

L. HENKEL

**FROM ROME TO
CHRIST**

A Story of a Spiritual Pilgrimage

by

MONICA FARRELL

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FOREWORD

Dear Readers:

Autobiographies are always interesting, but especially so when the person concerned has travelled widely, and has, therefore, a fund of entertaining experiences to relate.

When, however, we enter the religious realm and trace the course of a spiritual pilgrimage, it becomes positively fascinating.

Miss Monica Farrel is a sincere and devoted Christian always seeking how she can further the spread of the Evangel of Jesus Christ.

It is my conviction that this earnest disciple of the Lord has undertaken this task with a sense of deep humility, entertaining the splendid hope that this revelation of intimate affairs of the soul will be of service to others battling for spiritual liberty, seeking to free themselves from the bondage of Rome.

I am sure that Miss Farrell's greatest desire in writing this book is that many who have been negligent in regard to spiritual things will boldly embrace the Christian faith.

(Rev.) E. L. Slade Mallen.

Box 17, P.O., Glebe, Sydney.

INTRODUCTION

King David fought many battles, and God gave him many glorious victories. Out of the booty won in those battles David reserved some for the beautifying of the temple that Solomon built. Thus the fruits of past victories, instead of being confined to one generation, were preserved, and enriched the Temple wherein God dwelt and His people worshipped for many generations.

The life of every Christian is part of a great warfare, for we are passing through enemy territory. The battles fought and the victories won can be turned to good account by testimony spoken and written.

The enemy is still the same, and the battleground remains the same, though the tactics may differ. The old warrior, Paul, about to put off his armour and enter into the rest and fruits of victory, turned to young Timothy, about to take up the battle, with the words, "I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

The aged Paul could pass on good advice to young Timothy.

So I write this short testimony to the glory of God, and with the prayer that some souls struggling towards light may be helped to lay hold of God, Who says, "I will bring the blind by a way that they know not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them and will not forsake them."



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Not Expected to Live

Born in the City of Dublin, of Roman Catholic parents, I found myself an orphan at the age of seven years.

My father had died six months before I was born, and my mother died when I was seven years old. Very tiny and very delicate as an infant, I was not expected to live. At the time of my mother's death I had the appearance of a child of three or four years of age. All this added to my feeling of helplessness.

Seeing the family beginning to scatter, I wondered what would become of me and who would take care of me. Three of my sisters became nuns in the Dominican order, one brother became a priest, and later on another brother became a monk.

My eldest sister looked after me, but my constant fear was that she would marry someone who would not like me, and then what would happen to me?

A Talk with God

Greatly troubled, one day when I was only seven or eight years old, I went to a big R.C. church in Dublin, and as I walked up the aisle I said to myself, "I want to talk to real God." Kneeling down at the altar rails, I said in a loud whisper, "Are you there, God? Can You hear me? Listen, God. You took my father and mother away from me, so You will have to look after me Yourself now." With those words I threw myself, as it were, into the hands of my loving Heavenly Father, and as I rose from my knees I felt a wonderful sense of relief, and walking down the church I said, "Well! that's that! God is going to look after me now."

Although I was so young at the time, I sincerely believed that a real transaction took place that day between God and my soul.

My eldest sister continued to care for me. Those were sad days in our home. We were ever conscious of the loss of our dear mother. At night in bed I would try to picture where mother was, and what she was suffering.

Mother in "Purgatory"!

✓ The very best Rome can offer to a departed soul is Purgatory, and the torments of Purgatory are supposed to be as bad as hell. The only difference is that the soul in Purgatory eventually gets out of the flames and into heaven: but this may not be for hundreds of years, and in the meantime the only relief or comfort to the Roman Catholic is to have masses said for the repose of the soul of the loved ones. These masses cost money. There is a common saying in Ireland among Romanists: "High money, high mass; low money, low mass; no money, no mass."

As I was only a child and had no money, I could have no masses said, so that night after night I lay in bed breaking my heart crying, as I thought of my dear, gentle, loving mother burning in those awful flames. I used to wish I could get into the fire instead of mother, even if it were for a little while. I used to think, "I wouldn't scream, and I wouldn't cry, I'd try and bear it as long as I could to relieve poor mother"; but, of course, it was impossible to do anything, and so the only relief was to be found in tears till time healed the wound.

My mother was the daughter of a mixed marriage; her mother was a Protestant and her father an R.C..

As my grandmother was a true Christian, her influence was felt around our home long after her death.

Family Bible Reading

One of my earliest recollections was of my grandmother's family Bible that was in our home. I remember looking at the pictures in it, and on Sunday afternoons I remember my brother Frank (who is now a priest) would sometimes read from it to us.

I suppose I was not more than five years old when I heard the story of the Crucifixion read out by my brother one Sunday afternoon, and I can still remember vividly picturing as he read, and when he read that they spat upon the

Saviour I burst into tears and said, "Well, they needn't have done that to Him." It seemed to me such a filthy, dirty thing to do to the pure, clean, holy Saviour. I was quickly carried out of the sitting-room and comforted by one of my sisters. Whether our priest knew anything about these Bible readings in our home or not, I do not know.

My mother was different from the ordinary type of Roman Catholic. No doubt it was due to the fact that she had a Protestant mother. My mother had an independent spirit and was never one to cringe before priests or nuns. She was a strict Roman Catholic, and at the same time a sincere Christian. It seems to me she took her religion from the church of Rome and her spiritual comfort from the Bible, and she evidently did not see the inconsistency between the two.

Placed in a Convent

✓ When I was about eleven years old my eldest sister decided to go to America, and during her stay there I was placed in a convent boarding-school in Dublin. After an absence of nearly three years my sister returned and took me out of this convent, and we lived together in the city of Dublin. By this time I had been well grounded in Romanism and was very proud of the "One True Church." I could not understand the foolishness of Protestants staying in a religion which I thought was founded by Henry VIII and Martin Luther to please the devil and spite the Pope! I was sure I could persuade many Protestants to join "The One True Church" if only I could get them to listen to me while I could explain matters to them. With this objective in view, I asked my sister to send me to Marlborough Street School, where I knew I should mix with Protestant girls, and where I hoped to gain a lot of converts, but I did not mention my design to my sister, and, when sending me to the school, she warned me not to argue with Protestants for fear I would lose my faith.

