

THE DOCTRINE OF  
REWARD AND RETRIBUTION  
in the  
BOOK OF PROVERBS.

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T H E S I S.

For Degree Of

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Submitted By

JOHN KENNEDY, M.A., B.D.

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTES.

- H.D.B. Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible.
- B.D.B. Brown, Driver and Briggs' Hebrew Lexicon.
- ZATW. Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.
- LXX. Septuagint.
- S. Syriac.
- T. Targum.
- V. Vulgate.

Wherever the Syriac, Targum or Vulgate is referred to in the notes, the reference is from Kittel. It is simply used to strengthen the support given to an alternative reading.

Bible passages are cited according to the Hebrew enumeration of chapters and verses.

A passage is underlined to indicate a departure from the Hebrew consonantal text.

## INTRODUCTION

It is commonly held by scholars that the Book of Proverbs asserts a doctrine of individual reward and retribution. "Rewards and punishments are in this life, and according to works. Virtue and vice never go unrewarded here and now. No wrongdoing escapes retributive justice. If the righteous are punished on earth when they fall into sin, how much more the wicked and the sinner". (11.31).<sup>(1)</sup> This extract from one of the latest books on the teaching of the Wisdom Literature fairly represents scholarly opinion on the subject. This doctrine of an exact reward and retribution happening in this life so that all accounts are squared before death is supposed to lead to the conclusion that all suffering is a result of previous sin. Such doctrine is attributed not only to Sages but to Psalmists. In another recent book on the religion of Israel it is stated, "The conclusion that the adversity of the righteous and the prosperity of the wicked are alike evanescent and that before death each

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(1) Ranston. "The Old Testament Wisdom Books", p.88.

will reap the due reward of his deeds ..... became, in fact, the orthodox view of post-exilic Judaism, in spite of numerous apparent exceptions. Where it did not fit the obvious facts it was assumed that the sufferer who seemed to be righteous was in reality guilty of some terrible secret sin for which he was being punished by Yahweh, and thus to disaster was added the cruel and doubtless often unjustified suspicion of wickedness." <sup>(1)</sup> The allusion here, of course, is to what is presumed to be the suggestion of the friends in the book of Job.

This doctrine, however, supposed to be debated in the Book of Job, is open to investigation from two sides. One may scrutinise the assertions made in Job itself to see if such doctrine was the matter in question, or one may investigate the Book of Proverbs to see if it really held as a constituent part of the Sages' thought. It may be that scholars are placing the Book of Job against a false background and so misreading its thought. This is a bold suggestion, I admit, but, truth to tell, it is not mine but that of Professor Stevenson. From an independent investigation of Job, he has arrived at

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(1) Oesterley and Robinson. "Hebrew Religion". p.309.

the conclusion that "the friends' doctrine has been crudely and inaccurately defined by modern interpreters."<sup>(1)</sup> If that is so, the need for a re-investigation of the teaching of the Book of Proverbs is readily apparent. It is such an investigation I have undertaken in the work which comprises this thesis.

Apart, however, from the question, or questions, debated in the book of Job, the need for a thorough scrutiny of the Sages' assertions regarding reward and retribution is a clamant one. The jejune doctrine attributed to them has always been a difficulty to scholars. It is hard to believe that men, who had the same experience of life as ourselves, could persist in holding, as it has been asserted of them, that a good man is always rewarded with temporal prosperity and an evil man meets with retributive justice. The facts of life do not support such doctrine and, as far as we are aware, never have supported it. The Sages, had they held it, must have shut their eyes to plain experience which is, of course, what scholars say they did. I venture to believe that the results of this thesis will do something to establishing the probity of the Sages and reveal them, moreover, not as utilitarians, as some have

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(1) I am indebted to Professor Stevenson for this statement of his views. See p. 48.



been inclined to reckon them, but as deeply religious men.

A word might be said about the method of dealing with the subject. The key to the doctrine of reward and retribution in the Book of Proverbs is to be found in the assertions made concerning two types of men, the Saddik and the Rasha, well known to students of the Psalms. Who are these men? It has been too readily assumed that in Proverbs the Saddik is the good man generally and the Rasha is his opposite, but a rigorous investigation into the precise meanings of these terms is necessary. So my investigation starts with a scrutiny of their meaning outside the Book of Proverbs altogether. Their evolution is followed through the historical and prophetic writings into the Book of Psalms. Only then are they discussed in the Book of Proverbs.

The bearing of such a preliminary investigation on the whole question of reward and retribution will readily be seen. If Saddik and Rasha mean something more than "good man" and "bad man" in the commonly accepted moral sense, then the assertions made regarding their fate must be studied in a new light. I believe I have discovered that Saddik is a term which signifies the

loyal member of covenanted Israel, faithful to Yahweh and his instruction, and that Rasha signifies the apostate or heathen aggressor. The distinction between them is not only moral but religious, a momentous distinction for the Sages, which coloured their whole scheme of thought and profoundly influenced their doctrine of reward and retribution. The reward of the Saddik is participation in the blessings which Yahweh bestows upon his faithful people; the retribution falling on the Rasha is the destruction which Yahweh brings upon his enemies. That is, the doctrine of divine reward and retribution in the Book of Proverbs is not that of individual recompense and punishment but one which asserts a vindication by Yahweh of his faithful people as a whole and an imminent destruction on all his enemies.

It is not difficult to see how this conclusion agrees with the main trend of Old Testament doctrine but I have made no systematic attempt to correlate it with the teachings of the prophetic books or the Book of Psalms. The reason for this omission is quite simple. Throughout the thesis, especially when my conclusions have been formulated, I have used the evidence of these other Old

Testament writings in support of my contentions. This support, where I have drawn upon it, does seem to be conclusive and to go over the ground in detail appears to be superfluous.

Having dealt with the manner in which divine reward or retribution comes to the Saddikim or the Reshaim, I pass on to consider the benefit of "righteousness" to the individual. There I find that the man who keeps instruction and walks in the fear of Yahweh may or may not be blessed with temporal prosperity, but he lives in the favour of Yahweh and his days are full of promise and hope. He is heir to the promises made to Israel and lives in the expectation of a day of judgment, when Yahweh will intervene to vindicate his own. The "life" which he enjoys is the moral favour of Yahweh with its blessings of prosperity in the community of the faithful and, in the day of vengeance on evil-doers, preservation from destruction.

I then pass on to deal with the manner in which prosperity or adversity comes to individuals. There I find many statements that diligence and toil and shrewdness are qualities that make for success and that thriftlessness and laziness and such like bring a man to poverty.

But such statements are manifestly founded on experience and are not expressions of religious dogma. This doctrine, if it can be called a doctrine, of reward and retribution is manifestly not the doctrine supposed to be found in the Book of Job.

The conclusion of the whole matter is that the teaching of the Sages on divine reward and retribution is related to the teachings of the prophets and the expectations of the psalmists and the doctrine that a man's fortunes are the index to his character is without demonstration in their teaching.

A few lines of explanation are needed regarding the translations. Throughout the thesis, instead of translating Saddik and Rasha, I have anglicized the Hebrew. The use of such words as "righteous" and "wicked" presents grave difficulties. In the first place, their meaning is assumed and this is just what I am trying to discover. Again, in its original use, Saddik does not mean "righteous" but "innocent" and Rasha has the meaning of "guilty person". They were originally legal terms and only in course of evolution did they acquire a religious significance. The greatest difficulty of all, however, is afforded by the fact that "righteous" in

English, as also "wicked", affords no distinction between the singular and plural. Such distinction is extremely important. It makes for clarity to have the exact Hebrew number before one all the time.

Similarly, in such Hebrew terms as <sup>ר</sup>רָצוּץ and <sup>ר</sup>רָצוּץ, when their meaning is under discussion, I have retained the Hebrew instead of translating it. At times this may appear pedantic but style has again been sacrificed to clarity.

The tenses of the Hebrew present a difficulty in translation. It would have suited the purpose of this thesis many a time to have translated an imperfect by a future, a perfectly legitimate procedure, but for the sake of uniformity I have been rigorous, in Psalms and Proverbs at any rate, in adhering to the present. It is a pregnant tense, being able, as it were, to project itself into the future and in no case do I think its use prejudices the meaning of the passage as long as its possibilities are fully understood.

It only remains to be added that the work is entirely my own. I trust I have omitted in the footnotes no reference to authorities which have helped, but the

main labour of the thesis has been on the Hebrew text  
itself under the very helpful guidance of Professor  
Stevenson.

*John Kennedy.*

SADDIK AND RASHA OUTSIDE PSALMS AND PROVERBS.

The doctrine of reward and retribution in the Book of Proverbs is bound up with assertions made concerning two classes of men known as "righteous" and "wicked". As explained in the introduction, these English words are too general for our purpose and we have retained the Hebrew terms "Saddik" and "Rasha". To discover the meanings of these terms outside the Psalms and Wisdom Literature is our first task.

The primary meaning of *הַצַּדִּיק* is "to set forth as righteous" or "to justify in a legal sense." The primary meaning of *הַשֵּׂרֵץ* is the exact opposite. It signifies "to declare to be in the wrong" or "to condemn as guilty" in civil relations. We take for example Deut. 25.1, "if there be a quarrel between men, and they bring it to the judgment seat and they judge them, they shall justify the Saddik and condemn the Rasha." (*וְהִצַּדִּיק וְהִשֵּׂרֵץ*) Here the legal connotation of Saddik and Rasha is quite apparent. The Saddik is the innocent party and the Rasha is the guilty party.

In Exodus 23.1. also, we find it written, "Thou

shalt not take up a false report; put not thine hand with the Rasha to be an unrighteous witness", where the context shows quite clearly that the reference is to the proceedings of a law court, where an innocent man is not to be condemned on false testimony. <sup>(1)</sup> Again, in I Samuel 24,18, Saul says to David, "You are in the right against me". ( 'תָּוִי בְּצִדְקָתְךָ נִצַּחְתָּ ) Here the reference is to innocence and guilt before Yahweh who in verse 16 is looked upon as judge.

This last example introduces us to an extension in the use of the words "Saddik" and "Rasha" to mean the innocent or the guilty party before Yahweh. An example of this usage is found in I Kings 8.32, "Then hear thou in heaven and take action and judge thy servants, condemning the guilty so as to bring his way upon his head and acquitting the innocent so as to give him according to his innocence." Here Yahweh is regarded as the ideal judge before whom men's innocence or guilt is established. Even in cases where a man may be acquitted before an earthly tribunal, he is not acquitted before the judgment seat of Yahweh as, for

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(1) Cf. also Ex.23, 7.8; Deut. 16.19; 25.1.



example, in Exodus 23,7, "Keep thee far from a false matter, and the innocent and the Saddik do not slay for I will not justify the Rasha."<sup>(1)</sup> Yahweh is the ultimate tribunal. It is before him a man is Saddik or Rasha.

It is in this sense that Saddikim and Reshaim are contrasted in Genesis 18. 23-33. It is clear that the men of Sodom and Gomorrah are moral delinquents but it is also clear that their sin is a sin against Yahweh. (  $\text{יְהוָה}$  ) Gen. 13.13. Yahweh is regarded as their judge who can take appropriate steps to punish them. Gen. 18.25. Here the legal connotation of these terms, Saddik and Rasha, as the innocent or guilty parties in a law suit is replaced by the religious connotation of the innocent or guilty parties before Yahweh. The terms, therefore, came to have a religious as well as a legal sense. That this religious sense eventually became dominant in one of the terms at least is evident from the two following passages where the term Rasha is quite clearly used for the enemy of Yahweh.

2 Chron. 19.2. And there went out to meet him Jehu the son of Hanani the seer, and he said to king Jehoshaphat, "Shouldst thou help the Rasha

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(1) LXX. reads, however,  $\text{ἡ δὲ ἰσχυρία τοῦ ἁμαρτωλοῦ}$ , which seems rather tautological.

and love them that hate Yahweh? Because of this Yahweh's wrath is upon thee."

1 Sam. 2.9,10.

The feet of his saints he shall keep,  
But the Reshaim shall be silent in darkness,  
For by strength shall no man prevail.  
Those who strive with Yahweh shall be shattered.  
Against them shall he thunder in heaven.

These examples, of course, illustrate a late usage of the term Rasha. We have now to study the usage of the two terms, Saddik and Rasha, in the Prophets and see what they meant to each of them.

### 8th Century.

AMOS has two references to the Saddik, viz.,

2.6. Because they sell the Saddik for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes.

5.12. Ye that oppress the Saddik, that take bribes, that turn aside the poor at the gate.

The second of these passages does not offer much difficulty. From the context, the Saddik is evidently the innocent party in a cause brought before the judges, who are condemned by the prophet for their corruption. They browbeat the innocent ( פ'י צד ), take bribes, and refuse to dispense justice to the poor.

The first passage is more difficult. It may mean that honest, unimpeachable men are sold into slavery. Insolvent debtors can be about the only class referred to, but the law did not allow the sale of insolvent debtors. (cf. 2 Kings 4.1; Neh.5.5; Matt.18.25). Also, to sell an insolvent debtor for a pair of shoes seems, on the face of it, absurd.

Some other interpretation seems to be called for. Mr. Box (Ex. Times XII, 378) quotes the LXX of I Sam. 12.3 as saying, "of whose hand have I received a bribe or a pair of shoes?" Here Samuel clears himself of any suspicion of bribery or corruption in the administration of justice. The mention of a pair of shoes is explained by the practice of selling land by the transfer of a shoe (Ruth 4.7). To sell the Saddik for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes was to accept a bribe in the administration of justice and so to sell the cause of the innocent, on the one hand, and to be corrupt in transferring the title-deeds of a poor man's property on the other. We have here, therefore, simply another reference by Amos to the prevailing corruption of the judges of his day. The Saddik to him, in so far as he

makes reference to him, was the innocent party in a law suit.

MICAH has a reference to the Reshaim in 6.10, but the passage cannot be accepted as it stands. The first half of the line is too long and the thought offers no parallel to the thought of the second half. The following emendations would seem to be required. הַאֲשָׁה for (1) הַאֲשָׁה cf. Lam. 3.17. אֲצִלּוֹת may be an error for אֲצִלּוֹת רָשָׁעִים looks like a commentator's gloss.

The line would therefore read

עוֹר הַאֲשָׁה אֲצִלּוֹת רָשָׁעִים! אֲצִלּוֹת רָשָׁעִים זְעִימָה

Shall I continue to overlook wicked skimpings,  
and the scant measure that is abominable?

This gives good sense and excellent parallelism but it disposes of Rasha as a gloss. If so, it leaves us without any guidance as to Micah's use of the word. In any case, the passage is too doubtful to be of value.

HOSEA. The Saddikim are referred to in 14.10, but this is probably a gloss, and will be dealt with later on in this chapter.

ISAIAH OF JERUSALEM. There are three references in this book to Saddikim and Reshaim.

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(1) Suggested by Wellhausen.

3.10 This is most certainly a gloss and will be dealt with later.

5.23 "Who declare the Rasha innocent (רשע צדיק) for a bribe and the innocence of the Saddik turn away from him."

Here the reference is clearly to one who is innocent or guilty in a law court.

11.4. The date of this passage is uncertain, but may be conveniently treated here.

But with righteousness will he judge the helpless,  
And give decision in equity for the humble of the earth,  
And will smite the tyrant<sup>(1)</sup> with the rod of his mouth  
And with the breath of his lips will he slay the Rasha.

The meaning of Rasha depends here on the correctness of the emendation of רשע to צדיק. If this latter be correct, Rasha will require a more intense meaning than "wicked person" in a general sense, if it is to afford an appropriate parallel.

### 7th Century.

JEREMIAH. There are only two "unsuspect" references to Reshaim in Jeremiah. These are found in 5.26 and 12.1.

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(1) Reading צדיק for רשע a more significant word affording a better parallel. רשע is probably a dittograph from line 2.

5.23. "But this people has a mutinous and rebellious disposition. They mutiny and go, and they no longer say in their hearts, Let us fear Yahweh our God .....26 For among my people are Reshaim."

12.1. "Too righteous art thou, Yahweh, that I should contend with thee, yet there are cases about which I would speak with thee. Why does the way of the Reshaim prosper? Why are all those sons of apostasy at ease? Thou hast planted them. Indeed they take root. They spread, they bring forth fruit. Near art thou in their mouths, but far from their hearts."

According to these passages, Reshaim are mutinous and rebellious members of the community who have apostatized from Yahweh. His name may be on their lips but he is far from being in their hearts. By their deeds they deny his sovereignty for they make no attempts to keep his commandments. They are practical atheists. To the prophet's mind, no doubt, the content of religion was as important as the form, but it was because he moralised the nature of Yahweh that he moralised his requirements. It was the requirements of Yahweh that the Rasha was violating and in violating these he was tacitly denying Yahweh's sovereignty. Rasha, to Jeremiah, means something more than "wicked person". It means "apostate and wicked person". This apostasy is manifest in conduct.

Nothing is said about secret sins or illicit thoughts. A man was demonstrably a Rasha. He quite openly by his actions repudiated the sovereignty of Yahweh.

Saddik is mentioned in 20.12, but the word should probably be פִּיִּי cf. 11.20.

There are other two references to Reshaim which, if genuine, would throw great light on Jeremiah's use of the term but the Jeremianic authorship is doubtful. The passages are 23, 19 and 20 which is duplicated in 30, 23 and 24, and 25.31. In 23.19, 20 the passage is clearly out of place and has been inserted for some reason from 30.23,24 which may be translated as follows:

"Behold, the tempest of Yahweh. His fury goes out, a sweeping tempest. It shall burst upon the head of the Reshaim. The fierce anger of Yahweh shall not return, until he has performed, until he has set up the purposes of his mind. In the end of the days you shall have discernment into this."

The meaning of this passage is plain. In the end of the days, Yahweh shall rise and sweep away all his enemies, who are designated as Reshaim.

25.31. (Yahweh) has a dispute with all flesh and (1) the Reshaim he will give to the sword."

Here again, the Reshaim are the enemies of Yahweh.

ZEPHANIAH. In Zephaniah 1.3, we find a reference to Yahweh's cutting off "the stumbling blocks with the Reshaim". It is doubtful if this is part of the original text. Whether it belongs to a commentator or to Zephaniah it clearly designates "the remnant of Baal etc. and the idolatrous priests." v.4. Thus either in the mind of Zephaniah or the redactor, Rasha meant "heathen idolater" or apostate Israelite who followed his practices.

HABAKKUK. Habakkuk has the following:

1.4. "Therefore direction is dumb, and judgment never goes forth. For the rasha encompasses the Saddik. Therefore judgment is perverted."

If we follow the LXX. and read, "For the guilty supplants the innocent", the whole context fits together and the forensic use of Rasha and Saddik is apparent.

1.13. "Why do you look upon the apostates, and hold your peace when the Rasha swallows up the more Saddik than he?"

Here Rasha refers to the Chaldean and Saddik to the loyal Israelite. (S.R. Driver. Century Bible, p. 72).



ד'גזג are often referred to as apostates or barbarians, cf. Is. 21.2; 24.16; 33.1.

2.4. "Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not even in him, but the Saddik will live by his faithfulness."

The Saddik refers to the loyal Israelite, his opponent being the Chaldean (S.R. Driver. Century Bible. p.76.)

3.13. This is a gloss and will be dealt with later.

### 6th Century.

EZEKIEL. Ezekiel defines a Saddik as follows:

18. 5-9. But if a man be Saddik and do judgment and righteousness and has not eaten on<sup>(1)</sup> the mountains and has not lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel and has not defiled the wife of his neighbour and has not drawn near to a menstruous woman and has not wronged any man but has restored to the debtor his pledge, has not plundered, has given his bread to the hungry and covered the naked with a garment, who has not given out to usury, and has not taken increase, who has withdrawn his hand from iniquity who has done faithful judgment between man and man, who has walked in my statutes, and has kept my judgments to do faithfulness, he is Saddik, he shall surely live, is the utterance of Adonai our God."

Here the Saddik is the loyal Israelite. He is the

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(1) Reading by for by (LXX).

worshipper of Yahweh and the keeper of his laws. These laws are not moral only but hygienic and religious. They all refer to outward actions. Nothing is said about the inward disposition.

The Rasha is similarly defined in 18.10ff.

He is "a shedder of blood, .....that doeth not any of these duties, but even hath eaten upon the mountains, and defiled his neighbour's wife, hath wronged the poor and needy, hath spoiled by violence, hath not restored the pledge, and hath lifted up his eyes to the idols, hath committed abomination, hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase." He is the disloyal Israelite, who has openly apostatized from Yahweh. He is not one who is a transgressor or a weak member of the fold. He is one who openly denies the requirements of Yahweh. The penalty for such apostasy is death. (18.13).

There are also references to the Saddik and Rasha in 3.18 ff.; 13.22; 18.20 ff.; 21.3,4,30; 33.8 ff.; but these do not add anything to the definition of the terms which is given above.

