

READY
FOR THE
GREAT CHANGE.



LONDON :
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.







Mary's home in the Country.



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BY H. T.



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“Blessed are they that sow beside all waters.”

ISA. XXXII. 20.

IT is now nearly two years ago, and Mary was about nineteen years old when she left her father's house in the country for a situation in London. This was not because her father was unable to keep her, nor yet that her home was not comfortable as far as this world goes ; but it was a public-house, and it was not always seen to as it should be, so that things often occurred which gave her much sorrow.

More especially so, as things of eternity were pressing heavily upon her soul, for she saw her neighbours day after day taken

from their homes to the dark cold grave, and she knew her turn must come, and it might be soon, for the young were taken as well as the old, and the rich as well as the poor, and she longed to be ready. Her soul thirsted for salvation, and she felt she could do anything, or endure any privation so that she might obtain it, and be prepared for that day. Her sisters did not feel so: therefore they could be cheerful and happy as things were, but Mary could not, her heart was sad.

But when she came to London it was still the same, for she could not get what she wanted. Though her situation was peaceful and quiet, and everything she might reasonably expect, she could have time to be alone, yet she could not find rest to her soul; there was still an aching void within, do what she would, or however she might strive.

Then after a time she left that situation and took another, but still things were no

better. She tried again and again to do what was right, but found she continually did wrong. She wept and prayed often, and made great resolutions to be good, but discovered sin to be following her steps; go where she would, or try how she might, she found sin was dwelling in her. This distressed her very much; she wanted to be pure and holy, but found she was vile and sinful. Sometimes she thought she had better return to her father's house and try and make herself happy in the things of this life; but this she could not do, the thought was painful to her. Death was coming, and eternity would follow, and how would it be with her then? She knew she was not ready, and her heart sank within her.

Things went on in this way till she left that place and took another in the West End of London, and there she attended all the churches and chapels she could, but all to no purpose; she was as sad and sorrowful as ever, till at last she thought all hope for

her was gone ; she had always been so bad, that it was no use for her to try. Others, she thought, might get the blessing and be happy for they were not like her ; she was so vile and bad, and so far gone that she was beyond the reach of mercy.

Thus things went on till one evening she was passing through Hyde Park, and if possible more sad and sorrowful than ever, feeling as if she were alone in the world. But on lifting up her eyes she saw a little way off a company of people standing, and wondering what they were doing she went to see, and found a man was preaching the gospel. This surprised her very much, more especially as he did not look like a minister, but seemed as if he worked with his hands. She listened, and found he was telling the people about *Jesus the spotless Lamb of God* ; how He came into this world and *died and rose again* ; and “*put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*” (Heb. ix. 26) ; “*And by him all that believe are justified from*

all things" (Acts xiii. 39); without any goodness of their own in any way whatever.

Oh! she said to herself, this will just suit me. I want to be justified before God; and this is to be obtained by simply believing in His dear Son; and there is no goodness of my own required for my soul's salvation. Oh how glad I am to know this! it is what I have been striving for so long, and I do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And why should I not be happy notwithstanding all that I am, because *it was for sinners like me that He came to die.*

And with that her heart became filled with that peace which passeth all understanding, she received the Lord Jesus Christ and passed from death unto life, and went on her way rejoicing.

There was no excitement about it, but from that moment everything was changed with her, she was a new creature in Christ Jesus and could now serve God with joy and gladness for her burden was gone, her

sins were forgiven, her soul was saved, and she was happy. (Matt. ix. 28, 29.) There was now no need of her making resolutions to be good, for it was her joy and delight to do whatever she knew was pleasing to God, and she did it with all her heart, for it was indeed a service of love, though still mixed with weakness and infirmity.

Not long after this she went to live in a small village, about twelve miles from London, and while there she heard of a man who held a meeting in his own house once a week to read God's word, and there she was helped on very much in the ways of the Lord, till after a time this situation failed her and she obtained another some distance off. Although there were a few days from the time of her leaving before she would be required in her new place, yet she could not go home to stay, though only for so short a time; she could go and see her father and mother, and sisters, but could not remain, it was a grief to her. So this

christian man offered her to stay with them if she could put up with their small house and five little children ; this she most gladly accepted, and was quite at home with them.

