

observe Nature and mark the operation of her uniform and inflexible laws, let us say to them, "Look above Nature; there is a higher and diviner order. Nature is not an end, is only a means: she expresses her Maker's Mind and exists for her Maker's ends. What is necessary to his ends is according to his nature, though it may seem opposed to man's. Interpret the universe through the idea of God, place God and man in living relations to each other, let the conditions necessary to the realization of these relations be fairly conceived, and there will be the consciousness of an order sublimer than any Nature reveals; an order which not only has room for the Resurrection, but demands it, to the end that eternal grace may reign through righteousness unto the glory of the Eternal."

A. M. FAIRBAIRN.

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THE WISDOM OF THE HEBREWS.

THIRD PART.

A GENERAL view of the principles of the Hebrew Wisdom was given in the First Paper, and some illustrations from the oldest literature of the Wisdom of the way in which these principles were applied in the Second. It remains now to look at some of the particular problems of the Wisdom, and after this to advert shortly to that highest generalization of it which appears in Proverbs (Chap. viii.), where, being abstracted from its empirical manifestation in the laws of life and providence, it was elevated into the region of transcendence and acquired a subsistence of its own, being personified as the counterpart of the Divine mind and fellow of Jehovah.

As the Wisdom aimed at detecting and exhibiting the operation of fixed principles in the world and life, it became practically a doctrine of Providence in a wide sense. In no nation were the principles and conditions of well-being and misfortune so clearly distinguished as among the Hebrews. The Lawgiver set out by laying before the people "blessing and cursing." Though the Theocracy was administered, as to its principles, in no way different from God's government of other nations, there was a difference in the swiftness with which these principles manifested themselves. When the nation sinned, defeat and subjection followed close upon the sin ; when other nations sinned, or when they still sin, subjection follows with equal certainty, though not with the same rapidity. When an individual offended, there was immediately, in the ceremonial disability that ensued, a punishment of his offence. Thus, that fundamental connexion of evil and suffering being extremely prominent in the Hebrew commonwealth, took possession of men's minds with a very firm hold. And no doubt this was intended. The Law was a ministration of death. Its purpose was to educate the people in the knowledge of sin and of retribution. In the theology of St. Paul the law stands not on the side of the "remedy," but on the side of the disease. It came in to aggravate the malady,—that the offence might abound. It had other uses, and this view of it is not meant to be exhaustive. But as an intermediate institution, coming in between the promise and actual redemption, this was one of its effects and purposes. It augmented the disease both in fact and in the consciousness of the mind struggling with its demands. It revealed both sin and its conse-

quences: "By the law is the knowledge of sin; when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." And the supernaturalness of God's conduct of the Theocracy under the covenant of Sinai merely or mainly brought out very plainly the principles of all moral government. God governs all states as He governed the Jewish state; the laws of his natural government do not differ from the laws of his supernatural government; but in the latter, their operation, being immediate, was very perceptible, while in his natural government, as they operate slowly, they often elude observation.

It was natural in this way, especially for a member of the Hebrew state, to apply the principle of retributive justice very stringently and universally. All evil he knew to be for sin, any evil he concluded must be for some sin. Where there was an evil, there must have been a sin to bring it forth. Evil was not an accident, nor was it a necessary outcome of the nature of things; it was an ever present parasite fastening upon the trunk of the tree of human life and bred by the condition of that tree: "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, but man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward" (Job v. 6). This stringent application of the Law was more natural in a state of society like that existing in the East than it would be with us. There society is simple, and its elements are detached from one another. The tribes live apart. They draw their subsistence from the soil in the most direct way. One class does not depend on another; there is no complex and intricate interweaving of relations as in modern society. Hence the incidence of a calamity

was generally direct ; it did not pass through several strata, affecting the lowest most severely, though it might be caused by the highest. The movements of life were all simultaneous, and a calamity was seen to fall generally where it was deserved. In this way, not in Israel only, but throughout the East, the principle of retributive righteousness was held very firmly : with the man who doeth well, it is well ; with the sinner, it is ill. And all evil is the direct effect of God's anger for sin.

