

led to suggest in Haupt's edition of the Hebrew Old Testament (London: David Nutt) that a late editor inserted the words proposed by Lagarde in lieu of a group of words which had become illegible, just as (according to the view adopted above) an editor inserted the reference to Sakkut and Kaiwân in Amos v. 26. In both cases the editor fell into an anachronism. It is worthy of notice that Isa. xlvi. 1, Jer. xlvi. 15 and l. 2, all belong to late compositions; also that the text of Isa. x. 4 seems to have been imperfect in the time of the LXX. translator, who gives simply τοῦ μὴ ἐμπροσθέν εἰς ἀπαγωγήν. It may perhaps turn out that sobriety of judgment is not necessarily identical with critical hesitancy, as has too generally been supposed. Hesitancy is natural and justifiable for a time, but further study may lead even a lover of sobriety to unexpected conclusions.

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### ST. JOHN'S VIEW OF THE SABBATH REST.

REVELATION I. 10.

#### I.

"I WAS in the spirit on the Lord's day." Such is the initial note of the greatest allegorical poem that ever was written. It is hardly the note we should have expected. We should have expected the day itself rather than its spirit to have been the subject of the opening chord. A man about to receive a revelation from heaven might be supposed to be looking first of all upon the curtain, to have his eye riveted originally upon the lifting of that veil which was interposed between him and the mystery. We should imagine that his earliest thought would be, What was the nature of that mystery which should be rent into sunbeams when the curtain fell? what should he see when the veil was with-

drawn? This in truth is not his thought at all. His primary question is, not what he shall see, but whether he shall be fit for the sight. The arduous part of the work to him is not the opening of heaven nor the revelation of heaven; it is the preparation for heaven. He feels that what he needs before all things is the spirit of the sabbath. He feels that the things inside this veil cannot be revealed to the eye. There are few spectacles indeed that *can* be revealed to the eye. I doubt if the most beautiful sights in nature are not indebted for one-half at least of their charm to the voices of the spirit. How many things are beautiful this year that were commonplace last! Why is this? It is no additional painting from the outside; perhaps the tear and wear of time may have diminished the actual glory. But the added charm has come from the spirit of a new day—a day which has lent its association to the once-ignored scene, and invested with imperishable interest what yesterday we passed by on the other side.

The question now is, What in the view of St. John is the spirit of the Lord's day—that spirit which the seer regards as essential and preliminary to any rending of the veil between earth and heaven. Every anniversary day requires its appropriate spirit. Without that spirit, nothing which happens outside will reveal anything to the spectator. The day of a Queen's jubilee requires the spirit of loyalty; without this, no streaming of flags will convey it to the eye, no blast of trumpets will communicate it to the ear. The day which commemorates a victory needs the spirit of patriotism; without this the roll of artillery is all in vain. The day which keeps the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth demands the spirit of poetry; without this the banquet has no significance. The sabbath is in John's view also an anniversary. It is the anniversary of creation and resurrection. It too can only be understood by its appropriate spirit. What is the appropriate spirit of this day as it

appears to the seer of Patmos? It is a very important question, because, according to him, in finding that spirit you have found the spirit preparatory to the Apocalypse. Is there any sign of the seer's opinion? It is something in his favour that, unlike his countrymen in general, he lays more weight upon the sabbath spirit than upon the sabbath hour. Has he given us any indication of what he takes that spirit to be? Do we find in this passage any trace of the thought which lay beneath the words, and which led him to connect the visions of his book with the breath of the seventh morning?

I think we do. I believe that, if we join the second clause of the verse to the first, we shall reach a luminous understanding of the idea which dominated the mind of the apostle, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet." I take the explanatory clause to be the hearing of the trumpet *behind* him. The idea is clearly that of retrospect, looking back. When we hear the sabbath called the day of rest, the question at once arises, What rest? Rest is a relative term; what is rest to you may be hard work to me. I want to know what is that ideal of rest with which you wish me to associate this day. Now, John's ideal of the sabbath rest is that of a satisfied past. It is the ability to look back and say, "It was all very good." The trumpet behind is the triumph behind. It is the sense of happy memory. It is the conviction that "hitherto the Lord has helped us." It is the heart's hymn of retrospect over the way by which it has been led, and the wreathing of that path with flowers across which perhaps it had been brought with tears.

