

more likely, however, that the word was used simply as a symbol of dignity and power, and hence pointed to some illustrious ruler of Israel who was to make his appearance at a later date. The figure is very appropriate in the mouth of Balaam who came from Mesopotamia, a land where astrology was universally believed in. The pronoun "Him" probably refers to collective Israel. Balaam seems to have had the actual scene before his mental vision, for the tense indicates a present view rather than a prediction of the future. "I see Him, but not now," that is, I see the state of things portrayed, but the realization is not yet. Whether the prophecy referred to the Israelites in general, or to some special ruler in particular, the prediction is a very remarkable one, coming from such a source. In any case there was a long interval between the prophecy and its fulfilment.

PHARAOH'S MAGICIANS.

Question 127.—Would you kindly answer—*however BRIEFLY*—the following question: "Must one believe the *first* part of verse 12, Exodus vii. chapter, LITERALLY? (for how could the Egyptian magicians hope to bring life out of inanimate objects? And would God turn the heathen sorcerer's rods also to serpents when it strengthened Pharaoh's unbelief?)" * * *

Answer.—It is not at all likely that a genuine miracle was wrought by the sorcerers. Their tricks were mere feats of sleight of hand, like those performed by the conjurors of more modern times. Pharaoh doubtless had demanded a proof of the Divine mission of Moses and Aaron, and when the first miracle was performed he called in his magicians, and informed them of what had been done and requested them to do the same. The object of the king was, we may suppose, to ascertain whether a real miracle had been wrought or a mere trick performed. The sorcerers then, to show that nothing had been done which they could not imitate, threw down their rods which also became serpents. Now the conjurors of the East, and especially of Egypt have always been celebrated for their power in charming serpents. This was usually accomplished by pressing on the nape of the neck of the snake by which means the animal was thrown into a