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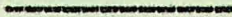
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THE THEOLOGY OF THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON



A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Old Testament Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology



by

Walter Emil Rast

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Approved by: Alfred von Rohr Sauer
Advisor

Walter E. Rast
Reader

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The body of Jewish literature which we have come to include under the term Apocrypha, though often overlooked, can serve to greatly expand the range of reference with which we confront the biblical books of both the canonical Testaments.

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Yet, this is ironic when viewed in the total perspective of the Church's history. For, one is surprised to find, particularly as far as The Wisdom of Solomon is concerned, that it has often played no small part indeed in the Church's life and thought, and that its inspiration, though not ultimately ap-

The term Apocrypha includes books with a wide range of religious value, and it is not fair to compare some of them with others. The Wisdom of Solomon serves as a good example of this. By the term Apocrypha many think of pseudographic writings, and thus the reproach that has frequently been heaped upon them. For a brief summary of the historical attitude toward the Apocryphal books, see Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Story of the Apocrypha* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937). Also Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Apocryphal Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The body of Jewish literature which we have come to include under the term Apocrypha, though often overlooked, can serve to greatly expand the frame of reference with which we confront the Biblical books of both the canonical Testaments. In the course of time a kaleidoscopic history has been forced upon this amalgam of books--ranging from rather confident acceptance to vigorous vilification. It is to be doubted whether the term Apocrypha itself has always proved to be a truly just superscription to write above these books. This is so as far as that which the term has often conveyed is concerned, for it has in recent years, at least, illicited an attitude of acrimony, rather than sympathy toward this group of writings.¹ Yet, this is ironic when viewed in the total perspective of the Church's history. For, one is surprised to find, particularly as far as The Wisdom of Solomon is concerned, that it has often played no small part indeed in the Church's life and thought, and that its inspiration, though not ultimately ap-

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proved, at least was up for question at points along the way.²

Yet, it must be admitted, that in dealing with *The Wisdom of Solomon*, we are dealing with the queen of apocryphal writings, and that, in its own way, it has a truly elevated position next to the canonical books, and can well be used with profit in being read next to them. Its importance lies, first of all, in the area of its charm, which evinces a spontaneous response of appreciation from those who taste the comparatively fine flavor of its Greek and perceive its lively and moving nuances.³ But, even more so, in the area of content, it ranges itself together with other works that come to make up Israel's sapiential writings, a collection of works which, in contrast to the prophetic literature, has an importance all its own. Again, the theological questions which it poses are of no mean import, and the answers it gives to them are such as demand the deepest concern. In many cases, as we shall see, its theological concern takes us into pathways that we feel we have not heretofore trodden, and we perceive at once that we are being confronted by an enlargement of that to which we have become accustomed on former paths. Finally, historically, *The Wisdom*

²William J. Deane, *The Book of Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), pp. 26, 35ff. Deane mentions the significant fact that *Wisdom* 18:14-16 was long applied by the Church to the Incarnation, and was even incorporated into her offices for Christmas and Epiphany.

³For a rather complete discussion of our writer's use of Greek, see Samuel Holmes, *The Wisdom of Solomon, in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphs of the Old Testament*, edited by R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 521ff.

of Solomon is of immeasurable importance because it propels us into the wide area of Alexandrine Judaism, which was later to find fuller expression in Philo Judaeus, and even later in the Christian era among Origen and Clement, and the Alexandrine school of exegesis in general. It is symptomatic of that great merger in which religious Judaism comes into contact with speculative Hellenism.⁴ It forces upon us the fascinating question indeed: What happened to this comparatively isolated and national enclave of Jews when the storm of Hellenism hit them like a thunderous blast? To attempt to answer this question is to be thrown into one of the most interesting periods of Jewish history.

We are justified in supposing that for a Jew, living in Egypt and yet preserving the foundation of his religious heritage, this problem was poignant indeed. And, at the risk of oversimplification, our writer's personal confrontation with Hellenism would seem to be his chief problem, and the problem at the bottom of our own quest into The Wisdom of Solomon. As an outgrowth of this problem, it would seem that the question underlying our concern with The Book of Wisdom would be: How does this writing compare theologically with those which hold a safe place in the canon? Doubtless, this is not the

⁴For the theological issues involved in this synthesis see Deane, *op. cit.*, pp. 1ff. For the philosophical issues consult Duncan Black MacDonald, The Hebrew Philosophical Genius (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936), pp. 96ff.

first time this question has been raised. On the contrary, it would seem to be the perennial question raised over the entire collection of Apocrypha as the Church of Christ has attempted to adjudge their proper status. Yet, we propose to ask it again, and this on the basis of its doctrines of God and Man, of its Way of Salvation, and finally of its development of the concept of Wisdom. We propose, in addition, to make our own judgement concerning the Book of Wisdom by positing this query as a criterion: Does The Book of Wisdom, as we have found it, present itself as (a) persisting in, (b) deflecting from, or (c) supplementing the general stream of thought in the canonical books concerning God, Man, Soteriology, and Wisdom. It is realized, of course, that there are divergences within the canonical books themselves, prompted by the varying vantage points from which different persons are writing. For the revelation of God in Old Testament history is progressive in the sense that it is pushing always forward towards its telos, when full revelation is to become manifest in the face of the Christ, and that, at points along the way, not all has been manifested which is more and more to come clear. Yet, we are safe in saying that there is such a thing as an Old Testament concept of God that holds in general, and similarly for man, salvation, and wisdom, although it is to be recognized that the problems involved in the latter are more complex than the other three. And these ideas, though developed more fully at various points because of a furtherance of God's revelatory action, are yet implicit throughout, and thus contin-

uous and unbroken throughout. Our problem poses the question of the extent to which the Book of Wisdom can be said to be found in this stream of implicit continuity. To answer this question, it would seem, would be to come a long way indeed toward understanding the point at which canonical and so-called apocryphal books are to be either identified with each other, or differentiated.

It is with certain inevitable limitations that the following study is undertaken. These should be noted here as adding to the necessary pre-suppositions with which the study is intended to unfold. The first has to do with the long-debated question of the authorship of Wisdom. The view has long been discarded that Solomon himself could have been the author. On the other hand, a number of noteworthy possibilities have been suggested, but the problem still remains as insoluble as the authorship of the New Testament Book of Hebrews.⁵ The largest controversy, however, has been waged over the question as to whether the book can truly be regarded as a composite whole. Arguments have ranged in favor of both dual and triple authorship.

It would provide somewhat of a peril to our study were the case of duplex or triplex authorship substantiated. As a matter

⁵Luther's view that it was Philo achieved some following, but has been effectively disposed of. Deane, *op. cit.*, p. 33, and J. A. F. Gregg, The Wisdom of Solomon, in The Cambridge Bible For Schools and Colleges, A. F. Kirkpatrick, general editor (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), p. xx.

of fact, we would be quite unwarranted in drawing conclusions which will depend, to a large extent, on its being the work of a single author. However, the opinion of many scholars recently has been to uphold the unity of the book.⁶ And, while anyone who confronts this masterpiece in the Greek is somewhat taken aback at the divergence between chapters 1-9 and 10-29, and even within the first section, the Wisdom chapters of 6-9, we still have come to the conclusion that the book can be viewed as a single whole. And this, because with Deane we feel that the basic unity must be sought not so much in the area of comparative vocabulary and style, as within that of content.⁷ For there is an underlying continuity running through the book, which would readily seem to justify its integrity, and, at the same time, allow us to proceed with the theology as we are intending to do.

Again, the problem of dating the book is important for the background of our study.⁸ The range of possible dates has extended from 250 B.C. to 40 A.D., and this on the following basis. The terminus a quo is the Septuagint Version

⁶Cf. Robert Pfeiffer, A History of New Testament Times (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1949), p. 325. "In conclusion, no decisive arguments have been presented to prove that Wisdom could not have been written by a single author."

⁷Deane, op. cit., p. 34. See also Holmes, op. cit., pp. 521ff. for an enlightening discussion of the vocabulary of Wisdom.

⁸Thorough discussions of the problem of dating this work are found in Pfeiffer, op. cit., pp. 326ff., and Holmes, op. cit., pp. 520ff.

of the Old Testament which is quite manifestly pre-supposed by the writer.⁹ The terminus ad quem is the New Testament itself, where striking allusions to The Book of Wisdom must be admitted.¹⁰ By the time of the New Testament, we can safely say it was in popular use. And allowing some time for it to reach this stage would point to its having been written conceivably not much later than the beginning of the Christian Era. This is substantiated by the fact that our writer seems to have had no direct acquaintance with Philo, which is quite unconceivable had he been living at this time.¹¹ It would seem to be a rather conservative estimate on our part, then, if we were to hold that approximately 100-50 B.C. represents the time our author composed this work.¹²

The text of Wisdom is found in Codices Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Ephraemi. Among the versions, it is found in the Syriac, Arabic, and Armenian.¹³ The best Version is that of the Vulgate which, in this case, represents the Old

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 525ff. Nearly every commentary on Wisdom will be found to contain a discussion of the influence of this book on the New Testament writers.

¹¹See note 5.

¹²This represents the well-founded view presented by Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 328.

¹³Holmes, op. cit., p. 520.

Latin (Itala). There are several variants contained in this version that are recognized as being part of the original text.¹⁴ Again, the subject that was for so long discussed--namely, the possibility that there might have been a Hebrew original of which the extant Greek is but a transcription--has been discarded.¹⁵

With these factors in mind, we turn to the theology of Wisdom and to our chief purpose, of giving an estimate of the book in the light of the four theological categories indicated.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 519.

¹⁵Pfeiffer, op. cit., pp. 319ff.

CHAPTER II

GOD IN THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

As we reflect on the observation made above, that The Book of Wisdom represents that kind of Judaism which was geographically estranged from the homeland and that novel elements of foreign culture had inevitably infiltrated it, a significant question poses itself. To what extent may this foreign influence be said to have modified the concept of God as it appeared to the mind of our writer? Does God appear the same as in the past, or has the belief in Him widened or narrowed in scope? This is a question which we propose to answer on the basis of an investigation of the names and qualities ascribed to God, the essence of God, His relation to Creation, to people, and His nature as a universal or local God.

In The Book of Wisdom we find God bearing eight titles. Two of the names which He bears, *κύριος* and *θεός*, are used so predominantly throughout, that we may readily call them casual and off-hand descriptions of God. These terms describe Him, in the main, as the writer saw Him. However, we are confronted by six others, none of which is used more than five times through the course of the work. Concerning the latter, we are compelled to conclude that the writer uses them intentionally, and that as we look at the nature of God that these titles evince, they will add, in no small measure,

to what the casual titles have told us about Him.

The first titles we shall consider are *κύριος* and *θεός*. The divine name, *κύριος*, is used twenty-seven times in The Wisdom of Solomon, while *θεός* is employed fifty-two times. The former is the Greek term used by the Septuagint translators to render the name of the covenant God of the Old Testament, or, as J. Coert Rylaarsdam suggests, "the term for the personal divine name."¹ The latter would serve to point to God's unchallenged role as the only true God.² Noteworthy is the fact that *κύριος* predominates in chapters 1-5, while *θεός* occurs more predominantly from 6-19. Pfeiffer explains, however, that this is the case because the first five chapters are written to apostate Jews, for whom the name *κύριος* would have great significance, while chapters 6-19 are directed, in the main, to Gentiles, and consequently the name *θεός* predominates.³

However, as one compares the use of both *κύριος* and *θεός* in the entire book, one does not become aware of any differentiation within the writer's mind. As a matter of fact, the writer seems to feel quite at ease in using either term to speak of God, and does not hesitate to interchange them almost at random. A few examples will bear this out.

¹J. Coert Rylaarsdam, Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1946), p. 37.

²See Robert Pfeiffer, A History of New Testament Times (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1949), p. 325.

³Ibid.

In 2:13 the writer uses both divine designations in describing the relationship of the righteous man to God. He is said to have knowledge of θεός, and at the same time, is spoken of as the servant of κύριος. In 3:1 the souls of the righteous are in the hand of θεός. But in 3:9 it is κύριος who shall reign over them forever. 9:1 is significant because both names are used in the intimate discourse of Pseudo-Solomon with God. He prays both θεὸν πατέρων and κύριε ἑλέους. And, although we have pointed out that θεός predominates in the latter chapters of the book, we still find God addressed in 16:12 as κύριε. 15:1 adds a personal note by calling θεός here θεός ἡμῶν.

We find no conflict, then, in the writer's mind, between the God of his national religion, κύριος, and the God who is over all, θεός. The two are identified. The God of the fathers is the God of the universe. Our writer, in his employment of these two names, is explicitly a Hebrew of the first rank.

Yet, the God of the writer of Wisdom is more than κύριος and θεός. His invincible sovereignty is characterized by another divine name. He is designated in five places as δεσπότης. In 6:7 He is called ὁ πάντων δεσπότης, and this points to His being above all terrestrial Lords, thus needing never to cower before them. Wisdom is greatly enhanced in 8:3 because ὁ πάντων δεσπότης loved her. In 11:26 God again is δεσπότης, and accordingly watches over all things. According to 13:3,

the wicked are greatly at fault because they recognize the beauty of creation, but do not know Him who is most beautiful of all, ὁ θεσπότης . In 13:9, this is enlarged, for here θεσπότης is pictured as having created all things.

Gregg points out that the picture of God as θεσπότης is found also in Job 5:8, but this only in the Septuagint Version, for it is missing in the Hebrew text.⁴ The designation is certainly unique, and perhaps will become clearer to us as we look more closely at the author's conception of God as a whole.

Another name, which is of great importance, is πατήρ . Our author uses this title for God three times. In 2:16 the wicked are portrayed as being angry over the righteous man, because he calls God his πατήρ . An important passage, presenting a matter we shall consider more in detail below, is 11:10. Here God is πατήρ to the righteous, and as such merely tries them, while He is a fierce judge toward the wicked. Yet the picture of God as πατήρ is not limited to His communion with the righteous. He is also πατήρ in His preservation of the world. In 14:3, for example, He acts as πατήρ in steering the navigator's ship through the sea, even though the navigator does not acknowledge this, and worships the piece of wood on

⁴J. A. F. Gregg, The Wisdom of Solomon, in The Cambridge Bible For Schools and Colleges, A. F. Kirkpatrick, general editor (Cambridge: The University Press, 1922), p. 79.

⁵It is noteworthy to recall that the Old Testament does not as a whole emphasize the fatherhood of God. Of places where it is mentioned we note Is. 63; Hos. 11; Jer. 3; 31.

which he sails instead.

The portrayal of God as πατήρ, then, is significant in characterizing His attitude over against the righteous who are His own, and the world in general. His providential attitude toward what He has made indicates the graciousness of His character, and the term πατήρ is thus important in indicating a quality of God that will become more important to us as we proceed.

A fifth title ascribed to God is ὑψίστος. This name, perhaps, stems largely from the thinking regarding the place where God lives. It is far above the scan of the human eye. Thus God, too, is ὑψίστος, in that He inhabits a realm which is unknown to man, and as such is over all. In 5:15, this portrait of God gives great comfort to the righteous, because their care is ὁ ὑψίστος. At the same time, in 6:3 it lays grave responsibility upon the earthly monarchs who, although they have a quota of power, have received this only from ὑψίστος.

This designation seems to have much in common with *deus deorum*. God is exalted above all that is human and is beyond the perception of man. To have His protection is to want nothing, and to have responsibility from Him is to be confronted with something serious indeed.⁶

⁶We call to mind here the old Hebraic expressions of *יהוה* and *יהוה*, which may serve as the background for what is to be found in the Greek term, ὑψίστος. Both of these designations characterized the transcendence of God. Cf. Ps. 91:1-2.