That Ezekiel also referred to the heathen as Reshaim is evident from 7.21 where, speaking of some outstanding

example of Judah's idolatry, he says on behalf of Yahweh "I will give it into the hand of strangers for a prey and to the Reshaim of the earth for plunder and they shall profane it." <sup>(1)</sup> Here it is quite evident that the abomination is not to be given into the hands of the wicked men of Judah for it is already in their hands. It is to be given over to the Chaldeans who are to be brought against the land by the might of Yahweh. So that, to Ezekiel, Rasha means "apostate Israelite" or "heathen aggressor." Conversely, Saddik means "loyal worshipper of Yahweh," one who performs לְשׂוֹן and קִרְיָא (18.5), which covers (1) religious duties (18.6), (2) duties relating to marriage and the relations of men and women (18.6), (3) duties to one's neighbour (18.7.8), which are all brought under the conception of obedience to the commands of Yahweh (18.9).

THE BABYLONIAN ISAIAH. There is one reference to Reshaim in Isaiah, 40-55.

53.9 And his grave was appointed with the Reshaim and with the rich (?) his sepulchral mound.

The text of this verse is very difficult. We have read (following Box - ISAIAH, p.272) לְשׂוֹן for לְשׂוֹן,

(1) לְשׂוֹן (Q).

also  $\text{בְּחַיִּים}$  for  $\text{בְּחַיִּי}$ . This latter emendation offers a better parallel to  $\text{בְּחַיִּי}$ .

Who the Reshaim are depends on the view we take of the Servant passages as a whole. If the servant is Israel, the Reshaim are in all probability the rich Babylonians among whom the faithful remnant of Israel suffered and died. If the servant is an individual the reference may be to Zerubbabel and to his presumed martyr death among the Persians. In each case the suggestion is that the Reshaim are the heathen oppressors of Israel, but the views on which this suggestion is founded are too speculative to help us much.

The internal evidence of the passage itself is a little more helpful if we could just accept the authenticity of  $\text{רָשָׁעִים}$  in the second half of the line, but this has been questioned (cf. Box -ISAIAH, p.272). If the Reshaim are really rich, they could hardly be members of that community of Israel which was in the mind of the prophet, for this community was in deep depression. It was its sickness the martyr bore and its sufferings he endured (c.4). This suffering community surely did not include rich men as bona fide members. If it did,

it is difficult to understand the tragedy of the martyr's burial amongst them. If these rich men therefore are not members of the loyal community the Reshaim are heathen or, at least, apostate Israelites. The passage seems best understood in the sense that the prophet is referring to a burial place outside the confines of the loyal community.

(1)

THE POST-EXILIC ISAIAH.                      There is one reference to the Saddik and one to the Reshaim in Isaiah 56-66.

57.1. The Saddik perishes and no one is concerned, The men of piety are swept away and no one heeds.

Here the Saddikim are equated with "the men of piety" who were the later Hasidim. Their opponents and oppressors are either the Samaritan community or the pro-Samaritan section in Jerusalem and Judea, cf. 57.3-13. The Saddik is, therefore, the loyal Israelite, as opposed to his apostate countrymen and heathen neighbours. Having regard to the use of the word in the language of Ezekiel, there were no doubt ritualistic as well as moral elements

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(1) I have followed Prof. Stevenson in placing the work of the post-exilic Isaiah in the 6th century. (See "Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel p.92.)

in his loyalty.

57.20. But the Reshaim are like the tossed-up sea,  
For it cannot repose.  
Its waters toss up mire and dirt,  
There is no peace, says my God, to the Reshaim.

They are opposed to the depressed and suffering minority in the community (cf. vvs. 14-18). That is, they are opposed to the party of the pious. They lie outside the promises of Yahweh, for there is no peace to them, that is, no happy future. This does not tell us much about the Reshaim, but they can hardly be regarded as members of the orthodox fold of Israel.

### 5th Century.

MALACHI. Malachi has two references to Saddik and Rasha in 3.18 and 21.

3.18. "Then shall you return and discern between Saddik and Rasha, between him that serveth God and him that doth not serve him."

It is probable that the words "Saddik and Rasha" are an insertion here. If so, they are the redactor's terms for "him that serveth God" on the one hand and "him that doth not serve him" on the other, showing that

these terms held good at a date later than Malachi. There is no reason why they should not have the same meaning for Malachi for those who remembered "the instruction of Moses, his statutes and his judgments" (3.22) would tread down the Reshaim under their feet (3.21). The Reshaim, at any rate, are the enemies of the orthodox Israelites, who, doubtless, are the Saddikim.

#### 4th Century.

Towards the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the third, we must place the passage from Isaiah 26. 1-19.

1. (In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah).  
A strong city is ours; salvation he sets up for walls and outworks. (1)
2. Open the gates, that there may come in the Saddik ..., the keeper of faithfulness.
3. .... corrupt .....
4. Trust in Yahweh for ever and ever for .. Yahweh is an everlasting rock. (2)
5. For he has abased the dwellers on high, the lofty city; he has levelled<sup>(3)</sup> it to the ground; he has brought it to the dust.

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(1) Omitting 'יָ which overloads the line.

(2) Omitting אֵל (dittograph).

(3) Omitting אֶרֶץ (dittograph).

6. The feet<sup>(1)</sup> of the afflicted trample it, the steps of the hapless.
7. The path of the Saddik is smooth, the road of the Saddik thou makest even.
8. Surely in the paths of thy judgments, Yahweh, we have waited for thee. Thy name and memorial have been our soul's desire.
8. With all my heart I desire thee in the night, with my innermost spirit, I seek thee diligently. When thy judgments come on earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.
10. No<sup>(2)</sup> favour will be shown to the Rasha. He has not learned righteousness in the land of truth. He deals perversely and does not see the majesty of Yahweh.
11. Thy<sup>(3)</sup> hand has been raised. They do not behold. They shall behold and be dumbfounded at thy seal for a people. Yea, the fire against thine adversaries shall devour them.

Here the terms Saddik and Rasha are clearly technical. The Saddik is a member of the faithful community of Israel, expecting the deliverance of Yahweh because of his fidelity to his cause. He is utterly committed to that cause and rejoices in what he claims to be its vindication. This he sees in the discomfiture of his enemies, the Reshaim, who have stubbornly refused to learn righteousness, i.e., the worship of Yahweh in its

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- (1) Omitting שָׁרָא (dittograph).
- (2) Inserting שָׁרָא .
- (3) Omitting הַיָּהוָה .



legal and ritualistic as well as its moral requirements. The city of these Reshaim has evidently been taken and destroyed by some more powerful enemy (v.5.) In all this, the Saddik sees the hand of Yahweh. The strong sense of corporate loyalty to Yahweh on the part of the Saddikim should be noted. The place in which they dwell is, or will be, definitely a unit, filled with his chosen people, the Saddikim. (vvs.1 and 2).

### 2nd Century.

DANIEL. Daniel has one reference to the Reshaim.

12.10. "But the Reshaim shall do wickedly (תַּרְשִׁיעוּ) and none of the Reshaim shall understand."

For the meaning of "do wickedly" in Daniel we must turn to 11.32, where we find a reference to such as "do wickedly against the Covenant." (תַּרְשִׁיעוּ כְּבִית). "To do wickedly" is to apostatize. The same meaning is found in 9.5. "We have sinned and have dealt perversely and have done wickedly, and have rebelled and turned aside from thy commandments and thy judgments." As far as we can discern, therefore, a Rasha to Daniel is an apostate.

### THE GLOSSES.

We must now turn to the meaning of the terms,

Saddikim and Reshaim, in the minds of glossators. When, of course, any glossator did his work is past our knowing but the meaning of the terms in their minds should throw light on a late usage.

HOSEA.

14.10. "For straight are the ways of Yahweh, and the Saddikim walk in them, but transgressors ( וְרָשָׁעִים ) stumble in them."

This does not tell us much about the Saddikim except that they are the faithful followers of Yahweh.

ISAIAH.

3.10,11. "Happy is the Saddik. Good is his portion. For the fruit of their doings they shall eat. Woe to the Rasha. Evil is his portion. For the work of his hand shall be done to him."

There are two reasons for believing that the Saddikim and Reshaim here contrasted are contrasted as members of a class and not as individuals.

1. Saddik and Rasha, though in the singular, are used generically, as we see from the reference to "the fruit of their doings" in the second half of the first line.

2. The comment as a whole is on a passage which refers not to the individual, but to the community. It has

no relation to the context into which it has been inserted if Saddik and Rasha are taken in an individualistic sense.

13.11. And I will visit on the world its evil,  
 And on the Reshaim their iniquities.  
 And I will still the arrogance of the proud,  
 And the presumption of tyrants I will lay low.

The piece from which these lines are taken (Is. 13, 2-22) is a prophecy against Babylon (vvs.1,19). The Reshaim and the proud and tyrants are enemies of Israel, not just wicked men in general. It was not a clearing out of the bad men of the world, including those of the community of Israel, that Yahweh was going to perform, but the destruction of the enemies of his people. (cf. 14. 4,5).

Isaiah 29.21 refers to those who "turn aside the Saddik with emptiness", but the reference is clearly to the practice of corruption in judgment, and Saddik must be read in its primary sense of "innocent."

Isaiah 48.22. "There is no peace, says Yahweh, to the Reshaim". This is an obvious gloss founded on 57, 20, which see.

Isaiah 55.7. "Let the Rasha forsake his way and the man of iniquity his devisings and let him return to Yah-

weh and he will have compassion on him and unto our God, for he will pardon abundantly."

Here the Rasha is unquestionably an apostate.

HABBAKUK.

3.12, 13 "Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, to deliver <sup>(1)</sup> thine anointed. Thou didst shatter the head off the house of the Rasha, laying bare the foundation to the neck <sup>(2)</sup> (rock).

Kuenen, Wellhausen, Nowack Marti suggest that this whole ode in chapter 3 is an interpolation (Driver - Century Bible - MINOR PROPHETS p.59). Driver suggests that the title and the musical notes in vvs. 3,9,13,19 stamp it as an excerpt from a liturgical collection. If so, its reference to Reshaim is important as it affords guidance to the interpretation of the references to them in the Psalms. The Reshaim referred to are clearly the enemies of Israel.

THREE OBSCURE PASSAGES. There are three passages where the meaning of the term Rasha is in some obscurity which we will now consider.

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(1) Probably  $\text{y'w'is}$  . (2) Perhaps  $\text{y'v}$  .

(1). Numbers 16.26. "And he (Moses) spake to the congregation saying, "Turn away from the tents of these wicked men ( **הַצְּבִיִּים הַרְשָׁעִים הָאֵלֶּה** ) and touch nothing which belongs to them lest ye be consumed in all their sins." The **צְבִיִּים וְרָשָׁעִים** are Dathan and Abiram, who have rebelled against the sovereignty of Moses, which he claimed to be from God. Their sin is the sin of rebellion or apostasy and not moral delinquency (cf. Ps. 106 vvs. 16-18). It has a religious rather than a moral connotation, so that **צְבִיִּים וְרָשָׁעִים** may mean rebellious men or apostate men rather than "wicked men" in a purely moral sense.

(2). I Samuel 24.14. "As the proverb of the ancients says, "From the Reshaim comes out wickedness ( **וְרָשָׁע** )'".

"The proverb of the ancients here put into David's mouth, with its suggestion that Saul's misdeeds would recoil upon his own head (cf. 25.39), is so utterly at variance with the fine spirit of magnanimity which breathes through David's previous remarks, that it is set down by all the commentators as a marginal gloss."<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) So A.R.S. Kennedy I & II Samuel (Century Bible ) p.160.

But if this is a gloss, the second half of the sentence "but mine hand shall not be upon thee" is also a gloss or a dittograph of the concluding phrase of v.12. That is, the whole verse and not the proverb only is a gloss or it is composed of a gloss and a dittograph. To say that the whole verse is a gloss is to say too much. The proverb itself might be but hardly the verse as a whole. To say that 13b is a dittograph is to make the whole sentence composed of a gloss and a dittograph, which is rather drastic treatment of a portion of narrative which otherwise presents no difficulties.

The interpretation of Dr. Kennedy really begs the question of the meanings of Reshaim and Rasha. If Rasha can mean "rebellious person" or "apostate" and Resha "deed of rebellion" or "apostasy", the difficulties of the sentence vanish. David would simply be asserting that he is not in rebellion against Saul and wishes him no harm.

Now, when we find "Reshaim" used of Dathan and Abiram, the rebels, there is no reason why it should not have the same meaning here. "From rebels comes the deed

of rebellion" or "From apostates comes the act of apostasy" gives excellent sense, for David has just repudiated the suggestion that he should stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and given that as his reason why he left Saul unharmed (vvs. 7 and 11).

Resha is used of the deed performed by those who are in rebellion against Yahweh (cf. Job 34. 8,9; Ps. 84.11). It is an even stronger word than Pesha (  $\text{פֶּשַׁע}$  ) which is sin breaking out into rebellion (cf. Job 34.37).  
 (1)  
 It means rebellion which has become a habit or state. It is far too strong a word to be applied to Saul, which the commentators have rightly seen and so regarded the passage as a gloss. But as describing the kind of action which David repudiates, it gives admirable meaning.

(3). The third passage to be considered does not present much difficulty, even though the meaning at first sight seems doubtful. It occurs in 2 Sam. 4.11, where David pronounces judgment on the slayers of Mephibosheth and says "How much more when  $\text{כַּבְּשֵׁי לְשָׁעִיר קָרָה אֶת-אִשׁ צַעֲדִיק}$   
 This phrase surely should be translated, "How much more

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(1) Cf. Skinner. H.D.B. Vol.4. p.529.

when guilty men slay the innocent party."

CONCLUSIONS. We have now dealt with all the references to the Saddikim and Reshaim outside the Psalms and the Wisdom Literature, and must now endeavour to sum up our conclusions. The following is a short summary of our findings.

There are four meanings to be attached to Saddik and Rasha:-

1. Innocent and guilty in a forensic sense.
2. Innocent and guilty in eyes of Yahweh.
3. Worshipper of Yahweh and enemy of Yahweh.
4. Loyal member of covenanted Israel and apostate or heathen oppressor.

The course of evolution of these meanings can be roughly traced.

#### 8th Century.

To Amos and Isaiah of Jerusalem, Saddik and Rasha meant innocent and guilty in a forensic sense.

#### 7th Century.

To Jeremiah, Rasha meant apostate, whose apostasy was openly revealed by his actions.

To Zephaniah and Habbakuk, the term meant apostate



or heathen oppressor. The Saddik, to Hab<sup>K</sup>akuk, was the loyal Jew.

### 6th Century.

To Ezekiel the Saddik was the loyal Israelite who keeps the laws of Israel in their religious, moral and legal aspects. In one instance, Rasha refers to heathen aggressor as well as to one who openly apostatizes.

To the Babylonian Isaiah, the Reshaim are heathen or apostate Israelites.

To the post-Exilic Isaiah, the Saddikim are associated with the ultra loyal party among the Israelites. The Reshaim are outside the orthodox fold.

### 5th Century.

To Malachi, the Reshaim are the enemies of the orthodox Jews.

### 4th Century.

The Saddikim are members of the faithful community of Israel. The Reshaim are the enemies of Yahweh and his people.

### 2nd Century.

To the writer of Daniel a Rasha is an apostate.

The evolution of these terms, Saddik and Rasha, has been a process of specialization. From the simple designation of the innocent and guilty in a law court, they came to denote the innocent and guilty party in the sight of Yahweh. To be Saddik was to be "in the right" with him; to be Rasha was to be "in the wrong" with him. As the moral requirements of the worship of Yahweh hardened under the teachings of the prophets, so did the contents of the term "Saddik". As its ritualistic elements hardened, so a hard, outer shell grew round the devotion of his worshippers, which clearly marked them off from apostates and enemies. "Saddik" did not alter in form but it changed in content till, about the 6th century, it came to mean loyal Israelite, worshipping Yahweh, and keeping the laws of Israel in their entirety. All others were Reshaim. They were either disloyal and apostate Israelites or heathen oppressors of the loyal community. These findings are confirmed rather than weakened by our consideration of the glosses and exceptional passages in which the terms occur.

SADDIK AND RASHA IN PSALMS.

We now may proceed to elucidate the meanings of the terms Saddikim and Reshaim in the Book of Psalms.

SADDIKIM.

Chief among the terms descriptive of the Saddikim are יְשָׁרִים (Straight) and יְשָׁרֵי לֵב (Straight-of-mind).

יְשָׁרִים

Ps.33.1.  
Shout for joy, Saddikim, to Yahweh;  
To the Straight praise is seemly.

Ps.140.14.  
Surely the Saddikim give thanks to thy name;  
The Straight dwell in thy presence.

יְשָׁרֵי לֵב

Ps. 32.11.  
Rejoice in Yahweh and exult, Saddikim,  
And shout for joy, all the Straight-of-mind.

Ps.64.11.  
The Saddik rejoices in Yahweh and trusts in him,  
And all the Straight-of-mind glory.

Ps. 97.11.  
Light shineth<sup>(1)</sup> for the Saddik,  
And to the Straight-of-mind rejoicing.

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(1) יָרַח LXX. S.T.

Other terms for classes so closely associated with the Saddikim that it is impossible to distinguish them are שׂוֹמְרֵי (Perfect) and שׂוֹמְרֵי (Pious Ones).

שׂוֹמְרֵי

Ps. 37.17ff.

For the arms of the Reshaim are broken,  
But Yahweh upholds the Saddikim.  
Yahweh knows the days of the Perfect,  
And their inheritance is for ever.  
They are not put to shame in time of evil,  
And in days of famine they are satisfied.  
But the Reshaim perish etc. etc.

שׂוֹמְרֵי

37.28,29.

For Yahweh loves judgment,  
And does not forsake his Pious Ones.  
Evil doers are destroyed for ever,  
And the seed of the Reshaim are cut off.  
The Saddikim possess the land,  
And dwell in it for ever.

These men associated with the Saddikim are not good men in general, but members of the true fold of Israel under different designations. The Straight does not refer to "straight" men in general but to the straight (we might almost say the "strict") among the people as distinguished from the enemies of Yahweh, cf.

Pss. 33.1; 107.42; 111.1; 112.2,4; 140.14. The same holds good of the Straight-of-mind, cf., Pss. 7.11; 11.2; 32.11; 64.11; 94.15; 97.11. Neither are the Perfect those of flawless character, but the true sons of Israel faithful in their allegiance to Yahweh, cf., Ps. 119.1.

Although he governs his life with regard for the instruction of Yahweh, the Saddik does not claim to be morally perfect. In Psalm 32, the writer acknowledges his sin ( אֲשָׁמָה ) and does not cover his iniquity ( אֲשָׁמָה )<sup>v.5</sup>, yet he classes himself with the Saddikim, as is seen from the closing lines.

Rejoice in Yahweh and exult, Saddikim,  
And shout for joy, all the Straight-of-mind.

Again, in Psalm 69, the writer acknowledges that God knows his folly ( אֲשָׁמָה ) and his offences ( אֲשָׁמָה )<sup>v.6</sup>, yet associates himself with the vindication of the Saddikim in v.29. Also, in Psalm 39, it is the writer who refuses to associate with the Rasha (v.1) who asks to be delivered from his transgressions. From these considerations it becomes evident that the Saddik did not regard himself as impeccable.

There are also other classes opposed by the Reshaim who are spoken of in the same terms as the Saddikim and who in all probability are the Saddikim under other names e.g.,

יְשֵׁנֵי דָרֶךְ : עֲנִיִּים : אֲבִיוֹנִים

9.18.

The Reshaim shall return to Sheol

All the proud (גִּבּוֹרִים)<sup>(1)</sup> who forget God.

For the poor (אֲבִיוֹן) shall not always be forgotten;

The hope of the afflicted (עֲנִיִּים)<sup>(2)</sup> shall not perish  
for ever.

37.14.

The Reshaim have drawn the sword,

(And they have trodden their bow

To cast down the afflicted and poor,) (עֲנִי וְאֲבִיוֹן)

To slay the Straight-of-way (יְשֵׁנֵי דָרֶךְ).

The clause in brackets is probably an insertion but, even so, it reveals that in the mind of the redactor the afflicted and poor were synonymous with the Straight-of-way. The words are used not in a general but in a specialised sense and refer to the whole community of loyal Israelites rather than to individuals who

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- (1) We have read גִּבּוֹרִים here for גִּבּוֹרִים. It is the גִּבּוֹרִים who elsewhere are associated with the Reshaim (Ps. 94. 2.3; 140. 5.6.) and contrasted with the afflicted and the widow (Prov. 16.19; 15.25.)
- (2) There is some confusion here between עֲנִיִּים and עֲנִיִּים but we have taken the עֲנִיִּים instead of the Ketib.

may happen to be poor and afflicted, cf. ( 7' 28 ) Pss. 9.19; 74.21; Is. 29.19; 41.17. ( ' 28 ) Pss. 10.2, 9; 14.6; 102.1; Is. 14.32; Hab. 3.14.

These terms reflect the fortunes of the community as a whole and go far to establishing the conclusion that these were in a depressed condition. When it is stated, moreover, that the Reshaim have trodden the bow to cast down "the Afflicted" and "Poor", little doubt remains in our mind that it is a picture of actual suffering that is here presented. There are certainly indications, as we shall come to see later, that the Reshaim were in enjoyment of abundant temporal prosperity compared with them who were loyal to Yahweh (cf. PSS. 73 and 92), so that the terms "Afflicted" and "Poor" are not just so much decorative language.

