

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

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CHICAGO

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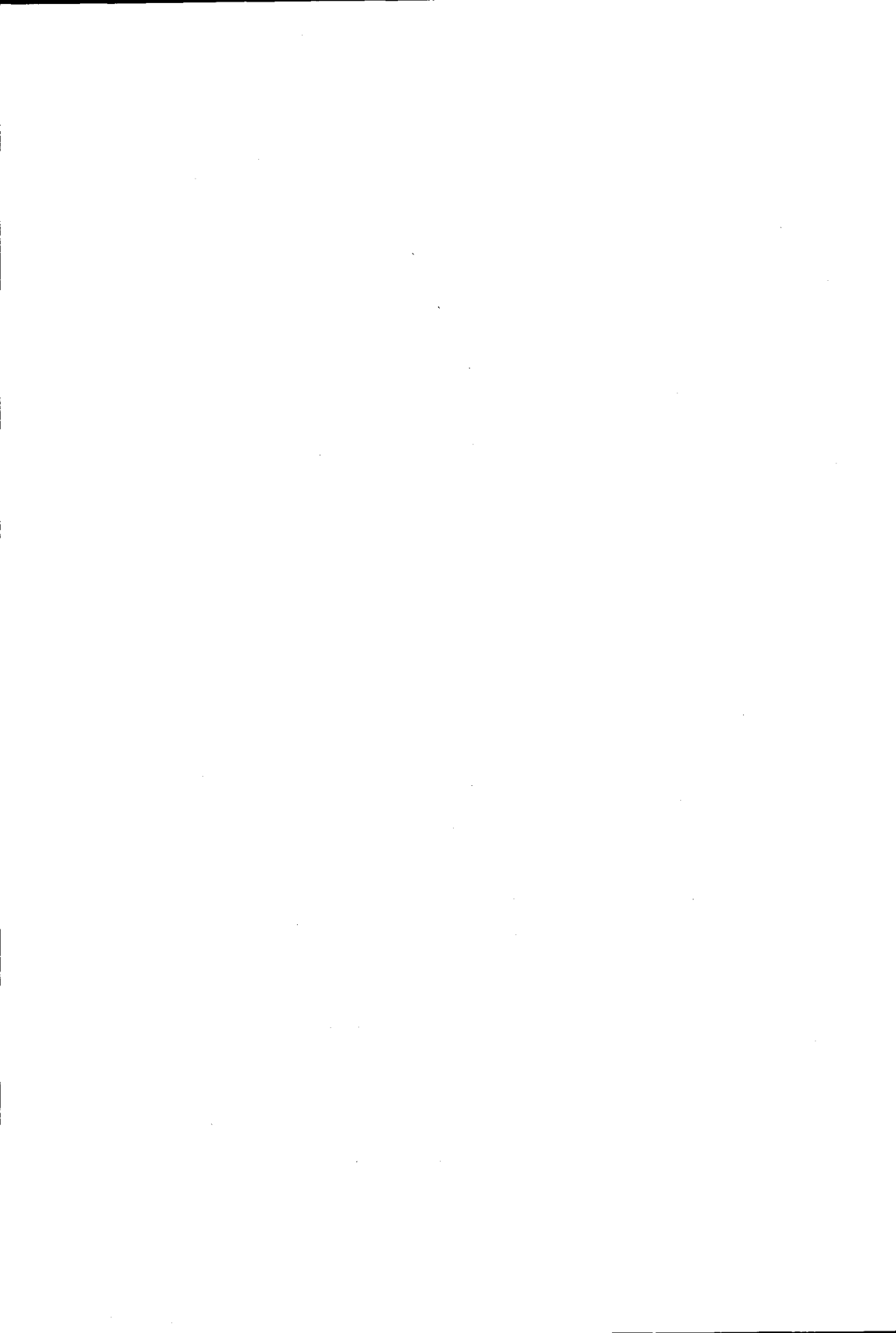
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SOLOMONIC LITERATURE.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

SOLOMONIC ANTIJAHVISM.

THE FEROCITIES of Josiah and his Jahvists indicate the presence of an important Solomonist School. Their culture and tendencies are reflected as we have seen in the rage of prophets against them, and the continuance of their strength is shown in the preservation of Agur's Voltairian satire on Jahvism, and Job's avowed blasphemies:

" If indeed ye will glorify yourselves above me,
And prove me guilty of blasphemy—
Know then, that God hath wronged me!"

This translation from Job, quoted from Professor Dillon, need only be compared with that of the authorised and the revised versions to show us the *causa causans* to-day which of old added four hundred interpolations to the Book of Job to soften its criticism.

It appears strange, however, that Professor Dillon has not included among *The Sceptics of the Old Testament* three writers in the composite eighty-ninth Psalm, nor remarked its relation to the Book of Job. At the head of this wonderful composition the mythical wise man of 1 Kings iv. 31, Ethan, rises ("Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite," perhaps meaning Wisdom of the Everlasting Helper) to attest the divine mercies and faithfulness in all generations. This is in two verses, probably pre-exilic, which a later hand, as I think, has pointed with a specification of the covenant with David. After the "Selah" which ends these four verses come fourteen verses of sermonising upon them, in which nearly all of the points made by Job's "comforters" are put in a nutshell. The sons of

God who presented themselves, Satan among them, in his council (Job i. 6) appear here also (lxxxix. 6):

“ Who among the sons of the gods is like unto Jahveh,
A God very terrible in the council of the holy ones.”

After the mighty things that “Jah” had done to his enemies have been affirmed an Elohist takes up the burden and a “vision” like that of Eliphaz (Job iv. 13) is appealed to:

“Then thou speakest in vision to thy holy ones.”

The vision’s revelation (Job v. 17) “Happy is the man whom God correcteth” is also in this psalm (32, 33): “Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes, but my mercy will I not utterly take from him.” And Eliphaz’s assurance “thy seed will be great” (v. 25) corresponds with that in our psalm (verse 36), “His seed shall endure forever.”

When the psalmist of the vision has pictured, as if in dissolving views, the military renown of David, God’s “servant,” and Solomon, God’s “first-born,” the transgressions of the latter are foreseen, but the seer continues to utter the divine promises:

“ My covenant will I not break,
Nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips.
One thing have I sworn by my holiness;
I will not lie unto David:
His seed shall endure forever,
And his throne as the sun before me;
As the moon which is established forever
Faithful is the witness in the sky. Selah.”

Then breaks out the indignant accuser:

“ But thou HAST cast off and rejected!
Thou hast been wroth with thine ‘anointed’;
Thou hast broken the covenant with thy ‘servant,’
Thou hast profaned his crown to the very dust;
Thou hast broken down all his defences;
Thou hast brought his strongholds to ruin!
All the wayfarers that pass by despoil him;
He is become a reproach to his neighbors.
Thou hast exalted the right-hand of his adversaries,
Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.
Yea, thou turnest back the edge of his sword,
And hast not enabled him to stand in battle.
Thou hast made his brightness to cease,
And hurled his throne down to the ground.
The days of his youth thou hast shortened:
Thou hast covered him with shame! Selah.”

A sarcastic "Selah," or "so it *is!*"—if Eben Ezra's definition of Selah be correct.

Then follow four verses by a more timid plaintiff, who, almost in the words of Job (e. g., x. 20), reminds Jahveh of the shortness of life, and the impossibility of any return from the grave, and asks how long he intends to wait before fulfilling his promises. He also supplies Koheleth with a text by the pessimistic exclamation, "For what vanity hast thou created all the children of men"!