In 13:1 we meet an expression which is employed only here to designate the divine nature. It is the title found in the phrase τὸν ὄντα. This expression leads us naturally to think of Exodus 3:14, which in the Septuagint is rendered ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν.⁷ The entire section is speaking of the Creation and of the wicked who look at the Creation and do not recognize τὸν ὄντα. This is an important link with the Hebrew traditional view of God.

Closely related is another designation in 13:1. This is the title τεχνίτης.⁸ God's activity in creating the world is here pictured in terms of that of an artificer. We see here some occasion for Hellenistic influence, for the term is not familiar to the Jews.⁹ Whether this term is to be associated with the specifically Hellenistic idea of formless matter (ἄλης ἀόρατος) in 11:17, or whether the author is just being broad in his use of terms is debatable. If the former were the case, the term would plunge us into the heart of Hellenism.

In 13:3, however, we meet a title for God in which we unquestionably confront some Hellenistic influence. This has to do with the phrase γενεσιάρχης τοῦ κόσμου. It is of importance to note, as Deane points out, that this is a apax legomena in the Septuagint, and that here the author is going

⁷ Samuel Holmes, The Wisdom of Solomon, in The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, edited by R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 556.

⁸ It is noteworthy that this title is given to Wisdom in 8:6.

⁹ Gregg, op. cit., p. 125, gives two cases of its use in Philo. Cf. also the Hebrew word "לִבְיָנִי".

his own way in introducing something new into the divine nomenclature.¹⁰ The concern with the beauty of the world was opprobrious to the Hebrews, who rather shied away from it for fear of committing idolatry.¹¹ We may thus safely conclude that, of all the divine names at which we have looked, this one most specifically indicates an element foreign to the Hebrews.

We have observed, then, that the divine names in *The Book of Wisdom* give us a varying picture of God. We shall leave them temporarily, but shall return to them later in order to make the application of what we have observed.

Closely related to the divine names are the qualities which the book ascribes to God. These, too, are able to bring us into touch with the writer's view of God. We find, first of all, that God is all-powerful. In 1:3 He has a kind of *δυναμεις* which, when put to the test, can convict the foolish. If He takes it upon Himself to punish people, this is unchallengeable according to 12:12, for God is all-powerful. No one can question His right to do so with men. Finally, the righteous take comfort because they know that even if they sin, God is their own and possesses *κράτος*.

The quality of power serves to give added support to the divine names discussed above which imply the same kind of

¹⁰William J. Deane, *The Book of Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1881), pp. 30, 180.

¹¹Gregg, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

character. It serves to underline particularly the title
ὁ δεσπότης.

But, a quality that is of decided importance, and that meets us in a variety of words in the book, is that of mercy. We have seen above that, in 9:1, God is addressed as κύριε ἐλέους. Mercy is thus an essential part of His character. In 15:1 we find four words describing the same quality. God is, first of all, χρηστός, which might be much like the Old Testament יְיָ. He is likewise ἀληθής, μακροθύμος, and preserves all things that are in ἐλέος. Gregg finds in these words a link with the famous four qualities of God in Exodus 34:6, where God is יְיָ, יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, and יְיָ.¹² Again, we may find either an intentional or else naive attempt to express this quality of God in the new meaning the writer gives to φιλόψυχε in 11:26. The word really means "cowardly," but here apparently the author is using it to express the merciful nature of God.¹³

This quality of mercy is important, for it permeates the thinking of the author throughout. Siegfried has even gone so far as to conclude that one of the true differences between God in The Wisdom of Solomon and God in the canonical books is that the latter picture Him as a God who is somewhat more

¹²Ibid., p. 143.

¹³The use of this word here is taken by many commentators to be a solecism, as also the use of μεταλλάξω in 4:12 and 16:25. Goodrick says of the case here: "The expression is beautiful, but the Greek is bad." A. T. S. Goodrick, The Book of Wisdom, in The Oxford Church Bible Commentary (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), p. 255.

arbitrary, giving man breath and withdrawing it from him as He wills, while the former pictures Him as Love, finding pleasure in all His creatures.¹⁴ While this may appear as an oversimplification, it is yet important to note at this point that our writer's picture of God is one in which He generally appears as a loving, merciful God.

Another quality of God apparent in our writer's thinking is that of singleness. We mean to say by this that the belief about God in The Wisdom of Solomon is stringently monotheistic. The existence of no other god is recognized. No room is allowed for henotheism. Indeed, 12:13 expresses the sentiment that there is no god like to this God who cares for all (οὐτε γὰρ θεός ἐστὶν πλὴν σου). The singleness of God is likewise manifested in His wrathful refusal to recognize the claim to validity the idols make. As a matter of fact, in 14:11 God is even portrayed as promising a day of punishment for the idols (ἐν εἰδώλοις ἐθνῶν ἐπισκοπὴ ἔσται).

We may thus conclude at this point that the writer of the work before us preserves a belief about God which is implicit in the historical faith of the Hebrews in Palestine. That is his articulated faith in Yahweh as the only God, whose claim on all is supreme.

While we are concerning ourselves with the qualities of God according to the writer of Wisdom, we should expect to find a

¹⁴C. Siegfried, "Book of Wisdom," A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c. 1902), IV, 930.

close connection with Old Testament portrayals of God if we should be able to point to anthropomorphic qualities which are attributed to Him. For it is important to bear in mind that our author lives at a time when anthropomorphisms were questioned, and indeed were even softened. Even some of the Septuagint translators had evidenced a tendency toward muting human characteristics ascribed to God.¹⁵

Yet we find that our writer is not noticeably hesitant in using either anthropomorphic or anthropopathic qualities in picturing God. In 3:1, for example, we find that the souls of the righteous are said to be in God's hand (ἐν χειρὶ θεοῦ). In 5:16 the author speaks of the eschatological reward of the righteous as coming from the hand of God (ἐκ χειρὸς κυρίου), that He covers them with His right hand (τῇ δεξιᾷ σκεπάζει αὐτούς), and that He protects them with His arm (τῷ βραχίονι ὑπερασπιεῖ αὐτῶν). Finally, in 1:10, we confront a rather anomalous expression in οὐς ζηλώσεως. The commentators are quite well agreed that this is a Hebraic expression, and is common to the historical belief of the Jews. Gregg points, for example, to the Septuagint of Numbers 5:14 where the phrase "a spirit of jealousy" occurs. At the same time, he notes that God's jealousy in the Old Testament is found in two senses, in His guardianship of His chosen people, and in that of protecting His honor. It is in the latter sense, Gregg feels, that it is found here.¹⁶

¹⁵Gregg, *op. cit.*, p. xlii.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 6.

Farrar says that "this is the common Hebrew adjectival genitive," and that God is often called this "in an anthropopathic sense."¹⁷ In any case this seems to be an extremely strong anthropomorphism for one living in the midst of the Hellenistic Age and points to the stubbornness of the writer's traditional faith.

The foregoing has dealt, in the main, with incidental references to God, or rather, expressions which give us what is implicit in the writer's faith in God. We turn, at this point, to consider the inner being of God as our author conceives of it. Of course we do not discuss this question with the expectation that all will be neatly and clearly pointed for us, for we have seen that in even the incidental references to Him, God is, for our author, a sovereign and complex being. Our intention is, consequently, merely to indicate certain general features which characterize his belief about God's essence.

The essence of God in the thinking of our writer is found chiefly in three expressions. We can only call them expressions at this point, for the problem of determining what they really represent is one which we shall take up below. This triptych of God is composed of the σοφία of God, the πνεῦμα of God, and the λόγος of God.

Since the problems relating to σοφία are mammoth indeed and since our author presents his thinking about the same as the

¹⁷F. W. Farrar, Wisdom, in The Holy Bible with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary by Clergy of the Anglican Church: Apocrypha I, edited by Henry Wace (London: John Murray, 1888), p. 428.

substructure of his entire discourse, we have devoted an entire chapter to the discussion of Wisdom. At this point we are only able to hint at a few of the problems which will be taken up at greater length below.

A problem which is of importance in our author's conception of God is the relation of σοφία to God. We shall see below that this is a question of no mean significance, for we find in various places what would appear to be manifestly a contradiction between God and Wisdom. This, in turn, leads us into the problem of the possible hypostatization of Wisdom. If the latter proves to be the case, and if σοφία is not merely a quality or attribute subsisting in the Godhead, but rather a self-existent entity, then we shall have the problem of explaining how her usurpation of activities that are ordinarily ascribed to God can be squared with the author's idea of the singleness of God.

All of this serves only to point to a fact which is of utmost importance to us at this point, and that is that God's essence, for our writer, is not simple and clearly outlined. God appears to him as one who is inexplicable and complex. And the Divine Wisdom that comes forth from God, and is the ἀπόρροια of God in 7:25, is equally complex in its own right and in its relation to the Divine Being itself.

This is also true of another facet of God's essence, namely His πνεῦμα. For in looking at the πνεῦμα of God, we are again confronted with the problem of its relation to God, and,

in turn, to Wisdom. There seems to be such a freedom of exchange in our author's usage that we are forced to conclude that God's being is not precise in his mind. There are a number of cases in the first chapter which illustrate this. In 1:5 we find the expression ἄγιον πνεῦμα παιδείας. It seems that this is an expression referring to Wisdom, just as Proverbs 1:1 associates σοφία and γινω. This is clearly substantiated by 1:6 where Wisdom is specifically mentioned as a loving πνεῦμα. Yet, in 1:7 we find the sudden and strange shift to the πνεῦμα κυρίου, which fills the world.

This same interchange permeates later sections of the book. In 7:7 Solomon prays and a πνεῦμα σοφίας comes to him. Again, in 7:22 Wisdom is described as having within her a πνεῦμα. But, the difficult passage of 9:17 shows God sending both His σοφία and His ἄγιον πνεῦμα from on high. The big question here is are they identical? Gregg comments, "No distinction must be pressed between wisdom and holy spirit. . . . The variation is due to poetical parallelism."¹⁸ Yet, even if they are identical there is no doubt but that the author found this quite difficult to understand himself. Finally, in 12:1 the flavor is essentially Hebraic as the writer speaks of God's incorruptible spirit (ἀφθαρτον πνεῦμα) being in all things.

There is little doubt, then, that πνεῦμα in the writer's thinking adds greater complexity to his conception of God. The apparent ease with which he transfers its employment would

¹⁸Gregg, op. cit., p. 94.

again indicate that God is beyond any schematization he can sketch.

We find this again in the usage of *λόγος* in the book. There has been a world of disagreement regarding the importance of the *λόγος* passages in The Book of Wisdom. The inclination has been to find some affinity either with Philo's Logos or with that of the Apostle John.¹⁹ But, by and large, the commentators are agreed that the majority of the *λόγος* passages are no more than Hebraic in their sense. Thus, for example, in all the passages where this word is used in the earlier chapters of the book, it clearly means "word" in the Hebraic sense, with the exception of 2:2 where it means simply man's reasoning power. But in 9:1 God is addressed as one who made all things by His word (*ἐν λόγῳ σου*). The question is whether this can go so far as to refer to a personalized form of the Logos as the Apostle John sees it in the creation. Most commentators are agreed that it is simply Hebraic, and represents a similar mode of expression as Psalm 33:6, where it is said: "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth."²⁰ Again, in 12:9, the sense appears Hebraic, where God is pictured as being able to destroy the heathen by one

¹⁹Rylaarsdam, *op. cit.*, p. 43, mentions Rendell Harris as the most extreme, who finds a direct tie-up between the Logos in Wisdom and the Gospel of John.

²⁰Gregg, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

stern word (λόγῳ ἀποτόμῳ) of His mouth. But in 16:12 there is room for difference of opinion. Here the Logos would, at first glance, seem personalized. The writer is in the midst of a doxology, and says the righteous in Israel's history were preserved not by herbs and unguents, but by the healing word (λόγος ἰώμενος). Yet, Holmes prefers to take this as Hebraic, and points to Psalm 107:20: "He sent his word and healed them."²¹

The crucial passage, however, is 18:15:

ὁ παντοδύναμός σου λόγος ἀπ' οὐρανῶν ἐκ θρόνων βασιλείων
ἀπότομος πολεμιστῆς εἰς μέσον τῆς ὀλεθείας ἤλατο ὅτῃς
δίψος ὄξυ τὴν ἀνυπόκριτον ἐπιταγήν σου φέρων.²²

The opinion of Holmes on this passage is significant. He insists on its being Hebraic, because, on the basis of 16:12 and other passages noted above, he feels that this passage must also be taken in a Hebraic sense. He points to Psalm 147:29 where a parallel might be found: "His word runneth very swiftly." Yet, on top of it all, he is compelled to concede that this is apparently a stronger personification

²¹Holmes, op. cit., p. 561; Gregg, op. cit., p. 155; Goodrick, op. cit., p. 327.

²²Translation is from The Complete Bible: An American Translation, the Apocrypha translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1939).

Your all-powerful word leaped from heaven, from the
royal throne,
A stern warrior, into the midst of the doomed
land,
Carrying for a sharp sword your undisguised command.

than any Old Testament examples.²³ Professor Albright has left little doubt concerning the probability that the underlying type of thought behind this idea is not Hellenistic, but Semitic. And yet he does not do away with the possibility of hypostatization, but points to its background as being in a common Semitic tendency to give concrete personality to the words which issued forth from the mouth of a god.²⁴

Be this as it may, it is important for our own purpose to recognize here the problem of the complexity of the inner being of God for our author. The role of the *λόγος*, together with that of *πνεῦμα* and *σοφία*, raises the poignant question regarding the essence of God in The Wisdom of Solomon. It is a question that, perhaps, may move nearer to being answered as we consider God's relation to creation. And yet we must ask it at this point. Is the God of The Wisdom of Solomon a transcendent or immanent God? In all that we have been saying about the triptych of expressions regarding the essence of God, must we conclude that our author's God is so far from earth and man that it is necessary for him to postulate some sort of communicatory entities by which God might establish relationship with men? This problem is great indeed,

²³Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 565.

²⁴W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), p. 285. Albright points to the study of L. Dürr (1938), which gave quite thorough illustration of the fact that we have here a true Semitic tendency.

and although George Foot Moore has given us every reason to dispense with the rabbinical Memra at this point, we are still prone to wonder about the relationship of God to creation and to men.²⁵ And it is at this point that we undertake the task of looking at this facet of our writer's belief about God.

God's relation to created things is a sovereign relationship, because, according to 1:14, He is the Creator of all (ἐκτίσεν γὰρ εἰς τὸ εἶναι τὰ πάντα). This is substantiated by the passage looked at above, in 9:1, that He has created all things (ὁ ποιήσας τὰ πάντα) by His Word. Yet as the Creator in 1:13, He has not made θάνατος. His creation is good, and reflects the account of Genesis 1.

There are, however, problems connected with His being Creator. The philosophical passage of 11:17 points to His creating the world out of formless matter (κτίσασα τὸν κόσμον ἐξ ἀμόρφου ὕλης). This, accordingly, seems to have as its basis the Hellenistic idea of the eternity of matter, which comes into decided conflict with Hebraic monism. The writer appears to oscillate between a strictly Hebraic and a philosophically Hellenistic view. Gregg's words are perhaps the

²⁵The term Memra was employed by the rabbis in place of the divine name at those points where they wished to preserve the transcendent majesty of God. Thus it would be expected that there could be an affinity between the Memra of the rabbis and the peculiar use of λόγος in The Book of Wisdom. But this is hardly possible. For a complete study see George Foot Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Theology," Harvard Theological Review, XV (January, 1922), 41-85.

best regarding this vacillation;

It is impossible to say with certainty which view was held by the writer of Wisdom: even Philo was not consistent, and oscillated between the two positions, and the writer of Wisdom was far more of a Hebraist than Philo.²⁶

It is thus notable that Gregg is not too inclined to make our author a rabid Hellenist on the basis of this passage.

