

***BERNARD
FRESENBORG***

***"THIRTY
YEARS
IN HELL"
OR, "FROM
DARKNESS
TO LIGHT"***

Bernard Fresenborg

"Thirty Years In Hell" Or, "From Darkness to Light"

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Chapter I.

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Who I Am, What I Am, and Why I Am What I Am.

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My parents were Catholics, and for this reason I suppose, is why I became a Catholic Priest.

I was born in Germany, in 1847, thus you see I am now almost what the world would call an old man—56 years old.

A few years ago, I was of the opinion that my life had been well spent, but to-day I firmly believe that the major part of my life has been spent in erroneous doctrines and nonsensical teachings, as the broad light of wisdom and independent thought has penetrated the dark resources of my bewildered conception of right, and has caused me to look upon things in general in an intelligent manner. Therefore, I feel that my youth and the vigorous years of my manhood have been spent in what one might term idolatry.

From this time forward I am going to endeavor to undo, as near as possible, what I have helped to accomplish in the past.

In the first place, I desire to give the reader an idea of who I am, as the reader is entitled to this knowledge, and in the second place I want the reader to understand what I am, and in the third place to understand why I am what I am, as there must be a reason for all things.

My ancestors came from Sweden, but becoming tired of religions warfare under Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden,

they settled in a Catholic colony in Germany, in the southern part of the Dukedom of Oldenburg, near the River Haase.

The reader, if he be a Protestant, is familiar with Protestant affiliations, and I am led to believe belongs to one of the many Protestant denominations, known under the head of Methodist, Baptist, Christian, United Brethren, Presbyterian, Free Baptist, or some one of the many other Protestant Churches. Therefore you can easily see why it was that I became a Catholic, as I was taught it from my infancy.

My father, like his ancestors, lived in Essen, Oldenburg. Essen is a town of considerable trade in grain, in fine Oldenburg horses and Holstein cows, in fact, it is a town noted for its fine stock.

The beautiful town of Essen has a considerable population. Two fine rivers, which unite their rapid waters in its very midst, make it an ideal spot to live.

My relatives were among the first and best families of the Dukedom. These families were by name Dickmann, Meyer, Junker and Mohlenkamp, who are at the head of the intellectual and material movements of that place. They are all related by marriage and intermarriage to the Fresenborgs. My parents had ten children. This, however, may not interest the reader, so I will confine myself to my own biography.

The school to which I was sent was one of the leading schools and had a world-wide reputation, especially of sending many scholars and students to the gymnasium and afterwards to universities for different branches of sciences.

It seems as though all of those who attended this school became successful in their individual careers, as lawyers, doctors or some other of the chosen avocations of life.

I was raised, I might say, under the walls of the free City of Bremen, and was inspired with the idea of freedom, and this, perhaps, may be the reason why, when I have come to be an old man, that I have shaken off this eternal bondage of Catholicism and launched my boat so late in life upon the broad waters of Protestant freedom.

As the son of a wealthy family, I was sent to the Gymnasium of Vechta for higher studies, where I received the best education which Germany could give to her sons, and from there I was dismissed with the diploma of "Maturity" in 1870, which was a passport to any man holding such a diploma in any scholarly community, for a diploma from this institution meant all that it implied.

After I had gone through a perfect study of Gymnasium, and after having obtained my diploma, I could then decide for any career that I might choose.

About this time came the disturbance of all of Germany caused by "The German-French War." Like every patriot, I volunteered as a soldier, but the officers in the German army were practical men and they had little use for unseasoned "student soldiers" in the field of action, and I was left in garrisons where universities were situated, where I had military practice for a few hours each day, and then could follow my studies at the same time.

Peace followed quickly after the Waterloo of Napoleon III at Sedan, and this peace was restored quickly in the

"fatherland," as not one victorious Frenchman had crossed the "Rhine."

I followed my favorite study, forestry and agriculture, for some time, but as my parents and my forefathers, both on my father's and mother's side, had been devout Catholics, I had an earnest longing to become a Catholic Priest, as I desired to go forth in the world and proclaim the cause of Christ, believing that Catholicism was the only church which had a right to establish her doctrines, and, of course, cast my lot with this church, and to-day finds me an old man with every vestige of childhood's faith shaken from center to circumference, as I have lived in America so long and seen so much of the intelligence of Protestantism, and so much of the deception of Catholicism, I could not remain in the Catholic Church and be true to my conception of what was right and wrong, therefore I laid aside, with a degree of regret, the relics of Catholic barbarism.