Now, it seems to me that this view of the sabbath rest is borne out both by the Old Testament and by the New. In the book of Genesis it is described as God's rest from creation; but it is a retrospective rest. It is not the joy of prospect but the joy of memory. It is the looking back

upon the work that has been done, and finding that it has been done well, "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good." In the New Testament the day has the significance of a triumph. It is the rest of the soldier who has fought the battle and ascended up on high leading captivity captive. Yet here again it is a retrospective rest. It is the triumph of a work done. It is the glory of looking back rather than of looking forward. Olivet has vindicated Calvary; that is the burden of the resurrection song. It is a rest that centres round the exclamation, "It is finished!" rather than round the vision of a new world begun. Alike in the Old Testament and in the New, alike in its Judaic and in its Christian dress, the sabbath strikes one chord—the chord of memory. The spirit of the Lord's day is the spirit of retrospective rest.

We come next to ask, What is it that renders this the fitting spirit for the Apocalypse? It must have some analogy to that inside the curtain, otherwise it would form no preparation for it. And indeed we shall find that what we want from any revelation is mainly a vision of retrospective rest. On a first view it might seem otherwise. We often think that our chief desire in seeking the rending of the veil is to get a glimpse of the future. In that we deceive ourselves. No man would be satisfied with such a revelation if he got it to-morrow. We want, not mainly a sight of the future, but a sight of the past. Our eagerness to see the future is in great measure a retrospective eagerness. We have a notion that, if the future were unveiled, the past would be vindicated, that the light of to-morrow would throw itself back upon the shadows of yesterday. The desire of man in this world is not simply to feel that in another world it will be all right with him. He wants to feel that it is all right now. His hope is that in a future life the clouds of this will be, not simply rolled away, but explained. He wants to see that they never needed to be

rolled away, that they were always sunbeams in disguise. Nothing less than this will content a human soul.

We cannot, I think, get a better illustration of this than one derived from Bible literature itself—the book of Job. Job receives a richer heritage than all that he has lost. He gets grander houses, broader fields, costlier equipages. Yet, every reader feels that if this be all, the book has reached no conclusion, the problem no answer. If a thing has been taken from me unjustly, it does not restore satisfaction to my mind that some one has compensated the loss. Injustice is not explained by being expiated; and what I want is an explanation. I want to know why the blot came, whether it was a blot at all, what purpose it served in the universe. The real conclusion to the book of Job is not its last chapter but its first; not its epilogue but its prologue. It is in its opening verses that we get the key to its close. It is *these* which, at the end of the book, bring satisfaction to the mind, for they become then a retrospective light. In them we find the vindication of the long hours of sorrow. In them we read the secret of the seeming injustice. In them we behold the days of chaos glorified. The revelation of the mystery is not the supply of new raiment to make up for the old; it is the manifestation of that purpose which made the removal of the old raiment a necessity. The rest of the reader is a retrospective rest.

Now, I take this to be the moral of the Apocalypse. It matters not in this connection how you shall interpret it—whether you shall regard its predictions as past, passing, or to come. In any case, the seer finds himself in imagination at the end of the line looking back. He is standing in thought at the terminus of the present world, and his eye ranges, not into coming worlds, but over the shadowy past. In that gaze he finds rest—sabbath rest, retrospective rest. He sees patches of blue in the places where he used to meet only masses of cloud. And he feels that the latest

vision is the true one, that if he had seen correctly at the beginning, the blue would have always been there. That this is the design of the book is, I think, manifest from its very key-note, "Behold He cometh with clouds." Why mention the end of the book at the beginning? Clearly because to the mind of the seer the end was connected with the beginning. The last coming was not a sudden catastrophe interfering with the present system of things. It was the *climax* of the present system of things, the point to which they had been leading up. To his eye all the troubles of this book were tributaries—streams of the river which was to make glad the city of God. The very expression "He cometh" is suggestive. It withdraws the event from mere futurity. He was coming now—in the very clouds that seemed to obscure Him, in the very mists that appeared to deny Him. He was coming in the chariots of fire, on the wings of the wind, on the waves of sorrow. He was coming by the power of those influences that were meant to retard Him. He was coming by the seeming retrogressions of history, by the alleged failures of life, by the actual falls of man. The song of victory was sung over the place of tears.

