

## ARTICLE VI.

## WISDOM AS A PERSON IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

BY PROF. E. P. BARROWS, ANDOVER.

In several passages of the book of Proverbs, Wisdom is introduced in a personal form, solemnly calling upon the children of men to listen to her words, promising life to those who obey her voice, and threatening those who despise her with death. Not to mention other minor passages, we refer the reader to Chap. i. 20-33 and Chap. viii. 1-ix. 12; particularly the very remarkable description of Wisdom as the eldest child of God, and dwelling in His presence before the creation of the world, Chap. viii. 22-31. Notwithstanding Bertheau's objections,<sup>1</sup> these two passages must be considered as proceeding from the same author; and the reader who would enter fully into the spirit of the writer, should study them both in connection with each other. Respecting the meaning of the word *Wisdom* in these passages, very different ideas have been entertained. To introduce the subject, we will take two opinions representing opposite extremes.

The first view, which is also the lowest, is that which takes the term here simply as a *poetic personification* of the lessons which are perpetually inculcated on man as well by the order of nature as by the course of divine Providence; as much as to say: The whole constitution of the world continually admonishes men to walk in the ways of virtue. We cannot deviate from the path of rectitude without being in various ways reminded of our folly. We have continual experience in our own case, of the evils of sin; and continual opportunity to learn, from observing its effects in others, that it always leads to misery and ruin. We have but to open our eyes that we may see how gluttony, drunkenness, and debauchery

<sup>1</sup> Die Sprüche Salomo's: Einleitung. Professor Stuart also follows his judgment. But Ewald rightly decides that the first nine chapters constitute one whole.

bring in their train, disease, poverty, and shame, and how drowsiness clothes a man with rags. If we will but attend to what is constantly going on before our eyes, we cannot fail to know that a companion of fools shall be destroyed; that hasty suretyship involves men in ruin; that pride is the forerunner of disgrace, and that riches are an uncertain and unsatisfying possession. And so in every department of morals and religion. "Common sense, universal experience, and the law of justice written on the heart, as well as the law of God, testify against rapine and wrong of every kind."<sup>1</sup> In this sense, Wisdom, by a beautiful personification, may be said to stand and cry continually at the corners of the streets, inviting men to come and learn of her the way to true happiness. To exalt still higher our idea of her dignity and priceless value, Wisdom proceeds to represent herself as the eldest child of God, as dwelling with Him from eternity, and as present with Him at the creation of the world.

In sharp contrast with this view is the opposite extreme, which understands Wisdom throughout these passages, directly and simply, of our Lord Jesus Christ in His personal presence and ministry. "We are to understand, not the attribute of divine wisdom displayed in the works of creation, nor the light of nature in man, nor the law of Moses given to the Israelites, nor the revelation of the divine will in general, as it is delivered out in the sacred Scriptures, nor the Gospel and the ministry of it in particular, but our Lord Jesus Christ; for the things spoken of wisdom and ascribed to it in this book, especially in the eighth and ninth chapters, show that a divine person is intended, and most properly belong to Christ, who may be called Wisdom in the plural number, as in the Hebrew text, because of the consummate and perfect wisdom that is in Him; as He is a divine person, He is the *Logos*, the Word and Wisdom of God; as Mediator, *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid* in Him; and as man, *the Spirit of Wisdom* rests upon Him without measure. This, with what follows to the end of

---

<sup>1</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on Prov. 1: 20.

the chapter, is a prophecy of the ministry of Christ in the days of His flesh, and of the success of it, and of the calamities that should come upon the Jews for the rejection of it." <sup>1</sup>

In the above quotation from Dr. Gill, the reader is particularly requested to notice the various *limitations*. It is not "the revelation of the divine will in general, as it is delivered out in the sacred Scriptures, nor the Gospel and the ministry of it in particular." It is "a prophecy of the ministry of Christ in the days of His flesh." It is these limitations that constitute the main defect of the view. It has, as we shall endeavor to show further on, a true side, and is faulty not so much in what it affirms, as in what it denies, or at least omits. When we consider the remarkable agreement of this description of Wisdom, particularly as given in Chap. viii. 23-31, with that of the Logos, as given by John and Paul, we cannot wonder that the ancient interpreters were so unanimous in understanding it of the hypostatic Wisdom of God in Christ, "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." <sup>2</sup> In finding Christ in these passages Dr. Gill is right; but in finding in them only "the personal ministry of Christ in the days of His flesh," he is manifestly wrong. It is plain beyond contradiction that the invitations and admonitions of heavenly Wisdom, speaking through Solomon, are addressed to the men of Solomon's day, as well as to those of following generations. Nay more, she is introduced as one that not only existed before the beginning of human history, but has always been calling men, since their creation upon the earth, from their folly and wickedness into the paths of virtue and blessedness. We do not obtain from these passages the idea that now, for the first time, Wisdom comes forth to address men, or that she will address them hereafter "in the last days;" but that now, *as always*, she lifts up her voice to them continually. But in "the personal ministry of our Lord in the days of His flesh," the generations that lived before Him could have no share. In these

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Gill on Prov. 1: 20.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 2: 9.

there was, as it was proper there should be, a fulness of light and power such as the world had never before enjoyed. "Blessed are your eyes," said the Saviour, "for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."<sup>1</sup> But the eyes of those who lived before Christ were not left without the light of which he is the original Fountain, and the divinely appointed Revealer. This view then, in the narrow form in which Dr. Gill states it, must be decidedly rejected.

If we turn, now, to the first view, which regards wisdom only as a poetic personification, we shall find that this also has a true side, and is, like the other extreme, more at fault in what it denies than in what it affirms. Here the following remarks are in place:

*First:* The personification of Wisdom, as representing simply an impersonal order of nature and history, or one in which the presence and providence of a personal God are either denied or left out of view, is not to be thought of for a moment. None but a pantheist would separate nature and history from the God of nature and history; least of all would a Hebrew do it, who was accustomed to see God's hand directly in all the movements of nature, and in all the events of history. To the Hebrew writer God's personal presence fills heaven and earth, and whatever takes place in the sphere of either nature or human society, His agency is in it, and by it He fulfils His holy counsels. Is it of nature that He speaks? Nature is plastic like clay in His almighty hand, and He directs all her powers to the accomplishment of His own most free and wise purposes. "He giveth snow like wool; He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes; He casteth forth His ice like morsels; who can stand before His cold? He sendeth out His word and melteth them; He causeth His wind to blow and the waters flow."<sup>2</sup> Or is it of the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 13: 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 147: 16—18.

course of human affairs? All these are in like manner directed and controlled by God. In every transaction, good or evil, his hand is present and must be acknowledged. "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive."<sup>1</sup> Of the conduct of Jeroboam in following the foolish counsel of the young men who were brought up with him, the sacred historian says: "Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat."<sup>2</sup> Such is the uniform view which the sacred writers take of the movements of human society. To the Hebrew, then, all the lessons which nature and history inculcate, come directly from God himself. Through them He speaks, and in them his voice is heard. When Wisdom, therefore, addresses men, it is the personal Wisdom of God that speaks.