It is probable that this general principle was one common to the Shemitic races before one of them, viz., Israel, became the "people of the Book." Revelation adopted the principle, and sanctioned it at first in its generality ; by and by individuals and the whole people were led into circumstances and passed through struggles that suggested the necessary modifications upon it. The moral ideas of the primitive Shemitic races afford a very attractive subject of investigation. Unfortunately the materials on which a judgment must be formed are very scanty. It is becoming apparent, however, that Israel had much in common with the other tribes surrounding her, and that they remained behind at stages of moral condition and opinion which she abandoned for others far in advance. Even in such an approach towards organized society as was made on the settlement in Canaan, this simple faith must have received rude shocks. In the happy days of the early monarchy, indeed, when the kingdom of God was everywhere prosperous, and heathen states on all sides bowed before it, the principle was receiving splendid illustration. But in later times, when great heathen monarchies rose in the East

and trampled the little state under their heel, the principle could not but come into danger of question. At first the deeper sense of sin might afford an explanation to reflecting minds: these calamities befel them because they had forsaken the Lord their King. But, in the long run, even repentance failed to secure restoration. The kingdom, which was still the kingdom of God, was hopelessly trodden down by the heathen oppressors. The Psalms and Prophets are filled with the complaints and the astonishment of pious men over this anomaly. In the fate that overtook the different classes of the people the failure of the principle was most signally manifested. It was the very cream of the nation that suffered the severest calamities. The lax and ethnicizing party, agreeing with their conquerors, or at least submitting to them, escaped suffering; while the true theocratic-hearted men, whether those left at home, such as Jeremiah, or those carried into exile, like Daniel, were the victims of extreme hardships and indignity, both at the hands of their enemies and from their false brethren. It is probable that many of the Psalms which express complaints of the prosperous wicked, and suggest questionings as to the righteousness of Providence, belong to the era when the state was falling into decline. In the Book of Job, too, which is the Epic of the Wisdom, there are passages which show traces of great sufferings on the part of some classes of the people; but, as the scene of the poem is laid among the tribes lying east of Palestine, the pictures of social misery may represent the condition of the subjugated races there, although the author being a genuine Hebrew, it is probable that something more than mere speculative

interest or a personal experience moved him to his great undertaking, and that his colours are partly borrowed from the national sorrows of his own day.

The principle of retributive justice is the fundamental principle of moral government. The assertion of it was therefore natural at all times, whether late or early in the history of the people. It is asserted with perfect roundness in the First Psalm, probably a late composition. Doubts regarding the principle would only be expressed when circumstances suggested them with such a force that they could not be repressed. When therefore we find a lengthy composition, like the middle Chapters of the Proverbs, asserting the principle without restriction, we infer that the composition is early and reflects a period of settled prosperity and reign of law. On the other hand, when we observe a great literary work like the Book of Job, formally devoted to the treatment of moral anomalies in Providence, we may conclude that the body of the state was beginning to be covered with sores, and that the composition is considerably later. It is less easy to determine the date of smaller pieces like the Psalms, in which such questions are moved. Some of these pieces are emotional and lyrical rather than didactic, and might be occasioned by any grave failure of the principle, though operating within a small area. Others, such as Psalm xlix., open with expressing a formal intention of treating the problem, and indicate that the difficulty was one which had begun to press on many minds.

The general principle, that it was well with the righteous and ill with the sinner, was seen to be broken in upon on two sides. The wicked were many times

observed to be prosperous, and on the other hand the righteous were plagued every day. The first side of the difficulty is treated in such Psalms as xvii., xxxvii., xlix., lxxiii. and others; the second side in the Book of Job.

