

PSYCHIC PHENOMENA
IN
THE OLD TESTAMENT

By

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TO
" ONE IN PARADISE "

AN EARNEST STUDENT OF THE OCCULT

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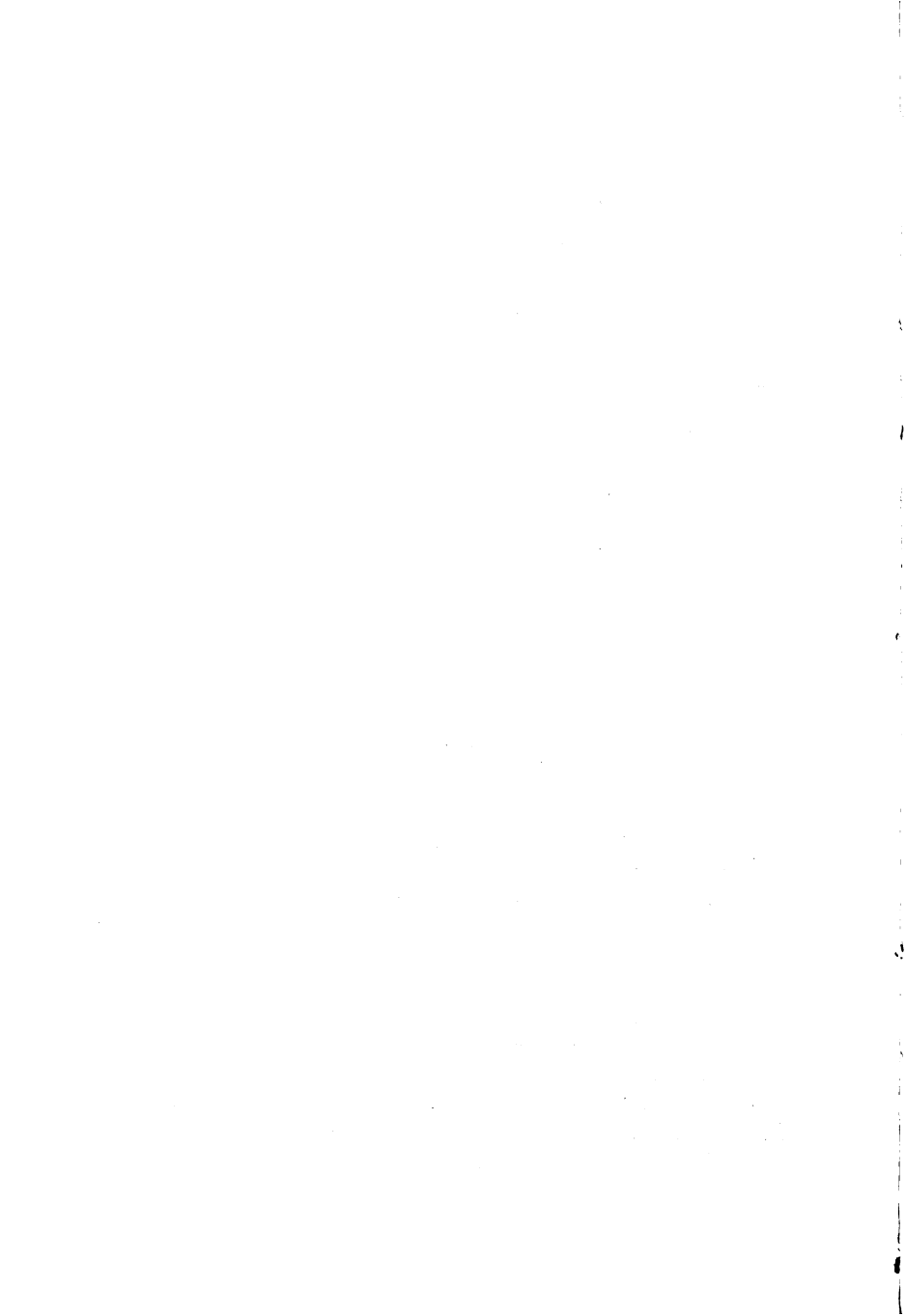
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A FOREWORD

THE writing of this little book has been the laying of a childhood's ghost ; a ghost which has been so persistent of late that it would not be exorcised until my subconscious mind had unburdened itself. Let me draw a picture which will illustrate the story. A child of five is sitting on the nursery rug before a fire screened with a high fender. She is turning the leaves of a picture-book—a small, square book with solid leather covers and quaint printing entitled, *Scripture History Designed for the Improvement of Youth*.

It is profusely illustrated with two hundred wood engravings crudely drawn, and depicting Biblical scenes from Adam and Eve in the Garden to the Transfiguration of Christ.

The child can only spell out the simplest words in the text, but she is fascinated by the pictures. The quaintly drawn figures are so different from the people whom she knows. Her imagination is stirred by the sight of humanity struggling in the waters of the Flood, and by the picturesque appearance of Joseph, with a moustache which Napoleon might have envied, and wearing a turban adorned with an upstanding feather, as he receives his brethren.

She turns the pages slowly, lingering long over the favourite scenes, for pictorially she knows the book by heart. But there is a nervous twitch about the little fingers, and a scared look in the blue eyes as she comes to a certain portion of the book ; then with a quick movement she turns over some dozen pages in a bunch, and with a look of relief resumes her quiet enjoyment of the remainder of the volume.

What is it that the little maid has skipped ? In those nervously discarded pages will be found a picture of the Witch of En-dor calling up Samuel from the grave at the request of Saul. The child has, on a first perusal of the book, been affrighted by this picture of the prophet rising up in his ghostly mantle, and has made up her determined little mind that she will not look at it again.

With strange insistence that picture has never left her mind since those nursery days. The old scripture history book has survived numerous household flittings, and now has been unearthed in a dilapidated condition from a lumber-room. The ghost of Samuel still looks from its pages. The realistic picture, seen after the lapse of many years, has suggested that the Scriptures are full of scenes similar to the spiritualistic and psychic phenomena experienced by psychics to-day, and engaging the attention of the Psychological Research Society.

As the great mental scientist, Troward, has pointed out, the Bible is the greatest occult book

in the world. The object of the present writer is to group together scenes and occurrences from the Old Testament dealing with the communion of men and women with the Unseen, Materialisations, and Dreams and Visions, and to describe them pictorially. This is done with deep reverence. As we know, various super-normal phenomena related of Biblical characters have been experienced by saints and seers throughout the ages, and there is no argument against such phenomena being experienced by spiritually minded men and women to-day. So far from this detracting from the historic value of the Old Testament, it confirms it.

Ministers of religion are beginning to realise this. The Rev. W. H. B. Yerburch, Rector of Bredon, writes of *Psychic Phenomena*: "While so many of our accredited and orthodox teachers have been explaining the super-normal in the Bible away, a newer science, with fresh insight, by demonstrating that these things (psychic phenomena) occur now, by seeking to find out the laws that govern their working, is bringing back our faith in the genuineness of the wonders recorded in its pages."*

In these sketches of psychic phenomena, we are taking the Bible text as it stands in its fascinating and mysterious realism. The Old Testament, as Canon Barnes has pointed out, is "Jewish literature," valuable for the monotheism which it teaches, but in its pages are found folklore,

* *Church Family Newspaper*, July 29th, 1921.

obsolete forms of worship, crude science and many incidents difficult to explain.* And we may add to the Canon's list of wonders contained in this ancient books of the Hebrews, those of psychic phenomena.

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* Address at Education Conference, January, 1922.

PART I
MATERIALISATIONS

“ Spirits when they please
Can either sex assume, or both : so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure.”
—MILTON, *Paradise Lost*.

THE WITCH OF EN-DOR CALLS UP THE PROPHET SAMUEL

MATERIALISATION is the most wonderful, and the rarest form of psychic phenomena, and the most questioned by investigators. But that spirits do appear on earth in human form and manifest themselves through mediumistic power has been confirmed by people of the highest mental and moral standing. The evidence for such phenomena does not rest on that of mere visionaries. It has been accepted by such eminent scientists as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Barrett and the late Sir William Crookes and Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, after minute investigation, while amongst literary men, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is foremost as a convinced believer in spiritualism and its attendant phenomena.

If we read our Bible with an open mind, we shall find in its pages psychic phenomena more wonderful than anything which the records of the Society for Psychical Research offer. In primitive times people lived in closer communion with what we term the "Unseen," and particularly was this the case with the Hebrews, as their literature reveals. If we approach the Old Testament stories in the same attitude of mind with

which we read accounts of modern super-normal phenomena, their psychic significance becomes plain and arresting. No longer shall we pass these stories by as unexplainable mysteries.

The Scriptures make it clear that there were persons gifted with psychic power in ancient days, but because of the abuse to which such a gift might be put, the Mosaic law enacted penalties against wizards, witches and those who had familiar spirits. It should be noted that they were not punished for pretending to have this power, the reality of their super-normal gift does not appear to have been questioned, but they were condemned as a danger to the community if they used it unworthily. Such, indeed, has been at the root of the persecution of witches in all periods. It was not their possible fraud, but their power, which was dreaded.

