





Division

1

Section



The Student's Old Testament

PROVERBS AND DIDACTIC POEMS

THE STUDENT'S OLD TESTAMENT

LOGICALLY AND CHRONOLOGICALLY
ARRANGED AND TRANSLATED

BY

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ARRANGEMENT OF VOLUMES

I. Narratives of the Beginnings of Hebrew History. (*Now Ready.*)

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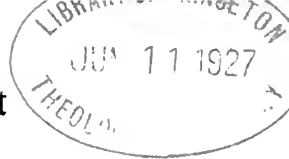
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Introduction. Practical and Ethical Observations and Precepts. Religious Proverbs. Gnomie Essays. Numerical Enigmas. Discussions of the Problem of Evil. Discussions Regarding the Value of Life and Its Wise Enjoyment. Poems Describing Wisdom.

THE STUDENT'S OLD TESTAMENT



PROVERBS AND DIDACTIC POEMS

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
TO THE GOODLY FELLOWSHIP OF THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON RELIGION IN HIGHER EDUCATION
TO WHICH IN HIS LAST YEARS PROFESSOR KENT
DEVOTED MUCH OF HIS ENERGY AND IN
WHICH HIS SPIRIT STILL LIVES

FOREWORD

THE greater part of the present work had been completed by Professor Kent before the illness which ended in his untimely death in May, 1925. The successive volumes of *The Student's Old Testament* have been familiar to scholars and laymen for many years, and have exercised a wide influence both in this country and abroad. Their author was a tireless worker, who spared no pains to accomplish his purpose. Each book in the series is the fruit of long study which aimed to use all the helpful material, ancient and modern, with an open mind. His careful translations, based on the original languages with constant reference to the principal versions, and arranged according to a comprehensive plan of his own, fill a unique place among the modern helps to the study of the Bible.

The subject of this volume, *The Work of Israel's Wise Men*, was especially congenial to Professor Kent, and had interested him for many years. He had already given it a brief and popular treatment in his *Wise Men of Ancient Israel and Their Proverbs*, published in 1895, and ever since then had been collecting material for a more thorough and extensive work. A glance at the critical notes appended to the present translation will serve to show the reader how seriously he took his difficult task. Like its predecessors, the volume testifies to its author's ability to construct a book fitted for practical use by students and teachers.

The publishers have been fortunate in securing for the completion of the unfinished work the collaboration of Doctor Millar Burrows, a former pupil of Professor Kent; one who, in addition to being a competent and careful scholar, is also able as few others could be to carry the task through to its end in the method and the spirit of its original author. There will be found no unevenness in the execution. The many readers of Professor Kent's printed works, as well as those—also many in number—who were privileged to be his pupils and friends, may take satisfaction in the knowledge that the book which he had long planned and nearly finished can now be presented to the public substantially in the shape which he himself would have given it.

CHARLES C. TORREY.

February 15, 1927.

PREFACE

THIS is substantially Professor Kent's book. According to his own estimate the task as he left it was about two-thirds done. In completing it I have tried to do as nearly as I could what he would have done. All passages found in the Shorter Bible are, with very few alterations, given here as they are rendered in that valuable little work, though this often necessitated considerable change in other passages to secure uniformity of style and diction. In those portions of the text which were entirely missing from the manuscript, and which I have therefore had to translate myself,* I have tried to follow Doctor Kent's method and manner.

Professor Kent believed that a new translation of the Bible should be couched in plain, vigorous, idiomatic, "Anglo-Saxon" language, the language spoken and understood by the modern man. This ideal involves no little difficulty. To avoid archaic expressions without falling into unlovely colloquialisms, to be idiomatic without too far sacrificing local color and literary flavor, and at the same time to convey some sense of the form and rhythm of the original—all this is not easy, especially in translating poetry. Perfect balance and consistency can hardly be expected, to say nothing of originality. The present work, leaning sometimes rather heavily upon earlier versions and sometimes venturing to walk alone, endeavors throughout to present that rendering of the text which will most adequately reproduce its meaning and spirit for the modern reader.

In the general plan of the book and the notes there has been even less change than in the translation. The critical and exegetical views expressed are Professor Kent's. Some things, indeed, have been allowed to stand which he might have altered if he had been able to revise the manuscript. The classification of the Proverbs might have been changed in a few particulars. In the sections of Proverbs which were lacking in the manuscript, the arrangement of Professor Kent's early book, *The Wise Men of Ancient Israel and Their Proverbs*, has been followed, though he would probably have revised this arrangement somewhat, as he did in the other sections. On questions of text and interpretation in the passages which I have had to supply I have necessarily, of course, leaned more upon my own understanding.

* Job 17¹²⁻¹⁵, 31¹⁻⁴, 26-28, 40¹⁵⁻⁴¹; many scattered verses in Proverbs and all of §§ 54-64, except such verses as are included in the Shorter Bible; Ecc. 6, 7, 10-25, 27-29, 31, 11-12, 10¹⁻¹⁰, 12¹⁻¹⁴.

PREFACE

The omission of Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon is a matter of regret, but, although a chapter of the Introduction is given to Sirach, it is unlikely that Professor Kent intended to include these books in the volume. He left no manuscript of either, while the canonical books had been worked upon again and again.

In passing on to Doctor Kent's friends and readers this concluding volume of the series which is perhaps the most important of all his literary achievements, I wish to express my gratitude to Mrs. Kent for the honor of being given this share in the work of my lamented teacher and friend. Like many other young men, I owed Professor Kent a personal debt far greater than I could ever repay or express. Not only did I have the privilege of working with him; he also brought me into the "goodly fellowship" to which, with Mrs. Kent's approval, I have ventured to dedicate this volume.

I must also acknowledge my obligations to Mr. H. A. Sherman, of Charles Scribner's Sons, for many courtesies; to Professor George Dahl, of the Yale Divinity School; Professor H. T. Fowler, of Brown University; and Professor James Muilenburg, of Mount Holyoke College, for suggestions regarding the bibliography, and especially to Professor C. C. Torrey, of Yale University, who has given similar suggestions, has read the entire manuscript and illuminated several dark problems of text and interpretation, and has graciously written the Foreword for the volume. To Mrs. Burrows I am indebted for invaluable assistance in proof-reading and other details.

MILLAR BURROWS.

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

	PAGE
FOREWORD.....	vii
PREFACE.....	ix

INTRODUCTION

THE HISTORY OF THE WISDOM LITERATURE

I. THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN OR SAGES.....	3
II. THE LITERARY ACTIVITY OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN OR SAGES....	13
III. THE HISTORY AND POINT OF VIEW OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES	17
IV. BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING.....	22
V. THE PROBLEM AND THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF JOB.....	33

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION: THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE WISE.	
§ 1. Preface: The Aim of the Book of Proverbs	Pr. 1 ²⁻⁶ , 22 ¹⁷⁻²¹ ... 45
§ 2. Wisdom's Appeal.....	Pr. 8 ¹⁻¹¹ 46
§ 3. Characteristics of Wisdom.....	Pr. 9 ¹⁰ , 16 ⁶ , 8 ¹²⁻²¹ ... 47
§ 4. The Rôle of Wisdom in the Universe... Pr. 8 ²²⁻³⁶	48
§ 5. Wisdom's Banquet.....	Pr. 9 ¹⁻⁶ , 11, 12... 49
§ 6. Folly's Banquet.....	Pr. 9 ¹³⁻¹⁸ 49
§ 7. Consequences of Rejecting Wisdom's Invitation.....	Pr. 1 ²⁰⁻³³ 50
§ 8. Reward of a Persistent Search for Wisdom.....	Pr. 2 ¹⁻⁹ , 20, 10-19, 3 ¹³⁻¹⁶ , 4 ⁷⁻⁹ , 3 ¹⁶⁻¹⁸ , 4 ²⁰⁻²² , 3 ² , 4 ^{5a-6} , 3 ²¹⁻²⁶ 51
II. GOD.	
§ 9. What Can Man Know of God?.....	Pr. 30 ¹⁻⁴ 53
§ 10. Nature of God.....	Pr. 21 ^{1, 30} , 15 ^{11, 3} , 5 ²¹ , 19 ²¹ , 25 ² , 16 ¹¹ , 21 ³ , 15 ⁹ ... 54
§ 11. God the Creator.....	Pr. 3 ¹⁹⁻²⁰ , 22 ² , 20 ¹² 55
§ 12. God the Supreme Ruler.....	Pr. 16 ¹ , 20 ²⁴ , 16 ⁹ , 33, 21 ³¹ , 16 ⁴ 55

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

II. GOD.—Continued.		
§ 13. God the Judge and Rewarder of Human Actions.....	Pr. 16 ² , 21 ² , 29 ²⁶ , 17 ³ , 10 ²⁹ , 3, 12 ² , 25 ²¹⁻²² , 16 ⁷	PAGE 55
§ 14. God the Foe of All Forms of Evil.....	Pr. 28 ⁹ , 16 ⁵ , 3 ³³⁻ 34, 11 ²⁰ , 21 ²⁷ , 3 ³² , 15 ²⁹ , 20 ¹⁰ , 11 ¹ , 12 ²² , 15 ²⁶ . 8, 17 ¹⁵ , 6 ¹⁶⁻¹⁹ ..	56
§ 15. God the Champion of the Needy and the Faithful.....	Pr. 15 ²⁵ , 22 ²²⁻²³ , 12, 18 ¹⁰ , 16 ³ , 30 ⁵⁻⁶ , 20 ²²	57
III. MAN.		
A. THE NATURE OF MAN.		
§ 16. Man's Universal Characteristics.....	Pr. 27 ¹⁹ , 1, 21 ² , 14 ¹² , 20 ⁹ , 27, 27 ²⁰ , 14 ¹⁰ , 13, 13 12, 19, 15 ³⁰ , 25 ²⁵ , 15 ¹³ , 12 ²⁵ , 15 ¹⁵ , 27 ⁸ , 18 ¹⁴ , 14 ³⁰ , 17 ²² , 27 ¹⁷ , 20 ¹¹ , 27 ²¹ , 20 ⁶	58
§ 17. Advantages of Old Age and Youth.....	Pr. 20 ²⁹ , 16 ³¹	59
B. THE EDUCATION OF MAN.		
§ 18. Folly—the Absence of Education.....	Pr. 22 ¹⁵ , 14 ¹⁸ , 17.	60
§ 19. Characteristics of a Fool.....	Pr. 17 ²⁴ , 14 ⁷ , 24 ⁷ , 26 ⁷ , 9, 19 ³ , 15 ²¹ , 10 ²³ , 14 ¹ , 18 ² , 12 ²³ , 14 ³³ , 12 ¹⁶ , 14 ⁹ , 24, 26 ⁶ , 24 ⁹ , 29 ⁹ , 27 ²² , 26 ¹¹ , 27 ³ , 17 ¹²	60
§ 20. Hopeless Evils That Result from Folly	Pr. 3 ³⁵ , 11 ²⁹ , 10 ¹³ , 26 ³ , 10 ³ , 18 ⁷ , 21 ¹⁶	62
§ 21. Aims of Education.....	Pr. 4 ¹ , 7, 15 ¹⁴ , 14 ⁹ , 13 ¹⁶ , 10 ¹⁴ , 18 ¹⁵ , 17 ¹⁶ , 23 ²³	62
§ 22. The Instructors.....	Pr. 3 ¹¹⁻¹² , 4 ¹⁻⁴ , 6 ⁶ , 15 ¹² , 18 ⁴ , 20 ⁵ ...	63
§ 23. Importance of Primary Education.....	Pr. 29 ⁶ , 29 ¹⁷	63

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

III. MAN.—Continued.		
§ 24. Discipline.....	Pr. 29 ¹⁵ , 27 ⁵ , 13 ²⁴ , 19 ¹⁸ , 23 ¹³⁻¹⁴ , 12 ¹ , 10 ¹⁷ , 15 ¹⁰ , 19 ¹⁶ , 29 ¹ , 15 ⁵ , 28 ⁴ , 15 ³² , 17 ¹⁰ , 25 ¹² .	PAGE 64
§ 25. Importance of the Receptive Attitude.....	Pr. 12 ¹⁵ , 28 ¹³ , 18 ¹ , 9 ⁷⁻⁹ , 19 ²⁷ , 23 ¹² , 19 ²⁰ , 4 ¹³	65
§ 26. Value of Education.....	Pr. 1 ⁸⁻⁹ , 24 ¹³⁻¹⁴ , 16 ²² , 19 ⁸ , 16 ¹⁶ , 28 ¹¹ , 15 ^{2, 7} , 16 ²³ , 13 ¹⁵ , 21 ²² , 20 ¹⁸ , 24 ⁵⁻⁶ , 21 ²⁰ , 24 ³⁻⁴ , 13 ¹⁴ , 4 ¹⁰⁻¹²	65
C. MAN IN HIS DOMESTIC RELATIONS.		
§ 27. Parents and Children, Brethren.....	Pr. 23 ²² , 19 ²⁶ , 20 ²⁰ , 28 ²⁴ , 30 ¹⁷ , 13 ¹ , 28 ⁷ , 15 ²⁰ , 17 ²⁵ , 21, 23 ²⁴ , 10 ¹ , 23 ²⁵ , 27 ¹¹ , 13 ²² , 17 ⁶ , 20 ⁷ , 18 ¹⁹	67
§ 28. Wives.....	Pr. 19 ¹³ , 27 ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ , 21 ^{9, 19} , 12 ⁴ , 19 ¹⁴ , 18 ²²	68
§ 29. The Ideal Wife.....	Pr. 31 ¹⁰⁻³¹	69
§ 30. A Husband's Duty to His Wife.....	Pr. 5 ¹⁵⁻²⁰	70
§ 31. Master and Servant.....	Pr. 29 ²¹ , 19, 19 ¹⁰ , 30 ¹⁰ , 17 ²	70
D. MAN IN HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS.		
§ 32. Social Calls.....	Pr. 25 ¹⁷	71
§ 33. Friendship.....	Pr. 27 ¹⁰ , 22 ²⁴⁻²⁵ , 18 ²⁴ , 17 ¹⁷ , 27 ^{9, 6}	71
§ 34. Rich and Poor.....	Pr. 29 ¹³ , 28 ³ , 13 ²³ , 29 ⁷ , 21 ¹³ , 28 ²⁷ , 14 ³¹ , 22 ⁹	72
E. MAN IN HIS ECONOMIC RELATIONS.		
§ 35. Rules for Different Occupations.....	Pr. 27 ²³⁻²⁷	72
§ 36. Labor and Laziness.....	Pr. 16 ²⁶ , 27 ¹³ , 22 ²⁹ , 12 ²⁷ , 24, 22 ¹³ , 26 ¹⁴⁻¹⁶ , 20 ⁴ , 19 ¹⁵ ,	

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

III. MAN.—Continued.	PAGE	
	15 ¹⁹ , 21 ²⁵ , 18 ⁹ , 14 ⁴ , 10 ⁵ , 24 ²⁷ , 20 ¹⁴ , 22 ⁷	73
§ 37. Poverty.....	Pr. 23 ²⁰⁻²¹ , 28 ¹⁹ , 22 ¹⁶ , 13 ¹⁸ , 6 ⁶⁻¹¹ , 24 ³⁰⁻³⁴ , 10 ¹⁵ , 14 ²⁰ , 19 ⁷ , 4, 18 ²³ , 19 ¹ , 22.....	74
§ 38. The Acquisition and Value of Wealth	Pr. 11 ¹⁶ , 19 ¹⁴ , 15 ⁶ , 22 ⁴ , 21 ⁵ , 12 ¹¹ , 13 ¹ , 10 ¹ , 13 ¹¹ , 14 ²³ , 10 ²² , 13 ⁸ , 18 ¹¹ , 10 ² , 21 ⁶ , 20 ²¹ , 28 ²⁰ , 22, 6, 22 ¹ , 20 ¹⁵ , 11 ^{4, 28} , 16 ⁸ , 23 ⁴⁻⁵ , 15 ¹⁶ , 16 ¹⁹ , 30 ⁷⁻⁹ , 13 ⁷ , 11 ²⁴	75
F. MAN IN HIS LEGAL RELATIONS.		
§ 39. Legal Procedure.....	Pr. 18 ¹⁷ , 25 ⁷⁰⁻¹⁰ , 18 ¹⁸ , 29 ²⁴	78
§ 40. Duties of Witnesses and Judges.....	Pr. 24 ²⁸⁻²⁹ , 25 ¹⁸ , 19 ²⁸ , 12 ¹⁷ , 14 ²⁵ , 19 ⁵ , 21 ²⁸ , 17 ²³ , 15 ²⁷ , 18 ⁵ , 17 ²⁶ , 28 ²¹ , 24 ²⁴⁻²⁶	78
§ 41. The Object of Punishment.....	Pr. 20 ³⁰ , 19 ¹⁹ , 25, 21 ¹¹	79
§ 42. Dangers of Suretyship.....	Pr. 22 ²⁶⁻²⁷ , 17 ¹⁸ , 11 ¹⁵ , 6 ¹⁻⁵ , 20 ¹⁶ ..	79
G. MAN IN HIS POLITICAL RELATIONS.		
§ 43. The Character and Rule of the King..	Pr. 21 ¹ , 16 ¹² , 17 ⁷ , 28 ¹⁶ , 2, 20 ²⁸ , 25 ² , 16 ¹⁰ , 20 ⁸ , 29 ¹⁴ , 31 ⁴ , 5, 8-9, 25 ³⁻⁵ , 19 ¹² , 20 ² , 16 ¹⁵ , 14, 13, 14 ³⁵ , 28 ¹⁵ , 29 ² , 12, 4, 20 ²⁶ , 25 ¹³	80
§ 44. Duties of the People.....	Pr. 14 ²⁸ , 23 ¹⁻³ , 25 ⁶⁻⁷ , 15, 24 ²¹⁻²² , 17 ¹¹ , 13 ¹⁷ , 18 ¹⁶ , 21 ¹⁴ , 17 ⁸ , 29 ⁸ , 11 ¹⁰⁻¹¹ , 14, 14 ³⁴ ..	82

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

		PAGE
III. MAN.—Continued.		
H. MAN'S DUTY TO ANIMALS.		
§ 45. Consideration for Brute Beasts.....	Pr. 12 ¹⁰	83
I. MAN'S DUTY TO HIMSELF.		
§ 46. Temperance.....	Pr. 20 ¹³ , 25 ¹⁶ , 27 ⁷ , 21 ¹⁷ , 20 ¹ , 23 ²⁹⁻³⁵ , 18 ²¹ , 14 ³ , 12 ¹³ , 20 ²⁵ , 18 ¹³ , 29 ²⁰ , 15 ²³ , 17 ²⁷ , 28 ³ , 13 ³ , 21 ²³ , 10 ¹⁹ , 4 ²⁴	84
§ 47. Self-Restraint.....	Pr. 25 ²⁸ , 14 ¹⁷ , 29 ¹¹ , 19 ¹¹ , 14 ²⁹ , 16 ³² , 29 ³ , 31 ³ , 23 ²⁶⁻²⁸ , 22 ¹⁴ , 30 ²⁰ , 5 ¹⁻¹⁴ , 6 ²⁰⁻³⁵ , 7 ¹⁻²⁷	85
§ 48. Attitude Toward Temptation.....	Pr. 28 ¹⁴ , 27 ¹² , 14 ¹⁶ , 21 ²⁹ , 4 ²⁵⁻²⁷ , 24 ¹⁻² , 17 ¹⁴ , 1 ¹⁰ , 4 ¹⁴⁻¹⁷ , 23 ⁶⁻⁸ , 17 ⁴ , 25 ²⁶	90
§ 49. Importance of Prudence and Tact.....	Pr. 11 ²² , 14 ⁸ , 23 ³ , 14 ¹⁵ , 19 ² , 26 ¹⁰ , 4	91
§ 50. Value of Learning from the Wise.....	Pr. 15 ³¹ , 13 ²⁰	91
§ 51. Importance of Being Ruled by Right Motives.....	Pr. 21 ¹⁰ , 11 ²³ , 27	92
§ 52. Meekness.....	Pr. 21 ²⁴ , 25 ²⁷ , 21 ⁴ , 26 ¹² , 16 ¹⁸ , 18 ¹² , 11 ² , 13 ¹⁰ , 29 ²³ , 12 ³ , 27 ²	92
§ 53. Purity and Uprightness of Purpose....	Pr. 22 ⁵ , 21 ⁸ , 22 ¹¹ , 4 ²³ , 11 ⁵⁻⁶ , 13 ⁶ , 12 ³ , 16 ¹⁷	93
J. MAN'S DUTY TO OTHERS.		
§ 54. Evils to Avoid.....	Pr. 10 ²⁶ , 11 ¹² , 28 8. 25, 10 ¹² , 29 ²² , 15 ¹⁸ , 27 ⁴ , 24 ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ , 20 ²² , 17 ¹³ , 3 ³⁰ , 30 32-33, 20 ³ , 26 ¹⁷ , 17 ¹⁹ , 22 ¹⁰ , 18 ⁶ , 26 ²¹ , 17 ¹⁴ , 1, 27 ¹⁴ , 29 ⁵ , 26 ²⁸ , 23 ²³ , 26 ²³⁻²⁷ , 14 ⁵ , 13 ⁵ , 12 ¹⁹ , 25 ¹⁴ ,	

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

		PAGE
<p>III. MAN.—Continued.</p>	<p>20¹⁷, 26²⁸, 11¹³, 20¹⁹, 26¹⁸⁻¹⁹, 13², 18⁸, 11⁹, 25²², 26²⁰, 16²⁸, 10¹⁸, 3²⁹, 16^{27,30}, 10¹⁰, 6¹²⁻¹⁵, 24⁸, 15²⁶, 22²²⁻²³, 28, 23¹⁰⁻ 11, 12⁶, 16²⁹, 29¹⁰, 28²⁸, 3³¹⁻³², 1</p>	<p>98</p>
<p>§ 55. Virtues to Cherish.....</p>	<p>Pr. 21¹⁵, 3, 29²⁷, 10³², 11, 20-21, 12⁵, 15²⁸, 11³⁰, 12¹², 28¹², 27¹⁰, 25¹⁹, 17¹⁷, 24¹⁰⁻¹², 17⁹, 25²⁰, 23⁹, 26⁵, 1, 8, 25¹¹, 24²⁶, 15⁴, 16²¹, 12¹⁸, 15¹, 16²⁴, 12²⁶, 3²⁷⁻ 28, 21²⁶, 19⁶, 11²⁵⁻²⁶, 14²¹, 19¹⁷, 17⁵, 11¹⁷, 31⁶⁻⁷, 3³⁻⁴, 10¹², 15¹⁷, 24²⁹, 25²¹⁻²²....</p>	<p>99</p>
<p>K. MAN'S DUTY TO GOD.</p>		
<p>56. Religious Virtues.....</p>	<p>Pr. 9¹⁰, 15³³, 14², 23¹⁵⁻¹⁹, 14²⁶⁻²⁷, 10²⁷, 19²³, 3⁷⁻⁸, 22⁴, 19³, 3¹¹⁻¹², 29¹⁸, 13¹³, 3⁹⁻¹⁰, 29²⁵, 16²⁰, 28²⁶⁻ 26, 3⁵⁻⁶.....</p>	<p>102</p>
<p>L. THE REWARDS OF HUMAN CONDUCT.</p>		
<p>§ 57. Man Shall Reap What He Sows.....</p>	<p>Pr. 11³¹, 12¹⁴, 11¹⁸, 22⁸, 5²²⁻²³, 18²⁰, 28¹⁰, 11³, 14¹⁴..</p>	<p>104</p>
<p>§ 58. Recompense for Right or Wrong Con- duct.....</p>	<p>Pr. 14³², 13⁹, 10²⁸, 24¹⁹⁻²⁰, 28¹, 4¹⁹, 18, 28⁵, 14²², 19, 18³, 12³, 10⁷, 6, 21⁷, 13², 10⁹,</p>	

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

<p>III. MAN.—<i>Continued.</i></p>	<p>12²¹, 26², 11²¹, 28¹⁸, 14¹¹, 29¹⁸, 21¹², 13²¹, 17²⁰, 15⁶, 13²⁵, 12²⁰, 29⁶, 10²⁵, 24¹⁵⁻¹⁶, 10³⁰, 12⁷, 2²¹⁻²², 10³, 24, 11¹⁹, 10¹⁶, 12²⁸, 10³¹, 28¹⁷, 10², 11⁷, 15²⁴, 12², 19²⁹, 11⁸, 21¹⁸, 13⁶, 14¹⁴, 21²¹.....</p>	<p>PAGE 105</p>
<p>IV. NUMERICAL ENIGMAS.</p>		
<p>§ 59. Four Classes of Evil-Doers.....</p>	<p>Pr. 30¹¹⁻¹⁴.....</p>	<p>109</p>
<p>§ 60. Four Things That Are Never Satisfied.</p>	<p>Pr. 30¹⁵⁻¹⁶.....</p>	<p>109</p>
<p>§ 61. Four Things That Are Incomprehensible.....</p>	<p>Pr. 30¹⁵⁻¹⁹.....</p>	<p>109</p>
<p>§ 62. Four Things That Are Intolerable.....</p>	<p>Pr. 30²¹⁻²³.....</p>	<p>110</p>
<p>§ 63. Four Things Which, Though Small, Manifest Great Foresight.....</p>	<p>Pr. 30²⁴⁻²⁸.....</p>	<p>110</p>
<p>§ 64. Four Things Which Are Stately in Their Going.....</p>	<p>Pr. 30²⁹⁻³¹.....</p>	<p>110</p>

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

<p>KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST FOR THE REAL VALUES IN LIFE.</p>		<p>PAGE</p>
<p>§ 1. The Eternal Wheel of Things.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 1²⁻¹¹.....</p>	<p>113</p>
<p>§ 2. The Futility of Those Things for Which Men Strive.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 1¹²⁻²³.....</p>	<p>114</p>
<p>§ 3. Man's Helplessness Under God's Fixed Rule.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 3¹⁻¹⁵.....</p>	<p>116</p>
<p>§ 4. Man's Lot No Better Than That of the Beast.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 3¹⁶⁻²².....</p>	<p>116</p>
<p>§ 5. Human Life Full of Injustice and Disappointment.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 4¹⁻¹⁶.....</p>	<p>117</p>
<p>§ 6. Maxims Intended to Deliver from the Vexations of Life.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 5¹⁻⁹.....</p>	<p>118</p>
<p>§ 7. Folly of Expecting More than Passing Enjoyment from Wealth.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 5¹⁰⁻²⁰.....</p>	<p>118</p>
<p>§ 8. Human Desire Is Insatiable.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 6¹⁻⁹.....</p>	<p>119</p>
<p>§ 9. The Fruitlessness of Philosophical Speculation.....</p>	<p>Ecc. 6¹⁰⁻¹², 10¹⁴, 7¹⁰, 14.....</p>	<p>119</p>

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

KOHLEETH'S VAIN QUEST FOR THE REAL VALUES IN LIFE.— <i>Continued.</i>	PAGE
§ 10. Perfection Undesirable and Non-Existent.....	Ecc. 7 ¹⁵⁻¹⁸ , 20-28... 120
§ 11. The Right Attitude Toward Rulers....	Ecc. 8 ²⁻⁹ , 10 ⁴⁻⁷ , 16-17, 20..... 121
§ 12. Righteous and Wicked Fare Alike....	Ecc. 8 ¹⁰ , 14-15..... 122
§ 13. No Evidence That the World Is Ruled by Divine Justice and Love.....	Ecc. 8 ¹⁶⁻⁹ 122
§ 14. Making the Most of Life and Youth...	Ecc. 11 ¹⁻¹⁰ , 12 ¹⁻⁸ ... 123
§ 15. Observations of Later Wise Men.....	Ecc. 7 ¹⁻⁹ , 11-13, 19, 8 ¹ , 9 ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ , 10 ¹⁻³ , 8-13, 15, 18-19..... 125

THE BOOK OF JOB

	PAGE
PROLOGUE: SUFFERING IS A TEST OF MAN'S PIETY... Job 1-2.....	131
THE LYRIC DRAMA OF JOB.	
§ 1. Job's Utter Woe.....	Job 3..... 134
FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES.	
§ 2. Discourse of Eliphaz: The Impossibility of Any Man's Being Absolutely Righteous.....	Job 4-5..... 136
§ 3. Job's Reply: The Grounds of His Complaint.....	Job 6-7..... 139
§ 4. Discourse of Bildad: God Always Rewards According to Man's Deserts...	Job 8..... 142
§ 5. Job's Reply: God Condemns the Innocent and Is Pitiless.....	Job 9-10..... 144
§ 6. Discourse of Zophar: Repentance the Only Means by Which Job May Again Win God's Favor.....	Job 11..... 147
§ 7. Job's Reply: He Is Unjustly Condemned by His Friends; God Must Vindicate Him.....	Job 12-14..... 149
SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES.	
§ 8. Eliphaz: Job, Whose Guilt Is Shown by His Words, Should Know the Fate of the Wicked.....	Job 15..... 153
§ 9. Job: Even Though Unjustly Afflicted, Man Has a Friend in Heaven.....	Job 16-17..... 155

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES.— <i>Continued.</i>		PAGE
§ 10. Bildad: Disaster Always Overtakes the Wicked	Job 18.....	158
§ 11. Job: The Vision of God and of a Vindication After Death	Job 19.....	159
§ 12. Zophar: The Triumph of the Wicked Is Brief	Job 20.....	161
§ 13. Job: The Grim Facts of Life Belie the Traditional Explanation of Suffering	Job 21.....	163
THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES.		
§ 14. Eliphaz: Job's Guilt Fully Explains His Affliction	Job 22.....	165
§ 15. Job: If Man Could Find God His Problems Would Be Solved	Job 23, 24 ^{1-18, 21-23, 25}	167
§ 16. Bildad: It Is Impossible for Man to Be Perfect in God's Sight	Job 25 ^{1-6, 24} ^{19, 20, 24}	170
§ 17. Job: Guilt Does Not Explain All Suffering	Job 26-27 ^{6, 12}	170
§ 18. Zophar: The Pitiable Fate of the Wicked	Job 27 ^{7-11, 13-23}	172
§ 19. Job: To Lose the Consciousness of Fellowship with God Is the Supreme Misfortune	Job 29-30.....	173
§ 20. Job's Oath of Clearance	Job 31.....	176
REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS REGARDING THE MEANING OF SUFFERING.		
§ 21. Elihu's Reasons for Speaking	Job 32.....	178
§ 22. The Value of Pain	Job 33.....	180
§ 23. The Justice of the Omnipotent God ...	Job 34.....	182
§ 24. The Impassivity of God	Job 35.....	184
§ 25. The Justice of God's Rule Revealed Both in Human History and in the Natural World	Job 36-37.....	185
§ 26. A Later Wise Man: The Divine Wisdom That Rules the Universe Is Incomprehensible	Job 28.....	189
THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM.		
§ 27. The Lord: Finite Man Cannot Grasp and Therefore Cannot Justly Criticize the Infinite Plan of the Universe	Job 38-42 ⁶	191

CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION

EPILOGUE.		PAGE
§ 28. The Reward of Job's Fidelity.....	Job 42 ⁷⁻¹⁷	197

APPENDIX

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	PAGE
	199
INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES.....	xxi
EXPLANATION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	xxvii

INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

Job		Job		Proverbs	
CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE
1.....	131	34.....	182	3 ³²	56, 98
2.....	132	35.....	184	3 ³³⁻³⁴	56
3.....	134	36.....	185	3 ³⁵	62
4.....	136	37.....	187	4 ¹	62, 63
5.....	137	38.....	191	4 ²⁻⁴	63
6.....	139	39.....	193	4 ⁵	53, 63
7.....	141	40.....	196	4 ⁶	53
8.....	142	41.....	195n	4 ⁷	52, 62
9.....	144	42 ¹⁻⁶	197	4 ⁸⁻⁹	52
10.....	146			4 ¹⁰⁻¹²	67
11.....	147			4 ¹³	65
12.....	149			4 ¹⁴⁻¹⁷	90
13.....	150	1 ¹	Superscription	4 ¹⁸⁻¹⁹	105
14.....	152	1 ²⁻⁶	45	4 ²⁰⁻²²	52
15.....	153	1 ⁷	60	4 ²³	93
16.....	155	1 ⁸⁻⁹	65	4 ²⁴	85
17.....	157	1 ¹⁰	90	4 ²⁵⁻²⁷	90
18.....	158	1 ¹⁰⁻¹⁹	98	5 ¹⁻¹⁴	86
19.....	159	1 ²⁰⁻³³	50	5 ¹⁵⁻²⁰	70
20.....	161	2 ¹⁻⁹	51	5 ²¹	54
21.....	163	2 ¹⁰⁻¹⁹	51	5 ²²⁻²³	105
22.....	165	2 ²⁰	51	6 ¹⁻⁵	80
23.....	167	2 ²¹⁻²²	107	6 ⁶⁻¹¹	74
24 ¹⁻¹⁸	168	3 ¹	Cf. 4 ^{1, 20}	6 ¹²⁻¹⁵	97
24 ^{19-20, 24}	170	3 ²	53	6 ¹⁶⁻¹⁹	57
24 ²¹⁻²³	169	3 ³⁻⁴	102	6 ²⁰⁻³⁵	87
25.....	170	3 ⁵⁻⁶	104	7.....	88
26.....	170	3 ⁷⁻⁸	103	8 ¹⁻¹¹	46
27 ¹⁻⁶	171	3 ⁹⁻¹⁰	104	8 ¹²⁻²¹	47
27 ⁷⁻¹¹	172	3 ¹¹⁻¹²	63, 103	8 ²²⁻³⁴	48
27 ¹²	171	3 ¹³⁻¹⁵	52	9 ¹⁻⁶	49
27 ¹³⁻²³	172	3 ¹⁶⁻¹⁸	52	9 ⁷⁻⁹	65
28.....	189	3 ¹⁹⁻²⁰	55	9 ¹⁰	47, 102
29.....	173	3 ²¹⁻²⁶	53	9 ¹¹⁻¹²	49
30.....	174	3 ²⁷⁻²⁸	101	9 ¹³⁻¹⁸	49
31.....	176	3 ²⁹	97	10 ¹	68
32.....	178	3 ³⁰	94	10 ²	76, 108
33.....	180	3 ³¹	98	10 ³	56, 107

INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

Proverbs		Proverbs		Proverbs	
CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE
10⁴	76	11²⁰	56	13⁶	93, 108
10⁵	73	11²¹	106	13⁷	77
10⁶⁻⁷	106	11²²	91	13⁸	76
10⁸	62	11²³	92	13⁹	105
10⁹	106	11²⁴	77	13¹⁰	92
10¹⁰	97	11²⁵⁻²⁶	101	13¹¹	76
10¹¹	99	11²⁷	92	13¹²	58
10¹²	94, 102	11²⁸	77	13¹³	104
10¹³	62	11²⁹	62	13¹⁴	66
10¹⁴	62	11³⁰	99	13¹⁵	66
10¹⁵	75	11³¹	104	13¹⁶	62
10¹⁶	108	12¹	64	13¹⁷	83
10¹⁷	64	12²	56, 108	13¹⁸	74
10¹⁸	96	12³	93	13¹⁹	59
10¹⁹	85	12⁴	68	13²⁰	91
10²⁰⁻²¹	99	12⁵	99	13²¹	107
10²²	76	12⁶	98	13²²	68
10²³	61	12⁷	107	13²³	72
10²⁴	108	12⁸	106	13²⁴	64
10²⁵	107	12⁹	92	13²⁵	107
10²⁶	93	12¹⁰	83	14¹	61
10²⁷	103	12¹¹	76	14²	102
10²⁸	105	12¹²	99	14³	85
10²⁹	56	12¹³	85	14⁴	73
10³⁰	107	12¹⁴	104	14⁵	95
10³¹	108	12¹⁵	65	14⁶	62
10³²	99	12¹⁶	61	14⁷	60
11¹	56	12¹⁷	78	14⁸	91
11²	92	12¹⁸	101	14⁹	61
11³	105	12¹⁹	96	14¹⁰	58
11⁴	77	12²⁰	107	14¹¹	106
11⁵⁻⁶	93	12²¹	106	14¹²	58
11⁷	108	12²²	57	14¹³	58
11⁸	108	12²³	61	14¹⁴	105, 109
11⁹	96	12²⁴	73	14¹⁵	91
11¹⁰⁻¹¹	83	12²⁵	59	14¹⁶	90
11¹²	94	12²⁶	101	14¹⁷	85
11¹³	96	12²⁷	73	14¹⁸	60
11¹⁴	83	12²⁸	108	14¹⁹	106
11¹⁵	80	13¹	67	14²⁰	75
11¹⁶	75	13²	96, 106	14²¹	101
11¹⁷	102	13³	85	14²²	106
11¹⁸	104	13⁴	76	14²³	76
11¹⁹	108	13⁵	95	14²⁴	61

INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

Proverbs		Proverbs		Proverbs	
CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE
14 ²⁵	78	16 ²	55	17 ¹⁵	57
14 ²⁶⁻²⁷	103	16 ³	57	17 ¹⁶	62
14 ²⁸	82	16 ⁴	55	17 ¹⁷	71, 100
14 ²⁹	86	16 ⁵	56	17 ¹⁸	80
14 ³⁰	59	16 ⁶	47	17 ¹⁹	94
14 ³¹	72	16 ⁷	56	17 ²⁰	107
14 ³²	105	16 ⁸	77	17 ²¹	68
14 ³³	61	16 ⁹	55	17 ²²	59
14 ³⁴	83	16 ¹⁰	81	17 ²³	79
14 ³⁵	82	16 ¹¹	54	17 ²⁴	60
15 ¹	101	16 ¹²	80	17 ²⁵	68
15 ²	66	16 ¹³⁻¹⁵	81	17 ²⁶	79
15 ³	54	16 ¹⁶	66	17 ²⁷⁻²⁸	85
15 ⁴	100	16 ¹⁷	93	18 ¹	65
15 ⁵	64	16 ¹⁸	92	18 ²	61
15 ⁶	76, 107	16 ¹⁹	77	18 ³	106
15 ⁷	66	16 ²⁰	104	18 ⁴	63
15 ⁸	57	16 ²¹	101	18 ⁵	79
15 ⁹	55	16 ²²	65	18 ⁶	95
15 ¹⁰	64	16 ²³	66	18 ⁷	62
15 ¹¹	54	16 ²⁴	101	18 ⁸	96
15 ¹²	63	16 ²⁵	Cf. 14 ¹²	18 ⁹	73
15 ¹³	59	16 ²⁶	73	18 ¹⁰	57
15 ¹⁴	62	16 ²⁷	97	18 ¹¹	76
15 ¹⁵	59	16 ²⁸	96	18 ¹²	92
15 ¹⁶	77	16 ²⁹	98	18 ¹³	85
15 ¹⁷	102	16 ³⁰	97	18 ¹⁴	59
15 ¹⁸	94	16 ³¹	60	18 ¹⁵	62
15 ¹⁹	73	16 ³²	86	18 ¹⁶	83
15 ²⁰	67	16 ³³	55	18 ¹⁷	78
15 ²¹	61	17 ¹	95	18 ¹⁸	78
15 ²²	Cf. 11 ¹⁴ , 20 ¹⁸	17 ²	71	18 ¹⁹	68
15 ²³	85	17 ³	56	18 ²⁰	105
15 ²⁴	108	17 ⁴	91	18 ²¹	85
15 ²⁵	57	17 ⁵	101	18 ²²	69
15 ²⁶	57, 97	17 ⁶	68	18 ²³	75
15 ²⁷	79	17 ⁷	80	18 ²⁴	71
15 ²⁸	99	17 ⁸	83	19 ¹	75
15 ²⁹	56	17 ⁹	100	19 ²	91
15 ³⁰	59	17 ¹⁰	64	19 ³	60, 103
15 ³¹	91	17 ¹¹	83	19 ⁴	75
15 ³²	64	17 ¹²	61	19 ⁵	79
15 ³³	102	17 ¹³	94	19 ⁶	101
16 ¹	55	17 ¹⁴	90, 95	19 ⁷	75

INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

Proverbs		Proverbs		Proverbs	
CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE
19 ⁸	66	20 ²³	Cf. 20 ¹⁰	22 ⁶	63
19 ⁹	Cf. 19 ⁵	20 ²⁴	55	22 ⁷	74
19 ¹⁰	71	20 ²⁵	85	22 ⁸	104
19 ¹¹	86	20 ²⁶	82	22 ⁹	72
19 ¹²	81	20 ²⁷	58	22 ¹⁰	95
19 ¹³	68	20 ²⁸	81	22 ¹¹	93
19 ¹⁴	68, 75	20 ²⁹	59	22 ¹²	57
19 ¹⁵	73	20 ³⁰	79	22 ¹³	73
19 ¹⁶	64	21 ¹	54, 80	22 ¹⁴	86
19 ¹⁷	101	21 ²	56, 58	22 ¹⁵	60
19 ¹⁸	64	21 ³	54, 99	22 ¹⁶	74
19 ¹⁹	79	21 ⁴	92	22 ¹⁷⁻²¹	45
19 ²⁰	65	21 ⁵	76	22 ²²⁻²³	57, 97
19 ²¹	54	21 ⁶	76	22 ²⁴⁻²⁵	71
19 ²²	75	21 ⁷	106	22 ²⁶⁻²⁷	79
19 ²³	103	21 ⁸	93	22 ²⁸	97
19 ²⁴	Cf. 26 ²⁵	21 ⁹	68	22 ²⁹	73
19 ²⁵	79	21 ¹⁰	92	23 ¹⁻²	82
19 ²⁶	67	21 ¹¹	79	23 ⁴⁻⁵	77
19 ²⁷	65	21 ¹²	107	23 ⁶⁻⁸	90
19 ²⁸	78	21 ¹³	72	23 ⁹	100
19 ²⁹	108	21 ¹⁴	83	23 ¹⁰⁻¹¹	97
20 ¹	84	21 ¹⁵	99	23 ¹²	65
20 ²	81	21 ¹⁶	62	23 ¹³⁻¹⁴	64
20 ³	94	21 ¹⁷	84	23 ¹⁵⁻¹⁹	103
20 ⁴	73	21 ¹⁸	108	23 ²⁰⁻²¹	74
20 ⁵	63	21 ¹⁹	68	23 ²²	67
20 ⁶	59	21 ²⁰	66	23 ²³	63
20 ⁷	68	21 ²¹	109	23 ²⁴	68
20 ⁸	81	21 ²²	66	23 ²⁵	68
20 ⁹	58	21 ²³	85	23 ²⁶⁻²⁸	86
20 ¹⁰	56	21 ²⁴	92	23 ²⁹⁻³⁵	84
20 ¹¹	59	21 ²⁵	73	24 ¹⁻²	90
20 ¹²	55	21 ²⁶	101	24 ³⁻⁴	66
20 ¹³	84	21 ²⁷	56	24 ⁵⁻⁶	66
20 ¹⁴	74	21 ²⁸	79	24 ⁷	60
20 ¹⁵	77	21 ²⁹	90	24 ⁸	97
20 ¹⁶	80	21 ³⁰	54	24 ⁹	61
20 ¹⁷	96	21 ³¹	55	24 ¹⁰⁻¹²	100
20 ¹⁸	66	22 ¹	77	24 ¹³⁻¹⁴	65
20 ¹⁹	96	22 ²	55	24 ¹⁵⁻¹⁶	107
20 ²⁰	67	22 ³	91	24 ¹⁷⁻¹⁸	94
20 ²¹	76	22 ⁴	76, 103	24 ¹⁹⁻²⁰	105
20 ²²	57, 94	22 ⁵	93	24 ²¹⁻²²	83

INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

Proverbs		Proverbs		Proverbs	
CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE
24 ^{23a}	Superscription	26 ¹⁷	94	28 ¹⁶	81
24 ^{23b}	Cf. 18 ⁵	26 ¹⁸⁻¹⁹	96	28 ¹⁷	108
24 ²⁴⁻²⁵	79	26 ²⁰	96	28 ¹⁸	106
24 ²⁶	79, 100	26 ²¹	95	28 ¹⁹	74
24 ²⁷	74	26 ²²	Cf. 18 ³	28 ²⁰	76
24 ²⁸	78	26 ²³⁻²⁷	95	28 ²¹	79
24 ²⁹	78, 102	26 ²⁸	95, 96	28 ²²	77
24 ³⁰⁻³⁴	74	27 ¹	58	28 ²³	95
25 ¹	Superscription	27 ²	92	28 ²⁴	67
25 ²	54, 81	27 ³	61	28 ²⁵	94, 104
25 ³⁻⁵	81	27 ⁴	94	28 ²⁶	104
25 ^{6-7b}	82	27 ⁵	64	28 ²⁷	72
25 ^{7c-10}	78	27 ⁶	72	28 ²⁸	98
25 ¹¹	100	27 ⁷	84	29 ¹	64
25 ¹²	64	27 ⁸	59	29 ²	82
25 ¹³	82	27 ⁹	71	29 ³	86
25 ¹⁴	96	27 ¹⁰	71, 99	29 ⁴	82
25 ¹⁵	82	27 ¹¹	68	29 ⁵	95
25 ¹⁶	84	27 ¹²	90	29 ⁶	107
25 ¹⁷	71	27 ¹³	Cf. 20 ¹⁶	29 ⁷	72
25 ¹⁸	78	27 ¹⁴	95	29 ⁸	83
25 ¹⁹	100	27 ¹⁵⁻¹⁶	68	29 ⁹	61
25 ²⁰	100	27 ¹⁷	59	29 ¹⁰	98
25 ²¹⁻²²	56, 102	27 ¹⁸	73	29 ¹¹	85
25 ²³	96	27 ¹⁹	58	29 ¹²	82
25 ²⁴	Cf. 21 ⁹	27 ²⁰	58	29 ¹³	72
25 ²⁵	59	27 ²¹	59	29 ¹⁴	81
25 ²⁶	91	27 ²²	61	29 ¹⁵	64
25 ²⁷	92	27 ²³⁻²⁷	72	29 ¹⁶	107
25 ²⁸	85	28 ¹	105	29 ¹⁷	63
26 ¹	100	28 ²	81	29 ¹⁸	103
26 ²	106	28 ³	72	29 ¹⁹	71
26 ³	62	28 ⁴	64	29 ²⁰	85
26 ⁴	91	28 ⁵	106	29 ²¹	70
26 ⁵	100	28 ⁶	77	29 ²²	94
26 ⁶	61	28 ⁷	67	29 ²³	92
26 ⁷	60	28 ⁸	94	29 ²⁴	78
26 ⁸	100	28 ⁹	56	29 ²⁵	104
26 ⁹	60	28 ¹⁰	105	29 ²⁶	56
26 ¹⁰	91	28 ¹¹	66	29 ²⁷	99
26 ¹¹	61	28 ¹²	99	30 ¹⁻⁴	53
26 ¹²	92	28 ¹³	65	30 ⁵⁻⁶	57
26 ¹³	Cf. 22 ¹³	28 ¹⁴	90	30 ⁷⁻⁹	77
26 ¹⁴⁻¹⁶	73	28 ¹⁵	82	30 ¹⁰	71

INDEX OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

Proverbs		Ecclesiastes		Ecclesiastes	
CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE	CHAPTER	PAGE
30 ¹¹⁻¹⁴	109	1 ¹⁻¹¹	113	8 ²⁻⁹	121
30 ¹⁵⁻¹⁶	109	1 ¹²⁻¹⁸	114	8 ¹⁰	122
30 ¹⁷	67	2	114	8 ¹¹⁻¹³	122n
30 ¹⁸⁻¹⁹	109	3 ¹⁻¹⁵	116	8 ¹⁴⁻¹⁵	122
30 ²⁰	86	3 ¹⁶⁻²²	116	8 ¹⁶⁻¹⁷	122
30 ²¹⁻²³	110	4	117	9 ¹⁻¹⁶	122
30 ²⁴⁻²⁸	110	5 ¹⁻⁹	118	9 ¹⁷⁻¹⁸	126
30 ²⁹⁻³¹	110	5 ¹⁰⁻²⁰	118	10 ¹⁻³	126
30 ³²⁻³³	94	6 ¹⁻⁹	119	10 ⁴⁻⁷	121
31 ¹⁻²	Superscription	6 ¹⁰⁻¹²	119	10 ⁸⁻¹³	127
31 ³	86	7 ¹⁻⁹	125	10 ¹⁴	119
31 ⁴⁻⁵	81	7 ¹⁰	119	10 ¹⁵	127
31 ⁶⁻⁷	102	7 ¹¹⁻¹³	126	10 ¹⁶⁻¹⁷	121
31 ⁸⁻⁹	81	7 ¹⁴	119	10 ¹⁸⁻¹⁹	127
31 ¹⁰⁻³¹	69	7 ¹⁵⁻²⁸	120	10 ²⁰	121
		7 ²⁹	12In	11	123
		8 ¹	126	12	124

EXPLANATION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Text in roman type.

Foot-notes, presenting the reasons for the analysis and classification of the material, significant alternate readings, and explanatory material, in small roman type.

Interpretative side-headings, giving a condensed summary of the accompanying text, on the margins in small roman type.

Chapter numbers in arabic figures. **Verse numbers** in small figures placed above the line. **Successive portions of a verse** indicated by ^a, ^b or ^c, placed after the verse number. Thus, Proverbs I. 3 (second part of the verse) to II. 5 (first half) is written 1^{ab-2^a}.

Complete literary units are numbered with arabic numerals and referred to as sections. Thus, § 2 refers to § 2, *Wisdom's Appeal*, p. 46.

General Abbreviations

ASJL = American Journal of Semitic Languages.	Heb. = Hebrew.	sc. = namely.
AV = Authorized Version.	Introd. = Introduction.	Sym. = Symmachus's version of the O.T.
Ar. = Arabic.	i. e. = that is.	Syr. = Syriac version of the O.T.
Aram. = Aramaic.	Lat. = Latin version of the O.T.	Targ. = Targum.
BDB = Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon.	Lit. = literally.	Theod. = Theodotian's version of the O.T.
cf. = confer, see.	MSS. = Manuscripts.	Trad. = traditional.
cp. = compare.	N.T. = New Testament.	Vs. = verse.
ε, g. = for example.	Old Lat. = Old Latin version of the O.T.	Vs. = see above.
Eth. = Ethiopic version of the O.T.	O.T. = Old Testament.	Vss. = verses.
E.V.V. = English versions.	RV = Revised Version.	VSS. = versions.
Gk. = Greek version of the O.T.	Sah. = Sahidic version of the O.T.	

Abbreviations for the Biblical and Apocryphal Books

Gen. = Genesis.	Is. = Isaiah.	Mt. = Matthew.
Ex. = Exodus.	Jer. = Jeremiah.	Mk. = Mark.
Lev. = Leviticus.	Ezek. = Ezekiel.	Lk. = Luke.
Dt. = Deuteronomy.	Hos. = Hosea.	Rom. = Romans.
Josh. = Joshua.	Am. = Amos.	I Cor. = I Corinthians.
Sam. = Samuel.	Mi. or Mic. = Micah.	I Pet. = I Peter.
Kgs. = Kings.	Nah. = Nahum.	
Chr. = Chronicles.	Hab. = Habbakuk.	
Ps. = Psalms.	Zech. = Zechariah.	
Pr. or Prov. = Proverbs.	Mal. = Malachi.	
Ecc., Eccl., or Eccles. = Ecclesiastes.	Wisd. Sol. = Wisdom of Solomon.	
Sg. of Sgs. = Song of Songs.	BSir. = Ben Sira, or Sirach.	

PROVERBS AND DIDACTIC POEMS

I

THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN OR SAGES

THE desire to store up and to transmit to each succeeding generation the results of experience was strong in the mind of early man. Having found that a certain course of action brought disaster and another success, he was eager to profit by this hard-won knowledge and to impart it to his kindred and friends. Thus arose the earliest wisdom literature.

The basis of the work of the wise

In the introduction to the *Instruction of Ptah-hotep*, the ancient Egyptian sage states that his purpose was to *speak to his son the words of those who hearken to the counsel of the men of olden time*. Ptah-hotep lived nearly fifty centuries ago, yet he spoke repeatedly of *the counsel of the men of olden time*. These allusions indicate that at this early day there was a large body of maxims embodying the experience of the sages of preceding generations. Ptah-hotep's purpose in transmitting the results of his own practical observation and experience in the form of proverbs to his son and disciples is also clearly stated: it was to *instruct the ignorant in the exact knowledge of fair-speaking*. He adds, *If you heed these things that I have said to you, all your plans will progress*. Like Israel's wisdom teachers, he declares that his teachings are *the glory of him who obeys, and shame of him who fails to keep them*.

Ptah-hotep is an excellent example of the wise men or sages who flourished in Egypt at an early period. The names of several of them have been preserved: Imhotep, Ke'gemni, and Ameneruhe'et. They were the viziers, governors, or kings whose authority and reputation as men of affairs greatly enhanced in the eyes of their own and later generations the value of their practical teachings. About their names have gathered collections of early proverbs. Some undoubtedly came directly from the lips of these famous sages; others were probably gleaned by them or by later editors from the *words of counsel of the men of olden time*. Most of them had been committed to writing by 2000 B.C. They have been preserved because they were set as copy for the pupils in the scribal schools. By a fortunate accident these ancient copy books have survived. In many points their teachings closely resemble those of the Hebrew wise. They deal with duties toward superiors, equals, and inferiors, and the judicious use of the tongue. In general they give practical advice as to how to act prudently in all the different relations of that ancient life. They are more egoistic than social. Class points of view and prejudices are much in evidence. The thought is often crude, but it represents the beginning of that wisdom teaching that reached its culmination on the lips of Jesus, *the greater than Solomon*.

Egyptian wise men

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Teach-
ings of
Ptah-
hotep

Among the more significant teachings of Ptah-hotep are the following:

If you find a wise man in his time, a leader of understanding more excellent than yourself, bend your arms and bow your back.

If you find a wise man in his time, a poor man and not your equal, be not overbearing against him when he is unfortunate.

If you are insignificant, follow an able man and all your proceedings shall be good before the god.

If you are a leader, hear quietly the speech of the petitioner. He who is suffering wrong desires that his heart be cheered to do that on account of which he has come. . . . It is an ornament of the heart to hear kindly.

Established is the man whose standard is righteousness, who walks in its way. He ordinarily makes his fortune thereby, but the avaricious is houseless.

Be not avaricious in dividing. . . . Be not avaricious toward your kinsmen. Greater is the fame of the gentle than the harsh.

Repeat not a word of hearsay.

If you are a strong man, establish respect for yourself by wisdom and by quietness of speech.

If you become great after you were little, and get possessions after you were formerly poor in the city . . . be not proud-hearted because of your wealth. It has come to you as a gift of the god.

Do not practise corruption of children.

Let your face be bright as long as you live.

Wise
men
among
the
Babylonia-
nians

The quiet, contemplative life of Egypt furnished a congenial atmosphere for the sages. Wit, versatility, and culture were always highly prized by the early Egyptians. The Babylonians, on the contrary, were an active commercial people, more intent on developing their laws and legal institutions than in listening to the teachings of sages. In directing their lives, they also depended not so much on practical maxims and counsel as upon oracles, omens, and magic, or else upon definitely formulated laws. Hence the wise men of Babylon were not the sages but the magicians, the priests, and the lawgivers. There are suggestions, however, that the sages were not entirely lacking in Babylonian life. On the back of one of the creation tablets is a reference to this class:

Let the elder enlighten,
Let the wise, the learned meditate together,
Let the father rehearse, make the son apprehend.

THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

Also, in the second volume of Assyrian texts edited by Sir Henry Rawlinson are found certain proverbs and riddles that were used in instructing the pupils in the schools of the scribes; but among the hundreds of thousands of inscriptions that have come from the ruins in the Tigris-Euphrates valley only a comparatively few examples of this type of literature have yet been discovered. Pre-eminent among these is the noble proverb:

You shall not slander, but speak kindly,
You shall not speak evil, but show mercy.
Him who slanders and speaks evil,
The god, Shamash, will punish.
You shall not speak unrestrainedly, but guard your lip;
When you are angry do not speak at once;
If you speak hastily, you will repent later,
And in silence will feel remorse.

The Arabian desert was the natural home of the Semitic wise man and his proverbs. The *wisdom of the children of the East* was well known to the editor of Kings (I Kgs. 4³⁰). The background of the book of Job is the desert east of the Jordan. Eliphaz, the eldest of Job's friends, comes from the Edomite city of Teman, famous for its wisdom teachers (cf. Jer. 49⁷). The life of the nomad was conducive to meditation. Moreover he was constantly confronted by crises which required quick and prudent action. His unstable mode of living made it necessary for him to make many important decisions. The hard struggle for a livelihood sharpened his wits. Having no settled place of abode, he was obliged to treasure his valuable, hard-won experience in the form of concise, easily remembered proverbs. Hence to-day in Palestine and in all lands under the influence of the Arabian desert proverbs and epigrammatic maxims are constantly upon the lips of the people. Thus, under the old Turkish régime a supernumerary of the Beirut customs office (whom we employed to rescue our books from the storehouse where they had been placed by the customs officials to await the final Judgment Day) when asked whether the usual bribe would have delivered us from all annoyance, replied: "When a man has bread in his mouth he cannot speak." At every turn in the East the apt maxim takes the place of the ordinary direct statement. Men learn instinctively to think and to express their thoughts in the characteristic terms of the ancient wisdom teachers.

The history of the wise in Israel is recorded only in barest outlines through chance references in the historical and prophetic books and in the inferences that may be drawn from the wisdom books themselves. Close proximity and contact with Egypt on the one side and with the life of the Arabian desert on the other undoubtedly gave a great and constant impetus to this peculiar type of thought. Similar conditions and needs in each of these lands also gave rise to similar ideas and forms of teaching. A few proverbs are found in the earliest historical books (*e. g.*, I Sam. 24¹³). Jotham, in his beautiful fable (Judg. 9⁸⁻¹⁵), and Samson, in his famous riddle (Judg. 14¹⁴⁻¹⁸), employed the literary forms that characterized the teaching of the later wise.

In the days of the united Hebrew commonwealth there were many women

In Arabia and adjacent lands

Wisdom thought in early Israel

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

The famous wise women

who were famed for their practical wisdom. David's strong-minded commander, Joab, employed the services of a certain wise woman of Tekoa to aid him in securing the recall of the banished Absalom. By means of a skillfully devised recital of her personal woes she aroused the sympathies of David. After he had committed himself to the principles of mercy rather than of stern justice, she demanded that he apply the same to the case of his own son. Thus she won her point (II Sam. 14¹⁻²¹). Her language has the peculiar flavor of the wisdom teachers and her words reveal a remarkably keen insight into human motives.

Later another wise woman aided Joab. While he was besieging the rebellious city of Abel-beth-maacah, that stood at the head of the Jordan valley, she sought an interview with him and secured favorable terms. Then *she went and advised all the people in her wisdom* and persuaded them to surrender (II Sam. 20¹⁵⁻²²).

The wise men in David's court

Absalom's rebellion also brought to the front two counsellors who enjoyed a great reputation for sagacity and skill in giving advice. Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's former adviser, went over to Absalom. The Hebrew historian states that his counsel in *those days was as if one inquired of the word of God—so was all the counsel of Ahithophel regarded by David and Absalom* (II Sam. 16²³). By appealing to the pride and fear of Absalom, Hushai, David's other counsellor and faithful friend, succeeded in thwarting the wiser counsels of Ahithophel. Chagrin because his advice was rejected drove Ahithophel to deliberate suicide.

Solomon's wisdom

In a court where practical wisdom was esteemed thus highly Solomon was reared. His close alliance with Egypt may also have strengthened his ambition to become famous as a wise man. To judge from the traditions that survive, his wisdom was of the type that from earliest times had been highly prized in the Arabian desert and in the land of the Nile. It represented sagacity, insight, and clear judgment. It is well illustrated by the familiar story of the method by which Solomon determined who was the real mother of the baby that the contending mothers brought before him (I Kgs. 3¹⁶⁻²⁸). The life of the Arabian desert presents many striking parallels. Two women were brought before a famous judge among the Arabs, charged with shamelessness. After listening to the charge, the judge pronounced the following sentence: *Let her who is innocent of this charge throw aside her garment and stand before me naked*. One woman unhesitatingly carried out the terms of the sentence. The other cast herself to the ground before the judge, crying, *Slay me instead*. It requires no imagination to determine which woman was declared innocent. According to the editor of Kings, Solomon's wisdom differed from that of Egypt and the Arabians not in character but degree. There is not the slightest evidence that it had an ethical, social, or religious quality. It was in harmony with his splendor-loving, superficial character. Although he enjoyed the reputation of being the wisest man of his day, his tyrannical, disastrous policy wrought only ruin for himself and his nation. He was sadly lacking in the deeper moral and spiritual qualities that were essential to a really wise rule. In fact he proved one of the most foolish rulers that ever sat on the throne of Israel.

THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

In the days of the Babylonian exile, when the editor of the book of Kings lived, the tradition was current that Solomon was the author of three thousand proverbs and at least five hundred songs. The tradition also adds that *he spoke of different varieties of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts, of birds, of creeping things, and of fishes.* In the light of the maxims found in the book of Proverbs (e. g., 6⁵, 6-8) it is probable that the reference is to the comparisons drawn from the characteristics of plants and animals. There is no valid reason for concluding that Solomon was a pioneer in modern scientific research. His proverbs, like the peculiar type of wisdom for which he was famous, doubtless resembled closely the secular proverbs which have come down from the early Egyptian sages. In the light of recent discoveries it is not improbable that he not only imported an Egyptian wife, but proverbs as well from the land of the Nile. According to I Kings 10²² his policy was to bring into Israel all kinds of foreign products. His reputation for worldly wisdom, his fame as a framer of proverbs and songs, and the dazzling splendor of his court fully explain why later generations regarded him as the author not only of the book of Proverbs, but of most of the wisdom books of the Old Testament and Apocrypha. Moses, David, Solomon, and Isaiah represent respectively the legal, psalm, wisdom, and prophetic literature of the Old Testament. To them were attributed practically all later anonymous writings. The prestige of their names was thus used to give authority to these late books. It is possible that some of Solomon's proverbs have found a place in the book of Proverbs, although it is not demonstrable. It is certain that the great majority of them came from later and more spiritually minded sages who lived in the light of the noble teachings of prophets like Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah.

Solo-
mon's
reputa-
tion as
a prov-
erb
writer

Only a few references are found to the wise during the period of the divided Hebrew states, but these few are significant. While Isaiah stood practically alone in the wars of 705-701 B.C. in opposing rebellion against Assyria, he declares in the name of Jehovah:

The
wise
before
the
exile

I will proceed to do a thing so wonderful and astonishing,
That the wisdom of the wise men shall perish.

The reference is to the catastrophe that was soon to fall upon Judah at the hands of the Assyrians. Evidently the wise men of Isaiah's day were, like Ahithophel and Hushai, the advisers of rulers and people. Their functions are still political and secular, and at times they resorted to political policies which the prophet did not approve.

The same opposition existed in Jeremiah's day:

How can ye say, "We are wise and the teaching of Jehovah is with us"?
But, behold, the deceptive pen of the scribes has rendered it deceptive.
The wise men are put to shame, they are dismayed and taken!
They reject the word of Jehovah, and what wisdom have they?

Here the contrast is strongly drawn between that human wisdom, based on observation and experience, which was the possession of the early sages and

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

the messages of the prophets who were inspired by a sense of the divine presence and command. The fundamental point on which Jeremiah differed from the wise men of his day appears to have been in regard to the national policy. If so, it indicates that the wise still confined their attention chiefly to questions of state. In one important passage in Jeremiah they are brought into clear comparison with the other classes of Israel's teachers. It is in connection with the popular attempts to silence Jeremiah. His assailants urge that, if they put him to death, *teaching will not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet* (18¹⁸). As in the days of Ahithophel, *counsel* is the peculiar contribution of the wise, and there is no evidence that it was concerned with anything except questions of state and the practical problems of daily life.

Their strength and limitations

In Ezekiel 7²⁶ the same three classes of teachers are again spoken of together, but the term *elders* is substituted for *the wise*. The reference confirms the conclusion that the pre-exilic wise as a rule, like the sages of Egypt and in the court of David, were men not only of maturity but also of authority in the state. Their position gave them unusual opportunities for studying life and for developing intelligent, practical judgment. It also imparted great weight to their utterances, so that, like the words of Ahithophel, they were regarded as of almost equal authority with the divine oracles. The evidence is also clear that in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah the people frequently followed the counsel of the wise, disregarding the prophetic teachings; but before the sages could wisely guide mankind they had to gain, in the painful school of sorrow, a deeper insight into truth and the inspiration of a nobler moral purpose.

Influence of the Babylonian exile on the wise

The Babylonian exile cut athwart all of Israel's life and institutions. Among the many changes that it effected was a fundamental transformation of the aims and methods of the sages. With the destruction of the Hebrew monarchy and national independence, the political problems, which hitherto had largely engrossed the attention of the wise, suddenly vanished. As a result, they turned their attention from the rulers and powerful leaders of their race to the individual, to the common man of the street, and to the children who were to be the ancestors of the rising generations. No individual nor problem, however humble, was beyond the circle of their interest and sympathy. Thus, the advisers of rulers became the counsellors of the needy and tempted. Instead of race or class interest, love for mankind became the guiding motives for the work of the later sages. The exile and all the woes which followed in its train had softened the hearts of these alert, brilliant leaders of the Jewish race. Henceforth a strong ethical and religious note characterizes all of their teaching. Narrow racial points of view and interests disappear. It is significant that Israel is not once mentioned in the book of Proverbs. It is to man they speak, and especially to youth, to men and women in the making.

The period of their greatest activity

Henceforth the social and religious teachings of the prophets, which the earlier sages had rejected, were accepted as the foundation upon which they built. The principles which the earlier prophets had proclaimed to the nation were by these later teachers interpreted in terms clearly intelligible to

THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

the young and ignorant, and were made the guides in the development of individual character. Also in the days following the exile the priests largely ceased to be teachers of the people and devoted themselves to the details of the ritual. The voice of the prophets was also heard less and less. The result was that the sages assumed the task of the earlier teachers. From the middle of the Persian period (about 450 B.C.) until the Maccabean struggle (169 to 165 B.C.), which introduced an entirely new epoch in Israel's history, the Jewish sages were the chief social, ethical, and spiritual guides of their race. To their patient, tireless, self-sacrificing work is largely due the preservation of Israel's faith during these critical years. They indeed saved the soul of Judaism and prepared it for the new crisis which came during the Maccabean struggle. They also bore on the torch of Hebrew learning, which they in turn handed over to the scribes and rabbis, who from 165 B.C. on became the chief teachers of the race. To the rabbis they imparted that profound interest in the individual and that emphasis on social and moral values which partially delivered the work and writings of these later teachers from the blight of triviality and ceremonialism.

The Jewish wise men or sages were not a caste like the priests, nor did they, like the prophets, feel a direct, divine call to their work. Keen, sympathetic observation and broad experience were their teachers. Most of them appear to have been men of mature years when they began to teach. The motive which impelled them was their deep interest in the welfare of society and especially of the youth with whom they came into contact.

The first six verses of the first chapter of the book of Proverbs contain a remarkably clear statement of their aims. They were concerned in imparting information and wisdom to the ignorant with the end that they might live wisely and uprightly. They also aimed to develop discretion in the young and inexperienced. Finally they sought to inspire and direct their intelligent disciples that they might increase in learning and be able to understand and appropriate the teachings of the wise. Their ultimate aim, therefore, was to develop intelligent, prudent, and efficient men and women, and in so doing to lay the foundations for a perfect social order.

The wise were primarily teachers rather than preachers. Ordinarily their disciples appear to have sought them out in their homes or in the temple courts, where they probably, like the later scribes, were to be found teaching the circle of eager disciples who gathered close about them. Ben Sira has given us a vivid picture of the ideal of the pupil in the school of the wise:

Stand in the assembly of the elders,
And whoever is wise, cleave to him,
Desire to hear every discourse,
And let not a wise proverb escape you.

Look for him who is wise and seek him out earnestly,
And let your foot wear out his threshold (6³⁴⁻³⁶).

Ordinarily the Hebrew sages appear to have taught their disciples in the open spaces beside the city gates where old and young were gathered together to discuss public and private questions.

Source
of their
author-
ity

Their
aims

Places
where
they
taught

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Obstacles in their path

Sometimes their intense zeal to reach the ignorant and unreceptive led them to adopt the methods of the prophet and address the assembled throng:

Wisdom cries aloud in the streets,
Raises her voice in the open places.
On the top of the walls she calls,
At the entrance of the city gates she says:
"How long, O ignorant, will you love ignorance,
And scoffers delight in their scoffing,
And the stupid hate knowledge?" (Pr. 1²⁰⁻²²).

Ordinarily the eastern world is highly appreciative of the teachings of its sages, but these and many other references in the book of Proverbs indicate that the Jewish wise men were often confronted by indifference or contemptuous disregard for the pearls of wisdom which they cast so freely before their disciples. For that reason the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs are devoted to an earnest commendation of the teaching of the wise. They realized that the first essential was to create a receptive attitude in the minds of their disciples, and a clear appreciation of the practical value of the wisdom which they were striving to inculcate.

Principles underlying their work

The Jewish sages anticipated many of the principles which are regarded as fundamental in modern education. Their profound teaching:

Train up a child in the way he should go,
And when he is old he will not depart from it (Pr. 22⁶),

is the basis of the modern religious education movement. To the parents they intrusted the education of their children. The sages devoted much of their time and attention to training parents, that these responsible guardians of childhood might be qualified for their task. The earnestness with which the wise urged parents not to spare the rod reveals how important they deemed that task. The wise appear to have devoted their attention primarily to adolescent youth. From the age of about twelve, the sensible and well-nurtured Jewish boy began to sit at the feet of the sages, who taught:

Walk with the wise and you will be wise,
But he who associates with fools shall smart for it (Pr. 13²⁰).

Before their disciples they set up the lofty ideal:

A wise man is better than a strong man,
And a man who has knowledge than he who has strength (Pr. 24⁵).

