

No. 337.

THE MUD-WALL COTTAGE.

“Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him.”-- JAMES ii. 5.

IN company with a pious friend, who in zeal and love led the way, the writer of these lines once walked from the city in which they dwelt, several miles into the country, with the desire to imitate the example of Him who, when he was on earth, “went about doing good.” My friend had been in that part before, and was familiar with the bye-roads, the extensive woods, the wide-spread heath, and the dwellings of the cottagers, some of which were in clusters forming little neighbourhoods, while others stood alone almost hidden from view. In a lonely lane we came to a frail cottage built of earth, consisting of one small apartment. On entering it we found an aged couple bowed down with infirmities, apparently in a state of great poverty, as their furniture and clothing indicated. The poor old woman, on her humble seat, was writhing in great pain. Inquiry being made respecting the cause of her sufferings, she related the particulars of an accident which had just befallen her, and which inflicted some severe bruises. My friend, ever ready to improve any incident, and to introduce conversation of a profitable nature, after making some observations which were kind, judicious, and appropriate, asked the sufferer, “What do you think of the Saviour now?” With a voice at once tremulous yet clear, while her whole frame shook, and which seemed to give emphasis to her words, she exclaimed, “One drop of his blood is worth a thousand worlds!” Such was her estimate of the value of the Saviour. My friend turned to me with a look full of expression, and which spoke both astonishment and delight. Both of us laid up the words in the memory; and on subsequent occasions they occupied our thoughts and conversation.

This aged person had been favoured for some few preceding years with opportunities of hearing the truths of the Gospel set forth in a plain and earnest manner. The fruit of the Divine blessing on the Word appeared. The poor old woman could express herself in her simple way respecting her faith in the Lamb of God, and her hope of salvation. Her trust for eternal life was founded on the merit of a crucified Redeemer. She died a short time after, in the same frame of mind as that she manifested at the time of our visit. The whole scene was new to the writer; it made a powerful impression on his mind; he saw in it much to instruct, to arouse, to encourage him; both with reference to his own spiritual estate, and his endeavours for usefulness to the souls of others.

Now, whosoever thou art who lookest on this page, the question once put by Jesus Christ himself is put to thee, "What think ye of Christ?" Canst thou say with the aged occupant of the mud-wall cottage, "One drop of his blood is worth a thousand worlds!" or is he slighted or rejected by thee? art thou careless about the matter? or art thou refusing the great salvation which is in him alone? or art thou building thy hope of obtaining the favour of God on thy own goodness?

"What think ye of Christ, is the test, to try both your state and your scheme;

You cannot be right in the rest, unless you think rightly of him:
As Jesus appears, in your view, as he is beloved or not,
So God is disposed to you, and mercy or wrath is your lot."

Yes, reader, thus it is; the word of the God of truth declares that there is "salvation in no other;"—that "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus;"—that "there is one Mediator between God and Man, Christ Jesus;"—that "there is no other sacrifice for sins" than that made by the shedding of his "precious blood." That true record assures us that it is the greatest of all sins to disobey the Gospel; and that it will bring down on the unbeliever the heaviest punishment, as justly merited by those who refuse the offers of such amazing love. If such persons should be brought to a correct acquaintance with the holiness of God and his law, the depravity of their

hearts, and the guilt of their sins; they will then discover their danger; and they will find that nothing but faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ will appease an awakened conscience, and afford a well-grounded hope of meeting the Judge of all in peace: they will be convinced that the poor old cottager's refuge must be theirs, or they must meet the storm of divine wrath naked and defenceless. Who then that pretends to any wisdom and foresight, would not dread a mistake here? Who that would be in a state safe for eternity would not be most deeply concerned to avoid disappointment and dreadful dismay at the last? Who that would have a "peace which passeth all understanding;" who that would have comfort in affliction; who that would have an infallible antidote to the fear of death, would not "look unto Jesus, the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him;" whose "precious blood cleanseth from all sin?"

While penning these lines, the writer finds himself, almost before he was aware, arrived nearly at the age at which he found the inhabitants of the mud-wall cottage long ago. So rapid is the flight of time! so short is life! He too,—that is his immortal spirit, occupies a cottage that is "of the earth earthy," a frail and corruptible body, which will soon crumble to dust: and then the soul must take up its abode elsewhere, even in the regions of endless bliss or woe. Convinced that he is a guilty sinner, deserving the wrath of a holy God; dreading above all things self-deception, or being found building his hope for eternity on a foundation of sand; and viewing in the Gospel of Christ a suitable and sufficient provision made to meet all his wants; he would cherish no other sentiment than that which was embodied in the language of the poor old cottager; and cling to the doctrine of the cross as his only refuge. Whether thou, reader, art young or old, in the enjoyment of plenty or the endurance of poverty; remember this,—that soon thou must quit the "earthly house of thy tabernacle:" be assured that nothing but faith in the all-sufficiency of the Saviour's merit will avail thee at last. And no language can express the security, peace, joy, and hope of the true believer in the Lord Jesus; whether

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How wisely and mercifully are the truths of the Gospel adapted in a peculiar manner to the condition of the poor, the afflicted, the aged! Overlooked and neglected as they often are by those of superior rank, if they have spiritual discernment, and can by faith commit themselves to Him who is mighty and merciful to save, they may cheerfully repose confidence in him to supply their temporal necessities, and to sustain their minds under bodily sufferings; whilst they are privileged to rejoice in the consideration that their precious souls and their everlasting welfare are safe in His gracious and faithful hand; and that they are very soon to go to that blessed state where poverty, pain, age, and death are for ever unfelt and unknown;—that happy world where the poor of this world, if rich in faith, shall possess an “inheritance which fadeth not away;” an “house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;” an “eternal weight of glory.”

My dying Saviour and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin,
Sprinkle me ever with thy blood,
And cleanse, and keep me clean.

The atonement of thy blood apply,
Till faith to sight improve;
Till hope in full fruition die,
And all my soul be love.



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