



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

## **MOLLIE (HARPER) BUCHANAN**

(Methodist)

In this paper, I wish to speak of one woman – Mrs. Mollie Buchanan, wife of “Chris” Buchanan, who for many years has been one of the leading businessmen of the county, and who, for several years has been a lay evangelist, leading many sinners to Christ, and many believers to richer experiences of grace.

“Mollie,” as this heroine of the cross is called, was the recipient of a sun-lit conversion in the little town of Blackshear, Georgia, under peculiar and thrilling circumstances. A protracted meeting was running in the Methodist church. The town was awakened, and souls were being converted. Judge Harper, her father, was a worldly and wicked man. Hearing that his little girl had gone to the altar, he forbade the repetition, under penalty of a “whipping.” But after the sermon the Holy Ghost made a mighty draw for eternity. She, among others, fell at the altar. Her sinful and exasperated father started down the aisle to make good his threat to “take her out,” etc. But before he could reach her, Jesus did. She arose, shouting the praises of God.

Her father raised his strong arm to knock her down, but this once frightened, now fearless, child of heaven, saw him and sprang, with a look and shout of innocent, daughterly love, right under where the blow would have fallen. But when he saw that face and looked into the pitying eyes of Christ, in those of his Mary Ann [called Mollie], his arm literally fell to his side, and with a grunt of surprise and awe, he turned to flee. (He told me years afterwards, “Since God made me, I never saw such a face on mortal shoulders.”) She clung to him, telling, in ringing accents, of her love for him, for Jesus, and for everybody. They passed out at the door. He would gladly have left her, but she would not be left. His load of guilt became all the more intolerable, punctuated as it was at every step by the ringing shouts of “Glory!” “Hallelujah!” “Bless God!” and “Save my papa!” until they reached home.

The happy girl was soon in her sick mother’s arms, trying to tell the “wonderful story of love.” The father walked the piazza. Several of the ministers hurried over, lest the mad father might do violence to his child. They did not know the Holy Ghost had him in tow. The preachers were in the room rejoicing with the mother and daughter, when Judge Harper stopped in the doorway and exclaimed, “See here, if any of you men have any influence at a throne of grace, you had better pray for me, for I am about to go under.” He resumed his fruitless walk, while songs went on within. Again he stopped and uttered about the same words. Seeing his sincerity and earnestness, too, they went to God in fervent prayer. There was no answer that sleepless night, except to increase the gnawings of an aroused conscience, and the looking for of sudden damnation.

With dawn, darkness of soul increased, until he put on his hat, went down town and into every whisky house and said: “I’ll never cross your threshold again, unless it is to collect a bill, or do you a needed favor.” He entered every place where cards or billiards were played, and exclaimed: “Men, I’m done!” He then went home and said: “Sallie, I will spend the balance of my nights at home with you and the children.” That meant much, still the clouds hung lower, and the raging storm swept on. He attended all the services, only to have emphasized his inexpressible condemnation of soul. He joined the church only to be tempted to believe it was rank hypocrisy. After three or four days of agony – barbed soul-

storm – he walked out into the field, fell down between two cotton rows, and swept the keys of prayer and repentance, from rigid to limp, till the news of his acceptance at heaven’s court reached him. This was what he wanted.

He hastened to tell his family, the church, the town. Through the vicissitudes of the closing years of the war; during the trying ordeal of reconstruction times; amid the claims of a large and growing family; under the weight of a financial storm that swept him clean of every dollar; in the presence of death in his family of a most shocking character; during a long sickness in age and poverty, he never forgot that morning in the cotton field. During those awful days and nights of conviction, he leaned on the prayers of “Mollie,” and when saved, he called for her, whose joy at her dear father’s conversion knew no bounds.

*[This is a moving and beautiful story, and I do not wish to inject anything into the text here that would detract from the remainder of the story in the slightest, nor take away from its blessedness. However, I feel that it is wise to make the following remarks at this point: Beginning with the next paragraph, we read of Mollie Harper’s marriage to Chris Buchanan, “whose heart was emphatically in the world.” The author offers no explanation of how Mollie, as a Christian, came to marry an unsaved man. There is nothing related that would give any indication that Mollie backslid in so doing. While the Bible is clear that Christians should not be “unequally yoked together” with non-Christians in marriage, or even otherwise, there have been exceptions to the rule – where a Christian has felt clear to marry an unsaved partner, perhaps assured of God that the unsaved spouse would be saved. Perhaps this was the case here, but if so, it was certainly not what God usually wills in the matter.--DVM]*

She married an industrious business man, but whose heart was emphatically in the world. But she took the contract of living and praying him to God. Amid all the makes and breaks, the ups and downs of farm life, mercantile life, saw-mill life, she vigorously pleaded the promises. When, one at a time, covering a lapse of years, six white little coffins, with muffled tread, had been borne from her home, through glistening tears, she would look up and say, “Blessed Jesus, it is all right, only let it lead dear Chris to Thy feet.” With a Job’s patience, a Joshua’s defiance of natural surroundings, a Nehemiah’s inwrought courage, an Elijah’s appeal to the fires of heaven, a Moses’ vision of things unseen, coupled with the martial swing of a Deborah and the girlish modesty of a Ruth, she won, with a great deck-sweep. It was on this wise (I quote from her husband, soon after his triumphant conversion.

