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EDUCATIONAL VIEWPOINTS
OF THE WISDOM LITERATURE
IN THE BIBLE

by

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Thesis

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EDUCATIONAL VIEWPOINTS OF THE WISDOM LITERATURE

IN THE BIBLE.

Chapter 1.

Introduction.

1. Purpose of the Study. As never before men are seeking the best methods of education. Many experiments have been tried and tested, some definitely belonging to one school, some to another, some forming an eclectic system. As yet, perfection has not been pronounced upon any. Is the weakness of our modern education due to its failure to recognize what the Bible and experience so clearly teach about the fundamental nature of man? Has the Wisdom literature anything to offer of a constructive nature? If not, what does it lack? The purpose of this investigation is to throw light upon these questions. At the same time the opportunity is presented to make a critical comparison of this literature with the educational views of other portions of Scripture.

With reference to the first question stated above, an article appeared recently in a German publication to the effect that eighty-three German neurologists and insanity specialists have published a pressing call not to take Christian teaching from the young, i.e., in the German public schools. "In the present (1) lamentable struggle of political parties over the schools," they say, "attempts are being made, in a folly truly irresponsible, to shake the foundations of Christianity. We, the undersigned insanity and

(1) Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift, No.49. Quoted in the Sunday School Times, Feb. 11, 1928, p.80.

nerve specialists, who have daily opportunities to look into the deep abysses of psychic need and suffering, earnestly warn against allowing the belief in Christ even in the least degree to lapse in the hearts of our youth, since this it is that is the real anchor in the storms of our time. The Christian religion is now and will remain the philosophy, the psychology, the ethic, the socialism. Therein are we psychiatrists and neurologists at one with the greatest and noblest among the spirits whom the German nation is proud to name as her sons, and who have taught us to recognize the nature and ends of Christianity in its infinite wisdom, truth, freedom, and strength." (1)

In their own line, every believer recognizes the Scriptures to be unique. Just what that line is needs definition, and individuals define it variously. For some the Book is larger by far than they have any use for. To find salvation and to live a good life on earth, these are the ends they have in view, and for these ends a few texts are sufficient. For those who declare that God means to form in them the mind of Christ the Book is not too large, for such a purpose demands not a little teaching. "I have more understanding than all my teachers," enthusiastically exclaims the psalmist, "for thy testimonies are my meditation."

Whatever the educational viewpoint of these wise men may be, at least it must be an apprehension of truth and the experiences that flow from it - not doctrine, nor faith in a doctrine. The nature of man must find what it craves, and expand in all parts and in equal proportions. Mind and conscience develop together.

(1) Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift, No.49. Quoted in the Sunday School Times, Feb. 11, 1928, p.30.

"Scripture produces no monsters: no men of intellect without heart; no conscience urging men to self-devised torment; neither any self-complacent egotism."

Here, then, is what we are called to enter into: here is a field to be worked which will call for all our faculties in all their energies. It may not be easy work, but it may be delightful, and that increases the energy.

If Scripture is so comprehensive, no field of knowledge may be shut out from it, if one is willing to explore faithfully enough. It has been said that there is no philosophy in Scripture. It is true that there is no "arrangement of the facts of the universal system, no speculative questions as to the whence and whither of existing beings, no inquiry controlled by the rigid laws of logic, and carried on in a scientific method But if a keen and genuine and fruitful study of the universe and the purpose for which we are in it constitutes a philosophy, . . . then Hebrew literature is in the highest degree philosophical, and its wise man is above all others the man who has a philosophy of life." (1)

"The Wisdom literature, therefore, corresponds to the philosophical literature among other peoples, with this difference that the Hebrew had two fixed points: the existence of a personal God, and the reality of a divine revelation; The procedure was simply to understand the contents of these truths together with definitions and applications to the problem of daily living." (2)

We shall search, then, for the education in which the mind and moral

(1) Beecher, in Moulton, p.114.

(2) Eisselen, p.83.

nature will have equal and true development.

2. Plan of Treatment. It is proposed, first of all, to glance at the functions of the books of the Old Testament in their natural groupings, not as single volumes, until we come to the group under discussion. Then it will be interesting to search for the likenesses and differences that exist between other groups and the Wisdom books. One outstanding difference will be noted in the external, literary form of Wisdom literature (with the exception of Ecclesiastes), which is that of Hebrew poetry. What significance this has with reference to the content of the books will be searched out.

The relation of the books within the group to each other, the tie that binds them together, as well as the distinctive character of each, will be the next step, and this leads naturally into the major study of the educational aspects of the Wisdom literature. The books are progressive and constructive in order and in interest. They unfold. The philosophy of education is here as well as poetry, and they are deeply emotional, because they have to do with human experience. The book of Job shows how self dies only to take on larger life. The Psalms, of which, however, only a few lend themselves to this study, display this larger life as life in God. Proverbs enrolls the individual in the school of God, educating him for life. Ecclesiastes leads one up and down in a restless search only to show at the end the emptiness of earth. The interpretations of the Song of Solomon are so many and varied that it is difficult to choose, but Godet (1) points out in this oriental love song

(1) Godet, Old Testament Studies.

the fulness of Christ, who is made unto us the wisdom of God. Here,
mind and conscience find true rest.

CHAPTER II.

The Field of Wisdom Literature.

1. Introduction: Character of the Old Testament in General.

The Old Testament is often spoken of as the earthly part of revelation, addressed to an earthly people of God, also speaking of the ages of probation, especially under the law, with its accompanying history. The law was a minister of death. Its purpose was to educate the people into the knowledge of sin and of death, as Paul says: "So that the law is become our tutor . . . ," and again, "For through the law cometh the knowledge of sin." (1)

The books of the law give us the foundation of God's way with His people, the principle upon which He deals with them. "The priestly portion concerns itself chiefly with the ritual and other formal expressions of religion." (2)

The historical books record the history of discord, division, and the power of the enemy, although with divine interventions in deliverance. They are the development of the principles given in the books of the law as carried out in the lives of the people.

The prophets, with the accompanying history, give us God's voice, the reasoning of divine holiness with man, pleading that man shall be holy also. Visions of the future are given, with promises of the full display of the glory of God. Here are the same principles as before, now unfolded in the idea of the Holy, leading His people into His presence.

2. Character of the Wisdom Literature. The Wisdom literature, then, forming a group by itself, constitutes the books of experience and

(1) Galatians 3 : 23; Romans 3 : 20
(2) Eiselen, p.83.

trial in the world. These books speak of the lessons man has learned in it, the wisdom which results and the goodness of God which turns sorrow into song. The world is regarded as a place of testing, a place that brings out all that calls for God's help, for the testing reveals man's weakness, his waywardness, his unbelief in the face of trials and of enemies, his failures and shortcomings. Consequently, these books of experience are very different from any other portion of Scripture. They have to do with earth in a very special way, with the human element, with the thoughts produced in the heart by the circumstances through which the people passed.

a. Points of Difference from the Remainder of the Old Testament.

It is that which gives character to these books, a man giving expression to his thoughts. In the book of Job, for instance, there are the unbelieving, imperfect expressions of men who are not clear in their thought about God; in the book of Ecclesiastes there is the expression of one who, for a time, has shut God out. These, and Proverbs, with its gathered wisdom for the way of life, make a rich and varied study.

Another way in which the Wisdom literature may differ from the rest of the Old Testament is that its point of view is general, while the other writings are particularistic; human instead of national. The worship of the Old Testament, so heavily weighted with ritual and ceremony, is seldom mentioned here. The Wise man thinks of God and man in their relations to each other, and of man to man. His thoughts are on a moral level, mind and conduct interesting him to the exclusion of external worship. Neither does he refer to the chosen people. There is no distinction between Jew

and Gentile. The special names of Israel, Judah, Jacob, "my people," and Zion are not mentioned. It is mankind, and God as Creator which form the center of his thoughts. (1)

Consequently, Hebrew wisdom entered the field of humanity in all its common affairs. Industry and intercourse are noted, habits and tendencies, manners and speech, the perversity of the heart which refuses discipline, the inevitable succession of cause and effect. There issued a law of conduct with reward and penalty, creating a universal law out of the ceremonial law which was probably its background plus that of the world itself. It is a vital emergence of personality, intended not for the Jew only, nor for the Jewish nation, but for man as man, and as an individual member of any body politic. Nations can stand together on this kind of thinking and share in this solution of life. (2)

The friends of Job come from lands foreign to Judaism. Eliphaz came from Teman in the land of Edom, a place mentioned in Jeremiah in connection with wisdom. Job himself was not a resident of Judea, but lived in Uz, a land Eastward. So that wisdom is a kind of clearing house for the ideas of many lands. (3)

b. Literary Form. In form, Wisdom literature consists of analogies, antitheses, and pithy maxims in poetry. However, Hebrew poetry differs from much other poetry in that it has no rhyme. Its rhythm is by way of parallelisms, and these differ charmingly in various ways. In some cases the sentiment is repeated: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Sometimes a contrast is presented:

(1) Davidson, pp.44, 45.

(2) Genung, p.26.

(3) Ibid, p.46.

"Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty;
Open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread."

Again, the lines complete the thought grammatically:

"Yet I have set my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion."

The parallelism may consist of two, three, or four lines. The lines may be short or long, abrupt or deliberate, according to the sentiment expressed. Excitement reigns in the staccato opening of the second

Psalm: "Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?"

And on the contrary, in the midst of enemies, the psalmist calmly closes the fourth Psalm with a lullaby strain:

"In peace will I both lay me down and sleep;
For thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety."

The purpose of poetry is to instruct while it gives pleasure.

It is not addressed to the reason alone; the passions are invoked; memory is assisted by the harmony of verse; the interest is aroused by the beauty of imagery; virtue more easily becomes a habit; and the very verse form becomes impregnated with the spirit of integrity."

(1)
c. Content in General. These books differ so entirely in their content from all other Scripture, as being utterances of the heart of man, of the experience of man, rather than those of God to man, that it is doubly striking that they should be given to us in poetry.

Among the Hebrews poetry meant Song, therefore, the lesson is taught that through their very trials they are to raise the song of praise. And these verse-songs show that whether they mourned in darkness, or bewailed their own failures or shortcomings, or caught a glimpse of deliverance, they sang. The patriarchs called themselves pilgrims, and it is the pilgrim who sings, turning his

(1) Cf. Lowth.

trials into song. This is very attractive.

The books usually called the Wisdom literature are Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Some scholars include the Song of Solomon, and there are a few Psalms which might properly be studied in this connection.