The simplest resolution of the problem is, perhaps, that seen in Psalm xxxvii. There the condition of the perplexed mind is not very aggravated, and the relief administered is simple. The difficulty was felt; it seems was pretty widely felt. But the difficulty was simply a practical sore: it had not yet so lodged itself in the mind as to become a speculative trouble. The condition of society was such that many wicked men were rich and prosperous, and there were righteous men in distress. This state of things led to envy, to irritation on the part of the just; and the Psalm is directed towards calming the ruffled feelings of the pious. Relief is administered in the form of an advice oft repeated, backed up by a statement of the method of moral government. The advice is: "Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity; cease from anger and be not wrathful; fret not thyself in any wise to do evil." The consideration urged in support of the advice is that the prosperity of the wicked is *brief*; it is an interruption to the general scope of things, speedily overcome by them, and the current flows on in its accustomed channels—"Fret not thyself because of evil doers, for they shall soon be cut down like the grass." "The wicked plotteth against the just, but the Lord laugheth at him, for he seeth *that his day is coming*." And on the other hand: "Trust in the Lord and do good, and thou shalt *inherit* the earth."

The Psalmist satisfies himself and others with affirming the general principle, and by saying that the exception to it is of short duration. It is a practical solution, sufficient when the evil has gone no further than to breed discontent. The difficulty that there is exception at all does not bulk largely in presence of the acknowledged brevity of its duration. There is no stretching out of the hand to grope after any principle, whether in God's general administration or in his particular treatment of the wicked, nor even in that direction in which peace was sometimes found—a profounder conception of what true felicity and prosperity was. The Psalmist does indeed refer to the joy that accompanies faith, but this joy is not held up as true felicity in contrast to the happiness of outward prosperity. It is rather touched on incidentally in course of an exhortation to keep the faith even amidst present confusions, because out of these the old moral order will speedily arise—"Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked; for the arms of the wicked shall be broken." All turns upon the speed with which the current, hemmed or turned aside for a moment, sweeps away the obstacles and returns to fill again the old channels.

The doctrine of Psalm xxxvii. is that the triumphing of the wicked is for a moment: "Yet a little while and they shall not be." But the righteous shall be fed, shall dwell in the land and inherit the earth. "Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." Calamity comes upon the wicked man in the midst of his life. The Psalmist does not pursue his fate further,



nor does he emphasize particularly the manner of his death. Now this solution is of course true in particular cases. It is many times applicable. But it is obviously incapable of being made a general principle to explain and satisfy the mind on all cases. The friends of Job urged it as a universal principle against him. Job has hardly words to express his scorn of the infatuated self-hardening of the dogmatic mind against obvious facts, and his sense of the melancholy contrast which facts presented to traditional theories—"When I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, wax mighty in power?"

Obviously the observation of new facts demanded new explanations and further modifications of the theory. Wicked men might be seen who had grown hoary in their wickedness. Relief from such a spectacle was sought by dwelling on the manner of the wicked man's death. It was said that however long the ungodly might live, he would not depart from this world in peace, his end would be amidst terrible manifestations of the Divine displeasure. This is the position held in Psalm lxxiii. This Psalm forms an advance on xxxvii. in various ways. The Psalmist's mind is in a condition greatly more inflamed. The problem has passed out of the region of mere feeling and become a real speculative difficulty, what the writer calls an '*amal*, a trouble, so great as to threaten to confound the boundary lines of good and evil: "As for me, my feet were almost gone. . . . Behold these are the ungodly who prosper in the world. . . . Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain: . . . for all the day long have I been plagued." The moral equilibrium of the Psalmist had

