

for publication. Space will not allow us to translate (from the Hebrew) his learned and very interesting account of it, which, as we are informed, will appear shortly in a German translation. We shall only say that this MS., according to the extracts forwarded to us, contains not less than seventeen passages, many of them given *verbatim*, out of those quoted in the *Pugio* from the Midrash of Moses had-Darshan. They are on the following pages of the *Pugio*: 349, 350, 377, 385, 419, 535, 538, 563, 643, 695, 714, 728, 767, 771, 842, 850, 862, 937. The reason of the discrepancy between Herr Epstein's copy and that of Herr Buber, can only be explained by the supposition that the copyist employed by the latter could not always read the difficult writing of the Prague MS. With seventeen passages agreeing with the *Pugio*, one would rather think that this MS. throws some light upon it.

A. NEUBAUER.

To be continued.)

CHRIST'S USE OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

THE teaching of our Lord is so unique, His method and manner are so original, that it hardly occurs to us at first to seek for sources which He may have used. And yet His own testimony to the ancient Scriptures gives us a warrant for reading them through, not only for the purpose of seeing their witness to Him, but also for the purpose of seeing how He made use of them Himself. It is a labour of reverence and love to read the Old Testament, if we may say so, with our Lord's eyes and to mark its influence upon His mind. In more senses than one the New Testament is latent in the Old. It is Christ's beautiful work to bring the New out of the Old; and then to make the Old patent in the New.

We propose to examine the way in which He did this work in His use of the Book of Proverbs.

That this book would have a peculiar attraction for Him, is evident to every one who has marked the connexion between the Wisdom of which it speaks and the Incarnate Word. If we may venture to gaze into the growing consciousness of the boy Jesus, as He meditated upon His mission, daily revealing itself to Him in the light of the Holy Scriptures, we may conceive with what a solemn joy He recognised His own person in those measured words (viii. 27, etc.) :

“ When He established the heavens, I was there,
 When He set a circle upon the face of the deep ;
 Then I was by Him as a master workman,
 And I was daily His delight,
 Rejoicing always before Him,
 Rejoicing in His habitable earth ;
 And my delight was with the sons of men.”

Long afterwards it was a kind of echo of these words when He told the Jews “ before Abraham was, I am,” and spoke to His disciples of the glory He had with His Father before the world was. In the deep consciousness of His identity with that mysterious Wisdom so dimly portrayed and personified in the old Wisdom Book, He was able to give an unexpected turn to one of its questions. “ Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended ? ” it asked (xxx. 4), and He could say, “ The Son of man, which is in heaven ” (John iii. 13). Surely too it was in a deliberate identification of Himself with Wisdom that He said, “ Wisdom is justified by her works ” (Matt. xi. 19), for it was of Himself and His own conduct He was speaking at the time. And the echo of His own conviction is found in the Apostolic writings, which describe His person in language borrowed from the Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, a book moulded on the Book of Proverbs : “ She is the breath of the power

of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty ; therefore can no defiled thing fall into her. For she is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God and the image of His goodness" (Wisdom of Solomon vii. 25, 26).

We can easily suppose, then, that Jesus finding in Himself the key to the book, would read it with a special ardour. It was the compendium of the practical wisdom which had hitherto revealed itself to the spirit of His people. He would naturally use as much of it as was available, and where He could not actually use it, we might expect His language and His choice of images to be largely influenced by it. He came not to destroy but to fulfil ; and this applied to the Wisdom, no less than to the Law and the Prophets, of Israel. How He conserved, and shaped, and fulfilled this ancient Wisdom we are now to see.

There is one mark of the Book of Proverbs which affords a striking connexion with the teaching of our Lord ; that is its universalism. We could not gather, if it stood alone, that it sprang from a people who possessed a temple with a priesthood and an elaborate ritual. If it refers to the sacrifices, it is only to show their futility as sacrifices apart from the character of the worshipper (xv. 8, xvii. 1), and, quite in the spirit of the more advanced prophets, it teaches that " To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice " (xxi. 3). All the narrowing Jewish ideas are absent, so that the general tone is almost as much Greek as Hebrew. Only now and then are we reminded that the people is the people of the Law and the Prophets, as for instance, in xxix. 18—

" Where there is no vision the people cast off restraint :
But he that keepeth the law happy is he."

