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THE WISDOM OF THE HEBREWS.

SECOND PART.

IN a former paper the first period of the Hebrew Wisdom was described as that in which there is a complete harmony between principles and phenomena; the affairs of life and the events of Providence are in perfect correspondence with the *a priori* principles which the Wise Man held in regard to God and the moral order of the world. This condition of the Wisdom appears in the Proverbs of Solomon, particularly in the Chapters from the tenth onwards. The moral maxims and generalizings on life and Providence contained in these proverbs are in all probability the earliest examples which remain to us of the efforts and activity of the Wisdom. There is no valid reason to doubt that many at least of these proverbs belong to Solomon, and others to his age. The renown for Wisdom which this king had among his own people, and even, although in a distorted and fantastic form, among the other peoples of the East, must have rested on some real foundation of fact. No doubt reputations grow, and veneration enlarges its hero sometimes in proportion to the indistinctness of its real knowledge of him; and objects seen in the broad blaze of day are very insignificant compared with the bulk they assume when seen between us and the light still lingering on the horizon of a day that has gone down. But making allowance for the exaggerations of later and less happy times, thirsting for the wells of an ancient Wisdom now run dry, we should leave tradition and history altogether unexplained if we disallowed the claim of Solomon to be the first and greatest of the Wise, and

refused to accept some considerable portion at least of the Proverbs that pass under his name as really his.

Our present Book of Proverbs is a miscellaneous collection. It is an anthology of the words of the Wise just as the Psalter has gathered into one the hymnology of Israel, the product of every age and the reflection of every feeling of the people's life. But there is no more reason to doubt that Solomon was a Wise Man than there is to doubt that David was a poet. The breaks in the Book of Proverbs that reveal its composite character are quite visible. After the general heading: *The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel*, in the beginning of the Book, we are surprised to come upon another: *The Proverbs of Solomon*, in the beginning of the tenth Chapter. The first heading is probably due to a general editor, although how much more is due to him may be difficult to say. It is not improbable that Chapters i.-ix. may be also from his pen. These Chapters are wholly unlike the rest of the Book, consisting of connected moral pieces, and are less expositions or expressions of Wisdom herself than exhortations to a diligent seeking after her. There is that kind of difference between Chapter x. foll. and these Chapters that we are familiar with as the difference between productivity and criticism. In the middle Chapters the Wisdom is creative; and, absorbed in the fascination of her own activity, and in the delight of expressing and revealing herself, she has no place in her own thoughts herself; in these nine early Chapters she is become self-conscious; she is fascinated by her own beauty; she invites men to behold her and to love her. It must have taken some

time before a pursuit, followed at first instinctively and without even consciousness, out of the mere religious and mental delight which it afforded, was drawn under the eye of reflection and became, as an operation of the mind or a posture of the whole nature, a subject of contemplation and discussion. On this internal ground alone we must assume that these nine Chapters are considerably later than those in the middle of the Book. It is of little consequence whom we suppose to have been the writer of them, whether an author working independently, or the editor of a collection of Solomonic proverbs at an earlier time, or the general editor at last. Their relation to the body of the Book is the main thing, as exhibiting a later development of the Wisdom, when she had ceased to be creative and become self-conscious and the subject of her own contemplation.

There is no reason to doubt the genuineness of the superscription in Chapter x. It marks an early collection of Solomonic proverbs. It is not necessary to suppose that every one of these proverbs is Solomon's. Words of other Wise Men may have become mixed with his. The same or similar sentiments may have been uttered by others, and in a kind of literature much in the popular mouth, and liable to alteration as circumstances *a propos* of which quotations were made altered, occasional substitutions may have occurred, and found their way into MSS., as happened with the sayings in the Gospels. We are without materials for judging how far this may have been the case, for we have no knowledge of the condition of the MSS., or of the means taken to preserve them, nor of the date at which this collection was made. We may fairly

assume that the contents of the middle Chapters correspond in the main to the heading. The presence of other small collections is marked by headings more or less distinct. The great collection beginning with Chapter x. ends with Chapter xxii. 16. Then commences a new section with the words, "Bow down thine ear and hear the words of the wise." This section continues to Chapter xxiv. 22, and is followed by a small collection beginning, "These also belong to the wise." Then follows a further collection of Solomonic proverbs "which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out," *i.e.*, probably, edited from various sources. This collection extends to the end of Chapter xxix., and is followed by several other small collections, which bring the Book to a close.

