

Contributions and Comments.

The Angels' Song.

IF I am not too late, being *penitus toto divisus orbe*, may I send a word on Lk 2¹⁴?

In Abbé Crampon's French Bible occurs the following note:—

'La Vulgate porte : *pax hominibus bonae voluntatis*; ce que l'on traduit ordinairement par : *paix aux hommes de bonne volonté*. Mais le terme *εὐδοκία* semble devoir s'entendre ici (comme presque partout dans l'Écriture, où il correspond à l'hébr. *ratsôn*, Vulg. *beneplacitum*, cf. Ps 5¹⁸, etc.) de la *bienveillance divine*, d'où descendit, avec Jésus-Christ, le salut et la *paix*, non pas seulement pour les hommes qui sont présentement de *bonne volonté*, mais aussi pour les pécheurs qui, par l'effet de la *bienveillance* divine, seront amenés au *bon vouloir* (voy. Philipp 2¹⁸). Le sens serait donc : *paix aux hommes objets de la bienveillance divine*. Cf. Isaïe, 49⁸ 61², etc., et Luc. 177 *sv*. De plus il est très probable qu'il faut lire, au lieu du génitif, le nominatif *εὐδοκία* : *bienveillance*, comme il est traduit ci-dessus. Avec le génitif il faut traduire : Au ciel gloire à Dieu ! Sur la terre paix aux hommes, objets de la bienveillance divine.'

The text in this Bible reads :

Gloire, dans les hauteurs, à Dieu !
Et, sur la terre, paix,
Bienveillance pour les hommes !

I wish to introduce this Bible to your readers, who may not know it. It is the best Bible I know in any language. It has hardly any Roman Catholic bias. It has excellent notes and is very well got-up. But I could write pages of its excellences. It is published by the Société de S. Jean l'Évangéliste, Deselée, Lefebvre et Cie, Paris, Rome, and Tournai; and I believe a second edition is coming out; the first is exhausted. It prints the Apocryphal books in historical or prophetic or poetical order, in this being of course superior to Segond's excellent Bible, which does not contain the Apocrypha, but to which, however, it is indebted for renderings in the O.T.

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Tananarive.

The Theophany at Horeb (1 Kings 19).

COMMENTATORS seem to be divided between two interpretations of this passage. Older writers like Keil saw in it a rebuke to the fiery zeal of the prophet, and a revelation of God as long-suffering and gentle in His ways. More recent critics (e.g. Benzinger, Kittel, Skinner) rightly point out that vv. 15-18 contradict this, and see in the theophany a refining of the conception of Yahweh, as one whose nature is to be symbolized only by the least sensuous of representations.

This interpretation, however, strikes one as giving the lesson which may be derived from the theophany in this novel form, rather than what it meant for Elijah and for his biographer: what the prophet seeks, and what we should expect to find, is a revelation of Yahweh's will to His discouraged servant, and something like this must be the primary import of what happened. More important still, on this view the symbolism of the vision (v. 11f.) is unlike that of other prophetic experiences of the kind in that it has no close connexion with the divine message which follows (vv. 15-18), but merely serves to prepare Elijah for a revelation of some kind.

If we work back from the words of Yahweh in vv. 15-18, yet another interpretation offers itself. The events recorded in v. 11f. form the immediate occasion of the revelation; they are the symbols by which Yahweh reveals to the prophet what He is about to do. In wind, earthquake, and fire He is at work in some measure, but He is fully known only when to these succeeds 'the sound of a light whisper' (Burney). What can this mean? Disheartened by his failure, Elijah feels that Yahweh's cause in Israel is doomed to disaster: now in what comes to him in the desert he reads the divine assurance that it shall not be so. As in Jer 1 and Am 7 f., Yahweh's oracle is seen first in symbols, then clearly revealed to the mind. The three forces of Nature represent the three catastrophes which are soon to come upon Israel—war, civil strife, and religious conflict. In all this Yahweh is at work, leading events to quietness and peace; as on the storm of the desert the light breeze follows, so on the disasters of His people will