The Wisdom therefore of the book is singularly free from local limitations ; it is applicable in all countries and all

ages ; and if we do not refer to it often as an authority, it is largely because all its most valuable lessons have been brought home to us with greater force and clearness by our Lord Himself. This universalism of our book would make it very attractive to Him. He did not come to slight the great ordinances of the ancient faith, but His purpose was to lead us out of them into something larger and better ; and all those tendencies within the circle of the ancient faith, which looked towards larger and better things, would be sure to command His special attention. The Wisdom spoke not to Jews only, but to the world ; and He the incarnate Wisdom spoke to Jews, in words which were meant to speak to the world.

From what has been just said we may conclude that if our Lord had not used the book to some considerable extent, we should have had a very hard problem to solve. Here is the book which is the utterance of the transcendental Wisdom, the Word which in Him became flesh ; and its language is cast in the mould of a universalism which, like Christ's message, itself, looks to the whole world. Not to have used the book would have been implicitly to condemn it. On the other hand, to have been limited by it would have been to acknowledge that the Incarnate Wisdom was not an eternal necessity. We shall see that all possible objections are forestalled by the fact that the Lord made ample use of the book—we may almost say of every chapter—while, on the other hand, He hardly ever uses a thought, an image, or a word, without giving to it a deeper or a fuller meaning. No book of the Bible did He study more, no book of the Bible did He so enrich, enlarge, and improve.

In order to illustrate this, we propose to examine first of all that summary of our Lord's teaching which we call the Sermon on the Mount, and to inquire how far its spirit and precepts are anticipated in the Book of Proverbs. Then we shall glance at the images and parables employed by our

Lord in His teaching, and to see if He borrowed them to any extent from our book. Finally, we shall try to gather together some of the main points of the old Jewish Wisdom, and see how they have been embodied in the gospel.

The most extensive part of our inquiry comes first. Let us take the three chapters of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v.-vii., and trace in them the influence of the Proverbs. First of all come the Beatitudes, in which our blessed Lord sums up the ideal character for His kingdom. The first beatitude runs, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," or, as it appears in Luke, "blessed are ye poor," in contrast with the rich of the earth. Proverbs xvi. 19 reads: "Better is it to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud." The thought is the same, though it is hardly necessary to point out how the proverbial saying is infused with a new spirit and lifted into a new atmosphere, when the Lord adds "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." In the third beatitude, which differs from the first rather in the promise attached to it than in the spiritual condition delineated, "they shall inherit the earth," recalls one of the most trenchant of the Proverbs (x. 30), "the righteous shall never be removed, but the wicked shall not dwell in the earth." It seems almost as if the Lord, having given the promise of the heavenly kingdom to gentle spirits, wished to go back and reaffirm the truth of the old Wisdom, that the same spirit has a promise of the life that now is, an inheritance even in this world. Having noticed the connexion of the first beatitude with Prov. xvi. 19, we are led to see a connexion between the fourth of the beatitudes and verse 26. It seems likely that the Wisdom has a spiritual meaning hidden in "The appetite of the labouring man laboureth for him, for his mouth urgeth him thereto"; but it is certain that our Lord, pondering on the ancient saying would almost lose sight of its obvious material meaning, and would be absorbed in the great