It is not easy to say in a word how this kind of literature differs from other kinds represented in the Old Testament. The point of view of the Wise is general, while in other writings of the Old Testament it is particularistic; it is here human, while elsewhere it is national. There are certain terms and ideas characteristic of the other writings in the Old Testament which are absent from the literature of the Wisdom, and perhaps a better idea of its nature can be got from this negative peculiarity than from its positive contents. For example, though sacrifice is once or twice referred to, the ritual system which occupies so large a place in the Pentateuch is completely ignored. The mass of positive enactments of the ceremonial law, the complicated arrangements of the Tabernacle and Temple service, the priesthood and the hierarchy, do not seem honoured even with an allusion. The Wise Man is occupied with the thought

of God and man, with the relations of men to God and to one another ; but it is only what is moral in all this, what touches mind and conduct, that interests him : the external exercises of worship are passed by without mention. Again, the Wise Man differs as much from the Prophet as from the Lawgiver. All those ideas around which prophecy revolves, such as the idea of a Kingdom of God, of a chosen people, of a Messiah, and the like, are, if not unknown, without significance to the Wise. The distinction between "Israel" and "the Gentiles" has no place in his mind. The darling phraseology of the prophets, such as "Judah," "Israel," "Jacob," "Zion," "my people," "the latter day," and the whole terminology of particularism, nowhere occurs in the Wisdom. The universalistic idea of God has created an idea of mankind equally large.

Conclusions have been drawn from these peculiarities of the Wisdom which though natural are hasty. It has been inferred from the meagre allusions to ceremonial that in the age of the Wise the ritual was much less developed than it became at a later period. It may be true that the ritual was scanty and less imposing in early times, but such a conclusion cannot be drawn from the Proverbs, for other portions of the literature of the Wisdom, such as Ecclesiastes, usually considered a very late book, are marked by the same want of ritual allusions. And unquestionably the prophetic age ran parallel in great part to the age of the Wisdom; but the whole circle of prophetic ideas are foreign to the Wise.

Again, it has been inferred from the universalistic point of view of the Wisdom that the Wise were men

who found themselves outside the circle of beliefs cherished by their countrymen, which they repudiated or sought to reduce to a naturalistic basis. But this view confounds the Wise with their direct opponents, the *letsim*, or scornors. The latter were a class of sophists or sceptics, the deadliest enemies of the Wise, who being "wicked" and "sinners" (Psa. i. 1) had gone the length of finding a speculative justification for their wickedness and unbelief. Looking back from the distance at which we ourselves live to the times of Revelation, we are apt to fancy that it came in a manner which made all denial of it or opposition to it impossible. But this was far from being the case. The evidence which authenticates Revelation is never demonstrative, but always moral. The contents of Revelation have always been the largest part of the evidence for its truth. But moral evidence is strong or weak according to the kind of mind to which it appeals. And thus there has always been opportunity for opposing, and, in point of fact, the same opposition to, Revelation. The prophets were disbelieved and persecuted. They were confronted by other prophets whom *they* called false, and who were so; but all of whom were not consciously false. There were the same confusions and the same difficulties in the path of faith at the time when Revelation was given that exist now when it is complete. The essence of faith lies deeper than intellectual judgment, and, consequently, external evidence is never of more than negative and secondary value. That "scornors," or sceptics, should exist alongside of Revelation, and be found like waifs in the pools and eddies down its whole course, was to be expected. How far they com-

bined into societies, or formed a propaganda, is not easy to say. From allusions in the Proverbs it is evident that they strove assiduously to gain possession of the youthful mind of the country, and in this attempt they were met by the Wise, who put forth efforts equally strenuous to draw the rising thought of the land to their side. The aim of the Wise Man who gathered the Proverbs together was "to give subtilty to the simple [*i.e.*, the undeveloped mind], to the young man knowledge and discretion" (Chap. i. 4). And most of the exhortations of the Wisdom are directed to youth; for the hearer before the ancient sage is always his "son," that is, youthful scholar and friend. But however peculiar and distinctive may be the direction which the Wisdom takes, the Wise Men stand on the common foundations of the faith of their people, and pursue the same ends with the other teachers in the nation.