Meaning of the Hebrew word wisdom

Wisdom represented in the thought of the sages the goal of all education. The word comes from a Semitic root which means in the Assyrian *to know*, and in the Arabic *to be firm, fixed, free from defect*. In the teaching of the Hebrew wise it represents not only knowledge, but also the power to gain knowledge and to use it skilfully and effectively. Thus in Isaiah 3⁸ and Ezekiel 27⁸ the Hebrew word *wise* describes a man skilled in technical work.

THE WORK OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

In Genesis 41^{33, 39}, II Samuel 14²⁰, and elsewhere, it describes a man skilled in administering public affairs; in II Samuel 13³, one who is shrewd and cunning in dealing with men; while throughout the book of Proverbs it is the designation of a man who in all his public and private acts is governed by the highest religious and ethical principles. With the wise the mere acquisition of knowledge was never an end in itself. They aimed to make men rather than human encyclopædias. Their disciples were tested alone by their fruits.

The sages also taught that God was the supreme Teacher:

My son, reject not the instruction of Jehovah,
And do not weary of his reproof;
For whom he loveth he reproveth,
Even as a father the son in whom he delights (Pr. 3^{11, 12}).

The
divine
teacher

Moreover, they taught that religion is the foundation of all wisdom:

The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction (Pr. 1⁷).

The phrase *fear of Jehovah*, here, in the Psalms, and in later Jewish literature, is equivalent to our modern term *religion*. It is significant, therefore, that the sages placed this fundamental principle at the beginning of the book of Proverbs. They were intensely interested in all that concerned the well-being and development of the individual; but education which was not truly religious had in their eyes no value nor attraction.

The Jewish sages aimed in the book of Proverbs to hold up before their disciples a composite portrait of an ideal man. It is not an impossible, wishy-washy saint that they have here portrayed, but a man of red blood and practical ability. He is a faithful husband, free from the vices of intemperance and social immorality, devoted to his wife and the interests of the household. All men find in him a true friend, a wise counsellor, a forgiving foe, a neighbor charitable toward others' faults. He is an upright, diligent, and effective business man who enjoys the respect of the community and well-deserved prosperity. He is a just and considerate official, actively championing and protecting the weak and defenseless. He is well informed, gifted with keen insight, and genuinely interested in his fellow men. He is always generous toward the needy and helpful to those in distress and trouble. Above all he is sane, well balanced, and guided by a simple, strong faith in God and by the desire to be loyal in every thought and act to his divine Friend. The abiding happiness is his which comes through living a normal, upright life. The portrait is well worthy of careful study and thoughtful imitation.

The
ideal
man as
portrayed
in the
book of
Prov-
erbs

In a very true sense the Jewish sages were the pioneers who prepared the way for the later Christian education movement. Jesus recognized this debt when he declared in speaking of himself, that *a greater than Solomon is here* (Mt. 12⁴²). Also, in his reply to the charge that he mingled freely with all classes, he maintained: *Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds* (Lk. 7³⁵).

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Jesus' attitude toward the teachings of the wise

There are many indications that Jesus was a close and appreciative student of the wisdom literature of his race. His interest, like that of the sages, centred not in the nation, nor in certain classes, but in the individual. His aims and those of the Jewish wise men were practically identical. At many points the great Teacher reiterated or emphasized the principles already laid down by these earlier teachers (cf., e. g., Mt. 5⁴² and Pr. 3²⁶). His teaching that *whoever shall give a cup of water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose his reward* (Mt. 10⁴²) is but a more personal and vivid declaration of the great truth embodied in Proverbs 19¹⁷:

He who has pity on the poor lends to Jehovah,
And his good deed will he repay him.

Jesus taught in Matthew 6²⁵ and elsewhere the filial attitude of trust expressed in the noble Proverb (16³):

Commit your works unto Jehovah,
And your purposes shall be established.

Many of Jesus' figures of speech are taken from the lips of the earlier wise. Thus, for example, his figure of the way (Mt. 7^{13, 14}) constantly recurs in the book of Proverbs (e. g., 4²⁶, 6²³, 8^{32, 34}, 9⁶). The germinal ideas and figures that appear in many of Jesus' familiar parables are found in Proverbs. Thus, for example, the parable of the two houses, the one built on the sand and the other on the rock, is suggested by Proverbs 10²⁵ (cf. 12⁷):

When the whirlwind passes the wicked is no more,
But the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

The Christian book of Proverbs

The epistle of James has rightly been called the Christian book of Proverbs. It is not an epistle, but a loosely connected collection of wise maxims inspired by the principles that Jesus proclaimed and the spirit of love and democracy that he infused into his followers.

II

THE LITERARY ACTIVITY OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN OR SAGES

ISRAEL'S wise men or sages were primarily teachers and not writers. In the earlier days they apparently depended wholly upon oral instruction and aimed to impress their teachings directly upon the minds of their disciples. To this end they put these teachings in such compact literary moulds that they could be easily treasured in the memory. They also had in mind the immediate needs of the ignorant and inexperienced with whom they came into personal contact. It was only in the mature and more contemplative period of their activity that the wise as a class committed their teachings to writing.

Early
wisdom
oral not
written

Possibly the earliest literary form in which the wise set forth their teaching was the similitude or comparison. The Hebrew word for proverb (*māshāl*) means to *put things side by side*, that is, to *make a comparison*. It is closely related to the Greek-derived word *parable* which describes the presentation of a thought by means of an illustration or story. *Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord* (Gen. 10⁹) is perhaps the oldest fragment of wisdom literature in the Old Testament. Proverbs 25²⁵ contains a characteristic proverb that is the outgrowth of the tendency to present an important truth in terms of common physical experience:

Com-
parison
earliest
literary
form

As cold water to a thirsty man,
So is good news from a far country.

The proverb is the basal literary unit in all wisdom literature. It presents in the most concise and epigrammatic form the crystallized results of experience. A popular proverb possesses authority because it is the outgrowth of common experience and has the indorsement of the successive generations that have preserved it. Its transmission from mouth to mouth subjected it to a constant process of attrition, which in time wore away all needless words and tended to give it a compact, epigrammatic form. This process is illustrated in the case of certain proverbs which have been preserved both in their older, more verbose, and in their later, more concise form. The older Hebrew literature contains a few examples of the one-line proverb, as for example the proverb of the ancients, which David quotes in I Samuel 24¹³: *From the wicked comes forth wickedness*. But all of the proverbs found in the wisdom books of the Old Testament are poetic in form. Poetry was the most natural medium for conveying thought among all primitive peoples. Rhythm of sound or thought is ever an efficient aid to the memory. Further-

Proverb
the out-
growth
of expe-
rience

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

more, the presentation of the practical teaching in dual form tended to emphasize and make clear the thought.

Origin of
prov-
erbs

The majority of the biblical proverbs are orphans. The origin of most of them is unrecorded. A few of them, like the proverb, *Is Saul among the prophets?* clearly go back to some historic incident (cf. I Sam. 10¹⁰⁻¹² and 19¹⁸⁻²⁴). Some were probably first presented in the form of riddles. Thus, for example, Proverbs 16²⁴ may well have been suggested by the question, *What is as sweet as honey?* and its answer, *Pleasant discourse, for it is sweet to the soul and medicine to the bones.* Proverbs 22¹, with its emphasis on the value of a good name, may go back to the question, *What is worth more than riches?* Similarly the question, *What is like seizing a dog by the ears?* may originally have introduced the answer, *Meddling with a quarrel not your own.* The great majority, however, of the maxims in the book of Proverbs, clearly come from the lips of once famous, but now unknown sages. In many proverbs the language reflects the point of view of these venerable teachers:

My son, if you are wise I shall be glad,
I shall rejoice when you speak right things.
Buy the truth and sell it not,
Wisdom, instruction, and understanding (23^{16, 23}).

Use of
paradox

The sages knew the value of presenting their teachings in a striking, thought-provoking form. Like Jesus, they appreciated the value of the paradox. Thus in Proverbs 26^{4, 5} they developed the paradox by putting two proverbs together. Each contained a valuable teaching, and yet, when placed side by side, they seem to present a direct contradiction. The reader in explaining this seeming contradiction would inevitably have fixed in his mind the truth conveyed by each:

Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest you also become like him.
Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own conceit.

Gnomic
essays

Notwithstanding the limitations of the gnomic type of literature, the wise succeeded in discussing the important questions in which they were interested with remarkable thoroughness. They accomplished this end by putting side by side proverbs dealing with the same theme. Each verse or couplet is a unit by itself, and yet together they present the practical conclusions of the sages on such themes as the proper treatment of the fool (Pr. 26¹⁻¹²), the characteristics and fate of the lazy man (26¹³⁻¹⁷), or the woes which attend the drunkard (23²⁹⁻³⁵). In Proverbs 31¹⁰⁻³¹ the characteristics of the efficient housewife are set forth in a beautiful, alphabetical poem. In the same way in the opening chapters of the book of Proverbs the value of wisdom is proclaimed in a series of what might be called gnomic essays.

Book of
Eccle-
sias-
tastes

The next stage in the development of the wisdom literature is illustrated by the book of Ecclesiastes. Here the question of what is worth while is discussed both from the practical and philosophical point of view. While much

LITERARY ACTIVITY OF ISRAEL'S WISE MEN

of the thought is set forth in proverbial form, the author refuses to be bound down by the proverb unit. *Philosophical essay* or *homily* perhaps best describes this product of late Jewish wisdom.

The culminating literary product of the wise is the book of Job. Here the gnomic unit used is combined in such a masterly way that the profoundest and most difficult problems of human philosophy are treated with amazing thoroughness. Different speakers are introduced to set forth the many different interpretations of the problem of innocent suffering. The whole is suffused with a personal, emotional element. The result is the greatest lyric drama of antiquity.

The most typical product of the wisdom school is the book of Proverbs. This elaborate anthology is in reality a library in itself. Its various superscriptions suggest its long literary history. The chief and probably the oldest section of the book is found in 10¹-22¹⁶. It bears the superscription, *These are the Proverbs of Solomon*. They deal with the social evils denounced by prophets like Amos and Isaiah.

Many references to a king, who is thought of as a native ruler, imply that certain, if not a majority, of these proverbs come from a period before the Babylonian exile while the Jews were still ruled by men of their own race. The absence of any reference to the exile confirms that impression. On the other hand, the absence of any allusions to idolatry and the presence of a class of scoffers suggest that many of them come from after the exile and that the collection as a whole was not made before the latter part of the Persian or the early part of the Greek period.

The appendices in 22¹⁷-24³⁴ are not attributed to Solomon, but to the wise men as a class. The inference is that they come from a later period than the preceding collection. The term *proverb of Solomon* (cf. *psalm of David*) apparently describes a proverb which came from an early period, and was therefore attributed by popular belief to the early Hebrew ruler who was famous for his wisdom. The expansion of this tradition is illustrated by the fact that in the final superscription appended to the Proverbs (1¹) the entire book is described as, *The Proverbs of Solomon*, even though this testimony is belied by the contents of the proverbs themselves and by the direct statement of the superscriptions found within the book. The appendices in 22¹⁷-24³⁴ contain many repetitions of maxims found in the larger collection. This fact indicates that these later collections were gleaned in part from the same field. The allusions to commercial life, to the exiled Jews, and to the wide prevalence of intemperance point to the Greek period as the probable date when these smaller collections were added.

New light upon the origin of certain biblical proverbs, and especially those in 22¹⁷-24³⁴, has come from the ruins of ancient Egypt. In 1923 Sir Wallis Budge published in the *Second Series of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri* an Egyptian wisdom book, entitled, *The Teaching of Amenemope*, which may be dated about 1000 B. C. It is divided into thirty chapters and consists of popular proverbs. From a writing-tablet preserved in the Turin Museum we know that it was used as a text-book in the Egyptian schools twenty-five hundred years ago. The most interesting fact, however, is that nine of these proverbs

Wisdom literature at its height

The book of Proverbs

Its date

Divisions and authorship

Egyptian origin of certain proverbs

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

are, as Professor Adolph Erman has pointed out in the May, 1921, report of the Prussian *Academic der Wissenschaft*, almost word for word identical with maxims found in the biblical book of Proverbs. Seven of these are in the appendices in Proverbs 22¹⁷-24³³, indicating that these later collections were probably made by a Jew living in Egypt during the Greek period, who drew freely from the famous *wisdom of the Egyptians*.

Chapters 25-29

The finest proverbs in the book are found in chapters 25-29. The superscription states that these proverbs were transcribed by the scribes of Hezekiah, king of Judah, but they still bear the traditional title, *Proverbs of Solomon*. The word meaning to *transcribe* is found only in late Hebrew. Its presence implies that the superscription is not earlier than the Greek period. The rulers who figure in these proverbs are oppressors rather than champions of the people, suggesting Persian or Greek, rather than Jewish, potentates. The literary form of these proverbs is also more complex than the simple couplets found in the first large collection (10¹-22¹⁶). The earlier part of the Greek period is probably the historical background of most of them.

Later additions

To this collection or collections were added in later days the preface contained in 1²⁻⁶, the elaborate prologue in 1⁷-9¹⁸ describing wisdom, and finally the long appendices in chapters 30 and 31. The corrupt city life reflected in the prologue and the philosophical proverbs and Aramaisms that appear in the appendices indicate that they all probably come from the latter part of the Greek period, although probably from different writers and editors.

Summary

The book of Proverbs, therefore, represents the growth of five or six centuries. Possibly some of the maxims actually come from Solomon. Many of the proverbs in this section were probably long current on the lips of people before they were collected and edited. It is doubtful whether any part of the book was committed to writing before the exile. Then it took form in successive collections. Proverbs in its final form may be dated about 200 B.C. It represents not the work of one, but probably a score at least, if not a hundred or more different writers. It is the great storehouse of Israel's practical wisdom, but like the Koran and many other products of oriental thought, its contents must be classified before they can be successfully studied and utilized by modern western students.

III

THE HISTORY AND POINT OF VIEW OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

THE sensation in passing from the book of Proverbs to Ecclesiastes is akin to that which one experiences when he steps out of a brilliant, oriental sunset into a dimly lighted, mysterious subterranean passage. Teachings which have seemed obvious and firmly established suddenly become vague and uncertain. Dark doubts and an atmosphere of pessimism confront the reader on every side. The problems which haunt the pages of Omar Khayyam, Schopenhauer, and the Russian pessimists are constantly being presented for consideration.

Its atmosphere

Yet few Old Testament books have made a deeper impression on English literature and thought than Ecclesiastes. The French scholar Renan declared that it was the most charming book ever written by a Jew. Its fascination lies in part in the very fact that it belongs to that literature of pessimism and revolt which has always had a unique attraction for certain types of mind. Above all it lays bare the tragedy of a human soul unilluminated by spiritual insight nor warmed by unselfish service. The author also has a forceful, epigrammatic manner of presenting his conclusions, which goes far to explain why his teachings have been more widely quoted than those of almost any other Old Testament teacher.

The fascination of the book

The problems discussed in the book of Ecclesiastes are also of perennial human interest. Of all the Old Testament wisdom writings, it approximates most nearly in its point of view to that of the Greek philosophical literature. The author seeks to face squarely the whole of reality. He struggled valiantly with the problem of what is of value in human life. He even rises to the consideration of the ever-recurring question of whether life itself is really worth living. At the very beginning he states his pessimistic thesis: *All is vanity*. In succession he presents his negative conclusions regarding the various sources that are supposed to yield satisfaction.

Its theme

It is not strange that the book of Ecclesiastes was the last to find a place in the Old Testament canon. The surprising fact is that it was included at all. It is known that Antiochus the Great became king of Syria when only seven, and in 198 B.C. wrested Palestine from Ptolemy V. If these identifications are correct, 10¹⁶, 17 expresses the enthusiasm of the Jews over this transfer of power to Antiochus. It also suggests, as a definite date for Ecclesiastes, the years immediately following 200 B.C. This dating is in perfect accord with the other evidence.

Date

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

The his-
torical
back-
ground

The last half of the third and the first half of the second century B.C. was the darkest and most corrupt period in the history of the Jews of Palestine. Their home-land was the bone of contention between the rival rulers of Egypt and Syria. Drunkenness and licentiousness were regnant in the court of Egypt, and the favorites of irresponsible despots preyed on the people of Palestine. Jewish tax-collectors, like Joseph the son of Tobias, fattened upon their fellow countrymen and made their profession loathsome to the Jews. It was a selfish, sordid age, and the helpless Jews of Palestine saw only the corrupt and seamy side of Hellenistic civilization. This dreary background is reflected in the writings of the original author of Ecclesiastes. It also goes far to explain the hopeless pessimism that pervades the sections that come from his pen.

Person-
ality of
Kohē-
leth

The personality of the author of Ecclesiastes is clearly revealed in his writings. He either bore the name or assumed the title Kohēleth. The word means one who calls together or addresses a popular assembly. Whatever be his faults, Kohēleth was certainly frank. In his revelations of his inner experiences, he rivals the modern realists. It is the frankness of old age, which has left behind all the pretenses and ideals of youthful years. His description of the failing powers of old age is one of the most brilliant passages in the world's literature and could have been written only by one who was witnessing the dissolution of his physical vigor. The peculiar quality of his pessimism is also that of extreme old age. As has been noted, it is not an attitude of bitterness, but one of calm hopelessness. It is the philosophy of physical weakness. The mere thought of toil and struggle tires him. His mind, however, is active, for his book abounds in brilliant epigrams.

His
experi-
ences

It is evident from 2¹⁻⁸ that he had great wealth and had used it throughout his long life chiefly for his personal gratification. He knew, too, by bitter experience the limitations of money. He had learned that *the satiety of the rich does not let him sleep* (5¹²). Also that *the eye is never satisfied with riches* (4⁸). Evidently his selfish policy had won for him no friends. Even his domestic life appears to have been a tragedy. On rare occasions in his varied life he had found a true man, but never a faithful woman (7²⁸). Sadly he exclaims: *I found something more bitter than death—a woman whose heart is snares and nets and her hands are fetters* (7²⁶). Possibly the sequel is a part of his philosophical autobiography, *Whoever pleases God shall escape her; but the sinner shall be taken by her*, or it may be the sarcastic addition of a later sage. In any case, it is probably a true reflection of Kohēleth's experience.

Kohēleth tells without reservation or apology of his selfish pursuit of pleasure and of his unrestrained self-indulgence, but of one fact he is proud: he never lost his head: *my wisdom remained with me* (2⁹). Withal it is not an admirable character that is here revealed, but it is consistent and a typical product of the corrupt, materialistic third century before Christ.

His
aim in
writing

Ecclesiastes is the most dramatic, as well as the saddest, book in the Bible. Kohēleth, with one foot in the grave and with his physical energies flickering like a burnt-out wick, writes, even though all toil for him is painful, that he may pass on to youth the results of his experience, negative though they are. There is no doubt about his purpose: he desired to warn man not to

HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

expect much in life. He believed that he who anticipates nothing has no disappointments. Also he had a positive purpose. He had found that certain experiences, such as constructive work, yield a passing pleasure. Likewise youth has certain joys that are beyond the grasp of old age. His advice, therefore, is to enjoy the valid pleasures that each stage in life offers, and not to wait, as many do, until it is forever too late.

Most of the Old Testament books are shot through with a strongly personal element. This lyrical quality is a large part of their charm. Pre-eminently is this true of Ecclesiastes. It is a *journal intime*. In a series of loosely connected essays, Koheleth gives the results of his own personal observation and experience. Some of the brilliant proverbs, with which his writings are freely interspersed, are of his own coinage; others were evidently gleaned from the storehouse of the wise. The style passes easily from prose to poetry. These didactic essays culminate in the brilliant poem descriptive of youth and old age in 11^{9-12⁸}. In a series of vivid pictures he portrays the gradual disintegration of man's material habitation until at last comes the final collapse and the oriental mourners go up and down the street, raising their shrill cries of lamentation.

Literary
char-
acter of
Ecclesi-
astes

Koheleth's thought is cast in Jewish moulds, and yet he breaks away from many of the accepted points of view of Judaism. His approach to the problems of the universe reveals the Greek atmosphere in which he lived. In certain respects he anticipates modern scientific methods. He accepts nothing on the basis of authority. He trusts only his own observation and experience. He recognizes the fixed order of the universe and the reign of unchanging laws (1⁴⁻¹¹, 3¹⁻¹¹, 8⁵⁻⁹). But to his aged, wearied eyes, these laws and the tireless, unvarying action of natural forces, bring not joy and confidence, but only ennui. He does not question God's existence and infinite power, but he finds in the merciless mechanism of nature no evidence of divine love and no opportunity for fellowship and co-operation with him. His religion is even colder and more cheerless than that of the modern mechanistic materialist, for he believed that God had *put ignorance in men's minds, so that they cannot find out from the beginning to the end the work that God is doing*.

Kohe-
leth's
idea of
God and
of the
universe

Human life and organized society, as he viewed them, are equally unsatisfying. Men strive and toil instinctively for riches, knowledge, honor, and happiness, but in the end all these quests are fruitless. Society, too, is ruled by injustice and might, not right, as a rule prevails (8²⁻¹⁵).

Koheleth's jaundiced view of life is largely due to his lack of any belief in personal immortality. In this, as in other respects, he is a forerunner of those staunch conservatives, the Sadducees, who held with their forefathers that there was no joyous life or development beyond the grave. *For the fate of man and of beasts is the same: as the one dies, so the other dies—all go to one place; all are from the dust and all return to dust* (3^{19, 20}). Having no appreciation of the sacredness or possibilities of human personality, Koheleth deems the dead, *who know absolutely nothing*, happier than those involved in the turmoil of life (4²). It was to present a far different and nobler view that the apocryphal book entitled, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, was written.

No be-
lief in
personal
immor-
tality

Like every constitutional pessimist, Koheleth seems to take a certain grim

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Things
worth
while

delight in painting life in its darkest colors. Grudgingly he admits, however, that it offers certain satisfactions which men should enjoy, as insects do the sunshine on a spring day. Nowhere does he recommend dissipation, for in the end it destroys rather than adds to a man's pleasure. Evidently he was influenced by the inherited morality as well as the religion of his race. The natural pleasures of youth, the joy of work and of married life are what he commends, for they have at least a temporary value. *Go, eat your food with joy and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God hath already approved your doing so. Let your garments be always white, and let not your head lack oil. Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of the vain life which God gives you under the sun, for it is your portion in life and the reward of your toil under the sun* (9⁷⁻⁹).

Sources
of Kohe-
leth's
philoso-
phy

Earlier interpreters of Ecclesiastes traced many of its ideas to the influence of the Stoic and Epicurean schools of Greek thought. There may have been such indirect influences, for Palestine in the third century B.C. was saturated with Hellenic culture; but it is evident that Koheleth was more directly influenced by the older Babylonian philosophy from which both of these great schools drew many of their ideas. The closest parallel to Ecclesiastes is found in the old Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, which may be dated about 2000 B.C. It is addressed to the national hero:

O Gilgamesh, fill indeed your belly,
Day and night be joyful,
Daily ordain gladness,
Day and night rage and make merry,
Let your garments be bright,
Purify your head, bathe with water,
Desire your children which your hand possesses,
Enjoy a wife in your bosom,
Peaceably do your work (cf. Barton, *Eccles.* 39, 40)

The
later
revision
of Ec-
cle-
siastes

A philosophy which departed as widely as did that of Koheleth from the religion of his race and from the testimony of deeper spiritual experience could not stand unchallenged. Ecclesiastes in its present form confirms this conclusion. Certain earlier interpreters regarded it as the record of an ancient discussion regarding the real values in life similar to the debates between the rabbis recorded in the Talmud. In a sense this is true; but there is no evidence that Koheleth ever sat in the presence of his critics. Evidently his *silver cord was snapped and the golden bowl was broken* before they turned upon him. Possibly all this was in keeping with the deliberate intention of this brilliant cynic. It was inevitable that his pessimistic and, to a large extent, false philosophy of life should be attacked from many sides. Fully one-fourth of the present book records these attacks. Sometimes it is only a line denying pointblank one of Koheleth's extreme assertions. Sometimes it is in the form of elaborate poems describing the value of that wisdom which Koheleth rejected as only of secondary value (cf. 7^{11, 12}, 9^{17-10³}, 10⁸⁻¹⁶).

HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

Certain of these apparently contain very pointed arraigments of Koheleth and his pessimistic philosophy:

The words of the wise spoken quietly
Are more effective than the loud cry of an arch-fool!
Wisdom is better than weapons,
But one sinner destroys much good.
A dead fly corrupts the perfumer's ointment,
So a little folly destroys precious wisdom (9¹⁷-10¹).

These comments evidently come from later sages. Others were added by Pharisaic moralists. They reflect a more orthodox, formal philosophy of life: *Because the sentence of an evil deed is not promptly executed, men are inclined to do wrong. But although a sinner does wrong persistently and goes on unpunished, I know that good fortune will come to those who revere God, but not to the wicked* (8¹¹, 12).

Even the words, *Remember your creator in the days of your youth* (12¹), give an altogether different turn to Koheleth's original teaching. Ben Sira knew the book of Ecclesiastes before it had been revised by the hands of later sages and Pharisees (cf. Barton, *Eccles.* 53-56); but to the contributions of these more orthodox critics it doubtless largely owes its place in the Old Testament canon.

The truth and value of these later comments and exhortations are obvious. The original sections of Ecclesiastes, however, lay bare the tragedy of a human soul. It is an oft-recurring tragedy. It is the tragedy of a life lived under the tyranny of materialism and selfishness. It illustrates the fatal consequences of the wrong approach to life, to humanity, and to God. Koheleth never found life, because he never lost it. He remained to the end a once-born man. Therefore, except for his brilliant thinking, he never rose above the level of the brute. There is not a grain of altruism in the entire book. Lacking altruism himself, he saw only the dark and seamy side of human character and life. Like many others, he was abnormally keen in detecting his own faults incarnate in others.

Ecclesiastes enables us to look into the souls of thousands of our fellow men. It also gives us a vivid picture of the consequences of giving free rein to similar tendencies innate in our own souls. Its value lies in the fact that vividly and with absolute frankness it presents the logical, inevitable results of cherishing a merely materialistic, selfish philosophy of life. Koheleth furnishes an excellent basis for the appreciation of the optimistic teachings of Ben Sira and of that deeper philosophy of life lived and proclaimed by the great Teacher of Nazareth.

The
religious
value of
Eccle-
siastes

IV

BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

The
title

ALTHOUGH it is not included in the present volume,* the longest and in many ways the most interesting of the wisdom books comes from the Jewish sage, Ben Sira. It is commonly known as *Ecclesiasticus*. This name comes from the old Latin Bible and was used by Jerome in his Latin version. The title indicates that it was regarded by the early church as especially adapted to use for instruction in conduct. Indeed, its use in the *ecclesia* or church gave it this distinctive title. In most Greek manuscripts it is designated as, *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach*. This title is probably an expansion of the original Hebrew designation, *The Wisdom of Jeshua Ben Sira*.

Its place
in the
canon

In the Latin and Greek Bibles *Ecclesiasticus* enjoyed equal authority with the other Old Testament books. It still holds this place in the Roman Catholic and Greek churches. In the Anglican church passages from *Ecclesiasticus* are still indicated for public reading. In the canon of the Old Testament, agreed upon by the Jews of Palestine about 90 A.D., *Ecclesiasticus* was not included. This exclusion was probably due to the fact that the name of the author and his relatively late date were known to those who formed the Old Testament canon. Unlike *Ecclesiastes* and *Proverbs*, it was not by implication or tradition connected with the revered name of Solomon. Until the beginning of the last century, in common with the other books of the Old Testament apocrypha, it was published in the family editions of the English Bible. The exclusion of the apocryphal books from the Protestant canon was not due to the action of any authoritative committee or council, but to the arbitrary action of the Bible societies. To-day the wisdom of their action is being seriously challenged by thoughtful biblical scholars throughout the Anglo-Saxon world.

Date

Ecclesiasticus, or as it is known from its Hebrew title, Ben Sira, is one of the few Jewish books that can be dated definitely. In the prologue to the Greek version, its translator describes himself as the grandson of Jesus, the son of Sirach. He states that he went to Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of King Euergetes. From contemporary writers we know that this ruler became king in 170 B.C., which fixes the date of the translator in 132 B.C. His grandfather must, therefore, have lived some time during the early part of the second century B.C. In 50¹ Ben Sira describes in enthusiastic terms the activities of the high priest Simon the son of Onias. References in the writings of the church historian Eusebius leave little doubt that this Simon lived between 200 and 175 B.C. Allusions to the prevalent Greek culture and the absence of any references to the Maccabean uprising which began in

* See Preface for the reasons for omitting Ben Sira.

BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

169 B.C. confirm the evidence that Ben Sira lived and wrote between 200 and 175.

The historical and religious background is very similar to that of Ecclesiastes. References in Ben Sira indicate that the author was familiar with the writings of Koheleth. Strong currents of Hellenic and Hebrew thought were mingling and reacting in Palestine, as well as in the larger Greek world. Attracted by the allurements of Greek culture, many Jews were proving faithless to the religion of their fathers. It was a period when it was especially difficult to be broad and yet loyal to the ideals of Judaism. Ben Sira was one of the few Jewish writers of the age who succeeded. He speaks appreciatively of banquets and has no words of denunciation for the Greek types of philosophy which were current in Jerusalem, as well as in Alexandria. If he had lived in Athens or at the centres of Greek culture throughout southwestern Asia, he would probably, like Paul, have been found at times among the eager youth that thronged the lecture rooms of the Greek philosophers.

The
histori-
cal sit-
uation

In Ben Sira the vague, composite picture of the Jewish sage becomes clear and pulsating with life. He is the only Jewish sage of the olden days whose name we know. His name and many allusions in his writings indicate that he belonged to a well-known Jerusalem family. He was evidently a man of influence and probably of wealth. He appreciates the dignity of labor:

Ben
Sira
himself

Hate not laborious work
Neither agriculture that the Most High hath ordained.

At the same time he speaks rather patronizingly of manual laborers. They are important, but far below the scribes in influence and significance:

These are deft with their hands,
And each is wise in his handiwork.
But they are not inquired of in public council,
And in the assembly they enjoy no patronage (38³¹, 33).

Ben Sira lived at a period when the Jewish wise men were becoming scribes. They still retained the broad interests and points of view of the earlier sages. It was not until the beginning of the Christian era that the scribes focussed their attention largely upon the questions of the law. In 39¹⁻¹¹ Ben Sira has given a vivid picture of the scribe of his day. Incidentally he has probably painted a clear picture of himself. The portrait is well worthy of careful consideration:

His
training

He searches out the wisdom of all the ancients,
And is occupied in prophecies.
He preserves the discourses of men of renown,
And enters into the subtleties of parables.
He seeks out the hidden meaning of proverbs,
And is familiar with the dark things of parables.
He serves among great men,
And appears before a ruler.
He travels in the land of alien nations,

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

And has tried both good and evil things among men.
He eagerly turns to the Lord who made him,
And before the Most High he makes supplication,
And opens his mouth in prayer,
And makes supplication for his sin.
If the Great Lord will,
He will be filled with the spirit of understanding.
He himself pours forth words of wisdom,
And gives thanks to the Lord in prayer.
He himself directs his counsel and knowledge,
And in their secrets he meditates.
He himself sets forth wise instruction,
And glories in the law of the covenant of the Lord.
Many praise his understanding,
Never shall it be blotted out.
His memorial shall not cease,
And his name shall live from generation to generation.

His
experi-
ences

From chance references in his writings, it is possible to trace in outline Ben Sira's training and experiences. Possibly in the closing chapter allowance must be made for the fond idealization of old age, and yet the passage (51¹³⁻¹⁷) gives a vivid picture of this ancient teacher:

When I was yet young,
Before I travelled abroad,
I desired and sought out wisdom.
In my youth I made supplication in prayer;
And I will seek her out even to the end.
My foot trod in her footsteps,
From my youth I learned wisdom.
I bowed down mine ear a little and received her,
And much knowledge did I find.
Her yoke was joyous to me,
And to my teacher do I offer thanks.

To use Goethe's phrase, Ben Sira was trained in the stream of things. He listened intently to the teaching of the present, as well as of the past. He knew well the value of trained insight and experience. In 34¹⁰⁻¹³ he states that

He who has had no experience knows little,
But he who has travelled multiplies his skill.
In my travels have I seen much,
And many things have befallen me;
Often I was in mortal danger,
But was saved thanks to these things.

BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

Here we have a character who reminds us in some ways of the energetic, cosmopolitan Paul, who especially attracted the young because of his various adventures and achievements, as well as through his glowing words and warm sympathy.

Ben Sira also drew much from the earlier teachers of his race. In the prologue to his book, he is aptly described by his grandson as "a lover of learning." He freely acknowledges his debt to the earlier teachers of his race:

Sources
of his
wisdom

I, indeed, came last of all,
As one who gleanes after the grape-gatherers.
By the blessing of God I made progress,
And, as a grape-gatherer, filled my winepress.
Consider that I labored not for myself alone,
But for all those who seek instruction (33¹⁶, 17).

Ben Sira was pre-eminently a teacher. His voice was undoubtedly heard in the public assemblies. In 33¹⁸ he declares:

As a
teacher

Hearken unto me, you great ones of the people,
And you rulers of the congregation, give ear to me.

At times he taught privately as well as publicly:

Hearken, my son, and receive my judgments,
And refuse not my counsel (6²³).

Like the famous Greek poetess Sappho, he appears to have been the head of a preparatory school. In 51²³, 24 he speaks of his house of instruction. Like a Greek philosopher, he extends an invitation to youth to become regular attendants on his lectures:

Turn in to me, you who are unlearned,
And lodge in my house of instruction.
No longer will you lack all these things,
And your souls be so sore athirst.

His exhortations to his pupils reveal the man:

Hearken to my teachings, though you be but a few,
And much silver and gold will you acquire thereby.
Let me delight in my circle of hearers,
And may you not be ashamed to sing my praise.
Work your works before the end comes,
And God will give you your reward in due time (51²⁸⁻³⁰).

These concluding words frankly and clearly reveal the ambitions and aspirations of this great Jewish teacher. He preferred the intimacy of a few intelligent and receptive disciples rather than the applause of the unintelligent mob. In the appreciation and achievements of his disciples he found his true reward. In the light of modern oriental custom, it is easy to picture the scene: crosslegged on the floor or on a low divan sits the venerable sage. About him

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

in a semicircle on the floor are his disciples, intently listening as he pours out the result of his study, observation, and experience. The earnest spirit of the teacher permeates the ancient classroom. Ample opportunity was doubtless given for questions and answers, for Ben Sira's aim was not merely to instruct but to educate his disciples.

His
range of
interest

Ben Sira's range of interest was wide and even wider than those of the authors of the book of Proverbs. He touches upon most of the subjects with which they deal, and his conclusions are usually in full harmony with theirs. He aimed to give instruction upon all the varied problems of life. He was greatly interested in the homely, every-day relationships in the family, in business, and in the closer contacts between man and man. He even goes so far as to lay down the rules of courtesy and to instruct his disciples how they should behave at the table and treat their elders. In many respects he reminds us of the Chinese sage Confucius; but he was more deeply religious. In his teachings religion and ethics are closely blended. In 25¹² he declares

The beginning of the fear of the Lord is to love him,
And the beginning of faith is to cleave to him.

Out of the depths of his own religious experience he exclaims:

Strive for the right, even to death,
And the Lord will fight for you.

Ben
Sira's
sense of
humor

Ben Sira was an exceedingly keen and sympathetic observer of human life. In the Syriac version of 19³⁰ he declares:

A man's attire proclaims his occupation,
But his gait shows what he is.

Possibly he drew from his own experience when he declared in 26¹⁴:

A silent woman is a gift from the Lord!

Equally appealing to universal human experience is the proverb (found only in the Greek):

He who sins against his Maker,
Let him fall into the hands of his physician!

Evidently Ben Sira had often mingled with the crowds in the market-places. The following proverb illustrates the result of his observation (27²):

As a nail sticks fast between the joinings of stones,
So sin thrusts itself in between buying and selling.

The
folly of
the fool

Twenty centuries have not materially transformed human nature nor industry. Like all the sages, Ben Sira has much to say about fools, and he was eager to deliver them from their foolishness by making them laugh at their own folly:

Have you heard anything? Let it die with you;
Be of good courage, it will not burst you!
A fool travails because of a word,
Even as a woman travails because of a child.

BEN SIRÁ'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

Possibly wise Ben Sirá knew by experience the truth of the following epigram (20¹⁸):

A slip on the pavement is better than a slip of the tongue,
Thus the fall of the wicked comes swiftly.

True, indeed, is his statement (21²⁶):

The heart of fools is in their mouth,
But the mouth of the wise is in their heart.

Keen is the irony in the following proverb and yet deserved (22¹¹):

Mourn for the dead, for his light has failed,
But mourn for a fool, for understanding has failed him.
Weep gently for the dead, for he has found rest,
But the life of a fool is worse than death.

Ben Sirá's literary work has had a most dramatic history. In the prologue to the Greek translation, his grandson tells us that it was written first in Hebrew and that he later translated it into the Greek. Until the closing years of the last century, the original Hebrew version was practically unknown to western scholars. Then through the work of Professor Schechter and other Jewish scholars who ransacked the Genizah, or refuse heap, in connection with one of the Cairo synagogues, where soiled or torn manuscripts were stored away, Hebrew fragments of the book of Ben Sirá were discovered.

The
literary
history
of Ben
Sirá

Most of these come from about the eleventh Christian century and are of differing values. They richly supplement our present Greek texts and give us very definite knowledge of Ben Sirá's ability as a Hebrew scholar. Few, if any, of the later Jews were masters of such a classical Hebrew style. These Hebrew fragments represent fully two-thirds of the original book and are of great value in reconstructing the original Hebrew text.

Style

The book of Ben Sirá is almost the only Hebrew classic that has not been seriously revised by later hands. In this respect it is in striking contrast to Ecclesiastes. Not only the contents but the present order is apparently due from beginning to end to Ben Sirá himself. The book falls naturally into five general divisions. Like the canonical book of Proverbs, the first four are introduced by hymns in praise of wisdom. The first collection (1¹-16²³) deals with religion and ethics. It is introduced by a discussion of the origin of wisdom in 1¹⁻¹⁰. The second collection is found in 16²⁴⁻²³³⁸. It is introduced by an essay on wisdom as revealed in the work of creation (16²⁴⁻³⁰). This essay is based on Proverbs 8. The second collection deals with the same general themes as the first collection. The third section is found in 24¹-33¹⁵. It begins with a long poem in praise of wisdom (24). The rest of the section deals with a variety of practical problems paralleling in part the themes discussed in the first two collections. The third collection is found in 33¹⁶⁻⁴³³³. It contains a group of longer essays dealing with such subjects as the treatment of servants, dreams, and sacrifices.

Struc-
ture

The contents and general character of these first four sections suggest that they represent successive stages in the teaching activity of Ben Sirá. They

Growth

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

correspond to the notes of the ordinary university professor. In some cases it is possible to detect the progress in Ben Sira's thought. The last group, with its longer essays, reveals perhaps the maturity of advancing years; while the opening sections with their terse, epigrammatic proverbs are suggestive of the intenseness and zeal of youth. The fifth section is found in 44¹⁻⁵⁰²⁹. It consists of a description of the men in Israel's history who by their devoted services have promoted the cause of religion and morals.

Con-
clusion

The conclusion of the book is an appendix (51) beginning with a hymn of thanksgiving (51¹⁻¹³) and concluding with a poem embodying many of Ben Sira's personal experiences.

The
teach-
ings re-
garding
God

Ben Sira anticipated in many ways the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth regarding the character of God. He also spoke out of the depths of his deep, personal experience. In nature he found proofs at every turn of the existence, not of a cruel tyrant, but of a divine Friend without whose knowledge not even a sparrow falls to the ground. In one deeply emotional passage he addresses God as *Lord, Father, and Master of my life*. In chapter 39¹⁹⁻²² Ben Sira gives a vivid picture of his conception of God and his relation to man:

The works of all flesh are before him,
And there is nothing hid from before his eyes.
From everlasting to everlasting he beholdeth,
Therefore there is no limit to his power to deliver,
And there is nothing small nor petty with him,
There is nothing too wonderful nor too hard for him.
None may say: "Why is this?"
For everything is selected for its purpose.
His blessing overflows like the Nile,
And he saturates the world like the river of Egypt.

In the thirty-third verse of the same chapter he exclaims:

The works of God are all good.
They supply every need in its season.

In 44²⁶ he adds:

Bodily health and strength lift up the heart,
But better than both is the fear of God.
In the fear of the Lord there is no want,
And with him there is no need to seek other help.

The phrase, *fear of Jehovah*, here as elsewhere in Jewish literature, represents that rare religion of heart and life which the sages sought to inspire in their disciples. As with Jesus of Nazareth, Ben Sira's ethics were grounded in his deep religious faith.

BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

In 18¹⁰⁻¹⁴ there is a remarkable poem describing God's relation to man. It is an echo of Psalm 90, but its spirit is far more constructive:

God's
relation
to man

As a drop of water from the sea or as a grain of sand,
So are man's few years in the eternal day.
Therefore the Lord is longsuffering toward them.
And poureth out his mercy upon them.
He seeth and knoweth that their end is evil,
Therefore he doth increase his forgiveness.
Man shows mercy toward his neighbor,
But the Lord is merciful toward all mankind,
Reproving, chastening, and teaching,
And bringing back as a shepherd his flock.
He hath mercy upon those who accept discipline,
And diligently seek to know his judgments.

Like all the wisdom teachers of his race, Ben Sira stoutly insisted on man's freedom of will. In his thought God is ready to co-operate, but every man is responsible for his own acts. This teaching is clearly presented in 15¹⁵⁻¹⁷:

Man's
freedom
of will

If you desire you can keep the commandment,
And it is wisdom to do his good pleasure.
Poured out before you are fire and water,
Stretch out your hand to whichever you desire.
Life and death are before man,
That which he desires shall be given him.

In verses 19, 20 he adds:

The eyes of God behold his works,
And he knoweth man's every deed.
He commandeth no man to sin,
Nor giveth his strength to men of lies.

Not only did Ben Sira regard each man as responsible for all his acts, but he also believed that man alone could atone for his sins (3³⁰):

Water quenches flaming fire,
So almsgiving atones for sin.
He who does a favor, it meets him on his way,
And when he falls, he shall find support.

The absence of an inspiring hope of personal immortality makes Ben Sira's optimism all the more significant and heroic. The cold immortality of a man's fame, comforted, even though it did not satisfy him. In 41^{12, 13} he exclaims:

His lack
of the
hope of
a joy-
ous, per-
sonal
immor-
tality

Be in fear for your name, for that abides longer for you
Than thousands of precious treasures.
Life's goods last for limited days,
But the reward of a name for days without number.

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Ben Sira apparently shared the rather indefinite and unsatisfying conception of life beyond the grave that is so brilliantly pictured in the third chapter of Job, for he declares (22¹¹):

Weep gently for the dead,
For he has found rest.

One of the most original and picturesque poems in the book deals with the subject of death (41¹⁻⁹):

Ah! Death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee
To him who lives at peace in his family circle,
To him who is at ease and altogether prosperous,
And still has strength to enjoy luxury.

Hail! Death, how welcome is thy decree
To a luckless man and to him who lacks strength,
Who stumbles and trips at everything
Who is broken and has lost hope!

Fear not death, it is your destiny,
Remember that generations past and future share it with you.
This is the portion of all flesh from God,
How can you reject the decree of the Most High?
Whether you live a thousand, or a hundred, or ten years,
In Sheol there are no reproaches regarding life.

Man's
attitude
toward
God

Ben Sira's religion was of the sincerest type, since he looked for no future rewards. In his present experience he found ample reasons for that deep loyalty toward God which breathes through all his teachings. The second chapter of his writings contains in many ways one of the noblest declarations of faith found in ancient Jewish literature. It is the same faith that permeates the oldest records of Jesus' teachings (21¹⁻¹¹):

My son, when you come to serve the Lord,
Prepare your soul for temptation.
Set your heart aright and be steadfast,
And be not perturbed in the time of calamity,
Cleave to him, and do not leave him,
That you may prove yourself wise in the end.
Accept whatever comes to you,
And be patient in sickness and poverty;
For gold is tested in the fire,
And acceptable men in the furnace of affliction.
Put your trust in the Lord, and he will help you,
Hope in him, and he will make straight your way.

BEN SIRA'S GUIDE-BOOK TO RIGHT LIVING

You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy,
And turn not aside, lest you fall.
You who fear the Lord, trust in him,
And your reward shall not fail.
You who fear the Lord, hope for good things,
And for eternal gladness and deliverance.

Consider the generations of old and see:
Whoever trusted the Lord and was put to shame?
Or who was ever loyal to him and was forsaken?
Or who ever called on him and was overlooked?
For the Lord is compassionate and merciful,
He forgiveth sins and saveth in time of trouble.

Ben Sira, in his teachings regarding the value of modesty, anticipated two of Jesus' familiar beatitudes (3¹⁷, 18, 20):

The importance of modesty and proper self-respect

My son, when prosperous, walk humbly,
And you will be loved more than a giver of gifts.
Be modest the more you are exalted,
And you will find favor in the sight of God;
For many are the mercies of God,
And he reveals his secret to the humble.

Ben Sira, however, had no more sympathy than Jesus with that Uriah Heep type of humility which is as insincere as pride and boasting (4²⁰⁻²²):

Observe the opportunity and beware of evil,
And be not ashamed of yourself;
For there is a shame that brings iniquity,
And another shame, glory and grace.
Do not be obsequious to your own hurt,
Do not humiliate yourself to your own injury.

Honesty, sincerity, and temperance are the personal virtues most stressed by Ben Sira. In each case he aimed to deter youth from yielding to their baser, instinctive impulses by pointing out the consequences (6²⁻⁴):

Personal virtues

Do not become a slave to your passions,
Lest you consume your strength.
It will devour your leaf and destroy your fruit,
And leave you like a dried-up tree;
For unbridled passion destroys its possessor,
And makes him the laughing-stock of his enemy.

Ben Sira strongly emphasizes the importance of always telling the truth (7¹³; 20²⁴):

Never take pleasure in speaking a falsehood,
For its consequence is not good.
A foul blot in a man is a lie,
It is continually in the mouth of the ignorant.

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

Unconsciously, Ben Sira was endeavoring to carry the method of modern science into the field of morals and conduct and to point out the close relation between cause and effect. In 21⁸ he declares:

He who builds his house with other men's money,
Is as one who gathers stones for his sepulchral mound.

In the third verse of the same chapter he lays down the broad principle:

Like a two-edged sword is all iniquity,
From its stroke there is no healing.

Man's
social
responsibilities

Like the Jewish sages who preceded and followed him, Ben Sira has much to say regarding man's duty to his fellow men. While he had great respect for formal religion, he realized that life and conduct were the touchstones of true faith. In 4¹⁻¹⁰ he has anticipated the definition of true religion found in the Epistle of James: *to visit the orphans and widows in their bereavement and to keep oneself clean from the evil of the world*. In this passage he has given vigorous expression to many of the noblest teachings of the earlier prophets:

My son, mock not the life of the poor,
And grieve not the eyes of the bitter in spirit.
Do not cause him who is in want to sigh,
Nor vex the heart of the oppressed.
Despise not the supplication of the poor,
And do not turn away from the broken in spirit.
Deliver the oppressed from his oppressors,
And let not your spirit show contempt for a righteous cause.
Be as a father to the fatherless or to orphans,
And in the place of a husband to widows;
Then God will call you his son,
And be gracious to you and save you from destruction.

The
value of
Ben
Sira's
work

The writings of Ben Sira shed clear light upon the customs and inner life of the Jewish people at a period which is otherwise exceedingly obscure. It reveals the temptations to which the Jews were exposed through their close contact with the debased Hellenistic culture which Alexander introduced into southwestern Asia. It gives us the first clear, concrete picture of one of the wise men who have given us the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. It introduces us to the Jewish sages in the period when they were beginning to take up the work of the scribes. It sets forth clearly that nobler spirit in Judaism which enabled it to survive the disintegrating influences of the Greek and Roman periods. Above all it puts us into vital touch with the sane, constructive philosophy of life of one of the noblest teachers of the Jewish race. It enables us to look into the very soul of one who, like Jesus of Nazareth, was far greater than Solomon. A worthy forerunner of Jesus of Nazareth was Jesus, the son of Sirach.

V

THE PROBLEM AND THE HISTORY OF THE BOOK OF JOB

THE book of Job is the Matterhorn of the Old Testament. Among many other lofty peaks it towers in solitary grandeur. Carlyle says of it: *It is all as great as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal merit. I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book. It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem,—man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth.*

The place of the book in the world's literature

Like all the Hebrew wisdom writings, the book of Job lacks close literary unity. In its present form it contains at least four loosely connected literary units. The first is the epic story, with its rhythmic prose style, passing over at several points into poetry, which is found in chapters 1, 2, and 42⁷⁻¹⁷. At the end of chapter 2 a few verses have evidently been lost, which told of how Job maintained his integrity, even though, like his wife, his three friends counselled him to curse God and die. Otherwise this story is complete in itself. The real book of Job, however, that has challenged the universal admiration of all generations, is found in chapters 3-27, 29-31, and 38¹⁻⁴². The close literary unity of the successive cycles of speeches is broken by the insertion of chapter 28, which contains a majestic poem describing the futility of seeking to attain divine wisdom. While this matchless poem is well worthy a place among the great masterpieces of the book of Job, it interrupts the logical thought of the lyric drama, and is clearly the work of a later poet.

Its structure

The unity of the drama of Job is further broken by the Elihu speeches found in chapters 32-37. They are inserted immediately after chapter 31, in which Job has appealed directly from men to Jehovah. The immediate response to Job's appeal is found in chapters 38-41. These record Jehovah's appearance in the thunder-cloud and the message which was the divine answer to Job's challenge. Late Aramaic words and different idioms distinguish these chapters from those which precede and follow. These speeches of Elihu are in reality but verbose and rather artificial expansions of the arguments of Eliphaz presented earlier in the poem. Also in the prose epilogue (42⁷⁻¹⁷) Job's other friends are all mentioned by name. The absence of any reference to Elihu makes the evidence practically complete that chapters 32-37 were added by some later poet who was not satisfied with the treatment of the problem of innocent suffering in the preceding chapters and who aimed to present his own convictions in this bold and dramatic way.

The Elihu speeches

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

The
origin
of the
story of
Job

The prophet Ezekiel in describing the guilt of Jerusalem declared, in the days preceding its fall in 586 B.C., that *if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would by their righteousness save only themselves* (Ezek. 14¹¹, 20). From this incidental reference it is clear that long before the Babylonian exile Job figured as one of the saints in early Hebrew story. He is here associated with Noah, who represented a period long antedating the beginnings of Hebrew history. The story was evidently so firmly fixed in the popular mind that a detailed description of Job's piety was unnecessary. The character of Job, as portrayed in the epic story of Job 1, 2, and 42⁷⁻¹⁷, fully justifies Ezekiel's allusion.

The
Babylonian
Job

The present setting of the prose story of Job is the wilderness east of Palestine. Its contents implies that it came to the Hebrews through their Aramean ancestors. It is not impossible, however, that it goes back to an older Babylonian or primitive Semitic original. A strikingly close parallel has come down from the ancient cuneiform library of Asshurbanipal. It is preserved in a series of tablets entitled, *I Will Praise the Word of Wisdom*. This title indicates that, like the book of Job, it was classified under the head of wisdom literature. The presence of the name Bēl instead of Marduk (who became the chief god of the empire after the rise of Babylon about 2000 B.C.) indicates that, like most of the documents in the library of Asshurbanipal, it was a copy of a far older original. Its hero is Tābī-utul-Bēl, king of Nippur. The first tablet begins with praise of Bēl for deliverance from great affliction. It then describes in graphic terms the unprecedented affliction that overtook the king. Tābī-utul-Bēl speaks:

A king—I have been changed into a slave.
A madman—my companions became estranged from me.
In the midst of the assembly they spurned me.
At the mention of my piety—terror.
By day—deep sighs; at night—weeping.
The month—cries; the year—distress.

The second tablet continues the theme:

I cried to the god, but he did not show me his countenance;
I prayed to the goddess, but she did not raise my head.

The priests also could not help him:

The like of this had never been seen;
Whatsoever I touched, trouble was in pursuit.

Then, as in Job, follows a long protestation of innocence:

As though I had not always set aside the portion for the god,
And had not invoked the goddess at the meal,
Had not bowed my face and brought my tribute;
As though I were one in whose mouth supplication and prayer were
not constant,

.

THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

As though I were like the one who has pronounced the sacred name
of his god!

Prayer was my practice, sacrificing my law.

Royal prayer—that was my joy.

His essential innocence is established. The cause of his misfortune is therefore inscrutable. There follows a majestic passage which recalls the ninetyeth Psalm as well as passages from the book of Job:

What, however, seems good to oneself, to a god is displeasing;
What is spurned by oneself finds favor with a god.
Who is there that can grasp the will of the gods in heaven?
The plan of a god is full of mystery; who can understand it?
How can mortals learn the way of a god?
He who is still alive at evening is dead the next morning,
In an instant he is cast into grief, of a sudden he is crushed;
For a moment he sings and plays,
In a twinkling he wails like a mourner.

Have they enough, they consider themselves like their God;
If things go well, they prate of mounting to heaven;
If they are in distress, they speak of descending into the realm of the
dead.

Then the hero describes at length his malady:

The sickness threw me on the ground and stretched me on my back;
It bent my high stature like a poplar.

The house became a prison;
As fetters for my body, my hands were powerless;
As pinions for my person, my feet were stretched out.
My discomfort was painful, the downfall severe.
A strap of many twists held me fast,
A sharply-pointed spear pierced me.
All day the pursuer followed me;
At night he granted me no respite whatever.

Unfortunately, at this point the text is missing, but the context implies that the king's humility and petitions touched the heart of Bēl, for we have a minute description of how the sufferer was restored to health:

My sins he caused the wind to carry away,
Mine ears, which had been closed and bolted as a deaf person's,
He took away their deafness, he restored my hearing.

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

He made my form like one perfect in strength,
My entire body he restored.
He wiped out anger, he freed from his wrath,
The depressed form he revived.

The
prose
story of
Job

The ancient poem closes with a hymn of thanksgiving.

The resemblances between this Babylonian story and that contained in the book of Job are many and obvious. Both may go back to an older Semitic original. The problem of why the innocent suffer is evidently as old as human history. The oldest Hebrew version of this story is obviously that found in chapters 1 and 2 and 42⁷⁻¹⁷ in the book of Job. It has the characteristic repetitions and the concrete language of a popular tale. It is hyperbolic in all its details. For example, Job has seven sons and three daughters, which from the point of view of an oriental is regarded as the ideal number. He also has seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels and five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses. After his vindication he is given the same number of sons and daughters and twice as many possessions as he had at first. The series of calamities, which in rapid succession overtake him, are likewise characteristic not of real life but of the melodrama in which the action is dependent not upon the actors but upon external events. The story, with its bold portrayal of the assembly of the heavenly hierarchy and of the divine authority given Satan to test Job, was evidently not told to record exact history but to illustrate a great teaching. It clearly reflects current folk religion. In its literary classification it belongs, therefore, with such stories as the fall of man in the third chapter of Genesis, or with the didactic stories in the first six chapters of the book of Daniel.

The
charac-
ters in
the
popular
story

Job, the hero of the popular story, is famous not only for his abounding prosperity but also for his superlative piety. This piety is of a conventional type, and is expressed in formal sacrifices rather than in aggressive acts of social service. In this respect he is fundamentally different from the Job of the lyric poem, whose oath of clearance (Job 31) contains the noblest prophetic and social definition of religion to be found in the Old Testament. Also Job of the prose story is a rich, prosperous sheik living in the borderland between the Jordan and the Arabian desert. In every respect he lives the life of a nomad. In contrast, the Job of the lyric drama is intimately conversant with the social problems and life of a great city. Satan figures only in the prose story. He is a regularly accredited member of the divine hierarchy. He is the chief prosecuting attorney of earth. His task is to discover and to report to Jehovah the sins of all mankind. Experience has made him a pessimist regarding human virtue. Piety, he contends, is always prompted by self-interest. Satan, as here portrayed, is mercilessly faithful to his task. In fact, his only fault is that he is overzealous. He is still trusted by Jehovah with great power. Obviously, the Satan here pictured is very different from the devil that figures in the New Testament. He is identical with Satan or the Adversary in Zechariah 3, whose zeal in pointing out the sins of the Jewish people is condemned by Jehovah.

It is significant that the earliest references elsewhere in the Old Testament

THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

to Satan are found in Zechariah 3 and I Chronicles 21¹, both of them post-exilic writings. There is a distant likeness between the character of Satan in the prologue of Job and the Persian Ahriman, who was believed to be the head of the hierarchy of evil. The resemblance, however, is not close, and the points of difference are equally striking. Satan is more like the lying spirit who, in the story told by the prophet Micaiah and recorded in I Kings 22, was sent by Jehovah to deceive the false prophets and who by his deceptive message lured Ahab on to his ruin.

Satan in Jewish literature

In this prose story there is no suggestion of acquaintance with the law of Deuteronomy which made legal only one central sanctuary (cf. 1⁵ and 42⁸). The Chaldeans are spoken of as mere Arab marauders, and not as the conquerors who in 586 B.C. captured Jerusalem and left it a barren waste. The indications, therefore, all suggest that this popular tale was current among the Hebrews long before the days of Ezekiel. It was probably committed to writing during the early part of the Babylonian exile. Then its promises of material restoration, if the nation would but faithfully endure the tests to which it was being subjected at the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians, would have brought comfort to the minds of the troubled Jews. The allusions in Ezekiel 14^{14, 20}, which come from the earlier part of the Babylonian exile, to a well-known hero, Job, whose character closely corresponds to that of the Job of the prose story, indicate that this popular tale was familiar to the Jewish exiles.

Date of the prose story

The question raised by Satan, *Does Job serve God for naught?* is the keynote in this ancient tale. Is the piety of man prompted by selfish motives, or by disinterested devotion? Will it endure the test of misfortune? These questions, perennially vital, are here dramatically presented. The story also suggests one of the many solutions of the eternal problem of the suffering of the righteous which are massed in the book of Job. It assumes that virtue can only be attested by trial. Suffering, therefore, is necessary, if the quality of man's piety is to be proved. The application of this explanation to the problem of the faithful Jews during the Babylonian exile is obvious: they were simply being tested. The conclusion seemed equally clear: if they endured the test, their former prosperity would be restored. The only flaw in the theory was that as a matter of fact their misfortunes but increased, and no vindication came to them. A more fundamental explanation of the problem of innocent suffering was required.

The aims and teachings of this story

The real drama of Job begins with the third chapter. Here a great wisdom poet begins to grapple with the stupendous problem. The action depends not upon external circumstance, but upon the development within the mind of Job and his friends. The author of this poem uses the framework of the popular story, but creates a new Job and a new plot. The unique explanation of Job's suffering given in chapters 1 and 2 is completely ignored. Likewise the problem, *Does Job serve for naught?* The friends, instead of being condemned by Jehovah, as they are in 42⁷, figure as the protagonists of the current orthodoxy. In a series of formal dialogues the problem is defined in detail, and the various current solutions presented. In these dialogues, sometimes the didactic and sometimes the lyric note is dominant. In his long

The lyric drama of Job

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

speeches. Job, instead of being a paragon of forbearance, as in the prose story, pours out the bitterness of his soul and charges God with injustice in no measured terms. Then, with marvellous psychological skill, the author gradually introduces those elements of hope and higher idealism in the mind of Job which lead up to the final *dénouement*. The action and progress are wholly subjective. The term lyric drama, therefore, is the most exact western definition which can be found for this supreme product of Semitic art.

The author of the lyric drama

The author of this lyric drama is evidently a man of broad culture and experience. He is democratic in his outlook on life. He is inspired with the noblest humanitarian motives. He is familiar with both the social problems of a great city and the life of the wilderness which extends to the east and south of Palestine. Evidently he himself had travelled with one of the many caravans which penetrated its wastes. Many of his figures reveal such an intimate familiarity with the peculiar life of the Nile valley that there is little doubt that he himself had visited this land of mystery. He was a keen observer and lover of nature. He was acquainted with the changing phases of the seasons, appreciative of the stately movement of the stars, and familiar with the habits of animals and birds. Above all, he was a philosopher who had pondered deeply on the profoundest problems of human life. He had experienced the doubts of youth, and those darker questionings which threatened the very faith of his race and age. Amidst intense stress and struggle he had battled his way through the mazes of the current orthodoxy to a higher conception of God, and more than that, to a personal acquaintance with him.

His aims

The aims of the author are clearly revealed. His first endeavor was to prove the insufficiency and the cruel injustice of the old dogma that prosperity was always the reward of right-doing, and conversely, that calamity was a certain evidence that its victim had sinned. He also aimed to portray the struggles and the inevitable psychological reactions of a noble soul confronted by the darker realities of human life and of the universe. He set out to show the utter inadequacy of the current belief which conceived of the life beyond the grave as one of passive, passionless existence in a gloomy region to which not a single ray of divine goodness and love penetrated. He aimed instead to make clear that, if not in this world, at least in the life beyond the grave the injustice of this present existence would be righted and the innocent sufferer vindicated. He sought in this mighty drama to set forth his own deep convictions that the God whose providences seemed from certain angles to be unjust was after all man's final refuge, and that instinctively and rightly man turns to him as the fountain of all justice. Above all he endeavored to teach in concrete terms the supreme truth that man's personal experience of God and the humility and trust which that experience begets are the only satisfactory solvents of the otherwise insoluble problem of why the righteous suffer.

Problems in the lyric drama

This lyric drama deals with Israel's mature problems. The childhood faith of the race lies far behind it. Its background is the complex life of a highly developed civilization. This background is not concealed by the archaic coloring and the nomadic setting. In this drama Hebrew wisdom

THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

thought approaches nearest to Greek drama and philosophy. Job's dialogues with his friends recall the memorable discussions that during the same age were being carried on in the schools of ancient Hellas. Job has much in common with Prometheus, the hero of Æschylus's great drama. The fact that the author of Job in his opening chapter (3) evidently had in mind the classic passage in Jeremiah 20^{14, 15}, in which the martyr prophet curses the day in which he was born, indicates that the poem is at least exilic or post-exilic. Even more significant is the author's bold parody (Job 7¹⁷) of Psalm 8¹, which was probably not written earlier than the first half of the Persian period. The drama of Job reflects the strongly sceptical note which first found expression in Malachi 2¹⁷:

You have wearied Jehovah with your words.
Yet you say, "How have we wearied him?"
In that you say, "Everyone that does evil
Is good in the sight of Jehovah,
And he delights in them;
Or where is the God of justice?"

Or in Malachi 3^{14, 15}:

You have said, "It is useless to serve God,
And what gain is it to us to have kept his charge,
And that we have walked in funeral garb before him?
Even now we call the proud happy,
Yea, those who work iniquity thrive,
Yea, they tempt God and escape."

The prophet, who probably lived shortly before the appearance of Nehemiah in 444 B.C., assures us that those who feared Jehovah spoke these words one to another. The reference in Job 16¹⁷ possibly implies that the author of the drama was acquainted with Isaiah 53⁹. In any case, the cumulative evidence points to a date not earlier than the middle of the Persian period, and possibly as late as the earlier part of the Greek period. The writings of II Isaiah, however, and the great psalms of suffering found in the Psalter indicate that the problem of the suffering of the innocent in Jewish history became most acute in the discouraging, dreary years immediately preceding the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. A date about 450 B.C. well satisfies the implications of this great lyric drama. Date

The drama opens with an impassioned speech on the lips of Job in which he curses the day of his birth (3). The author's aim is to reveal the intensity of Job's anguish, and at the same time to make clear the limitations placed upon him by the acceptance of the current belief regarding the life after death. The literary structure of the drama is apparently determined by the methods employed by the ancient Jewish teachers. It recalls the later discussions between the schools of Shammai and Hillel recorded in the Talmud. The current interpretations of the problem of suffering and the divine rulership of the world are presented by Job's three friends, the famous sages of his day. Job, stung by their at first implied and later openly ex- The literary structure of the drama

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

pressed doubts regarding his integrity, assails the very dogmas which he had hitherto held, and battles his way through to a larger concept of the universe and of God. In three cycles of speeches these rival positions are presented with a fulness and vigor that reveal the marvelous breadth and the scientific spirit of the author (4-27). In the end the friends are silenced, and Job, after a masterly *résumé*, rests his case with God (29-31). Then out of the thunderstorm Jehovah answers Job, not replying to his wild arraignment of divine justice, but revealing to him in a series of powerful pictures and impressive questions the omniscience and wisdom and love that rule the universe (38¹-40^{2, 6-14}). The elaborate descriptions of behemoth (probably the hippopotamus) and leviathan (probably the crocodile) in 40^{15-41³⁴} are clearly later additions to the original drama. In conclusion Job declares in a speech, the brevity of which is in striking contrast to his earlier impassioned invective, that he has spoken of that which he knew not (40³⁻⁵, 42^{2, 3, 4, 5}). Humbly but joyfully he asserts:

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
But now mine eye sees thee.

The
charac-
ter of
Job's
friends

Each of Job's friends possessed certain well-defined characteristics. Each emphasized distinct elements in the character of Jehovah. Eliphaz, the oldest, naturally speaks first. His is the mellow ripeness of old age. He is courtly, tactful, and considerate. Of the three friends, he is distinctly the prophet and philosopher. In many ways he represents Job's old self. His thought is also tinged by a certain mystical element which adds to his attractiveness. He presents the highest conception of God then known. He conceives of him as a benign ruler personally interested in the development of his human children. But Eliphaz is more of a philosopher and theologian than a lover of his fellows. He holds tenaciously to the current dogma that calamity is always the result of man's sin. Unfortunately for Job, Eliphaz is far more intent upon defending his favorite theological doctrines than he is upon relieving his friend's heartbreak.

Bildad

Bildad, on the other hand, is a typical traditionalist. He can think only in terms of the past. His outlook is entirely backward rather than forward. The only testimony which he regards as valid is that of the ancients. He feels that his especial task is to defend the rightness of Jehovah's rule of the universe. When Job dares question the justice of that rule, Bildad, in his zeal to defend the orthodox God, ignores completely his duty of sympathizing with his tortured friend.

Zophar

Zophar is the dogmatist. By bluster and loud speaking he sought to convict Job of sin and to establish his thesis that divine wisdom is inscrutable, and therefore that the one task of man is to submit.

Their
rôle

The rôle of Job's friends is twofold: first, dramatically, to complete the cycle of Job's woes, for they deprive him of their friendship and strip him of his reputation; secondly, to present strongly and in detail the current interpretations of the suffering of the innocent that their inadequacy and failure to solve the problem, so dramatically presented by Job's fate, might be made clearly apparent. Well do the friends play their double rôle.

THE PROBLEM OF THE BOOK OF JOB

At first Job expectantly looks to his friends for comfort and support. When he finds that they are more loyal to their theories than they are to him, and that they do not hesitate to apply even to his own case the grim old doctrine of proportionate rewards, the discovery perturbs him more than any of the calamities which have hitherto overtaken him. He can scarcely believe the testimony of his ears as he hears them tear to shreds his reputation, which he regarded as more firmly established than the everlasting hills. He hastens in his reply to Eliphaz to explain the reasons why in his desperation he had spoken rashly. Then, when he sees the stony, suspicious faces of his friends, he is overwhelmed by their injustice and by the feeling of utter loneliness. Like desert brooks, they had failed him in his hour of sorest need. For the moment he is carried off his feet and is overwhelmed with the thought that possibly he has sinned. If so, why does God, instead of showing mercy, pursue him like a relentless tyrant?

The progress of thought in the first cycle of speeches

Bildad's speech only drives the arrows of the Almighty deeper into Job's quivering heart. In his desperation he turns upon God and boldly questions the justice of the seemingly irresponsible tyrant who has brought all these calamities upon him, and yet gives him no opportunity to defend himself either before a human or a divine tribunal. Henceforth the ultimate problem in the mind of Job is whether justice or injustice rules the universe. God, not Job, is on trial. Subjected to this searching test, the God of his earlier years, the God of his friends, the Superman who he believed meted out proportionate rewards, suddenly becomes a mere oriental tyrant, as capricious and unjust as the irresponsible potentates who lorded it over the vast Persian empire.

The seeming injustice of God

These intemperate words stirred Zophar's rage, so that he openly charges Job with guilt. Stung to the quick, Job turns upon his friends with bitter invective. He even accuses them of misrepresentation in their presumptuous attempt to defend the God of their narrow faith. Involuntarily he turns from the orthodox God of his friends, and appeals to him before whom *no godless man would come*. Across his tortured mind there flashes for the moment the hope that possibly that God of justice will yet bring him back from Sheol and restore to him those joys of life of which he has been so ruthlessly robbed. The dark clouds quickly close in upon him, but having had this radiant vision, Job cannot forget it. The progress, therefore, in this first cycle of speeches is not straight ahead, but more like the zigzag path of the lightning stroke. He has seen clearly the insufficiency of the current conventional theology. Already not his reason but his faith begins to reach out involuntarily toward a God who is just and the friend of the afflicted. With this larger faith comes the fluctuating but ever-growing hope that even beyond the grave both he and God will yet be vindicated.

The appeal to God

Henceforth Job and his friends move in opposite directions. As their conviction that he is guilty grows, his consciousness of his essential innocence deepens. In time he ignores them altogether, and turns in eager expectancy to the God of justice in whom he firmly believes. At the same time with his lips he unsparingly and often bitterly arraigns the justice of the God of appearances. In 19²³⁻²⁷ the earlier fleeting hope that after death his innocence

The progress in the second and third cycle of speeches

HISTORY OF THE WISDOM WRITINGS

would yet be vindicated suddenly becomes a definite conviction. In words that have become immortal he declares:

I know that my Deliverer liveth,
And at last he will stand up on the earth;
And after this my skin is destroyed
Then I shall behold God.

Thus with marvellous skill the author of the drama of Job has revealed the birth-pangs of the belief in a personal immortality. In the remainder of the drama, however, he threshes out the problem entirely in the arena of man's earthly existence. His great message was evidently for those in the thick of the struggle then raging. He was seeking to give them a faith by which to live as well as die. The charges of Job's friends grow shorter, until finally they are silenced. In each successive speech Job appeals with greater assurance from the God who seems to disregard man's fate to the God of justice and love whom he feels must exist somewhere in the universe. Job, having established his own positive goodness, as well as his innocence, in keeping with the loftiest social and moral standards of the prophets and sages (29-31), leaves his case with his divine Judge and Vindicator.