In the troublous times in Israel after the death of the prophet Samuel, the people, in dread of being conquered by the Philistines, were in a state of nervous uncertainty as to the future. And just as our own people, similarly affected in the late war, flocked to palmists and clairvoyantes until the law against them had to be rigorously enforced, so the Israelites showed a similar tendency to probe the future, until Saul was obliged "to put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land."

Now, Saul himself was a psychic and believed in the power of divination. When his father's asses were lost and he sought them all day in

vain, he and his servant went to consult Samuel the prophet, or more correctly the "Seer," as the sacred narrative points out. We need not elaborate the story; through Samuel's mediumship the asses were found.

Later, Saul himself developed the gifts of prophecy until it became a proverb among the people, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

He had been accustomed to obtain guidance through dreams and visions. But in the last phase of his career, when the hosts of the Philistines were encamped against him, his petitions were made in vain. Neither dream nor vision came to him, and "his heart greatly trembled."

At this crisis he determined to seek guidance through human mediumship.

According to Judge Parry this is a weakness of royalty. "Since the days," he writes, "when King Saul paid a clandestine visit to the old lady medium at Endor crowned heads have always been patrons of necromancy."*

We notice a disposition on the part of commentators to abuse the wise woman of Endor. She is described by one as "a wild old creature," dwelling in a cave, and as "a leering scoundrel," but there is nothing in the Bible narrative to justify these flights of the imagination. Mediums were not necessarily old hags in olden times any more than they are to-day, and after all it was Saul the King who importuned the woman to exercise her powers.

* *Weekly Dispatch*, February 5th, 1922.

Though Saul had banished witches and those who had familiar spirits from the land, he yet believed in them. The Biblical narrative puts it graphically. "Then said Saul unto his servants, 'Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.' And his servants said to him, 'Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.'"

The visit now planned is highly dramatic. Saul is with his army encamped at Gilboa. The Philistines are pitched in Shunem and the way to En-dor leads past the camp of the enemy. We picture Israel's King with blanched and careworn face—he had fasted all day—devising a plan by which he can make the perilous journey to the witch at En-dor. Complete disguise is necessary, so the kingly armour is exchanged for "other raiment," two trusty men are selected to accompany him, and Saul sets forth in the dead of night. It is a terrible ride over rough country in the darkness, and the travellers are haunted by the fear that some outposts of the enemy may suddenly spring upon them. At length the village of En-dor is reached, and the wise woman found.

And Saul entreats her, "I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee."

The woman is on her guard with her unknown visitor, and suspects a trap, as her modern counterpart in Bond Street might have done.

"Layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" she asks.

Saul reassures her. "Then," said the woman, "whom shall I bring up unto thee?" And he said, "Bring me up Samuel."

Was there ever such a séance? The medium aroused from her bed in the night-time, confronted by an importunate man, whom she knew not was Israel's King, demanding that she should call the great prophet from his grave. The atmosphere is tense with warfare. In the plain below Mount Tabor two hostile armies lie encamped. The decisive battle will soon be fought, and the inhabitants of En-dor are sleeping fitfully.

There is no time for parley. Before the morning light has illumined Tabor, Saul must be back with his army.

"Bring me up Samuel!" we hear the distracted monarch reiterate. The woman uses her occult powers and the figure of the prophet materialises. She cries out with fear as she sees the form rising, for her power of divination has also told her that her visitor is none other than Saul the King.

"Be not afraid," he says, and eagerly asks, "What sawest thou?"

And the woman said unto Saul, "I saw gods ascending out of the earth."

And he said unto her, "What form is he of?"

And she said, "An old man cometh up; and is covered with a mantle."

Saul is now able to see the form, and he "perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground and bowed himself."

Then the apparition speaks, "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?"

And Saul answers, "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."

Never did inquirer into the future receive so terrible an answer: "The Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David: because thou obeyest not the voice of the Lord, . . . He will also deliver Israel with thee into the hand of the Philistines: and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Thus spake Samuel from the grave.

At these words the apparition vanishes and Saul falls to the ground with fear and exhaustion.

Then the woman prepared him a meal and set him on his way refreshed.

With what mental anguish did the doomed King retrace the journey to Gilboa. At the ensuing battle the terrible prophecy is fulfilled. The army of Israel is taken, Saul's sons are slain by the Philistines and Saul "took a sword and fell upon it."

Commentators have raised the question, Did Samuel appear in the flesh and did he speak with the voice of a man, or was the apparition a phantasy of the Witch of En-dor's brain? The wording of the sacred narrative conveys the unmistakable

impression that the apparition was in reality Samuel. Josephus and other Jewish expositors affirm that it was Samuel who appeared to Saul, and this is the view of early Christian writers. Justin the Martyr says, "That the soul lives after death, I have shown from the fact that the soul of Samuel was brought up by the woman with a familiar spirit, as Saul had desired."

God in His wisdom doubtless thought fit to permit the spirit of Samuel to speak to the erring Saul, in human form and garb.

A further point is raised by Biblical critics, as to where Samuel was when called to earth. He tells Saul, "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." Was the spirit of Samuel sojourning in some intermediate state where Saul and his sons could join him. This is a question for the Rev. Vale Owen to solve.

Having dealt with the raising of the prophet Samuel by the Witch of En-dor, the most striking instance of Materialisation in the Old Testament, we will consider the other instances in chronological order.

ABRAHAM ENTERTAINS ANGELS UNAWARES

THE earliest record of a materialisation is the visit of the three angels, in human form, to Abraham and Sarah in their tent at Mamre.

The beautiful imagery of the sacred record conveys a graphic picture of patriarchal life. Abraham is sitting at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. The terebinth or oak-tree gives a grateful shade. The patriarch is dwelling in the land of Canaan amidst his far-stretching pastures covered with flocks and herds. He has, too, great store of gold and silver, and is, in a word, a powerful and wealthy sheik. But he lacks an heir to his possessions. True, Hagar, the bondwoman, has borne him Ishmael, but Sarah his wife has no child.

Abraham is now in his hundredth year, and Sarah is ninety, and it seems to him that God's promise that he should be "a father of many nations . . . and Kings shall come out of thee," is impossible of fulfilment. His nephew Lot, dwelling a little distance away in the rich plains amongst the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, is blest with sons and daughters, while he, the chosen of God, sits in the quiet noontide of the eastern day at the door of his tent, a disappointed and childless man.

Suddenly, as he lifts his eyes from this painful

reverie and looks, " lo, three men stand by him." Visitors are doubtless a welcome relief, and without stopping to summon one of his three hundred odd servants, the wealthy chief himself runs to meet the strangers and bowing himself to the ground addresses the leader with the characteristic hospitality of the East, " My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on."

There is no indication that Abraham regarded the passing strangers as more than ordinary travellers.

The scene is now one of hospitable bustle. Abraham, according to the usual manner of husbands with visitors on their hands, hastens into the tent to his wife and bids her prepare food. His detailed direction, " Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth," seems unnecessary to a housewife of Sarah's experience, but there is electric tension in the air. Abraham, leaving his wife to the making of the cakes, now " ran unto the herd and fetcht a calf, tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it." Abraham goes for butter and milk, and when all is ready, he sets the meal under the shade of the tree and himself stands beside his guests, as " they did eat."

The meal eaten under the terebinth-tree makes the materialisation of Abraham's spirit visitors complete. It has puzzled the Fathers and many commentators. Tertullian has cryptically set it down that "Angels could be like men and eat and still be angels; men may hereafter be like angels," and not eat and yet be men. (Tertullian, *De Resur.* 62.) There is no hint in the graphic Bible story that the angelic visitors did not enjoy their meal like tired travellers.

When it is over, comes the *dénouement* and they inquire of Abraham, "Where is Sarah thy wife?" And he says, "Behold in the tent." Then the object of the visit is revealed and Abraham is told, "Sarah thy wife shall have a son," and the promises of God that his seed shall inherit the earth are repeated and confirmed.

Sarah, behind the tent-door, laughs at this amazing intelligence. She would scarcely have done this had the visitors looked like angels. The materialisation was perfect, they had talked and eaten like ordinary men. But suddenly something fills her with fear and she denies that she laughed.

Their mission accomplished, the angel guests do not vanish into air, but rise up and continue their journey towards Sodom, and Abraham goes with them, "to bring them on the way." Not until he has communed with God does he realise that he has entertained angels unawares.

ANGELS AS WAYFARERS VISIT LOT

THE scene now changes from the pastoral home of Abraham to that of his nephew Lot, in Sodom. It is evening, and Lot, a wealthy and important man, is sitting at the gate of the city.

He sees two strangers approaching ; they look like ordinary travellers and little does he guess that they are mysterious guests who have been set on their way by his uncle, Abraham, at Mamre.

Various conjectures have been made by commentators regarding the third angelic visitor who left his companions during the journey between Mamre and Sodom. It is generally surmised that he was a superior being to the other angels and had returned to his own sphere.

Lot goes out to meet the two men and bowing himself with his face toward the ground, thus addresses them : " Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways." And they said, " Nay ; but we will abide in the street all night."

The answer strikes us as unexpected ; was it a form of Eastern politeness or had the angel visitors a wish to test the genuineness of Lot's hospitality. He, however, continues to " press

upon them greatly," and " they turned in unto him, and entered into his house ; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread," and again we are told " they did eat."