He met me at the train in Waycross about sun-up, and could not wait till we got to the house to tell it; nor I to hear it.) A great revival had been planned for and prayed for. Sister Mollie (she is my wife’s sister) was among those who were asking largely of the Lord. Her husband was full of business, and as indifferent as usual to the meeting, which had been in progress a few days. One night, after retiring, he said: “Mollie, I am going fishing in the morning.” After a few words about the meeting, she said, “I’ll get up early and fix you some breakfast.” “No, I will go too soon, and won’t want breakfast.” He told me, that down in his heart, he wanted to get back about 10 o’clock, find his wife off at church, while he leaned up against the cupboard, ate cold breakfast, and felt neglected. He did it, too.

That afternoon he changed his business clothes for a Sunday suit. His wife, noticing it, said: “Are you going to church tonight, Chris?” “No.” “Where are you going?” “To the lodge.” He was the lodge Master. She said: “Chris, don’t let that Masonic horn be blown tonight so close to our meeting.” “I guess she will blow.” “Well, I hope there won’t be anybody there but you and Jesus.” “Guess we will have a crowd.”

That night, while the men were gathering, he took cognizance of the furniture of the room. The ringing, of the church-bell across the street; its intonations through his soul drifted him into a mental, soliloquial comparison. He said, “This is something of a church itself. There is the chandelier – that’s church furniture. There’s the Bible – that’s church furniture. There’s the altar – that’s church furniture. Here’s

the pulpit – it's church furniture." Here, it dawned on him, and with all the emphasis of an electric shock, he said: "Yes, and I am the preacher – and I swear, and am wicked."

Church out, the lodge adjourned, the husband and wife returned home and retired. After several hours of fruitless effort at sleep, sister Mollie said: "Chris, what's the matter? Why don't you sleep?" He replied, "O, nothing." She said, "Chris, I believe there is, and I believe you are miserable about your soul." Without any concessions on his part, but with much prayer on hers, the night was spent. The next morning, at a testimony meeting, some one, Bro. Murphy, I believe, was saying, "We are doing but little; look at how few of our business men are here," at the same time calling over the names of men who were related to the church by marriage, among them Mr. Buchanan.

About this time he [Mollie's husband, Chris Buchanan] walked in, followed by some twenty others, whom he had gotten to close their places of business. They took seats in the church. After prayer, to the surprise of all, Mr. Buchanan arose and said: "Good people, I want you to sing 'Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy.' We are here, Sinners is our name, and we are very needy. I want to go to that altar for prayer, and I wish my friends, who have so kindly come out at my request, would go with me." I am told the scene was indescribable. Attraction turned the other way that morning. The town changed front. A new Waycross almanac was edited from heaven. Henceforth the town was to be known in the religious annals of the country.

Over one hundred of the adults of that small town went into the Methodist church. I believe the records will show that "Mollie" offered more prayer, shed more tears, made more visits, engaged the angel of the covenant in more hand-to-hand, tussles, shoved the buzzards off the waiting sacrifice oftener, knocked the devil out with a ten-strike of faith more times, and registered, on the firing line more frequently than any one person that enlisted, in that campaign.

During a holiness meeting a little later on, her soul went out after God's fullness. She was in a highly justified state, and therefore could hunger after and appreciate the Spirit-filled experience.

During the usual indoctrination stages of the meeting, she saw but two things – her need, and Jesus' willing ability. One day, after a younger member had criticized her prominence in the meeting, and had lightly spoken of the experience itself, she retired to her closet to ask the dear Lord to make it unmistakably plain, both as to the fact and her eligibility to this great blessing. Jesus became so real to her that to this day, in referring to it, she says he was right in there with me. She just talked to Him, and He just talked back to her, until He said: "My child, I now cleanse you, and will keep you." She believed it, and ran over with joy. Emerging from that closet, she bore the image of Christ in her face, and His praises on her lips, and with great rejoicing, went out into the lot, where her little boys were. They were startled, and asked what was the matter. She told them that she had seen Jesus yonder in the house, and that he had sanctified her and told her so. So it turned out that she first preached complete deliverance to her own boys.

Shortly after, her son-in-law came in, when she hurried to him, and with tears of gladness and shouts of victory, told of her meeting with Jesus. There was a something in all this which disarmed prejudice and left a depositum of conviction as to the genuineness of her high claims. She has swung far out into Holy Ghost know-sos. This living witness to Jesus' power to save has had many testings. On one occasion, her oldest son and a neighbor boy were playing with a pistol, when it discharged into his [her boy's] body. Some thought he could not live, even through the night. In addition to this trial, the next morning two physicians came to pronounce to her that she had breast-cancer. She had been having much pain. They told her she had cancer, and that there no remedy but to remove them both.

She went to meet Jesus, with whom she is so well acquainted, and who had so often given her His kiss of affection and comfort. She told him that if he would save Clint (her shot boy) from death, and would heal her, she would never fail to testify to His saving love and keeping power, and that she would

always kneel down and pray on entering God's house. Her boy was soon pronounced better, and has often been pronounced the finest-looking man in Waycross. As to herself – the pain subsided, and to this day there has been no operation. This was preceded by the usual baptism of assurance, which so many of God's children have had.

Her husband was sanctified several years ago, and, as has been already stated, is a very useful man. Her two daughters are Christians. Her youngest son is an honorable Christian man. She has one wayward son, for whom she clings to God with a faith which must win or break the continuity of the Divine promise.

I expect to speak, in future, concerning some other women in Waycross, but none have lived longer and stood more, and still stood steadfastly, than my precious sister. It is worth a trip to this lovely town to see her and hear her tell, in her simple, sweet way, what Jesus has done for her, and what He is to her.

Source: "Some Women I Have Known" by John B. Culpepper

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