3. Uses of the term "Wisdom." The term "Wisdom" has quite a wide application in Hebrew. It includes skill in task-work: "Thou shalt speak unto all that are wisehearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office;" and in warfare: "For he (Assyria) hath said, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I have understanding: and I have removed the bounds of peoples, and robbed their treasures, and like a valiant man I have brought down them that sit on thrones . . ."; and in efficiency in administration: "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as Jehovah commanded Moses"; and in shrewdness in practical affairs: "Then she went unto all the people in her wisdom" (saving the city). There is, however, a higher type of wisdom, the inestimable value of which none but God can fully realize, for He created it in the beginning when He marked out the foundations of the earth. It walks in the way of righteousness, and is beneficent, loving toward men, steadfast, sure, and free from care. (1)

Wisdom had its origin in God. It existed with Him before it was ever realized in creation. It was from the beginning, begotten

(1) Ferbridge: Introduction in Brown.

with the first movement of the divine Mind. It has an existence of its own, and was effective in creation, "playing before Jehovah, intoxicated with delight. Its play is creation. As it moves in grace and power before Him, its exquisite, articulated limbs and frame bearing themselves with a divine harmony, every movement embodies itself in some creative work. And where the divine beauty and power of its movements were most conspicuous and its delights deepest, was in the habitable earth, and with the children of men." (1) This is taken to be the "Logos" of John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." The description as given in Proverbs is in the introductory portion, and is the high water mark of all the Wisdom literature.

4. The place of Wisdom Literature in the Bible.

a. The origin. The origin of the Wisdom literature may be traced to human need. Men are reached variously, some by authoritative command, others through their emotions by way of ritual and form, a few may learn through the experience of others, and many respond to the intellectual appeal. All these means were used at some time or other. The prophet's stern, "Thus saith the Lord"; the priest's effective ritual; the psalmist's personal experience; and the Wise men's appeal to the intellect - combined to help man. The Wisdom literature especially occupies itself with the universal moral and religious principles that are applicable to all human life. (2)

b. The purpose. The purpose which Proverbs declares is to "give

(1) Davidson, p.80.

(2) Eiselen, p.83.

subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion".
"Hence the Proverbs are not popular sayings, as with us, but embodiments of some truth of religion or morals, statements of how such truths may be observed verifying themselves in life and society." So while they are not popular sayings, they approach the popular vein, because they deal with the kind of thought accessible to and needed by the average man. (1)

"As a whole, Wisdom literature is an important chapter in the history of personality, of the growth of strong, rounded manhood. One essential strain of that developed personality is the intellectual educative; the awakening of the mind to life as it is, and the work of ideals clear from the fogs and evils that beset them." (2)

c. The nature of Wisdom literature. The nature of Wisdom literature may be called secular, but in the sense that the secular and the sacred were never sharply divided. The people always had a felt background of the sacred. (3) But this literature is that of passion. The whole gamut of human experience is covered. At the same time Divine experience is uncovered, as the books go on to deal with affairs of this world and its work, and to call on the practical self-reliant activities of man.

The arrangement of the Wisdom books seems to be based upon the age of the supposed authors. Job, by whomever written, comes first; the Psalms next, generally called the Psalms of David; and last come the three books of Solomon.

5. Summary of each Book. Job is mentioned as the best man of his time on earth. He became penitent, which is one meaning of his name, not

(1) Davidson, p.134.
(2) Genung, p.4.
(3) Ibid, p.16.

because of words uttered under stress of calamities, but because of his knowledge of God. He had heard of God by the hearing of the ear; now his eye saw Him, and therefore, for the first time God was properly revealed to him. Once, he claimed spotless conduct for himself, now he abhors, not his sins, but himself, and repents in dust and ashes.

In Ecclesiastes it is the wisest man who is unveiled. Solomon's wisdom results in folly, just as Job's goodness is confessed to be vileness. Both books are of world wide interest and significance in the search for righteousness and for wisdom. The book of Job has another problem, however, the ministry of evil, which will be taken up later.

The book of Psalms has a largeness of character which lifts it above the other books of its group, speaking in praise and prophecy of the reign of God. The voices of the universe speak to and of Him. Man, in all his experience, concedes Him to be Master.

The Song of Songs gives us experience of another order from that of Job or Ecclesiastes. If Job comes confessedly to an end of himself, even of a good self, we have here a song of the heart, which speaks of a deliverance from self to be occupied with Another. Job was filled with introspection, a process which brought him nowhere. Now in this tiny book the soul is grappled by a love so mighty the heart itself cannot contain it. It reminds one of the Hallelujah Chorus. The hero is described as the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely.

Proverbs harvests the grain of the other books, so that we find a word for almost everything in life. In Ecclesiastes, King Solomon goes over the path of experience alone, but here it is the

Wise man going over the path with his readers, pointing out the dangers, and the need of care in this direction or the other. There is a direct word for many a question, and guidance in conduct toward one's fellowmen.

6. Conclusion. In conclusion, then, we have found that the Wisdom literature has a character entirely its own, differing in content and form from the rest of Scripture, with an outlook upon life that is intensely human. We also perceive that Wisdom has a background of meaning that is more than human, that it springs from the realm of Deity Himself. And in the several books to be studied each has a different aspect of wisdom to present, so that apparently no field of human experience shall be left untouched.

CHAPTER III.

Personality in the Wisdom Literature.

1. Introduction:

The Principle Embodied in Wisdom Literature. There are certain principles embodied in the Wisdom literature which give the key to their contents. In Proverbs and in Job these are of a positive kind, and in Ecclesiastes they are largely negative. The positive elements deal with religion of a practical kind, as in Proverbs, and of an inner quality, as in Job. Ecclesiastes writes emptiness and vanity upon the experience of life, and even hope of the future is heavily obscured.

"So when we take up the Proverbs and inquire if there is any one truth that it all stands for, we find that, as it progresses, there is discovered a root out of which the whole organism springs." This forms itself into a principle which is never lost sight of, and is appealed to as something inescapable, creating a true philosophy of life: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom; And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (1)

It has been said that the book of Proverbs is not truly religious, that it aims at a lower plane of life than the other books of the Old Testament. Differences have been pointed out, but these were not in the realm of moral zeal. The Wise men were concerned with life, and the simple precepts for the guiding of life. Their very simplicity renders them the more valuable, because men need simple direction. The external and internal aspects of religion belong together, though finding separate emphasis at different times.

(1) Genung, p.97.

Proverbs places the emphasis upon the practice of religion, how to overcome temptation, and how to discharge everyday duties. (1)

"In Proverbs, religion means good sense, mastery of affairs, strength and manliness, and success, a well-furnished intellect employing the best means to accomplish the highest ends." And such teaching is of a universal nature, because of the healthy, vigorous tone. "The first chapters of Proverbs are the foundation of the whole Wisdom literature, the basis of reference, the court of appeal, the point of departure." (2) The young man is advised both negatively and positively. He is not to go heedlessly with the crowd. He is to have a mind of his own, principles and standards of conduct. He is not kept in ignorance of the kinds of temptations that will assail him: there will be escapades of all kinds, laziness, presumption, the strange woman. On the other hand, there are held up to his view paths of instruction not without their discipline, and a growing realization of ideals. (3)

Inevitably, the youth must take his choice. There are Folly and Wisdom, each beckoning, the latter queenly and gracious, calling to a "self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control" which alone can lead to power.

The opening words of Proverbs give its educative value: "To know wisdom and instruction; to discern the words of understanding; to receive instruction in wise dealing, in righteousness and justice and equity; to give prudence to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion: that the wise man may hear, and increase in learning; that the man of understanding may attain unto sound counsels; to understand a proverb, and a figure, the words of the wise,

(1) Eiselen, p.119.

(2) Davison, p.134.

(3) Genung, p.98

and their dark sayings." This does not mean to be filled and clogged with information, but to be wise. "And I applied my heart to seek and to search out wisdom concerning all that is done under Heaven: it is a sore travail that God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith." This is the kind of knowledge which can be applied directly to life. "Accordingly, this preface names over many of these aspects of knowledge: understanding, wise dealing, righteousness, justice, equity, prudence, subtlety, and discretion." These do not belong to the memory-class of learning, nor to the informational aspect, but they belong to the larger life of action and of heart where energy and will dwell, and where relations with others find interpretation. It was the educational furnishing of mankind. (1)

In Job, his line of siege with the adversary is one which occupies the whole man. It is not merely logic. Here Wisdom is something not merely to know but to be; consequently, he asserts the truth and is the truth so far as his heart dictates it. (2)

"Though I be righteous, mine own mouth shall condemn me:
Though I be perfect, it shall prove me perverse.
I am perfect: I regard not myself;
I despise my life.
It is all one: therefore I say,
He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.
If it be not He, who then is it?"

It is inspiring to see Job cling to his honest integrity, and in his bewilderment continue his demand to God and to show himself in love and power.

The distinct contribution of Ecclesiastes to the world's

(1) Genung, p. 110, 115.
(2) Ibid, p. 182.

possession of truth is generally understood to be of a negative sort, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." But the book shows rather that because everything is vanity there should be a surge onward to the substance, to the elements of life that have permanence. There is a steady leading to that end, slowly, but surely, and very gently. Rejoicing is not impossible in this book, as Koheleth shows what men ought to do about the apparent emptiness of life, and what manner of men they ought to be. (1)

2. The Personality of Job. It has been pointed out that in the book of Job three thoughts give the key to the whole history: Satan's malice, Job's self-righteousness, God's glorious majesty. Satan's assault on Job is given in the first chapter, and when God has permitted Satan to do his worst, he passes from view. He has introduced Job into the circumstances which God will use to probe him. Satan, with all his malice, is but the tool in God's hands, as it were, to polish His servant. At the end of the book God comes in, and reveals His majesty and His power. And now what a change! Job, who had closed the mouths of his friends, but was in bondage and in misery, now learns the secret of deliverance. Is it that God vindicates him, or confirms him in his good opinion of himself? He could tell Satan that there was none like Job upon the earth, but He speaks far differently to Job himself. In God's holy presence awed and broken, he learns to see himself by contrast. "I have heard of Thee . . . but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself." A difference of opinion exists as to the meaning of the name "Job", but one meaning is given as "the penitent."

(1) Cf. Genung, p.205.

