

THE STRUGGLE

THE OBSTACLES MET IN THE SEARCH AFTER TRUTH.

A Convert's Story of How He Became a Catholic—Freemasonry One of the Principal Stumbling Blocks in His Pathway to the Church.

"How I became a Catholic?" for the purpose of those who may be struggling between the promptings of truth on the one hand and the teachings of Protestantism and education on the other, as I was to a period of fifteen years, I propose to answer the above question, or rather describe the obstacles that I found in my pathway toward the Catholic Church, after my judgment became convinced of the correctness of its claims as the one, only true Church, writes N. P. Thompson, in 'Truth, of Nazareth, near Raleigh, N. C.

Reared under Protestantism, I had imbibed all the prejudice and embraced all the errors regarding Catholicism which any one could under any circumstances—excepting none. Truly, I was a "Pharisee after the strictest sect." I was superintendent of a Methodist Sunday school at the time of my marriage to a Catholic, and had never met a Catholic to converse with, to my knowledge, before making the acquaintance of the woman who became my wife. I promised her before marriage that I would investigate for myself the claims of her Church, after our marriage, and that promise I at once set about fulfilling.

Being religiously inclined by nature and training, I not only took up a series of the studies on Catholic doctrine but I expended my investigation into almost all the religions of the world, past and present. I found much to admire in the teachings of Confucius, the wisdom of Aristotle and philosophy of Plato. I became a strong admirer of the Hebrew religion, which, more than any other, taught the existence of one God, who was the Supreme Ruler and Creator of the universe. If by any means I could to-day be convinced that there never existed a Divine Person, who came on earth to establish a teaching medium for the salvation of mankind, I should feel obliged in conscience to enter the Jewish Church, as coming nearer than all others toward my ideal of a doctrinal religion and meeting nearer than any other the conception of Divine Creation and rulership over man. While a Protestant, I felt and claimed myself to be "Christian," but never, until I began to investigate the claims of the Catholic Church, did I fully realize what that word meant. I soon learned that it embraced more than was usually conveyed in the word as understood by Protestants. I found it meant the acceptance of the teachings of a divinely established and divinely guided Church—an infallible teacher and an incorruptible body, founded by Almighty God Himself, for the salvation of mankind! I found the Roman Catholic Church the only one claiming to be an infallible teacher and an unerring guide for mankind in matters of faith and morals. I found it fulfilling that function and exercising that sphere, and this through a period of time beginning with the Apostles and extending down to the present; so that my judgment became convinced of the fact that if there was such a thing as Christian religion it existed only in the Roman Catholic Church.

From the very nature of logical reasoning, this became to me an irresistible conclusion. The arguments on which Protestantism sought to establish itself, viz.: that the Church had become corrupt and needed reforming, proved entirely too much. If true, it destroyed Christianity itself, for Christ, being God, could not have established a corruptible church, or left an uncertain guide to men in so vital a matter as the salvation of their souls! A Divine Founder could only establish a church possessing His characteristics; hence man could not "reform" the Church of God. It remained alone to Protestantism to attempt such a work, the inconsistency of which must become apparent to any reflecting mind.

Now, all these truths I accepted and yet for fifteen years thereafter I remained outside of the Church, and why? I was a member of a number of secret orders, among them the one known as Freemasonry. I learned that to become a Catholic I would have to renounce Masonry, and while I sought in various publications and from a number of priests, to find reasons that I could accept as justifying the requirement, I did not find them. I loved its broad humanitarian principles and noble charity. I ceased attending any and all churches, until I began to feel that the practical work of Masonry embodied the highest form of religion—sufficient for the most exalted of the humblest of mankind.

In this state I was rapidly drifting out toward the sea of delusion or atheism, although the cares and responsibilities of a parent were upon me, and I was feeling them with increasing weight as the years passed and my children were growing up around me. My family resided at Wilmington, N. C., and being in Savannah, Ga., on one occasion, my wife wrote and requested that I call on Bishop Gross, afterward Archbishop of Oregon, who was then at Wilmington, Father Mark Gross was her pastor. She desired that I should make this the plea for seeking the Bishop, in talk with him regarding obstacles existing in Masonry which I obeyed her request as from an irresistible impelling impulse, which I have since attributed to the fact that she had just made her Easter Communion, and had offered it up to God for my speedy conversion.