After this writer has sounded his "Selah," another rather more bitterly reminds Jahveh, in three verses, of how not only his chosen people are in disgrace but his own enemies are triumphant.

(These two are much like the writer of Psalm xlv. 9-26, who almost repeats the points made by the above three remonstrants, and asks Jahveh, "Why sleepest thou?")

Finally a Jahvist doxology, fainter than any appended to the other four books, completes the strange psalm :

" Praised be Jahveh for evermore!
Amen, and Amen!"

Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Or is this the half-sardonic submission of Job under the whirlwind-answer, which extorted from him no tribute except an admission that when the ethical debate became a question of which could wield the biggest whirlwinds, he gave up.

In Job's case the only recantation is that of Jahveh himself, who admits (xli. 7) that Job had all along spoken the right thing about him (Jahveh). The epilogue is as complete a denial of Jahvist theology as the words of Jesus (Luke xiii.), which an interpolation has tried to stultify: "Think ye those Galileans who suffered were worse than others? Think ye the men on whom the tower fell were worse than others? *No!*"

Job's small voice of scepticism which followed the whirlwind was never silenced. The fragment of Agur (Proverbs xxx. 1-4) appears to have been written as the alternative reply of Job to Jahveh. Job had said, "I am vile, I will lay my hand upon my mouth, I have uttered that I understand not." Agur adds ironically, "I am more stupid than other men, in me is no human understanding nor yet the wisdom to comprehend the science of sacred things." Then quoting Jahveh's boast about distributing the wind (Job xxxviii. 24), about his "sons shouting for joy" (*Ibid.* 7), and giving the sea its garment of cloud (*Ibid.* 9), Agur, the "Hebrew Voltaire," as Professor Dillon aptly styles him, asks :

“ Who has ascended into heaven and come down again?
 Who can gather the wind in his fists?
 Who can bind the seas in a garment?
 Who can grasp all the ends of the earth?
 Such an one I would question about God: ‘What is his name?
 And what the name of his sons, if thou knowest it?’ ”

The stupid Jahvist commentator who follows Agur (Proverbs xxx. 5-14) and in the same chapter interpolates 17 and 20, has the indirect value of rendering it probable that there were a great many “Agurites” (a “bad generation” he calls them) and that they were rather aristocratic and distrustful of the masses. This commentator, who cannot understand the Agur fragments, also shows us, side by side with the brilliant genius, lines revealing the mentally pauperised condition into which Jahvism must have fallen when such a writer was its champion.

It is tolerably certain that such fragments as those of Agur imply a literary atmosphere, a cultured philosophic constituency, and a long precedent evolution of rationalism. Such peaks are not solitary, but rise from mountain ranges. Professor Dillon, to whose admirable volume I owe much, finds Buddhistic influence in Agur's fragments.¹ But I cannot find in them any trace of the recluse or of the mystic; he does not appear to be even an “agnostic,” for when he says “I have worried myself about God and succeeded not,” the vein is too satirical for a mind interested in theistic speculations. He is a man of the world,—more of a Goethe than a Voltaire; he regards Jahveh as a phantasm, is well domesticated in his planet, and does not moralise on the facts of nature in the Oriental any more than in the Pharisaic way. He appears to be a true Solomonic philosopher and naturalist. I cannot agree to Professor Dillon's omission of the “Four Cunning Ones” (Proverbs xxx. 24-28) because they are not of the same metrical form as the others, and lead, “nowhither.” The lines

“ The ants are a people not strong,
 Yet they provide their meat in the summer,”

no doubt led to the famous parable of Proverbs vi. 6-11, “Go to the ant, thou sluggard.” Being there imbedded in an otherwise commonplace editorial chapter, they may possibly be derived from some commentator on Agur.

Agur apparently represents the Solomonic thinkers brought with the rest of the people under the trials that made Israel the Job

¹ *The Sceptics of the Old Testament*, pp. 149, 155.

of nations. They are such as those who led astonished Jeremiah to ask "what kind of wisdom is in them?" (Jeremiah viii.) They "do not recognise Jahveh's judgments"; in "shame, dismay, captivity, they have rejected Jahveh's word." The exquisite humor of Agur shows that these philosophers did not lose their serenity. Agur sees man passing his life between two insatiable daughters of the ghoulish, "the Grave and the Womb,"—Birth and Death,—and amid the inevitable evils of life he will be wise to refrain from rage and lay his hand upon his lips.

But silence was just what the Jahvist omniscients could not attain to. Notwithstanding Jahveh's confession that Job was right in his position, and the orthodox wrong in their theory that all evil is providential, the "comforters" rise again in the commentator who begins (Proverbs xxx. 5):

"Every word of God is perfected.
He is a shield to them that trust in Him,"

and proceeds in verse 14 with his inanities. And these have prevailed ever since. Even Jesus, when he took up the burden of Wisdom, and rebuked the Jahvist superstition that those on whom a tower fell were subjects of a judgment, must have his stupid corrector to add, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." This simpleton's superstition has taken the place of the great successor of Solomon, and to-day, amid all the learning of Christendom, is proclaiming that the Father is "permitting" all the Satans,—war, disease, earthquake, famine,—to harry his children just to test them or to chasten them. Why should omnipotence create a race requiring worse than inquisitorial tortures for its conversion? In all the literature of Christendom there is not one honest attempt to deal with the evils and agonies of nature; and at this moment we find theists apotheosizing the "Unknowable from which all things proceed," without any appreciation of the fact that in the remote past Jahvism sought the same refuge, and that it was proved by Job a refuge of fallacies. In an awakening moral and humane sentiment Job stands in this latter day upon the earth, and again steadily repeats his demand why one should respect an Unknowable from whom all things,—all horrors and agonies,—proceed.

Ethically we are required to do no evil that good may come; theologically, to worship a deity who is doing just that all the time. This is no doubt a convenient doctrine for the Christian nations that wish to preserve their own property and peace at home, while

acting as banditti in Africa, China, and the Sandwich or other islands. All such atrocities are enacted and adopted as part of the providential plan of spreading the Gospel, latterly "civilisation"; but it is very certain that there can be no such thing as national civilisation until evil is recognised as evil, good as good,—the one to be abhorred, the other loved,—and no deity respected whose government would wrong a worm.

WISDOM IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS, AND THE AVESTA.

The legend of the Queen of Sheba forms not only a poetic prologue to the epical tradition of Solomon's wisdom, but has a substantial connexion with the character of that wisdom, to whose final personification she contributed.

The corresponding Oriental stories do not necessarily deprive this legend of historic basis, but point to the region of this "Queen of the Seven (Sheba)." Those Oriental pilgrimages of eminent women to great sages, however invested with magnificence, are natural; even such romances could not have been invented unless in accordance with the genius of the country in which they were written. There is no great antecedent improbability that a queen, belonging to a region in which her sex enjoyed large freedom, might have made a journey to meet Solomon.

