

CHAPTER XXIV

My Re-Baptism

Baptism is recognized in the Romish Church as an ordinance, and one of her seven sacraments. But, like other dogmas of that Church, it has been grossly perverted and corrupted. It was originally a simple and expressive ordinance sanctioned by Christ. It was designed as a symbol to represent a fact—the inward spiritual change effected by the Holy Spirit. But in the Church of Rome the reality has been buried and lost sight of in the mere form. There is no spiritual efficiency in the water itself, nor is there any evidence of any necessary supernatural power attending its application. Baptismal regeneration is not taught in the Bible, and is a corruption held among Romanists and ritualists. In Popery it is taught that when the infant is baptized all the guilt and defilement of original sin are taken away and it becomes as pure as Adam when created. The facts, we see, are against this, for the children who have this excellent start have an unspeakable advantage above others, if Romanist teaching be true, and they ought to be very good, at least much better than others who have not been validly baptized. But we know that this is not the case, as they show the same natural depravity that others do.

It is amazing how this Divine ordinance has been abused and perverted. I give here some examples of this in connection with the work of the early Jesuit missionaries in Canada. These seemed to be so foolish as to think that some drops of water sprinkled on infants made them Christians, fitted them for heaven, without which they would be lost. Among these missionaries was Father Le Mercier, whom I

allow here to speak for himself. In the *Jesuit Relations* of 1637, he writes:

“On the third of May, Father Pierre Pijart baptized, at Anonatea, a little child two months old, in manifest danger of death, without being seen by the parents, who would not give their consent. This is the device which he used. Our sugar does wonders for us. He pretended to make the child drink a little sugared water, and at the same time dipped the finger in it. As the father of the infant began to suspect something, and called out to him not to baptize it, he gave the spoon to a woman who was near, and said to her, ‘Give it to him yourself.’ She approached and found the child asleep; and at the same time Father Pijart, under pretence of seeing if he was really asleep, touched his face with his wet finger, and baptized him. At the end of forty-eight hours he went to heaven.

“Some days before, the missionary had used the same device for baptizing a little boy six or seven years old. His father, who was very sick, had several times refused to receive baptism; and when asked if he would not be glad to have his son baptized, he answered, No. ‘At least,’ said Father Pijart, ‘you will not object to my giving him a little sugar.’ ‘No, but you must not baptize him.’

“The missionary gave it to him once, then again; and at the third spoonful, before he had put the sugar into the water, he let a drop fall on the child, at the same time pronouncing the sacramental words. A little girl who was looking at him cried out: ‘Father, he is baptizing him!’ The child’s father was much disturbed, but the missionary said to him: ‘Did you not see I was giving him sugar?’ The child died soon after, but God showed his grace to the father, who is now in perfect health.”

The historian Parkman writes: “Nothing could divert the Jesuits from their ceaseless quest of dying subjects for baptism, and above all, of dying children. They penetrated every house in turn where, through the thin walls of bark,

they heard the wail of a sick infant; no menace and no insult could repel them from the threshold. They pushed boldly in, asked to buy some trifle, spoke of late news of Iroquois frays—anything, in short, except the pestilence and sick child—conversed for a while till suspicion was partially lulled to sleep, and then, pretending to observe the sufferer for the first time, approached, felt its pulse, and asked of its health. Now, while apparently fanning the heated brow, the dextrous visitor touched it with a corner of his handkerchief, which he had previously dipped in water, murmured the baptismal words with motionless lips, and snatched another soul from the fangs of the ‘infernial wolf.’”

Here was fanaticism combined with deception—a lack of truthfulness which is characteristic of Jesuitism in which the end justifies the means—and thus relying on a few drops of water to save a soul, and that applied by lying, in words and act. Yet those Jesuit missionaries are often eulogized and represented as model, self-denying and heroic Christian men, while at the same time practising dark superstition, and that by the most flagrant deception and lying.