truth of which it formed an apt analogy ; thus the Proverb appears in the sermon of Him who had been tempted in the desert as a hungry, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." The next of the beatitudes, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy," is simply a better and more beautiful way of saying what occurs in Proverbs xi. 17, "the merciful man doeth good to his own soul," the only difference being that the Proverb dwells upon the "quality of mercy," which makes it twice blessed, blessing him that gives and him that receives, while our Lord in His manner refers the matter to His Heavenly Father, who shows mercy to those who themselves show mercy; it is God's direct doing when the spirit of the merciful man is refreshed within him. Still more interesting is the turn which is given to an ancient Proverb in the next beatitude. In Proverbs xxii. 11, we find, "He that loveth pureness of heart, grace *is on* his lips, *the king shall be* his friend." The step from the king to God was always easy in the theocracy of Israel; naturally our Lord would substitute God for the king, but He gives a deeper meaning to the whole thought; we are to desire purity not because it makes our speech gracious, nor because it wins us the friendship of man or of God, but because the vision of God depends upon it; only the pure in heart can see the King in His beauty. The last of the blessings which shows the influence of Proverbs is that pronounced on the peacemaker; naturally our Lord, who had come "to make peace," saw the reward of it in being called a son of God; it was altogether a deeper and a larger thought than any which could have entered into the heart of the ancient Israelite; but even the ancient Israelite had recognised in his proverbial Wisdom that "to the counsellors of peace is joy" (Prov. xii. 20).

The section of the Sermon which follows is concerned chiefly with a criticism and enlargement of the law; we

are not therefore surprised that references to the Book of Proverbs are scanty; but they are not altogether wanting. The large and generous injunction "give to him that asketh thee" (Matt. v. 42), is an echo of the proverb (xxii. 9), "He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor," and even the imperative form finds a very close parallel in Proverbs iii. 28, "Say not unto thy neighbour, Go and come again, and to-morrow I will give, when thou hast it by thee." And that this last precept was sometimes in our Lord's thought, appears in the brief parable of the importunate neighbour, who will not be put off by the comfortable householder, whose children were with him in bed. Again the beautiful re-reading of the ancient Law concerning the love of enemies, which is felt by us all to be the very key-note of the sermon, finds a germ, if not more, in the Book of Proverbs (Matt. v. 44, 45). It is a thought of that book, a very large and luminous thought, that God looks with an equal eye on all men, making His sun and His rain a gift to the evil and the good. The proverb puts it in this way: "The poor man and the oppressor meet together; the Lord lighteneth the eyes of them both" (Prov. xxix. 13). If the ancient Wisdom never got to see that we are actually to love our enemies—it was reserved for our blessed Lord to give that crowning touch to social morality—it taught very clearly that we were not to hate them, and was so far much in advance of the law to which our Lord referred. It said, "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he is overthrown; lest the Lord see it and it displease Him" (Prov. xxiv. 17). It taught, "Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me; I will render to the man according to his work" (Prov. xxiv. 29). It taught, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; if he be thirsty give him water to drink" (xxv. 21). And it got very near to the great healing message of the Lord

of love, when it said, "Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all transgressions" (x. 12). The conviction is irresistible that the Lord had studied long and earnestly the ancient Wisdom, and summed up in His teaching these scattered glimpses of truth, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and "I say unto you, Love your enemies."

Having seen the influence of our book even in the section which deals with the law, we shall hardly think it fanciful to see another reminiscence of Proverbs in Matthew v. 28. The danger of the adulterous thought, as distinct from the action which might ensue on it is already recognised in the precept, "Lust not after her beauty in thy heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids" (Prov. vi. 25).

The section of the sermon in Matthew vi. 1. 18, the rebuke of the hypocrites of the later Judaism, finds no parallel in the Proverbs. Hypocrisy is a mark of a more advanced religious period. In times of less developed piety, the temptation is to conceal rather than to simulate spiritual fervour. But in our Lord's warning against laying up treasure (v. 19) we at once recognise the use He made of the Book of Proverbs. The Proverbs usually dwell on the worthlessness of riches obtained by evil practices: "Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith" (xv. 16). "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice" (xvi. 8). And there is one very interesting link of connexion between our book and the Lord's teaching; it is in the version of Proverbs xv. 27 which occurs in the Chaldee Targum, a work the substance of which was doubtless familiar enough to students of His day; there the verse reads, "He who gathers the *mammon of unrighteousness* troubleth his own house" (*vid.* Luke xvi. 9). But while the first lesson of the Proverbs is the evil of unjust gain, their second lesson is the futility of hoarded treasure in itself. "Riches profit not in the day of wrath;

but righteousness delivereth from death" (Prov. xi. 4). "He that trusteth in his riches shall fall: but the righteous shall flourish as the green leaf" (ver. 28). And the third lesson of the Proverbs concerning riches comes very near to the Lord's profound teaching. "There is a treasure which does not fail: it is found in the house of the righteous" (xv. 6), it belongs often to the poor (xiii. 7). When this truth was seen, it remained only for our blessed Master to teach us how we should lay up treasures incorruptible in heaven.