*Secondly:* A Hebrew, when discoursing of divine wisdom, could never leave out of view *God's revealed word*. To him that was, as it is in truth, the sun of the moral world. He could never be guilty of the unspeakable folly (which seems to have been reserved for the boasted philosophy of these latter days) of expatiating at great length on the lessons which nature teaches, but omitting all allusion to the direct instruction of revelation; as if one were to eulogize in glowing terms the brilliancy of the moon's rays, but carefully withhold all reference to the sun, whence she derives her brightness. It is because the world needs — needs because of its moral perverseness and blindness alone, if one chooses thus to limit the proposition, but still needs — a more direct and authoritative revelation of God and duty than that which nature and conscience furnish, that God has given such a revelation. The sacred writers never for a single moment, put the light of nature in competition with even the comparatively dim and imperfect teachings of the Old Testament. When the rich man in hell beseeches Abraham

---

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 50: 20.<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings 12: 15.

that Lazarus may be sent to warn his five brethren, the reply is: "They have" — what? "the light of nature"? "the inward monitor of conscience"? No, not a word of these; but, — "*Moses and the prophets*; let them hear *them*."<sup>1</sup> The Wisdom of God, speaking through "*Moses and the prophets*," constituted at once the highest privilege and the most cherished prerogative of God's chosen people. "What advantage then hath the Jew, or what profit is there in circumcision? Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."<sup>2</sup> In that beautiful Psalm of David in which he sets forth the lessons which the heavens teach concerning God's infinite power and skill, the work of warning men against sin, converting them and making them wise unto salvation, is assigned, not to nature, but to God's written Word. "The *heavens* declare the *glory* of God and the firmament showeth his *handy work*."<sup>3</sup> But "*the law of the Lord* is perfect, *converting the soul*; the testimony of the Lord is sure, *making wise the simple*."<sup>4</sup> "Moreover by them is thy servant *warned*, and in keeping of them there is great reward."<sup>5</sup> Such is, from first to last, the spirit of the Old Testament not less than of the New. When Solomon, therefore, represents Wisdom as solemnly addressing men, it is certain that he has *primary* reference to the Wisdom of God, speaking as well in his written Word, as in the unwritten messages of his prophets.

But we need not, for this reason, understand him as excluding either the outward revelations of nature and providence, or the inward revelations of conscience in the human soul. Nature, providence, conscience and scripture, these all have the same God for their Author, and their teachings are all in mutual harmony with each other, and constitute one self-consistent whole. "Thou shalt not steal," commands the divine law. "Thou shalt not steal," responds the voice of conscience. "Thou shalt not steal," proclaims the course of divine providence; for though a man may seem for a time to prosper by dishonest methods, the end is always

<sup>1</sup> Luke 16: 29.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 3: 1, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ps. 19: 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. 19: 7.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. 19: 11.

shame and misery. "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished;"<sup>1</sup> "Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel,"<sup>2</sup> are proverbs based on experience, and they will endure the test of experience to the end of time. The Word of God commands: "Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."<sup>3</sup> Conscience always approves this precept as right, and condemns every violation of it; and nature herself fights against the glutton, the drunkard and the debauchee. Here, again, such precepts as the following: "Be not among wine-bibbers, among riotous eaters of flesh; for the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty; and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags;"<sup>4</sup> "A harlot is a deep ditch, and a strange woman is a narrow pit,"<sup>5</sup> rest on the broad foundation of universal experience. Heavenly Wisdom speaks, first of all, through revelation. But her voice is echoed back by conscience, by history, and by nature. These all speak with her, and in her behalf. Her testimony to the sons of men includes them all. If the view which regards Wisdom, in the passages now under consideration, as only a poetic personification of the lessons of natural religion, is too low, that which confines her testimony to the written Word<sup>6</sup> is too narrow.

*Thirdly:* As a Hebrew writer could not limit the calls of heavenly Wisdom to any one time or manner in the past, but must include all the ways in which she has addressed men from the beginning (the chief of these being, as already explained, the direct revelations of Scripture), so neither could he restrict her voice to any one time or mode of address in the future. As he comprehended under her divine call, all God's warnings and admonitions in the past, through whatever channels received, so must he also include in it all his further revelations reserved for future time. A portion of the instructions of Wisdom his generation had received, but

<sup>1</sup> Prov. 13: 11.<sup>2</sup> Prov. 20: 17.<sup>3</sup> 1 Pet. 2: 11<sup>4</sup> Prov. 23: 20, 21.<sup>5</sup> Prov. 23: 27<sup>6</sup> As Rashi, who defines Wisdom to be "the divine wisdom of the law, Prov. 1: 20; and simply "the law," Prov. 8: 1.

more awaited God's people in the day when the great Prophet foretold by Moses should appear. Through him, in a preeminent sense, should Wisdom call men to repentance and salvation ; and all they who received him should find life and obtain favor of God ; but all who despised his reproof should perish.

Thus far might an inspired writer in Solomon's day go, in interpreting the words which he himself spake as he was "moved by the Holy Ghost." Whether he would be able to go any further is a question which we need not be anxious to settle. But we who live in "the last days," and have before us the record of the appearance of that Prophet whom Moses foretold, may lawfully inquire what new light it sheds on the passages now under consideration, particularly the remarkable description contained in Chap. viii. 22-31. In the exposition of the Holy Scriptures it must be assumed as a primary principle, that *revelation is an indivisible whole, of which the later parts explain and interpret the former.* While this revelation was in progress, every new disclosure of the counsels of God cast a light backwards upon all that had preceded, while, at the same time, it awaited for itself a brighter light in the future. The very idea of inspiration implies a prescient mind that sees the end from the beginning, and that shapes the beginning with reference to the end. The principle of interpretation which we are now considering can be set aside only by those who deny, either openly or covertly, that the Scriptures contain a divine communication from God to man in the strict and proper sense of the words. Such unbelievers will of course see no divine plan running through all the parts of revelation, and combining them all into one perfect whole. To them the Bible will be only a patchwork, a mere accretion of documents, most of them fragmentary, accumulated in the course of ages, and put together by men, without any steady progress towards a foreseen and predetermined end. They will admit the influence of the earlier upon the later portions, for that is a purely human element ; but they will reject all adumbration in the earlier writings of truths, the clear and direct revelation

of which the Wisdom of God reserves for a later age. They who find in the primitive documents such dim shadowings of mysteries to be fully revealed in their appointed time, will be condemned by them as fanciful and uncritical; and they will cry out against their principles of interpretation as foisting into the older records the ideas of later ages. But to the man who believes in the reality of divine revelation, it cannot seem incredible that the older communications from God to man should contain intimations of truths which are afterwards revealed in explicit terms. Why should it not be so? To the infinite mind of God there can be no growth in knowledge. When he made the first revelations to man, it was in full view of all the subsequent revelations. Why should not the former contain in themselves, like seeds sown in the earth, the germs of all the latter? Why should not the truths of Scripture follow the universal law of his works: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear"? We are persuaded that this is indeed the law of revelation, not less than of nature.