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cepted, and that my conversion would follow, and when I informed her a few days later she felt no surprise over it. But I anticipated. After a pleasant hour with the Bishop (and he was an exceedingly lovable man, as I subsequently came to know him most intimately. Peace to his ashes!) I brought up my difficulty, and asked him why the Catholic Church condemned Masonry. As near as I can recall them, for that was twenty years ago, this was his reply: "The Catholic Church is a divine organization, while Masonry is human in its origin. The tendency of Masonry is to lead its votaries to that as their fountain of morals, instead of to the Church; hence the Church found itself with a human rival in its path, and could do nothing less than condemn it, or else abandon its claim as being the divine source from which men must receive their code of religion and morals." At once the force of his reasoning came home to me, although I had doubtless had the same truths conveyed to me before, but my heart was prepared to receive them only through the grace of Almighty God, who had answered my wife's prayers. I said to him: "Bishop, will you take me into the Church to-morrow morning?" The good Bishop laughed until his sides shook, and his eyes danced with merriment as he answered: "We do not accept members like Protestant churches, you must be instructed first." I told him I desired to be then and there examined as to my fitness, for I had heard my children's catechism, and knew it from cover to cover. This was done; I was found sufficiently instructed, and my request was complied with the following morning. And I now need only say that after a lapse of twenty years during which I have practically been a monthly communicant in the Catholic Church, nothing has ever occurred to cause me the slightest regret for my action, although I severed fraternal ties and friendly relations that I prized, next to my family, above all else on this mundane sphere.

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WHERE THE ORANGE BLOSSOMS BLOW.

Way down in Souf Col'ina whar I hoed de yello' corn, I used to beat de Mocking-bird a-rian' in de mo'n An' dat whar I was happy, Yas dat whar I was gay, A dancing an' a singin' to pass de time away Down in Souf Col'ina, whar de sweet potatoes grow, Down in Souf Col'ina whar de orange blossoms blow, Way down in Souf Col'ina whar da nebbber habshaw, Take me back to dat deah ol' sunny home. Dose happy days am crumbled wid derustob mem'ry's chain, Dose brcken links will ne'er unite to bring dem back again; O! Maray and ol' Missy da bot am sleepin' fast, Awaitin' till ol' Gabriel shall call dem up at last. Way down in Souf Col'ina whar da nebbber hab snow, Down in Souf Col'ina whar de orange blossoms blow, Down in Souf Col'ina whar de sweet potatoes grow, Take me back to dat deah ol' sunny home. I see a po' ol' weary niggah, an' my race am nearly run, I see really good fo' notin' 'cept fo' settin' in de sun, But when de Angel calls me I want to fin' a grave, Way down in Souf Col'ina whar de sweet magnolias wab. Down in Souf Col'ina whar de sweet potatoes grow, Way down in Souf Col'ina whar da nebbber habshaw, Down in Souf Col'ina whar de orange blossoms blow, Take me back to dat deah ol' sunny home. —S. E. HAMPTON.

Telephone Voices. The vocal chords of a woman are considerably shorter than those of a man. As a result the voice has a higher pitch. The telephone diaphragm responds more accurately to the higher-pitched voice, the magnetic disturbances are more rapid, and therefore more potent, and the currents transmitted to the remote station lose less in transmission. Until some method is devised for equalizing the value of the sonorous waves set up by the longer, slower vibrating chords of men and the shorter, more rapidly vibrating chords of women this primary character renders women's voices more penetrating in the transmission of messages.—London Mail

A SINGULAR CASE.

CONVERSION COMES THROUGH A CHAT.

A Follower of Mohammed Enlightens the Non-Catholic Christian Who Finally Abjures His Errors and is Received into the One True Church.

[The writer of the following remarkable narrative, who is known to the editor of the Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times, vouches for its truth in every particular.]

Some time ago I had the great pleasure of reading in your valuable paper an account of a curious conversion, which reminds me that my own was probably as curious, since, through God's infinite mercy, it was occasioned by a Mohammedan as follows:

We sat on the forecastle of an ocean liner, and I may admit here that without any better reason than my own conceit I regarded the Mohammedan as a know-nothing, whilst I posed as the enlightened Christian etc. We discussed religious schisms and isms, when I casually remarked that "in the light of history Mohammed was not verified as that for which his followers so earnestly accepted him." The Mohammedan inquired: "Are you a Christian?" "Yes." "Are you a Catholic?" "No." "But your forefathers were."