I discarded the Scapular and everything that has no more intelligent meaning to it than the cungering devices of the heathen has towards the uplifting of humanity and the civilization of the world.

Many, many years ago my faith was shaken by what I had seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears, but I nursed my religious belief from my mother's bosom; my religion was born and bred in my bones; every drop of blood in my person was electrified in childhood by the cungerings of Catholic legerdemain, and I was taught at my mother's knee to believe that there was no other church that had a ghost of a chance of eternal salvation but the Catholic Church, and I was taught that all Protestants were

heretics and abominable in the sight of God and sure of eternal damnation, unless they turned from their sins and joined the Catholic Church.

Ofttimes I would have my faith shaken by the actions of some lustful priest, but I clung tenaciously to the religion of my mother and refused to look beyond the horizon of Catholic superstition.

About the time that I had fully made up my mind to become a priest, I had my faith shaken in the priesthood to a great extent by a scandalous happening near the College of Vechta, which concerned and strictly involved one of the great dignitaries of Catholicism in my college town, but I fought this feeling of dislike down and forced myself to believe that what a priest or bishop did was all right in the sight of God, but at the same time I had a feeling of distrust, as I could not reconcile myself to believe that God would look with compassion upon the acts of a dignitary more readily than he would upon the transgressions of his blind and duped followers, but nevertheless I went ahead and prepared myself for the priesthood, which I followed for thirty years.

Right directly opposite the college which I was attending resided the Very Rev. Harold. This reverend gentleman was a high dignitary in the Catholic Church.

We young priests had often heard it whispered about that Priest Harold had in his house at different times a number of concubines, which are nothing more nor less than lude women. We often saw ladies around the mansion, dressed in the very height of fashion, and their actions led us to believe that they were there at the solicitation of Rev.

Harold, as they were seen there at all times of the day and night, and this certainly made a very strange impression upon us young students, as there were so many different faces; one day we would see two or three young girls, and the next day the same number would be about the mansion, but different faces. All of us young students endeavored not to believe the rumor, as we were Catholics in every sense of the word, and we did not want to believe that anything so degrading would be tolerated in the very mansion of one of the officials who were teaching us.

The acts of this dignitary became so flagrant that even the students who were trying not to believe the scandal were forced to believe there was something wrong about the mansion of this Catholic dignitary.

About this time there was a young priest by the name of Wulf, from Rome, who was sent to Vechta and made secretary of this dignitary's mansion, who, during the day, worked in the office of the mansion, where court was held in cases of the Catholic Church and schools.

He was soon familiar in and about the mansion and the surrounding grounds and was given many privileges, and the dignitary seemed to like him because he did not meddle with his vile conduct, and the ladies who frequented this place also seemed to admire him. There was a large lawn surrounding the mansion and at night-time a number of vicious dogs were unchained to guard it.

The priest that was sent from Rome was soon on familiar terms with the dogs and they would mind him and became as obedient as children, and he was soon on such good terms with these dogs that he could approach the house at

any time, day or night, and one word from him would cause them to sneak off to their kennels and not molest any who desired to approach the mansion.

The young priests of this college were determined to learn, if possible, if this Catholic dignitary was guilty of the immoral conduct that he was accused of, so they went to Wulf and explained to him that they desired to make a personal investigation, and got this young priest to promise that he would let them into the grounds one night and also see that the dogs did not molest them.

We selected a dark night and a few of us young priests slipped into the lawn surrounding the mansion and placed a ladder up to the second story window, as there was a bright light inside, and we determined to learn, if possible, what was going on in this room.

Dr. Wulf, the secretary, was the first to ascend, and there in this room was the dignitary of the Catholic Church in a half drunken condition, with two licentious and lude women, playing cards and drinking wine, and the trio were in a half nude condition, and frequently this dignitary of the Catholic Church would kiss these harlots.