Passing on to the injunction in Matthew vi. 25, we find a very beautiful and detailed expansion of an idea, which was not unknown to the ancient Wisdom. Catching, as we have been catching, the echoes of the Book of Proverbs in the Sermon on the Mount, we can believe that the proverb, "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy purposes shall be established" (Prov. xvi. 3), was in the mind of Jesus when He told His disciples to dismiss all anxious thought for the morrow, taking their place with the joyous and careless creatures of the field and of the air. And again in the great commandment (Matt. vi. 33) to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and other things shall be added, we seem to have an expansion and a translation into the sphere of our Lord's ideas, of the deep saying (Prov. xxi. 21): "He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour," which is as much as to say, that when righteousness comes first in our thought, and mercy to one another second, we shall find that we have gained righteousness as a central possession, but in her train the life, or the soul, which we had been content to lose, and the honour, of which we never thought. The third chapter of the sermon shows some further marks of our book. Matthew vii. 6 is itself a proverb which we almost expect to find in the ancient collection. In that expectation we are disappointed; but it seems as if the Lord had cast into proverbial form a thought which occurs several times in Proverbs, though in unfigura-

tive language, "He that correcteth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that reproveth a wicked man getteth to himself a blot" (Prov. ix. 7). "Speak not in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words" (Prov. xxiii. 9). "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him" (Prov. xxvi. 4). Now it seems to be just the aspect of truth presented in these sayings that our Lord wishes to emphasize when He said, "Cast not thy pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you." The group of sayings which follows in Matthew vii. 7-12, one of the most precious and beautiful in all the New Testament, is in its form and substance our Lord's and His alone. From no ancient book could He have derived it. Yet we may see the germ of the large thought in "They that seek the Lord understand all things" (Prov. xxviii. 5). The first gift God gives to the seeker is His Spirit, and the Spirit teaches what we ought to ask.

Lastly the danger of hearing the law and not doing it, and the image of the ill-founded house, with which the sermon closes, may be discovered, germinally at any rate, in our Book. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination" (Prov. xxviii. 9), says in a much balder and less forcible way what the Lord says in the solemn passage: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven." And we seem to have the suggestion of the vivid picture of the house on the sand and the house on a rock, in that striking proverb (x. 25): "When the whirlwind passeth, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is an everlasting foundation."¹

¹ Three interesting points of contact with our Lord's teaching outside the Sermon on the Mount may be added. Cf. Prov. xix. 16 with Luke xi. 28; Prov. xxi. 18 with Matt. xx. 28; and Prov. xxviii. 24 with Matt. xv. 5. The last is specially worthy of note.

The last mentioned link of connexion forms an easy transition to the second part of our inquiry: the suggestions of images and similitudes which our Lord obtained from the Book of Proverbs.

After recounting our Lord's words about the sheep and the fold, the fourth Gospel says, "This proverb (*παροιμία*) spake Jesus unto them" (John x. 6) using the word which is employed to designate the Book of Proverbs. From John xvi. 25-29 it is clear that He was accustomed to speak in proverbs, that is in similitudes which concealed spiritual truths. It is this idea of a similitude which lay at the root of the Hebrew proverb; and though a large number of the Proverbs betray no indication of it, the Book as a whole is a storehouse of images brought into the service of illustrating and enforcing doctrine. We should therefore be somewhat surprised if our Lord's teaching did not betray a close acquaintance with these figures and tropes of ancient Wisdom. Of course we should be more surprised if He had been confined to them. It takes nothing from the claim which His parabolic teaching may make for originality to recognise that He turned to account such elements of proverbial and parabolic Wisdom as He found already existing. We shall now glance at some of the Proverbs which seem to have served Him as material, or at any rate as hints, of His own matchless speeches.

