

Coming back to Genesis ii 5, and rendering *ki, though*, a meaning which it often has, I would translate thus: "And every plant of the field was *already* in the earth, and every herb of the field had *already* sprouted, though the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth," &c. With this translation the historian's meaning is obvious enough. He is giving a summary of the story of Creation with a view to introduce the history of Jehovah's covenant relations with the man for whom He made special provision in the garden of Eden; and he recalls the fact that the earth was already prepared for the habitation of man, that the materials for a garden, suitable for his first home, were already in existence, even in that region of the earth where, as his readers knew, rain was almost unknown—a mist, which went up from the abundantly watered plains of the Tigris and Euphrates, supplying the place of rain.

Thus read, the discrepancy between the two accounts of Creation disappears; and, if a just reason can be given for the introduction of the covenant name of God into this history of the Adam, there seems no difficulty in supposing that the second chapter is the work of the same author as the first.

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EXODUS xxxiii. 15.—What was the special grace desired by Moses in these memorable words? After the apostacy of the children of Israel at the foot of Sinai, God set forth new conditions under which they should continue their journey to the Promised Land. What withdrawal of honour and privilege was there in these conditions that Moses should so strongly deprecate their being carried out? If we had only this chapter, we might infer that the difference in God's future dealings with Israel would be, that He would henceforth commit them to the care of an angel—some messenger of his providence less holy than Himself—and that the honour and privilege which his personal presence implied would be withdrawn. For we read in the opening verses of the chapter, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which *thou hast brought up* out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: *and I will send an angel before thee: . . . for I will not go up* in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way" (Verses 1-3).

Apart, however, from the fact that it is difficult to conceive of any real difference between God's personal and instrumental superintendence, we no sooner turn our attention to the account of his pro-

posed dealings with Israel before they fell into the idolatry of the golden calf, than we find that the handing over of the command of their hosts to an angel could not have been the change of treatment that filled Moses with such dismay. In Chapter xxiii. 20, God says, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions : *for my name is in him*. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak ; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites," &c. There is no warrant for the supposition that the angel of Chapter xxxiii. is an inferior being to the Angel of the Divine Presence spoken of in Chapter xxiii. Indeed, there can be no reasonable doubt that when God says, "Must my presence (literally, my face) go with thee, that I may give thee rest?"¹ the reference is to the angel in whom God's Name was, and whose visible symbol was the pillar of cloud and of fire. And of course the reference will be the same in Moses' reply, "If thy presence go not *with me* [with us. See Verse 16], carry us not up hence."

What, then, was the grace which God proposed to withdraw from Israel? By their shameful apostacy after the manifestation of the Divine glory at Sinai they had shewn that the grandest and most awful signs of the Divine Majesty could easily be forgotten ; and it really seemed that the presence of the pillar of cloud and of fire in their midst would not, when once it should become familiar, deter them from rebellion. It would be better not to give them the opportunity of openly insulting the Divine Majesty. A grace which failed to inspire awe would inevitably harden. God intimated, therefore, that the Angel of his face, instead of having his holy tent in the midst of the tents of the congregation ("I will not go up *in the midst* of thee"), should simply *go before them* to prepare their way. If the fiery cloudy pillar were not altogether withdrawn, it should remove to a distance from their camp, and they should be reminded by this very distance that they were an obstinate people, and that the Lord God refused to dwell among them. Hitherto Moses' own tent, pitched without the camp, had been the tent of meeting, not only for himself, but for any member of the congregation who wanted to inquire of the Lord. As this, however, was a provisional arrangement, pending the erection of the sanctuary, we must suppose that this also was part of the privilege to be withdrawn.

¹ Chap. xxxiii. 14. See Ewald's translation in Cheyne and Driver's "Old Testament." I would translate the last clause, "In order to set thee at rest."

If, now, we look at Chapter xxix. 42-45, we shall see of what they would be deprived by the threatened change in God's dealings: "This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord: where I will meet you, to speak there unto thee. And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and *the tabernacle* shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God."

Evidently they would lose the sanctuary which was to be their peculiar glory. To the nations they would appear a people that not only had no visible God, but no public religious rites. Moses, their leader, instead of being able to commune with God and ask counsel of Him, would be left to the guidance of his own sagacity. The children of Israel could not come to inquire of God; no atonement could be carried into the presence of his mercy-seat, and no blessing could be spoken by the priests, conveying peace to the hearts of the thousands of Israel. They were to be left to follow their own devices and the counsels of their own hearts. God would fill them with their own ways. Only his providence engaged to direct their path and prepare their way to enter the Promised Land. The effect of this terrible reservation in the conditions on which God pardoned their apostasy would have resembled the effect of a papal interdict in mediæval times, when nations were denied the public offices of religion and shut up to a life almost without God in the world. It was this terrible prospect that called forth Moses' passionate entreaty, "If thy presence go not *with us*, carry us not up hence." Better that we should remain in the wilderness, better that we should die where we are, than live under such perpetual discouragement, so manifestly forsaken of God!