I may say I could never understand why we were always warned against arguing with Protestants, as I used to say to myself, "If we are right and they are wrong, why shouldn't we argue with them till we prove to them that they are wrong and we are right."

Schoolgirls' Heated Arguments

At that school I got very friendly with a Scottish Presbyterian girl named Marjory. She and I had many discussions about religion, each one naturally defending her own

church. One day in the playground, Marjory and I had a heated controversy. She had a crowd of Protestants behind her, and I had a crowd of Romanists behind me. As each of us gained a point, our supporters cheered vigorously, and naturally we were each eager to carry off the flag. The battle was going hard against me, when I suddenly decided to use what I considered was an unanswerable argument which I had saved for such a moment, so I said, "Well, anyway, Marjory, but for Henry VIII and Martin Luther you old Protestants wouldn't have a religion at all." (Loud cheers from the Romanists.) I thought, "that's got her"; but Marjory, quite unperturbed, opened her schoolbag and produced her Bible, and handing it to me, she said, "Monica, that's my religion. Now, you take that book and show me the part that Henry VIII or Martin Luther wrote, and I will give up believing it." Well, the tables were well and truly turned on me, as I did not know what part of the Bible anybody wrote, and I couldn't very well show her the part that Henry VIII or Martin Luther wrote, so I was in an awkward position, and to get out of it I said, "Marjory, did you ask me to take a Protestant Bible into my hand? Take it away: I wouldn't touch it with a forty-foot pole." Then I called out to somebody, who was not calling me, "I'm coming," and away I ran amidst the hoots and boos of the Protestant party.

Going home from school I thought over the whole incident. I was feeling very humiliated at the thought that I had let my church down. I said to myself, "I'm going to have a quiet chat with Marjory and ask her more about this."

As my eldest brother had been left all the furniture in our home after my mother's death, he had separated from us, and of course had taken the family Bible, so I had not seen it since I was seven years old, and apart from the few stories I remembered my brother reading, or the portions I heard read in the chapel during the mass, I knew nothing about the Word of God.

One day, shortly after this incident, I said to Marjory, "How is it, Marjory, that if your religion comes out of the Bible there was no Protestant religion till about four hundred years ago?"

✓ **Scottish Schoolgirl's Protestant Defence**

Marjory answered, "Monica, ever since the days of the New Testament there were always people who believed what we believe, but they were not called Protestants,

neither were they called Roman Catholics. The early believers were called Christians, and as long as they remained true to Christ they were bitterly persecuted, but they kept close to God and His word, and loved each other. Then persecution ceased, and the Emperor Constantine began to favor the Christians and gave them the highest positions; the result was that thousands of heathen people came into the Christian Church and pretended to be Christians because they wanted to be popular. These heathen people did not want Christ, and were not satisfied with the simple Christian worship, so they began to introduce their heathen beliefs and practices into the Christian Church. That is how images, holy water, purgatory, incense, etc., found a place in the so-called Christian religion. Gradually through the neglect of the Bible and the ignorance of the people, more and more heathen ideas came into the church, till it was more heathen than Christian. Then there came a great revival in learning. The scholars of Europe began to study some ancient Bible manuscripts which had been brought to light through the flight of some monks from their ancient monasteries. Studying the scriptures made these scholars realize how far the church had got away from the teaching of its founder, the Lord Jesus Christ, and these men called the people back to the teaching of God's Holy Word. They pointed out that God's Word said, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above or in the earth beneath, nor in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them," etc. Then these scholars pointed to the images in the churches, for in those days they had bleeding images and weeping images," etc.

- ✓ "The people saw the wrong in these images, and the godly men that led them back to the Bible destroyed the images, removed the holy water fonts, got rid of the massing priest and Latin services, and, instead, gave the people a service in their own language, and the pure word of God. These men were called reformers, that movement was called the Reformation," said Marjory, "It was not a new religion, Monica; it was going back to the old."
- ✓ Then by way of illustration, Marjory said: "You might pass a house on your way to school, Monica, with a black knocker on the door. One day you pass the same house and see a beautiful shining brass knocker. You think it is a new knocker, but upon examining it you see it is the old knocker cleaned up".

✓ "That's like Protestantism", said Marjory. "It's not a new religion, it's old Christianity cleaned up, with all the rubbish that was collected during the Middle Ages thrown out."

Impressed with Protestantism

Marjory's explanation of Protestantism made a deep impression on my mind. Never again could I think of it as a new Religion started by Henry VIII. Some time after this I said something disparaging about the Presbyterian Church to Marjory, and she said: "Monica Farrell, don't you ever say another word to me against the Presbyterian Church till you have been into the Presbyterian Church to a service and seen and heard for yourself; then I will listen to what you have to say. I'll promise you faithfully that I will go to Mass with you next Sunday morning if you will come to church with me next Sunday evening. Well, will you agree to that, Monica?"

✓ I replied: "Marjory, you know that no Roman Catholic is allowed into a Protestant Church during a service. It would be quite all right for you to go to Mass with me, but it would not be all right for me to go to church with you." "And might I ask you why?" said Marjory. "Oh", said I, "because I have the right religion and you have the wrong religion. It's quite all right for a person with the wrong religion to go where she would hear the right religion, but it would not be all right for a person with the right religion to go where she would hear the wrong religion." Up to that time Marjory had often "boiled up" at some of the things I said to her. On this occasion she "boiled over," and I got the overflow, which, though not pleasant, was wholesome. She said: "I'll tell you why your priests won't let you into the Protestant Church, Monica; they know jolly well if you went into the Protestant Church you would hear the truth, and if you heard the truth you would not believe the pack of lies they tell you any longer, and they would not be able to bully you and knock money out of you, and (clapping her hands) that's why they won't let you into the Protestant Church."

To say that I felt hurt and insulted is to put it mildly, but of course I realized I had brought it on myself. However, above all, I felt puzzled.