We find, therefore, that the Saddikim in the Psalms are a class of men, referred to under a variety of names, who regard themselves as members of the true fold of Israel by virtue of their loyalty to Yahweh. Even with the evidence which we thus far have before us we can draw the conclusion that they were in a depressed condition, with little in their outward fortunes to com-

pensate them for their loyalty. They even referred to themselves in terms which embodied this depression in their fortunes.

RESHAIM.

A favourite term for the Reshaim is פְּעֵלֵי אִי (as may be seen from the following passages.

Ps. 28.3.

Drag me not away with the Reshaim  
And with the workers of iniquity ( פְּעֵלֵי אִי )  
.....

5.

Because they do not discern the works of Yahweh, ---  
He breaks them down and does not build them up.

Ps. 92.8ff.

When the Reshaim sprout forth as herbage,  
And all the workers of iniquity flourish,  
It is in order that they be destroyed for ever.  
But thou art exalted for ever (Yahweh),<sup>(1)</sup>  
For behold, thine enemies, Yahweh,  
Thine enemies perish.  
All the workers of iniquity are scattered.

Ps. 94.3ff.

How long shall the Reshaim, Yahweh,  
How long shall the Reshaim exult?  
They pour forth; they speak arrogantly;  
They speak boastfully, all the workers of iniquity.  
Thy people, Yahweh, they crush,  
And thine inheritance they afflict.  
The widow and sojourner they slay,  
And orphans they crush.  
And they say, "Yah does not see,  
And he does not discern, the God of Jacob."

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(1) Perhaps delete.



Ps. 101.8.

Morning by morning I destroy all the Reshaim  
of the earth,  
To cut off from the city of Yahweh all the workers  
of iniquity.

Ps. 141. 9,10.

Keep me from the jaws of the trap they have set for me  
And from (1) the snares of the workers of iniquity.  
Let them fall into their own toils, (2) the Reshaim,  
While I pass over.

It is easy from the above passages to deduce that  
these workers of iniquity are (1) Disbelievers in Yah-  
weh (28,5; 94.4ff. cf. also 14.4; 64.6) and (2) en-  
emies of Yahweh's people (94.4ff. cf. also 14.4; 64.5;  
125 pass.)

The Reshaim are also

רְשָׁעִים

Ps. 37.38.

But the rebellious (רְשָׁעִים) are destroyed together,  
The future of the Reshaim is cut off.

For רְשָׁעִים in the sense of rebellious against  
Yahweh cf. Isaiah. 1.28. "And there shall be a destruct-  
ion of רְשָׁעִים and sinners (חַזְקֵי אִם) and those who for-

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(1) Reading	וְחַקְשׁוֹת	LXX.
(2) Reading	בְּמַחְרֵי יְהוָה	LXX.S.

sake Yahweh shall perish."

רִצָּן

PS. 1.1.

Happy is the man who does not walk in the counsel  
of the Reshaim,  
Who in the way of sinners does not stand,  
And in the seat of "scorners" ( רִצָּן ) does not sit.

This word is characteristic of the Wisdom Literature where it is used for the most objectionable type of  
(1)  
"fool". He is one who takes delight in his folly (Prov. 1.22) and will not listen to wisdom (Prov. 13.1; 15.12). He is an abomination to men (Prov. 24.9) and is scorned by Yahweh himself (Prov. 3.34). Outside the Wisdom Literature, it occurs only once, in Isaiah 29.20, where it is equated with "the tyrant" ( צָרִיץ ) and contrasted with "the humble" and "needy" who trust in Yahweh.

הוֹלֵלִים

Ps. 73.3.

For I was envious of the boasters ( הוֹלֵלִים )  
When I saw the prosperity of the Reshaim.

Ps. 75.5.

I said to the boasters, Boast not!  
And to the Reshaim, Lift not up the horn!

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(1) Cf. Oesterley's "Book of Proverbs", Westminster Commentaries. p. LXXXVII.

The "boasters" may have had confidence in their wealth (cf. Ps. 49.7; 52 pass.) or in graven images (Ps. 97.7). Their strength did not lie in Yahweh.

נַעֲלָמִים וְתִי שׂוֹאֵם ..

Ps. 26.4

I do not sit with worthless men ( תִּי שׂוֹאֵם )  
And with dissemblers I will not come. ( נַעֲלָמִים )

5.

I hate the congregation of evil-doers,  
And with Reshaim I do not sit.

חֹמֶץ : חֲעִיִל

Ps. 71.4.

My God, rescue me from the hand of the Rasha  
From the palm of the "corrupt" ( חֲעִיִל ) and the "unjust"  
( חֹמֶץ )

The precise significance of these terms is doubtful. That חֲעִיִל refers to the practice of bribery and corruption is evident from Pss. 7.4 and 82.2. The meaning of חֹמֶץ is less clear. The LXX renders it by  $\delta\iota\sigma\kappa\alpha\lambda\omicron\upsilon\sigma\tau\omicron\varsigma$ .

חֲרָעִים

Ps. 37.9,10.

For evil-doers ( חֲרָעִים ) are cut off  
But they who wait on Yahweh inherit the land.  
For yet a little while and the Rasha is gone,  
You diligently search his place and he is no more.

Isaiah 1.4. refers to as רְשָׁעִים those who have forsaken Yahweh. It is used in Jeremiah 23.14 for those who follow practices which are utterly evil in the sight of Yahweh.

רְשָׁעִים

Ps. 104.35.

Let sinners ( רְשָׁעִים ) be completely destroyed,  
from the earth,  
And let the Reshaim be no more.

As will be seen from the retribution demanded from this verse, the "sinners" are not venial transgressors but hardened evil-doers. They are referred to in Ps. 26.9 as "bloody men" and are described in Prov.1.10ff as assassins and robbers. In Ps. 51.15 and in Isaiah 1.28 they are associated with רְשָׁעִים as those that forsake Yahweh. In Prov. 13.21, they are contrasted with the Saddikim and in Prov. 23.17 with him who fears Yahweh. Even foreign enemies of Israel can be designated as "sinners", cf. I Sam. 15.18, "Go and exterminate the sinners - Amalek."

It will now be seen from our study of the terms used to describe these two classes of men, Saddikim and Reshaim, that the vital contrast between them lies in

their relationship to Yahweh. The fundamental distinction between them is not moral but religious. Even those descriptive terms which, at first sight, seem to be purely moral are found upon analysis to have a religious basis.

CHARACTERISTIC OF SADDIKIM AND RESHAIM IN  
PSALMS.

Having seen Saddikim and Reshaim segregated into two distinct classes of men vitally contrasted in their relationship to Yahweh, we may proceed now to elucidate some characteristics of their life and thought. As we have already noticed, the most fundamental of these characteristics is the different attitude each adopts to Yahweh. This has its issue in one very important matter. The Saddik, being faithful to Yahweh, seeks to govern his life with regard to his instruction. The Rasha, on the other hand, is sceptical of the government of Yahweh and indifferent to his instruction. The following passages will make this clear.

The Saddik governs his life with regard to the instruction of Yahweh.

Ps. 1.2. (1)  
 But whose delight is in the instruction of Yahweh,  
 And in his instruction meditates day and night.

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(1) Perhaps וְיָדָבֵר .

Ps. 37.30,31.  
 The mouth of the Saddik utters wisdom,  
 And his tongue declares justice.  
 The instruction of his God is in his mind.  
 And his steps are not unsteady.

cf. also Ps.94.12.

The Rasha is sceptical of the government of Yahweh  
 and indifferent to his instruction.

Ps. 9.18.  
 The Reshaim return to Sheol,  
 All the proud<sup>(1)</sup> who forget God.

Ps. 10.3,4.  
 For the Rasha commits pollution  
 On account of his ingraided lust.  
 And the plunderer congratulates himself  
 The Rasha contemns Yahweh,  
 "According to the height of his anger!"  
 "He will not search it out!"  
 "There is no God!"  
 These are all his wicked thoughts.

Ps. 28.3.  
 Drag me not away with the Reshaim,  
 And with the workers of iniquity.  
 .....  
 Because they do not discern the works of Yahweh.  
 He breaks them down and does not built them up.

Ps. 94.7.  
 And they (the Reshaim v.3) say, Yah does not see,  
 And he does not discern - the God of Jacob.

Ps. 119.53.  
 I am seized in raging heat,  
 From the Reshaim who forsake thy instruction.

Ps.119.155.

Salvation is far from the Reshaim,  
For thy statutes they do not seek.

Ps.139.19.

Would that thou wouldst kill the Rasha, O God,  
..... corrupt .....

Who speak against thee maliciously,  
And take thy name<sup>(1)</sup> in vain.

Having noted the attitude of these two classes to Yahweh and his instruction we must now note their relation to one another.

In the first place, the Saddikim generally seem to be poor compared to the Reshaim.

Ps.37.16.

Better the Saddik's little,  
Than the wealth of many Reshaim.

Ps.73.3.

For I was envious of the boasters,  
When I saw the prosperity of the Reshaim.

12.

Behold, these are the Reshaim,  
And, being always at ease, they have increased riches.

Ps.92.8

When the Reshaim sprout forth as herbage,  
And all the workers of iniquity flourish,  
It is in order that they be destroyed for ever.

Again, apart from this question of the disparity in their fortunes, the two classes are violently opposed to

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(1) Reading  $\text{שְׁמִי} \text{לֹא} \text{בְּיַד} \text{שֹׂנְאָי}$ .



one another. The Saddikim are evidently in a depressed condition and suffer spoliation and even death at the hands of their enemies.

Ps. 31. 18,19.

Yahweh, do not let me be put to shame,  
For I have called on thee;  
Let the Reshaim be put to shame,  
Let them go silent to Sheol  
Let the lying lips be dumb,  
Which speak arrogantly against the Saddik,  
With haughtiness and contempt.

Ps. 37. 32.

The Rasha keeps watch on the Saddik,  
And seeks to put him to death.

Ps. 94. 3-7.

How long shall the Reshaim, Yahweh,  
How long shall the Reshaim exult?  
They belch forth; they speak arrogantly;  
They boast themselves, all the workers of iniquity  
Thy people, Yahweh, they crush,  
And thy heritage they afflict.  
Widow and stranger they slay,  
And orphans they deliberately murder.  
And they say, Yah does not see,  
And he does not discern - the God of Jacob.

12-15

Happy the man whom thou chasteneth (...) <sup>(1)</sup>  
And teachest out of thy instruction,  
To cause quietness for him in bad times,  
Until a pit is dug for the Rasha.  
For Yahweh does not leave his people,  
And his inheritance he does not forsake,  
Until justice returns to the Saddik, <sup>(2)</sup>  
And a recompence <sup>(3)</sup> to the Straight-of-mind.

Again, as against the self-confidence and scepticism

(1) Deleting אֵל.

(2) פָּדָה seems to be required here to make an appropriate parallel to אֵל.

(3) Reading אֵל a better parallel than אֵל.

of the Reshaim, which we have already noticed, the suffering Saddikim are distinguished by their faith in Yahweh and look to him for their vindication.

Ps.7.10

Let the evil of the Reshaim come to an end,  
And establish the Saddik,  
Thou searcher<sup>(1)</sup> of hearts and reins,  
The God that is "saddik".

Ps.34.16.

The eyes of Yahweh are unto the Saddikim,  
And his ears unto their cry for help.

Ps.37.17.

For the arms of the Reshaim are broken,  
And Yahweh sustains the Saddikim.

32,33.

The Rasha keeps watch on the Saddik,  
And seeks to put him to death.  
Yahweh does not forsake him in his hand,  
And does not allow his condemnation when judged.

Ps.58.11,12.

The Saddik rejoices when he sees the vengeance,  
His feet he washes in the blood of the Rasha.  
And men say, Surely there is fruit for the Saddik,  
Surely there is a God who judges the earth.

Ps.68.2,3,4.

God arises; his enemies scatter,  
And those that hate him flee from his presence.  
As smoke is driven away when the wind<sup>(2)</sup> driveth,  
As wax melteth from the presence of fire,  
The Reshaim perish from the presence of God.  
But the Saddikim rejoice,  
They exult before God,  
And triumph with great rejoicing.

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(1) Omitting ' LXX.S.

(2) Insert וּי as וְיִשְׁפֹּךְ requires some such fem. subject.

This faith in Yahweh is also the keynote of Psalms 75, 94, 118, 125, 142 and 146, where confidence in his vindication is clearly expressed.

From our study therefore of the Saddikim and Reshaim in this and in the preceding chapter we are now in a position to come to some conclusions regarding them.

The terms used to describe them in the Psalms involve a vital contrast in their relationship to Yahweh. "Straight", "Straight-of-Mind", "Straight-of-Way", "Perfect", "Pious Ones", "Poor"<sup>(1)</sup>, "Afflicted"<sup>(1)</sup>, (or "Humble") are all descriptions of men whose vital characteristic is that they are loyal to Yahweh. "Workers of Iniquity", "Rebellious", "Scorners", "Boasters", "Worthless men", "Dissemblers", "Sinners", embody the vital feature of disloyalty or hostility to Yahweh.

In considering the characteristics of these two classes, we have seen that the Saddik governs his life with regard to the instruction of Yahweh. The Reshaim, on the other hand, are sceptical of Yahweh's government and indifferent to his instruction.

The Saddikim generally seem to be poor compared to

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(1) For a discussion of the meaning of these terms cf. H.D.B. (Extra Vol. ) p. 19a.

the Reshaim.

Not only are those two classes of men in opposition in their attitude to Yahweh, but they are in opposition to each other. So strong is this opposition that the Saddikim suffer violence and death at the hands of the Reshaim.

The Saddikim look for their vindication and reward to Yahweh.

Two further points which must be noticed, of great importance in our discussion, first, that the vindication the Saddikim looked for was a vindication of their whole class, and, second, the individual Saddik looked for his own reward in that salvation. That is to say, the individual did not look for any special intervention of Yahweh on his own behalf but set his hopes on the reward which Yahweh would bestow on the loyal community of which he formed a part. It is a class and not a personal vindication which is indicated in the following, yet the individual shares in it (N.B. 64.11; 92.13,14).

Ps.1.5

Therefore the Reshaim do not rise up in the judgment,  
Nor sinners in the congregation of the Saddikim.

Ps.37.17.

For the arms of the Reshaim are broken,  
But Yahweh sustains the Saddikim.

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(1) The point becomes much clearer when the Psalms are studied as a whole.

Ps. 64.11.

The Saddik rejoices in Yahweh and trusts in him.  
And all the Straight-of-mind glory.

Ps. 69.29

Let them be blotted out from the book of the  
living,  
And with the Saddikim let them not be written.

Ps.92.13,14.

The Saddik sprouts like the palm,  
He grows like a cedar of Lebanon.  
Transplanted into the house of Yahweh,  
In the courts of our God they sprout.

Ps. 140.14.

Surely the Saddikim give thanks to thy name,  
The Straight dwell in thy presence.

These quotations, however, while affording indication of the trend of the Psalmists' thought, are not sufficient to establish the points in question and we must seek to elucidate them more fully in a further chapter. We have chosen for detailed discussion three representative Psalms (1,37 and 140). The first is an introduction to the whole literature of the Psalmists, the second a compendium of their doctrine, and the third the prayer of an individual for deliverance from his enemies. They all deal with the relations existing between Saddikim and Reshaim and with the views held

by the former on the matter of reward and retribution.

FATE OF SADDIKIM AND RESHAIM IN PSALMSPSALM 1.

1. Happy is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the Reshaim, who in the way of sinners does not stand, and in the assembly of scorers does not sit.
2. But whose delight is in the instruction of Yahweh and in his instruction meditates day and night. (1)
3. For he is like a tree transplanted by runlets of water, which gives its fruit in its season, and whose leaf does not wither, and all that it produces it makes to thrive.
4. Not so the Reshaim; but like the chaff which the wind drives away.
5. Therefore the Reshaim do not rise up in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the Saddikim.
6. For Yahweh takes care of the (way of) the Saddikim, But the way of the Reshaim comes to nought. (2)

Regarding v. 3c there is dubiety of interpretation. It can either refer to  $\psi\psi$  and read as above, or it can refer to  $\psi' \cdot \psi' \eta$  of v.1 and read "for all that he does he makes to prosper." The reading given above is to be preferred. The clause is too far away from its subject if that is  $\psi' \cdot \psi' \eta$  in v.1 or the pronoun in v.2.

- 
- {1} Perhaps  $\psi' \cdot \psi' \eta$   
 {2} Perhaps delété. Overloads half-line and looks like an insertion parallel to  $\psi' \cdot \psi' \eta$  in second half.

Its subject is more naturally  $\Psi$  to which the other clauses refer. There is a parallel passage in Jer. 17.8, where the man who trusts in Yahweh "shall be like a tree planted by the waters, that stretcheth out its roots to the stream, which does not fear when heat cometh, but its leaves are always green, in the year of drought not anxious, and never ceasing to produce fruit". Here the use of  $\eta\psi\gamma$  for "produce" clearly refers to the tree. If the passage in the Psalm is founded on Jeremiah the use of  $\eta\psi\gamma$  there should be decisive for the Psalm. The general correspondence of the two similes suggests something more than coincidence.

#### EXPOSITION:

This psalm compares two types of men, the Saddik and the Rasha. The Saddik honours Yahweh and delights in his instruction. The Rasha, on the other hand, is a sinner and a scorner. These two contrasted types are compared to a well-rooted tree and chaff blown by the wind. Stability and worth is the condition of the Saddik. Instability and worthlessness is the condition of the Rasha. They are representative of two different classes of men who will meet with different fates.

The question emerges, Are the comparisons to the tree and chaff illustrations of the actual conditions of these two classes?

It may be argued that they are pictures of their actual outward state, that it is here stated in a concrete



way that the Saddik, or his class, is in enjoyment of abundant material prosperity, while the Rasha, or his class, is poor and worthless. If line 3c does not refer to  $\omega' \delta ?$  but to  $\psi \nu$  this argument loses much of its force. Also in Jeremiah 17.5-19, the man who does not trust in Yahweh is represented as being rich. So if the Psalm is founded on Jeremiah it is improbable that the rich man there is the poor man here. Therefore, linguistically and having regard to the probable origin of the Psalm, the case for the literal interpretation of these similes is considerably weakened.

Taking the Psalm as a whole, if the Saddik is in enjoyment of rich material prosperity there is little need to fall back on faith in his future vindication. Neither is there much point in postulating a future judgment on the Reshaim who are already like the chaff, a people of naught.

It may, of course, be said that the Psalm is vindictive, but such vindictiveness would surely be fatuous. That verse 5 should postulate retribution on a people whose outward condition is as worthless as the chaff and that verse 6 should assert that, however worth-

less their condition, they shall still come to naught, while the Saddikim, already in enjoyment of abundant temporal prosperity, shall receive further vindication in their discomfiture, is pointless and improbable.

Neither is the psalm vindictive in spirit. It begins on the note of meditation and ends on the note of faith. This interpretation also makes nonsense of verses 4 and 6, for if the Reshaim are already like the chaff how can it be asserted that they come to naught? Some other interpretation of the Psalm is needed.

In the first place, it should be noted that it is not at all asserted that the present condition of the Reshaim is worthless. They take counsel together, stand in the way of sinners, and sit in the assembly of scorners. It looks as though the Reshaim were a powerful section of the community. If they are numbered among the scorners, they must have had something to scorn at, surely not at a God who was able to bless his worshippers with abundant temporal prosperity, unless, of course, the Reshaim despised the things of this world, in which case they would hardly be numbered among the sinners. Their scorn is more likely to be directed against a God

who did not seem to be able to do anything for those who delighted in His instruction.

There is also the suggestion in the Psalm that those whose delight ought to be in the instruction of Yahweh are tempted to associate themselves with the Reshaim and to join the ranks of the scorners. The Psalm is written as a warning against giving way to this temptation. In what does the temptation consist if the Rasha's condition is like the chaff and the Saddik is established as a well-rooted tree? It is an entirely different matter if prosperity or power seems to attend the Reshaim and the Saddik has little to offer by way of temporal gains.

From these considerations it becomes evident that the future vindication of the Saddikim is meant to redress a present incongruity, for they do not need to be vindicated if they are already richly blessed nor is it necessary to assert that the Reshaim come to naught if their present condition is worthless. It is an entirely different matter if the Saddikim remain unvindicated and the Reshaim are apparently triumphant. Then a future reversal of these conditions becomes a necessary article of faith for the Saddikim. As a class they are depressed

and looking for a future vindication while the Reshaim are in the ascendancy and, from their confidence in their wealth or power, are conducting themselves as sinners and scorning the Saddik or his God.

The similes in the Psalm, therefore, are not similes of the outward condition of these two classes but similes of their inward condition, or the condition of them both in their relationship to Yahweh (v.6). This condition to the writer of the Psalm, is their real condition. Because of this the Reshaim shall not "rise up" in "the judgment" or be gathered in the "congregation of the Saddikim." The Saddikim, on the other hand, are taken care of by him. Their real condition is stable and permanent. They shall not come to naught.