"I presume they were, at least before the Reformation," he exclaimed. "It was then that a man named Luther, holding in his hand your holy Bible, in which was written, 'As My Father sent Me, so I send you, he that heareth you, heareth Me; and I am with you always even to the end, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against My Church. He who heareth not the Church, let him be as the heathen and the publican.' This man Luther proclaimed himself the Church, saying that the original was fallen into gross error, and called on mankind to hear and follow him, which millions of you did, thereby branding the Church, her Founder and your holy Bible as failures and frauds. Now those who crucified the prophet of Nazareth had power over His body only. Was there any way under heaven in which Luther could more effectually scorn, deny and crucify his Messiah in spirit than to assert his ability to be or found a church where the Messiah had failed. Is not the sordid guilt of multitudinous conduct expelled from the ranks and degraded. But your Christian savior Luther said: 'I am the minister of war, the generals, the colonies, the captains. I am the army. Kick over the hundred or two millions who have gone astray and follow me.' And you answered, 'Hallelujah! Amen!' Can you, sir, point to anything in Mohammedanism so supremely ridiculous as this. What would be thought of or done to the individual day laborer who parading in front of the parliament or palace, should loudly repudiate all the existing laws and enactments of his government and king, crying: 'I am your king and your government, throw those pretenders out and follow me? Should we think him possessed?'"

"Then came royal Henry VIII., who said to a fawning courtier 'I am in a sad fix. The Church will not grant even me, royal Henry, a divorce.' 'True, your majesty.' 'But, my courtier, observe what Luther has done over there. I observe, your majesty.' 'Why not start up a church of our own. Why not, indeed, your majesty?' 'I will ordain you a Bishop, an Archbishop, and you grant me a divorce.' 'Amen, your majesty.' It was done! And again a wavering battalion of the Cross and the Crucified threw down their arms and followed—what? Then came Wesley, Knox, Calvin, Joe Smith, Brigham Young, Booth and a thousand others, all vying with each other to nail their lies like banners to the cross; to libel your prophet, his Church and Testament. These men flung before your eyes an open book which itself utterly condemned every pretension to enact laws or to dignify their personal opinions with the name of Church. Yet they obtained a goodly following. "Our history shows clearly that we believe that this is the Church which the Prophet of Nazareth founded and endowed with authority to teach and continue to the end. You acknowledge that his mission on earth was to establish a Church and offer himself as a sacrifice for all mankind. That Church calls now, as ever, to be heard and obeyed by all Christendom. Take the beam from your own eye, as her book tells you, then you may see how to take the mote from mine. We may pity, but we have no room to scorn the Catholic, since his Church believes, professes and practices the doctrines as set forth in the Christian testament. Our unflinching yet withal gallant foe, she has ever remained to which we, numbering one-third of the earth's population, bear true and sorrowful witness; as, had she once relinquished her first professions, we could easily have defeated her with the pen where the scimitar had failed. Our struggle against her supremacy was at least sincere; we tried wit, all our might to obliterate her or many a gory plain. Centuries before the atheistical, salary-grasping sects of yesterday had found a name we wert unequal to the task. As the poet in a truth remarks: "And still the crescent pater waved Before the hallow'd sign, Which flew in triumph o'er thy field. Oh, sacred Palestine, And wonderful but true, we found that in victory she crosses the hand which had struck at her life. Wonderful, although we are as well aware that her book says 'love thy enemies as we are that she existed ere the book was written. And to-day she commands even our profound respect

while you, who scorn and deride the Prophet of Nazareth and the Prophet of Mecca, alike with him who sent them—the deity whom you worship (if any) must be a gross conception of your own vain imagining, which afflicts you first with the scourge of the 'higher criticism'; secondly, with the curse of agnosticism, and, finally, with the inherited curse of infidelity. You, sir, may travel far, yet will you fail to find one Mohammedan preaching and teaching his own condemnation and glorifying in it."

Necessity to say this unexpected lecture started a train of thought which in about six months resulted in my being enrolled a member of the one true Church, and I am no longer one of the number who cause the Mohammedan to point the finger of scorn and cry "fool."