So here is the penitent, the best man on earth, abhorring himself, and getting to the end of himself, finding God instead. (1)

Job has been likened to Prometheus, both representing the soul of the creature rising up against its doom and daring to call its Creator to account. (2)

a. Importance of the Narrative. The interest in the book of Job does not lie in its debate, but in its narrative, therefore it is a sublime self-portrayal of a man who held fast to his integrity against God and man and death and darkness. It is not a sermon, but a vital uprising of the human spirit. (3)

b. Job and his Friends. All the old conventional ideas of Wisdom are called to an account and searched out, made to pass through the fire, as it were, of actual experience, made to answer to the depth of being. And when it fails in any part, it is not Wisdom that has failed, for "in her true ideal and power she emerges stronger, stouter, fiercer than ever." The book of Job has a high function in this aspect and as wide as the universe itself. It is the suffering of Job which has opened his eyes to this new aspect of Wisdom. His friends know nothing of this inward schooling, consequently Wisdom lacks the vitality of first-hand knowledge. To Job himself the unfolding came gradually. With stubborn insistence he held his ground. He knows what God ought to be like, and he knows he is right in maintaining himself before God. His friends urge repentance, accuse him of having a deadened conscience, of being a scoffer, and promise him reinstatement if only he will acknowledge himself as a sinner.

(1) Ridout.

(2) Genung, p.146.

(3) International Standard Bible Dictionary: Job.

Their statements of wisdom are true enough, but have no application to the case. Job himself had many times offered such maxims to others as Eliphaz reminds him: (1)

"Behold, thou hast instructed many,
And thou hast strengthened the weak hands.
Thy words have upholden him that was falling,
And thou hast made firm the feeble knees.
But now it is come unto thee, and thou faintest;
It toucheth thee, and thou art troubled." (2)

It is also true that men reap what they sow, and that man cannot in his very nature be other than impure:

"And as I have seen, they that plow iniquity,
And sow trouble, reap the same." (3)

And with further implied blame Eliphaz intimates that Job's attitude of mind prevents him from knowing true wisdom, and urges him to "commit his cause to God," holding before his view the much-desired result: (4)

"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth:
Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the
Almighty.
For He maketh sore, and bindeth up;
He woundeth, and His hands make whole." (5)

His doctrine of God, as One doing great and unsearchable things, giving rain, setting on high the lowly, frustrating the devices of the crafty, saving the needy and the poor, is an introduction to his plea that Job would allow God to use His power in his behalf:

"And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace;
And thou shalt visit thy fold, and shalt miss nothing."

All this is true, but its wisdom does not satisfy. It does not fit his case. He has not brought this evil upon himself. He is being wronged:

(1) Genung, p.148
(3) Job 4:8
(5) Job 5:17 : 18.

(2) Job 4: 3-5.
(4) Genung, p.148.

"There is no violence in my hands,
And my prayer is pure." (16:17)

Even though his eyes are red with weeping and he is sitting in the shadow of death he will maintain this. He passionately desires death, and yet exults in pain that he has not denied God. He seeks Him but cannot find Him. He feels that Eliphaz leaves much to be desired in his words of wisdom: "But your reproof, what doth it reprove?" (6:25) He is passionate in his portrayal of his wrong: I will not refrain my mouth," he says. Bildad openly rebukes him, attributes his children's death to their sins, and implies Job's impurity by saying that upon confession he would be restored. He too recites the wisdom of tradition that all that forget God shall be cast out of the way:

"Behold God will not cast away a perfect man,
Neither will He uphold the evil-doers." (8:20)

There is nothing new in this to Job:

"Of a truth I know that it is so," and he follows it with a great BUT, and this seems to be his problem, for twice he asked the question, and one other time he compares man with God in this aspect: "But how can man be just with God?" (9:2; 25:4)

For this presumption of trying to find out the secret of God, Job is reproved by his third friend, Zophar, who now says:

"Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine
iniquity deserveth.
Canst thou by searching find out God?
Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (11:6)

Zophar goes on to describe the greatness of God in its height, breadth, depth, and length, and ends by saying: "But vain man is void of understanding." This is all so familiar to Job that he replies with irony: "No doubt but ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you." (12:2)

And later he says:

"Lo, mine eye hath seen all this,
Mine ear hath heard and understood it.
What ye know, the same do I also;
I am not inferior to you."

They are failing him, falling short of the mark. And they are all he has to depend upon. Suddenly he awakes to the real support of

friendship: "Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven,
And He that voucheth for me is on high.
My friends scoff at me:
But mine eye poureth out tears unto God. (16:19)

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Whom I, even I, shall see on my side,
And mine eyes shall behold,
And not as a stranger;
My heart is consumed within me." (19:27)

He still has a clear recognition of the hardness of life on earth, still thinks he is unjustly dealt with, and is sincere in his demand that God shall justify Himself as truly Godlike in this mysterious circumstance. He feels himself safe in the very hands that have stricken him as he does not in those of his so-called friends. They prefer their logic to a sympathetic striving to find out the truth. Job wants justification. (1).

c. Analogy of Job to Scripture as a Whole. The background of Job's life is the same as that of the opening of Genesis, and therefore, of mankind - untried, unproven, and untested human righteousness in an environment of happiness. In both cases, there is also the intrusion of Satan, bringing death and disease, followed by man's attempt to recover man from his fallen condition. A revelation from God makes known a divine provision, and the end of Scripture, in the book of Revelation, as the end of Job portrays man's condition

(1) International Standard Bible Dictionary.

infinitely more than his first. Job, by searching, could not find God. He is self-revealing. In summary, scope, and teaching, this book gives us the entire Bible.

Job's question was answered when God spoke to him out of the whirlwind: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel By words without knowledge?" (38:2) and went on to reveal Himself in all His majesty and power. The whirlwind features of human experience are explained, whether in the life of the individual, in nature, or in nations. The question of human desert does not enter. The fact of the whirlwind is the answer to his friends. "There is the whirlwind - the inexplicable, the incalculable, the irrational; there is all that to be possible met in life. But God is in the whirlwind. We cannot say why the whirlwind should be there; it is sufficient to know that God is in it. That is Job's view of human experience, that is Job's faith, that is what gave him peace. And even the New Testament merely makes a little more explicit what this unknown but supreme genius saw more or less clearly so long before: "All things work together for good to them that love God." (1)

The story of Job in his personality and as he lives the answer to the problem is the chief thing. Wisdom is not attacked, but men's theories of Wisdom. Truth is truth, and does not change with men's apprehensions of it.

3. Development of Personality of the Psalmist:

a. Recognition of the Holiness of God. There are certain Psalms which present this same aspect of difficulty to the Wise man. Accustomed to think of his maxims as self-verified, he reacts upon his

(1) Editor of the Expository Times quoted in the Biblical Review upon Otto's Idea of the Holy, p.585.

personal relations to God when calamities occur. In the presence of the prosperity of the wicked he is excited to fretfulness and envy of the man who seems to have the best of it here. In the 37th Psalm, faith and patience are given as the answer. Let the wicked prosper. Rest in Jehovah; He is still Jehovah. Strange to say, the two Psalms preceding this portray God's dealings with the wicked, and the two Psalms following show His dealings with the righteous. God is holy, therefore, whether in judgment or in grace.

b. Hope of Immortality. In the 49th Psalm, the psalmist declares: My mouth shall speak wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding." He begins with a question. If man with all his self-confidence is yet the poor creature which this Psalm represents why should he be afraid in days of evil even though encircled by those who would trip him up. He sees through the folly of the rich. Let anyone try to throw a shield about his brother and give a ransom to God for him. He cannot. Everyone knows, says the psalmist, that death comes to all. Here, too, there is a point of contact with Ecclesiastes. And so he moralizes: riches give but a transitory glory; death dispossesses the owner. As for the righteous - God will redeem his soul from Sheol.

c. The Spiritual Value of Suffering. Again, in Psalm 73, there is the same painful thing to consider and hard to understand, the suffering of the righteous in contrast with the prosperity of the ungodly. But the psalmist turns from this to deplore his own folly in being so moved by the short-lived triumph of the wicked. He owns it as the ignorance of the beast who leaves out God. If he realizes that God is with him, that may well stand in the place of other good:

"Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory."

These Psalms combine with Job in the attempt at a practical answer to the question of the suffering of the righteous.

4. Conclusion. In conclusion, the principles embodied in the Wisdom literature show us the emergence of a vital personality in practical religion. There are standards of conduct of a high order, and a definite choice between good and evil, giving us real educative value.

There is also the principle of an inner religion bringing personality out into a desirable self-consciousness in relation to the integrity of self and to the holiness of God. Suffering is accepted for what it is, the discipline of a life in absolute dependence upon God.

CHAPTER IV.

Character Development in the Wisdom Literature.

1. Introduction: Every age has its ideals of character and its principles of conduct and the age of Wisdom literature no less so. The book of Proverbs holds character training before one's gaze continually, presenting the wisdom of making a good choice in every conceivable aspect of human relations. Wisdom is presented in the concrete and in the abstract, dramatized and personified in various ways, and given also in parable. Ecclesiastes comes forward with a problem, holding character in a veiled vision before the eyes of youth, and finally presents his findings as a source book: "And for what is more than these, my son, be admonished."

2. Character as a Choice. The book of Proverbs presents a great variety of wise sayings upon many subjects, but there is also a definite grouping. For instance, the proverbs most frequently quoted and perhaps most loved, are those in chapters 10-22. They are a "keen insight into the ways and motives of men." The effect of a certain few of them upon the reader is that of quiet enjoyment rather than a challenge to deep moral purposiveness. The bulk of them, however, exhibit an over-ruling Providence, a God vitally interested in His handiwork, consequently drawing men's minds to a consideration of higher principles. (1)

The Wise man has a friendly attitude toward his fellow-men in the very words in which he expresses himself, leading them to an unconscious acceptance of his precepts. He sees the human characteristics, mimics them without irony, as when he notes a bit of bargaining: "It is bad, saith the buyer;
But when he is gone his way, then he boasteth." (20:14)

(1) Cf. Davidson, p.47.