After Dr. Wulf came down the ladder and told what he had seen, of course the rest of us wished to become eye witnesses to the perfidy of this vagabond of the Catholic Church.

We would take time about going up the ladder to look at this sight, and sometimes one would remain so long at the top of the ladder the others would become restless and urge him to come down and give the rest of us a chance.

It seemed as though this Catholic dignitary and the women up stairs within had implicit confidence in the dogs, and had no fear of detection in their drunken orgy of immorality. This dignitary seemed very drunk, and the ladies began to undress him preparatory to putting him to bed. When they had him undressed, one of them pulled off her clothes and went to bed with him.

The next morning the report in the form of affidavits was presented to the parents of the girls, which caused a very great sensation, and this bundle of infamy and abomination was forced to leave the city by the parents of these daughters whom he had desecrated by his filthy touch.

It was afterwards learned that this state of affairs had existed in this Catholic mansion for years past, and all that had transpired in this mansion would blush the inhabitants of Sodom if it could be told, but it is so filthy that it could not be repeated by any one who had much respect for himself.

After this dignitary had left the mansion there were a number of children's skeletons unearthed in the park belonging to the mansion, and one child's skeleton was found in the waters surrounding the palace.

No one was ever arrested for this awful, awful crime, as this Catholic dignitary fled to some monastery and there was concealed from the law's clutch, as there is no law whereby these monasteries can be forced open and their criminals brought to justice.

A monastery is a Catholic institution that may be used for divers purposes, but for one great purpose, and a very heinous purpose, is to hide and conceal Catholic officials who break the laws of their country, as they can flee to

these monasteries and there hide themselves from the wrath of the civil government.

It makes no difference how vile the culprits may be, these Catholic institutions are always a refuge for them, and especially if the culprit who has money or friends supply them with same, as the Catholic Church is and always has been a great money machine, as money, in the eyes of the Catholic dignitaries, covers up a multitude of sins.

You may not know it, but it is a fact, nevertheless, that the monasteries never allow the officers of the civil laws to enter, and suppose the officers did enter, the culprit would never be found, as Catholic institutions are built with the purpose of sheltering her abominable faithless in case these criminals' desire to hide themselves therein, as the convents, monasteries and cloisters have a labyrinth which would mystify any one who was not used to these underground passages.

No one ever learned where the dignitary of this Catholic institution at Vechta went, but we were thoroughly convinced that he was hiding somewhere in a monastery.

At this point in my religious training I perceived the nonsense of celibacy, and the Apostle's injunction: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." (I Cor. 7:2.) But the teachings of my childhood caused me to believe that it would be sacrilegious upon my part to even allow myself to believe that the Pope of Rome could possibly make a mistake, therefore I did as all true Catholics are expected to do, and forced myself to believe that all of the abominations practiced by this church were godly.

At this time I would conceal myself in privacy, and endeavor to reason why a minister of the gospel should be expected to do things which were unnatural and against the direct teachings of God, as we find in *Gen. 21:18* that our Creator said: "It is not good that man should be alone, I will make a helpmate for him," but whenever I would undertake to study and try to convince myself of the erroneousness of the Catholic doctrines, her teachings would loom up and blind my intelligent conception of things, as I had been taught that I should not question a single mandate that the Pope of Rome should see fit to promulgate, therefore I made up my mind that it was a sin for me to use the intelligence that God had given me, and I resolved to follow the Catholic doctrine, regardless of what it might lead me to, consequently I closed my eyes to reason and common sense and became a blind and superstitious follower of Rome.