The best known and best loved of the Wise is the author of the Proverbs Chapters x.—xxii. Among these proverbs there are a few which seem to want any very deep moral purpose, and are little else than the remarks of a keen insight into the ways and motives of men, all of which to a thoughtful mind are full of interest, and the observation of them conducive to a lively though quiet enjoyment. Most of them, however, have a visible connection with higher principles, and are designed to exhibit God realizing Himself in life and providence. Of whatever kind they be, the observations are always good-natured and never betray irritation or dislike on the part of the Philosopher to his fellow men. He walks through the bazaars and observes the peculiarities of oriental marketing: "It is

naught, it is naught, sayeth the buyer ; but when he is gone his way then he boasteth" (Chap. xx. 14). Or he remarks how our natural selfishness cuts into us somewhat deeper, and describes it with a certain caustic though even still kindly cynicism : "All the brothers of the poor man do hate him ; how much more will his neighbours go far from him" (Chap. xix. 7). The difficulty of one's poor relations existed already in those days. Sometimes his expressions are so pointed as to border on humour, as when he represents the slothful man expressing his deadly dread of labour by saying, "There is a lion in the road ;" or as too lazy to lift his hand from the dish to his mouth, or to roast what he had taken in hunting ; or when he describes the poor man whose domestic relations have been unfortunate as preferring to squeeze himself into a corner of the house-top rather than dwell with a brawling woman in a wide house (Chap. xxv. 24) ; or when he ridicules the over-tenderness of the paternal heart : "Withhold not correction from the child ; if thou beatest him with the rod he will not *die*" (Chap. xxiii. 13). But usually he shews a broad sympathy and a grave kindly tenderness for all the natural feelings and the instinctive desires of every sentient creature, embracing even the lower creation in his benevolent regard : "A righteous man regards the natural desires (*nephesh*) of his beast" (Chap. xii. 10). That philosophy which annihilates the individual, which recognizes mankind but not men, to which humanity is an ever renewing advancing tree, from which the separate leaves drop off exhausted, where "the individual withers and the race is more and more"—this philosophy is unknown to him. The

whole endures because each part endures, and he knows an antidote to the individual's fall: "Righteousness delivereth from death" (Chap. x. 2). Hence to him every emotion and natural desire of the individual is of worth, and he regards it with sympathy, whether it be sorrow or its opposite, joy: "Sorrow in the heart of a man bears him down" (Chap. xii. 25); and on the other hand, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Chap. xvii. 22). And his perception is delicate enough to see that, however grateful ordinarily the fellow feeling of other men is to us, there are times when we must be left alone with our feelings, and that in every human soul there is an inmost core so sensitive that it shrinks from all external condolence or sympathy as something too rude: "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy" (Chap. xiv. 10). Yet, on the other hand, we live in one another, we stretch out our hands to the future, and sometimes we are divided, and the "half of our soul" embarks upon the sea or wanders in distant lands, and we long to know how he fares: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but the desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (Chap. xiii. 12, 19); "The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart, and a good report maketh the bones fat" (Chap. xv. 30); and, "As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country" (Chap. xxv. 25). Nothing human is alien to the Wise Man; he is philanthropic in the literal sense; every way of man and every expression of his mind or nature has a charm for him.

Again, when we pass from the individual in itself to those broad distinctions which characterize it, as man and woman, father and child, youth and old man, it is

singular to observe with what pleasure the Wise Man dwells on them as all beautiful in their place, and how he seizes on that in each which is becoming to it, and constitutes its charm: "A gracious woman attains to honour, and strong (or laborious) men attain to wealth" (Chap. xi. 16). That indescribable delicacy in woman, whether you call it tact, or taste, or sensibility, or grace, which is the complement of the strength or force of man, and gives her her power and secures her her place as surely as these secure him his, the Wise Man's eye fastens upon at once; and he is almost rude when he describes the opposite of this, that which we call vulgarity or coarseness, and which he calls want of "discretion," which even beauty is so far from hiding that it throws it into relief: "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is beauty in a woman who is without discretion" (Chap. xi. 22). Similar is his judgment on other classes: "The glory of young men is their strength, the glory of old men is the grey head" (Chap. xx. 29). It is not nature alone, but moral conduct, that makes the young man strong (Chap. xxxi. 3, 4); and why the glory of old men is the grey head is explained in the following proverb: "The hoary head is a crown of glory, it is found in the way of righteousness" (Chap. xvi. 31). The English Version spoils this by translating "*if* it be found," misapprehending entirely the Hebrew point of view, which is that "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened" (Chap. x. 27). To the Hebrew mind this life in the body was the normal life. He had no doctrine of the immortality of the soul as distinct from the man. Neither had he any doctrine of a transcendent place