Allegation of Priestly Lying

Walking home from school that day I said to myself: "The cheek of Marjory—saying that our priests were telling us a pack of lies! But I wonder why they won't let us go into Protestant Churches all the same."

✓ From previous conversation with Marjory and other Protestants I had gathered that at all Protestant services the Bible was read, prayer was offered to God, and hymns to God were sung, and the preacher preached about God and encouraged the people to do what was right in the sight of God. What puzzled me then was, why it was considered such a dreadful sin for a Roman Catholic to go into a Protestant church during a service.

✓ Murder, adultery, robbery, drunkenness or any other sin could be forgiven by an ordinary priest, but to go to a Protestant service involved going to a bishop to get absolution.

Secretly I resolved that when I was a woman I would go to a Protestant service and satisfy my curiosity.

One more incident happened in that school, which greatly influenced my future life. As a result of Marjory's truthfulness I was led to see the wrong in telling lies, and I made a promise to God that I would never tell another lie if only He would help me.

From then on I refused to tell lies for anybody or anything. The first result of this decision was that I found it impossible to defend the Church of Rome against the attacks of Protestants, and only now did I realize how freely I had been having recourse to lies to defend "Mother Church". I left school, and with Marjory and all my other school companions, and I got a job in a Protestant firm in the city of Dublin.

✓ Here again there were disputes about religion, and as I listened to the Roman Catholics telling lies by the score to defend "Mother Church", I said to myself, "There is something wrong somewhere. How is it our church is the 'One True Church' and we have an infallible pope, and antiquity, certainty and security, yet our religion can be defended only with lies, while the Protestants, who have none of these privileges, can defend their religion without any lies?"

Ever since I had resolved to tell only the truth I had been forced to keep silent during most of these arguments. As I was very proud of the Roman Catholic Church and dearly loved it, this was a great grievance to me.

I was very fond of a good argument, and it was very irritating to stand by and hear my religion being torn to pieces by heretics who were supposed to be on the way to hell, and not to be able to answer without lying.

One day I said to myself, "What's the matter, is it the church that is wrong or am I"? Concluding that the church couldn't possibly be wrong, I decided that it must be all my

fault. I said, "It's my ignorance. If I knew my religion well enough I should know the correct answers to these arguments without telling lies." I thought of going to a priest and asking him to give me answers to these Protestant arguments which would not be lies. No sooner did I think of this than my own mind told me what the priest would say. I knew he would immediately say, "You leave that firm. Stop arguing with Protestants or you will lose your faith." I reasoned it out like this, "If I have the right religion and the Protestants have the wrong religion, surely the more I argue the better shall I prove to them that I am right and they are wrong."

R.C.'s Forbidden Attendance at Protestant Church

"Of course, if they had the right religion and I the wrong, then it would be dangerous to argue, as they would prove to me that they were right and I was wrong." No sooner had this latter thought come to my mind than Marjory's words came ringing back in my ears, "I tell you, Monica, why your old priests don't let you go into the Protestant Church. Because they know jolly well that if you heard the truth you wouldn't believe the pack of lies they are telling you any longer, and they wouldn't be able to bully you and knock the money out of you; that's why they won't let you into the Protestant Church." I said to myself, "I wonder if there is anything in what Marjory said. I wonder if it is possible that our religion is wrong, and that our priests are telling us a pack of lies, and then forbidding us to go where we should hear the truth, and laughing up their sleeves at us for being such a pack of fools? Well, my word! If that were the case I would go to every Protestant church in the city of Dublin."

The Communion service of the Church of Rome rose up before my mind. As a child I used to love to get around the side of the communion rails where I could get a full view of the people. I always felt intrigued at the sight of big men, and stylish ladies with feathers and furs, kneeling, and holding the communion cloth under their chins, their heads thrown back, their eyes closed, their mouths open, and their tongues sticking out, the priest walking along, sticking a wafer into each mouth very unceremoniously. Invariably as I saw this sight I would say to myself, "Open your mouth and shut your eyes and see what God will give you."

As the scene round the altar rails rose to my mind I thought, "Upon my word! the whole religion seems to me

to be the same as the communion service—a game of open your mouth, etc.” I made up my mind I was finishing with swallowing just what the priest was pleased to tell me, and for the future I was going to do a bit of thinking for myself.

“Debate” with Myself

Deciding to think the matter out and trying to find if there were any honest way of meeting the Protestant arguments, I sat down at a table to have a kind of a “one person debate”. First I would put forward the Protestant ideas, and then I would answer them, if possible, and then, when discussions arose at business I would have the answer all ready, and there would be no temptation to tell lies.

Starting from the Protestant angle, I said Protestants do not believe the pope to be infallible. They do not believe in transubstantiation, nor in confession to a priest, but only to God. They do not believe in purgatory, and they do believe that priests and nuns should be allowed to marry if they wish.

It was an endeavour to answer these objections truthfully that the folly of the whole Roman system was revealed to me. Up to this I had accepted all the doctrines without question or examination. No sooner did I begin to take them one by one and carefully examine them than I saw how ludicrous they were, and I wondered that I had ever been so foolish as to believe all this nonsense.

A feeling of distrust took the place of love and loyalty I had felt for the church. I had been disillusioned and I knew it, but before throwing the whole thing overboard I decided to put it on one last practical test. How could I, in a practical way, demonstrate the falseness of the whole Roman system? I knew if I could prove Rome wrong in one point it would be as good as proving her wrong in all.

A Nun's Warning

✓ Going back to the teaching I had received as a child, I remembered a nun in a day school I attended, warning the children about the danger of going into a Protestant church during a service. Putting her hands together as if to pray, and rolling her eyes up towards heaven, she said, “If you went into a Protestant Church during a service, maybe you would drop dead on the floor! Maybe your eyes would roll out on the floor! Maybe when you put out your hand to take that Protestant Bible your arm would wither, or you

would be paralyzed, or the ground would open up and swallow you, or you would be run over on the way home, or fall down and break your leg. Something dreadful would be sure to happen!" Remembering this, I thought it would be a good idea to go to a Protestant service and see for myself if any of these dreadful things happened. If they did, the Church of Rome was right in spite of my reasoning; if not, it was wrong.