Now Lot is not in favour amongst the inhabitants of Sodom. He is viewed with suspicion as a stranger who has come into the plains with great store of cattle and gold and silver and many servants, and lives apart from the idolatrous inhabitants. He is known, too, as the relative of the wealthy Hebrew at Mamre.

Curious eyes have watched Lot receive the strangers at the city gate and conduct them to his house. It is clear, therefore, that the materialised forms were visible to Lot's fellow townsmen. The presence of strangers has been noised abroad among the people, and they come in crowds " both old and young," demanding, " Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them."

Lot divines that the mob bodes no good to his guests, or to himself, and he goes out to them with pacific words and an extraordinary suggestion regarding his two virgin daughters, but nothing avails. He would have been powerless against the infuriated mob which now storms his dwelling had not the angel visitants come to his rescue and forcibly pulled him into the house and closed the door.

Suddenly the shouts of anger and revenge give place to cries of distress, fright and panic. The

assailants can be heard groping wildly around the house, but they cannot find the door. The angel visitors have smitten them with blindness.

Lot now comes under the control of his mysterious guests ; he does not appear to have marvelled at the miracle performed for his safety, but his mode of address is changed into one of awe and reverence. The angels bid him gather his family together and fly from the city doomed to destruction. He lingers until the morning, for there is division in the family, his sons-in-law refusing to obey the command, but his wife and daughters wait obedient at his side. Small wonder that Lot is irresolute. Flight means the abandonment of all that he possesses and he will go forth a penniless fugitive, he knows not whither.

While he wavers, spirit power is exercised, and he comes under the physical control of the angel visitors and we are told that they "laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters . . . and they brought him forth, and set him without the city," saying, "Escape for thy life ; look not behind thee, . . . escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed."

To-day there are authenticated cases like that of the Rev. G. Maurice Elliott, Rector of Snitterly, in which an angel form has led some troubled human being to where relief was to be found.

The latter part of Lot's story indicates that he has become conscious that the spirit of God

is working through the mediumship of his mysterious visitors. Ignoring the presence of the messengers, he addresses the unseen power as "My Lord," and pleads that he may be permitted to go to the little city, afterwards called Zoar.

The morning sun is shining over the doomed cities of the plains when Lot and his daughters enter Zoar, after this night of marvellous happenings.

Lot's wife has disobeyed the divine command and looked back towards her old home. No merciful angel hand has restrained her and she is turned into a pillar of salt.

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire," and they were utterly destroyed. And Abraham, out in the early morning, communing within himself at the place where he had set the angel visitors on their way to Sodom, saw the smoke of the doomed cities rising up "as the smoke of a furnace." But he knows that through his intercession his nephew Lot and his family have been spared.

JACOB WRESTLES WITH AN ANGEL

A VERY striking materialisation is described in the life of Jacob, for not only does he see angels in human form, but he wrestles in man to man grip with one of the heavenly messengers.

The incident occurs when Jacob, having served Laban for many years, has become a wealthy man with flocks and herds and camels and servants, and decides to leave Padan-Aram and return to his native country of Canaan. He assembles Leah and Rachel and their handmaidens and children and together with his people and cattle sets out on the pilgrimage, but without taking leave of the hard-hearted Laban, who, however, hastens after him in wrath, but in a vision is cautioned not to offer violence to his son-in-law.

Jacob proceeds on his way with a disturbed mind. The days of his youth come back to him and he dreads to meet Esau, whom he supplanted. His thoughts turn to Heaven for guidance and as he journeys, he meets angels on the road and is comforted, and names the place Mahanaim.

He now prepares for the meeting with Esau and arranges the order of his company and sees them pass safely over the brook Jabbok.

Jacob lingers alone by the side of the stream.

It is night, and his thoughts turn to the Unseen and his spirit craves for comfort.

The conditions are favourable to psychic phenomena, and while he meditates in the dark and lonely night he suddenly feels human arms closing around him, and "there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day."

Jacob struggles with all his strength; he realises that it is not mortal man with whom he is contending but an angel messenger, and he craves for a blessing. The struggle continues fiercely until at length the angel touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh and puts it out of joint. Even then Jacob does not loose his hold, and his antagonist entreats, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." And Jacob replies, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." His persistence prevails. The angel wrestler gives up the struggle and as the dawn sheds its rosy light over the brook Jabbok, showing the camels and cattle and people of Jacob's caravan preparing to resume the journey, he receives the desired blessing, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." The dreaded meeting with Esau is turned into a brotherly reunion, and Jacob settles in the land of Canaan and sets up an altar unto the Lord.

BALAAAM'S ASS SEES AN ANGEL AND SPEAKS

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at a meeting of the Christian Evidence Society, pointed out that one of the favourite questions raised by cavillers at Biblical narrative was, "What do you really mean by Balaam's Ass speaking?"

Attempts have been made to regard the story as a myth or an allegory, but it has emerged from the test of time, and the attacks of commentators, as a literal incident. The Apostle Peter describes it as real.

Students of psychic phenomena find no difficulty in accepting it, for they know that animals sometimes show a sense of vision and have premonitions of approaching disaster which amount to clairvoyance, and this was the case with Balaam's Ass.

Balaam appears suddenly in the Scriptures as a mysterious person, half-seer, half-magician. Though living amongst the idolatrous people, he worshipped Jehovah. He is a strange mixture of a prophet of the Lord and a soothsayer. He has the reputation of possessing supernatural powers, and when Balak, the King of Moab, becomes afraid of the hosts of Israel, who have come out of Egypt and pitched in the plains of Moab, he sends for Balaam that he should come and curse them saying: "I wot that he whom

thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed." Such, then, is the reputation of Balaam.

He is evidently accustomed to be paid for the exercise of his occult powers, for we are told that the messengers from the King of Moab came to Balaam with "the rewards of divination in their hand."

Balaam, however, seeks divine guidance and is warned not to curse Israel. The Princes of Moab come again to entreat him and offer larger bribes, but still Balaam refuses to exercise his power against the Lord's people. Then his covetous nature gets the upper hand, and God allows him to follow his selfish inclinations. So "Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass and went with the princes of Moab."

We see him setting out riding his well-trusted ass and accompanied by two servants. The ass is intimately associated with the life of the prophet and magician, and has borne him on many mysterious errands. And as the war-horse, with kindling eye and distended nostrils, assimilates the bravery of its gallant rider on the field of battle, so Balaam's ass may have imbibed some of his master's psychic power.

Suddenly the ass refuses to go forward, it has become clairvoyant and sees the figure of an angel with a drawn sword standing in its path. Balaam's threats and blows are of no avail and the animal at length falls down under the violence of its angry master.

Then its mouth is opened and " she said unto Balaam "—it may be noted that the ass is humanised by the use of the feminine pronoun—" What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times? And Balaam said unto the ass, Because thou hast mocked me : I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee."

Curiously, the frightened animal does not speak of the vision it sees, but replies like an old and injured servant, " Am not I thine ass, upon which thou hast ridden ever since I was thine unto this day? Was I ever wont to do so unto thee ? "

Then Balaam's eyes are opened and he too sees the angel with the drawn sword in his hand, and " he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face."

The angel now instructs Balaam to go forward on his journey with the Princes of Moab. Then follow those dramatic settings-up of altars on the heights of Pisgah and of Peor when, looking down upon the tribes encamped in the plain, Balaam is constrained to bless instead of curse Israel.

The dual character of Balaam as prophet and magician is revealed when we read that now " he went not, as at other times, to seek for enchantments, but he set his face towards the wilderness."

In solitude he would attain a deeper realisation of spiritual power, and the tricks of the magician would seem gross and material.

THE CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST APPEARS TO
JOSHUA

MANY attempts have been made by the old Jewish writers and by modern commentators to explain who the person was who appeared to Joshua before the destruction of Jericho. Some suppose him to have been the Archangel Michael and others a symbolic figure of the Word of God, or even to have been the Son of God. The Scriptures are clear and explicit: he was the "captain of the Lord's host," the commander of a host of angelic beings.

Joshua did not see him in a dream or vision, but in material form as a man, holding his sword drawn in his hand. The appearance was no mystic chimera, but a materialisation.

The story opens when Joshua, leading the children of Israel into the land of Canaan, has brought them to Jericho, a city so strongly fortified that to the wandering Israelites, untrained in military strategy and lacking munitions of war, it seems an impregnable fortress.

While Joshua is looking towards Jericho and meditating on the tremendous task before him, he "lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand." The Israelitish com-

mander is his own sentry, and challenges the martial stranger : " Art thou for us, or for our adversaries ? " And the answer is direct, " As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come."

Joshua realises that it is a heavenly messenger in human form and falls " on his face to the earth, and did worship." Then he inquires, " What saith my lord unto his servant ? " and the captain of the Lord's host replies, " Loose thy shoe from off thy foot ; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." And Joshua did so.

In this attitude of reverence Israel's commander receives instructions for conducting the most remarkable siege in the history of the world. The siege of Troy pales before it. The mysterious captain of the host unfolds the plan of campaign. For six successive days the Israelites, with the Ark of the Covenant before them, are to compass Jericho. On the seventh day they are to compass the city seven times, the priests blowing the trumpets of ram's horns.

