

Poor Peddler

There was once a poor man, a peddler, who used to go round the country villages selling little goods. This poor man, in going round on his journeys, heard some old women singing the simple little chorus:

*I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.*

Jack remembered the chorus. "Ah!" said he, "that just suits me." So he began to hum it himself as he went round on his huckstering expeditions and, by God's good grace, that little song burnt its way into poor Jack's heart.

After some time he became a converted man, gave up his swearing and drinking, and began regularly to attend the church services. At last he determined that he would join the church; so he went to the minister. The minister said. "Well, friend, what can you say for yourself?"

"Not much," he said. "Only this:

*I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."*

"Well," said the minister, "you must tell me more than that."

"No," said Jack, "I can't, for that is my confession of faith, and that is all I know."

"Well, friend," said the minister, "I can't refuse you church fellowship, but you will have to come before the church meeting, and the members will have to see you and judge you."

Jack accordingly went to the church meeting, and there sat some good old-fashioned deacons—some of whom began to see whether they could find fault with him. He stood up, and on being requested to state his experience, simply said:

*"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."*

Some one old deacon said, "Is that all you have to say?"

"Yes," says Jack, "that's all."

The minister said, "You may ask my friend here some questions if you like."

So one says, "Brother Jack, have you not many doubts and fears?"

"No," said Jack, "I never can doubt but that 'I'm a poor sinner and nothing at all,' for I know I am; and I cannot doubt that 'Jesus Christ is my all in all' for He says He is, and how can I doubt that?"

"Well," said another, "but sometimes I lose my evidences and my graces, and then I get very sad."

“Oh,” said Jack, “I never lose anything, for in the first place *‘I’m a poor sinner, and nothing at all’*—no one 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.”

Then another began to question him thus: “But my dear friend Jack, don’t you sometimes doubt whether you are a child of God?”

“Well,” said he, “I don’t quite understand you; but I can tell you I never doubt but that *‘I’m a poor sinner and nothing at all,’* and that *‘Jesus Christ is my all in all.’*”

Always after that in the villages they used to call him “Happy Jack,” for he was always happy; and the reason was that you could not drive him from that simple standing point, “There is nothing in me: I believe in Christ; I deserve punishment; I am lost in myself, but I trust in Him who came into the world to save sinners, and I know He will not let me perish.”

*My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus’ Name:
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand. —E. Mote*

Formerly titled “Poor Huckster.”

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