The idea of chasing my eyes down the main aisle of a Protestant church in the sight of all the congregation didn't appeal to me, so I decided to try some other test that I could carry on alone and at home, just in case of accidents.

Meat on Friday. No ill Effects

Remembering another incident with the nun gave me a clue. One day a little girl came into school and said to this nun, "Oh, sister, you don't know what happened in our house this morning." "What was that, dear?" said the nun. "We forgot it was Friday, and we all had bacon and egg for breakfast," said the little girl. Looking absolutely horrified at her, the nun hissed, "It's a wonder it didn't stick in your neck and choke you!" Now, I thought, there's an idea. What's to prevent my eating a piece of bacon next Friday in defiance of the church, and seeing what happens? If the Church of Rome is right, I ought to choke, or some other dreadful calamity should overtake me, like the ground opening up to swallow me, or the house collapsing on top of me.

Friday came, and in fear and trembling I fried a piece, and it seemed to be the most appetizing piece of bacon I had ever smelt in my life. Looking at it suspiciously, I said, "If ever the devil was in a bit of bacon, he's in you."

Sitting down to eat it, I dared not say grace, just in case I was flying in the face of God. So, cutting a piece off, I whispered to myself, "God helps those who help themselves. If I have to choke, it will not be for the want of chewing!" Having swallowed the first piece without any ill effects, I ate the rest in a more comfortable frame of mind, and when I had finished, just before relaxing, I ran up and down the stairs to make sure all the spare parts were working!

Finding everything in order, I sat down and laughed heartily to myself: "Monica Farrell, you silly person. Haven't you realised that the Protestants go to church every Sunday and their eyes don't roll out, and they eat meat every Friday and they don't choke? Don't you realize that God doesn't talk to religions, He talks to people, and a

thing's either right or wrong in the sight of God, and that old man in Rome can't make right wrong or wrong right?"

Deceived by Roman Church

The above incident may seem silly to my readers, but to me it was of tremendous importance, and broke for ever the pretentious power of the Church of Rome. I had finished with it. It might plead or threaten in the future, but on me it would have absolutely no effect.

Realising that the Church of Rome was not a church at all, but a huge political-commercial system, with a religious cloak to give it an air of respectability, the next problem I had to face was, "What was I going to do about it?"

The obvious thing, of course, was openly to dissociate myself from it, and find the church that would give me the truth, and join it. Now, that all sounds very simple and straightforward, and nobody knew that better than I, but as I lived in the City of Dublin, and as these were particularly troublesome days, when people were being shot down for little or nothing, it was neither an ideal time nor place for taking an open stand against Rome.

Knowing all this full well, but hardly acknowledging it to myself, I said, "Well, now I know the Church of Rome is wrong, I don't yet know who is right. Suppose I stop just here and don't trouble to find out. Suppose I conclude that Protestant ministers are just a little better than Roman priests, that all are out to get just what they can out of the people; then the wisest thing to do is to go to mass on Sunday morning to allay the suspicion of others. I don't believe in it, and I needn't worship that little cake of flour and water that the others will be worshipping, but I needn't say anything about it. It's nobody else's business what I believe or don't believe."

For about a year that was my attitude and I was getting more bitter and cynical as the days went by.

My biggest trouble in those days was the fact that while I was in that frame of mind I dared not pray. Up to that time I had always been able to talk to God and tell Him my troubles. Now I had nobody to whom I could confide my doubts or sorrows or fears. Then there was the constant dread of death. What if I should die? What would become of me? When these thoughts rushed into my mind, I would banish them as quickly as possible, telling myself it was of no use. I was not prepared to face the persecutions and publicity an open stand would cost. In the meantime I could

not think that God would hear the prayer of a person who was not honest enough to step out and do right, whatever the cost.

Women Kneeling in the Mud

✓ After about a year I was walking one day through one of the slums of Dublin, and I saw poor women kneeling in the slush and mud, in order to kiss the ring of a bishop who was well clothed, and covered by a huge umbrella. Disgusted at the sight, I said, "That man is not even a gentleman, never mind being a Christian, or he would never allow those poor old women to kneel down in the wet mud and kiss his ring. He's an old hypocrite, and he's going to hell, if I know anything," I thought. Regarding other priests, I said, "I suppose most of them are hypocrites and they'll mostly go to hell, too." Then I thought of the pope and said, "Oh, he's the biggest hypocrite of the lot, and making most out of it. He's sure to be going to hell!"

"Where Are YOU Going, Monica?"

Then a little voice said to me, "And where are you going, Monica?" "Oh," I said, "I wasn't talking about myself. I was talking about the others." "But where are you going?" said the little voice quite calmly. Suddenly I realized how foolish I was, and I said, "Monica Farrell, you are like a peacock on the road to hell. You've got your head stuck up in the air, telling everybody else about the hell they're going to, and can't see the pit at your own feet. What particular advantage will it give you to open your eyes in hell and find the pope beside you? No good telling him you knew he would be there." Standing, because I dared not move, and turning towards a shop window to give the appearance of looking into it, four words stood out before me. They were: God, Eternity, Heaven, Hell. Now, I said, they are facts, and nobody can get away from them, and they don't belong to any church. They are just cold, hard facts, affecting every individual, whether the individual likes it or not.

There is a God, and I must one day stand before Him and be judged by Him, and, according to that judgment, I go to heaven or hell for all eternity.

Eternity was the next thought that gripped me. Eternity, for ever and ever and ever. I should be somewhere. Where would it be? It must be one of two places—heaven or hell.

