

xxix. 17. The Koran calls Joseph a perfect beauty, the most accomplished of mortals. Two of the finest poems in the Persian have Joseph for their subject.

"If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls."—*Jewish Proverb*.

One great want of the nation is *integrity* in official station, honesty in office. In the days of Washington two candidates applied for a certain office. One was a warm friend and life-long associate of Washington; the other decidedly hostile to the politics of Washington. It was supposed that the President would decide for his friend; but, to the surprise of all, the enemy was appointed to office. Upon being remonstrated with upon the injustice of the appointment, Washington replied, "My friend I receive with a cordial welcome to my house, and welcome to my heart; but, with all his good qualities, he is not a man of business: his opponent is, with all his hostility to me, a man of business. My private feelings have nothing to do in this case: I am not George Washington, but President of the United States. As George Washington, I would do this man any kindness in my power; but, as President, I can do this man nothing."

When Diogenes heard Zeno with subtle arguments endeavoring to prove that there was no motion, he suddenly starts up, and walks. Zeno asking the cause thereof, said Diogenes, "Hereby I confute you, and prove that there is motion." Thus walking with God is the best way to confute ungodly believers. Living religion proves there is religion. Joseph's *life*, not his arguments, won Potiphar.

3. PRISONER, vers. 20, 21. INTO...PRISON. Falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, (vers 7-19,) innocent Joseph loses overseership, and finds himself a prisoner in the king's dungeon, (Gen. xli. 14,) or "round house." A partly subterranean structure, the top of which rose above the ground in a vaulted roof. "There are no stately grated prisons in the East." Joseph WAS THERE IN THE PRISON, thrust in without trial, "hurt with fetters," "laid in iron." Psa. cv. 17, 18. MERCY. God never for one moment loses sight of his children.

The hearts of all men are in his hands, and he knoweth how to show mercy. FAVOR. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Prov. xvi. 7. Probably the keeper knew Joseph's previous spotless character; and possibly he also knew him to be innocent of the charge made against him.

What multitudes of God's people have thus suffered from a wicked world. Envious princes cast holy Daniel into the lion's den. A vile king thrusts John the Baptist into the fortress of Macherus. Peter and Paul and Silas are also in chains for Christ's sake. Luther speaks for Jesus, and finds himself fast held within strong walls on the rocky heights of the Wartburg; and good John Bunyan spends twelve years in Bedford jail, a prisoner for the truth.

As great and mighty fishes are not bred and fed in small rivers and sweet waters, but in the salt and bitter waters of the seas, so men that are excellent and very famous, by reason of the notable and manifold virtues wherewith they be endued, are not delighted in the false and deceitful pleasures of this world, but are nourished, and, as it were, sweetly cherished and brought up in Christ, with very sour sorrows and bitter calamities, which they endure and most patiently bear for God's sake." —*Boices*.

One in affliction, when asked how he bore it so well, replied, "It lightens the stroke to draw near to him who handles the rod."

"Christ is the best physician: he never takes down the wrong bottle."—*Berridge*.

4. MASTER, vers. 22, 23. KEEPER...COMMITTED. The slave becomes overseer; the prisoner becomes keeper. God is with him every moment. Joseph's notability and superiority are more conspicuous with every new event in his eventful life HE WAS THE DOER. The keeper reposes the same boundless confidence in the *prisoner* that Potiphar did in the *slave*, BECAUSE THE LORD WAS WITH HIM. The sacred historian makes not less than *ten* references, in this lesson, to the fact that the *prosperity* of Joseph was from the Lord.