The Abyssinians, who regard her as the founder of their dynasty, at the same time show how little characteristic of their country the legend was, by their ancient tradition, that it was the Queen of Sheba who provided that no woman should sit on the throne, forever! They claim that this Queen is referred to in Psalm xlv.—"At thy right hand doth stand the Queen, in gold of Ophir." This psalm is Solomonic, but the reference is no doubt to the Queen Mother, Bathsheba (whose throne was on his "right hand," 1 Kings, ii. 19). Neither Naamah the Ammonitess, mother of Solomon's successor, nor the daughter of Pharaoh, who was especially distinguished as his wife, is described as a queen,—this indeed not being a Jewish title for a king's wife. The psalm indicates much glory to be conferred on a woman by wedlock with Solomon, but not that he was to derive any honor from either or all of the "threescore queens" assigned him in later times (Cant. vi. 8). In another Solomonic Psalm (lxxii.) it is said :

“ The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents :
 The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts,
 Yea, all kings shall fall down before him.”

No glory is here supposed to be derivable from a woman, and an inventor would probably have merely devised a saga on the last of the lines just quoted, which is adapted in 1 Kings, iv. 34, to Solomon's wisdom, or he would have imagined some instance of a particularly illustrious monarch coming to pay homage to Solomon. That the only example is that of a woman carries some signs of reality.

Assuming that there was ever any King Solomon at all, this Psalm lxxii., whose Hebrew title is “Of Solomon,” might have been written in the height of his reign. The title of “God” given him in Psalm xlv. is here approximated in the opening line, “Give the King thy judgments, O Elohim,” and in the ascription to him of such virtues and such beneficent dominion, “from the river (Euphrates) to the ends of the earth,” without any further reference to God, that an indignant Jahvist expands the doxology (18-20) to include a reclamation for Jahveh. The ancient lyric closes with verse 17, which says of Solomon :

“ His name shall endure forever ;
 His name shall have emanations as long as the sun ;
 Men shall bless themselves in him ;
 All nations shall call him The Happy.”

The Jahvist answers :

“ Blessed be Jahveh Elohim, the Elohim of Israel,
 Who alone doeth wondrous things,
 And blessed be His glorious name forever ;
 And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.
 Amen, and Amen.”

Now in this beautiful poem (omitting the doxology) the elation is especially concerning some connexion with Sheba. In verse 10 it is said “The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts”; in verse 15, “To him shall be given of the gold of Sheba.” These lines might have been written on the announcement of a royal visit, or meeting, which had not mentioned a queen. But what country is indicated by Sheba (the Seven)? In India there are seven holy rivers, and seven holy Rishis, represented by the seven stars of the Great Bear. But these correspond with the Seven Rivers of Persia which enter into the Persian Gulf, in the Avesta called Sata-væsa, a star-deity. In the Yîr Yast 9 it is said :

"Satavæsa makes those waters flow down to the seven Karshvares of the earth, and when he has arrived down there he stands, beautiful, spreading ease and joy on the fertile countries, thinking in himself, 'How shall the countries of the Aryas grow fertile?'"

As there are seven heavens, there are seven earths (Karshvares), and these, as already shown (*ante* II.), are presided over by the "seven infinite ones" (Amesha-Spentas). Of these seven the first is Ahura Mazda himself, and of the others only one is female—Armaîti, genius of the earth. Of this wonderful and beautiful personification more must be said presently, but it may be said here that Armaîti was the spouse of Ahura Mazda, and Queen of the Seven,—the seven Ameshi-Spentas who preside respectively over the seven karshvares of the earth.

The function of Armaîti being to win men from nomadic life and warfare, to foster peace and tillage, she was a type of "the eternal feminine"; and such an ideal could hardly have been developed except in a region where women were held in great honor, nor could it fail to produce women worthy of honor. That such was the fact in Zoroastrian Persia is proved by many passages in the Avesta, wherein we find eminent women among the first disciples of Zoroaster. There is a litany to the Fravashis, or ever living and working spirits, of twenty-seven women, whose names are given in *Favardîn Yast* (139-142). Among these was the Queen Hutaosa, converted by Zoroaster, the wife of King Vîstâspa, the Constantine of Zoroastrianism. Hutaosa was naturally a visible and royal representative of Armaîti, "Queen of the Seven," a princess of peace, a patroness of culture, to be imitated by other Persian queens.

That the sanctity of "seven" was impressed on all usages of life in Persia is shown in the story of Esther. King Ahasuerus feasts on the seventh day, has seven chamberlains, and consults the seven princes of Media and Persia ("wise men which knew the times"). When Esther finds favor of the King above all other maidens, as successor to deposed Vashti, she is at once given "the seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the King's house; and he removed her and her maidens to the best place of the house of the women." Esther was thus a Queen of the Seven,—of Sheba, in Hebrew,—and although this was some centuries after Solomon's time, there is every reason to suppose that the Zoroastrian social usages in Persia prevailed in Solomon's time. At any rate we find in the ancient Psalm lxxii., labeled "Of Solomon," Kings of Sheba (the Seven) mentioned along with the Eu-

phrates, chief of the Seven Rivers (Zend Hapta-heando) ; and remembering also the "sevens" of Esther, we may safely infer that a "Queen of Sheba" connoted a Persian or Median Queen.

We may also fairly infer, from the emphasis laid on "sevens" in Esther, in connexion with her wit and wisdom, that a Queen of the Seven had come to mean a wise woman, whether of Jewish or Persian origin, a woman instructed among the Magi, and enjoying the freedom allowed by them to women. There is no geographical difficulty in supposing that a Persian queen like Hutaosa, a devotee of Armañti (Queen of the Seven, genius of Peace and Agriculture), might not have heard of Salem, the City of Peace, of its king whose title was the Peaceful (Solomon), and visited that city,—though of course the location of the meeting may have been only a later tradition.¹

The object of the Queen's visit to Solomon was "to test him with hard questions" as to his wisdom. It was not to discover or pay court to his wisdom, though he received from her "of the gold of Sheba" spoken of in the psalm. As a royal missionary of the Magi her ability and title to prove Solomon's knowledge, and decide on it, are assumed in the narrative (1 Kings x.). Several sentences in her tribute to Solomon's "wisdom and goodness" recall passages in the Psalm (lxxii.). There is here an intimation of some prevailing belief that Solomon's wisdom was harmonious with the Zoroastrian wisdom. Whether the visit of the Queen be mythical or not, and even if both she and Solomon are regarded as mythical, the legend would none the less be an expression of a popular perception of elements not Jewish in Solomonian literature.

Of course only Biblical mythology is here referred to. The Moslem mythology of Solomon and the Queen (Balkis) has taken from the Avesta Wise King Yima's potent ring, and his power over demons, and other fables, in most instances to be noted only as an unconscious recognition of a certain general accent common to the narratives of the two great kings. Yet it can hardly be said that the stories of Yima in the Avesta and of Solomon in the Bible are entirely independent of each other,—as in Yima's being given by the deity a sort of choice and selecting the political career, Ahura Mazda saying: "Since thou wanted not to be the preacher and the bearer of my law, then make thou my worlds thrive, make my

¹ It may be mentioned that the Moslem name for the Queen of Sheba is Balkis, which points to the great Zoroastrian city of Balkh, near which are the Seven Rivers (Saba' Sin), whose confluence makes the Balkh (Oxus), with whose sands gold is mingled. (Cf. Psalm lxxii. 15.)

worlds increase : undertake thou to nourish, to rule, and to watch over my world." Ahura Mazda requests Yima to build an enclosure for the preservation of the seeds of life (men, animals, and plants) during a succession of fatal winters, and some of the particulars resemble both the legend of the ark and that of building the temple. Yima was, like Solomon, a priest-king (he is also called "the good shepherd"); he was, like Solomon, beset by satans (daêvas), and after a reign of fabulous prosperity he finally fell by uttering falsehood. What the falsehood was is told in the Bundahis : the good part of creation was ascribed to the evil creator.