In His preservation of created things, we find God continuing in the same vein of mercy and love that we have had occasion to note above. This is brought out particularly by the use of φείδομαι. Its finest expression, perhaps, is in 11:26 where God guards all things because they are His own (φείδη πάντων, ὅτι δά ἐστιν). The same characteristic is evidenced in the moving passage of 14:3-6 where the unwitting sailor is guided through the waves by God's providence. For even the waves are in God's hands.

Thus God's relation to created things is predominantly Hebraic, and we find Him delineated as both Creator and Preserver of all that is. This leads us to discuss His relationship to people.

As He is the Creator of created things, God is also the Creator of men. The locus for this is the important passage of 2:23, where it is said that God created man for immortality (ὁ θεὸς ἔκτισεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ' ἀφαιρέσει), and that He made him in the image of His own eternity (εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀιδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν). We shall have recourse to this

²⁶ Gregg, op. cit., p. 110.

passage again in our chapter on man.

Again, as man's Creator God is associated with men in terms of a religious-ethical relationship. Man is spiritually responsible before Him. This is clearly defined in the latter part of 1:6:

ὅτι τῶν νεφρῶν αὐτοῦ μάρτυς ὁ θεός
καὶ τῆς καρδίας αὐτοῦ ἐπίσκοπος ἀληθῆς
καὶ τῆς γλώσσης ἀκουστής.²⁷

God can be sinned against, and the eunuch is blessed who in 3:14 has resisted the impulse to do evil against the Lord (μηδὲ ἐνθυμηθεὶς κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου πονηρά).

Thus God is by no means removed from men. Conversely, 1:2 says that He can be found by (εὐρίσκειτω) and is manifested to (ἐμφανίζεται) those who do not tempt Him. It is not necessary to point to the great significance of these two words for the conception of God in our author's mind. They are given further elaboration in 13:6-9 where God is specifically designated as a God who can be known through His created works.

But men can go even further. They can actually set up communion with Him. This can be done in 3:9 by trusting in Him (οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπ' αὐτῷ), and in 1:1 by seeking Him in

²⁷Goodspeed, *op. cit.*, translates:

For God is a witness of his heart,
And a truthful observer of his mind,
And a hearer of his tongue.

singleness of heart (ἐν ἀπλότητι καρδίας τητήσατε αὐτόν). This communion with God is of the greatest importance in our author's mind. Yet it is significant that it is narrowed down to fit into his doctrine of predestination. We have, in The Book of Wisdom, a conception of the righteous man (δίκαιος) as an individual, and of righteous people (δίκαιοι) as a group. And this belief is by no means of minor importance in our writer's concept of God. It is rather imperative that we turn now to consider what he believed to be God's relation to both the δίκαιος as an individual and the δίκαιοι as a group.

There is an apparent difference between chapters 1-9 and chapters 10-19 in point of individual and corporate emphases. It is true, as Johannes Fichtner has observed, that the first half of the book tends to see man more as an individual while the latter part pictures him predominantly in his role in the community. He does warn us, however, that we must not see exclusively the one or the other emphasis in the respective sections, for both elements can be found in the two parts.²⁸ Nevertheless, for our own purpose it is to be noted that our writer's concept of man as δίκαιος is greatly developed in the first section of the book, and that when, in the latter portion he undertakes to make use of the reality of Israel's corporate history, it must be seen in the light of what he has said

²⁸Johannes Fichtner, Weisheit Salomos, in Handbuch zum Alten Testament (Tubingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1938), p. 13.

about the *δίκαιος* as an individual in preceding chapters. For, without a doubt, he is re-interpreting Israel's corporate history in terms of the *δίκαιος*, and goes so far as to give them the significant collective title of *δίκαιοι*. In other words, he is not painting just a literal sketch of Israel's history. It will be of importance for us to recall this fact as we consider God's relationship to His people.

This unique group of righteous men, related intimately to the true God, are called by a number of communal names which express the tenderness of their relation to Him. We find them designated as *ἐκλεκτοί* in 3:9 and 4:15. In addition, in the latter passage they are also called *οὐνοί*. In 9:7 the author, addressing God, says they are God's own people (*λαοῦ σου*). In this same passage we have the intimate expression of their communion with God in that they are His sons and daughters (*υἱῶν σου καὶ θυγατέρων*). This belief is expressed again in 12:19 where they are called *υἱοί*. But, it is to be noted that the term most readily applied to them is the one we have noted above, the term *δίκαιος* for the individual, and *δίκαιοι* for the group.

The *δίκαιοι* are related to God in the closest friendship. In 3:1 they are in His hand (*ἐν χειρὶ Θεοῦ*), and in 3:8 He will reign over them forever (*βασιλεύσει αὐτῶν κύριος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας*). In 5:15 their care is with none other than the Most High (*ἡ φρονεῖς αὐτῶν παρὰ ὑψίστου*). The upshot of this all is that the writer, as one of the *δίκαιοι* himself, can say with

great trust in 15:2: "we are yours" (σοὶ ἔσμεν).

This peculiar importance of the δίκαιοι plays no small part in the writer's view of Israel's past. To be sure, the fact that God preserved Israel of old in the manner that He did is the true meaning of Israel's history, and it is for this reason that Israel's past has meaning for the δίκαιοι of the writer's own time. The past of Israel is glorified, and the vicissitudes of their ancient history recorded in the canonical scriptures, are re-interpreted, and their application is homiletically made to the contemporary righteous man. So the eunuch in 3:14, if he does not commit sin, is promised an inheritance in the temple of the Lord (ἐν ναῦ κυρίου). The temple (ναός) and the altar (θυσιαστήριον) are glorified in 9:8, and the occupation of Canaan is treated similarly in 12:3-8 as evidencing the great wickedness of its former occupants, but the simultaneous worthiness of the righteous.

The fact that the author has the δίκαιοι so much in mind leads us to the final point we must consider about his view of God. We must ask the question whether his God is only a local God, or whether He has universal concern for men.

It would be possible to view God in The Book of Wisdom as a God whose concern is, in the final analysis, narrowed down to His elect people. As a matter of fact, in chapters 10-19 He is identified as the God who inflicted the Egyptians with horrible tortures at the time of the Exodus. He punishes the wicked in 4:18-19 in a manner which notably recalls the

imprecatory Psalms.²⁹ In 3:10 the wicked are punished not only because of their evil imaginations, and because they have forsaken God, but also because they have not been concerned about the righteous (οἱ ἀμελήσαντες τοῦ δικαίου). Indeed, the contrast between the *δίκαιοι* and *ἀσεβεῖς* is so bitterly drawn at points, that the lex talionis appears to fit the writer's thinking. It is necessary for us, then, to look more closely at the manner in which God acts toward these two specific groups.

There is a difference between God as He punishes and God as He tempts and tries. The author appears to be making this differentiation. The words he employs to show God's punitive activity toward the wicked are *βιάσασθαι* and *κολάζω*. Yet, for the *δίκαιοι* neither of these terms is suitable. The author rather uses the interesting word *παιδεῖν* to express this action of God toward them.

God punishes in 5:17-23 by taking on a full suit of armour and using the forces of nature as His weapons of destruction against the wicked. In 11:17-21 He creates terrifying beasts as the instruments of His wrath. He casts the wicked down headlong and lays them utterly desolate in 4:19. And yet, it is significant that while all of this is transpiring the righteous are being blessed. This is quite apparent in the contrast drawn between the two words, *κολάζω* and *εὐεργετέω* in 11:5:

²⁹Gregg, op. cit., p. 42.

δι' ὧν γὰρ ἐκολάσθησαν οἱ ἐχθροὶ αὐτῶν
διὰ τούτων αὐτοὶ ἀποροῦντες εὐεργετήθησαν.³⁰

For God's attitude toward the δίκαιοι is merely one of chastisement whereas for the wicked it is punishment. This is brought out again in 12:22:

Ἡμεῖς οὖν παιδεύων τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν
ἐν μυριότητι μαστιχοῦς.³¹

In 3:4-6 the writer says that though they seem to be punished in the sight of men (ἐν ὄψει ἀνθρώπων εἶν καλοῦσθαι), they have the hope of immortality. When they have been chastened a little, they will be greatly blessed (ὀλίγα παιδευθέντες μεγάλᾳ εὐεργετηθήσονται), because God tried them (ὁ θεὸς ἐπείρασεν αὐτοὺς) and found them worthy of Himself. He proved them as gold in a furnace (ὡς χρυσὸν ἐν χωνευτηρίῳ ἐδοκίμασεν αὐτοὺς).

We have, then, a rather distinct line drawn between God's attitude over against the δίκαιοι and ἀδελφεῖς. If, as we have seen, God is, for our author, the powerful Creator who can control events as He pleases, this very sharp distinction appears to depict Him consequently as a God of caprice. And,

³⁰Goodspeed, op. cit., translates:

For the means by which their enemies were punished
Benefited them in their time of need.

³¹Goodspeed renders as follows:

So when you discipline us, you flog our enemies
Ten thousand fold.

precisely this seems to be the danger of which our author is aware. He appears to be conscious of the fact that the world may get a disparaging picture of God indeed, and that it may come up with a charge against God which is justified.

It is for this reason that, in chapter 12, the author seems to make what we might term a "theodicy." The problem which is foremost in his mind at this point is to reconcile the fact that God has power over all with the fact that He is a righteous God. The reality that God is in intimate relationship with the *δίκαιος*, and simultaneously exercises His power to punish the wicked must be justified.

Our writer says, addressing God in 12:2, that His reproving of the heathen is really purposeful and not capricious. He reproves them only a little at a time (*κατ' ὀλίγον ἐλέγχεις*), and admonishes them by reminding them of the ways of their sin (*ἐν οἷς ἀμαρτάνουσιν ὑπὸ μνησκων νοθετεῖς*). And He does all of this that they might turn away from evil and believe on Him (*ἵνα ἀπκλάγόντες τῆς κακίας πατήσωσι σε*). In 12:10 He exercises His judgment again just a little at a time (*κατὰ βραχὺ*), and gives them recourse to repentance. So, the upshot of it all is the question in 12:12: Who can accuse God when the nations whom He has made perish? (*τίς ἐγκαλέσει σοι κατὰ ἐθνῶν ἀπολωλότων ἀσὺ ἐπαίης*). For in 12:15 God is a God who orders all things righteously (*δικαίως τὰ πάντα διέπεις*), and His power is just the beginning of righteousness (*ἡ ἰσχὺς σου δικαιοσύνης ἀρχή*),

and since He is Lord of all, He spares all (τὸ πάντων θε
 θεοῦν πάντων φείδεται θε ποιῶν).

It is apparent that our writer is torn not only between conflicting Greek and Hebraic ideas of God, but that he has also confronted the question of prime importance to all of Israel's sapiential authors. He has attempted to give an answer to the problem of suffering for the righteous. But at the same time he has attempted to steer clear of depicting God as an arbitrary tyrant for the rest of the world. His intent is manifestly to avoid both the Scylla of capriciousness and the Charybdis of double-predestination in portraying the divine attitude toward men.

But now it remains for us to collect some of the observations made regarding God in The Wisdom of Solomon and to pose again the question we have asked originally: To what extent is our author continuing in the traditional belief in God as predicated in the canonical books, and as representing Palestinian-Hebraic belief in Him? Does he deflect from this belief at any point?

We may note at this point several factors in the conception of God in The Book of Wisdom that put us very definitely in touch with the God of Israelitic faith. We have above noted the following points of contact: (1) God is the Creator of all things and of men. (2) His attitude toward His Creation and men is one of love and mercy, and He takes great pains to preserve the things that are. (3) He is called by

several names, viz. κύριος , θεός , and πατήρ that would readily put Him into touch with the God of the Hebrews of the Old Testament. (4) He is the only valid God, and stringent monotheism prevails. (5) The power of God and His righteousness are reconcilable. (6) He is Lord of history as illustrated chiefly by the Israel-Egypt conflict of old. (7) God is essentially the God of the Exodus; at least this is the substructure of our author's conception of Him. (8) Anthropomorphic qualities are ascribed to Him. And, (9) He is related to man chiefly in a moral-religious relationship.

These points indicate a decided affinity between our writer and Old Testament belief. Yet it is of equal interest to observe points of divergence, and we note them as follows: (1) Although the Exodus is central in our writer's thinking, God is not pictured as standing over against the people in the Exodus and wilderness events as He is in the canonical books. There they are specifically described as a rebellious people, and God is often full of wrath toward them. Our writer is writing from a particular point of view, and appears to be re-writing Israel's early history in hyperbole to fit his premise that God is always intimate with the δίκαιος .³² (2) The divine titles θεοπάσης τῶν πάντων , τεχνίτης , and particularly γενεσιάρχης τοῦ κόσμου evidence some

³²It is true that the prophets also viewed the wilderness period as a time when Israel was in a state of pristine harmony with her God. But the point to note here is that the writer of Wisdom uses thorough-going hyperbole at this point.

kind of touch with Hellenism, and the latter two have no affinity with the Old Testament. (3) It would seem that the God of the Book of Wisdom is not nearly so capable of moving close to man as He is in the Old Testament. To be sure, our observations about σοφία, πνεῦμα, and λόγος would indicate He is more remote from men. (4) The idea of a covenant, although perhaps implicit at points, does not have the force with which it is employed in Old Testament books. (5) There is, as would be expected, only a forced continuity with the historic people of the Old Testament.

Two points, however, must be remembered as we note these divergences. In the first place, we must call to mind again that The Book of Wisdom is not a Palestinian product. Our fifth point, that there is only a forced continuity with Old Testament history, is explicable on this basis. In the second place, the kind of writing with which we are dealing is not narrative, but rather philosophical, didactic, and intent upon dealing with the deeper aspects of God and man. In all fairness, the divergences we have noted above might apply at certain points to the wisdom literature of the canonical books themselves, merely because they also are not narrative, but didactic.

But our study thus far has been fruitful in that it has shown us that our writer is a man of his own time. Although he is an orthodox Jew and fights for his traditional beliefs, his sharpened reflexes are not unaffected by the milieu in

which he dwells. It is thus that we find a conflict in his thinking about God. We have points of contact with Old Testament Hebrew beliefs. But we have Greek philosophy and culture making their impress at the same time. The extent to which this same interpenetration influences his thinking in other areas is the problem we intend to investigate in the following chapters.

CHAPTER III

MAN IN THE BOOK OF WISDOM

It should hardly be fair, as in the case of the doctrine of God, to expect that our author has formulated a clear and precise schematization of the nature and destiny of man. On the basis of our study thus far, we should be inclined to expect rather the exact opposite. For one thing has become apparent thus far, and that is that our author is a brilliant representative of the clash between, and even, at times, synthesis of Judaic and Hellenistic ideas. He is a man living alertly in his own age, having confronted the most respectable thinking of his time, and attempting to give answers to basic problems which are both consequently and inevitably eclectic. It is to be anticipated, therefore, that he will evidence beliefs about man that can be traced all the way back to the matrix of Hebraic faith, and yet, at the same time, will often call upon Hellenism to supply his frame of reference for his sketch of man. We should accordingly hope to come into touch with his anthropology by considering what he has to say of man as creature--of man's inherent structure, both psychophysically (to employ a modern term without the intricacies of meaning ascribed it) and religiously. We intend to note the freedom, if there is such, granted to man per se and in eius loco, and finally the reality of sin and its grip upon man. It will ultimately be our task to give an answer to the

question: Is The Book of Wisdom essentially anthropocentric or theocentric? For it should have become clear, after having looked at both his doctrine of God and of man, whether our writer has continued by and large in the Old Testament stream of theocentricity, or whether he is generally deflective, and has steered more in the direction of humanistic anthropocentricity.