Fifteen Kisses.

The monks of the middle ages divided the kiss into fifteen distinct and separate orders. First. The decorous or modest kiss. Second. The diplomatic or kiss of policy. Third. The sly kiss, to ascertain if woman has drunk wine. Fourth. The slave kiss. Fifth. The kiss infamous—a church penance. Sixth. The slipper kiss, practiced to ward tyrants. Seventh. The judicial kiss. Eighth. The feudal kiss. Ninth. The religious kiss (kissing the cross). Tenth. The academical kiss (on joining a solemn brotherhood). Eleventh. The hand kiss. Twelfth. The Judas kiss. Thirteenth. The medical kiss, for the purpose of healing some sickness. Fourteenth. The kiss of etiquette. Fifteenth. The kiss of love—the only real kiss.

Three sites are at the disposal of the Catholics of Escanaba, Mich., for their proposed new church which will cost in the neighborhood of \$50,000. It is intended that a convent school shall be built later. The basement of the new church will be used for school purposes until such time as the school building is completed.

The Georgetown "College Journal" in a recent number made mention of some books for the blind prepared by the Rev. James Becker, S. J., and of a grammar of the Innuitt language composed by Father Francis Barnum, S. J.

Brother Castoris, for many years di-rector of St James' parochial school on Jay street, New York city, has been promoted to the directorship of the Novitiate of the Christian Brother at Amawalk, N. Y. His place at St James' school will be filled by Brother Cyril.

The friends of the Rev. Dr. Bonaventure Broderick of the Hartford diocese will be pleased to learn that the recommendation of Archbishop Sheerell he has been appointed an honorary chamberlain to the Pope with the title of Monsignor.

An Atchinson woman has such supreme faith in her husband that when he goes hunting she never orders meat for dinner. Rev. A. C. McCarthy is pastor of a Lutheran church at La Crosse, Wis. It would be interesting to examine into the deviations in the process by which a Lutheran McCarthy was evolved.

Says the Catholic Citizen So Blanche Walsh, the actress, has become a Theosophist and has a statue of Buddha in her room. Angels and ministers of grace, defend us! Think of the daughter of "Fatty" Walsh, the Tammany politician, as a Theosophist!

The Franciscan Order has lost another Bishop in China. Rt. Rev. Bishop Marchi, O. F. M., died a few days ago at Tsinan-fu, aged sixty-five years. His death was caused by the privations he suffered during the late period of Chinese persecution. He makes the seventh Bishop of his Order lost by the Church in China in recent years.

The German Empress has contributed twelve thousand marks toward the erection of a German Catholic church at Smyrna, Greece.

The Lazarist Sisters in Abyssinia were lately commended by King Menelik for the excellent work they are doing to advance civilization.

By way of Pekin comes the report that a French priest and two Chinese converts were murdered at a village in the north of the Kwangsi province and that the Chinese Officials assert that the murders were committed by robbers and were not a result of an anti-Christian demonstration.

With the demolition of the old prison of St. Lazarus, Paris, will disappear the cell wherein St. Vincent de Paul lived for long years. It is now proposed to take a photograph of the cell for the Caravalet Museum, to which establishment will also be sent the old clock presented to the saint by King Louis the Thirteenth.

The census bureau bulletin of January, 1902, makes the population of the Philippines and Porto Rico 7,914,682, which, added to the figures of 9,158,741 Catholics in this country, makes over 17,000,000 Catholics, or over 60 per cent. of the church-going people under the American flag.

The German Franciscans from Rhine provinces and Westphalia report much progress made in Holy Cross province, Brazil, during the last few years. The first Lission was established in May, 1891, by two priests and tow lay brothers, with rapid conversion by thousands of the savage natives as a result. The order itself has grown with its success, until now it monasteries compare favorably with those in the Vaterland. Brazil is considered a great field by the Francis-

ROME AND THE BIBLE

THE NEW COMMISSION AND THE WORK IT HAS TO PERFORM.

It is Not an Innovation in Papal Procedure, and the Labors and Conclusions of This Powerful and Intellectual Body Will Be of Vast Importance.