Several other heroes of the Avesta have assisted in the idealisation of Solomon, notably King Vîstâspa, already mentioned. Like Solomon, he is famous for his horses and his wealth. Zoroaster exhorts him, "All night long address the heavenly Wisdom ; all night long call for the Wisdom that will keep thee awake." From Zoroaster the "Young King" learned "how the worlds were arranged"; and he is advised "have no bad priests or unfriendly priests."

It is now necessary to inquire whether there is anything corresponding to these facts in the ancient writings ascribed to Solomon. The lower criticism has little liking for Solomon, and makes but a feeble struggle for the genuineness of his canonical books against the higher criticism, which forbids us to assign any word to Solomon. But these higher critics acquired their learning while lower critics, and it is difficult to repress an occasional suspicion of the survival of an unconscious prejudice against the royal secularist, apparent in their unwillingness to admit any participation at all of Solomon in the wisdom books. Is this quite reasonable?

It is of course clear that Solomon cannot be described as the author of any book or compilation that we now possess. But neither did Boccaccio write Shakespeare's "Cymbeline," nor Dryden's "Cymon and Iphigenia," nor the apologue of the Ring in Lessing's "Nathan the Wise," nor Tennyson's "Falcon," in which, however, his Tales are used. I select Boccaccio for the illustration because his defiance of "the moralities" led to his suppression in most European homes, thus facilitating the utilisation of his ideas by others who derive credit from his genius, this being precisely what might be expected in the case of the great secularist of Jerusalem. But no one can carefully study the Book of Proverbs without perceiving that a large number of them never could have been popular proverbs, but are terse little essays and fables, some of them highly artistic, which indicate the presence at some

remote epoch of a man of genius. And I cannot conceive any fair reason for setting aside the tradition of many centuries which steadily united the name of Solomon with much of this kind of writing, or for believing that every sentence he ever uttered or wrote is lost.

It would require a separate work to pick out from the two Anthologies ascribed to Solomon—the First, Proverbs x. 1, xxii. 16, and the Second, xxv. 29,—the more elaborate thoughts, and piece together those that represent one mind, even were I competent for that work. But this fine task awaits some scholar, and indeed the whole Book of Proverbs needs a more thorough treatment in this direction than it has received.

Of the last seven chapters of the Book of Proverbs, one (xxx.) containing the fragments of Agur and his angry antagonist, is elsewhere considered. Chapters xxv., xxvi., xxvii., and xxxi. 10–31, may with but little elimination fairly come under their general heading, “These are also proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, King of Judah, copied out.” Chapters xxviii. and xxix., with their flings at princes and wealth, contain many Jahvist insertions. The admirable verses in xxiv., 23–34, and those in xxxi. 10–29, 31, represent the high secular ethics of the Solomonic school.

The verses last mentioned (exaltation of the virtuous woman) are curiously enough blended with “The words of King Lemuel, the oracle which his mother taught him.” The ancient Rabbins identify Lemuel with Solomon, and relate that when, on the day of the dedication of the temple, he married Pharaoh’s daughter, he drank too much at the wedding feast and slept until the fourth hour of the next day, with the keys of the temple under his pillow. Whereupon his mother, Bathsheba, entered and reproved him with this oracle. Bathsheba’s own amour with Solomon’s father does not appear to have excited any rabbinical suspicion that the description of the virtuous wife with which the Book of Proverbs closes is hardly characteristic of the woman. She was the “Queen Mother,” a part of the divine scheme, and Jahveh can do no wrong.

The first nine verses of this last chapter in the Book of Proverbs certainly appear as if written at a later day, perhaps even so late as the third century before our era, and aimed at the Jahvist tradition of Solomon. Lemuel seems to be allegorical, and we here have an early instance of the mysterious disinclination to mention the great King’s name. His name, Renan assures us, is hidden

under "Koheleth," but he is not named in the text of that book or even in that of the "Wisdom of Solomon." In Ezra v. 11 the mention of the temple as the house "which a great king of Israel builded and finished" seems to indicate a purposed suppression of Solomon's name which continued (Jeremiah lii. 20 is barely an exception) until this silence was broken by Jesus Ben Sira, and again by Jesus of Nazareth.

The removal of verse 30 (Proverbs xxxi.), clearly a late Jahvist protest, leaves the praise of the virtuous woman with which the book closes without any suggestion of piety. Yet we find here that "her price is far above rubies," "she openeth her mouth with wisdom," and one or two other tropes which probably united with some in the First Anthology to evolve more distinctly the goddess Wisdom. Some sentences of the First Anthology grew like the mustard seed. "Wisdom resteth in the heart of him who hath understanding" (Proverbs xiv. 33), reappears in 1 Kings iii. 12; and in x. 24 it is definitely stated that it was the wisdom which God had put into Solomon's heart that made all the earth seek his presence. It was a miracle they went to see; the glory is not that of Solomon but that of God.¹

The nearest approach to a personification of Wisdom in the First Anthology is proverb xx. 15: "There is gold and abundance of pearls, but the lips of knowledge are a (more) precious jewel." This expands in Job to a long list of precious things—gold, coral, topaz, pearls—all surpassed by Wisdom, and the similitudes journey on to the parables of Jesus, wherein the woman sweeps for the lost silver, and the man sells all he has for the pearl of price. This however was a comparatively simple and human development. And the first complete personification of Wisdom, growing out of "the lips of knowledge," and perhaps influenced by the portraiture of "the virtuous woman," is an expression of philosophical and poetic religion. This personification is in Proverbs viii and ix., which are evidently far more ancient than the seven chapters preceding them, and no doubt constitute the original editorial Prologue to the so-called "Proverbs of Solomon," with the exception of some Jahvist cant about "the fear of Jahveh." We hear from "the lips

¹In many places in the Avesta (e. g., Sîrôzah i. 2) a distinction is drawn between "the heavenly wisdom made by Mazda, and the acquired wisdom through the ear made by Mazda." Darmesteter says: "Asnya khratu, the inborn intellect, intuition, contrasted with gaoshô-srûta khratu, the knowledge acquired by hearing and learning. There is between the two nearly the same relation as between the parâvidyâ and aparâvidyâ in Brahmanism, the former reaching Brahma *in se* (parabrahma), the latter sabdabrahma, the word-brahma (Brahma as taught and revealed)." (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXIII., p. 4.)

of knowledge" a reaffirmation of the "excellent things" said in the Anthologies about the superiority of Wisdom to gems. (The word "ancient" given by the revisers in the margin to viii. 18 may possibly signify the antiquity of the Anthologies when this Prologue was written.) The scholarly writer of the Prologue had closely studied the ancient proverbs, and occasionally gives good hints for the interpretation of some that puzzle modern translators. Thus Wisdom, in describing herself as "sporting" (viii. 30) indicates the right meaning of x. 23 to be that while the fool finds his sport in mischief the wise man finds his sport with wisdom. (This proverb may also have suggested the laughter of the "virtuous woman" in xxxi. 25.)