So much we can say, but what is meant by "rising up" and "judgment" and "congregation" is by no means clear. Some ultimate judgment seems the only possible interpretation which makes sense of the whole. That Psalmists and Sages looked for such a judgment we shall soon find good reason to believe, but how far it is specialised in this reference it is impossible to say.

The further question arises, In what manner is the

man referred to in verses 1 and 2 concerned in this vindication of the Saddikim?

If it is the same Reshaim who are referred to in verses 5 and 6 as are referred to in verse 1, he is certainly involved in this vindication in some way or other for it is his own opponents who are to be thus retributed. It may be that he does not look for a personal vindication but that his personal fortunes are sunk in the fortunes of the Saddikim generally. The thought of their vindication as a class may be sufficient consolation to him though he may not be present to enjoy it. This vindication of his class, however, hardly justifies the comparison of the man himself to a stable and fruitful tree, compared to which his present adversaries are as chaff. These contrasted conditions must have some issue for the parties concerned, of which he is one. The assertion, also, that the Reshaim shall not be present to enjoy this vindication would be but cold comfort to one who believed that he himself would be in exactly the same condition. So we must take it that his own inward condition of stability will be made manifest as against the instability of his opponents. When

and how this manifestation will come can only be determined by a more precise knowledge of what is involved in the statements in verse 5, a knowledge which, unfortunately, it is impossible to attain with any degree of precision.

It only remains to point out that the man who looks for this vindication is not depicted as a sinner. It is his opponents who are both sinners and scorners. Therefore, whatever adversity the Saddikim are suffering or whatever prosperity the Reshaim are enjoying, it is not attributed by the writer of the Psalm to the wrongdoing or the goodness of the parties concerned.

PSALM 37.

- 8 1. Heat not yourself because of evil-doers,  
Do not envy the workers of iniquity.
- 2 2. For like grass they speedily wither,  
And like the fresh grass they fade.
- 2 3. Trust in Yahweh and do good,  
Dwell in the land and pasture with confidence.
- 4 4. Place your delight in Yahweh,  
And he gives you the requests of your heart.
- 7 5. Roll upon Yahweh your way,  
Trust in him and he performs.
- 6 6. He brings forth like the light your right,  
And your just cause as the noon-day.
- 7 7. Be resigned to Yahweh and wait patiently for him,  
Heat not yourself at him who prospers,  
At the man who executes evil devices.
- 7 8. Cease from anger and forsake wrath.  
(Heat not thyself; it leads only to evil.)
- 9 9. For evil-doers are cut off,  
And they who wait on Yahweh inherit the land.
- 1 10. For yet a little while and the Rasha is gone,  
You diligently search his place and he is no more
11. But the humble possess the land,  
And take delight in abundance of peace.
- 3 12. The Rasha plots against the Saddik,  
And gnashes at him with his teeth.
13. Adonai laughs at him,  
For he sees that his day is coming.
- 7 14. The Reshaim have drawn the sword .....  
To slay the Straight-of-way.
15. Their sword enters their own heart,  
And their bows are broken in pieces.
- 6 16. Better the Saddik's little  
Than the wealth of many Reshaim,
17. For the arms of the Reshaim are broken,  
But Yahweh sustains the Saddikim.

- ' 18. He takes care of the days of the blameless  
 And their inheritance continues for ever.
19. They are not put to shame in time of evil,  
 And in days of famine they are satisfied.
- > 20. (But the Reshaim perish,  
 And the enemies of Yahweh, as the beauty of the  
 meadows,  
 Vanish, like smoke they vanish.)
- S 21. The Rasha borrows and does not repay,  
 But the Saddik is gracious and gives.
22. Yea those whom he blesses possess the land,  
 And those whom he curses are cut off.
- n 23. From Yahweh are the steps of a man,  
He establishes his way in whom he is pleased.
24. Although he fall he is not cast headlong,  
 For Yahweh supports his hand.
- 2 25. A youth I have been and now I am old,  
 But I have not seen the Saddik forsaken ....
26. All day long he is gracious and lends,  
 And his seed are a blessing.
- D 27. Turn from evil and do good,  
And dwell for ever[and ever.]
28. For Yahweh loves judgment,  
 And does not forsake his pious ones.
- y Evil doers are destroyed for ever.  
And the seed of the Reshaim are cut off.
29. The Saddikim possess the land,  
 And they dwell for ever on it.
- 9 30. The mouth of the Saddik utters wisdom,  
 And his tongue declares justice.
31. The instruction of his God is in his mind,  
 And his steps are not unsteady.
- Y 32. The Rasha keeps watch on the Saddik,  
 And seeks to put him to death,
33. Yahweh does not forsake him in his hand,  
 And does not allow his condemnation when judged.
- P 34. Wait on Yahweh and keep his way,  
 And he exalts you to possess the land,  
 And when the Reshaim are cut off you see it.



35. I consider the Rasha (striking terror,  
 And making himself bare .....  
 36. And one passes by) and behold, is no more,  
 And I seek him diligently and he is not found.  
 37. (Preserve integrity, and observe straightness)  
 For there is a future for the man of peace.  
 38. But transgressors are destroyed together,  
 The future of the Reshaim is cut off.  
 39. The salvation of the Saddikim is from Yahweh,  
 Their refuge in time of trouble.  
 40. (For Yahweh helps them and delivers them ...  
 For they take refuge in him.)

#### NOTES:

Doubtful passages are shown in brackets.

Obviously corrupt passages are omitted altogether,  
 their omission being indicated thus .....

In v.27 there is an insertion from the LXX. shown  
 in square brackets.

#### Notes on Verses.

8. 8a should probably be transferred after 7a and 8b  
 deleted as a gloss.  
 14. Omit as gloss      וְדַרְכֵי קִשְׁטָם לְהַפִּיל עָלַי וְאֶבְיֹן!  
 18. Delete      הוֹי!  
 20. Read      בְּעֵשֶׂן מִן כְּעֵשֶׂן  
 23. Read      כֹּדְבָנוּ וְדַרְכֵינוּ מִן כֹּיֵן דַּרְכֵנוּ  
 25. Delete as gloss      וְצָרְעוּ מִבֶּקֶשׁ לָהֶם  
 27. Insert with LXX      וְעַד

28. Reading  $\text{לִשְׁחַרְרֵנוּ}$  LXX. for  $\text{לִשְׁחַרְרֵנוּ}$ . Insert  $\text{וְעַלֵּנוּ}$  LXX.
37. Read with LXX.  $\text{וְעַלֵּנוּ}$  for  $\text{וְעַלֵּנוּ}$
39. Omit  $\text{וְ}$  at beginning of line.
40. Corrupt. The second  $\text{וְעַלֵּנוּ}$  is an obvious dittograph.  $\text{וְעַלֵּנוּ}$  seems an explanatory gloss. Even then the line is overloaded. It is difficult to decide whether  $\text{וְעַלֵּנוּ}$  or  $\text{וְעַלֵּנוּ}$  should go.

#### EXPOSITION.

The alphabetical arrangement of the psalm is obvious. It seems, also, to be divided into seven sections of three letters each. It may be that the letter  $\text{ש}$  (v.21) was omitted in the original psalm and later on inserted. It makes four letters in this section and the verse breaks the continuity of thought.

The principal theme of the psalm is the fate of two classes of men who stand in opposition to each other. On the one hand, there are "evil-doers" (vvs.1,9.), "workers of iniquity" (v.1), "transgressors" (v.38) and Reshaim (vvs. 10,12,14,16,17,20,21,28,32,34,35,38.). On the other hand, there are "they who wait on Yahweh" (v.9), "the humble" (v.11), "the straight-of-way" (v.14), "the blameless" (v.18), "the pious ones" (v.28), the Saddikim (vvs. 12,16,17,21,25, 29,30,32,39).

The main distinction between these two classes lies in their attitude to Yahweh or, rather, in Yahweh's attitude to them. The one class are opposed to Yahweh and come under his condemnation. The other class seek to serve him and look for their vindication at his hands. That the "evil-doers" and "workers of iniquity" do not acknowledge Yahweh is evident from verses 1-9. That the Reshaim are also his enemies is evident from verses 12-17 and 20, 28 and 34. The attitude of the other class to Yahweh is equally evident. They are "they who wait on Yahweh" (v.9), "those whom he takes care of" (v.18), "those whom he does not forsake" (v.28), "those whom he will exalt to possess the land and whose salvation will come from him" (vvs. 34,39).

That there are two and only two classes of men referred to under various names is evident not only from their attitude to Yahweh but from the simplicity of the psalmist's doctrine of their retribution and reward. "Evil-doers", "workers of iniquity", "transgressors", and Reshaim all meet a similar fate at Yahweh's hands (vvs. 2,9, 10, 15, 20, 28, 34, 36, 38.). "Those who wait on Yahweh", "the humble", "the straight-of-way", "the blame-

less", "the pious ones", and the Saddikim all meet a similar vindication (vvs. 9.11, 17,18,28,29,34,39). The psalmist's outlook on the matter is quite simple. He is not dealing with the complex problem of the relation between many classes of men with different attitudes to life but with the straight-forward problem of the relation between two classes of men, referred to under various names who are distinguished from each other by their attitude to Yahweh. Whatever distinctions he may have drawn between "evil-doers", workers of iniquity", "transgressors" and Reshaim, they are all merged in this final characteristic that they are enemies of Yahweh. Whatever shades of meaning he may have attached to "blameless", "pious ones", and Saddikim, these classes had the one characteristic that they were followers of Yahweh. The psalmist's doctrine of retribution and reward is founded on a basis that is essentially religious.

The preponderating number of references to Reshaim and Saddikim in the Psalm leads us to suspect that these are general terms used to describe these two classes as a whole. If, fundamentally, the psalmist had only two classes of men in his mind it would be rather strange if

he had no general terms to describe them. To say that Rasha describes a group within a group and Saddik a group within a group leaves us without any general descriptive terms for the two main groups, whose relationship to each other so dominates the psalmist's thought. This suspicion that Reshaim and Saddikim are general terms for the members of these two main classes is confirmed by the fact that, while "evil-doers" and "workers of iniquity" are referred to in the plural in v.1. the specific name for a member of this class when used in the singular is Rasha, (v.10). Certainly, "evil-doers" are Reshaim and "transgressors" are Reshaim (vvs. 28.38). Moreover, it is the Rasha and the Saddik who are contrasted in the series of comparisons in vvs. 12-17, and throughout the psalm (vvs.21,32,38,39). If there are fundamentally only two main classes referred to, distinguished from each other by their attitude to Yahweh, it appears most probable that Rasha was a general term for the one and Saddik for the other.

Apart from this distinguishing characteristic of their attitude to Yahweh, the psalmist makes some significant statements as to the relations existing between these

two classes of men. In the first place, the class to whom the psalm is addressed must be the Saddikim otherwise the promises held out to the Saddikim would have no meaning for them. The members of this class are exhorted not to be envious of evil-doers or workers of iniquity v.1. that is, of the Rasha v.10. This class were tempted to be envious because they were depressed and in need of Yahweh's vindication, (vvs.5-6) while their enemies were prospering (v.7). This conclusion is borne out by v.16.

Better the Saddik's little  
Than the wealth of many Reshaim

The Saddik, also, evidently suffered oppression at the hands of the Reshaim, as the following statements show.

- 12. The Rasha plots against the Saddik,  
And gnashes at him with his teeth.
- 14. The Reshaim have drawn the bow,  
To slay the straight-of-way.
- 32. The Rasha keeps watch on the Saddik,  
And seeks to put him to death.

The Saddik also has need of self-restraint, (vvs. 1,8), of resignation (v.7), of patience (vvs.7,10) and particularly of confidence in Yahweh (vvs. 3,6,7,17,18,

19,23,24,28,33,34,39,40.)

This confidence in Yahweh is mainly a confidence in a coming vindication at his hands, but although this may be held to be the principal theme of the psalm its nature is not stated with any great degree of precision. The retribution to be meted out to the Reshaim, involving the reward of the Saddikim is as follows.

2. Like grass they speedily wither,  
And like the fresh grass they fade.
9. Evil-doers are cut off,  
But they who wait on Yahweh inherit the land.
15. Their sword enters their own heart,  
And their bows are broken in pieces.
20. (But the Reshaim perish,  
And the enemies of Yahweh, as the beauty of the meadows  
Vanish, like smoke they vanish.)
22. Yea those whom he blesses possess the land,  
And those whom he curses are cut off.
28. Evil-doers are destroyed for ever,  
And the seed of the Reshaim are cut off.
38. The transgressors are destroyed together.  
The future of the Reshaim is cut off.

Of these statements, vvs. 2 and 20 are clearly figurative, meaning nothing more than that attacks on Saddikim will fail. Verse 22 at first sight seems hard-

ly relevant, as apparently the subject of the verb is the Saddik of verse 21, but when we remember that verse 21 is probably an insertion, we must go back to verse 20 for a subject, which we find in Yahweh. This leaves us with verses 9, 28 and 38 with probably also 22 in which to find precise statements of the psalmist's expectations. Here we have quite definite assertions that the Reshaim are cut off from "the land". It is not stated what is meant by "the land". The fate of the Saddikim is simply the opposite to that of the Reshaim. They are to be vindicated and to possess "the land". (vvs. 9,11,18,19,22,27,29,34.)

We are faced, therefore, with two classes, one poor and oppressed, looking for vindication at the hands of Yahweh, the other wealthy and dominant, judged by the oppressed class to be enemies of Yahweh. The Saddikim are exhorted to have faith in Yahweh's vindication and to look forward to the time when they shall reign supreme with the Reshaim destroyed.

It should be noted that it is the fate of two parties or classes that is being dealt with and not the fate of individuals, except in so far as they belong to these



parties. The individual is involved in the fate of the class but it is not with the fate of the individual, as such, that the Psalm is chiefly concerned. The psalm is addressed to a community and not to an individual, e.g. (1)

3b. Dwell in the land and pasture with confidence

6. He brings forth like the light your right  
And your just cause as the noonday.

9b. They who wait on Yahweh inherit the land.

11. The humble possess the land and take delight  
in abundance of peace.

The promises are to a class and not to an individual. It is not the individual but the loyal community that is exhorted to dwell in the land and to pasture with confidence. Abundance of peace shall reign not for the individual but for the class as a whole. The inheritance of the land cannot be an individual recompense but one which comes to the whole community of which he forms a part. As far as the individual is included in these promises it is as a member of a class he will eventually be vindicated even as all the members of the opposing class are ultimately condemned.

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(1) For the suggestion that the psalm is addressed to a community and not to an individual, I am indebted to Professor Stevenson.

On the other hand, there are some verses of the psalm which require investigation, suggesting as they do that the Saddik had a more immediate and individual recompense from Yahweh. The following are such verses with comments.

4. Place your delight in Yahweh,  
And he gives you the requests of your heart.

The use of "heart" here is significant. It means deepest and most fervent desires. This does not necessarily imply all desires. The deepest and most fervent desire of the loyal Israelite was probably to see the vindication of his faith. If this exhortation is addressed to the community it is no doubt this which is suggested. This is made clear in the immediately following verses 5 and 6.

18. He takes care of the days of the blameless,  
And their inheritance continues for ever.  
19. They are not put to shame in bad times,  
And in days of famine they are satisfied.

Here it is the community as a whole that is under Yahweh's protecting care and not the individual. Only thus can we understand the phrase "Their inheritance continues for ever."

23. From Yahweh are the steps of a man,  
He establishes his way in whom he is pleased.

The text of the second line of this verse is very doubtful and no secure statement can be based on it. It goes no further, however, than to say that the good man will receive Yahweh's blessing. In the ups-and-downs of life he is under his care. This conclusion is borne out by the immediately succeeding verse.

24. Although he fall he will not be cast headlong  
 For Yahweh supporteth his hand.

This seems also to be the doctrine involved in the following lines:

25. A youth I have been and now I am old  
 But I have not seen the Saddik forsaken.

It is difficult here to know whether the forsaking refers to Yahweh or to the Saddik's friends. It most probably refers to the former but, even so, the suggestion is not that the Saddik continues in unbroken prosperity but rather that in life's adversities he is under Yahweh's care.

Verses 21 and 26 might be taken together.

- 21 **The Rasha** borrows and will not repay,  
 But the Saddik is gracious and gives.

26. All day long he is gracious and lendeth,  
And his seed are a blessing.

These verses do not necessarily suggest that the Saddik is prosperous or rich. They are descriptions of the characters of the Saddik and Rasha. The Rasha may not pay his just debts or perhaps his borrowing is a forced loan. The Saddik is gracious and gives not necessarily because he is a wealthy man but because he is a good man. Even the poor may lend of their poverty and be more generous than the rich. This interpretation of verse 26 is strengthened by the immediately preceding verse where it is asserted that the psalmist has never seen the Saddik forsaken. In that verse he does not think of him as rich and it is hard to imagine that he changes his viewpoint in the verse that follows.

One further verse is decidedly obscure.

33. Yahweh does not forsake him in hand  
And does not allow his condemnation when  
judged.

For the resolution of this obscurity we must turn to other psalms where Yahweh's championship of the poor

and afflicted is asserted (Ps.69.33; 107.41; 140.12). There it is to come in an act of judgment not on one particular transgressor but on transgressors as a body and not for one innocent sufferer but for sufferers as a class. This accords so well with the tenor of the psalm that we can hardly doubt but that it is the intention here. The Psalmist can hardly be asserting that Yahweh directly intervenes to prevent individual cases of injustice and at the same time be calling on the faithfully community to have confidence in an imminent judgment. It is a judgment given for the whole people which is referred to in the immediately succeeding verse (v.34). The verses in an alphabetical psalm such as this may not be immediately connected but at least they belong to the same scheme of thought.

It would be a mistake to say, however, that the psalm does not offer any present consolation to the Suddik as an individual. The vindication it holds out to his class is not a remote vindication but one which

will take place almost immediately. It is to those who are now fretting at the prosperity of evil-doers that the promise is made that Yahweh will "bring forth like the light your right and your just cause as the noon-day." (v.6) Like grass, the workers of iniquity shall speedily wither (v.2). For yet a little while and the Rasha is gone (v.10). Even now Adonai is laughing at him for he sees that his day is coming (v.13). The very sword they have drawn to slay the straight-of-way enters their own heart (v.14). It is no remote enemy that is thus to be dealt with but their present foes. "Wait on Yahweh and keep his way, and he exalts you to possess the land, and when the Reshaim are cut off you see it." (v.34).

Apart from the confidence expressed in this vindication, there is the comfort of the knowledge of Yahweh's oversight and sustaining care. The cause of the Saddikim is not forsaken (v.28). Even now they are not overlooked (v.18). Such injustices as they meet with are not sustained at Yahweh's hands (v.33). Comfort in Yahweh's presence and confidence in his vindication, these are the two great notes of consolation in the psalm.

PSALM 140.

2. Deliver me, Yahweh, from the evil man,  
From the man of violent deeds preserve me,
3. Who have devised evil things in their mind.  
All the day they stir up wars.
4. They have sharpened their tongue like a serpent,  
Adder's poison is under their lips.
5. Keep me, Yahweh, from the hands of the Rasha,  
(From the man of violent deeds preserve me,)<sup>4</sup>  
Who have devised to trip up my steps.
6. The proud have hidden a trap for me,  
And cords have they spread like a net;  
At the sides of the track laid snares for me.
7. I said to Yahweh, My God art thou,  
Give ear . . .<sup>2</sup> to the voice of my cravings.
8. [Yahweh, my God, strength of my salvation,  
Thou coverest my head in the day of weapons.
9. Grant not . . .<sup>3</sup> any desires of the Rasha,  
What they have plotted<sup>4</sup> do not promote.
10. They lift up the head round about me,  
Let the trouble of their own lips cover them.
11. May he rain hot coals upon them,<sup>5</sup>  
Cause them to fall into (deep waters?)  
That they may rise no more.
12. Let not the glib be established in the land,  
The man of violence evil hunts to the place of  
banishments.]
13. I know<sup>6</sup> that Yahweh executes judgment for the  
afflicted,  
Justice for the poor.
14. Surely the Saddikim give thanks to thy name,  
The straight dwell in thy presence.

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- (1) This line is perhaps a repetition of 2b.
  - (2) Omit יְהוָה ; overloads line.
  - (3) Omit יְהוָה ; overloads line.
  - (4) Following LXX. read אֲשֶׁר צָחַח instead of צָחַח .
  - (5) Adopting emendation יִהְיֶה following 11.6. Reading  
also אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה following LXX.
  - (6) Q יְדַעְתִּי .

EXPOSITION:

The text of this psalm is in very bad order. No sure text can be built up from verses 8 to 12, the translation of which has been placed in square brackets. Its leading features, however, are quite clear and do not depend for their substantiation on a meticulously accurate text.