To illustrate more clearly our meaning, we will take those remarkable passages of the Old Testament in which God is spoken of in the plural number: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness";<sup>1</sup> "Behold the man is become as one of us, knowing good and evil";<sup>2</sup> "Let us go down and there confound their language";<sup>3</sup> "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?"<sup>4</sup> We say not that these are *revelations* of the doctrine of the Trinity. We would not rest upon them as proof-texts. But when we learn from the pages of the New Testament that this mode of speech has a foundation in eternal verity; when we find it in such passages as the following: "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and *we* will come unto him and make *our* abode with him";<sup>5</sup> "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, *and* the love of God, *and* the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all"<sup>6</sup>—when we find this harmony between a primitive mode of speaking of God and

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 1: 26.<sup>2</sup> Gen. 3: 22.<sup>3</sup> Gen. 11: 7.<sup>4</sup> Isa. 6: 8.<sup>5</sup> John 14: 23.<sup>6</sup> 2 Cor. 13: 14.

the New Testament revelation of the great mystery of three persons in one God; and when we further remember that He who made the first dim manifestation of himself to man, made it in full view of the last full revelation, we cannot but regard the passages which we have quoted from the Old Testament as *adumbrations*, or if one prefers, *anticipations* of the doctrine of the Trinity contained in the New Testament.

That the principle of interpretation now contended for has been abused by a large class of interpreters, we frankly admit. They could see nothing but the good things themselves revealed by Christ and his apostles, where there was only "a shadow of good things to come." In their zeal to find everywhere predictions of events belonging exclusively to New Testament times, they hardly left the Church of the Old Testament any gospel belonging appropriately to itself.<sup>1</sup> But the abuse of a true principle should lead us not to reject it, but only to apply it with greater caution. One thing is certain beyond contradiction, that the writers of the New Testament have proceeded upon this principle. They find the pages of the Old Testament thickly sown with the seeds of truths, whose full growth was reserved for their own day. Following their guidance, let us reverently inquire whether the passages now under consideration contain anything which can be reasonably understood as an adumbration or anticipation of the high mystery afterwards revealed concerning the Word that was in the beginning with God, and was God, and dwelt from eternity in the bosom of the Father.

We remark, in the first place, that the entire costume of the first passage (Prov. i. 20-33), conveys the idea of something higher than a mere poetic personification of wisdom as a divine attribute. That God's wisdom personified should be

<sup>1</sup> Vitringa, for example, refers the 58th chapter of Isaiah to the Protestant churches at the period of the decline of the Reformation (*Periodus Ecclesiae Instauratae Declinantis*). No doubt the Holy Ghost intended it for them, and all like them; but not in such a way that it did not have its first and immediate reference to those to whom it was originally addressed.

represented as addressing to the children of men such words as these: "How long, ye simple, will ye love simplicity, and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?"—is not surprising. That she should add: "Turn ye at my reproof," is altogether natural. But when she proceeds to say: "Behold I will pour out my spirit unto you;" and afterwards, "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at nought all my counsel and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh;" \* \* "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me;"—we are irresistibly led to think, not of a poetic personification, but of the personal God himself, in his awful majesty and holiness. The "spirit" which Wisdom promises to pour out upon those who listen to her voice, is beyond all question the Holy Spirit, to bestow which is the peculiar and incommunicable prerogative of God himself. Compare such passages of the Old Testament as the following: "And the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass that when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied."<sup>1</sup> "And the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them."<sup>2</sup> "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."<sup>3</sup> Had we no other passage but that now under consideration, we might say that the inspired writer had passed unconsciously from the idea of wisdom as a divine attribute personified, to that of the personal God himself. But in the eighth chapter Wisdom is expressly distinguished from God, and represented as his companion, dwelling with Him from eternity. We are led, then, very naturally, to think of such declarations of the New Testament as the following: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth

<sup>1</sup> Numb. 11: 25.<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. 10: 10.<sup>3</sup> Isa. 44: 3.

from the Father, he shall testify of me.”<sup>1</sup> Here the incarnate Word, who was from eternity in the bosom of the Father, promises, upon his return to the Father, to send from him the Holy Spirit to be the Comforter and Guide of his people. And the same eternal Word was from the beginning, as we shall see hereafter, the Revealer of God’s counsels to men.

We remark, again, that the description of Wisdom (Chap. viii. 22–31), does not apply so naturally to a mere attribute of God as to a true personal being; and that its remarkable agreement with those passages of the New Testament which speak of our Lord in his præexistent state, warrants us to regard it as an adumbration, by the Spirit of prophecy, of this great “mystery of godliness.” We prefix to our remarks upon it the following

#### TRANSLATION.

“Jehovah possessed me (or, obtained me) as the beginning of his way, before his works, of old. From everlasting was I founded, from the beginning, before the earth was. When there were no deeps was I born; when there were no fountains laden with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I born; when he had not yet made the earth and the fields and the first of the clods of the world. When he prepared the heavens, there was I; when he set a circuit upon the face of the deep; when he established the clouds above; when the fountains of the deep were made strong; when he appointed to the sea its limit, that the waters should not pass its border (or, his command). And I was at his side as one brought up by him (or, as an artificer); and I was daily a delight [to him]; exulting before him all the time; exulting in the habitable abode of his earth; and my delight was with the sons of men.”

#### ANNOTATIONS.

Vs. 22. Jehovah possessed me (or, obtained me) as the beginning of his way, before his works, from olden time.