In viii. 22-31 Wisdom becomes more than a personification and takes her place in cosmogony. This passage, which contains germs of much of our latter-day theology, must be quoted in full, and comparatively studied. Wisdom speaks :

22. Jahveh acquired me in the outset of his way,
Before his works, from of old.
23. From eternity was I existent,
From the first, before the earth.
24. When no deep seas I was brought forward,
When no fountains abounding with water.
25. Before the mountains were fixed,
Before the hills, was I brought forward :
26. When he had not fashioned the earth and the fields,
And the consummate part of the dust of the world.
27. When he established the heavens, I was there ;
When he set a boundary on the face of the deep ;
28. When he made firm the clouds above ;
When the fountains of the deep became strong ;
29. When he gave to the sea its limit,
That the waters should not pass over their coast ;
30. Then was I near him, as a master builder :
And I was his delight continually,
Sporting before him at all times ;
31. Sporting in the habitable part of his earth,
And my delight was with the sons of men.

Let us compare with this picture of Wisdom that of Armaîti, genius of the Earth, in the sacred Zoroastrian books. In the Gâtha Ahunavaiti, 7, it is said : "To succor this life (to increase it) Armaîti came with wealth, the good and true mind : she, the everlasting one, created the material world ; but the soul, as to time, the first cause among created beings, was with thee" (Ahura Mazda).

Thus, like Wisdom, Armaîti is everlasting: she was not created but "acquired" by the deity. When Ahura Mazda, as chief of the seven Amesha-spentas, ideally designed the world, she gave it reality, as master builder, and, like Wisdom, hewed out the foundation pillars he had marked out,—namely, the Seven Karshvares of the earth. The opening lines of Proverbs ix. read almost like a quotation from some Gâtha—

" Wisdom hath builded her house,
She hath hewn out her seven pillars."

Like Wisdom, Armaîti was the continual delight of the supreme God. In an ancient Pâli MS. it is said that Zoroaster saw the supreme being in heaven with Armaîti seated at his side, her hand caressing his neck, and said "Thou, who art Ahura Mazda, turnest not thy eyes away from her, and she turns not away from thee." Ahura Mazda tells Zoroaster that she is "the house-mistress of my heaven, and mother of the creatures."¹ Like Wisdom, Armaîti has joy in the "habitable part" of the earth, and the "sons of men" from whom she receives especial delight ("the greatest joy") are enumerated in the Vendîdâd, also the places in which she has such delight. They are the faithful who cultivate the earth morally and physically, and the places so watered or drained, and homes "with wife, children, and good herds within."

Armaîti has a daughter, "the good Ashi," whose function is to pass between earth and heaven and bring the heavenly wisdom (Vohu-Mano, "Good Thought") to mankind. The soul of the world thus reaches, and is reached by, heaven, and Armaîti thus becomes a personification of the human and celestial Wisdom, ascribed to great men, such as Solomon. At the same time the "sons of men" are all the children of Armaîti and she finds delight among them. Even the rudest are restrained by her culture. "By the eyes of Armaîti the (demonic) ruffian was made powerless," says Zoroaster,—who is said to have laughed at his birth; and the spirit of the Earth, laughing with her flowers and fruits, survived in Persia the sombre reign of Islam, to sing in the quatrain of Omar Khayyam: "I asked my fair bride—the World—what was her dower: she answered, 'My dower is in the joy of thy heart.'"

"The sons of men" is not an Avestan phrase, for to Armaîti

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*. Vol. XVIII. Pahlavi Texts tr. by West. The text quoted above (from p. 415) is of uncertain age, but it is harmonious with the more ancient scriptures, and no doubt compiled from them.

her daughters are as dear as her sons, but we find in the Vendîdâd "the seeds of men and women." These are sprung from those who were selected for preservation in the Vara, or enclosure, of the first man, Yima, made by direction of the deity, when the evil powers brought fatal winters on the world. The deformed, diseased, wicked, were excluded, the chosen people were those formed of "the best of the earth." From long and prosperous life on earth the Amesha of immortality, the good angel of death, conducted them to eternal happiness; they are the immortals, children of the demons being mortals. There was something corresponding to this in the Jewish idea of their being a chosen people, as distinguished from the Gentile world (see Deut. xxxii. 8), and no doubt the phrase "sons of men" represented a divine dignity afterwards expressed in the title "Son of Man."¹

The Solomonic hymn of Wisdom at the creation (Proverbs viii. 22-31) contains other Avestan phrases. "From eternity was I formed" recalls Zervan akarana, "boundless time," and verse 26, relating to the earth, is still more significant: in it "the sum" has been substituted by the Revisers for (E. V.) "the highest part" (of the earth) but in either rendering it is near to the Avestan phrase, "the best of Armaîti" (Earth). This phrase is reproduced in the Bundahis (xv. 6), where the creator, Ahura Mazda, says to the first pair, "You are man (cf. Genesis v. 2, he 'called their name Adam'), you are the ancestry of the world, and you are created the best of Armaîti (the Earth) by me." (West's translation. *Sacred Books of the East*. Vol. V., p. 54, n. 2.) The word for Earth in Proverb 26 is *adamah*, and in the Septuagint (various readings) it is actually translated *Ἀρμαίθ*,—Armaîti's very name. We may thus find in proverb 26 (viii) the idea that man is the supreme expression of the Earth.

Whether there is any connexion between the Sanskrit *Adima* and Hebrew *Adam* is still under philological discussion: probably

¹ Among the cultured Jews, just before our era, there was a recognition of the dignity of man as is seen in the Wisdom of Solomon vii. 1, "I myself am a mortal man, like to all, and the offspring of him that was first made of the earth." Solomon ascribes his superiority only to the divine gift of wisdom. This idea of human equality was in the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. iii. 9)—probably a Parsi heretic, at any rate an apostle of purifying water and fire—and it underlay the title of Jesus, "Son of Man." That in Armaîti there was a conception of a humanity not represented by race but by character and culture will appear by a comparison with the Vedic Aramati, a bride of Agni (Fire) to whom she is mythologically related, on the one hand, and on the other to the spirit of the earth who came to the assistance of Buddha. This story, related in many forms, is that when the evil Mâra, having tempted Buddha in vain, brought his hosts to terrify him, all friends forsook him, and no angel came to help him, but the spirit of the earth, which he had watered, arose as a fair woman, who from her long hair wrung out the water Buddha had bestowed, which became a flood and swept away the evil host. Watering the Earth is especially mentioned in the Avesta as that which makes her rejoice, and marks the holy man.

not, for their meaning is different, Adima meaning "the first," and Adam relating to the material out of which he is said to have been formed. Adam is derived from Adamah: after all, man came from the great Woman,—“the Mother of all living.”¹ Adamah, according to Sale, is a Persian word meaning “red earth,” and in Hebrew also it connotes redness. Armaîti might have acquired an epithet of ruddiness from her union with Âtar, the genius of Fire (Fargard xviii. 51–52. Darmesteter Introductory, iv. 30). In Hebrew *adamah* combines three senses,—a fortress, redness, and cultivated ground. In Proverbs (viii. 31) we have the fortress or enclosure, “the habitable part of his earth”; in verse 26 the cultivated earth, “the highest part (or sum, or best) of the dust of the earth.” The “delight” in which Wisdom dwelt (verse 30) is Eden, the garden of delight, and in verse 31 this delight associated with the human children of the earth. Here we have the elements of the narrative of the creation Adam in Genesis, and the garden, though they clearly are not derived from Genesis. And in Genesis we find something like a personification of the earth, as in ix. 13, “It (the rainbow) shall be a token of a covenant between me and the earth.”