been disturbed by the spectacles that life presented, and he rocked to and fro between faith and disbelief. At last his mind returned to steadiness; and, in the Psalm, he surveys the path by which he had reached it. In the "sanctuaries of God" a light was shed upon the end of the wicked, and on his own side the consciousness of God's presence with him without change upheld him: "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places . . . how are they brought to destruction as in a moment . . . I am continually with thee. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterwards take me to glory." The "sanctuaries" or holy places of God do not appear to be material localities; they are the innermost circles, the furthest back principles of God's holy providence. The Psalmist was enabled to look through the confusions of a life, however long, and behind the brilliancy of a prosperity, however great; and behold terrors of God's displeasure gathering round the wicked man at last. This is a solution far in advance of that in Psalm xxxvii. It shifts the problem from this life to the edge of the grave. Psalm xxxvii. brought the wicked to destruction in the mid-time of his days, and left the godly inheriting the earth. Death, except as an event that cleared the ground of the wicked, did not enter into the question. In Psalm lxxiii. all turns upon death and its accompaniments, in the destiny both of the righteous and the ungodly. We must dismiss from our mind those inveterate ideas of death and the world beyond which are now ingrained into our habits of thinking, partly from heathen and partly from Christian sources, if we would understand the Old Testament mode of viewing such a subject. To the philosophic Greek death was a relief; the soul

escaped from her prison and spread her wings to soar unhindered in the sublimest regions. To the Christian to depart is to be with Christ, which is far better. To the Old Testament saint to die was to remain dead, not non-existent, but dead. To be dead was to be insensible to the fellowship of the living, whether man or God: "In Sheol who shall give thee thanks?" A change in Sheol was not to be conceived, for Sheol was the realm of changeless silence, where the departed subsisted but did not live. There were not two worlds, one here, and another beyond; the one a howling wilderness and vale of tears, the other a happy land where bliss immortal reigns. Something like the opposite of this was the conception that prevailed: the bliss and life were here, the gloom and apathy there. The afflicted suppliant in Psalm xxxix. begs for a brief respite, ere he departed, of happiness and light, for these would soon be no more possible: "Spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more, for I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner as all my fathers were." Life was a brief but happy visit and sojourn with God; soon it came to an end, and joy died with it. It is true that this is not to be called the *doctrine* of Scripture. Sheol is no creation of revelation. Such views were rather national sentiments, which revelation found and raised its own fabric upon. Sheol was a creation of the religious imagination of the people, based on the sense of sin, and its dark and huge proportions were but projections of a haunted fancy working on the sights and circumstances of natural death. But Revelation waged no war against the fancy. It left Sheol yawning and dark, and gave relief to trembling faith in another way. It brought

both just and wicked to the brink; but the just it transported across the abyss to God. If there were two worlds, the one was not here and the other beyond; both were here, and what was beyond was but a prolongation of that which existed here, and which could be observed here, if not always in life, at least in the circumstances of death. This world was not one where merely tendencies could be detected, where there was an excess or preponderance in one direction, but so much which was adverse that principles struggled vainly to attain their goal. The tendencies reached results. The crisis or judgment worked itself out. Men's destinies were matured. And in the article of death they manifested themselves. The wicked were brought to destruction as in a moment,—and a veil of darkness is let fall upon their further destiny. The righteous is brought also to the brink of a Sheol where a gracious hand is held out to "take" him, and Sheol is overleapt. The fellowship with God is not broken in death, but continued. The phrase "afterward wilt take me to glory" might seem to imply more, that the fellowship was not only prolonged but perfected. This is possible. But the idea that the blessedness of the saint was greater after death than here would be a very remarkable one in the midst of other Old Testament ideas. If the translation *to* glory be adopted, the term "glory" probably refers to God Himself, and not to any new condition of the saint. The words might be rendered, *in* glory, or even, "after glory thou wilt take me," in which case the reference would be to the manner of the death or life of the just, in opposition to that of the wicked. And this would make the antithesis in the Psalm more exact.

