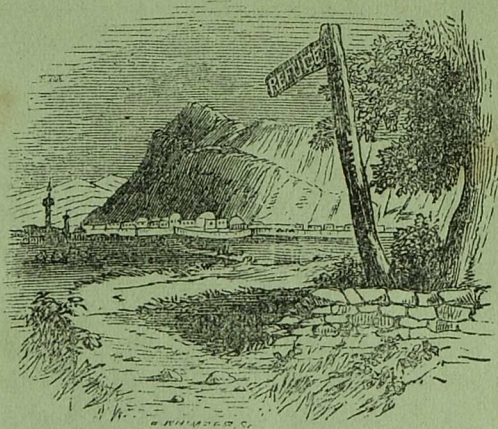


# POOR JOSEPH;

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.



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## POOR JOSEPH.

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A poor, uninstructed man, named Joseph, whose employment was to go on errands and carry parcels, passing through London streets one day, heard psalm-singing in the house of God; he went into it, having a large parcel of yarn hanging over his shoulders; it was Dr. Calamy's church, St. Mary's, Aldermanbury. A very well-dressed audience surrounded the Doctor. He read his text from 1 Tim. i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." From this he preached, in the clearest manner, the ancient and apostolic gospel, the contents of this faithful saying, viz., that there is eternal salvation for the vilest sinners, solely through the worthiness of Jesus Christ, the God that made all things. "Not many rich, not many noble,

are called " by this doctrine, (says the Apostle,) " but God hath chosen the weak things of this world, to confound the things which are mighty."

While the elegant part of the congregation listlessly heard this doctrine ; and, if they were struck with anything at all, it was only with some brilliant expression or well-turned period that dropped from the Doctor ; Joseph, in rags, gazing with astonishment, never took his eyes from the preacher, but drank in with eagerness all he said, and trudging homeward, he was heard thus muttering to himself : " Joseph never heard this before ; Christ Jesus, the God who made all things, came into the world to save sinners like Joseph ; and this is true ; and it is a faithful saying." Not long after this, Joseph was seized with a fever, and was dangerously ill. As he tossed upon his bed, his constant language was, " Joseph is the chief of sinners ; but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and Joseph loves him for this." His neighbours, who came to see him, wondered on hearing him always dwell on this, and only this. Some of the religious sort



addressed him in the following manner :—

“ But what say you of your own heart, Joseph ? Is there no token for good about it ? no saving change there ? Have you closed with Christ by acting faith upon him ? ”

“ Ah, no,” says he, “ Joseph can act nothing ; Joseph has nothing to say for himself but that he is the chief of sinners ; yet, seeing that it is a faithful saying, that Jesus, he who made all things, came into the world to save sinners, why may not Joseph, after all, be saved ? ”

One man, finding out where he heard this doctrine, on which he dwelt so uniformly and with such delight, went and asked Dr. Calamy to come and visit him. He came, but Joseph was now very weak, and had not spoken for some time, and though told of the Doctor’s arrival, he took no notice of him ; but when the Doctor began to speak to him, as soon as he heard the sound of his voice, he instantly sprang upon his elbows, and seizing him by his hand, exclaimed as loud as he could, with his now feeble and trembling voice, “ Oh, sir, you are the friend of the Lord Jesus, whom I heard speak so well of him ! Joseph is the chief of sinners ; but it is a faithful say-

ing, that Christ Jesus, the God who made all things, came into the world to save sinners, and why not Joseph ? Oh, pray to that Jesus for me, pray that he may save me, tell him that Joseph thinks that he loves him for coming into the world to save such sinners as Joseph." The Doctor prayed ; when he concluded, Joseph thanked him most kindly ; he then put his hand under his pillow, and took out an old rag, in which were tied up five guineas, and putting it into the Doctor's hand, (which he had kept all this while close in his,) he thus addressed him : " Joseph, in his folly, had laid this up to keep him in his old age ; but Joseph will never see old age ; take it, and divide it among the poor friends of the Lord Jesus ; and tell them that Joseph gave it them for His sake who came into the world to save sinners, of whom he is the chief." So saying, he reclined his head. His exertion in talking had been too much for him, so that he instantly expired.