The psalm is a prayer on the part of some individual for deliverance from his enemies. These enemies are of a certain wicked type. (vvs. 2-6). They include the evil man and the man of violent deeds. Their inmost thought is evil (אֲשֶׁר הִשְׁבוּ לַעֲוֹת זָלָב). They are continually stirring up strife. That they are not an unsubstantial group of mischievous people is evident, for they are known as the proud and their machinations against the psalmist extend round him like a net. The Rasha is referred to twice as being among their number.

The deliverance the psalmist looks for is the complete extermination of these enemies. v.11. This extermination involves the vindication of a group to which the psalmist belongs, who are described as poor and afflicted and who include the Saddikim and Upright. v.13.



These latter terms are probably terms for the whole group. v.14.

Apart from the vindication of this group, the psalmist does not seem to look for any personal vindication, although his prayer is a most fervent prayer to be rid of his own enemies. He evidently finds his vindication in the vindication of his class. The destruction of his enemies also is their destruction in toto and not vengeance against any particular individual. This vindication and destruction are expected in some dramatic form. He prays to Yahweh to confound his enemies, to rain hot coals upon them, to cause them to fall into deep waters and to hunt them to a place of banishments. These metaphors are most confused and some of them are uncertain but there is no doubt as to the final result desired. It is that the group to which the psalmist belongs be vindicated. This is the group of Yahweh's loyal people.

The question arises, Who are these enemies of the psalmist and of the Saddikim, among whom are the Reshaim who are involved in their fate? Are they just wicked Jews, mischievous neighbours who are causing the writer a great deal of personal affliction, yet like himself

believers in Yahweh as the God of Israel? Or are they aliens or apostates who contemn both the writer and his God?

The Psalmist belongs to the group of Saddikim and Upright who are loyal worshippers of Yahweh. The presumption is, therefore, that his enemies are disloyal worshippers or aliens. This presumption is strengthened by the fact that if his enemies were also worshippers of Yahweh in any sense recognisable to the writer, his prayer for Yahweh's deliverance would hardly have the directness and force it undoubtedly has. The problem created would hardly have been resolved in so direct a manner. He could scarcely expect Yahweh to rain down hot coals on his own personal enemies or on the enemies of his group unless he fervently believed that they were Yahweh's enemies also. It is only the identification of Yahweh's interests with his own desires which could provide the basis for such drastic punishment.

Nor is the psalmist likely to make the strong assertion, "I said to Yahweh, "My God art Thou", if his enemies are making the same assertion. It may be, of course, that he believes Yahweh to be a God of righteousness who

will punish the unrighteousness of his worshippers, but worshippers who are to be completely exterminated are hardly worthy of the name. They must be regarded as apostates. On the whole, therefore, the nature of the vengeance called for suggests that these enemies are enemies of Yahweh also as well as the writer of the psalm.

In conclusion, we must notice that the judgment which the psalmist looks for, if it is to be any redress for his own personal afflictions, must be regarded as imminent. It is a present vindication which he so strenuously prays for. The psalm ends with an expression of assurance that the prayer will be heard.

We can now group together some conclusions from our study of these Psalms, conclusions which have already been suggested by a more general research.

1. They deal with two classes of men, referred to under a variety of names, who stand in opposition to each other. The distinctive names of these classes are Saddikim and Reshaim. As regards the use of the term "Reshaim", this distinctiveness is less evident in Psalm 140 than in Psalms 1 and 37, but as the term "Saddikim" is used of the one group and the other group includes the Reshaim, the inference is that this psalm also deals with the same two contrasted classes, with Saddikim as a group name for the one and Reshaim for the other. This, at any rate, gives an intelligible reading of the psalm.
2. The Saddikim are loyal worshippers of Yahweh. The Reshaim are not loyal worshippers of Yahweh and are regarded by the Saddikim as his enemies.
3. The Saddikim, as a class, are poor and depressed, longing for deliverance. The Reshaim are dominant and enjoy a considerable measure of temporal prosperity.
4. The Saddikim look for their vindication at Yahweh's hands.

5. This vindication is not merely personal but social. It is the vindication of the whole community to which the individual Saddik belongs.
6. In this vindication the Reshaim as a class will be swept away.
7. This intervention of Yahweh is looked upon as imminent.

So much, therefore, has been gained from our study of Saddik and Rasha in the Book of Psalms. Keeping our conclusions in mind we may now pursue our studies into the Book of Proverbs.

COLLECTIONS INCORPORATED IN PROVERBS.

The composite character of the Book of Proverbs needs no emphasis, and scholars are generally agreed on its main divisions. Little fault will be found with the following allocation of its parts, as given by Oesterley in his "Book of Proverbs"<sup>(1)</sup>.

(1) 1.7 - 9.18, with 1.1 - 1.6 as an introduction.

(2) 10.1 - 22.16.

(3) 22.17 - 23.14, which is paralleled by the teachings of Amen-em-ope.

(4) 23.15 - 24.22, which begins with a special address to "My son".

(5) 24.23 - 34, which begins with a distinct introduction, "These also are the sayings of the wise."

(6) 25 - 29, with a distinction between 25 - 27 and 28 - 29.

(7) 30. 1-14.

(8) 30. 15 - 33.

(9) 31. 1 - 9.

(10) 31. 10 - 31.

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(1) Op. cit. p.XII ff.

Chapters 1-9 are commonly recognised to be post-Exilic and will be treated as such without further discussion, so we may begin our examination of the book with chapters 10 - 22.16. Of these chapters Oesterley says, "There are reasons for believing that this collection is made up of smaller ones; for it is to be noticed, in the first place, that, with few exceptions chapters 10 - 15 consist entirely of couplets containing antithetic parallelisms, whereas this form occurs but rarely in 16 - 22.16 which consist in the main of the other type of couplets. <sup>(1)</sup> This difference between the two sections cannot be accidental, but points rather to <sup>(2)</sup> their having belonged originally to distinct collections."

An independent examination of the whole collection gives us a further justification for holding to the division already noticed by Oesterley. Chapters 10-15 are concerned with the contrast between Saddikim and Reshaim in a way that the other portion is not. In chapters 10-15, proverbs dealing with the Saddikim and Reshaim occur no less than 49 times. In chapters

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(1) Comparative parallelism  
synonymous parallelism  
continuous sentence.

(2) Op.cit. p. xiv.

16 - 22.16, they occur only 17 times. Of these 17 references, it is a noteworthy fact that 8 occur in chapter 21. <sup>(1)</sup> Also, nowhere in chapters 10-15 are the terms Saddik and Rasha used in the original sense of innocent and guilty in a law court, yet in 16 - 20 the terms are used in this sense 5 times, excluding a doubtful case in 20.26.

Thus we are met with the following phenomena. In 10 - 15, the references to Saddikim and Reshaim are plenteous, and when we come to consider them, we shall find that they are of the same nature as those already dealt with in the Psalms. In 16 - 20 the references are few and they are, with two exceptions, of a forensic character. In 21 - 22.16 the references become plenteous again and have lost their early legal sense. So, on the basis of these references to Saddikim and Reshaim, we might tentatively divide the whole collection into the following parts, 10 - 15, 16 - 20 and 21 - 22.16.

Comparing 10 - 15 with 16 - 20, there is another matter of significance. The references to the king in

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(1) Rasha is also used as an adjective in 21.29.



the former are much more numerous than those in the latter. In 10 - 15 there are only two references to a king.

14.28 In the multitude of people is the glory of  
a king,  
But in the lack of people is a ruler's de-  
struction.

14.35 The favour of a king is toward a prudent  
(1) servant,  
But his wrath slays him who causes disappoint-  
ment.

Neither of these proverbs necessarily implies that a king is sitting on the throne of Judah. They are of a perfectly general character and might refer to any king. On the other hand, the references to the king in chapters 16 - 20 are much more numerous and seem to betray a greater degree of intimacy. They do afford some grounds for Sellin's contention that "enthusiasm for the mon-  
(2)  
archy and confidence in it is everywhere apparent."

Chapter 16 has quite a little group of them as follows:

16.10 An oracular decision is on the lips of the king,  
In judgment his mouth does not transgress.

16.12. It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness,  
For by righteousness his throne is established

(1) Reading תְּהִלָּה LXX.

(2) Sellin's "Introduction to O.T." p.209.

- 16.13 The delight of kings is righteous lips,  
And the speaker of straightness he loves.
- 16.14 The wrath of the king is a messenger of death,  
And a wise man pacifies it.
- 16.15. In the light of the king's face is life.  
And his favour is like a cloud of spring rain.

There are no further references to the king until we come to 19.12. Then we have the following:

- 19.12 Like the growl of a lion is the wrath of the king,  
But his favour is like dew on the grass.
- 20.2 Like the growl of a lion is the terror of the king,  
He who angers himself against him sins against his  
life.
- 20.8. The king sits on the throne of judgment,  
And sifts all wrong with his eyes.
- 20.26 A wise king winnows the Reshaim,  
And brings the wheel over them.<sup>cy</sup>
- 20.28 Kindness and faithfulness guard the king,  
And his throne is established by justice.<sup>(2)</sup>

These proverbs do betray a certain preoccupation with the qualities essential for a king and this pre-occupation is best understood in the light of practical necessity. We would seem best to interpret their quality

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- (1) Oesterley suggests (after Stern<sup>U2/</sup>nagel)  
"And bringeth upon them their own iniquity".
- (2) Reading פְּיָאָה LXX.

if we take them in a particular rather than in a general sense and hold them as applying to reigning kings in Judah.

Now Oesterley and Sellin argue that the whole collection (10 - 22.16), because of these references to the kingship, belongs to an early date. But only two of these references, as we have seen, occur in 10 - 15 and the implications of these are doubtful. Therefore, as far as these chapters are concerned, the case for an early date on this ground loses much, if not all, of its force. Indeed, none of the proof texts which Oesterley gives occur in these chapters at all and, in this matter, he overlooks the distinction he has already drawn between 10 - 15 and 16 - 22.16. Neither do these two proverbs in 10 - 15 bear out Sellin's contention that "enthusiasm for the monarchy and confidence in it is everywhere apparent" although the passages in 16 - 20 may do so. So, as far as the references to the kingship are concerned, the case for an early dating of chapters 10 - 15 lacks substantiation.

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(1) Op.cit. p.xxiii.

If, however, we ally the proverbs referring to the king in chapters 16 - 20 with those which refer to the Saddikim and Reshaim in the early legal sense of innocent and guilty, we have fairly good grounds, in the lack of any evidence to the contrary, for believing that these chapters belong to a fairly early stage in Israel's history and in all probability are pre-Exilic. Therefore, the contention of Oesterley and Sellin may be right as far as these particular chapters are concerned but we shall underline the line which Oesterley has already drawn between these chapters and chapters 10 - 15.

When we come to chapters 21 - 22.16, the phenomena we meet with have changed again. Saddik and Rasha are no longer used in a forensic sense, yet it is difficult to say that they have acquired a clearly technical significance. The passages in which they are mentioned are as follows:

- 21.7. The violence of the Reshaim sweeps them away,  
Because they refuse to do justice.
- 21.10 The desire of the Rasha is all for evil.  
He has no pity on his neighbour
- 21.12 The Saddik considers the house of the Rasha,  
How the Reshaim are overthrown in discomfiture.

- 21.15 Joy to the Saddik when justice is done,  
But ruin to workers of iniquity.
- 21.18 A ransom for the Saddik is the Rasha,  
And instead of the Straight the disloyal.  
(1)
- 21.26 All day long the corrupt desires,  
But the Saddik gives and does not hold back.
- 21.27 The sacrifice of the Reshaim is an abomination;  
How much more when brought with evil motive!

Of these proverbs, 21.12 is very doubtful as it stands. The LXX reads  $\sigma\iota\delta\iota\varsigma$  instead of  $\sigma\iota\delta\iota\kappa\iota\varsigma$ . Also, as the Hebrew runs, the subject of the couplet should be Yahweh, as it can hardly be said that the Saddik overthrows the Reshaim to ruin. The use of the term Rasha in both halves of the proverb is also suspicious. We naturally expect some contrast in the lines. Any attempt to reconcile these inconsistencies must be conjectural and this proverb is best left out of consideration.

It is evident that the Reshaim are flagrant evil-doers, and are contrasted with the Saddikim or Straight. In some way, however they do attempt to worship Yahweh, if the sacrifice of 21.27 refers to him. We seem, therefore, to have two classes of men who, in their conduct at any rate, stand in the strongest opposition to each other. There is only one reference to a king in the collection (21.1). It seems a general statement asserting the supremacy of Yahweh even over kings.

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(1) Reading  $\sigma\iota\delta\iota\kappa\iota\varsigma$  (LXX) for  $\sigma\iota\delta\iota\varsigma$  which is clearly out of order.

So, taking the collection 10 - 22.16 as a whole, and using as our criteria the references to Saddikim and Reshaim, as we may be justified now in dividing the whole collection into three smaller collections, viz., 10 - 15, 16 - 20 and 21 - 22.16. Of these we may say that 16 - 20 is the earliest, 21 - 22.16 is later and 10 - 15 is probably last of all. The references to the king tend to support these conclusions as far as the earlier dating of 16 - 20 is concerned.

We may now turn our attention to the next largest collection 25 - 29. This, also, as Oesterley suggests, may be divided into two sections, viz., 25 - 27 and 28 - 29. The connection between these sections is already broken by the passage 27.23-27, which has been inserted as a complete literary unit between the couplets in 25 - 27. 22 and those of 28 - 29. There is also an outstanding difference in the style of the proverb found in these two sections. The first are framed predominantly of comparative sentences but the latter are mostly made up of antithetic parallelisms. There is a difference also in the literary quality of the sayings. Those in 25 - 27

are polished and urbane, the result evidently of reflection and skill in expression. Those in 28 - 29 have more of a propagandist quality. They are full of thrust and urgency. It is not difficult, therefore, to believe that the two sections come from different schools of thought and were originally separate collections.

As regards the dating of these collections, there are no criteria which afford us any certain conclusion. Chapters 25 - 27 are headed by the statement that they are the proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out. This title establishes the proverbs which it heads as a separate collection and suggests that when it was incorporated with other collections it was already regarded as old. It begins with a series of references to the kingship (25. 1-7). These references at the beginning of the collection, if there is any significance in their position at all, are best explained by the fact that the people were familiar with and interested in the monarchy. Two of them have a note of intimacy which seems better to refer to a reigning monarch than to no king in particular.

- 25.4. When dross is taken from silver,  
It comes forth entirely pure.<sup>(1)</sup>
5. When the Rasha is taken from the presence  
of the king,  
His throne is established in justice.
- 25.6. Claim not honour for thyself in the presence  
of the king,  
And in the place of great men do not stand;  
For it is better that he should say to thee,  
"Come up hither",  
Than to be asked to go down to make room  
for a noble.

In the absence of any other criteria, therefore, we may adjudge this section to be early. There are only two references to the Saddik and Rasha in it (25.5 and 25.26). These may be early and of the original forensic meaning of innocent and guilty.

Chapters 28 - 29 have many references to the Saddikim and Reshaim. They stand forth as two classes of men who are inveterately opposed to one another (28.12,28; 29.2,7,16,27. It has two references to the kingship in it but they appear to be of a general quality (29.4,14). There are proverbs, however, which seem to suggest that the people had had experience of unjust rulers (28.15,16; 29.12). There are other sayings

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(1) Reading ויצא נצרף כלי. LXX.



which show that the teachings of the prophets had borne some fruit (28.3, 8, 27. 29.7) and the importance of instruction (  $\text{הַיָּדֵי}$  ) is emphasised (28.4, 7, 9; 29.18). From all this we may deduce that the collection is not early.

Three small sections remain to be mentioned, but they need not detain us long. There is no reference to Saddik or Rasha in 22.17 - 23.14. 23.15 - 24.22 has a few references, not of a forensic character. 24. 23-34 has one reference to the Rasha in the early forensic sense.

Retracing our steps now and bearing in mind that from the paucity of our data our conclusions can only be tentative, we might seek to state them as follows:

16 - 20 is the earliest collection. The intimate nature of the references to the king and the forensic content of the terms Saddik and Rasha go far to establish this.

25 - 27 would seem to belong to a slightly later period.

21 - 22.16 and 28 - 29 might follow. In the former

the Reshaim are referred to as worshippers of Yahweh. In the latter, Saddikim and Reshaim stand out as members of two opposing classes.

10 - 15 might be placed after 28 - 29, as the opposition between Saddikim and Reshaim is its predominant feature. It has no intimate references to the king.

Chapters 1 - 9 have a number of references to Saddikim and Reshaim and are taken last of all as clearly post-Exilic.

SADDIK AND RASHA IN PROVERBS.

Taking the collection, therefore, in the order we have given, we may now try to elucidate the meanings of the terms Saddik and Rasha.

16 - 20.

Innocent and guilty forensically.

17.15 To acquit the Rasha and condemn the Saddik,  
An abomination to Yahweh are both of them.

18.5 To favour the Rasha is not good,  
To turn away the Saddik from justice.

Saddik as innocent party.

17.26 Also, to fine the Saddik is not good,  
To smite the noble against justice."<sup>1</sup>

Rasha as guilty party.

17.23 The Rasha takes a bribe from his bosom,  
To deflect the course of justice.

There are two other proverbs where Reshaim are referred to in connection with the administration of justice.

(1) Kuhn would emend the second line thus

לְהַטֵּא בְּתוֹכָם מִיָּשָׁר - מִעַל - יָשָׁר

"To turn aside his path from straightness." cf. 17.23. 18.5.

19.28 A false witness scoffs at justice  
And the mouth of Reshaim gulps down  
wrong.

Here the Reshaim are evidently men who either bear false witness or take willing advantage of it.

20.26 A wise king winnows the Reshaim,  
And brings the wheel over them.<sup>(1)</sup>

Here the activity of the king as judge is probably referred to.

25 - 27.

25.4 When dross is taken from silver,  
It comes forth entirely pure,  
5 When the Rasha is taken from the  
presence of the king. (1)  
His throne is established in justice.

Here the Rasha would seem to be a man of bad influence, perhaps the type of man who led to corruption in the administration of justice. When he is taken from the presence of the king, justice is purified.

25.26 A spring befouled and a spoiled fountain,  
A Saddik who falls before a Rasha.

The second clause may be taken to read "A good man who falls before a bad man." This, however, would be the first use of the terms in this sense and the verb

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(1a) See note at foot of page 84.

(1) Cf. Page 90 .

*Ein*, which means to be shaken or moved or overthrown, can hardly refer to the voluntary actions of a good man who gives way to the actions of the wicked. It rather suggests the downfall of a saddik before force majeure as, for example, the corrupt testimony of a law court. In such a case, the analogy of the first clause would have relevance and point. The spring of justice would be befouled.

21-22.16.

The Rasha is wicked and pitiless.

21.10 The desire of the Rasha is all for evil,  
He has no pity on his neighbour.

The Reshaim are outside the religious pale.

21.27 The sacrifice of the Reshaim is an abomination,  
How much more when brought with evil motive!

The Saddik is unselfishly generous.

21.26 All day long the (corrupt ?) desires,  
But the Saddik gives and does not withhold. (1)

The first clause of this proverb is corrupt, but the second does seem to tell us something about the Saddik. He is of generous disposition, probably kind to his needy friends or compassionate on the poor.

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(1) LXX.  $\text{לֹא}$  for  $\text{לֹא}$  which is an obvious dittograph.  
See also p. 87.

28 - 29.

The Saddik is confident but the Rasha is full of baseless fears.

28.1 The Rasha flees<sup>(1)</sup> when no one pursues,  
But the Saddik<sup>(2)</sup> has the confidence of a  
young lion.

The Saddik is kind to the poor. The Rasha is inconsiderate.

29.7 The Saddik pays heed to the cause of the poor,  
The Rasha does not plead for the needy.<sup>(3)</sup>

There are other proverbs in this collection which suggest that there is a strong and violent opposition between Saddik and Rasha.

28.4 Those who forsake instruction praise the Rasha,  
But such as keep instruction contend with him.<sup>(4)</sup>

29.27 An abomination to the Saddikim is the unjust man,  
And an abomination to the Rasha is the Straight-of-way.

29.10 Men of blood hate the Perfect,  
And the Reshaim<sup>(5)</sup> seek his life.

There are others which suggest that this opposition found its issue in a class warfare.

28.12 When the Saddikim are exalted<sup>(6)</sup> there is great  
confidence<sup>(7)</sup>  
When the Reshaim arise, men hide themselves.

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- (1) Reading כִּזְ for כִּזְ LXX. (4) Reading בּוֹ for בָּמִי  
(2) Reading singular for plural. (5) Reading שְׂמִי for שְׂמִי  
(3) Reading לִי (Toy). (6) Reading מְעֻלֹת (Toy).  
(7) Reading תִּקְוָה (Toy).

- 28.28 When the Reshaim arise men hide,  
But when they perish the Saddikim increase.
- 29.2 When the Saddikim <sup>(1)</sup>rule the people rejoice  
But when the Reshaim govern, men groan.
- 29.16 When the Reshaim multiply transgression  
multiplies,  
But the Saddikim gaze with joy on their fall.

10 - 15.

In this collection the largest number of contrasts between Saddikim and Reshaim is to be found. They may be divided up as follows.

