

judgment alike impregnable to assault, whether it be urged from the pre-Christian or from the post-Apostolic side.

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ST. JOHN'S PARADOX CONCERNING THE DEAD.

(REVELATION XIV. 13.)

THIS is one of the most remarkable passages not only in the Apocalypse but in the Bible. It breaks a long reticence. The life of the disembodied soul had been hitherto almost ignored. Even the raptures of a Paul had centred mainly round a resurrection morning, when the dead should break their silence and resume their place in the universe. Here the silence has itself become vocal. The attention of the seer centres, not on the resurrection morning, but on that state of the soul which is popularly called disembodied, and, for the first time in Bible literature, the interest of the reader is solicited for those who are at present in the condition we name death.

I understand the passage to mean that at this particular epoch a change had taken place, not in the state of the departed dead, but in man's conception of that state. "Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow with them." The suggestive word is to me the word "write." It is not that from henceforth the dead are to be more blessed, but that from henceforth we are to *think* of them as more blessed. It is really, as I understand it, "write from henceforth, blessed are the dead." It is the proclaiming of a new revelation on the subject, which is to be incorporated for the future with the sum of human knowledge. The books in which man records his thoughts of the departed are

henceforth to attribute to them even in their silence the possession of life and joy.

The idea of the passage, then, clearly is, that the blessedness of the dead proclaimed by Christianity is a new conception. To the Jew, the dead were not blessed. His views about a future life fluctuated; but even in the best of them he did not reach the notion that it is a happy state to be within the veil. Death was to him a penalty; the state of the dead was the bearing of a penalty. His hope for the departed was that they would come back again. If there were any among them whom at present he deemed privileged, it was those who were allowed to come back on a visit. He figured some of his greatest men as being permitted to return to earth in the form of other lives: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, were supposed to have lived again in other forms. The fact that such a return could be deemed a privilege to the good is itself strongly suggestive of the Jewish view as to the state of the dead. The devout Christian believer who has lost a friend in his own fellowship would in the very moment of his anguish refuse to bring him back if he got the choice; I have put the question repeatedly in these circumstances. The devout Jew would have taken a different view of the matter. The change of sentiment can only be accounted for by a change of revelation. Something must have intervened to alter man's estimate of the condition called death. There must have come to him a moment in which he began to see from a new angle—an angle whose prospect reversed the first impression, and made the gloom, glory.

If we turn now to the Hindoo mind, we shall see a totally opposite association of death. To the devotee of ancient India the distinctive motto of life was "blessed are the dead." The most striking proof of this is its doctrine of transmigration. We have seen how in Judaism this doctrine took the form of a privilege to the good; here it

is a punishment to the bad. The desire of the Hindoo was that he might never come back. It was coming back that he was afraid of. He, like the Jew, believed in the possibility of the transmigration of souls—but with a difference. The Jew believed that it was possible for the good; the Hindoo held that it could befall only souls that were bad or imperfect. To the latter the reward of virtue was to be freed from earth. The blessedness of the departed good consisted in the certainty that they would never be compelled to return, that they had finally got rid of the present world, and would have no share in aught beneath the circle of the sun. The Hindoo worshipper could have said with St. John, “blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.”

And he could have gone still further in the approving quotation of this passage. Not only would he have held with St. John that the sainted dead are blessed; he would have agreed with him as to the reason of their blessedness, “that they may rest from their labours.” The beauty of death to the Hindoo was its quiescence; beyond all things he valued rest. What he disliked about this world was its constant round of action. His own nature was meditative. The passions of the crowd oppressed him. What the Western mind calls reality was to him illusion. The streets, and openings of the gates, the buying and selling, the marrying and giving in marriage, were to him the vain things of the imagination—the phantoms of sense which clogged the wings of the spirit. He wished to find repose from these. His most pleasing association of death was the hope of such repose. To get back to the bosom of the infinite calm, to be folded in the rest of that windless, waveless sea which he believed to lie beyond this turbulent scene of things, that was the aspiration which moulded his nights and days.

So far, then, there is an agreement between the Hindoo and the Christian conception of the state called death.