Now I knew no sin would be allowed to enter heaven, and that I was a sinner. Even if I could begin now and never sin till the day of my death, (which I felt would be quite

impossible), my past sins would be quite enough to damn my soul. So it would seem that heaven was impossible. The only place left for me was hell. I asked myself the question, "What is hell?" I remembered vivid descriptions of hell that I had heard as a child, but, dreadful as they were, they did not terrify me as much as the words of the Saviour, which I knew He would one day speak to those He would condemn to a lost eternity: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

It was the first three words that most impressed me: "Depart from Me." I tried to picture what it would be like to be cut off **for ever** from the Saviour. Never to be able to approach Him, to cry and beg and plead in vain. No response and for ever. Oh, the thought just broke my heart, and I said, "I've been a fool. I've been frightened of a little persecution, and risking a whole eternity of misery. "Just then some words, from the Bible I had heard read out in the chapel, came to my mind; they were the words of the Saviour when He said: "Fear not them that kill the body and after that have no more than they can do, but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear Him, which, after He hath killed, hath power to cast you into hell, yea, I say unto you, fear Him."

Yes, I thought, that's the only thing I should really fear.

Ready to Follow the Truth

Turning for home, I said: "If God will spare me, and keep my mind sound, I will think and think till I find a way to heaven, and when I find it I'll go, whatever the cost." Wondering how to go about things, I thought the best thing would be to study the different religions, and then decide which was the best. I began to reckon up all the denominations, and then I said, "Good gracious! I'd be the age of Methuselah before I got through the study of half of them. There must be a shorter way." Then I said, "What is it I want? Is it a religion? No. What I want is to know the way to live on earth so as to please God, and to be sure, when I die, I'll go straight to heaven. Now, who owns heaven? Do the Protestants? No. Do the Roman Catholics? No. Heaven belongs to God. I wonder if God ever said anything about going to heaven, and if He did, where is it?" Just then Marjory's words came back to me. Whenever she quoted a text of Scripture she would always say, "And you know, Monica, that's in the Bible, and the Bible is the Word of God." I thought, "That's it. If I can get a Bible and read

it I'll find out what God says about going to heaven, and I'll follow that, and when I stand before God in judgment I'll say, "Well, God, I did what You said, and I couldn't think of anything better to do." I felt sure that, if I could honestly look in the face of God, He would not condemn me.

Praying for Light

Going into my bedroom when I got home, I knelt down to pray. I could pray now. God would listen to me now, as I was prepared to do anything He said, whatever the cost. I must pray, as I simply could not get on without God. So I said these words, "Oh, God, give me light, and give me a Bible, and show me Thy will for me, and I'll do it, Lord, whatever it is."

As I said the word "Light" a wonderful light shone all round about me.

I finished my prayer, and opened my eyes to see the sun streaming in through the window, but somehow there was more than ordinary sunlight in that light, because I could see it with my eyes closed, and my hands covering my eyes. It was as Paul said, "A light above the brightness of the sun shining round about me."

Before kneeling down to pray I had been wondering how I could get a bible. I had no money to buy one, as my sister did not give me pocket money. I did not know what kind of a shop to go to for one.

Rising from my knees after my little prayer, the thought came to me to get to a Protestant church, and ask a minister for a Bible.

Attending R.C. and Protestant Services

The next day being Sunday, I went to Mass with my sister as usual in the morning, but in the evening I managed to slip away on my own, and go to a Presbyterian church, and after the service I asked the minister if he would please give me a Bible. "An old one would do for me," I said.

The minister gave me a new Bible, and I brought it home and hid it carefully.

For a year I read that Bible every day, and sometimes for hours at a time I would pore over its pages, and I never remember finding it dry. I began at Genesis and read through. When I came to a list of hard names I just skipped over them. When I came to any parts I found hard to understand I skimmed over them also, until I came to more

"story" parts, but I just loved what I read. It spoke to my heart.

After about a year of going to Mass on Sunday mornings and to church on Sunday evenings, (when I could manage it), and reading my Bible all through the week, I began to feel that the time was coming when I should have to come right out in the open about things.

Accordingly, I began to drop hints at home, as I did not want my sister to get a terrific shock. One and another began to get suspicious of me. I knew I was becoming the centre of gossip, but I was not sorry, as I thought, what they are telling each other they are saving me the trouble of saying, and if they keep on long enough they'll know everything before I have the trouble of saying anything!

Struck by My Brother

At last the bombshell fell! My eldest brother, Matthew, asked me if it were true that I had been seen coming out of a Protestant church. I said, yes, quite true. My brother struck me across the face several times, and with each blow he said, "Take that, and don't ever cross the threshold of my door again. I would rather see you in your coffin than disgrace a good Catholic family."

Now, it so happened that on that day, as I went to my brother's home, I had been fretting at the thought of having to give up my brother's children, whom I loved very dearly. I began to wonder if I was doing the right thing after all, and I began to waver.

Had my brother talked kindly to me that day he might have won an easy victory, but his brutality and insulting behaviour was the very best cure for my faint-heartedness.

Walking out of his house with my cheeks ablaze with indignation, I said, "Well, if that's the best argument the church can give a man of forty-six years of age for his sister of eighteen, I am sure I am doing the best thing in leaving such a church."

Soon after this my sister with whom I lived discovered my church going, and I had to decide whether I would give up going to church or walk straight out of the home. Deciding to take the plunge and leave home, I walked out with nothing in the world but the contents of a tissue-paper hat-bag. Not a penny in my pocket, not a friend in the world, and not a prospect of employment. Just out in the big strange world, not knowing where I was going to sleep that

night, or what the future held, but only knowing that I was doing the thing that would please God, and He owned all the world, and I had nothing to fear.

As I walked out my sister said, "You'll come and see Mattie before you go?" I answered, "I don't want to see Mattie again. The last time I saw him will do me for a long time."

Leaving Home

Turning back to look for a last time at my sister, I felt a strange longing to run back and put my arms around her neck, and tell her that I would never leave her again. Her face looked so sad, and as I remembered all that she had done for me, and how she had looked after me since I was seven years old, sometimes sitting up late, sewing at the machine, so that I could have a new coat of frock for Sunday, it seemed heartless to walk away and leave her all alone in the world. But what could I do? If I turned back it meant giving up my Bible, and all hopes of heaven, and living a life of hypocrisy, remaining outwardly attached to a church I despised, and acting a part to please my sister.

Knowing that I would bitterly regret such a step, and become the most miserable person in the world, and make my sister's life a misery also, I decided to step out in faith with God, and trust Him to give my sister a good husband, who would be a far better companion to her than I could be—which he did.

