

**ASHTON COTTAGE;
OR, THE TRUE FAITH**

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Ashton Cottage; Or, the True Faith by Ashton Cottage

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A Sunday Tale.

"Lay hold on eternal life." 1 Timothy vi. 12.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET AND CO. BERNERS STREET,
MDCCLV.

PREFACE.

THE design of the accompanying little Work is to supply the deficiency in suitable Sunday afternoon readings, so often felt by those who have the responsible office of training the minds of the young. This deficiency suggested to the Author the desirableness of presenting to the public material for the profitable occupation of those hours so often wasted or wearisome ; hoping that the union of incident with sound doctrine may arrest the attention, in humble imitation of our Lord's example of tuition by parables, and, through His blessing, lead the young mind to love the truest of all knowledge—the knowledge of Himself.





Chapter the First.

It was a lovely summer's afternoon, as backward and forward on the gravel-walk before Ashton Cottage an elderly female walked ; now her countenance would betray expectation, as she leant over the little gate, and then a solemn and graver look evince anxiety. She seemed as though she could not quite decide some momentous question, as, just on reaching the gate again, her grandchild approached.

“ Well, Mary,” she said, to the modest-looking girl who met her, “ you are late, I think, for Saturday ; it must be after four o’clock.”

“ O no, grandmother !” returned the child, “ I’m earlier than usual ; Miss Banks is not well, so we had no class, and after dinner she said we had better all have a walk together, as it is my birthday—you know I am fourteen to-day—but when I had gone a good way with them I turned back, for I wanted so much to see my uncle that I could not enjoy my walk. Is he come ?”

“ Yes, Mary,” replied Mrs. Walton, “ he is come ; but I have something to say to you before you see him ;” and putting her arm over her shoulder, they walked down the quiet lane together. “ Your uncle is come, indeed, and he wishes me to take his daughter to live with us for three months ; but what do you think it is for ? That she may learn that a life of usefulness is a happy life, when people love the Lord and his service. Now, do you think we can prove this to her ? may I depend on your helping me to make Janet happy by being cheerful yourself ? or had we better put off the visit till I can feel sure my Mary is truly a sheep chosen by the Good Shepherd ?”

“ O no, grandmother, do let her come now,” said Mary, with all a girl’s enthusiasm : “ I will

try not to disappoint you. I'm sure I am very, very happy, so do let her come now."

"Perhaps it will be best," Mrs. Walton added, slowly, "as your uncle has proposed the time; we must look to the Lord for his blessing, for without that nothing can come right. And now, Mary," she continued, turning towards the cottage, "we must go to your uncle."

James Walton was waiting for them, and soon read in the bright face of his niece the answer to his request; for she could not, though she was by nature a quiet and reserved girl, keep to herself her joy at the expected event.

"Come, Mary," said her grandmother, "we must have tea directly; your uncle goes back by the mail at seven to-night, so be quick, child."

But Mary could not be quick, she felt so nervous; she had, besides, many questions to ask about Janet: she could think of nothing but her, and wondered who she was like, and why her uncle James looked so serious.

And James Walton might well look serious. He had married unsuitably, and saw his girl acquiring bad habits; although his sons, being immediately under his own control, were diligent and dutiful, he had many sad thoughts for Janet, his eldest daughter (the youngest being