We come into contact with the Hebraic belief in God as supreme Creator of man, as soon as we concern ourselves with the origin of man. For man, in 2:23, is expressly the work of God's own hand, and is made in God's own image. So beautifully is this traditional belief expressed in this passage that we take the opportunity to quote it in its entirety:

ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἐκτίσεν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐπ' ἀφουράσια
καὶ εἰκόνα τῆς ἰδίας ἀιδιότητος ἐποίησεν αὐτόν.¹

Just briefly we might note here the purposefulness lying behind man's creation in the phrase ἐπ' ἀφουράσια. This will prove to be important for us as we consider the ascription of immortality to man at greater length below; but for the present

¹Translation is from The Complete Bible: An American Translation, the Apocrypha translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1939).

For God created man for immortality,
And made him the image of his own eternity.

In the manuscripts ^{AB}, A, and B, ἰδιότητος is read for ἀιδιότητος, but this is quite awkward. Although the latter reading, "eternity," is without as great support in the manuscripts, it makes much better sense. See Gregg, The Wisdom of Solomon, in The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, edited by A. F. Kirkpatrick (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1922), p. 22.

it is interesting to note that the same tone is apparent here as we find in the Genesis account of man's creation. In both places man's creation is an act of the goodness of God. He is made for eternal fellowship with God, and is made in such a manner as to be himself the very εἰκών of God. We are, then, clearly in touch with Hebraic belief at this point.

We find that the author continues to make use of the creation sections of Genesis in later parts of the book. In 10:1, where Wisdom is being extolled, she is said to have guarded the first-formed father of the world (πρωτόπλαστον πατέρα κόσμου). This is manifestly the man who stands at the beginning-point of mankind, Adam. The loneliness of his status, prior to the gift of a mate, is reflected in the phrase μόνον κτισθέντα. And again, in 10:2, we find him with authority over all things (ἰσχύον κρατῆσαι ἅπαντων), a gift of Wisdom.

The propagation of the human race repeats the miracle of Adam's existence, and all men are compelled in their own births to look back to the story of the first man for the explanation of their own being. Thus, Pseudo-Solomon, speaking in 7:1, says that he is a mortal man like all men, and that he is the off-spring of the first-formed man made of earth (γεννηθεὶς ἀπόγονος πρωτοπλάστου).

The creatureliness of man is thus pre-supposed throughout the book. Man's existence is not by accident, but is rather seriously related to the existence of God Himself.

This underlying structure in our writer's thinking about man is not without importance.

Accordingly, if man is God's formed creature, it behooves us to look at the structural make-up of man, both psycho-physically, as we have said above, and religiously. Concerning the psycho-physical make-up of man we have no continuous and labored sketch by our writer, but we are able to look closely at incidental references that seem to point to an underlying assumption.

We find, first of all, that our author is Hebraic in some of his casual references to man's structure and nature. Thus, in 1:6, we meet the traditionally espoused parallel of "reins" ($\nu\epsilon\phi\epsilon\omega\upsilon$) and "heart" ($\kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$). This leads us into touch with the many passages in the Old Testament where $\aleph\aleph\aleph$ and \aleph are set in contrast. The heart is the center of thought for the Hebrew,² and in 2:2 we find the wicked in great despair because reason ($\delta\ \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$) is just a spark kindled in their hearts ($\delta\pi\iota\nu\omicron\eta\epsilon\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \kappa\iota\nu\eta\sigma\epsilon\iota\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma\ \eta\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$). Aside from the meaning of the passage, the importance here is the association of man's reasoning faculty with $\kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha$, a specifically Hebraic idea. Again in 8:17 Pseudo-Solomon ponders matters in his heart ($\phi\rho\omicron\nu\tau\acute{\iota}\sigma\alpha\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\rho\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\ \mu\omicron\upsilon$) as a good Jew would. For we must remember that, strictly speaking, a full-

²Samuel Holmes, "The Wisdom of Solomon," The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, edited by R. H. Charles (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 535.

fledged Hellenist would have been more intent on the function of the mind than of the heart.

This leads us to the consideration of another parallel, or contrast, that is essentially Hebraic in structure. It is the contrast between $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ and $\psi\upsilon\chi\etá$, which would find its Old Testament counter-part in גוֹל and נֶפֶשׁ . The structure of man in the Old Testament is generally dichotomic. The essential make-up of man is flesh and spirit, or soul and body. Both go to make up a man, and yet both are differentiated and must be expressed in parallel. The unity of man is postulated in this duality.³

We have essentially this view of man in our author's persistent employment of $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ and $\psi\upsilon\chi\etá$. Again and again he is inclined to see man as basically made up of these two. But we should meet with a difficult problem indeed, and at the same time would be quite far from Old Testament belief about man, were we to find that our author posits $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ and $\psi\upsilon\chi\etá$ as conflicting entities. This is indeed a matter with which we are forced to deal as we recall that our author has confronted Platonic philosophy. We should be inclined to wonder if he postulates not only the parallelism of $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha$ and $\psi\upsilon\chi\etá$, as the Old Testament does, or if he goes actually farther and expounds a definite tension between the two--the body as being corrupt and the soul as being natively pure.

³Johannes Pedersen, Israel (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 1926), I, II, 170ff.

For one can scarcely predicate that the Old Testament teaches, as Platonism, that the soul of man is pure and deserving eternal reward per se while the body is evil and destined to annihilation. To find tendencies along this line would indicate a definite deviation from Hebraic faith. We must, therefore, look more closely at our writer's views on σῶμα and ψυχή, and this, in turn, will lead us to consider the whole belief in pre-existence and immortality as espoused in the book.

The question that we must posit at the outset is the one we have indicated above. Is a Platonic dualism promulgated in the book? Is the soul for our author free in itself of any defilement, and, simultaneously, is the body bogged down in terrestrial pollution? Perhaps the most disputed passage in this matter is 9:15, and that we might have it before us for our consideration, we quote it here:

φθαετὸν γὰρ σῶμα βαρύνει ψυχὴν
καὶ βεῖθει τὸ γεῶδες σκῆνους νοῦν πολυφρόντιδα.⁴

The controversial statement is found in the first half of the passage, where the thought of the writer would indicate some kind of affinity with Platonism, or at least would reflect some kind of contact, be it immediate or distant, with its

⁴Translation from Goodspeed, op. cit.:

For a perishable body weighs down the soul,
And its earthly tent burdens the thoughtful mind.

belief about the soul and body.⁵ However, it is only when we scan the whole context of this verse that we come to realize that our writer is not so outright Platonic at this point. In the preceding verses we find him expressing disparagement over man as he is ignorant of the counsels of God and beset by all kinds of miserable thoughts. Verse 15, then, would seem to be nothing more than an attempted explanation of this sad plight. Man is as grass and dust, and though he may inwardly, in his soul or mind, have some kind of latent desire to know God, he is weighed down by the mortality that is his. It would seem that we find no more explicit Platonism here than we would in the tension that the Apostle Paul places between the *σάρξ* and the *πνεῦμα*. Indeed, the words of Gregg on this matter present a substantial answer to the problem:

This famous passage has caused the writer to be charged with dualistic views of which he is not guilty. There is in this verse none of that dualism which pronounces matter evil: the writer goes no further than the Psalmist when he says, "He knoweth our frame: He remembereth that we are dust," or St. Paul in Gal. v. 17.⁶

This view of 9:15 is without a doubt undergirded when we recall a passage that is found very early in the book, namely 1:4. In this passage we find *σῶμα* and *ψυχή* once again set in parallel. But it is interesting to note that here it is not only the body that can devise evil and wickedness, but it

⁵Goodrick points to the similarity between this passage and a passage in Plato's *Phaedo*. A. T. S. Goodrick, *The Book of Wisdom*, in *The Oxford Church Bible Commentary* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913), pp. 382-83.

⁶Gregg, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

is also the soul. The writer says that Wisdom cannot enter into a contriving soul (κακότεχνον ψυχὴν), much less dwell in a body that is subservient to sin (ἐν σώματι κατὰ κρείω ἁμαρτίας). One can scarcely argue that our writer's view of soul and body are Platonic at this point, and the words of Johannes Fischer are unchallenged:

Der Mensch besteht demnach aus Leib und Seele; jedoch mit der platonisch-philonischen Ansicht, nach welcher der Leib die Quelle alles Bösen ist, hat die Stelle nichts zu tun.⁷

To the question then regarding the possibility of a touch with Platonism in the body-soul antithesis, we are prone to say that our writer evidences no thorough-going belief in the opposition of the two. To be sure, he does not appear to be ignorant of what Platonism had to say on this point. In fact, at points we must even agree that he is employing conceptual forms of his own time to express an ancient belief. But the latter is most significant. For our author, in his belief in *σῶμα* and *ψυχὴ*, does not appear to make a decisive break with traditional belief.

But while speaking of the soul in *The Book of Wisdom*, we are faced with the important question of pre-existence and immortality. The important study of F. C. Porter in 1908 on the pre-existence of the soul in *The Book of Wisdom* seems to have delineated much that is involved in the dis-

⁷Johannes Fischer, *Das Buch der Weisheit*, in *Das Alte Testament*, herausgegeben von Friedrich Nötscher (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1954), p. 8.

cussion of this problem.⁸ It is again a question of background. Is our author so influenced by Hellenism that he believes in and sees the air teeming with peripatetic souls, pre-existent and immortal, some of which come to be imprisoned in the bodies of men?

Aside from passages we have just considered which would contain something of the same concern, we find the most anomalous statement in 8:19-20. The writer first makes a statement, but then, on a second thought, changes it. We quote these two verses as follows:

παῖς δὲ ἡμῶν εὐφυῆς
 ψυχῆς τε ἔλαχον ἀγαθῆς
 μᾶλλον δὲ ἀγαθὸς ὢν ἦλθον εἰς σῶμα ἀμίαντον.⁹

Just what the author intended by this sudden correction is hard to say. We could easily make it our task to point here to the conflict in his own mind, in which Platonic belief achieved the victory. The passage is by no means easy to explain. Porter believes that our author's thinking at this point, and on the whole subject of pre-existence and immortality is Hebraic and not Greek. He feels simply that in this passage, the writer believed, as did the rabbis, that

⁸Access to Porter's views was obtained through Goodrick and Volz. See Goodrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 377ff., and Paul Volz, *Die Eschatologie der jüdischen Gemeinde* (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1934), p. 59.

⁹Translation from Goodspeed, *op. cit.*:

I was a well-formed child,
 And a good soul fell to me,
 Or rather, I was good and entered an undefiled body.

God allotted a soul to each body. And regarding the sudden correction the author makes, Porter says that "it occurs to him that it would be better to connect the personality with the soul, and to say that the body was happily matched to the soul rather than that the soul was happily matched to the body."¹⁰ This explanation would seem to imply that there is really no manifest Platonism to be found in these two verses, for they are just as readily explainable on other bases.

The concept of immortality is, however, a point that needs some clarification. It is without a doubt one of the truly pregnant advances that the book makes, and is developed with a thoroughness that is unprecedented in preceding Hebrew writings. If we do find an idea of pre-existence in our author's thinking, even though it is explainable as being not entirely remote from Jewish thought, the question is the extent to which his belief in immortality evidences Hebraic or Hellenistic ideology. To put it briefly: Does our writer believe in the immortality of the soul per se?

To answer this query we may revert, first of all, to a passage we have considered above under the subject of the image of God, namely 2:23. We found there the noteworthy phrase that man was made ἐπὶ εἰκόνι θεοῦ. Already in this passage it is quite significant to note that immortality has a charismatic character. It is not something, at least

¹⁰Quoted by Goodrick, op. cit., p. 382.

in this passage, that is to be viewed apart from the Creator. It is His gift to man. The author seems to advance nothing more than what is found in the Genesis creation account, namely that man was made to live with God; there is a purpose behind his creation. If there is Platonic influence here at all, we should be inclined to say that the author is merely using his own vocabulary and conceptual formulations to express an old belief inherent in the creation account of Genesis 1-2.

But does this hold true for the author's view as a whole? We find in several other places indications that it does hold true, and that the concept of immortality is chiefly a promise and hope to the righteous, rather than a philosophical statement. It is implied, for example, in 3:1, where a collective hope is advanced that the souls of the righteous are in God's hand ($\Delta\iota\kappa\alpha\acute{\iota}\omega\nu \delta\epsilon \psi\upsilon\chi\alpha\acute{\iota} \acute{\epsilon}\nu \chi\epsilon\iota\rho\acute{\iota} \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$). And in 3:4 the writer says that though they appear to be punished in the sight of men, their hope is full of immortality ($\eta \acute{\epsilon}\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\varsigma \acute{\alpha}\sigma\theta\epsilon\tau\acute{\omicron}\nu \acute{\alpha}\theta\eta\nu\alpha\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma \pi\lambda\acute{\eta}\rho\eta\varsigma$). 1:15 advances the thought that righteousness ($\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\sigma\acute{\upsilon}\nu\eta$) is immortal ($\acute{\alpha}\theta\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\varsigma$). If we add the second half of this verse which is found only in the Vulgate Version, but is strongly attested by scholars--viz. iniustitia autem mortis est acquisitio--¹¹ we find a parallel

¹¹Robert Pfeiffer, History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1949), p. 319.

that substantiates the observation that immortality is a promise held out by God, and granted to those who are associated with righteousness. In 5:15 the hope is held out that the righteous live forever (Δίκαιοι δὲ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἰῶσιν), and in 6:19, at the end of what is generally designated as his Sorites,¹² the author says that incorruption leads men near to God (ἀφθαρσία δὲ ἐγγὺς εἶναι ποιεῖ θεοῦ). The same sentiment is the Confession of 15:3. The writer says that to know God is perfect righteousness, and to know His power is the root of immortality (εἰδέναι σου τὸ κράτος εἶζα ἀθανασίας).

In one place, however, we find evidence of a belief that the soul per se is immortal. In 15:8, where the author is in the midst of a vituperative discourse against the idol-makers, he says that the fabricator of idols makes them of the same clay from which he himself was taken just shortly before, and to which he will return when his soul is of necessity demanded back of him (τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπαιτηθεὶς κέρος). It is significant that in the same context, in 5:11, Gregg finds some case for a belief in pre-existence, although not fully Platonic. The writer is there speaking against the idol-makers, and points to their folly because they did not know their own Maker, the one who breathed into them an energizing soul (τὸν ἐμπνεύσαντα αὐτῷ ψυχὴν ἐνεργουσαν).¹³

¹²For a discussion of this logicizing device employed by the Stoics, see Holmes, op. cit., pp. 544-45.

¹³Gregg, op. cit., p. xliii.

Concerning the first of these two passages, Goodrick makes the observation that this passage is important "as proving that Pseudo-Solomon believed that the souls even of wicked men returned to God, and did not suffer annihilation." But we must note that he qualifies this observation by saying: "At least that is the opinion here. Unfortunately, what he says in one place cannot be used to check what he says in another."¹⁴

On this whole subject of the pre-existence and immortality of the soul, we ourselves would be a little chary about making his affiliation with Platonic philosophy too secure. To be sure, we cannot circumvent the rather obvious fact that in these beliefs he has spoken beyond what the canonical books state either implicitly or explicitly. He has without a doubt a grasp of the belief of the Platonists and manifests it sufficiently to warrant what Deane has said regarding the Church's use of the book:

The doctrine of the pre-existence of souls has been condemned in Christian times as heretical (e.g. in the Second Council of Constantinople), and those who hold the inspiration of *The Book of Wisdom* are necessarily obliged to refuse to see it in this passage.¹⁵

Yet it cannot be said with certainty that our writer believes fully as a Platonist. We have cited sufficient passages to evidence the fact that, if anything, he is attempting to state

¹⁴Goodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 313.