The false and superstitious use of baptism is carried on at the present time by the Romanists, and this is an essential element in their missionary operations. I give here a marked example of this. The apostolic vicar of Su-Tehuen, in China, after reporting the baptism in six years of over 112,815 pagan children in danger of death, and the salvation of two-thirds of these who actually died the same year they were baptized, proceeds:

“We pay faithful persons, men and women, who are acquainted with the diseases of children, to seek and baptize those who are found dangerously ill. It is easy to meet at fairs a crowd of beggars with their children in extreme distress. They may be seen everywhere, in the roads, at the gates of the towns and villages, in the most needy condition. Our male and female baptizers approach them with soothing, compassionate words, and offer pills to the little sufferers,

with expressions of the most lively interest. The parents willingly permit our people to examine the condition of their children, and to sprinkle on their foreheads some drops of water, securing their salvation, while they pronounce the sacramental words. Our Christian baptizers are divided into two classes: those who travel about seeking for children in danger of death, and those who remain at their posts in the towns and villages, and devote themselves to the same work in their respective neighbourhoods. I intend to print some rules for their direction, and to stimulate them all in their work.

“The expenses of the traveling baptizers are 150 francs (\$27.90) a year, including his medicines and board; 100 francs (\$18.60) are sufficient for a stationary male baptizer, and 80 or 85 francs (\$15.00 or \$16.00) for a female; and yet the number of baptizers is so great that the whole expense this year (1847) amounts to 10,000 francs (\$1,860.00).”

Rev. Jacob Primmer, in his deeply interesting book on Romanism, gives a graphic description of a baptism he witnessed in Rome, which will illustrate the character of the Popish superstition. This I here insert, which presents to the mind of the reader a picture that deserves the name of pagan, rather than Christian:

A BAPTISM IN ST. PETER'S

“On the left, when entering St. Peter's, is a small chapel, called the baptistry. The font consists of a marble cover of a pagan sarcophagus with a bronze top. Everything in popish ceremonial is connected in some way or another with paganism. As we were leaving, at 5:30 P. M., preparations were being made for a baptism. We got near, note-book in hand, as usual, and record as follows: Baptism—purses out and payment made to priest, who puts on white cotta, kisses cross on red stole and puts it on—gets his book and goes at it with rattling speed—he remains outside the baptistry rails—blows on the face of the child to drive out the devil—takes

spittle and puts it on chin, brow and mouth, goes up to the font, anoints the child's head—this is how Papists are fabricated—continues his harangue at the same high speed—the parents and godmother also rattle away as fast as the priest; holy oil, holy salt, holy crossings, very many; and holy blowing on the face of the infant, in order to dislodge the devil supposed to be in the infant instead of in the priest. The priest changes the red stole for a white one, and the father of the child holds a large bit of candle lit, in his hand, while the priest still harangues with great rapidity; the godmother holds the child's head over the font and the priest pushes it under the water (not sprinkling the head but immersing it). Responses follow, the whole concluding with 'Amen,' and the Papist farce of manufacturing a Christian is over—another coin is given to the priest and off the parties go. The amazing thing is that the child, while this performance was going on, never cried. The time taken would be eight minutes. All a farce. No sincerity, no earnestness. Evidently the endeavor was to see how quickly they could get through with it."

When I left the Church of Rome I was kindly advised by the Presbytery of Chicago to be re-baptized. But it seemed to me then, as it seemed to Luther, Calvin, Knox and many others, that my baptism in the Church of Rome was validly conferred. And, after having heard my reasons, the Presbytery unanimously resolved to let me go free on that subject.

After that time many venerable brothers in Europe, as well as on this continent, pressed me to be re-baptized; and, though they did not entirely decide me to do it, I confess that they much diminished my confidence in the baptism of Rome. I had many hours of anxiety on that subject for more than three years. And the dear Saviour knows that I shed many tears at His feet, when imploring Him to give me more of His saving light on that important matter.

When I preached in Antigonish, the Romanists determined to kill me; and I was most cruelly stoned by several hundred

of them. Bruised and wounded and staggering, I expected at any moment to fall down and die by the side of my martyred friend, the Rev. Mr. Goodfellow, who was himself terribly cut on the head, and profusely bleeding; when I heard in my conscience, a voice telling me, "You die! and you are not yet baptized!"

That thought distressed me much in that solemn hour. I escaped from my murderers in a most providential way. I promised to God to study the question of my baptism more seriously, with His help; and He knows that I did it. But though it seemed to me more and more every day that the reason for being re-baptized was stronger than I thought at first, the reason for considering my baptism valid in the Church of Rome was remaining the strongest in my mind.