The psychological moment is to be seized when the seventh long blast is blown, at which all the people are to shout with a great shout and the wall of the city will fall down flat and the conquering Israelites will ascend, " every man straight before him."

Had ever military commander to give such fantastic instructions to an army facing a closely-defended city ? Joshua must have been imbued with hypnotic power in order to persuade the people to carry out the plan. They obey to the

letter, and the wall of Jericho falls before the shouting Israelites.

We cannot pierce the veil to know how the miracle was performed, but we may conjecture that the captain of the Lord's host commanded an army of spiritual beings to carry out his behests, and that they caused fear to fall upon the defenders of the city so that they became powerless before the invaders. The great shouting and tumult of the Israelites may have suggested to the men of Jericho that an innumerable army was approaching.

The history of warfare affords instances of the tide of battle being mysteriously turned in favour of a small army against a superior force. It seemed, for instance, to our own brave little army at Mons, that angels intervened to save them from the overpowering German army. And why should not such intervention from the Unseen take place to-day as in the ancient times ?

GIDEON THE THRESHER IS SURPRISED BY
A MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

THE Israelites for their sins have been delivered into the power of the men of Midian, and live in constant dread of the ravages of the foe. There is border warfare, with raids by the Midianites upon the belongings of the unwary.

Gideon, a simple man of the tribe of Manasseh, and "the least in his father's house," is busy threshing the family wheat by the winepress, instead of on the open threshing-floor, so as to keep it secret from the raiders. As he threshes he keeps a sharp lookout lest the enemy come and commandeer his wheat, and it is with some apprehension that he sees a stranger approach and seat himself under an adjacent oak-tree.

Gideon leaves his threshing to converse with the visitor, and soon realises that he is in the presence of a messenger from the Unseen. He receives from him the astonishing communication that he, Gideon, a man of no experience or position, is destined to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Midianites.

The plain husbandman believes in *testing the spirits*, and boldly suggests to the stranger that he shall give a sign that he is indeed a spiritual messenger by remaining where he is until he returns with food to set before him. The compact is accepted. Gideon hastens away, makes ready a kid and unleavened cakes and

returns to find the man still sitting under the oak-tree. He accepts the sign that he is indeed a heavenly messenger.

Gideon is now directed to place the food upon a rock near by. No sooner has he done this than he beholds the visitor touch the kid and the unleavened cakes with his staff and to his amazement a fire comes out of the rock and consumes them. In the midst of the burning, the angel visitant vanishes, and Gideon is filled with fear to have talked face to face with a heavenly being. But a voice from the Unseen reassures him—"Thou shalt not die." And in that place Gideon built an altar unto the Lord.

Gideon, even yet, is sceptical as to whether he has the power to save his nation from the oppressors, and again he *tests the spirits*. He puts a fleece of wool upon the floor; it is soft and dry, ready to be combed for use. He suggests that if the night dew settles only upon the fleece and leaves the floor around it dry he will take it as a sign. Early next morning he hastens to see what has happened, and finds the fleece so wet that he wrings a bowlful of water out of it.

Still he is not quite satisfied and asks for the further sign that next night the fleece shall remain dry and the dew collect upon the ground. The miracle happens, and Gideon goes forth to his task, strong in the faith that his mysterious visitor was indeed a heaven-sent messenger and that he, the unknown man of Manasseh, will be made the instrument for the deliverance of Israel.

A "MAN OF GOD" APPEARS TO THE WIFE OF MANOAH

THIS incident of a materialisation occurs when the children of Israel have been delivered into the hands of the Philistines. God has designed that a strong man shall be raised up to deal with the foe, and the hitherto childless wife of Manoah, a man of Zorah, is chosen to be the mother of the future deliverer, the redoubtable Samson.

The birth of the child is foretold to Manoah's wife by an angel messenger. She receives the tidings with joy, for she has longed and prayed for a child, and hastens to tell her husband the good news. We hear her, excitedly relating her experience : " A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible : but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name. But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son ; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing : for the child shall be a Nazarite to God."

Manoah is anxious to hear the news for himself, and prays that the " Man of God " may come again. The messenger appears the second time, but still to Manoah's wife. She is sitting in the field and sees the mysterious figure walking to-

wards her. She runs to call her husband that he may come and hear her story confirmed. Manoah arrives and boldly accosts the stranger, as though he were a fellow human being. "Art thou the man," he asks, "that spakest unto the woman?" And he said, "I am." The promise of the birth of a child to Manoah's wife is repeated and instruction given to the parents for his upbringing.

Manoah presses the "Man of God" to stay and eat and it is stated that "he knew not that he was an angel of the Lord," so complete was the materialisation. The mysterious visitor refuses Manoah's hospitality, but suggests that he should offer the kid, which he has prepared, as a sacrifice. The still unperceiving Manoah asks the man his name, but is told that, "it is secret." He now proceeds to kindle the sacrifice and suddenly his visitor of flesh and blood dematerialises and ascends in the flame from the altar.

PART II
ANGEL GUIDES

“The Angels come and go, the messengers of God.
Nor though they fade from us do they depart.”

—R. H. STODDART.

“God has in all ages used the ministry, not alone of men, but of angels, defeating the rage, the malice, the subtilery, of evil spirits.”

—JOHN WESLEY.

AN ANGEL STAYS THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

THE Old Testament teems with records of the patriarchs and prophets and even humbler people being inspired and guided by angel voices and angel messengers, and throughout history pious and devout people have believed themselves to be similarly guided and inspired. John Wesley was a believer in the ministry of angels, or good spirits, and the protection which they afforded against the machinations of evil forces.* Sir William Barrett elucidates the same idea. "We cannot," he says, "blind our eyes to the fact that there is a lower as well as a higher region in the spiritual world, a region of dangerous spiritual parasites as well as of helpful ministering angels."†

An angel guide is the medium in the supreme test of Abraham's faith, when he is commanded to offer up his only son as a sacrifice to the Most High. The test is so severe and unnatural as to be a stumbling block in the way of people accepting the Bible story. Sometimes it is explained by the fact that human sacrifices were common amongst the people where Abraham sojourned, and that the command of Jehovah was in accordance with the spirit of the times.

* Wesley's sermon on "Good Angels." † *Light*, October 29, 1881.

In the midst of the conjectures one thing is clear—Abraham received the command from the Unseen and was supernaturally enabled to obey the command until his hand was stayed.

Terrible as the idea of offering a loved son as a human sacrifice seems, may it not be taken as typical of the sacrifices made by martyrs in all ages, when children and dear ones were counted as nothing compared to the Faith? Bunyan in Bedford jail sacrificed not only himself but those dependent on him, including his blind child.

The story opens when the child promised to Abraham and Sarah by angel visitors has been born and grown to boyhood. We imagine him as a bright and beautiful lad, full of spirit, the joy of his parents' hearts, and the pride of all who serve the rich sheik at Mamre. The future seems radiant with hope. The promises made to Abraham that his son shall found a great nation from which the Messiah shall spring seem sure of fulfilment.

Again the word of the Lord comes to Abraham by a voice from the Unseen. We are not told whether it occurred in the land of the Philistines where he had been sojourning, or whether at Mamre. The voice said, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

Was ever a father faced with such a command? In that hour of trial Abraham's faith rises su-

preme. He makes no protest, but rising up in the morning, after the vision of the night, saddles his ass, summons two of his young men and Isaac his son, cleaves the wood for the burnt offering and sets out for the land of Moriah.

It is a three days' journey. Graphic preachers have described imaginary conversations by the way between father and son with farewell messages from the youth to his mother. Isaac, however, did not know that he was destined for sacrifice, and could scarcely have sent such messages.

At length the travellers see Mount Moriah looming in the distance ; now they have reached the foot of the mountain and Abraham directs his servants to remain and take care of the ass while " I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you." The last words suggest hope in the hour of trial.

Abraham now loads Isaac with the wood and takes the fire, or means of igniting it, in his hand, and the knife. As they climb the hill Isaac asks the question which proves his ignorance of the true situation : " Where is the lamb for a burnt offering ? " and the answer comes from the stricken yet hoping father, " My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

At length the appointed spot is reached and Abraham binds Isaac and lays him upon the wood on the altar. The lad makes no protest. Is some angel spirit keeping him quiescent ?

At the supreme moment, when Abraham with

eyes upturned to Heaven lifts the knife to slay his son, " the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, Abraham, Abraham," and he replies, " Here am I." The voice continues, " Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him : for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

A ram caught in a thicket is now taken for the burnt offering, and the Angel of the Lord calls yet again to Abraham, confirming the promises in language of graphic imagery : " In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore ; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies ; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

AN ANGEL GUIDE DIRECTS ABRAHAM'S SERVANT
TO REBEKAH

THE scene of this romantic marriage idyll opens in Abraham's dwelling at Mamre. The patriarch is now well stricken in years and he has laid Sarah to rest in the field of Machpelah. Their son Isaac, with whose future progeny rest the promises, is still without a wife.

Abraham summons the chief servant of his household and bids him journey "unto my own country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." The servant sees difficulties in the way of the delicate mission; "Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land," he says. Abraham reassures him with the promise that God will send His angel to guide him on the way.