It was then that I understood a passage of Scripture that I had often heard quoted before, which always puzzled me: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

I could see now that it did not mean to hate them in the popular sense of the word, but that it might happen that we should have to do the thing that appears heartless, even though our very hearts were breaking at the pain it would give to a loved one.

Once the decision was made I felt peaceful, knowing that God would undertake for both my sister and myself.

I Call at Protestant Orphanage

My next trouble was the tissue-paper hat-bag, which began to split in several places. This forced me to seek assistance. As I just happened to be passing a Protestant Boys' Orphanage I decided to ask permission to leave my parcel so that I could go to church.

Nervousness nearly hindered me from knocking at the door, but, seeing a lady closing a window, I was struck with her gentle and refined appearance, and, beckoning her to come to the door, all fear left me, and the lady very kindly permitted me to leave my parcel. Relieved of that burden, I set off with a light heart to the nearest Protestant place of worship, as time had been fleeting, and I was afraid I should miss the morning service.

Merrion Hall, the meeting place of "The Brethren", was the nearest, so I went there, and was greatly helped by the service. On leaving Merrion Hall I saw a lady who lived next door to us. Hearing that I had just left home, this kind lady slipped half a crown into my hand, whispering that she wished it were much more, or that she could take me home to lunch, but that would be impossible.

Thanking God He had provided enough for my lunch and tea, I started back to pick up my parcel.

Feeling some explanation was due to the lady at the orphanage, I explained to her what had happened. The lady was very sympathetic and introduced me to the Matron, who immediately suggested that I should stay for dinner.

During dinner, which was in the staff dining-room, I told the Matron and her staff what had induced me to leave home.

Befriended by Irish Church Missions

"And where are you going to sleep to-night?" asked the matron. "Oh, I'll be all right," I answered, not wishing to be a trouble to her. "But have you anywhere to sleep?" persisted the Matron. "To be strictly truthful, I haven't", I replied. "Well," said the Matron, "God must have guided you to this place. Do you know you couldn't find a better place in the whole city of Dublin?"

"We are the 'Irish Church Missions to Roman Catholics', and our business is to help Roman Catholics who are conscientiously leaving the Church of Rome. We are your friends and will stand by you, through thick and thin." Pointing to the windows, the kindly Matron said, "Do you see those windows? Well, the glass in them is well insured, and if they are broken, we just put more glass in and carry on. The house you are in is well insured, and if it is burned down, we just build again and carry on."

Snapping her fingers, she said, "We don't care that much what they say or do against us, so you have nothing to fear, as you are amongst friends who will protect you."

It is easy to imagine what a comfort and relief these words were to me.

Up to that time I had to be very careful about visiting any Protestant home, for fear of raising suspicion and causing persecution to other people.

For that reason I had refrained from calling to see Protestants I knew, or telling them what was going on in my mind. I felt it was better, for their sakes, that they should know nothing, and that any persecution that should come had better come round my head, as I did not wish to have the responsibility of involving others in my worries and troubles. However, here were people who, of their own free will, were prepared to breast the storm and, like their Master, stand by to help in time of need.

Christian Family Help Me

Through the matron I was put in touch with a Christian family who kept me, not only for that night, but for three months. On the Monday morning after I left home, I called to see the Presbyterian minister of the church I had attended, and told him all that had befallen me on the Sunday, and how God had so wonderfully undertaken for me. He was very pleased, and advised me to attend the Mission Church and link up permanently with the Irish Church Missions, as he pointed out that they were specially trained to deal with Roman Catholics. The only thing I regretted was that this would mean I should join the Church of England, (equivalent to the Evangelical Church of England here), whereas my desire had been to join the Presbyterian Church, where I had worshipped for the best part of a year, and had been much helped and blessed. However, on being assured by the minister that I should not have to believe anything as a member of the Church of Ireland that I did not already believe as a Presbyterian, I was more content. The minister assured me that, doctrinally, the two churches were agreed, and it was only in the matter of church government and the matter of conducting the services that they differed.

I Join the Church of Ireland

Consequently I became a member of the Church of Ireland, and was publicly received into fellowship in the Mission Church of Dublin. Regularly attending the services in the Mission Church, I heard the errors of Rome contrasted with the truth of God's Word, and the history of the novel doctrines of Rome and their Pagan origin exposed.

Feeling quite satisfied that I had done the right thing in leaving Romanism and embracing Protestantism, and longing to see others liberated from the bondage of spiritual and intellectual darkness, I applied to the I.C.M. for acceptance as a student in their Teachers' Training College. Knowing that, as yet, I had not the full assurance of salvation, the committee very tactfully suggested that I should come to the Mission Training College as a guest for three months, attending lectures as if I were a student, and at the end of three months they would decide, no doubt praying that, in the meantime, I might come to know the way of Christ more perfectly.

Amongst the subjects studied in the Training College were the famous One Hundred Texts. The lecturer was a layman, Mr. T. Murray. When we were studying Matt. 11: 28, 29, 30, Mr. Murray was explaining the two "rests" mentioned in these verses—the rest of Justification and the rest of Sanctification. By way of illustrating the point regarding Justification by Faith, Mr. Murray referred to the story of Pilgrim's Progress, and how Christian stood looking up at the empty Cross, and when he realized that it was for his sins Jesus had died on that Cross, the burden rolled off his back, and "three shining ones" came down to him, took off his filthy rags, put on him beautiful white garments, and gave him a roll of evidence, and Christian gave three leaps for joy.

✓ Robe of Christ's Righteousness

As Mr. Murray spoke of the robe of Christ's righteousness covering the poor sinner, so that God no more saw the sinner in his sin, but in Christ, The Son of Righteousness, and how the character of Christ was put to the sinner's account, and it was on that character of Christ the saved sinner stakes his claim to heaven—all this brought back to my mind the plan I had as a child conceived to avoid judgment.

As my readers may know, seven years of age is a most important time in the life of a Roman Catholic. Seven years is the age of reason. Roman Catholics believe that from then upwards a child is capable of going to hell; hence the necessity for children of seven years to make their confession.