of blessedness different from this earth, where the principles of God's government, impeded in their flow here by many obstacles, should roll on in their majestic course smooth and straight. He saw all those principles realized here. "Life" to him was what we ordinarily call by that name, and as lived in the body ; and immortality was the continuance of this life, and was conferred by righteousness. The blessedness of the just arising from the fellowship of God was enjoyed here. This at least is the point of view of these proverbs and of the early lyrics. The *fact* of death was ignored. In the lyrics death is absorbed in the higher feeling of life and in the ecstasy of conscious blessedness. And in the deep flow of principles in the proverbs it is submerged. To us Westerns, our metaphysical ideas about the "soul" and its natural immortality, and the ideas naturally accompanying these of the imperfection of matter and the body, and its being a clog upon the spirit and its prison-house, have suggested a different train of thought. "They whom the gods love die soon."

The good die early,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket.

There is scarcely a trace of such an idea in Scripture : "In the way of righteousness is life, and the pathway thereof is immortality" (Chap. xii. 28). Perhaps the other idea might be suggested by the events recorded regarding Enoch ; but it was an idea foreign to the whole strain of Hebrew conception, which regarded this life as fully expressing the principles of Divine government, in which therefore the destiny of man was to be conclusively worked out, whether the

destiny of the individual or the race. Such passages as Isaiah lvii. 1, "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come," are misinterpreted; the meaning being that the righteous is swept away and destroyed before the advancing tide of evil.

If now, before passing on to the individual's relation to that which is without him, we inquire how he should bear himself, what conditions and habits of mind he should cherish, and what activities he should pursue, we enter into the region of duty, and that brings up the great fixed idea on which all is built, viz., the idea of Jehovah. The prevailing feeling in the mind should be the fear of the Lord, the sense of the all-present God, and that awe which this sense carries with it. Out of this will grow those conditions of mind that are becoming. One of the first of these will be *humility*, which in a world where God is all must be the way to all conduct that has in it success: "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom, and before honour is humility" (Chap. xv. 33): "By humility and the fear of the Lord are riches and honour and life" (Chap. xxii. 4): "When pride cometh then cometh shame" (Chap. xi. 2). This humility is not merely a temperament, or a social or ethical condition of mind; it is a religious attitude; it is the broad general sense of what a man is in the presence of God; hence one of its expressions is this: "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Chap. xx. 9). But this abiding awe of God will reveal itself in the whole life in a general gravity of deportment befitting him that is Wise, in equanimity of mind, in self-restraint and patience of temper, in thoughtful consideration in the

presence of men, or on matters of importance, and slowness to speak, and even in a dignified manner of utterance, in opposition to the levity and want of consideration and the unthinking haste of the fool, and in general in a cautious and discreet course of conduct: "He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly" (Chap. xiv. 17); "An equal temper is the life of the flesh, but keenness of mind is the rottenness of the bones" (Chap. xiv. 30); "He that is slow to anger is greater than a hero, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Chap. xvi. 32); "The heart of the righteous meditates in order to answer, but the mouth of the wicked bubbleth over with evil things" (Chap. xv. 28); "The tongue of the righteous gracefully uttereth knowledge, but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness" (Chap. xv. 2); "He that spareth words hath knowledge; Wise men reserve knowledge, but the mouth of the fool is an imminent downfall" (Chap. x. 14); "A fool's chagrin is presently known, but a prudent man covereth an affront" (Chap. xii. 16). Many more proverbs to the same effect might be cited; they culminate in that which is the highest encomium of reticence: "Even a fool when he holds his peace is accounted a wise man" (Chap. xvii. 28). There is an exquisite polish in these proverbs in the original which a translation cannot convey, a delicate balance and opposition of clause to clause and word to word which betrays acute thinking and great elaboration. The proverbs Chapter xv. 2, and Chapter x. 14, are good examples; in the latter the caution and reserve with which the Wise Man speaks, and the knowledge which at last he expresses, are balanced against the readiness of the fool, which is like a toppling

ruin, and his utterance, which is like the clatter and confusion of the ruin when it falls.