¹⁵William J. Deane, *The Book of Wisdom* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1881), p. 158.

old beliefs in new language and form. And the old beliefs are there, if one searches for them. The place of the soul is not disjointed from the sovereignty of God.

We have mentioned the fact that Porter's book brought into clear perspective the thinking about pre-existence and immortality in The Book of Wisdom. His contention that these are essentially Hebraic brought reaction from various quarters. Paul Volz, among others, has come forth forth to state his reactions to Porter's study, and since it presents a helpful summary of Porter's main contention with Volz's own opinion regarding it, we cite his summary paragraph here. Porter's book, he writes

betont den Unterschied zwischen der rabbinisch-jüdischen und der platonisch-griechischen Vorstellung von der Präexistenz und der Unsterblichkeit der Seele. Bei der rabbinischen Vorstellung bleibe die Seele etwas Unpersönliches, die Entscheidung über den Charakter des Menschen vollziehe sich nicht in der Präexistenz, sondern erst im irdischen Leben, die Folgerung aus dieser Seelenlehre sei nicht die Unsterblichkeit, sie schliesse den Auferstehungsglauben nicht aus, sondern ein. PORTER meint nun, das Buch Weisheit (wie auch der slav. Henoch) stehe mehr auf der rabbinischen als auf der hellenistischen Seite, es sei nicht von platonischen und philonischen Vorstellungen aus, sondern von der Atmosphäre des einfachen Judentums aus zu erklären. Daran ist wohl manches richtig; der Verfasser ist nicht ein Grieche, sondern ein Jude. Aber man darf ihn nicht auf eine einfache Formel bringen; er ist ein von griechischem Geist beeinflusster Jude, und er ist kein Philosoph, sondern ein Prediger; aus beidem ergibt sich eine gewisse Mannigfaltigkeit der Ideen und eine Vermischung der Linien, vollends bei einem so undurchsichtigen Problem wie dem Seelen- und Fortdauerglauben. Alles in allem scheinen mir seine Aussagen doch näher bei der philonisch-hellenistischen als bei der rabbinischen Anschauung zu stehen.¹⁶

¹⁶Volz, op. cit., p. 59.

Of singular importance, however, as we deal with a doctrine of man in The Book of Wisdom, is our writer's underlying concept of sin. This doctrine is so clearly apparent in the book that we might say it is of prime importance among all the conceptions with which we are dealing in this study. We shall, first of all, look at certain of our author's expressions used to undergird his idea of sin.

A most striking phrase looms up before us already in the initial part of the book, and it is the use of this expression that seems to underly, to a great extent, our writer's concept of sin. This is the phrase *εκόλοι λογισμοί* found in 1:3. Various cognates of both the noun *λογισμός* and verb *λογίζομαι* should be noted to show the significance of this idea in the author's thinking about sin. In 1:3 the writer says that *εκόλοι λογισμοί* separate men from God. This idea of "twisted thoughts" might be said to be characteristic of one who represents Israel's sapiential and gnostic writings. We find the same thought in 2:1, where the unrighteous are depicted as reasoning crookedly in themselves (*ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λογισάμενοι οὐκ ὀρθῶς*). In 2:21 it is used with *πλανῶ* as the writer sums up the perverted reasoning of the wicked as a concomitant of their defection (*ταῦτα ἐλογίσαντο, καὶ ἐπλανήθησαν*). It might be added that chapters 2-3 are a clear expression of this distortion of thought, for here the wicked are depicted in the futility of their rabid Epicureanism.

In later sections of the book this same sense of the word and its cognates occurs. In 9:14 the writer says that the

thoughts (λογισμοί) of mortals are terrible. God is described in 11:15 as sending all kinds of horrible animals to punish the wicked because of their perverted thoughts (ἀντὶ δὲ λογισμῶν ἀδυνέτων ἀδικίας αὐτῶν). But, probably the passage manifesting the greatest tragedy is 12:10, where there is despair as to whether the unrighteous will ever change from this kind of perverted reasoning (ὅτι οὐ μὴ ἀπαλλαγῆ ὁ λογισμὸς αὐτῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα).

It might be said, then, that this is an underlying characteristic of sin for our author. It is echoed in the usage of the word ἀφρονες to describe the wicked in 15:5. The negative expression of lacking wisdom in 9:6 (τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ σοφίας ἀπόσης) and in 10:8 (σοφίαν γὰρ παρεδέσαντες) illustrates the same kind of thinking. For our author sees sin as quite definitely interrupting the daily discourse a man should carry on with his Creator in his innermost thoughts.

We find other expressions, however, which serve to illustrate his doctrine of sin. In chapter 2, the rank rebellion of the wicked seems to indicate that the word ὕβρις lies behind all that they are doing, although our writer does not specifically employ the word. Again, a general term is used in 2:21. Our writer says of the unrighteous that their wickedness (κακία) has blinded them. In 5:6 their sin is their defection from the way of truth (ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ ἀληθείας), and this provides the background for the ultimate question of 9:13: "What man is he that can know the plan of God?" (τίς γὰρ ἄνθρωπος γνώσεται βουλὴν Θεοῦ;) For the things about God are mysteries, and the lot of the wicked is that they do not know them. This is

brought out clearly again in 2:22 where it is said they are ignorant of the mysteries of God (οὐκ ἔγνωσαν μυστήρια θεοῦ).

As we look at our writer's doctrine of sin, however, it is important that we bear in mind that sin is basically something that is against God Himself. It is for this reason that the chapters beginning at chapter 13 and running through to the end of the book are so insistent that idolatry is the most supercilious travesty on the majesty and power of God. As an example we may take 14:14, where the author says of idols that it is by the vain-glory of men that they came into the world (κενοδοξία γὰρ ἀνθρώπων εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον). For idols are an obvious proof of the fact that men have forsaken the Lord (τοῦ κυρίου ἀποστάντες), the sin of man recorded in 3:10.

The conception of sin thus far is unquestionably in the sphere of morality. It has to do with the God-man relationship. And it might be noted that it is in his doctrine of sin that our author most readily displays the fact that he is not an outright Platonist. He does not spend much of his time in lachrymose concern over the fact that matter is evil and that wretchedness must be traced to this basic factor of experience. He rather sets evil in the moral sphere. Wickedness has to do with man's ethical responsibility before God. This will become even more apparent as we turn now to discuss the radical character of sin for him.

We should very readily draw the conclusion, as we look

more closely at our writer's view of sin, that it is an inherent and serious condition. He associates sin in 10:1 already with the evil inclinations of the first created man, Adam, and says that Wisdom helped to bring him out of his fall (καὶ ἐξείλατο αὐτὸν ἐκ παραπτώματος ἰδίου). Setting aside the enigmatic meaning of this passage, it is significant for us here that sin is linked with man's creation, and that the moral interpretation of man's sin in the Genesis creation account is accepted. As a consequence sin is associated with the being of man by nature. It is ingrained, and in 12:10 the writer does not hesitate to call the evil of the wicked an inbred evil (ἔμφυτος ἢ κακία). This is echoed in 13:1 where he makes the blank statement that all men by nature are vain (μάταιοι μὲν γὰρ πάντες ἄνθρωποι φύσει). This passage incidentally also brings out the natural ignorance of man about who God really is. It is stated in a rather circumlocutory fashion by a phrase that we could render literally: "there was present with them an ignorance of God" (οἷς παρῆν θεοῦ ἀγνωσία).

Perhaps the outstanding example of this inherent propensity toward wickedness are the Canaanites in 12:3-7. The ease with which they sacrificed their own children and the futility with which they carried on their idolatrous ritual point to the inbred nature of their evil. They are a people whom God hated indeed.

But sin brings death, and Holmes is no doubt correct

when he says that the concept of death, like others in the book, is spiritualized.¹⁷ The writer sees death in a necessary correlation to men's perverted thoughts about the plan and way of God. Yet in this very connection we find one of the truly prize passages in The Book of Wisdom. Man's death because of his refusal to know God's way can be traced all the way back to the deceit of the Serpent. 2:24 says that it is by the envy of the devil that death came into the world (φθόνῳ δὲ διαβόλου θάνατος εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον). This passage is particularly important because, as Heinisch says, it is "the first instance in which Satan is expressly singled out as the tempter of Adam and Eve."¹⁸ We find here then an advance in the thinking about sin. The Tempter is intricately bound up with the wickedness of man as it accrued to him in the Fall.

If, then, sin is something that clashes with the plan of God, and if it is radically ingrained in men, it follows that God punishes sin. We find many examples of the punitive activity of God in the book. Thus in 3:10 the writer says that the ungodly will have punishment (ἐξουσιᾶ ἐπιτιμίας) according to how they have thought, and in 3:19 he remarks that the end of the unrighteous generation is horrible (γενεᾶς ὅτι

¹⁷Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 542.

¹⁸Paul Heinisch, Theology of the Old Testament, English edition by William Heidt (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, St. John's Abbey, c. 1950), p. 139.

ἀδίκου χαλεπὰ τὰ τέλη). The bitterness with which their punishment is foretold in 4:19-20 reminds us of the imprecatory Psalms. He will cast them down headlong (ἐΐξει περνεῖς) and shake them from the foundations (σαλεύσει αὐτοὺς ἐκ θεμελίων). Perhaps no fuller expression of this punitive visitation is given than in the section from 10-19, where the death of the Egyptians is interpreted as being the most manifest illustration of the wrath of a punishing God.

But now, as we have concerned ourselves with the doctrine of sin in The Book of Wisdom, a question looms up in our minds. To what extent does our writer posit a belief in the freedom of the will? Is he a determinist, or does his idea of both Good and Bad originate in the will of man? Is God responsible for sin, or is man?

We have noted points at which our writer seems decisively to describe sin as something ingrained and almost pre-determined. Yet, as Gregg suggests, we must contrast this with the expression in 1:16, where the writer pictures the ungodly themselves as calling down death upon themselves (Ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν καὶ τοῖς λόγοις προσεκαλέσαντο αὐτόν), and making a covenant with it (συνθήκην ἔθεντο πρὸς αὐτόν).¹⁹ We seem thus to have two quite conflicting views, one deterministic and the other giving some expression to the freedom of the will. We know of no final solution to this conflict, except to say that the writer's

¹⁹Gregg, op. cit., p. 118.

view of predestination, which we will discuss in another chapter, has an influence on his thought at this point and causes the opaqueness which he manifests here.

Without a doubt, we have in The Book of Wisdom a picture of God as the Absolute. He is Creator of all, as we have seen in a previous chapter, and lays moral claims upon all, as we have seen in our discussion of sin above. From this viewpoint our author is a determinist. God is in complete control. But at the same time we must note that our writer does not present a completely constricted view of such a picture of God. There is room for man to make his own choice and his own decisions. Does this not lie at the heart of the book? For in 1:1 and again in 6:1-4, the freedom of terrestrial rulers to do either good or bad is recognized. And indeed the entire work is a call to repentance addressed to apostate Jews. They can turn, if they themselves but will it. For even in the passage which seems most clearly to evidence some kind of determinism, viz. 12:10, we have the explicit statement that God gave the wicked in time past a place for repentance (ἐδίδους τόπον μετανοίας). And again in 3:13 one can scarcely say that there is determinism in the joy expressed over the woman who of herself refrained from experiencing intercourse in transgression (ἥτις οὐκ ἔγνω κοίτην ἐν παραπτώματι). It is to be doubted then that our author ever really considered the question of determinism in opposition to the freedom of the will.

The upshot of this all brings us to a question we have proposed for ourselves at the conclusion of these two chapters. We should like to ask: Is the book, as we have viewed it thus far, written essentially from an anthropocentric or a theocentric point of view? The problem with which we have just dealt, that of determinism vs. free will, serves to lead us directly to the conclusion that our writer, beyond a doubt, is a theocentrist. The important factor in all that we have considered thus far is God's relation to it. In this chapter, for example, we have seen that the soul, even though bearing Platonic overtones at points, cannot be viewed apart from God. Again, sin is disastrous because it, too, is enveloped in defection from God. Our initial chapter traced at great length the very concept of God Himself and its important bearing in our writer's thought. We are lead to the conclusion that, as giving a general affinity between the two, this is a point at which The Book of Wisdom and the canonical writings hold common ground. But now we have reached the point at which we must concern ourselves with the Plan of Salvation advanced by the book.

CHAPTER IV

THE WAY OF SALVATION IN THE BOOK OF WISDOM

We should expect our writer to have a significant view of salvation as we recall his radical sense of sin and evil. And, to be sure, he does. There is a kind of hope held out to apostates who are willing to amend their ways, and if, as we have observed above, the entire book is a call to repentance, then certainly we should find some sort of soteriology espoused in the book. We propose in this chapter to examine in a bit greater detail the necessary corollary to our writer's belief in the selectiveness of a unique people, viz. the doctrine of predestination. Without a doubt, this posed sizeable problems in his own mind. In the second place, this will lead us to the very important soteriological question: Does the saving initiative appear to be chiefly God's or man's? From this we shall proceed to concern ourselves with the important aspects of salvation as they appear in various quarters of the book. And finally we shall point to a problem that will find greater elaboration in our succeeding chapter, the problem of Wisdom's role as a soteriological agent.

The word *σωτηρία* itself is employed a meager four times in the work. We find it in 5:2, where the wicked who have maltreated the righteous some day will wake up to behold rather the *σωτηρία* of the righteous. In 6:24, the word lies at the heart of the appeal to the "judges of the earth" in

the sweeping statement that wise judges are the σωτηρία of the earth. In 16:6, the writer is re-interpreting Israel's wilderness wanderings and points to the Brazen Serpent as a sign of salvation (σύμβολον σωτηρίας). Again, in 18:7, the people of the Exodus were witness not only of the destruction of the enemy, but also of their own salvation. The use of the noun σωτηρία, then, seems to indicate that the writer has in mind much the same kind of idea that the Jews of old had delineated with σωτηρία, and which the Septuagint accordingly rendered with σωτηρία.

The verb σώζω is employed five times. In 9:18 and 10:4 we meet with a problem which will be discussed below, for here it is said that Wisdom is the agent who saved (ἐσώθησαν, ἐσώσεν) the people. In 14:4 the word is used to show that the providence of God is over all men and is not limited to merely the righteous. By guiding the navigator unwittingly through the waves, God shows that he can save from all danger (δύνασαι ἐκ παντὸς σώζειν). In the Brazen Serpent section once again, viz. 16:7, the writer says that the people were not saved (ἐσώζετο) by looking at the serpent, but rather by God Himself. It is interesting that God is here addressed as σωτήρ. Finally, in 18:5, Moses' preservation as an infant is looked upon as a case of being saved.

We have, just in the employment of this root, therefore, an idea of God as Savior. However, it is noticeable that our writer's idea of salvation is somewhat more generalized than

that of the Old Testament. We should have expected, particularly in the activized sense of the verb, to have had a more decisive picture of salvation. The excitement that pulsates in the verb $\psi\omega$ throughout much of the Old Testament is lacking somewhat here. This makes for a significant contrast between an Old Testament prophet's emotionalism, and the quieted fervor but strained reasoning of a Wisdom writer.

At this point we are ready to bring to the fore once more our author's conception of a unique people, which will in turn lead us to discuss his view of predestination. We have had some occasion in the preceding chapters to note the definite contrast between the $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\iota$ and the $\alpha\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. In order that we might have this problem fully before us at this time, we call to mind once more some of the observations made above. We noted, for example, that the $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\iota$ experience an intimate fellowship with God, that they are His people, His elect, His holy ones. He never is described as acting toward them in stringent and inexorable judgment. What afflictions they do have are merely exercises by which their confidence in Him is invigorated. Yet for the $\alpha\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ it is just the opposite. That which is proving affliction and mere trial to the $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\iota$ is damning, wrathful torture to the $\alpha\delta\epsilon\lambda\phi\epsilon\iota\varsigma$. They are objects of the hate of God, and He scarcely spares them, if spare them He does at all.