Mean-
ing of
the
speech
of
Jehovah

Job, in his quest for a larger, truer conception of God and his rule, was handicapped by the primitive belief that God was the immediate cause or agent in every event or experience that came to man. His generation had not yet discovered the eternal laws that rule the universe. And yet in the majestic speech of Jehovah, the poet, with marvellous intuition and skill, opens Job's mind to an appreciation of these laws. Typical illustrations of the workings of what we to-day call the laws of nature are marshalled before Job in quick succession. Thus a broader basis is provided for that faith in divine justice and goodness which Job could not banish from his inner consciousness, even in his hour of deepest woe. More comforting still, the infinite, omniscient God had condescended to speak directly to the heart of his afflicted servant. No longer does he know him simply by others' testimony:

But now mine own eye sees thee.

A mysterious personal experience of God suddenly swept away all Job's anguish and doubts; at last he was at peace, for he had found his divine Friend. In the teaching of the Jewish sages personal religious experience was not only the beginning of wisdom but also its climax.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

I. INTRODUCTION

II. GOD

III. MAN

A. THE NATURE OF MAN

B. THE EDUCATION OF MAN

C. MAN IN HIS DOMESTIC RELATIONS

D. MAN IN HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS

E. MAN IN HIS ECONOMIC RELATIONS

F. MAN IN HIS LEGAL RELATIONS

G. MAN IN HIS POLITICAL RELATIONS

H. MAN'S DUTY TO ANIMALS

I. MAN'S DUTY TO HIMSELF

J. MAN'S DUTY TO OTHERS

K. MAN'S DUTY TO GOD

L. THE REWARDS OF HUMAN CONDUCT

IV. NUMERICAL ENIGMAS

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

I

INTRODUCTION: THE PRACTICAL VALUE OF THE TEACHINGS OF THE WISE

§ 1. Preface: The Aim of the Book of Proverbs, Pr. 1²⁻⁶, 22¹⁷⁻²¹

Pr. 1 ²That men may get wisdom^a and discipline,^b
 May understand words of discernment,
 ³May receive training in wise conduct
 In that which is right, just, and honorable;
 ⁴That shrewdness^c may be taught to the simple,
 And knowledge and a purpose to youth,
 ⁵That the wise man^d may hear and grow wiser,
 And that the intelligent man may be guided^e
 ⁶In interpreting proverbs and parables,
 The words of the wise and their riddles.^f

22 ¹⁷Incline your ear and hear my words,^g
 And apply your mind to know them.^h

Introduction.—The desire to arrest men's attention and to make clear to them the fundamental, practical value of the wisdom teaching embodied in the proverbs that follow was what actuated the author of these introductory chaps. (1-9). He opens with a brief statement of the aims of the wisdom teachers; he next cites definite illustrations of the moral perils from which their teachings will deliver those who heed; then he points out the evils that result from not heeding and the rewards that wisdom has to confer. In conclusion he describes the origin and character of Wisdom and contrasts what Wisdom and Folly each give to those who follow them. Into this long introd. have been inserted 6¹⁻¹⁹ and 9¹⁻¹², which are clearly foreign to their context and belong with the collection of proverbs that follows. Otherwise the entire section is closely bound together by the same literary style and earnest, hortatory spirit. It reveals the zeal of the wisdom teacher to save the ignorant, inexperienced, and tempted from fatal mistakes and to develop strong characters. The zeal and teachings of the earlier prophets live again in the soul of this earnest lover of men. It is a fitting and effective introduction to the practical maxims that follow.

§ 1 The book of Pr. is introduced by the superscription *The Proverbs of Solomon, Son of David, King of Israel*. Inasmuch as the preface that follows seems to require some such title, it is probable that it was added by the author of the Introd., although it may come from the final editor of the book. As has already been noted, Introd., p. 15, it ignores the other superscription found within the book, and, like the titles to Ecc. and Sg. of Sgs., simply represents a late tradition. The opening vs. that follow are the closest parallel to a modern preface to be found in the O.T. writings. (A N.T. parallel is the preface to the Gospel of Luke.) Ten parallel lines define succinctly the aims that the Heb. sages sought to realize and the practical results they hoped to impart to those who diligently studied and listened to their teachings. Their purpose was evidently to educate as well as to instruct, to rear up intelligent disciples as well as to impart useful information.

^a Pr. 1² Cf. for the meaning of the Heb. word translated *wisdom*, Introd., p. 10.

^b ¹⁷ This word, meaning originally *discipline*, also indicates the instruction or character that comes through discipline and training.

^c ¹⁴ This word ordinarily means *subtily*, skill in attaining given ends.

^d ¹⁵ Or, *Let the wise man*.

^e ¹⁵ Lit., *get guidance*.

^f ¹⁴ This closing vs. turns the attention from the training of disciples to the subject-matter

employed in education, and thus connects the preface with the collection of proverbs that follows.

^g ²² Omitting *the wise*, which is doubtless a gloss, and repeating the preceding word in the Heb. So Toy, now confirmed by the parallel in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. Introd., p. 15).

^h ²² Altering one letter of Heb. to agree with the parallel in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet*.

INTRODUCTION

- ¹⁸For it is pleasant^l that you keep them in mind,^j
 That they be ready^k on your lips.
¹⁹That your trust may be in the Lord,
 I have taught you how to live.^l
²⁰Have I not written you thirty proverbs^m
 With sound adviceⁿ and knowledge,
²¹To teach you words of truth,
 That you may answer him who questions you?^o

§ 2. Wisdom's Appeal, Pr. S¹⁻¹¹

Pr. 8

- Is not Wisdom calling,
 And Reason crying aloud?^p
²On the prominent heights by the way,^q
 In the midst of^r the highways she stands,
³By the gates that lead into the city,
 At the entrance she cries aloud:
⁴To you, O men, I call,
 My appeal is to all mankind.
⁵O simple ones, learn to be prudent,
 And you who are foolish, gain insight.^s
⁶Give heed; what I speak is important,^t
 And what my lips utter^u is right.
⁷Because my mouth speaks truth,
 And false lips are abominable^v to me.
⁸All the words of my mouth are just;^w

Places
 where
 the wise
 teach

Classes
 to which
 they
 appeal

Nature
 and
 value of
 their
 teachings

^l 22¹⁸ Gk. takes this with ¹⁷, to know that they are pleasant. Syr., Targ., Because they are pleasant, keep them, etc.

^k 22¹⁸ Lit., in your belly.

^m 22¹⁸ Lit., established together.

ⁿ 22¹⁹ Lit., your way. So Gk. Heb. is corrupt. This vs., as we might expect from the mention of the Lord (lit., Yahweh), has no parallel in the Wisdom of Amenemopet.

^o 22²⁰ Gk., Syr., Targ., Lat., triply. The corrupt Heb. here has puzzled all commentators. It may be pointed to read thirty, and this was probably the original reading, for the collection which these vs. introduce (22²²⁻²⁴) falls naturally into thirty divisions, and the Wisdom of Amenemopet contains thirty chapters, the last beginning, Consider these thirty chapters, to enjoy them and to profit by them. The word proverbs in the trans. is supplied to complete the sense.

^p 22²⁰ Lit., counsels.

^q 22²¹ Following Toy in omitting from each line a superfluous repetition of truth. The reading questions is that of the Gk. Heb., sends.

§ 2 The tendency to hypostasize wisdom was natural, although the author was probably influenced by the Gk. atmosphere and type of thought that in his day had penetrated Palestine and was in the ascendancy in all the lands of the dispersion, cf. Introd., p. 15. Wisdom represents the collective teachings and work of the Heb. sages. She is thought of as a woman because the Heb. word is feminine. The figure of speech emphasizes the unity of the wisdom school and its teachings. The introduction of Understanding as a synonym of Wisdom indicates that what we have here is simply a personification, not the postulating of a being distinct from God, as in the case of the Gk. demiurge.

^r 8¹ Lit., give her voice.

^s 8² Probably the walls and towers and all elevated points from which she can call to the passer-by. Cf. the parallel passage, 1²⁰⁻²¹. The Gk. omits by the way.

^t 8² So Gk. Heb., between.

^u 8² So Gk. Heb. repeats the same verb as in the first member of the couplet and yields no clear sense. Its reading is clearly due to a scribal error. RV., Be of an understanding heart.

^v 8² Or, revising the Heb. with the aid of ^v, true.

^w 8² Lit., the opening of my lips.

^x 8² Lit. (Gk. and Syr.), an abomination. Heb., the abomination of my lips is wickedness.

^y 8² Lit., in righteousness.

WISDOM'S APPEAL

Naught in them is twisted or crooked.

⁹All is clear to the man of sense,
And right to those who gain knowledge.

¹⁰Choose instruction^x rather than silver,
And knowledge rather than gold.

¹¹For wisdom is better than corals,
And with her no treasures compare.

§ 3. Characteristics of Wisdom, Pr. 9¹⁰, 16⁶, 8¹²⁻²¹

- | | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| Pr. 9 | ¹⁰ The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord,
And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. | Rooted
in
religion |
| 16 | ⁶ By kindness and truth iniquity is expiated,
And by the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil. | |
| 8 | ¹² I, Wisdom, make prudence my dwelling,
And I possess ^y knowledge and ^z insight.
¹³ Arrogance, ^a pride, and wrong doing, ^b
And false speech ^c do I hate. | Prudent
and
discern-
ing

Antag-
onistic
to evil |
| | ¹⁴ With me are counsel and skill; ^d
Insight and power are mine. | Indis-
pensable
to rulers |
| | ¹⁵ By me kings do reign,
And rulers decree what is just. | |
| | ¹⁶ By me officials govern,
And nobles rule ^e over the earth. | |
| | ¹⁷ Those who love me, I love, ^f
Those who seek earnestly find me. | Easily
found |
| | ¹⁸ With me are riches and honor,
Lordly wealth and prosperity. ^g | |
| | ¹⁹ My fruit is better than gold, ^h
My revenue than choicest silver. | Reward-
ing those
who
seek me |
| | ²⁰ I walk in the way that is right,
And keep to the paths of justice, | |

^x S¹⁰ Gk., Syr., and Targ. omit *my* (Heb.); this probably represents the original reading, for it is supported by the next line.

§ 3 Wisdom is here defined broadly. It is the guide of rulers and judges as well as of those who in private life seek success and prosperity.

^y S¹² Or *have found out*.

^z S¹² Adding the *and* required by the context and supplied in the Gk.

^a S¹³ Heb. inserts at the beginning of this vs. the detached line: *The fear of Jehovah is to hate evil*. It is probably from a scribe who added it as an introduction to the couplet that follows. It is loosely connected with the context and destroys the regular parallelism. Its definition of the fear of Jehovah differs from that in 1⁷, 9¹⁰, 15³³.

^b S¹⁰ Lit., *the evil way*.

^c S¹⁰ Lit., *mouth of what is turned away*.

^d S¹⁴ Lit., *deliverance*; *i. e.*, the knowledge and ability and skill in applying it in order to achieve a desired end.

^e S¹⁶ Following the Gk. in correcting the Heb.

^f S¹⁷ Correcting the corrupt Heb. with the aid of the VSS. and the marginal Heb. reading.

^g S¹⁸ Lit., *righteousness*. As in Ps. 112³ and Is. 54¹⁷ the sage evidently has in mind the prosperity and good reputation that are the fruits and evidence of right deeds.

^h S¹⁹ Lit., *fine gold and refined*.

INTRODUCTION

²¹Endowing with wealth those who love me,
And filling their treasuries full.'

§ 4. The Rôle of Wisdom in the Universe, Pr. 8²²⁻³⁰

First of
God's
Creation

Pr. 8

²²The Lord formed me as his first creation,¹
The earliest of his works of old.
²³In the primeval past^j was I fashioned,^k
At the first, before earth existed.
²⁴When there were no depths, I was born;
When there were no springs full^l of water.
²⁵Ere the mountains were set in their places,^m
And before there were hills I was born,
²⁶Or ever the earth and the fieldsⁿ had been made,
Or the first of the dust of the world.

Present
and
Active
at the
Creation

²⁷When God set up the heavens, I was there,
And when he stretched the vault over the deep,
²⁸When he made firm the skies above,
And fixed^o the fountains of the deep,
²⁹And when the Lord set to the sea its bounds,
So that its waters should not transgress his commands,^p
When he laid the foundations of the earth,
³⁰Then I was by him as a foster-child,^q
And I was his delight from day to day,
Playing before him at all times,
Playing upon his habitable earth.

Therefore
able to
guide
men

³¹My delight is to be with mankind;
³²So now, my sons, listen to me,^r

§ 4 This entire description of Wisdom's place in the universe was intended to inspire confidence in the authority and practical value of the teachings of the wise. Like Gen. 2¹⁻³, which connects the origin of the Sabbath with the creation, it traces the conception and birth of Wisdom back to the beginning of the universe. True to Jewish faith, Jehovah is represented as the Creator; but Wisdom was the first and most important of his creations. Wisdom, therefore, is familiar with all the mysteries of the universe and so supremely fitted to instruct and guide man. B. Sir. in 24 gives a somewhat similar picture, but represents Wisdom as the law of Moses and dwelling in the midst of Israel. The picture in Pr. 8 is more universal. While the description in both these passages suggests a complete hypostasis of Wisdom, it seems clear that the author of Pr. 8 and B. Sir. were simply personifying Wisdom and that in their minds it represented the collective doctrines and work of the wisdom teachers.

¹ 8²² Lit., *way*; i. e., work of creation.

^l 8²² Lit., *from everlasting*. Cf. Mi. 5².

^k 8²³ The Heb. root is probably the same as found in Job 10¹¹ and Ps. 139¹³, and means *were together* in the mother's womb. The reference, of course, is to conception. Vs. ²⁴ goes on to tell of Wisdom's birth.

^l 8²⁴ Lit., *heavy* or *abounding*.

^m 8²⁵ I. e., were set on their deep foundations.

ⁿ 8²⁶ Lit., *outside places*. The addition of the fields not only destroys the metre but also anticipates the order of creation. Syr., Lat., and Targ. read *river*s, but this does not remove the difficulty, it only confirms the conclusion that this word is a scribal addition.

^o 8²⁸ Slightly revising the Heb. with the aid of the VSS. and the requirements of the parallelism.

^p 8²⁹ The Gk. omits this line, which is probably a gloss suggested by Job 38¹¹. It destroys the balanced parallelism and introduces an alien construction.

^q 8³⁰ The word may mean *master* or *workman*. It is not found elsewhere in the O.T. The context implies that Wisdom was still a child.

^r 8³² The second member of the vs. clearly belongs where the Gk. puts it, after ³¹.

THE RÔLE OF WISDOM

- ²³Hear instruction that you may be wise,
And reject it not.
- ^{24a}Happy is the man who hears me,
^{22b}And they who follow my counsel,
- ^{24b}Watching daily at my gates,
And waiting at my door-posts.
- ²⁵For he who finds me finds life,⁸
And wins the favor of the Lord.
- ²⁶But he who misses me wrongs himself,
For all who hate me love death.

§ 5. Wisdom's Banquet, Pr. 9^{1-6, 11, 12}

Pr. 9

- ¹Wisdom has built her house,
She has set up^t her seven pillars;
- ²She has killed her cattle and mixed her wine,
She also has spread her table.
- ³She has sent her maidens to proclaim^u
On the prominent heights in the city:
- ⁴'Let him who is simple turn in!'
'To him who lacks insight she says:
- ⁵'Come now and eat my bread,
And drink of the wine I have mixed!'
- ⁶'Abandon your folly and live,
And walk with the guidance of reason!'

Bountiful
pre-
parations

- ¹¹For by me will your days be prolonged,
And the years of your life will be lengthened.
- ¹²If you are wise, the wisdom is yours:
If a scoffer, 'tis you who must bear it.

Result of
accep-
tance

§ 6. Folly's Banquet, Pr. 9¹³⁻¹⁸

Pr. 9

- ¹³The woman Folly^w is clamorous,
Seductive,^x and knows no shame.^y
- ¹⁴She sits at the door of her house,
At a prominent place in the city,

Folly's
seductive
invita-
tion_j

⁸ ⁸⁵ Following the superior marginal reading of the Heb., which is supported by the Lat. and Targ.

⁵ Continuing the personification, the sage represents Wisdom as preparing a banquet and sending out a universal invitation. The bountiful provisions are the teachings of the wise. The invitation is extended especially to the inexperienced and those devoid of understanding. The didactic purpose and the earnest, hortatory tone of the wise are prominent throughout the section.

^t ⁹¹ So Gk. Heb., *heven*, but the essential idea is that she has set up the pillars in her court where the banquet is to be held, so that the Gk. has probably retained the original reading.

^u ⁹² So Syr., Lat., and Targ. Heb., *she proclaims*.

^v ⁹⁶ Vss. 7-10 introduce a different theme, interrupt the close connection between ⁶ and ¹¹, and belong with the proverbs in the main body of the book.

⁶ Here Folly is personified as the antithesis of Wisdom. The author has in mind, however, the extreme types of folly, especially social immorality. Folly, as here portrayed, resembles the harlot of chaps. 5 and 7.

^w ⁹³ Heb., *woman of folly*. Probably it should be corrected to read as above.

^x ⁹³ Following the Syr. and Lat. in revising the Heb. slightly.

^y ⁹³ Heb., *nothing*.

INTRODUCTION

¹⁵Calling to those who pass by
Who are going right on in their way:
¹⁶Let him who is simple turn in!¹
To him who lacks insight she says:
¹⁷Stolen waters are sweet,
And bread eaten in secret is pleasant!¹

¹⁸But he knows not that phantoms² are there,
And her guests in the bottomless pit.³

§ 7. Consequences of Rejecting Wisdom's Invitation, Pr. 120-33

Fatal
effect of
accepting
it

Wisdom's
warning
to those
who
reject her
counsel

Pr. 1

²⁰Wisdom cries aloud in the streets,^b
In the open places^c raises her voice;
²¹On the top of the walls^d she calls,
At the entrances of the gates she says:^e
²²How long, O ignorant, will you love ignorance,
And scoffers delight in their scoffing,^f
And they that are stupid^g hate knowledge?
²³Give attention^h to my reproof.
See, I will show you my purpose,¹
Will tell you my decision:
²⁴Because I called, and you refused,
I stretched out my hand, and none heeded,
²⁵But you ignored all my counsel,
And my reproof you rejected,
²⁶I too will laugh in your calamity;
I will mock when terror^j o'ertakes you,
²⁷When terror like a storm comes upon you,
And your calamity comes like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish befall you.^k
²⁸Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer,
They will seek me but will not find me,
²⁹For they have hated knowledge,

¹ 918 Lit., *the shades, i. e.*, the dwellers in the realm of death.

² 918 *I. e.*, the abode of the dead. For a vivid description, cf. Job 317-19.

§ 7 While this section in the book of Pr. stands before, it logically belongs after the description of Wisdom's and Folly's banquet in 8, 9. The warning tone suggests the rebuffs that the wise often received from those whom they sought to reach. As in the preceding sections, personified Wisdom represents the wisdom teachers and their practical teachings. In ²², ²³, ²⁷ the usual couplets are expanded into triplets. Possibly the third line in each case is an addition.

^b 120 So Gk., supported by the parallelism. Heb., *street*.

^c 120 *I. e.*, the open space at the entrance of the city gates where the people assembled.

^d 121 So Gk. Heb., *noisy places*, reading according to the demands of the metre and parallelism.

^e 121 The Heb. text has been expanded by the addition of the interpretative glosses, *in the city . . . her words*. The Gk. is further expanded.

^f 122 This line may be secondary, for in ²² only the ignorant and fools are mentioned.

^g 122 This word, usually translated *fool*, means those who are too dull or inert to desire knowledge and practical training.

^h 122 Lit., *turn*.

ⁱ 122 Lit., *pour forth my spirit*; *i. e.*, my innermost thought.

^j 126 *I* Lit., *your fear*, but the possessive pronoun refers to the victims of the fear.

^k 127 The first two lines, with the preceding verse, make two couplets with complete parallelism. Possibly this last line is a later addition from Ps. 113³.

CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTION

And have not chosen the fear of the Lord.

³⁰They have rejected my counsel,
All my reproof they despised.

³¹They shall eat of the fruit of their conduct,
And with their own counsels be sated,

³²For the aversion¹ of the ignorant slays them,
And the indifference^m of fools destroys them.

³³But he that heeds me dwells secure
And free from the fear of harm.⁷

The effect
of neg-
lecting or
heeding
her
teachings

§ 8. Reward of a Persistent Search for Wisdom, Pr. 2¹⁻⁹, 20, 10-19, 3¹²⁻¹⁵, 4⁷⁻⁹,
3¹⁶⁻¹⁸, 4^{20, 22}, 3², 4^{5a-6}, 3²¹⁻²⁶

Pr. 2

¹My son, if you heed my words
And store my commands in your mind,

²Attentively listening to wisdom,
Applying your mind to reason,

³If you call to understanding
And cry aloud to reason,

⁴If you will but seek her as silver,
And search for her as for hid treasures,

⁵You shall then understand true religion
And gain a knowledge of God;

⁶For the Lord gives wisdom,
From his mouth come knowledge and insight;

⁷He stores up sound wisdom for the upright,
He is a shield to those who live blamelessly,

⁸That he may guard the course of justice,
And protect the way of his faithful ones.^a

⁹Then you shall understand justice and judgment
And equity, every good path,

²⁰That you may walk in the way of good men,
And keep in the paths of the righteous.^o

¹⁰For wisdom shall enter your mind,
And knowledge shall be pleasant to you,

¹¹Discretion shall watch over you,
And understanding shall guard you,

¹²To save you from doing wrong,
From men whose speech is perverting,

The
knowl-
edge and
insight
that God
gives to
those
who seek
wisdom

The
value of
wisdom
in deliv-
ering
from
tempora-
tion and
evil men
and
women

¹ ¹³² Lit., *turning aside*; *i. e.*, from instruction.

^m ¹³² Or, *careless ease*; *i. e.*, the lack of desire and zeal to ascertain knowledge.

§ 8 The preceding section presented the disadvantages of rejecting and this describes the advantages of following the counsels of the wisdom teachers. The thought in the first part of the section is closely knit together by a series of connectives. The section as a whole suggests very clearly the aims that the wisdom teachers sought to attain.

^a ²⁸ Lit., *his pious ones*, following the Gk. and Syr. Lat. and Targ. omit *his*.

^o ²³⁰ Transferring this verse, as suggested by Toy (Pr., p. 39), to the place where it logically belongs.

INTRODUCTION

- ¹³Who abandon the paths of right
 To walk in ways that are dark,
¹⁴Who rejoice in doing wrong
 And take pleasure in evil acts,
¹⁵Men whose paths are crooked,
 And their ways of life perverted.^p
¹⁶To deliver you from the dissolute woman,^q
 From the harlot with words that entice,^r
¹⁷Who has left the friend of her youth^s
 And forgotten the sacred covenant.^t
¹⁸For her house leads down to death^u
 And her paths to the place of the dead.
¹⁹None who go in to her return
 Or attain the paths of life.

The in-
 estimable
 value of
 wisdom

- 3** ¹³Happy the man who finds wisdom,
 And he who gains understanding.
¹⁴For her profit^v excels that of silver,
 And her increase the finest gold.
¹⁵She is more precious than corals,
 And no treasures^w with her can compare.

The
 honor
 which
 she
 brings

- 4** ⁷The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom,^x
 And with all you have gotten get insight.
⁸Prize her highly, and she will exalt you,
 She will honor you if you embrace her,
⁹On your head place a chaplet of beauty,
 And bestow a fair crown upon you.

Long life
 and
 pros-
 perity

- 3** ¹⁶In her right hand is long life,
 In her left are riches and honor.
¹⁷Her ways are pleasant ways,
 And all her paths are peaceful.
¹⁸She gives life to those who grasp her,
 They are happy who hold her fast.

Security

- 4** ²⁰My son, to my words give heed,
 To my sayings incline your ear;

^p 215 Omitting one letter in the Heb. that destroys the parallelism.

^q 216 Lit., *strange woman*; but this term seems to mean the woman who has broken away from the bonds of family and society. Possibly the term arose because most of the harlots in Israel were of non-Jewish origin.

^r 216 Lit., *the stranger who makes smooth her words*.

^s 217 *I. e.*, her husband; cf. Hos. 2^a. 17, Ezek. 16⁴³.

^t 217 So Gk., Aquila, Sym., Theod., and Targ. Heb., *the covenant of her God*. The reference is to her marriage bonds.

^u 218 The Heb. is uncertain. Gk. reads, *she has set her house by death*; but this makes little sense.

^v 314 Lit., *gain that comes from traffic*.

^w 315 So the VSS. Heb., *not all that you desire*.

^x 47 The Heb. is elliptical but vigorous. The meaning is: the first and most important thing is to get wisdom. It is more important than all other possessions.

REWARD OF PERSISTENT SEARCH

- ²¹Let them not depart from your sight;^y
Keep them well in mind.^z
- ²²For they are life to those who find them,
And healing to all their being.^a
- 3** ²For length of days and years of life
And peace will they add to you.
- 4** ^{5a}Get wisdom, get understanding.
⁶Forsake her not, and she will keep you;
Love her, and she will preserve you.
- 3** ²¹My son, keep wisdom and discretion,
Let them not depart from your sight;^b
- ²²And they shall be life to your being,
A beautiful chain^c for your neck.
- ²³You shall then go your way securely,
And your foot shall never stumble.
- ²⁴When you sit^d you shall not be afraid,
When you lie down, your sleep shall be sweet.
- ²⁵Be not afraid of sudden terror,^e
Nor the ruin of the wicked when it comes;
- ²⁶For the Lord will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being taken.

Peace
of mind

II

GOD

§ 9. What Can Man Know of God? Pr. 30¹⁻⁴

- Pr. 30** ¹The utterance of the man: I have wearied myself, O God,^a
I have wearied myself, O God, and am exhausted;^b
- ²For I am the most stupid of men;^c
I have not human intelligence;

Limitations
of man's
knowledge of
God

^y 4²¹ Lit., eyes. Cf. 3²¹.

^z 4²¹ Lit., within your heart.

^a 4²² So Toy; lit., flesh. Cf. 3²².

^b 3²¹ Transposing the Heb. as the context and sense demand.

^c 3²² Lit., beauty.

^d 3²⁴ So Gk. Heb., lie down.

^e 3²⁵ Or the terror that overtakes the ignorant.

God.—The sages, like all the Hebrew teachers, assumed the existence of God and his rule over the universe. Most of the problems that concern the modern ethical and religious teacher had never dawned upon them.

§ 9 This difficult passage is introduced by the superscription, *The Words of Agur the Son of Jakeh, the Massite*. The last word is based on a reconstruction of the Heb. that reads, *oracle*. Possibly a scribe who aimed to explain the corrupt Hebrew has added, *the inspired utterance of the man*, and he or a copyist has repeated the opening words of the original section, *I have wearied myself, O God*. The demands of the parallelism, however, indicate that either this strange introduction is original or else it represents a text that has become hopelessly corrupt. The questions which follow are reverent but evidently asked by one who, like Job and the author of Eccles., is overwhelmed by the difficulties in the way of him who would fathom the mysteries of the divine character.

^a 30¹ Dividing the Heb. vowels as the context requires. The Gk. and Lat. translators found great difficulty with this vs. Gk., *These things says the man to those who trust in God, and I cease*.

^b 30¹ Slightly changing the punctuation of the Heb.

^c 30² Lit., *I am more stupid than men*. Evidently the writer here protests against certain wise men, who, like Job's friends, spoke with dogmatic assurance.

GOD

³And I have not learned wisdom;
 I have no knowledge of the Holy One.
⁴Who has ascended to heaven and descended?^d
 Who has gathered the wind in his fists?
 Who has bound the waters in a garment?^e
 Who has established all the ends of the earth?
 What is his name,^f and what is his son's name?^g

§ 10. Nature of God, Pr. 21¹, ³⁰, 15¹¹, ³, 5²¹, 19²¹, 25², 16¹¹, 21³, 15⁹

Omnipo-
tent

Pr. 21 ¹A king's heart in the hand of the Lord is like watercourses:
 He turns it wherever he will.^h
³⁰There is no wisdom nor insight
 Nor counsel against the Lord.ⁱ

Omnis-
cient

15 ¹¹The lower world lies open before him,^j
 How much more then the hearts of men!^k
³The eyes of the Lord are all seeing,
 Keeping watch on both wicked and good.

5 ²¹For the ways of a man are before the Lord's eyes,
 And all his paths he makes level.^l

Un-
change-
able

19 ²¹There are many plans in a man's mind,
 But the counsel of the Lord shall stand.

Un-
search-
able

25 ²The glory of God is concealing something;
 The glory of kings is searching out something.

Just

16 ¹¹A just balance and scales^m are the Lord's;ⁿ
 All the weights of the bag are his work.
21 ³To do what is just and right
 Is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

^d 30^a The inference of Job 38 is approved. Probably the author was also familiar with Pr. 8²⁴⁻²⁹.

^e 30^a Cf. Job 26³, where the garment is the clouds.

^f 30^a *I. e.*, what is really known about Jehovah's history and real character? Possibly there is also an allusion to the popular mythology.

^g 30^a So GK. In the Heb. a scribe has apparently added from Job 38³, *if you know*. It is not supported by the metre or parallelism.

§ 10 The wise men were not primarily theologians, but moralists and practical teachers and guides. Their chief theme was man in his different relations. The proverbs included in this group do not afford a basis for a systematic theology. They do, however, reflect incidentally the beliefs of the wise regarding Jehovah and his relation to the universe and man. He is the God of the great ethical prophets, active in all human affairs, the supreme creator and ruler of the universe, just and merciful. He is also more interested in the deeds and purposes of his children than in the formal acts of worship and ceremonial. The theology of the wise men shows a great advance beyond that of the early prophets, for Jehovah is here thought of not merely as the God of Israel but as the divine friend of man, in intimate touch with each individual. Thus the sages prepared the way for that personal interpretation of God as the father of his children which characterizes the teachings of Jesus. With the sages, as with the prophets, the ultimate basis for right doing is found in the character and demands of Jehovah.

^h 21¹ *I. e.*, it is as thoroughly under control as the water in an irrigation canal.

ⁱ 21³⁰ *I. e.*, no human mind can prevail against Jehovah.

^j 15¹¹ *I. e.*, Jehovah controls even the world of the shades.

^k 15¹¹ Lit., *the children of men*.

^l 15²¹ Or *weighs*.

^m 16¹¹ Lit., *Balance and just weights*. Possibly *just* is a scribal addition.

ⁿ 16¹¹ The proverbs that precede and follow this all relate to the king, from which it may possibly be inferred that the original read, *the king's*, and that a later scribe identified it with the divine king, Jehovah.

NATURE OF GOD

15 ¹The conduct of the wicked is abhorrent to him,
But he loves^o the man eager to do right. Loving

§ 11. God the Creator, Pr. 3¹⁹, 2⁰, 22², 20¹²

Pr. 3 ¹⁹By wisdom the Lord founded the earth,
By understanding established the heavens;
²⁰By his knowledge the depths are opened,
And the skies deposit the dew. All things made by him

22 ²The rich and the poor meet together,
The Lord is maker of them all.^p

20 ¹²The hearing ear, and the seeing eye—
The Lord has made them both.

§ 12. God the Supreme Ruler, Pr. 16¹, 20²⁴, 16⁹, 33, 21³¹, 16¹

Pr. 16 ¹The plans of the mind^q belong to man,
But the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.^r Human plans and acts

20 ²⁴A man's steps are directed^s by the Lord;
How can man understand his way?

16 ⁹Man's mind maps out his way,
But the Lord directs his steps.
³³The lot^t is cast into the lap,
But its every decision is from the Lord. The lot

21 ³¹The horse is prepared for the battle,
But victory depends on the Lord. Victory

16 ⁴The Lord made everything for its own end,—
Even the wicked for the day of evil.^u All things

§ 13. God the Judge and Rewarder of Human Actions, Pr. 16², 21², 29²⁶, 17³,
10²⁹, 3, 12², 25²¹⁻²², 16⁷

Pr. 16 ²A man thinks all he does is pure,^v
But the Lord tests the disposition.^w Tester of man's acts and purposes

^o 15^a Lit., *follows after*; i. e., as a guide.

§ 11 The older Heb. conception of the creation is here reflected. The earth is a great level mass supported by pillars on foundations that rest on the surrounding ocean. Through the rifts in the earth come the springs and the rivers that well up from the depths below.

^p 22² Of course the main teaching of this proverb is that all men, whatever be their social standing, are Jehovah's creation.

§ 12 That Jehovah overrules all the varied activities and experiences of men is here taught plainly and unhesitatingly; and yet the wise men never cease to emphasize the freedom of the will and human responsibility. Even in these proverbs they assume that man will continue to plan and to strive to realize his ends. God, however, guides and shapes all in accord with his omniscient purpose.

^q 16¹ Lit., *arrangements of the heart*; i. e., what man plans in his mind.

^r 16¹ The meaning seems to be that man may plan, but God alone can give him apt words that will enable him to realize his plans.

^s 20²⁴ Lit., *a man's goings are from*.

^t 16³³ The use of the lot as a means of determining the divine will was practically universal throughout antiquity and appears in both the O.T. and N.T. This proverb clearly voices the popular belief.

^u 16⁴ I. e., the judgment day. While this sounds like an extreme statement of the doctrine of predestination, it must be remembered that the wise always taught that a man was good or wicked according to his own choices and acts, not by divine decree.

§ 13 Here the wise, like Jesus, put the emphasis on the motives and inward states of mind rather than the merely outward acts.

^v 16² Lit., *all a man's ways are pure in his eyes*.

^w 16² Lit., *spirits*.

GOD

- 21 ²A man thinks all he does is right,
But the Lord tests the motive.^x
- 29 ²⁶Many seek for the ruler's favor,
But the Lord decides each man's fate.
- 17 ³⁷The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold;
The assayer of hearts is the Lord.
- 10 ²⁹The Lord^y is a stronghold to him who does right,
But destruction to those who do wrong.
³⁷The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,
But he disappoints the desire of the wicked.
- 12 ²A good man will obtain favor from the Lord,
But a designing man^z he will condemn.
- 25 ²¹If your enemy hungers, give him food;
If he thirsts, give him water to drink;
²²For you will heap coals of fire on his head,
And the Lord will reward you.
- 16 ⁷When a man's life pleases the Lord,
Even his enemies he reconciles to him.

Rewarder
of con-
duct

§ 14. God the Foe of All Forms of Evil, Pr. 28⁹, 16⁵, 3³³⁻³⁴, 11²⁰, 21²⁷, 3³², 15²⁹,
20¹⁰, 11¹, 12²², 15²⁶, ⁸, 17⁶, 6¹⁶⁻¹⁹

Pride

- Pr. 28 ⁹He who turns away his ear from hearing instruction,
His prayer also will be despised.
- 16 ⁵Every proud-minded man is abhorrent to the Lord,
Assuredly^a he shall not go unpunished.
- 3 ³³The curse of the Lord is on the house of the wicked,
But he blesses the home of him who does right.
³⁴Surely he scoffs at the scoffers,
But to the humble he ever shows favor.
- 11 ²⁰The Lord detests the evil-minded,
But is well pleased with him who lives uprightly.
- 21 ²⁷The sacrifice of the wicked is despised,
And all the more when brought with evil intent.
- 3 ³²For the perverted man is abhorrent to the Lord,
But his friendship is with the upright.
- 15 ²⁹The Lord holds aloof from the wicked,
But hears the prayer of the upright.
- 20 ¹⁰Varying weights^b and varying measures
Are both abhorrent to the Lord.
- 11 ¹A false balance is abhorrent to the Lord,
But a just weight is his delight.

Wicked-
ness

False
weights
and
measures

^x 21² Lit., *hearts*; i. e., inward states of mind. This proverb is simply a variant of 16⁷.

^y 10²⁹ The Heb. is usually translated, *the way of the Lord*, but a very slight change gives the above felicitous reading.

^z 12² Lit., *a man of devices*.

§ 14 The word translated *abhorrent* or *despised* (lit., *an abomination*) is applied in the earlier prophetic and legal literature only to what is of heathen origin or contrary to Israel's ceremonial usage, as, e. g., the worship of idols or offering children in sacrifice. In Lev. and Ezek. it is used of acts of unchastity. By the wise it is employed in describing immoral or unjust acts. Here the wise, like the prophets, put ethics squarely on a religious basis.

^a 16⁵ Lit., *hand to hand*; i. e., *my hand upon it*; a strong assertion.

^b 20¹⁰ I. e., weights that purport to be the same but vary, thus favoring fraud.

THE FOE OF EVIL

12 ²²Lying lips are abhorrent to the Lord,
 But they who deal honestly are his delight.
 15 ²⁶Wicked plans are abhorrent to the Lord,
 But pleasant words are pure.^o

Lying

⁸The sacrifice of the wicked is abhorrent to the Lord,
 But the prayer of the upright is a delight to him!
 17 ¹⁵He who vindicates the wicked and he who condemns the righteous
 Are both abhorrent to the Lord.
 6 ¹⁶There are six things that the Lord hates,
 Yes, seven are abhorrent to him:
¹⁷Haughty eyes and a lying tongue,
 And hands that shed innocent blood,
¹⁸A mind that devises wicked schemes,
 Feet that make haste to do evil,^d
¹⁹A false witness who breathes out lies,
 And he who sows strife among brothers.

The
sacrifice
of the
wicked

Unjust
decisions

Seven
hateful
sins

§ 15. God the Champion of the Needy and the Faithful, Pr. 15²⁵, 22²², 23, 12, 18¹⁰,
 16³, 30⁵, 6, 20²²

Pr. 15 ²⁵The Lord roots up the house of the proud,
 But establishes the border^e of the widow.
 22 ²²Rob not the poor because they are poor,
 Nor oppress the poor at the city gate,^f
²³For the Lord will plead their cause,
 And rob those who deprive them of life.^g
¹²The eyes of the Lord are on him who guards knowledge,^h
 But he overthrows the words of the faithless.
 18 ¹⁰The name of the Lord is a strong tower,
 To which the righteous runs and is safe.
 16 ³Entrust what you do to the Lord,ⁱ
 Then your plans will succeed.^j
 30 ⁵Every word of God is tried;
 He is a shield to those who trust in him.
⁶Add not to his words,^k
 Lest he reprove you and you be found a liar.
 20 ²²Say not, 'I will be revenged for a wrong;'
 Wait for the Lord, he will save you.

The
widow

The
wise

The
righteous

Those
who
trust him

^o 15²⁵ So Heb., but this inconsequential remark can hardly represent the original text, nor do the varying readings of the VSS. help us.

^d 16³ So Gk. Heb. inserts the superfluous phrase, *to run*.

§ 15 As in the philanthropic laws of Dt., Jehovah is the defender of the defenseless.

^e 15²⁵ *I. e.*, the bounds of the ancestral estate. Cf. Dt. 19¹⁴.

^f 22²² This is one of the proverbs derived from the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Intro.*, p. 15).

^g 22²³ Or *deprive of life those who rob them*.

^h 22¹² Slightly revising the Heb. as demanded by the context and supported by parallels in Ps. 34¹⁵, 101⁶.

ⁱ 16³ Lit., *cast on Jehovah your works*.

^j 16³ Lit., *be established*.

^k 30⁵ The reference is probably to an established canon of Scriptures. The sage may have had in mind the new doctrines, *e. g.*, of the resurrection, that were then being taught by certain teachers. By some the vs. is regarded as an answer to the questioning spirit revealed in 30²⁻⁴ of § 9.

MAN

III

MAN

A

THE NATURE OF MAN

§ 16. Man's Universal Characteristics, Pr. 27¹⁹, 1, 21², 14¹², 20⁹, 27, 27²⁰, 14¹⁰, 13, 13¹², 19, 15³⁰, 25²⁵, 15¹³, 12²⁵, 15¹⁵, 27⁸, 18¹⁴, 14³⁰, 17²², 27¹⁷, 20¹¹, 27²¹, 20⁶

All men akin	Pr. 27	¹⁹ As in water face answers to face, So the heart of man to man. ^a
Finite		¹ Do not boast what you will do tomorrow, For you know not what a day may bring forth.
Fallible	21	² A man thinks all he does is right, But the Lord tests the motive. ^b
	14	¹² There is a way which seems right to a man, But the end of it is the road to death.
	20	⁹ Who can say, 'I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin'?
Possessed of a con- science		²⁷ Man's spirit ^c is the lamp of the Lord, Searching all the chambers of the soul. ^d
Never con- tented	27	²⁰ Sheol and Abaddon ^e are never satisfied, So man's desires ^f are never satisfied.
Psycho- logically isolated	14	¹⁰ Every heart knows its own sorrow, And no other ^g shares its joy.
		¹³ Even in laughter the heart may be ^h sad, And the end of joy may be sorrow.
Keenly sensitive to pain or joy	13	¹² Hope deferred makes the heart of man sick, But desire fulfilled ⁱ is a tree of life.

The Nature of Man.—The wise do not give a systematic treatment of man's psychological characteristics, but simply observations regarding those peculiarities which impressed them most. In many respects their insight into human character was exceedingly keen. Sometimes they anticipated the profoundest conclusions of modern psychology. They evidently recognized the presence of a conscience, which they likened not to a voice but to a lamp. Also they were aware of the great power that the mind had over the body and of the supreme importance of a calm, hopeful mental state.

^a 27¹⁹ This is one of the most difficult and doubtful proverbs in the book. The current rendering is based on a slightly revised Heb. text which reads, lit.,

*As in water face to face
So the hearts of man to man.*

This apparently means that as water reflects a physical image, so a man finds in the mind of his fellow man an exact reflection of his own, i. e., all men have certain common mental characteristics. The Gk. has for the first line simply, *As face to face.*

^b 21² Lit., *hearts.*

^c 20⁹ *I. e.*, the divine spirit, representing ethical and intellectual qualities, that God imparted to man at his creation. Cf. the Heb. idea in Gen. 2⁷.

^d 20²⁷ Lit., *body*, but this stands for the whole man and especially his moral and spiritual nature.

^e 27²⁰ A synonym of Sheol.

^f 27²⁰ Lit., *the eyes of man.* But eyes represent desires, as in Ecc. 2¹⁰, 4⁵.

^g 14¹⁰ Lit., *stranger*; i. e., another. So Toy (Pr., p. 287).

^h 14¹³ The current translation of the proverb is not in accord with the optimistic spirit of the book of Pr. The meaning seems to be that joy and sorrow are mingled in life, and man is subject to both.

ⁱ 13¹² Lit., *when it comes*, but the above represents the corresponding Eng. idiom. The tree of life symbolizes mental and physical health.

MAN'S CHARACTERISTICS

- ¹⁹Desire realized is sweet to the soul,
But it is abhorrent to fools to depart from evil.^j
- 15 ³⁰The light of the eyes^k rejoices the heart;
Good tidings make the bones fat.
- 25 ²⁵As cold water to a thirsty man,
So is good news from a far country.^l
- 15 ¹³A joyful heart makes a cheerful countenance,
But by inward^m sorrow the spirit is broken.
- 12 ²⁵Anxiety in a man's mind depresses it,
But a kind word makes it happy.
- 15 ¹⁵All days are evil to the downcast,ⁿ
But the cheerful man has a continual feast.
- 27 ⁸Like a bird that wanders from its nest
Is a man who wanders from his home.^o
- 18 ¹⁴A man's spirit sustains him in sickness,^p
But who can raise up a broken spirit?
- 14 ³⁰A tranquil mind^q is the life of the body,^r
But jealousy^s rots the bones.
- 17 ²²A joyful heart is good medicine,
But a broken spirit dries up the bones.
- 27 ¹⁷As iron sharpens iron,
So a man sharpens the face of his friend.^t
- 20 ¹¹Even a child makes himself known by his deeds,
Whether his conduct is pure and right.
- 27 ²¹The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold;
A man is tested by the praise he receives.^u
- 20 ⁶Many a man proclaims his own kindness,^v
But a trustworthy man who can find?

Devoted
to his
home

Subject
to
mental
states

Devel-
oped by
associa-
tion

Revealed
by acts

Tested
by rep-
utation

Real
friendship
rare

§ 17. Advantages of Old Age and Youth, Pr. 20²⁹, 16³¹

- Pr. 20** ²⁹The glory of young men is their strength,
And the beauty of old men the hoary head.

Each age
has its
glory

^j 13^o The antithesis is not natural. Probably a couplet has fallen out, leaving this one proverb instead of two.

^k 15³⁰ *I. e.*, the joy shining through the eyes either of the bearer or recipient of good news. It is equivalent to good news.

^l 25²⁵ This proverb represents universal human experience, but is especially fitting on the lips of a scattered race like the Jews.

^m 15¹³ *Lit., of heart or mind.*

ⁿ 15¹⁵ *Lit., All the days of the downcast (or afflicted) are evil.* The antithesis is best brought out by the above rendering.

^o 27⁸ *So Toy; lit., place.*

^p 18¹⁴ *Lit., supports (or sustains) sickness.* The sage here enunciates a profound psychological principle. Sickness or misfortune cannot crush the man of indomitable spirit, but it is impossible to help or heal the one who has lost courage.

^q 14³⁰ *Lit., heart of health; i. e., a calm, soothing habit of mind.*

^r 14³⁰ *Lit., flesh.*

^s 14³⁰ Jealousy here evidently stands as a type of passion in general, the opposite of the calm, peaceful spirit.

^t 27¹⁷ This proverb describes aptly the value of social intercourse in the development of character.

^u 27²¹ *Lit., according to his praise; i. e., what men say about him.* Cf. 17³, § 13, where Jehovah is the one who tests men.

^v 20⁶ *I. e., professes that he is ready by kindly acts to show his friendliness.*

§ 17 reflects the two proverbs supplement each other. They also reflect the deference always paid in the East to elders.

16 ³¹The hoary head is a crown of glory,^w
When acquired by upright living.^x

B

THE EDUCATION OF MAN

§ 18. Folly—The Absence of Education, Pr. 22¹⁵, 14¹⁸, 1⁷

Natural
to youth

Pr. 22 ¹⁵Folly is inherent in the mind of a child,
But the rod of discipline will drive it from him.^a

14 ¹⁸Simpletons inherit folly.
But men of sense^b secure^c knowledge.

Due to
the neg-
lect of
education

1 ⁷Reverence for the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,
But the foolish despise wisdom and discipline.

§ 19. Characteristics of a Fool, Pr. 17²⁴, 14⁷, 24⁷, 26⁷.⁹, 19³, 15²¹, 10²³, 14¹, 18²,
12²³, 14³³, 12¹⁶, 14⁹.²⁴, 26⁶, 24⁹, 29³, 27²², 26¹¹, 27³, 17¹²

Inatten-
tive

Pr. 17 ²⁴Wisdom is the goal^d of a man of understanding,
But the eyes of a fool are at the ends of the earth.

Obtuse

14 ⁷Go from the presence of a fool
For his lips do not utter knowledge.^e

24 ⁷Wisdom is beyond the reach of a fool,^f
He does not open his mouth at the gates.^g

Unapt in
expres-
sion

26 ⁷The legs of the lame hang loose,^h
And a proverb in the mouth of fools.

⁹Like a thorn-stick in the hand of a drunken man,ⁱ
Is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

Dissatis-
fied with
his lot

19 ³A man's folly brings ruin upon him,^j
And then he rages^k against the Lord.

^w 16³¹ Cf. for this same idea in expanded form B. Sir. 25³⁻⁶.

^x 16³¹ Lit., *in the way of righteousness it is found*.

The Education of Man.—For a study of the educational aims and methods of the wise, cf. *Intro.*, I.

§ 18 The wise recognized different types of folly: (1) that which came from inexperience and was especially characteristic of youth; (2) stupidity due to physical and mental limitations or characteristic of an unawakened mind; (3) obstinate, defiant folly which was the result of deliberate choice.

^a 22¹⁵ Menander said that he who was not flogged was not educated.

^b 14¹⁸ Or *the prudent*.

^c 14¹⁸ So Gk., supported by the context. Heb. (*are crowned?*) is doubtful; Syr., *share*.

§ 19 The wise held up the faults of the fool before their disciples to turn them from folly.

^d 17²⁴ Lit., *is before the face*. The parallelism indicates that the meaning is as rendered above.

^e 14⁷ Following Toy in emending the Heb.

^f 24⁷ The vs. is very obscure. The above rendering is based on a slightly revised Heb. text.

The traditional text reads, *Corals to a fool are wisdom*.

^g 24⁷ In 17²⁵, 18⁶ the fool is blamed for his readiness to talk. Probably the meaning here is that in public councils he has nothing to say.

^h 26⁷ The rendering of this line is doubtful. If the above is correct, the meaning is that a fool can use a wise proverb no more skillfully and effectively than a lame man his legs.

ⁱ 26⁹ Again the exact meaning of the Heb. is a little doubtful. The current translation conveys a wrong idea, for the verb does not mean to *go into* or to *stick into* the hand, but rather to *possess*. The idea seems to be that a wise maxim in the mouth of a fool is as disastrous to all concerned as a thorn-stick in the hand of an irresponsible drunken man.

^j 19³ Lit., *ruins his way*.

^k 19³ Lit., *his heart rages*.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A FOOL

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 15 ²¹ Folly is a delight to one who lacks sense,
But a man of insight is straightforward. ¹ | Fond of
his folly |
| 10 ²³ It is as sport to a fool to commit a crime,
But so is wisdom to a man of sense. | |
| 14 ¹ A wise woman ^m builds up her household,
But the foolish ⁿ with her own hand tears it down. | Improvident |
| 18 ² A fool takes no pleasure in insight,
But only in disclosing his mind. | Indiscreet |
| 12 ²³ A sensible man conceals his knowledge,
But foolish minds proclaim their folly. | |
| 14 ³³ In an intelligent mind wisdom reposes;
In the bosoms of fools it is made known. ^o | |
| 12 ¹⁶ A fool's anger is known at once,
But a sensible man ignores ^p an insult. | Uncontrolled |
| 14 ⁹ Fools mock at guilt, ^q
But among the upright there is good will. ^r | Shameless |
| 24 ² The crown of the wise is prudence,
The diadem of fools is folly. ^s | |
| 26 ⁶ He who sends a message by a fool
Cuts off his own feet and drinks violence. ^t | Untrustworthy |
| 24 ⁹ The plan of the foolish ^u is sin,
And the scoffer is abhorrent to men. | |
| 29 ⁹ If a wise man has a lawsuit ^v with a fool,
He trembles ^w and laughs and there is no rest. | Thoroughly
perverse |
| 27 ²² Though you should pound a fool in a mortar, ^x
You will not remove his foolishness from him. ^y | Unalterable |
| 26 ¹¹ Like a dog that returns to his vomit,
A fool repeats his folly. | Disgusting |
| 27 ³ A stone is heavy and sand weighty,
But a fool's vexation is heavier than both. | Intolerable |
| 17 ¹² Let a bear that has lost its cubs meet a man,
But not a fool in his folly! | Dangerous |

¹ 15²¹ Lit., *makes going straight*.

^m 14¹ Slightly restoring the corrupt Heb.

ⁿ 14¹ Lit., *folly*.

^o 14³³ If the text is correct, this line must be ironical.

^p 12¹⁶ Lit., *conceals, covers up*; *i. e.*, he restrains his anger and avoids strife.

^q 14⁹ Following the Lat. Heb. is obviously corrupt. It might be rendered, *Guilt mocks fools*, but this does not yield a clear meaning.

^r 14⁹ *I. e.*, either the sense of divine favor, or good-will among themselves. Cf. Luke 21⁴.

^s 14²⁴ Following the Gk. in emending the Heb., which reads:

*The crown of the wise is their riches,
The folly of fools is folly.*

^t 26⁶ Inverting the two members of the couplet. The meaning of this line is obscure, probably as the result of corruption of Heb. The idea seems to be that he who trusts an important commission to a fool loses control of his interests and suffers loss.

^u 24⁹ Heb., *the plan (or thought) of folly*. The parallelism, however, supports the above reading.

^v 29⁹ The Heb. word has this technical meaning.

^w 29⁹ *I. e.*, with excitement or anger. It is not clear whether it is the wise man who trembles and laughs or the fool. The construction gives the former interpretation but the sense the latter.

^x 27²² A scribe has apparently added, to explain the figure still further, *with a pestle in the midst of pounded grain*. This confuses the figure and destroys the poetic symmetry of the vs.

^y 27²² So Gk. Heb., *his foolishness will not depart*, but a slight emendation produces the same meaning as the Gk.

§ 20. **Hopeless Evils That Result from Folly**, Pr. 3³⁵, 11²⁹, 10¹³, 26³, 10⁸, 18⁷, 21¹⁴

Disgrace
Serfdom
Punish-
ment
Calamity
Death

- Pr. 3** ³⁵Wise men obtain honor,
But disgrace is the lot of the fool.
- 11** ²⁹He who brings trouble to his own home shall inherit the wind,^a
And he who is foolish shall become slave to the wise.^b
- 10** ¹³On the lips of the discerning wisdom is found,
But the rod is for the back of him who is witless.
- 26** ³A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass,
And a rod for the back of a fool.^c
- 10** ⁸A wise^d man accepts commands,
But a foolish talker shall fall.
- 18** ⁷A fool's mouth is his destruction,
And his lips are a snare to him.
- 21** ¹⁶The man who strays from the way of wisdom
Will rest in the assembly of the shades.^e

§ 21. **Aims of Education**, Pr. 4^{1, 7}, 15¹⁴, 14⁶, 13¹⁶, 10¹⁴, 18¹⁵, 17¹⁶, 23²⁸

To gain
under-
standing
Knowl-
edge
Wisdom

- Pr. 4** ¹Hear, O children, a father's instruction,
And listen, that you may gain insight.
⁷The beginning of wisdom:—Get wisdom,^f
And with all you have gotten get insight.
- 15** ¹⁴An intelligent mind seeks knowledge,
But the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.
- 14** ⁶A scoffer seeks wisdom and finds none,
But knowledge to an intelligent man is easy.
- 13** ¹⁶A sensible man does everything wisely,^g
But a fool displays his folly.^h
- 10** ¹⁴Wise men hide their knowledge,
But the mouth of a fool is impending destruction.ⁱ
- 18** ¹⁵An intelligent mind acquires knowledge,
And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.
- 17** ¹⁶Why is it a fool has a price in his hand
To buy wisdom, when he has no mind?^j

§ 20 From the Christian and modern educational point of view the wise put their teaching too often in negative rather than positive form. Here, as in § 19, they aimed to turn men from foolish conduct by pointing out its consequences. Their practical observations are very keen and true to human life in all ages.

^a 11²⁹ *I. e.*, shall in time possess nothing.
^b 11²⁹ *Lit.*, *wise of mind (or heart)*.
^c 26³ *I. e.*, a fool must be treated as a brute beast, for it is impossible to appeal to his reason.
^d 10⁸ *Lit.*, *wise in mind*.
^e 21¹⁶ *I. e.*, pay the penalty for his folly by death. For the Heb. idea of life after death, cf. Job 31^{8, 19}, Is. 14¹⁵⁻²⁰, Ezek. 26²⁰, 32¹⁸⁻³⁰.
 § 21 Cf. for a discussion of the sages' theory of education, *Introd.*, p. 10.
^f 4⁷ So Heb., literally rendered. The text is probably corrupt.
^g 13¹⁶ So Syr., Lat. Heb., *Every sensible man acts with knowledge*.
^h 13¹⁶ *I. e.*, makes a show of folly as a merchant spreads out his goods.
ⁱ 10¹⁴ The meaning possibly is that the wise do not tell all that they know, but the fool is constantly bringing harm to himself and others by telling what should be kept secret.
^j 17¹⁶ *I. e.*, it is useless for a fool to seek to acquire wisdom by paying for it, for he does not have the ability to appreciate and apply it. Apparently in those days there were students who could pay the tuition fee but could not pass the examinations.

AIMS OF EDUCATION

23 ²³Buy the truth, and do not sell it,—
Wisdom and training and insight.

§ 22. The Instructors, Pr. 3^{11, 12}, 4¹⁻⁴, 5^b, 15¹², 18⁴, 20⁶

- | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Pr. 3 | <p>¹¹My son, reject not the discipline of the Lord,
And do not spurn his reproof,
¹²For whom he loves^k he reproves,
Even as a father^l the son in whom he delights.</p> | God the
Great
Teacher |
| 4 | <p>¹Hear, O children, a father's instruction,
And listen, that you may gain insight,
²Because I give you sound learning;
Do not forsake my teaching.
³When I was a son of tender age,
Dearly beloved by my father,^m
⁴He used to teach me and say to me:
'Let your mind hold fast my words;
Keep my commands and live;
^{5b}Do not forget nor turn away from my injunctions.'ⁿ</p> | Parents |
| 15 | <p>^{12a}A scoffer does not like reproof;
He will not go to the wise.</p> | Wise
men |
| 18 | <p>⁴The words of a man's mouth should be^o as deep waters,
A gushing torrent, a wellspring of wisdom.</p> | |
| 20 | <p>⁵Counsel in a man's mind is like deep water,
But a man of sense will draw it out.^p</p> | |

§ 23. Importance of Primary Education, Pr. 22⁶, 29¹⁷

- | | | |
|---------------|--|-------------------|
| Pr. 22 | <p>⁶Train a child in the way he should go;
When he is old he will not depart from it.^q</p> | Child
training |
| 29 | <p>¹⁷Correct your son, and he will bring you comfort,
And give you^r exquisite delight.</p> | |

§ 22 The wise recognized that life was one great school in which Jehovah was the master and the parents and the wise men were under obligation to attend to certain important parts in the education of the individual.

^k 3¹² Omitting *the Lord*, which is clearly implied in the context and was probably added by a scribe. It destroys the metrical balance of the vs.

^l 3¹² Or *and afflicts*, following the Gk. and the parallel passage in Job 5^{17, 18}. The Heb., however, is strong and harmonious.

^m 4⁵ Following Toy in emending the Heb.

ⁿ 4^{5b} Lit., *the words of my mouth*. Preceding this line the Heb. has the words, *Get wisdom, get insight*, but the Gk. does not have them and they are metrically superfluous.

^o 18⁴ Supplying the verb required to bring out the idea. The wise would not assert that all men were thus gifted with wisdom.

^p 20⁶ This proverb is elucidated by the preceding. *Counsel* in this case may also mean the secret purposes which a man of insight and sagacity is able to draw out.

§ 23 The central thought of these proverbs is reflected also in many others not classified under this head.

^q 22⁶ This proverb embodies one of the fundamental principles of modern education. It was inspired by practical observation and experience and is the watchword of the modern religious education movement.

^r 29¹⁷ Lit., *to your soul*; but this idiom is more exactly rendered as above.

§ 24. Discipline, Pr. 29¹⁵, 27⁶, 13²⁴, 19¹⁸, 23^{13, 14}, 12¹, 10¹⁷, 15¹⁰, 19¹⁶, 29¹, 15⁵, 28⁴, 15³², 17¹⁰, 25¹²

Necessary
to edu-
cation

- Pr. 29** ¹⁵The rod and correction give wisdom,
But a child left to himself disgraces his mother.
- 27 ⁶Better is open rebuke
Than love that is hidden.⁵
- 13 ²⁴He who spares his rod hates his son,
But he who loves him punishes^t him.
- 19 ¹⁸Punish^u your son while yet there is still hope;
Set not your heart on his destruction.
- 23 ¹³Withhold not discipline from the child;
If you beat him with the rod, he will not die.
¹⁴You must beat him with the rod,
And so deliver him from Sheol.^v
- 12 ¹He who loves knowledge loves correction,^w
But he who hates reproof is stupid.
- 10 ¹⁷He who heeds correction has the assurance of life,
But he who disregards reproof is in danger of going astray.
- 15 ¹⁰There is severe correction for one who leaves the path;
He who hates reproof will die.
- 19 ¹⁶One who keeps the commandment^x keeps his life;
He who despises the word^y will die.
- 29 ¹He who, though often reproved, persists in his course^a
Shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.
- 15 ⁵A fool despises his father's correction,
But he who regards reproof acts prudently.
- 28 ⁴Those who forsake the teaching^a commend the wicked,
But those who observe the teaching contend against them.
- 15 ³²He who rejects correction despises his own self,
But he who listens to reproof gains understanding.
- 17 ¹⁰A rebuke enters deeper into an intelligent man
Than a hundred stripes into a fool.
- 25 ¹²As an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold,
So is a wise reprovee on a responsive ear.

Correc-
tion
must be
heeded

§ 24 Well aware that discipline was essential at certain stages in the training of a child, the sages properly threw the responsibility on the parents. Modern education suggests less crude and more effective forms of discipline, but the principle is still practical.

⁵ 27⁶ This proverb refers to the relations of friends as well as of parents and children.

^t 13²⁴ Lit., *seeks him early with discipline*, but this merely indicates earnestness, not literally rising early for the sake of administering punishment.

^u 19¹⁸ *I. e.*, discipline, if need be, by severe measures.

^v 23^{13, 14} These two vss. are a unit.

^w 12¹ Or *He who loves correction loves knowledge*.

^x 19¹⁶ *I. e.*, the precepts of the priests and sages.

^y 19¹⁶ Correcting the Heb. by the analogy of 13¹³. Heb., *despises his ways*; but this makes no sense.

^a 29¹ Lit., *hardens his neck*.

^a 28⁴ *Torah* is probably here, as elsewhere in Pr., to be translated, not *law* in the technical meaning of a body of legal statutes, but *teaching*, referring especially to the teachings of the wise. The references to the wicked confirm this conclusion.

THE RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE

§ 25. Importance of the Receptive Attitude, Pr. 12¹⁵, 28¹², 18¹, 9⁷⁻⁹, 19²⁷, 23¹², 19²⁰, 4¹³

- Pr. 12** ¹⁵A fool's conduct seems right in his sight,
But a wise man listens to counsel.
- 28** ¹³He who hides his transgressions will not prosper,
But he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.
- 18** ¹He seeks desire who withdraws himself,
And against sound wisdom he rages.^b
- 9** ⁷He who corrects a scoffer gets insult,
And he who reproves a wicked man gets disgrace.
⁸Reprove not a scoffer, lest he hate you;
Reprove a wise man and he will love you.
⁹Give instruction to a wise man and he will be wiser;
Teach a righteous man and he will gain more learning.
- 19** ²⁷Cease, my son, to hate^c instruction,
To err from the words of knowledge.
- 23** ¹²Apply your mind to instruction,
And your ears to words of knowledge.
- 19** ²⁰Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That you may be wise in your later life.
- 4** ¹³Hold fast instruction, let it not go;
Keep it, for it is your life.

The chief distinction between a fool and a wise man is his attitude toward counsel

The right attitude of a disciple

§ 26. Value of Education, Pr. 1^{8, 9}, 24^{13, 14}, 16²², 19⁸, 16¹⁶, 28¹¹, 15^{2, 7}, 16²³, 13¹⁵, 21²², 20¹⁸, 24^{5, 6}, 21²⁰, 24^{8, 4}, 13¹⁴, 4¹⁰⁻¹²

- Pr. 1** ⁸My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And forsake not the teaching of your mother;
⁹They shall be a chaplet of beauty for your head,
And a necklace about your neck.
- 24** ¹³Eat honey, my son, for it is good,
And honeycomb is sweet to your taste.
¹⁴So know wisdom to be to your soul:
If you find it, your hope shall not be cut off.^d
- 16** ²²Understanding is a wellspring of life to its possessor,
But folly is the chastisement of fools.^e

In general

§ 25 This section formulates one of the chief aims of the wise, which was to develop in men a receptive attitude. They realized that all things were open to him who would heed instruction, but that the man who would not listen closed all doors against his own development.

^b 18¹ This proverb is very obscure. Gk., Lat. differ materially from Heb., and many emendations and interpretations have been suggested, but none is satisfactory. Apparently a wilful, unsocial nature is indicated.

^c 19²⁷ Heb., *hear*. Another obscure proverb. Toy changes to read, *He who ceases to listen to instruction will wander from the words of knowledge*. Probably the original had the similar sounding Heb. verb *to hate* instead of the doubtful *to hear*, which is followed in most translations.

§ 26 This theme was a favorite one with the sages, who taught most emphatically that *knowledge is power*.

^d 24¹⁴ It is not clear whether this vs. originally ended with *find it* or as above. In Heb. a scribe has introduced from 23¹⁸, and *there is an end*, which makes no sense here. Possibly he added *your hope shall not be cut off* from the same source, but more probably the presence of these words led him by association to insert the preceding awkward clause.

^e 16²² *I. e.*, folly brings its punishment, just as insight, on the other hand, gives life to its possessor.

MAN

- 19 ⁸He who gets intelligence is a friend to himself;^f
 He who keeps understanding shall find good.^g
- 16 ¹⁶How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!^h
 To get insight is rather to be chosen than silver.
- 23 ¹¹The rich man is wise in his own eyes,
 But an intelligent poor man will search him out.ⁱ
- 15 ²The tongues of the wise dispense^j knowledge,
 But the mouths of fools pour out folly.
⁷The lips of the wise disperse^k knowledge,
 But the fool^l does not comprehend.^m
- 16 ²³The mind of the wise guides his mouth,
 And adds persuasiveness to his lips.
- 13 ¹⁶Good sense is rewarded with favor,
 But the conduct of the faithless destroys them.ⁿ
- 21 ²²A wise man scales the city of the mighty,
 And brings down the stronghold in which it trusted.^o
- 20 ¹⁸Establish^p your plans by counsel,
 And make war not without guidance.
- 24 ⁵A wise man is better than a strong man,
 And a man who has knowledge than he who has strength.^q
⁶For by wise guidance you conduct war,^r
 And in the multitude of counsellors^s there is safety.
- 21 ²⁰There is a precious treasure^t in the dwelling of the wise,
 But a foolish man swallows it up.
- 24 ³By wisdom a house is built,
 By understanding it is established,
⁴And by knowledge the chambers are filled
 With all precious and pleasing stores.^u
- 13 ¹⁴The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
 That a man may avoid^v the snares of death.

Better
than
riches

Guide to
the use
of wise
words

Secures
favor

Brings
victory

A source
of wealth

Insures a
long and
peaceful
life

^f 19⁸ Lit., *He who gets mind is one who loves his soul* (or *self*).
^g 19⁸ *I. e.*, enjoy the fullness of life.
^h 16¹⁶ Possibly the irregular *how* is a late addition, and the first line, like the second, was a simple statement, *To get wisdom is better than gold*.
ⁱ 23¹¹ Riches and wisdom do not always go together. The sage's sympathies are with the poor, whose poverty was a spur to the development of their wits.
^j 15² Lit., *let fall*, slightly correcting the Heb., which reads, *make good*.
^k 15⁷ Since this word is ordinarily "used of destructive dispersion," Toy, by changing one letter of the Heb., reads *preserve*.
^l 15⁷ Lit., *the mind of fools*.
^m 15⁷ With Toy slightly revising the Heb. as the context suggests.
ⁿ 13¹⁶ Heb., *is enduring*, but this is just the opposite of what the sages taught. The current translation, *is rugged* (or *hard*), is unjustified. It is not the only instance of a mistranslation which has become a proverb. Again the Gk. aids in correcting a slight error of the Heb. due to a similarity of sound.
^o 21²² Lit., *the strength of its confidence*.
^p 20¹⁸ Following Toy in reading the verb as imperative rather than declarative.
^q 24⁵ Following the Gk., Syr., and Targ. in reconstructing the Heb.
^r 24⁶ Following the Gk. and Syr. in omitting, *for yourself*.
^s 24⁶ *I. e.*, in taking wise and varied counsel.
^t 21²⁰ Heb., but not Gk., adds, *and oil*; but this is probably a later scribal gloss.
^u 24⁴ Lit., *wealth*, but the sage evidently has in mind the costly possessions with which a house was furnished.
^v 13¹⁴ Lit., *to avoid*. Cf. 14²⁷.

VALUE OF EDUCATION

- 4 ¹⁰Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,
 And the years of your life shall be many.
¹¹I teach you the way of wisdom,
 I lead you in the paths of uprightness.
¹²When you walk you^w will not be impeded,
 And if you run, you will not stumble.

C

MAN IN HIS DOMESTIC RELATIONS

§ 27. Parents and Children, Pr. 23²², 19²⁶, 20²⁰, 28²⁴, 30¹⁷, 13¹, 28⁷, 15²⁰, 17²⁶, ²¹,
 23²⁴, 10¹, 23²⁵, 27¹¹, 13²², 17⁶, 20⁷, 18¹⁹

- Pr. 23** ²²Listen to your father who begat you,
 And despise not your mother when she is old.^a
- 19** ²⁶He who maltreats his father and chases away his mother
 Is a son who acts shamefully and disgracefully.
- 20** ²⁰He who curses his father or mother,^b
 His lamp shall go out in the blackest of darkness.^c
- 28** ²⁴He who robs his father or mother,
 Saying, 'There is no wrong in it,'^d
 Is like^e him who is a destroyer.
- 30** ¹⁷The eye that mocks a father
 And despises the old age^f of his mother
 The ravens of the valley shall pick out,
 And the vultures^g shall eat it.
- 13** ¹A wise son loves^h instruction,
 But a scoffer will not listen to a rebuke.
- 28** ⁷He who obeys instruction is an intelligent son,
 But he who makes friends of profligates brings disgrace on his
 father.
- 15** ²⁰A wise son makes a glad father,
 But a foolish sonⁱ despises his mother.

Filial
 obliga-
 tions

What
 children
 confer
 upon
 parents

^w 4¹³ Heb., *your step*.

§ 27 The glimpses here given of the domestic life of the Hebrews are illuminating. The mother of children stands almost on an equality with the husband. Bad children were evidently not unknown. Loyalty to parents is made by the sages one of the strongest motives for right doing. In this they show their wisdom, for it is often the only force that will hold the young from doing wrong. It appeals to the chivalrous note and to the feeling of love and gratitude that is strong within the heart of the normal youth. In the same way the wise emphasize the responsibility of parents to children, thus anticipating what is often held to be a very modern principle.