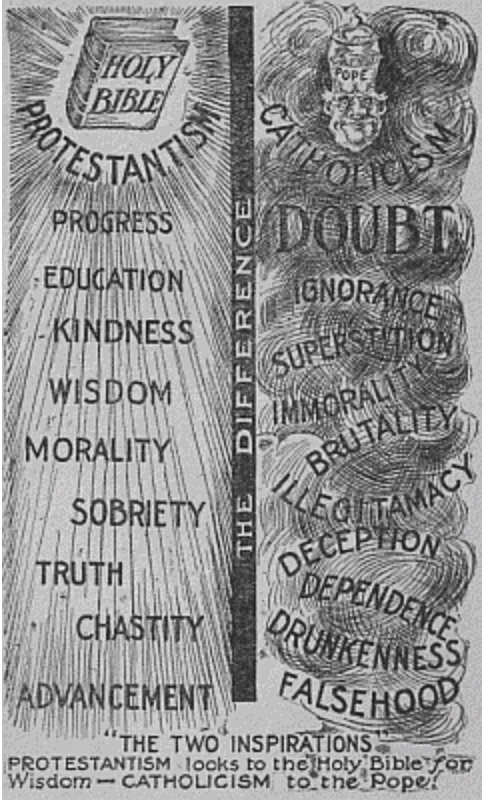
When I came to America I beheld her great civilization and at once my conception of intelligent action presented itself again, but I fought hard to drive these feelings from my bosom, but the more I fought the stronger I became convinced that I was wrong and that my early training was wrong, and that the entire machinery and mechanism of the Catholic Church was founded upon abominations and superstitions, but the teachings of my mother would prevail and I would slink back into the trenches of Catholicism, and there I remained until less than a year ago, when I resolved to burst the bands of iniquity and walk out upon the plains of Protestantism, regardless of the deep feelings of respect that I had for my early training.

If God is an intelligent God, then we are expected to worship Him in an intelligent manner, and if he is not an intelligent God, it is impossible for Him to be a God, and if the Lord of Hosts is an intelligent Creator and expects us, as His children, to worship Him in an intelligent manner, the Catholic Church and all of her followers are sinning against God every day, as her mode of worship is steeped in the drugs of heathenish superstitions.

In this volume I propose to set forth nothing but absolute truths, and I call upon an intelligent God for my witness, and I am qualified to make oath before any official that is qualified to bind me under oath that every word that appears in this volume shall be the truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

I will give \$5,000.00 to any charitable institution named by any state of the United States if any Catholic priest, bishop or cardinal will prove by any of their church doctrines that I have misstated or misrepresented the teachings of Catholicism in any letter, word or sentence.

I want to thoroughly impress the reader with the truthfulness of this volume, so when he or she has perused these pages they may know that it has been written by one who has served in the capacity of a Catholic priest for the past thirty years, but who, to-day, stands out upon the broad plains of spiritual emancipation, and from this time forward will always be found upon the side of spiritual liberty and following the doctrines of an intelligent God, and when my earthly race is run I hope and pray to be ushered into the presence of an intelligent God.



"THE TWO INSPIRATIONS."

Chapter II.

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Some of the Abominations of Catholicism Carried On in the Name of Blessed Saviour.

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What I will now relate is not hear-say nor something that I have read about, but it is something that *know about*, and which I witnessed.

It is a well-known fact that Catholicism endeavors to impress her subjects with the miraculousness of latter day miracles, as she will hold up the bones of some supposed Catholic Saint, and declare to her benighted followers that if they worship these relics, they will work wonders and cure the ailment of any affliction they may be possessed of.

For instance, they will take the bone of some Catholic Saint (?) and admonish the followers of Catholicism to touch this bone, or to kiss it, and declare to them that by so doing they will become entirely cured of any malady that may rack their person with misery.

In fact, Catholicism will resort to all kinds of nonsensical practices in order to completely keep their subjects in darkest ignorance, which will enable the officials to "hoodwink" their followers and make them believe anything the officials see fit to teach them.

I will now relate what I saw in Munster, Germany. The news spread all through Germany that the "Mother

Superior" of the house of Saint Clement was living upon "Holy Communion" only.

Now that the reader may understand what "Holy Communion" is, I will here state that it is a thin wafer, used for sacramental purposes, which would not weigh more than the one-hundredth part of an ounce, and this is what they claimed the Mother Superior of the house of Saint Clement was existing upon, she only taking one of these wafers every twenty-four hours.

Of course, this was given out by the dignitaries of the Catholic Church in order to blind their followers, and I desire to state right here that I also believed that this was the fact until it was demonstrated thoroughly that it was an infamous lie and that the instigators were infamous impostors. However, pilgrimages started from all directions to see this "Mother Superior," and when they could not see her, they fought for the opportunity of praying in her chapel. Some stayed for weeks and weeks to see her. Applications for intercessions of all kinds of misery were sent to her, as these simple "dupes" of Catholicism actually believed that this impostor had the power to heal any ailment that might afflict them.