The Book of Wisdom is a polemic in one very important

phase.¹ It is written in antithesis to that kind of free lance sensuality that characterized the baser side of Epicureanism, a kind of squandering in which even many of the Alexandrian Jews had participated. Yet there seemingly remained a group loyal to its heritage, preserving itself from naughty infiltrations of this sort and because of its stand-offishness was forced to bear the brunt of oppression. In 2:12ff. we find the ἀσεβῆς plotting to lie in wait for the soul of the δίκαιος, to torture him and put him to a shameful death, a situation so realistically described that our writer may have experienced it himself. In any case he is unable to forget, and his theology becomes subjective to the extent of coming nigh, if not directly, to the use of the lex talionis.

To point to the usage of the lex talionis is not our main purpose at this point, however. We are interested merely in showing our writer's belief in the triumph of the δίκαιος over the ἀσεβῆς, a belief implicit in which there is a doctrine of predestination. We find this triumph espoused in 3:7, where the δίκαιοι are pictured in the day of victory as skipping like sparks through the stubble, the ἀσεβῆς.² It is manifest again in 4:16, where it is said that the δίκαιοι

¹J. A. F. Gregg, The Wisdom of Solomon, in The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, edited by A. F. Kirkpatrick (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1922), pp. xxiiff.

²Noteworthy is the affinity of this verse with Obadiah 18.

who are dead will condemn the ἁσπεῖς who are living. In 5:1 the writer offers the hope that the δίκαιοι will stand in great boldness (ἐν παρρησίᾳ πολλῇ) before such as have afflicted him. The writer would appear thus to espouse a kind of unconditional predestination, even bordering on that of a double predestination.

This becomes no less a problem for our writer than the paradox of predestination and man's freedom has been through the ages. Our author has no clearly articulated solution. He is cast back and forth between these two poles. It is the age old problem with which he is dealing here, the reality of Israel's election and the peoples in darkness about her. And yet we have noted two factors in our chapter on God, the one that God is recognizably the God of all, a universal God, and secondly that our writer tends to soften this great conflict in God with a sort of theodicy.

To be sure, our writer gives us no ultimate solutions to the universal problem of predestination. He has not reasoned it out to its final conclusions and drawn them. At best, we can only say that he believes in the election of the δίκαιοι, that they share a special relationship with God, and that they entertain the hope that their souls are fully in His keeping.

One observation to which we are led, however, as we are discussing our writer's conception of predestination, is that its weighty position in his thinking would seem to evidence

a rather important fact in his soteriology. It would seem that, in many cases, the initiative in the soteriological act is God's. The fact that the δίκαιοι share God with each other in such unchallenged communion has been determined before, and is something they have fallen heir to. It is the outgrowth of a predetermined attitude of God toward them.

Yet we should pose the question: Does this hold true as a whole in the book? Is it unqualifiedly God who effects salvation throughout? To answer this question we turn to investigate, at greater length, some of the factors we have hinted at above.

We noted in discussing the cognates of σωζω that, by and large, it does not carry the excitement of the Old Testament σω. This leads us to set up an hypothetical judgment that we will now have to prove at greater length. It would seem that, for the writer of The Book of Wisdom, salvation is rather something ethical than dramatic. We turn at this point to substantiate this judgment.

We have noted before the cases of both the woman who desists from committing adultery, and the eunuch who withholds his hand from doing injury to himself. In 3:15 their piety is extolled, for the writer says that the fruits of good labors are glorious (πόνων καρπὸς εὐκλεής). In 4:10 it is said of the righteous man that he was pleasing to God (εὐάρεστος Θεῷ). In 5:6-7 the wicked in the day of visitation bemoan the fact that they have not followed

the way of the Lord (ὁδὸς κυρίου). This is an Old Testament expression, viz. אִלְּנָהּ יְיָ, yet seems to have a little more constricted and ethical sense in this writing. In 6:9-11 it is learning wisdom (μάθητε σοφίαν), keeping holy things in a holy manner (φυλάξαντες ὁσίως τὰ ὅσια ὁσιωθήσονται), and aspiring to do the words of the wise Solomon (ἐπιθυμήσατε τῶν λόγων μου) that can save a man. Again, the word ἄξιος becomes important at certain points, and Fichtner goes so far as to say it is a key word in the first and third sections of the book as he divides it.³ We find this word in 3:5 where it is said of the testing of the righteous that God found them worthy (ἄξιος) of Himself. This appears again in 12:7 where the expulsion from the promised land of the original inhabitants and the consequent settlement by a people truly worthy (ἄξιος) of the land is extolled.

All these examples seem to indicate a kind of ethic lying at the heart of our writer's belief, the fulfillment of which is able to bring a man to communion with God. But, although many of them might be considered as being little more than illustrations of gnomic statements, parallels of which we have sufficient in the canonical Wisdom literature, yet we must note two important instances where our writer goes even further in his application of the ethical. It is the point at which the

³Johannes Fichtner, Weisheit Salomos, in Handbuch zum Alten Testament (Tübingen: Verlag von J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1938), p. 6.

Stoic ethic penetrates his thought and becomes part of it. The first instance is in 4:1-2, where the saving quality of ἀρετή is extolled. This section is spoken to barren women, for whom the sterile womb would seem to be a curse. The writer says that it is better to have no children at all and to have instead.⁴ ἡετή is immortal and is known both with God and men. It is most to be desired and wears an eternal crown of triumph.

The second instance is in 8:7 and speaks of the four cardinal virtues of Stoicism.⁵ The writer says that if a man loves righteousness (δικαιοσύνη), her labors are virtues (ἀρεταί) for him. For she teaches the following: σωφροσύνη, φρόνησις, δικαιοσύνη, and ἀνδρεία. And all of these things are such that there is nothing more profitable in the life of a man (χρησιμώτερον οὐδὲν ἔστιν ἐν βιωῖ ἀνθρώπων).

Without a doubt, then, the ethical plays an important role in the belief of our writer. The hypothesis stated above, that the soteriology of The Book of Wisdom appears in many cases to be rather ethical than dramatic and activistic, appears to have substantiation. It is not God for whom our

⁴The fact that the author of Wisdom refuses to accept childlessness as a mark of divine displeasure is taken by Holmes to be a radical departure from traditional belief. See Holmes, "The Wisdom of Solomon," The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, edited by R. H. Charles (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), I, 518.

⁵For a discussion see Gregg, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

writer takes care, for He is supreme and transcendent. It is rather man, as he is tempest-tossed on the waves of life. The problem is that of raising man up from the quagmire. As a Wisdom writer, our author is wont to say that since man's problems lie in the area of ethics, his salvation also must be interpreted within the confines of this same area.

Yet our writer is acquainted sufficiently with the history of his people to recall that God had made dramatic movements in their direction, that He had again and again proved His power on their behalf doing great things for them. We cannot make the observation that much in the soteriology of the book is ethical without recalling that chapters 10-19 give us a picture of the God of Israel's history, a God who was with them from times immemorable, and delivered them.

As we raise again the question whether the soteriological impulse originates with God or man, we are prone to ask: Can we say that either one is really dominant in the book? Or isn't it rather true that we have here a conflict, unresolved indeed, between the ethical and the dramatic? Is it not a conflict that was adumbrated already above in our discussion of predeterminism and the freedom of the will, or in that of the writer's predestinarian beliefs? It would seem that, at this point, we are dealing with the heart of a problem for the sapiential authors of Israel. It concerns the extent to which a man can reorientate his own life to a state of harmony with God or the extent to which it is necessary for God to act in

this respect for him. It is a question of nature versus super-nature, a problem that plagued the minds of "Israel's humanists." J. C. Rylaarsdam, in the introduction to his work on this very problem, states succinctly:

Another question perennially present in the history of Christian life and thought is spoken of as the problem of nature and grace. Does the human mind, in its exercise of freedom and in its capacity for observation, experimentation, and analysis, discover the true way of life? Granting that there is a God who creates men, is the divine act of creation, which endows them with a reasoning and purposive consciousness, the only "grace" God grants them? Or are men, at least some of them, given special aid over and above this "natural" endowment? If so, in what manner or form is it given, and how is it related to the natural urge for understanding? Does it supplement nature? Or does it deny its validity?⁶

It is not without its significance that our writer should, at his early time, be concerned with a problem that has not often been torpid in theological concern and that at our own time is a subject of great debate. The Book of Wisdom is not without contemporary significance.

As we turn now to consider the notable aspects of salvation in our writer's belief, we are confronted with a significant fact. It becomes rather apparent, as we look more closely at the work, that it is devoid of any kind of Messianic expectation.⁷ To be sure, it is only with a certain amount of force exerted

⁶J. Coert Rylaarsdam, Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1946), pp. iv-v.

⁷C. Siegfried, "Book of Wisdom," A Dictionary of the Bible, edited by James Hastings (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1902), IV, 930. See also Gregg, op. cit., p. xlvi.

on the text that LaGrange can find in 2:12-20 a lucid prophecy of the Suffering Servant, for this passage seems to have no larger meaning than the persecuted righteous man, in whose defense the entire book is written.⁸

More important, however, and more greatly elaborated in the work is the expectation of the unfolding of some kind of divine rule, in which the δίκαιοι will participate, and at which time they will triumph over the ἀσθεῖς. This particular belief, according to Gregg, is espoused in two places, in 3:7-9 and in 5:16-23.⁹ In the first of these passages the writer says that in the time of their visitation (ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς) the righteous will shine and run like sparks amidst the stubble. But more than this, they will judge the nations and have dominion over them, and their Lord will reign over them forever. This relationship will be one of truth (ἀλήθεια), and those that are faithful will abide with God, and will have grace and mercy. In the beautiful passage of 5:16-23 the righteous are promised a glorious kingdom (τὸ βασίλειον τῆς εὐπρεπείας) and a beautiful crown (τὸ διάδημα τοῦ κάλλους). The Lord in addition will protect them and will fight for them. He will take the forces of nature, thunder, hailstones, and flood and use them as His weapons to fight for the righteous.

⁸ Rylaarsdam, *op. cit.*, p. 62, quotes LaGrange as saying that 2:12-20 is "une véritable prophétie de la Passion du Sauveur."

⁹ Gregg, *op. cit.*, p. xlviil.

Without a doubt, these two passages are futurist. They look forward to the establishment of some kind of theocratic reign, in which the *Siddoi* are going to share. But there is some disagreement among scholars as to the extent of this reign and its nature. Gregg mentions three ways in which the passages can be interpreted. They can be taken

- a) as vivid and pictorial descriptions of an ethical and spiritual future, the concrete being the only way of presenting the inward reality.
- b) as definite and literal promises concerning a concrete earthly future, when the Jews shall be restored to their theocratic pre-eminence.
- c) as representations of the popular Jewish eschatology, which looked forward to a universal Messianic world-sovereignty for Israel, in which the dead would partake, having been restored to earth by a bodily resurrection.¹⁰

Gregg proceeds to adopt the first as his own view, while he mentions that Grimm, in his great commentary, had held out for the second.¹¹ It would seem that Charles makes more room for the third when he says, "Our author makes no reference to the Messiah. There is, however, to be a Messianic or theocratic kingdom, in which the surviving righteous will judge the nations and have dominion." Yet he does proceed to say that there is no belief in a bodily resurrection expounded in the book.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Grimm's work on Wisdom is still considered to be the finest. The greater part of it is accessible in English in F. W. Farrar, Wisdom of Solomon, in The Holy Bible With an Explanatory and Critical Commentary by Clergy of the Anglican Church: Apocrypha I, edited by Henry Wace (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1888).

¹² R. H. Charles, A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913), p. 309.

It may be that Gregg has good reasons for saying that the first view is more apropos for an Alexandrian Wisdom writer.¹³ However, we ourselves would be inclined to see here some kind of affinity with late Jewish eschatology. It is indisputable that our writer knew the prophetic writings of the Septuagint translation and is saturated with them at certain points.¹⁴ Indeed, if this is the case, it would be expected that he should manifest some sort of eschatology, and much in the vein of the prophets. Yet we must make the qualification that his eschatology is not of the distinct and emphatic sort as that of some of his near contemporaries. For he is a Wisdom writer, and eschatology is not his chief purpose.

Closely affiliated with our writer's conception of what is in store for the righteous in the future is his concept of rewards.¹⁵ We find the actual word *μίσθος* used in several instances as part of the hope held out to the righteous. In 2:22 the writer chides the wicked because they did not discern the reward of holiness (*μίσθον ὁσιότητος*) held out to blameless souls. In 5:15 it is the righteous themselves who know that their reward is with the Lord (*ἐν κυρίῳ ὁ μίσθος αὐτῶν*). Using again the examples in 3:13-14,

¹³Gregg, op. cit., p. xlviiii.

¹⁴All the major commentaries on the book have examples of this.

¹⁵For a discussion of the concept of "rewards" see Rylaarsdam, op. cit., pp. 56ff.

that of the barren and yet plous woman and the eunuch who works no harm to himself, we find that rewards are promised to both. To the first is given the hope that she will have fruit (viz. children or something that will compensate even more) at the visitation of souls (ἐξεί κερπὸν ἐν ἐπισκοπῇ ψυχῶν), and to the eunuch will be given a special faith (τῆς πίστεως χάρις ἐκλεκτῆ'), and an inheritance in the temple of the Lord (κληροσ ἐν ναῶ κυρίου).

The concept of rewards reminds us of what the prophets of the Old Testament themselves held out as the hope of the people. Rylaarsdam notes that the prophets spoke of the rewards as being chiefly limited to life on earth, but that in The Wisdom of Solomon the concept of rewards is spiritualized.¹⁶ We have noted our writer's concern with rewards because it is important in his doctrines of soteriology and eschatology. It makes it very clear that our writer has a specific view about the future and the lot of the δίκαιος at this time. And though at times the thought of their future state lingers in the background, it is of great significance for the writer's view of the salvation of the righteous.

Before we bring this chapter on soteriology to a close, it is important to note briefly a matter that will be taken up more fully in the succeeding chapter. Yet it must be

¹⁶Ibid., p. 57. The validity of this conclusion, however, is subject to question.

brought in at this point as having some bearing on our writer's soteriology. We refer to the role of Wisdom herself in the saving process. We are inclined to wonder at many points if Wisdom does not nearly usurp activities that normally belong to God; or as is the case in this chapter, if Wisdom does not function in the prime role as Savior in the place of God Himself. To put it briefly, is there any apparent conflict in point of soteriology, between God and Wisdom?

We should be inclined to find this conflict particularly prominent in chapters 6-9 if it is the case. And so it would appear to be the case, for example, in 6:9-11, where Wisdom is held up as the one who is able to save the rulers of the earth from misrule and consequently from desolation. It is perhaps most manifest of all in the Sorites of 6:17-20, where it is finally Wisdom who is able to lead men near to God.

As we discuss this problem at greater length in the succeeding chapter, we shall have occasion to trace the relationship of this kind of thinking to the canonical Wisdom literature, and again to concern ourselves with the problem of the hypostatization of Wisdom as an agent separate from God. If it is merely a similar mode of expression as we find it in the canonical Wisdom Books, then we have no particular precedent here in The Wisdom of Solomon. If on the other hand Wisdom does appear to be an actual personality in the full

sense of the term, then we shall have a number of important problems with which to deal in our succeeding chapter.

THE ROLE OF WISDOM

We have had occasion, in preceding sections, to note some of the idiosyncrasies of Wisdom in our author's thinking. We have found that in many cases the part that she plays poses rather serious problems, or at least tends to divert our pathway into new and fresh areas of study regarding her position among men.