The pontifical commission on modern questions concerning holy writ just appointed by his holiness Pope Leo XIII. is esteemed as one of the most influential and powerful deliberative bodies organized by the Catholic church in several centuries. Its purpose is rather clearly expressed in its name. Briefly it will examine into and pass with authority upon all questions of construction and interpretation raised concerning the Bible by modern methods of investigation. The commission will thus speak for the Catholic church on the whole question of the so called higher criticism. The investigation is expected to be full and fair and to express the convictions of the best minds of the Roman Catholic clergy.

Pope Leo and his assistants have had the organization of this body under consideration for several years. It was their expressed purpose to include in it only the most broadminded, progressive and scholarly students of the gospel. The membership of the commission is believed to justify the judgment of the appointing pope to a very satisfactory degree.

The appointment of this commission for the purpose indicated is not an innovation on the part of the church. Pontifical commissions on the Scriptures have been held by the Catholic church in the past. The last one was near the beginning of the present pontificate and had for a member Dr. Cappelletto, now a cardinal and recognized as the ablest scholar in the church.

Appros of the personnel of the commission American Catholics, and especially those in the educational world, are delighted at the recognition of the Catholic university and of American Catholic scholarship in the appointment of the Very Rev. Dr. Charles P. Grauman, who has been at Washington for the last ten years as professor of sacred Scripture. The English speaking world is represented on the commission by Dr. Grannan and also by the Rev. Dr. Robert F. Clark of the archdiocese of Westminster, England, and the Rev. David Fleming, the Irish scholar, at present the superior general of the Franciscan order.

The full pontifical commission, in addition to those just named, follows:

President, Cardinal Parocchi, vice chancellor of the Roman church; Cardinals Segna and Vives y Tuto as assessors. Dr. Van Hoonacker, professor of Holy Scripture at the University of Louvain, Belgium. Dr. Fraucastel, professor at the seminary, Perugia, Italy; Dr. Jorio, professor at Valencia, Spain; Dr. Esser, secretary of the congregation of the Index; Dr. Vigouroux, professor at the Catholic Institute, Paris; Dr. de la Hummelauer, S. J., college of St. Ignatius, Holland; Dr. Gismond, S. J., professor at the Gregorian university, Rome; Dr. Amelli, O. S. B., prior of the monastery of Monte Cassino, Italy; and Dr. Hoels, professor at the Seminary of The Hague, consultants.

Cardinal Parocchi, the prefect of the commission, is one of the most prominent figures in the whole church. His offices are numerous—vice chancellor of the holy Catholic church, subdean of the sacred college of cardinals, cardinal bishop, assigned to the suburban see of Port and Santa Rufina; secretary of the congregation of the universal inquisition, president of the congregation of apostolic visits and prefect of the congregation of residences of bishops. Cardinal Parocchi is the son of a poor Mantuan miller and in his day was a great orator. Cardinal Gibbons has long been his close friend and in some respects considers him one of the greatest men he ever met. He is one of the three living cardinals who were named by Pope Pius IX. and for many years was cardinal vicar. So long did he bear this title that at the Vatican he is still called by it often rather than by any other. He used to be a warm friend of King Victor Emmanuel, but upon the latter's assumption of political power he became his strong enemy. He resides in some badly furnished apartments in the Via National in Rome and for two or three years has been in quite poor health.

Dr. Fleming, the secretary of the commission, is an Irishman of marked ability. He is said to be very close to the former legate to the United States, Cardinal Satoli, to have been already selected for the cardinalate and to be one of the most indefatigable students of Biblical exegesis in the world.

The remaining members of the commission are almost equally prominent. They represent nearly every phase of Roman Catholic activity. Francis, Cardinal Segna and Cardinal Vives y Tuto, the assessors, are cardinal deacons only, the former an Italian and the latter a Portuguese. Their offices are in some measure perfunctory, the hard work of the commission devolving upon the consultants. Dr. Clark is one of the most distinguished divines in England. Dr. de Hummelauer has been distinguished for many years as an instructor in Holland. The Italian consultant is as strong intellectually as it is numerically.

The Rev. Dr. Grannan is a priest of the archdiocese of New York. He was born in Wisconsin and began his classical education at Bardstovon, Ky., but completed it at Montreal. He finished his theological studies at the Propaganda college, Rome, where he received the doctorate in philosophy in 1874 and the doctorate in theology in 1880. He served two years on missions in the archdiocese of New York and then went to Mount St. Mary's seminary, Emmitsburg, Md., where he was professor of sacred Scripture and dogmatic theology, and was also for a time

president of that institution. He was called to the Catholic university before its opening in 1880 and spent two years at the most famous universities of Europe pursuing special studies. He has been in active work at the Catholic university since 1891.