^a 23²² Cf. the parallel in 30¹⁷.

^b 20²⁰ Cf. the older law, Ex. 21¹⁷, Lev. 20⁹.

^c 20²⁰ Lit., *in the pupil of darkness*. *I. e.*, his life shall be extinguished.

^d 28²⁴ This line destroys the symmetry of the couplet and may be the explanation of a later scribe. The reference is probably to robbery under the guise of law by depriving parents of their property. Cf. Mk. 7¹¹, ¹³, where Jesus develops the same teaching.

^e 28²⁴ Lit., *a companion to*; *i. e.*, places himself in the same class with.

^f 30¹⁷ So Gk. and a revision of the Heb., which is clearly corrupt. The current translation, *to obey*, is very doubtful. Cf. the parallel to the Gk. in 23²².

^g 30¹⁷ Lit., *sons of vultures*, *i. e.*, members of the virtue family. Cf. *daughters of men* for women.

^h 13¹ Correcting the Heb. by the analogy of 12¹ and the evidence of the parallelism.

ⁱ 15²⁰ So Gk. and some Heb. MSS.

- 17 ²⁵A foolish son is a grief to his father
And brings bitterness to her who bore him.
²¹He who begets a stupid son does it to his sorrow,
And the father of a fool has no joy.
- 23 ²⁴The father of a righteous man greatly rejoices,
And he who begets a wise sonⁱ has joy.
- 10 ¹A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.
- 23 ²⁵Let your father^k be filled with joy,
And let her who bore you rejoice.
- 27 ¹¹Be wise, my son, and make glad my heart,
That I may answer the one who reproaches me.
- 13 ²²A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children,
But the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the righteous.
- 17 ⁶Children's children are the crown of old men,
And the glory of children is their father's.
- 20 ⁷A righteous man who lives a blameless life,—
Blessed are his children after him!
- 18 ¹⁹Brother helped by brother is like a city firm and high,
And strong as a well-founded palace.¹

What
parents
confer
upon
children

Brotherly
co-ope-
ration

§ 28. Wives, Pr. 19¹³, 27¹⁵, 16, 21⁹, 19, 12⁴, 19¹⁴, 18²²

- Pr. 19 ¹³A foolish son is ruin to his father,
And the quarrelling of a wife is a continual dripping.
- 27 ¹⁵A continual dripping on a rainy day
And a quarrelsome woman are alike;
¹⁶He who would restrain^m her restrains the wind,
And his hand comes in contact with oil.
- 21 ⁹It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop,
Than with a quarrelsome woman in a large house.ⁿ
¹⁹It is better to dwell in a wilderness,
Than with a quarrelsome and fretful woman.
- 12 ⁴A good wife^o is a crown to her husband,
But a shameless one is as rottenness in his bones.
- 19 ¹⁴Houses and riches are an inheritance,^p
But a prudent wife comes from the Lord.

The
source of
their
husbands'
weal or
woe

Value of
a good
wife

ⁱ 23²⁴ Possibly the original read, *she who bore him*, making the parallelism complete; cf. vs. ²⁵, 10⁴, and 17²⁵.

^k 23²⁵ Heb. adds, *and your mother*, but this destroys the parallelism.

¹ 18¹⁹ So Gk. Heb. is unintelligible.

§ 28 The possibilities of the marriage relation for weal or woe are here forcibly set forth and with a practical purpose. If they were oftener held up before the young, many tragedies would be averted.

^m 27¹⁶ So Lat. The meaning seems to be, it is as easy to hold (Heb. *hide*) the wind, or to hold oil in one's hands, as to stop a quarrelsome woman.

ⁿ 21⁹ This proverb is repeated in 25²⁴. The reading of the Heb. followed above is obtained by transposing two letters.

^o 12⁴ The Heb. means, *a woman of strength*. This strength may be physical, mental, or moral, or may include general ability. The comparison lays the emphasis primarily on moral character.

^p 19¹⁴ Heb. adds, *of (i. e., from) fathers*.

WIVES

18 ²²If one finds a wife, he finds a good thing,
And obtains favor from the Lord.

§ 29. The Ideal Wife, Pr. 31¹⁰⁻³¹

<p>Pr. 31 ¹⁰A good wife who can find? She is worth far more than corals. ¹¹Her husband^a trusts her completely, And has^r no lack of gain. ¹²She does him good and not harm All the days of her life.</p>	<p>Faithful to her husband's interests</p>
<p>¹³She procures wool and flax, And works willingly with her hands.[*] ¹⁴She is like the ships of the merchant, She brings her food from afar. ¹⁵She rises also while yet it is night, And gives out food^t to her household.^u</p>	<p>Provides well for her family</p>
<p>¹⁶She examines a field and buys it, With her earnings she plants a vineyard. ¹⁷She girds herself with might, And develops strength in her arms. ¹⁸She perceives^v that her profit is good; Her lamp goes not out at night.</p>	<p>Sagacious in man- aging her business</p>
<p>¹⁹She lays her hands on the distaff, Her hands take hold of the spindle. ²⁰She bestows her goods on^w the poor, Extends her hands to the needy. ²¹She fears not snow for her household, For all her household is clothed in scarlet. ²²Coverlets she makes for herself, Her clothing is fine linen and purple. ²³Her husband is known in the council,^x When he sits among the elders of the land.</p>	<p>Indus- trious and charita- ble</p> <p>Clothes her family well</p>

§ 29 While the sages' ideal of the perfect wife is distinctly Oriental and lacks the elements of full equality and companionship that are so highly appreciated in the modern Occident, it places the emphasis on those home qualities that make for the peace and strength of the home life. The Hebrew wife also possessed much more independence than her Oriental sisters to-day. As in the modern East, she did most of the work outside as well as within the home, while her husband was free to devote himself to the public and social functions. This poem is the one example of the acrostic or alphabetical poem in the O.T. Wisdom Literature.

^a 31¹¹ Lit., *her husband's mind*.

^r 31¹¹ So Lat. Gk., *She has*. Heb., lit., *spoil is not lacking*.

^t 31¹² Lit., *With the delight of her hands*. Possibly, as Toy urges (Pr. 554), the Heb. idiom means, *as she will*.

^{*} 31¹³ Lit., *prey*; *i. e.*, what she has received.

^u 31¹⁵ Heb. adds a third line, *And their portion to her maids*, but this is not supported by the rigidly regular parallelism of this acrostic poem and is evidently a scribal expansion.

^v 31¹⁸ Lit., *tastes*; *i. e.*, learns by experience.

^w 31²⁰ Lit., *stretches out her hand to*.

^x 31²³ Lit., *gates*. The context suggests that it is her husband's clothing that gives him distinction in the council at the city gate. The greater cause, however, is the ability of his wife.

²⁴She makes linen cloth and sells it,
Girdles she delivers to the merchant.

Wise and
kind

²⁵Strength and honor are her clothing,
She laughs at the time to come.

²⁶What she says is full of wisdom,^y
And on her tongue is kindly instruction.^z

²⁷She attends to the interests of her household,
Nor eats the bread of idleness.

²⁸Her children rise up and bless her,
And her husband praises her, saying:

²⁹'Many women^a have done well,
But you excel them all.'

³⁰Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain;
A woman of intelligence^b will have praise.

³¹Give her credit for the work of her hands;
And let her works praise her in the gates.^c

Praised
by her
children
and
husband

Worthy
of honor

§ 30. A Husband's Duty to His Wife, Pr. 5¹⁵⁻²⁰

Fidelity

Pr. 5

¹⁵Drink waters from your own cistern,
And running water from your own well.

¹⁶Should your springs be scattered abroad,
And your rivers of water in the street?^d

¹⁷Let them be for yourself alone,
And not for strangers with you.

¹⁸Let your fountain be blessed,
And rejoice in the wife of your youth.

¹⁹Let^e her breasts satisfy you at all times;
And be ever ravished with her love.

²⁰For why should you, my son, be ravished with a stranger
And embrace the bosom of another woman?

§ 31. Master and Servant, Pr. 29^{21, 19, 19}, 30^{10, 17}

Pr. 29

²¹He who brings up his servant in luxury from a child^f

The
spoiled
servant

^y 31²⁶ Lit., *Her mouth she opens with wisdom.*

^z 31²⁶ Lit., *teaching of kindness.*

^a 31²⁹ Lit., *daughters*; i. e., of men.

^b 31³⁰ So Gk. This is also in harmony with the context. Heb., *a woman who fears the Lord*, is clearly the addition of a pious scribe.

^c 31³¹ Lit., *Give her the fruit of her hands.*

§ 30 The pictures given of Hebrew husbands are, on the whole, less attractive than those of their wives. The sages emphasized, however, the necessity of marital fidelity in husband as well as wife, although ancient, like modern, society failed to punish incontinence in the man as it did in the woman.

^d 5¹⁶ The emphasis in these two verses is on conjugal fidelity. As in Is. 36¹⁵, 51¹, the cistern represents the pleasures of a man's home. Cf. Sg. of Sgs. 4¹⁵.

^e 5¹⁹ Apparently a scribe, commenting on ¹⁸, has inserted at the beginning of ¹⁹ the exclamation, *Lovely hind and charming mountain goat*. It has no parallel and interrupts the sequence of thought.

§ 31 The household slave was recognized as a member of the Heb. family and treated almost as a child of the master. This fact is fully appreciated by the sages, whose utterances upon this theme are more of the nature of observations than precepts.

^f 29²¹ Gk., *He who from a child lives luxuriously will be a servant*. Possibly this is the original reading.

MASTER AND SERVANT

- Will in the end bring trouble upon himself.^g
- ¹⁹A servant will not be corrected by words,^h
For though he understand he will not respond.
- 19** ¹⁰That a fool should have luxury is not desirable,
Much less that a servant should rule over princes.
- 30** ¹⁰Defame not a servant to his master,
Lest he curse you, and you be held guilty.
- 17** ²A wise servant shall rule over a son who acts shamefully,
And shall share the inheritance among brothers.

A ser-
vant as
a ruler

Let a
stranger
not in-
termeddle

The re-
ward of
a faithful
servant

D

MAN IN HIS SOCIAL RELATIONS

§ 32. Social Calls, Pr. 25¹⁷

- Pr. 25** ¹⁷Let your foot be seldom in your neighbor's house,
Lest he become weary of you and hate you.

§ 33. Friendship, Pr. 27¹⁰, 22²⁴, ²⁵, 18²⁴, 17¹⁷, 27⁹, ⁶

- Pr. 27** ¹⁰Your friend, and your father's friend, forsake not;^a
Better is a neighbor near at hand than a brother far away.
- 22** ²⁴Make no friendship with a man given to anger,
And go not with a wrathful man,^b
²⁵Lest you learn his ways
And involve yourself in trouble.^c
- 18** ²⁴There are friends^d who are hurtful,^e
And there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
- 17** ¹⁷A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.^f
- 27** ⁹Oil and perfume rejoice the heart,
So does sweet friendship by sincere counsel.^g

^a 29²¹ So Gk. The meaning of the Heb. is unknown. Possibly it should read, *In the end he will become refractory.*

^b 29¹⁹ Servants, like children, must be disciplined by more than mere words.

Man in His Social Relations.—The sages did not stop to discuss the ultimate basis of right and wrong. The principles enunciated by the earlier prophets, their observations of life, and their own intuitions told them that certain acts were wrong and others right, and so they taught. Their authority was that of conviction based on keen observation and deep experience.

§ 32 In the Orient social calls are made almost entirely by the men. The burden of the labor in the household and in the field falls upon the women, leaving them little time for social life, while the men appear to have so much leisure that the advice of the sage is still to the point.

§ 33 The sages held up a high ideal of friendship. They realized that adversity was the true test of friendship and that friendly criticism was far more valuable than flattery.

^a 27¹⁰ The fact that in the Heb. this proverb has three lines suggests the work of a scribe. The third line is the complement of the first, while the second, *And go not to your brother's house in the day of your distress*, is contrary to 17¹⁷, *A brother is born for adversity*, and to ordinary human experience. There is every reason, therefore, for regarding it as secondary.

^b 22²⁴ This is one of the proverbs derived from the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Intro.*, p. 15).

^c 22²⁵ Lit., *get a snare for yourself.*

^d 18²⁴ So Syr., Targ., certain Gk. MSS., and a slightly revised Heb. text.

^e 18²⁴ Lit., *companions.* Toy (Pr. 365) reads, *who only seek society.* The reading adopted above is supported not only by the context but also by the Syr., Targ., Lat., and certain Gk. MSS. Current translation, *to his own destruction.*

^f 17¹⁷ In time of adversity a man turns to his kinsmen.

^g 27⁹ Lit., *and the sweetness of his friend from counsel of soul.* Lat., inverting the order of the words, *and the soul is sweetened by the good counsels of a friend.*

MAN

⁶Sincere are the wounds of a friend,
But profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

§ 34. Rich and Poor, Pr. 29¹³, 28³, 13²³, 29⁷, 21¹³, 28²⁷, 14²¹, 22⁹

The two
classes

Pr. 29 ¹³The poor man and the oppressor meet together,
The Lord gives light to the eyes of both.

Oppres-
sion of
the poor

28 ³A wicked man^h who oppresses the poor
Is like a rain that sweeps away and gives no bread.

13 ²³The fallow land of the poor yields abundance of food,
But many a man is destroyed through injustice.ⁱ

Obliga-
tions to
the poor

29 ⁷A righteous man considers the cause of the poor;
A wicked man does not understand knowledge.

21 ¹³He who closes his ears to the cry of the poor,
He also shall call and not be answered.

28 ²⁷He who gives to the poor will not lack,
But he who hides his eyes will have many a curse.

14 ³¹He who oppresses the poor reviles his Maker,
But he who has pity on the needy honors him.

22 ⁹He who has a bountiful eye will be blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.

E

MAN IN HIS ECONOMIC RELATIONS

§ 35. Rules for Different Occupations, Pr. 27²³⁻²⁷

Pastoral

Pr. 27 ²³Be diligent to know the state of your flocks,
Give careful attention to your herds,

²⁴For riches are not forever;
And does wealth^a endure to all generations?

²⁵The hay is removed, the aftergrowth appears,
And the grass of the mountains is gathered in.

²⁶The lambs will supply you with clothing
And the goats pay the price of the field,

²⁷And there will be goats' milk enough for your food^b
And maintenance for your maidens.

§ 34 While lacking in the social passion of the prophets, the sages hold substantially the prophetic view of the relations between rich and poor. Their attitude, especially in its emphasis on charity, was carried over into the teaching of the later rabbis.

^h 28³ Heb., *a needy man*, but the idea of the needy oppressing the poor is very strange, and the above reading requires only a slight change in the Heb. Gk., *a virile man in wickedness*.

ⁱ 13²³ The meaning of this proverb is exceedingly doubtful. Possibly it teaches that, although the poor are allowed to share in the products of the fallow land, especially during the seventh year of rest (cf. Vol. IV, § 223), they frequently fall a prey to the oppression and legalized injustice that the prophets denounced.

Man in His Economic Relations.—The economic order which the sages contemplated was, of course, a very simple one, but their observations are still valuable.

§ 35 The homely practical interest of the sages is strikingly illustrated by these verses.

^a 27²⁴ Emending the Heb. in accordance with the context.

^b 27²⁷ Heb. adds, *for the food of your household*, probably an alternative reading included here by conflation of varying MSS.

LABOR AND LAZINESS

§ 36. Labor and Laziness, Pr. 16²⁶, 27¹⁸, 22²⁹, 12²⁷, 24, 22¹³, 26¹⁴⁻¹⁵, 20⁴, 19¹⁵, 15¹⁹, 21²⁵, 18⁹, 14⁴, 10⁵, 24²⁷, 20¹⁴, 22⁷

- Pr. 16** ²⁶The appetite of the laborer labors for him,
For his hunger impels him to work. An in-
centive to labor
- 27** ¹⁸The keeper of the fig tree shall eat its fruit,
And he who waits on his master shall be honored. The re-
ward of
diligence
- 22** ²⁹If you see a man skilled in his business,
He shall stand in the presence of kings,
And not in the presence of obscure men.^c
- 12** ²⁷The slothful man does not stir up his game,
But a diligent man possesses wealth.^d
- ²⁴The hand of the diligent will rule,
But sloth will be enslaved.
- 22** ¹³The sluggard says, 'A lion is outside!
I shall be killed in the streets!' Charac-
teristics
of a lazy
man
- 26** ¹⁴As the door turns on its hinges,
So the lazy man turns on his bed.
¹⁵He dips his hand in the dish,
But does not^e bring it to his mouth!
¹⁶The lazy man is wiser in his own opinion
Than seven who can answer intelligently.
- 20** ⁴The lazy man will not plough in the fall;
He expects a harvest,^f but has none. The evils
that re-
sult from
laziness
- 19** ¹⁵Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep,
And the idle soul shall hunger.
- 15** ¹⁹The way of the lazy is hedged in with thorns,
But the path of the diligent is a well-built highway.
- 21** ²⁵The desire of the lazy man kills him,
For his hands refuse to work.
- 18** ⁹He also who is slack in his work
Is a brother to one who destroys.
- 14** ⁴Where there are no oxen, the crib is clean,^g
But large crops depend on the strength of the ox. Agricul-
tural
maxims
- 10** ⁵He who gathers in summer acts sensibly;^h
He who sleeps in harvest behaves disgracefully.

§ 36 Industry is an important element in the ideal of character held up by the wise.

^c 22²⁹ This is one of the proverbs derived from the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Introd.*, p. 15).

^d 12²⁷ Transposing two words and inserting a preposition as suggested by Toy (Pr. 259). The current translations are unsatisfactory and not supported by the Heb.

^e 26¹⁵ Lit., it tires him to.

^f 20⁴ Lit., he asks (or seeks) in the harvest. Possibly we should translate, *In harvest time he will beg, but will get nothing.*

^g 14⁴ The Heb. word used here ordinarily refers to moral purity. A slight revision of the Heb. gives the meaning, *there is no corn.* In any case the proverb simply emphasizes the importance of the ox in tilling the soil.

^h 10⁵ Lit., is a wise son; i. e., member of the family or clan. The second member also reads, lit., is a son who acts shamefully.

- 24 ²⁷Set in order your work without,
Prepare for your work in the field,
And after that build your house.¹
- 20 ¹⁴'Bad, bad,' says the buyer,
But when he has gone away, he boasts.
- 22 ⁷The rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower is servant to the lender.

§ 37. Poverty, Pr. 23^{20, 21}, 28¹⁹, 22¹⁶, 13¹⁸, 6⁶⁻¹¹, 24³⁰⁻³⁴, 10¹⁵, 14²⁰, 19^{7, 4}, 18²³, 19¹. ²²

- Pr. 23** ²⁰Be not one of those who drink wine to excess,
One of the gluttonous eaters of flesh,
²¹For the drunkard and the glutton come to poverty,
And drowsiness¹ clothes one with rags.
- 28 ¹⁹He who cultivates his land has plenty of bread,
But he who follows vain things^k has plenty of poverty.¹
- 22 ¹⁶He who oppresses the poor to increase his own gain
And he who gives bribes^m come only to want.
- 13 ¹⁸Poverty and shame come to him who shuns knowledge,
But he who heeds reproof is honored.
- 6 ⁶Go to the ant,ⁿ O lazy man;
Consider her ways, and be wise;
⁷She, having no chief,
Overseer, nor ruler,
⁸Provides her food in the summer,
And gathers supplies in the harvest.
⁹How long will you lie down, O lazy man?
When will you arise from your slumber?
¹⁰A little sleep, a little slumber,^o
A little folding of the hands to rest,
¹¹And your poverty comes as a robber,
And your want as a well-armed man.
- 24 ³⁰I went by the field of the lazy man,
By the vineyard of him who lacked sense;

¹ 24²⁷ Unless the first two lines are doublets, something has probably fallen out here, since we have only one line instead of the couplet which we should expect as a balance to the first two lines. The meaning of the proverb, in any case, is that means of subsistence should be assured before one undertakes to establish a family.

§ 37 Poverty was apparently common in the later Jewish community. The sages analyzed the causes of poverty with great skill and with the practical purpose of showing their disciples how to avoid it. At the same time they recognized that it was not always the result of failure or wrong-doing on the part of the poor. The sages were keenly alive to the evils of poverty, but they taught that honest poverty was not dishonorable.

¹ 23²¹ *I. e.*, the torpid state that results from intemperate drinking and eating.

^k 28¹⁹ *Or persons.*

¹ 28¹⁹ An intentional play on the word for *plenty*.

^m 22¹⁶ *Lit., gives to the rich.* The meaning of this expression is uncertain, but giving to the rich was probably equivalent to bribing the judges, who were drawn from the rich and ruling class. The object would be to secure immunity from oppression.

ⁿ 6⁶ The ancients were ignorant of the wonderful social organization that characterizes the ants (cf. Aristotle, *De Anim.*, I, 1¹¹). Aelian, in the third century, was the first to note that they had leaders and nobles. It was their activity and obvious industry that attracted the attention of the Hebrews.

^o 6¹⁰ This proverb is repeated in 24³⁰ ¹.

Commer-
cial
maxims

Causes:
Intem-
perance

Shift-
lessness

Acts of
oppres-
sion

Failure
to listen
to cor-
rection

Laziness

POVERTY

- ²¹It was all overgrown with thorns,
 Its surface was covered with nettles,
 And its stone wall was broken down.
³²Then I beheld and reflected,
 I saw and received instruction:
³³A little sleep, a little slumber,
 A little folding of the hands to rest,
³⁴And your poverty comes as a robber,^p
 And your want as a well-armed man.
10 ¹⁵The rich man's wealth is his strong city,
 The destruction of the poor is their poverty.^q

14 ²⁰A poor man is hated even by his neighbor,
 But a rich man has many friends.

- 19** ⁷All a poor man's kinsmen hate him;
 How much more do his friends stand aloof!^r
⁴Wealth adds many friends,
 But the poor—his friend draws away!

18 ²³The poor man uses entreaties,
 But the rich man answers roughly.^s

- 19** ¹Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity
 Than he who is false in his speech, though rich.^t

²²A man's desire is the measure of his kindness,^u
 And a poor man is better than a liar.

Disad-
vantages
of pov-
erty

Prefer-
able to
dis-
honesty

Obtained
by
violence

By in-
heritance

§ 38. The Acquisition and Value of Wealth, Pr. 11¹⁶, 19¹⁴, 15⁶, 22⁴, 21⁵, 12¹¹, 13⁴,
 10⁴, 13¹¹, 14²³, 10²², 13⁸, 18¹¹, 10², 21⁶, 20²¹, 28²⁰, 22, 6, 22¹, 20¹⁵, 11⁴, 23,
 16⁸, 23⁴⁻⁵, 15¹⁶, 16¹⁹, 30⁷⁻⁹, 13⁷, 11²⁴

Pr. 11 ¹⁶A gracious woman attains honor,
 And violent men attain riches.

- 19** ¹⁴Houses and riches are an inheritance,^v
 But a prudent wife comes from the Lord.

^p 24⁴ Slightly revising the Heb., as the context requires, to agree with 6¹¹.

^q 10¹⁶ Cf. 18¹¹ for a variation of the same proverb.

^r 19⁷ The words which follow in the Heb., *he who pursues words, they are not*, make no sense. The Lat., *he who pursues only words shall have nothing*, is obviously an endeavor to read a meaning into the context. The current English translations are unwarranted. The Heb. probably represents a marginal note that has crept into the text.

^s 18²³ Simply a reflection of the customs of the day. It is in general true to human nature in all ages.

^t 19¹ So Syr. and the parallel in 28⁶. Heb., *a fool*.

^u 19²² The meaning of this first line is doubtful. The Heb. reads, lit., *what a man desires is his kindness; i. e., a good intention is the essential thing*, or, more probably, *a man's kind acts are regulated by his motives*. Gk., *mercy is fruit to a man*. Lat., *a needy man is merciful*.

^v § 38 The wise recognized fully that wealth was a powerful motive with men and did not hesitate to employ this motive as an incentive to right conduct. They did not condemn wealth if justly acquired. On the other hand, they never made it the chief goal in life. In fact, they condemned all men and methods that aimed to acquire it rapidly, for as a rule these methods were evil, and suddenly acquired wealth was usually a curse rather than a blessing to its possessor. Many things were much more desirable than wealth. The golden mean between poverty and wealth was by far the best blessing. Above all, they taught the importance of the contented mind that left to God the provision of what was needful.

^v 19¹⁴ Heb. adds, *of (i. e., from) fathers*.

MAN

By wise
and right
conduct

- 15 ⁶In the house of the righteous is much treasure,
But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.^w
22 ⁴The reward of humility and reverence for the Lord
Is riches and honor and life.

By dili-
gence

- 21 ⁵The plans^x of the diligent lead only to plenty,
But every one who hastes^y hastes only to want.
12 ¹¹He who cultivates his land has plenty of bread,
But he who follows vain things is lacking in sense.^z
13 ⁴The lazy man^a desires, and has nothing,
But the diligent enjoys plenty.^b
10 ⁴Slack management^c brings only poverty,
But efficiency^d makes a man rich.
13 ¹¹Wealth quickly^e acquired grows less,
But what is slowly amassed increases.^f

By labor

- 14 ²³In all labor there is profit,
But mere talk^g tends only to penury.
10 ²²The blessing of the Lord makes a man rich,
And he adds no sorrow with it.^h

Gift of
God

- 13 ⁸The ransom of a man's life is his riches,
But the poor has no vindicator.ⁱ
18 ¹¹The rich man's wealth is his strong city,
As a high wall in his estimation.

Its value:
if ac-
quired
justly

- 10 ²Treasures unjustly acquired profit nothing,
But righteousness delivers from death.
21 ⁶He who acquires^j wealth by fraud^k
Pursues a bubble^l into deadly snares.^m

If ac-
quired
unjustly

- 20 ²¹An inheritance may be gotten hastily at the beginning,
But its final conditionⁿ will not be blessed.
28 ²⁰An honest man shall be abundantly blessed,
But haste^o to get rich shall be punished.^p

^w 15^c Or, Gk., *the revenue of the wicked is cut off*. The above translation, however, voices the general truth that right action brings a good reward, but wickedness only trouble.

^x 21^c Or, with Targ., *methods*.

^y 21^d *I. e.*, is in a hurry to get rich.

^z 12^d Or, slightly changing the Heb. to make the parallelism complete, *lacks bread*. But cf. the more forcible parallel in 28¹⁹ (§ 37).

^a 13^d Lit., *the soul of the lazy man*.

^b 13^d Lit., *is made fat*.

^c 10^d Lit., *a slack hand*.

^d 10^d Lit., *hand of the diligent*. This has the brief, crisp form of a popular proverb.

^e 13^d So Gk. and Lat. Heb., *by vanity*.

^f 13^d Following the Heb. punctuation demanded by the context. The current translation is, *but he who gathers by labor shall have increase*. The proverb reflects general experience.

^g 14²² Lit., *the talk of the lips*.

^h 10²² *I. e.*, the Lord gives men wealth without any of the regrets and disgrace that men have when they seek to acquire it unjustly.

ⁱ 13^d The reading and meaning of this line are doubtful. Through a serbal repetition of 13^d the last two words in the Heb. make a statement contrary to fact. The reconstruction is on the basis of the demands of the context.

^j 21^c Pointing the Heb. as suggested by the Gk.

^k 21^c Lit., *a lying tongue*.

^l 21^c Heb., *vapor driven to and fro*; Gk., *vanities*.

^m 21^c Slightly altering the Heb. (lit., *seekers of death*) in accordance with the Gk.

ⁿ 20^d Lit., *end*.

^o 28²⁰ Lit., *he who hastes*.

^p 28²⁰ Lit., *shall not be acquitted*.

WEALTH

- 22^a** A man with an evil eye hastes after riches,
Not knowing that want shall come upon him.
6 Better is a poor man who lives a blameless life
Than one who is dishonest,^a though he be rich.
- 22** ¹A good name is better^r than great riches,
More highly esteemed^s than silver and gold.
- 20** ¹⁵There is gold and abundance of rubies,
But wise lips^t are a precious jewel.
- 11** ⁴Wealth is not profitable in the day of wrath,
But righteousness delivers from death.
²⁵He who trusts in riches shall fail,
But the upright flourish like a green leaf.
- 16** ⁸Better is a little with righteousness
Than great revenues with injustice.
- 23** ⁴Toil not that you may become rich;
Cease through your own understanding.
⁵Should you set your eyes upon it, it is gone!^u
For riches take their flight,^v
Like an eagle that soars toward heaven.
- 15** ¹⁶Better is little with reverence for the Lord
Than great treasure and trouble as well.
- 16** ¹⁹Better is a modest spirit with the humble
Than to divide spoil^w with the arrogant.
- 30** ⁷Two things I ask of thee,^x
Deny me them not ere I die:
⁸Put far from me deceit and lying,
Give me neither poverty nor riches;
Provide me with the food that I need,^y
⁹That I may not be filled to the full and deny thee,^x
And say, 'Who is the Lord?'
Or else be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.
- 13** ⁷Some pretend to be^z rich, yet have nothing;
Others pretend to be^z poor, yet have great wealth.
- 11** ²⁴One man disperses his wealth, yet grows rich;
Another withholds too much, yet comes to want.^a

Relative
to honor

Relative
to knowl-
edge

Relative
to right-
eousness

Difficult
to retain

Not soul-
satisfying

The de-
sirable
mean

False
and true
attitude
toward
wealth

^a 28^o Lit., *crooked in his ways*.

^r 22¹ Lit., *rather to be chosen*.

^s 22¹ Or, more lit., *favor is better*.

^t 20¹⁵ Lit., *lips of knowledge*.

^u 23⁵ This line is uncertain in the Heb., but the VSS. suggest the reading adopted.

^v 23⁵ Lit., *make wings for themselves*, and so in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet*, from which this and the preceding proverb are derived (cf. *Introd.*, p. 15). In the next line the Egyptian proverb has *geese* where the Heb. has *eagles*. Geese were not as highly regarded by the Hebrews as by the Egyptians.

^w 16¹⁹ *I. e.*, share wealth. The figure, derived from warfare, was probably intended to imply that the wealth was acquired through oppression or legal injustice.

^x 30^{7, 9} The archaic pronoun is retained because the words are addressed to the Deity.

^y 30⁸ Lit., *tear off for me the foot of my portion*, *i. e.*, the food that is needful for me and my rightful portion. The principle underlying this noble prayer is incorporated in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, *Give us this day our daily bread*, *i. e.*, that bread which we daily need.

^z 13⁷ Lit., *make themselves*.

^a 11²⁴ The liberal man prospers; the miser loses the best things of life.

MAN

F

MAN IN HIS LEGAL RELATIONS

§ 39. Legal Procedure, Pr. 18¹⁷, 25⁷⁻¹⁰, 18¹⁸, 29²⁴

In a
lawsuit

- Pr. 18** ¹⁷The first to speak^a is right in his plea;
Then comes his fellow^b and tests him.
- 25** ⁷What your eyes have seen
⁸Report not hastily in public,^c
For^d what will you do in the end,
When your neighbor puts you to shame?^e
⁹Plead your case^e with your neighbor himself,
And disclose not another's secret,
¹⁰Lest he who hears it revile you,
And infamy be with you always.^f
- 18** ¹⁸The lot makes quarrels cease
And separates the mighty.^g
- 29** ²⁴He who is partner with a thief hates himself:
He hears the oath, but tells nothing.

Use of
the lot

Obliga-
tions of
an oath

§ 40. Duties of Witnesses and Judges, Pr. 24²⁸⁻²⁹, 25¹⁸, 19²⁸, 12¹⁷, 14²⁵, 19⁵, 21²⁸, 17²³, 15²⁷, 18⁵, 17²⁶, 28²¹, 24²⁴⁻²⁶

Import-
tance of
bearing
true tes-
timony

- Pr. 24** ²⁸Be not a witness against your neighbor without cause,
And do not^h deceive with your lips.
²⁹Say not: 'I will do to him as he did to me,
I will pay back the man for his deed.'
- 25** ¹⁸A maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow
Is he who bears false witness against his neighbor.
- 19** ²⁸A worthless witness mocks at judgment,
And the mouth of the wicked swallows iniquity.
- 12** ¹⁷He who speaks truth promotes justice,
But a false witness sets forth deceit.
- 14** ²⁵A reliable witness saves lives,
But he who tells lies is a deceiver.

Man in His Legal Relations.—Again the sound good sense of the counsel makes it surprising applicable to all times in spite of changes in legal forms.

§ 39 Observation evidently convinced the sages that it was best to settle controversies out of court.

^a 18¹⁷ The words, *to speak*, or others of similar import, are implied in the Heb. but not expressed.

^b 18¹⁷ *I. e.*, the opposing party. An unsound argument may seem very convincing before the other side has been heard.

^c 25⁸ Lit., *Go not forth hastily to strive*, but this has no connection with the preceding line, and the metre demands that these two lines be taken together. The above reading, requiring only the alteration of two vowels in the Heb., follows the Gk. (cf. Toy, Pr. 462).

^d 25⁸ Heb., *lest*, but this is impossible unless something has dropped out after it, as the current translations assume. The words meaning *for* and *lest* might be confused in a carelessly written manuscript.

^e 25⁹ Lit., *strive your strife*.

^f 25¹⁰ Lit., *your infamy turn not away*.

^g 18¹⁸ Casting lots is a crude type of arbitration (cp. *tossing up* in modern sport).

§ 40 The sages duly emphasize the ninth commandment.

^h 24²⁸ So Gk. The Heb. is in the form of a question.

WITNESSES AND JUDGES

- 19 ⁶A false witness shall not go unpunished,
Nor shall he who tells lies escape.
- 21 ²⁸A false witness shall perish,
But a man who hears shall speak forever.¹
- 17 ²³A wicked man takes a bribe from the bosom¹
To pervert the paths of justice.
- 15 ²⁷He who is greedy of gain brings trouble on his own house;
But he who hates bribes shall live.
- 18 ⁸Partiality to the wicked is not good,
Depriving the righteous of justice.^k
- 17 ²⁶Also to punish the righteous is not good,
To smite the noble for uprightness.¹
- 28 ²¹To show partiality is not good;
For a piece of bread a man may do wrong.
- 24 ²⁴The man who says to the wicked, 'You are right';
Nations will curse him; peoples denounce him;
²⁵But it will be well with those who reprove;
The blessing of prosperity shall rest upon them.
- ²⁶He kisses the lips
Who gives an honest answer.^m

A judge
to show
no par-
tiality

§ 41. The Object of Punishment, Pr. 20³⁰, 19¹⁹, 25, 21¹¹

- Pr. 20** ³⁰Stripes that wound are remedies for evil,
And strokes in the innermost parts of the body.ⁿ
- 19 ¹⁹A man of great wrath shall bear the penalty,
For if you deliver him, you must do it again.^o
- ²⁵Smite a mocker, and the simple man will learn prudence,
But reprove an intelligent man, and he will understand.^p
- 21 ¹¹By the punishment of the mocker the simple man is made wise,
But by instruction the wise man gains knowledge.^q

Remedy
for evil

Effect
depends
on in-
telligence

§ 42. Dangers of Suretyship, Pr. 22²⁶⁻²⁷, 17¹³, 11¹⁵, 6¹⁻⁵, 20¹⁶

- Pr. 22** ²⁶Be not one of those who pledge themselves,^r
Or of those who are bondsmen for others' debts;

Brings
personal
loss and
distress

¹ 21²⁸ This is a literal translation. No satisfying explanation of the line has been offered.
¹ 17²³ *I. e.*, probably, the bosom of the briber, the wicked man being the judge. The expres-
sion, *from the bosom*, refers to the secrecy with which the bribe is offered and accepted (cf. 21¹⁴, § 44).

^k 18⁵ *Lit.*, *to turn aside the righteous in judgment.*

¹ 17²⁶ *Or is contrary to justice.*

^m 24²⁶ *I. e.*, he proves himself a true friend who reproves an offender.

ⁿ § 41 The sages clearly regard punishment as redemptive rather than vindictive in purpose
Its preventive aspect is also considered.

^o 20³⁰ The meaning of this proverb is obscure and the text uncertain, but the essential thought
appears to be that punishment, to be effective, must be severe.

^p 19¹⁹ Another difficult proverb. No explanation or reconstruction of the text can be con-
fidently adopted. The most obvious interpretation is that if a man of ungoverned temper is de-
livered from the consequences of his acts, he will repeat them and incur the same penalty again.

^q 19²⁵ *I. e.*, a word to the wise is sufficient, but the simple require an object-lesson.

^r 21¹¹ Cf. note on the preceding proverb, 19²⁵.

§ 42 The worldly prudence advocated here and elsewhere in the Wisdom Literature, though
far from the spirit of Mt. 5⁴⁰⁻⁴², is not so far from the approved practice of the modern world.

^r 22²⁶, 17¹³ *Lit.*, *strike(s) hands.*

MAN

²⁷If you have nothing with which to pay,

Why should your bed be taken from under you?

17 ¹⁸A man has no intelligence who pledges himself^r
And becomes surety in the presence of his neighbor.

11 ¹⁵He who is bondsman for another^s will suffer,
But he who hates suretyship is safe.

Puts a
man
under the
power of
another

6 ¹My son, if you have become bondsman for your neighbor,

If you have pledged yourself for another,

²Have snared yourself with your lips,^t

Trapped yourself by your spoken words,

³Then do this, my son, and be free,

For you are in your neighbor's power:

Go, humble yourself,^u

And importune your neighbor.

⁴Give no sleep to your eyes,

Nor slumber to your eyelids.

⁵Free yourself as a gazelle from the trap;^v

And as a bird from the hand of the hunter.

Destroys
his busi-
ness
standing

20 ¹⁶Take his garment who is^w bondsman for a stranger,
And hold him in pledge who is bondsman^x for others.^y

G

MAN IN HIS POLITICAL RELATIONS

§ 43. The Character and Rule of the King, Pr. 21¹, 16¹², 17⁷, 28^{16, 2}, 20²⁸, 25², 16¹⁰, 20⁸, 29¹⁴, 31^{4, 5, 8, 9, 25³⁻⁵}, 19¹², 20², 16^{15, 14, 13, 14³⁵}, 28¹⁵, 29^{2, 12, 4}, 20²⁶, 25¹³

Subject
to the
Lord

Pr. 21 ¹A king's heart in the hand of the Lord is like watercourses:
He turns it wherever he will.^a

16 ¹²It is a shame for rulers to do wrong;
For a throne is established by doing right.

17 ⁷Proud speech^b is not becoming to a fool,
Still less is falsehood^c to a prince.

Princi-
ples that
should
guide
him

^r 22²⁶, 17¹⁸ Lit., *strike (s) hands*.
^s 11¹⁶ Heb., *stranger*; i. e., either a member of another clan or family or a foreigner.
^t 6² So Gk. Through a scribal error the Heb. has the phrase, *by the words of your mouth*, which recurs at the end of the vs.

^u 6³ So Heb., though the meaning is doubtful. Gk., supported by the context, *do not be slack*.

^v 6⁵ So Gk., Syr., and Targ. Heb., *hand*.

^w 20¹⁶ Lit., *for he is*.

^x 20¹⁶ The words, *who is bondsman*, are not repeated in the Heb.

^y 20¹⁶ Lit., *strangers*, or (Heb. margin) *a strange woman*.

Man in His Political Relations.—While the wise assumed a monarchical form of government, their sayings apply with almost equal force to democratic governments.

§ 43 There is no revolutionary doctrine in the political ideas of the sages, unless it be involved in their insistence (characteristic of the Hebrew spirit) upon the moral responsibility of rulers.

^a 21¹ i. e., it is as thoroughly under control as the water in an irrigation canal.

^b 17⁷ Lit., *a tip of superiority* (?).

^c 17⁷ Lit., *a tip of falsehood*.

THE KING

- 28 ¹⁶A prince without insight is a great oppressor,
 But one who hates greed^d will prolong his days.
²For the transgression of a land its princes are many,
 But with intelligent men^e who know the right it will endure.^f
- 20 ²⁸Mercy and truth preserve the king,
 And he upholds his throne by mercy.
- 25 ²The glory of God is concealing something;
 The glory of kings is searching out something. As judge
- 16 ¹⁰A divine sentence is on the lips of the king;
 His mouth does not transgress in giving judgment.
- 20 ⁸A king who sits on the throne of judgment
 Scatters^g all evil with his eyes.
- 29 ¹⁴The ruler who faithfully judges the poor,—
 His throne shall be established forever.
- 31 ⁴It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine.^h Sobriety
 Nor for princes to say, 'Where is strong drink?'
⁵Lest they drink, and forget the law,
 And fail to give justice to the afflicted.
- ⁸Open your mouth for the dumb;
 Uphold the rights of the suffering;ⁱ
⁹Open your mouth, and judge justly;
 Give justice to the poor and needy. Cham-
pionship
of the
poor
- 25 ³The heavens are high,^j and the earth is deep,^k
 But the mind of a king^l is unsearchable. His plans
secret
- ⁴Take away the dross from the silver,
 And out comes a vessel for the silversmith;
⁵Take away the wicked from the king,
 And his throne will be established in righteousness. His coun-
sellors
- 19 ¹²The wrath of a king is like the roaring of a lion,
 But his favor is like dew on the grass. His favor
or wrath
- 20 ²The dread of a king is like the roaring of a lion;
 He who quarrels^l with him wrongs himself.
- 16 ¹⁵In the light of the king's countenance is life,
 And his favor is like a rain-cloud of Spring.^m

^d 28¹⁶ Lit., *unjust gain*; *i. e.*, exploiting his subjects.

^e 28² Lit., *Man* (in the generic sense).

^f 28² This line is hopelessly ambiguous. Whatever the exact meaning, it apparently refers to the dependence of national stability upon intelligence and knowledge in the people (or rulers). The connection between the two lines is not clear.

^g 20⁸ Or *winnows*.

^h 31⁴ The text of this verse is much disputed—particularly the proper name and the repetition.

ⁱ 31⁸ Slightly emending the Heb., lit., *sons of passing by* (or *away*).

^j 25⁸ Lit., *for height, for depth*.

^k 25³ Lit., *kings*.

^l 20² Heb., *is angry with him*; Gk., *angers him*.

^m 16¹⁵ Lit., *a cloud of the latter rain*; *i. e.*, a cloud bringing the welcome Spring rain, upon which the growth of the crops depended.

¹⁴The wrath of a king is like messengers of death,
And a wise man will appease it.

¹⁵Righteous lips are the delight of a king,
And he loves him who speaks what is right.

14 ³⁰The king's favor is shown to a servant who acts wisely,
But his anger to one who acts shamefully.

28 ¹⁵A roaring lion and a ranging bear
Is a wicked ruler over a poor people.

29 ²When the righteous rule,^a the people rejoice,
But when wicked men govern, the people sigh.

¹²If a ruler listens to falsehood,
All of his courtiers are wicked.

⁴A ruler by justice establishes a land;
But he who exacts gifts ruins it.

20 ²⁶A wise king winnows the wicked
And runs the wheel^o over them.

25 ¹³Like the cold of snow in the time^p of harvest
Is a faithful messenger to those who send him.^q

Effects
of his
rule

§ 44. Duties of the People, Pr. 14²⁸, 23¹⁻³, 25^{6, 7, 15}, 24^{21, 22}, 17¹¹, 13¹⁷, 18¹⁶, 21¹⁴,
17⁸, 29⁸, 11^{10, 11, 14}, 14³⁴

Pr. 14 ²⁸In a multitude of people lies the glory of a king,
But in a lack of subjects^r lies a prince's destruction.

23 ¹When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
Consider well who^s is before you,

²And put^t a knife to your throat,
If you have a large appetite.^u

³Do not desire his dainties,—
They are deceitful food.

25 ⁶Claim not honor in a ruler's presence,
And stand not in the place of great men;

⁷For it is better that you be told, 'Come up here,'
Than that you should be humbled before the prince.^v

¹⁵By forbearance a ruler is persuaded,
And a soft tongue will break a bone.

Importance of
the
people

Bearing
in the
presence
of rulers

Forbearance
before a
ruler

^a 29¹ Heb., *increase*. The above reading requires only a slight emendation and improves the parallelism. But cf. vs. 16 (§ 58) and note.

^o 20² Referring to the primitive method of threshing employed by the Hebrews.

^p 25¹² Lit., *day*, but it is not unlikely that the original text read *heat* (so Gk. and Syr.). The two words might easily be confused in a manuscript.

^q 25¹³ Heb. has a third line: *he refreshes his master's soul*. This is probably a gloss, i. e., a scribe's explanatory note, written on the margin and in subsequent copies incorporated into the text.

§ 44 Nowhere is the non-revolutionary character of the sages' teaching more strikingly exhibited than in this section.

^r 14²⁸ Lit., *people*, but the word is not the same as that used in the preceding line.

^s 23¹ Or *what*. It is not quite clear whether Heb. in these verses refers to respectful behavior or caution against poisoning, but most commentators prefer the former alternative, and the parallel with the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Introd.*, p. 15) favors it.

^t 23² Or *you will put*.

^u 23² Lit., *if you are the owner of an appetite*.

^v 25⁷ Cf. Lk. 14⁷⁻¹¹. The remainder of the vs. belongs with vs. 8 (cf. § 39).

THE PEOPLE

- 24 ²¹Fear the Lord, my son, and the king;
Do not associate^w with those who change,^x
²²For their calamity shall rise suddenly,
And who knows the end of their years?^y
- 17 ¹¹A rebel^a seeks only evil,
But a cruel messenger^a shall be sent against him.
- 13 ¹⁷A wicked messenger falls into mischief,
But a trustworthy envoy is health.
- 18 ¹⁶A man's gift makes room for him
And brings him before great men.
- 21 ¹⁴A gift in secret averts anger,
And a present in the bosom strong wrath.
- 17 ⁸A gift is a precious stone^b in the eyes of its owner:^c
Wherever it^d turns, it^d prospers.
- 29 ⁸Scornful men kindle discord in a city,
But wise men turn aside wrath.
- 11 ¹⁰When the righteous prosper the city rejoices,
But when the wicked perish there is shouting.
¹¹By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
But by the counsel of the wicked it is overthrown.
¹⁴Where there is no wise guidance a people falls,
But in much counsel there is safety.
- 14 ³⁴Righteousness exalts a nation,
But sin is the disgrace of peoples.

Loyalty
to the
existing
govern-
ment

The dip-
lomatic
use of a
gift

What
citizens
confer
upon
their
country

II

MAN'S DUTY TO ANIMALS

§ 45. Consideration for Brute Beasts, Pr. 12¹⁰

- Pr. 12 ¹⁰A just man regards the life of^a his beast
But the heart^b of the wicked is cruel.

^w 24²¹ Lit., *miz yourself*.

^x 24²¹ Slightly correcting the Heb. The reference is not entirely clear. Revolutionists are perhaps in the mind of the sage. Cf. Rom. 13¹. The Gk., following a variant and possibly original text, reads, *Do not disobey either of them*. If this be followed, the possessives in ²² must be regarded as equivalent to subjects, so that the vs. may be translated:

²² *For the ruin they bring is sudden,
And the destruction they send who can see?*

^y 24²² Or *of them both*, but this has no meaning in the context, unless the reading of vs. ²¹ noted above be adopted.

^a 17¹¹ Lit., *rebellion*.

^b 17¹¹ Or *angel*.

^c 17⁸ Or (possibly) *a lucky stone*.

^d 17⁸ Probably the giver (i. e., one who has something to give) is meant rather than the recipient of a gift.

^e 17⁸ Or *he*.

Man's Duty to Animals.—In spite of the great apostle's scornful question (I Cor. 9⁹), Israel's sages and lawgivers were rightly concerned for man's dumb servants.

§ 45 Here, as in the philanthropic laws of Dt. (Vol. IV), are laid the foundations of the modern humanitarian movement.

^a 12¹⁰ Lit., *knows the soul of*. The Heb. word indicates not only the life but also the well-being and comfort of the animal.

^b 12¹⁰ This word is often translated, *tender mercies*. It means lit., *bowels*, regarded as the seat of the kindly emotions.

MAN

I

MAN'S DUTY TO HIMSELF

§ 46. Temperance, Pr. 20¹³, 25¹⁶, 27⁷, 21¹⁷, 20¹, 23²⁹⁻³⁵, 18²¹, 14³, 12¹³, 20²⁵, 18¹³,
29²⁰, 15²³, 17^{28, 27}, 13³, 21²³, 10¹⁹, 4²⁴

In
sleeping

Pr. 20 ¹³Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty;
Open your eyes and you shall have plenty.

In eating

25 ¹⁶If you find honey, eat what is sufficient,
That you may not be surfeited and vomit it up.
27 ⁷One who is full refuses honeycomb,
But to the hungry every bitter thing is sweet.

In
drinking

21 ¹⁷He who loves pleasure shall come to want,
And he who loves wine and oil shall not be rich.
20 ¹Wine is a mocker, strong drink is turbulent,
And whoever is misled^a by it is not wise.
23 ²⁹Who cries,^b 'Woe?' Who, 'Alas?'
Who has contentions? Who complains?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
³⁰They who linger long over wine,
They who go in to taste mixed wine.
³¹So look not upon the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles^c in the cup,^d
³²At last it bites like a snake,
And stings like an adder.
³³Then you will see strange things,
And your mind utter distorted ideas.
³⁴You will be like one sleeping at sea,^e
Like one asleep in a great storm.^f
³⁵I have been struck, but I feel no pain;
I have been beaten, but I am not conscious of it.
When shall I awake from my wine?^g
I will seek it yet again.^h

Man's Duty to Himself.—In their interest in the simplest details of personal life the sages were forerunners of the rabbis whose teachings are found in the Talmud, but the hair-splitting casuistry of the rabbis is alien to the spirit of the wise.

§ 46 Wine was commonly used as food by the Israelites, especially in connection with their religious feasts, cf. Dt. 14²⁶. The Nazirites, the Rechabites, and, in later times, the priests were under obligation to refrain from it, because it was associated with the corrupt Canaanite civilization. The evils of intemperance were denounced by prophets like Isaiah, but the sages were the first to point out in detail its malign effects upon the individual.

^a 20¹ Lit., *errs*.

^b 23²⁹ Lit., *who has*. The sage here graphically reproduces the crazed exclamations of those who engage in drunken brawls.

^c 23³¹ Lit., *gives its eye*; i. e., sparkles or gleams.

^d 23³¹ Heb. adds, *it goes straight*; i. e., glides down smoothly. This is probably a later scribal comment or a fragment of an original couplet. Cf. Sg. of Sgs., 7⁹.

^e 23³⁴ Lit., *in the midst of the sea*; i. e., in a boat at sea.

^f 23³⁴ The exact meaning of the Heb. is unknown. The Gk. is followed in correcting the Heb.

^g 23³⁵ Supplying the words required by the metre and the allusion in the second line.

TEMPERANCE

In the
use of
words

- 18 ²¹Life and death are in the power of the tongue;
They who are fond of using it must eat its fruit.
- 14 ³In the mouth of fools is a sprig of pride,^b
But the lips of the wise shall preserve them.
- 12 ¹³By the sin of his lips a wicked man is ensnared,ⁱ
But a righteous man escapes trouble.
- 20 ²⁵It is a snare to a man rashly to say, 'It is holy,'^j
And after vows to make inquiry.
- 18 ¹⁸He who answers before he hears
Covers himself with confusion.
- 29 ²⁰Do you see a man who speaks before he thinks?²
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- 15 ²³A man has joy from the utterance^k of his mouth,
And a word in due season, how good it is!
- 17 ²⁸Even a fool, if he keeps still, is considered wise;
Prudent, if he keeps his lips shut.
- ²⁷He who is sparing of his words has knowledge,
And he who has a cool spirit is a man of sense.
- 13 ³He who guards his mouth preserves his life,
But he who opens wide his lips—it is his ruin.
- 21 ²³He who guards his mouth and tongue
Guards himself against trouble.
- 10 ¹⁹In much talk^l transgression is not lacking,
But he who controls his lips acts wisely.^m
- 4 ²⁴Banish from you crooked speech,
And put deception far from your lips.

§ 47. Self-restraint, Pr. 25²⁸, 14¹⁷, 29¹¹, 19¹¹, 14²⁹, 16³², 29³, 31³, 23²⁶⁻²⁸, 22¹⁴, 30²⁰,
5¹⁻¹⁴, 6²⁰⁻³⁵, 7¹⁻²⁷

Pr. 25 ²⁸A man without self-control
Is a ruined city whose wall is broken.

14 ¹⁷The quick-tempered man acts foolishly,
And a malicious plotter is hated.

29 ¹¹A fool gives vent to his wrath,
But a wise man restrainsⁿ his anger.^o

In con-
trolling
the
temper

^b 14³ *I. e.*, a shoot sprouting from the mouth of fools. The Heb. word is used elsewhere only in Is. 11¹.

ⁱ 12¹³ So Gk. Heb., *is an evil snare*. The Gk. adds what may be an original proverb that has been lost from the Heb.:

He whose looks are mild will be pitied,

He who enters into litigation in the gates will bring trouble on souls.

Probably the last line originally read, *on himself*.

^j 20²⁷ When a Hebrew declared a thing to be holy or consecrated, it belonged to Jehovah and could never be claimed again by him. The proverb guards against rash devotion and later subterfuges to recover the possession.

^k 15²³ Lit., *answer*. *I. e.*, what a man says determines his success and therefore happiness.

^l 10¹⁹ Lit., *a multitude of words*.

^m 10¹⁹ Cf. *Sayings of the Fathers*, 3¹³, *Silence is a hedge about wisdom*.

§ 47 The importance attached by the sages to the control of the temper and of sexual passion is evinced by the number and elaboration of the proverbs devoted to these matters.

ⁿ 29¹¹ So Gk. Heb. is corrupt.

^o 29¹¹ Following a slightly revised Heb. text that is strongly supported by the context. †

MAN

- 19 ¹¹A man's wisdom makes him patient,
It is his glory to overlook faults.
- 14 ²⁹The patient man shows great wisdom,
But the quick-tempered man acts like a fool!
- 16 ³²He who is patient is better than a warrior,
And he who rules his temper than he who takes a city.
- 29 ³He who loves wisdom rejoices his father,
But he who associates with harlots wastes his wealth.
- 31 ³Give not your strength to women,
Nor your morals to those who slay kings.^p
- 23 ²⁶My son, give me your attention,^q
And pay careful heed^r to my guidance.
²⁷For a harlot is a deep pit,
And an adulteress^s a narrow well.
²⁸She lies in wait as a robber,
And increases the faithless among men.^t
- 22 ¹⁴The mouth of an adulteress is a deep pit;
He who is abhorred of the Lord shall fall in it.
- 30 ²⁰This is the way of an adulteress:
She eats and wipes her mouth,
And says, 'I have done no wrong.'^u
- 5 ¹My son, give heed to my wisdom,^u
Lend your ear to my understanding,^u
²That discretion may watch over you,^v
And the knowledge of your lips may keep you.^w
³For the lips of a harlot drop honey,
And her speech^x is smoother than oil,
⁴But at the last^y she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
⁵Her feet lead down to death,
And her steps reach^z the abode of the dead.
⁶She does not make level the path of life:^a
Her paths are unstable, though she knows it not.
⁷Now therefore, my son,^b give heed,
And do not depart from my words.

^p 31³ Slightly correcting the Heb.

^q 23²⁶ Lit., *heart, mind*; *i. e.*, attention.

^r 23²⁶ So the VSS. Heb., *take delight in*.

^s 23²⁷ Lit., *strange woman*; *i. e.*, one belonging to another clan or family and therefore an adulteress; cf. 7^{5, 14}, where this relation is made very clear.

^t 23²⁸ *I. e.*, those who yield to her attractions and are faithless to their marital obligations.

^u 5¹ Or *to wisdom and to understanding*. The wise nowhere else claim that they themselves speak wisdom or understanding, but only that they are able to develop those qualities in others.

^v 5² The text is defective. *Over you* is implied, but not found in the Heb. Cf. 2¹¹.

^w 5² Following suggestions contained in the Gk. in restoring the sense required by the context. Heb., *that your lips may keep knowledge*, but this makes little sense. Toy restores, *That knowledge may keep thee* (Pr. 101).

^x 5³ Lit., *palate*.

^y 5⁴ Lit., *her last*.

^z 5⁵ Lit., *take hold on* (the path).

^a 5⁶ The contrast is with 4²⁶. The VSS. supply the negative required instead of the Heb., *lest*.

^b 5⁷ So Gk. and Lat. and the parallels in 5^{1, 20}. Heb., *sons*.

SELF-RESTRAINT

- ⁸Keep the course of your life far from her,
 And go not near the door of her house;
⁹Lest you give your honor^c to others,
 And the toil of your years^d to the cruel;^e
¹⁰Lest strangers enjoy your wealth,
 And your labors pass to an alien;
¹¹Lest you groan when your end shall come,
 When your flesh and body are consumed,
¹²And say, 'Alas! I hated instruction,
 And my mind has despised reproof;
¹³I have disregarded the voice of my teachers,
 Nor given heed to my instructors!
¹⁴I was nearly overwhelmed by calamity^f
 In the congregation and the assembly.'
- 6** ²⁰My son, keep your father's precept,
 And reject not your mother's teaching.
²¹Bind them continually upon your heart,
 Tie them about your neck,
²³For their precept is a lamp,^g and their teaching is light;
 Reproofs and instruction^h are the way of life.
²²When you walk, wisdomⁱ will lead you;
 When you lie down, she will watch over you,
 And when you awake, she will talk with you.
²⁴To keep you from the evil woman,
 And from the wiles of the stranger's tongue.
²⁵Lust not after her beauty in your heart;
 Let her not capture you with her glances,^j
²⁶For a harlot seeks only a morsel,^k
 But the adulteress hunts precious life.
²⁷Can a man take fire in his bosom
 And his clothes not be burned?
²⁸Or can one walk on hot coals
 And his feet not be scorched?
²⁹So with him who goes in to his neighbor's wife:
 Whoever touches her shall not go unpunished.

^c 5⁹ Gk., *life*. Syr. and Targ., *wealth*.

^d 5⁹ Lit., *and your years*.

^e 5⁹ Targ., *aliens*; possibly this reading is original.

^f 5¹⁴ Lit., *in all evil*; *i. e.*, had experienced all that calamity could bring.

^g 6²³ This vs. is obviously the immediate sequel of 21. Vs. 22, on the other hand, is the more obvious introduction to 24, for wisdom, which is the implied antecedent in 22, is what keeps the inexperienced from the temptations of the evil woman.

^h 6²³ So Gk., Syr., and Targ. Heb., *reproofs of instruction* (one MS. reads, *reproof of instruction*).

ⁱ 6²² Supplying the subject, which is not expressed in the Heb., though suggested by the form of the verb (lit., *she will lead you*).

^j 6²⁵ Lit., *eyelids*.

^k 6²⁶ Following the acute suggestion of Toy (Pr. 136, 137) in emending the corrupt Heb. The VSS. read, *for the price of a harlot is a loaf of bread*; *i. e.*, prostitution is less costly and dangerous than adultery. Of course, if this be the correct interpretation, the sage is not recommending prostitution but sounding an earnest, emphatic warning against adultery.

MAN

- ³⁰Do not¹ men despise a thief, if he steal
 To satisfy his appetite when he is hungry?
³¹And if he is caught he must restore sevenfold,
 He must give all the wealth of his house.
³²He who commits adultery is devoid of sense.
 He destroys himself who does so.
³³Wounds and dishonor shall he receive,
 And his disgrace shall not be wiped away.
³⁴For jealousy makes a man furious,^m
 And he will have no pity in the day of vengeance.
³⁵He will consider no satisfaction,ⁿ
 Nor be content, though you give many gifts.

- 7 ¹My son, keep my words,
 And lay up my precepts with you.
²Keep my precepts and live,
 And my teaching as the apple of your eye.^o
³Bind them on your fingers,
 Write them on the tablet of your mind.
⁴Say to Wisdom, 'You are my sister,'
 And call Understanding your friend,^p
⁵That they may keep you from another's wife,
 From the adulteress, with her enticing words.
⁶For at the window of my house
 I looked out through my lattice,
⁷And I saw^q and discerned among the youths
 A young man devoid of understanding
⁸Passing along the street near her corner,
 And he was walking on the way to her house
⁹In the twilight, at the close of day,^r
 In the depth^s of the night and the darkness.
¹⁰And, behold, a woman comes to meet him,
 Attired as a harlot^t and with secretive mind.^u
¹¹She is restless and wilful;^v
 Her feet abide not in her house:

¹ 6³⁰ This vs. is best taken as a question, following certain MSS. It is not at all probable that the wise would in any case condone a theft.

^m 6³⁴ Lit., *is the fury of a man*.

^o 6³⁵ Lit., *ransom*, but this has not the same connotation as the Heb. word, which indicates anything accepted as a substitute for punishment or vengeance.

^o 7⁴ *I. e.*, the pupil, standing for the eye, a man's most delicate and precious possession. Cf. 20²⁰, Dt. 32¹⁰, Ps. 17⁵.

^p 7⁴ Lit., *kinswoman*, but the word "involves the idea of intimate friendship" (Toy, Pr. 145).

^q 7⁷ The Heb. has been supplemented by a parallel phrase, *among the inexperienced*, which anticipates the second line of the couplet.

^r 7⁹ Lit., *evening of the day*.

^s 7⁹ Lit., *in the pupil*; *i. e.*, middle or depth.

^t 7¹⁰ Gk., *with the appearance of a harlot*.

^u 7¹⁰ Lit., *guarded of mind*.

^v 7¹¹ Or, revising the Heb. according to Sg., 3¹, *a gadabout*.

SELF-RESTRAINT

- ¹²Now she is in the street, now in the open places,
And lies in wait at every corner.
- ¹³So she seizes him and kisses him,
With an impudent face she says to him:
- ¹⁴I vowed^w sacrifices of peace offerings;
To-day I have paid my vows.^x
- ¹⁵So I came out to meet you,
Eagerly to seek you, and I have found you.
- ¹⁶I have spread my couch with tapestries,
With striped cloths of Egyptian yarn;
- ¹⁷I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh,
With aloes and cinnamon.
- ¹⁸Come, let us take our fill of love until morning;
Let us enjoy each other's love.^y
- ¹⁹For my husband is not at home;
He has gone on a long journey;
- ²⁰He has taken a bag of money with him;
He will come home at the full moon.^z
- ²¹With her fair speech she makes him yield;
With the blandishment of her lips she compels him.
- ²²Enticed,^a he goes after her
Like an ox that goes to the slaughter,
Like a dog led into bonds,^b
- ²³Until an arrow pierces his liver,—^o
Like a bird rushing into a net,
Not knowing it is spread for^d his life.
- ²⁴So now, my son,^e listen to me,
And pay attention to what I say.
- ²⁵Do not let your mind turn to her ways;
Do not go astray in her paths.
- ²⁶For many are the wounded whom she made fall,
And a mighty host are all those slain by her.
- ²⁷In her house there are ways to Sheol,^f
Going down to the chambers of death.

^w 7¹⁴ Lit., *upon me* (were), a common expression for what is obligatory or incumbent upon a person.

^x 7¹⁴ The inference seems to be that the sacrificial feast is just ready and she seeks guests to share it with her. The flesh of the votive offering had to be eaten on the day it was sacrificed (Lev. 7¹⁶).

^y 7¹⁸ Lit., *enjoy ourselves in love*.

^z 7²⁰ *I. e.*, a week or two hence, to attend the full-moon feast. Vs. ⁹ indicates that the imaginary scene described above took place early in the month, or at least when the moon was not present to light the heavens.

^a 7²² So Gk. Through a slight scribal error the Heb. reads *suddenly*.

^b 7²² The Heb. is hopelessly corrupt. Gk., Syr., and Targ., supported by the context, read, *Like a dog to bonds*. A slight correction of the remaining Heb. word gives the verb required by the context.

^o 7²³ This line must evidently be restored to its logical position, as above.

^d 7²³ Lit., *is against*; *i. e.*, it was spread for the purpose of taking his life.

^e 7²⁴ So Gk. and the parallels.

^f 7²⁷ Lit., *her house is ways to Sheol*; *i. e.*, there are many ways in her house that lead to death.

MAN

§ 48. Attitude Toward Temptation, Pr. 28¹⁴, 27¹², 14¹⁶, 21²⁹, 4²⁵⁻²⁷, 24¹⁻², 17¹⁴, 1¹⁰,
4¹⁴⁻¹⁷, 23⁶⁻⁸, 17⁴, 25²⁶

To
avoid it

Pr. 28 ¹⁴Happy is the man who is ever on his guard,
But he who is obdurate falls into misfortune.

27 ¹²A prudent man sees evil and hides,
Simpletons go on and are punished.

14 ¹⁶A wise man fears and avoids misfortune,
But the fool is arrogant and confident.^g

21 ²⁹A wicked man hardens his face,
But an upright man considers^b his ways.

4 ²⁵Let your eyes look right ahead,
And let your gaze be straight before you.

²⁶Let the path for your feet be level,ⁱ
And let all your ways be stable.

²⁷Turn not to right nor to left,
Keep your foot far from evil.

24 ¹Do not envy wicked men,
Nor desire to be with them,

²For their minds meditate on violence,
And their lips talk of mischief.

17 ¹⁴The beginning of strife is as when one lets out water;
Therefore leave off contention before quarrelling begins.

1 ¹⁰My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent.

4 ¹⁴Enter not into the path of the wicked,
And walk not in the way of bad men;

¹⁵Avoid it, pass not over it,
Turn from it and pass on.

¹⁶For they do not sleep unless they have done harm,
And their sleep is taken away unless they have made someone
stumble.

¹⁷For they eat the bread of wickedness
And drink the wine of violence.

23 ⁶Eat not the bread of him who is inhospitable,^j
Nor desire to share his dainties,

⁷For he is like one who keeps his thoughts to himself:^k

§ 48 The practical wisdom of the sages appears again in their counsel to avoid temptation and the sources of temptation.

^g 14¹⁶ Lit., *lets himself pass beyond bonds*. Ordinarily it means *throw himself into a passion*. Possibly it should be interpreted, *acts insolently*. Gk., Syr., and Targ., *mingled with (it)*.

^h 21²⁹ So Gk. and the marginal reading of the Heb. Trad. Heb., *established*.

ⁱ 4²⁵ I. e., follow the level and straight path, not turning aside into the alluring but perilous bypaths.

^j 23⁶ Lit., *has an evil eye*.

^k 23⁷ The exact meaning of this line is not certain. Toy (Pr. 429) revises to read:

*For as he deals with himself,
So he deals with you.*

The word rendered above *keeps his thoughts* (lit., *calculates*) may be pointed to read a *hair*. So Gk. and Syr. A recent writer (Julian Weill, in the *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, XLIV, pp. 62 f.) defends this reading and argues that the word rendered above to *himself* (lit., *in his soul*) means *in his throat*. In support of this interpretation he cites a parallel from the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. Introd., p. 15), as well as the usage of the cognate word in Assyrian, which had been previously urged as a ground for the same interpretation in other O.T. passages. The line would then read: *For it (i. e., the hospitality of an avaricious man) is like a hair in the throat*. This closely resembles the Gk.

TEMPTATION

'Eat and drink,' he says to you,
 But his heart is not with you.
⁸The morsel you have eaten you shall spit out,
 And you shall lose your sweet words.¹

- 17 ⁴An evil-doer gives heed to wicked words,^m
 And a false manⁿ gives ear to a mischievous tongue.
 25 ²⁶As a troubled^o fountain and a ruined spring,
 So is a just man who gives way before the wicked.

§ 49. Importance of Prudence and Tact, Pr. 11²², 14⁸, 22³, 14¹⁵, 19², 26¹⁰, ⁴

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Pr. 11 ²²As a ring of gold in a hog's snout,
 So is a fair woman without discretion.^p</p> <p>14 ⁸A prudent man's wisdom is to understand his way,^q
 But the folly of fools leads them astray.^r</p> <p>22 ³A prudent man sees evil and hides,
 Simpletons go on and are punished.</p> <p>14 ¹⁶The simpleton believes everything,
 But the prudent man looks where he goes.</p> <p>19 ²Also to act without reflection^s is not good,
 And he who makes haste with his feet misses the mark.</p> <p>26 ¹⁰A master-workman does everything himself,
 But a fool hires those who pass by.^t
 ⁴Answer not a fool according to his folly,
 Lest you also be like him.</p> | <p>Dis-
cretion
essential</p> <p>Prudence
the only
safe guide
in life</p> <p>Tact
with a
fool</p> |
|---|---|

§ 50. Value of Learning from the Wise, Pr. 15³¹, 13²⁰

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Pr. 15 ³¹The ear that hearkens to life-giving admonition
 Shall abide among the wise.</p> <p>13 ²⁰Walk^u with the wise and you shall be wise,
 But the companion of fools shall have trouble.</p> | <p>Receptive
attitude</p> <p>Right
asso-
ciates</p> |
|--|---|

¹ 23⁸ Possibly this line originally followed ². If it belongs in its present context, the meaning is that all his endeavors to cultivate the friendship of a niggardly man have been in vain. The passage has a close parallel in the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. *Introd.*, p. 15). Prof. Torrey suggests emending the Heb. to read *his words* (i. e., those quoted in ⁷).

^m 17⁴ Lit., *kips*.

ⁿ 17⁴ Lit., *falsity*.

^o 25²⁶ Lit., *trampled*, and therefore befouled.

§ 49 Prudence and tact were among the chief qualities that the wise sought to develop in their disciples.

^p 11²² *I. e.*, beauty without discretion is still hideous.

^q 14⁸ *I. e.*, consists in understanding fully the course of conduct which he should follow.

^r 14⁸ Following the Gk., which has apparently preserved the original reading. Heb., *is deceit*.

^s 19² Following Toy's acute suggestion (Pr. 368). Heb., lit., *without knowledge of soul*.

^t 26¹⁰ This obscure *va.* has been a block of stumbling to all translators. The VSS. differ widely. The above is a literal translation of the Heb., with the exception of the words, *and hires*, which have been repeated by mistake.

§ 50 The theme of these proverbs is often repeated in other connections.

^u 13²⁰ Following the accepted Heb. rather than the marginal reading, which represents an attempt to make the parallelism more perfect.