Thus far we have not mentioned the important fact that the body of literature known generally as Israel's sapiential writings--which as a whole would include Job, Proverbs, the Ecclesiast, Ecclesiastes, and The Wisdom of Solomon--is to be distinguished in its own right from other Israelitic writings. It is to be placed into a separate category, for there is something distinctive about it that marks it off from the remaining material. This distinctive feature about the Wisdom writings might be termed its assiduous concern with man as he is asked to live in the world and before God. In other words, in this body of literature we are dealing with a kind of thinking about man and God that is to be characterized for its passivity of action--sapientia in Latin. In contrast to the prophets, the Wisdom writer is not so concerned with social problems, except as they may be part of the larger problems of man and God. His prime concern is rather the larger and yet less tangible problems involving deep inside, the problems of suffering and God's

CHAPTER V

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Thus far we have not mentioned the important fact that the body of literature known generally as Israel's sapiential writings--which as a whole would include Job, Proverbs, the Qoheleth, Jesus ben Sirach, and The Wisdom of Solomon--is to be distinguished in its own right from other Israelitic writings. It is to be placed into a separate category, for there is something distinctive about it that marks it off from the remaining material. This distinctive feature about the Wisdom writings might be termed its assiduous concern with man as he is naked in the world and before God. In other words, in this body of literature we are dealing with a kind of thinking about man and God that is to be characterized for its paucity of nationalistic leanings. In contrast to the prophets, the Wisdom writer is not so concerned with social problems, except as they serve to point up the deeper problems of man per se. His prime concern is rather the larger and yet less tangible problems steaming deep inside, the problems of suffering and God's

relation to it, the responsibility for sin, predestination and the love of God, God's control and man's freedom. In short, it is the predicament of man in his existence and the interest of God exercised toward the same.

To a large extent the recognition of these factors is important as we consider Wisdom's role in The Book of Wisdom. We should therefore be rather inclined, as we evaluate her place in our author's thinking, to do so chiefly on the basis of the other Wisdom literature. For the degree to which Wisdom in The Book of Wisdom appears to become something different from that of the other sapiential writers would serve to point up one of the unique facets of our writer's thought, and would serve to bring into clearer focus the uniqueness of the book as a whole.

In direct relation to this, however, it is important to recall that the enclave of people devoted to the discussion of this sort of thing in Israel was not necessarily late in point of time. In fact, we are forced to recognize the existence of people with a sapiential concern early in the history of the Israelites.¹ The fact that much of the Wisdom material was not actually set down in writing until later times does not preclude the fact that its basic issues had long before been orally yet poignantly dealt with. We mention this fact here

¹At a number of points in the Old Testament we are led to believe that Edom very early possessed a kind of Wisdom for which she became famous. Cf. Jer. 49:7.

that we might see Wisdom as pointed to by our author, not as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as being in a continuous stream that reaches back to the earliest times in Israelite history. Bearing this fact in mind, the peculiarities of Wisdom, as they are found in this book, will become more pointed, and we shall better estimate her position in the long stream of sapiential concern.

It is with the intention of noting the peculiarities of Wisdom in our author's thought that we proceed, at this point, to concern ourselves with several problems which propose themselves. The first is the extent to which Wisdom in The Book of Wisdom is theocentric and charismatic, and the extent to which it is possibly humanistic and secular. Again, we propose to discuss here the large problem which has been hinted at above, viz. Wisdom's essential form as she springs forth from God to come to man. We intend to concern ourselves with the question: Does she come essentially as an attribute of God, a personification, or an hypostasis? Finally, we shall be led into the discussion of her prime activity, and shall ask the question at this point: What appears to be her function as she comes to man?

The problem of the theocentricity and charismatic character of Wisdom is apparent throughout the long stream of Israelite Wisdom. We should be inclined as New Testament Christians to see Wisdom throughout the Old Testament writings as quite thoroughly charismatic and God-centered. Yet, if we were to

do this, we would be evading one of the truly strong and paradoxical tensions inherent in Israelite Wisdom. We have noted it at points above. It is the tension between man's freedom and God's ordering of things. Or, to put it as we have above, it is again the problem of nature and grace. For implicit in this very tension are all the problems relative to the paradox of nature and grace.

Indeed in early and more casual references to חכמה in the Old Testament books, there is a simplicity that is quite unquestionably theocentric. We find it associated particularly with those incidents in which people were called upon to exhibit technical skill in constructing the tabernacle, or in fabricating the priestly garments. It is the wise-hearted (חכמי) in Exodus 28:3 who make Aaron's garments for him. It is again the same (חכמים) in Exodus 36:1 who are active in the building of the sanctuary. And yet it is notable in both cases, and this holds true for the remainder of these early, naive references, that it is God who disposes this Wisdom upon these technicians. In Exodus 28:3 God is speaking, and says that He has filled them with a spirit of Wisdom (רוח חכמה). In the same manner in Exodus 36:1 the writer says it is the Lord who has put Wisdom in them (נתן יהוה חכמה).

The extraordinary dispensation of Wisdom, however, is associated with the name of Solomon, and thus all the Wisdom writers of Israel fall back in one way or another upon the great experience that was his in attaining Wisdom. But the reality of great importance in the dispensation to Solomon is the fact

that it came as a gift and as an answer to prayer. Far from being something that he himself set out to seek, it was granted to him as a gift from the Lord. The reality that is expressed in I Kings 5:9,² that it was God who gave Solomon Wisdom and understanding (וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה אֵלֶיךָ חָכְמָה לְאֵלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם), was to lie at the heart of the Hebraic idea of the acquirement of Wisdom.

Yet another line of thinking transects at this point, and is of great importance to the underlying thought of Wisdom literature. It is a factor taken for granted throughout many of the Proverbs, and one which becomes somewhat crucial in the discussions of the Qoheleth. It is the extent to which there is a human quest for Wisdom, almost in antithesis to the divine dispensation of it.

It is true that in the Proverbs and Qoheleth we have two different types of Wisdom material. The first is essentially prudential and didactic, the latter reflective and even, at points, pessimistic.³ And yet the significant thing about both of them is that the concern with Wisdom tends in many cases to originate somewhere within the area of the aspirations of man himself. In the Book of Proverbs this is perhaps most simply noted in the frequent association of the Hebrew verb אָרַן with Wisdom, a verb with a decided economic flavoring. A more or less typical case of the affinity of this economic background

²In the English Bible this is 4:29.

³J. Coert Rylaarsdam, Revelation in Jewish Wisdom Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1946), p. 4.

with Wisdom is found in Proverbs 23:23, which the Authorized Version renders, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." The Hebrew reads as follows, and the usage of the word **סֹכֶר** is also important to note: **אִסֹּחַ קִנְיָהּ וְאַל תִּסְכֹּר חִכְמָה וְסוּכָר וּבִינָה:**

In the Qoheleth we find the reflections of a man who is discouraged over the uncontrolled cycle of events, who mourns over the recklessness of mortals and the futility of knowing that anything good he might leave behind may soon fall into the hands of fools. He is a man still in the midst of life and yet beset with doubts about the worthwhile character of its promises. And so he tries a variety of things that life has to offer in order that in one or another of them he might discover some meaning beyond the drabness that characterizes the outer shell of events. One of the things he tries is Wisdom, and in 1:13 we are confronted by an anomalous and yet significant statement. Noteworthy is the fact that he himself assumes the initiative in his quest for Wisdom. He gives his own heart to search out Wisdom, and to know things that are with his own mind (**וַנִּתְּתִי אֶת-לִבִּי לְדַרוֹשׁ וּלְתוֹרַת חִכְמָה**). Although he does make mention of the fact that God had placed this kind of searching within the realm of man, it is significant that the immediacy of Wisdom as something coming direct from God is here replaced by a secondary view which pictures it as coming a little less immediately upon men. The upshot of all this then is that the attainment of such Wisdom brings weeping in due

proportion. For in 1:18 the attainment of much wisdom is much grief (ברו חכמה רב - כעם).

Yet it is to be noted that in these same two writings Wisdom is something that comes from God. Proverbs 8, to which we shall refer again, is without a doubt an encomium on the theocentricity and charismatic nature of Wisdom. Again in Qoheleth 2:26, it is God who gives to man Wisdom (כי לאדם .. נתן חכמה).⁴ The examples could be enlarged.

This rather hasty sketch of a difficult problem perhaps does nothing more than point to the fact that in the Wisdom literature there is a tension between a strict theocentricity and the role of man himself in the acquirement of Wisdom. It should also be remembered, however, that inasmuch as the Wisdom writers were Hebrews, there was no strictly secular sphere of life for which man was per se responsible and in which he could live naked in isolation from God. All life was religious for the Hebrew. All life was coram Deo. To a large extent this may supply the solution to the tension of nature and grace as applied to Israel's concept of Wisdom.

But now it is imperative for us to observe more closely this same matter in The Book of Wisdom and to note the manner in which our writer deals with this identical problem and the extent to which he either follows in the traditional vein or deviates from it.

⁴In Qoh. 2:26 God's name is not mentioned, but He is manifestly the subject.

In the Wisdom chapters of The Book of Wisdom, viz. chapters 6-9, we are confronted with the details of Wisdom's functions. At the risk of stating conclusions before sufficient data has been supplied, we should like at this point to note that The Book of Wisdom appears to put emphatic stress on the theocentricity and charismatic character of Wisdom. To be sure, we should say even more--that it is at this point that this book reaches its true peak and becomes most beautiful.⁵ If the inspiration of this book were to be discussed again by the Church, it would seem that it would be at this point that it would be most difficult to decide against it. For in its depiction of Wisdom it would appear almost to outrank the canonical writings in sheer beauty of expression.

It is true, however, that in this book Wisdom is something that must be sought after, and we have this same crossing of the divine and human pointed to above. Thus, for example in 6:12, Wisdom is easily seen by those who love her (εὐχεῶς θεωρεῖται ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγαπώντων αὐτήν), and is found by them that seek her (εὐρίσκεται ὑπὸ τῶν ζητούντων αὐτήν). To think upon Wisdom in 6:15 is the perfection of understanding (ἐνθυμηθῆναι περὶ αὐτῆς φρονήσεως τελειότης), and in 6:20 the desire of Wisdom (ἐπιθυμία σοφίας κινᾷ ἐπὶ βασιλείαν) bringeth into a kingdom. In 8:9 Pseudo-Solomon is speaking and says that he proposed to take her to live with himself

⁵William J. Deane, The Book of Wisdom (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1881), p. 26.

(ἔκρινε τούτην ἀγαθέσθαι πρὸς συμβίωσιν).

All these examples illustrate again the human initiative to be exerted in the acquirement of Wisdom and plunge us again into the dilemma we have attempted to sketch above. Yet we have made the observation that The Book of Wisdom is quite manifestly theocentric and that its descriptions of the same are some of the most noteworthy expressions in the book. We find this very matter poignantly depicted in 8:17-21. Pseudo-Solomon is described as saying that when he considered the glories that were to be found in Wisdom, such as immortality (ἀθανασία) and riches (πλοῦτος), he went about seeking how to take her to himself (ὅπως λάβω αὐτήν εἰς ἑμαυτόν). But in v. 21 he comes to the very significant observation that Wisdom is not something that can be acquired by oneself. It is essentially from God, and even to know this is Wisdom. Wisdom must be prayed for. This verse is really the locus for our writer's concept of the theocentricity of Wisdom, and since it is so fruitful, we note it in its entirety here:

γινούσ δὲ ὅτι οὐκ ἄλλως ἔσονται ἔσθλας, εἰ μὴ ὁ θεὸς τῷ
 —καὶ τοῦτο δ' ἦν φρονήσεως τὸ εἰδέναι τίνος ἢ χάρις—,
 ἐνέτυχον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ ἐδέηθον αὐτοῦ
 καὶ εἶπον ἐξ ὅλης καρδίας μου.⁶

⁶Translation is from The Complete Bible: An American Translation, the Apocrypha translated by Edgar J. Goodspeed (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1939).

But I perceived that I could not win her unless God
 gave her to me
 (And this too came of understanding, to know from whom
 the favor came)
 I appealed to the Lord, and besought him,
 And said with all my heart. . . .

Chapter nine, then, is Pseudo-Solomon's prayer for this Wisdom, and contains many extraordinary allusions to the theocentricity and charismatic character of Wisdom. In 9:10 he prays that God may send Wisdom out of His holy heavens and from the glory of His throne (ἐξ ἁγίων οὐρανῶν, ἀπὸ θεοῦ σοφίας). In 9:4 Wisdom sits by the throne of God (θεῶν πᾶρεδρον). Even before this, Pseudo-Solomon, in 7:7, had already prayed and the spirit of wisdom had come upon him (φρόνησις ἐδόθη μοι). To be sure, in all of these passages Wisdom is with God and is sent forth from God to be with men. We could enumerate a greater number of passages illustrative of the same sentiment, but these are sufficient to underline our writer's basic belief in the theocentricity of Wisdom and its role as a charismatic gift. They are sufficient, at the same time, to allow us to draw the conclusion that in point of theocentricity the Book of Wisdom has a great deal in common with the canonical Wisdom books, and that far from underemphasizing this fact, it tends to shine forth with resplendent beauty. This factor will, perhaps, find greater elucidation as we turn now to discuss the basic form of Wisdom, which will lead us to look more clearly at the place she occupies in relation to God.

The Book of Wisdom is a book that has achieved fame because of what it has to say about Wisdom. The peculiarly formulated idea of the form of Wisdom in chapters 6-9, and even as it carries over into chapter 10, has caused everyone who has studied the book to stand in both amazement and perplexity.

One is prompted to wonder just what the author is trying to say of Wisdom here. For without attempting to substantiate this statement at this point, it appears to represent a movement forward in Jewish belief.

As we concern ourselves with Wisdom's basic form in the book, we are inclined to wonder if our writer is looking at Wisdom merely as an attribute of God, or if Wisdom becomes personified in literary form, or if, and this is of extreme importance, she is actually hypostasized, is given existence of her own over against God, and performs functions which are peculiar to herself. It is not difficult to see that we have arrived at a fascinating area of our investigation, and that, if we are able to show that the latter is the case, that we shall have run across a noteworthy phenomenon in Jewish thought.

First of all we ask the question: Is Wisdom in The Book of Wisdom merely an attribute of God? By this we mean, is it an expression of some sort of characteristic about God, that He possesses and that this symbol of human speech tries to describe? Without spending a great deal of time on this question, we give an answer that even a very casual reading of chapters 6-10 could supply, namely that this is hardly so.⁷ Wisdom is more than merely a characteristic of God. It is not an attribute, because it is manifestly more than that. Wisdom has the marks of a distinct person or entity. And this leads us

⁷J. A. F. Gregg, The Wisdom of Solomon, in The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, edited by A. F. Kirkpatrick (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1922), p. xxxvii.

to consider our second query: Is Wisdom in The Book of Wisdom then a personification, viz. a literary device upon the part of our writer?

As we proceed to answer this query, it is necessary for us to note the difference between personification and hypostatization. By employing the first term, we have reference to something within our writer's mind the formulation of which he himself is responsible for. It is, as we have indicated, more of a literary mechanism--either consciously or unconsciously employed--through which his intention is to state a deeper truth, or to solve a deeper problem, than that which appears on the surface. Thus if Wisdom proved to be a mere personification in this book, then doubtless the writer is not as much concerned with the problem of Wisdom as he is with a problem that has made this kind of personification of Wisdom necessary. To put it briefly, if the manner in which he speaks of Wisdom is merely a literary device, then it is quite obvious that he grappled with no particular problems about Wisdom.