The selfish aspect toward the poor relation does not escape his kindly criticism:

"All the brethren of the poor do hate him;
How much more do his friends go far from him!
He pursueth them with words, but they are gone." (19:7)

He is playfully sarcastic in dealing with laziness in various instances as when the man is fertile in excuses for not working:

"There is a lion without;
I shall be slain in the streets." (22:13)

And when he wishes food but is too indolent for the necessary exercises: "The sluggard putteth his hand to the dish,
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again." (19:24)

On the other hand he is very grave in his remonstrances against sluggishness, foreseeing the end, and pointing it out to his hearers:

"Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep;
And the idle soul shall suffer hunger." (19:15)

He has a particular antipathy to idleness, judging by the frequency of his admonitions. (1)

a. Presentation of Wisdom in Concrete Form. All that the Hebrew sage presented in proverbs was in particular, concrete instances. He observed minutely as he went about in the market place, and in the byways and haunts of men, having his feet upon the ground, as it were. Each characteristic of human action or reaction recorded itself upon his mind, and he voiced it simply, kindly, tenderly, sometimes caustically, sometimes in ridicule. An illustration with reference to the last aspect is given concerning discipline in the home:

"Withhold not correction from the child;
For if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die;"

but he hastens to admonish the parent by saying,

(1) Cf. Davidson, p.47

"Thou shalt beat him with the rod,
And shalt deliver his soul from Sheol," thus linking
up an emergency in human experience with eternal issues. (1)

Imagination seems to have no part in his observations, nor
did he speculate upon these affairs of humanity, for to him there
was no "conflict of values," yet he was "laying the foundation of
a philosophy in personality, in character, expressed alike in the
ideas of his brain and in the tempers and passions of his soul -
this character was the focus in which his Wisdom united and centered." (2)

Many of his educational viewpoints are seen in his
contrasts, especially in the realm of character development:

"The mouth of the righteous bringeth forth wisdom;
But the perverse tongue shall be cut off." (10:31)

In the social aspect the contrast is presented from the
man and woman side: "A gracious woman obtaineth honor;
And violent men obtain riches." (11:16)

From the standpoint of discipline character is shown:

"Whoso loveth correction loveth knowledge;
But he that hateth reproof is brutish." (12:1)

The attitude toward learning has its effect upon accomplishment:

"A scoffer seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not, (14:6)
But knowledge is easy unto him that hath understanding."

The control of the emotions is not without a place in the educational
scheme of the wise man:

"He that is slow to anger is of great understanding;
But he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." (14:29)

The place of the teacher finds justification: (15:22)

(1) Cf. Davidson, p. 47.
(2) Genung, p. 108.

"Where there is no counsel, purposes are disappointed;
But in the multitude of counsellors they are established."

The sage had practical ends in view in all his pithy sayings and whether he uttered them in positive or negative form, it was intended for so much gain in character. He exhibited as many attitudes toward human qualities as were revealed to him in his varied observations, and these were of a like kind. He had "sarcasm" for fools, scorn for scorers, contempt for sluggards, abhorrence for the impure and unchaste, and disdain for talebearers and backbiters." His admonitions centered around the ideals of conduct toward rulers, parents, teachers, elders, the thrifty, the prosperous, the shrewd and subtle, the poor and oppressed. These traits could be summed up into a love of righteousness which is true wisdom, and into an abhorrence of wickedness, as the representation of folly. "To be industrious, openminded, steady, temperate, tactful in speech was just in so many ways to be wise, that is, to put the soul to good use for practical ends. To be forward, gluttonous, clamorous, and headstrong was to be so many kinds of a fool." (1)

(1.) Wisdom as a Public Teacher.

b. Presentation of Wisdom in Abstract Form. Wisdom as presented in chapters 1 to 9 is less concrete than in the section just dealt with. It is ideal in most of its thought, is profound and beautiful. (2) It is described in chapter 8:1-8 as a public teacher.

"Doth not wisdom cry,
And understanding put forth her voice?
On the top of high places by the way,
Where paths meet, she standeth;
Beside the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the coming in at the doors, she crieth aloud."

- (1) Genung, p.108.
(2) Davidson, p.75.

She does not take her place expecting the crowds to come to her, but she goes where the crowds are, where the people naturally congregate, where the throngs are brought together for many reasons, all human enough. Her voice is but another appeal added to the many, only here is cried aloud. She challenges men in general, the simple and the fools to hear her as she pictures the kind of thing she has to offer, the excellent truths. She has nothing crooked, all her words are plain, they are better than silver or gold:

"For wisdom is better than rubies;
And all the things that may be desired are not to be
compared unto it." (8:11)

It is herself which she offers. The catalog of desirable attainments is not a result of her gifts or of her influence, or even the outcome of her instructions. Men do not become prudent or powerful or wise by following a set of rules which she inculcates. It is herself in very truth which they must possess. If men wish prudence they must abide with Wisdom, for prudence is her dwelling place. It is there that knowledge and discretion are absorbed. It is a soul and body unity. She says:

"I am understanding; I have might.
By me kings reign,
And princes decree justice,
By me princes rule,
And nobles, even all the judges of the earth," (8:14-16)

The whole social order, therefore, of government and governed, is Wisdom expressing herself. She is the foundation, the superstructure, the background, the center, the polish of all that is intelligent and right. The right which she maintains is in the realm of godliness, for "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil" she says. She also proclaims her hatred of all that is a negation of herself:

(1) Davidson, p.76.

"Pride and arrogance, the evil way,
And the perverse mouth, do I hate." (8:13)

She does not hold herself aloof from any who desire her, but is easily won, for she says, invitingly,

"I love them that love me;
And those that seek me diligently shall find me,"

and she promises a rich reward for such responses to her love:

"That I may cause those that love me to inherit
substance,
And that I may fill their treasuries." (8:21)

This wealth of Wisdom is confirmed by the Sage himself in speaking of the happiness of those who find her who is better than silver, gold, or rubies; "And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her," whether it is long life, riches, or honor.

(2) Wisdom as a Father. The Sage takes the position of a father and implores his sons to get wisdom, calling it good doctrine, passing it on as he received it from his father who considered keeping the commandments as life itself. "Get wisdom, get understanding," for in her is preservation. She is the principal thing; with her is promotion, a crowning of success in grace and beauty. A straight goal ahead is the method: (1)

"Turn not to the right hand nor to the left:
Remove thy foot from evil."

There is a definite warning against evil in the form of the "Strange woman." She is pictured as dropping honey from her lips, and as having the smoothness of oil. But her bitter end is also given, her feet going down to death. She is altogether unstable. The end of the one who falls before her is sketched with pathos: he will be

(1) Cf. Brown, p.1.

robbed of honor, his labor will be that of a hireling, his health and strength gone. Worst of all, remorse will be given futile expression:

"How have I hated instruction,
And my heart despised reproof:
Neither have I obeyed the voice of my teachers,
Nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!
I was well-nigh in all evil
In the midst of the assembly." (5:12-14)

The youth is given advice in business affairs: if he has given his bond for a neighbor he has snared himself with his words. The best thing to do in such circumstances is to go to his friend and humble himself. He is to use such importunity as not to give sleep to his eyes until he delivers himself "as a bird from the hand of the fowler."

(3.) Wisdom in Parable. The Proverbs are not without the teaching in parables, a favorite method in Scripture. The oft-quoted parable of the ant: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard" is a study in industry. The ant, needing no supervision in the way of "chief, overseer, or ruler," diligently gathers her supply of winter food in the summer and harvest time. But the sluggard loses his sleep, just "a little more folding of the hands to sleep." The result will be the stealthy oncoming of poverty and of want that cannot be driven away any more than a defenseless man can fight successfully with one who carries a shield.

c. General Instructions. General instructions of the conduct of life include almost every aspect of human relations. A good name is choicer than wealth, and the loving favor that goes with such a name is priceless. God is the Creator of all mankind, therefore,

the rich and the poor are to be regarded alike. Evil is naturally in the world, but the wise man will not be seen in contact with it, not even as a witness.(1)

There is a threefold reward to those who keep themselves humble in the fear of Jehovah: riches, honor, and life. There is a thorny way for those who love evil and refuse the good, but this way is far distant from the one who maintains the captaincy of his soul, Child training is a subject dear to the heart of the sage, and the assurance is given of a successful issue:

"Train up a child in the way he should go,
And even when he is old he will not depart from it."

The rich man in his capacity of a lender is dominant over the poor man who is caught in the character of a borrower. Calamity is a necessary sequence of iniquity, and blessing follows the bountiful giver. The one way in which to treat the scoffer is to cast him out, for with his exit contention disappears, and peace reigns. For the pure in heart the friendship of a king is none too good, and indeed, is promised, and for the one who has knowledge safety is provided by Jehovah Himself. Laziness is ridiculed and abhorred. And again the sensibleness of correction and discipline is urged in the fact of the natural foolishness of the child and the effectiveness of the rod. This group of maxims closes with a warning that only want will be the result of oppressing the poor or catering to the rich.

The one who gives the advice in these proverbs, being a king, evidently knows at first hand the snares that lie in wait for

(1) Cf. Brown.

the youth: "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler,
Consider diligently him that is before thee;
Be not desirous of his dainties;
Seeing they are deceitful food." (28:1-3)

If this is a lesson on temperance, the Sage berates drunkenness in a far more open way, piling detail upon detail, interpreting as he proceeds, so there can be no mistaking the meaning of the nauseating scene. And is experience a good teacher in this instance? Apparently not, for the deluded victim says, "I will seek it yet again." (35:35)

When one follows the description of a wise man it is easy to see what folly it is for such a man to envy the wicked. Wisdom builds a house and fills the rooms with lovely things, in a figure. And the wise man grows continually stronger, makes war by wise guidance with sure victory. The evil man is a mischief-maker and fills his heart with plans of oppression.

To abstain from quarrelsomeness is a bit of prudence concerning one's own peace of mind, for it might be difficult to withdraw what one has said. And a man bent upon mischief-making is like one "that taketh a dog by the ears," even more, like a madman throwing about "firebrands, arrows, and death." And after all, he must explain his conduct by saying, "Am I not in sport?" (25:8-10)

As a final illustration of lessons on conduct the one on the uncertainties of life may seem to offer a good closing thought: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what the day may bring forth." (27:1) The author does not specify what sort of a man is boastful of the future, but One "greater than Solomon" apostrophized such an one as "thou fool." The folly consists not

in acts of wickedness, but merely forgetting God and the life beyond in the enjoyment of the world. He has not learned the text of the Wisdom literature: "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom."

(3) Character as VISION: Problem of Ecclesiastes. In Ecclesiastes, as in Job, the situation is presented suggesting a problem. Wisdom is embodied in a person, giving a point from which one may proceed. The situation differs, however, in that wealth is coupled with wisdom in the world of affairs where men labor. The scene is involved. Here is a man who has had every opportunity; he has kingly prerogatives; thousands wait upon his bidding; he has all wealth, everything that heart could wish. He has all wisdom, every opportunity to enjoy himself in the world. And what is the result? "All is vanity." The problem is this: "Here am I, with a reward of life ideally great, with all that wisdom can earn or fortune bestow; and now that I have it, what have I? What does it amount to? What new possessions does it add to my life, soul, real self?"⁽¹⁾

Ecclesiastes has been spoken of as sad and pessimistic in its tone. Perhaps it is so, because it sounds the depths of personality in its attempt to evaluate life's realities.

a. The Problem Stated: The Reward of Life. The problem is: "What is the reward of life?" Men labor and are paid for it in wages and are satisfied. But what can pay a man for living? This book answers the question by implying that "nothing can pay a man for living but life itself. Life is an ultimate fact. It cannot be bartered for anything else; it will accept no equivalent. Anything

(1) Genung, p.199.

else put in the balance with life, as wages, gain, achievement, turns out to be vanity, vapor, a futile, elusive breath of air. Any possible reward of life must be not in coin, but in kind. Life must be its own reward." (1)

b. The Search for Solution. Therefore, the writer will search in every realm from the luxuries of wealth to the lowest scale of hardship to see what may be found to solve his problem. (2)

"I said in my heart, Come now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure I searched in my heart how to cheer my flesh with wine, my heart yet guiding me with wisdom I made me great works builded houses . . . planted vineyards made gardens and parks . . . pools of water I bought men servants and maid servants . . . great herds and flocks . . I gathered me silver and gold and the treasures of kings and of provinces . . . men singers and women singers I withheld not my heart from any joy And, behold, all was vanity . . . and there was no profit under the sun." (2:1)

From pleasure he turned to experiment in the field of wisdom itself and its opposite. He found that wisdom excelled folly, "as far as light excelleth darkness." But he found also that one event happened to all." (3)

He tried another realm, that of labor, and he found that the laborer must die and leave all to another. There is nothing, therefore, but mere enjoyment. Will that stand the test? But no! This is the gift of God, and is not in man's power. It is

(1) Genung, p. 288

(2) Moulton, p. 288.