On the twelfth of August, 1873, having heard that many citizens around St. Anne were to meet to meditate the Word of God, pray, and praise Him, it came to my mind that it would do me good to pass a few hours with them, at the feet of the dear Saviour, to look with more attention than ever to His bleeding wounds and to all that He had done and suffered for me, that by His grace I might love Him more and more.

I had never seen a camp-meeting before, though I had heard much said against, as well as in favour of, such gatherings. But God knows that I went there only with the desire of drinking some drops of those precious waters of life, which our Saviour never refuses to the thirsty soul who goes to Him. When I went to that meeting, the question of my baptism was absolutely out of my mind. I heard several very good sermons from various Protestant ministers; but not a word was said, that I remember, about baptism, except that at 3 P. M. we were invited to pray for those who were to be baptized at 4 P. M.

There were between two and three thousand people on that most beautiful spot; they all knelt and prayed. It was a most solemn thing indeed to see that multitude prostrated

before the throne of grace and to hear their ardent prayers their sobs; to see the tears of those penitent and repenting sinners crying for mercy.

There was no confusion, as I had expected; there were no contortions, as I was prepared to see. But there was the most sublime and soul-stirring harmony I had ever seen in the humble and earnest supplications of the multitudes. The noise was grand and sublime, as the noise of the deep waters when the winds from heaven blow upon them. All was grand, there, as the works of our God are grand and sublime everywhere.

In the midst of that multitude I was praying with all my heart for those who were to be baptized, when a thought flashed through my brain and chilled the blood in my veins: "You are not baptized, and you pray for others, when you ought to pray for yourself, and be baptized to-day."

I tried to repulse that thought as I used to by saying to myself, "A priest of Rome has baptized me."

But that day the voice of my conscience spoke as it had never spoken. It said as loud as thunder, "The priest of Rome is not the priest of the true, but of the false Christ. He is the priest of the Christ kept in the secret chambers (tabernacle), Matt. 24:23-26. The priest of Rome is the priest of an idol of bread made with a little flour mixed with some water, afterwards baked. Have you not made that christ, yourself, with your hands, when a priest of Rome? And that god made with your hands was he not your only saviour and god? Do you think the priests of the idols of China and Japan can administer the sacrament of baptism? Would you believe in the validity of your baptism had that sacrament been administered to you by a priest of the heathen Emperor of China? But what is the difference between a priest of the Pópe of Rome who worships a god made with a piece of bread, and a priest of the Emperor of China who worships a god made with a piece of wood? Is it not the same monstrous and damnable idolatry?"

At first, I remained absolutely mute before this new light, for this light had never come to my mind with such an irresistible power. But a moment after, I said, "Oh, my God! I understand that I am not yet baptized. At the first meeting of my presbytery I will receive that sacrament."

But more quickly than lightning the voice of my conscience answered: "Will you see the next meeting of your presbytery? Are you certain that you will live to-morrow? Can you not be carried away this very night? And when you know that your God wants you to be baptized *to-day* will you resist His will? Do you want to expose yourself to die the death of a rebel?"

This last thought filled me with distress. I could not consent to risk to die a rebel. I determined to be baptized without any delay.

But I was away from my own people, and it seemed to me unorderly to be baptized by a Methodist when I was a Presbyterian. I foresaw so clearly the scornful, the perfidious, the false and unchristian interpretation, the profane remarks which would flow as a deluge upon my devoted head from those who would not or could not understand my exceptional position. For a moment I felt such a distress in my soul at the thought of the unkind and unchristian things which would be said, not only by my enemies, but by my mistaken friends, that I again determined to postpone it to the next meeting of my presbytery.

But my accusing conscience spoke again: "Will you have more consideration and fear for your friends and your foes than for your God? That God says, '*to-day* be baptized.' To please the world, will you answer, to-morrow?"

I felt so ashamed at my sorrow that I put my hands on my face to conceal the tears of regret which were flowing on my cheeks, and more with my sobs than with my words, I said, "May Thy name forever be blessed, O! dear Saviour, for Thy long patience; yes, *to-day*, with Thy grace, I will be baptized. But before I receive that baptism of water—Oh! Oh!

do baptize me again with Thy Holy Ghost and Thy blood; fill my heart with more love for Thee."