This is how things were when I first saw her ; I had promised to be at the village for two Wednesday evenings, and also the following Sunday afternoon, to hold gospel meetings in a little room which had formerly been used as a small shop. The first Wednesday evening Mary was there full of joy and gladness, for she thought others like herself would get salvation and be happy. But the next Wednesday evening she was prostrate in bed, she had been suffering for a day or two with a small pimple on the upper lip but did not take much notice of it, thinking it would soon be better ; but it got worse and spread very much, so that they sent for the doctor, who said as soon as he saw her that there was but little hope of her recovery. I also described the case to a physician on my way home, who asked

if she lost her consciousness at all, I said yes, very much; then he said, there is no hope whatever, and most likely you will find her gone when you return on Sunday; and so it was; for the last post on Saturday evening brought the news that she was dead, and would be buried the following day in a small cemetery near. She was absent from the body and present with the Lord.

The case called forth a great deal of sympathy in the village, and drew together a large number of people. Her father and mother and sisters were there and felt it very much, and many tears were shed in the village that day—tears of real sorrow, and some of joy.

We took the coffin into the little room where we should have held the gospel meeting had Mary been alive. And as many came in as could, while others stood at the door; the first thing we did was to thank God for her salvation, and also that He had given her to know the joy of it while she

was in health and strength, and therefore she was ready for this great change.

We then prayed that this solemn event might be blessed to every soul present, especially to her own family, and that none may be allowed to put off this great question of life everlasting, seeing time is so short and life so frail.

After this we sung a hymn, and read the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and spoke of the uncertainty of life as seen in her whose body was now lying before us. She was as healthy and as blooming as any of us only a few days ago; but now all that we could do was to lay her in the dark cold grave, as she had for ever done with things down here; and, for all that we knew, the most healthy among us before next Sunday might be in the same position.

But Mary was ready. She had received the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for her sins according to the scriptures, and with Him

she had life and salvation, even life everlasting, a life which death could not touch, and there was the same blessing for the greatest sinner among us. Therefore none need despair, because the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin; it makes the vilest of the vile whiter than snow in a moment, by simply believing.

Mary knew the joy and blessedness of this, while she was in health and strength, and how well for her that she did, for after she was taken worse she was mostly unconscious; beside this, there was enough for her to do in struggling with the agonies of death in that solemn moment, without having to seek salvation. Therefore we hope this will weigh heavily with any one who may be thinking there is time enough yet, and is putting off his soul's salvation till a dying hour.

If any such had seen her the last few days of her life, they would have seen what a mistake it would have been to have put off

this eternal question till these solemn moments. But we thank God she did not.

We then took the coffin to the cemetery and sung another hymn, and prayed, and committed her body to the care of Him who died for her, knowing that He would watch over her very dust until the resurrection morning comes, when He will call His sleeping ones out of their graves to be with Himself for ever; and we knew Mary would be among that happy number who would rise to meet Him and enjoy His company in eternal glory.

We then lowered the coffin into the grave, and took one loving silent look of farewell till that coming moment when we shall meet her again where parting is unknown.

How encouraging it was for those who preach the gospel in Hyde Park, or indeed anywhere, in lanes or streets, or rooms, or wherever it may be. That dear brother knew nothing of Mary as he was speaking

forth there words of life and blessing for her soul, and most likely he never will down here, but he will surely meet her up there, as his "joy and crown of rejoicing . . . in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming" (1 Thess. ii. 19.) He had gone out in the evening, after the work of the day was over, to tell out those truths which were so precious to his own soul, and Mary came along and heard them, and they were to her *words of eternal life*; and we hope, to many others.

It is the simple tale about *Jesus and His precious blood, that God delights to bless*. I hope His servants will ever remember this, and keep to it more and more, and if they do not see the happy result of it now, they will surely do so by-and-by, when their work is done, and they see His face.

H. T.

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