

it with their feet, the bakers molding the loaves into fancy shapes, others carrying them towards the ovens, which were cylinders

of Nile mud narrowed towards the top, out of which the flames appear, while the loaves are seen stuck on the outside to bake.

APPLICATION

Joseph's master . . put him into the prison, v. 20. The prison has been the preparatory school for very many of the world's best benefactors. No fault of theirs, but the ignorance and insensibility of their contemporaries, brought them to the dungeon. Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Peter, Paul and Silas, are notable examples in Bible history. Socrates was put to death in prison, after serving a term of punishment for teaching the truth. Columbus, the great navigator, suffered cruel confinement, lying in irons and receiving abuse, because of false charges that had been laid against him. Bunyan was confined for twelve years in "a filthy den, a receptacle for felons and cut-throats." A prison matters little, if one is innocent as Joseph was.

The Lord was with Joseph, v. 21. James II. of England imprisoned certain bishops because they would not join him in overthrowing their cherished Protestant faith. They were committed on the evening of Black Friday, arriving at the prison just at the hour of divine service. They hastened to the chapel, and were soon listening to these words, and knew that their Lord had not left them: "In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in affliction, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments." This word in season so strengthened and assured the prisoners, that the much dreaded imprisonment became to them an opportunity for thought and prayer and work that afterwards greatly aided the cause they were pledged to support.

That which he did, the Lord made it to prosper, v. 23. A worthless workman blames his tools, and a lazy lad complains of his lack of opportunity. For one to rise because of faithfulness in a jail, means that there is much good in him. Where there is much to try the temper, and much to tempt one to refusal, it is evidence of real manhood to try to do well. When one does as well as he can, he does all that is required of him, and he will prosper.

For God works wonders for us, when we do our duty as in His sight. The "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love", that we may perform towards our fellows, wherever we find them, are like seeds we drop into the warm earth in a sunny corner of the garden. They will spring up and prosper towards ourselves as well as to all men.

Wherefore look ye so sadly? ch. 40 : 7. When Sir Walter Scott was in Ireland, he met a poor woman who offered to sell him some berries. The offer was not accepted. Just then a beggar who came along asked an alms and was given some pence. At this the berry woman said that the gentleman might as well give her alms, too, as she was "an old struggler." Sir Walter was so struck with the expression, that he rewarded her and said her remark deserved to become classical, as a name for those who take up arms against a host of troubles instead of yielding sadly to them.

Think on me when it shall be well with thee, v. 14. It is most natural for us to feel the blows of life and to moan. Dr. Joseph Parker says of this plea of Joseph, **Only a Man** "He would have been far too great a man for me, if I had not seen this little touch of nature coming out, after all. I have wondered, as I have read along here, that he did not protest and resent and vindicate himself, and otherwise come out as an injured man. He has been almost superhuman up to this point." Now he feels the chain to be heavy and the yoke makes him chafe. He was only a man.

Lesson Points

Better a prison and God, than a palace and sin. v. 20.

"Many, if God should make them kings,
Might not disgrace the throne He gave;
How few who could as well fulfil

The holier office of a slave!" vs. 21, 22.
The best cure for our own troubles is showing kindness to others. ch. 40, v. 4.
Suffering breeds sympathy. vs. 5-7.