Both hold that the sainted dead are blessed; both agree that their blessedness consists in rest. But from this point they part company, and unite no more. For St. John proceeds to make a remarkable addition to the statement—an addition which at first sight seems to contradict it, “their works follow with them.” This is the original reading. It does not mean, as our version would suggest, that the works follow the rest, but that they accompany it. It is the dead who are represented as following the Lamb, as in verse four. They are treading in the footsteps of the sacrificial life and are entering into rest. But St. John says it is a peculiar kind of rest—a rest which is accompanied by all their energies. Here is something radically different from the Hindoo conception. The blessedness of the dead is declared to lie in a rest which is distinct from quiescence, in a rest which involves work as a part of its being. It is no Nirvana, no dream-consciousness, no state of suspended animation. It is not simply a repose which is followed by an awaking; it is a repose which is itself the ground of an increased vitality. It is a state of which St. John is not afraid to speak in contradictory terms. At one time he says, “they rest from their labours”; at another, “they rest not day nor night.” He is not describing two experiences; he is depicting two sides of the one shield. The sleep is with him the waking, the rest is the work, the end of labour is the beginning of service.

Now, this is a paradox, and it is a paradox peculiar to the religion of Christ. The ideal of the Hindoo mind, as we have seen, was quiescence; rest came by excluding action. The ideal of the Jew was action; the works of the law gave no room for rest. Here, the rest and the work are made one experience. It is no longer a matter of alternation. The sabbath does not follow the six stages of labour; it accompanies them, it causes them. What is the root of such a conception? Is there anything in the passage before

us which would indicate its origin, which would suggest how it came into St. John's mind? It is St. John's mind that we want to know about. It is easy to philosophise on the matter. But in an expository essay the main question is, not what possible explanation can be given, but what was the solution of the problem entertained by the writer himself. In some cases we fail to find any clue to this, and are forced to content ourselves with conjecture. Have we any better guide here? Is there any indication in the terms of this statement, which can suggest to us that process of thought by which the seer arrived at a conclusion so paradoxical as the union of rest and work?

I think there is. I believe there are four little words which give a key to the whole subject and afford a glimpse into the mind of the author. These words are "yea, saith the Spirit." On a first view they are awkward. One does not see why they should be there. From a rhetorical point of view the verse would read better without them. They introduce a speaker where there is no room for a dialogue, and interrupt a sentence which, from the orator's standpoint, would have best run on. Why is this? Clearly because they are not spoken from the orator's standpoint at all. They are inserted as a note of explanation. They are put in by way of commentary. They are intended to throw light on a saying thoroughly new to that world, and conveying in its first utterance a sense of contradiction. Let us go on to read this comment.

St. John has been declaring that the blessedness of the dead consists in a rest which involves work. He remembers that he is stating something which to the common mind must seem a paradox. He hastens to defend himself, to show that his view is one of common sense. He reminds his readers that he is speaking of a peculiar kind of rest—the rest of the spirit. He tells them that the rest of the spirit is the opposite of the rest of the cemetery. The rest

of the cemetery is the cessation of being. By nature and by definition it is the inability to work. But the rest of the spirit is the reverse of this; it is that which disentombs the spirit, that which gives it *ability* to work. It comes not from a diminution, but from an increase of its vitality. Before the spirit reaches its rest, it is impeded in its movements; when in absolute unrest, it is said to be dead. The nearer it comes to a state of rest, the closer it approaches to a state of activity. Unrest is that which impedes the nature of anything. The unrest of a piece of matter is its movement; the unrest of a spirit is its want of movement. To remove the unrest of matter is to make it quiescent; to remove the unrest of spirit is to make it non-quiescent, to waken it into life. Masses of matter are made to move by collision, by pressure, by friction. But souls have their movement checked by these things. To give them force, they require the elimination of friction, the absence of collision. It is where they are undisturbed that they are most powerful; they work when they rest from their labours.