The solution in Psalm lxxiii. is almost complete, and embraces all the elements. No doubt it has no explanation to offer of the fact that the ungodly may enjoy a lifetime's prosperity. But in the deeper analysis of life which the Psalmist is enabled to effect a great step toward this is made. And he is enabled, in the interests of the righteous at least, to dispose of death. Death is always in the Old Testament a secondary thing; it is an obstacle, a mystery, a cloud that hangs on the horizon and darkens the outflow of principles. The light of faith pierces and dissolves it, and the stream of life with God on this side flows on visible and unchecked beyond. The solution in Psalm xlix. is identical, although the lines drawn in lxxiii. are laid down there in deeper colours. Psalm lxxiii. pursues mainly the destiny of the just; Psalm xlix. hangs with an awful interest over the fate of the ungodly. But there is no real advance: "God will redeem my soul out of the hand of Sheol, for he will take me." But of the wicked it is said: "Like sheep they are set in Sheol; Death shepherds them." The life of the righteous with God is prolonged, and Sheol is overleapt. The wicked sink into Sheol; they remain dead; but death, though not life, is still subsistence.

There is one point in the solution of Psalm lxxiii. which left room for further complications. The ungodly are represented as being delivered over to death amidst terrible external manifestations of God's anger; even on this side their destiny was declared. This was a solution no doubt true in many cases. It was a solution, too, in advance of former ones, and it became regarded as a finality. The traditional mind found rest in it, and shut its eyes. It was very hard in Old

Testament times to detach the spiritual relation to God from its material illustration, to hold fast to a spiritual truth which found no verification in the visible events of life. It was the very axiom of the Wisdom that principles and phenomena were in correspondence. And in laying down this axiom it was but expressing the grand principle of the Old Dispensation. In that Dispensation the general law was that all truths were *embodied*; they had also a material expression. But one of the tasks of the old economy was to drill holes in itself, to begin making breaches along the whole circumference of the material wall that bounded it —by the Law to die to the Law. And none were busier agents in these operations than the Wise. A psalm here and there, the complaint of a prophet like Habakkuk, are all the evidence that remains to us of processes of mind that must have been going on extensively among reflecting men. The author of the Book of Job uncovers fires that had been smouldering long in many hearts, and rakes them together, heaping on piles of fuel of his own upon the mass. The condition of Job differs from that of the Psalmists. Their problem was the prosperity of the wicked; or, if it was their own affliction, they either knew the cause of it, or it had not gone so far as to interrupt their fellowship with Heaven. Job's problem was the affliction of the just, an affliction unexplained by anything in his life; and as he saw in it proof of the anger of God, and believed, as his malady was mortal, that this anger would pursue him to the grave, this threw the solution of his problem out of this world altogether and into the realm beyond. It was *there* that he knew he would see God. But here he came into collision with the

principle of Psalm lxxiii., in which his immortal friends sought refuge against him. Step by step Job's mind reached to some apprehension of the meaning of his history. At least he threw to the winds one after another traditional solutions of it which satisfied his friends, and which, if the case had not been his own, would probably have satisfied him. Stripped and naked, tortured by disease, with not a shred of material verification to hang by, God even repudiating, as it seemed, his friendship, he planted his foot upon his own consciousness of fellowship with God, and stood unmoved; for he *knew* that his fellowship with God was also, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, God's fellowship with him. And when his friends pointed to his frame dissolving amidst the awful tokens of God's anger (which he admitted), and said it was ever so with the wicked, he called it false—false on both its sides; false that he, though so plagued, was wicked, and false that the wicked were at all times so plagued. The death of the wicked could be seen many times to be peaceful, and his memory cherished among men: "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment (*i.e.*, in peace) go down to the grave. . . . He is borne away to the grave, and men keep watch over his tomb. The clods of the valley are sweet unto him, and all men draw after him, as there were innumerable before him. How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood." One after another Job chased his adversaries out of the ancient strongholds. His results, however, as given in the body of the Book, are wholly negative. He destroys, in every one of its forms, the absoluteness of the principle of retributive justice. But the general principle

itself is still conserved in the Epilogue, and the positive contribution to the question is given in the Prologue. The principle is re-affirmed in Job's renewed prosperity, as it could not but be if the equilibrium of doubts and certainties was to be preserved, and the centre of gravity of human life not shifted from faith to scepticism; and an advance on the former doctrine, equal almost to a revolution, is made in the revelations of the heavenly Cabinet, where suffering is seen to be abstracted from the merits of the sufferer altogether, and raised to the place of a general force in the constitution of the universe, wielded by God for general ends like other forces, and affecting individuals not in their own cause, but in the interests of the whole.

