

‘Thus saith Jahweh.’

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To appreciate at its true value the significance of the prophetic formula ‘Thus saith Jahweh,’ it is necessary to note that in the Revised Version of the Old Testament, as in the earlier of 1611, it is rendered ‘Thus saith the LORD,’ which is, nevertheless, an imperfect and misleading representation of the Hebrew name; for ‘Jahweh’ and ‘The LORD’ are not equivalent terms, the ideas for which they severally stand being not only dissimilar, but disparate. What ‘Jahweh’ means, what its origin was, and where it originated, are questions which have long been, and still are, under dispute. One thing, however, is certain: ‘The LORD’ is *not* what it means. Centuries before the Christian era the Jews began to regard the distinctive name of their national God with a superstitious awe, which ultimately made them shrink from taking it on their lips even in the reading of Holy Writ, and led to their substituting for it, in their reading, a name of lower import and of generic as distinguished from personal significance (אֲדֹנָי, meaning ‘Lord,’ and accordingly represented in the LXX, appropriately enough, by Κύριος, which again was reproduced in the Vulgate by the Latin ‘Dominus,’ and subsequently by the English ‘The LORD,’ and the German ‘Der Herr.’ To what extent Christendom has in this matter followed in the wake of Judaism is amazing. The Jews would not pronounce the holy name; but we neither pronounce it nor print it. In English theological books, of a more or less scientific character, it is now common indeed to meet with the transliterated Hebrew name, in slightly varying forms (Jahwe, Jahweh, Yahweh), but as yet no English edition of the Scriptures intended for use in public worship has replaced the objectionable expression ‘The LORD’ by ‘Jahweh,’ which, like other proper names, will always be open, I fear, to the objection of being untranslatable.

In our English Bible, to represent ‘Jahweh’ use is frequently made of an impossible word ‘Jehovah’—a conflate term consisting of the consonants of one word (יהוה) and the vowels of another (אֲדֹנָי), which is no word therefore of natural origin, and,

strictly speaking, no word at all, but an artificial and essentially meaningless invention, introduced into the English language four centuries ago, in the year 1520, as the late Professor A. B. Davidson testifies. It was *then*, on various grounds, more open to objection than ‘Jahweh’ would be at the present day. In the first place, ‘Jahweh’ is a real word, which ‘Jehovah’ is not; in the second, there is no more reason for excluding it from our vocabulary than for excluding other proper names which have been transferred, in an altered or unaltered form, from foreign languages into our own; in the third place, and for a reason the most cogent of all, it would effectually do away with an ambiguity inseparable not only from ‘Lord,’ but also from ‘The LORD.’

When Jahweh is represented by ‘The LORD’ or by ‘GOD,’ as in the case of the twofold expression אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה, because a seeming, but only seeming, tautology would be created by the rendering ‘The Lord LORD,’ the reader is tempted by the imposing capitals to think that the reference can be to none but the most High God—our Lord and God, the Lord and God of Christ and the Christian Church, although the reference really and always is to what might be with justice, but possibly not without offence, called a minor God; to God as He was conceived by ancient Israel, though not as a minor certainly, but as a major, or even as the supreme deity, even when He was not yet regarded as the sole God. This distinction, too often entirely overlooked, it is of great importance to recognize, and even to emphasize. For between Jahweh and the God of Christ and of the Christian Church (perhaps I should add, when it is duly enlightened), or God in the philosophic sense, there is in many ways a difference, and a great one too.

In the frequently recurring formula ‘Thus saith Jahweh,’ the speaker may be a more or less exalted phase of Jahweh, and as such a more or less adequate approximation to God in the highest and fullest sense, but He is always the God of Israel, and as such inferior, both morally and otherwise,

to the God of the Christian faith, on many occasions saying what the Christian God would never say, and doing what He would never do.

There is thus a high necessity for making it perfectly clear, when Jahweh speaks, that He is not yet God in our sense of the word, but only the God of the O.T., in one or other of the many phases through which He passed in the long course of His development in the mind of Israel. From any one who is content to treat lightly the difference between Jahweh on the one hand, even Jahweh at His best, and the supreme and universal God on the other, I must in all seriousness dissent. To slur over the difference is as much a blunder and a sin as to confound an *εἰδωλον* with the 'one living and true God.' For the greater glory of God dwelling in light unapproachable, it is therefore necessary to show a greater regard for scriptural terminology, and, instead of 'Thus saith the LORD,' to read 'Thus saith Jahweh,' and so get rid of an innovation and a perversion, ac-

companied by serious disadvantages, which is none the less an innovation and a perversion because it originated with the LXX more than 2000 years ago.

To restore 'Thus saith Jahweh' in all those passages of our English Bible where 'Thus saith the LORD' occurs, would be only a partial reform; but even from such a reform a considerable benefit would be derived, inasmuch as it would warn the reader that the speaker is Jahweh and not God in the absolute sense, nor even *our* God. If in every passage where 'Jahweh' stands in the Hebrew text, the name were to take the place usurped by 'The LORD,' the change would be much more extensive, while the consequences and advantages would be correspondingly great. Certainly Jahweh and God are not and never were identical, as they are commonly supposed to be. It is distinctly odd that, in Biblical typography, GOD should represent the God of the O.T., and not the greater God of the New.

In the Study.

Virginibus Puerisque.

Facing Sunwards.

'They . . . pitched . . . in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising.'—Nu 21¹¹.

JULY and August are the great months for camping out. During these months we hear of Boys' Brigade Camps here, and Boy Scouts' Camps there, and even Girl Guides' Camps yonder. And it's all very jolly and splendid, and we come back to town wishing hard that we could live under canvas for ever.

Now those of you who know anything at all about camping out know that one of the most important things is the choice of the site where you are to pitch your tent or tents. You fix if possible on a spot where you can get water, and where you will be sheltered from the wind, and where you will get plenty of sunshine. For instance, you would not pitch your camp on the north side of a hill if you could avoid it. You would choose 'the south side, facing the sun.

To-day's text is one of many that tell us where

the Israelites pitched their camp as they journeyed to the Promised Land. On this occasion we are told they pitched it 'in the wilderness which is before Moab, toward the sunrising.' That is just a poetic way of saying that they pitched east of Moab; but I think these three words 'toward the sunrising' would be not at all a bad motto to take for life's journey. Let us pitch our tent 'toward the sunrising.' Let us face in the right direction. Let us face the sun.

Once upon a time when our forefathers ran about dressed in skins they thought a very great deal of the sun, and they were careful always to choose the sunny slopes for their dwellings. After a time people grew to think less of the sun. They built houses facing north, or anyhow, houses too with tiny windows that scarcely allowed the sun to peep in. Then to make matters worse they hung their beds round with great stuffy curtains that shut out his rays, and they kept their blinds down lest his beams should fade their carpets. In our day, fortunately, men are beginning to find out how good a friend the sun is, and we read of sun baths and sun cures, and we go in for large windows and keep