CONTRASTS IN SPEECH.Benevolent contrasted with malevolent speech.

- 12.6 The words of the Reshaim are liers-in-wait,  
But the speech of the Straight delivers.

Profitable contrasted with worthless speech.

- 10.20 Choice silver is the tongue of the Saddik,  
The mind of the Reshaim is of no value.

Circumspect speech contrasted with reckless utterance.

- 15.28 The Saddik considers before he speaks,  
But the Reshaim blurt out with reckless talk.

Helpful contrasted with injurious language.

- 10.11 A fountain of life if the mouth of the Saddik,  
But the mouth of the Reshaim pours out harshness.

(1) *ni772* after LXX. (2) Reading plural for singular.  
(3) Reading *y'a* (cf.15.28)

Goodwill contrasted with malice.

- 10.32 The lips of the Saddik utter<sup>u</sup> goodwill,  
But the mouth of the Reshaim malice.

CONTRASTS IN CONDUCT.Love of Straightforwardness contrasted with inveterate corruption.

- 13.5 The Saddik hates deception,  
But the Rasha acts basely and shamefully.

Mastery of appetite contrasted with mastery of appetite.

- 13.25 The Saddik is an eater to satisfy his appetite,  
But the belly of the Reshaim goes on wanting.

Kindness to animals contrasted with ingrained cruelty.

- 12.10 A considerate person is the Saddik for the  
well-being of his beast,  
But the bowels of the Reshaim are cruel.

Apart from these direct statements made regarding the character of these two types or classes of men, there are also certain logical inferences to be drawn from statements made regarding Yahweh's attitude to them.

The conduct of the Saddikim is acceptable to Yahweh while that of the Reshaim is condemned by him. (c)

- 10.3 Yahweh does not suffer the Saddik to hunger,  
But he thrusts aside the (evil) desire of the Reshaim.
- 11.20 An abomination to Yahweh is the twisted of mind  
But the Perfect-of-Way are his delight.

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(1) צַדִּיק .

(2) "Perfect-of-Way and "Straight" are here regarded as synonyms of Saddik cf. page 29 ff.



- 10.29 A stronghold to the Perfect-of-Way is Yahweh  
But destruction to the workers of iniquity.
- 15.8 The sacrifice of the Reshaim is an abomination  
to Yahweh,  
But the prayer of the Straight is his delight.
- 15.29 Yahweh is far from the Reshaim,  
But the prayer of the Saddikim he hears.

Combined with these, there is the more explicit inference  
that the Rasha does not practise "עֲשֵׂה".

- 15.9 An abomination to Yahweh is the way of the  
Rasha,  
But he who follows after עֲשֵׂה he loves.

There are also proverbs in this collection which  
suggest that the opposition between Saddik and Rasha is  
an opposition between two classes of men,

- 11.10 In the prosperity of the Saddikim the city  
exults,  
And when the Reshaim perish, a shout of joy.
- 11.11 By the blessing of the Straight the city is  
exalted,  
But by the mouth of the Reshaim it is over-  
thrown.

24, 23 - 34.

There is one reference to the Rasha in this collection  
which refers to him in the forensic sense of the guilty  
party in a law suit.

- 24.23 To have respect of persons in judgment is not good;  
 24 He who says to the Rasha, "You are innocent",  
 men curse and people execrate.

The date of this collection is very uncertain.

1 - 9.

The Saddikim are good men.

- 2.20 Therefore walk in the paths of good men,  
 And keep in the ways of the Saddikim.

The Reshaim are evil men.

- 4.14 In the path of the Reshaim do not go,  
 Walk not in the way of evil men.

The Rasha is a scorner, or an associate of scorners.

- 9.7 He who corrects a "scorner" <sup>(1)</sup> gets insult,  
 And he who reproves a Rasha reviling. <sup>(2)</sup>

The Saddik is susceptible to instruction.

- 9.9 Instruct a wise man and he grows wiser,  
 Teach a Saddik and more he learns.

There is one passage from which we may clearly infer  
 that the conduct of the Rasha is abnoxious to Yahweh.

- 3.33 The curse of Yahweh is in the house of the Rasha,  
 But the habitation of the Saddikim he blesses.

There is another reference which suggests that the  
 Saddikim and Reshaim are two distinct classes of men.

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(1) Cf. p. 36.

(2) Reading  $\eta \rho \lambda \gamma$  (T<sub>1</sub>).



DUBIOUS OR IRRELEVANT PROVERBS.

We now come to proverbs referring to Saddikim or Reshaim which may have something to say to us in the matter of their reward or retribution. The following proverbs seem to require consideration in this connection:

16 - 20.

16.4; 18.10.

21 - 22.16.

21.7; 21.15; 21.18.

10 - 15.

10.3; 10.6; 10.7; 10.16; 10.24; 10.25; 10.27;  
10.28; 10.30; 10.31; 11.5; 11.6; 11.8; 11.9;  
11.18; 11.21; 11.23; 11.28; 11.31; 12.3; 12.5; 12.7;  
12.12; 12.13; 12.21; 12.26; 13.9; 13.17; 13.21;  
13.22; 14.11; 14.19; 14.32; 15.6.

23.15 - 24.22.

23.17,18; 24.16; 24.19,20.

1 - 9.

2.21,22; 3.33.

From this list we may remove those references which, for textual reasons or because of their unintelligibility, afford us no sure conclusion which will be of value in our discussion. Verses 12.12; 12.26 and 11.9 come into this category.

12.12 is hopelessly corrupt. See Oesterley p. 93, Toy p. 249.

12.26 has a hopeless first half line which leaves the meaning of the second half dubious. See Oesterley p. 97. Toy p. 257.

10.6 is also suspect. The parallelism is none too sure and most commentators regard the second half line as corrupt. It occurs again in 10.11b and may have got in here by a scribal error. The LXX. follows a different text, reading "sorrow" for "violence" but that does not help us very much. The proverb, therefore, is best left out of consideration, as no conclusion built on it can be satisfactory.

10.16. The last word of this proverb is dubious.  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁוּׁוּ}$  does not seem to offer an effective parallel to  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁוּׁוּ}$ . Oesterley and Toy following Stérnagel, suggest  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁוּׁוּ}$ . Some such emendation would appear to be necessary but the versions all support the M.T. The proverb is a tantalizing one, as the dubiety which clings to it makes it difficult to use it with point in our discussion. It could be taken later on among those which refer to the promise of life but, fortunately, there is enough material there to make its aid unnecessary. We have thought it best to leave it on one side.

11.9. also comes into the category of those whose text is suspect, as its meaning is most obscure. It runs as follows:

By his mouth the godless would ruin his neighbour,  
But by knowledge the Saddikim are rescued.

What does this proverb mean? Does it refer to the corrupt testimony of a law court or to malignant talk traducing persons in authority? It is most difficult to say. If it refers to a law court, it appears to be the only one in the collection 10 - 15 where Saddik is used in the early forensic sense, although there is no reason why it should not be so used, but the use of the plural is decidedly peculiar. One would expect the singular.

The probability is that there is some corruption of the text. The LXX reads  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁוּׁוּ}$  for  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁוּׁוּ}$  and  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁוּׁוּ}$  for  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁוּׁוּ}$  which is not of much assistance. For  $\text{וְיִשְׁׁוּׁוּ}$  it reads, however,  $\text{πολιτεις}$

which gives much the same sense as the Hebrew but seems to suggest a different text. All the commentators have had difficulty with this proverb and it is best left out of consideration.

Having put aside, then, these dubious proverbs, we may proceed further to eliminate those which, when textually emended or properly interpreted, provide a clear meaning which makes them irrelevant to the question of reward or retribution. The following seem to come within this category, 12.21; 13.17; 15.6; 14.32 and 23.17,18.

12.21 seems at first sight to be relevant to the discussion, e.g.

No mischief can befall the Saddik,  
But the Reshaim are full of misfortune.

But the text of this proverb is suspect. The LXX., Targum and Syriac read  $\text{הַיָּשָׁרִים}$  for  $\text{הַיָּשָׁרִים}$ . Accepting this emendation, the proverb would read -

No injustice is pleasing to the Saddik,  
But the Reshaim are full of evil.

That this is the proper form of the proverb is evident from the use of the phrase  $\text{מִלֵּאָה}$ . This expression means "full of evil" and not "full of misfortune," cf. Eccles. 9.3  $\text{מִלֵּאָה הָאָדָם בְּנֵי בָנָי}$  where the context leaves us in no doubt as to the meaning intended. The phrase "full of misfortune" would require the use of the verb  $\text{שָׁבַע}$ , cf. Ps. 88.4  $\text{שָׁבַע בְּרָעוֹת בְּרָעוֹת}$  or Job 14.1. The use of  $\text{מִלֵּאָה}$  in this proverb, therefore, decides the issue.

In 13.17  $\text{שָׁבַע}$  is used as an adjective, which

makes it hardly relevant to our discussion. In any case, as Kittel suggests, the phrase  $\text{רָשָׁע מְלַצֵּחַ}$  might be an error for  $\text{רָשָׁע מְלַצֵּחַ}$ .  $\text{לֵךְ}$  also should probably be  $\text{לֵךְ}$ . Even if we leave  $\text{רָשָׁע}$  and read  $\text{לֵךְ}$  the proverb would read -

A wicked messenger lands one in misfortune,  
But a trustworthy envoy brings profit.

If this is a correct reading of the proverb, it has nothing to do with the question of reward and retribution, as far as any doctrinal significance is concerned.

15.6 is generally acknowledged to be in need of emendation. As it stands it reads -

The house of the Saddik is a great store  
But in the revenue of the Rasha is a thing troubled.

Perhaps  $\text{רָשָׁע}$  should be substituted for  $\text{רָשָׁע}$ , as it is quite possible that a redactor may have made the change to provide an effective parallel to  $\text{רָשָׁע}$  in the second line. In which case the proverb would read -

The house of the Saddik - abundance of kindness,  
But in the house of the Rasha - a thing troubled.

This may be the original form of the proverb or it may not. In any case, the uncertainty of the text makes any conclusion as to its meaning tentative.

14.32 appears in need of emendation. As suggested by the LXX and Syriac  $\text{יִתְקַצֵּר}$  should probably be substituted for  $\text{יִתְקַצֵּר}$ . In which case the proverb would read -

The Rasha is overthrown by calamity  
But the Saddik trusts in his integrity.

If this rendering is correct, it probably means that the Rasha has no sure ground of confidence amid the vicissitudes of life. When distress comes, he has nothing to hold on to, but the Saddik, probably through his faith in Yahweh, is "cast down but not destroyed". In any case, the obscurity of the text makes the proverb of doubtful value in dealing with this question of reward and retribution.

23.17,18 read, after one or two minor emendations, as follows:

- 17 Let not thine heart envy sinners,  
But fear<sup>(1)</sup> Yahweh all day long.  
18 But if thou keep it<sup>(2)</sup> there is a sequel,  
And thy hope is not disappointed.

So the statement runs as it stands, but v. 18 is in all probability an interpolation. It is repeated in 24.14. Verses 17 and 19 also go together. So we are left with the simple exhortation of v. 17 which has no bearing on our question of reward and retribution.

Next we may deal with some proverbs which refer to the Saddikim and Reshaim but which have no direct statement to make in the matter of their reward and retribution. viz., 10.7; 12.13; 24.16 and 3.33.

10.7 appears to be a statement of fact with no doctrinal significance.

The memory of the Saddik is a blessing,  
But the name of the Reshaim rots.

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(1) Reading אֵלֹהִים cf. 24.21.  
(2) Reading אֵלֹהִים לXX.



12.13 runs as follows:

By the transgression of his lips the evil  
man is ensnared,  
And so the Saddik comes out of trouble.

Kuhn reads for  $\text{הַיָּדָוָה}$  the somewhat more appropriate word  $\text{הַיָּדָוָה}$ , whereupon the second half-line reads, "But the Saddik comes out of the net." This gives excellent sense and should probably be adopted. Even accepting this emendation, the meaning of the proverb is not very clear. It seems to be a warning against slanderous or vindictive or even perjured speech and a commendation of discretion in speech, which was a characteristic of the Saddik. It seems to have no wider significance in the matter of reward and retribution.

There appears also to be no doctrinal significance in 24.16.

(For) <sup>(1)</sup> seven times the Saddik falls and rises,  
But the Reshaim crash <sup>(2)</sup> at misfortune.

As far as the question of reward and retribution is concerned, this proverb does not even say that the Saddik has no misfortunes. It quite literally says he has his "ups-and-downs," but through all his misfortunes there

(1)  $\text{וְ$  is inserted here establishing a connection with preceding verse. If there is a connection, it is by no means clear. The two verses are better taken separately.  $\text{וְ}$ , of course, may have been there originally as an emphatic affirmative, meaning "Yea," or "Verily." See B.D.B. p. 474b.

(2) Cf. Is. 59.14 and Jer. 46.6. for  $\text{שָׁבַר}$  in the sense of "to fall over" or "to be completely overthrown."

is the grace of continuance. The Reshaim, on the other hand, have not the same resource. When misfortune comes they are finished.

3.33 reads as follows:

The wrath of Yahweh is in the house of the Rasha,  
But the habitation of the Saddikim he blesses.

This proverb does not mean anything more than that Yahweh favours the Saddikim and is against the Rasha. The outcome of this attitude on the part of Yahweh may be in their present fortunes or in their fates. We leave the proverb on one side as affording us no clear guidance as to the nature of their reward or retribution.

There are two further obscure proverbs which may be dealt with in this section, viz., 10.31 and 11.31.

10.31 The mouth of the Saddik bears the fruit  
of wisdom,  
But the tongue of maliciousness shall be  
cut off.

In the proverb which immediately follows it is stated:

10.32 The lips of the Saddik utter what is  
kindly,  
But the mouth of the Reshaim malicious-  
ness.

If we take these two statements together, it would appear that it is the Rasha who utters maliciousness and who is therefore to be cut off. This may mean that he himself will be involved in some kind of retribution which will fall on him alone or, on the other hand, that he will be a victim in some general disaster that will fall upon his class.

Even if we accept the proverb as it stands its meaning is obscure but it is difficult to believe that we have before us the original text of the saying. In 10.32 we have two balanced statements and we should expect the same balance in 10.31. As it stands, the parallelism seems to be defective. Perhaps some other word should be substituted for תִּבְרֵן . תִּבְרֵן seems as near as we can get. The initial ת and ב may be dittographs of the final letters in תִּבְרֵן. If this emendation be made, the proverb would read:

The mouth of the Saddik bears the fruit of wisdom,  
But the tongue of maliciousness evil things.

On the other hand, the verb תִּבְרֵן may be pointed in the Hiphil instead of in the Niphal, and the sentence would read, "But the tongue of maliciousness destroys." This gives quite good sense but the parallelism, though better than in the accepted rendering, is not as good as it might be. The obscurity of the parallelism makes the proverb difficult. In any case there is not much light to be gathered from it on the problem we have before us.

11.31. also is a most difficult proverb involving much obscurity in its meaning. It may be translated as follows:

Behold the Saddik is recompensed in the land,  
Much more the Rasha and sinner.

As regards the text, in the first line the LXX, has  
μᾶλλον σωσεται It is difficult to see where this reading

comes from, unless it is a redaction of a later date. (1)  
 If we accept the M.T., it is not easy to know what is implied in the verb  $\text{וְשָׁבַע}$ . It may mean that the Saddik is punished for evil-doing, but this is most unlikely. The Saddik was the sincere worshipper of Yahweh whose sacrifices, including sin-offerings, were acceptable in his sight. Nor is it easy to account for the word in this context. We would expect some such word as  $\text{וְשָׁבַע}$  but if this were substituted it would refer to the manner of life of the Rasha and, even if applied by the Sages to the Saddik, would hardly be acceptable to the readers of the book.

If, however, we read the verb  $\text{וְשָׁבַע}$  in the sense of being complete, or safe, or at peace, we get a perfectly understandable first line, "Behold the Saddik dwells unharmed in the land," in accord with the statement in 10.30:

The Saddik for ever is not shaken,  
 But the Reshaim do not abide in the land.

The second line, however, is left in need of elucidation. We would suggest the following emendation:

$\text{וְשָׁבַע וְשָׁבַע וְשָׁבַע}$

The proverb would then read as follows:

(1) What it means, either, is by no means easy to determine. If it involves a doctrine of salvation, there is nothing comparable to it in the Book of Proverbs.

Behold, he causes the Saddik to dwell in the land.  
Yea, he cuts off the Rasha and sinner.

On the other hand, most commentators accept the proverb as it stands, interpreting it as asserting that, while the good man will receive due punishment for his delinquencies, the retribution that falls on the wicked and sinner will be much more severe. If this interpretation is accepted, the proverb is alone in asserting a gradation of rewards and punishments falling on Saddik and Rasha from the hands of Yahweh. It ignores the strong, distinctive line which Psalmists and Sages ever drew between them. The attitude of Yahweh to these two classes of men was quite clear-cut and distinct. The suggestion that he distinguished between them only in degree and not in kind finds no support in Psalms or Proverbs. This point, we believe, will be sufficiently clear when we come to the following chapter.

While we favour the emendation we have suggested, which would bring the proverb into that group which deals with the Sages' doctrine of retribution and reward, the lack of authority for such a change keeps us from using it in our discussion.

12.5 is also a proverb whose meaning is dubious.

The thoughts of the Saddikim - judgment,  
The counsels of the Reshaim disappointment.

It is difficult to know how to translate this proverb.

The Revised Version reads:

The thoughts of the righteous are just,  
But the counsels of the wicked are deceit.

McFadyen translates it as follows:

The aims of the righteous are just,  
The designs of the wicked are treacherous.

It may just be asserting a contrast between the one class of men and the other or it may be saying that he who deals with the Saddikim gets justice, for that is their inner intention, but he who throws in his lot with the Reshaim will eventually be undeceived. It may, however, mean that the expectations of the Saddikim are upheld by the judgment of Yahweh while he confounds the counsels of the Reshaim. But this is perhaps reading too much into it and it is best left out of consideration.

We now pass on to deal with proverbs whose integrity or meaning is not in question and which provide us with an understanding of the Sages' doctrine.

PROVERBS DEALING WITH FATE OF SADDIKIM AND RESHAIM.

The real problem to be solved in proverbs which treat of the fate of the Saddikim and Reshaim is not whether the Sages believed in an individual reward or retribution for them but the problem of when and how they believed the reward or retribution would come. We may take it for granted that, believing as they did in the righteousness of Yahweh, they were convinced that he would reward the Saddik and punish the Rasha but what doctrine did they hold regarding the manner of Yahweh's intervention for or against them? Were his rewards and punishments centred on the individual, bringing to him blessing or disaster in isolation from his class or did he intervene by means of a communal judgment or judgments which wrought discomfiture for his enemies, and brought blessing to all his faithful people? The proverbs we have to consider may illustrate one or other of the following doctrines. For clearness of discussion we state them a priori.

(X) They assert an individual reward for the Saddikim and an individual retribution on the Reshaim. The reference to "Saddikim" in this case is a reference to the individuals who compose the class. For each separate Saddik there is a separate reward, peculiar to his own circumstances, the sign of Yahweh's good favour to him as

an individual. "Reshaim" is likewise a group name for individuals who shall meet with retribution as individuals. Each man shall receive a separate retribution which will be a sign of Yahweh's displeasure with him as an individual. Sooner or later all the members of his class will meet, at separate times, with individual retribution.

There is, however, another possible interpretation.

(Y) "Saddikim" and "Reshaim" may refer to the classes as wholes. In this case the reward or retribution coming to the members of the class would come to the individuals in the class at one and the same time. This class judgment would involve the individual but it would be as a member of his class he would be vindicated or as a member of his class he would be condemned. The expectation of the individual Saddik would not be that he would participate in a special piece of good fortune but that he would share the good fortune of his class. At the same time the judgment he looked for as imminent on the Reshaim would not be a special judgment on the individual but a judgment on the whole class of evil-doers. This interpretation we have already applied with fruitful results to Psalms 1 and 37 which are commonly regarded as "wisdom" Psalms. (1)

In the light of these possibilities we can now go

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(1) Throughout the discussion which follows we shall refer to these interpretations as (X) or (Y).



on to interpret those proverbs which refer to the fate of Saddikim and Reshaim.

For convenience and clarity of treatment, we divide the proverbs we have to consider into four groups.

- A. Proverbs which seem to suggest an individual reward or retribution.
- B. Proverbs which seem to suggest a communal reward or retribution.
- C. Proverbs whose interpretation is specially involved.
- D. Proverbs which throw little light on the manner of reward or retribution.

Group A contains proverbs which seem to assert an individual reward and retribution, i.e. interpretation (X).

11.21 Assuredly the evil man does not go unpunished,  
But the seed of the Saddikim escape.

11.28 He who trusts in his riches withers,<sup>(1)</sup>  
But like the green leaf the Saddikim flourish.

12.3 A man is not established in שׁוֹשׁ?  
But the root of the Saddikim is not removed.

We must take particular notice of the assertions made in these proverbs.

11.21 says "Assuredly the evil man does not go unpunished,  
But the seed of the Saddikim escape."