Dr. Calamy left this scene, but not without shedding tears over Joseph ; and used to tell this little story with much feeling, and as one of the most affecting occurrences he ever

met with. It naturally suggests the following observations :—

1. Let us admire the sovereignty of Divine grace. The whole congregation, whether rich or poor, were sinners in the sight of a holy God, and stood equally in need of that salvation which, by the gospel, was preached to them. But while the elegant assembly heard it with listless attention, the word of God came with demonstration of the Spirit and of power to the heart of Joseph, and fixed his attention to its infinite importance. To what can we ascribe this difference, but to the sovereign grace of Him, “who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy ; who hath hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them to babes, and hath chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him ?”

To display the power and sovereignty of this grace, the apostle tells us, that “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty,” for the express purpose that no flesh

should glory in his presence, but that he that glorieth should glory *only in the Lord*. This is very different from the general views of men. There is a proneness in the human mind, when convicted of sin, to do something in order to escape the wrath of God, and merit his favour. Many go about to establish a righteousness of their own, not submitting to the righteousness of God; while others endeavour, by their own exertions, to make their hearts better, and so prepare them for the reception of Christ. Joseph had no idea of such a way of salvation. When asked about his heart, if there was no token for good about it, no saving change there; "Ah, no!" said he, "Joseph can act nothing; Joseph has nothing to say for himself, but that he is the chief of sinners," &c.

2. The gospel produces love to God and his people. Joseph had received the word, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, and it wrought effectually in his believing it. He experienced the truth of the Apostle's assertion, "We love him because he first loved us." "Oh, pray," says he, "to that Jesus for me, pray that he may save me;



tell him that Joseph thinks that he loves him for coming into the world to save such poor sinners as Joseph." Whatever may be said about loving God for what he is in himself, it was a sense of the love of Christ manifested in saving sinners, that first attracted his attention, drew forth his warmest affections, and occupied all his thoughts. Thus it is with every sinner saved by sovereign grace. A sense of the love of Christ, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, infallibly produces love, and this is shown by universal obedience to the will of God, and studying to adorn the doctrine of God by a life and conversation becoming the gospel. Joseph could not now manifest his love to God in this way, but he does it by showing love to his people, and that *because* they were the friends of Jesus. When he heard Dr. Calamy's voice, he exclaimed, "Oh, sir, you are the friend of the Lord Jesus, whom I heard speak so well of him, *and whom I love for what you said of him!*" and to this profession of love, he added a substantial proof, in giving to the poor friends of Jesus all he possessed in the world.

3. The gospel is sufficient to support the mind in the immediate prospect of death. Joseph did not comfort himself with the thought that he was no worse than his neighbours, and therefore, as God was merciful, he would be safe enough. The atonement of Christ was the only ground of his hope and confidence in the view of death, judgment, and eternity. Being justified by faith, he had peace with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.

Friend, is the question on thy heart engraved,  
 "What shall I do to be for ever saved?"

*Believe in Jesus*, is the sole reply,  
 Believe in Him, and thou shalt never die;  
 His precious blood gives pardon, life, and  
     peace,  
 Freedom from guilt, and joys that never cease.

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BY THE SAME PUBLISHER,

*The Converted Collier.*  
*Poor Tom ; or, What can I do ?*  
*Salvation only by Christ.*  
*Who would not Pray ?*

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## H Y M N.

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COME, ye souls, by sin afflicted,  
Bow'd with fruitless sorrow down,  
By the broken law convicted,  
By the tempter's snares undone,  
Look to Jesus—  
Mercy flows through Him alone.

Take his easy yoke and wear it,  
Love will make obedience sweet,  
Christ will give you strength to bear it,  
And his Spirit guide your feet  
Safe to heaven,  
Where his ransom'd captives meet.

Sweet as home to pilgrims weary,  
Light to newly-open'd eyes,  
Flowing springs in deserts dreary,  
Is the rest the cross supplies ;  
All who taste it  
Shall to rest immortal rise.