In the introductory chapters of Proverbs great stress is laid on the inestimable value of the Divine Wisdom, which is to be sought as men seek for treasure. "If thou seek her as silver and search for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord" (ii. 4). "The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared unto her" (iii. 14, 15). Following the same image—one, we may remember, more familiar than than it is

now—our Lord drew the vivid picture of a treasure found and joyfully hidden in the field, and the companion picture of a merchant seeking pearls, and selling all he has to buy one of great price, as illustrations of the kingdom of heaven. And may we suppose that as the Incarnate Wisdom read thoughtfully on in the same third chapter of the Book of Proverbs, “She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her” (ver. 18), His mind conceived the idea of Himself as the true Vine (John xv. 1), and of His happy, believing disciples as the branches, through Him bearing the lovely fruits of righteousness (Matt. vii. 16)? Of course the image is sufficiently obvious to make it quite fanciful to search for its suggestion anywhere else than in the facts of nature; but when we have become awake to the use which our blessed Lord made of the book which is before us, we may with reverent interest recognise its probable influence on His mind even in these more obvious details.

Another familiar image in the Proverbs is that of the Way. “The commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (vi. 23). “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (xiv. 12). “But the path of the righteous is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble” (iv. 18, 19). We seem to see the Lord meditating on these sayings, and then declaring to mankind that there is a broad road which leads to destruction (Matt. vii. 13), and “if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because the light is not in him” (John xi. 10); but there is a way, narrow it is true, but leading unto life, lit with a light too, and He Himself is at once the Way (John xiv. 5), and the Light. “Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not” (John xii. 35).

In the image of Proverbs ix. 1-6 we seem to have the suggestions of one, if not of two, of our Lord's parables. Wisdom has built her house ; she has prepared a feast ; her beasts are killed ; her wine is ready ; and she sends out her maidens (in LXX. τοῦς ἐαυτῆς δούλους) to summon every one in the city to come in and eat. So the kingdom of heaven is a prepared feast (Luke xiv. 16). The servants are sent out to summon all and every (Matt. xxii. 10) to sit down at the table of the King's Son. The connexion here seems very plain. Perhaps it is not over-fanciful to see in the image of Wisdom's handmaidens (ix. 3) the first germ of the Lord's most touching parable ; is this the suggestion of the Five Wise Virgins who do the bidding of Wisdom ? As another Proverb says (xxi. 20), " there is precious treasure *and oil* in the dwelling of the wise."

If the reader is disposed to dismiss this last reference as fanciful, perhaps he will not fail to recognise the suggestion of our Lord's solemn parable concerning the Rich Man and Lazarus, in a proverb, which though not a similitude, exactly presents the outlines of that parable. " The poor is hated even of his own neighbour, but the rich hath many friends. He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth : but he that hath pity on the poor, happy is he " (Prov. xiv. 20, 21). Was it not such a saying, combined with such as Prov. xix. 7, " All the brethren of the poor do hate him : how much more do his friends go far from him ? " that led our Lord to draw the picture of the pampered epicure, and the perfectly friendless beggar, in order that He might show how much more pitiable is the first, while the last has a friend in Abraham, that we say not in God Himself ? For the teaching of the Lord's parable is not directed to unveiling a new eschatology, but to revealing the baleful delusion which besets our minds concerning wealth and poverty. And may we not add, that the tremendous picture of judgment presented in Matt. xxv. 40, a judgment in which every service

to our fellows shall be taken as done to our Lord, is an amplification, such as only Christ could give, of that striking proverb which occurs a little farther on in the same chapter (xiv. 31): "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker: but he that hath mercy on the needy honoureth Him"? (Cf. xix. 17.)

It must be on the strength of the conviction which will now be formed in the reader's mind, of our Lord's acquaintance with the details of our Book, that we shall venture to see in xx. 18, "Every purpose is established by counsel: and by wise guidance make thou war," the hint of the illustration, "What king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel?" (Luke xiv. 31.) But few of us will hesitate to see the suggestion of the parable of Luke xiv. 10, in the proverb, "Put not thyself forward in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: for better is it that it be said unto thee, 'Come up hither; than that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince'" (xxv. 6, 7). In this instance we may almost say that our Lord was quoting from the passage. The conclusion is not so obvious in respect to a verse a little later on. "By long forbearing is a ruler persuaded, and a soft tongue breaketh the bone" (xxv. 15), but evidently here is the thought which is enforced in the vigorous parable of the Unjust Judge (Luke xviii. 1).