In Proverbs x. and following Chapters Wisdom unveils her face to men without any thought of herself. The Wise Man, in whom her spirit had taken up its abode, pours it out with no formal thought of what he is doing. In the happy early times of the commonwealth, when peace and good order prevailed, and the moral life of the people was yet rigid and severe, Wisdom was silently giving effect to herself in all her principles, and every effort of her power was reflected in the heart of the Wise, and his lips expressed it, all consciousness of what he was doing being repressed in the fascination of his task. But in later days, when, amidst repeated revolutions, external authority was relaxed and social morality debauched, when brigand Murder stalked through the land or lurked in the thickets, and Adultery in the shape of the strange woman, with lubricity in her looks, and the harlot's attire upon her back, flitted about the streets, decoying



the youth to her haunts, these hideous shapes, impersonations of Folly, threw up by contrast before the Wise Man's eye another figure, chaste and beautiful, with the serenity of order on her face, and truth and religion in her eyes, the figure of Wisdom. The traits of this exquisite picture are borrowed from a hundred sources, from the political conditions of the time, from the usages of the religious teachers of the day, from all the ways of public life in the city, and the manners of the men and women of the age, good and bad; yet not from these as superficial phenomena, playing before men's eyes like unsubstantial shadows that come and go, but all of them in their true meaning fragments and expressions of a hidden whole, the moral framework of the human economy, image of the mind of God, whose Agent and Fellow it is. This is the Wisdom of Chapters i.-ix., an abstract idealism of surprising depth and beauty.

These nine Chapters are all from one hand, though possibly, as some think, they may contain in some parts later amplifications, and the figure of Wisdom is the same throughout. The eighth Chapter, however, gathers all the scattered traits together; and an outline of this Chapter, with a few additional remarks, is all that need be offered here.

First, in Verses 1-3, Wisdom is introduced as a public teacher, and the places are described where she takes her stand and speaks:

Doth not Wisdom cry,  
And Understanding put forth her voice?  
She standeth in the top of high places, by the way,  
In the meeting-places of the paths;  
Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,  
At the coming in at the doors, she crieth.

The high places on the top of which Wisdom takes her stand are supposed to be the heights about the Temple, from which the crowds of worshippers could be addressed as they passed—a favourite position of the prophets in their public office. The crossways or meeting-places of the streets were naturally the thronest parts of the city; and the gates, where justice was dispensed and the public life and thought of men expressed themselves, were ever crowded with masses of people passing out and in at their narrow openings. There, where the people most did congregate, Wisdom takes her place and appeals to men.

Second, Verses 4-11, Wisdom herself speaks; she names those whom she desires to hear her, men in general, and particularly the unformed minds among them, and descants upon the rectitude and preciousness of that which she brings before them.

Unto you, O men, I call,  
 And my voice is to the sons of men,  
 O ye simple, understand wisdom,  
 And ye fools be of an understanding heart.  
 Hear, for I will speak of excellent things,  
 And the opening of my mouth shall be right things.  
 For my mouth shall speak truth,  
 And wickedness is an abomination to my lips.  
 Receive my instruction and not silver,  
 And knowledge rather than choice gold;  
 For wisdom is better than rubies,  
 And all the things that may be desired are not to be  
 compared unto her.

What Wisdom offers to men is Wisdom herself, true and precious. And this being the case, she passes on to a delineation of herself, the forms in which she appears, the good she procures; and ends with a history of her origin and her work from the beginning.