The idea of a creative deity requiring, as in Proverbs viii., the assistance of another personal being, is foreign to Jahvism, but it is of the very substance of Zoroastrianism, and it reappears in the Elohimism of Genesis. Another important and fundamental fact is, that we find in the prologue to Proverbs a deity contending against something, circumscribing forces that need control, not of his creation. It is plain that the conception of monotheistic omnipotence had not yet been formed. There are higher and lower parts of the earth.

Although there is no evidence that any such compilation as our “Genesis” existed at the time when the prologue (viii., ix.) to the “Proverbs of Solomon” was composed, the Elohist opening of Genesis, especially in its original form, harmonises with the Parsi conflict between Light and Darkness.

“When of old Elohim separated heaven and earth—when the earth was desolation and emptiness—darkness on the face of the deep, and the spirit of Elohim brooding on the face of the waters,—Elohim said, *Be Light*; *Light* was.”²

¹ Even in the legend in Genesis ii. the “rib” is a misunderstanding. Eve (Chavah) was the female side of Adam, which was the name of both male and female (Gen. v. 2). The “rib” story arose no doubt from the supposition that Adam’s allusion to “bone of my bone” had something to do with it. But Adam’s phrase is an idiom meaning only “Thou art the same as I am.” (Max Muller’s *Science of Religion*, p. 47.)

² These two, darkness and the brooding spirit, may seem to be related to the raven and the dove sent out of the ark by Noah, but this account only indicates the origin of the story of the

The spirit of God "brooding" over the waters (Genesis i. 1) may be identified with the Wisdom of Proverbs ix. 1, who "builds her house" as the Elohim built the universe, and "hath hewn out her seven pillars" like a true Armaîti, "Queen of the Seven." She is the Spirit of Light. And probably the darkness that was on the face of the abyss suggested the antagonistic personification in the next chapter (ix.) named by Professor Cheyne "Dame Folly." Wisdom, having builded her house, spread her table, mingled her wine, sends forth her maidens to invite the simple to forsake Folly, enjoy her feast, and "live." Dame Folly,—who though she has "a seat in high places" is "silly,"—clamors to the wayfarer to believe that the bread and water of her table, being surreptitious, are sweeter than the luxuries and wine offered by Wisdom. This appears to be the meaning of Dame Folly's somewhat obscure invitation.

" 'Waters stolen are sweet !
Forbidden bread is pleasant !'
He knoweth not her phantoms are there,
That her guests are in the underworld."

In this contrast between Wisdom inviting all to enter her house, drink her wine, and "live," and Folly inviting them to her "Sheol," we have nearly a quatrain of Omar Khayyam : "Since from the beginning of life to its end there is for thee only this earth, at least live as one who is on it and not under it."

In the Avesta the good and wise Mother Earth (Armaîti) is opposed by a malign female "Drug" (demoness), whose paramours are described in Fargard xviii. (Vendîdâd). These two are fairly represented by Wisdom and Folly as personified in Proverbs viii. and ix.

The Jahvist who in Proverbs i. 1-7 (excepting the first six verses) undertakes to edit the original and ancient editor as well as Solomon, presents the curious case of one of Dame Folly's phantoms interpreting the words of Wisdom's guests. Unable to com-

Deluge; for the raven was in Persia an emblem of victory, and in the Biblical legend it was the only living creature that defied the Deluge and was able to do without the ark. In the corresponding legend in the Avesta, where King Yima makes an enclosure (Var.) for the shelter of the seeds of all living creatures, the heavenly bird Karshipta brings into that refuge the law of Ahura Mazda, and as the song of this bird was the voice of Ahura Mazda, it may have been an idealised dove.

(" For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone . . .
The voice of the turtle is heard in the land.")

But when Yima lent himself to the lies of the Evil One his (Yima's) "glory" left him in the form of a raven (Zambâd Yast, 36). But both the raven and the dove were tribal ensigns, and it is not safe to build too much on what is said of them in Eastern and Oriental books.

prehend their portraiture of Dame Folly, he imagines that the allusion must be to harlotry, admonishes his "son" that "Jahveh giveth wisdom," which among other things will "deliver thee from the strange woman," whose "house sinketh down to the underworld and her paths unto phantoms." Which recalls the pious lady who on hearing her ritualistic pastor accused by a dissenter of leanings toward the Scarlet Woman, anxiously inquired of a friend whether she had ever heard any scandal connected with their vicar's name!

Our Jahvist editor seems to be one who would often say of laughter "it is mad"; and naturally could not imagine how Wisdom could "sport" before the Lord (viii. 30) unless she were in some sense mad. The sport before Jahveh could only be in mockery of some sinner's torment, like the derision ascribed to Jahveh (Psalm ii. 4); consequently our editor represents Wisdom crying abroad in the streets:

" Because I have called and ye refused
I also will laugh in the day of your calamity,
I will mock when your fear cometh."

But Pliny mentions the Mazdean belief, confirmed by Parsi tradition, that Zoroaster was born laughing. To him Ahura Mazda says: "Do thou proclaim, O pure Zoroaster, the vigor, the glory, the help and the joy that are in the Fravashis (souls) of the faithful."

However, we may see in these first seven chapters of Proverbs that Wisdom had become detached from the sons of men, in whom she had once found delight, was no longer in the human heart, but had finally ascended to wield the heavenly thunderbolts. And, alas, it is probable that we owe to this vindictive and menacing attitude of deified Wisdom the preservation of so many witty and sceptical things in books traditionally ascribed to Solomon. The orthodox legend being that the Lord had put supernatural wisdom into Solomon's heart, and never revoked it despite his "idolatry" and secularism, it followed that the naughty man could not help continuing to be a medium of this divine person, Wisdom, and that it might be a dangerous thing to suppress any utterance of hers through Solomon,—a kind of blasphemy. However profane or worldly the writings might appear to the Jahvist mind, there was no knowing what occult inspiration there might be in them, and the only thing editors could venture was to sprinkle through them plenteous disinfectants in the way of "Fear-of-the-Lord" wisdom.

The proverbs in which the name Jahveh appears are not, of course, to be indiscriminately rejected as entirely Jahvist interpolations. It seems probable that little more than the word Jahveh has been supplied in some of these,—e. g., xix. 3, xx. 27, xxi. 1, 3, xxviii. 5, xxix. 26. But in a majority of cases the proverbs containing the name Jahveh are ethically and radically inharmonious with the substance and spirit of the book as a whole, which is founded on the supremacy of human "merits" as fully as Zoroastrianism, in which salvation depends absolutely on Good Thought, Good Word, Good Deed. In dynamic monotheism (as distinguished from ethical) of which Jahvism is the ancient and Islam the modern type, the doctrine of human "merits" is inadmissible: a man's virtues are not his own, and in Jahveh's sight they are but "filthy rags," except so far as they are given by Jahveh. But in the Solomonic proverbs the highest virtues, and the supreme blessings of the universe, are obtained by a man's own wisdom, character, and deeds. And in some cases the claims for Jahveh appear to have been inserted as if in answer or retort to proverbs ignoring the participation of any deity in such high matters. I quote a few instances, in which the antithesis turns to antagonism:

Solomon—By kindness and truth iniquity is atoned for.