The lesson God desired to teach was conveyed by the mere threatening, and, in answer to the intercession of Moses, He consents to the construction and erection of the sanctuary. When completed, He solemnly took possession of it, and Jehovah's sacred tent became the visible centre of the camp of Israel (Chap. xl. 34-38).

The application of this incident is obvious, though, since we live under a new and better covenant, we are in a somewhat different case from the children of Israel. The Shekinah has been set up in the family of man and can never be removed. Immanuel, God with us, is the imperishable possession of the human family. Atonement for the sins of mankind has been made; Divine forgiveness has been

pronounced ; God and man are reconciled. If nowhere else, the reconciliation is accomplished in the person of Jesus Christ. A man is on the throne of God. A new and living way into the holiest of all is open to the contrite in heart. There is a Comforter ready to dwell with man upon the earth, who is the Spirit of the Father and the Son. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance, and the covenant which secures these blessings is unchangeable and can never be revoked.

The question for us is, Are we content to live without a personal sense of the Divine presence, without tasting for ourselves that the Lord is gracious, without seeking counsel and guidance from the oracles of God and obtaining answers of peace to our prayers? Does a life of practical atheism seem to us something too terrible to be endured? Would an interdict of our sanctuary services, a prohibition laid upon private prayer, a withdrawal of Divine promises, fill us with heartfelt dismay? Would it make a great difference to our actual life, if we were deprived of all opportunity of seeking Divine counsel, and were left to guide ourselves by our own sagacity, to maintain our uprightness by our own strength, and live without thought of Him in the world? Are we prepared to say, "If the Lord go not up with us in the journey of life, we would rather that it should end here. We decline to bear such responsibilities alone. It were better, in such a case, to die than to live"?

It is not out of place to add that the suggestion offered in this note lights up the whole of that part of the Book of Exodus which refers to the wilderness-life of Israel. What is more, it accounts for what otherwise appears so strange, the detailed repetition of all the particulars respecting the construction of the Sanctuary. Moses, trained in all the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians, had imbibed their characteristic love of symbolism ; and nothing, probably, delighted his soul more than that Jehovah's revelation of Himself should take this ritualistic form. He would value the honour of giving this Sanctuary to Israel more than any credit that might accrue to him for his civil and sanitary regulations. Was it not oracle and mysteries all in one? The prospect of losing it had filled him with dismay ; while the permission to carry out the original design that had been shewn him in the Mount, after the threatened prohibition, gives him so much joy, that he dwells with fondness upon the actual execution of the work as the completion of the great ambition of his life. According to this view, the repetition of the account of the construction of the Tabernacle becomes an unmistakable mark of the genuineness and authenticity of Exodus. No writer of a later age,

who might have drawn up a description of the construction of the Tabernacle, would have thought of elaborating it twice over, once in the form of instructions how to make it, and then again in an account, equally detailed, of the way in which these instructions were carried out. It is just a reflection of the joy that filled the great Lawgiver's heart in the possession of a privilege that had been so nearly lost.

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ISAIAH vi. 9, 10.—There is no passage of Holy Writ that has a better title to be regarded as a *locus classicus* than this. It is quoted in each of the Synoptical Gospels. St. John recalls it when recording the unbelief of the Jews, and St. Paul twice quotes it in illustration of the same painful fact. There are striking variations in the uses thus made of it from the original passage, which furnish a pertinent example of the freedom with which the sacred writers handled previous statements of Scripture.

The forms of quotation in the New Testament range themselves into two diverging lines, one tending to assert that an influence is brought to bear upon men's minds by which they are rendered insensible to moral truth, the other that their blindness is the result of their own unwillingness to understand and obey. To the former may be referred Mark iv. 11, 12; Luke viii. 10; John xii. 39, 40; and Romans xi. 8; to the latter, Matthew xiii. 14, 15; Acts xxviii. 26, 27. Since the last two passages are an almost verbal quotation from the LXX., it may be said that the leaning of the New Testament is to discern between the lines, if not in the form, of the original passage a judicial chastisement of the perverseness of the Jewish people.

It becomes therefore an interesting question, What was the precise meaning of the message conveyed by the Divine Spirit to Isaiah's mind? Did it represent the ministry to which he was solemnly deputed as a forlorn hope, because, from the moral temper and confirmed habits of the people, an unfavourable result was antecedently certain? This seems the sense in which it was understood by the authors of the LXX., and its form, if Hebrew idiom be taken into account, is by no means inconsistent with this meaning. It is a mode of expression, very characteristic of Hebrew thought, to represent the result of a course of action as designed which is only foreseen or confidently anticipated. Familiar with forms of government in which the sovereign power appeared wholly without control, the Hebrews transferred ideas derived from this source to the government of God. They had a conviction, that the Judge of all the earth must do right, but the conception of the rights of the creature and correlative