There yet remains one more parable of the Lord's which seems to have a root in one of the Proverbs; it is that of the Pharisee and the Publican. We may dwell on it for a moment in passing, as an example of Christ's wonderful power in clothing an abstract thought in a concrete form, and so making it live before us. The proverb (xxx. 12, 13), "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness: there is a generation, oh how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelids are lifted

up!" is forcible and true enough, but we read it and pass on. The parable in Luke xviii. 10, which presents before us the self-righteous man in the temple praying, and contrasts him with the poor publican beating on his breast, is one of those pictures which we never forget.

But speaking generally, if we have been right in tracing some of our Lord's illustrations to a source in the Book of Proverbs, we cannot fail to notice how much every image gains in His hands. Wisdom is in Him Incarnate; and the corresponding gain in concreteness and living force will be the impression left on every mind after comparing the manual of ancient Hebrew Wisdom, and the teaching of Him who spoke as never man spoke.

Before we pass on to the concluding part of the subject, we may perhaps observe the curious fact that in several passages of the Septuagint which differ from the Hebrew in the Book of Proverbs, we have words and thoughts which appear in our Lord's teaching. It would seem as if He was familiar not only with the Hebrew text, but with the Greek translation which was current in His day. For instance, in the long addition to ix. 12, it is said of the evil man, *διαπορεύεται δι' ἀνύδρου ἐρήμου*. And so our Lord says of the unclean spirit (Matt. xii. 43), *διέρχεται δι' ἀνύδρων τόπων*. It would seem again that the special use of *κοιῖάω* in Matt. xxiii. 27, *παρομοιάζετε τάφοις κεκοιναμένοις*, looks back to the remarkable version of Prov. xxi. 9, which runs *κρεῖσσον οἰκεῖν ἐπὶ γωνίας ὑπαίθρου, ἢ ἐν κεκοιναμένοις μετὰ ἀδικίας καὶ ἐν οἴκῳ κοῖνῳ*, which seems to have been understood to be a description of hypocrisy. As instances of these Septuagint renderings being in the mind of Christ, we may quote Prov. xv. 5, which contains this interesting addition, "The beginning of a good way is to do the things which are just, and these are acceptable with God rather than offering sacrifices: he that seeketh the Lord shall find knowledge with righteousness, and they

that rightly seek Him shall find peace"; or Prov. iv. 21, which runs, "Son, attend to my speech, and to my words lay to thine ear; in order that thy fountains may not fail thee, guard them in the heart." The same thought of an inward fountain,¹ we may note in passing, occurs in xiv. 27, "the fear of the Lord is a fountain of life," and reappears in our Lord's teaching, when He specially quotes it as "what the Scriptures have said" (John vii. 38). These additions of the Septuagint, we may add, not unfrequently form a stepping stone between the Hebrew text and our Lord's teaching.

There now remains to us only the third and briefest part of our task. We have to gather together the main ideas of the Book of Proverbs, and consider to what extent they reappear in the teaching of the Gospel. The broad contrast between wisdom and folly becomes, in our Lord's lips, the contrast between those who find in Him their wisdom and those who follow their own way. But within the lines of this contrast there are four ideas which recur again and again throughout our Book. (1) The necessity of inward rightness. (2) The immense importance of spoken words. (3) The need of humility. (4) The fallaciousness of material possessions (xi. 4, 28, xiii. 7, xv. 27, xxii. 1, 2, xxiii. 4, xxviii. 11, 22, xxx. 8). It is unnecessary to remind the reader of the Gospels, that these four ideas are precisely those which our Master's teaching most impresses on our minds. Inwardness, the right use of the tongue, humility and unworldliness, are the notes of the kingdom of heaven. Concerning the last of these, enough was said when we were examining the Sermon on the Mount; but a few illustrations may be furnished of the first three.