(3) Moulton, p. 288.

also vanity. (1)

He entered the world of times and seasons, which suggests a certain theory of the universe. Every deed has its occasion, and every man his opportunity to work out his own idea of life, whether for good or ill, each man a test case. He went where injustice and evil reigned, and passed on, knowing that God will be the judge. There is no solution. In the world of oppression he praised the dead because they were no longer living; he went into the world of labor, where a man is envied of his neighbor; where the very success of industry creates unsociability and isolation; where selfishness reigns. He noted the insatiability of the man who gets riches: "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase; this also is vanity." Even the intellect is unable to cope with the problem in giving a right interpretation to all he saw. "When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth then I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because however such a man labor to seek it out, yet he shall not find it." He has found one thing - "this only have I found: that God made men upright; but they have sought out many inventions," bending His laws, the laws of wisdom, to their own will. (2)

He finds one chilling fact, the stamp of death upon every man, whether wise or foolish, leaving all his acquirements behind, not knowing whether his heir will be a fool or a wise man. "As

(1) Genung, p.223.
(2) Genung, p.223.

well their love, as their hatred and their envy, is perished long ago; neither have they any more a portion in anything that is done under the sun." (1)

6. The Spiritual Value Discovered. Finally, the message of the book shifts the matter to the spirit: "Fear God and keep His commandments," finding there the sum of manhood. (2)

He has marshalled the world before him, and all that he gets out of it is bitterness, vexation, disappointment. To the question: "What is the reward of life?" Solomon says, "If you have all the wealth of a king, and all his power; if you spend your time in seeking enjoyment; if you spend your whole life in searching the world, you will find nothing but disappointment.

4. Conclusion. In conclusion, the character development here presented is in full recognition of Jehovah's power and efficiency. The greatness of God is not staggering in its effect. Rather, man possesses the same spirit within him, for "the spirit of man is the lamp of Jehovah, searching all his innermost parts." (Prov.20:27) However much disappointment life may hold, activity is still held before youth as the way to a desirable self-consciousness. In Oriental religion annihilation of effort is sought. But here man is free to act, his conscience is alive within him, and his task "is to use his freedom to fall into harmony of thought and conduct with Jehovah, the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness." (3)

(1) Genung, p.223.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Davidson, p.55.

CHAPTER V.

Training for leadership.

A Study in Comparison.

1. Introduction: Scope of the Chapter. In following the principle of concentration we shall organize the study in the next two chapters around two central and important truths, first, training for leadership, and then, the training of the child.

The development of leadership in the moral education of the race as seen in Ecclesiastes, depends much upon the recognition of certain difficulties in life, problems indeed, which seemed not to be explained by the ordinary principles of wisdom. Life as lived by man did not harmonize itself with the universal plan of God as generally understood. As Davidson says: "God's external providence was found to be out of harmony with the necessary conception of God. The wise man saw two points which greatly disquieted him: he saw the wicked prosperous, and he saw the righteous begging their bread." (1) "Koheleth" accepted these differences and tried to turn them to account. He did this by going about among men, by visiting all their haunts, and by searching every avenue of life and of activity.

Other leaders in history have also seen disquieting things and have endeavored to gain an insight into their meaning for the ultimate benefit of mankind. The Old Testament abounds with illustrations of great leaders whose method brought the secret of progress. The New Testament also has its examples, and Jesus embodied great principles in His entire earthly history. In the

(1) p.38.

time of the Reformation Luther became an outstanding exponent of efficiency in the midst of crushing evils.

2. Koheleth's Training for Leadership. Koheleth felt the pressure of existing circumstances and wished to ease them, or at least to make the most of them, both for himself and others. His very position as king and leader of his people made this necessary. He made life, its profits and rewards, the theme of his search. He steered for the field of labor, for there, if anywhere, the secret of progress and of compensation would be found. "What is there left over, what net proceeds, when the laborer has done his work? Every man has a work to do, whether it is paid for or not, whether done in joy or in sour rebellion; it is the lot to which God and his own nature have appointed him, and it is the vehicle of his talents, his bent, his skill, his range of interests. He is to put himself by the side of God among the creative forces." (1)

Therefore, Koheleth betook himself to the details of the world's life. He set himself the task of exploring and surveying by wisdom "concerning all that is wrought under the heavens." First, he gave an account of all his kingly enterprises, building palaces, making parks, accumulating wealth, servants, pleasures, luxuries. But from every quest, every enterprise, every achievement, he returned with the sickening sense of vanity and a chase after wind.

He entered other realms of activity where men lived and toiled and struggled, and came back with the same sense of the

(1) Genung, p.217.

futility of it all. He was wearied and mentally "paralyzed with the sense of human powerlessness." Also he had a divided feeling as the result of his search: a realization of dependence upon God in His overflowing sufficiency on the one hand; and on the other there remained with him the remembrance of the crushing evils of the world which he had witnessed. Between the two, "human prostration was complete. He was both abject and overwhelmed, though never skeptical." Consequently, he ends by saying: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; (marg. "all that hath been heard"): Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." And he can only appeal to judgment and leave his problem there: "For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." (1)

3. Comparison with other Leaders.

a. Moses. Moses, likewise, saw a deep problem of life. Raised in a palace, no less than Koheleth himself, and achieving the wisdom of his time in all its breadth and fulness, he had a true desire to help his people and to solve the riddle of life. He began in very much the same way as Koheleth, went among the people, humbling himself as Koheleth had not done. Both felt themselves to be the leader and deliverer of their people. Both failed in their chosen method. Moses found himself in Midian as the result of his failure and here is where the secret of success in true leadership was found. The history is very brief, although forty years were spent in this back part of the desert during which a work was being

(1) Davidson, p.40.

done in Moses that was needed to make him the leader he wished to be. His life as a shepherd in Midian gave ample time for meditation, and this, it seems, was the training for the power to be presently entrusted to him. He issued from this obscurity "the meekest man on earth."

In the course of his service as a shepherd he came to Horeb with its accompaniments of a fiery unconsumed bush, the voice of God, and his commission. Moses presented his personal unfitness as a leader, and received assurance in reply that the people brought forth by him would serve God upon that very mountain. A vision of leadership came to him then, not in the midst of the crowd, but in the solitude of great, quiet space. When he went back to the world, he found the same oppositions, false trusts, pride, and feebleness as before. But he carried with him signs of power in his rod which he could never have gained in the ceaseless action of his first method. The story of the deliverance from Egypt is one of many struggles competently met by the leader. There were not only physical and political deliverances, but the economic problems were efficiently solved; a legal set of laws never surpassed by any nation was instituted, and a national organization, with tribal regulations, was effected. The forty years' training in the palace would have been unavailing of itself, but combined with the forty years in the wilderness, and later, the forty days on the mountain, Moses was enabled to bring back no abject confession of "All is vanity and vexation of spirit," but rather the triumphant valedictory expression of divine goodness:

"Happy art thou, O Israel:
Who is like unto thee, a people saved by Jehovah, the
shield of thy help,
And the sword of thine excellency." (Deut.33:29)

Like Koheleth, Moses felt dependent upon God, but not in prostration of spirit, when he said:

"The eternal God is thy dwelling place,
And underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deut.33:27)

b. Joshua. The history of Joshua in his development for leadership is allied closely with that of Moses. Here was a man trained as a soldier, and necessarily had to do with conflict, with men in continual movement. The progress of the people was halted with a significant phrase: "Then came Amalek." The young man, Joshua, was the leader, but his success was entirely dependent upon Moses on the hilltop before God, holding up the rod of power. If Moses' hands were up, Israel prevailed. Amalek was beaten off, and Israel had a free and unobstructed road.

Later, when Moses was on the mountain forty days, Joshua, who accompanied him as far as he dared, waited below during that mysterious delay, although the elders had returned long before. Aeron, in the midst of the people, had made the golden calf as a substitute for the leadership of Moses.

Those forty days of waiting must certainly have left its impress upon the character of the future leader of Israel. Joshua does not seem to have possessed a mystical nature, yet these days were wrapped in spiritual meaning. All the events of his later days, filled as they were with entering a new land, conquering

enemies, settling a nation, apportioning to each tribe an equal section of a country varied in topography, all these must have been interpreted and directed in the light of that mystical period in his younger manhood. With that background there could be divine commands along the way and also promises of a significant nature. "Arise, go over Jordan," and "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you."

