



NARRATIVE

OF

POOR JOSEPH.

BY REV. DR. CALAMY

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
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POOR JOSEPH.

AN AUTHENTIC NARRATIVE.

A poor unlearned 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; and went in, having a large parcel of yarn hanging over his shoulders. It was Dr. Calamy's church, St. Mary's, Aldermanbury.

A very well-dressed congregation surrounded the doctor. He read his text from 1 Tim. 1 : 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 chief." From this he preached, in the clearest manner, the ancient and apostolic Gospel, the contents

of this faithful saying, that there is eternal salvation for the vilest sinners, only 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 that are mighty.”

While the gay and thoughtless part of the congregation listlessly heard this glorious truth, —and, if they were struck with any thing, it was only with some fine expression or well-turned sentence that the doctor uttered—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 speaking with himself : “ Joseph never heard this before ; Jesus Christ, 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 neighbors 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 of 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 continually 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 elbow, and seizing him by his hand exclaimed as loud as he could with his now feeble and trembling voice,

“O, 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 saying,’ that Jesus Christ, 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 amongst 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 exertions 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 power of Divine grace. The whole congregation, whether rich or poor, were sinners in the sight of the holy God, and stood equally in need of that salvation which by the Gospel was preached to them. But while the thoughtless assembly heard it with inattention, 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 free 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 of this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

To display the riches 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 men, when convicted of sin, to go about to establish a righteousness of their own, not submitting to the righteousness of God; while others endeavor, 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," said he, "Joseph has nothing to say for himself, but just that he is the chief of sinners; but "it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.'"

2. The Gospel, when received, produces love to God and to 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 ef-

fectually in his believing it. He experienced the truth of the apostle's assertion, "We love him because he first loved us." "Oh! pray," said 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."

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, always 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. Ca-

lamy's voice, he exclaimed, "O, 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 neighbors, 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 the hope of the glory of God.

It is appointed unto men once to die, but after death the judgment. Think of this, ye that forget God, and put far from you the day of death. Remember that your breath is in

your nostrils ; perhaps this night your soul may be required of you, and what then would be your condition ? Be entreated to consider your ways, and flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the Gospel. It still remains "a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," even the chief. "Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts, 4 : 12. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts, 16 : 31.

THE END.

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