

The Wednesday Word, March 15, 2023: Jack the Huckster

Many years ago, in England, there was a man known as 'Jack the Huckster'. Some thought he was a half-wit, but his story shows his mind was sound. Jack was a notorious, swearing drunkard who made his living by selling cheap goods and trinkets from door to door, and one day, as God would have it, he heard a poor woman singing ... "I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my All in All."

As he went home he kept repeating these words to himself and God's Spirit engraved them on his heart. Jack trusted in the crucified Saviour and was saved. His neighbours now became astonished at his constant serenity. Some of them had a world of doubts and fears about their own salvation and eventually they asked him if he ever doubted.

"Well," he said, "I can't doubt but that I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all but why should I doubt that Jesus Christ is my all in all?"

Although he was a huckster and always travelling about, Jack wanted to join the church. So, he went to the local Elders and said, "I want to join." But the Elders had other ideas and challenged him with the words, "Jack you have been such a great sinner and you are unconverted,"

"Well," said Jack, "I don't know if I'm unconverted and I confess I am a great sinner ... but ... "I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my All in All"

"Well then" they demanded, "Give testimony to your conversion experience."

Jack quietly said, "All my experience is that I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all, and Jesus Christ is my all in all."

Try as they would, they could get no other testimony from him. "Well," they said, "when you come before the church meeting, the minister may ask you questions."

"I can't help it," said Jack, "all I know I will tell you, and this is all I know I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all, but Jesus Christ is my all in all."

He was admitted into the church, and continued with the believers, but that was still all his experience, and you could not get him beyond it.

"Jack," said one brother, "I sometimes feel so full of grace, I feel so advanced in sanctification, that I begin to be very happy."

"I never do," said Jack; "I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all."

"But then," said the brother, "I go down again, and think I am not saved, because I am not as sanctified as I used to be."

"But I never doubt my salvation," said Jack, "because Jesus Christ is my all in all, and He never alters."

That's all well and good!" said his questioner, "but I have my ups and downs."

"I don't," said Jack; "I can never go up, for in myself I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all; and I cannot go down, for Jesus Christ is my all in all."

Then another Christian man said to him, "But you always seem so happy and pleased, Jack. How is it?"

"Well," he said, "I ought to be happy, for ... 'I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my All in All.'"

"But," said the gentleman, "I can't see how you can be always so happy and sure. I sometimes lose my evidences of salvation."

"I don't," said Jack, "for nothing can rob me if I am nothing at all — and in the second place, 'Jesus Christ is my all in all,' — and who can rob Him? He is in Heaven; I never get richer or poorer, for I am always nothing, but I always have everything for 'I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is in my All in All.'"

"Another friend said, 'I am at times miserable because I remember my sad sinfulness even since conversion.'"

"Ah," said Jack, "you have not begun to sing — 'I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my All in All' "

Then another man asked, "How do you get rid of your doubts and fears? My faith frequently fails and I miss my sure hope in Christ. My frame of mind is so variable and my feelings so contradictory, what do you think of that?"

"Think?," said Jack, "Why sir I have nothing to worry about for, 'I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all; But Jesus Christ is my All in All.'"

We can learn much from Jack the Huckster, especially the grand truth that Christ is all we need. Our trouble is, however, that Christ is usually not all we want. We must guard against growing tired of Jesus our Prophet, Priest and King. Christ alone remains our only recommendation for perfection and heaven. No matter how much we advance in doctrine we need, like Jack, to remain broken and dependent in the presence of the One who is ALL and in ALL.

And that's the Gospel Truth!