The first clause of this verse, יהוה קנני ראשית דרכו, has been the subject of the most earnest controversy. The Septuagint renders it: *κύριος ἔκτισέ με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ*; *the Lord created me the beginning of his way*. In this the Chal-

<sup>1</sup> John 15: 26.

dee Targum agrees with it: *God created me in the beginning of his creation*; the Syriac version: *the Lord created me in the beginning of his creation*; and the Arabic: *the Lord created me the beginning of his ways*.<sup>1</sup> The other Greek versions, on the contrary, employ the word *ἐκτήσατο*, possessed.<sup>2</sup> So also the Vulgate: *Dominus possedit me in initio viarum suarum*. Since all the ancient fathers of the Church agreed in understanding this passage of the hypostatic Wisdom of God in the person of the Logos, Arius, following the version of the Septuagint, maintained that he is, in the proper sense of the word, a *created* being, though brought into existence before all other creatures, above them all in dignity, and the one through whom God made them all. The orthodox, on the contrary, denied to the word חָקַקְתִּי the sense of creation, and, interpreting it in harmony with the word הוּלַלְתִּי, *I was born*, which occurs in the 24th and 25th verses, understood it of the *eternal generation* of the Logos from the Father, in such a sense that he is himself of the same substance with the Father, and cœternal with him.<sup>3</sup>

The more recent interpreters are also divided in their opinions in respect to the signification of חָקַקְתִּי in this passage. Michaelis and Schultens render it "*possedit*," *possessed*; Ziegler, "*warb um mich*," *acquired*, and adds in a note: "Er warb um mich, oder besass mich. Beydes kann חָקַקְתִּי heissen." *He acquired me, or possessed me*. חָקַקְתִּי *can mean both*. De Wette renders: "*bereitete mich*," *prepared me*. Many, as Gesenius, Muntinghe, Umbreit, Bertheau, Stuart, render: *created me*. But since these latter understand wisdom here as simply a divine attribute personified, which must have been cœternal with the divine being, they are compelled to admit that it is only in a figurative

<sup>1</sup> See in Walton's Polyglott.

<sup>2</sup> See Remains of Origen's Hexapla by Montfaucon, in loco.

<sup>3</sup> Which, excluding all idea of the literal generation of substance, amounts in reality to the proposition that the first and second persons in the Godhead hold to each other eternally the relation of Father and Son. This idea of the proper eternity of the Son and his equality with the Father in respect to substance (*δμοουσία*) was brought out more definitely by the Arian controversy.

way that she is said to have been created. On the question of the signification of *קָנָה* in this verse, Prof. Stuart remarks: "*Philology*, at all events, must have its proper place, independent of party views." To this we fully assent; and we propose to show, in a philological way, what is the true Hebrew usage of the word in question. We preface our remarks by the following from Prof. Stuart, which well represents the views of Gesenius as expressed in his *Lexicon*: "*קָנָה* then means originally, *to erect any thing, to set it up or make it steadfast*. As naturally flowing from this come the meanings: *to create, to found*, exemplified in Deut. xxxii. 6; Ps. cxxxix. 13; Gen. xiv. 19, 22. Moreover the Arabic (*كَانَ*) means *to create*. Then come the derived meanings: *prepare, acquire*, and lastly, *to acquire by purchase, i. e. to buy*. But the simple sense of *possedit, as given by the Vulgate, has no footing in the Hebrew*."<sup>1</sup> After such a statement, the reader may be somewhat surprised to learn that of the *eighty-two* cases in which the verb *קָנָה* appears in the Hebrew Scriptures, it is used, by the concession of all, *seventy-six* times in the sense of *getting or acquiring*; and that the specific usage, *to get by purchase, buy*, is by far the most common. The classification of these seventy-six cases, according to frequency, is as follows:

1. To get by purchase, buy, as a house, field, wife (Ruth iv. 10); <sup>2</sup>	58
2. To get by human labor, to buy in a figurative sense, especially wisdom. So often in the book of Proverbs;	13
3. To get by the exercise of divine power, as Jehovah Israel, for a peculiar possession, i. e. to redeem for himself (Ex. xv. 16; Ps. LXXIV. 2; Isa. xi. 11), or as Jehovah Mount Zion (Ps. LXXVIII. 54);	4
4. To get in a general sense, as Eve a son, with Jehovah as her helper (Gen. iv. 1).	1
Total	76

The passage last quoted (Gen. iv. 1) is the *first* in which the verb occurs, and there it has its *true generic sense*. From the *context* we learn that the manner of getting was that of

<sup>1</sup> Stuart *in loco*.

<sup>2</sup> We have before us a list of all these passages, but it is unnecessary to specify them. They may be seen in any Hebrew Concordance.

conceiving and bringing forth; but the verb itself has no such meaning.

There remain *six* cases only to be examined. Of these Deut. xxxii. 6 may be at once disposed of. It means to *redeem* for himself as his peculiar people, as in the examples given above, No. 3.

We will next examine Isaiah i. 3: יָרַע שׁוֹר קָנָהוּ, which must either be rendered: *the ox knoweth his buyer*; or, *the ox knoweth his owner*. The latter is the rendering adopted by Gesenius himself, as well as by De Wette, Alexander and translators generally. Etymologically, it presents no difficulty; for the transition from the idea of *possessing one's self of a thing* to that of *being possessed of it*, is easy. Here the analogy of the Greek κτάομαι is very instructive. Properly it means to *get, acquire for one's self*. But the Perfect κέκτημαι (literally, *to have acquired for one's self*) has come to signify to *possess*. Hence κεκτημένος is *master*, especially of slaves. Now the Hebrew Participle קָנָה, having no distinction of tenses, may well answer to both the Present and Aorist of the Greek, *one who gets*, and, *one who has gotten*; and to the Perfect, *a possessor, master*. In precisely the same way the Hebrew Participle קָנָה and the Greek κτήμα (literally, *what is gotten*), come to signify *possession, wealth*. Once more, קָנָה signifies *acquisition*, especially by purchase (סֵפֶר הַמִּקְנָה the deed of purchase, τὸ βιβλίον τῆς κτήσεως, as the Sept. render it, Jer. xxxii. 11); then, *the thing purchased*, as the cave of Machpelah (Gen. xxiii. 19, Sept., εἰς κτήσω, which is equivalent to εἰς κτήμα), and also a person bought with money (מִקְנָה בְּסֵף, Sept., ἀργυρώματος, Gen. xvii. 12; etc.). מִקְנָה, moreover, literally *something gotten*, has come to signify *possessions of cattle*, precisely like the Greek κτήνος from κτάομαι.