§ 51. Importance of Being Ruled by Right Motives, Pr. 21¹⁰, 11²⁵, 27

Each man determines his own environment

- Pr. 21** ¹⁰The wicked^v desires to do harm;
His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.^w
11 ²⁵The desire of the righteous is only good;
The expectation of the wicked is wrath.
²⁷He who seeks good seeks^x favor,
But he who seeks evil, it shall come to him.

§ 52. Meekness, Pr. 21²⁴, 25²⁷, 21⁴, 26¹², 16¹³, 18¹², 11², 13¹⁰, 29²³, 12⁹, 27²

Evils of pride and self-seeking

- Pr. 21** ²⁴Scorner⁷ is the name of the proud, haughty man,
Who acts with overbearing pride.
25 ²⁷It is not good to eat much honey;
But to seek the glory of others is glorious.^y
21 ⁴A haughty look and a proud heart—
The lamp^z of the wicked—are sin.
26 ¹²Do you see a man wise in his own opinion?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.
16 ¹⁸Pride goes before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before a fall.
18 ¹²Before destruction a man's mind is haughty;
Before honor there is humility.^a
11 ²When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
But with the humble is wisdom.
13 ¹⁰Through pride comes only strife,
But with those who take counsel is wisdom.
29 ²³A man's pride will bring him low;
But he who is of a lowly spirit will obtain honor.
12 ⁹Better off is he who has no social distinction,^b yet has a servant,
Than he who makes great pretensions, yet lacks bread.
27 ²Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth;
Some other, and not your own lips.

Of false pretensions

Personal modesty

§ 51 The wise would have agreed that it is the things which come out of a man that defile him (Mk. 7¹⁸).

^v 21¹⁰ Lit., *the soul of the wicked*.

^w 21¹⁰ *I. e.*, is not regarded with kindly feelings.

^x 11²⁷ Possibly the text should be revised, after the analogy of 3¹³, so as to read, *wins*.

§ 52 Presumption and conceit are the antithesis of the spirit of the wise.

^y 25²⁷ The meaning and text of this verse are doubtful.

^z 21⁴ So Gk., Syr., Targ., Lat., and some Heb. MSS. The meaning is not certain and the text may be corrupt. *Lamp* is in apposition with the first line. The thought may be: pride is the chief source of the joy of the wicked (cf. 13⁹, Job 18⁶), but it is sinful and therefore but ephemeral. Or it may be that two lines have fallen out (^{4a} having been the first line of one couplet and ^{4b} the second line of another); ^{4b} may then be taken as a clause in itself: *the lamp of the wicked is sin*.

^a 18¹² The construction in the Heb. is the same in this vs. as in 16¹³, no verb being expressed in either case. The meaning of both vs. is exactly that of Lk. 14¹¹, 18¹⁴: *For every one who puts himself forward will be humiliated, but he who does not put himself forward will be honored*.

^b 12⁹ Lit., *is lightly esteemed*. From I Sam. 18²³ and Is. 3⁹ it is clear that the reference is to social standing. In contrast stands the man who acts as if he were deserving high honor; *i. e.*, pretends that he is a noble.

PURITY AND UPRIGHTNESS

§ 53. Purity and Uprightness of Purpose, Pr. 22⁵, 21⁹, 22¹¹, 4²³, 11⁵⁻⁶, 13⁶, 12³, 16¹⁷

- Pr. 22** ⁵Traps^o and snares are in the way of the lawless;
He who cares for his life keeps away from them.
- 21** ⁸The way of the guilty is crooked,
But the pure man—his conduct is straight.^d
- 22** ¹¹He who loves purity of heart,
On whose lips is grace,—the king is his friend.^o
- 4** ²³Guard your heart above all things,
For from it come the sources of life.
- 11** ⁶The righteousness of the perfect man makes his way straight,
But by his own wickedness the wicked shall fall.
⁶The righteousness of the upright saves them,
But the treacherous are trapped by their own craft.^f
- 13** ⁶Righteousness guards him whose life is upright,^g
But wickedness destroys the sinner.
- 12** ³No man is established by wickedness,
But the root of the righteous stands unmoved.
- 16** ¹⁷The highway of the upright is departing from evil;
He who watches his way preserves his life.

The
blessed-
ness of
the pure
in heart

J

MAN'S DUTY TO OTHERS

§ 54. Evils to Avoid, Pr. 10²⁶, 11¹², 28⁸, 25, 10¹², 29²², 15¹⁸, 27⁴, 24¹⁷⁻¹⁸, 20²², 17¹³, 3³⁰, 30³²⁻³³, 20³, 26¹⁷, 17¹⁹, 22¹⁰, 18⁶, 26²¹, 17¹⁴, 1, 27¹⁴, 29⁵, 26²⁸, 28²³, 26²³⁻²⁷, 14⁶, 13⁵, 12¹⁹, 25¹⁴, 20¹⁷, 26, 28, 11¹³, 20¹⁹, 26¹³⁻¹⁹, 13², 18⁸, 11⁹, 25²³, 26²⁰, 16²⁸, 10¹⁸, 3²⁹, 16²⁷, 30, 10¹⁰, 6¹²⁻¹⁵, 24⁹, 15²⁶, 22²²⁻²³, 28, 23¹⁰⁻¹¹, 12⁶, 16²⁹, 29¹⁰, 28²⁸, 3³¹⁻³², 1¹⁰⁻¹⁹

- Pr. 10** ²⁶As vinegar to the teeth and as smoke to the eyes,
So is a lazy man to those who send him.

Indolence

§ 53 In this section the wise anticipate Jesus in placing the chief emphasis on the motives and character that determine the acts of an individual (cf. § 51).

^o 22⁵ Following the VSS. in reading *traps* instead of *thorns*.

^d 21⁸ The word translated *pure* means also *innocent*; if *guilty* is the true meaning of the word so rendered, the verse refers to the devious ways of the guilt-laden, as contrasted with the plain, straight path of him whose conscience is clear. It may be, however, that the contrast intended is simply that between crooked and straight dealing. The word translated *guilty* occurs nowhere else, and its derivation is doubtful; it may even be the result of a scribe's carelessness in writing twice the word for *pure*, which it immediately precedes and very closely resembles in appearance.

^o 22¹¹ This vs. is a little awkward, although intelligible. Possibly it should be emended to read:

*The king loves the pure of heart,
And grace of lips is his delight.*

^f 11⁶ Heb., *desire or calamity*. The proverb echoes the thought of Hab. 2⁴, *The upright lives by his faithfulness*.

^g 13⁶ Lit., *the upright of way*.

Man's Duty to Others.—The evils condemned and the virtues commended in these sections are largely those which have occupied attention in the passages concerning man in his various relationships. In general those passages reflect observation of the facts of life, while these are more hortatory in nature.

§ 54 The qualities and practices here censured may be summarized as those which keep a man from being a good neighbor and citizen. They are the vices most commonly encountered in every community and in all ages.

MAN

- Disdain-
fulness **11** ¹²One who despises his neighbor lacks sense,
 But a man of insight keeps silence.
- Greed **28** ⁸One who adds to his wealth by interest and increase
 Hoards it for a benefactor of the poor.^a
²⁵A greedy man stirs up strife,
 But he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.
- Hatred **10** ¹²Hatred stirs up strife,
 But love overlooks faults.
- Anger **29** ²²An ill-tempered man stirs up strife,
 And a wrathful man abounds in transgression.
15 ¹⁵A quick-tempered man stirs up strife,
 But a patient man quiets contention.
- Jealousy **27** ⁴Oh, the fierceness of wrath! The flood of anger!
 But who can stand before jealousy?
- Revenge **24** ¹⁷At the fall of your foe be not glad,
 And at his stumbling let your heart not exult,
¹⁵Lest the Lord see and be displeased,
 And turn his anger away from him.
20 ²²Say not, 'I will be revenged for a wrong;'
 Wait for the Lord, he will save you.
- Ingrati-
tude **17** ¹³He who returns evil for good,
 From his house evil shall not depart.
- Conten-
tion **3** ³⁰Strive not with a man without cause,
 If he has done you no harm.
30 ³²If you have foolishly exalted yourself
 And cherished designs, hand on mouth!^b
³⁸For pressing milk brings out curd,
 And pressing the nose brings out blood,
 And pressing anger brings out strife.^c
20 ³It is an honor for a man to shun strife;
 Only a fool^d is quarrelsome.
26 ¹⁷A man seizing a dog by the ears
 Is one excited over^e a quarrel not his own.
17 ¹⁹A lover of transgression is a lover of strife;
 He who makes high his door invites a breach.

^a 28⁸ *I. e.*, those who take advantage of the poor shall lose their wealth, but the charitable shall prosper.

^b 30³² Both text and meaning of this verse are doubtful.

^c 30³⁴ Heb. has a play on the words *nose* and *anger*, which are alike in sound and in derivation.

^d 20³ *Lit.*, *But every fool*.

^e 26¹⁷ *Syr.*, *Lat.*, *mizing in*. This involves the transposition of two letters and a different proposition in the Heb., but may be original. In the first line Gk. reads *tail* instead of *ears*.

EVILS TO AVOID

- 22 ¹⁰Cast out a scoffer, and strife goes out,
And discord and insult cease.
- 18 ⁶A fool's lips lead him^f into strife,
And his mouth cries out for stripes.
- 26 ²¹Charcoal for embers, and wood for fire,
And a quarrelsome man to kindle strife!
- 17 ¹⁴The beginning of strife is as when one lets out water,
Therefore leave off contention before quarrelling begins.
¹Better a dry crust with quietness
Than a house full of feasting with strife.^g
- 27 ¹⁴When one blesses his neighbor loudly^h and zealously,ⁱ Flattery
It is credited to him as a curse.
- 29 ⁵A man who flatters his neighbor
Spreads out a net for his feet.
- 26 ²⁸A lying tongue hates those crushed by it,^j
And a flattering^k mouth works ruin.
- 28 ²³He who reproves^l will find more favor
Than he who flatters with his tongue.
- 26 ²³Like silver dross^m plated on an earthen vessel Dissimu-
lation
Are ferventⁿ lips with an evil heart.
- ²⁴With his lips one who hates disguises himself,
But he holds^o deceit in his bosom.
- ²⁵When he makes his voice gracious, trust him not,
For there are seven abominations in his heart.
- ²⁶Though he cover^p his hatred with guile,
His wickedness will be revealed in the assembly.
- ²⁷He who digs a pit shall fall into it,
And he who rolls a stone shall be crushed.^q
- 14 ⁵A reliable witness will not lie, Lying
But a false witness utters lies.
- 13 ⁵A just man hates anything false,
But a bad man acts shamefully and disgracefully.

^f 18⁶ So Gk., Targ., and a slightly emended or freely rendered Heb. (lit., *come*).

^g 17¹⁴ Lit., *he sacrifices of strife*. Sacrifices and feasting went together in ancient Israel (cf., e. g., I Sam. 9¹²⁻¹³).

^h 27¹⁴ Lit., *with a great voice*.

ⁱ 27¹⁴ Lit., *in the morning rising early*. Some consider these words (wholly or in part) secondary, as the line is very long.

^j 26²⁸ So apparently the Heb., if it means anything. VSS., *hates a true one*, which makes very doubtful parallelism. Toy reads, *brings destruction*, but this requires rather drastic emendation of the Heb.

^k 26²⁸ Lit., *smooth*.

^l 28²³ Heb., *rebukes a man after me*. The word meaning *after me* is certainly corrupt. Gk., *rebukes the ways of a man*, which might have been either corrupted into the present text or derived from it. The general sense of the proverb is unaffected by this obscurity in detail.

^m 26²³ Lit., *silver of dross*; i. e., the dross left by refining silver. This would be a cheap material for plating pottery and giving it a specious appearance like silver.

ⁿ 26²³ So Heb. Gk., *smooth*.

^o 26²⁴ Lit., *pits*.

^p 26²⁶ Slightly revising the Heb. as suggested by the VSS.

^q 26²⁷ Lit., *it will come back to him*.

MAN

- 12 ¹⁹A true lip shall be established forever,
 But a false tongue is but for a moment.^r
 25 ¹⁴Clouds and wind and no rain,—
 So is the man who boasts of gifts ungiven.^s
 20 ¹⁷Sweet to a man is bread gained by fraud,
 But later his mouth will be filled with gravel.
 26 ²⁸A lying tongue hates those crushed by it,
 And a flattering mouth works ruin.^t

Breach
of con-
fidence

- 11 ¹³One who gossips^u gives away secrets,^v
 But a trustworthy soul^w hides a matter.
 20 ¹⁹One who gossips gives away secrets,
 So avoid^x him who opens his lips.

Treachery

- 26 ¹⁸Like a madman who hurls about
 Deadly firebrands and arrows
¹⁹Is he who deceives his neighbor
 And says, 'I did it in sport.'
 13 ²From the fruit of a man's mouth he eats good,
 But the desire of the treacherous is violence.^y

Slander

- 18 ⁸A slanderer's words are like dainties:
 They go down to a man's inmost depths.^z
 11 ⁹With his mouth a godless man destroys his neighbor,
 But by knowledge the righteous are delivered.
 25 ²³As a north wind brings forth rain,
 So does a gossiping tongue^a an angry face.
 26 ²⁰Without wood a fire goes out,
 And without a slanderer strife ceases.
 16 ²⁸A false man lets loose strife,
 And a slanderer separates friends.
 10 ¹⁸One who conceals hatred is a liar,^b
 But one who utters slander, he is a fool.^c

^r 12¹⁹ Lit., *an eye-wink*.

^s 25¹⁴ Lit., *with a false gift*. The above rendering follows Toy.

^t 26²⁸ V. s., notes ⁱ and ^k on this vs.

^u 11¹³ Lit., *goes about with slander*.

^v 11¹³ Lit., *intinacy*, and so *secret counsels*. The same word is used for *friendship* in 3²² (v. i.).

^w 11¹³ Lit., *one faithful of spirit*.

^x 20¹⁹ Lit., *mix not yourself with* (as in colloquial Eng.).

^y 13² So Heb., but the connection between the lines and the meaning of the whole are not clear. The word rendered *desire* means lit. *soul* and is so taken by Gk., Syr., Targ., with verbs meaning *perish* or *be snatched away* instead of the noun *violence*. Instead of *eats*, Syr., Targ., Lat., and seven Heb. MSS. have *is satisfied*, as in 12¹⁴, where Syr. also reads, *a good man*. Cf. also 18²⁰, § 57. Possibly the original read:

*A good man shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth,
 But the treacherous soul shall eat violence.*

^z 18⁸ Lit., *the chambers of the belly*.

^a 25²³ Lit., *tongue of secrecy*.

^b 10¹⁸ Lit., *lips of falsehood*.

^c 10¹⁸ I. e., slander is not only sinful (like deception), but foolish. The Heb. conjunction may mean *either and or but*; it is here generally taken in the former sense, but the emphatic *he* of the second line favors the view that a contrast is intended.

EVILS TO AVOID

- 3** ²⁹Plan not evil against your neighbor,
The man who trustingly lives beside you.
- 16** ²⁷A worthless man plots^d evil,
And on his lips is a scorching fire.^e
³⁰One who shuts his eyes to form wicked plans,
One who closes his lips, accomplishes evil.^f
- 10** ¹⁰One who winks his eye will make trouble,
And a talkative fool will be overthrown.^g
- 6** ¹²A depraved man, a bad character,^h
Goes about making false statements,ⁱ
¹³Winks with his eyes, scrapes with his feet,
Makes signs with his fingers,
¹⁴Devises crooked schemes in his mind,
Always sows the seed of discord.^j
¹⁵Therefore calamity shall suddenly overtake him;
In an instant he shall be crushed without remedy.
- 24** ⁸One who plans to do evil
Shall be called a schemer.^k
- 15** ²⁶Wicked plans are abhorrent to the Lord,
But pleasant words are pure.^l
- 22** ²²Rob not the poor because they are poor,
Nor oppress the poor at the city gate,
²³For the Lord will plead their cause,
And rob those who deprive them of life.^m
²⁸Remove not an ancient landmark
Which your fathers made.
- 23** ¹⁰Remove not an ancient landmark,ⁿ
And enter not the fields of the fatherless.

Evil
machina-
tions

Oppres-
sion of
the poor

^d 16²⁷ Lit., *digs*, as one digs a pit.

^e 16²⁷ Heb., *like (or as it were) a scorching fire*, referring to the false speech by which he puts his plans into execution.

^f 16³⁰ So Heb. If the text is sound, the meaning must be, Beware of the man who does not talk about his plans. Gk. has a somewhat different text and adds a third line, *He is a furnace of wickedness*.

^g 10¹⁰ So Heb. Gk., *One who boldly reproves will make peace*. Possibly this reproduces the original text, the Heb. reading having been copied by mistake from vs. ⁸.

^h 6¹² Lit., *man of iniquity*.

ⁱ 6¹² Lit., *in crookedness of mouth*.

^j 6¹⁴ Emending and rearranging the Heb., which has three lines:

*Has crooked schemes in his mind,
Devises evil always,
Sows discord.*

The word for *seed* is formed by prefixing one letter to the word for *evil*. The word translated *sows* (lit., *sends out, releases*) is nowhere, however, applied to literal seed-sowing. Its use with *discord* (or *strife*) is characteristic of Pr. (cf. vs. 19, 16²⁸).

^k 24⁸ Lit., *master* (Heb., *baal*) of schemes.

^l 15²⁶ Cf. note on this vs. under § 14.

^m 22²³ Cf. notes on these vs. under § 15.

ⁿ 23¹⁰ Toy, for the sake of the parallelism, emends to read, *the widow's landmark*. Possible confirmation of this reading has been found in the fact that the *Wisdom of Amenemopet* (cf. Intro., p. 15) contains the sentence, *Seize not the widow's landmark*.

MAN

Deeds of
violence

- ¹¹For their Champion^o is strong;
He will take their part^p against you.
- 12** ⁶The words of the wicked are an ambush for blood,
But the mouth of the upright will deliver them.
- 16** ²⁹A violent man entices his neighbor
And leads him in a way that is not good.
- 29** ¹⁰Bloody men hate the perfect man,
And wicked^q men seek his life.
- 28** ²⁸When the wicked rise men hide themselves,
But when they perish the righteous multiply.
- 3** ³¹Do not envy a violent man,
And do not choose any of his ways,
³²For the perverted man is abhorrent to the Lord,
But his friendship is with the upright.
- 1** ¹⁰My son, if sinners entice you,
Do not consent;
¹¹If they say, 'Come along with us,
Let us lay wait for blood,^r
Let us lie in ambush for the innocent without cause,^s
¹²Like Sheol let us swallow them alive,
And whole like those who go down to the pit.
¹³All precious wealth we shall find,
We shall fill our houses with booty;
¹⁴Throw^t in your lot among us,
Let there be one purse for all of us!^u
¹⁵My son, do not walk in the way with them;
Keep your feet from their paths.^v
¹⁷For in vain is the spreading of a net
In the sight of any winged creature,^w
¹⁸And these men lay wait for their own blood,
They lie in ambush for their own lives.
¹⁹Such are the ways^w of every plunderer;
Plunder^x takes the life of its possessors.

^o 23¹¹ Heb., *Goel*, the avenger of blood and kinsman-redeemer; cf. Dt. 19⁶⁻¹², Ruth 3^{9, 12-11}, Job 19²⁶.

^p 23³¹ Lit., *strive their strife*.

^q 29¹⁰ Heb., *upright*, but this is impossible unless the verb be changed, and only a slight emendation is required to secure the meaning given above.

^r 1¹¹ By a slight emendation some commentators read, *the perfect man*, in order to have a closer parallel to the next line.

^s 1¹¹ Naturally the sinners would not say that they were acting without cause. The writer is expressing his own judgment of the act rather than quoting exactly what would be said. The word meaning *without cause* makes the line long and is considered secondary by some scholars, but the length and arrangement of the lines in this and the preceding vs. are at best uncertain, and it is hard to see why the word should have been added.

^t 1¹⁴ So Gk., Lat., Syr., Targ. Heb., *you will throw*.

^u 1¹⁵ Is. 59⁷ has been inserted here and is counted as vs. 16. It reads:

*For their feet run to evil
And make haste to shed blood.*

This is omitted by the best Gk. MSS.

^v 1¹⁷ Lit., *possessor of a wing*.

^w 1¹⁹ Lit., *paths*; or, emending slightly, *Such is the end*.

^x 1¹⁹ In the Heb. this is implied as the subject of the verb, the end of the preceding line being lit., *plunderer of plunder*.

VIRTUES TO CHERISH

§ 55. **Virtues to Cherish**, Pr. 21¹⁵, 3, 29²⁷, 10³², 11, 20-21, 12⁵, 15²⁸, 11³⁰, 12¹², 28¹², 27¹⁰, 25¹⁹, 17¹⁷, 24¹⁰⁻¹², 17⁹, 25²⁰, 23⁹, 26⁵, 1, 8, 25¹¹, 24²⁶, 15¹, 16²¹, 12¹⁸, 15¹, 16²⁴, 12²⁶, 3²⁷⁻²⁸, 21²⁶, 19⁶, 11²⁵⁻²⁶, 14²¹, 19¹⁷, 17⁵, 11¹⁷, 31⁶⁻⁷, 3³⁻⁴, 10¹², 15¹⁷, 24²⁹, 25²¹⁻²²

Pr. 21 ¹⁵It is joy to a righteous man to do justice,
 But destruction to those who do wrong.
³To do what is just and right
 Is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

Strict
justice

29 ²⁷Abhorrent to the righteous is a vicious man,^γ
 And abhorrent to the wicked is one upright in his way.

Upright-
ness

10 ³²A righteous man's lips know^z what is pleasant,
 But the mouth of the wicked what is false.^a

¹¹A fountain of life is a righteous man's mouth,
 But wicked men's mouths are covered with violence.^b

²⁰Choice silver is a righteous man's tongue,
 But wicked men's minds are worthless.^c

²¹A righteous man's lips feed many,
 But fools, for want of intelligence, die.

12 ⁶The plans of righteous men are just;^d
 The designs of wicked men are deceitful.^e

15 ²⁸A righteous man's mind considers how to answer,^f
 But wicked men's mouths pour out evil things.

11 ³⁰The fruit of righteousness^g is a tree of life,
 But violence^h is a taker of lives.

12 ¹²A wicked man desires the net of evil men,
 But the root of righteous men yields fruit.ⁱ

28 ¹²When righteous men rejoice, great is the glory,
 But when wicked men rise, men are sought out.^j

27 ¹⁰Your friend, and your father's friend, forsake not;
 Better is a neighbor near at hand than a brother far away.^k

Fidelity
in friend-
ship

§ 55 Here we have commended the practical virtues of the good neighbor and citizen. Characteristically there is nothing heroic about the teaching of the sages, yet our myriad woes would be much lighter and fewer if these qualities were more common among us.

^γ 29²⁷ Lit., *man of iniquity*.

^z 10³² Some MSS. read, *feed on*. Hitzig, followed by Toy, emends to read, *utter*.

^a 10³² The current interpretation inserts *is*, but the parallelism is closer if we supply (in thought) the verb expressed in the preceding line.

^b 10¹¹ Lit., *violence covers*.

^c 10²⁰ Lit., *as a little*.

^d 12⁶ Lit., *justice*.

^e 12⁵ Lit., *deceit*.

^f 15²⁸ Gk., Syr., Targ., *considers faithfulness*.

^g 11³⁰ So Gk. Heb., *a righteous man*.

^h 11³⁰ Slightly emending the Heb. (*a wise man*) as suggested by the Gk. The current rendering, *he that is wise winneth souls*, is unjustified.

ⁱ 12¹² Lit., *gives*, the object being unexpressed. The text and meaning of this verse are quite uncertain, and the renderings of the VSS. vary considerably.

^j 28¹² Or *mankind is searched*. This is usually taken to mean that men must be searched for because they have gone into hiding, but the interpretation is uncertain. Toy emends so as to read:

*When the righteous are exalted there is great confidence,
 But when the wicked come into power men hide themselves.*

^k 27¹⁰ Cf. note on this proverb under § 33.

MAN

- 25 ¹⁹A bad¹ tooth and a slipping^m foot,—
Such is a faithless man's hopeⁿ in the day of trouble.
- 17 ¹⁷A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.
- 24 ¹⁰If you weaken when you are in straits,^o
Straightened is your strength!
¹¹Deliver those who are taken to death,
And restrain those who are tottering to slaughter.
¹²If you say, 'I^p did not know this,'
Does the Weigher of hearts not perceive?
Does the Watcher^q of your soul not know
And requite man according to his work?
- 17 ⁹He who covers up a transgression seeks love,
But he who repeats gossip^r estranges his friend.
- 25 ²⁰Like vinegar on a wound
Is a song on a troubled heart.^a
- 23 ⁹Do not speak into the ears of a fool,
For he will despise the good sense of your words.
- 26 ⁶Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he become wise in his own opinion.^t
¹As snow in summer or rain in harvest,
So unfitting is honor for a fool.
⁶Like one who ties a stone in a sling^u
Is he who gives honor to a fool.
- 25 ¹¹A word^v fitly^w spoken
Is like golden fruit in silver settings.
- 24 ²⁶He kisses the lips
Who gives an honest answer.
- 15 ⁴The healing of the tongue^x is a tree of life,
But crookedness in it^y breaks the spirit.^z

Courage
in deliv-
ering the
innocent

Charity
toward
another's
faults

Consider-
ation for
another's
feelings

Wisdom
in treat-
ing with
a fool

Tact in
speaking

¹ 25¹⁹ Slightly emending the Heb. as suggested by the VSS.
^m 25¹⁹ Changing the vowels to read the active instead of the passive participle.
ⁿ 25¹⁹ *I. e.*, that in which he trusts, be it money, violence, or fraud.
^o 24¹⁰ Lit., *in the day of straits (or distress)*. The above rendering attempts to reproduce the word-play of the Heb. The meaning seems to be that strength which cannot stand a real test is not entitled to be called strength.
^p 24¹² So Gk. Heb., *we*.
^q 24¹² The Heb. word, like the Eng., may indicate either protection, restraint, or observation. Here, as in Job 7²⁰, it suggests that God keeps strict account of every man's conduct.
^r 17⁹ Lit., *repeats with a thing (or word)*.
^s 25²⁰ One guess is as good as another in this vs. Heb. is certainly corrupt, and so, in all probability, was the very different text reflected in the Gk. The above rendering combines parts of both Gk. and Heb., omitting the rest as unintelligible.
^t 26⁶ Lit., *eyes*.
^u 26⁶ *I. e.*, so that it cannot be shot out.
^v 25¹¹ Transposing the lines.
^w 25¹¹ So Sym. The meaning of the Heb. is uncertain.
^x 15⁴ *I. e.*, soothing words.
^y 15⁴ *I. e.*, in the tongue, referring to perverse speech.
^z 15⁴ Lit., *is a breaking of the spirit*.

VIRTUES TO CHERISH

- 16 ²¹A wise man is called discerning,
And sweet speech^a increases persuasiveness.
- 12 ¹⁸One may thoughtlessly speak^b like sword-thrusts,
But a wise man's tongue^c is healing. Kind words
- 15 ¹A mild answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.
- 16 ²⁴Pleasant words are like honeycomb,
Sweet to the taste^d and healing to the body.^e
- 12 ²⁶A righteous man searches out his neighbor,^f
But the way of the wicked misleads them. Helpfulness
- 3 ²⁷Refuse not a service to your neighbor^g
When it is in your power to do it. Liberality
- ²⁸Say not to your neighbor, 'Go, and come again,
And to-morrow I will give, when I^h have it by me.'^h
- 21 ²⁶All day long a wicked manⁱ covets,^j
But a righteous man gives and withholds not.
- 19 ⁶Many seek the favor of a noble^k man,
And every man is a friend to one who gives.
- 11 ²⁵The liberal man^l shall be prospered,^m
He who waters shall himself be watered.
²⁶The people curse him who withholds grain,ⁿ
But blessing is on the head of him who sells it.
- 14 ²¹He sins who despises his neighbor,
He is happy who pities the poor.
- 19 ¹⁷He who pities the poor lends to the Lord,
And he will repay him for his good deed.
- 17 ⁵He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker;
He who is glad at calamity will not be unpunished. Mercy

^a 16²¹ Lit., *sweetness of lips*.

^b 12¹⁸ Lit., *There is one who speaks thoughtlessly*.

^c 12¹⁸ Lit., *the tongue of wise men*.

^d 16²⁴ Lit., *soul*, but the word has a wide range of meaning.

^e 16²⁴ Lit., *bone*.

^f 12²⁶ So, lit., Heb., but the meaning is obscure and the text doubtful. The VSS. and commentators vary widely in their interpretations.

^g 3²⁷ Emending the Heb. as demanded by the context.

^h 3²⁷ Heb., *you*. If this is correct, we may read,

Say not to your neighbor, 'Go and come again,'

And 'To-morrow I will give, when you have it by you.

ⁱ 21²⁶ So Gk. and the implication of the parallelism. Heb. has no subject. The meaning is that a bad man is always wanting something for himself, while a good man is always giving to others.

^j 21²⁶ Heb., *desires desire*. Probably a scribe's carelessness is responsible for this meaningless repetition and the omission of the subject.

^k 19⁶ The word may indicate either character or rank. Here, judging by the parallelism, it refers to generosity.

^l 11²⁵ Lit., *soul of blessing*.

^m 11²⁵ Lit., *made fat*.

ⁿ 11²⁶ *I. e.*, to raise the price, a practice common in all lands and ages.

MAN

- 11 ¹⁷A kind man does good to himself,
A cruel man harms himself.^o
- 31 ⁶Give strong drink to one who is perishing,
And wine to the bitter in soul;
⁷Let him drink and forget his poverty
And remember his trouble no more.
- 3 ³Let not love and truth leave you,
Bind them about your neck;^p
⁴So you will enjoy favor and a good reputation^q
In the sight of God and man.

Love

- 10 ¹²Hatred stirs up strife,
But love overlooks all faults.
- 15 ¹⁷Better a dish of herbs where love is,
Than a fatted ox with hate.

Kindness
toward
an enemy

- 24 ²⁹Say not: 'I will do to him as he did to me,
I will pay back the man for his deed.'
- 25 ²¹If your enemy hungers, give him food;
If he thirsts, give him water to drink;
²²For you will heap coals of fire on his head,
And the Lord will reward you.

K

MAN'S DUTY TO GOD

§ 56. Religious Virtues, Pr. 9¹⁰, 15³³, 14², 23¹⁵⁻¹⁹, 14²⁶⁻²⁷, 10²⁷, 19²³, 37-8, 22⁴, 19³, 31-12, 29¹⁸, 13¹³, 3⁹⁻¹⁰, 29²⁵, 16²⁰, 28²⁵⁻²⁶, 3⁵⁻⁶

Rever-
ence:
What
it is

- 9 ¹⁰The beginning of wisdom is reverence for the Lord,
And knowledge of the Holy One^a is understanding.
- 15 ³³Reverence for the Lord is the result of wise instruction,^b
And before honor goes humility.
- 14 ²He who walks uprightly reveres the Lord,
But he who is crooked in his ways despises him.

^o 11¹⁷ Heb. has *his soul* in the first line and *his flesh* in the second, but the words do not imply such a contrast as their Eng. equivalents suggest. They were used almost interchangeably to denote the whole person.

^p 3³ Heb. adds, *Write them on the tablet of your mind*, which is omitted by some Gk. MSS. and seems to have been added by mistake from 7³. A scribe writing from memory may have confused the two passages.

^q 3⁴ Lit., *name*, slightly emending the Heb., which reads, *understanding*.

Man's Duty to God.—While the sages have not the religious passion of the prophets, their whole philosophy of life is rooted in sincere and simple piety. The expression, *reverence for the Lord* (lit., *fear of the Lord*), is regularly used where we should say *religion*.

§ 56 These proverbs reflect a conception of God and of man's relation to him which is essentially the same as that of the N.T.

^a 9¹⁰ Heb. may be read, *of holy men*, and is so taken by several VSS. and commentators. The parallelism, however, favors the above rendering.

^b 15³³ Lit., *is the instruction of wisdom*.

RELIGIOUS VIRTUES

- 23** ¹⁵My son, if you^c are wise,
 I too, I shall be glad;^d
¹⁶Happy shall I be,^e
 When your lips speak righteously.^f
¹⁷Do not envy sinners,
 But always revere the Lord;
¹⁸Assuredly the end is not yet,^g
 And your hope will not be cut off.
¹⁹Listen, my son, and be wise,
 And walk in the way of prudence.^h
- 14** ²⁶He who reveres the Lordⁱ has good reason to be confident,^j
 And his children will have a refuge.
²⁷Reverence for the Lord is a fountain of life,
 To avoid the snares of death.
- 10** ²⁷Reverence for the Lord prolongs life,^k
 But the years of the wicked will be shortened.
- 19** ²³Reverence for the Lord leads^l to life,
 He who hopes in him^m will not suffer harm.ⁿ
- 3** ⁷Be not wise in your own eyes;
 Revere the Lord and turn from sin.
⁸Then you will have health of body^o
 And your bones will be refreshed.
- 22** ⁴The reward of humility and reverence for the Lord
 Is riches and honor and life.
- 19** ³A man's folly brings ruin upon him,^p
 And then he^q rages against the Lord.
- 3** ¹¹My son, reject not the discipline of the Lord,
 And do not spurn his reproof,
¹²For whom he loves he reproves,
 Even as a father the son in whom he delights.^r
- 29** ¹⁸When there is no vision,^s the people are unrestrained,
 But he who keeps the teaching^t is happy.

Its
rewards

Submis-
sion

Regard
for re-
ligious
teaching

^c 23¹⁵ Lit., *your heart* (i. e., mind).

^d 23¹⁵ Lit., *My heart will rejoice, even I.*

^e 23¹⁶ Lit., *And my kidneys will be joyful.* The Hebrews regarded the kidneys and bowels as the organs of emotion and the heart as the organ of the intellect.

^f 23¹⁶ Lit., *upright things.*

^g 23¹⁸ Lit., *there is an after-part* (issue, end). Toy translates, *There is a future*, but this suggests the future life, which is not the meaning. Cf. Hab. 2³⁻⁴.

^h 23¹⁹ Revising the Heb. in the light of the context and other similar passages (cf. 4¹⁴, 9⁹).

ⁱ 14²⁶ Emending the Heb. as required by the context. Heb., *In reverence for the Lord is, etc.*, makes the second line refer to God's children, which is contrary to the usage of the book. The children of the righteous man must be meant (cf. 20⁷).

^j 14²⁶ Lit., *has a strong* (ground or object of) confidence.

^k 10²⁷ Lit., *adds days.*

^l 19²³ Supplying the verb, which is not expressed in the Heb.

^m 19²³ Adopting Toy's emendation of the obscure Heb.

ⁿ 19²³ Lit., *be visited with evil.*

^o 3⁸ So Gk. and a slightly revised Heb.

^p 19³ Lit., *ruins his way.*

^q 19³ Lit., *his heart.*

^r 3¹² On this vs. cf. notes ^k, ^l under § 22.

^s 29¹⁸ Gk., *interpreter.* Since Pr. does not elsewhere refer to prophetic vision and the parallelism suggests something connected with the teaching of the wise, it is not improbable that the Gk. is closer to the original text than the Heb.

^t 29¹⁸ The Heb. word *Torah* does not have in this book its technical meaning, *the Law*.

MAN

13 ¹³He who despises the word is a debtor to it,^u
But he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.

Honor 3 ⁹Honor the Lord with your wealth,
 With the best of all your income.
 10¹⁰Then your barns will be filled with grain,^v
 And your vats overflow with wine.

Trust 29 ²⁵Dread of man lays a snare,
 But he who trusts in the Lord is secure.^w
16 ²⁰He who acts wisely as regards the word will prosper,^x
 But he who trusts in the Lord is happy.
28 ²⁵A greedy man stirs up strife,
 But he who trusts in the Lord will prosper.^y
 26²⁶He who trusts in himself^z is a fool,
 But he who walks wisely will be delivered.
3 ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
 Depend not on your own understanding;
 6⁶In all you do^a know him intimately,^b
 And he will direct your paths.

L

THE REWARDS OF HUMAN CONDUCT

§ 57. Man Shall Reap What He Sows, Pr. 11³¹, 12¹⁴, 11¹⁸, 22⁸, 5²²⁻²³, 18²⁶, 28¹⁶,
11³, 14¹⁴

Pr. 11 ³¹If the righteous man is requited on earth,
 How much more the wicked and the sinner!^a
12 ¹⁴From the fruit of a man's mouth he is satisfied with good,^b
 And the work of man's hands will return to him.
11 ¹⁸A wicked man earns deceitful wages,
 But he who sows righteousness has a true reward.
22 ⁸He who sows iniquity will reap trouble,
 And the crop he has worked for^c will fail.

^u 13¹³ *I. e.*, is under an obligation like that of a debtor who has given a pledge. Both text and meaning, however, are somewhat doubtful.

^v 3¹⁰ Revising the Heb., as suggested by the Gk.

^w 29²⁵ *Lit.*, *set up high* (*i. e.*, where he will be safe).

^x 16²⁰ *Lit.*, *find good*.

^y 28²⁵ *Lit.*, *be made fat*.

^z 28²⁶ *Lit.*, *in his heart* (or *mind*).

^a 3⁵ *Lit.*, *in all your ways*.

^b 3⁶ Heb. reads simply, *know him*.

The Rewards of Human Conduct.—The teaching of the wise appeals constantly to prudential motives. The point of view is that of every-day experience and common sense.

§ 57 While further reflection (*Ecc.*, *Job*) showed that life was not so simple as it seemed to the earlier sages, as a general rule it is true that every form of virtue or vice brings its own appropriate reward or punishment.

^a 11³¹ Gk. has quite a different text in this verse. It is quoted in *I Pet.* 4¹⁸.

^b 12¹⁴ Cf. 13² and note ^v under § 54.

^c 22⁸ *Lit.*, *the grain of his work*. This reading requires an emendation suggested in part by the Gk. Heb., *the rod of his wrath*.

MAN REAPS WHAT HE SOWS

- 5 ²²His iniquities will take him,^d
 And in the cords of his sin will he be held.
²³He will die for lack of instruction,
 And perish^e through the greatness of his folly.
- 18 ²⁰From the fruit of a man's mouth his belly is satisfied;^f
 The increase of his lips satisfies him.
- 28 ¹⁰He who misleads the upright in an evil way
 Will fall into his own pit,
 But the perfect will inherit good.
- 11 ³The integrity of the upright shall guide them,
 But the crookedness of the faithless shall ruin them.
- 14 ¹⁴From his ways one of perverse mind is satisfied,
 And so from his deeds^g is a good man.

§ 58. **Recompense for Right or Wrong Conduct**, Pr. 14³², 13⁹, 10²⁸, 24¹⁹⁻²⁰, 28¹, 4¹⁹, 18³, 28⁵, 14²², 19¹⁸, 18³, 12³, 10⁷, 6²¹, 13², 10⁹, 12²¹, 26², 11²¹, 28¹⁸, 14¹¹, 29¹⁶, 21¹², 13²¹, 17²⁰, 15⁶, 13²⁵, 12²⁰, 29⁶, 10²⁵, 24¹⁵⁻¹⁶, 10³⁰, 12⁷, 22¹⁻²², 10³, 24¹¹, 10¹⁶, 12²⁸, 10³¹, 28¹⁷, 10², 11⁷, 15²⁴, 12², 19²⁹, 11⁸, 21¹⁸, 13⁶, 14¹⁴, 21²¹

- Pr. 14** ³²The wicked stumble in adversity,
 But a just man has hope when he dies.^h
- 13 ⁹The light of the righteous rejoices,ⁱ
 But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out.
- 10 ²⁸The hope of the righteous is joy,
 But the expectation of the wicked will perish.
- 24 ¹⁹Fret not yourself because of evil-doers,
 Nor be envious of the wicked,
²⁰For there is no future^j for the bad man,
 The lamp of the wicked shall be put out.

Hope or
hopeless-
ness

- 28 ¹The wicked flee when no one is pursuing,
 But the righteous are bold as a lion.
- 4 ¹⁹The way of the wicked is as darkness:
 They know not at what they stumble.
¹⁸But the path of the righteous is as the light of dawn,
 Shining more and more brightly till full daylight.^k

Moral
courage
or cow-
ardice

^d 5²² Heb. adds, *the wicked man*. Since the verb already has an object (*him*), this is probably a marginal gloss.

^e 5²³ Instead of this line Gk. has two lines, which seem to be simply variant readings of the Heb. One of them has *perish*, as above, and this is supported by the parallelism. Heb., *go astray*, makes an anticlimax.

^f 18²⁰ Cf. 12¹⁴, above, and 13², § 54.

^g 14¹⁴ Slightly revising the Heb., which reads, *from upon him*.

§ 58 While the rewards and punishments referred to in these proverbs are mostly external and temporal, the effects of conduct upon character itself are not ignored.

^h 14¹⁹ This seems to reflect a hope of a blessed hereafter, but the reading is uncertain. A slight emendation, supported by the Gk., gives the following:

*A wicked man is overthrown by his wickedness,
 But a righteous man trusts in his integrity.*

ⁱ 13⁹ Some commentators emend to read, *shines*.

^j 24²⁰ Lit., *end (issue, after-part)*.

^k 4¹⁸ The exact meaning of this line is not certain: the VSS. and commentators give various interpretations. The general contrast between stumbling in darkness and walking securely by daylight, however, is quite clear.

MAN

- Moral perception or blindness
- 28 ⁶Evil men do not understand justice,
But they who seek the Lord understand all.¹
- Truth or error
- 14 ²²Do not they go astray who plan evil?
But kindness and faithfulness are for^m those who plan good.
- Honor or humiliation
- ¹⁹Evil men bow before good men,
And the wicked at the gates of a righteous man.
- 18 ³With the coming of the wicked comes also contempt,
And with ignominy comes reproach.
- 12 ⁸According to his intelligence a man is praised,
And a prejudicedⁿ man will be despised.
- Remembrance or oblivion
- 10 ⁷The memory of the just shall be blessed,
But the name of the wicked shall rot.
- Blessedness or violence
- ⁶Blessings are on the head of the just,
But grief^o shall seal^p the mouth of the wicked.
- 21 ⁷The violence of the wicked will sweep them away,
Because they refuse to act justly.
- 13 ²From the fruit of a man's mouth he eats good,
But the desire of the treacherous is violence.^q
- Deliverance or misfortune
- 10 ⁹He who lives uprightly lives securely,
But he whose ways are crooked shall suffer.^r
- 12 ²¹No trouble shall be sent to the righteous,
But the wicked are full of misfortune.
- 26 ²Like the sparrow in its wandering, like the swallow in its flying,
So a curse without cause will not fall.^s
- 11 ²¹Most assuredly^t the evil man will not go unpunished,
But the seed of the righteous will be delivered.
- 28 ¹⁸One who walks uprightly will be saved,
But one of crooked ways^u will fall.^v
- Prosperity or calamity
- 14 ¹¹The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
But the tent of the upright will flourish.

¹ 28^s To us this proverb suggests the problem of God's justice, but the original meaning was probably that only those who seek to know God's will can perceive what is right.

^m 14² Inserting the preposition, which is found in the Gk. and needed in the Heb.

ⁿ 12^s Lit., *twisted in mind*.

^o 10^s So Gk. Heb., *violence*.

^p 10^s Lit., *cover*.

^q 13^s Cf. note ^v under § 54.

^r 10^s With Toy slightly emending the Heb., which reads, *shall be known*.

^s 26^s Lit., *come*; i. e., be accomplished.

^t 11^s Lit., *hand to hand*; i. e., I will give you my hand on it!

^u 28^s Lit., *crooked of ways*. As in vs. ⁴, *ways* has the dual form (*two ways*), but the reason for this form and its significance in this connection are not clear.

^v 28^s Heb. adds, *in one*. Some take this to mean, *at once*, but this is doubtful. Others emend the phrase. Toy regards it as a gloss on the *two ways* of the Heb. text.

RECOMPENSE FOR CONDUCT

- 29 ¹⁶When the wicked increase,^w crime increases,
But the righteous will see their fall.
- 21 ¹²A just man who considers the house of a wicked man
Overturns the wicked to evil.^x
- 13 ²¹Misfortune pursues the sinners,
But good fortune rewards the righteous.^y
- 17 ²⁰A perverted^a man finds no satisfaction,^a
And a double-tongued^b man gets into trouble.
- 15 ⁶In the house of the righteous is much treasure,
But in the revenues of the wicked is trouble.^o Riches or
trouble
- 13 ²⁵A righteous man eats till his appetite is satisfied,
But the belly of the wicked suffers want. Plenty or
want
- 12 ²⁰Deceit is in the mind of those who plan evil,
But those who counsel peace have joy. Joy or
evil
- 29 ⁶In his transgression an evil man is snared,^d
But a righteous man sings and rejoices.
- 10 ²⁵When the tempest passes, the wicked man is no more,
But the righteous man is established forever.^o Stability
or inse-
curity
- 24 ¹⁵Lie not in wait^f against the home of the just,
Do not rob the place where he rests;
¹⁶For seven times the just falls and rises,
But the wicked totter in ruin.
- 10 ³⁰A righteous man will never be removed,
But the wicked will not inhabit the land.
- 12 ⁷Wicked men are overthrown and are no more,
But the house of the righteous will stand.
- 2 ²¹For the upright will inhabit the land,
And the perfect will remain in it;
²²But the wicked will be cut off from the land,
And the treacherous will be rooted out of it.
- 10 ³The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry,
But he disappoints the desire of the wicked. Fulfil-
ment of
desires
or fears

^w 29¹⁶ Some commentators emend, as in vs. ² (cf. § 43), to read *rule*, or *come into power*. It is perhaps better here to assume that the word *increase* implies coming into power, for the repetition of the verb is probably intentional (cf. Ecc. 1¹⁸, 5¹¹).

^x 21¹² This does not make sense and can hardly be original, but none of the emendations which have been suggested is satisfactory. Possibly the original meant *Consigns the wicked to ruin* (cf. Job 5⁴).

^y 13²¹ Heb., *He rewards the righteous with good*.

^a 17²⁰ Lit., *twisted in mind*.

^a 17²⁰ Lit., *good*.

^b 17²⁰ Lit., *turned in his tongue*.

^o 15⁶ Cf. note on this vs. under § 38.

^d 29⁶ Repointing the Heb. as read by Syr. and Targ. Heb., *in the transgression of an evil man is a snare*.

^o 10²⁵ Lit., *an everlasting foundation*.

^f 24¹⁵ Heb. adds, *O wicked man*, but this is probably a gloss.

24 What the wicked man fears will come upon him,
But what the righteous desire will be granted.^ε

Life or
death

- 11 ¹⁹ True righteousness^h leadsⁱ to life,
But when one^j pursues evil, it leadsⁱ to death.^k
- 10 ¹⁶ A righteous man's wage leadsⁱ to life,
A wicked man's income to destruction.^l
- 12 ²⁸ In the path of righteousness is life,
But the way of evil^m leads toⁿ death.
- 10 ³¹ A righteous man's mouth produces^o wisdom,
But a false tongue^p will be cut off.
- 28 ¹⁷ A man oppressed with the blood of a person
Will flee to the pit; let them not seize him.^q
- 10 ² Treasures unjustly acquired profit nothing,
But righteousness delivers from death.
- 11 ⁷ When a wicked man dies, his expectation perishes,
And the hope of strength perishes.^r
- 15 ²⁴ The upward way of life is for the wise man,
That he may avoid Sheol below.

Divine
favor or
condem-
nation

- 12 ² A good man will obtain favor from the Lord,
But a designing man^s he will condemn.
- 19 ²⁹ Rods^t are prepared for scoffers
And stripes for the backs of fools.

The
wicked a
ransom
for the
righteous

- 11 ⁸ The righteous man is rescued from trouble,
And the wicked man takes his place.^u
- 21 ¹⁸ The wicked man is a ransom for the righteous,
And the treacherous man for^v the upright.

Right-
eousness
its own
reward

- 13 ⁶ Righteousness preserves the man of integrity,^w
But wickedness overthrows the sinner.

^ε 10²⁴ Repointing the Heb. verb as passive.

^h 11¹⁹ So Heb., as interpreted by BDB. Many commentators, in the interest of closer parallelism, prefer to emend so as to read, *He who associates with (or follows after) righteousness.*

ⁱ 11¹⁹, 10¹⁶ The verb is not expressed in the Heb.

^j 11¹⁹ Lit., *one who.*

^k 11¹⁹ Heb., *is death*, but not so the VSS.

^l 10¹⁶ Heb., *sin*; but the above reading, which requires only a slight emendation, gives better parallelism. The point of the verse is that wealth without character does more harm than good to its owner.

^m 12²⁸ Heb. has after *way* another noun meaning *path*, but this does not make sense and must be a mistake for some word expressing a contrast to the righteousness of the preceding line.

ⁿ 12²⁸ Supplying the verb (which is not expressed in the Heb.) and by a change of one vowel restoring the preposition as in the VSS. and many Heb. MSS.

^o 10³¹ The Heb. word means lit., *bear fruit.*

^p 10³¹ Lit., *tongue of falsehood.*

^q 28¹⁷ The text and meaning of this vs. are uncertain. Toy conjectures that it is a quotation from a law-book, inserted here by mistake.

^r 11¹⁷ The text and meaning of this proverb are doubtful.

^s 12² Lit., *a man of devices.*

^t 19²⁹ So Gk. and a slightly revised Heb. The trad. text reads, *judgments.*

^u 11⁸ Lit., *comes instead of him.*

^v 21¹⁸ Lit., *instead of.*

^w 13⁶ Lit., *the perfect of way.*

RECOMPENSE FOR CONDUCT

- 14 ¹⁴From his ways one of perverse mind is satisfied,
And so from his deeds^x is a good man.
21 ²¹He who pursues righteousness and kindness
Will find life^y and honor.

IV

NUMERICAL ENIGMAS

§ 59. Four Classes of Evil-Doers, Pr. 30¹¹⁻¹⁴

[There are three kinds of men whom the Lord hates,
And four that are abhorrent to him:]

- Pr. 30 ¹¹Those^a who curse their fathers
And do not bless their mothers;
¹²Those who are pure in their own eyes
And are not cleansed of their filth;
¹³Those whose eyes are—oh, how lofty!—
And whose eyelids are upraised;
¹⁴Those whose teeth are swords
And their incisors^b knives,
To devour the poor from the earth
And the needy from among men.

§ 60. Four Things That Are Never Satisfied, Pr. 30¹⁵⁻¹⁶

- Pr. 30 ¹⁵There are three things that are never satisfied,
Four which do not say, 'Enough':
¹⁶Sheol, the barren womb,
The earth, not satisfied with water,
And fire, which does not say, 'Enough.'

§ 61. Four Things That Are Incomprehensible, Pr. 30¹⁸⁻¹⁹

- Pr. 30 ¹⁸There are three things that are too wonderful for me,
And four which I do not understand:

^x 14¹⁴ Slightly revising the Heb., which reads, *from upon him*.

^y 21²¹ Heb. inserts *righteousness*, doubtless through an error in copying.

Numerical Enigmas.—Regarding the possibility that some of the earliest proverbs were originally riddles, cf. *Introd.*, p. 14. In the case of these later and more elaborate compositions it is not likely that the original form was a question and an answer, but in any case the form is closely related to the enigma. For another example of the same type, cf. 6¹⁶⁻¹⁸, § 14.

§ 59 In this section the introductory statement (cf. vs. 15, 18, 21, 24, 22) is missing, but it is not unlikely that the original text contained such a statement, for the vs. do not form sentences in themselves, but simply name the four classes of evil-doers, thus falling into the same literary mould as the other groups which follow them. A conjectural introduction has therefore been supplied above in brackets, following the analogy of 6¹⁶.

^a 30¹¹ Lit., *A generation*, and so throughout this section. Here, however, as often, the word signifies a general class rather than the men living at a particular time.

^b 30¹⁴ The Heb. word is simply a synonym for *teeth*.

§ 60 Heb. introduces this proverb with a line which no commentator has satisfactorily explained, and which is therefore omitted from the translation. It reads, lit., *The leech has two daughters, give, give*. It should be noted that this section simply records what a thoughtful man has observed; it has no moral teaching.

§ 61 Again we find observation rather than moral teaching. Cf. I Kgs. 4²²⁻²³. The vulture, serpent, and ship follow no roads or paths and leave no trace behind. Equally mysterious are the ways of lovers.

¹⁹The way of a vulture in the heavens,
 The way of a serpent upon a rock,
 The way of a ship in the heart of the sea,
 And the way of a maid with a maid.^o

§ 62. Four Things That Are Intolerable, Pr. 30²¹⁻²³

Pr. 30 ²¹Under three things the earth trembles,
 And under four it cannot bear up:
²²Under a servant when he becomes king,
 And a fool when he is satisfied with food,
²³Under an unpopular^d woman when she gets married,
 And a maid who becomes heir to her mistress.

§ 63. Four Things Which, Though Small, Manifest Great Foresight, Pr. 30²⁴⁻²⁸

Pr. 30 ²⁴There are four things which are small in the earth
 But wiser than the wise:^e
²⁵The ants, a people not strong,
 Yet they prepare their food in the summer;
²⁶The badgers, a people not mighty,
 Yet they make their homes in the rocks;
²⁷The locusts have no king,
 Yet they all go out in companies;^f
²⁸The lizard you may seize in your hands,
 Yet she is in royal palaces.^g

§ 64. Four Things Which Are Stately in Their Going, Pr. 30²⁹⁻³¹

Pr. 30 ²⁹There are three things of stately gait,
 And four which are stately in their walking:
³⁰The lion, mighty among the beasts,
 Who turns his back to^h none;
³¹The cock, strutting proudly;ⁱ the he-goat;
 And the king against whom there is no rising.^j

^o 30¹⁹ The word used here is the one used in Is. 7¹⁴. It means, lit., a *young woman*, whether married or unmarried.

§ 62 The sage who in these proverbs sings, as it were, his litany has watched the world go by and enjoyed the spectacle with a keen but good-natured sense of humor.

^d 30²³ Lit., *hated*.

§ 63 The joy of observing interesting things is the only motive of these as of the preceding *vss.*, though it is easy enough to draw a moral from them.

^e 30²⁴ Pointing the Heb. as it was read by the Gk., Syr., and Lat.

^f 30²⁷ Lit., *dividing*; i. e., arranging themselves in regular divisions.

^g 30²⁸ I. e., though apparently helpless, the lizard manages to make its way even into the closely guarded palace.

§ 64 Here something of the aesthetic interest appears in the pleasure of watching graceful, stately motion.

^h 30³⁰ Lit., *turns from the face of*.

ⁱ 30³¹ Heb., *that which is girded about the loins*. VSS., *the cock*. The word rendered *strutting proudly* is obtained (following Toy) by an emendation of the word for *loins*. Many other interpretations have been offered by ancient and modern commentators.

^j 30³¹ This reading is very doubtful, but none better has been proposed. The text is undoubtedly corrupt.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

I

KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST FOR THE REAL VALUES IN LIFE

§ 1. The Eternal Wheel of Things, Ecc. 1²⁻¹¹

- Ecc. 1** ²Vanity^a of vanities, says Koheleth,^b
Vanity of vanities! All is vanity. Vanity
of human
effort
- ³What gain has man from all his toil,
Which he puts forth under the sun?^c
- ⁴The generations come and go,
But the earth remains forever.
- ⁵The sun rises and the sun sets,
And comes hastening back to his rising place.^d Nature's
endless
cycles
- ⁶Round to the south and circling to the north,
Circling, circling goes the wind,
And on its circuits the wind returns.
- ⁷All the streams flow into the sea,
And yet the sea is not full;
To the place from which the streams flow,
From there they flow again.
- ⁸All things are wearied with labor;
No man is able to describe it;
The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor is the ear filled with hearing.
- ⁹What has been is what shall be,
And what has been done is what shall be done; Nothing
brings
lasting
satisfac-
tion

Koheleth's Vain Quest for the Real Values in Life.—As has already been stated in the Introd., pp. 17-21, the heart of the Book of Ecclesiastes comes from an ancient Jewish sage, who calls himself Koheleth. In a series of brilliant gnomic essays he discusses at length the value of those things for which men strive and the possibility of attaining happiness. At the very beginning he states his thesis: *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.* To him all human struggle seems unsatisfying and fruitless. The first reason for this pessimistic conclusion is set forth in a weird poem, 1²⁻¹¹. The author then passes over into half prose, half poetry. The whole discussion closes with a brilliant poem in which the young are urged to enjoy those pleasures which youth offers before paleying old age destroys all possibilities of enjoyment, 11²⁻¹².

§ 1 In this section the reader feels throughout the weakness of old age. The matchless order and rhythm of nature, instead of inspiring awe and confidence in the divine Ruler, only intensify the author's overpowering *ennui*. Heb. prefixes the title: *The words of Koheleth, son of David, king in Jerusalem* (cf. note on § 2 and Introd., p. 7).

^a 1² Lit., *breath* or *nothingness*. The word is used forty times by the author.

^b 1² Possibly the words *says Koheleth* are secondary, for the author of the original sections usually speaks in the first rather than in the third person.

^c 1² Another characteristic idiom. It is used by Koheleth twenty-five times. It refers to all terrestrial things.

^d 1⁵ The sun is thought of as animate and returning at night through the subterranean passage to the east, where it rises. For the same idea, cf. Vergil, *Georg.* I, 250. Also cf. II Kgs. 23¹¹ and Ps. 19⁶.

KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST

There is nothing new under the sun.

¹⁰Is there anything of which it may be said,
'See, this thing is new'?

Already it existed in preceding ages.^e

¹¹There is no remembrance of those who were earlier;
Also the men who shall be later
Shall not be remembered by those still later.

§ 2. The Futility of Those Things for Which Men Strive, Ecc. 1:12-2:26

The
folly of
man's
toil

Ecc. 1 ¹²I, Koheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³And I applied my mind to searching out and exploring by wisdom all that is done under heaven. But it is a wretched task that God has given men as their occupation. ¹⁴I have seen everything that is being done under the sun, and it is nothing but an illusion^f and a chasing of the wind.^g

¹⁵What is crooked cannot be made straight,

What is lacking can never be supplied.^h

¹⁶I said to myself, ¹'See, I have grown and attained more wisdom than all who were before me over Jerusalem, and my mind has gained a large vision of wisdom and knowledge.' ¹⁷When I carefully investigated^j wisdom and knowledge, madness and folly,^k I learned that this also is a pursuit of wind.

¹⁸For more wisdom brings more trouble,

And an increase of knowledge an increase of pain.

2 ¹I said to myself, 'Come now, I will make a test of pleasure and of self-indulgence;' but I found that this too was an illusion. ²I said of laughter, 'It is madness;' and of pleasure, 'What does it accomplish?' ³I found out how to stimulate^l my body with wine—though my reason was always in control^m—and how to indulge in folly, until I should discover whether this is a good way for men to spend all the days of their life on earth. ⁴I undertook great enterprises; I built houses for myself; I planted vineyards for myself; ⁵I had gardens and parks laid out, and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. ⁶I had pools of water constructed to irrigate a forest of growing trees. ⁷I bought male and female slaves and had others who were born in my house. I also had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all my predecessors in Jerusalem. ⁸Besides I amassed silver and gold and

^e ¹¹⁰ With certain MSS. slightly correcting the Heb.

§ 2 In this section Koheleth cites his more personal experiences to prove that all human effort is vain. These experiences he presents under the assumed guise of Solomon, the Magnificent, who was also the traditional father of the wisdom school. By bitter experience Koheleth has found that all the things which men ordinarily regard as sources of happiness—knowledge, wisdom, gratification of the appetites and passions, the sense of power and achievement, and the possession of wealth—utterly fail to give abiding happiness.

^f ¹¹⁴ The noun translated *illusion* here and in the remainder of the book is the one translated *rarity* in ² (see note ⁸).

^g ¹¹⁴ *I. e.*, utterly futile. The meaning of the Heb. verb is doubtful, as it occurs only in Ecc. It may mean *feeding* or *longing for*.

^h ¹¹⁵ The Heb. must be slightly revised as the context demands.

ⁱ ¹¹⁶ Lit., *communed with my soul*.

^j ¹¹⁷ Lit., *I gave my mind to know*.

^k ¹¹⁷ Slightly correcting the Heb.

^l ¹¹⁷ Lit., *draw out*.

^m ¹¹⁸ *I. e.*, keeping within the bounds of discretion.

FUTILITY OF STRIVING

the treasures of kings and of provinces. I secured for myself male and female singers, and all that gives pleasure to men, including many concubines.⁹

⁹I became far richer than any of my predecessors in Jerusalem; and my wisdom, too, remained with me. ¹⁰I withheld from myself nothing that I craved; I did not deny myself any pleasure, for I found enjoyment in all my toil, and this was the reward for all my effort. ¹¹But when I considered all that my hands had made, and what by toil I had accomplished, it all seemed but an illusion and a chasing of the wind. Nothing under the sun was worth while.

¹²Then I turned to investigate wisdom and madness and folly. For what can the man do who comes after the king? What has already been done!¹⁰ ¹³And I saw that wisdom is as superior to folly as light to darkness. ¹⁴The wise man's eyes are in his head,^p but the fool walks in darkness; and yet I know that the same fate overtakes them all.

¹⁵So I said to myself, 'The fate of the fool will also overtake me. Of what advantage then is my superior wisdom?'⁹ So I said to myself, 'This, too, is an illusion. ¹⁶For the wise man is no more remembered forever than the fool; for in the days to come everyone will be forgotten. Alas! the wise man dies just like the fool!' ¹⁷So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun seemed evil to me, for all is illusion and a chasing of the wind.

¹⁸Also I hated all that for which I had toiled under the sun, for I must leave it to my successor; ¹⁹and who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will control all that for which I have toiled and exercised my wisdom under the sun. This also is an illusion.

²⁰So I gave myself up to despair over all for which I had toiled under the sun, ²¹for a man who toils with wisdom and knowledge and success must leave his property to one who has not toiled for it. This also is an illusion and a great misfortune. ²²For what does a man get for all his labor and his carefully laid plans for which he toils under the sun? ²³For all his days are full of pain^r and his task a vexation, with no rest for his mind even at night. This also is an illusion. ²⁴There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and find pleasure^s in his toil. This also, I perceive, is the gift of God. ²⁵For who can eat or who can have enjoyment apart from him?⁶ ^{26b}But this, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind.^u

Vanity of
striving
to possess
and
attain
wealth

⁹ ²⁸ The exact meaning of the Heb. is not clear. Gk. and Theod., *male and female cup-bearers*. The context demands a meaning akin to that given above.

¹⁰ ²¹² *I. e.*, the king with royal resources at his command is able to exhaust every possibility of pleasure.

¹¹ ²¹⁴ *I. e.*, he can at least see where he is going.

¹² ²¹⁵ *Lit.*, *Why then am I excessively wise?*

¹³ ²²³ *Lit.*, *are pains*.

¹⁴ ²²⁴ *Lit.*, *cause himself to see good*. As Jastrow has pointed out, this is current slang, exactly equivalent to our phrase *having a good time*.

¹⁵ ²²⁵ Slightly changing the Heb. So Gk., Syr., and Lat., and some Heb. MSS.

¹⁶ ²²⁶ The first part of this verse reads: *For to the man who pleases him he gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he gives travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him who pleases God*. This absolutely contradicts the thought of ¹²⁻¹⁷, in which Koheleth maintains that a like fate awaits the wise man and the fool. It was evidently added by a later sage who wished to correct the author's false teaching.

KOHHELETH'S VAIN QUEST

§ 3. Man's Helplessness Under God's Fixed Rule, Ecc. 3¹⁻¹⁶

Fixed
time
for all
things

Ecc. 3 ¹For everything there is a fixed season,
And a time for every purpose under heaven:
²A time to be born and a time to die,^γ
A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted,
³A time to kill and a time to heal,
A time to tear down and a time to build,
⁴A time to weep and a time to laugh,
A time to wail and a time to dance,
⁵A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones,
A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
⁶A time to seek and a time to lose,
A time to keep and a time to cast away,
⁷A time to rend and a time to sew,
A time to keep silence and a time to speak,
⁸A time to love and a time to hate,
A time of war and a time of peace.

Man's
fixed
rôle is
to make
the best
out of
life

⁹What profit has the worker in the fruit of his toil? ¹⁰I have seen the task which God has given men to do. ¹¹He has made everything beautiful in its season, but he has also put ignorance^w in men's minds, so that they cannot discover from beginning to end the work that God is doing. ¹²I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and to do good while they live. ¹³Also that every man should eat and drink and have a good time^x in all his toil is the gift of God.

God's
will
irrevo-
cable

¹⁴I know, too, that whatever God does is eternal; nothing can be added to it nor taken from it; and God has done so that men may revere him. ¹⁵What is there that now is? Already it has been, and that which is to be already is, and God will seek again that which has been driven away.

§ 4. Man's Lot No Better Than That of the Beast, Ecc. 3¹⁶⁻²²

No
justice

Ecc. 3 ¹⁶Moreover I saw under the sun in the place of justice, crime; yes, in the place of righteousness there was wickedness! ¹⁸I said to myself, 'It is for the sake of mankind, that God may test them, and show them that they are beasts.'^γ ¹⁹For the fate of mankind and of beasts is the same.

§ 3 The author proceeds to illustrate still further the vanity (illusion) of all human endeavor. Man is circumscribed on every side by fixed limitations which forbid the realization of his highest aspirations. Eating and toil are the only sources of real pleasure left open to man under God's iron rule.

^γ ³¹ The author probably means that the time of a man's birth and the time of his death are both fixed by God. So the Moslem believes to-day.

^w ³¹ Pointing the Heb. as the context demands and translating as the ground root of the verb, *hidden*, implies.

^x ³¹ Lit., see good. Cf. note on 2⁴.

§ 4 Here Koheleth reveals his Sadducean training. He evidently had in mind Job's bold assertion of his belief in personal vindication after the grave, Job 19²⁶⁻²⁷. Possibly he had also come into contact with the Platonic teaching regarding individual immortality. Both of these he rejects. Into this negative setting a Pharisaic editor has injected in ¹¹ the opposite doctrine: *I said to myself, God will judge the righteous and the wicked, for he has appointed a time for every matter and for every work.* The later editor employs the same introductory formula as does Koheleth in ¹⁴. It is clear that ¹⁶ was the original sequel of ¹⁵.

^γ ³¹ Through a scribal repetition the Heb. text has been expanded.

MAN'S LOT

The one dies like the other; and they all have the same spirit. Man has no advantage over the beast, for all is but an illusion. ²⁰All go to the same place; all sprang from the dust, and will return to the dust. ²¹Who knows whether the spirit of man goes upward and the spirit of the beast goes down to the earth? ²²So I perceived that there is nothing better for man than to find pleasure in his activities, for that is his privilege; for who can help him to see what shall be after him?

§ 5. Human Life Full of Injustice and Disappointment, Ecc. 4¹⁻¹⁰

Ecc. 4 ¹Again I considered all the oppressions that are practised under the sun, and saw the tears of the oppressed. And they had no one to comfort them; on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no one to comfort them. ²Therefore I deemed those who have long been dead more fortunate than those who are still alive; ³and better off than either is the one who has not yet been born, who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

Oppression every-where; better not to live

⁴Then I perceived that all toil and all skilful work is the result of a man's rivalry with his neighbor. This, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind. ⁵Better is a handful with quiet^a than two handfuls with toil and a chasing of the wind.

Vanity of all competition

⁷Then I again saw an illusion under the sun. ⁸There is one man alone, without a second; he has neither son nor brother; yet there is no end of all his toil, and his eye^b is not satisfied with riches. For whom then do I labor and deprive myself of good? This also is an illusion and an evil struggle. ⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil; ¹⁰for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him^c who is alone when he falls and has none to lift him up! ¹¹Also, if two lie together they have warmth; but one alone—how can he be warm? ¹²And if a man^d could overpower one alone, two could withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.^e

Isolation of wealth and its fruitlessness

¹³Better than an old and foolish king, who no longer knows how to receive instruction, is a poor but wise youth,^f ¹⁴although he came forth from prison^g to be king, and even though in his kingdom he was born poor. ¹⁵I saw that all the living who walk under the sun were with the youth (the second), who stood up in his stead. ¹⁶There was no end of all the people over whom

All power ephemeral

§ 5 In 4⁷⁻¹² Koheleth pours out the bitterness of his soul: isolated, without friend or relative, he is compelled in his tottering old age to meet the shocks of life unaided. Vss. 9-12 have been regarded by scholars as later additions, but they apparently reflect Koheleth's own bitter experience and the sense of utter loneliness which rests like a pall upon his entire philosophy of life.

^a 4⁴ A scribe has added the proverb, *The fool folds his hands and eats his own flesh*. It is a condensation of Pr. 24³²⁻³³ and is inconsistent with the context, especially the vs. which follows.

^b 4⁶ Lit., *palm full of rest*. Cf. for the same idea Pr. 15¹⁷.

^c 4⁸ So Gk., Syr., Targ., and marginal reading of Heb.

^d 4¹⁰ So many MSS.

^e 4¹² *I. e.*, a robber.

^f 4¹² *I. e.*, three constitute a sure defense.

^g 4¹³ The allusion is probably to Ptolemy V of Egypt, who succeeded his aged father, Ptolemy IV, at the age of five. If Koheleth had in mind a classic illustration, it was probably that of Joseph; the latter, however, did not succeed Pharaoh on the throne of Egypt.

^h 4¹⁴ So Gk., Lat., and certain MSS. The traditional Heb. is doubtful. It may be revised to read, *rebellious house*. If so, the reference is probably to the Ptolemaic dynasty.

KOHLETH'S VAIN QUEST

he ruled; yet those who came after could not delight in him. Surely this, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind.

