

worthiness are appreciated here, as they had been in Potiphar's house, and practically everything is left to his care. *Because the Lord was with him.* Joseph's confidence in God, and the knowledge of his own innocence, set him free from anxiety about himself, and so he was the better fitted to serve others.

II. Joseph's Kindness, Ch. 40: 1-7.

Vs. 1-3. *Butler of the king .and his baker.* The "chief of the butlers" and the "chief of the bakers" (see, *Light from the East*) would certainly be important personages, and probably members of noble families, whose duties kept them near the king. Compare the case of Nehemiah at the court of Artaxerxes, Neh. 1: 11; 2: 1. *Offended their lord.* Their crime, according to a Jewish tradition, was an attempt to poison the king; but, if this had been the case, the offenders would doubtless have been more summarily dealt with. It may have been a very trifling offence for which their tyrannical master cast them into prison. *Pharaoh*; a title belonging to all the kings of Egypt, as Kaiser to the German emperors.

Vs. 4-7. *Captain of the guard* (Potiphar, ch. 37: 36); literally, "captain of the slaughterers" (of animals). It seems, says Driver, that these royal butchers must in some way have come to be the royal body-guard. *Charged Joseph with them*; a proof that Potiphar's confidence in his faithful slave was still unshaken. *A season*; some considerable time. *Dreamed a dream both of them.* Dreams are not an unusual experience, but it probably struck them as significant that they should both dream dreams so similar in character on the same night. *Each man according to the interpretation.* The two dreams had apparently different meanings. *Joseph .saw them .sad* (Rev. Ver.). They were perplexed as to the meaning of their dreams, and, since they were prisoners, prevented from going to those trained to interpret them. *Wherefore .?* With troubles enough of his own, Joseph is still full of sympathy with those of others.

III. Joseph's Wisdom, 8-15.

Vs. 8-11. *Do not interpretations belong to God?* Joseph is as loyal to God as he is faithful to his masters. *Tell me them.* "In this dream, the chief butler sees the whole

process of wine-making pass before his eyes in a few seconds. The buds appear on the vine branches, they unfold into blossoms, and ripen into grapes. He gathers them; presses them forthwith into Pharaoh's cup; they become wine; and, as the royal cup-bearer, he serves the wine to Pharaoh." (Bennett.) This dream, says Dr. Geikie, has been curiously illustrated by an inscription from an Egyptian temple, in which the king is seen standing, cup in hand, while underneath are the words, "They press grapes into the water and the king drinks".

Vs. 12-15. *This is the interpretation.* Joseph, guided by heavenly wisdom, had no hesitation in explaining the chief butler's dream as forecasting his restoration to favor. The correctness of his interpretation was proven by the result, vs. 20, 21. *Think on me.* A very natural appeal to the butler to interest himself on Joseph's behalf, when he should be in a position to help him. *Stolen away .have I done nothing.* While protesting his own innocence, he does not seek to clear himself by accusing others, but generously passes over the cruelty of his brothers, and the base falsehoods of his master's wife. *Dungeon*; "hole".

Light from the East

PRISON—In Egypt, a prison was usually a section of some strong fortress, where the prisoners were handed over to the soldiers, who became responsible for their safe-keeping. Some of the palaces had apartments for the temporary imprisonment of offending officials or refractory slaves. And, as the priesthood grew in wealth and power by the endowments of successive kings, every great temple had its own prison. In many cases the prisoners were transported to the gold and silver mines of Ethiopia and Sinai, and worked with great cruelty during the short time they survived.

BUTLER—The cup-bearer, whose duty it was to serve the wine at the king's table. He shared the king's confidence in a high degree, because it was part of his duty to guard him against poison, and this confidence made him a person of great importance.

BAKER—Providing bread for Pharaoh's household was a large task. A picture of the New Empire represents all the processes of baking, the kneaders of the dough tramping