This would seem to mean that the Saddikim and/or their posterity escape punishment. Does this imply that the Saddikim escape punishment for their own sins or that

(1) Reading שׁוֹשׁ: (קאו)

they escape the punishment that falls on the evil-doer? It is hardly likely that the Saddikim felt themselves under any imminent judgment for their sins. They were sincere worshippers of Yahweh whose sacrifices, including sin-offerings, were acceptable in his sight (see p. 110). It is most probable, in view of their relationship to Yahweh, they regarded themselves as immune from his judgment on evil-doers. How and when does that judgment come? Does it come in a series of judgments on evil-doers one by one or does it fall on evil-doers as a whole?

11.28 states

He who trusts in his riches withers,  
But like the green leaf the Saddikim flourish.

The withering of the man who trusts in riches is contrasted with the flourishing of the Saddikim. This may either mean that he does not prosper or that he does not endure. But quite evidently he has prospered, so the proverb must mean that he has no permanence in his prosperity. This lack of stability may be revealed by a judgment on himself or on the class to which he belongs. The reference to the Saddikim may mean that the individual flourishes like the green leaf or that the community flourishes like the green leaf.

12.3 says "A man is not established in וְשָׂרָף  
But the root of the Saddikim is  
not removed.

What is meant by a man not being established in וְשָׂרָף is

to be discovered from the statement in the second line.

וְיָשׁוּב means "stock" or "family" cf. Is. 11.1,10 and Dan. 11.7. If this is so, the reward of the Saddikim would seem to be the surety of posterity and the retribution on the evil-doer would appear to be that he has no posterity. This may mean that he has no children at all, or it may mean that if he has children they shall be cut off. To say that the evil man has no children is to say too much. To say they are to be cut off, invokes the question, How is this to happen? Does retribution fall here and there on particular evil-doers and/or their children, or, because they are all apostates and enemies of Yahweh does he sweep them away as a class?

In all these proverbs it may quite well be that it is the Saddikim as a community that is mentioned. In so far as they involve the individual, it is the idea of persistence that is stressed, not the doctrine that the individual is rewarded with prosperity. Indeed a close reading of the proverbs would seem to establish the conclusion that the Saddikim are contrasted with those who already believe themselves secure because of their prosperous condition. "Assuredly the evil man does not go unpunished," says 11.21. From this we are led to suspect that his evil, so far, had been prosperous. "He who trusts in his riches withers" (11.28) makes it quite clear that there were some men in enjoyment of temporal pros-

perity outside the ranks of the Saddikim. "A man is not established in W," says 12.3. It probably looked as though he was because of his prosperous condition. These proverbs do not decisively prove a doctrine of individual retribution and reward. They are open to interpretation (X), but for our own part, if we are to come down on the one side or the other, we are more inclined to interpret them under interpretation (Y).

Group B contains proverbs which while open to interpretation (X) seem better understood when interpreted by (Y). It will be noticed that they belong to different collections.

COLLECTION 16 - 20.

- 16.4 Every work <sup>(1)</sup> of Yahweh for its own end,  
And even the Rasha for the day of disaster.

COLLECTION 21 - 22.16.

- 21.7 The violence of the Reshaim sweeps them away  
Because they refuse to do justice.

COLLECTION 23.15 - 24.22.

- 24.19 Do not heat thyself because of evil-doers,  
Envy not the Reshaim,  
20 For there is no future for the evil man  
The lamp of the Reshaim goes out.

COLLECTION 10 - 15.

- 10.25 When the tempest passes the Rasha is no more,  
But the Saddik is an everlasting foundation.  
10.30 The Saddik for ever shall not be shaken,  
But the Reshaim shall not dwell in the land.  
11.6 The W of the Straight delivers them,  
But the disloyal are taken in their own desire.  
11.4 Wealth is of no avail in the day of wrath  
But W delivers from death.

12.7 The Reshaim are completely overthrown  
and they are no more,  
But the house of the Saddikim stands.

14.11 The house of the Reshaim is destroyed,  
But the tent of the Straight<sup>(1)</sup> stands.

COLLECTION 1 - 9.

2.21 For the straight dwell in the land,  
And the perfect remain in it.  
22 But the Reshaim are cut off from the land,  
And the apostates rooted out of it.

We must seek to arrive at a satisfying understanding of these assertions.

16.4 is a significant proverb. It may be that the phrase  $\text{דַּי} \text{ הַיּוֹם}$  used in it refers merely to the day when the individual Rasha meets with his fate. If so, this is the only example of its use in that sense. In Amos 5. 18-20 and Isaiah 2.12 it is used of the judgment falling on the enemies of Yahweh as a class. It was a day of national consequence and involved much more than retribution on the individual wrongdoer. Also, 16.4, if it is rightly placed, belongs to what we regard as the very earliest collection in the Book of Proverbs. If it has not strayed into this collection but is actually a pre-exilic proverb, it is not possible it is asserting a doctrine of individual retribution.

21.7 makes an assertion regarding the manner in which retribution falls on the Reshaim. They are swept away. This may only refer to one form which the judgment

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(1) Reading,  $\text{יְרֵכָה} \text{ לְכָל}$ .

takes and it may fall on particular individuals, but we have included it among our suggestive proverbs because it does suggest a sweeping judgment on the whole class.

24.19 states, and as far as the first two lines are concerned, in practically identical phraseology, what has already been stated in Psalm 37.1f. Let us put proverb and psalm together.

Pr. 24.19 Do not heat thyself because of evil-doers  
 Envy not the Reshaim.

20 For there is no future for the evil man  
 The lamp of the Reshaim goes out.

Ps. 37.1 Heat not thyself because of evil-doers,  
 Do not envy the workers of iniquity,

2 For like grass they speedily wither  
 And like the fresh grass they fade.

If it is a retribution falling on the Reshaim as a whole that is intended in the Psalm, it would seem to be almost a certainty that it is the same kind of retribution that is looked for in the proverb.

In 10.25 we have to decide the question whether the tempest (  $\text{7210}$  ) falls on the individual or on the enemies of Yahweh as a class. In the references to it in other literature it operates in the latter manner (cf. Hos. 8.7; Ps. 83.16; Is. 29.6). Moreover, the comparison of the Saddik, who escapes the tempest, to an everlasting foundation can hardly refer to the single individual. It would appear best to be understood as referring to himself and his posterity or to him as a member of his class.

The class to which he belongs survives the tempest and he finds his own everlasting stability in the thought of its persistence. Thus the proverb would seem to be asserting not simply that the individual escapes from disaster but that he has a permanence which continues in his posterity or his class. This gives a cogent meaning to the phrase, "The Saddik is an everlasting foundation."

10.30 and 2.21,22 can be considered together. They make the same kind of assertion. The first line of 10.30 is difficult to understand. It may be asserting (1) that the individual Saddik shall never be shaken or (2) that his posterity shall continue for ever, or (3), taking him as a representative of his class, that his class of men shall never be shaken. Interpretation (1) may mean that the individual Saddik has his ups-and-downs in life but he is always under Yahweh's care. In this case he is in the same position as the Saddik in Psalm 37 vs. 23-25. But there the Saddik looked for his reward as a member of the faithful Community of Yahweh and not in unbroken prosperity isolated from his class. If this is so then interpretation (2) or (3) may also be involved in the assertion. The Saddik himself does not continue in unbroken prosperity but, as a member or a representative of a class of men of whom Yahweh approves, he has a lasting foundation in the land. The Reshaim, contrarywise, have none.

2.21,22 would seem also to have this significance.

It says that the straight or perfect dwell in the land while the Reshaim and apostates are cut off. The question simply is, In what sense are we to hold that this is true? Let us put this proverb alongside a passage from Ps. 37.

- 2.21 For the Straight dwell in the land,  
 And the perfect remain in it.  
 22 But the Reshaim are cut off from the land  
 And the apostates rooted out of it.

- Ps. 37.9 For evil doers are cut off  
 And they who wait on Yahweh inherit the land  
 10 For yet a little while and the Rasha is gone  
 You diligently search his place and he is  
 no more.  
 11 But the humble possess the land  
 And take delight in abundance of peace.

Can there be any reasonable doubt ~~but~~ that these two statements are asserting the same thing? If, then, it is a class judgment which is referred to in the psalm where the classes of Saddikim and Reshaim are rewarded and retributed as wholes, it would seem to be the same kind of reward and retribution that is asserted in the proverb. The individual straight one dwells securely because he belongs to a class which dwells securely; the Rasha is cut off because he is a member of a class which meets this fate.

11.6 has been included in this second group of proverbs not for what it in itself says but because it appears in close proximity to 11.4 and presumably belongs to the same environment of thought. Let us take the two proverbs together.



11.6 The  $\text{נְפִלְיָם}$  of the straight delivers them  
But the disloyal are taken in their own desire.

11.4 Wealth is of no avail in the day of wrath  
But  $\text{נְפִלְיָם}$  delivers from death.

It would appear from the juxtaposition of these two proverbs that the  $\text{נְפִלְיָם}$  of the Straight delivers them in the day of wrath. This may be, as Oesterley suggests, <sup>(1)</sup> a day of calamity (Job 21,30), but the calamity comes on the Reshaim as a class (Job 21.17,18). <sup>(2)</sup> On the other hand, it may be a day of national consequence such as is referred to in Zeph. 1.15-18. Whether we take it in a narrow or broad sense, it would appear to involve a destruction which falls not on some isolated evil-doer but on the whole class of evil-doers.

12.7 and 14.11 may be taken together. In the first place we would do well to admit that the language used in them is figurative. One would hardly care to hold that it is being asserted in them that the house of the individual Rasha shall be destroyed or that the actual dwelling place of the Saddik shall stand. What, then, is meant by "the house of the Reshaim" and "the house of the Saddikim"? Do they not just mean "the community of the Reshaim" and "the community of the Saddikim"? The use of the word "house" in this sense is quite familiar in "the house of Jacob" and "the house of Israel". Just

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(1) Op. cit. p. 82.

(2) The correspondence between these verses and Ps.1.4 is obvious.

as it is used of Yahweh's people, so is it used of his enemies, cf. Is. 31.2 "He will rise against the house of evil-doers." In 14.11 "tent" is a parallel to "house," and it has the same communal significance, cf. Ps. 69.25; 84.10; Zech. 12.7. If this is so, then it would appear that in the proverbs the one community is posited against the other community, and the proverbs make assertions regarding their respective fates. The one is destroyed; the other stands. The proverbs, therefore, while capable of an individualistic interpretation, would seem best to be interpreted as referring to the fates of the communities as wholes.

From our consideration, therefore, of these proverbs in Group B we are inclined to the view that the better interpretation of them is offered by interpretation (Y). We believe, that while interpretation (X) is possible, the latter is more faithful to their content. They do seem to point to a reward and retribution which come to the Saddikim and Reshaim as wholes and not to a number of rewards and retributions falling to individuals one by one.

SOME DIFFICULT PROVERBS TREATING OF FATE  
OF SADDIKIM AND RESHAIM.

We now come to our third group of proverbs C, i.e. proverbs whose meaning is specially involved. They are all in collection 10 - 15 with the exception of 21.18, and are as follows.

For convenience in dealing with them we shall take them in the following order.

- 11.8 The Saddik from distress rescued,  
And the Rasha has taken his place.
- 21.18 A ransom for the Saddik is the Rasha,  
And instead of the straight the disloyal.
- 10.24 The fear of the Rasha comes upon himself,  
But the desire of the Saddikim is granted.
- 13.22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his  
children's children,  
But the wealth of the sinner is laid up  
for the Saddik.
- 14.19 Evil men bow before good men,  
And the Reshaim at the gates of the Saddik.

We may take 11.8 and 21.18 together. They both state that in some way the Rasha is to be substituted for the Saddik. How and when does this substitution take place? Is it possible to say?

That the individual Rasha is to be substituted for the individual Saddik hardly seems to be the intention of the proverbs. In 21.18 "straight" is given in the plural instead of in the singular. So the proverbs do not clearly imply a doctrine of exact individual substitution.

When we turn to Psalm 37 and consider two statements there, the difficulty in the interpretation of the proverbs lightens.

Ps. 37. 12-15.

The Rasha plots against the Saddik,  
 And gnashes at him with his teeth.  
 Adonai laughs at him,  
 For he sees that his day is coming.  
 The Reshaim have drawn the sword  
 To slay the Straight-of-way.  
 Their sword enters their own heart,  
 And their bows are broken in pieces.

Here the tables are to be turned on the Saddikim and Reshaim as two opposing classes. In this day of vindication the Rasha occupies the present position of the Saddik. He who causes distress is involved in distress. He encounters the wrath of Yahweh from which the loyal go free. Here we have a doctrine of the substitution of the Rasha for the Saddik but it is that of a class substitution. This is made clear in the verses 32-34, where the Saddik is rescued from distress and the Rasha has taken his place but it is not the individual Rasha who is substituted for the individual Saddik, which under any ordinary conditions of living would be an almost impossible proceeding, but the whole class of apostates and evil-doers for the loyal worshippers of Yahweh, viz.

Ps. 37. 32-34.

The Rasha keeps watch on the Saddik,  
 And seeks to put him to death.  
 Yahweh does not forsake him in his hand,  
 And does not allow his condemnation when judged.  
 Wait on Yahweh and keep his way,  
 And he exalts you to possess the land,  
 And when the Reshaim are cut off you see it.

These quotations from Ps. 37 may not be relevant. Each must use his own judgment in regard to that. But in default of any other clear interpretation of the proverbs they offer at least a rational understanding of them. The proverbs must have meant something, and something quite pointed and definite to the men who composed and read them. We suggest that this interpretation does give them point and meaning.

The same quotations from the psalm offer an explanation of 10.24. We would also quote the opening and closing verses of Psalm 140.

- 2 Deliver me, Yahweh, from the evil man,  
 From the man of violent deeds preserve me  
 .....
- 5 Keep me, Yahweh, from the hands of the Rasha  
 .....
- 13 I know that Yahweh executes judgment for the  
 afflicted, justice for the poor.
- 14 Surely the Saddikim give thanks to thy name,  
 The Straight dwell in thy presence.

In the light of these similar sayings, it is difficult not to believe that what the proverb means is that the fear which the Rasha inspires in the hearts of the Saddikim shall come upon himself. In this collection (10-15) there is evidence of a strong class conflict between Saddikim and Reshaim, cf. 11.10; 11.11. The Psalmists who are involved in a similar class conflict, assert that the day is coming when terror shall visit the Reshaim and the longing of the Saddikim for deliver-

ance, and possibly also for vengeance, shall be granted. This offers a quite intelligible explanation of the proverb, "The fear of the Rasha comes upon himself, but the desire of the Saddikim is granted." The "but" of the proverb may be read as "and," in which case this conclusion is strengthened.

We are not denying, of course, that it is possible to interpret this proverb in an individualistic sense. We are simply suggesting that here is another interpretation which has as much point and which is in agreement with the doctrine of the Psalmists. It is difficult to believe that the Sages and Psalmists who had the same social background could interpret the same situation in different ways.

14.19 needs some circumspection in its translation. The first line may be stated as we have given it, or it may be rendered,

The miserable bow before the prosperous.

In this case the Sages are merely stating a fact. What is meant by the corollary of this fact

And the Reshaim at the gates of the Saddik?

The term שַׁעַר is significant. Nowhere in the Old Testament does it refer to the gates of a private dwelling house. If it does do so in this instance, what is meant by saying that the Reshaim "bow in homage" before them, for that seems to be the meaning of the verb as used here?

Are the Sages really asserting that the Reshaim, either as individuals or as a class, actually bow (or will bow) in homage before the gates of a prosperous Saddik? If so, here we have a concrete illustration of the doctrine of individual retribution and reward.

There are some who will prefer this interpretation but we must not let it stand as the only interpretation. In Isaiah 60 it is said of the Saddikim (v. 21), "And there shall come unto thee, bowing down, the sons of those that afflicted thee, (and all they who despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet), and they shall call thee the city of Yahweh, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel." (v. 14) Through the gates of the restored and vindicated community shall be brought all the wealth of the Gentiles (v. 11) and their service shall be placed at Israel's disposal (v. 12).

Taking Saddik, therefore, in a generic sense as the reference to "gates" suggests <sup>the</sup> proverb can mean that as the miserable bow before the prosperous, so the Reshaim will bow before the vindicated and triumphant community of the Saddikim. It is not too much to say that this hope of prophets and psalmists found expression in the teachings of the Sages.

We come to the last proverb of this group. For convenience we state it again.

13.22 A good man leaves an inheritance to  
his children's children.  
But the wealth of the sinner is laid  
up for the Saddik.

Again we have a proverb which seems to state an exact doctrine of retribution and reward. We cannot altogether foreclose such a possible explanation. It may be that what the proverb is asserting is that ill-gotten wealth is never retained but sooner or later finds its way into the hands of the man of integrity and honour. The good man can keep his money and hand it on to his children but the bad man dissipates it and loses it to the Saddik.

The weakness of this interpretation is, however, that it breaks down the parallelism of the proverb. The good man leaves an inheritance which his children inherit. The sinner also presumably leaves an inheritance but the Saddik inherits it. On this suggested interpretation, however, the sinner has no inheritance to leave. It may be that he does leave it and his children dissipate it and so it finds its way into the hands of the Saddik. But this surely is going a long way round to find a meaning for the proverb. A proverb is a pithy saying.

We must look at two things (a) the statement in the first line (b) the statement in the second line. The first line means not merely that the good man has an inheritance to leave but it means something more, he has a posterity to whom to leave it. He leaves it to his children's children. If this is the meaning of the first line the meaning of the second line follows. The sinner also



has an inheritance but he has no one to whom to leave it. He has no posterity. The second line of the proverb, therefore, is saying two things. It is saying that the sinner has no future and it is also saying that his wealth is kept safe for the Saddik, for  $\text{ך'קף}$  means to keep safe or to hide away or to treasure up. What then is meant by saying that the sinner has no posterity and that his wealth is treasured up for the Saddik?

It may mean, as we have suggested, that this transference comes about by natural processes; but it may also come about by the destruction of the sinner and his class. When the Reshaim are destroyed the Saddikim shall enjoy their gains. We admit that this interpretation is in advance of anything we find in Proverbs but it is not altogether without foundation in other relevant literature. The reference to the Saddikim enjoying the wealth of their opponents we have already noticed in Isaiah 60, and the thought that the Saddikim would enjoy the wealth of their antagonists is only a logical extension of the day of vindication. When the Reshaim as a class were destroyed, the Saddikim as a class would persist and the wealth of the sinner may therefore be regarded as being laid up for them, a thought more consolatory for the faithful Saddikim and one which would go a long way to sustaining them in their conflict with conditions as they were. It seems to us in this as in other proverbs, the

more meaning we can put into them which makes them relevant to the conditions in which the Saddikim actually found themselves, the nearer we shall arrive at their proper understanding.

There remains a fourth group of proverbs D which it is possible to interpret by either of the interpretations we have stated.

- 10.28 The hope of the Saddikim - rejoicing,  
But the expectation of the Reshaim perishes.
- 11.23 The longing of the Saddikim surely issues  
in good.  
But the expectation of the Reshaim - wrath.
- 13.9 The light of the Saddikim rejoices (for  
ever),  
But the lamp of the Reshaim is extinguished.
- 13.21 Misfortune pursues sinners  
But the Saddikim shall be requitted with good.

The absence of content in these proverbs makes any decision as to their doctrine most difficult. Our own preference in their interpretation is for interpretation (Y). We prefer it for the following reasons.

(i) It is a straightforward interpretation. It makes the proverbs mean simply what they say.

(ii) They seem to be allied to certain prophecies which favour (Y) e.g. 10.28 and 11.23 = Is. 65. 13.14;  
13.9 = Is. 60. 19,20.

Of all the proverbs we have considered interpretation (Y) seems the more satisfactory interpretation of B and C. The proverbs in group A provide the most serious difficulty in the way of this interpretation but, in the

light of the discussion we have given to them, the difficulty does not seem to be insurmountable. We cannot state categorically that the assertions made in them regarding the reward of the Saddikim refer to them as a class, but such statements as "The seed of the Saddikim" and "the root of the Saddikim" do seem to have a communal rather than an individualistic significance. Group D is open to interpretation (X) or (Y).

If (Y), then, be provisionally taken to cover all the proverbs we have been considering we would arrange them in the following scheme to show how they would illustrate or support this doctrine of reward and retribution.

COLLECTION 16-20.

Proverbs asserting destruction of Reshaim as a class.

- 16.4 Every work of Yahweh for its own end,  
And even the Rasha for the day of disaster.

COLLECTION 21-22.16.

- 21.7 The violence of the Reshaim sweeps them away,  
Because they refuse to do justice.

COLLECTION 23.15 - 24.22.

- 24.19 Do not heat thyself because of evil doers,  
Envy not the Reshaim,  
20 For there is no future for the evil man,  
The lamp of the Reshaim goes out.

Proverbs asserting the escape of the Saddikim from punishment or destruction.

COLLECTION 10 - 15.