§ 6. Maxims Intended to Deliver from the Vexations of Life, Ecc. 5¹⁻⁹

Right
attitude
toward
God

Ecc. 5 ¹Be careful what you do when you go to the house of God; and go there to listen rather than to have fools offer a sacrifice, for they do not know that they are doing wrong. ²Do not be rash with your mouth, and do not let your mind be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few. ³For a dream comes through a multitude of business, and a fool's voice through a multitude of words. ⁴When you vow a vow to God do not delay to pay it, for he has no pleasure in fools; pay what you vow. ⁵Better is it that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. ⁶Do not allow your mouth to make your flesh sin, and do not speak in the presence of the angel,^h for that is a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands? ⁷But fear God.ⁱ

Fidelity
in paying
vows

⁸If you see the oppression of the poor, and the wresting of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter, for one high official is watching above another, and there are higher ones over them.^j ⁹A king on the whole is an advantage to a land, at least to a cultivated land.^k

Do not
try to
under-
stand all
the evils
of life

§ 7. Folly of Expecting More Than Passing Enjoyment from Wealth,

Ecc. 5¹⁰⁻²⁰

Riches
unsatis-
factory

Ecc. 5 ¹⁰He who loves money is never satisfied with money, nor he who loves a great fortune^l with gain. This also is an illusion. ¹¹When wealth increases, they increase who share it; and what advantage is there to the owner except to see it with his eyes? ¹²The sleep of a laborer is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the satiety of the rich does not let him sleep.

Riches
often a
curse^m

¹³One of the grievous evils which I have seen under the sun is wealth hoarded by its owner to his ruin. ¹⁴When this wealth is lost through a bad venture after he has become a father, his son has nothing in hand at all. ¹⁵As he came naked from his mother's womb, so he returns just as he came,ⁿ and he receives for his toil nothing which he may carry away in his hand. ¹⁶This also is a grievous evil, that he must go away just as he came, and what

§ 6 The counsel in 5² is an echo from the Book of Job and may be an interpolation, intended as a rebuke of Koheleth's intemperate moods. In fact, the authorship of the entire passage, 5¹⁻⁷, is uncertain. There is nothing in it, however, that could not come from Koheleth. On the whole, it is perhaps most satisfactory to regard these maxims as a development of his utilitarian philosophy; to avoid everything which might offend the Deity, if you would escape disaster. While defective in measured beat, the passage is characterized by a certain rhythm of idea.

^h 5⁶ Gk. and Syr., *God*; this may represent the original meaning. In any case the angel is God's direct representative, as the latter part of the verse makes clear.

ⁱ 5⁷ A scribe who had² in mind has inserted before this clause the awkward and corrupt gloss: *for in the multitude of dreams there are vanities and in many words.* If an original passage lies back of these words, it has become hopelessly corrupt.

^j 5⁹ A graphic description of the corrupt officialdom that prevailed in ancient Persia and Egypt.

^k 5⁹ *I. e.*, where the protection of some form of government is necessary.

§ 7 Here Koheleth discusses in detail the value of wealth which he has already touched upon in 2³. Again he clearly speaks out of the depths of his own personal experience.

^l 5¹⁰ So Syr. and Targ. (lit., *mammon*). Heb., *multitude*.

^m 5¹⁵ The author here echoes the Book of Job, cf. Job 1².

WEALTH UNSATISFYING

advantage is it to him that he toils for the wind, ¹⁷and spends all his days in darknessⁿ and mourning and great vexation and sickness and distress?

¹⁸This is what I have observed: it is good and proper for one to eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of all his toil under the sun during the span of life which God has given him; for this is his right. ¹⁹Every man also to whom God has given riches and wealth and the power to enjoy them and to take up his task^o and to be happy in his toil—this is the gift of God. ²⁰For he should remember that life is short and that God approves of his being happy.

Man's
highest
privilege

§ 8. Human Desire Is Insatiable, Ecc. 6¹⁻⁹

Ecc. 6 ¹There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is heavy^p upon mankind. ²God gives a man^q wealth and treasures and honor; he lacks nothing of all that he desires; yet God does not enable him to eat any of it, but an outsider eats it. This is an illusion, and it is a bad disease. ³If a man has a hundred children and lives many years, yet in spite of the length of his life^r remains unsatisfied,^s and he has not even a grave, I say an abortion is better off than he is. ⁴For in^t illusion it came and in^t darkness it goes, and in darkness its name is hidden; ⁵moreover it did not see the sun and did not know anything. It has a better rest than he has. ⁶Even if he lived a thousand years twice over and did not enjoy himself,^u do not all go to one place?

Evils of
unsatis-
fied
desire

⁷All man's toil is for his mouth, but even so he^v is not filled. ⁸For what advantage has the wise man over the fool? What advantage has a poor man who knows how to walk before the living?^w ⁹The sight of the eyes is better than the wandering of desire. This, too, is an illusion and a chasing of the wind.

§ 9. The Fruitlessness of Philosophical Speculation, Ecc. 6¹⁰⁻¹², 10¹⁴, 7¹⁰, 14

Ecc. 6 ¹⁰What has come to be has already been named, and it is known what man is. He cannot go to court against one who is more powerful than he is. ¹¹For there are words a-plenty—increasing the illusion. What advantage has man? ¹²For who knows what good man has^x in life through-

Do not
try to
solve
life's
mysteries

ⁿ 5¹⁷ So Gk. Heb., *in darkness he eats*.

^o 5¹⁹ Lit., *lot*.

§ 8 These vss. might serve as a text for the Buddhist contention that the root of all evil is desire.

^p 6¹ Lit., *great*.

^q 6² Lit., *a man to whom God gives*.

^r 6³ The words thus freely rendered are difficult; probably the text is more or less corrupt. The translation is based on the conjecture that the Heb. means, lit., *many as are the days of his years*.

^s 6³ Lit., *his soul is not satisfied with good*.

^t 6⁴ Or, *into*.

^u 6⁶ Lit., *see good*.

^v 6⁷ Lit., *the soul*; *i. e.*, the appetite. The Heb. word is used in many senses.

^w 6⁸ Commentators explain this as referring to a man who has risen from poverty by the exercise of prudence. It may mean, however, What is the use of knowing how to behave when you are poor?—*i. e.*, ethics will not make the mare go.

§ 9 Speculation regarding man's nature, the meaning of life, and the future seems to K. quite futile. Attempts to find in this book traces of the influence of Greek philosophy have not been conspicuously successful, but it is not impossible that in this section we have a negative reaction, a deprecation of the fundamental point of view of Greek philosophy. For 7¹⁻⁹, 11-13, see § 15; cf. also *Introd.*, pp. 20 f.

^x 6¹² Or *what is good for man*. Is this a reflection upon the philosophers' discussion of the *Summum Bonum*?

KOHLELETH'S VAIN QUEST

out his illusory existence?^y He spends it like a shadow. Who will tell man what is to be after him under the sun? 10¹⁴Man does not know what is to be, and what is to be after him who can tell him?^z 7¹⁰Do not say, 'How did it come about that the olden days were better than these?' It is not wisdom that makes you ask^a about this. 14In the day of good fortune be of good cheer,^b and in the day of misfortune^c consider: God has made the one corresponding to the other in order that man might not find out anything of what is to be after him.^d

§ 10. Perfection Undesirable and Non-Existent, Ecc. 7¹⁵⁻¹⁸, 20-23

Ecc. 7 15I have seen everything in the course of my illusory existence.* There is such a thing as a righteous man who perishes by his righteousness, and there is such a thing as a wicked man who prolongs his life by his wickedness. 16Do not be righteous to excess, and do not make yourself wise beyond measure. Why should you destroy yourself? 17Do not be wicked to excess, and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time? 18It is well that you take hold of the one, but at the same time do not withhold your hand from the other.^f 20For no man on earth is so righteous that he does right and does not sin. 21Furthermore, do not pay attention to everything that is said,^g or you may^h hear your servant curse you. 22For you know in your heartⁱ that many times you too have yourself cursed others. 23All this I have tested with wisdom. I said, 'I will be wise,' but it was far beyond me. 24Far away is that which exists, and it is deep, deep—who can find it? 25I bestirred myself mentally^j to search^k and seek for wisdom and the solution^l and to know that wickedness is folly and foolishness madness. 26I found something more bitter than death—a woman whose heart is snares and nets and her hands are fetters. Whoever pleases God shall escape her; but the sinner shall be taken by her.^m 27See, I have found this, says Koheleth, putting two and two togetherⁿ to find the solution,¹ 28which I have sought

Strike
the mean
between
vice and
holiness

Ignore
gossip

Philoso-
phy
futile

Woman's
guile

^r 6¹² Lit., *the number of the days of the life of his illusion.*

^z 10¹⁴ This verse (except the opening clause, *And a fool multiplies words*) is probably a misplaced fragment from the original work of K., though the passage in which it now occurs, 10⁸⁻¹⁵, seems to be the work of a later sage (cf. § 15). It fits the context better here than in that passage, which has nothing to do with a knowledge of the future.

^a 7¹⁰ Lit., *not out of wisdom have you asked.*

^b 7¹⁴ The words *fortune and cheer* are implied but not expressed in the Heb.

^c 7¹⁴ Lit., *evil.*

^d 7¹⁴ *I. e.*, good and evil are so evenly balanced in life that it is impossible to say which will prevail in the future.

§ 10 Koheleth's cynical counsel is very different from Aristotle's doctrine of the Golden Mean or Buddha's Middle Way: it recommends, not a virtuous mean between two vicious extremes, but a mean of prudence, avoiding extreme virtue as much as extreme vice. The remarks about women (7²⁶⁻²⁸) are not obviously relevant; they seem to be a spontaneous outburst of bitter memory connected with Koheleth's quest of wisdom through experience (cf. § 2).

^f 7¹⁵ Lit., *the days of my illusion.*

^g 7¹⁸ A pious scribe has added: *For he who fears God will come clear from both of them.* For 1⁸, cf. § 15.

^h 7²¹ Lit., *all the words that they speak.*

ⁱ 7²¹ Lit., *that you may not.*

^j 7²² Lit., *your heart* (*i. e.*, your conscience) *knows.*

^k 7²⁵ Lit., *went about in* (or *with*) *my mind*, adopting the reading of many MSS. and some of the VSS.

^l 7²⁵ Heb., *to know and to search and to seek*, but the words *to know* were probably copied in by mistake from the latter part of the vs.

^m 7²⁶, 27 Lit., *accounting or reckoning.*

ⁿ 7²⁸ On this sentence, cf. *Introd.*, p. 18.

¹ 7²⁷ Lit., *one to one; i. e.*, one thing to another.

PERFECTION NON-EXISTENT

repeatedly without finding it: one man out of a thousand I have found, but a woman among all these I have not found.^o

§ 11. The Right Attitude Toward Rulers, Ecc. 8²⁻⁹, 10⁴⁻⁷, 16, 17, 20

Ecc. 8 ²Observe the command of a king;^p

Despotic
power

³Do not rashly go out from his presence,

Do not oppose him in an evil matter;^q

For he does whatever he pleases.

⁴For the word of a king is powerful,

And who shall say to him, What are you doing?

⁵He who keeps the command knows no evil thing;

And a wise heart knows time and judgment;^r

⁶For every matter has a time and judgment,

Because the misery of man is great upon him.^r

⁷For no man knows what shall be,

For who can tell him how it shall be?

⁸No man has power over the wind to retain the wind,

Neither has anyone power over the day of death.

There is no discharge in war,

Neither shall the evil-doer escape the consequences of his deeds.^s

⁹All this have I seen,

And I have given my attention

To every work that is done under the sun

In a time when man has power over another to do him harm.

10 ⁴If the ruler's anger^t rises against you, do not leave your place,^u for conciliation^v will allay great sins. ⁵There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, an error,^w as it were, proceeding from the ruler: ⁶he puts fools^x in many high places, while the rich^y live in humiliation. ⁷I have seen slaves on horseback and princes walking like slaves on the ground.

¹⁶Alas for you, land whose king is a child,^z

And whose princes eat in the morning!^a

¹⁷Happy are you, land whose king is of the nobility,

And whose princes eat at the proper time,

^o 7²⁸ To this vs. a pious editor adds, ²⁹ *Only see, I have found this, that God made mankind upright, but they have sought many devices.*

§ 11 This discussion of despotism has been prefaced by the maxims of a later sage, cf. § 15. The sequel of ²⁸ is found in ³. Into the heart of this original observation of Koheleth a Pharisaic scribe has injected the line, *even on account of the oath of God*. The reference is probably to the oath of allegiance which each subject was supposed to take on the king's accession.

^p ⁸ So Gk. and Syr. Through a scribal error the Heb. reads at the beginning of the line the pronoun, *I*.

^q ⁸ Lit., *Do not stand in an evil matter*. The exact meaning is obscure, but the context favors the above reading, and it is in harmony with K.'s Sadducean opportunism.

^r ⁸ ⁴ These vs. are by many commentators regarded as the additions of a Pharisaic editor.

^s Lit., *neither shall wickedness effect an escape for its owners*.

^t ¹⁰ Lit., *spirit*.

^u ¹⁰ Barton interprets this as meaning resignation from an official position.

^v ¹⁰ Lit., *healing*. The meaning of the clause is that a conciliatory attitude may appease even the anger aroused by grave offenses.

^w ¹⁰ The Heb. word indicates unintentional sin.

^x ¹⁰ Heb., *folly*. VSS., *the fool*.

^y ¹⁰ *I. e.*, the landed aristocracy.

^z ¹⁰ On the historical background of this passage, cf. *Intro.*, p. 17.

^a ¹⁰ *I. e.*, are so given to revelry that they cannot wait until the proper time for their feasts.

KOHELETH'S VAIN QUEST

For strength and not for drinking!

²⁰Even in your thought do not curse a king,
And in your bed-chamber do not curse a rich man,
Because a bird of the heavens will carry the sound,
And a winged creature^b will tell a matter.

§ 12. Righteous and Wicked Fare Alike, Ecc. 8¹⁰, 14-15

Injustice
of life

Ecc. 8 ¹⁰I saw wicked men offering sacrifice;^c and they came, and went from the holy place, and were praised in the city for doing thus. This also is an illusion.^d ¹⁴There is an illusion which exists on the earth, in that there are righteous men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked, and there are wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous; I say that this too is an illusion. ¹⁵Then I commended mirth, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat and to drink and to be joyful, for that will abide with him in his toil all the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.

§ 13. No Evidence That the World Is Ruled by Divine Justice and Love, Ecc. 8¹⁶-9¹⁶

Folly of
seeking
to know
the
char-
acter
of God
and the
reasons
for his
acts

Ecc. 8 ¹⁶Then I applied my mind to know wisdom, and to see the wearisome labor that is done on the earth,—for neither by day nor by night does he^e see sleep with his eyes. ¹⁷I also saw all the work of God, that man cannot fathom the work that is done under the sun; because however much^f a man may toil to search it out, he will not fathom it; and even if a wise man thinks he can know it, he will not be able to fathom it. **9** ¹For all this I stored up in my mind; and my mind saw^g that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God. Whether it be love or hatred, men do not^h know. All before them is illusion,ⁱ ²since to all there is one fate, to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the evil,^j to the clean and to the unclean, to him who sacrifices and to him who does not sacrifice. As is the good man, so is the sinner; he who swears is as he who fears an oath.

Final
end of
the good
and bad
the same

^b 10⁵⁰ Lit., *an owner of wings*.

§ 12 Koheleth's observation of life has not convinced him that honesty is the best policy.

^c 8¹⁰ This vs. is obscure. The *holy place* is clearly the temple. The above rendering, suggested by Prof. C. C. Torrey, is based on a reconstruction of the text. The idea clearly is that the wicked often have an honorable funeral. The last part of the vs. may be read, *Those who did right were forgotten in the city, etc.; i. e., the righteous go down to the grave in obscurity.* Heb. reads, *forgotten*, but many MSS. and several VSS. read, *praised*.

^d 8¹⁰ A pious scribe in the next three vss. takes issue with Koheleth: ¹¹*Because the sentence of an evil deed is not promptly executed, men are inclined to do wrong.* ¹²*But although a sinner does wrong persistently and goes on unpunished, I know that good fortune will come to those who revere God, who are reverent before him,* ¹³*but good fortune will not come to the wicked, and he will not prolong his life like a shadow, because he is not reverent before God.*

§ 13 Finding no solace in the contemplation of his fellow men and their conduct, K. turns to God and seeks in vain for proof that he rewards the good and evil either in this life or in the life beyond death. In this section his pessimism reaches its lowest depths.

^e 8¹⁶ *I. e., man, who toils incessantly.*

^f 8¹⁷ Slightly correcting the Heb.

^g 9¹ So Gk. and Syr. Heb., *and to explore*.

^h 9¹ Heb., *man does not*, but the change to the plural in the next sentence makes awkward English.

ⁱ 9¹ So VSS. supported by context. Heb. omits *illusion*, but begins the next vs. with a word which may well be due to a misreading of the word wanted here.

^j 9² So the Gk., Syr., Lat., and the demands of the parallelism. Heb. omits *and to the evil*.

NO EVIDENCE OF DIVINE JUSTICE

⁷The worst evil of all that exists under the sun is that there is one fate for all, and that the minds of men are full of evil and boastful thoughts while they live, and after that they join the dead. ⁸Yet, there is hope for all who are still alive, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. ⁹For the living know that they will die, but the dead know absolutely nothing, nor do they have any further compensation, for their memory is forgotten. ¹⁰Their love, their hate, and their jealousy have already vanished, and never more will they have a share in anything that is done under the sun.

⁷So go, eat your food with joy, and drink your wine with a merry heart, for God has already approved your actions.^k ⁸Let your garments be always white; and let not your head lack oil.^l ⁹Enjoy life^m with the woman whom you love all the days of the vain life which God gives you under the sun, for that is your lot in life, the reward of your toil under the sun. ¹⁰Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work, nor reckoning, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the abode of the dead to which you are going.

Therefore enjoy the opportunities of the present

¹¹Again I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; the wise have no food, nor men of insight wealth, nor the learned popular favor; but all alike are the victims of time and chance. ¹²For man also knows not his time: like fishes that are taken in an evil net, and like birds caught in a snare, the sons of men are taken at an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them.

Human fortunes determined not by merit but by chance and destiny

¹³Also this have I seen as a bit of wisdom under the sun, and it seemed great to me: ¹⁴there was a little city, and few men within it, and a great king came against it and besieged it and built great siege-worksⁿ against it. ¹⁵Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and by his wisdom he delivered the city; yet nobody remembered that poor man. ¹⁶Then I said, 'Wisdom is better than strength; nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.'^o

Practical illustration: wisdom of service, but not rewarded

§ 14. Making the Most of Life and Youth, Ecc. 11¹⁻¹⁰, 12¹⁻³

Ecc. 11 ¹Cast your bread upon the waters,^p

And after many days you will find it.

²Divide it up into seven or eight parts,^q

For you know not what disaster may befall the land.

³If the clouds are full of rain,

They empty themselves on the earth.

If a tree falls to the south or the north,

In the place where it falls, it lies.

Liberal dealing recommended

^k ⁹⁷ *I. e.*, this is the natural and inevitable and therefore the right thing to do in the world as God has constituted it.

^l ⁹⁸ Cf. Bab. philology contained in the Gilgamesh epic (Introd., p. 20).

^m ⁹⁹ Lit., see *life*.

ⁿ ⁹⁴ So the VSS. and a few MSS.

^o ⁹⁶ This arraignment of wisdom inspired a later sage to add a little poem in praise of wisdom, 9¹⁷⁻¹⁰, cf. § 15.

§ 14 A poem presenting the practical implications of Koheleth's view of life. For the literary form of Ecc., cf. Introd., p. 19.

^p ¹¹ Probably this refers to liberality, though other interpretations have been advocated; *e. g.*, investing freely in maritime enterprises.

^q ¹¹ Lit., Give a portion to seven and even to eight.

KOHLETH'S VAIN QUEST

⁴He who observes the wind does not sow,
 And he who watches the clouds does not reap.
⁵As you know not in what way the spirit
 Enters the pregnant womb,^r
 So you do not know how God works,—
 He who creates the whole.

God's
 way's
 mysteri-
 ous

Neglect
 no op-
 portunity

Enjoy
 the
 present

⁶In the morning^s sow your seed,
 And let not your hand rest until evening,
 For you do not know which is the better,
 Or whether both are equally good.

⁷The light is sweet to the eyes,^t
 And it is pleasant to see the sun.
⁸Though a man live many years,
 Let him be happy in all of them,
 Yet let him remember the days of darkness,
 For they shall indeed be many.
 All that is coming is vanity.

Youth's
 privilege

⁹Be happy, young man, in your youth,
 And let your heart make you merry while young.
 Follow your own inclinations,
 And all that appeals to your eyes,^a

¹⁰Put vexation out of your mind,
 And banish all evil from your body,—
 For childhood and youth are illusions—

Miseries
 of old
 age

12 ¹Before the evil days come on,^v
 Or the years draw near when you shall say,
 'I find no pleasure in them.'

²Before the sun is darkened,
 And the light of moon and stars,^w
 And the clouds return after the rain;^x

³When the keepers of the house^y tremble,
 The strong men^z bow themselves,
 Those who look out of the windows^a are dimmed,

⁴And the doors to the street^b are closed;
 When the sound of the grinding^c is low,

^r 11⁵ Translating freely. The Heb. is obscure and uncertain.

^s 11⁶ *I. e.*, the morning of life.

^t 11⁷ Slightly rearranging the Heb. on the basis of metre. The meaning is not affected.

^u 11⁸ A devout scribe adds, *But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.*

^v 12¹ The scribe gives quite a different turn to Kohleth's teaching by inserting before this line the warning: *But remember your Creator in the days of your youth.*

^w 12² The world does not look so bright in old age as in youth.

^x 12³ Times of gloom are not brief and infrequent, as in youth, but follow one another immediately.

^y 12³ Probably the hands.

^z 12³ The legs.

^a 12³ The eyes.

^b 12⁴ Probably the lips.

^c 12⁴ The reference is probably to the toothlessness of old age.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUTH

And one rises at the voice of a bird,^d
 And the daughters of song are all feeble.*
 ¶Then too one is afraid of a height,^f
 And the way is full of terrors,^g
 The almond tree puts forth its blossoms,^h
 The grasshopper limps along,ⁱ
 And the fire of passion is dead;^j
 ¶Before the silver cord is snapped,
 And the golden bowl is broken,^k
 The pitcher broken at the fountain,
 And the wheel broken at the cistern;^l
 For the man goes to his eternal home,
 And the mourners go about the streets;^m
 ¶The dust returns to earth as it was,
 And the breathⁿ returns to God who gave it.
 ¶Vanity of vanities, says Koheleth,^o
 All is illusion.^p

§ 15. Observations of Later Wise Men, Ecc. 7:1-9, 11-13, 19, 81, 9:17-18, 10:1-3, 8-10, 18, 18-19

Ecc. 7 1^a A good name is better than good ointment,
 And the day of death than the day of one's birth.
 2^b It is better to go to the house of mourning
 Than to go to the house of feasting,
 For that is the common end of man,
 And the living will lay it to heart.

Mourning
better
than
mirth

^d 12^a The sleep of the aged is brief and easily disturbed.
^e 12^a This may refer either to the weakness of the voice or to the failure of hearing.
^f 12^a Shortness of breath prevents climbing.
^g 12^a Feebleness makes the aged timorous.
^h 12^a A striking figure, likening the hoary head to the almond tree with its white blossoms.
ⁱ 12^a The meaning of this line is quite uncertain. According to the interpretation on which the translation is based, the reference is to the halting gait of the aged.
^j 12^a Lit., *the caper-berry* (used to stimulate passion) *fails*. For the rest of this vs., see the end of vs. ^k and note ^m.
^k 12^a Life is quenched like the light of a lamp when the cord by which it is suspended breaks.
^l 12^a Another picture of the breaking down of the machinery of the body. No water can be drawn when the pitcher and the wheel are broken.
^m 12^a This and the preceding line come at the end of vs. ⁿ in the text, but the order followed above seems preferable.
ⁿ 12^a Or *spirit*, the word being the same in Heb.
^o 12^a Cf. note ^b on 1^a, § 1.
^p 12^a *Vanity* and *illusion* in the translation represent the same Heb. word. Cf. note * on 1^a, § 1. This verse, the conclusion of the original work of Koheleth, is identical with 1^a. The book begins and ends, therefore, with the same statement, summing up the results of Koheleth's observation of life. A later editor, who regards both Ecc. and Pr. as the work of Solomon, adds this appendix: *And in addition to the fact that Koheleth was wise, he still taught the people knowledge, and weighed and examined and arranged many proverbs.* ¹⁰Koheleth sought to find words that were pleasing, yet with uprightiness he wrote words that were true. ¹¹Wise men's words are like goats, but like well-driven nails are the parts of collections,—they are given by one shepherd. ¹²But beyond these, my son, take warning: the making of many books is endless, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. ¹³The end of the matter—all has been heard. To this the scribe who has sought by several interpolations to tone down Koheleth's teaching adds a final word:

Revere God and keep his commands,
 For this is the whole duty of man;
¹⁴For God will bring every deed to the judgment
 That is passed on all secret acts, good or bad.

§ 15 These passages differ in form and spirit from the scribal additions noted in the preceding sections. They belong to the same category as the Book of Pr., and may well have been added under the assumption that such utterances, having come down from Solomon, would be quite in place in a book written by him.

KOHLELETH'S VAIN QUEST

³Grief is better than laughter,
 For through sadness^a the heart may be made glad.
⁴The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning,
 But the mind of fools is in the house of mirth.

A fool's
 laughter
 despicable

⁵It is better to listen to the rebuke of a wise man
 Than for one to listen to the song of fools.
⁶For as the crackling of nettles under kettles,
 So is the laughter of a fool; it is vanity.

Force
 and
 bribes

⁷For oppression makes a fool of a wise man,
 And a gift puts an end to intelligence.

Patience

⁸Better is the end of a thing than its beginning;
 Better is patience than a haughty spirit.
⁹Do not quickly give way to anger;
 Only fools cherish wrath in their hearts.^f

Practical
 value of
 wisdom

¹¹Wisdom with an inheritance is good
 And advantageous to those who see the sun.
¹²For the protection^g of wisdom is like the protection of money,
 And the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom gives life to
 those who have it.

God's
 work
 unalterable

¹³See the work of God,
 For who can straighten what he made crooked?

Power of
 wisdom

¹⁹Wisdom makes the wise man stronger
 Than ten rulers^h who are in a city.^u

8 ¹Who is like the wise man,
 And who knows the interpretation of a thing?
 A man's wisdom makes his face shine,
 And the hardness^v of his face is changed.

9 ¹⁷The words of the wise spoken quietly^w
 Are more effective than the loud cry of an arch-fool.

¹⁸Wisdom is better than weapons,
 But one sinner destroys much good.

Evils of
 folly

10 ¹A dead fly corrupts^x the perfumer's ointment,
 So a little folly destroys precious wisdom.^y

^a 7³ Heb., *sadness of the face*.

^f 7⁹ Lit., *For anger rests in the bosom of fools*.

^g 7¹² Lit., *shadow*.

^h 7¹⁹ Or perhaps the meaning is that wisdom gives more strength to the wise man than the protection of ten rulers would give him.

^u 7¹⁹ Apparently the security afforded by the city walls is in mind.

^v 8¹ Lit., *strength*.

^w 9¹⁷ Lit., *heard in quiet*.

^x 10¹ Correcting the Heb. as suggested by the VSS.

^y 10¹ The Heb. of this line is corrupt, and the original reading can only be conjectured.

LATER OBSERVATIONS

²A wise man's mind is at his right hand,
But a fool's mind is at his left hand.
³Moreover, when a fool walks in the way his mind is lacking,
And he tells every one he^z is a fool.

⁸He who digs a pit will fall into it,
And he who breaks through a wall will be snake-bitten.

⁹He who quarries stones will be hurt by them,
And he who hews trees is imperilled by them.

¹⁰In case the tool^a is dull,
And he does not sharpen it,^b
Then he must exert more strength;
But wisdom contributes to success.^c

¹¹If the serpent bites, not being charmed,
Then the charmer is of no use.

¹²The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious,
But a fool's own lips will swallow him.

¹³The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly,
And the end of his talk is wicked madness.

¹⁵A fool's toil exhausts him,
Because he does not know how to go to town.

¹⁸Through idleness the rafters sink;
Through not lifting the hands^d the house leaks.

¹⁹For laughter they make bread,
And wine makes life merry,
And money answers for everything.

Sundry
proverbs

^z 10³ The ambiguity exists in the Heb.

^a 10¹⁰ Lit., *iron*.

^b 10¹⁰ Lit., *its face*; *i. e.*, edge.

^c 10¹⁰ Lit., *is an advantage for giving success*; or, following the VSS., *an advantage to him who succeeds*.

^d 10¹⁸ Lit., *the sinking of hands*.

THE BOOK OF JOB

JOB

A LYRIC DRAMA PRESENTING VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

PROLOGUE

SUFFERING IS A TEST OF MAN'S PIETY, Job 1-2

Job 1 ¹In the land of Uz there was a man named Job; and he was blameless and upright, one who revered God and avoided evil. ²He had seven sons and three daughters; ³and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred asses; and he had many servants, so that he was the richest man among all the peoples of the East.^a ⁴His sons used to gather and each in turn hold a feast in his own house; and they always invited their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵When their round of feasting was over,^b it was Job's custom,^c in order to absolve them from all possible guilt,^d to offer burnt-offerings for each of them; for he said, 'Perhaps my sons have sinned and secretly cursed^e God.' And this Job never failed to do.

Job's
piety
and
pros-
perity

⁶Now on a certain day when the Sons of God^f presented themselves before Jehovah, the Adversary^g came with them. ⁷Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'From where do you come?' The Adversary answered, 'From going back and forth on the earth, and walking up and down on it.' ⁸And Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'Have you observed my servant Job? For there is no man like him on the earth, blameless and upright, who reveres God and avoids evil.' ⁹The Adversary replied, 'But is it for naught that Job fears God? ¹⁰Have you not yourself made a hedge all about him, about his household, and about all that he has? You have blessed whatever he does,^h and his possessions have vastly increased. ¹¹But just put out your hand now and touch all his possessions; he certainly will curseⁱ you to your face.' ¹²Then Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'See, everything that he possesses is in your power; only do not lay hands on Job himself.' So the Adversary left the presence of Jehovah.

The Ad-
versary's
accusa-
tion

Divine
permis-
sion to
test him

Prologue.—For a discussion of this introductory narrative and its relation to the Lyric Drama, cf. *Introd.*, pp. 36-37.

^a ¹² Lit., *greater than all the sons of the East.*

^b ¹⁵ Lit., *the days of the feast had gone about.*

^c ¹⁵ Heb., *he arose early in the morning and . . . (i. e., did it zealously).*

^d ¹⁵ Lit., *Job sent and consecrated them; i. e., sent for them that they might participate in and so profit by the sacrifices for their ceremonial purification; cf. I Sam. 16⁵, Josh. 7¹⁵, Ex. 19^{10, 14}.*

^e ¹⁵ Lit., *blessed, then said good-bye to.* Possibly this is a scribe's softening of the original, which may have read lit., *curse*d.

^f ¹⁵ *i. e., divine beings, just as "sons of men" are human beings.*

^g ¹⁵ Heb., *the satan.* So Zech. 3^{1, 2}. The same word is applied to David by the Philistine lords in I Sam. 29⁴. In I Chr. 21¹ the definite article disappears. On the being here referred to, cf. *Introd.*, p. 37.

^h ¹⁰ So Gk., Syr., Targ.

ⁱ ¹¹ Lit., *bless*, but this is clearly used euphemistically to express the opposite meaning, as in ⁶.

PROLOGUE

¹³Now on a certain day,^j as Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking^k in the oldest brother's house, ¹⁴a messenger came to Job and said, 'The oxen were ploughing and the asses were grazing near them ¹⁵when Sabceans^l suddenly attacked and seized them; the servants were put to the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

¹⁶While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'The fire of God^m has fallen from heaven and has completely burned up the sheep and the servants, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

¹⁷While this man was still speaking, another messenger came and said, 'The Chaldeans,ⁿ attacking in three bands,^o raided the camels and drove them away; the servants were put to the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you.'

¹⁸While this one was still^p speaking, another messenger came and said, 'Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking^q in their oldest brother's house ¹⁹when a great wind came from across^r the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house; it fell upon the young men and killed them. I alone have escaped to tell you.'

²⁰Then Job rose, tore his robe, shaved his head, prostrated himself on the ground and worshipped, ²¹saying:

Naked I came^s from my mother's womb,
And naked shall I return there!
Jehovah gave, Jehovah has taken away;
Blessed be the name of Jehovah!

²²In all this Job did not sin nor blame^t God.

² ¹On another day when the Sons of God presented themselves before Jehovah, the Adversary came with them.^u ²And Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'From where do you come?'

The Adversary answered, 'From going back and forth on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.' ³Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'Have you observed my servant Job? For there is no man like him in the earth, blameless and upright, one who reveres God and avoids evil; he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me to ruin him without cause.'

'The Adversary answered Jehovah, 'Skin for skin,^v yes, a man will give all that he has for his life. ⁵But just put out your hand now, and touch his

^j ¹³ Lit., and it came to pass on a day.

^k ¹³ So one Heb. MS., Syr., and the parallel in ⁴. Heb. here adds *wine*.

^l ¹⁴ The Sabceans dwelt in southwestern Arabia and had attained to a high civilization. Nowhere else in the O.T. do they figure as robbers. Possibly they represent Arabs in general.

^m ¹⁵ Probably, as in I Kgs. 18³⁸ and II Kgs. 1¹², a flash of lightning.

ⁿ ¹⁷ The Chaldeans dwelt in curly times in the lower Tigris-Euphrates valley near the Persian Gulf, and only in later times conquered Babylonia. They attained their greatest power between 605 and 538 B.C.

^o ¹⁷ *I. e.*, so as to approach the camels from different sides and thus capture them; cf. for similar nomadic tactics, the capture of Ai, Gideon's attack against the Midianite camp, and the plan of battle which Joab used effectively against the Ammonites.

^p ¹⁸ Correcting the Heb. by the aid of the parallels in ¹⁶, ¹⁷.

^q ¹⁸ So two Heb. MSS., Gk., and Syr., and the parallel in ⁴. Heb. adds *wine*, as in ¹⁴.

^r ¹⁸ Lit., from the other side of. Most of the storms in the wilderness are cyclonic in character.

^s ¹⁸ Following certain Heb. MSS. in correcting the traditional reading.

^t ¹⁸ The text has evidently been modified here. The Syr., *revile*, satisfies the context and is probably original.

^u ² Heb. adds, to present himself before Jehorah, but Gk. omits as in ¹⁴.

^v ² Cf. the similar idiom, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. The implication is that the text had not been fundamental, for only external possessions had been involved.

First
test: loss
of all his
posses-
sions

Job's
pious
resigna-
tion

Divine
permis-
sion to
test Job
by af-
flicting
his person

SUFFERING A TEST OF PIETY

bone and his flesh; he certainly will curse^w you to your face.' ⁶Jehovah said to the Adversary, 'See, he is in your power; only, spare his life.'

⁷So the Adversary left the presence of Jehovah, and afflicted Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head with leprosy^x so terrible ⁸that he took a piece of broken pottery with which to scrape himself.

As he sat among the ashes, ⁹his wife said to him, 'Are you still holding to your piety? Curse^w God and die.' ¹⁰But he said to her, 'You speak like a senseless woman.^y We accept prosperity from God, shall we not also accept misfortune?' In all this Job said nothing that was wrong.

¹¹When Job's three friends heard of all this^z misfortune that had befallen him, they came each from his own home: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, for they had arranged to go together and show their sympathy^a for him and comfort him. ¹²But when they saw him in the distance, they did not at first recognize him. Then they all wept aloud and tore their robes and threw dust upon their heads.^b ¹³Then they sat down with him on the ground^c seven days and seven nights^c without any one saying a word to him, for they saw that his anguish was intense.

[Then,^d moved at the sight of Job's affliction, they broke out with loud lamentations and withheld not bitter complaints of the injustice of God. And Eliphaz the Temanite said, 'It is useless to serve God. And what gain is it to Job that he has kept his charge, and that he has walked blamelessly before him? Even now we call the proud happy, and those who work iniquity thrive; yea, they tempt God and escape. Why, O Job, do you still remain steadfast in your piety? It were better to curse God and die.'

But Job was greatly displeased, and spoke to them, saying:

You speak as men without wisdom,
In whose heart there is no fear of God.
Bitter is the pain that wracks me,
But more bitter are the words which you utter.
Blessed be Jehovah for that which he gave me;
And now that I am bereft, blessed be his name.
I will call to him in my distress and say,
Show me clearly wherein I have erred,
And let me not depart under the weight of thine anger;
For God is good to all who call upon him,
And he will not suffer the righteous to fall forever.]

^w 25. ⁹ Lit., *bless*, as in 1^s. 11.

^x 27 Reference is probably to the loathsome and incurable tubercular leprosy, which takes the form of swellings that afflict all parts of the body and break out in festering sores. This diagnosis is confirmed by the statement, *from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head*.

^y 21⁰ Slightly correcting the Heb.

^a 21¹ Gk. and Lat. omit *this*.

^b 21¹ Lit., *sway back and forth*, as the Oriental does in expressing grief.

^c 21² Heb. adds *toward heaven*, but Gk. omits.

^d 21³ Gk. omits *on the ground and seven nights*.

^e The passage enclosed in brackets is an imaginary reconstruction of what may be supposed to have followed in the original story of Job (cf. *Introd.*, p. 36). It forms a bridge between the Prologue and the Epilogue quite different from the present poem, showing how the poet, like Shakespear, was able to make profound and undying literature out of a simple folk-story. For the rest of the story, cf. § 28.

Afflicted
with vile
leprosy

Tempted
by his
wife

Visited
by his
friends

Continu-
ation of
the folk-
tale

THE LYRIC DRAMA OF JOB

THE LYRIC DRAMA OF JOB

§ 1. Job's Utter Woe, Job 3

Better
never to
have
been
born

Job 3

²Then^a Job began^b to speak and said:
³Let the day perish which gave me birth,
And the night when they said, 'A man child is born!'^c
⁴Let that day be utter darkness,
Let God^d not regard it from above.
Let no ray of light shine upon it,^e
⁵May gloom and darkness claim it.
Let a cloud settle down upon it,
Let all that make black the day^f frighten it!
⁶That night! Let thick darkness seize it.
Join it not^g to the days of the year,
From the list of the months exclude it.
⁷That night!^h let it ever be barren,ⁱ
May no joyful shout^j invade it.
⁸Let those curse it who curse the day,
Who^k are prepared to rouse up leviathan.^l

The Lyric Drama of Job.—The setting of this lyric drama is supplied by the old popular prose story of Job found in Job 1-2. The hero, bereft of possessions, of children, and of all that contributes to a man's happiness, sits silently weeping on a refuse heap. Apparently he is afflicted by the loathsome tubercular type of leprosy. He is clad in sackcloth, and in keeping with the Oriental method of expressing grief, is casting ashes upon his bowed head. About him, sitting for seven days and nights in speechless horror, are his friends. As in the old Greek tragedies, the drama is staged out under the blue canopy of heaven. The action is almost wholly subjective. Job first speaks, and then in turn each of his friends. The progress is wholly within the mind of Job himself. His words and gestures alone reveal the mighty tempests that sweep over his soul. As the drama unfolds, his mood becomes calmer, until in chaps. 29-31 he develops a masterly *résumé* of his ease. The only objective action in the play is the approach of the great, low-lying thunder-cloud, which draws near at the close of the drama. From its depths comes the majestic voice of Jehovah. The divine message is not a direct reply to Job's complaint. Instead, the Almighty calls upon Job to open his eyes and behold the evidences of divine wisdom and care revealed in the animate and inanimate world which surrounds him on every side. Before this transcendent vision of God's omniscience and goodness Job bows in deepest reverence, forgetting his personal sorrows, which a few moments before had completely clouded his vision of the Almighty.

§ 1 As Duhm has pointed out (*Hiob* 17), the author shows great tact in making his hero do what the great prophet Jer. had already done, Jer. 20¹⁴⁻¹⁸. The dependence in language as well as in thought upon this earlier passage is clear. Jer.'s words are simpler and more natural. The author of Job has heightened the picture at many points. In cursing the day that he was born, Job portrays dramatically his overwhelming grief and utter despair. By this impassioned utterance Job at once assumes a very different rôle from the hero of the prose story. His pent-up agony and indignation at last find full expression. Above all, he questions by implication God's justice, and thus rouses his friends to turn upon him and voice the suspicions that their silence had implied.

^a 3^e Heb. inserts before this (apparently as a title for the chapter), *After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his day* (*i. e.*, the day of his birth).

^b 3^e The Heb. is usually translated, *answered*. Probably for this reason the Gk. and Lat. omit the word, but it is often used in the sense given above.

^c 3^e So practically all the VSS. Heb., *the night which said, A man child is conceived*. Cf. Jer. 20¹⁵. The traditional Heb. is clearly corrupt.

^d 3^e In the poetic sections the word *Eloah* (*God*) is put in the mouth of the Edomite hero of the drama, not the distinctively Heb. title of the deity, *Jehovah*.

^e 3^e *I. e.*, May no sun or star light it up, but may it remain clothed in blackness, the possession of chaos.

^f 3^e Or *the deep gloom of day*. The VSS. vary widely in the rendering, and none are satisfactory. The reference is probably to an eclipse.

^g 3^e Slightly revising the Heb. with the aid of Sym. Targ., and the demands of the context; cf. also Gen. 49⁶. Job would have his birthday erased from the calendar.

^h 3^e So one Heb. MS., Gk., Syr., and Lat. Heb. adds, *destroying the regular metre, behold*.

ⁱ 3^e Lit., *stony*.

^j 3^e *I. e.*, over the birth of a child.

^k 3^e *I. e.*, the magicians and sorcerers who were supposed to be able to arouse the leviathan.

^l 3^e The traditional monster of the great deep that represented chaos and the foes of light. It was thought of as capable of causing an eclipse.

JOB'S UTTER WOE

⁹Let the stars of its sunrise be dark,
 Let it wait for light, but have none,
 Let it not see the eyelids of the dawn.^m

¹⁰For it closed not the doors of my mother's womb,
 Nor hid trouble from my eyes.

¹¹Why did I not die at birth,ⁿ
 Breathe my last when I came from the womb?^o

¹⁰Or^p why was I not as a hidden untimely birth,
 As infants that never saw light?

¹²Why did the knees receive me,^q
 Or the breasts, that I should suck?

¹³I should then have lain down in quiet,
 Should have slept and been at rest

¹⁴With kings and counsellors of earth
 Who built themselves great pyramids;^r

¹⁵With princes rich in gold,
 Who filled their houses with silver.

¹⁷There the wicked cease from troubling,^s
 There the weary are at rest;

¹⁸Captives too at ease together,^t
 Hearing not the voice of masters.

¹⁹There the small and great are gathered,
 And the slave is free from his master.

²⁰Why is light given^u the wretched,
 And life to the bitter in soul,

²³To a man^v whose way is hid,
 To him whom God has hedged in,

²¹Those who long for death, but it comes not,
 And dig for it^w as^x for hid treasure.

²²Who are beside themselves with joy, if they discover it,
 And are glad when they find the grave?^y

²⁴For sighs take the place of my food,^z

Injustice
 of being
 compelled
 to live
 on in
 misery

^m 3⁹ Dawn is here represented as coming like a fair youth or maiden.

ⁿ 3¹¹ So Gk. and Lat., lit., *in the womb*. Heb., *from*.

^o 3¹¹ Heb. idiom, *from the womb go forth and expire*.

^p 3¹⁰ With Duhm restoring this vs. to the place where it logically belongs. Vs. 17 is the immediate sequel of 15.

^q 3¹² The reference is to the reception of the new-born child by the father, who in ancient times decided whether or not it should be allowed to live. If he turned it over to the mother or nurse to keep, its life was preserved.

^r 3¹⁴ So the Arabic and Coptic. Heb., *wastes*, ironically referring to the desolate remains of the once proud palaces.

^s 3¹⁷ *I. e.*, from their restless, contentious life.

^t 3¹⁸ Or *as well*; *i. e.*, they as well as the wicked tyrants have peace and rest.

^u 3²⁰ So Gk., Syr., Lat., and Targ. Heb., *does he give*.

^v 3²³ This vs. belongs logically after 20 and probably stood here originally.

^w 3²¹ *I. e.*, seek it intently, even as the natives of Palestine to-day dig frantically for buried treasure.

^x 3²¹ Following the Gk. and Syr. in slightly correcting the Heb.

^y 3²² So Gk., Eth., and Sah. Syr. and one Heb. MS. read, *mound*. Possibly the idea is that they are so eager for death that they contemplate with pleasure their funeral mound, cf. Josh. 7^x, 8^y.

^z 3²⁴ Heb., *for my sighing comes before I eat*. The context supports the rendering followed above.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

And my groans are poured out like water.
²⁵For the evil I fear^a overtakes me,
 And whatever I dread comes upon me.
²⁶No peace nor quiet have I,
 No rest, but turmoil comes.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

§ 2. Discourse of Eliphaz: The Impossibility of Any Man's Being Absolutely Righteous, Job 4-5

Job
 should
 apply
 his own
 teachings

Job 4

¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:
²If one ventures a word, will it vex you?
 But who could refrain from speaking?^a
³See! You have instructed many
 And strengthened the drooping hands.
⁴Your words have upheld the fallen,
 Giving strength to^b tottering knees.
⁵But now that it comes to you,^c you are impatient,
 Now that it touches you, you are dismayed.

⁶Is not your religion^d your confidence,
 Your blameless life^e your hope?
⁷Remember! What innocent man ever perished?
 Or where were the upright ever destroyed?
⁸As I have observed, those who plough sorrow
 And sow trouble gather the harvest.
⁹By the breath of God they perish,
 And by the blast of his anger are consumed.
¹⁰The lion roars and the fierce lion howls,^f
 Yet the young lions' teeth are broken.^g
¹¹The old lion perishes for lack of prey,
 And the whelps of the lioness are scattered.

¹²Now a message^h was secretly brought me,
 And a whisper of it reached my ear,

Calamity
 the inev-
 itable
 conse-
 quence
 of sin

In God's
 sight no
 mortal is
 absolutely
 free from
 sin

^a ³²⁵ In 29¹³ Job declares that in the days of his prosperity he had no fear of the future. The statement in ²⁵ is evidently general, not specific.

§ 2 Eliphaz shows great tact. His first object is to encourage Job and to lead him to realize that no man can be absolutely sinless. With rare skill the poet portrays the vague terror that comes from the consciousness of a divine presence and revelation. The language and atmosphere are those of the prophets. The aim is to render more impressive the truth set forth in 4¹⁷⁻¹⁸, upon which Eliphaz's argument turns: Job is mortal, hence he has sinned. He is now suffering the consequences. Let him acknowledge his sin and escape.

^a 4² Lit., *But to hold back with words who is able?*

^b 4⁴ Lit., *and you have strengthened.*

^c 4⁵ Eliphaz here takes up Job's own words and confession.

^d 4⁶ Lit., *fear*. The word is used in a technical sense by Eliphaz, cf. 15⁴, 22⁴, and is equivalent to piety or religion.

^e 4⁶ Lit., *the integrity of your ways; i. e., the rightness of your conduct.*

^f 4¹⁰ Lit., *the roar of the lion and the voice of the howler!*

^g 4¹⁰ *I. e.*, first they roar and beget terror, but suddenly their power is broken.

^h 4¹² Lit., *a thing, or word (of God), was brought by stealth.*

ELIPHAZ

- ¹³In thoughts from the visions of night,
 When deep sleep falls upon men;
¹⁴Fear came upon me, and trembling,
 That made my bones all quake.
¹⁵Then a spirit passed before me,
 The hair of my flesh stood on end.
¹⁶It stood still,ⁱ
 But I could not discern its appearance;
 A form was before my eyes;
 In the silence I heard a voice:^j
¹⁷'Can mortal man be just before God?
 Can one be pure before his Maker?
¹⁸Even his servants he does not trust,
 And his angels he charges with error;^k
¹⁹How much more those who dwell in clay houses,
 Whose very foundation is dust,^l
 Who, like the moth, are crushed,^m
²⁰Between morning and evening destroyed,ⁿ
 Unobserved, they perish forever.
²¹Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?
 They die, and that without wisdom.'
- 5** ¹Call! Is there any who will answer you?
 And to which of the holy ones^o will you turn?
²For vexation kills the fool,
 And envy slays the silly.
³I have seen the fool taking root,
 But suddenly his habitation rotted down.^o
⁴His children are far from safety,
 Crushed in the gate with no deliverer;^p
⁵His harvest the hungry eat up,
 And the thirsty are eager for his wealth.^q
⁶For affliction does not come from the dust,
 And trouble does not spring out of the ground;
⁷But man himself begets trouble,^r

Disaster
overtakes
the
foolish,
but not
without
cause

ⁱ 4¹⁶ Possibly this incomplete line is secondary, but its very brevity may be a part of the poet's art.

^j 4¹⁶ Lit., *Silence, and I heard a voice.*

^k 4¹⁸ The Heb. word occurs nowhere else.

^l 4¹⁹ The reference is clearly to the older account of man's creation found in Gen. 2.

^m 4¹⁹ This line is doubtful and may be secondary. The reading is based on Gk., Syr., and Sah.

ⁿ 5¹ *I. e.*, angels.

^o 5¹ So Gk., Syr., Sah., and a revised Heb. text. Heb., *I cursed*, appears to be corrupt.

^p 5⁴ *I. e.*, unjust decisions were rendered by the judges, whose court was usually by the city gate. *In the gate* may be a later explanatory gloss, for it makes the line too long.

^q 5⁵ This vs. has suffered in transmission, as the many variant readings of the VSS. indicate. Through confusion an impossible third line has grown up. Deleting it, the original vs. appears. Duhm (*Hiob* 31), following Aquila, Sym., Syr., and Lat. in correcting the Heb., radically revises so as to read for these two lines, *He who is thirsty drains water out of their spring; i. e.*, because it is so deserted.

^r 5⁷ Heb., *man is born to trouble*, but this contradicts ^e.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

It is best
to trust
one's case
to the
omni-
scent
ruler of
the uni-
verse

Submis-
sion to
his disci-
pline
insures
peace and
prosperity

Even as the sparks⁹ fly upward,
⁸But as for me, I would seek God
 And to him would commit my cause,
⁹Who does things great and unsearchable,
 Marvellous and without number;
¹⁰Who gives rain on the earth,
 And sends waters upon the fields;[†]
¹¹Who sets[‡] the lowly on high,
 And those who mourn are exalted to safety.
¹²He frustrates the plans of the crafty,
 So that their hands cannot achieve success.[¶]
¹³He takes the wise in their craftiness,[¶]
 And the counsel of the wily is overthrown.[×]
¹⁴They meet with darkness in the day-time,
 And grope at noonday as in the night.
¹⁵But he saves the poor[‡] from the sword,
 And the needy from the hand of the mighty,
¹⁶So that the poor man has hope,
 And iniquity stops her mouth.

¹⁷Happy[‡] the man whom God corrects;
 Therefore spurn not the Almighty's chastening.
¹⁸For he causes pain but to comfort,
 And wounds that his hands may heal.
¹⁹From countless[‡] troubles he will deliver you,
 Whatever comes,[‡] no evil shall touch you;
²⁰In famine he will redeem you from death,
 In time of war from the might of the sword.
²¹You shall be hid from^b the scourge of the tongue;
 You shall not fear when destruction comes.
²²At ruin and want you shall laugh,
 You shall have no fear of wild beasts,
²³You shall be in league with the stones,
 And at peace with the beasts of the field.
²⁴You shall know that your tent is secure,

⁹ Heb., lit., *children of flame*. Gk. and Sah., *nestlings of the vulture*. The exact reading and meaning are not clear. If the above translation is followed, the meaning is that man is as prone to bring trouble upon himself as the sparks are to fly upward.

[†] ¹⁰ Some scholars regard this vs. as secondary because it destroys the close connection between ⁹ and ¹¹.

[‡] ¹¹ So Gk., Lat., and Sah. Heb., *In that he sets up*.

[¶] ¹² The derivation of this word is not certain, but it occurs again in 6¹¹, where it appears to mean *abiding wisdom*. Here it describes the fruits of wisdom.

[×] ¹³ This line is quoted in I Cor. 3¹⁹.

[×] ¹⁴ Lit., *hastens itself, or is hastened*, and so *rushes to its downfall*.

[‡] ¹⁵ Supplying the word demanded by the context. Heb., *from their mouth*, is clearly a corruption of the original. Gk. and Sah. render, *But they perish in war and are unable to escape from the conqueror*; but this makes little sense.

^b ²¹ So five Heb. MSS., Gk., Syr., and Lat. Heb. inserts *behold*, but this destroys the metre and adds nothing to the context.

[¶] ¹³ Lit., *seven*. Cf. Pr. 30¹⁸, 21, 24, 29, Am. 1³, 6, 9, 11, 13.

[×] ¹⁴ So Gk., Syr., and Lat. Heb., in. The allusion is to slander. Possibly the original read, *pestilence*. Cf. for a close parallel, Ezek. 5¹⁷, 14²¹.

ELIPHAZ

- You shall visit your fold, and miss nothing.
²⁶You shall know your descendants^c are many,
 And your offspring as grass of the earth.
²⁶You shall die in a ripe old age,
 As a sheaf garnered in its season.^d
²⁷Consider this,—we have found it so;
 Hear it, and know it yourself.

§ 3. Job's Reply: The Grounds of His Complaint, Job 6-7

Job 6

- ¹Then Job answered:
²Oh, that my grief were carefully weighed;
 All my calamities^e laid in the scales!
³For they would outweigh the sand of the sea;
 Therefore it is that my words have been rash.
⁴For the arrows of God the Almighty have pierced me,^f
 My spirit drinks their deadly poison,
 The terrors of God^g are arrayed against me.
⁵Does the wild ass bray as he munches the grass,
 And over their fodder do oxen low?^h
⁶Can a man eat what is tasteless and saltless?
 Is there any taste in the white of an egg?ⁱ
 6 ⁷My appetite refuses to touch them;^j
 They are as loathsome food^k to me.

⁸Oh, that my request might be granted,
 And that God would give me my heart's desire,
⁹Even that he would consent to crush me,
 Would let loose his hand and cut me off!
¹⁰Then this^l would be my consolation,
 I would exult^m amid pain unsparing.ⁿ

Crushing
character
of Job's
affliction

No solace
in the
words of
his
friends

Sigh for
deliver-
ance by
death

^c 5²⁶ Lit., *seed*.

^d 5²⁶ *I. e.*, with body still vigorous.

§ 3 In the first part of his reply, 6¹⁻¹², Job in his anguish and desperation stoutly maintains his right to complain. He has been stripped of all that men count worth while, and even death is denied him. To make his woe complete, his friends have failed to give him that sympathy in his hour of mortal agony which is friendship's noblest gift, 6¹⁴⁻³⁰. Instead, they have cruelly repeated over him their cold dogmas, which they are more eager to defend than they are to save the innocent or succor the perishing. In 7¹⁻¹⁰ he pathetically describes the utter tragedy of his lot, with no hope in this life nor in the life beyond the grave. In the remainder of the chapter, 7¹¹⁻²¹, he frankly gives free rein to his rage. In bitter indignation he turns upon the divine Ruler, whom he once regarded as his Friend, and charges him with cruel injustice. For the moment a shadow of doubt regarding his true innocence beclouds his vision, 20⁻²¹; but even if he has sinned, why does his divine persecutor show him no mercy?

^e 6² So the VSS. and the marginal reading of the Heb.

^f 6⁴ Lit., *are with me*.

^g 6⁴ For the figure of the terrors of God, cf. Ps. 88¹⁷.

^h 6⁵ Cf. the similar type of teaching adopted by Amos in 3⁸.

ⁱ 6⁶ So Jewish rabbis; many modern scholars translate, *juice of purslain* (a plant which produces an insipid, slimy substance).

^j 6⁷ Gk., *My wrath cannot be quieted*.

^k 6⁷ Gk., *as the smell of a lion*.

^l 6¹⁰ So three Heb. MSS., Targ., and Lat. Heb., *still*.

^m 6¹⁰ Lit., *leap in joy*.

ⁿ 6¹⁰ The line that follows in the Heb., *For I denied not the words of the Holy One*, is evidently a later scribal addition. It breaks into the course of Job's thought and is contrary to the facts.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

Patience
under
such
afflictions
is im-
possible
for a
mortal

- ¹¹What strength have I, that I should endure?
And what is my future, that I should be patient?
¹²Is my strength the strength of stones,
Or is my body made^o of brass?
¹³See, I have no help in myself,^p
And the power to succeed is driven from me.

Faith-
lessness
of his
friends
in his
time of
worst
need

- ¹⁴A friend should be kind to one fainting,
Though he lose his faith in the Almighty.^q
¹⁵My brothers have been as a treacherous brook,
As streams that overflow their banks,
¹⁶Which are turbid because of the melting ice,
And the snow that hides itself within them.
¹⁷But when it is warm, they vanish,
When hot, their channels are dry.
¹⁸Caravans turn their course to them,
They go up through the waste, and perish.
¹⁹The caravans of Tema^r looked,
The companies of Sheba waited for them.
²⁰They were disappointed^s because they hoped;^t
They came to them, but were dumbfounded.
²¹Even so you have been to me;^u
You see the terror^v and fear.
²²Have I said, 'Bring me a present,'
Or, 'Give me a gift from your wealth;
²³Save me from the hand of a foe;
From the power of the tyrant redeem me'?

Their
inability
to bring
any valid
charge of
sin

- ²⁴Teach me, and I will keep silent.
Show me how I have erred.
²⁵How forcible^w are upright words!
What does your reproof reprove?
²⁶Do you mean to rebuke mere words?
The words of the desperate are as wind.

^o 6¹² Supplying the verb required by the metre and implied by the context.

^p 6¹³ Following Syr. and Lat. The Heb. is of uncertain meaning and probably corrupt.

^q 6¹⁴ Lit., *fear of the Almighty*, a term here as elsewhere in Job equivalent to religion and its demands. Syr. and Lat. read,

*He who refuses kindness to his friend,
Forsakes the fear of the Almighty.*

Barton (Book of Job 94) suggests the reading,

*To one who is denied kindness from his friend,
Even he (sic) forsakes the fear of the Almighty.*

^r 6¹⁹ In an oasis in northern Arabia; Sheba was in the south.

^s 6²⁰ This verb is usually translated, *put to shame*, but it expresses both ideas.

^t 6²⁰ So the superior reading of the Syr. and Targ.

^u 6²¹ This vs. is evidently corrupt. The above revision is in part supported by the marginal reading and one Heb. MS., and by Gk. and Syr.

^v 6²¹ *I. e.*, my terrible fate.

^w 6²⁵ So Targ. and one Heb. MS.

JOB

- 27 You would fall^z on a blameless man,^y
 And make an assault on^z your friend.
 28 Now be pleased to look upon me:
 I would surely not lie to your face.
 29 Turn back, let there be no injustice;
 Turn back, for right is still with me.^a
 30 Is there injustice on my tongue?
 Can I^b not discern what is evil?

- 7 ¹Has not man a hard service^c on earth,
 Whose days are like those of a hireling?
²As a slave who pants for the shadows,^d
 As a hireling who looks for his wage,^e
³So fruitless months are my lot,^f
 And wearisome nights are appointed me.
⁴Whenever I lie down, I say:
 'When will day come, that I may arise?'^g
 I am full of unrest till the dawn.

- ⁵Worms and clods of dust^h clothe my flesh;
 My skin grows hard, then breaks.ⁱ
⁶My days are swifter^j than weavers' thread,^k
 And are spent without any hope.
⁷Oh remember that my life is but a breath;
 My eye shall see happiness no more.
⁸The eye of him who sees me shall look on me no more;
 Thine eyes shall be upon me, but I shall not be.
⁹As the cloud is consumed and is gone,
 So he shall never come back
 Who goes down to the home of the dead.^l
¹⁰He shall never return to his house,
 His place shall know him no more.
¹¹So I will not restrain my mouth;
 I will speak in anguish of spirit,
 I will complain in bitterness of soul.

Misery
and
transitori-
ness of
human
life

No
return
from
Sheol

^z 627 Following Gk. and Lat. Heb., *cast lots*.

^y 627 Slightly revising as demanded by the context. Heb., *over the fatherless*.

^a 627 So Gk. Heb., *make merchandise of*.

^b 629 Heb., *my righteousness is in it*. The above reading is obtained by a slight revision. Or we may read, *let righteousness come*.

^c 630 Lit., *my palate*.

^d 71 Lit., *a period of enforced military service*, cf. Is. 40¹.

^e 72 *I. e.*, for the time when he can rest from his labor.

^f 72 *I. e.*, in Job's case death.

^g 73 Lit., *I am made to inherit*; *i. e.*, without any choice.

^h 74 Slightly correcting the text. Heb., *When shall I arise and the night be gone?*

ⁱ 75 *Of dust* is possibly an explanatory gloss, as the line is unusually long.

^j 75 *I. e.*, with the sores that characterized leprosy.

^k 76 Or *lighter*; *i. e.*, they break easily and come to an end.

^l 76 Heb., *weaver*. Inasmuch as there is no evidence that shuttles were used by the early Heb. weavers, it is probable that the author had in mind simply the flying thread.

¹⁷⁹ As the steel to the magnet, Job constantly reverts to the question of the future life.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

God
pitilessly
persecutes
man

- ¹²Am I a sea, or a sea-monster,^m
That thou settest a watch over me?
¹³When I say, 'My bed shall give comfort,
My couch shall ease my complaint,'
¹⁴Then thou frightest me with dreams,
And terrifiest me through visions,
¹⁵So that I myself choose strangling,
And death rather than my pains.ⁿ
- ¹⁶I loathe^o life, I would not go on living,
Let me be, for my days are but breath;
¹⁷What is man,^p that thou dost exalt him,
That thou thinkest of him at all,
¹⁸Remembering him each morning,
And testing him every moment?^q
¹⁹How long^r wilt thou not look away from me
And let me alone till I swallow my spittle?^a
²⁰If I sin, then how does that harm thee,^t
O Watcher of men?
Why hast thou made me thy target?
Why am I a burden to thee?^u
²¹Why dost thou not pardon my guilt,^v
And overlook mine iniquity?
For now I shall lie in the dust;
When thou seekest me, I shall not be!

§ 4. Discourse of Bildad: God Always Recompenses According to Man's Deserts, Job 8

- Job 8** ¹Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:
²How long will you speak such things,
And your words be mere blustering wind?^w
³Is God a perverter of justice?
Or can the Almighty do wrong?

^m 7¹² Clearly the poet has in mind the old Semitic myth of the contest of the creating God with Tiamat, the great monster that represented primeval chaos.

ⁿ 7¹⁵ Slightly revising the Heb., which reads *bones*. Possibly the Heb. is original.

^o 7¹⁶ In 9²¹ the same verb is used with *life*, which Heb. here omits.

^p 7¹⁷ A bitter parody of Ps. 8⁴.

^q 7¹⁸ As one who is ever watching and investigating man's actions.

^r 7¹⁹ So the VSS.

^s 7¹⁹ *Let me swallow my saliva* (meaning *Wait a minute*) is a common expression among the Arabs to-day.

^t 7²⁰ Lit., *what do I to thee?* The preceding words, *if I sin*, destroy the metrical balance of the vs. and may have been inserted by a scribe who had in mind ²¹ and did not understand the logical development of the thought.

^u 7²⁰ So two Heb. MSS., Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *to myself*.

^v 7²¹ Here for a moment Job doubts his own innocence.

§ 4 Bildad is the traditionalist whose outlook is backward and who sees virtue in the past alone. He has no regard for the evidence of present experience. Hence there is no place in his thought for new truth. Job's intemperate words are in Bildad's mind convincing evidence of guilt. His only aim, therefore, is by highly colored and contrasting pictures to point out to Job the sudden judgment that awaits wrongdoing and the happy fortune of the righteous. Like every traditional dogmatist, he is not always logical.

^w 8² *I. e.*, like a destructive tempest.

If a man
sins, why
does not
God
pardon?

God
cannot
be un-
just;
rather he
deals im-
partially
with all
according
to their
acts

BILDAD

⁴If your children sinned against him,
 He has let them suffer the penalty;
⁵But you should^x earnestly seek him,
 And supplicate the Almighty.
⁶If you are pure and upright,^y
 He will now answer your prayer,
 And will prosper your righteous abode.
⁷And though your beginning be small,
 Your latter end shall be increasingly glorious.
⁸For inquire now of past generations,
 And note what the fathers^z have searched out;
⁹For we are of yesterday, and know nothing,
 Our days upon earth are like^a a shadow.^b
¹⁰Will they not teach you and^c tell you,
 And speak words that come from their heart?

Confirmed
 by the
 testimony
 of the
 past

¹¹Can papyrus grow up without mire?
 Can the reed-grass^d thrive without water?
¹²While still green and untried,
 Of all herbs, it withers most quickly.
¹³So end all who forget their God,
 So the hope^e of the godless man perishes,
¹⁴Whose stupid confidence is shattered,^f
 And whose trust is a spider's web.^g
¹⁵He leans upon his house, but it does not stand,
 He seizes hold of it, but it does not endure.
¹⁶He grows green in the light of^h the sun,
 And over his garden shoots go forth.
¹⁷Over the springⁱ his roots are entwined,
 He looks upon the house of stones.^j
¹⁸If he is destroyed from his place,
 Then it denies him, saying, 'I have not seen you.'
¹⁹So^k this is the destruction^l of his way,
 And from the dust another springs.^m
²⁰Surely God will not cast out a perfect man,

All are
 dependent upon
 God, who
 cuts down
 the guilty
 and vindicates
 the
 righteous

^x 8^s So Gk. Heb., *If you would*.

^y 8^s Heb. adds the awkward line, *Surely now he will awake for you*. The Gk., Sah., and Eth. do not have this, but read as above.

^z 8^s So Gk. and Lat. and the demands of the context. Heb., *their fathers*.

^a 8^s So Syr.

^b 8^s It is only the cumulative testimony of the past that counts.

^c 8¹⁰ So VSS. Heb. has lost the *and*.

^d 8¹¹ This and the word translated papyrus are both Egyptian words.

^e 8¹³ So Gk. Heb., *paths*. The idea is that his end is sudden destruction.

^f 8¹⁴ The Heb. is probably corrupt, and the translation is doubtful.

^g 8¹⁴ Cf. Koran, 29⁴⁰, for Mohammed's use of this same expressive figure.

^h 8¹⁶ Lit., *in the presence of*.

ⁱ 8¹⁷ Translating the Heb. as in Sg. of Sgs. 4¹² and as the context suggests.

^j 8¹⁷ So Heb. The expression *house of stones* would naturally refer to the spring. Or, slightly emending the Heb. as suggested by Gk. and one Heb. MS., we may read, *he lives among the stones*.

^k 8¹⁹ Restoring the Heb. by the aid of the Gk., Sah., and Eth.

^l 8¹⁹ Again following the superior Gk. in restoring the Heb., which reads *joy*.

^m 8¹⁹ So Gk., Syr., and one Heb. MS.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

Nor will he upholdⁿ evil-doers.
²¹He will yet fill^o your mouth with laughter,
 And your lips with shouts of joy.
²²Your foes shall be clothed with shame,
 And the tent of the wicked shall vanish.

§ 5. Job's Reply: God Condemns the Innocent and Is Pitiless, Job 9-10

Job 9

¹Then Job answered:
²To be sure, I know that it is so;
 But how can a man be just before God?
³If he should desire to contend with him,
 Not one charge in a thousand could he answer.
⁴He is wise in mind and mighty in strength,—
 Who has ever defied him and prospered?—
⁵Him who without effort^p moves mountains,
 Overturning them in his anger;
⁶Who shakes the earth out of its place,
 So that its pillars tremble;
⁷Who commands the sun and it rises not,
 And places a seal on the stars;
⁸Who alone stretches out the heavens,^q
 And treads on the high waves^r of the sea;
⁹Who makes the Bear and Orion,
 The Pleiades^s and the constellations of the south;^t
¹⁰Who does great things past finding out,
 Marvellous things without number!^u
¹¹He goes by me, but I do not see him;^v
 He passes on, but I do not perceive him.
¹²When he seizes me, who can prevent him?
 Who will ask, 'What doest thou?'
¹³God will not withdraw his anger;
 The helpers of Rahab^w bow beneath him.

Impossi-
ble for a
mortal
man to
prove his
innocence
before the
Omnipo-
tent

Though
innocent,
he is the
prey of
an unjust
Deity

ⁿ §20 Lit., *hold fast by the hand*.

^o §21 Correcting minor errors in the Heb.

§ 5 In this speech Job's *w*e reaches its climax. He admits his friends' contention that no man can be just in the sight of God; but, instead of granting their claim that he is guilty, he maintains that the reason is that no finite man can plead his cause before the Infinite, ⁹¹⁻¹². Hence, though innocent, he is proved guilty and condemned by his irresponsible Judge, ⁹¹²⁻²⁵. In 10 Job transfers the charge from himself to God, and challenges him to explain why he treats the creation of his hand so cruelly and unjustly. God's care for man points to a benign purpose in the work of creation, and the possibility gives Job a little comfort, even though his present tragic lot seems to belie that purpose.

^p 9⁵ So Syr., lit., *and does not know it; i. e., without being conscious of it*. Heb., *and they do not know it*.

^q 9⁸ Cf. Is. 44²⁴ for this idea.

^r 9⁸ Lit., *high places* (cf. Mic. 1³). The reference may be to the encircling sea that rested upon the firmament.

^s 9⁹ Cf. Am. 5⁵.

^t 9⁹ Some star or group of stars in the southern heavens, possibly the Southern Cross.

^u 9¹⁰ A repetition of 5⁹.

^v 9¹¹ So VSS. Heb. omits *him*.

^w 9¹³ *I. e., the ancient gods and demons who are allied with the primeval monster that in Semitic mythology represented chaos, the foe of order, cf. Vol. I, Appendix III.*

¹⁴How much less can I answer him,
 Choose my words against^x him!
¹⁵Though^y I were right, I could give him no answer,^z
 But would have to beg mercy from my judge.^a
¹⁶If I called to him, he would make no reply,^b
 I do not believe he would hear my voice.
¹⁷He who crushes me by a fierce tempest,
 And increases my wounds unjustly,
¹⁸Does not permit me to catch my breath,
 But fills me full of bitterness.
¹⁹Is it a question of strength? He is mighty!^c
 Or of justice, who will arraign me?^d
²⁰Though right, my own mouth would condemn me;
 Though blameless, I would be proved guilty.