There were thousands of fanatics who visited Munster and hung their crutches on the chapel walls and declared they were cured of their ailment. The blind claimed to see by her intercessions. It was claimed that all, possessed of every kind and description of ailments, could be cured if the one who was afflicted only had faith in this Mother Superior's wonderful power?

"The finger of God is in the land!" was the cry, and tens of thousands of Catholics from all over the country gathered in Munster.

There was a certain man by the name of Friedhoff who doubted the proclaimed powers of this Mother Superior and boldly declared his doubt, and the Catholic world was indignant over the audacity of such a doubt. It was learned that the Mother Superior would allow but one sister of the institution to come to her room, and also her Father Confessor. By the way, it might be pertinent to say that the Mother Superior was an extremely handsome young lady; in fact, very young for the position she occupied.

The guard that was placed over the Mother Superior was given instructions by the Mayor of Munster to watch her closely and see that she lived entirely upon "Holy Communion." The Protestant world took an active part in this matter and gave close attention to the guard that was over this "Mother Superior," as they were determined to learn from whence originated this bold deception, as they were thoroughly convinced that it was nothing more nor less than a deception.

The confessor of the "Mother Superior" was changed and the sister who waited upon her was changed, and in a very short time the "Mother Superior" asked for food; thus it began to dawn upon the public at large that they had been grossly deceived, and they began to learn that all of these miraculous cures (?) were brought about and promulgated by the leaders of Catholicism. Numerous physicians were taken into confidence and an examination was made of the "Mother Superior," and it was learned that she was

pregnant, and it was proven that the child belonged to the priest in charge of the convent, who, by the way, was the one this "Mother Superior" confessed her sins to.

This "Mother Superior" sat in her room and gave her orders to at least two hundred sisters who were inmates of this institution.

The Catholic world advertised this "fake" so thoroughly that every house in and about Munster was filled to overflowing with pilgrims who came there on the strength of this well-advertised "fake."

Munster was the Mecca. Every train arriving brought in hundreds and added great multitudes to the already great crowd. Some claimed that the sight of the chapel, or even the sight of the hospital, healed them.

Even the newspapers began to report the wonderful miracles (?) that were performed by this "Mother Superior."

By this time the Protestants in Munster were getting very active and denounced this worship in round terms, and set about to have an investigation made, which was bitterly opposed by the Catholics. The hotel keepers and shop keepers of Munster were bitterly opposed to the Protestants' denunciation, as they were anxious for this "fake" to be advertised as thoroughly as possible, as it was bringing them in large revenues, as the thousands who were visiting Munster were compelled to have raiment, food and lodging; but the denunciation of this "fake" by the Protestants became so great that the bishop was compelled, greatly against the wishes of the citizens of Munster, to investigate, and this investigation brought forth enough to startle the civilized world. However, it is only one of the many, many

colossal "fakes" that are promulgated by Catholicism. However, the clamor of the Protestant world brought things to a crisis, as the "Mother Superior" was ordered to stay in strict confinement and a watch was placed over her.

This brought matters to a climax and the "Mother Superior" confessed that one of the inmates of the convent had secretly carried her food during all of this time that she was claiming to exist on "Holy Communion." Of course, this is only one of the tens of thousands of such schemes that are practiced by Catholicism all over the world, and the Protestants were not surprised and stated boldly and above board that they knew there was some "scull-duggery" attached to all of this "fake" miracle business.

This "Mother Superior" fled from Munster, and it was learned that she went to the City Rheine, on the river Ems, and gave birth to a child, and the father of this child was the Catholic priest in charge of this convent, who helped and was the prime instigator in giving out to the world that the "Mother Superior" was performing miracles, which was a malicious lie made of whole cloth and promulgated in order to securely bind the followers of Catholicism to their idolatrous belief.

This is not the end of the "Mother Superior," as she afterwards practiced in the open what she had practiced in this Catholic convent at Munster, as she entered a house of ill fame in the City of Rheine in Germany, and there led a life of shame as a harlot of the world; however, she was only living the same life she had been living when she was sailing under the name of "Mother Superior" in this convent at Munster.