If we take קָנָה in Isa. 1: 3, in the sense of *possessor*, we may also understand it in the same sense in Gen. 14: 19, 22: קָנָה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, *the possessor of heaven and earth*. So Onkelos, רַבְרַבְרָה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, *whose is the possession of heaven and earth*. The Seventy have ἔκτισε, *created*; the Vulgate

has, in v. 19: "*qui creavit coelum et terram,*" but in v. 22: "*possessorem coeli et terrae.*" Jarchi's note here is very instructive, and gives the true key to the solution of the question: "*Like the words 'Maker of heaven and earth': by his making them he has possessed himself of them, so that they are his.*"<sup>1</sup> He does not deny to the word קָנָה the sense of *having obtained, possessed himself of*; but he represents this possession as having come by the right of creation. In other words, קָנָה here answers precisely to the Greek *κτητήμηνος*, *possessor*, which also conveys the idea of *having acquired*. The *manner of acquiring*, in this instance, is undoubtedly that of *creation*, but this does not give to the verb itself the meaning *create*, so that Fürst is entirely correct in his remark: "*quare ipsum v. קָנָה neutiquam vi creandi condendive dicitur.*"<sup>2</sup>

The two remaining passages are Ps. 139: 13: בְּרִצְאָתָהּ קָנִיתִי, בְּלִיטָתִי, rendered in our version: *For thou hast possessed my reins*; and the one now under consideration: יְדִחוּהָ קָנִי רֵאשִׁיטָהּ הָרְבִיבִי. To each of these the sense of the Greek Perfect *κέκτημαι* is appropriate. That it suits well the context of the latter passage, no one can deny. We add, therefore, a few words respecting the former. The ground-idea, then, of the 139th Psalm is not the skill and power of God as our Creator, but our intimate relation to God as to Him who has an absolute property in us, and whose presence and power have, from the first, penetrated our inmost being. The reins are mentioned here as the seat of affection and desire. God has had these in his possession from the beginning by right of creation, and therefore his knowledge of them and his power over them is absolute.<sup>3</sup>

The conclusion, then, to which we come, on strictly philological grounds, is that the true idea of קָנָה is *to get, possess one's self of*, then, more specifically, *to buy*; that in a few passages the idea of *present possession* is most prominent,

<sup>1</sup> כמו עושה שמים וארץ על ידי עשייתו קנאן להיות שלו.

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew Concordance.

<sup>3</sup> The second clause of this verse should be rendered: "*thou didst cover me in my mother's womb.*" Compare Ps. 5: 12; 91: 4.

as in the Greek *κέκτημαι*, yet never so as wholly to exclude the idea of past acquisition; and that in no instance does it signify *to create*, any more than *to bring forth*; though in some passages the manner of acquisition is shown by the context to have been that of creating, or (in one passage at least, Gen. 4: 1) bringing forth.

All that Gesenius is able to allege for the assumed primitive idea, *to erect, set upright*, is, 1st, the noun קָנָה, *reed, cane*; 2d, the assumed relationship of קָנָה to בָּיַן.<sup>1</sup> As to קָנָה, *reed*, the assumption that it has its name from its *upright growth* is nothing but an unsupported conjecture, on which we are not authorized to build a whole system of derivate meanings, not one of which exhibits a trace of the alleged primitive idea. As to בָּיַן, since it differs from קָנָה in its first radical, we need some solid ground for affirming the relationship of the two roots; but no such ground exists. The assumed use of בָּיַן, in the sense of *create*, is as groundless as that of קָנָה in the same sense. In all the instances adduced by Gesenius, the idea of *founding, or preparing*, is appropriate. It may be shown by the context that it is by the exercise of creative power, but this does not give to the verb itself the meaning *to create*.

A word, in closing this discussion, on the Arabic verb قَبَّلَ, to which Gesenius and others appeal. Did it properly mean *to create*, the argument from it might have weight. But the Arabic lexicons give, for its first and proper meaning, *to acquire for one's self*, precisely as in Hebrew. So Freytag: "Acquisivit sibi, *peculiariter* in proprium usum, *oves*, etc." He gives, indeed, from the Kamoos: "Creavit Deus aliquem;" but this is merely brought in by the Kamoos (p. 1937) near the close of half a page of other definitions; and, so far as we have any means of judging, is no

<sup>1</sup> We omit the unused root קָרָה, which in Gen. 4: 1 is interchanged with קָנָה, because in that the idea, *to set up, erect*, is equally doubtful. In Arabic usage it signifies *to forge*, as a blacksmith iron, *to arrange, set in order, repair*; and, in Conj. II., *to construct and put together*, as the saddle of a camel, *to adorn and set in order*, as a bride, house, etc. Hence we might get a more natural derivation of the meaning *to create*, did the usage of the Hebrew קָנָה warrant it, which it does not.

more the *proper meaning* of the Arabic, than of the Hebrew verb.

The result to which we are brought is, that in the present passage קָנִי יְהוָה means, in a general sense, *Jehovah possessed himself of me, obtained me*; while the manner of obtaining is to be gathered from the context. If now it be asked: What is that manner? we must answer: Not by a literal generation of substance, any more than by a literal creation of substance. Not in such a manner that there ever was a time when Wisdom was not; for the attribute of eternity is plainly ascribed to her in the present passage. She existed before all the works of God, and this is a common scriptural way of conveying the idea of existence that has no limit in past duration. We must remember that we have to do here with a relation that is altogether superhuman, and which is, moreover, expressed, not in dry didactic propositions, but in the loftiest strains of poetry, the writer employing finite human relations to shadow forth that which is Divine and infinite. From these earthly images we must subtract all that is material and temporal, leaving only the pure relation itself in its infinity and eternity. Those who render the verb קָנִי created me, namely, as a Divine attribute, understand this creation as shadowing forth, in a poetic form, an eternal relation. The Son of Sirach, who frequently speaks of Wisdom as created, manifestly conceives of her as being alike without beginning or end: *πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἔκτισέν με, καὶ ἕως αἰῶνος οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπω*;<sup>1</sup> which we may render: *Before time, from the beginning, he created me, and to eternity I shall not cease*;" though this does not express the strength of the Greek antithesis — *πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος*, and *ἕως αἰῶνος*. If we understand Wisdom as intended by the spirit of prophecy to be an adumbration of the hypostatic person of the Logos, we must still proceed in the same way, separating from the expression under consideration, as we do in the case of the New Testament expressions, *ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*, all that is earthly and finite, thus arriving at a true eternal relation that transcends everything human.

<sup>1</sup> Siracides 24: 9.

רֵאשִׁית הַדֶּבֶר — These words may be taken as an adverbial clause equivalent to בְּרֵאשִׁית הַדֶּבֶר, *in the beginning of his way*. Compare Gen. 14: 4 ; 2 Sam. 21: 9 (where the emendation of the Masoretes is unnecessary). But it is perhaps better to construe them in apposition with the suffix in קָנִי, thus: *Jehovah possessed himself of me as the first of his way*; and then it will be precisely equivalent to the declaration that is amplified in the following verses, that Wisdom was born before all things; for we can hardly understand רֵאשִׁית here in the sense of *chief*, as in Job 40: 19, since it is of her eternity that Wisdom is discoursing. The *way* of God is his activity in the widest sense. The old commentators, who construe רֵאשִׁית הַדֶּבֶר in apposition with the suffix of the preceding verb, make it synonymous with ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως τοῦ Θεοῦ, Rev. 3: 14, and insist upon its being taken “not passively, but actively, for the Beginner of things” (non passive, sed active, pro Initiatore rerum, velut in loco *Apoc.* iii. 14).<sup>1</sup> But any such distinction as this seems to be foreign to the scope of the immediate context, which dwells upon the fact that Wisdom existed before the creation of the world.