²¹Blameless I am! I regard not myself;
 I loathe my life; it is all one to me.^e
²²Therefore I openly declare:
 He destroys the blameless as well as the wicked.
²³And when the scourge^f brings sudden death,
 At the despair of the innocent he mocks.
²⁴He has given over the earth to the wicked;
 He veils the faces of its judges;^g
 If it be not he, who then is it?
²⁵My days^h are more swift than a runner,ⁱ
 They flee away, bringing no joy,
²⁶They glide by like ships of papyrus,^j
 Like vultures that swoop on their prey.
²⁷If I resolve to^k forget my complaint,
 To cast off my sadness and smile,
²⁸I shudder at all my pains,
 And know that thou wilt not acquit me,
²⁹But that I shall surely be guilty.
 So why should I labor in vain?

Brevity
of life

Courage
and
innocence
are of no
avail in
securing
justice
from the
unattain-
able
Judge

^x 914 Heb., *with*; *i. e.*, in conflict with.

^y 915 So Gk., Syr. Heb. inserts *whom* at the beginning of the line.

^z 915 Gk., Sah., and Eth., *I should not be answered*.

^a 916 Gk., Sah., and Eth., *his judgment*.

^b 916 So Gk. Heb., *and he answered me*; possibly this is original, but more probably it is a later toning down of Job's intemperate words.

^c 919 So Gk., Targ., Sah., and Syr. Heb., *strength of the mighty, behold*.

^d 919 So Heb. Gk., Syr., *him*. The parallelism supports the VSS., but it may be that the question is supposed to be asked by God; in either case the idea is that no mortal dares summon God before a tribunal. If Heb. is correct and it is Job who speaks, a contrast must be intended: God will prevail if it is only a matter of strength, but if it is a matter of justice, Job will be vindicated.

^e 921 The short two-beat measure is well adapted to express Job's intense feeling (cf. 5¹⁻³ and Nah. 2).

^f 923 A pestilence or natural calamity.

^g 924 So that they do not see the truth and render just decisions.

^h 925 So certain Heb. MSS., Syr., and Lat. Heb., *And my days*.

ⁱ 925 *I. e.*, a royal messenger. Probably the poet had in mind the swift Persian post.

^j 926 *I. e.*, swiftly like the light Nile boats.

^k 927 Lit. (correcting the Heb. with aid of the VSS.), *If I say I will*.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

³⁰Though I wash myself with snow,¹
 And cleanse my hands with lye,
³¹Thou wouldst plunge me in the mire,^m
 And my own clothes would abhor me.

³²Thou art not a man as I am,ⁿ
 That we should come together in judgment.
³³There is no one between us as arbiter^o
 To lay his hand on us both.
³⁴Let him take his rod from off me,
 And let not his terrors seize me;
³⁵Then would I speak and not fear,
 For I am at heart not afraid.

10 ¹In my soul I loathe my life,
 I will let my complaint loose against him;^p
 In the bitterness of my soul I will speak,^q
²I will say to God, Do not condemn me;
 Show me why thou contendest against me.
³Is it well for thee to oppress,
 To despise the work of thy hands,
 And favor the plan of the wicked?
⁴Hast thou eyes of flesh?
 Or seest thou as a man?
⁵Are thy days as the days of a man,
 Or thy years as the life of a mortal,
⁶That thou strivest to find out my guilt,
 And searchest after my sin,
⁷Though thou knowest that I am not guilty,
 And that from thy hand none can deliver?

⁸Thy hands have formed and fashioned me,
 And now wilt thou turn^r and destroy me?
⁹Remember^s thou madest me as clay;
 Wilt thou turn me again into dust?
¹⁰Hast thou not poured me out as milk,
 And curdled me like cheese?
¹¹Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
 And knit me with bones and with sinews.
¹²Thou hast granted me life and favor,

Demand
that God
reveal the
hidden
reason for
thus per-
secuting
the inno-
cent

Why did
God give
so much
care to
man's
creation
only in
the end to
betray
him?

¹ 930 Certain of the VSS. read, *with waters of snow*.

^m 931 So Gk., Lat., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *ditch*.

ⁿ 932 Heb. adds, *that I should answer him* (i. e., as a defendant in a suit), but this makes the line too long.

^o 933 Or with thirteen Heb. MSS., Gk., and Syr., *O that there was an arbiter*. Through a common scribal error the particle meaning *would that* has possibly been confused with the very similar Heb. word *not*.

^p 101 So Gk. and Sah.

^q 101 Possibly this line was added from 711.

^r 103 Following the Gk., Ar., Syr., Sah., and Eth. in reconstructing the corrupt Heb.

^s 102 So Gk. Heb. adds a word equivalent to our *Please*, but this disturbs the metre, and was probably added by a later scribe who aimed to heighten the picture.

JOB

And thy care has guarded my spirit.
¹³Yet these thou didst hide in thy heart,
 But I know that this was thy plan.[†]
¹⁴If I sin, then thou dost observe me,
 And refuse to acquit me of guilt.
¹⁵Am I wicked? Then woe unto me.
 Am I just? I cannot lift my head,
 Full of shame and drunk with sorrow.[‡]
¹⁶If I rise,[¶] as a lion thou huntest me,
 Appalling me with fresh marvels.
¹⁷Thou dost call new witnesses against me,
 And makest thy wrath against me still greater,
 And placest anew hard service upon me.[§]
¹⁸Why then didst thou bring me forth from the womb?
 I would have expired and no eye had seen me.
¹⁹I should have been as though I had not been,
 I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.
²⁰Are not my days few enough?^{||}
 Oh leave me to smile[∞] a little,
²¹Ere I go, no more to return,
 To the land of the shadow of death,
²²To the land as dark as midnight,[∞]
 Where the very light is darkness!

§ 6. Discourse of Zophar: Repentance the Only Means by Which Job May Again Win God's Favor, Job 11

Job 11 ¹Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:
²Should a torrent^a of words go unanswered?
 And should a mere boaster^b be justified?
³Must men hold their tongues while you babble,
 And mock, with no one to curb you?^c
⁴For you say, 'My life^d is pure,
 And I am clean in thine eyes.'
⁵But oh, that God would speak,
 And open his lips against you,

Would
that God
himself
would
correct
Job's
impiety

[†] 10¹³ Lit., *with thee*; i. e., thy secret purpose.

[‡] 10¹⁵ Lit., *Behold my sorrow!* The above reading is secured by a slight emendation.

[¶] 10¹⁶ So Syr. Heb., *If it exalt itself.*

[§] 10¹⁷ Following Gk., Sah., Syr., and Eth. Lit., *renewest the military service.*

^{||} 10²⁰ Reconstructing the corrupt Heb. with the aid of the Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth.

[∞] 10²⁰ Lit., *brighten up.*

[∞] 10²² The text is corrupt. Many regard this vs. as secondary. The above is based on Gk. Heb., through a scribal error, repeats as *blackness.*

§ 6 Zophar, the dogmatist, has no sympathy for Job. Acting on the impulse of his preconceived ideas, he proceeds to call upon God to rebuke Job and teach him the truth that Zophar deems final. Like Eliphaz, at the end he seeks to lure Job on to repentance by picturing glowingly the rewards that will follow repentance.

^a 11² So Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth., supported by parallelism. Heb., *the multitude of words.*

^b 11² Lit., *man of lips.*

^c 11³ So Gk., Syr., Ar., and Eth. Heb., *make you ashamed.*

^d 11⁴ So Gk., Lat., Sah., and Ar. Heb., *doctrine.*

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

⁶And show you the secrets of wisdom,
How wonderfully effective they are!^e
Then you would know^f he exacts from you
Less than your guilt deserves.

⁷Can you probe the real nature of God,
Discover the Almighty's perfection?
⁸It is higher than heaven;^g what can you do?
Deeper than Hades; what can you know?

⁹Its measure longer than earth,
And wider than the sea.

¹⁰If he passes by and imprisons
And calls to trial,^h who can stop him?

¹¹For he knows men who are false;
When he sees iniquity, he does not overlook it.ⁱ

¹²But a senseless man will learn,
When an ass's colt is born a man!^j

¹³If you would cleanse^k your heart,
And stretch out your hands to God,

¹⁴And put away sin from your hand,
And let no wrong dwell in your tent,^l

¹⁵You would then^m lift your face without blemish,
And you would be steadfast and fearless.

¹⁶Then you would forget your misery,
And recall it as floods that have passed.

¹⁷And your lifeⁿ would be brighter than noonday,
Your darkness^o would be like the morning.

¹⁸You would feel secure, for there is hope;
You would look about you^p and rest in safety.

¹⁹You would lie down, with none to frighten you,
And many would seek to win your favor.

²⁰But the eyes of the wicked fail,
And they have no way to flee;
Their only hope is to expire.

No guilt
can
escape
the Om-
nipotent

^e 11^e Slightly revising the difficult Heb. The meaning is that the effective divine wisdom can work wonders.

^f 11^f So the VSS. Heb., *Know, then*. Possibly the line is secondary; cf. 9¹¹⁻¹².

^g 11^g So Lat. and Aquila. Heb., *It is high as heaven*.

^h 11^h Lit., *call an assembly*; *i. e.*, to pronounce judgment.

ⁱ 11ⁱ So Gk. Heb., *he does not consider it*.

^j 11^j *I. e.*, never. The current translations of the Heb. are impossible.

^k 11^k So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *direct aright*.

^l 11^l So certain Heb. MSS. and the VSS. Heb., *tents*.

^m 11^m So Syr. and Ar. Heb. adds, *surely*.

ⁿ 11ⁿ So Gk. Heb. omits *your*.

^o 11^o So three Heb. MSS., Syr., and Targ. Heb., *though it were dark*.

^p 11^p Even as every Arab searches his tent before retiring; cf. Is. 17².

§ 7. Job's Reply: He Is Unjustly Condemned by His Friends; God Must Vindicate Him, Job 12-14

- Job 12** ¹Then Job answered:
²Verily you are the people,
 And with you wisdom shall die!
³But I have a mind as well as you,
 And who does not know all this?^q
⁴I am as one who is a laughing-stock to his neighbor,—
 'One who called upon God, and he answered!'^r
 The just and perfect man^s is a laughing-stock.^t
⁵The man at ease mocks at disaster,
 But it is ready for him whose foot slips.
⁶It is the tents of robbers that prosper,
 And they who provoke God are secure,
 They who carry their God in their hand.^u
⁷But ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
 And the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you;
⁸Or the creatures that crawl on the earth,^v and they will teach
 you;
 The fishes of the sea shall declare to you:
⁹Which of them all does not know
 That the hand of the Lord has done this?—
¹⁰In whose hand is the life of all that lives
 And the breath of all mankind.
¹¹Does not the ear try words,
 As the palate tastes its food?
¹²Does wisdom depend upon years,^w
 Or insight upon length of life?
¹³With God^x is wisdom and might;
 Counsel and insight are his.
¹⁴What he ruins cannot be rebuilt;^y
 What he imprisons cannot be set free;
¹⁵When he holds back the floods, they dry up;
 When he sends them on earth, they destroy it.
¹⁶With him is strength and wisdom;
 Deceived and deceiver are his.^z

Job's
retort to
his sleek,
self-satis-
fied
friends:
facts
belio
their
thesis

All God's
creation
testifies
to his
might and
wisdom

But he
rules men
arbitrarily

§ 7 In this long speech Job breaks completely with his friends and their narrow theories of divine procedure. He faces squarely the many examples of injustice that life presents. With biting irony he condemns his friends for trying to misrepresent facts in order to defend God. And yet in the end he appeals from the God of appearances to the God of reality, in whom he almost disbelieves and yet cannot wholly disbelieve.

^q 12³ So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., through scribal additions from 13², has, *I am not inferior to you*, between the two lines given above.

^r 12⁴ The words on the lips of the scornful friends.

^s 12⁵ So Gk. Heb. omits *and*.

^t 12⁵⁻¹⁰ Duhm and Schmidt regard these vss. as secondary.

^u 12⁵ Heb. reads, *Who brings his God in his hand*; i. e., trusts to his God for power. But this may be, as Siegfried suggests, a corruption for *Who lifts up his hand against God*.

^v 12⁸ Emending the Heb. in accordance with the context.

^w 12¹² Lit., *is wisdom with aged men?*

^x 12¹³ Heb., *With him*; i. e., God.

^y 12¹⁴ So Heb. Gk., Syr., Sah., Ar., and Eth., *who will build?*

^z 12¹⁶ Cf. Is. 45⁷. The Hebrews believed that God was the author of evil as well as of good.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

- ¹⁷He makes counsellors walk barefooted,^a
And judges he turns into madmen.
- ¹⁸He looses the bonds of kings^b
And binds their own loins with chains.^c
- ¹⁹He makes priests also^d walk barefooted^a
And overpowers the mighty.
- ²⁰He deprives the trusty of speech,
Takes away the judgment^e of elders.
- ²¹He pours contempt upon princes,
And looses the belt of the strong.^f
- ²²He reveals the deep things of darkness,
Brings out to the light the deep gloom.^g
- ²³He makes nations great, then destroys them,
Expands them, then hems them in.
- ²⁴Earth's chiefs^h he deprives of their judgment,
Makes them wander in trackless wastes,
- ²⁵Where they grope in utter darkness,
And staggerⁱ like drunken men.

The facts
are
obvious
to every
one

Job's
friends
distort
the truth
in their
effort to
be the
cham-
pions of
God

- 13** ¹My eye has seen all this,^j
My ear has heard and noted it.
- ²What you know, I know also;
I am not at all inferior to^k you.
- ³But I would address the Almighty,
And I long to reason with God;
- ⁴For you are but forgers^l of lies,
All of you worthless physicians!
⁵Oh, that you were but silent!
That would be wisdom on your part.

Folly of
trying to
distort
truth in
order to
vindicate
God

- ⁶Now listen to my argument,
And heed the plea of my lips.
- ⁷Is it for God you speak falsely,
For him that you talk deceitfully?
- ⁸Will you show him partiality,
Or be special pleaders for God?
- ⁹Were it well if he searched you out?

^a 12¹⁷, 19 *I. e.*, leads them captive. The word rendered *barefooted* occurs only in these two *vs.* and Mic. 1⁸. Some commentators hold that 17^a has been mistakenly assimilated to 18^a and should read (as suggested in part by the Gk.), *the counsellors of the land he makes foolish*. This would make a closer parallel to the next line.

^b 12¹⁸ *I. e.*, the bonds which they place on their subjects.

^c 12¹⁸ Slightly correcting the Heb., which reads, *a girdle*.

^d 12¹⁹ Inserting *also* for the sake of the rhythm.

^e 12²⁰ *Lit., taste; i. e.*, judgment.

^f 12²¹ Slightly revising the Heb. as the context demands. The trad. Heb. is meaningless.

^g 12²² There is nothing in the universe concealed from him.

^h 12²⁴ So Gk. Heb., *The chiefs of the people of the land (or earth)*

ⁱ 12²⁵ So Gk. Heb., *he makes them reel*.

^j 13¹ Gk., Sab., and Eth., *these things*.

^k 13² *Lit., fall not before*.

^l 13⁴ *Lit., plasterers*.

JOB

Can you trick God, as you trick men?

¹⁰For he will surely rebuke you,

If you secretly show partiality.

¹¹Shall his majesty not overawe you,

And dread of him fall upon you?

¹²Your maxims are proverbs of ashes,

Your defenses but works of clay.

¹³Be still^m that I may speak;

Let come to me what may,

¹⁴I willⁿ take my flesh in my teeth,

And place my life in my hand.

¹⁵He will slay me; I have no hope,^o

But I will defend my acts to his face.

¹⁶This also shall be my salvation,

That no godless man would approach him.^p

¹⁷Give careful heed to my words,

As I set them forth in your hearing.

¹⁸Now I have prepared my case,

I know that I am right.

¹⁹Who will contend with me?

Then would I be silent and die.

²⁰Only do two things^q for me;

Then from thee I will not hide.

²¹Withdraw thy hand far from me,

And let not thy terror appall me.

²²Then call, and I will answer,

Or let me speak, and answer me.

²³How many are my iniquities?

Let me know my guilt and my sin.

²⁴Oh, why dost thou hide thy face,

And count me as thine enemy?

²⁵Wilt thou harry a wind-blown leaf,

Wilt thou chase the withered stubble,

²⁶That thou judgest me so harshly,^r

And repayest the sins of my youth?

²⁷Thou putttest my feet in the stocks,

Bold
protesta-
tion of
innocence

Appeal to
God for
justice

^m 13¹¹ So Gk., Lat., Sah., and Eth. Heb. adds, destroying the metre, *let me alone*.

ⁿ 13¹⁴ With Gk. omitting *why*, which is repeated from the last clause in ¹², the words for *to me what may* and *why* being almost identical in Heb.

^o 13¹⁵ The AV translation, *Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him*, is not supported by the Heb. or the context.

^p 13¹⁶ *I. e.*, his readiness to argue his case before the omnipotent and omniscient Judge is proof of his innocence.

^q 13²⁰ The two things which Job desires God to do are specified in ²¹.

^r 13²⁶ Lit., *writest bitter things against me*.

FIRST CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

And placest watch over all my paths;
Thou settest a bound to the soles of my feet.*

- 14 ¹Man that is born of woman
Is short-lived^b and full of trouble.
²He springs up like a flower, then withers;^u
He flees like a shadow and stays not.
- 13 ²⁸And^v he wastes away as with disease,^w
Like a garment eaten by the moths.
- 14 ³Dost thou notice such a one,
And bring him^x to judgment before thee?^y
⁴Since his days are determined,
The number of his months is with thee.
And thou settest him bounds that he cannot pass.
⁶Look away from him, and let him have peace,^z
To enjoy like a hireling his day.^a
⁷For there is hope for a tree,
Though cut down, it may sprout again,
⁸And may not cease sending up shoots.
Though its root grow old in the earth,
And its stock be dead in the ground,
⁹It may bud at the scent of water,
And send up sprouts like a plant.
¹⁰But a strong man dies and lies prostrate;
Man breathes his last, and where is he?^b
¹¹Like waters gone from the sea,^o
Like a river dry and parched,
¹²He lies down to rise no more,
Nor awakes^d till the heavens vanish,
Nor is^d ever aroused from his^d sleep.
¹³Oh that in the abode of the dead thou wouldst hide me away,
Conceal me until thine anger be past,
In thine own set time remember me!

Man has
no hope
beyond
this life

Would
that God
might
vindicate
his ser-
vants
after
death

* 13²⁷ Some scholars, emending the Heb. and connecting with the next vs., read:

*Thou makest a cut about my root,
²⁸So that it decays like a rotten thing.*

It is more satisfactory to transfer ²⁸ to its natural place after 14², as above.

^b 14¹ Lit., *short of days*.

^u 14² Gk., Sah., and Eth., *falls*. Cf. Ps. 103¹⁵⁻¹⁶, Is. 40⁶⁻⁸, and contrast Mt. 6²⁴⁻²⁵.

^v 13²⁸ Transposing this vs., with Barton, to its natural position.

^w 13²⁸ Emending the Heb., which reads, *like a rotten thing*. Gk., Syr., *like a wine-skin*.

^x 14³ So Gk., Syr., Lat., and Sah. Heb., *me*.

^y 14³ A Heb. scribe has added in the traditional text the unmetrical and illogical line that separates ³ and ⁴: *Oh that a clean thing could come out of an unclean: not one can*. One Heb. MS. omits, as above.

^z 14⁶ Lit., *cease*.

^a 14⁶ *I. e.*, look away that he may have a little respite from his continuous labor under the master's eye.

^b 14¹⁰ So Heb. One MS., Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth., *he is not*.

^o 14¹¹ This figure is strikingly illustrated by the shallow seas or ponds and the short-lived rivers or brooks of Palestine.

^d 14¹² Heb. has the plural.

JOB

- ¹⁴If a man may die, and live again,^g
I would wait all my days of hard service,
Until my release should come.
¹⁵Thou wouldst call and I would answer,
Thou wouldst yearn for the work of thy hands!
¹⁶But now thou countest my steps,
And dost not forgive^f my sin;
¹⁷My transgression is sealed in a bag,
Thou hast kept on record^g my guilt.
¹⁸But the mountain crumbles to pieces,
And the rock is moved from its place;
¹⁹The water wears down the stones,
The floods wash away the soil;
So thou destroyest man's hope,
²⁰And he goes, vanquished by thee, forever;
With altered mien, thou dost send him away.
²¹His sons^h attain honor, unknown to him,
Or shame, but he does not perceive it.
²²Only his body is wracked,
And the soul within him mourns.

But God
gives man
no hope
beyond
the grave

SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

§ 8. Eliphaz: Job, Whose Guilt Is Shown by His Words, Should Know the Fate of the Wicked, Job 15

- Job 15** ¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:
²Should a wise man reply with mere bluster,^a
And be full of intemperate speech?
³Should he reason with profitless babble,
Or with speeches of no avail?
⁴See, you are destroying religion,^b
Impairing devout meditation.^c
⁵For your wickedness prompts your speech,
And you choose the tongue of the crafty.
⁶Your own mouth condemns you, not I,
And your own lips are witness against you.

Job's
words
proclaim
his guilt

^a 14^a Heb., *shall he live?*

^f 14^b So Gk. (lit., *pass over*) and the demands of the context. Heb., *watch over*.

^g 14^c Lit., *blued up*, "for safe keeping against the day of reckoning" (BDB).

^h 14^d The poet here, as in 19¹⁷, forgets that Job's children are dead.

§ 8 Job's rejection of Eliphaz's counsels and his intemperate words have convinced this oldest and most considerate of the three friends that Job's affliction is not merely for his chastisement but was richly deserved. Hence nothing remains but to point out to him the fate of the wicked in the hope that he may be warned and led to repent.

^c 15² Lit., *knowledge of wind*; i. e., windy knowledge. The eastern winds were from the desert; i. e., hot air.

^b 15⁴ Heb., *fear*, which is here equivalent to religion.

^a 15⁶ The term well describes that mystical contemplation which the Oriental regards as the essence of religion.

SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

In defying the testimony of human experience and in claiming to be innocent

⁷Were you the first man to be born,
Brought forth before the hills?^d
⁸Do you hear God's secret council,^e
And is wisdom revealed to you only?
⁹What know you, that we know not?
What insight have you that we lack?
¹⁰With us are the gray and the aged,
Men older by far than your father.^f

¹¹Do you spurn the divine consolations,
The words spoken gently to you?^g
¹²Why do your feelings control you,
And why do your eyes roll in frenzy,^h
¹³That you set your will against God,
And let such words escape you?

¹⁴What is man, that he should be clean,
Or one born of woman, innocent?
¹⁵If God trusts not even his holy ones,
And the heavens are unclean in his sight,
¹⁶How much more abhorrent and filthy
A man who drinks evil like water!ⁱ

¹⁷I will show you, listen to me;
What I have seen I will tell,—
¹⁸What wise men have made known
And not hidden, told by^j their fathers,
¹⁹To whom alone the land was given,
When no stranger had come among them.
²⁰The wicked man writhes with pain all his days,
All the years laid up for the tyrant.
²¹In his ears is the sound of terrors,
In prosperity comes the spoiler,
²²He cannot escape^k from the darkness,
He is destined for the edge of the sword,^l
²³Set aside as food for the vulture,^m

The testimony of all ages is that calamity overtakes the wicked

^d 15⁷ Cf. Pr. 8²⁵.

^e 15⁸ Or *Do you hearken in the council of God?*

^f 15¹⁰ Here the old man speaks; cf. 12¹² and contrast Wied. Sol. 4³⁻⁹:

*For honorable old age is not that which standeth in length of time,
Nor is its measure given by number of years:
But understanding is gray hairs unto men,
And an unspotted life is ripe old age.*

^g 15¹¹ *I. e.*, Eliphaz's earlier words.

^h 15¹² The Heb. word occurs nowhere else. Perhaps with some commentators, following the Gk. and one Heb. MS., we should read, *his eyes are lifted up*; *i. e.*, he is proud.

ⁱ 15¹⁶ *I. e.*, is morally degenerate.

^j 15¹⁸ *Lit.*, *from* (*i. e.*, having received it from).

^k 15²² *Lit.*, *will not depart*, revising the Heb. with Duhm, who urges strongly that the repetition of this line in ²⁰ represents the original.

^l 15²² So Gk. Heb. omits *edge*.

^m 15²³ So Gk., supported by the context and a slight revision of the evidently corrupt Heb.

ELIPHAZ

- He knows he is doomed to disaster.ⁿ
 The day of darkness^o ²⁴terrifies him;
 Distress and anguish o'erwhelm him,
 As a king prepared for the fray.^p
²⁵For his hand he has raised against God,
 And has even defied^q the Almighty.
²⁶He runs against him insolently^a
 With the thick bosses of his bucklers,
²⁷For he has covered his face with his fat,
 And put folds of fat on his loins;^t
²⁸But he shall dwell^u in desolate cities,
 In houses uninhabited,
 About to fall into ruin.^v
²⁹He shall not be rich; his wealth shall not endure;
 On the earth he shall cast no shadow.^w
³⁰The flame^x shall wither his branches,
 And by the wind his fruit shall fall.^y
³¹Let him not, self-deceived, trust in vanity,
 For vanity shall be his recompense.
³²His pruning^z shall be accomplished before its time,
 And his branch shall not become green.
³³He shall shed, like the vine, his unripe fruit,
 And cast, like the olive-tree, his blossom;
³⁴For the company of the godless is barren;
 Fire consumes the tents of bribery.
³⁵They conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity,
 And their womb matures deceit.

§ 9. Job: Even Though Unjustly Afflicted, Man Has a Friend in Heaven, Job 16-17

- Job 16** ¹Then Job answered:
 ²Many such things have I heard;
 You are all wearisome comforters.^a
 ³Is there no end to vain words?^b

Job's
friends
sorry
com-
forters

^o 15²² So Gk.
^o 15²³ Connecting the phrase, as does the Gk., with the following verb.
^p 15²⁴ The meaning of the word must be inferred from the context. Possibly this line should come at the end of ²⁵.
^q 15²⁵ Lit., *acted like a hero* (cp. Goliath).
^r 15²⁶ The reference is still to the godless man, *i. e.*, Job.
^s 15²⁷ Heb., *with his neck*. The above reading is confirmed by the Gk.
^t 15²⁷ *I. e.*, has become gross and insensate to all religious feeling.
^u 15²⁸ Slightly revising the Heb. as the context demands.
^v 15²⁸ *I. e.*, he defies God by building up towns which shall be destroyed by God because of their guilt; cf. Dt. 13¹²⁻¹⁸.
^w 15²⁹ So Gk., Sah., and Eth. The Heb. is obscure and probably corrupt.
^x 15³⁰ Heb. inserts before this line, *He shall not depart from darkness*, probably a gloss from ²⁷.
^y 15³⁰ So Gk. Heb. is corrupt.
^z 15³² So Gk., Old Lat., and Sah. Heb. is corrupt.
^{§ 9} The tone of this speech is very bitter, but more and more, as his friends fail him, Job turns in desperation to the very God who has, as he feels, so unjustly afflicted him.
^a 16³ Lit., *Comforters of trouble*; *i. e.*, they only add to his trouble.
^b 16³ Lit., *words of wind*; *i. e.*, words that lack sense and do not fit Job's case.

SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

What provokes you that you answer?

¹I too could speak like you;

If you were but in my place,

I could join words together against you,

And at you could shake my head.

²I could^c strengthen you with my speech,^d

And the solace of my lips could comfort you.*

⁶If I speak, my grief is not assuaged;

If I cease, what relief does it give me?^f

⁷But now he has wearied and dazed me.^g

All my misfortune ⁸lays hold of me;^h

As a witness it rises against me;

My leanness testifies to my face.

⁹His anger has torn and assailed me,

He has gnashed on me with his teeth.

My foesⁱ whet their eyes^j upon me;^k

¹⁰They open their mouths^l against me;

They smite my cheek reproachfully;

They all take sides against me.

¹¹God has given me up to knaves,^m

Cast me into the hands of the wicked.

¹²I was at ease, but he shattered me,

By the neck he seized and crushed me;

He has set me up as his target,

¹³From all sides his arrows assail me.ⁿ

He cleaves my reins and spares not;

He pours out my gall on the ground.

¹⁴One breach after another he makes on me;

He rushes at me like a warrior.

¹⁵I sewed sackcloth upon my skin,^o

And have humbled myself in the dust.^p

¹⁶My face is red with weeping,

Job forsaken, the object of human and divine attack, yet innocent

Also the victim of God's destructive might

^c 165 E.V.V., wrongly, *But I would*. There is no conjunction or change of construction in the Heb.

^d 165 Lit., *moueth*; i. e., mere talk.

^e 165 In the Heb. a scribe has by mistake introduced the verb *assuage* from the next line. In the Gk. and Syr. a different form of the verb is used and the negative is added. The parallelism indicates that the original had some such verb as *support*, *encourage*, or *comfort*.

^f 165 Lit., *What* (sc. burden) *goes from me?*

^g 167 Restoring the Heb. by the aid of the Gk.

^h 167, ^a Following Duhn in restoring the corrupt Heb. by the aid of 42¹¹.

ⁱ 169 So Syr., Sym., and Ar. Heb., *my adversary*.

^j 169 With this idiom cp. the Eng., *look daggers at me*.

^k 169 So Syr. and the demands of the context.

^l 160 So Syr., Targ., Lat., and nine Heb. MSS. Heb., *with their mouths*.

^m 161 Following the VSS. in correcting the Heb. The reference is probably to Job's former friends.

ⁿ 1613 God is here pictured as the divine huntsman, and man is his prey.

^o 1615 Not merely put it on as in ordinary affliction, but assumed it as a permanent garb.

^p 1615 Heb., *laid my horn in the dust*. The opposite idiom, *exalt one's horn*, means *be proud*.

- Deep darkness is over my eyelids;
 17 Although I have done no violence,
 And though my prayer is pure.
 18 O earth, cover not my blood,^a
 Let my cry find no place to rest.
 19 Even now is my Witness in heaven,
 He who vouches for me is on high.
 20 My friends pour their scorn upon me,
 But my eye pours out tears to God,^r
 21 That he plead for a man with God
 As a mortal pleads with his neighbor!^s
 22 For when but a few years come,
 I shall go whence I shall not return.
 17 ¹His anger^t has ruined my life;^u
 The grave is left^v for me.
²Surely mockers^w are with me,
 And my eye dwells^x on their defiance.
³Place now my pledge^y beside thee;
 Who is there that will strike hands with me?^z
⁶Thou hast^a made me a byword of the people,
 And when they see me they spit.^b
⁷My eye also is dim through sorrow,
 And my limbs are all like a shadow.
⁸Upright men are astonished at this,^c
 And the guiltless bestirs him against the godless.^d
⁹The righteous man holds on his way,
 And the man with clean hands grows stronger and stronger.*
 10 But as for you all, come on now again!—
 I shall not find a wise man among you.

Spurned
by man,
yet cer-
tain of
his in-
nocence

^a 16¹⁸ The blood represented the life, and the blood of one unjustly slain was supposed to cry for vengeance; cf. Gen. 4¹⁰, Ezek. 24⁹.

^r 16²⁰ Cf. 13³.

^s 16²¹ So Targ. and Lat.; certain Heb. MSS., *And between a man and his neighbor*; standard Heb. text, *And a son of man with his neighbor*.

^t 17¹ Slightly correcting the Heb., which reads, *my spirit* (or *anger*).

^u 17¹ Lit., *days*.

^v 17¹ Again correcting the Heb. in the light of the context.

^w 17¹ Lit., *mockeries*.

^x 17¹ Slightly correcting the Heb. This line is probably corrupt. The Gk. is quite different.

^y 17⁸ Slightly correcting the Heb. as suggested by the Syr.

^z 17⁸ *I. e.*, be surety for me. Here follow vss. 4⁵, which read:

⁴*For thou hast hid their heart from understanding,*

⁵*Therefore shalt thou not exalt them.*

⁶*He who denounces his friends for a prey,*

⁷*Even the eyes of his children shall fail.*

These two vss. appear to be scribal additions, for (1) they break the close connection between ⁸ and ⁹; (2) Job has for the moment turned from his friends (in ¹⁰ he addresses them directly); (3) these vss. are loosely connected with each other and are proverbs that would naturally be added by a thoughtful scribe; (4) there is no antecedent.

* 17⁹ So Gk. Heb. has the third person under the influence of 4⁵.

^b 17⁶ Lit., *And I am an object of spitting in (their) presence*.

^c 17⁸ This probably refers to Job's fate.

^d 17⁸ The godless are probably Job's friends.

* 17⁹⁻¹⁰ These vss. may be a dislocated section of Bildad's speech. If so, they fit best after 18⁴.

SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

No hope
in the
future

- ¹¹My days are passed in roaring;^f
 My dearest possessions^e are torn away.
¹²They^h turn the night into day;
 'Light,' they say,ⁱ 'is close to darkness.'^g
¹³If I look to Sheol as my house,
 Have made my bed in the dark,
¹⁴Have called the pit my father,
 The worm my mother and sister,
¹⁵Where then is my hope,
 And who can discern my advantage?^j
¹⁶Will they go with me^k down to Sheol,
 Or to dust shall we go down^k together?

§ 10. Bildad: Disaster Always Overtakes the Wicked, Job 18

Job's
fury
rebuked

- Job 18** ¹Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:
²When will you end^l mere words?
 Consider, and then we will speak.
³Why are we counted as beasts,
 And deemed unclean by you?
⁴You who tear yourself in your anger,
 Shall the earth be forsaken for you,
 Or the rock be removed from its place?

Fate
of the
wicked

- ⁵The light of the wicked is quenched,
 And the flame of his fire shines not.
⁶The light is dark in his tent,
 And the lamp above him goes out,
⁷His confident strides are shortened,
 And his own counsel proves his ruin,
⁸For his foot is thrust^m into a net,
 And he walks straight into the toils,
⁹A trap shall catch his heel,
 And a snare shall tightly grip him.
¹⁰A noose is hid for him in the ground,
 And a ginⁿ is set in his way.
¹¹Terrors on all sides affright him
 And chase after him^o at his heels.

^f 17¹¹ So Gk. Heb., *my purposes* (apparently in apposition with *possessions*, subject of *are torn away*).

^e 17¹¹ Lit., *the possessions of my heart*. Some take this to mean *desires*.

^h 17¹² *I. e.*, presumably, Job's friends, but they are very abruptly introduced. The verse is corrupt and may also be misplaced.

ⁱ 17¹² Supplying *they say*, as the context seems to require. The text here is hopelessly corrupt.

^j 17¹² Lit., *good*, emending the Heb. as indicated by the Gk.

^k 17¹⁶ Revising the Heb. according to the Gk.

§ 10 After an unsympathetic rebuke of Job's self-importance, Bildad elaborates poetically his former theme: a sinner's prosperity is insecure and brief. This time, however, he does not urge repentance and promise restoration. His tone throughout is one of condemnation.

^l 18² Revising the Heb. according to the Gk.

^m 18⁸ So Gk., Syr., Lat., and nine Heb. MSS. Heb., *with his foot he is thrust*.

ⁿ 18¹⁰ The piling up of synonyms in this passage is remarkable.

^o 18¹¹ Lit., *scatter him*.

BILDAD

- ¹²Disaster shall hunger for him,^p
 And misfortune await his stumbling,
¹³His skin be consumed by sickness,^q
 Death's first-born^r consume his members.
¹⁴Rooted out of his tent, his trusted refuge,^s
 He shall be brought to the king of terrors.^t
¹⁵Lilith^u shall dwell in his tent,
 Brimstone be strewed o'er his dwelling.
¹⁶His roots underneath shall dry up,
 And his branch above shall wither.
¹⁷His memory shall fade from the land,
 No fame shall he have abroad.
¹⁸Driven from light into darkness,
 From the world shall he be banished.
¹⁹He shall have neither son nor scion among his people,
 Nor any survivor where he sojourned.
²⁰They who come after shall be astonished at his day,^v
 As those who went before were affrighted.^w
²¹Surely such are the homes of the unrighteous,
 Such the place of one who does not know God.

§ 11. Job: The Vision of God and of a Vindication After Death, Job 19

- Job 19** ¹Then Job answered:
²How long will you force me to suffer,
 And break me in pieces with words?
³These many^x times you reproach me,
 Yet are not ashamed to attack^y me.
⁴If it even were true that I erred,
 My error is mine alone.^z

Bildad's
words
do not
apply to
Job's
case

^p 18¹² Slightly revising the Heb.

^q 18¹³ Slightly revising the Heb. according to the Eastern consonantal text. The allusion is probably to Job's horrible malady.

^r 18¹³ *I. e.*, fatal disease.

^s 18¹⁴ *Lit.*, *his tent, his confidence.* Gk., *healing shall be rooted out of his tent.*

^t 18¹⁴ *I. e.*, Death.

^u 18¹⁴ Revising the Heb., which reads, *what is not his.* Gk., *in his night.* Lilith was the vampire-like night-monster.

^v 18²⁰ *I. e.*, judgment day, the calamity that overtakes him. Gk., Sah., and Eth. read, *at him.* This may be original.

^w 18²⁰ *Lit.*, *laid hold on terror.*

§ 11 Job gives up his friends as hopeless. Equally hopeless seems the God of popular tradition. Job fares forth a lone pilgrim and exile, forsaken and taunted by kinsmen, friends, and apparently God. And yet he is not crushed by his woes. Conscious of his innocence, he faces yawning Sheol, and then a miracle takes place. The mists of popular belief that had hitherto concealed the nobler realities of the other world roll away, and he sees God vindicated because he will yet vindicate his servant. In this passage the author reaches one of his goals. In this dramatic way he sets forth his deep conviction that if God's justice is not vindicated in the present life of a man, it will be in the life that lies beyond the grave. Also he maintains, in words which will continue through the ages to comfort those who mourn beside the bier of their dead, that a sentient life is still assured to those who pass through the valley of the shadow of death. This brilliant ray of hope was quickly cut off by the clouds of current belief, but when once it had flashed into the eye of man he could not wholly forget it, however deep the encircling gloom.

^x 19³ *Lit.*, *ten.*

^y 19³ So Gk., Sah., and O.Lat. The exact meaning of the Heb. word is not known.

^z 19⁴ *Lit.*, *lodges with me.* The idea probably is: I alone bear the consequences of my mistake; it does not concern nor hurt you (cf. 7²⁰).

SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

Job
aban-
doned
and
assailed
by God

- ⁵If indeed you would rise up against me,
 And charge me with shameful crimes,
⁶Then know that God has betrayed me,
 And has spread his net about me.
⁷I cry, 'Wrong!' but I am not heard;^a
 I call, but there is no justice.
⁸He has blocked my way completely,^b
 Has shrouded my path in darkness:^c
⁹He has stripped me of my glory,
 And taken the crown from my head.^d
¹⁰He has demolished me completely,^e and I am gone;
 And my hope he has uprooted like a tree.
¹¹He kindles his wrath against me,
 And regards me as one of his enemies.
¹²His troops come on together
 And throw up a rampart^f against me
 And encamp about my tent.
¹³My brothers keep far from me,^g
 My friends are wholly estranged.
¹⁴My neighbors have ceased to know me,^h
 The guests in my house have forgotten me.¹
¹⁵My own maids count me a stranger,
 In their sight I am but an alien.
¹⁶To my servant I call, with no answer;
 With my mouth I must entreat him.
¹⁷My breath is offensiveⁱ to my wife,
 And I am loathsome to my mother's children.^k
¹⁸Even young children despise me;
 Whenever I rise, they jeer at me.
¹⁹All my intimate friends¹ abhor me,
 And they whom I love turn against me.
²⁰My skin clings to my bones,^m
 I escape by the skin of my teeth.ⁿ

^a 19⁷ Cf. Jer. 20³.

^b 19⁸ Lit., *fenced my path so that I cannot pass*.

^c 19⁸ Lit., *set darkness in my paths*.

^d 19⁹ I. e., his reputation.

^e 19¹⁰ Lit., *broken me down on all sides*.

^f 19¹² Lit., *their way*.

^g 19¹³ So Gk., Aquila, Syr., Sym., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *he has put from me*.

^h 19¹⁴ With Duhm slightly revising the text as the context requires.

ⁱ 19¹⁴ Joining the first two words of ¹³ with the last verb in ¹⁴.

^j 19¹⁷ Lit., *strange*; i. e., baleful because of his loathsome leprosy. The Heb. verb may be from a root which in Ar. means, *smell bad*. The parallelism supports this meaning.

^k 19¹⁷ Lit., *the sons of my (mother's) womb*.

^l 19¹⁸ Lit., *the men of my intimate circle*.

^m 19²⁰ This line is overfull and makes little sense as it reads in the trad. Heb. text. Gk. and Sah. have: *My flesh rots in my skin*. If not original, this indicates that *my flesh* is probably the addition of a scribe.

ⁿ 19²⁰ The exact meaning of the proverbial phrase is not clear. Possibly in this context it is equivalent to nothing at all, for the teeth have no skin. So Barton, Job 174. Bickell and Duhm would revise it so as to read, *my teeth are gone*.

- ²¹Have pity, have pity, my friends,
For the hand of God has touched me.
²²Why, like God, do you persecute me,
Not content with destroying my body?
²³Oh, that my words were now written,
That they were inscribed in a book,
²⁴That with an iron pen and with lead^o
In rock they were graven forever!
²⁵For I know that my Defender^p lives,
That at last he shall stand upon earth;^q
²⁶And after this skin is destroyed,
Freed from my flesh,^r I shall see him,^s
²⁷Whom I shall behold for myself;
My own eyes shall see, and no stranger's.
My heart in my breast stands still!^t
- ²⁸If you say, 'How can we persecute him
And find the root of the matter in him?'^u
²⁹Then dread the sword for yourselves,
For wrath shall come on the wicked,^v
That you may know there is a judgment.

Pity
needed,
not per-
secution

Firm
hope that
even
after
death he
will be
vindi-
cated
by God

Judgment
shall
come
upon his
friends

§ 12. Zophar: The Triumph of the Wicked Is Brief, Job 20

- Job 20** ¹Then Zophar the Naamathite answered:
²Not so^w do my thoughts make answer;
For this reason I hasten to speak.^x
³Must I hear your insulting reproof?
With senseless bluster^y you answer me.

In time
guilt shall
surely be
punished

^o 19²⁴ Probably the meaning is *with an iron pen in lead* (and) *in rock*, or *graven in rock with an iron pen and* (filled in) *with lead*. The Heb. proposition *in* also means *with*.

^p 19²⁵ Heb., *God*, the avenger of blood (*e. g.*, Dt. 19^{6, 12}) and the one who espoused the cause of the accused. In Ruth 3 the same word (E.V.V., *kinsman*) is applied to Boaz.

^q 19²⁴ Lit., *on the dust*; *i. e.*, on my grave.

^r 19²⁶ Lit., *From my flesh*; *i. e.*, without it.

^s 19²⁶ Cf. the translation of Enoch and the story of Noah in its old Bab. forms: certain favored ones were allowed to enter the presence of the gods and to live immortally.

^t 19²⁷ At the thought of restoration to Jehovah's favor, Job is on the point of fainting.

^u 19²⁸ So 100 Heb. MSS., Theod., Targ., and Lat. Heb., *in me*. The idea is, How can we prove his guilt?

^v 19²⁹ So Gk., Sah., and Eth., and a revised Heb. text.

§ 12 Zophar, like the Spanish inquisitors, is enraged by the thought that the object of his attack is inspired by a God-given vision of truth, as well as by Job's bold counter-attack, 19²². Zophar's intemperate words betray his rage. As has been said, his is the utterance of a partisan, who, mistaking the passionate resentment of wounded vanity for the inspiration of true religion, zealously magnifies God's strictness. Like many a theologian, he pictures God as a superman with all the unlovable qualities that the dogmatist himself possesses.

^w 20¹ So Gk. Heb., *therefore*, but this makes no sense in this context.

^x 20² Lit., *On account of my haste in me*. Possibly the line should be revised to read, *For this reason my heart is stirred*.

^y 20³ Lit., *wind out of (without) understanding*. So Gk. and a slightly revised Heb. In 8² and 15² Job's friends call his words but wind. The above reading (demanded by the sense) requires a further minor emendation of the Heb., which reads, *the spirit (wind) of my understanding answers me*.

SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

- ⁴Know you not^z this from of old,
 Since man was placed on the earth:
⁵That the joy of the wicked is short,
 The mirth of the godless but momentary?
⁶Though his height be as high as the heavens
 And his head reach up to the clouds,
⁷Like his dung he shall perish forever;
 Those who saw him shall say, 'Where is he?'
⁸Like a dream^a he shall take wings and vanish;^b
 He shall flee^c like a vision of night.
⁹The eye which beheld him shall see him no more,
 And never again shall his place behold him.^d
¹⁰His children^e shall seek favor of the poor;
 His descendants^f shall give back his wealth.
¹¹His bones, now full of youth,^g
 With him shall lie in the dust.
¹²Though evil is sweet in his mouth,
 As he keeps it hid^h 'neath his tongue,
¹³Though he spares it and will not let go of it,
 But keeps it still in his mouth,
¹⁴Yet the food in his stomach is turned;
¹⁵'Tis the poison of asps within him.
¹⁶The wealth he has swallowed he must vomit:
 God will cast it out of him.
¹⁷He has sucked the poison of asps;
 The tongue of the viper shall slay him.
¹⁸No rivers of oil^h shall he see,
 No streams of honey and butter.
¹⁹He must restore and not swallow his gains;
 Inⁱ the wealth from his trading no joy has he.
²⁰Having crushed and forsaken the poor
 And robbed a house not of his building,^j
²¹No security shall he have with his possessions,^k
 Nor safety with that which delights him.
²²Naught is left that he has not devoured;
 Therefore his prosperity is not lasting.
²³In the fulness of plenty he shall be in straits;

^z 20⁴ So Gk., one Heb. MS., and demands of context. Heb. omits *not*.
^a 20⁸ Cf. for the same figure Ps. 73²⁹, Is. 29⁷.
^b 20⁸ Lit., *not be found*.
^c 20⁸ So the VSS. Heb., *he chased away*.
^d 20⁹ These two lines are virtually a repetition of 7⁸, 10, but they fit the parallelism and there is no sufficient reason for regarding them as secondary.
^e 20¹⁰ Heb., *hands*, but this reading is inconsistent with 9-10.
^f 20¹⁰ This reading is obtained by adding one consonant, as suggested by Budde. Possibly these lines are but marginal notes on 13-19.
^g 20¹¹ Youth represents full vigor.
^h 20¹⁷ Revising the Heb. Gk., *milking of flocks*.
ⁱ 20¹⁸ So about fifty MSS. and Syr. Heb., *according to*.
^j 20¹⁹ Correcting the Heb. according to the Lat.
^k 20²⁰ Following the Gk. Heb., *for he knows no quietness within him*.

ZOPHAR

- Every distress¹ shall assail him.
²³When he is about to fill his belly,
 God^m will let loose his hot wrath against him,
 And rain down terrorsⁿ upon him.^o
²⁴As he flees from the weapon of iron,
 The bronze bow pierces him;
²⁵The missile comes out of his body,^p
 And the glittering point from his gall.^q
 Terrors keep coming upon him;
²⁶Utter darkness is stored up for him.^r
 A fire not blown by man shall devour him
 And consume what is left in his tent.
²⁷The heavens shall bring to light his guilt,
 And the earth shall rise in protest against him.
²⁸Destruction shall sweep away his house^s
 Like driftwood^t in the day of his wrath.
²⁹Such is the wicked man's portion from God,
 The divine retribution for all his iniquity.

§ 13. Job: The Grim Facts of Life Belie the Traditional Explanation of Suffering, Job 21

- Job 21** ¹Then Job answered:
²Listen attentively to my speech,
 And let this be your consolation:
³Bear with me now while I speak,
 And when I have spoken, mock on.^u
⁴Is it of man I complain?^v
 And why should I not be impatient?
⁵Look at me and be filled with amazement,
 And lay your hand on your mouth.^w
⁶When I remember I am dismayed
 And shuddering seizes my flesh.

Let the friends be silent in the presence of the terrible facts

¹ 20²² So Gk. and Lat. Heb., *hand of one in trouble*.

^m 20²³ The subject is not expressed in the Heb.

ⁿ 30²⁸ Heb., *with his food* (object not expressed). The above reading involves only a slight emendation and is supported by the Gk.

^o 20²⁵ This doubtful vs. may be a scribal addition.

^p 20²⁵ Following the Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth. in revising the Heb., which reads, *he draws it forth and it comes out of his body*.

^q 20²⁵ Cf. 16¹²⁻¹³.

^r 20²⁶ So Gk., Old Lat., and Sah. Heb., *for his treasures*.

^s 20²⁸ So Gk. Heb., *The increase of his house shall depart*.

^t 20²⁸ The Heb. word is uncertain, but seems to mean *things swept away*.

§ 13 In this section Job weighs carefully the evidence that gives the lie to the sweeping assertions of his friends. He dwells at length upon the moral disorder of the world. The vital question at issue is not Job's but God's justice. Here we find a philosopher's scientific analysis of the phenomena of life. The old dogma of proportionate rewards is torn to tatters. The Gk. omits ²⁶⁻²⁸, and ²⁴ is closely connected with ²⁷, so that the intermediate vs. are not essential to the context. On the other hand, they fit logically in Job's speech and probably were omitted by the Gk. translators because they considered them, as they are in fact, a repetition of the thought of ¹⁶⁻²⁰.

^u 21³ Gk. inserts *not*, but the above is more consistent with the action of the friends.

^v 21⁴ *I. e.*, not against man but God.

^w 21⁶ *I. e.*, in surprise and wonderment.

SECOND CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

The prosperity
of the
wicked

- ⁷Why do the wicked live on,
Grow old, and attain great power?
⁸Their children are settled about them,^x
And their offspring before their eyes.
⁹Their households are safe^y from fear,
No rod of God^z falls upon them.
¹⁰Their^a bulls gender and fail not;
Their cows never lose their calves.
¹¹They send out their young like a flock,
And their children dance for joy;
¹²They sing^b to the timbrel^c and harp,
And rejoice at the sound of the pipe.
¹³They complete^d their days in prosperity,
And in a moment^e go down to Sheol.
¹⁴Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us;
We have no desire to know thy ways.
¹⁵Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
What advantage have we, if we pray to him?'
¹⁶Behold! Their fortune is in their own hands.
Little does God heed the counsel of sinners.^f

They
even
defy
God

Just
punish-
ment
exceptional

- ¹⁷How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out?
How oft does calamity fall upon them?
¹⁸How often are they as straw before the wind
And as chaff that the storm carries off?
¹⁹God stores up guilt for his children;—
Let him punish the man himself, that he may know it!^g
²⁰Let his own eyes see his destruction,
Let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty!
²¹What cares he for his house after him,
When the number of his months is cut short?
²²Shall any teach knowledge to God,
Who judges those on high?
²³One dies with his strength unimpaired,
Wholly at ease and prosperous;
²⁴His pails are full of milk,
In his bones the marrow is moist.

All men
alike

^x 21⁸ So Gk. and Syr. Heb. adds *with them*, but this phrase destroys the metre and adds nothing to the sense.

^y 21⁹ So Gk., Lat., and corrected Heb.

^z 21⁹ *I. e.*, divine judgment.

^a 21¹⁰ So Gk. and Lat. Heb., his.

^b 21¹² Lit., *lift up* (*sc.* the voice).

^c 21¹² So VSS. and many MSS. The standard text reads, *according to the timbrel*.

^d 21¹³ So variant readings and VSS. Trad. Heb., *wear out*.

^e 21¹³ To die quickly in old age is rightly regarded as a blessing.

^f 21¹⁶ So Gk. The meaning seems to be that God apparently cares nothing about the plans of the wicked; cf. Mal. 3¹²⁻¹⁵.

^g 21¹⁹ *I. e.*, if God were just he would make every sinner pay the penalty of his own sins and not let the consequences fall on the children of the wrong-doer. The current translation, which supplies *you say*, is not impossible, but when the author a little later (²³) wishes to express this idea, he supplies the introductory words.

JOB

- ²⁵But another dies embittered,
With never a taste of prosperity.
²⁶In the dust they lie down together,
And the worm covers them both.
- ²⁷Indeed, I know your thoughts,
And the devices by which you would wrong me.
²⁸For you say, 'Where is the house of the tyrant,
And where are the dwellings^b of the wicked?'
²⁹Have you not asked those who travel?
And do you not know their proofs,
³⁰That the wicked is kept from disaster,
Is saved¹ in the day of wrath?
³¹Who declares his acts to his face,
Or repays him for what he has done?
³²And yet he is borne to the grave,
And watch is kept over his tomb,
³³Sweet to him are the clods of the valley;^j
After him all men follow,^k
As innumerable have before!^l
³⁴Why do you give me vain comfort,
And make answers bereft of all truth?

Facts
disprove
your
claims

THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

§ 14. Eliphaz: Job's Guilt Fully Explains His Affliction, Job 22

- Job 22** ¹Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered:
²Can a man be of service to God?
For a wise man serves only himself.
³Is the Almighty pleased by your righteousness?
Does your blameless life^a bring him profit?
⁴For your piety^b would he reprove you,
Or prefer a charge against you?
- ⁵Is not your wickedness great?
Is there no end to your crimes?
⁶For you take pledges wrongly from kinsmen,^c

Sin the
only ex-
planation
of Job's
affliction

The
probable
sins

^b 21²⁸ So one MS. and Lat. Heb. adds, *tent*.

ⁱ 21³⁰ Revising the Heb. as the context requires. Heb., *they are led away*.

^j 21³³ Even after death he shall sleep peacefully amidst pleasing environment.

^k 21³³ Lit., *draw after him*.

^l 21³³ Possibly this line is secondary. It destroys the regular metre and may have been added by a scribe. The evidence, however, is not decisive. If it is original, the meaning is that the prosperous wicked man here pictured is no exception, but is only one of many.

§ 14 As Job grows calmer his friends become more intemperate. Here the author has faithfully presented the psychology of dogmatism. Eliphaz well illustrates the futility of *a priori* reasoning; Job is afflicted, therefore he must have sinned. His calamity is most crushing, therefore he must have committed the most heinous sins. On this slender basis even the mild Eliphaz goes on to recount a long list of hypothetical sins and then charges Job with committing them.

^a 22³ Lit., *that you make your ways perfect*.

^b 22⁴ Lit., *fear*. Again Eliphaz uses the term in the technical sense of religious faith; cf. 4⁵.

^c 22⁶ *I. e.*, by taking advantage of the needs of the destitute.

THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

And strip from the naked their clothing.^d
⁷You have given no drink to the weary,
 And withheld your food from the hungry.
⁸The land is held for him who is strong;^e
 The man specially favored^f possesses it.
⁹Widows you have sent away empty,
 And broken^g the arms of the fatherless.
¹⁰Therefore snares encircle you,
 And sudden fear confounds you;
¹¹Your light has gone out in darkness,^h
 And the flood of waters engulfs you.

¹²Is not God in the height of heaven,ⁱ
 And does he not see^j how high the stars are?
¹³Yet you say, 'What does God know about it,
 Can he judge aright through the darkness?'
¹⁴Clouds envelop him, he sees not,
 And he walks on the vault of heaven.^j
¹⁵Will you keep to the way of old,
 Which wicked men have trodden,
¹⁶Who were snatched away before their time,
 Whose foundation was poured out like a stream?^k
¹⁷The righteous see it and are glad,
 And the innocent laugh them to scorn.
¹⁸Saying, 'Surely our adversaries are destroyed,
 And the fire has consumed what is left of them.'^l

¹⁹Be friendly with him and at peace,
 For in this way good will come to you.
²⁰Receive now instruction from his mouth,
 And lay up his words in your mind.
²¹If you turn humbly^m to the Almighty,
 And banish sin far from your tent,
²²And lay your treasure in the dust,

Useless
to try to
escape
God's
judgment

Confes-
sion and
right
deeds
will alone
bring
relief

^d 22⁶ Taking the outer mantle and even the undergarments as security for loans; cf. Dt. 24¹⁰⁻¹³.

^e 22⁸ Lit., *man of arm*.

^f 22⁸ Lit., *he whose face is lifted up*; i. e., who enjoys royal favor. This vs. interrupts the close connection between ⁷ and ⁹ and may be secondary.

^g 22⁹ So the VSS. Heb., *are broken*.

^h 22¹¹ So Gk. Heb., *Or darkness, you do not see*.

ⁱ 22¹² Syr., *Did not God make high the heavens?*

^j 22¹² So Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth.

^k 22¹⁶ Vss. 17-18 are made up of extracts from 21¹⁴⁻¹⁶ and interrupt the close logical connection between ¹⁶ and ¹⁹. Reconstructed by the aid of the Gk. they read:

^l *Who said to God, 'Depart from us;'*

And, 'What can the Almighty do for us?'

^m *Yet he filled their houses with good things.*

But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

^l 22¹⁸ I. e., as the cities of the plain were destroyed, Gen. 18-19.

^m 22¹⁸ So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *you shall be built up*; but this is not in harmony with the context and is due to an obvious corruption of the Heb. text.

ELIPIAZ

- The gold of Ophir amongⁿ the stones of the brooks,
²⁵Then the Almighty shall be your treasure,
 And precious^o silver shall he be to you.
²⁶You shall then find delight in the Lord,
 And shall lift up your face to God.
²⁷You shall pray to him, and he will hear you;
 And so you shall pay your vows.
²⁸What you decree shall stand,
 And light shall shine on your ways;
²⁹For he humbles him who speaks proudly,^p
 But saves the man who is modest.^q
³⁰He delivers the man who is innocent;^r
 He shall be saved by the cleanness of his^s hands.

§ 15. Job: If Man Could Find God, His Problem Would Be Solved, Job 23,
 24¹⁻¹³, 21-23, 25

Job 23

- ¹Then Job answered:
²Even now^t my complaint must be bitter,^u
 My affliction exceeds my groaning.^v
³Oh, that I knew where to find him,
 That I might go straight to his throne!
⁴I would lay my cause before him,
 Filling my mouth with arguments.
⁵I would know the reply he would make,
 And understand what he would say.
⁶Would he use his great power against me?
 No, he at least would give heed.
⁷There the upright might reason with him;
 And my case should be settled forever.
⁸I go forward, but he is not there,
 And backward, but cannot perceive him;
⁹On the left I seek,^w but in vain,
 On the right,^x but I do not see him.

If God
 could
 only be
 found,
 Job's
 vindica-
 tion is
 assured

ⁿ 22²⁴ Syr., Theod., and Aram., *like*. The meaning of the vs. is, Throw aside mere material possessions.

^o 22²⁵ The meaning of the Heb. word is unknown; the above rendering is conjectural.

^p 22²⁹ Emending the Heb. as the context demands.

^q 22²⁹ Lit., *casts down the eyes*. Cf. Lk. 18³².

^r 22³⁰ Again with the aid of the VSS. correcting the Heb., which reads, *not innocent*.

^s 22³⁰ So Syr. and Lat. Heb., *your* (sing.), but this is probably due to a scribe who had in mind 42⁸.

§ 15 Henceforth Job ignores his friends. The one supreme question in his mind is whether God is just and will vindicate him. Unlike his friends, Job is passionately eager to know God face to face and not as a distant abstraction. He has lost his old terror of God. In the fiery ordeal through which he is passing he has been convinced of his own essential innocence. His faith in God is also struggling for the ascendancy against the grim facts of life.

^t 23¹ Lit., *Also today*.

^u 23² So Syr., Targ., Lat., and revised Heb.

^v 23² Lit., *my hand* (Gk., Sah., Syr., and Eth., *his hand*) is heavy upon my sighing. The above rendering follows the interpretation of the rabbis.

^w 23⁹ So Syr. Heb. is unintelligible.

^x 23⁹ Lit., *I turn to the right*. So Syr. and Targ. Heb., *he turns*, but this is not supported by the parallelism.

THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

He will
yet
deliver
me, but
now his
attitude
only
tempts
me

- ¹⁰For he knows the way that I take;^y
I should come forth as gold, should he test me.
- ¹¹My feet have held to his steps,
My way have I kept without swerving,
- ¹²And obeyed his every command.
I have treasured his words in my heart,^z
- ¹³But when he decides,^a who can turn him?
And what he desires, he does.
- ¹⁴For he carries out his decree,^b
And has many such things in mind.^c
- ¹⁵Therefore his presence confounds me,
When I think of him, I am afraid.
- ¹⁶For God has made my heart faint,
The Almighty has filled me with terror;
- ¹⁷For indeed I am^d cut off by darkness,
And gloom envelops my face.^e

Examples
of the
seeming
injustice
of divine
rule

- 24** ¹Why does the Almighty not fix times for judgment,
And they who best know him not see his great day?²
- ²The wicked^f remove the landmarks,
They steal the flock with its shepherd,^g
- ³They drive off the ass of the fatherless,
Take the ox of the widow in pledge.
- ⁴They thrust the needy out of the way,
And the poor of the land all hide.
- ⁵Like^h the wild asses in the desert
They go forth to their task seeking prey.
The desert yields food for their children.ⁱ
- ⁶They reap by night^j in the field;
And they despoil the vines of the rich.^k
- ⁷All night they^l lie naked, without clothing,
With nothing to keep out the cold.
- ⁸They are wet with the showers of the hills
And cling to the rocks for shelter.
- ⁹They^m tear the fatherless from the breast,
Take the poor man's babe in pledge.ⁿ
- ¹⁰They^l go about naked without clothing

^y 23¹⁰ *I. e.*, my habitual way.

^z 23¹² So Gk. and Lat. and demands of the context.

^a 23¹³ Slightly revising the corrupt Heb.

^b 23¹⁴ So Syr. and Lat. Heb., *my decree*; *i. e.*, what is appointed for me.

^c 23¹⁴ Lit., *many such things are with him*.

^d 23¹⁷ Following one MS. in deleting the negative.

^e 23¹⁷ Deleting *from*, which makes no sense.

^f 24² So Gk., Sah., Eth., and the demands of the metre and context. Cf. Dt. 19¹⁴, 27¹⁷.

^g 24² So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *and feed them*.

^h 24⁵ The VSS. omit *Behold*, found in the Heb.

ⁱ 24⁵ The text and meaning of this line are somewhat uncertain.

^j 24⁶ Slightly revising the corrupt Heb. by the aid of Gk.

^k 24⁶ Heb., *wicked*.

^l 24⁷ ¹⁰. *I. e.*, the victims of the oppression just described.

^m 24⁹ Here the wicked oppressors must be meant. The perplexing change of subject may be due to misplacement of some of the vs., yet such ambiguity is not uncommon in Heb.

ⁿ 24⁹ Again revising the Heb., which reads, *take the poor in pledge*.

JOB

And are hungry as they carry the sheaves,^o
¹¹Between the olive-rows they make oil;
 They tread the winepresses, yet are thirsty.
¹²From the city the dying^p groan,
 And the souls of the wounded^q cry out;
 Yet God does not hear their prayer.^r

¹³These^a are of those who resent^t the light;
 They know not its ways,
 Nor dwell^u in its paths.

Murder-
ers and
adulterers

¹⁴The murderer rises in the dark,^v
 To kill the poor and the needy,
 And the thief stalks abroad^w at night.

¹⁵Putting a mask on his face,^x
 The adulterer watches for the twilight,
 Saying, 'No eye can see me.'

¹⁶In the dark he breaks into houses,
 But he shuts himself up by day.
 All these know not the light,

¹⁷For morning is to them as the shadow of death;^y

¹⁸They go swiftly^z on the face of the waters.^a

²¹There are those^b who devour the childless
 And show no kindness to the widow.

Those
who prey
on the
helpless

²²They drag off the powerless^c by their might;
 When they rise, none is sure of his life.

²³Yet he^d grants them security,^e and they rest,
 Though he plainly sees their deeds.^f

²⁵If this is not so, who will prove me a liar
 And nullify my indictment?

^o 24¹⁰ The meaning seems to be that the poor, even while laboring to get food for their oppressors, have not enough to eat for themselves.

^p 24¹² So Syr., Heb., of men; Gk., and houses.

^q 24¹³ Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth., infants.

^r 24¹³ So Syr., Aram., and implications of the Gk. Heb., the folly.

^s 24¹³ *I. e.*, the classes to be specified in the following vss.

^t 24¹³ Lit., rebel against.

^u 24¹³ Gk., Old Lat., Syr., Eth., walk. This may be original.

^v 24¹⁴ Slightly revising the Heb., which reads, at light.

^w 24¹⁴ Emending the Heb., which is clearly the result of a mistake in copying.

^x 24¹⁵ Transposing the line as the meaning requires.

^y 24¹⁷ The complement of ^{17a} is found in ^{18a}. Vs. ^{17b}, *For they know the terrors of the thick darkness*, was probably added by a scribe, and ^{18b-20} are either scribal additions or a part of Bildad's speech. Vs. ^{18bc} reads:

*Their portion is cursed in the earth;
 He turns not the way of vineyards.*

For ¹⁸⁻²⁰, cf. § 16.

^a 24¹⁸ Slightly revising the Heb.

^b 24¹⁸ *I. e.*, disappear as swiftly and silently as chips on a swift current.

^c 24²¹ Lit., there is one. The collective singular is used throughout ²¹⁻²², but in ²³ the plural appears.

^d 24²³ So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., mighty.

^e 24²³ *I. e.*, God.

^f 24²³ Slightly correcting the Heb.

^g 24²⁵ Lit., his eyes are upon their ways. For ²⁴, cf. § 16.

THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

§ 16. Bildad: It Is Impossible for Man to Be Perfect in God's Sight, Job 25, 24^{19-20, 24}

No man
can be
just
with
God

Job 25 ¹Then Bildad the Shuhite answered:
²Dominion and fear are with God;
 He makes peace in the heights of heaven.^ε
³Has he not innumerable armies?
 And on whom does his light not arise?
⁴How can man then be just before God?
 And one born of a woman be pure?
⁵See, even the moon has no brightness,^h
 And the stars are not pure in his sight;ⁱ
⁶How much less is man, a mere worm,
 And the son of man but a maggot!

Fate
of the
sinner

24 ¹⁹Drought^j and heat consume the snow waters;
 So Sheol the man who has sinned.
²⁰The womb shall forget him;
 The worm shall feed sweetly on him.
 He shall be no more remembered;
 He shall be uprooted like a rotten tree.^k
²⁴He is exalted a little while and is gone;
 Like the mallow he is laid low and shrivels,^l
 Cut off like the top of an ear of grain.

§ 17. Job: Guilt Does Not Explain All Suffering, Job 26-27^{6, 12}

Sorry
com-
forters

Job 26 ¹Then Job answered:
²How well you have helped the weak,
 Relieved the arm of the powerless,
³Counselled the man with no wisdom,
 Poured forth in abundance sound knowledge!
⁴By whose help have you uttered these words,
 And whose spirit inspired your speech?

§ 16 Bildad's speech is exceedingly brief. Apparently a later editor has taken one section of it and used it to tone down Job's arraignment of Jehovah's justice as revealed in the world. Restoring 24^{19-20, 24} to their logical position, this much-disarranged part of the book presents a clear sequence of thought. Some scholars would go further and also transfer to Bildad's speech 24^{5-8, 30³⁻⁸}, and 24¹⁷⁻¹⁸.

^ε 25² *I. e.*, he establishes peace, not disorder.

^h 25⁵ Gk., Sab., and Eth., *He commands the moon and it shines not*; but the Heb. gives the more perfect parallelism.

ⁱ 25⁵ Repeated very effectively from 15¹⁵.

^j 24¹⁹ As explained above, the position of these vs. in the present text is probably due to an editor.

^k 24²⁰ Following Duhm in restoring the impossible Heb.

^l 24²⁴ Restoring the corrupt Heb. with the aid of the VSS.

§ 17 For the last time Job reproaches his friends for their perfidy in not giving him help when he most needed it. He admits all their claims regarding God's invincible might, but this omnipotence only makes God's treatment of the innocent Job seem the more cruel and unjust. Yet despite the condemnation of his friends and seemingly of God himself, Job protests his innocence. In the Gk. 26⁵⁻¹¹ is omitted, but this was probably because the translator thought that it was a repetition of Job's words in 9^{1 d}.

JOB

⁶Before him in pain writhe the Rephaim,^m
 Whose dwellingsⁿ are beneath the waters.
⁶Sheol is naked before him,
 And the lower world lies uncovered.
⁷He stretches out the north^o over chaos,
 And hangs the earth upon nothing.
⁸He binds up the waters in his clouds,
 Yet the clouds are not torn with the weight.
⁹He sets firm the pillars of his throne,^p
 And over it spreads his cloud.
¹⁰He drew a circle^q o'er the face of the waters
 To the confines of light and darkness.
¹¹The pillars of heaven look
 And are filled with consternation at his rebuke.^r
¹²By his power he stilled^s the sea,
 And by his understanding he smote through Rahab.^t
¹³By his breath the heavens are made fair,^u
 His hand pierced the fleeing serpent.
¹⁴See, these are but the fringes of his ways;
 How small a whisper do we hear of him!
 But who can understand his mighty thunder?

Omnipo-
tence of
God's
rule

27 ²As God lives,^v who has robbed me of justice,
 The Almighty, who makes me bitter
³(For my life is still intact,
 And the spirit of God fills my nostrils),
⁴I swear that my lips speak no falsehood,
 My tongue does not utter deceit.
⁵Far be it from me to admit you are right;
 Till I die, I will never disclaim innocence.
⁶My innocence I hold fast and will not give it up;
 My heart does not reproach me for any of my acts.^w
¹²You^x have all seen it with your own eyes;
 Why then this inane folly?

Protesta-
tion of
innocence

^m 26^s *I. e.*, the Shades, the fallen giants who, like the Titans of Greek thought, were believed to inhabit the realm of the dead whither they had been banished.

ⁿ 26^s Slightly revising the Heb.

^o 26⁷ The north probably represents the earth.

^p 26⁹ Slightly revising the Heb., which reads, *he takes firm hold of the face of the throne.*

^q 26¹⁰ *I. e.*, the horizon.

^r 26¹¹ *I. e.*, the roll of his thunder.

^s 26¹² So Gk., Sah., and Eth. The Heb. word means both *disturb* and *be still*.

^t 26¹² Rahab is evidently the Heb. equivalent of the Bab. Tiamat. The reference is to the conflict with Tiamat, or personified chaos, which is recounted in the old Bab. account of the creation (cf. Vol. I, Appendix III).