As has been said, the significance of the present commission is its recognition of the fact that there are modern questions affecting the holy Scriptures, not of necessity errors, but times change and theological learning faces new problems. The questions to be considered are fundamental, far-reaching and important.

A PRIZED CRUCIFIX.

One That Was Given by Plo Nono to the Duke of Norfolk.

There is a crucifix at Arundel castle which is singularly valued owing to the story of how it came into the possession of the present Duke of Norfolk, says the London Free Lance. When his grace first succeeded to his title, when only twelve years of age, he went on a visit to Rome heavily weighted with his official dignity, though a natural and unspoiled child in years and bearing.

The then pope, Pius IX., or Plo Nono, as he was called, took a desperate fancy to the little nobleman, the lay representative of all loyal Catholicism in England, and therefore, in spite of his youth, a highly important guest. After some formalities they became very friendly, and the pope so far waived all precedent as to take the little duke on his back, "pickaback" fashion, and trot him around his room.

Highly delighted was the little scion of all the Howards at this singular privilege. "Now," said the pope, "what would you like best?" Earnestly the little boy answered, "Oh, show me your bedroom, holy father; they say no one may go in there."

And they told the story that the pope carried the duke into that inaccessible apartment on his shoulders and took from the wall the great crucifix hanging over the bed and gave it to his little guest as an eternal keepsake of a happy hour when a pope for once relaxed his priestly rule to have a real human romp with a little lad and when a duke rode "pickaback" on the shoulders of a supreme pontiff. Certainly a unique experience for both.

"Romanizing" Our Navy.

The Catholic News of New York notes an attempt to create a scare at a meeting in that city. The author of the attempt was a minister named Johnson, who declared that he believed there was a movement on foot to Romanize the navy and that this movement received much encouragement from Washington. Commenting on this, The News says: "Although this man's assertions were printed conspicuously in the papers last week, we haven't heard that our Protestant friends were stirred up to any noticeable extent by the Johnson discovery. Perhaps they are aware that out of twenty-four chaplains in the navy not more than one-sixth are Catholic priests, while the Catholics in the service number at least one-half the men in the navy. It must be difficult for a sane man to see where there is any danger of 'Romanizing' the navy. Even if that were possible we do not believe sensible Protestant Americans would be alarmed, for they well know that in the late war with Catholic Spain our Catholic soldiers and sailors were among the bravest and best of the American fighters."

Anti-Catholic Works. I believe any reasonable man cannot read in connection a Catholic and an anti-Catholic work without discovering the logical truth of the one and the false premises of the other. Childish and stupid seem to me the arguments of the Protestants; empty, vulgar and worthless the tirades of infidels and fanatical writers. I would not recommend any Catholic to read aught of those; they are vanity and vexation of spirit; they are full of subtle poison that robs the heart of rest, of health, of hope, of everything. A single page of plausible falsehood may pervert an unprejudiced mind so that a whole volume of truth will hardly restore it; therefore leave them alone.—Charles Warren Stoddard.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

The pope has taken the name and works of Galliel from the Index expurgatorius.

The niece of the Turkish ambassador to Rome has become a Catholic and desires to enter the religious life.

Archbishop Chapelle, the papal delegate to the Philippines, has obtained the coveted distinction of episcopal assistant to the papal throne.

Out of the fifty-eight members in the second chamber of the Holland parliament twenty-five are Catholics, and there are three Catholics in the queen's cabinet.

Eighty Benedictine monks from France have settled at Appuldurcombe House, on the Isle of Wight, which was, singularly enough, the site of a Benedictine monastery in the middle ages.

SHORT SERMONS.

Don't let repentance wait until you reach your deathbed.

Humility is the altar upon which God wishes that we should offer him our sacrifices.

That which hides sorrow for sin is sin itself. The more sin is cast out the more sorrow enters.

The secret of life is not to do what one likes, but to try to like that which one has to do, and one does come to like it in time.

The ready, earnest heart that asks, "May I do this for thee, Lord?" not, "Must I do it?" has a blessed reward moment by moment.