The servant sets out in style befitting his master's position and the importance of his mission. He takes with him ten camels laden, not only with provender for the journey, but with gold and jewels and fine raiment for the prospective bride and her kindred.

At length the cavalcade reaches the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia, and we picture the tired camels resting by the well without the city in the cool of the evening, at the time when the

women come out with their pitchers to draw water.

Which among the fair daughters of the city is fitted to be the wife of Isaac, ponders Abraham's servant, and he prays to heaven that a sign may be given him : " Let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink ; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also : let the same be she thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac." He now waits for the sign.

Soon the angel guide directs his eyes and he sees approaching a damsel " very fair to look upon." Her grace and beauty mark her out from the other women coming to the well. Artists in all ages have painted the charms of Rebekah : her lithe, tall figure in picturesque eastern robes girded for her work ; the glowing sunset giving lustre to her dark hair, and intensifying the rich colouring of her face. She walks with easy grace, balancing her waterpot upon her shoulder. Her nature overflows with kindness, and responding to the stranger's request, " Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water from thy pitcher," she hastens, also, to draw water for the weary camels.

Abraham's servant realizes that this is heaven's chosen bride for Isaac, and he unpacks some of his treasures and presents her with a golden ear-ring and two bracelets. Having thus won her favour, he inquires whether he could find a lodging in

her father's house, and whose daughter she is. Rebekah is all graciousness and runs home to prepare her family for the coming guest and to show her presents.

The story unfolds itself with delightful drama. Rebekah turns out to be the daughter of Abraham's brother, Nahor. Her family listen with approbation to the proposal that she shall return with the guest to their great kinsman to become the bride of his son. They are impressed by the servant's story of angel guidance and are convinced that it will be a heaven-made marriage.

Rebekah is called and questioned and decides to set out at once to meet her destiny. There is feasting and present-giving and hurried preparations for the journey. We imagine the leave-taking from her mother and brothers as Rebekah, looking a picture of loveliness in rich apparel and bedecked with jewels, mounts her camel, the servant leading it forth. The damsels who are to accompany her to her new home follow on camels. So the picturesque procession moves out of the city of Nahor for the land of Canaan.

Away at Mamre, Isaac has gone out into the fields to meditate, and is doubtless thinking of his coming bride. At length he sees the camels approaching. His curiosity is quickly satisfied, for Rebekah, who has a delightful impulsiveness about her, descends from her camel to meet him, first having covered herself with a veil.

Isaac, as yet, has not seen the beauty of Rebekah, but the grace and charm of a lovely maiden

can radiate in spite of an eastern veil, and he greets her like a lover. No message had previously *come through* from Nahor to Mamre telling of the success of the mission, and Isaac now learns the story from the servant. He is satisfied, and leading Rebekah into the tent of his lost mother, Sarah, "she became his wife, and he loved her." The mission of the Angel Guide is accomplished.

THE ANGEL-GUIDED EXODUS

Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee : behold mine angel shall go before thee.—*Exodus*.

THE story of that marvellous pilgrimage of the Israelites out of Egypt, through the wilderness, and into the Promised Land, teems with occultism. Miraculous happenings startle us in almost every chapter of Exodus. Carlyle says, "No rune in the wildest imagination of mythologist ever did such wonders on the actual firm earth . . . as that divine Hebrew Book, the work *partly* of the man Moses, an outlaw tending his Midianitish herds 4,000 years ago in the wilderness of Sinai." We note Carlyle's expression "partly," as significant that the "*man* Moses" was divinely inspired, angel-guided. He was a psychic of the first order.

The story opens more than four hundred years after Jacob and his sons had left the famine-stricken Canaan to settle in plenteous Egypt under the protection of his princely son, Joseph. The descendants of the patriarch have multiplied exceedingly, and live in comfort in their secluded Ghetto, the Land of Goschen. But now a Pharaoh reigns in Egypt who "knew not Joseph," and as is often the case in modern history, the

prosperous Jewish Ghetto creates jealousy and envy. Pharaoh devises a diabolical scheme for keeping down the Israelites, by causing their male infants to be destroyed.

A Hebrew mother, guided, we doubt not, by divine power, defeats the mighty potentate's purpose. She places her beautiful baby boy in an ark which she has cleverly made of bulrushes, and sets it on the bank of the Nile, at the spot where Pharaoh's daughter comes to bathe. The Princess's heart goes out to the foundling and she decides to adopt him. His sister Miriam is at hand and offers to fetch one of the "Hebrew women" to nurse the child. The unsuspecting Princess agrees and Miriam fetches her mother.

The boy thus saved from the water is named "Moses," and is brought up in the luxury befitting a prince and educated in the culture and learning of Egypt. But the ties of blood bind him to the oppressed Israelites, and one day he slays an Egyptian whom he sees ill-treating one of his race. For this he flees from Egypt and finds refuge with Jethro, the priest of Midian, whose daughter he marries.

While living a simple shepherd's life, the outlawed prince receives spiritual initiation into his great work.

A Voice speaks to him from the miraculously Burning Bush at Horeb, bidding him go back to Egypt and rescue the Hebrews from their oppressors. The power to perform miracles is given to him that he may impress Pharaoh. His shep-

herd's staff becomes a magical rod. If he lays it upon the ground it writhes as a serpent, if he takes it by the tail it becomes a rod again. As commanded, he puts his hand in his bosom and when he withdraws it the hand is leprous as snow. Yet a third sign is given and the water which he takes from the river and pours upon the dry land becomes red like blood.

The fact that Moses was sent to Pharaoh thus equipped points to the belief existing 4,000 years ago in the supernatural. By being able to produce more wonderful phenomena than the court magicians, Moses gained his power over Pharaoh. The future leader of the Israelites was, by his own admission, not an "eloquent man." He was "slow of words" and obtained his influence by occult manifestations. His brother Aaron, a man of ready speech, joined Moses in the mission to Egypt.

How superciliously the grandees of Pharaoh's court would look upon the outlawed Moses and his brother arriving from the wilds of Midian to demand that their oppressed brethren, the Hebrews, should be liberated to go a three days' journey into the wilderness that they might worship their God, Jehovah.

Pharaoh demands a sign that they are *bona fide* messengers. Then Moses performs the miracles in which he has been divinely instructed.

The great potentate is sceptical. He calls together the wise men and the sorcerers; there is consultation, and behold the magicians are

able to perform the selfsame miracles by their "enchantments."

The contest between Moses performing spiritual miracles and the magicians of Egypt with their presentments recalls modern challenges between eminent spiritualists and famous conjurers.

The contest at Pharaoh's court proceeds on marvellous and terrible lines. One after another, the "Ten Plagues," each more deadly than the last, are inflicted upon the people of Egypt through the instrumentality of Moses. The rivers are turned into blood, Frogs invest the land, Lice torment men and beast, Flies swarm everywhere, a Murrain attacks all the cattle, Boils afflict man and beast, Hail smites every living thing and all vegetation, Locusts swarm over the face of everything and Darkness envelops the land in an impenetrable pall.

The magicians have long retired from the contest before these awful visitations, but still the heart of Pharaoh is hardened, and not until the Angel of Death smites every first-born in Egypt, will he "let the people go."

The Angel passes over the blood-sprinkled doors of the Israelites, and their first-born are saved. With loins girded they eat the Passover Feast on that dread night, and loaded with the spoils of the Egyptians, the army of the Hebrews—men, women, children and cattle—passes out from the land of bondage. The Exodus of Liberation has begun.

Moses is guided by the Angel of the Lord in

all those wonderful happenings during the forty years' wanderings in the Wilderness. "The Angel of the Lord went before the camp of Israel," we are told. A pillar of light guides them at night, and a pillar of cloud protects them in the daytime from Pharaoh's hosts. The waters of the Red Sea stand in divided banks and the Israelites cross over dryshod while the pursuing Egyptians are overwhelmed by the returning floods. The bitter waters of Marah are miraculously sweetened, wells spring up in the desert, quails appear upon the earth and manna descends from the clouds to feed the wandering people, and divine intervention protects them from enemy tribes.

At Sinai, Moses, the psychic leader of Israel, has marvellous manifestations. In the midst of awe-inspiring scenes of spiritual communication, he receives the Ten Commandments, and instructions for the preparation of the Ark and the Tabernacle, and for the divers laws and ordinances which still govern the Hebrews to-day.

Moses passes beyond the Veil ere Canaan is reached, but he transmits his "spirit of wisdom," by the laying on of hands, to Joshua, who conducts the angel-guided pilgrimage to its triumphant entry into the Promised Land.

PART III
DREAMS AND VISIONS

“ The machinery of dreaming planted in the human brain was not planted for nothing. That faculty, in alliance with the mystery of darkness, is the one great tube through which man communicates with the shadowy.”

—DE QUINCEY.

“ Dreams full oft are found of real events
The Forms and Shadows.”

—JOANNA BAILLIE.

DANIEL, A TRAINED INTERPRETER OF DREAMS AND VISIONS

THOUGH out of chronological order, we are dealing first with the story of Daniel because of its unique interest. It throws light on the belief in psychic phenomena which existed in ancient Babylon, and on the way in which youths were trained in occult science until they graduated as "Wise Men."

Daniel was specially trained to interpret dreams and visions and eventually became "Master of the Magicians" at the Court of Babylon.