As a tiny child, I dreaded coming to the age of seven. I was terrified that I should die and go to hell. We were often warned about the day of general judgment, when we should have to stand alone before God, surrounded by all the saints and angels and devils. Everybody that ever lived

would witness our judgment, and every thought and word and deed would be exposed to the whole world.

I used to picture myself standing there, and I was certain it would mean that I should be condemned to hell for all eternity. I tried repeatedly to think of a way to escape this awful judgment.

At the beginning of this testimony I mentioned that, as a young child, I was very tiny. If anything frightened me I used to run to my mother and hide behind her skirt, and it covered me all over from head to toes, and to add to my sense of security, mother would often pat my head, then I felt safe and happy. This gave me an idea, and I decided that, on the day of judgment, before the judgment actually began, while people were taking their places, I would run to the Saviour and beg Him to let me hide behind His robes, like mother used to let me hide behind her skirt.

My Plan for Heaven

I knew the Lord Jesus died on Calvary, and had He not died nobody could get to heaven. What I did not know was that because He died anybody could go to heaven. We were told that the death of Christ opened the gate to heaven, but that you had to work your own way in, and that was just what I couldn't do. So, to all intents and purposes, the gate of heaven might just as well have been closed.

I intended to say to the Lord Jesus: "Dear Lord Jesus, didn't you die so that the gate of heaven would be opened?" He would say: "yes." I would say then: "Well, even though You died to open the gate of heaven, I shall never get in, because I shall never be good enough. So will you please let me hide behind your robes, like mother used to let me hide behind her skirt?"

I never knew if the Saviour would do this for me and smuggle me into heaven, or whether He would say: "Oh, no, you will just have to take your turn like all the others." To comfort myself I used to think, maybe the Lord Jesus would take pity on me if I cried hard, and He could see lots of tears rolling down my cheeks, but I could never be sure.

As I grew older this plan seemed to be impossible, as I was growing much too big to be tucked away. So the dream faded, but the problem of how to get to heaven remained.

When Mr. Murray referred to the story in *Pilgrim's Progress* it brought all this back to my mind, and I thought: "Perhaps there was something in it after all. If the robe of

Christ's righteousness could cover the sinner, then on the day of judgment I would stand behind Christ, and God would look at me as hidden behind Him."

Mr. Murray looked straight at me, and you would think he had read my thoughts when he said: "The beauty of this robe of righteousness is that you don't have to wait till you are dying for it, or till the day of judgment, but you can have it here and now." "Oh, Mr. Murray," I said, "That's too good to be true. I'd be glad enough to think I could go to heaven when I die, but you want to begin heaven here and now."

Personal Faith Needed

✓ "Well," said Mr. Murray, "there's nothing too good for you to take, if God is willing to give it," and he pointed to several portions of Scripture and explained them to me, but the one that God used to open my eyes was John 5: 24, where the Lord Jesus said: "He that heareth My words, and believeth in Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

✓ Drawing two squares on the table, Mr. Murray said: "We call that square 'Death', we call this square 'Life', you were born in the square called 'Death', and if you remain there till you die you go down to eternal death; the moment you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour you step into that square 'Life', and it is eternal life, so that the moment you die it is only to drop off the outer shell of the body, so that your spirit may go straight to be with God in heaven."

I saw it in a flash. Oh, the joy of knowing for a certainty that my soul was safe! This was what I had been striving for all these years, and now I had it.

I walked home as if walking on air. I felt like jumping for joy.

Urge to Awaken Roman Catholics

I wanted to shake every Roman Catholic in the world, not to hurt them, but to wake them up to what they were missing. I longed to tell them that they need not be terrified at the thought of dying, or of facing God, as the Lord Jesus had paid the price of their sin, and if they would accept Christ as Saviour they would have God for their loving heavenly Father.

A Worker in Irish Church Missions

Needless to say, I was accepted as a worker in the Irish Church Missions. After my training I taught in several Mis-

sion Schools in Dublin. It was great a joy to teach tiny tots and older children about the dear Lord Jesus. How I loved picturing heaven and all the joys awaiting them there, remembering how most of the pictures I had in my mind as a child were of hell and the devil.

One morning when I went to school, the matron of the Home was quite irritable, and as we were very good friends I couldn't understand it. So I said: "Whats the matter?" "Oh" she replied, "I don't know what you are teaching these children, but you've got them half mad." "why," I said: "whatever have they done?" "Well, she said, "last night, in the middle of the night, I heard the most frightful din, and when I went into the nursery there were all the children out of their beds, their clothes flung all over the place, and they were dressing themselves in their Sunday best. I clapped my hands and said, "What do you children think you are doing?" They answered, "We are going to heaven, matron; we can't wait any longer; we're tired of waiting." "Well," said I "what are these clothes doing on the floor?" we don't need those any more, and we thought we'd put on our Sunday clothes to go to heaven!" Poor matron looked very worried, but when I burst out laughing she began to see the funny side. I suppose, being up half the night getting them back into bed, took the edge off the joke for her.

When I went into the school room and saw all the dear little children looking a bit like puppy dogs after their mischief had been discovered, I felt as if I would like to bundle them all up in my arms and comfort them.

I thought how pleasing it would be to the Saviour, if more of us older ones would look forward with such joy at the prospect of being with Him. However, I explained to the children that we had to wait God's time, and related the story of Elijah going to heaven in the chariot of fire. I told them that, as they could not fly, they would have to wait till God sent the angels with a beautiful coach to take them up to His beautiful home.

Beginning Public Speaking

After some time a call came, requesting me to give my testimony. The idea of speaking in public had never dawned on me, and at first I was going to refuse flatly. Then I thought: "Well, if this is a call from God, I have no right to refuse." I accepted in that spirit, concluding that if the call were from God He would help me through, but if it were

not, it would be a failure, and I should know then that it was not God's plan.

Actually that was the beginning of a new phase of work. From then on, more and more the call to public speaking came, and eventually I crossed to England to take up my abode there.

Through all these years there had been great political upheavals in Ireland. Two rebellions and six years of intermittent rioting had left its mark on the country and the people.

