“And Dying Is But Going Home”

Wending her way every Sabbath to a Sunday class school in the west end of London, might have been seen a young girl, named Mary Jane Howes. She was deeply attached to both her teachers and fellow Sunday School students, and nothing but sickness ever kept her away from school. Naturally of an obedient and kind disposition, she was never known to tell a lie; but with all this natural amiability, the great change which alone fits the soul for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven had never taken place in that young heart. She had often been touched, awakened by the Holy Spirit to feel her need of this great salvation, but had neglected to seek it with all her heart. Her last sickness was brought on by what appeared at first to be only a slight cold. As other symptoms followed, her mother took her to a doctor who pronounced her case to be dangerous, advising that she should keep her bed. She became rapidly worse, and being alarmed, her parents sent for one of the agents of the Mission, Mr. Garland. By her bed-side he prayed for her with great fervor, and early on the following morning repeated his visit. At night she had become so much worse that they had sent for him, for they feared she was dying. Mo one had told her of her danger, and Mr. Garland requested all except her mother to leave the room. He then asked her if she thought her end was near, and if she felt prepared to meet her God. When the awful danger of her case dawned upon her, she exclaimed: "No, I am not prepared to meet my God; but I am not dying. I hope soon to recover, and be a help to my dear mother." Mr. Garland then told her that to all appearance, she would be in the world of spirits before many hours had passed, and urged her to seek the mercy of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I am not fit to die; I am not converted; I can't die!"

Seeing her great distress, her visitor kept pointing her to Jesus, praying with her most earnestly, the expression all the time deepening of her awful danger, repeating to her the gracious invitation: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." He left her for a little while.

When he departed she looked at him with a look of agony and despair, and exclaimed: "O Mr. Garland! my soul! my poor soul! am unprepared for death and judgment."

Despair seemed to have settled on her soul, and was clearly evident on her countenance. It was heart-rending to hear her groans, and see her tears. After a while she asked those present to sing the hymn beginning:

"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,  
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save."

When they had sung the whole through she said: "O sing it again!" While they were singing the second verse:

"Though they are slighting Him still He is waiting,  
Waiting the penitent child to receive;  
Plead with them earnestly, plead with them gently,  
He will forgive if they only believe,"

Despair yielded to faith, and with a joyful smile she exclaimed: "Jesus loves me; I can believe; I am saved! saved through the blood of the Lamb! My burden is all gone, my sins are all forgiven. I can die now. Jesus is mine, I am his. Hallelujah."

She now desired all present to join in singing:

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,  
Safe on His gentle breast;  
There by His love o'ershaded,  
Sweetly my soul shall rest:  
Hark, 'tis the voice of angels,  
Borne in a song to me,  
Over the fields of glory  
Over the jasper sea."

Each of her family, father, mother and two brothers, were called, and with tears and earnest entreaties she plead with them to meet her in heaven. Being now quite exhausted she laid down for a few minutes, and appeared to be in a calm sleep, when suddenly starting up she said:

"Sing another hymn, for I feel so happy I must sing."

A friend commenced singing: "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by."

"No! no! not that!" she exclaimed, "Jesus is not passing by; He is here in my room—in my soul. Sing: "'Ring the bells of heaven, there is joy to-day.'" And on she talked, breathing forth words of rapturous joy and thanksgiving. After a while her mother said: "Are you not tired, my dear Mary?"
"Oh no!" she replied. "I am crossing the river, but the water is not deep. I can feel the bottom, and like David, I can walk through the valley of the shadow of death. It is the way home to my Father's house above."

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