I Wisdom indwell in prudence,  
 And find out knowledge of witty inventions.  
 Counsel is mine and sound wisdom,  
 I am understanding,  
 I have power.  
 In me kings rule,  
 And princes decree justice.  
 In me princes are princes,  
 And nobles all the judges of the earth.

It is not said that Wisdom gives prudence, that she supplies counsel and power, that the king who has her rules well, but something much more than that. She indwells in prudence or subtilty of the loftier kind; it is a form in which she expresses herself. She is the soul of which it is the body. She *is* understanding, kingship, judgment. The forms of intelligence express her. That society is organized, that intelligence and rule are exercised, that there are offices and officers dispensing right—these things are embodiments of her. Like a subtle element underlying all, Wisdom determines to a point in intelligence and mind; she polarizes herself in kingship and social order; she scintillates off in understanding and counsel and administration. She is the substratum of intelligence, and, of course, also of godliness; for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom, and all that is opposed to piety is the negation of her: "Pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate" (Verse 13).

Then, having said that she was not prudish or hard to win, as might be feared of one so beautiful, but ready to give herself to him who would embrace her—"I love them that love me"—and having spoken of the splendid dowry that she brings with her: "Riches and honour are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness;" her own image seems to fill her mind

wholly ; she forgets the crowds around her, and, in a reverie, soliloquizes on her past, when she was alone with God, the first of his works, or ever the earth was ; and when she was his workman in creation, all of which was but herself taking shape in the magical play of her power (Verses 22-31) ; till at last, opening her eyes, she again addresses the astonished throng : " Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children, for blessed are they that keep my ways " (Verse 32).

The Lord possessed me as the beginning of his way,  
 The first of his works long ago.  
 I was set up from of old, from the beginning,  
 Or ever the earth was.  
 When there were no deeps I was brought forth,  
 When there were no fountains laden with water.  
 Before the mountains were sunk,  
 Before the hills was I brought forth.  
 While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields,  
 Nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

When he set up the heavens I was there,  
 When he drew a circle upon the face of the deep.  
 When he made firm the skies above,  
 As the fountains of the (upper) deep gushed wildly forth.  
 When he gave to the sea his decree,  
 That the waters should not pass his commandment,  
 When he marked out the foundations of the earth.  
 Then was I with him as his workman,  
 And day by day was I (full of) delights,  
 Playing before him at all times ;  
 Playing in his habitable earth,  
 And my delights were with the sons of men.

The first half of this passage, Verses 22-26, states that Wisdom was with God from the beginning ; she was brought forth before the hills, or ever the earth was. God possessed her, or gave her being, as the beginning of his way, *i.e.*, of his activity. The first movement of the Godhead outward was the giving subsistence to the Wisdom. The second half states that Wisdom

was present at creation, and that not as a spectator but as a workman, that the work was an intoxicating joy, that the self-realization of Wisdom in all the forms of creation was with the ease and conscious power of one playing before Jehovah ; and that in his habitable earth and among the sons of men the play was most brilliant and the delight keenest.

The details of this most singular passage may be summed up in one or two final remarks.

1. Wisdom appears as a public teacher. This picture of Wisdom, as occupying all the prominent places by the ways, as taking her place in the crowded thoroughfares and at the thronging gates, and making her appeal to men, forcing herself on their attention, as she brings her own beautiful form before their eyes and greets them with her musical words and offers herself to them to be loved, is very charming. The picture could have been drawn only by combining many materials together, such as the public teaching of the prophets, the more private conversational instruction of the Wise, the judicial procedure of the public law at the gates, and the many lessons of social order and well-being which the thronging thoroughfares presented. These are the things that swell the voice of Wisdom ; and the halo of beauty that surrounds her person, the serenity and the purity, the truth and goodwill to men, are in contrast to the disorder and the vice and the wretchedness that follow them, from which she would hold men back. She is the personification of everything that had a voice to speak to men, and impress upon them the principles of Divine order in the world. Her voice gathers into itself the many voices continually sounding in men's ears, the voice of

public life, of a well-ordered society, of revelation, or, in a word, of the whole course of things.