בְּקִדְמַת מַעֲשָׂיו, *before his works, of old*. *Before his works*, is to be taken absolutely, as the following verses show. Wisdom is not one of his works, but existed before them all, and was present at the creation of them all. בְּמֵצֵד, when used absolutely, as here, is a general expression for past time.

Vs. 23. From everlasting was I founded, from the beginning, before the earth was.

The verb נִבְרַחֲתִי is rendered, by the majority of commentators, *I was anointed*. If we adopt this meaning, the sense will be that given by Cocceius: “*a seculo uncta sum, h. e. constituta et declarata sum domina omnium* ;” *from everlasting was I anointed*, that is, constituted and declared ruler

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis in loco, who, however, himself prefers the other construction: *in the beginning of his way*. Some of the Jewish Rabbis, as quoted by Goier, also interpret רֵאשִׁית in an active sense: “*Sapientia suprema etiam principium vocatur, quia est principium principii.*”

of all things. But an examination of all the passages in which the verb  $\text{פָּקַד}$  occurs, and of all its derivatives, will show that this meaning is, at best, very doubtful. Its proper signification is *to pour out*. Hence in *Kal*, *to pour upon*, with  $\text{עַל}$  of the object poured upon (Ex. 30: 9; Isa. 29: 10); *to pour out as a libation*, with  $\text{לְ}$  of the person to whom it is made (Hosea 9: 4), and so probably  $\text{לְבַרְכָּתָא לְבַרְכָּתָא}$  *to pour out a libation* in making a league (Isa. 30: 1); *to cover over*, as if to pour over (Isa. 25: 7), to which signification some refer Isa. 30: 1; *to found*, as a molten image (which is done by pouring), with the accusative of the thing founded (Isa. 40: 19; 44: 10). These are all the cases in which the verb occurs in *Kal*, except Ps. 2: 6, which will be considered presently. In *Piel* it is used once (1 Chron. 11: 18), in the sense of *pouring out*, as an offering to the Lord. Its use in *Hiphil* and its passive *Hophal* is frequent, always in the sense of pouring out as a drink offering. Of its derivatives,  $\text{פָּקִידָה}$  signifies *a libation*, and *a molten image*;  $\text{פָּקִידָה}$ , *a molten image*, and *a covering*;  $\text{פָּקִידָה}$ , *a libation*, and *a prince*. On this latter usage great stress has been laid, as it has been *assumed* that princes received this name from their having been inaugurated by the ceremony of *anointing*. But Gusset has shown<sup>1</sup> that in all the passages where  $\text{פָּקִידָה}$  has this sense (Josh. 13: 21; Ps. 83: 12; Ezek. 32: 30; Dan. 11: 8; Micah 5: 4), it refers to princes constituted by a higher power. Now from the established usage of the verb  $\text{פָּקַד}$  in the sense of *founding*, we have a natural etymology. Princes are so named as those who are *constituted* rulers, *set* in office. This meaning suits well the only two remaining passages in which this verb is employed: “*I have set my king* ( $\text{כִּנִּיתִי מֶלֶכִּי}$ ) upon Zion my holy hill”<sup>2</sup> (Ps. 2: 6); and the present passage: *I was founded, or constituted*. So the Seventy: “ $\epsilon\delta\epsilon\mu\epsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\omega\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\ \mu\epsilon$ ,” and the

<sup>1</sup> Commentarii Linguae Ebraicae, under the root  $\text{פָּקַד}$ . He maintains also that the word always denotes *princes of foreign nations*. This is true with a single exception, Micah 5: 4. Yet even this passage is not absolutely certain; for the remarkable expression,  $\text{כִּנִּיתִי מֶלֶכִּי}$ , *princes of men*, may mean *Gentile* princes, whose ministry was largely employed in the later ages of Jewish history in defending God's people against their enemies.

<sup>2</sup> See Hengstenberg's Commentary in loco.

Vulgate : "ordinata sum;" and the ancient versions generally. We are not obliged, then, to assume for חָכְמָה the sense of *anointing with oil*, for which the appropriate verb is חָשַׁב.

Vs. 24, 25. When there were no deeps was I born; when there were no fountains laden with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I born.

The form חוּלַל (with its passive חוּלַל) occurs in a few instances in the sense *to wound*, where it is to be regarded as *Poel* from חָלַל. With this exception it always has the signification of *bringing forth*, either literally or figuratively. In what sense Wisdom is said to have been brought forth from eternity, has been sufficiently shown above, under v. 22. To her apply the epithets *μονογενής* and *πρωτότοκος*. In the expression: *before the mountains were settled* (הָרֵי טָבְעוּ, *sunk down* on their bases), there is an allusion, as in Job 38: 6, to the depth and stability of their foundations.

Vs. 26. When he had not yet made the earth and the fields, and the first of the clods of the world.

A poetic amplification of the idea that Wisdom existed before all created things in the most absolute sense. The expression רֵאשִׁית קְפָרוֹת תְּבֵלִי has been differently interpreted. The word רֵאשִׁית has been understood to mean: (1) *the highest part*; (2) *the chief or most preëminent part*; (3) *the sum* i. e. *mass*; (4) *the first part*, in respect of time. The last interpretation commends itself for its simplicity and harmony with the context.

Vs. 27-29. When he prepared the heavens, there was I; when he set a circuit upon the face of the deep; when he established the clouds above; when the fountains of the deep were made strong; when he appointed to the sea its limit, that the waters should not pass its border (or, his command).

These verses introduce a new and important idea. Thus far Wisdom has dwelt upon the fact that she existed from everlasting in God's presence before the beginning of all things. Now she shows that she was present at the formation of all things. We are to understand that she was present as an

actor, as the counsellor of Jehovah and his co-worker. According to one interpretation of the word חָכְמָה (ver. 30) this is directly affirmed. But however we may understand that term, we necessarily infer from the very idea of Wisdom and the attributes ascribed to her, that her presence at the creation of the world was that of an active power, not of an inactive spectator. When she dwells with kings, it is to endow them with the power of reigning: "By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule and nobles, even all the judges of the earth" (vs. 15, 16). So when she is at Jehovah's side in the work of creation, it is as a co-worker: "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens."<sup>1</sup> Not one of all God's works is made without her. We ought not to expect here a full development of the idea of Wisdom's activity in the work of creation, such as we have in the New Testament of the activity of the Logos: "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made."<sup>2</sup> "By him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth."<sup>3</sup> It is sufficient that we have in the present passage the germ of the idea contained in the following words of the apostle: "But to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him,"<sup>4</sup> where the Father is represented as the source of creation, and the Son as the producing agent.