This was John's vision. He put himself in the spirit of the Lord's day. He conceived himself to be standing in the seventh morning of creation, and looking back. He heard a trumpet behind him—the voice of the vindicating past proclaiming that it was all very good; and it was the sabbath of his soul. Now, I believe that psychologically St. John is right. I think that to our age, even more than to his, the greatest religious rest in the world is that which comes from the retrospect of history. We are living in the environment of a scientific dogma—the doctrine of evolution. It has threatened to root up the articles of our faith. It has asserted that the argument from design has lost its cogency. It has professed to account for the mechanical order of the

universe by the play of blind forces. It has offered to explain the symmetry of nature by the convergence of un-intelligent laws. It has assailed a ground of faith which used to be regarded as an Ararat in the flood of waters. In these circumstances men have looked round for a new shelter. They have asked if there is any hiding-place from the storm, or covert from the tempest. The ark has, in the opinion of many, been driven forth from its original landing place, and compelled to resume its aimless, trackless way. Is there any suggestion of a second Ararat? Is there any hope of a new anchorage? Is there any possibility that the ship of life may yet be directed to a haven where the first rest shall be restored, and the waters shall cease to trouble?

Now, I say that there is one spot for such rest—the history of life itself. Let us ask for a moment, Is there anything about the history of life which evolution, by its own confession, does not account for? There is. There is an element in history which the doctrine of evolution *admits* it does not explain—the fact of progress. I suppose we may take the late Professor Huxley as an adequate exponent of the doctrine of evolution. In the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Professor Huxley declares that evolution has no necessary connection with progress—that it is equally compatible either with going on, going back, or standing still. This is a most important admission. If progress is not necessarily involved in evolution, then the fact of progress demands an additional agency. If evolution had a choice of roads, why has it chosen the most difficult one? The machine had the alternative of advancing, retreating, or permanently stopping. Why has it taken the first course? The other two courses were much easier. To make it a retrograde movement, or to refuse to move at all beyond the limits of the first species, would, either of them, have been the simpler and therefore the more natural way. But nature has elected to go on, and to go on over a

most complicated path. It has chosen the narrow way, the steep way, the upward way, and it has maintained its choice in spite of infinite obstructions and innumerable actual reverses.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not arguing against the doctrine; I am arguing against its exclusive agency. Nature has made a choice—a selection; and it is not a natural selection. It has chosen to go up the hill, with two other alternatives before it. That choice indicates something as special as a special creation. Why do we value the belief in a special creation? Is it not simply because it implies a purpose, a choice on the part of nature? Here, in the very heart of evolution, there is necessitated the same choice; things go up when they might go down, when they might remain moveless. We take our stand beside the seer of Patmos; we look back. We expect to find the elements of decay, or, at the most, the forms of stagnation. Instead of that, what do we see? The steps of an ascending stair as aspiring as the ladder of Jacob. We hear the sound of a trumpet behind us; the voice of the past is a voice of triumph. Each move is a movement forward, each act is an ascent. The block of dead matter, the crystal, the plant, the animal, the primitive man, the tribal man, the national man, the cosmopolitan man—all these rise before us like the sloping steps of an altar. A hundred influences are present to interrupt their ascent: but they climb pertinaciously to their sabbath, and pause not till they reach the goal. What is that but a deliberately selective purpose—a revelation of the fact that, when the foundations of the earth were laid, Divine Wisdom was there.

This, then, to us, as to the seer of Patmos, is still the sabbath rest of the soul. He sought his revelation from the past. The joy of the Apocalypse is mainly a retrospective joy. All its songs point back. All its notes of jubilee are

over the triumph behind—the triumph that came out of the tragedy. If men cease not day nor night to praise, it is from the vision of yesterday, the vision of the crown through the cross: “worthy is the Lamb that was slain.” Some such vision awaits our retrospect too. It is through the cross of struggle that the world has reached the present goal, its upward goal. It is through the midst of the forces making for stagnation or for retardation that this wondrous piece of mechanism has cleared its way, steering ever toward the stars. In the light of such a fact, the mode of its origin seems a small thing. Call it creation, call it evolution, call it emanation, call it what you will, the fact remains inviolate and inviolable, that it moves along a path of purpose, and selects a course demanding intelligent choice. With such a retrospect as that, we may well be in the spirit of the Lord’s day.

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*THE LINGUISTIC HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT AND MAURICE VERNES’ DATING OF THE DOCUMENTS.*

It has long been recognised that the linguistic characteristics of literary documents provide a valid criterion when the origin of a particular literature is under discussion. The saying “*ἡ λαλιά σου δῆλόν σε ποιεῖ*” (Matt. 26. 73) applies also to books. And the fact has been grasped and applied by the historians of profane literature. For example, Th. Vogel,<sup>1</sup> in reference to a dialogue ascribed to Tacitus, has proved by linguistic arguments, “*Universum colorem sermonis adeo esse Quintilianeum, ut non modo aequalem ejus sed amicum discipulumve scriptorem fuisse*

<sup>1</sup> Th. Vogel, *De Dialogi qui Taciti nomine fertur sermone Judicium*. Lipsiae, 1881.