

Psalms as the 32nd, 34th, 37th and 39th give us the key to the process by which the language of devotion became the language of wisdom. And this, we think, in the order of nature and of time, was the first wisdom, not the sententious proverb, nor the didactic exhortation, but the terrible questioning of distressed faith. The wisdom of the Book of Job is thus not less profound but more elementary than that of Proverbs, and is very near akin to that of the Psalms I have mentioned, and others of the same class. The culmination and foundation of this primary wisdom is the fear of God. So said Job, the 28th chapter, and so the Psalmist, cxi. 10. But this which is the culmination of the first stage in the development of wisdom becomes the text from which its second stage proceeds. The man who out of the terrible trial of faith has learned this lesson, to rest in the simple spirit of religion, turns to ask what the fear of God imposes on man. And hence spring the practical precepts of religion, the proverb by which man's way is ordered in the fear of the Lord.

A third stage in the development of wisdom may be termed the reflective or objective. Sometimes this follows upon the second or practical stage, which is made the text or object of reflection, as in the 1st, 19th and 119th Psalms, and the discourses in the introduction to the Proverbs. The wisdom here commended is the practical wisdom presented from the 10th chapter onward. The 28th chapter of Job has usually been reckoned in this class, but a careful examination will detect a profound difference. Many expressions in the 3rd and 8th of Proverbs have doubtless been borrowed from this passage in Job, but the subject of contemplation in Job is wisdom under a different aspect, as we shall see presently.

At other times, however, this reflective wisdom follows directly upon the first stage, it is the complement of the questionings of doubt, the calm reflection which follows the agony of the struggle with scepticism. Here we may safely place the 28th chapter of Job. It is the praise of wisdom, not as a set of practical precepts for the guidance of the life, but as a right discernment of the providence of God, and of our relations to Him. But the Book of Job is too full of the intense