Jahvist—By the fear of Jahveh men turn away from evil. (xvi. 6.)

Solomon—He who is skilful in a matter findeth good.

Jahvist—Whoso trusteth in Jahveh, happy is he! (xvi. 20.)

In several other cases entire proverbs seem to be inserted for the correction of preceding ones,—these being not always understood by the interpolator:

Solomon—Treasures of evil profit not,

But virtue delivereth from death.

Jahvist—Jahveh will not suffer the righteous man to be famished,

But the desires of the unrighteous he thrusteth away. (x. 2, 3.)

Solomon—The tongue of the just is choice silver;

The heart of the evil is little worth:

The lips of the just feed many,

But fools die through heartlessness.

Jahvist—The blessing of Jahveh, that maketh rich,

And work addeth nothing thereto. (x. 20-22.)

Solomon—The virtuous man hath an everlasting foundation. (x. 25.)

Jahvist—The fear of Jahveh prolongeth days. (x. 27.)

Solomon—Hear counsel, receive correction,

That thou mayst be wise in thy future.

Jahvist—Many are the purposes in a man's heart,

But the counsel of Jahveh, that shall stand. (xix. 20-1.)

Solomon—The acceptableness of a man is his kindness :

Better *off* the poor than the treacherous man.

Jahvist—The fear of Jahveh *addeth* to life ;

Whoso is filled *therewith* shall abide, he shall not be visited by evil. (xix. 22-3.)

Solomon—The upright man considereth his way.

Jahvist—Wisdom is nothing, heart nothing,

Counsel nothing, against Jahveh. (xxi. 29, 30.)

In one instance the Jahvist has made a slip by which his hand is confessed. In xvii. 3 we find :

The fining-pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold,
But Jahveh trieth hearts.

But he omitted to notice the repetition in xxvii. 21, where we find the profound sentence which the Jahvist had reduced to commonplace :

The fining-pot for silver and the furnace for gold,
And a man is *proved* by that which he praiseth.

The Jahvist spirit is also discoverable in xx. 22 :

Say not "I will retaliate evil":
Wait for Jahveh and he will save thee.

Also in xxv. 21-2 :

Solomon—If he that hateth thee be hungry, give him bread to eat,
If he be athirst give him water to drink.

Jahvist—For thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head,
And Jahveh shall reward thee.

A similar mean and vindictive spirit is shown in xx. 18, following a magnanimous proverb ; but in the earlier xxiv. 29, we find the unqualified rebuke of retaliation :

Say not "As he hath done to me, so will I do to him,
I will render to the man according to his work."

It was this generosity that Buddha exercised,¹ and Jesus ; and it was left to Paul to recover the Jahvist modifications of Solomon's wisdom in order to adulterate for hard Romans the humane spirit of Jesus (Romans xii. 19, 20). The Solomonic sentences are normally so magnanimous as to throw suspicion on any clause tainted with smallness or vulgarity. The pervading spirit is, "The benevolent heart shall be enriched, and he who watereth shall himself be watered."

¹ See my *Sacred Anthology*, p. 240.

There is one proverb (xiv. 32) which suggests a belief in immortality, or possibly in the Angel of Death :

By his evil deeds the evil man is thrust downward,
But the virtuous man hath confidence in his death.

According to the Avesta every man is born with an invisible noose around his neck. When a good man dies the noose falls, and he passes to a beautiful region where he is met by a maid, to whom he says, "Who art thou, who art the fairest I have ever seen?" She answers, "O thou of good thoughts, good words, good deeds, I am thy actions." The evil man meets a leprous hag, embodiment of his actions, who by his noose drags him down through the evil-thought hell, the evil-word hell, the evil-deed hell, to the region of "Endless Darkness" (Yast xxii.). This darkness may be metaphorically spoken of in Proverbs xx. 20 :

He who curseth his father and mother,
His lamp shall be put out in the blackest darkness.

But generally the allusions to death in the Solomonian proverbs do not seem to allude to physical death. In x. 2 "virtue delivereth from death" is in antithesis to the unprofitableness of evil treasures, and in 16 :

The reward of a virtuous man is life ;
The gain of the wicked is sin.

Here "life" and "sin" are in opposition. Other sentences to be compared are :

The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
To avoid the snares of death. (xiii. 14, cf. the Jahvist xiv. 27.)
Understanding is a fountain of life to those who possess it,
But the snare of fools is Folly. (xvi. 22.)
He who hateth reproof shall die. (xv. 10.)
The way of life is upward to the wise,
So as to turn away from the grave (sheol) beneath. (xv. 24.)
Death and life are in the power of the tongue
And they who love it shall eat its fruit. (xviii. 21.)

(In the last clause "it" probably refers to "life," unless the pronoun be cancelled altogether.)

The getting of treasures by a tongue of falsehood,
Is *getting* a fleeting vapour, the snares of death. (xxi. 6.)
In the way of virtue is life,
But the way of the by-path leadeth to death. (xii. 28.)
The man who wandereth from the way of instruction
Shall rest in the congregation of the phantoms. (xxi. 16.)

The two proverbs last quoted may be usefully compared with the ancient Prologue (viii., ix.) already referred to in this chapter, as they are there reproduced pictorially in Wisdom and Dame Folly sitting at their respective doors. Wisdom offers long life and happiness :

But he who wandereth from me doeth violence to his own life,
All who hate me love death. (viii. 36.)

Dame Folly tries to turn into her by-path those who are "proceeding straight in their course" (ix. 15), but her victim—

He knoweth not her phantoms are there,
That her guests are in the underworld. (ix. 18.)

The same Hebrew word *Rephaim* (phantoms or shades) is used here and in xxi. 16.

All of these references to death and the underworld (*sheol*), except perhaps xiv. 32, refer to the living death, moral and spiritual, which is of such vast and fundamental significance in Zoroastrian religion. In this religion the evil power is "all death." The universe is divided by and into "the living and the not living."¹ "When these two Spirits came together they made first Life and Death,"—words sometimes used as synonymous with the "Good and the Evil Mind." Ahura Mazda representing all the forces that work for health and life, Angromainyu (Ahriman) all that work for disease and destruction, have ranged with them all animals and plants, on one side or the other, in this great conflict. The life of an Ahrimanic creature is "incarnate death." (Darmesteter's Introduction to the Vendidad, v. 11.) His destructiveness is equally against virtue, wisdom, peace, health, happiness, life, and all of these, not merely physical dissolution, are included in his Avestan title, "The Fiend who is all death." He is the Abaddon of Revelation ix. 11, also he "that had the power of death" in Hebrews ii. 14, and probably came into both of these from Proverbs xxvii. 20 :

Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied,
And the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Dr. Inman (*Ancient Faiths*, i., p. 180) connects Abaddon with "Abadan (cuneiform), the lost one, the sun in winter, or darkness," which conforms with the Avestan Ahriman, who is emphatically a winter-demon, his hell being in the north (cf. Jeremiah

¹ Gaya and ajyāiti, translated by Haug "reality and unreality" (*Parsis*, p. 303). The translation "living and not living" was sent me by Prof. Max Müller in answer to a request for a careful rendering.

i. 14 and elsewhere), and is the natural adversary of the Fire-worshipper.