Let me remark that this peculiar view of the nature of spiritual rest—a view which is distinctively Christian, furnishes, in my opinion, the key to something which otherwise is a mystery. I allude to the fact that in the New Testament the state immediately after death is spoken of in two different ways: sometimes it is described as a sleep; at others as a consciousness of increased vivacity. It is not to be explained as the sentiments of different writers. There would be nothing strange in that. Even inspiration might well permit a difference of opinion on a problem not unveiled. But the remarkable thing is that the different views about death are not enumerated by separate writers. They are given forth by the same speaker almost at the same time. We find St. Paul in one breath proclaiming that death is a sleep, and in the next declaring that to die is gain, that to depart and be with Christ is far better, that

if the house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a more commodious building. We find a greater than St. Paul announcing at one moment the death of a Lazarus under the metaphor of sleep, and at another repudiating the notion that God can reign over unconscious lives: "God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto Him." How are we to account for this diversity of statement? Is there any bridge that can unite the two banks of the stream? I know of only one—the Christian conception of spiritual rest. The rest of the spirit is the bridge by which it passes over into action, into newness of life, into vivid power of unimpeded energy, into work proportionate to the declining sense of labour. Let me elucidate this point—not from philosophy, but from scripture.

The favourite description of the New Testament for the blessed dead is, "those who sleep in Christ." What does that mean? Why are they said to sleep in Christ? To indicate that they have entered into the same state as Christ. The heavenly state of Christ is described by John himself under the metaphor of a sleep. In one of the comments on his own gospel narrative he says that the only begotten Son "is in the bosom of the Father." It is the symbol of rest, repose. Christ is said to have now entered into the state of heavenly sleep—the restful sabbath of the soul. The metaphor is all the more striking because in this instance it has not been suggested by death at all. Christ has not come to it by the gate of death, but by the gate of ascension. He has come to it, not because it is involved in dying, but because it is involved in heaven. It is not the prerogative of a worn-out body, but of a fresh mind. It is not the climax of exhaustion, but the culmination of glory. It would be reached by the beatified spirit though there were no such thing as death. All this is implied in the simile that Christ reposes in the bosom of the Father.

But now, still keeping St. John in our mind, let us go a step further. At the very moment when he is conceiving Christ as reposing on the bosom of the Father, Christ is to him the most active force in this universe. Not only so, Christ is by him at that moment conceived as having attained an increased activity by reason of His reclining or reposing attitude. What else is the meaning of these mysterious words which he has reported from the lips of the Master, "greater works than these shall ye do because I go unto My Father"? He means that the repose of the spirit has given the Son of Man wings, that He is better able to work *for* us and *in* us now than He was in the days of His flesh, that the calm peace of satisfaction has nerved Him further for the travail of the soul, that His rest has become His crown. It is this, and nothing less than this, that breaks forth in St. John's record of the Master's words, "if ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I go unto the Father," "cling to Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father," "if I go not away, the Comforter cannot come." It is the Son of Man's experience of the universal law that the spirit's power comes only with the spirit's peace, and that the heart which can shed itself most widely is the heart which has found repose.

To sleep in Christ, then, is to sleep as Christ sleeps— not on the bosom of Nirvana, but on the bosom of the Father. It is to lose, not consciousness nor self-consciousness, but the consciousness of self—of limitation, of restriction. It is to become oblivious of the sense of weight and weariness. It is the sense of weight and weariness that here below prevents our works from keeping pace with us. They lag behind. Most of our projects are never begun, all our undertakings are unfinished. It is not rest that kills work; it is unrest. The moment when the hand is most effectual is the moment when the mind has least friction. When our cares are awake, our arm sleeps.

organic unity of the Book of Job. He defends his position with a fertility of resource, and occasionally a subtlety of argument, which even those who are unconvinced will admire and enjoy; and, as a set-off to the retrogressive element in his criticism, he is as much convinced as any one that the book was written (he will not let me say composed) after the Exile.