British Leave Southern Ireland

✓ In 1922, when the British vacated Southern Ireland, loyal Protestants were disappointed and disgusted by the weak-kneed attitude of the British authorities towards the papacy. The attitude of the rebels themselves may be summed up in words of an old Irishwoman, who stood watching the troops embark, and as the last British Tommy climbed the gangway the old lady wrapped her shawl tightly around her, remarking as she did so, "Thanks be to the Lord they're gone; now we can go home and fight amongst ourselves in peace". She wasn't far wrong, as they had no sooner gone than the 1922 Rebellion broke out.

It was always a joy to step off the boat at Holyhead and journey by train through peaceful, beautiful Wales, with its neat cottages dotted on the hillsides. It made one wonder why Ireland, which was every bit as beautiful, should be such an unhappy country.

In about nine years of constant travel in England, Scotland, Wales, and including several visits to Ireland, I had the joy of addressing over five thousand gatherings.

In a mission in Halifax in Yorkshire about seventy souls accepted Christ as Saviour.

Struck in the Face

In St. Helen's in Lancashire we had a similar number of conversions. At St. Helen's we had a riot on Saturday night, following the open-air meeting, and during the disturbance a woman gave me a punch in the face. As I had often been threatened before, and had been wonderfully preserved, I wondered how the Lord allowed this blow to get through when He had stopped so many serious threats. I felt it was a great pleasure and privilege to be allowed to suffer even a small thing like that for the sake of the dear Lord Jesus, who suffered so much for me. The explanation came when

I discovered that, through that incident, a man had been led to Christ, and shortly afterwards, when I returned to St. Helen's, a woman told me the story of how she had been at the open-air meeting and seen all that happened. She went home and told her husband, who was a man who felt very strongly the sacredness of British liberty of speech. Although her husband had not been to church for years, he went the next day to show his sympathy, and on that day I spoke on the words, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." The woman told me her husband was saved that night, and within a month he had passed away. Needless to say, I thought it was well worth while having a punch in the face for the sake of that dear soul.

Stormy Meeting in Bristol

On one occasion in Bristol we had a very stormy meeting. The lady with whom I stayed was unable to attend the meeting, owing to another appointment, but promised to pick me up in her car, which was one of the latest racing models.

After the meeting the Roman element was very rowdy, and, seeing this car, they prowled around it, thinking perhaps it might have been waiting for me. As they walked round the car, glaring at it, the innocent occupants, not knowing anything about the stormy meeting within, thought these people were admiring the new model, and smiled condescending on them. The Romanists, seeing their unconcern, concluded the car had no connection with me, and walked round to the front of the hall to wait my coming. The chairman seized the opportunity to slip me into the car, and the driver, sensing something was wrong, soon gathered speed and as I waved good-night to the angry mob I saw fists shaking at me.

✓ In Port Glasgow, during the depression, when Irish Romanists had taken quite a number of jobs from the Scottish by deceptive methods, feeling ran high. After the meeting the organizer wanted me to wait and go home with him for safety. As he wore a tall silk hat, deep white collar and stiff white cuffs, I decided it would be much safer to slip out with the crowd, accompanied by the lady with whom I was staying, and her daughter.

My Life in Danger

As we passed out I heard a woman just beside me say, "If I knew where she was I would kill her!" We walked back one stop and boarded a bus. When it stopped to pick

up the people from the meeting nobody suspected that we, who were sitting there, had anything to do with the meeting.

A young woman from the Protestant Reformation Office remained with the man, and when they came out of the hall they were followed by an angry mob. Although the young woman was very different in appearance from myself, after some discussion which she could overhear, they concluded that she must be Monica Farrell. Then they proceeded to attack her.

After they had struck her two or three times, they discovered their mistake when the young woman spoke. Then they returned to the hall to wait for me, thinking that I was still inside. However, the hall-keeper informed them that they were simply wasting their time, as Monica Farrell had left.

The next morning I called at the office to see the young lady who had been attacked, and asked her how she liked being Monica Farrell. She said, very emphatically, that one night as "Monica Farrell" was quite sufficient for her.

In 1937 a cable arrived, inviting me to Australia, and, accompanied by Miss Norbury, I travelled out on the invitation of a committee of clergy and laymen of the Church of England, to start a teaching mission to be known as "The Builders," the idea being to preach and emphasize the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and point out the errors of the Church of Rome, many of which were creeping back into a section of the Church of England, styling itself Anglo-Catholic.

Continuing in the work of "The Builders" for nearly ten years, I had the privilege of addressing over five thousand meetings throughout most of the States of Australia, including Tasmania.

It became apparent that it was impossible for me to confine my work to the Church of England, as many requests came from other denominations. The committee was very kind and gave me the liberty to work freely wherever I felt the Lord was calling.

Convent Laundry Tragedies

The convent laundries had interested me for years. I had prayed, and called upon others to pray, that God would raise up someone who could champion the cause of these poor slaves. When I answered the phone one day I discovered the founder of "The Rock" was ringing to ask if I would

interest myself in a case involving a girl in the Temple Convent Laundry. Needless to say, I responded willingly. This incident opened up another phase in the work, and it soon became obvious to me that the future held storms and riots. Feeling it would be better, in case of gathering storms, to be free to speak and act as the moment demanded, without involving others unnecessarily, I asked my committee to release me. Seeing it was a matter of conscience, they had no option but to accede to my request. It had been a great joy for me to work with the Builders' Committee, and I do praise God for every remembrance of them.

After working for some time as a free agent I was joined by others interested' and a work was started, on the lines of the "Irish Church Missions," which we called "The Light and Truth Gospel Crusade."

The workers, who are drawn from several denominations, lead Roman Catholics, as well as Protestants, to Christ, and to witness from God's Word against idolatry, modernism, and materialism, which are bringing the wrath of God upon our countries.

This faithful band of voluntary workers is carrying on the witness in Australia, while I am engaged in this campaign in Great Britain and Ireland, for which I would earnestly seek your prayers.

"Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Galatians 5: 1.

Read Also . . .

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