Among the Zoroastrians there were not only Towers of Silence (Dakhma) for the literally dead, but also for the confinement of those tainted by carrying corpses, or by any contact with the death-fiend's empire, such as being struck with temporary death. "The unclean," says Darmesteter, "are confined in a particular place, apart from all clean persons and objects, the Armêst-gâh, which may be described, therefore, as the Dakhma for the living." Here then are the dead-alive guests of Dame Folly (Proverbs ix. 15), who opposes Wisdom, as Ahriman created Akem-Mano (evil thought) to oppose Vohu-Mano (good thought), and here is the assembly that might give the Solomonic proverb its metaphor :

The man who wandereth from the way of instruction,
 * Shall rest in the congregation of the phantoms (or shades, *Rephaim*).

The Zoroastrian books from which I have been quoting contain passages of very unequal date, but it is the opinion of Avestan scholars that most of them are from very ancient sources, pre-Solomonic, and there is no chronological difficulty in supposing that such institutions as the Armêst-gâh, for the separation of the unclean, should not have been well known in ancient Jerusalem before the corresponding levitical laws concerning the unclean and the leprous existed.

The Book of Proverbs was also a growth, and although, as has been stated, there is reason to regard as later additions most of the proverbs containing the word Jahveh, as they are inconsistent with the general ethical tenor of the book, there are several in which that name is evidently out of place. Even in the editorial Prologue we can hardly recognise orthodox Jahvism in the conception of a being, Wisdom, not created by Jahveh yet giving him delight and some kind of assistance at the creation ; and nowhere else in the Old Testament do we find such an idea as that of xx. 27, "The spirit of a man is Jahveh's lamp," or in xix. 17 :

He who is kind to the poor lendeth to Jahveh,
 And his good deed shall be recompensed to him.

But in the Zoroastrian religion men and women render assistance and encouragement to the gods, and we find the chief deity, Ahura Mazda, saying to Zoroaster concerning the Fravashis, or souls, of holy men and women : "Do thou proclaim, O pure Zoroaster, the vigor and strength, the glory, the help and the joy, that are in the

Fravashis of the faithful . . . do thou tell how they came to help me, how they bring assistance unto me. . . . Through their brightness and glory, O Zoroaster, I maintain that sky there above." (Favardîn Yast, 1, 2.) As Frederick the Great said, "a king is the chief of subjects," so with Zoroaster Ahura Mazda is the chief of the faithful; or, as Luther said, "God is strong, but he likes to be helped."

The similitude in Proverbs xx. 27 is especially important in our inquiry :

The spirit of man is the lamp of Jahveh,
Searching all the chambers of the body.

The word for "spirit" here is *Nishma*, which occurs in but one other instance in the Bible, namely, in Job xxvi. 4. Job asks:

To whom hast thou uttered words?
And whose spirit came forth from thee?

This chapter of Job (xxvi.) is closely related to Proverbs viii. and ix., both in thought and phraseology: the Rephaim, or phantoms, the "pillars," the ordering of earth and clouds, the boundary on the deep; and there is an allusion to "the confines of Light and Darkness" which point to the domains of Wisdom and Dame Folly. Job and the proverbialist surely got these ideas from the same source, and also the word *nishma*, translated "spirit," which throughout the Old Testament is *ruach*, save in the two texts indicated. But there is no text in the Bible where *ruach*, spirit, or soul, is associated with light like the *nishma* of the proverb, and in Job *nishma* evidently means a superhuman spirit. Now there is a Chaldean word, *nisma*, which in the Persian Boundahis appears as *nismô*, and is translated by West "living soul." The ordinary word for soul in the Parsî scriptures seems to be *rûbân*, and West regards the two words as meaning the same thing, the breath, or soul, basing this on the following passage of the Bundahis, representing the separation of the first mortal into the first human pair, Mâshya and Mâshyoi :

"And the waists of both were brought close, and so connected together that it was not clear which is the male and which the female, and which is the one whose living soul (*nismô*) of Aûharmazd (God) is not away (lacking). As it is said thus: 'Which is created before, the soul (*nismô*) or the body? And Aûharmazd said that the soul is created before, and the body after, for him who was created; it is given into the body to produce activity, and the body is created only for activity; hence the conclusion is this, that the soul (*rûbân*) is created before and the body after. And both of them changed from the shape of a plant into the shape of man, and the breath (*nismô*) went spiritually into them, which is the soul (*rûbân*).'"¹

¹ *Sacred Books of the East*. Vol. V., pp. 16, 53-54. Text and notes.

With all deference to the learned translator, I cannot think his exegesis here quite satisfactory. In the first sentence *nismô* is the breath of God; and although in the second the same word is used for the human soul, the writer seems to have aimed in the last sentence at a distinction: the divine breath or spirit (*nismô*) creates a soul (*rûbân*), to receive which the plant is transformed into a body fitted for the "activity" of an imbreathed soul. West twice translates *nismô* "living soul," but *rûbdn* only "soul." Does not this indicate Ahura Mazda as the source of divine life, as in Genesis ii. 7, where Jahveh-Elohim breathes into man, who becomes a "living soul,"—a being within the domain of the god of life, not subject to the god of death? Is it not his *rûbdn* that is the image of *nismô*? (Cf. Genesis ix. 5, 6.)

Turning now to the Avesta, we find the famous Favardin Yast, a collection of litanies and ascriptions to the Fravashis. "The Fravashi," says Darmesteter, "is the inner power in every being that maintains it and makes it grow and subsist. Originally the Fravashis were the same as the Pitris of the Hindus or the Manes of the Latins, that is to say, the everlasting and deified souls of the dead; but in course of time they gained a wider domain, and not only men, but gods and even physical objects, like the sky and the earth, had each a Fravashi." "The Fravashi was independent of the circumstances of life or death, an immortal part of the individual which existed before man and outlived him."

In Yast xxii. 39, 40, it is said: "O Maker, how do the souls of the dead, the Fravashis of the holy Ones, manifest themselves?" Ahura Mazda answered: "They manifest themselves from goodness of spirit and excellence of mind."

Favardin Yast, 9: "Through their brightness and glory, O Zarathrustra, I maintain the wide earth," etc. 12: "Had not the awful Fravashis of the faithful given help unto me, those animals and men of mine, of which there are such excellent kinds, would not subsist; strength would belong to the fiend."

In other verses these Fravashis (the word means "protectors") help the children unborn, nourish health, develop the wise. The imagery relating to them is largely related to the stars, of which many are guardians. These are probably the origin of the Solomonic similitude of reason, "The spirit (*nishma*) of man is the lamp of —?"

With all of these correspondences between the Solomonic proverbs, nothing is more remarkable than their originality, so far as any ancient scriptures are concerned. While they are totally

different from the Psalms, in showing man as a citizen of the world, relying on himself and those around him for happiness, and exalting nothing above human virtue and intelligence, without any religious fervor or wrath, the proverbialist is equally far from the ethical superstitions of Zoroastrian religion, which abounds in fictitious "merits" and anathematizes fictitious immoralities. It is as if some sublime Eastern pedlar and banker of ethical and poetic gems, who had come in contact with Oriental literatures, had separated from their liturgies and prophecies the nuggets of gold and the precious stones, polishing, resetting, and exciting others to do the like. At the same time many of the sentences are the expressions of an original mind, a man of letters, neither Eastern nor Oriental, and these may be labelled with the line of the Persian poet Faizi: "Take Faizi's *Díwán* to bear witness to the wonderful speeches of a freethinker who belongs to a thousand sects."