These proverbs describing how the individual expresses himself already form a passage over to his general activity and relations to men. However profound the sense of Jehovah's power and efficiency was in the mind of the Wise, it never paralyzed the man or led to a fatalistic and inert quiescence. Rather it stimulated him. For this Jehovah, whose spirit pervaded all, was not a Being unsympathetic with man or inaccessible to him, much less an insensible stream of force, deaf to appeal. Rather there was in man, or man himself was, a spirit similar; perhaps even it was the same spirit that was in man: "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the breast" (Chap. xx. 27). This spirit of man which goes through his breast like a lighted candle, bringing to view all that is there, being both a consciousness and a conscience, has been kindled by Jehovah, and he has lighted it at his own flame (Job xxxii. 8). Man is but a dimmer God; his capacities and motives and aims are the same, though feebler and more contracted. The nearness to him, therefore, of the great primal light will not be to obscure his own, but to make it burn the brighter. It will arouse him to activity, and an activity in harmony with God Himself. In these proverbs there is no trace of the strong sense of God driving men either to a pantheistic sluggishness and quietude, or to the despondency of a hopeless individualism. In this early time of the nation's strength and high fortune, the spirit was too fresh and strong to feel overpowered. Rather it was quickened, and the sense of harmony with Jehovah

made it feel almost omnipotent. Later, when the nation sank beneath its accumulated misfortunes, and the individual lay prostrate under a heap of miseries which he could do nothing to shake off, there did begin to lie on the breast the nightmare of a destiny almost fatalistic, and the best advice Coheleth has to give is to accommodate one's self to it with what skill he may, in fear and reverence, and to snatch at the same time what enjoyment the senses or the sunshine will afford. But there is at no time any trace of that annihilation of effort seen in other Oriental religions, where "the life of the All is but the course of nature, where there is no history with a spiritual goal to be attained by moral activity . . . where there is no ideal yet to be reached . . . where the stream of world-history flows on of itself without the coöperation of man, man having simply to yield himself to it, to adapt himself unresistingly to the eternally unvarying order of the world, to join himself as a passively revolved wheel into the constantly uniform moving clockwork."¹ Man is free as God is, if not so powerful; and his task is to use his freedom to fall into harmony of thought and conduct with Jehovah, the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness. Hence the encomiums passed upon diligence and the severe reprobation of sloth: "The hand of the diligent maketh rich" (Chap. x. 4); "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty" (Chap. xx. 13); "In all labour there is gain" (Chap. xiv. 23).

But of course it is in intercourse with men that this activity can be best displayed, and the dispositions that should accompany and animate it can best be seen.

¹ Wuttke, *Ethics*, vol. i. p. 45.

This disposition, to state it in a single word, is charity, philanthropy in the widest sense. The grave considerate kindness of the Wise Man is one of his most attractive traits. Looking abroad upon the classes of men, his eye alights upon the poor, whom we have always with us, and he compassionates the dreary monotony of their condition: "All the days of the poor are evil" (Chap. xv. 15); and he puts in a plea for their kindly treatment: "He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth; but he that hath mercy on the poor happy is he" (Chap. xiv. 21). Nay, regarding the various orders of society as the will and creation of Jehovah, he who disdains any of them seems to him to slight Jehovah Himself: "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker" (Chap. xiv. 31); but on the other hand, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again" (Chap. xix. 17). But the bearing of the Wise among all classes is the expression of a wide human goodness. In the presence of men in general he is courteous: "A soft answer turneth away wrath;" he esteems others highly: "He who despiseth his neighbour is a fool" (Chap. xi. 12); and should evil rumours regarding others reach his ear he will give them no further currency: "He that divulges a slander is a fool" (Chap. x. 18). Tale-bearing and slander are alluded to in the Old Testament in language of particular virulence. It seems to have been conducted of old, as a kind of private warfare, with great ferocity. In Psalm ci., which has been called "The King's Mirror," the royal author expresses his detestation of it and resolution to proscribe it in his court; and in Psalm xv. it is treated almost

as a cardinal sin. In our day the number of sins has greatly diminished, and it is only particular classes that can fall into them. A clergyman may still be guilty of several; a trader, perhaps, of one; but an independent man of wealth or station cannot sin. To the Hebrew mind backbiting was an odious vice. But civilization has softened our verdicts regarding many things; it has also taught us discrimination in applying our judgments. Perhaps in those days, from want of the means of public speech, slander was the weapon of strong men; it has now very much fallen into the hands of the weak things of the world, such as controversial writers on Scripture, and we mind it less. Christianity, too, the finest evidence for the truth of which is not miracles, nor its moral contents and the answer which it evokes in our own heart, but that it has raised woman to her true place, has perhaps contributed to the same result. By the softening influence of women on this species of warfare its horrors have been greatly mitigated.—In a word (to return to the Wise), the feeling of the Wise Man toward his neighbours is *love*, which thinketh no evil: "Hatred stirreth up strife; but love covereth all sins" (Chap. x. 12); so that, so far from seeking to revenge evil, he hideth it: "He that covereth an offence seeketh love" (Chap. xvii. 9). Of course coupled with this there was the practice of the severer virtues of justice, and particularly truthfulness, no vice being stigmatized so often as lying, and especially that form of it which is injurious to others, the bearing of false witness.