^u 26¹³ *I. e.*, cleared of clouds. Gk., *The bars of heaven fear him.*

^v 27² Vs. 1 reads, *And Job again took up his parable and said*, but this is evidently a scribal addition modelled after 29¹, for 27¹⁻² is the direct continuation of 26.

^w 27⁶ Lit., *days*. The next vs. (7-11) seem to be misplaced, for they are much more in accord with Zophar's point of view than with Job's (cf. § 18).

^x 27¹² This vs. is the logical sequel of ^s and finds no place in its present context, which, as remarked above, probably belongs to Zophar's speech (§ 18).

THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

§ 18. Zophar: The Pitiable Fate of the Wicked, Job 27⁷⁻¹¹. 13-23

Job 27

[Then Zophar the Naamathite answered:]

⁷Let my enemy be like the wicked,

My adversary like the unrighteous.

⁸For what is the hope of a godless man,

When God requires his soul?^y

⁹Will God give heed to his cry

When trouble comes upon him?

¹⁰Will the Almighty then be his delight,

And if he calls upon God, will he hear him?^z

¹¹I will teach you about the hand of God,

And I will not conceal the way of the Almighty.

¹³This is the wicked man's portion from God,

And what an oppressor^a receives from the Almighty:

¹⁴If his children are many, the sword claims them,

And his descendants are not satisfied with food.

¹⁵The remnant of them shall be buried by death,^b

And their widows shall make no lament.

¹⁶Though he heap up silver like dust

And prepare clothing like the clay,

¹⁷He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on,

And the innocent shall divide the silver.

¹⁸Like a spider's^c is the house that he builds,

Like a booth^d which the vine-keeper makes.

¹⁹He lies down rich, but does so no more;^e

He opens his eyes, and he is not.^f

²⁰Terrors overtake him like floods;

A tempest steals him away in the night.

²¹The east wind lifts him up, and he departs;

It sweeps him out of his place.

²²It smites him without mercy;

He would gladly escape from its power.

²³Men shall clap their hands at him

And hiss him out of his place.

§ 18 In the editorial revision of 24-27 not only was a secondary title added in 27¹, but the original title introducing Zophar's speech, which in the logical order concluded the last cycle, has been omitted. Possibly this was done intentionally, in order that Job might end with an orthodox confession of faith.

^y 27⁸ Revising the Heb. with the aid of the Gk. and Syr. and deleting the phrase *though he get gain*, which makes little sense, destroys the metre of the vs., and is probably a duplicate of the last line. Cf. I.k. 12²⁰.

^z 27¹⁰ Following the Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth., which are strongly supported by the context.

^a 27¹³ Heb., *oppressors*, but the context, ¹⁴, calls for the singular.

^b 27¹⁵ *I. e.*, cut down by pestilence they shall be left where they fall.

^c 27¹⁸ So Syr., Old Lat., Sah., and one version of the Gk. Heb., *moth*.

^d 27¹⁸ *I. e.*, temporary, perishable.

^e 27¹⁹ Following the Gk. and Syr. in interpreting the Heb.

^f 27¹⁹ *I. e.*, probably, not rich, though death may be meant.

JOB

§ 19. Job: To Lose the Consciousness of Fellowship with God Is the Supreme Misfortune, Job 29–30

Job 29 ¹Job again took up his discourse and said:^ε
²Oh, to be as in months of old,
 As in days when God guarded my steps,
³When his lamp shone above my head,
 And I walked by his light through the darkness;
⁴As I was in my prosperous days,^h
 When God protectedⁱ my tent;
⁵When still the Almighty was with me,
 And my children were all about me;^j
⁶When peace and plenty attended me,
 And the rock^k poured me streams of oil!
⁷When I went to the gate of the city,^l
 And took my seat in the open,
⁸The youths, when they saw me, retired,
 And the aged rose up and stood;
⁹The princes refrained from talking,
 And laid their hands on their mouths;
¹⁰The voices of nobles were hushed,
 And their tongues stuck fast to their palates.

¹¹He^m who heard of me called me happy,
 He who saw me bore me witness,
¹²For I saved the poor who cried,ⁿ
 And the orphan with none to help him.
¹³The perishing gave me their blessing,
 And I made the widow's heart sing.
¹⁴I put on the garment of righteousness,
 And justice^o as robe and turban.
¹⁵Eyes I was to the blind,
 Feet I was to the lame,
¹⁶And a father to those who were needy.
 I espoused the cause of the stranger,

Job's
former
pros-
perity

Righteous
and
philan-
thropic
acts

§ 19 With 27 the discussion between Job and his friends ceased; now he is left alone with his own thoughts. In 29 he reviews his happy and honorable past. This retrospect yields him mingled joy and sorrow, but on the whole the sad lyric note predominates, for the joyous background only brings out in clearer relief the woes of the present. By some the section 30²⁻³ is regarded as a disjected member of Bildad's speech, but it is not inappropriate in its present setting, for it heightens the tragic picture of Job in his hour of mental distress, the object of derision even to the offscourings of humanity.

^ε 29¹ Possibly the editor who introduced 28 has added this verse.

^h 29⁴ Lit., *days of my autumn*; *i. e.*, when I was at my best.

ⁱ 29⁴ Following the Gk., Syr., and Syr. in slightly revising the text as the context requires; cf. 1¹⁰.

^j 29⁵ The loss of God's friendship is too painful a theme to be expanded.

^k 29⁶ Gk., Syr., Eth., and Sah. read, *my hills*; *i. e.*, the hills planted with vineyards. This reading may be original.

^l 29⁷ *i. e.*, the place of public meeting.

^m 29¹¹ For was probably introduced by a scribe to connect 10 and 11. Restoring the logical order of the passage makes it superfluous.

ⁿ 29¹² Gk., Syr., Sah., and Eth., *from the oppressor*. Possibly this is original.

^o 29¹⁴ Heb., *my justice*, but VSS. omit *my*.

THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

¹⁷I shattered the jaws of the wicked,
And wrested the prey from his teeth.

Hopes

¹⁸So I thought, 'I shall die in my nest;^p
My days shall be as many as the sand;^q
¹⁹My root is spread out to the waters;
All night the dew lies on my branches;
²⁰My strength is refreshed within me,
And my bow is renewed in my hand.'

Honor
in the
commu-
nity

²¹Men listened to me expectantly,
And in silence awaited my counsel.
²²After my words they spoke not,
And my speech fell as rain-drops upon them.
²³They waited for me as for the rain,
Open-mouthed as for the latter rain.
²⁴I smiled on them, when they had no confidence;
The light of my countenance cheered the sorrowful.
²⁵I chose the way for them, and sat as chief,
I was enthroned as a king in the army.

The
present:
the
derision
of the
lowest
and most
despised
members
of society

30 ¹But now men younger than I deride me,
Whose fathers I refused to set with the dogs of my flock!^r
²The strength of their hands is nothing to me—^s
Men in whom all vigor has perished.
³They are gannet from want and famine;
They gnaw the dry ground^t amid^u waste and desolation.
⁴They pull up the shoots of salt-wort,^v
And the roots of the broom are their food.
⁵They are driven forth from the midst of men,
Who cry after them as after a thief,^w
⁶So that they live in dreadful valleys,
In holes of the earth and rocks.
⁷From among the bushes they cry out;
Under the nettles they are gathered together.^x
⁸They are the children of fools and ignoble men;
They are scourged out of the land.
⁹But they sing of me now in derision.
And my name is a by-word among them.

^p 29¹⁸ Gk., Sah., and Eth., *my youth shall grow old*.

^q 29¹⁸ Gk. and Lat., *like the palm tree*, which may be original, for the palm-tree lives to a very old age and retains its beauty and vigor.

^r 30¹ This vs. has apparently been expanded by a later scribe.

^s 30² Duhm (Hiob 140-141) emends the text so that it reads, *faïls*.

^t 30³ Gk., Sah., and Eth., *They flee to the wilderness*.

^u 30³ Following a revised text.

^v 30⁴ Lit., *salt-wort by the bushes (or shoots)*.

^w 30⁵ I. e., men warn them to depart whenever they appear near settled towns.

^x 30⁷ The VSS. have a variety of renderings: Gk., *live*; Eth., *hide*. There are two Heb. words having the same root; one has the meaning given above, the other would mean *were begotten* (cf. ⁹).

JOB

¹⁰In horror they stand aloof from me,
And do not refrain from spitting at the sight of me.

¹¹For he has loosed my bow-string^y and afflicted,
And they have^z cast off the bridle^a before me.

¹²On my right hand rise the rabble;^b
They cast up against me their deadly ramparts;

¹³They break up my paths;^c
They set forward my calamity;^d
They hurl their darts against me,^e

¹⁴As through a wide breach they come,
Rolling on in the midst of ruin.

¹⁵Terrors are turned upon me;
My honor is driven away^f as the wind,
And my welfare has passed like a cloud.

¹⁶And now my life is poured out within me;
Days of affliction have taken hold of me.

¹⁷The night bores into my bones,^g
And my gnawing pains never cease.

¹⁸With great force my garment clings to me;^h
It binds me about as the collar of my coat.

¹⁹Godⁱ has cast me into the mire,
And I have become like dust and ashes.

²⁰I cry to thee, but thou makest no answer,
I stand up before thee, but thou dost not heed.^j

²¹Thou hast become a merciless tyrant;
With the might of thy hand thou scourgest^k me.

²²Thou liftest me up to ride on the wind,
And dissolvest me in the roaring storm.^l

²³For I know that thou wilt bring me to death,
To the house where all living assemble.

²⁴Yet a falling man stretches forth his hand,
And in his calamity cries for help.^m

²⁵Did I not weep for the one in trouble?

Now
wracked
with pain
and per-
secuted
by God

Yet he
ever
helped
the
afflicted

^y 30¹¹ So Syr. and Targ. Heb., *his cord*; i. e., his support.

^z 30¹¹ Theod., Eth., and Lat., *he has*, but Heb. is probably original.

^a 30¹¹ I. e., all restraint.

^b 30¹² Through an inaccurate scribal repetition of ^{11b} the Heb. adds, *they cast off my feet*; but this makes no sense.

^c 30¹³ So 3 MSS., Theod., Syr., Lat., Targ. Heb., *path*.

^d 30¹³ This seems to be the meaning of the Heb., but the text is doubtful.

^e 30¹³ Revising the Heb. with the aid of the Gk.

^f 30¹⁵ So Gk. Heb., *they drive away*.

^g 30¹⁷ So Gk. Heb. adds, *from upon me*.

^h 30¹⁸ Revising the corrupt Heb. as suggested by Gk., Sah., and Eth. The meaning is that his festering sores have produced this effect.

ⁱ 30¹⁹ Supplying the subject implied in the Heb.

^j 30²⁰ So one MS. and Lat. Heb. omits *not*.

^k 30²¹ So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *persecutest*.

^l 30²² The author apparently draws his figures here from the old Bab. account of Marduk's contest with Tiamat or Chaos, in which he used the winds as his weapons

^m 30²⁴ Slightly revising the Heb.

THIRD CYCLE OF DISCOURSES

Did not my heart deeply grieve for the needy?^a
²⁶I looked for good, but evil came,
I hoped for light, but darkness descended.

§ 20. Job's Oath of Clearance, Job 31

Job 31

Lust

¹A contract have I made with my eyes;
How then could I gaze on^o a virgin?

²And what is God's allotment from above,
The Almighty's bequest from on high?

³Is it not calamity to the unrighteous
And disaster to those who do wrong?

⁴Does he not see my conduct?^p
And number all my steps?

Dishonesty

⁵If I have ever indulged in falsehood,
Or I have been eager to practise deceit,

⁶Then let God weigh me on scales that are just,
And he will acknowledge that I am innocent.

⁷If ever my step has swerved from the way,
Or my heart has followed my own inclination,^q

Or if any spot besmirches my hands,
⁸Then let me sow and another eat,
And let all my produce be rooted up.

Adultery

⁹If I have ever been lured by a woman,
Or lain in wait at my neighbor's door,

¹⁰Then let my wife grind as a slave for another,
And let other men bow down upon her;

¹¹For adultery is a heinous crime,
A crime indeed that calls for judgment,

¹²A fire that eats to the depths of hell,
And it would completely consume all my increase.

Disregard of servants' rights

¹³If I had spurned the cause of my servant,
And that of my maid, when they argued against me;

¹⁴What would I do when God takes vengeance?
And when he accuses me, what would I answer?

¹⁵Did not he who made me create him also,
And the same one fashion us each in the womb?

^a 30^a Or following Duhm in reconstructing the Heb. so as to connect this vs. with ^a :

*Or does he not weep who is in trouble?
Is not the soul of the needy grieved?*

§ 20 Just as the rebukes of his friends have grown into definite accusations, so now Job brings to a climax his protestations of innocence by denying that he is guilty of this or that specific sin which might justly have incurred the divine wrath. In so doing he presents a remarkably lofty standard of personal and social righteousness.

^o 31¹ Lit., *consider attentively*.

^p 31¹ Lit., *ways*.

^q 31⁷ Lit., *walked after my eyes*.

JOB

¹⁸From^r the days of my youth like a father he reared me,
And he was my guide from the time I was born.

¹⁶If I have denied the poor their desire,
Or disappointed the hopes^a of the widow,

Neglect
of the
poor

¹⁷Or if I have eaten my morsel alone,
So that the fatherless has not shared it;

¹⁹If I have seen any naked and perishing,
Or anyone needy with nothing to cover him,

²⁰If the loins of such have not blessed my gifts,
And his body been warmed by a fleece from my sheep;

²¹If against the just I have raised my hands,
Because I saw an ally in the court,

²²Let my shoulder then fall from its blade,
And my arm be wrenched from the socket.

²³For the fear of God restrains me,
And his majesty renders me helpless.

²⁴If I have put my faith in gold,
And have said to fine gold, 'In you I trust!'

Trust in
riches

²⁵If I have rejoiced that my wealth is great,
And because my hand has gained much—

²⁶If e'er I have seen the light^t shining,
Or the moon riding high^u in her glory,^v

Idolatry

²⁷And in secret my heart has been lured,^w
And my hand has kissed my mouth,^x

²⁸This too were a crime fit for judgment,^y
For I should have betrayed^z God on high.

²⁹If I have rejoiced at my enemy's ruin,
Or exulted when evil befell him,

Venge-
fulness

³⁰If I have permitted my mouth to sin
By demanding his life with a curse—

³¹If the men of my household^a have not said,
'Who is not satisfied with his food?'

Lack of
hospi-
tality

³²If ever a stranger has lodged in the street,
Or I have not opened my doors to the traveler—

^r 31¹⁸ Transposing this verse as required by the sequence of thought.

^a 31¹⁶ Lit., *caused the eyes to fail*.

^t 31²⁶ *I. e.*, the sun.

^u 31²⁵ Lit., *walking*.

^v 31²⁶ Lit., *as a glorious one*.

^w 31²⁷ The same verb used in 9.

^x 31²⁷ *I. e.*, I have thrown a kiss, a gesture of worship well known in ancient idolatry.

Worship of the heavenly bodies is often condemned by the prophets.

^y 31²⁸ Cp. 11. The language suggests a parallel between adultery and idolatry, quite in the spirit of the prophets.

^z 31²⁸ Lit., *deceived or failed*.

^a 31³¹ Lit., *tent*.

REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

Hypoc-
risy

³³If like Adam I hid my wrong-doing,
By concealing my guilt in my bosom,
³⁴Because of my fear of the multitude,
And my dread of public contempt,
And kept silent behind closed doors—

Bad
farming

³⁸If^b my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
³⁹If I have eaten its fruits without paying,
And caused its owners to lose their lives,
⁴⁰Let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And stinking weeds instead of barley.

Job's
closing
challenge

²⁵Oh, for someone to hear me!
Behold my defense all signed!⁹
Let now the Almighty answer,
My Adversary write^d the indictment!

³⁶On my shoulder I would bear it,^e
As a crown I would bind it round me;
³⁷I would tell him my every act;
Like a prince I would enter his presence!

REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS REGARDING THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

§ 21. Elihu's Reasons for Speaking, Job 32

Job 32 ¹So these three men ceased answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. ²Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the

^b 31³⁸ Transposing vs. 35-37 to the end, where they clearly belong.

^c 31³⁸ Lit., *Behold my mark!*

^d 31³⁸ So Syr. and Lat. Heb., *wrote*. Possibly a line has dropped out before this, as the two preceding lines of the translation form only one in Heb.

^e 31³⁸ *I, e.*, proudly display it.

Reflections of Later Generations Regarding Suffering.—The cumulative reasons for regarding the Elihu speeches as later additions to the original drama of Job have been suggested in the *Introd.*, p. 33. The reader misses at every point the majestic style of the master poet. Tiresome repetition takes the place of the rapid onward flow of the great poem. These repetitions are so many and marked that some recent writers (*e. g.*, Barton in his *Commentary on Job*, 19-20) have maintained that two originally independent criticisms of the lyric drama of Job have been combined. The one is addressed to Job and is found in 32¹, 6-10, 13-21, 33¹⁻³, 35²⁻⁴, 36²⁻⁵, 10^a, 6, 12, 14, 15, 5^b, 7^a, 15-25, 27^a, 28^b, 32, 37¹, 5^b, 6^a, 7-10, 11-21; the other, addressed to Job's friends, is found in 32^{2a}, 3^a, 17, 11-14, 34²⁻⁴, 25, 27, 35⁵, 14, 34³⁴⁻³⁷. While the hypothesis is not impossible, it implies such a complex disarrangement of the text that it is highly improbable. The duplicates are more easily explained as the repetitions of a verbose writer, exceedingly eager to drive home his doctrines, who addresses in turn Job and his friends, condemning the latter because of their failure to do justice to the orthodox arguments, even more than Job himself. The genuineness of these Elihu speeches has been defended by Budde, Cornill, Briggs, and Genuing, and while their claims have not gained general acceptance, they have served to call attention to the fact that the thought presented in these chapters possesses a larger intrinsic value than its literary form would suggest. In general Elihu expands Eliphaz's argument that suffering has a character-developing value. These speeches represent the later orthodox criticism and thinking regarding the conclusions presented in the lyric drama. The literary style and frequent Aramaisms suggest that they were written during the early part of the Gk. period and came from the same period, if not the same author, as the noble description of wisdom in chap. 28.

§ 21 The awkward repetitions in the prose introduction (1-4), which anticipate the direct statements of Elihu in 6², suggest that possibly it was written by a still later editor or reviser. Although Elihu, as presented in this chapter, is not distinguished for his modesty, he is intensely in earnest. Through his lips the later poet boldly criticises what seem to him to be the dangerous weaknesses in the lyric drama. It is clear that he wrote before the drama had been canonized. At the same time he draws most of his ideas from the greater poet whom he censures.

ELIHU

Buzite of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job, because he had maintained that he was more just than God. ³Also his wrath was aroused against his three friends, because they had found no answer and yet had condemned^a Job. ⁴Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job,^b because they were older than he. ⁵But when Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these men, his wrath was aroused. ⁶So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, spoke up and said,

⁶I am but young in years,
While you are very old,
And so I held back, and feared
To tell you my opinion.
⁷I felt that days should speak,
That the mature^c should teach wisdom.

Elihu's
hesitation

⁸But there is a spirit in men,^d
The Almighty's breath gives them insight.
⁹The aged^e are not always wise,
Nor do elders best discern truth.
¹⁰Therefore I urge you to hear me,
While I, too, state my opinion.

His
deter-
mination
to speak

¹¹I waited^f while you spoke,^g
And listened to your reasoning;
While you carefully chose your words,
¹²I gave to you close heed.
But none brought conviction to Job,
Not one of you refuted his claims.
¹³Say not, 'We have found wisdom;
God must vanquish him, not man;'
¹⁴For his words are not directed against me;
Nor will I give him answers like yours.^h

Because
Job's
friends
have
failed

¹⁵Amazed, they answer no more,
They have not a word to say.
¹⁶Must I wait because they are silent
And stand thus, with no further answer?
¹⁷I too will answer my part;
I too will state my opinion.

Elihu's
convic-
tions
compel
him to
speak

^a 32^a Syr. and certain Gk. MSS. read, *justified*; *i. e.*, by their failure to find fitting answers had virtually conceded the justice of Job's position.

^b 32^a Or *until they had spoken to Job*.

^c 32^b Lit., *multitude of years*; *i. e.*, those who have had the experience of many years.

^d 32^c Sym., *The spirit of God is in man*

^e 32^d So the VSS. Heb., *great*.

^f 32^e Vss. 11-17 are omitted by the Gk. and may be secondary. They really duplicate 15-17. Nichols (AJSL, XXVII, 126 ff.) and Barton regard them as the introduction to the further address to the friends in 34^d.

^g 32^f Possibly this line originally followed 12^a.

^h 32^g *I. e.*, it is not yet necessary to turn the case over to God, for Job still has Elihu to deal with.

REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

- ¹⁸For full of words am I;
 The spirit within compels me.
¹⁹My breast is like wine without vent,
 Like new wine-skins ready to burst.
²⁰I must speak and so find relief,
 I must open my lips and answer.
²¹I would show partiality to none,
 Nor give flattering titles to any man.
²²For of flattery I know nothing,
 Else soon would my Maker remove me.

§ 22. The Value of Pain, Job 33

Calls
 upon
 Job to
 answer
 him if
 he can

Job 33

- ¹So now, Job, hear my speech,
 And listen to all that I say.
²See, I have opened my mouth,
 My tongue has begun to speak.
³My words shall reveal the uprightness of my heart,¹
 And what my lips know they shall speak sincerely.
⁴Then^j answer me, if you can,
 Stand forth, and debate^k with me.
⁶In the sight of God I am like you,
 I, too, was formed out of clay.¹
⁴The spirit of God has made me,
 The Almighty's breath gives me life.
⁷No dread of me need appal you,^m
 And my handⁿ shall not rest on you heavily.
⁸Surely you have spoken in my hearing,
 And I have heard the sound of your words:
⁹I am clean, without transgression;
 I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me.^o
¹⁰See, he finds occasions against me;
 He counts me as his enemy.^p
¹¹He puts my feet in the stocks;
 He keeps watch over all my paths.^q

Job's
 claim
 that God
 is his
 enemy
 unfound-
 ed

§ 22 After rebuking Job and his bold appeal directly to the Almighty, the poet develops as his chief positive contribution Eliphaz's teaching that no mortal can be righteous before God (4¹⁷), and happy is the man whom God corrects (5¹⁷). Like Eliphaz, he also prepares a song of thanksgiving to be sung when once Job truly repents.

¹ 33² Or with Duhm slightly revising the Heb. text so as to read, *My mind inspires words*.

^j 33⁴ Vss. 4, 6 have through a scribal error been transposed.

^k 33⁵ Lit., *set in order* (sc. your words or arguments). For the full idiom, cf. 32¹⁴, where the same verb is translated *directed*.

¹ 33⁶ *I. e.*, I am not God, against whom Job had complained in 31²⁵ that he must plead his cause.

^m 33⁷ In 9²⁴ and 13²⁴ Job had complained that God's terror overpowered him.

ⁿ 33⁷ So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *urgency*.

^o 33⁹ Cf. 9²¹, 10⁷, 13¹⁸, 16¹⁷, 23⁷, 10⁻¹², 31. Elihu, however, heightens Job's assertion.

^p 33¹⁰ Cf. 13²⁴. The Heb. text is slightly corrupt.

^q 33¹¹ Cf. 13²⁷.

¹²How can you say, 'I cry and he does not answer;

God hides himself from men?'^r

¹³Why do you strive against God,
Because he gives you no answer?^s

¹⁴For God has one way of speaking,
Yes, two, but he does not repeat it:

¹⁵In a dream, in a vision of night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,^t
As they slumber upon their beds,

¹⁶Then he opens the ears of men,
And instructs them by terrible warnings,^u

¹⁷To turn men aside from wrong-doing,^v
And to save their bodies from ruin.^w

¹⁸To keep them back from the grave,
And their lives from descending to hell.^x

¹⁹On a bed of pain he is chastened,
And all his bones grow stiff.^y

²⁰He^z utterly loathes all bread,
And abhors the daintiest food.

²¹His flesh is wasted and lean,^a
And all his bones stick out.^b

²²His soul draws near to the grave,
And his life to the angels of death.^c

²³If there be with him an ange.,
An interpreter,^d one of a thousand,
To make known to man what is right,^e

²⁴Then God will be gracious and say:
'Deliver him from the grave;
I have found for his life' a ransom.^f

²⁵His flesh shall be fresh as a child's,
And the days of his youth shall return.

²⁶He prays to God and finds favor

God's
various
ways of
speaking
to men:

By
visions

By pain
and
sickness

Fortunate
is he if
he has
a wise
inter-
preter

^r 33¹² Revising with Duhm by the aid of the Gk. The references are to Job's words in 9¹⁶, 19⁷, 30²⁰, and 13³⁴, 23³⁻⁹, 26¹⁴.

^s 33¹³ Lit., *he answers none of his words*, but a change in the pronominal suffix from *his* to *your* gives the original meaning intended.

^t 33¹⁵ Evidently Elihu has in mind the impressive opening speech of Eliphaz, 4¹²⁻¹³.

^u 33¹⁶ So Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *and seals their instruction*, which is apparently due to a corruption of the text and lacks the usual number of measured beats to complete the metre.

^v 33¹⁷ Following the VSS. in reconstructing the first part of the line.

^w 33¹⁷ Again following the VSS. Heb., *hide pride from man*, but this is exceedingly awkward.

^x 33¹⁸ Revising the Heb., which reads, *passing away by a missile*.

^y 33¹⁹ That the Heb. is corrupt is indicated by the wide variety of versional readings. The rendering given above is based on the Gk. and a revised Heb. text.

^z 33²⁰ Lit., *his life*.

^a 33²¹ Making a slight change in the Heb. as required by the context.

^b 33²¹ The reading of this line is not certain.

^c 33²² Lit., *the destroyers*. The VSS. give various readings.

^d 33²³ Not necessarily an angel. Probably Elihu refers to himself as the wise interpreter and mediator between God and Job.

^e 33²³ Or *his righteousness*; i. e., God's.

^f 33²⁴ Adding *for his life*, which has apparently fallen out. The ransom that saves the man is his recognition that his affliction is sent for his chastisement.

REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

His
song of
thanks-
giving

These
are
God's
ways

And looks on his face with joy,
For he restores to the man his integrity,
²⁷And he sings before men this song:
'I have sinned and perverted the right,
But God has not requited my sin.^a
²⁸He has redeemed my soul from the pit,
That alive I should behold the light.'^b
²⁹See, all these things God does
Twice, yes thrice, with a man,
³⁰To bring back his soul from the pit,
To flood him with the light of life.
³¹Mark well, O Job, and hear me:
Be still, and I will speak.ⁱ
³²If aught you can say, answer me;
Speak, for I wish to clear you.
³³But if not, then you listen to me:
Be silent, while I teach you wisdom.

§ 23. The Justice of the Omnipotent God, Job 34

It is
folly for
Job to
assert
that
he is
innocent

Job 34

¹Moreover Elihu said,^j
²Hear my words, you wise men,
And give ear to me, you who have knowledge.
³For the ear is the tester of words,
As the palate is the taster of food.
⁴Let us choose for us what is right,
Determine by ourselves what is good.
⁵For Job has said, 'I am right,
And God has deprived me of justice;^k
⁶Though right, I am counted a liar;
Though sinless, my wound^l is incurable.'^l
⁷What man is there like Job,
Who drinks up scoffing like water,^m
⁸Who goes in company with evil-doers,
And walks with wicked men?ⁿ
⁹For he says, 'A man has no profit
From winning the favor of God.'^o

^a 33⁷ *I. e.*, through God's forgiveness I was not punished as I deserve.

^b 33⁸ *I. e.*, I shall continue to live in the light. These last two vss. contain the germ of a psalm. Duhm has even suggested that the author of the Elihu speeches also wrote temple songs.

ⁱ 33¹ *I. e.*, if you make no reply, I will continue speaking.

§ 23 Elihu in this chap. turns to Job's friends and apparently addresses the larger class of wise men whom they represent. Like the friends, he figures as the champion of God and seeks by arguments that are not always logical to defend his justice. Like Job in his quieter moods, Elihu feels convinced that justice and love alone explain human life and all the blessings that man enjoys from the hand of his Creator. For Job, however, Elihu has only stern denunciation for his presuming to dictate to the Almighty.

^j 34¹ These introductions may be later additions.

^k 34⁵ Cf. 1³, 27².

^l 34⁶ Heb., *arrow*; *i. e.*, wound made by an arrow.

^m 34⁷ *I. e.*, greedily.

ⁿ 34⁸ Of course this charge is not based on facts, but is gratuitous.

^o 34⁹ Cf. 21¹⁵.

¹⁰So hear me, you men of insight!

Far be it from God to do wrong,
And from the Almighty to err,

¹¹For the work of a man he requites
And rewards a man's every act.

¹²Surely God will not act wickedly;
The Almighty will not pervert justice.

¹³Who placed the earth in his charge?
Who keeps guard^p over the universe?

¹⁴If he should recall his spirit^q
And gather his breath to himself,

¹⁵All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.

¹⁶If you have insight, hear this;
Hearken to the sound of my words:

¹⁷Could one hating justice govern?
Will you condemn the Just and Mighty One,

¹⁸Who says^r to a king, 'You villain!'
To nobles, 'You wicked rascals!'

¹⁹Who shows no favor to princes
And regards not rich more than poor,
For they are all the work of his hands?

²⁰In a moment they die—at midnight;
The rich^s are shaken and pass away,
And the mighty are removed mysteriously.^t

²¹For his eyes are over man's acts;
Each one of his deeds he sees.

²²There is no darkness nor gloom
Where the workers of iniquity may hide.

²³For he appoints no set time for a man^u
To go before God in judgment.

²⁴He breaks in pieces mighty men without investigating
And sets others in their place.

²⁶They are crushed^v as a result of their wickedness;
He strikes them in the sight of others,^w

The om-
nipotent
surely
is just

Injustice
inconsis-
tent with
sovereign
power

In his
omni-
science he
quickly
crushes
the
wicked

^p 34¹³ Revising the Heb., as required by the sense.

^q 34¹⁴ The variant readings show that this obscure vs. is corrupt. In the light of ¹⁵ it is possible with the aid of the VSS., which omit Heb., *his heart*, to restore as above.

^r 34¹⁸ Restoring with the aid of the VSS. The idea is that God is so much more righteous than any human ruler that he can properly call them vile.

^s 34²⁰ Restoring the text, which reads *people*, so as to conform to ¹⁹. A scribe has left out the first part of the word, thinking that it was a repetition of the last two letters of the preceding word.

^t 34²⁰ Lit., *without a hand*.

^u 34²³ With Wright restoring the Heb. as the context demands, cf. ²⁴.

^v 34²⁶ Vs. ²⁵ is clearly a gloss, for it repeats the ideas in ²⁰⁻²¹. It reads:

*Therefore he notes their works
And overturns by night, and they are crushed.*

The final verb is best taken with ²⁶, the metre and logic of which require it, as above.

^w 34²⁶ Lit., *in the place of beholders*.

REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

- ²⁷Because they turned aside from following him
And did not regard any of his ways,
²⁸So that^x they caused the cry of the poor to come to him,
And he heard the cry of the afflicted.
²⁹When he is quiet,^y who then can condemn?
And when he hides his face, who can behold him?
Whether a nation or a man, it is the same,
³⁰That the godless man may not reign,
That he may not ensnare the people.
- ³¹Whenever any man says,
'I have borne chastisement, I will not offend again;
³²What I cannot see do thou teach me;
If I have done wrong, I will do it no more;'
³³Shall he recompense him as you wish?^z But you refuse it?^a
For you must choose, and not I:
Therefore speak what you know.
³⁴Men of understanding will say to me,
Every wise man who hears me,
³⁵Job speaks without any knowledge,
And his words are devoid of wisdom.'
³⁶But now, Job, learn your lesson;
Do not still reply like the witless.^b
³⁷For^c he adds rebellion to his sin;
He claps his hands among us
And multiplies his words against God.

§ 24. The Impassivity of God, Job 35

Job 35 ¹Moreover Elihu said,
²Do you think that it^d is right
(You say, 'I am more righteous than God')^e

^x 34²³⁻³³ These lines are omitted in the earlier Gk. VSS. and the Sah. and may be secondary. The evidence, however, is not conclusive.

^y 34²⁹ So Syr. and Aram. and one Heb. MS.

^z 34³² The text and the meaning of this long sentence are somewhat obscure. The translators of the VSS. evidently had difficulty with it. The application clearly is to Job, and the question is whether or not a man should be allowed to dictate to God the manner of his trial and punishment.

^a 34³³ The obscurity of this line is probably due to the loss of a word or two.

^b 34³⁶ Following the Gk., Old Lat., Sah., and Eth. If this reading is original, it means that Elihu has done his duty of Job. Job must, therefore, bear the consequences of his sins. Heb.:

*Would that Job were tried to the end,
Because of his answering like wicked men.*

If this is original, it may be taken as a continuation of what the wise men say.

^c 34³⁷ Following Heb. Gk. is again quite different. If ³⁶ be read as above, Elihu now turns from Job to the friends; if Heb. is original in both vss., the alleged words of the wise men probably include both ³⁵ and ³⁷.

§ 24 This section well illustrates the impossible extremes to which a dogmatist will resort in order to establish his thesis. Probably without knowing it, the author here makes Elihu deny all that Hosea and Israel's greatest prophets had said regarding God's deep concern regarding the character and acts of each of his children. Here we are introduced to the distant, cold, impassive Deity of theological speculation.

^d 35² Heb. *this*, but pointing forward to vs. 1. These vss. are rather freely rendered, so as to bring out what seems to be the connection between them.

^e 35³ So Gk., Syr., Targ., Lat., and slightly revised (or freely rendered) Heb.

Folly for
finite
man to
criticise
divine
justice

Human
righteous-
ness
profits
only the
one who
does
right; it
does not
affect
God

- ¹To ask^f what advantage you will have?
 ('What shall I gain by not sinning?')
²I myself will answer you
 And your^g companions with you.
³Look at the heavens and see;
 Observe the skies, high above you.
⁴If you have sinned, how does that affect him?
 If many your transgressions, what do you do to him?^h
⁵If you are righteous, what do you give him?
 Or what does he receive from your hand?
⁶Your wickedness may hurt a man like yourself,
 And your righteousness help a mere mortal.ⁱ

- ⁹Men cry out against many oppressors,^j
 Cry for help against the arm of the mighty,
¹⁰But they^k do not say, 'Where is God our^k Maker,
 Giver of songs in the night,
¹¹Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth
 And makes us wiser than the birds of the heavens?'
¹²There they cry, but he does not answer,
 Because of the pride of evil men.
¹³Surely God will not hear an empty cry,
 Neither will the Almighty regard it.
¹⁴How much less when you say you do not see him;
 The cause is before him, and you wait for him!
¹⁵But now, because he has not visited in his anger,
 And does not greatly regard arrogance,
¹⁶Therefore Job opens his mouth in vanity;
 He multiplies words without knowledge.

He hears
not an
empty
cry

§ 25. The Justice of God's Rule Revealed Both in Human History and in the Natural World, Job 36-37

- Job 36** ¹Elihu said further,
²Wait for me a little, and I will show you;
 For I have yet words to say on God's behalf.¹
³I will bring my knowledge from afar^m

Justifica-
tion of
God: his
righteous
rulership

^f 35^g Lit., *That you say.*

^g 35^h Gk., Sah., and Eth. add *three*. As a matter of fact Elihu goes on to reiterate the claims of Job's friends, but this fact does not prevent him from condemning them in general.

^h 35ⁱ Cf. 22²⁻³.

ⁱ 35^j Lit., *a son of man.*

^j 35^k So Theod., Sym., Syr., Lat., and Targ. Heb., *oppressions.*

^k 35^l So Syr. and Aram. Heb. *he, my.*

§ 25 This section contains a *résumé* of Elihu's teachings. The disciplinary meaning of suffering presented in 33 is expanded, and in 37 the author anticipates the still nobler description of Jehovah's majesty and wisdom found in 38-40. The figure of God as the divine Teacher, 36²², is well developed, and the description of his might in 37 attains to lofty heights. A large number of vss. in 36-37 are omitted in the Gk. Nichols and Barton hold that 36²⁵, 27^b, 28^a, 29-32, 37²⁻⁵ a, 11, 12^{a,b}, 13 were originally an independent poem describing a storm, but the evidence is not conclusive.

¹ 36² Lit., *yet words for God.*

^m 36³ *I. e.*, will draw my illustrations from all the universe.

REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

- And ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
⁴For truly my words are not false;
 One perfect in knowledge is with you.
⁵See, God is mighty in strength,
 He despises not the pure in heart.^a
⁶He preserves not the life of the wicked,
 But gives justice to the afflicted.
⁷He withdraws not his eyes from the righteous,
 But he is with kings on the throne:
 He seats them forever, and they are exalted.
⁸And if they are bound in fetters
 And taken in the cords of affliction,
⁹Then he shows them their work
 And their transgressions, how they have behaved proudly.
¹⁰He opens their ears to instruction
 And commands that they turn from iniquity.
¹¹If they give heed and serve him,
 They complete their days in prosperity
 And their years in pleasantness.
¹²If they do not hearken, they perish,^o
 And they expire without knowledge.
¹³For the godless in heart lay up anger;
 They cry not for help when he binds them.
¹⁴They die^p when they are still young,
 And their life ends among the depraved.^q
¹⁵The sufferer God saves through his suffering,
 And opens his ear by adversity.
¹⁶He would have led^r you out of distress,
 To a broad place, where there is no constraint,
 And where your table would be full of fatness.
¹⁷But instead the full fate of the wicked is yours,
 Judgment and justice hold you captive.
- ¹⁸Beware^s of wrath lest you be led away by your sufficiency,^t
 Neither let the greatness of the ransom turn you aside.
¹⁹Will your cry deliver you from distress,^u

He sends
afflictions
to teach
and
discipline
men

^a 36⁵ Following the reconstruction suggested by Nichols; the Heb. is obviously corrupt. Duhm combines the two lines and revises to read, *Behold, God despises the stubborn in heart.*

^o 36¹² Heb. adds *by a missile*, but this makes the line too long and is probably due to a scribal error. Syr., in *Abaddon*. Possibly the original read, *in Sheol*. Cf. 33¹⁸.

^p 36¹⁴ Lit., *their physical life dies*.

^q 36¹⁴ Heb., *holy*; i. e., those consecrated to licentiousness as were many devotees of the ancient Baal cults. Dt. 23¹⁷⁻¹⁸ and many other O.T. passages refer to these temple prostitutes (of both sexes).

^r 36¹⁶ So VSS. Heb., *allured*. This vs. is not found in the early Gk. and Sah. VSS., and may be the work of a later scribe. The Heb. is obscure at best.

^s 36¹⁸ So VSS. Heb. adds, *because*.

^t 36¹⁸ Slightly revising the Heb. The meaning is, in the time of severe affliction do not let your anger and resentment destroy its disciplining effects.

^u 36¹⁹ Following the guidance of the VSS. in revising the Heb.

ELIHU

- Or all the resources of your might?^v
²¹Take heed, regard not iniquity;
 For this^w you have chosen rather than affliction.
²²See, God acts loftily in his power.
 Who is a teacher like him?
²³Who has assigned him his way?
 Who can say, 'Thou hast wrought unrighteousness'?
- ²⁴Remember to magnify his work,
 Concerning which men have sung.
²⁵All men have looked upon it;
 Man sees it from afar.
²⁶See, God is greater than we know;^x
 The number of his years is unsearchable.
²⁷For he draws up^y the drops of water,^z
 Which distil in rain from his vapor,^a
²⁸Which the skies pour down
 And drop upon multitudes of men.
²⁹And who^b can understand the spreading of the clouds,
 The thunderings of his pavilion?
³⁰See, he spreads his light around him
 And covers the tops^c of the mountains.^d
³¹For by these he fills^e the peoples,
 Giving food in abundance.
³²He covers his hands with the lightning,
 And commands it to strike the mark.
³³Its noise tells concerning him,
 The cattle also concerning the coming storm.^f
- 37** ¹Yes, at this my heart trembles
 And is moved out of its place.
²Hark to the roar of his voice,
 And the sound that goes forth from his mouth.
³He sends it throughout the heavens,
 To the ends of the earth his lightning.
⁴In the wake of it roars his^g voice,
 With a voice majestic he thunders,
 And he does not restrain his lightnings,

His
might
shown
in the
storm
and other
phenom-
ena of
nature

^v 36¹⁹ Vs. 30 is omitted in the early Gk. and Sab. texts; it is hopelessly corrupt and probably secondary.

^w 36²¹ Slightly revising the Heb.

^x 36²⁶ Lit., *great and we do not know*.

^y 36²⁷ Or *restrains*.

^z 36²⁷ Or emending, *drops from the sea*.

^a 36²⁷ Lat., *which he pours out as rain*.

^b 36²⁹ So Syr. and Ar.

^c 36³⁰ Emending the text slightly.

^d 36³⁰ Again making an emendation which the text demands.

^e 36³¹ Changing the Heb. slightly. The trad. text reads *judges*.

^f 36³³ The Heb. is clearly corrupt. The rendering is based on a slight emendation of each word.

^g 37⁴ So two Heb. MSS.

REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

Whenever his voice is heard.

⁵Great things^b he does which we cannot comprehend,

⁶For he commands the snow,

‘Fall upon the earth,’

Also the rain and mighty storms.ⁱ

⁷On every man^j he sets a seal,

That all men may know his work.^k

⁸Then the beasts go into coverts,

And remain in their dens.

⁹Out of the chamber comes the storm,

And cold out of the stormy north.^l

¹⁰By the breath of God ice is given;

And the breadth of the waters is congealed.

¹¹He also loads the thick cloud with moisture;^m

He spreads abroad the cloud of his light.

¹²And it is turned round about by his guidance,

That itⁿ may do whatever he commands itⁿ

Upon the face of the habitable world,

¹³Whether it is for judgment^o on his land

Or for mercy that he makes it come.

¹⁴Listen to this, O Job;

Stand still and consider God’s wonders.

¹⁵Do you know how God orders his works^p

And makes the light of his cloud shine?

¹⁶Do you know the balancings of the clouds,

The wonders of the Perfect in Knowledge;—

¹⁷You whose garments are warm

When the earth is still because of the south wind?

¹⁸Can you with him spread out the sky,

Which is strong as a molten mirror?

¹⁹Teach us what we shall say to him;

We cannot think clearly^q because of darkness.

²⁰Shall it be told him that I would speak?

If a man should speak he would be swallowed up.

²¹As it is men cannot look at the light,

Bright shining^r in the skies

Direct applica-
tion to
Job’s
case

^b 37⁵ Heb. inserts at the beginning of the vs., echoing the idea of ‘, *God thunders marvelously with his voice.*

ⁱ 37⁶ A scribe has repetitiously expanded the Heb. The above rendering is that of the Syr. Others would revise to read, *To the showers of rain, ‘Be mighty.’*

^j 37⁷ Again slightly revising the doubtful Heb.

^k 37⁸ Following a slightly different reading of the Heb.

^l 37⁹ Lit., *the scatterers.* The reference is probably to a group of stars on the northern horizon which was popularly believed to be the bringer of cold.

^m 37¹¹ Or, slightly revising the Heb., *hail.*

ⁿ 37¹² Heb., *they, them,* but the context requires the singular.

^o 37¹³ Lit., *a rod.* Heb. inserts another *or*, probably due to scribal repetition.

^p 37¹⁵ So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *enjoins them.*

^q 37¹⁹ Lit., *set in order* (sc. our words or thoughts), as in 33⁵.

^r 37²¹ The word rendered *Bright shining* is of uncertain meaning.

ELIHU

Where the wind passes and clears them.
²²Out of the north comes brightness;
 About God is terrible majesty.
²³The Almighty,—we cannot find him;
 He abounds in power and justice;
 The thoroughly righteous he harms not.^a
²⁴Therefore mortals fear him;
 He regards no wise-minded man.

§ 26. A Later Wise Man: The Divine Wisdom That Rules the Universe Is Incomprehensible, Job 28

Job 28 ¹There is a mine for silver,
 And a place where gold is refined.
²Iron is taken from ore,
 And copper is melted from rock.
³Man puts an end to darkness,^t
 And explores to the furthest bound
 The stones that are buried in darkness.
⁴He breaks a shaft through the dust;
 With no foothold, forgotten, they hang,
 Afar from men^u they swing.^v
⁵From the face of the earth comes bread,
 But beneath it is melted^w by fire.
⁶Its stones abound in sapphires,
 And its dust yields grains of gold.
⁹Man^x lays his hand on the rock,
 By their roots he overturns mountains.
¹⁰He cuts channels through the rocks,
 And his eye sees each precious thing.

Man is
 able to
 find and
 make his
 own all
 the
 treasures
 of the
 earth

^a 37²⁸ So Syr. The text and meaning of the Heb. are uncertain.

§ 26 The editor who added this powerful poem to the Book of Job evidently felt that it was a definite contribution to the discussion of the divine rulership of the world. He accordingly inserted it at the close of the last cycle of speeches. Job in 29-31 entirely ignores it, and it is in fact nowhere referred to in the lyric drama. Its calm philosophical atmosphere is alien to the tense, heated discussions that precede and follow. The author of the poem has expanded the argument of Zophar in 11⁷:

*Can you find out the deep things of God?
 Can you reach the perfection of the Almighty?*

Zophar also discouraged the pursuit of divine wisdom, 11⁸⁻⁹. Job, however, in the lyric drama boldly fares forth to determine the purpose that lies back of the universe and challenges its justice. The poem in 28 was, therefore, inserted as a dignified rebuke to Job's presumption. The aim of the poem itself is constructive. While its conclusion is agnostic, it is a reverent agnosticism. The writer, like the author of the lyric drama, is ready to trust in the goodness and wisdom of the divine plan even though he cannot apprehend it, and he writes in order to inspire others with the same calm faith. Wisdom as here defined is so closely akin to what the Greek philosophers called Reason, or the plan which lies back of nature and the world of things, that it is probable that the poem was not written earlier than the third century n.c., when Hellenic thought was flooding southwestern Asia. Like the *Wisdom of Solomon*, it is one of the few pre-Christian writings in which Greek and Hebrew thoughts mingle.

^t 23³ *I. e.*, by boring into the earth.

^u 28⁴ So Gk., Aquila, Sym., and Eth. Heb., *Away from where men sojourn.*

^v 28⁴ *I. e.*, as they go down into the mine.

^w 28⁵ Lit., *turned.*

^x 28⁹ Transposing 7-9 to their logical position in the chap.

REFLECTIONS OF LATER GENERATIONS

¹¹He keeps the streams from trickling,
And brings to light what is hid.

¹²But where can wisdom be found?
And where is the home of understanding?

¹³The way^y to it no man knows,
It is not found in the land of the living.

⁷That path^z no bird of prey knows,
Nor has the eye of the falcon seen it.

⁸The proud beasts have not trodden it,
Nor has the fierce lion passed by it.

¹⁴The deep^a says, 'It is not in me';
The sea says, 'It is not with me.'

¹⁵It cannot be purchased with gold,
Nor will silver be taken in payment.

¹⁶Not in Ophir gold can one value it,
Nor in precious onyx or sapphire.

¹⁷Gold and glass cannot equal it,
Jewels of gold are no exchange for it.

¹⁸Crystal and coral are no match for it;^b
More precious than rubies is Wisdom.

¹⁹The topaz of Ethiopia is not equal to it,
Nor can it be valued in pure gold.

²⁰But Wisdom—from whence does it come?
Understanding—where is its home?

²¹It is hid from the eyes of all living,
Concealed from the birds of the air.

²²Destruction^c and Death declare:
'We have heard but a rumor about it.'

²³God perceives^d the way to it,
And he alone knows its home;

²⁴For he looks to the ends of the earth,
Seeing everything under the heavens,^e

²⁵He who fixed the force^f of the wind,
And by measure allotted the waters.

²⁶When he made a law for the rain,
And a path for the thunder-bolts,^g

²⁷Then he saw Wisdom and measured it,

^r 28¹² So Gk., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *price*; but cf. 20, 21.

^s 28⁷⁻⁸ These vs. logically follow 12. This is the order assumed in 21. Vs. 9 is also the logical sequel of 6.

^a 28¹⁴⁻¹⁹ These vs. are lacking in the Gk. and Sah. texts. Vs. 20 follows logically after 12, so that it is possible that 14-19 were not found in the original version of the poem.

^b 28¹⁸ Lit., *will not be remembered*.

^c 28²² Lit., *Abaddon*, the place where the wicked are punished.

^d 28²² Gk., Sah., Eth., and five Heb. MSS. read, *establishes*.

^e 28²⁴ So Lat. and Ar. Heb., *Seeing under the whole heavens*.

^f 28²⁵ Lit., *made a weight*. So VSS. Heb., *To make, etc.*

^g 28²⁶ Taken from 38²⁶.

But no
man can
find
wisdom
or make
it his
own

God
alone has
possessed
it from
the
creation

A LATER WISE MAN

He perfected and tested it.
28 And to man he said, 'Behold!
To revere the Lord is wisdom,
To avoid evil, understanding.'^h

THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

§ 27. The Lord: Finite Man Cannot Grasp and Therefore Cannot Justly
Criticise the Infinite Plan of the Universe, Job 38-42^g

Job 38 1 Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind:

2 Who is this that obscures my plan

By words devoid of knowledge?

3 Now gird up your loins like a warrior;^a

Let me ask, and you answer me!

4 Where were you when I founded the earth?

You have knowledge and insight,^b so tell me.

5 You must know!^c Who determined its measures?

Or who measured it off with a line?

6 On what were its pedestals^d placed?

Or who laid its corner-stone,

7 When the morning stars all sang together,

And the sons of God shouted for joy?^e

8 Who shut up the sea with doors,

When it broke forth fresh from the womb;

9 When I made the clouds its garments,

And thick mists its swaddling-band,^f

10 When I appointed its boundaries,

And set up its barriers and doors,^g

God's
character
as re-
vealed
in the
mighty
works of
creation
con-
trasted
with
that of
finite
man

As ruler
of nature

^h 28²⁹ Possibly this vs. is the addition of a later scribe who felt that a moral was needed to conclude the chapter.

§ 27 As has been noted in the *Introd.*, p. 33, 38 ff. is the original sequel to 31. Here Job's intense desire is justified, and God himself speaks to him face to face, not to answer Job's individual questions, but to reveal to his startled eyes the infinite wisdom and majesty of him who rules the universe. The long and labored description of the behemoth or hippopotamus and the leviathan or crocodile in 40¹⁻²-41³⁴ is generally agreed by scholars to be a later addition to the drama. The author of this section had evidently been so impressed by the size and irresistible might of these huge beasts, which he regarded as the chief of God's works (40¹⁵, 41¹⁴), that he felt impelled to describe them. Logically the description belongs after 30²⁶. By means of these powerful pictures of God, as revealed in the creation and rulership of the world, the author makes clear how impossible it is for man with all his limitations to fathom the mysteries of the universe and therefore to pass just judgment upon his providences. At the same time these speeches reveal the infinite wisdom and suggest the benign plan that lie back of the universe.

^a 38³ Or *hero*. So Syr., Targ., and one Heb. MS. Trad. Heb., *a man*.

^b 38⁴ Lit., *know understanding*; i. e., know as the result of clear insight.

^c 38⁵ These words are, of course, ironical.

^d 38⁶ Lit., *sockets*, in which the pillars that hold up the earth are set.

^e 38⁷ In celebrating the laying of the corner-stone as did the old Babylonians and Hebrews in connection with the building of their temples, cf. *Zech.* 4⁷. The figure of stars and angels is evidently taken from the Bab. account of creation.

^f 38⁹ The likening of the new-born earth to a new-born babe is quite in keeping with the matchless art of the poet.

^g 38¹⁰ Here again the poet draws his figures from the old Bab. account of Marduk's conquest of Chaos:

*One half of her he established,
He roofed over the heavens,
A bolt he fixed,
A watchman he set,
Not to let out his waters he commanded.*

THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

¹¹Saying, 'Thus far, but no farther;
Here shall your proud waves cease'^h
¹²Have you ever commanded the morning,
Or shown the dawn its place,
¹³To take hold of the skirts of the earth,ⁱ
That the wicked might be shaken out of it?
¹⁴It is changed as clay under the seal,
And the world stands forth^j as a garment;
¹⁵The wicked are shorn of their light,^k
And the upraised arm is broken.

¹⁶Have you entered the springs of the sea,
Or walked in the depths of the ocean?
¹⁷Have the gates of death been unveiled to you?
Have you seen the guardians^l of Hades?
¹⁸Have you grasped the breadth of the earth?
If you know all this,^m declare it.
¹⁹Where is the dwelling of light,
And where the abode of darkness?
²⁰Can you take it to its border,
And lead it backⁿ to its home?
²¹You know, for you were born then,
And your years are so great in number!

²²Have you entered the storehouse of snow,
Have you looked on the guardian^o of hail,
²³Which I have kept for the time of distress,
For the day of assault and battle?
²⁴In what way are the clouds^p divided
That scatter the showers^q on earth?
²⁵Who has cleft for the torrents^r a channel,
Or a path for the flash of the lightning,^s
²⁶Sending rain on a desolate land,
On the uninhabited wilderness,
²⁷To slake waste and desolation,
To clothe the dry land^t with verdure?

^h 38¹⁰ Slightly correcting the Heb. Gk., Sah., and Eth., *the pride of the waves be broken*.

ⁱ 38¹¹ *I. e.*, draw off the coverlet of darkness, revealing the wicked and their deeds.

^j 38¹⁴ *I. e.*, the light of dawn makes objects on the earth stand out as though stamped into a

seal.
^k 38¹⁵ *I. e.*, by the appearance of the light of day.

^l 38¹⁷ So Gk. Heb. repeats *gates*. Gk. instead of *have you seen* has *have frightened you*.

^m 38¹⁸ So Heb. Gk., *how great it is*.

ⁿ 38²⁰ Following Hoffmann in correcting the text as demanded by the context. Heb., *discern the paths*.

^o 38²² With Duhm punctuating the Heb. so as to avoid the repetition of the word *treasuries*.

^p 38²⁴ Through the influence of ¹⁹ the Heb. has *light* for the very similar word *cloud*, which is required by the context.

^q 38²⁴ With Duhm slightly correcting the Heb., which reads *east wind*. Gk., *thick smoke*.

^r 38²⁵ Thought of as coming through an opening in the vault of heaven.

^s 38²⁵ Lit., *lightning of the thunder*.

^t 38²⁷ With Wright transforming two Heb. consonants.

THE LORD

²⁸Has the rain a father?

Who gave birth to the dew-drops?

²⁹Out of whose womb came the ice?

And who gave birth to the hoar-frost,

Ice and
frost

³⁰So the waters are frozen like stone,

And the face of the deep is hidden?^u

³¹Can you bind the group of the Pleiades,^v

Or loose the bands of Orion?

Stars

³²Can you lead forth the stars^w in their season,

Or guide the Bear with her young?^x

³³Do you know the laws of the heavens?^y

Can you set up their rule on the earth?

³⁴Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,

That abundance of water may answer^z you?

Clouds

³⁵Can you send on their missions the lightnings;

To you do they say, 'Here we are'?

³⁶Who has put in the dark clouds^a their wisdom,

Or given the cloud-rack^b perception?

³⁷Who spreads out^c the clouds in wisdom?

Or who pours out the bottles of heaven,

³⁸When the dust runs into a mass,

And the clods stick firmly together?^d

³⁹Can you hunt the prey for the lioness,

Or fill the mouths of her cubs,

⁴⁰When they couch in their dens together,

Or lie in wait in the thicket?

As
Creator
and
Ruler of
animal
creatures:
Lions

⁴¹Who provides at evening^e her prey,

When her young ones cry to God,

And wander in search of^f food?

39 ¹Do you know the birth-times of the goats,^g

Or direct the calving of the hinds?

Wild
goats

²Do you number the months they fulfil,

Or know the time of their bearing?

^u 38³⁰ Transposing the verbs in the vs.

^v 38³¹ Or the *chain of Canis Major*. The exact meaning of the Heb. is not clear.

^w 38³² Doubtful. Possibly the signs of the zodiac.

^x 38³² Popular astrology asserted the influence of the stars upon human events.

^y 38³³ Or, revising the Heb., *Do you cause the heavens to know laws?* The reference, however, is probably to the popular belief in the influence of the stars on human affairs.

^a 38³⁴ So Gk., Lat., Sah., and Eth. Heb., *cover*.

^b 38³⁵ The meaning of the Heb. is uncertain. In Ps. 51⁶ it is translated *inward parts*.

^c 38³⁵ Again the Heb. is doubtful; possibly it means the northern lights or a comet.

^d 38³⁷ Heb., *numbers*. The emendation followed above involves only a slight correction in the Heb. and gives good sense.

^e 38³⁸ *I. e.*, the powdered dust becomes a mass of clods as the rain descends upon it.

^f 38⁴⁰ With Wright pointing the Heb. so as to read as above, and not, as currently translated, *for the raven*.

^g 38⁴¹ So the Gk. Heb., *for the lack of*.

^h 39¹ Dhnm reconstructs the Heb. to read, *Do you teach the wild-goats heat?* Possibly this is the original, for the present line is repeated in ^{2b}.

THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

³They bow and bring forth their young,
They are quickly over their birth-pangs.
⁴Their young grow strong in the open,
They go forth and return no more.

Wild ass

⁵Who sent out free the wild ass?
Who loosed the bonds of the swift ass,
⁶Whose home I have made the wilderness,
The salt land his dwelling-place?
⁷He scorns the din of the city,
He hears not the shouts of the driver;
⁸He seeks^b the mountains for his pasture,
After every green thing he searches.

Wild ox

⁹Will the wild ox be willing to serve you
Or spend the night by your crib?
¹⁰Can you bind his neckⁱ with thongs?
Or will he plow the furrows after you?
¹¹Will you trust him, his strength being great,
Or leave him to do your work?
¹²Are you sure that he will return
And gather your seed on your threshing-floor?^j

Ostrich

¹³The wings^k of the ostrich wave proudly,^l
But are her pinions and feathers kindly?^m
¹⁴For she leaves her eggs on the earth
And warms them in the dust,
¹⁵And forgets that the foot may crush them,
Or that the wild beast may trample them.
¹⁶She hardens herself against her young as if they were not hers.ⁿ
Though her labor is in vain, she has no fears.^o
¹⁷When she lifts herself up high,^p
She scorns the horse and his rider.

War-
horse

¹⁹Do you give the war horse his might,
Clothe his neck with the quivering mane?^q

^b 39⁸ So Theod., Targ., Lat., Eth., and a slightly revised Heb. text.

ⁱ 39¹⁰ So the VSS. Heb. repeats *wild oxen*.

^j 39¹² Revising the order of the Heb., as the sense and metre demand.

^k 39¹³⁻¹⁵ These vs. are lacking in the Gk. and may be later additions.

^l 39¹³ Correcting the Heb., as the context requires. Cf. Lam. 4³, *Cruel like the ostrich in the wilderness*.

^m 39¹⁴ Possibly this word is from an Aram. root. A slight change in the reading gives the meaning *lacking*, which may be original, for it fits the context excellently.

ⁿ 39¹⁶ As a matter of fact, the ostrich is devoted to its young.

^o 39¹⁶ Vs. 17 may be secondary, for it speaks of God in the third person and interrupts the logical connection with 14. It is also lacking in the Gk. It reads:

*Because God has deprived her of wisdom,
Neither has he imparted to her understanding.*

^p 39¹⁷ A slight change in the Heb. gives the reading, *When the archers come*.

^q 39¹⁹ The meaning of the word rendered *quivering mane* is not certain.

THE LORD

- ²⁰Do you make him leap like a locust?
 His majestic snorting strikes terror,
²¹He paws^r in the valley, rejoicing;
 In strength he goes forth to the fray,
²²He mocks at fear, undismayed,
 He turns not back from the sword.
²³The quiver rattles upon him,
 The spear and the javelin flash.
²⁴He devours the ground with fierce rage,
 Halting not at the blast of the trumpet.
²⁵When the bugle sounds, he neighs,
 As he scents the fray from afar,
 The din of commands and the battle cry.

²⁶Does the hawk soar because of your wisdom,
 And stretch her wings to the south wind?
²⁷Does the eagle^s mount up at your bidding,
 And build her nest on high?
²⁸On the cliff she dwells, making her home,
 On the peak of the cliff and the stronghold.
²⁹From there she spies out her prey;
 From afar her eyes behold it.
³⁰Her young ones also suck blood,
 And where the slain are, there is she.^t

Hawk

And eagle

^r 39²¹ So VSS. Heb., *they paw*.

^s 39²⁷ Or *vulture*.

^t 39³⁰ Cf. Lk. 17³⁷. Here should follow, logically, the secondary passage concerning the hippopotamus (behemoth) and crocodile (leviathan), which appears in Heb. as 40¹³⁻⁴¹ (cf. introd. note to this section). With a number of necessary emendations of the Heb. and a rather free rendering in several places it reads:

40¹⁵ See *behemoth*, which I made with you:

Grass he eats like an ox.

¹⁶ See, his might is in his loins
 And his strength in his belly muscles.

¹⁷ He bends his tail like a cedar;

The sinews of his thighs are knit together

¹⁸ His bones are tubes of bronze;

His limbs are like bars of iron.

¹⁹ The first of God's ways is he,—

Let his Maker bring near his sword!

²⁰ For the mountains provide for him produce,

And the beasts of the field all play there.

²¹ Beneath the lotus trees lies he,

Concealed by the reeds and the swamp.

²² For his shade the lotus trees screen him;

The poplars of the brook surround him.

²³ Though a river o'erflow, undismayed is he;

Calm, though Jordan surge up to his mouth.

²⁴ In his eyes there is none that can take him

Or pierce his nose by a trap.

41 ¹ Can you draw out leviathan with a hook

And press down his tongue with a line?

² Can you put a cord in his nose

And pierce his jaw with a hook?

³ Will he make to you many entreaties

And speak to you tender words?

⁴ Will he make a contract with you,

That you shall take him for a servant forever?

⁵ Will you play with him as with a bird

THE VOICE OUT OF THE STORM

40 ²Will^a the fault-finder strive with Almighty?
He who argues with God, let him answer.

³Then Job answered the Lord:
⁴How small I am! What can I answer?
I lay my hand on my mouth.
⁵I spoke once, but will do so no more;
Yes, twice, but will go no further.

Job's
submis-
sion

*And bind him for your maidens?
⁶Will the fishermen's companies trade for him
 And divide him among the merchants?
⁷Can you fill his skin with harpoons
 And his head with fishing spears?
⁸Lay your hand upon him!
 Remember the battle; repeat it not!
⁹His assailant's hope is false;
 At the sight of him he is o'erwhelmed.
¹⁰Is he not cruel? Who will rouse him?
 And who is he that can stand before him?
¹¹Who has opposed him successfully?
 Beneath the whole heavens, who is he?
¹²I will not fail to speak of his limbs,
 Of his might and his strong constitution.
¹³Who has stripped off his outer garment?
 Who can come within his double armor?
¹⁴Who has opened the doors of his face?
 Round about his teeth is terror,
¹⁵Channels of shields guard his back,
 Shut up, a seal tightly pressed,
¹⁶One closely joined to the other
 So that not a breath comes in between them,
¹⁷Each holding fast to its neighbor,
 Closely united, inseparable.
¹⁸Light flashes forth when he sneezes.
 Like the eyelids of Dawn are his eyes.
¹⁹Out of his mouth issue torches;
 Sparks of fire, as it were, escape.
²⁰From his nostrils comes forth smoke,
 As from a pot blown upon and boiling.
²¹His breath sets coals afire,
 And a flame comes out of his mouth.
²²In his neck lodges strength.
 Consternation dances before him.
²³The folds of his flesh hold together;
 They are solid upon him, immovable.
²⁴His heart is solid as a rock,
 Solid as the nether millstone.
²⁵When he rises, the mighty are horrified,
 Beside themselves with terror.
²⁶The sword will not stick though it reach him;
 No more will the spear, dart, or javelin.
²⁷Iron he regards as straw
 And bronze as rotten wood.
²⁸The arrow cannot put him to flight;
 For him slingstones are turned into stubble.
²⁹A club is to him like a reed,
 And he laughs at the shaking of the javelin.
³⁰His belly scales are sharp potsherds;
 He spreads a threshing-brag on the mud.
³¹He makes the depths boil like a cauldron;
 The sea he sets boiling like perfume.
³²Behind him he leaves a bright pathway;
 One would think that the deep had grown hoary!
³³There is nothing on earth that is like him.
 Made as he is without fear.
³⁴All that is high he sees;
 He is king o'er all the proud.*

^a 40² Before this vs. Heb. inserts, ¹And Jehovah answered Job and said. This can hardly be original, for vs. ² is not the beginning but the conclusion of Jehovah's reply.

THE LORD

- ⁶Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind:
⁷Now gird up your loins like a warrior;
Let me ask, and you answer me!^v
⁸Will you set aside my judgment,
And condemn me, that you may be justified?
⁹Or have you an arm like God,
With a voice like his can you thunder?
¹⁰Deck yourself with pride and dignity,
Clothe yourself with glory and splendor,
¹¹Pour forth the floods of your anger,
And abase all those who are proud.
¹²Tread down^w in their tracks the wicked,
¹³Bury them all in the dust,
Shut them up in the hidden place;
¹⁴Then will I sing your praise,
Because your right hand can save you!^x

Final
words of
Jehovah
to Job

- 42 ¹Then Job answered the Lord:
²I know that thou canst do all things,
And that nothing with thee is impossible.
³I spoke, therefore, without sense,
Of wonders beyond my knowledge.^y
⁵I had heard of thee but by hearsay,
But now my eye has seen thee;
⁶Therefore I loathe my words,^z
And repent in dust and ashes.

Job's
utter
humilia-
tion

EPILOGUE

§ 28. The Reward of Job's Fidelity, Job 42¹⁻⁷

[Then Jehovah answered Job out of the storm: See, you have spoken words of truth and have been found blameless in my sight. There is none like you

^v 40⁷ These two vs. repeat 38¹⁻². In view of this repetition, the insertion of 40¹⁵⁻⁴¹, the brevity of Job's first reply, and the strangeness of his making two such replies, it may be that 40¹⁵⁻⁴¹ should immediately follow vs. 2, that vs. 3⁵ should precede 42², and that 40⁶⁻⁷ and 42¹ should be regarded as editorial insertions necessitated by the rearrangement of the material. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the present order and the repetition of 38¹⁻² in 40⁶⁻⁷ are original.

^w 40¹² Omitting 42³ as a mere repetition of 11⁵.

^x 40¹⁴ For 40¹⁵⁻⁴¹, see note on 33¹⁰.

^y 42³ Before these two lines Heb. inserts a line (or defective couplet) repeating 38² almost verbatim, and between 3 and 5 is inserted vs. 4, which reads:

*Hear, prithe, and I will speak;
Let me ask, and you answer me.*

This is obviously based upon 38² (= 40⁷). If rightly included among the words of Job, these lines can be explained only as a meditative appropriation and application to himself of what Jehovah has said, or (more fancifully) as momentary interruptions by the last distant rumblings of the thunder-storm in which Jehovah had spoken (cf. R. G. Moulton: *The Modern Reader's Bible*, in loc.). Modern critics are inclined to regard them as glosses.

^z 42⁶ The object of the verb is omitted by the Heb., probably through a scribal error.

§ 28 Evidently in the original prose story, to which this concluding section belongs, Jehovah's words to Job were very different from those found in the lyric poem (38¹⁻⁴⁰). The passage printed above in brackets attempts with the aid of the context to supply these words and thus to restore the general outlines of the original story. By reading 1-2 with the passage in brackets following 2³, and continuing immediately with this section, a clear idea of the probable contents of the folk-tale may be obtained.

EPILOGUE

on the earth, for you are a perfect and upright man who fears me and turns away from evil, and you have remained steadfast in your piety, although without cause you have been sorely afflicted.]

Job 42 ⁷Now after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'My wrath is kindled against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has. ⁸Now, therefore, take seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept him, in order that I may not deal with you according to your folly, for you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job has.' ⁹So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the Lord commanded them. And the Lord accepted Job.

¹⁰Moreover the Lord made Job great,^a when he prayed for his friends, and gave him twice as much as he had before. ¹¹Then his brothers and all his sisters and all who had known him before came and ate and drank^b with him in his house. And they mourned with him and comforted him for all the misfortunes that the Lord had brought upon him. Each man also gave him a piece of money.^c ¹²So the Lord blessed Job's latter end more than his beginning, and he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand female asses. ¹³He also had seven sons and three daughters; ¹⁴the first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah, and the third Keran-Happuch.^d ¹⁵In all the land no women were found so fair as the daughters of Job. And their father gave them an inheritance together with their brothers.^e ¹⁶After this Job lived a hundred and forty years^f and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. ¹⁷Then Job died, old and satisfied with living.^g

^a 42¹⁰ Heb., *turned the captivity of Job*. This is an idiom that reveals the influence of the exile and was probably later substituted for the reading of the VSS., which has been followed above.

^b 42¹¹ So Gk. Heb. adds *bread*, and leaves out *and drank*.

^c 42¹¹ Lit., *Kesitah*, cf. Gen. 32¹⁹. The exact value is not known.

^d 42¹⁴ *Jemimah* probably means *dove*; *Keziah* means *cassia*; and *Keran-Happuch*, *horn of antimony*—antimony being used by Oriental women to add to their beauty. These names were clearly intended to suggest the surpassing beauty of Job's daughters.

^e 42¹⁵ Ordinarily daughters inherited property only when there were no sons. Cf. Num. 27¹⁻¹¹. ^f 42¹⁶ Gk., 170 years; in all 240 years. This suggests that in the original story Job, like the antediluvians, was represented as living far back near the beginning of human history.

^g 42¹⁷ Lit., *satisfied with days*. It is a phrase used elsewhere in the O.T. by the priestly writers; cf. Gen. 25⁸, 35²⁸.

Vindication of Job and condemnation of his friends

Reward of his steadfastness and piety

APPENDIX

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