1. Inwardness. "The thought of the foolish is sin" (xxiv. 9). "If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not this: doth

¹ Cf. also Prov. x. 11, xiv. 27, xvi. 22.

not He that weigheth the hearts consider it? And He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? And shall not He render to every man according to his work?" (xxiv. 12.) "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes: but the Lord weigheth the spirits" (xvi. 2). "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life" (iv. 23). "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin?" (xx. 9.) Here is that great truth which our Lord "made current coin." It is the inward part which God sees and judges. "The good man out of his good treasure bringeth forth good things: and the evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt. xii. 35). "The things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man" (Matt. xv. 18).

2. This leads us to notice the importance of speech. Our Lord taught us, that we should give account for each word, because the *word* is the outcome of the heart and of the life. The peculiar significance which He has thrown into this solemn truth, we cannot expect to find in the Book of Proverbs. But when He wished to teach on these lines, there was a wealth of proverbial wisdom, which gave Him a starting point for His lessons. "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters" (Prov. xviii. 4). "The words of the wicked are of lying in wait for blood" (xii. 6). "The tongue of the wise uttereth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. . . . A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breaking of the spirit" (xv. 2, 4). "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles" (xxi. 23). "A man shall be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth" (xii. 14). "A man shall eat good from the fruit of his mouth" (xiii. 2). "A man's belly shall be filled with the fruit of his mouth, and with the increase of his lips shall he be satisfied. Death and life are in the power of

the tongue" (xviii. 20, 21). Out of this Wisdom grew the solemn warning: "I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. xii. 36, 37).

3. Lastly, that exquisite law of humility which our blessed Lord perfectly exemplified and made operative in His believing disciples; the law which requires us all to humble ourselves as a little child, to be lowly as Christ is lowly, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, finds its preparation in the often recurring warnings of our Book against pride; though it is to be noted—and it is very significant—that the ancient Wisdom condemns pride because of its ill results, and seems always to promise exaltation as the reward of humility; while our Master has taught us that humility is itself the great blessing, a blessing which brings with it only one disadvantage, that it frequently leads to exaltation.

"When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom" (xi. 2). "The reward of humility and the fear of the Lord is riches, and honour, and life" (xxii. 4). "A man's pride shall bring him low: but he that is of a lowly spirit shall obtain honour" (xxix. 23). That is the teaching of Proverbs; and on it doubtless He who was meek and lowly in heart often pondered, before He came forth among men to teach them the true value of humility.

To sum up, we have seen good reason to think that our Lord, in studying the Book of Proverbs, identified Himself with that Wisdom which says, "From of old have I been anointed, from the beginning, before the earth was" (viii. 23), and therefore familiarised Himself with such sayings of that Uncreated Being as had filtered down into the minds of the prophetic people; that He made use in

His moral precepts of a great number of these wise sayings, usually amplifying and improving them; and that He employed in His parables many of the "similitudes," or proverbs contained in the ancient Book; and lastly, that the broad lines of moral teaching, which appear in a somewhat fragmentary and incoherent form among the sayings of the wise, were brought into clear and connected significance in the Incarnate Wisdom Himself.

And now we may close with a suggestion, that even in the last scene of His life one of the Proverbs came up into His mind. When He said to His persecutors, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" (John xviii. 23) did He not think of the old proverb, which His people ought to have remembered, "To punish the righteous is not good, nor to smite the noble for their uprightness" (xvii. 26)?

R. F. HORTON.

THE LAST STATE WORSE THAN THE FIRST.

(MATT. XII. 38-45 AND XVI. 1-4.)

THE Pharisees had the shallowest conception of the function of miracle. They would quite have approved the devil's suggestion that Jesus could give a prompt and convincing proof of His messiahship by casting Himself from the pinnacle of the temple and landing unhurt on the pavement below—though why the possession of a mountain-sheep's capacity for jumping should prove any one to be the greatest spiritual blessing to mankind, they probably did not inquire. They seem never to have seriously set themselves to understand the deeper parts of Christ's character, or to ask themselves whether such an