Uncrushed by the many failures of the people, by defeats, and by life itself as it passed in review before him, unlike Koheleth, Joshua could say: "There failed not ought of any good thing that Jehovah had spoken unto the children of Israel; all came to pass." (21:43)

c. Elijah. Elijah is another giant leader who emerged from obscurity, but there is no warrant in the narrative for assuming that it was a period of spiritual preparation, whatever one may think. Before the great trial on Mt. Carmel, however, Elijah spent three years and six months, first in solitude by the brook Cherith, then in comparative quiet in Zarepheth in the widow's home. When the time of fearful action came he met it with heroism and unyielding integrity. The reaction, devastating in its effects upon his character, for the moment, was nevertheless not without its elements of strength. The power of vision was his as he heard the still small voice, and went forth to appoint his successor and to announce the making and unmaking of kings. Koheleth saw that one grim event which happened to all, but "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

d. John the Baptist. In the New Testament, John the Baptist was "in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." He called himself a "voice," came among the crowds, saw life in its worst aspects; the selfishnesses of individuals and of masses, the extortions of the publicans, the violence and discontent of the soldiers, the adulteries of the king, all received from him appropriate rebuke and advice. But so hopeful was he that he could prepare a people by exhortation and by baptism for the coming of One greater than himself. And then he laid down his life in the "decreasing" in which he gloried. Koheleth's "Vanity of life" and John the Baptist's "the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" are scarcely in the same category.

e. Paul. When Saul of Tarsus bowed his soul before the vision on the way to Damascus, he "conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles, but went into Arabia" (Gal.1:15-17). "Paul was moved to seek solitude in order that he might fully understand and possess the great experience that had overtaken him. He remained in the wilderness three years, and when he came out he was prepared for the life which was to be his in the "crowded Graeco-Roman world." He could speak of men's duties in every realm, from the most commonplace relations to the highest aspirations of the soul. He could speak of having been caught up to the third heaven, of having seen things unlawful for man to utter and feel assured of a crown of life laid up for him. (1) Koheleth walked in a twilight of uncertainty concerning eternity and could

(1) Rev.H.E. Kirk, D.D. Sermon: The Soul's Arabia. Published in the Christian Herald, Nov. 5, 1927.

utter no assured word as to its reality.

f. Martin Luther. Coming down the centuries to a later period when the world needed some one to apply wisdom to the tangled condition of life, there came out of the solitude of a monastery one who unchained the Bible, and in fearlessness proclaimed the truth, saying, "God helping me, I can do no other." Martin Luther broke the shackles of superstition and of ignorance, established religion and schools for the masses to worship and learn in freedom, and saw hope and promise everywhere. Luther may have been vexed in spirit many times, but life was not "vexation of spirit."

g. Jesus. Jesus, the son of man, and the Son of God, the representative of the race and of Divine wisdom, "grew in wisdom and in stature, in favor with God and man" in an obscurity that lasted through thirty years. And when finally He came forth ready to move about among men His introduction to His work was by way of a forty days' fast in the wilderness. And frequently, during His brief ministry, there were retreats into the quiet places, there to be alone for the mystical, spiritual communion with God which was the secret of His power when among men. This is the dependence which Koheleth acknowledged with intelligent understanding, recognizing it as necessary to the moral order, but which brought him no personal joy, or ability to do more than to be a sign post pointing out the way, but not moving one step toward the goal himself.

In conclusion, Koheleth had vision enough to shift the temper of things from the commercial to the spiritual, leaving the soul on the heights ready for judgment. He has bade men to "fear

God and keep His commandments." He has summed up manhood as consisting in reverence and obedience. But after all, God is in heaven, and we are on earth. And though we may be nearer the point where we can see as God sees, yet we pronounce judgment on ourselves and can only await the verdict on "every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." (1)

Koheleth was too close to men to see the meaning and issue of life. He could not see the forest for the trees. Moses, Joshua and Elijah, John the Baptist and Paul, and Luther found the great verities on the heights and were not less, but more, helpful and sympathetic toward mankind in the problems and struggles of the race upward. Jesus could say, "I am the light of the world," and to His disciples, "ye are the light of the world," because of the contact with the unseen world. Koheleth was "poverty stricken because crowd-centered. The spirit that wisely breaks its active life with periods of quiet and solitude, increases in richness, even as it gives of its best in service to others." (2)

These leaders kept their minds free from the world that they might be clear-eyed and ready for the needs of the day. There are the same needs to-day, and even greater needs.

4. Summary: An Estimate. Koheleth's weakness was all the greater because he records this experience toward the end of his life, after he had tested all that the wisdom and pleasures of this world could give him. At the beginning of his long reign he had been given

(1) Genung, p.235.

(2) Kirk, "The Soul's Arabia."

"a wise and an understanding heart" beyond any other man of the human race (1 Kings 3:12). God gave him also riches and honor, so that no other king on earth in his lifetime was even his rival. "And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men . . . and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, . . . he spake also of beasts, and of birds, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom" (1 Kings 4: 29-34). (1)

Instead of using this divine wisdom which was given him he tried out the empty wisdom of men, draining the cup of pleasure and of human life to its dregs. "King Solomon loved many foreign women, . . . he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart . . . after other gods . . . and Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah." (1) (1Kings 11:1-6)

"This was the man who wrote Ecclesiastes. He could speak out of a bitter experience such as no man on earth before him or after him, has ever had. He knew beyond all other men the uttermost scope of human knowledge and wisdom and pleasure. " (1) But

(1) Sunday School Times, March 3, 1928, p.134.

he chose the lower plane of life when he might have had the higher, and with his wisdom he might also have led men to the heights which he glimpsed in his early years. Instead of leading, however, he merely asks, in profound introspection. "Is life worth living?" His answer is not reassuring at first, but his conclusion is an upward look that is satisfying. A hint in chapter eight says: "Yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God." (1)

It is this upward look which solves the problem. Moorehead gives the key to the phrase 'under the sun' which occurs so frequently throughout the book. "'Under the sun' life is scarcely worth living; but above the sun and in the heavens - glorious!" (2) This is the secret of leadership which gave Moses and the rest their power; it was the vision of Jehovah "high and lifted up" which caused in Isaiah first the sense of unworthiness, then, after the cleansing of his mouth with the live coal from off the altar, the readiness for leadership in his offer: "Here am I, send me."

May not Koheleth, too, have cast aside the things "under the sun" and in the last words of his book become the leader he desired to be in the upward pointing of his finger above the sun when he said: "Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, 'I have no pleasure in them' ". You may prove almost any of the teachings of the materialist, fatalist, or the sensualist by isolating parts of the first eleven chapters from the "conclusion of the whole matter" in the last chapter. The familiar words of our railroad tickets, 'not good if detached' should be written

(1) Cf. Weddell, quoted in the Sunday School Times, Mar.3, 1928, p. 134.

(2) From Weddell quoted in Sunday School Times, Mar.3, 1928, p.134.

opposite almost everything in Ecclesiastes except the last chapter."⁽²⁾

He could not, however, like Christ, lift up the years of his life to God and say: "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

(1) Bell, A.E.: The Gist of the Bible. Quoted in the Sunday School Times, March 3, 1928. p.134.

CHAPTER VI.

Training of the child.

A study in comparison.

1. Introduction: General View of Proverbs. The teaching of the wise men rests upon a religious basis. Their religion may not rise to the New Testament level, but in this they resemble other Old Testament writers; their conceptions of reward and punishment may be crude and materialistic, but this point of view they share with many Israelite characters whose vision was confined to this world. But with all these shortcomings, their teaching is inspired by a firm belief in the existence of a personal, righteous God and His rule over the world, and in the other great verities taught by the prophets. (1)

Far from disregarding religion the writers of the Proverbs, for instance, sought to make it the controlling motive of life and conduct. As a result a healthy, religious spirit pervades the book from beginning to end; and, in addition, there are numerous passages which give different expressions to the lofty religious conceptions of the wise men. Their creed is summed up in the expression: "The fear of Jehovah." (2)

Nevertheless, as is natural in a book seeking to influence conduct, great stress is laid upon ethics, the practice of religion. No interest or relation of life seems to have escaped the attention of these keen observers of human nature and of life. Precepts are given concerning ordinary, everyday conduct: as, for instance, diligence - "He becometh poor that worketh with a slack hand;
But the hand of the diligent maketh rich" (10:4).

(1) Eiselen, p.119.
(2) Ibid.

Riches as such are condemned -

"He that trusteth in his riches shall fall;
But the righteous shall flourish as the green leaf." (11:28)

Right treatment of animals is exhorted -

"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast;
But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." (12:10)

Common sense in speech does not go unnoticed -

"In the mouth of the foolish is a rod for his pride;
But the lips of the wise shall preserve them." (14:3)

The relations of men to others received a variety of treatment:
just weights - "A false balance is an abomination to Jehovah;
But a just weight is His delight." (11:1)

In the same category is pity for the poor -

"He that hath pity on the poor, happy is he" (14:21);

and again

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto Jehovah,
And his good deed will he pay him again." (19:17)

The integrity of national life is jealously guarded by precepts, as

"Righteousness exalteth a nation;
But sin is a reproach to any people." (14:34)

And this includes the attitude toward rulers:

"It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness;
For the throne is established by righteousness.
Righteous lips are the delight of kings;
And they love him that speaketh right." (16:12, 13).

2. Solomon on the Early Training of the Child. On the training of children Proverbs has much to say, but the number of precepts are chiefly in the way of reiteration. The principle is throughout the same. Disobedience is deplored and correction constantly insisted upon. "A wise son heareth his father's instruction," the marginal reading giving "correction" as an alternative; the proverb:

"A wise son maketh a glad father;
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother" (10:1)

is substantially repeated in three places.

a. Method of Correction. The principle of correction is

"The rod and reproof give wisdom;
But a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother."
(29:15)

The parental motive is indicated in the following:

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son;
But he that loveth his son chasteneth him betimes
(margin: diligently).

.....
Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope;
And set not thy heart on his destruction
(margin: causing him to die)." (29:18)

b. Historical Background. This last admonition may have come from a painful immediate experience of Solomon in his boyhood home life concerning the lapse of discipline there, for David never reproved any of his sons, not even so much as to say: "What doest thou?" The tragic outcome in the lives of two of Solomon's brothers, Ammon and Absalom, may have caused him to say: "And set not thy heart on causing him to die" by lack of correction. It was David's own moral weakness, according to Solomon, which produced the later disaster which almost brought about the ruin of the kingdom. And at the death of Absalom David's heart was well-nigh broken when he cried: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (II Sam.18:33)

In the history of Israel during the times of the Judges there were two outstanding men of whom the same experience is true. Eli's two sons were great transgressors, but Eli did nothing but expose his incapacity as a parent. In their contempt of Jehovah's

ordinances we do not even hear of a rebuke. When they add immorality to their practices Eli argued with them and protested, but that was all. He used no "rod," but let them go unchecked to the divine judgment which he foresaw but did nothing to avert. The sentence was both upon Eli and his house. The boy Samuel was called to be the mouthpiece of Jehovah to them, and in later years he became the righteous Judge of Israel.

The domestic history was repeated, however, for "when Samuel was old, he made his sons judges over Israel . . . And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice" (I Sam. 8:1,3). Consequently, the people rejected them and demanded a king, seeing no hope in the undisciplined sons of their great and just judge.

The admonition of Solomon possessed the roots of truth in the right rearing of sons, but somehow they failed in effectiveness in practice, if indeed they were practiced, both in his own household and in that of other great leaders of Israel. He says:

"My son, keep the commandment of thy father,
And forsake not the law of thy mother:
Bind them continually upon thy heart;
Tie them about thy neck." (Prov.6:20,21)

The purpose was to keep the youth in the right way and strong in the way of temptation.