*When he set a circuit (בְּרִיקָהּ חֹמָה) upon the face of the deep.* By the *circuit* (חֹמָה) we are to understand the circular vault of heaven. The *deep* is the primeval abyss that covered the face of the earth (Gen. i. 2). — *When he established (בְּאִמְצָתָא, literally, when he made strong or firm) the clouds above.* The clouds are established not individually, but as an order or system. The establishment of the clouds is then, for sub-

<sup>1</sup> Prov. 3: 19, in a passage where Wisdom is also set forth in a personal form, and which cannot be separated from the present personification, and that in the first chapter.

<sup>2</sup> John 1: 3.

<sup>3</sup> Col. 1: 16.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 8: 6

stance, equivalent to the establishment of the firmament in which they move.— *When the fountains of the deep were made strong.* The verb  $\text{קָוַה}$  is to be taken here, as elsewhere in Kal, intransitively. To be made strong may mean either to be firmly established in their places, or to be made strong in respect to the quantity and force of their waters. The latter is the preferable interpretation. Compare above  $\text{מִן־הַיַּמִּים נִקְבְּרוּ הַמַּיִם}$  *fountains heavy with waters* (v. 24). The fountains here spoken of are those of “*the great deep*” (Gen. vii. 11) by which, according to the idea of the Hebrews, the ocean is supplied with its waters. Compare Job xxxviii. 8.— *That the waters should not pass its border*, viz., that of the sea ( $\text{חֵטְב}$  *border*, Ps. cxxxiii. 2). But we may, with Cocceius, refer the suffix in  $\text{מִיַּיִם}$  to  $\text{יְהוָה}$ , and render: *that the waters should not transgress his command.* Compare for this use of  $\text{חֵטְב}$  Ex. xvii. 1; Josh. ix. 14, etc.; especially Eccl. viii. 2. The Scriptures frequently represent the setting of bounds to the sea as a high exercise of divine power. See Job xxxviii. 8–11; Ps. civ. 9; Jer. v. 22. The  $\text{וְ}$  at the beginning of this clause is that used to introduce *final and consecutive sentences.* See in Gesenius’s Lexicon, No. 6.

Vs. 30, 31. And I was at his side, as one brought up by him [or, as an artificer]; and I was daily a delight [to him], exulting always before him; exulting in the habitable abode of his earth, and my delight was with the sons of men.

The most important word in this beautiful description is  $\text{אֲמִינָה}$ , concerning which very different opinions have been held. The only two that deserve attention are *alumna*, *nursling*, *foster-child*; and *artifex*, *artificer*. On these we offer the following remarks:

1. According to either view  $\text{אֲמִינָה}$  is to be regarded as a word of common gender.

2. As to form, it may be either *active*, as  $\text{וְקַיִשׁ}$ , *fowler*, or *passive*, as  $\text{צִמְיוֹן}$ , *hidden region*, i. e. *North*.

3. In favor of the signification *artificer*, is *first*, the Hebrew  $\text{אֲמִינָה}$ , *workman*;<sup>1</sup> *secondly*, the Chaldee  $\text{אֲמִינָה}$ , and Syriac  $\text{اَمِينَان}$ ,

<sup>1</sup> Cant. 7; 1. Gusset’s arguments to show that it signifies here a *faithful man*, are very inconclusive.

*workman, artificer.* All these words differ indeed in form from אָרָן, but this is not decisive against its relationship with them.

4. In favor of the signification *alumna, foster-child*, is first the active form אָרָן, *one who carries a child*, attends to it and brings it up. (Num. xi. 12; Isa. xlix. 23; Esth. ii. 7, etc.). With this אָרָן would naturally correspond, as *passive to active*. That no other example of the word occurs cannot be considered a decisive objection; for, as Gusset remarks: "There are other words occurring but once, which, nevertheless, are explained with certainty and correctness from their roots." *Secondly*, in favor of the meaning *alumna* is the kindred form אָרָנִים (צִלֵּי הַיָּלֵף), *they who are borne, or brought up, on scarlet*; the seventy well: οἱ τιθηνούμενοι ἐπὶ κόκκων).<sup>1</sup>

5. The ancient translators and expositors differ so much among themselves that we cannot regard their authority as of much account. See a review of their interpretations in Geier.

6. Though the signification *opifex, artificer*, is not against the context, that of *alumna, nursling, foster-child*, is in most perfect harmony with it; and this, where the arguments from philology are so nearly balanced, may well turn the scale in favor of this latter meaning.

Wisdom immediately adds: "I was a delight [to him] exulting (Hebrew אָרָן, literally, *sporting, playing*, as a child in the presence of its father) before him all the time." She represents herself as the darling child of Jehovah, exulting from eternity in his presence. One cannot but think of the New Testament expressions: ὁ μονογενὴς υἱὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πατρὸς;<sup>2</sup> and οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα.<sup>3</sup>

*Exulting in the habitable abode of his earth* (Hebrew אָרָן בְּהַבֵּל אֲרָצוֹ in the world of his earth). אֲרָצוֹ is a species of the genitive of material, as much as to say: the world which consists of his earth.<sup>4</sup> אָרָץ denotes the earth generally, or

<sup>1</sup> Lam. 4: 5.<sup>2</sup> John 1: 18.<sup>3</sup> Matt. 3: 17.<sup>4</sup> The suffix belongs only to the latter noun. The rendering of the English

in respect to its mass alone. It is therefore equivalent to the Greek γῆ. תַּבְּלָל (from תּוֹבִיֵּל, *to produce, bring forth*) denotes the earth as a producer, as stored with men and animals, and the means of nourishing them. It answers, therefore, though by another mode of conception, to the Greek οἰκουμένη.

*And my delight was with the sons of men.* This final clause of the description gives us the crowning idea of the whole. Wisdom, that dwelt from eternity in the presence of God before the foundation of the earth, and that was present at its formation as the counsellor and co-worker of Jehovah, now makes it her favorite abode, because there man, the object of her deepest love, is found. The interest that she feels in God's world all centres in *the sons of men*. To their good she has from the beginning devoted herself, and her labors to recall them to the paths of truth and blessedness have been unwearied. This her delight in the children of men she makes the ground of a new appeal to them.

Vs. 32—36. Now therefore, children, hearken to me; for blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise; and let it not go. Blessed is the man that hearkeneth to me, watching daily at my doors, watching at the posts of my gates. For whosoever findeth me findeth life, and obtaineth favor from the Lord. But he that wrongs me hurts his own soul: all that hate me love death.