The foregoing pages, though containing little more than a number of passages from the Proverbs, may have given some distant and partial glimpses of the

benevolent countenance and stately demeanour of the Wise Man. It remains to allude in conclusion to the question, To what does this conduct inculcated by the Wise Man, and followed by him, lead? The answer to this question, though here put last, is in truth the presupposition of the Wisdom, which is not a mere ethic but an outcome of religion.

The reward of such conduct as the Wise Man inculcates might seem already attained in the satisfaction of doing good. But this mode of thinking was little in the way of the Hebrew mind. Both in speculation and in temperament the Jew was sensuous. As the body entered into his anthropology and his conception of life as an essential factor, the material world entered also as an essential element into his conception of the universe and its government. He was as far as possible from being an idealist. He demanded that his moral principles should be realized in the external world, and he believed that he saw his demand complied with. It was needless to raise the question whether virtue was its own reward. It had its external reward in the necessary principles of God's government: "Many a one scatters and yet it increases" (Chap. xi. 24); "The liberal soul is made fat; in the good of the righteous the city rejoices" (Chap. x. 13). There is a moral order in the world without, and in the heart of man, and it pursues its end with an irreversible certainty. It is here that the explanation is to be found of what has been thought extremely puzzling, the absence of a formal doctrine of immortality from the Old Testament Scriptures, and not in any intentional avoiding of such a topic by the Lawgiver or Revelation for the purpose of inculcating the principles of a present moral life, or for

any other purpose. That style of speaking of Revelation, common half a century ago, which told us that it was constructed so as by its difficulties to try our faith, and that prophecy was given in such a way that it should not be understood till it was fulfilled, and that its obscurity was necessary lest infidels might say it had been fulfilled by men of set purpose—this style of thinking, which represented the Author of Revelation as stooping to subtleties and quirks for the purpose, of all others, of tripping up infidels, is happily disappearing. “I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth . . . I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right” (Isa. xlv. 19). Scripture speaks simply and without passion, and it says to infidels as to all others: “Whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.” Instead of looking for an explanation of the form of Scripture to an intention having respect to the future, we are turning more to seek a reasonable and sufficient cause in the conditions of the present. The theory that the doctrine of immortality was kept hid from Israel in order that the attention of the people might be fastened on the conditions of a moral life here, introduces Western ideas into Scripture, makes two things out of one, and puts the cause for the effect. A moral life here *was* immortality. To what purpose present in early or later Scripture an explicit doctrine of immortality, when the doctrine was already given in the very conception of the universe current among the people? when it was held that life was that existence of the whole man in the body which we ordinarily so call; that this life was had in fellowship with God or in its coordinate human righteousness, and that it was indissoluble because the conditions of

the universe were normal, fully representing the character of God and his relations to men? Of course all this was, in some respects, ideal, and *facts*, such as death, were opposed to it. But the Hebrew doctrine of immortality was given in the idea and in the consciousness of the living saint; and the task of after revelation was to move out of the way the obstacles that stood before it. To us, on the contrary, the obstacles bulk so largely that we begin with them; and we are scarcely able to conceive a condition of mind that could give death a secondary place, or sweep it away in the rush of great principles regarding God and the universe, or sublime it in the intense ecstasy of conscious life in fellowship with God.

A. B. DAVIDSON.

BRIEF NOTICES.

THE BOOK OF JOB: a Metrical Translation. With Introduction and Notes. *By Rev. H. T. Clarke.* (London: Hodder and Stoughton.) As one who has himself but just emerged from a long and exhausting study of this "most marvellous product of Semitic genius," I still retain a keen sense of its difficulties and a deep sympathy with those who are brave enough to encounter them. I have therefore every motive, as I have every wish, to say all the good that can be said of Mr. Clarke's work, and must ask the reader to make such allowance for my present "personal equation" as he may think requisite.

It is of good omen that Mr. Clarke is profoundly sensible of the immense difficulties of rendering "the pregnant words of embarrassingly rich significance, and the perplexingly attenuated forms of construction" with which the Book of Job abounds, into "perspicuous and idiomatic English;" and that he has set himself to give a "real" rather than an "ostensible" translation of them, betaking himself to blank verse only that he may make the best amends in his power