3. Moses on Parent and Child. Moses commanded, "Honor thy father and thy mother" with its implied obedience, and so important was this law that a promise was added to it, "that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Not only was

God pleased to attach a promise for the observance of this commandment, but He also linked with it a signal punishment for disobedience to it: "And he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death" (Ex.21:17). Other commandments akin to this involve "emitting" one's parents, or "setting light" by them. Jesus when challenged concerning the tradition of the elders in the matter of the ceremonial of the washing of hands, replied with a counter question, saying: "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God said, Honor thy father and thy mother: and, Ye that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death." (Mt.15:3,4) His own life was an exposition of the full meaning of obedience when He filled His place in that human family in which He was placed, subject to the authority of those who at best knew Him so little. And this obedience is entirely a part of that other obedience by which He was perfected.

4. Paul on Parent and Child. Paul, in giving instructions to Timothy, includes the family relationship: "But if any widow hath children or grandchildren, let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents: for this is acceptable in the sight of God." The training of children is thus interpreted by Paul on a different basis than that noted in the Proverbs, and is upon a higher level. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Eph.6:1; of.Col.3:20) is just a simple statement. It is not so much subjection to parents as subjection to the authority of Christ, and therefore, preserves that authority in everything. It provides for the hour of

temptation and for all the relations of life, making any relationship but a shadow of higher and spiritual ones. When Solomon

said: "The eye that mocketh at his father,
And despiseth to obey his mother,
The ravens of the valley shall pick it out,
And the young eagles shall eat it," he doubtless felt

as Paul but had not the dynamic language or incentive to offer.

According to Paul, all those in authority are to exercise it in love, a love that "seeks not its own," and those under authority to yield obedience as to the Lord. How different from the rod-begotten submission!

5. Jesus and the Child. And this is entirely in line with the attitude and teaching of Jesus concerning the child. The sacredness of personality is shown here in a strong light. "The child in the midst" is a lesson to the disciples in humility; children at play give Him His text for administering grave rebuke to His enemies for their unreasoning stubbornness, although no blame rests upon the little ones as examples. (Mt.11:16, 17)

"See that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." He speaks as though on congenial ground after having used other language, strong, passionate in its denunciation of those who would injure a little one, for He had said: "It is profitable for him that a great millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depth of the sea." And again he said that it were better to cut off a hand or foot, better to pluck out an eye, if it caused offense. But He

turned to the other aspect of the guardian angels of these little ones. If He held children in such high regard, and surrounded them with the safeguards of a love so great, well may they be held in loving regard by men.

In a later incident there is given another happy scene which also has its pedagogical aspect, although there is a painful contrast between the Master and the disciples. The contrast is all the greater because Jesus had already declared the spirit of His Kingdom by the example of a little child. The disciples seem full of nothing but a sense of Christ's dignity as a Rabbi, and probably also of their own dignity in being so closely associated with Him. But Jesus answers their rebuke by bidding them recognize what the parents had already apprehended, His power and love: "to lay His hands on them and pray." He assures the disciples that there is a place for children in His Kingdom, for "of such" it is, and of no others. "Suffer the little children," He says, "and forbid them not, to come unto Me for to such belongeth the Kingdom of heaven." (Mt.19:13, 14)

From a great height the lofty peaks of earth and its granite ranges become levelled. So men's thoughts concerning their dignity and the foolishness of a child may find a level from the heights of Christ's wisdom as He displayed it to His disciples. The person of a little child can scarcely be exalted more than Jesus raised it, whether successfully or not, in the hearing of His followers.

Perhaps the foregoing is the warrant to follow Paul's command to the Ephesians: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your

children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." Authority, then, is not to be used so as to make it a burden to those under it. Children are to be subject to the authority to which the parents also are subject, and this common subjection makes everything right. Divine authority is that which establishes every other authority.

Rugh says that recognition must be given to youth's own directive principle for the interpretation of life, and that this will help in the diagnosis and treatment of youth, especially with specific reference to the future. The problem of the educator is to help youth to set up his lifework with no moral holidays. If such holidays occur as the result of over-stimulation and guidance, recovery is possible and easy as compared with those who have not had the nurture which recognizes children as subjects of the Kingdom. (1)

The wise man in Proverbs yearned after the youth of the land, desiring only his greatest good, and just as truly the glory of God, but was not able with his dimness of sight to visualize the drawing power toward a great obedience.

The psalmist says: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" And the answer comes: "By taking heed thereto according to Thy word" (119:9). And the thought of the Psalm continues to show that life is strong in him, and the untried world is full of natural attractions. Here, therefore, is the test case for the word of God to prove its power; and it is perfectly able to do this.

(1) Rugh: Social Standards. School and Society, Sept. 20, 1924, P. 331.

The young man watches the word shedding its light upon the whole scene, and observes how things acquire their true character by bringing God into connection with all. And so, continues the psalmist, the soul, finding here its attraction, is truly set free, made master of itself and of its circumstances. At the same time it realizes its dependence and its only safe shelter in the divine strength. This is the pattern which Solomon had in mind when he said:

"My son, if thou wilt receive my words,
And lay up my commandments with thee;
.....
Then thou shalt understand the fear of Jehovah,
And find the knowledge of God." (Prov. 2:1,5)

6. Bolshevism and the Child. A case study of the opposite method in child training is shown by a law affecting parents and children in Bolshevistic Russia. "The law does not permit the parents to punish their children as these belong to the State. In a certain family, the children were supposed to go to some Communist meetings. One evening the girl came home very late, and the mother asked for the reason. The girl cried out: 'You are not my mother; I belong to the State. You have no business to interfere with me. I shall report you.' The boy came in and slapped his mother in the face. When the government came to know the matter, the father and mother were apprehended and condemned to be shot, but the sentence was reduced to ten years' imprisonment because they were people of 'democratic opinions'". (1)

Child specialists warn against strict discipline when the disciplinary measures go to the point of using the "rod," but

(1) Dr. A. McCaig: Principal Emeritus of Spurgeon's College.
"Finding Heaven in a Bolshevik Prison," Sunday School Times,
February 4, 1928, p. 64.

Dr. May entertains a contrary view. In an address at a conference on character education held recently in Chicago, he said unhesitatingly that the rod used early and often gives a child a good foundation for character building in meeting the troubles of life in later years. (1)

Solomon's desire to have the child trained up in the way he should go, with the confidence that even in old age he would not depart from it had in it the right principle. It is the sharing in common of all the ideals of the family life. God said of Abraham: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness and justice . . ." (Gen. 18:19). This is the practical character of his faith. He was himself called out from the idolatry around to keep the way of the Lord, and he acknowledged him as the God of his household as well as his own God. The wise man's proverb would be fulfilled as to Abraham's house.

This is also the rule of the New Testament, according to which the Christian is to bring up his children in the "discipline of the Lord." He is assured that it shall be effectual. Among the principles of the Kingdom are discipleship, government, and discipline; and "thou and thy house" seems to be the rule, if one may judge by its frequent repetition. It was true of Cornelius of Caesarea, of Lydia and of the jailer in Philippi, of Crispus of Corinth, of the nobleman in Capernaum, of Stephanus of Corinth,

(1) Dr. Mark A. May, Professor of educational philosophy at Yale University. United Press article, N.Y. Times, Feb. 17, 1928.

and of others. "This is democracy in religion . . . involving the altruistic, the social, the communicative spirit, which is willing to share with all the good things coveted for oneself and one's own." (1) With such a beginning the wise man's proverb: "And even when he is old he will not depart from it" will doubtless find its fulfillment in the declaration of the youth"

"I delight myself in thy statutes:
I do not forget thy word."

7. Summary. Looking over the attitude toward the child then, we find the wise man making proverbs with the intense desire to see the youth of the land growing up clean and true to the highest ideals of the nation, but with a method embodying coercion, command, and pleading. He set before the youth's eye the two ways with the inevitable issue of each, bidding him choose the right. It is an ethical standpoint coupled with the injunction to fear God as the highest wisdom in the Wisdom Literature. We see Jesus teaching His disciples the law of love in their attitude toward the child; the sacredness of the personality of every individual; the awfulness of offending any young believer; and the preciousness of Himself to all such. And Paul echoes the Master's teachings in the picture of the shared life in the home as a matter of fact, the spiritual no less than the material. Abraham stands in the background as a great example of one who ordered his household aright, leaving a rich heritage to his descendants. The wise man of the Proverbs stands between two great lights, seeing through a glass darkly.

(1) Horne: "Helps to Better Living," Christian Herald, October 29, 1927, p. 931.

CHAPTER VII.

Educational Viewpoints. A Critical Study.

1. The Choice of Right Conduct.

a. Basis in Love. The choice of right conduct and its rewards: Davidson points out that the feeling of the wise man toward his neighbors is love, which thinketh no evil - "Hatred stirreth up strife, but love covereth all sins" (Prov. 10:12); so that, so far from seeking to revenge evil, he hides it - "He that covereth offense seeketh love." Of course, coupled with this, there was the practice of the severer virtues of justice, and particularly truthfulness, no vice being stigmatized so often as lying, and especially that form of it which is injurious to others, the bearing of false witness. (1)

This is not merely ethical, but religious. At the same time, it has to do with education in the realm of character building. In Proverbs there is a constant appeal to wholesomeness of conduct; Job utterly rejects every false thing, even in dogma; and Ecclesiastes, even though perplexed and uncertain, demands of manhood a four-square attitude before the world.

b. Moral Value. However, taking Ecclesiastes as an example, we find his philosophy of life falling short of the high aim expressed above in the fact of love covering all sins. As he went about among men he saw nothing but selfishness, especially in the industrial life. He could not fit that aspect of life into the scheme of things as a part of a great whole. President Coolidge says: "There are still

(1) P. 57.

some who sit apart, who do not see, who cannot understand. To them our industrial life is the apotheosis of selfishness. They cannot realize that the rattle of the reaper, the buzz of the saw, the clang of the anvil, the roar of traffic are all part of a mighty symphony, not only of material but of spiritual progress. Out of them the nation is supporting its religious institutions, endowing its colleges, providing its charities, furnishing adornments of architecture, rearing its monuments, organizing its orchestras, and encouraging its painting. But the American people see and understand. Unperturbed, they move majestically forward in consciousness that they are making their contribution in common with our sister nations to the progress of humanity." (1) This is a true philosophy of life and conduct which sees the value of the part in the meaning of the whole, where selfishness falls out and love rides triumphant for the betterment of mankind. This is also service, intelligently rendered.