Let any one, now, who has attained to the only true conception of revelation as an indivisible whole, having from first to last the same eternal Spirit for its author; and, moreover, as a progressive work, in which the earlier parts continually shadow forth some higher "good things to come" — let any man, with this true idea of revelation, compare this noble description of heavenly Wisdom with what is said in the New Testament of the divine Logos, and he cannot, as it seems to us, fail to discern in it the morning dawn of the approaching Sun of righteousness. How far Solomon

---

version: *in the habitable part of his earth*, though substantially correct, brings in an idea that does not exist in the original, that of contrast between the habitable and uninhabitable portions of the earth.

himself understood the full import of what he wrote, is a question of secondary importance. Though we cannot adopt that view of inspiration which would make the sacred penmen nothing more than *amanuenses* of the Holy Spirit, we must still hold that the *form* of a divine communication is often an essential part of it. In the present instance we must believe that the full personality here ascribed to Wisdom, as well as her several relations to God and man, is something more than poetic drapery ; that it has for its author not the luxuriant imagination of the sacred writer alone, but the prescient mind of the Holy Ghost, who moulds and controls the thoughts of inspired men as he pleases. Is Wisdom set forth as a person, dwelling from eternity with God? The divine Word, also, "was in the beginning with God," as a true personality.<sup>1</sup> He dwelt in glory, with God, before the foundation of the world.<sup>2</sup> Is Wisdom before all things? So also is Christ.<sup>3</sup> Is Wisdom the eldest child of God, brought forth before the existence of all created things? So also Christ is "the only begotten of the Father,"<sup>4</sup> and "the first-born of the whole creation."<sup>5</sup> Was Wisdom present at the formation of the earth and heavens, as God's counsellor and co-worker? The New Testament develops the idea, here contained in the germ, in all its fulness, teaching us that by the Word "all things were made, and without him was not any thing made that was made;"<sup>6</sup> that "by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."<sup>7</sup> Is Wisdom the delight of God, dwelling always with him, and exulting always before him? Christ is his well-beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased,<sup>8</sup> and who dwells in his bosom.<sup>9</sup> Did God associate with himself Wisdom as his darling child in the work of creation, so that she was present at the whole, saw

<sup>1</sup> John 1: 1, 2.<sup>2</sup> John 17: 24.<sup>3</sup> Col. 1: 17.<sup>4</sup> John 1: 14.<sup>5</sup> Col. 1: 15.<sup>6</sup> John 1: 3.<sup>7</sup> Col. 1: 16, 17.<sup>8</sup> Matt. 3: 17.<sup>9</sup> John 1: 18.

the whole, understood the whole, and had a part in the whole? There is a remarkable correspondence between this and the following words of our Lord: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth."<sup>1</sup> And finally, is Wisdom's delight with the sons of men, and has she been constantly laboring to recall them to the paths of holiness and happiness? The heart of Christ has been set on the salvation of men from the beginning. They are in a peculiar and emphatic sense the objects of his divine love, and from the fall of Adam to the present hour he has spoken in every communication from God to man, calling sinners to repentance and salvation.

The name itself, Wisdom, has a near relation to the term *ὁ Λόγος*, employed by the apostle John. However we may explain the origin of this term, it carries the idea that in Christ dwells the fulness of divine Wisdom, according to the declaration of the apostle Paul: "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."<sup>2</sup> It is remarked by Robinson that "later Jewish writers identify, or at least connect this σοφία [wisdom personified] with ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ."<sup>3</sup> As the divinely constituted Revealer of God's truth to man, the term "Wisdom" is peculiarly appropriate to Christ.

We can hardly conceive that any one should seriously object to the interpretation of this passage as an adumbration of the hypostatic person of the Logos, on the ground that Wisdom is represented as having been *produced* by God before all things, and cannot, therefore, be self-existent and underived. That she is not said to have been *created*, we have shown at large on strictly philological grounds. But she is said to have been *born*, and must she not, then, it is asked, have had a beginning? Undoubtedly, if we under-

<sup>1</sup> John 5: 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 2: 3.

<sup>3</sup> Lex. of New Test., under the word *λόγος*, where see his references to apocryphal writers.

stand this term in the literal and human sense. But the term is applied to Christ also. He is not only "the *only begotten* of the Father," but "the *first-born* of the whole creation." He must be a very bold critic who ventures to restrict these epithets to the *human nature* of our Lord. The Church has rightly understood, in all ages, that it is the divine Logos himself who dwells in the bosom of the Father, and is the Revealer of the Father to men, as well before as since his incarnation; and that none but a *divine* person can be called "the first-born of the whole creation." By interpreting these epithets according to the literal human idea, Arius arrived logically at the conclusion that the *Λόγος*, though existing before all other beings, had yet a beginning — *ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν*, *there was when he was not* — and then the distinction between *γεννητός* and *ποιητός* became one of mere words.<sup>1</sup> We have already indicated the true principle by which such expressions are to be explained. We must divest them of everything temporal, sensuous, and human, thus arriving at an eternal relation, which transcends all human relations, and can therefore be only shadowed forth to men by earthly analogies.

As to the *feminine* gender, that is only a matter of grammatical form, which applies equally to the *Word* of the New Testament. In Latin, *verbum* is *neuter*. Hence the Vulgate speaks of the Word in the neuter form: "*Hoc erat in principio apud Deum.*" So also the German: "*Dasselbige [Wort] war im Anfang bey Gott.*" The French *Parole*, on the contrary, is *feminine*; and hence the Word is spoken of in the feminine form: "*Elle étoit au commencement avec Dieu.*"

The conclusion, then, to which we are brought is this: that the divine Wisdom which addresses men in the passages now under consideration, is not the Son of David, "according to the flesh;" but David's Lord, "according to the spirit of holiness:" not the Messiah in his simple personal pres-

<sup>1</sup> See Neander's Church History, translated by Prof. Torrey, Vol. II. p. 362.

ence as "the word made flesh," but the eternal Word himself, whose being and activity are not limited by time; who, both before and since his incarnation, is always present with his Church, as the centre and source of her spiritual light and life; who spake first by "Moses and the prophets," and afterwards in his own person as "the man Christ Jesus;" and who, having returned to the Father's bosom whence he came, continued to speak by the lips of his apostles, and now speaks by his word and ministry "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;" who is with his church always, from Abel to the trump of the archangel, and is always calling the children of men to himself.

This view comprehends all that is valuable of the views named in the beginning of this Article, and much more which they, in their narrowness, exclude; and by this comprehensiveness it commends itself as the true view.

---

## ARTICLE VII.

### THE FUTURE STATE.<sup>1</sup>

BY REV. JAMES M. HOPPIN, SALEM, MASS.

THE revelation of a future state is given us in such a form as to be purely practical. It is to quell the sin and establish the faith of the soul. The 15th chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, that rich and wonderful leaf of inspiration concerning a future existence, is simply for this, that we may continue "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." The whole is a divinely urged argument for the faithful service of God in *this* life. Its business

---

<sup>1</sup> A View of the Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State. By Richard Whately, D. D., late Archbishop of Dublin. Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston. 1855.