The story opens at the period when Nebuchadnezzar has besieged and taken Jerusalem. On returning to Babylon he directs Ashpenaz, the Master of his Eunuchs, to bring certain well-favoured youths from among the Hebrews that they may be trained in "cunning knowledge," science and the "learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans," and become qualified to "stand before the king."

Among those chosen to undergo what we may call a *three years' course in psychic learning*, are Daniel, and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, and they are brought among the captives to Babylon. Their physical as well as their psychic condition is a matter of

consideration, and it is commanded that these highly favoured youths shall be fed sumptuously, and partake of the King's meat and wine. Daniel and his companions, however, beg that they may be allowed to take only "pulse to eat, and water to drink."

After some demur on the part of the Prince of the Eunuchs, they are permitted to follow their vegetarian and temperance diet. Their physical appearance does not suffer, we are told, and it may be inferred that the diet was conducive to spirituality of mind. Their education proceeds satisfactorily and Daniel, in particular, "had understanding in all visions and dreams."

These handsome Hebrew youths, *fit*, according to modern phraseology, in mind and body, did not forget the God of their Fathers in the land of their captivity, and to the learning of the Chaldeans in occult science, added the spirituality of the monotheistic faith. They were given such wisdom and understanding, we are told, that when the King consulted them, "he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm."

At length Nebuchadnezzar has a dream which greatly troubles his spirit, but he cannot recall the nature of the dream. All the magicians and astrologers are summoned to the palace to help the King in his distress. Tell us the dream, they ask, and we "will show the interpretation."

The autocrat of Babylon brooks no such con-

dition. Either they must tell him what he has dreamed, or he will command that their heads be cut off.

It may be inferred that Daniel and his companions are among the discredited company of wise men. Hitherto, Daniel has stood high in the King's favour because of his superior wisdom, and he now ventures to ask for time that he may entreat help from the God of the Hebrews. The request is granted and Daniel and his three friends retire to their house for spiritual communion.

In a "night vision," the secret of the King's dream is revealed to Daniel, and he blesses and praises the Lord God of his Fathers.

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He now informs Arioch, the King's captain, of his success and entreats him to stay the execution of the Wise Men.

In the palace, Nebuchadnezzar, a raging and distraught man, is still racking his brain for the elusive dream. Arioch enters with the joyful news that he has found a man amongst the "captives of Judah that will make known unto the King the interpretation."

Daniel is summoned to the King's presence. He begins the interview tentatively—Cannot the magicians, astrologers, soothsayers and wise men interpret the dream? he queries, if they cannot, then, he adds with spiritual fervour, "there is a God in Heaven that revealeth secrets."

The distraught monarch turns to him with relief and Daniel proceeds to describe the "great image," which the King had seen in his dream and interprets its symbolism.

The King is overjoyed with gratitude and commands that Daniel be made "ruler over the whole province of Babylon." But Daniel requests that his three friends, who had supplicated along with him for the solution of the King's dream should administer the affairs of the province and that he should "sit in the gate of the King."

We will not linger over the miraculous deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego from the fiery furnace into which they were subsequently thrown because they would not worship the image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up, but continue the story of Daniel.

Again the King is troubled by a dream, and, as before, he summons the Wise Men of his own nation in vain. Then he calls for Daniel (or Belteshazzar) whom he designates the "Master of the Magicians," and bids him interpret his dream, because "the spirit of the holy gods is in thee."

Daniel listens to the King's vision of "the great tree," and is so troubled by the portentous symbolism that he is "astonied for one hour" before he can speak. But he must needs deal faithfully with Nebuchadnezzar, and with courage born of conscious inspiration he reveals the terrible interpretation. Madness is to come upon

the King and he will be driven from the face of men and become like the beasts of the field.

That same hour was Daniel's interpretation of the dream fulfilled. The King, however, ultimately recovered his reason, and professed his faith in the God of Heaven.

Yet again is Daniel, as "Master of the Magicians" in Babylon, summoned to the palace to exercise his powers. Belshazzar, who has succeeded his father, Nebuchadnezzar, has made a great feast to a thousand of his lords. Revelry runs high as they sit at the sumptuously laden tables, and the King commands that the wine shall be served in the golden and silver vessels which his father had taken from the Temple at Jerusalem.

But as they drink, a man's hand is seen, writing on the wall of the palace. The mysterious phenomenon arrests the attention of the revellers. The materialised spirit hand, with no arm to guide it, inscribes mystic characters on the plaster of the wall. The King is paralysed with fear, and his princes and lords and concubines gaze horror-stricken. The magicians and astrologers are summoned, but not one of them can read the writing on the wall.

At length the Queen enters the banquet hall. She entreats the King, "Let Daniel be called." Did not thy father make him "Master of the Magicians, Astrologers, Chaldeans and Soothsayers," she reminds the King, and "forasmuch as he has an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and

understanding, interpreting of dreams, and showing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts," he can help thee in this matter.

Daniel is brought in before the King. We fancy the gracious Queen smiling encouragement as he enters, while the revellers regard him with awe. The spirit of prophecy is upon him. He brings home to Belshazzar the sin which he has committed in defiling the vessels of the Temple. Then turning to the wall he traces the dread characters, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN, and gives the interpretation, foretelling the terrible doom awaiting the King.

Consternation reigns in the banquet chamber, and some surprise must have been felt by the lords and princes that royal favours are bestowed upon Daniel. He leaves the chamber clothed in scarlet and with a gold chain about his neck like a prince. But his dream interpretation is verified: "That night was Belshazzar the King of the Chaldeans slain."

Daniel now passes from history as an interpreter of royal dreams. But he continues to have super-normal experiences as exemplified by his miraculous preservation in the lions' den. In the light of psychic science it may be suggested that he quelled the ferocious beasts by magnetic power. Certain persons are known to have this power over animals. Lady Susan Townley, in her interesting experiences at the Chinese Legation, printed in the *Weekly Dispatch*, says that the old Dowager Empress of China had

magnetic power over birds and could make them do her bidding.

The later years of Daniel are marked by symbolic visions—the vision of the four beasts, the vision of God's Kingdom and the vision of the ram and he-goat, which the angel Gabriel, materialising in the form of a man, interprets. Daniel is in a trance during these visions and awakens feeling faint and sick, an experience understood by modern mediums.

By prayer and fasting and continual subjugation of the flesh, he reaches the highest position as a seer. His life is passed in continuous experience of prophetic visions and communion with angelic beings.

JACOB'S DREAM AND LOVE STORY

FROM the earliest ages dreams and visions have played an important part in human life. We all have dreams ; they are the most usual of psychological experiences. At one time, people were shy of relating prophetic dreams because of that dread word "superstition," but to-day such reticence has been broken down, and to have had a dream which reveals the future makes one a person of intense interest to psychic students.

Dream phenomena are of frequent occurrence and attested by credible people. The dream may be a warning, or it may take the form of a vision of a death or some catastrophe taking place at the time and affecting a loved one of the dreamer, or it may relate to trivial things.

For example, an elderly lady had lost her writing-desk. The house was searched for it in vain. One night she dreamed that it had been found in the fire-grate of a spare bedroom. Next morning she sent her maid to the room and the desk was found in the grate behind a fire-screen, having been put there during a turning out of the room, and forgotten.

Psycho-analysts to-day regard dreams as a useful index to the mental disturbance of the patient whom they are trying to cure. A dream

often reveals a subconscious trouble. Truly, "the machinery of dreaming," as de Quincey says, "was not planted in the human brain for nothing."

Jacob's dream deals with what is customarily called the supernatural. It is spiritual and picturesque. Every child loves the story, and what touches the imagination of a child has the true mystic touch. The ladder of the dream survives to-day in articles of commerce. In glass-manufactories you will come across old workers who please visitors by fashioning a Jacob's ladder with molten glass, a thing of dazzling beauty when it solidifies.

Jacob dreams his dream 1760 B.C. He is the son of the wealthy Isaac and the darling of his mother, Rebekah. But a cloud hangs over the promising youth; he has obtained his brother's birthright by fraud and fears Esau's revenge. Rebekah devises a plan to send him out of harm's way, and with her usual skill in manipulating a situation, alarms the aged Isaac with the idea that Jacob may make an unsuitable marriage with one of the daughters of Canaan. So Isaac charges his son to go "to Padan-aram and take a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother."

Jacob sets out hurriedly, secretly and unattended. No stately camel, with servants in train, carries him over the desert. Staff in hand he trudges his lonely, weary way, full of painful thoughts. By sunset he has accomplished forty

miles of his journey and has reached the lonely rugged country of Bethel. The hills tower around him in solemn grandeur. Taking a stone for a pillow he lies down to sleep beneath the canopy of heaven.

We like to think that the stars shone brightly above him and inspired the dazzling conception of his dream. He sees a ladder, bright and shining, "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven." The place is full of heavenly glory ; angels are ascending and descending the glittering staircase ; beautiful, white-robed ethereal beings. They are the messengers of God Himself whom the dreamer sees sitting at the top of the ladder on a throne of golden splendour. Voices fall upon his ear and his troubled spirit receives the comforting assurance : " Behold, I am with thee . . . in all places whither thou goest."