On the other hand, the possibility that Wisdom is hypostatized in our writer's thinking raises deeper questions. By the process of hypostasis we mean the actual ascription of independent being to an entity, in which the latter is not merely personified, but has personality and exists in an existence apart from everything else. It is apparent at once that, if this is the case, then we have the task of explaining the existence of this independent being--to whom divine

functions are also ascribed--over against the unchallenged sovereignty of God Himself. And, if this proves to be the case, we shall have some perplexing problems to solve indeed in trying to explicate our author's belief.

As we turn to The Book of Wisdom itself, there are numerous passages which we could cite at this point as being illustrative of both personification and hypostasis. We may begin by pointing to a section that is striking indeed, and that quite possibly played some part in the thinking of the writer to the Hebrews.⁸ This is the section in 7:25-26, and we note it here in full:

ἀτμίς γὰρ ἔστιν τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεως
καὶ ἀπόρροια τῆς τοῦ παντοκράτορος δόξης εὐλικευμένης
διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲν μεμικρμένον εἰς αὐτὴν παρεμπίπτει
ἀπαύγασμα γὰρ ἔστιν φωτὸς αἰδίου
καὶ ἔσοπτρον ἀκηλίδωτον τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας
καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ.⁹

Examples of the same sort, illustrating either personification or hypostatization could be greatly enlarged upon. Wisdom goes around and seeks those that would have her in 6:16. She has her own attributes, which are heaped up in the encomium of 7:22-23. Her reach is from one end of the world to

⁸Cf. Hebrews 1:3.

⁹Translation by Goodspeed, *op. cit.*

For she is the breath of the power of God,
And a pure emanation of his almighty glory;
Therefore nothing defiled can enter into her.
For she is a reflection of the everlasting light,
And a spotless mirror of the activity of God,
And a likeness of his goodness.

the other, and it is she herself who orders all things in 8:1. She talks with God and carries on concourse with Him in 8:3. She knows all the mysteries of God according to 8:4. Pseudo-Solomon is persuaded to take her to himself in 8:9 because she does all these things. Her greatest gift, however, is immortality in 8:17. In 9:4 she sits by the throne of God, and in 9:9 was with God at the creation and understands the mysteries of His mighty works. God sends her out of the heavens to men according to 9:10, as they ask for her. Again in chapter 10 we find that it is no less than Wisdom herself who preserved the saints of old--Adam, Noah, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and the Israelites--in all their vicissitudes.

These examples pose curious questions regarding the basic form of Wisdom in our writer's thinking. In dealing with them we should like, first of all, to set our concern in the direction of a possible hypostasis and to answer questions that are pertinent to this.

The illustrations from The Book of Wisdom given above are sufficient to indicate that there is possible cause for thinking that Wisdom is here credited with actual, personal existence by our writer. Indeed it is not impossible to see a specific case of hypostasizing at this point. There are, however, factors which militate against such conclusions. It is imperative for us to note that in a number of cases our writer seems to have nothing more in mind regarding Wisdom than its simple and practical sense. A fine example would be found in 7:15-16,

where Pseudo-Solomon says that it is God who is the leader of Wisdom (αὐτὸς καὶ τῆς σοφίας ὁδηγὸς ἔστιν), and that we and our words and also all Wisdom (πάντα φρόνησις) are in His hands. The sentiment of this verse forces nothing beyond the simple, practical sense of Wisdom.

In this same connection it is necessary for us to bear in mind that our writer uses other words outside of σοφία for wisdom and understanding, although it is recognized that in the majority of cases σοφία is preferred above all. We find the various uses of φρόνησις, φρόνιμος, φροντίζω, and φροντίς, for example, and these words all carry little more than a practical sense of understanding. We are able to conclude from the fact that they are employed, however, that there is a stream of thinking in our writer's mind which pictures Wisdom as little more than practical understanding of the ways of God.

Again it is doubtful in general that our writer sees Wisdom as a self-existent entity, apart from God. Rather just the opposite would seem to be the case. It is pre-supposed throughout that Wisdom is with God and that she leaves His throne only as He bids her to leave. The observation that Gregg makes would seem to be quite in keeping with the sense of the book. He notes that Wisdom "is not a Being, personal and distinct from God: she emanates from Him, but emanation has not terminated. No birth-severance has taken place,

giving her independent life."¹⁰

On this basis then we should be inclined to discard the belief that there is an hypostasis in our writer's thinking about Wisdom. Such a conclusion would appear to go beyond what the writer has to say of Wisdom and would seem to us to be reading conclusions into his thinking which are not there. But if this is the case, then it is necessary for us to test the possibility that we have here a case of personification.

A case of personification would not be specifically new at this stage of Jewish history, for we quite manifestly have this already in the Proverbs. We have stated above that by personification we have in mind a mode of speaking which a writer employs to convey his basic beliefs. Thus, to make Wisdom meaningful for his readers, he gives her the characteristics of actual persons. Indeed there would seem to be much basis for concluding that this is precisely what our writer is doing and that his whole concept of Wisdom is a literary personification.

But it would appear that there is more. If we have here a case of personification, then it seems that it is an advanced case, and that our writer is much more extreme than our noteworthy canonical example, viz. Proverbs 8. It would rather seem to us that here our writer is a true "Hebrew of the Hebrews" and represents a tendency which is implicit in

¹⁰Gregg, op. cit., p. xxxvi.

the thinking of the Hebrews from the beginning, a tendency to concretize, to make solid, that which to the un-Hebraic mind is taken as abstraction. It is not surprising at all that we should find a Jew--even if living in Alexandria--speaking of Wisdom in this manner. And the significance of this concretizing is of no mean importance when we recall the Semitic undergirding of the Apostle John's account of the Incarnation, or, to use our very picture here, when the title of Wisdom was affixed to the person of Christ, as he was called the "Wisdom of God."¹¹ Our writer exemplifies a step in advance in the line of Wisdom writers who precede him. With Toy we are forced to say that if it is not specifically hypostatization that we have here, we are at least "in the line of advance toward hypostatization."¹²

Without a doubt then this is a point at which our writer deflects from the traditional stream of thought and supplements it with fresh beliefs. It is a significant addition in thought, and we must note it for our judgment on the place of the book in Christian thought and belief.

As we draw to a close our observation on the role of Wisdom in this book, it is necessary that we concern ourselves briefly with the function of Wisdom. For it is here that we are also able to adjudge the book in the light of the Wisdom

¹¹Cf. I Corinthians 1:24.

¹²C. H. Toy, "Wisdom of Solomon," Encyclopedia Biblica, edited by T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1903), IV, 5341.

movement as a whole.

A point at which Wisdom in The Book of Wisdom achieves a common denominator with all that Hebraic thought has to say about Wisdom, is her concern with man himself. This kind of tone is set already at the beginning of the book in 1:6, where Wisdom is said to be a loving spirit (φιλόφρων πνεῦμα). The same kind of thinking carries through into the Wisdom chapters themselves, where one of Wisdom's most admirable traits is her readiness to make herself accessible to men. A rather moving verse, for which there is a parallel in Proverbs 1:20-21, is 6:14. Here it is said that any who rises up early to wait for Wisdom shall find her sitting already at his doors. She will anticipate his asking for her. This verse is characteristic of the closeness of Wisdom to man as a whole. She loves man and gives herself to him.

But what does she bring to man when she comes? What is the knowledge that she offers? Is it earthly or religious knowledge? As we consider again our writer's purpose in writing this book, we are forced to conclude that it is essentially religious knowledge that she brings. At least it is religious in the sense that what she teaches man is the way God would like to have men act. So the rulers in 1:1 and 6:1 are to listen that they might rule in a manner that is acceptable to God. Men have to pray for Wisdom to have her, and this essential religious presupposition underlies what she brings. She comes not of herself, but God sends her, and this again is important

in considering that which she brings with her.

But a passage at which we are forced to pause for a moment is 7:17-21. Here it is peculiarly declared that wisdom is the knowledge of things that are (*τῶν ὄντων γνῶσιν*), knowing how the world was made (*εἰδέναί οὖσατιν κόσμου*), knowing the beginning, end, and midst of times (*ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ μεσότητά χρόνων*), the circuits of years and the positions of stars (*ἐνικυτοῦ κύκλου καὶ ἀστῶν θέσεις*), the nature of living creatures (*φύσεις ζῴων*), the violence of winds (*πνευμάτων βίαις*), and the reasonings of men (*διαλογισμοὺς ἀνθρώπων*). This would appear to be earthly wisdom without real religious significance. This passage is in reality a most significant one, for it substantiates observations that we have made before--that this book is essentially theocentric and religious, and that it is Hebraic in the sense of refusing to see a strictly secular sphere in life, an area divorced from God.

But Wisdom's prime task is the saving of men. She comes to men in their darkest needs and offers them the promise of being rescued. We noted in our last chapter that at points there seemed to be a conflict between God and Wisdom in the saving process. For at places Wisdom appeared to usurp functions that ordinarily belong to God. But now that we have come to the conclusion that Wisdom is not to be viewed as a self-existent entity in conflict with God, but rather as constantly coming forth from God, this problem is resolved. In

the saving process she works merely as His agent, causing His will to be effected among men. And this fact is stated with such a thoroughness that once again the book appears as a great contribution to Hebraic religious thought.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Wisdom of Solomon is the queen of apocryphal literature. This has become more and more apparent as we attempted to underline its theological implications. And beyond a shadow of a doubt, we have discovered that its theology is replete and deep, and that one cannot perceive its full depth by merely turning his spade over once. There is a plethora of fresh belief that whets the appetite of the religious man as he tries to understand and become friends with this lonely Jew out on the island of Alexandrine Judaism, cut off from his homeland and even from his infidel brothers in his own midst.

But as we reflect on the study we have made, how does this writer stand in relation to his canonical predecessors? To what extent is he in the same stream of belief, and to what extent has he reached out toward extraneous visions of truth? Or, to put it as we have at the beginning: Does our writer 1) continue in, 2) deflect from, or 3) supplement the stream of tradition as found in the canonical books?

In answering this question we must recall that there have been numerous points along the way which would force us to draw the conclusion that in many of his beliefs our writer is a Jew, following in the tradition of his fathers. We noted this in discussing his doctrine of God. He does not refuse to use anthropomorphic modes of expression. His God is

Creator of all things and of man. He loves man and comes down into his history to work on his behalf. He is a God of mercy, love, and truth. We noted it also in his doctrine of man. He adopts the Genesis picture of man as created in God's image. He sees the radical character of man's evil, not, however, denying to man a definite area of responsibility. In his soteriology we saw that much of his thinking is theocentric --indeed that the entire backdrop of the book is rather theocentric than anthropocentric. We saw him grapple with the problem of nature and grace as it is wrestled with by many others before him. Finally, in his concept of Wisdom, we found many links with the canonical Wisdom writers and noted the decidedly traditional belief that Wisdom is able to act as a soteriological agent, bringing grace to men.

These are just some of the significant affinities that can be traced between The Book of Wisdom and the faith of the fathers. We call them to mind for the purpose of making the observation that there is much in the theological content of this masterpiece that is essentially Hebraic and that casts us into the stream of Israel's past.

But now the question: Are there points at which our writer is deflective from this stream of belief? The answer again is in the affirmative, for we have had occasion to note them, too. We have had opportunity to see again and again that our writer is a man of his own times and has not turned a deaf ear to the thinking of his own age. Thus we could

note already in his doctrine of God a specific tendency to transcendentalize Him to an extreme in keeping with Platonic influence. Again, in his doctrine of man, the possibility that he may express a belief in the preexistence of the soul is not to be denied, and if this is the case, then we have some kind of deflection here. In this same sense, however, it is necessary to note again that we tried to rescue him from charges of Platonism in his idea of the immortality of the soul, as we showed this to be more an outgrowth of Hebraic thought. In his doctrine of salvation it is not impossible to see some kind of affinity between his beliefs and those of a more legalistic kind of Judaism arising in the intertestamental period. Were this the case, there would be cause to find a deflection here, too. In any case, the ethical atmosphere underlies a great deal of his soteriology. Finally, in his doctrine of Wisdom, we can scarcely say that this is deflective, but rather to view it as a furtherance of implicit Hebraic belief.

This leads us to the question: Are there cases where he actually supplements traditional belief? By this question we intend to preserve a positive atmosphere over against a more negative which is inherent in the word "deflective." In other words, are there any positive contributions that our writer makes to the stream of Israel's theology, beliefs that helped prepare the way for the New Testament era, or beliefs that in themselves represent an advance upon the faith that is found

in the canonical literature of the Old Testament.

It is true that this raises the question of inspiration. Is it really proper for us to speak of a so-called possible "advance" as being found in this book, that would put the book out in front even of inspired, canonical books? At first sight this may seem to be the danger in what we are trying to say here. But we should prefer to say that The Book of Wisdom is the product of spiritual illumination, a kind of illumination that comes to each religious man as he humbly and prayerfully confronts the issues involved between God and himself, a kind of illumination which, in the New Testament era, would have its equivalent in the man who reads his Bible and experiences the presence of the Holy Spirit at the same time, and then takes it upon himself to express what he has come to see. It could be, other factors of course permitting, that the latter work would represent a clarification, a delineation-- and consequently, and "advance" in apprehension. And thus we mean to say that The Book of Wisdom contains certain religious ideas that supplement traditional faith, in the sense that they clarify concepts that before are implicit. At any rate, the peculiarities of belief that are expressed here must be accounted for in some manner.

But what are these supplementary ideas that are advanced in the book? Regarding the doctrine of God, we cannot say that our writer says much of Him that would be noteworthy in comparison to the canonical books. But, when we come to his

belief about man, we recall the zest with which he speaks of the immortality of the soul. Now it is questionable whether this is to be considered deflective or supplementary. It is likewise not conclusively sure whether this belief is the outgrowth of Hebraic ideas or Platonism. We have attempted to deal with this problem in the chapter on man. There is thus a difference of opinion at this point, and perhaps not all could be as enthusiastic as Johannes Fischer, who, as a Roman Catholic, can write of this matter: "dies war bisher nirgends mit solcher Klarheit und Bestimmtheit ausgesprochen und bedeutet zweifellos einen Fortschritt in der alttestamentlichen Theologie."¹

In the area of the doctrine of man, we find also one of the truly beautiful "advances" in the book in our writer's discussion of a subject common to the Israelitic Wisdom writers, the problem of suffering. We noted there the moving passages which tell of the righteous man who may externally appear to be punished, but in reality is just being momentarily proven by God. His suffering will not last long. His soul is in the hand of God and he will soon be with Him. Without a doubt, these are some of the most moving, devotional passages in the book.

But probably the finest so-called advance is the concept of Wisdom. We noticed how proximate our writer's idea of

¹Johannes Fischer, Das Buch der Weisheit, in Das Alte Testament, herausgegeben von Friedrich Nötscher (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1954), p. 6.

Wisdom came to being an actual hypostasis. This is so noteworthy that it is imperative for us to point to it as supplying important background for the concept of the Logos in the Apostle John. In this same connection we noted that two other concepts, that of the Word and of Spirit, are likewise of great significance in the book and can be isolated as we look for ideas that provide significant background for Hebraic belief.

These ideas particularly account for the great importance of this book for both Old Testament and New Testament thought. As we have shown at the very beginning, it is not surprising that the book apparently had an influence upon Jesus and the New Testament writers. The manner in which it prepared the Greek tongue for the expression of the great Christ-event, the manner in which it began to shape conceptual formulations of the Hebraic-Greek milieu that they might be easily employed at the coming of the Son of God to interpret His person and work, and finally the manner in which this book could serve generally as a bridge from the Old Testament to the New Testament era is not without significance. In only one place is there a mournful lacuna. Our writer expresses no reflections in which he presages the coming of this Great One, although there are general allusions to a theocratic Kingdom. It is only to be regretted, for this One would have provided the final solution to the difficulties of man he so adroitly views.

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