There existed a written account of the story of Job (a *Volksbuch*) at the close of the pre-exilic period; this is implied by Ezekiel's mention of Job in xiv. 14, 20. The name Job (איוב) is obscure; but I have noticed the name Ayāb (apparently Palestinian) in Winckler's edition of the Amarna texts (237, 6.13). At any rate, Noah and Job are referred to by Ezekiel in quite the same terms, and no one doubts that the traditional story of Noah was in Ezekiel's hands. Budde even thinks that the third of Ezekiel's heroes—Daniel—must have been known to Ezekiel from some written document, though the date of Daniel according to this document cannot have been that which our Book of Daniel specifies. In a footnote he rejects without discussion Halévy's view that the names Daniel and Job in Ezekiel are simply corruptions of the names Enoch and Enos in the Sethite table in Genesis. Here I must ask leave to differ from him so far as Enoch is concerned. Elsewhere I hope to show that דנאל is most probably a corruption of דנוך, though I am far from holding with Halévy that איוב is a corruption of אנוש, and I am not surprised that Budde was repelled by Halévy's dogmatism. What did this folk-tale of Job contain? Different views are held; the author, however, is of opinion that all that is essential in Job i. 1–ii. 10 (except the statement that Job had not in any of his words fallen into sin) and in xlii. 10–17 (except the second part of v. 10) may have belonged to the folk-tale. What the poet did, according to Budde, was to insert his own composition (really the word must in

English be allowed) between the two parts of the folk-tale, and well fasten the whole together. The story itself, which I do not understand Budde to regard as founded upon fact, may have come from abroad, and it is natural to think of Edom (so famous for wisdom) as the most probable source. The poet who adopted it was a travelled man, and completely master of the culture of his time. As Goethe did with the folk-tale of *Faust*, he used the familiar story as the framework for his highest thoughts and noblest poetry. And here the question meets us, Is it true that only two authors have joined in producing our Book of Job, viz., the people (represented by some unknown scribe) on the one hand and the poet on the other, or may the work of the latter have been retouched, expanded, and added to by other writers? The decision, says Budde, is specially difficult because in most cases the doubts of critics have arisen out of nothing but a definite view of the connection of thought and of the poet's intended solution of the question treated of—a view which is necessarily subjective and disputable. The sketch of the present position of criticism given in the introduction must, of course, be supplemented by the remarks given at the proper points in the commentary, and also by Budde's earlier work, *Contributions to the Criticism of the Book of Job*¹ (Bonn, 1876), and by an essay or dissertation to which reference will be made later.

1. As to the Prologue and Epilogue, Budde believes that the doubts as to their having formed an integral part of the original work are unnecessary. It is true, however (as described above), that the narrative originally existed without the speeches. Naturally the poet sought to adapt his own writing to it to the best of his ability. Perhaps I may

Beiträge zur Kritik des Buches Hiob. Part I. relates to recent criticism and the idea of the Book of Job, and Part II. to the linguistic character of the speeches of Elihu.

Something must come to lull the cares if the work is to keep pace with the thought. Therefore it is that to St. John the future life is not a miracle, but something which annuls a miracle. It is not a supernatural state, but a state which restores the broken law of nature. It is the present life which has interrupted the natural order. Man has an ideal beyond his capacity. He has a work to do which he cannot finish; he leaves it behind him on the wayside. Another life must take it up and carry it through. Another state of being must restore the balance between the demand for outward service and the power to supply it. Here the human soul is restless ere it begins its toil; it has not a fresh start even in the morning. There must be found an environment for man in which rest shall be itself the starting point, and the movement of the hand shall be accelerated by the unruffled repose of the spirit.

GEORGE MATHESON.

*THE BOOK OF JOB AND ITS LATEST
COMMENTATOR.*

PART II.

THE text of Job as presented to us by Prof. Budde differs in very many points from the Massoretic, and if not the best that we may reasonably hope to get, yet supplies a far better basis for criticism and exegesis than we have hitherto had. The exegetical results of the author must for the most part be left here untouched. It is necessary, however, to give a sketch of the view of the origin of the Book of Job which the introduction to the present work supplies. It is to a certain extent retrogressive criticism which it gives us. Prof. Budde thinks that critics have been too analytic, and that it is desirable, after reviewing the subject in a more or less new light, to return to the belief in the