Distinctions might be drawn between these at other times, but, to the universalistic view of the Wise Man, they are all but elements of one whole.

2. If the picture of Wisdom the Teacher embraces all this, that which she teaches will be equally broad. The theme of Wisdom the Teacher is Wisdom herself—Wisdom the thing. There is such a thing. Within the sphere of life and the world there is a fixed order. In men's mind there are principles of thought and judgment. The order without and the principles in the mind correspond. Together they form one system, one framework upon which the world is built. Fragments of these inner principles, corresponding to forms of the external order, are called prudence and counsel: "I Wisdom indwell in prudence." Other fragments are called rule, kingship, judicial function: "In me kings are kings." And still other and the highest, the fear of the Lord and the hating of evil. But it is obvious that these things, though capable of being considered separately, make up together a unity which embraces the principles of ethics and religion and even of intelligence. And this, which is Wisdom, the objective thing, is the theme of Wisdom the preacher. In a word, the principles of the economy of the human race and the earth on which it is placed, form a well-ordered organism, an immaterial framework; but though immaterial it is not latent; it speaks with a thousand tongues of revelation and life, and what it speaks of in the ears of men is itself.

3. One more step remains to be taken. This Wisdom, this organic frame of principles now realized

in the human economy, had its origin in God ; and the organism existed with Him before it was realized in the actual creation. It was from the beginning. The first movement of the Divine Mind outward gave it birth. It was not so much a Divine conception as a scheme articulated and pliant, with a power inhering in it of effectuating itself, projected out of the Divine Mind. Hence it is idealized as having subsistence of its own beside Jehovah, and his purpose to realize it is regarded as a faculty of its own, a capacity within it to effectuate itself, which it does in creation. It is Jehovah's artificer in creation. In this work it plays before Him in the intoxication of delight. Its play is creation. As it moves in grace and power before Him, its exquisitely articulated limbs and frame bearing themselves with a Divine harmony, every movement embodies itself in some creative work. And there, where the Divine beauty and power of its movements were most conspicuous and its delight deepest, was in the habitable earth and with the children of men.

It would be strange if that portion of the Old Testament known as the literature of the Wisdom offered no contribution to the Christology of Scripture. Every portion of Scripture makes a contribution to this suitable to itself. The prophets, who are statesmen, furnish the idea of the kingdom of God and the Messiah, the Anointed, who is its King. The Psalms, which are private utterances of the believer, consecrate the idea of the Saint or Holy One, often afflicted, but staying himself on God, and delivered from death through his godly fear. The contribution which the Wisdom will make will partake of its own character, and consist of some idea universalistic or cosmical. And

this idea we have in the Wisdom of Proverbs. There can be no doubt that the conceptions of Wisdom just referred to entered into the Messianic consciousness of Israel and enriched it, and they are reproduced in the New Testament in connection with the Son. "The Word was with God." "All things were made by him." "In him do all things subsist."

A. B. DAVIDSON.

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A NEW TESTAMENT ANTITHESIS.

Πνευματικός, Ψυχικός.

IF I may adapt to the Bible the reverse of a saying applied not long ago to a well-known English politician—science is not its *forte*, nor is omniscience its foible. One science alone it makes bold to grapple with, the science of the redemption of man from sin. Yet even here its science deals with practice rather than theory; and he that looks for philosophical categories will as surely fail to find them as he that hunts for the classifications of geology. As with philosophy in general, so with psychology in particular. The three souls of Plato by which he sought to solve the problem of evil—the driver and his two steeds—the rational holding the reins of the courageous and the appetitive; Aristotle's differentiation of the human soul from the souls of all other orders of animate existence, by its active and passive, its speculative and impressionable reason; the eight subdivisions of the Stoics—the five senses, the faculties of speech and generation, and the governing part which dwelt in the breast, whence the voice came—all these are samples of an analysis which seems not to have interested the writers