Jacob awakes in the morning refreshed in body and spirit, and taking the pillow of stone whereon he has had his wondrous vision, sets it up as an altar unto his God and names the place " Bethel."

Most of us at some crisis in our lives have had our Bethel awakening after going to our couch with a heavy heart. We may not have seen a vision of angels, but a consciousness of guidance from the Unseen has soothed our spirits like the balm of Gilead.

The Rev. H. R. Haweis has described spiritualism as " The Jacob's Ladder which reaches from earth to heaven and upon which the angels

of God are ascending and descending"—a very beautiful idea.

At sunrise, Jacob resumes his journey. No longer do his feet drag heavily over the road. His mind now turns to thoughts of love, and he goes happily forward with confident hope in the future.

By evening he has reached the vicinity of Padan-aram and stops to rest by a well in a field. He is told by those about the well that Laban's flocks come there to water, brought by his daughter Rachel.

This is good news, the situation is growing romantic and the young man waits impatiently by the well.

Soon he sees a flock of sheep approaching, led by a beautiful maiden. No need to tell him that the fair shepherdess is Rachel. She comes to him with smiling face in the soft glow of the evening sun and seems to be the culmination of his dream. He thinks her as beautiful as the angels, and watches her with a lover's eyes as he assists her to water the sheep.

He at once tells her who he is and with a kinsman's privilege kisses her. It is a tense moment ; a time when love has its pain and, with the thought of the troubled past and the present joy, Jacob is unmanned and " lifted up his voice and wept."

Meanwhile Rachel has sped home with the news, and Laban comes out to welcome Jacob to his house.

One wonders whether the sequel to the love

story is designed to chasten the spirit of Jacob. After receiving the promise of Laban that he shall have the beautiful, well-favoured Rachel for his wife, he is deceived on the nuptial night by the substitution of the elder sister, Leah. But his love for Rachel, the maiden allied with his dream, remains unchanged, and he serves Laban yet another seven years that he may take her to wife.

The patient serving of Jacob for Rachel has been the simile of a lover's devotion throughout time. The seven years of his servitude "seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

JOSEPH THE DREAMER AND INTERPRETER OF DREAMS

THE story of Joseph's dream is very human, a picture of family life in which a younger brother, given to a little boasting, suffers at the hands of his elder brethren. His dream, though prophetic, is not associated with any heavenly vision as was that of his father at Bethel. But evidently Joseph has inherited some psychic power from his father, and his dream, though a normal experience, foretells the future.

Joseph, the idolised son of Jacob's old age, occupies a privileged position in the patriarch's household, which excites the jealousy of his brothers. His father has given him a coat of many colours, a further annoyance to them, not for artistic reasons, but because the fashioning of the coat is that of one not in servitude. It marks Joseph out from the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's concubines. Furthermore, Joseph carries home reports of the evil doings of his brothers in the fields.

Such is the atmosphere of dislike and jealousy which surrounds Joseph, an attractive, petted youth of seventeen, when he has dreams which add fuel to the flames.

We imagine him in the harvest-field, tired in

the heat of the day, and he lies down to rest and falls asleep and dreams. The scene of his work is present with him in sleep, and he sees the sheaves of his brethren bow down before his sheaf which stands upright in the midst of them.

When he awakens he hastens to tell his brethren his dream and they say indignantly, "Shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" and they "hated him yet the more for his dream."

It might have been prudent of Joseph to keep his next dream to himself, but no, he excitedly informs his brethren, "I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." Even Jacob now rebukes him for boastfulness: all the same, he cherishes the dream of his favourite son in his heart. Jacob knows that it has been sent for a purpose and will receive fulfilment in the days to come.

Not so the angry brethren of the dreamer, and when he comes out to Shechem, where they are feeding their flocks, they seize the lad, strip him of his coat of many colours, and put him into a pit to die, while they callously sit down to eat bread.

Poor Joseph, this does not look like the fulfilment of his dreams; but even as he cries in his misery there comes along a company of merchantmen, Ishmeelites, with their camels bearing spices and balm and myrrh, to carry into Egypt. Joseph's brethren see an opportunity for making money. They take the poor youth from the pit

and sell him to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver.

As he journeys along like a slave with the caravan, is Joseph permitted to know, we wonder, that this is the first step towards the fulfilment of his dreams and that out of his present humiliation will come ultimate honour and prosperity?

Arrived in Egypt, Joseph is sold by the merchantmen to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's and captain of the guard.

Joseph Interprets Dreams.

The second phase in the wonderful history of the Dreamer finds him achieving reputation as an interpreter in ancient Egypt, a country where the study of psychic lore and astrology existed from the earliest ages.

Ten years have passed since Joseph was sold into Egypt, and he has *made good* in the house of his master, Potiphar. But now, spitefully accused by Potiphar's wife, he is thrown into prison.

Amongst his fellow-prisoners are the chief butler and the chief baker of the King. Both have dreams which no one can interpret. Joseph feels that he has the mystic gift and offers his services. The chief butler relates his dream of the vine and the three branches, and Joseph interprets it to mean that in three days he will be restored to favour, and serve Pharaoh with his wine.

The chief baker relates his dream of the three white baskets and the baked meats which the birds did eat. Joseph is honest in his interpretation, dreadful as is the task, and he tells the baker that in three days he will be hanged upon a tree and the birds will eat his flesh.

Both interpretations are fulfilled, but for two more years Joseph languishes in prison forgotten by the ungrateful butler.

At length Pharaoh, the great and mighty king, is troubled by a dream—a dream of seven well-favoured kine and seven ill-favoured kine coming up from the river. Then again he dreams, now of seven good ears of corn upon one stalk and of seven thin ears blasted with the east wind.

The practice of the occult in Egypt in these early ages is made plain, for we are told that Pharaoh called for all the magicians and the wise men to interpret his dreams, but their usual skill failed them. Then the chief butler remembers that he has been forgetful of Joseph. He now tells Pharaoh that there was with him and the chief baker in prison, “a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the Captain of the Guard, and we told him and he interpreted to us our dreams.”

A messenger now surprises Joseph in the dungeon. He is bidden to shave himself, put on suitable raiment and come to the King's house.

These years of imprisonment must have robbed Joseph of his manhood's beauty and his attractive bearing. He would come forth a sadly

dejected figure, fearing impending punishment or death.

Such fears are allayed when Pharaoh addresses him : " I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it : and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it."

And Joseph replies, " It is not in me : God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

We picture the scene in the palace. Pharaoh surrounded by his courtiers, who are curious to see the turn of events. The magicians and astrologers stand discredited and angry in the background. The young Hebrew, fresh from his dungeon, is a marked figure amidst the surrounding grandeur. He carries himself with dignity and with attentive ear listens as Pharaoh relates his dreams. Then an inspired look comes into his face and stepping forward to the King he interprets his dream amidst the hushed silence of the court. It signifies, he says, that seven years of plenty will be succeeded by seven years of famine, and bids the King make preparations and store corn in Egypt against the days of famine.

Never has an interpreter of dreams received a richer reward. Joseph, the prisoner, is now honoured as a prince. Pharaoh appoints him ruler over all the land of Egypt. His fetters are removed, and he is invested with a royal ring and a chain of gold and put to ride in the King's chariot, and all bow down before him.

It is unique in the history of dreams that an

interpreter's own dream should find fulfilment in his interpretation of another's dream. This is the case with the dreams of Joseph and Pharaoh. The predicted famine overtakes the land, according to Pharaoh's dream, and Joseph's brethren, coming to buy corn in Egypt, bow down before him as the mighty prince, the arbiter of plenty. And so are fulfilled the dreams which Joseph dreamed in the harvest-fields of Canaan.

THE VISION OF SAMUEL, THE CHILD OF THE TEMPLE

All seers have seen by the light of childhood. Our childhood follows us into manhood.—G. MATHESON.

THE unsophisticated mind of a child is often more open to impressions from the Unseen world than that of an adult. Hence we have children who see fairies and firmly believe them to be real people. There are cases on record of highly sensitive children having invisible playmates who talk to them in some quiet hour in the nursery, and are not seen by anyone save themselves.

In the Bible we find a psychic phenomenon experienced by a child, in the story of Samuel. We are told that at this time there "was no open vision," or that psychic manifestations had become infrequent owing, doubtless, to the unspiritual condition of the Israelites.

A beautiful boy, set apart for the service of the temple, is the chosen medium for the beginning of a series of fresh revelations.

Samuel was well-born, psychically. He was God's gift in answer to the prayer of his mother, the devout, spiritually-minded Hannah. True to her vow, she dedicated him to the service of the Lord and brought him when about four years

of age to the temple at Shiloh to serve with Eli, the priest. Each year, when she came with Elkanah her husband to make an offering at the temple, she brought her boy a new little coat. This human touch in the narrative speaks eloquently regarding the fond mother's heart, ever yearning over the child from whom she is separated.

The boy Samuel grew year by year in favour with God and man. He was devoted to his master, Eli, and an affectionate companionship grew up between the two, as is often the case with an old man and a child. Distressed by the wickedness of his own sons, Eli clings for comfort to the child of the temple, who is so obedient to his commands and of such a sweet and gentle disposition.