I rose up, and requested the people to sit for a moment; then, addressing the Rev. Mr. Foster, the respected Methodist pastor of Kankakee, I told him, "Can you baptize a Presbyterian without affecting his connection with his own church?"

He answered, "Yes, sir, undoubtedly."

I then said, "Mr. Foster, I am a Presbyterian minister, connected with the noble Canada Presbyterian Church, and I hope that nothing will ever break the ties so sweet and so blessed which unite me with that Church. If I were among them, to-day, I would ask them to baptize me, and they would grant me that favour; but I am far away from them. And I must be baptized to-day! In the name of our common Saviour, please do baptize me. I was baptized by a priest of Rome, the thirtieth of July, 1809; and till this day I sincerely believed that my baptism was valid. But I was mistaken. My dear Saviour has done for me what He did for the poor blind man of the Gospel. At first I was perfectly blind; He touched my eyes, and I could see men as if they were trees; but Jesus has just now touched my eyes again, and I see the things about the priests of Rome just as they are. The priests of Rome make their own gods and their own christs themselves every morning with a little piece of bread—they shut up that wafer-christ in 'secret chambers' as was prophesied by the Son of God (Matt. 24:23-25). There the wafer-christs are often eaten by rats and mice. The priests of Rome carry that wafer-christ and god from house to house in their pantalon and vest pockets, through the streets in their own private buggies, and in the railroads, to fulfil the prophecy of Jesus, who says, 'beware of the false christs. Lo, here is Christ or there; believe it not.' (Matt. 24:23.)

"The priests of Rome eat their christ every morning, and often after they have eaten him, they vomit him out of their sickly stomachs, and they are bound to eat him again. The

priests of Rome are idolaters. The Son of God cannot allow them to administer the sacraments of His Church.

“ Besides that, the baptism which Rome gives is not the baptism of Christ; it is quite another thing. Christ has ordered that sacrament that, by receiving it, we confess and declare that our souls have been purified by His blood, shed on the cross. But the priests of Rome administer the baptism to take away by it the sins already committed before its reception. Then, the baptism of Rome is not a sacrament; it is a sacrilegious caricature of a sacrament; it is an insult to Christ and His Church.”

A few minutes later I was kneeling in front of the multitudes, in the midst of a great number of people who wanted to be baptized with me. And the Rev. Mr. Foster baptized us all.

I will never sufficiently thank my God for what He has done in me and for me, in that most blessed hour.

After we were baptized, the ministers who were there offered most fervent prayers for every one of us; they put their hands on our heads, not as a sacramental sign, but as a mark of fraternal Christian feeling. But my emotions were too great and too sweet at that solemn moment to pay any attention to that circumstance. What I can say is that if all the brethren and sisters who were there praying around us had wished to lay their hands on our heads when sending to the throne of grace their ardent supplications, I would not have been able to find any fault in that; and even to-day, it is impossible for me to see any impropriety, scandal, or any ridicule, when, under the eyes of God and man, such things occurred in the midst of us, children of that great merciful God.

I do not say this as an apology. An apology is unnecessary regarding such a solemn and sacred action. My baptism was an affair between my God and me alone—my only regret was that I had postponed it so long, and that uncontrollable and providential circumstances had prevented me from being baptized by one of our Presbyterian brethren. But it was the

will of God that in this, as well as in many other things of my life, I could not do my own will, but I had to do His will. The ways of God are not the ways of men.

Since that time it was my privilege to attend, as a deputy, the admirable (I might say the marvelous) meetings of the Evangelical Alliance in New York. There the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptists, and the Episcopalians have pulled down, and I hope forever, the walls of division which Satan has raised up among the children of God. They have all eaten of the same bread, and they have all sat at the same table, that it might be said of them: "They are one bread, one body, one heart, one Church."

And the whole world has blessed the sublime spectacle of that unity. Our dear Canada Presbyterian Church, which has tasted of the delicious fruit of that perfect unity, through her representation at the Evangelical Alliance in New York, will not find fault with her weakest child, if, in one of the most blessed hours of his life, he has thought that there is no more difference or division among the Methodist and the Presbyterian Churches of this land of exile than there will be when, around the throne of the Lamb, they will sing together the eternal Alleluia.