2. The choice of Right Motives.

a. Spiritual Value. It has been said that education is a preparation for life and that we do not really live during the process of education. In that case many never live, for education never really ends. Ecclesiastes says: "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest" (9:10-13). The immediate activity is of value only. But Solomon's motive for making the present experience the end in itself is far from ideal. The future

(1) Christian Herald, Oct. 29, 1927, p.934.

is without hope, a dark blot on the horizon. The motivation falls far short of Paul's when the latter exhorts to present diligence and fervency in spirit as "serving the Lord." What preparation for the future there may be will take care of itself. The education of the moment is truly momentous. The Master bids His followers to adopt a motive which will make the future glorious yet without giving the main thought to it. It is the purposive present which counts: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." That includes the diligence which Solomon exhorts, and the reason for it as given by Paul. This is education in the supplying of a right motive and incentive reaching out for the greatest happiness to one's self and to others.

b. Scheme of Life.

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth;
And there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but
it tendeth only to want" (Prov. 11:24).

The educational value of this is illustrated in many fields of activity: in agriculture we know that to fertilize the land richly there will be a rich return in crops. In business a liberal outlay will bring a liberal patronage. Every school in the land is a testimony to the truth of this proverb. The efforts expended upon the education of the youth of any land produce results in increase of character and efficiency that cannot be calculated. Life is enlarged and glorified; elements and considerations which lie beyond the present and the visible are called into play. Such scattering in generous measure finds its justification in the forces of the

universe: the sun streams light, the clouds give rain, the flowers shed their perfume, each season brings its gifts. And God, the Creator of the universe, is the great Example of the scattering that increaseth. (1)

Parker says: "Some of you have your scheme of life yet to begin. Do not be narrow; do not be little; do not be what is termed prudent in the poor shallow sense of that word. Be true, be noble, be self-oblivious. Have you natural amiability and philanthropic love to others? Encourage that. Do not live inwards; live from your hearts outward." (2) Scattering breaks up the mastery of selfishness, enlarges the circle of kindly interests, shows that there is something in the world beyond our own personal concerns. Withholding is also influential, but in a negative way. Sometimes, under the guise of prudence, it attempts to justify itself, but it is selfishness nevertheless. It is influential in the insidious way that poisons do their deadly work; in the way that darkness and gloom engender disease. It is not constructive, neither for himself nor for others, for "he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." The withholding also has a tendency to blind one to the real issues of life, an element which goes beyond the bare statement of the proverb, but which the New Testament gives us in the parable of the man who pulled down his barns to build greater ones. "But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and

(1) Parker, p.140.

(2) p.146.

is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:20, 21) As usual, the author of the Proverbs does not give the motivation for his precept which is found in the "treasure in heaven" idea given by Jesus to His disciples.

3. Education of the Conscience. The education of the conscience is not neglected by the wise man. Solomon says in a figure: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." (Prov.20:27) This doubtless refers not to the intellect, but to the moral mind of man, that is to say, his conscience. It is just as truly capable of education and development as is the purely mental part of man. It sets him above being a mere thinking animal.

The Bible proceeds upon the assumption that man has a conscience. God demands of Adam: "Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" (Gen.3:11) The psalmist acknowledges the existence of conscience within himself when he welcomes the searchlight of God: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps.139:23,24). He, at least, wishes to be truthful. Cleanliness and purity are what Solomon desires for himself and the youth whom he addresses, implying a struggle against the opposites, with the secret of deliverance not yet found: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure of my sin?" (Prov.20:9). The presence of conscience is implied in the incident of the woman taken in adultery: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her . . . And they, when they heard it, went out one by one, beginning from the

eldest, even unto the last" (John 8:7,9). And Paul says, very feelingly: "Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth" (Rom.14:22).

a. Conscience as Light. Solomon calls this faculty "the candle of the Lord," therefore, it is a light, divine, self-revealing. As a candle, it would seem to be dim; as light, it is capable of increase. Conscience is sometimes spoken of as being good, as when Paul connects a pure heart with a good conscience (1 Tim.1:5); and again he speaks of a conscience "void of offence," showing that conscience is not necessarily good, but that it may be trained to goodness. If it is the candle of the Lord there must surely be a good conscience toward God before there can be a good conscience toward men. It deals with motives, making men responsible for his actions, and leaving him in no doubt as to the quality of his actions. As the candle of the Lord, it cannot be extinguished, however dim and murky it may be. (1)

b. The Functioning of Conscience. The educational implication of this emphatic proverb is the possibility of developing and awakening in every individual the realization of judgment, sense, moral faculty, and spiritual power within himself. And the responsibility of education is to bring right ministries to bear upon the child for such an issue.

The functioning of conscience is shown in the proverb:
"The wicked flee when no man pursueth;
But the righteous are bold as a lion" (28:1).

The sentiment that "conscience doth make cowards of us all" is indeed very old. The timidity of a guilty conscience is clearly shown

(1) Cf. Parker, p.267.

in the proverb. The pursuer is but a phantom, but seems very real, very near, and quite terrific. Both Adam and Cain could testify to the terrors of a guilty conscience. Flight, however, has not only a point of departure, but also a point of arrival; a whither as well as a whence. Flight may be to safety and right conduct, or, as sometimes happens, to greater wrong and peril; to tears of repentance, or to self-forgetfulness in revelry. The value of flight, however, is often seen in the fact that it is a blessing in disguise. The wicked man knows he ought to be pursued, he condemns himself, his inward state becomes concrete, when, like the thief on the cross, he acknowledges that he receives the just reward for his deeds. The educational process is to lead one to one's place in the great system of things, and this can only be done by avoiding that which is evil and clinging to the good. So far, this proverb finds justification in the experience of all mankind.

The good conscience, on the other hand, creates heroism, according to the wise man, daring the universe. The statement is supported by history. Caleb and Joshua, Elijah, Nehemiah, the three Hebrew youths in the fiery furnace, and Daniel are instances. Men were astonished at the boldness of the apostles, and it is these, together with the Old Testament heroes, who give us the secret of boldness, rather than the wise man. The proverb leads us to think that boldness and courage are automatically linked with righteousness. But we know that some righteous souls have been wanting in courage. Peter denied his Lord, and Nicodemus came by night to speak to One who was not in favor with the leaders of the nation.

In the case of the apostles, when their work was hindered and their lives threatened, they did not ask to have the danger averted, but prayed for boldness (Acts 4:29). The prayer life of the saints of the Old Testament needs no comment, especially with reference to this aspect of the boldness of a lion. Such an attitude leaves no reserves for self-seeking, which is the true cause of unsteadiness and timidity.

4. Conclusion. In conclusion, we may say with Cicero that the impulse which directs to right conduct, and deters from crime, is not only older than the ages of nations and cities, but coeval with the Divine Being, who sees and rules both heaven and earth.

The Wisdom literature is a mosaic, with a realization of moral instincts and duties, presenting a philosophy of principles which can only be learned by doing. Moral lessons are everywhere, for even a fool may become a teacher, through no will or purpose of his own. "The true ideal of education is to train the powers, to cultivate the whole nature - not the thinking powers only, but the feelings and susceptibilities; to strengthen the will, to supply right motives and incentives, to train the conscience, to develop character, deepen the social sense and benevolent impulses, and to bring into action those qualities of human nature which we call spiritual. Only with such a training can a man be helpful to others in the widest sense. Only thus can he obtain the fullest happiness, for happiness comes partly at least from a healthy exercise of one's faculties and powers." (1)

(1) Crowder, F.W. Quoted in the Christian Herald, Nov. 5, 1927, p. 954.

So then, all the aspects treated in this chapter, dealing with the higher concerns of being, are educational. Only a few have been touched upon, but these are given as beginnings of a wider horizon, and to indicate that there is a way in which a way-faring man, though a fool, may walk and not err therein.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Summary and Conclusion.

The unique character of the books of the Wisdom literature is that they are the expression of the human heart in answer to the divine revelation of the other books. They show the experience of man, both in goodness and in wisdom, as they deal with the universal questions of mankind, and confess their failure. However short of a satisfactory answer they may come, and however materialistic the beginning of some of the arguments may be, these writers find themselves pointing to a right conclusion. They bring into view those qualities of human nature which we call spiritual. It remains for a later One, Jesus Christ Himself, to bring these qualities into action.

In laying these books under criticism for lacking the highest educational motives and incentives we are but following the admonition of Koheleth when he said: "Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this" (Eccles.7:10). We do not acknowledge that the books of Wisdom have produced better educational viewpoints than the present days have brought. We are living in the days when the light of Christ's wisdom sheds a greater glory upon our attempts at education. This privilege brings a sobering thought as to whether we are measuring up to the responsibility which the achievements of the present have placed upon us. Materialism is with us in myriad ways, and the objective which Wisdom of old set before us - "Fear God" - must not be lost sight of, but rather be transmuted into the goal for the greatest happiness of all.

Koheleth's endeavor in his quest for the chief good which led him through large and varied experience has not been without results. Though he carried no lamp of revelation in his hands, nor ventured beyond a certain point without it, yet he swept the whole circle of social experience, and consequently spoke with an authority intensely practical. His ideal man does not find the greatest good in pleasure, nor in devotion to affairs, but in a wise use and enjoyment of the present life, recognizing the claims of duty and of charity, and keeping the commandments of God.

The great proposal in Proverbs is nothing less than to invest the young man with wisdom and clothe him with honor and discretion. It declares that the beginning of wisdom is to fear Jehovah, nevertheless it is but the beginning, and though Koheleth makes it the conclusion of his finds, a further education is needed. In the New Testament it is love and not fear which forms the dominant motif, for, as Paul says, "The love of Christ constraineth us."

Finally, the book of Job teaches us the intrinsic value of man in the sight of God. If one man could stand in unbought loyalty before God, then the fact is proved that the potency of soundness exists in manhood. (1) All the demands of the wisdom literature are met and surpassed in the Man Christ Jesus "who is made unto us Wisdom."

So the books of wisdom have opened themselves to our gaze, touching human life at every point. Political life and social; life in the home, in the market, in the sanctuary; the rich

(1) International Standard Bible Dictionary: Job.

and the poor; rulers and the ruled; all is held before us for study, and made subservient to spiritual culture. There is no pragmatic philosophy here. Truth is unchanging. It is the good man and the bad man; the wise man and the foolish man; and there is no shading of the one or the other for purposes of mitigation.

These books are a call to discipline, and unseparating in their call. The soul may be neither idle nor indifferent. Whatever criticism we have made of them has not been because they are not helpful in the school of life, for truly they are spurs and goads. But that is not enough. The possibilities of the soul demand further treatment, and the criticism in this paper points to the Fatherhood of God as revealed in the Gospels. Our experience sets a seal upon the Wisdom literature, but for the entreaties, persuasions, and wooing so necessary for the human soul we turn to Him who is meek and lowly, and where alone true rest is found.

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