Without the sacred place there is sordid wickedness, but within the precincts the aged Eli, his eyes growing dim, and the young Samuel in the first beauty of life, running about in his little coat, his loins girded with an ephod, to trim the lamp and attend the door of the temple, keep alive spiritual communion.

One night, when both have retired to their respective beds, Samuel is aroused by a voice calling him. He sees nothing in the darkness and thinks that Eli is calling and hastens to his side, saying, "Here am I." The old priest answers, "I called not, lie down again." But the voice calls again, and yet a third time, "Samuel, Samuel," and the bewildered boy

insists, "Thou didst call me," and still Eli answers, "I called not." At length Eli realises that the mysterious voice comes from the Unseen, and bids Samuel answer, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

The message now given to the awed and listening boy bodes ill to the house of his beloved master, Eli. When the vision has passed he lies pondering until the morning, then rises to perform his usual duties and opens the door of the temple. He dreads to meet Eli and fears "to show him the vision." But the old priest is not to be put off. He approaches the boy in a fatherly attitude: "Samuel, my son, what is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee?" and the boy tells him "every whit."

That night's vision was the initiation of the child Samuel as one of Israel's great seers. Throughout his life he received revelations and was known as a prophet, "from Dan even to Beersheba." Truly, "all seers have seen by the light of childhood."

THE VISIONS OF THE PROPHETS

The inestimably precious unorganized institution, the Order, if it might be so termed, the Order of the Prophets.
—JOHN STUART MILL.

THE word " Vision " at once suggests to the mind something seen, but it also carries with it a relation to the future. From time immemorial those who have had visions have been called seers or prophets, and the root meaning of the word is expressed in the modern form of clair-voyant.

Great souls in all ages have been inspired in their work, as were the prophets of old. If the secret experiences of Milton or Shakespeare were revealed it might be found that they were conscious of being under some Unseen control as they wrote. The writings of Emmanuel Swedenborg reveal him as the greatest of modern vision-seers.

Lovers of that spiritual artist-poet, William Blake, will recall that he owed the turning point in his career to a vision in which his departed brother revealed a technical process by which he was enabled to produce a facsimile of song and design.

Blake relates that he saw the spirit of this loved brother ascend through the ceiling at the

time of dissolution and "clapped his hands for joy"—joy that his brother still lived and was able to communicate with him from the spirit world. The brothers appear to have worked as closely together in art by their spirit communion as when the elder was on earth.

Some present-day writers confess to working under occult influence. A distinguished novelist relates that she has often been visited in her study by a Hindoo, who gave her material for native stories and then vanished as mysteriously as he came. His presence was absolutely real to her.

Possibly Mr. H. G. Wells had a prophetic vision of the Tanks, which he so graphically described in a story in *The Strand*, some thirteen years before they were invented for warfare.

With regard to the psychical evolution of the Tank, the vision of Mrs. Capron, the wife of a British officer, may be cited, as related in *The Daily Express*. Mrs. Capron was much concerned over untoward events in the war and, as she was thinking deeply, she heard a voice calling, "More help from Great Britain," and suddenly in a vision saw "great armoured battle cars, bristling with guns," going over the trenches and dealing havoc amongst the enemy. So real was the vision that, on the strength of it, Mrs. Capron put in a claim for the reward offered by Government to the inventor of the Tanks.

Madame de Thèbes, the "soothsayer" of Paris, who was consulted by many eminent personages, was a seer of visions. She used to say,

“ I am just a plain, domestic woman of the people, and never call myself a psychic ; I simply see things that are going to happen.”

It may be of interest to give an instance, not generally known, of this remarkable woman's gift.

A gentleman and his pretty young wife, personal friends of Madame de Thèbes, were calling upon her and in course of conversation mentioned that the wife was going to America and proposed to sail in the *Titanic*, because it was said to be a boat which could never be sunk.

“ Do not let your wife sail in that boat,” said Madame de Thèbes to the gentleman, “ for I see it in mid-ocean being overwhelmed by an iceberg.”

The husband pooh-poohed the vision and remonstrated with Madame de Thèbes for alarming his young wife. Ignoring the warning, the lady sailed in the *Titanic* and was amongst those lost in that terrible catastrophe.

Harriet Beecher Stowe relates that the idea of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* came to her in a vision while she was sitting at Communion Service in the College Church at Brunswick. She saw the scene of Uncle Tom's death unroll before her like a picture. Around that pathetic vision Mrs. Stowe wove her immortal story. And who shall say that it was not as much an outcome of the Divine purpose as were the visions of the prophets of old? *Uncle Tom's Cabin* cut straight at the root of slavery and more copies of it have been sold

than of any other book in the language, save the Bible.

Joan of Arc heard voices and saw visions and was burned at the stake for supposed witchcraft. To-day the inspired maid has been canonised.

So, throughout history, exceptional people have dreamed dreams and seen visions.

The books of the Hebrew prophets were admittedly written by inspired men. They wrote under control. They foretold the future as revealed in visions, and kings and priests trembled before them. They were the idealists of their age and suffered the persecution which usually comes to those who see far ahead of their times.

These prophetic psychics sprang from all classes. Amos was a herdsman and a gatherer of the sycamore fruit, Micah was a man of the people, Jeremiah and Ezekiel priests, Daniel of noble birth, and Isaiah, according to tradition, was an aristocrat of the royal house. All consciously knew themselves to be instruments in the hands of the Most High.

Jeremiah's doleful prophecy is illustrated by symbolic visions as in that of the "almond tree and seething pot," the girdle which was marred, and the baskets of good and bad figs. He writes as one in constant communication with the higher powers.

Ezekiel is a prolific seer of visions. They startle one in almost every chapter of his mystical book. They appeared to him while a captive in Babylon

and often when he was beside the river Chebar. We may recall the visions of the "four cherubim" and the "four wheels" and of the "roll of a book," "the coals of fire," and that marvellous vision of the resurrection in the valley of dry bones, unsurpassed for its weird description.

Isaiah, the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, relates his visions in terms of matchless imagery. The sublime utterances which fall from his lips, his terrific outbursts against evil-doers and his tender compassion for the suffering and sorrowful place him on the pinnacle of inspired eloquence. Quotation is not needed. The burning words of the prophet are woven into the warp and woof of the languages of Judaism and Christendom, and have thrilled countless thousands when rendered by the great masters of song.

The book of Isaiah is a vision which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah. He sees the future history of the Jewish race. For their sins they are to be conquered and scattered over the face of the earth, their punishment is described with simile and metaphor of terrific import, but a remnant is to be saved and return again to Zion. Jerusalem, lying low, overshadowed by the hills of Moab, he sees exalted to the skies. She who has been debased by the foe shall rise out of the ashes of her destruction and become an exalted sign amongst the nations. He sees not only the tribes of Israel, but all the nations of the world ascending the slopes of Zion.

The weapons of war are no longer needed and the glorious vision unfolds itself before Isaiah as an age of universal peace. In the familiar passage, "Unto us a Son is born," he predicts the virgin-birth of the Messiah ; He who is to be the Saviour of the world.

Although the entire book of Isaiah is a vision and a prophecy, the prophet describes special experiences as in the ecstatic vision which came to him when worshipping before the altar in the temple, in the year when Uzziah the King died. It is a time of political crisis in Israel and the prophet is seeking guidance.

As he prays, Isaiah experiences such an exaltation of spirit that he seems to be carried beyond the veil of the Holy of Holies, even into Heaven itself, and he sees "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim, each one had six wings, with twain he covered his face and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." The atmosphere is tense and as the seraphim cry, "Holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts," the posts of the door move and the house is filled with smoke.

In this glorious vision Isaiah receives his dedication as a prophet. He is bidden to go forth and tell the people the things which are to befall Israel—the captivity in Babylon, the destruction of that city of iniquity, the return to Jerusalem and the birth of the Messiah. A seraph takes a live coal from the altar and lays it upon the

mouth of the prophet in token that he is purged of sin; and also it seems to be a symbol of the burning eloquence of his lips.

The visions of the prophets are the most remarkable instance in history of the power of "suggestion." Through these *suggestive* revelations hope has been kept alive in the hearts of the scattered Hebrews throughout long centuries. The promises are for them, and come oppression or come persecution, they are conscious of being the chosen people who have occupied a unique position from remote antiquity.

I once heard a flippant person ask a Jew why some people were so eager to prove that the British were descendants of the Lost Tribes? "What distinction would it be to have sprung from the Lost Tribes?" The descendant of Abraham looked amazed and replied, "Why, your nation would inherit the Promises!"

Belief in the Promises has given dignity, courage and patience to the Hebrew race. They may be patriots without a country, religionists with their ancient shrine demolished: they may see Zion laid low and Jerusalem robbed of her beauty and greatness, but the predictions of the vision-seeing prophets remain as the solace and comfort of the pious Jew in every land.

Though the Books of the Prophets were written for the Hebrew race, they contain lessons for humanity at large. They are books of philosophy, books of maxims and books of the highest spiritual teaching. The visions therein related

are so rich in symbolism that the imagery is applicable to every phase of human experience and aspiration. Modern psychics may dream dreams and see visions, but the vision-seeing prophets of the Old Testament remain, after the lapse of centuries, unsurpassed for marvellous experiences and the vivid power of narrating them.



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