- 10.25 When the tempest passes the Rasha is no more,  
But the Saddik is an everlasting foundation.

- 11.6 The <sup>רָשָׁע</sup> of the straight delivers them,  
But the disloyal are taken in their own  
desire. (Seell. 4.)
- 11.21 Assuredly the evil man does not go unpunished,  
But the seed of the Saddikim escape.

Proverbs contrasting the impermanence of the  
Reshaim with permanence of the Saddikim.

- 10.30 The Saddik for ever shall not be shaken,  
But the Reshaim shall not dwell in the land.
- 11.28 He who trusts in his riches falls,  
But like the green leaf the Saddikim flourish.
- 12.3 A man is not established in <sup>שֹׁמֵר</sup>  
But the root of the Saddikim is not removed.
- 12.7 The Reshaim are completely overthrown and  
they are no more.  
But the house of the Saddikim stands.
- 13.9 The light of the Saddikim shall rejoice  
(for ever)  
But the lamp of the Reshaim shall be  
extinguished.
- 14.11 The house of the Reshaim is destroyed,  
But the tent of the straight stands.

COLLECTION 1 - 9.

- 2.21 For the straight dwell in the land,  
And the perfect remain in it,  
22 But the Reshaim are cut off from the land,  
And the apostates rooted out of it.

This interpretation which asserts the vindication of the whole class of Saddikim and retribution on the whole class of Reshaim is valid over the whole book of Proverbs. It agrees with the teaching of the pre-exilic and post-exilic prophets. It also asserts the same kind of judgment as is postulated in post-exilic literature e.g. Gen. 18. 23.33, and the Book of Jonah. <sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) In neither of these places does the writer assert a  
(Over

Continued from overleaf

retribution which falls on sinners one by one. In Gen. Yahweh threatens to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah by a sweeping judgment. In Jonah the same kind of judgment threatens Nineveh. If the post-exilic writers thought of Yahweh operating in this manner did they really believe that he retributed sinners day by day according to their works?

The text is extremely faint and illegible, appearing to be a continuation of the discussion on retribution and divine judgment.

THE INTERPRETATION OF PROVERBS REFERRING TO  
THE FATE OF THE SADDIKIM AND RESHAIM.

We have now to bring the proverbs referring to the fate of the Saddikim and Reshaim under one explanatory doctrine. As will have been noticed, the great majority of them occur in collection 10-15. It is hardly possible that two doctrines of reward and retribution run through these seven chapters, nor is it necessary to postulate two if one will do. An either/or explanation seems to be called for. If the Sages believed that the individual Rasha invariably met with discomfiture and the Saddik was blessed with good fortune, then there was no need for them to postulate judgment on the Reshaim as a whole or a vindication of the whole class of the Saddikim. Conversely, if they held to such a judgment, it was because they did not see an individual judgment in indubitable operation. Now, the orthodox interpretation of the Sages' teaching is that they believed an indubitable individual judgment was in operation. (X) was absolute. Therefore, and the conclusion is quite logical, suffering was a punishment for sin. So, it is supposed, the problem was created which is debated in the Book of Job. (X) was not even held as a general principle, which allowed of exceptions. A general principle which allowed of exceptions would not allow one to draw the conclusion that if a man

was a sufferer he was also a sinner. Job might simply have been an exception to the rule! But if (X) was absolute (Y) was not needed. Conversely, if they held to (Y) it was because (X) was not absolute. We seem driven to decide between these two doctrines as far as 10-15 is concerned and what we find as the explanatory doctrine of 10-15 might well be the explanatory doctrine of the book as a whole. Or, conversely, and this offers us an easier approach to the solution of our problem, the doctrine found in collections outside 10-15 is most likely to afford the explanation of the doctrine found in this central portion. It is highly improbable that if (Y) is the doctrine found in collections of an earlier and later date than 10-15, that (X) is the doctrine of 10-15.

There are only four proverbs occurring outside 10-15, one (16.4) occurring in collection 16-20 which we adjudge to be earlier, two (21.7 and 24.19,20) in collections which we cannot date, and one (2.21,22) in 1-9 which is clearly post-exilic. These proverbs seem to us to favour interpretation (Y). For the sake of clarity we state them again.

16.4 Every work of Yahweh for its own end,  
And even the Rasha for the day of disaster.

21.7 The violence of the Reshaim sweeps them away,  
Because they refuse to do justice.

24.19 Do not heat thyself because of evil-doers,  
Envy not the Reshaim.

20 For there is no future for the evil man,  
The lamp of the Reshaim goes out.

- 2.21 For the straight dwell in the land,  
 And the perfect remain in it.  
 22 But the Reshaim are cut off from the land,  
 And the apostates rooted out of it.

Therefore, the whole case for (X) would seem to rest on our interpretation of the proverbs occurring in 10-15. Is it likely to be (X) with proverbs before and after supporting (Y)? Again, if certain proverbs in 10-15 itself (e.g. 11.6; 12.7; 13.22; 14.11 and 14.19) clearly favour (Y), it is hardly possible, for the reasons we have adduced, that (X) is the interpretation of the remainder. If we had to decide the matter here and now we would say that the Book of Proverbs does not contain the doctrine attributed to it by scholars that each individual has a purely individual reward or retribution and, as a consequence, suffering is a punishment for sin so that all accounts are squared before a man's death. We would give as our finding that the doctrine it contains is one which relates the divine reward or retribution to a day of Yahweh when he vindicates all his faithful people in the destruction of their enemies. But before putting forward such a revolutionary view we would like to deal with some considerations which have moved scholars to adopt the view we are rejecting.

The considerations in favour of (X) seem to be as follows.

a. It offers the best interpretation of the proverbs themselves.



b. It agrees with the fact that the Sages had no belief in a reward or retribution in a future life. A man must be rewarded in this life or not at all. All classes were equal in Sheol.

c. It is the inevitable outcome of the teachings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

d. It provides the problem debated in the Book of Job.

To these may be added other two considerations.

e. The Sages were a special class of teachers distinct from the prophets. They taught a eudaemonistic morality, whose natural outcome was that he who followed after wisdom would be blessed, whilst he who rejected their teachings would meet with misfortune.

f. They were influenced by other literatures, especially by the literature of Egypt, and drew some of their moral admonitions from these sources. Therefore, in their teachings on retribution and reward, they do not embody classical Hebrew doctrine.

We have the following comments and criticisms to make regarding these considerations which appear to support interpretation (X).

a. (i) Proof texts to support this interpretation cannot be drawn indiscriminately from all the collections in the book. It is difficult to believe that (X) covers the statements made in the book as a whole. Proverbs is

not a homogeneous work. It contains collections ranging from the pre-exilic period till well on into the post-exilic period. Are we to believe that in all these collections one single doctrine of individual reward and retribution is asserted? If the assertions regarding reward and retribution refer to one single doctrine, it must be one that held good in the pre-exilic as well as in the post-exilic period. The only refuge for scholars who would relate them all to interpretation (X) is to place the whole Book of Proverbs in the post-exilic times.

(ii) Proof texts given by scholars in support of (X) sometimes do not distinguish between rewards and retributions for which a man himself is responsible and those which come to him through the action of Yahweh.<sup>(1)</sup> It is true that the Sages held, as sensible men have always held, that there is correspondence between a man's merits and his deserts.

21.17 The man who comes to want is the lover  
of pleasure  
The lover of wine and strong drink does  
not become rich.

This is a statement from experience. It is not to be confused with statements which assert the judgment of Yahweh. Yet statements of this kind are sometimes introduced to support the latter doctrine.<sup>(2)</sup> We must be most careful

(1) Oesterley draws this very proper distinction. Op. cit. p. lxii.

(2) Cf. Bertholet, *Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments* p. 98f.

between  
to distinguish these rewards or retributions mediated  
through a man's own actions and those which come unmediated from Yahweh. We ~~have already~~ dealt with the former in our chapters on wealth and poverty.

b. That the Sages confined their doctrine of reward and retribution to this life is indubitable, but it is not necessary to believe that because the individual confined his expectations to this life that his reward must manifest itself in his own temporal prosperity. Was the individual Israelite so isolated from his class or so bereft of any expectations of posterity that unless he was personally rewarded he could not believe in the righteousness of Yahweh? The loyal Israelite was above all things class-conscious, (the "I" problem of the Psalms is only to be resolved along those lines) and he found the utmost satisfaction in the thought of a posterity. The significance of these features of his character is that his fortunes were sunk in very large measure in the fortunes of his class. He was not a crass individualist. The very thought that Yahweh would vindicate his class or bless his children afforded him the utmost consolation. Was not the longing for children an expression of his desire that he himself would share in them in the vindication of his class and the covenanted blessings which Yahweh would bestow on the house of Israel? To sever the individual from these hopes by paying him his wages

as it were before he died is to make him too much of an individual. The very fact that he lived as a Saddik and died as a Saddik meant that the problem of individual retribution and reward had no sharp edges for him. He shared in the promises made to his class and if they were not realised by himself they would be realised by his posterity.

c. The inevitable outcome of the teachings of Jeremiah and Ezekiel is stated by Charles as follows: "Hence there is a strictly individual retribution; judgment is daily executed by God, and finds concrete expression in man's outward lot. Thus the inward lot of the individual harmonises perfectly with his outward character."<sup>(1)</sup>

We would offer the following criticism of this deduction.

The explanation of Jer. xxxi, 27-30, does not seem to be a new doctrine of strictly individual retribution but rather that the people shall not be punished for the sins of their ancestors. This seems also to be the explanation of Ezekiel's doctrine enunciated in Chapter 18.<sup>(2)</sup>

Apart altogether from the question as to whether Jeremiah and Ezekiel separated one individual from another or one generation from another, it is of the highest importance to notice the manner in which the doom came on

(1) R. H. Charles: "Eschatology," p. 62.

(2) See Prof. Stevenson, "Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel," pp. 45 and 61.

the wicked. Neither Jeremiah nor Ezekiel asserted that each man would meet with his reward or retribution isolated from his fellows. It was a righteous community Yahweh would bless or an unrighteous community he would destroy and this he would do by sweeping judgment (Jer. 3.14, 22; 24.6 ff; Chrs. 30-33; Ez. 6.9; 11.19; 16.60 ff; 20.39 ff; 36.26 ff; 37.1 ff; 39.25 ff).

d. <sup>(1)</sup> The view that Job's friends believed that individual misfortune is invariably a divine punishment of the sufferer's sin is held by Professor Stevenson to be unproved and improbable.

e. This position is maintained by v. Gall.

"Die Weisheitsliteratur, die in der ausgehenden persischen Periode entstand und in der angehenden hellenistischen wohl ihre Blütezeit erlebte, zeigt uns jedenfalls, dass es in der jüdischen Gemeinde und auch in der Diaspora Leute gab, die ganz anders dachten als die nachexilischen "Propheten" und Dichter der Psalmen. Diese Richtung scheint in der Diaspora, und zwar wohl der Ägyptens entstanden zu sein, wo ja die Spruchliteratur seit alters eine grosse Rolle gespielt hatte. Sie ist entstanden in heidnischer Umgebung, der Begriff des "Heidentums" existiert für sie nicht. Ihre ganze Sittlichkeit ist ein hausbackene, rationalistische Moral und ihre Religion der Glaube an den einen Gott, wie ihn das Gesetz lehrt; nur insofern ist ihnen das Gesetz alles, aber ohne die messianische Bezogenheit, die ihm von Haus anhaftet." (2)

We cannot agree with these findings of v. Gall.

The whole Book of Proverbs did not originate in the outgoing Persian period. There may have been in the Jewish community those who thought otherwise than the post-exilic prophets and writers of the Psalms but, as far as our re-

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(1) For this statement I am indebted to Professor Stevenson.

(2) v. Gall, "Basileia Tou Theou," p. 259 f.

searches in Proverbs are concerned, we have discovered affinities rather than differences. The Hebrew Wisdom Literature was influenced by the Egyptian Wisdom Literature and influenced it in turn, but we cannot possibly agree that it originated in pagan surroundings and the meaning of paganism did not exist for it. If there is no Messianic hope in the Book of Proverbs there is in Ben Sira.<sup>(1)</sup> Our own findings regarding Proverbs in this connection we shall leave over till our last chapter.

f. The correspondence between the Egyptian and Jewish Wisdom literature does not extend to their doctrine of reward and retribution. The reason for this is obvious. The Egyptian wisdom writers believed in a future life, the Hebrew Sages were not influenced by this belief.<sup>(2)</sup> If the Hebrew Sages, as we are prepared to assert, were influenced in their doctrine of reward and retribution by the Hebrew prophets they must have moved along other lines than the Sages of Egypt. As v. Gall says, it is in the apocalyptic writings of the Hebrews and not in the prophetic writings that we must look for the best parallels to Egyptian doctrine.<sup>(3)</sup> We are not denying that the Hebrew Sages were indebted to the Egyptian wisdom writings for many of their aphorisms but their acceptance of other people's wisdom did not

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(1) Cf. Oesterley's "Ecclesiasticus," p. lxxiii f.

(2) Cf. Fichtner, "Die Altorientalische Weisheit in ihrer Israelitisch-Jüdischen Ausprägung," p. 72.

(3) Cf. v. Gall, op. cit., p. 81.

break down their own class-consciousness that they were Yahweh's chosen people. This conviction we shall endeavour to show moulded their conceptions of reward and retribution. It is interesting to notice in this connection that Prov. 22.17-23.14, which is commonly recognised to be based on Amen-em-ope, has not a single reference to Saddik or Rasha in it. It is in what the Sages have to say about these two classes of men that we must look for their distinctive doctrine of divine reward and retribution.

THE BENEFIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS TO INDIVIDUALS.

We have now seen good reason to believe that the Hebrew Sages held to a doctrine of divine reward and retribution which involved the loyal people of Yahweh as a whole and brought discomfiture to their enemies, but it would be strange indeed if they had believed that the practice of  $\text{נְפִלְאָה}$  brought no present recompense. We must now try to determine the Sages' beliefs regarding the benefit of  $\text{נְפִלְאָה}$  to the individual.

Before dealing with the statements in Proverbs itself as to the reward of  $\text{נְפִלְאָה}$ , it is advisable to see what is said of it in other places. An illuminating passage in this connection is Ps. 106, 3-5.

Happy are they who keep judgment,  
He who does  $\text{נְפִלְאָה}$  at all times.

Then there follows the significant statement. (1)

Remember me, Yahweh, in the favour to thy people,  
Visit me with thy salvation,  
That I may see the prosperity of thy chosen,  
To rejoice in the joy of thy nation,  
To glory with thine inheritance.

Here the man who practises  $\text{נְפִלְאָה}$ , or who identifies himself with the original psalmist, looks forward to participation in the favour Yahweh is about to show to Israel. He craves a personal boon but it is one which

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(1) Probably a gloss, but its content is significant none the less.



has its fulfilment in the prosperity of his people. To share in their prosperity is his rich reward. In Psalm 15, moreover, the whole of which should be read in this connection, the man who walks perfectly and does **פִּיֶּי** and speaks faithfulness in his heart is not rewarded with temporal prosperity but finds his recompense in continuing in Yahweh's tent and dwelling in his temple. That is, he enjoys the consciousness of Yahweh's favour and is identified completely with his cause. In both these Psalms, **פִּיֶּי** has not a non-moral issue, such as temporal prosperity, but a religious issue. It is true that behind the consciousness of Yahweh's approval there is the expectation of blessing but it is not a crude, materialistic blessing to the individual but it is something higher. It is the outcome of the vindication of Yahweh himself manifested in the blessings he will pour upon his faithful people.

We turn now to the teachings of the prophets. In Isaiah 56.1 the command of Yahweh comes, "Keep judgment and do **פִּיֶּי**, For my salvation is near at hand, and my **פִּיֶּי** soon to be manifested." Here **פִּיֶּי** is the practice

of such requirements of instruction as keeps the individual in the community of the faithful against the day of Yahweh's intervention when, as Box <sup>(1)</sup> says, "the Law and legal observances will be honoured and godlessness extirpated from the community." A careful reading of the prophecy makes that quite clear. The intervention is not on behalf of any single individual to confer on him a reward for goodness, but for the sake of all who are faithful. The reward of the individual <sup>to</sup> in his status in the new community which Yahweh will bring into being (cf. 56.5ff).

In this passage, also, the assertion of **יְשׁוּעָה** on the part of Yahweh is noteworthy. It is tantamount to "salvation", not only here but in other passages (cf. Is. 45. 8.17; 46.14; 51.5; Ps. 24.5; 71.15; 132. 9,16). Yahweh does not meet the **יְשׁוּעָה** of the individual with temporal prosperity but the "salvation". Neither is this salvation a salvation from sickness and disease but salvation from the effects of his wrath and the doom that falls on the wicked.

The reward of **יְשׁוּעָה** in the Book of Deuteronomy also should be noted. In this connection, chapters 4, 6 and 28 especially should be read. It is sufficient indication

(1) The Book of Isaiah p.286.

of their teaching to quote one small passage, namely,  
4,40.

"And you shall keep the statutes and the commandments which I command you this day that it may be well with you and with your children after you in order that you may prolong your days on the land which Yahweh your God gives to you everlastingly."

This keeping of the statutes and commandments is *שְׁמֵרָה* (cf. 6.25) but the reward is not to the individual but to the people as a whole. The man who kept *שְׁמֵרָה* had his own status in the community and lived according to that status. In so far as the whole community was blessed, he enjoyed the blessing; in so far as they were cursed, he bore the burden of their common misfortune. This is quite evident from any diligent study of the chapters mentioned.

The promise, also, of "length of days" is not made to the individual but to the community. It does not mean that each individual in it will have his days artificially lengthened but that the whole community will prolong its existence in peace. The phrase "length of days" means security through the vicissitudes of life. (cf. Deut.

25.15; 30.20; 1 Kings 3.14; Ps. 21.4).

The punishment of the individual who committed a breach of **הַפְּתָי** was death at the hands of his fellows. This we shall notice more particularly when we come to deal with proverbs referring to life and death. In the meantime the community persisted, struggling to realise **הַפְּתָי** and the blessings it would bring them, and becoming more and more conscious that they would only obtain to them when Yahweh intervened on their behalf and fulfilled to them his promises.

We may now turn to the sayings concerning **צַדִּיקָה** in the Book of Proverbs, and see what is said regarding its outcome there. Contrasted with the retribution following on **שֹׁרֵץ** its rewards may be classified as follows:

A real or fictitious recompense.

- 11.18 The Rasha works a deceitful recompense,  
But the sower of **צַדִּיקָה** has the true wages.

Direction or downfall.

- 11.5 The **צַדִּיקָה** of the Perfect directs his way,  
But in his **שֹׁרֵץ** the Rasha falls.

Deliverance or downfall.

- 11.6 The **צַדִּיקָה** of the Straight delivers them,  
But the disloyal are taken in their own desire.

Security or downfall.

- 13.6  $\text{הַיָּשָׁר}$  guards the perfect-of-way,  
But  $\text{הַפְּשָׁעִים}$  overthrows the sinner.

Permanence or impermanence.

- 12.3 A man is not established by  $\text{שֹׁשָׁן}$ ,  
But the root of the Saddikim is not removed.

Life or death.

- 11.19 The path<sup>(1)</sup> of  $\text{הַיָּשָׁר}$  leads to life,  
But he who pursues evil does so to death.<sup>(2)</sup>
- 12.28 In the path of  $\text{הַיָּשָׁר}$  is life,  
But the way of  $\text{הַפְּשָׁעִים}$  leads to death.

Deliverance or death.

- 10.2 Treasures of  $\text{שֹׁשָׁן}$  do not profit,  
But  $\text{הַיָּשָׁר}$  delivers from death.
- 11.4 Wealth is of no avail in the day of wrath,  
But  $\text{הַיָּשָׁר}$  delivers from death.

Some of these proverbs stand out with special significance, especially 11.6 and 11.4 which we have already dealt with on page 122 as illustrating a doctrine of class retribution. 12.3 suggests that the man who practices  $\text{הַיָּשָׁר}$  finds his reward in the stability of the community to which he belongs and not in any personal or

(1) Reading  $\text{אֲרֵץ}$  cf. 12.28.

(2) Versions  $\text{חַיִּים}$  for  $\text{יָמִים}$ .

or isolated prosperity. In none of the proverbs is such personal prosperity mentioned and indeed it is suggested in two of them that those who practice  $\text{שׁוֹמְרֵי}$  are not unpossessed of this world's goods (10.2; 11.4).  $\text{נְפֻטָּה}$  gives direction (11.5), or security (13.6) or the true recompense (11.18), whatever that may mean. It leads to life (11.19; 12.28). It delivers from death (10.2; 11.4). These suggestions are all pointers, but they do not point directly to individual temporal prosperity.

Some of the proverbs at least point in the direction already indicated by Psalmists, Prophets and Lawgivers. 11.4, 11.6 indicate <sup>a</sup>communal judgment and a vindication of the faithful. For the elucidation of these proverbs we do not need to postulate a different background of thought from what we have already met with in the Psalmists and the previously considered teaching of the Sages. The statements in 11.5 and 13.6 may be simple statements regarding the sustaining power of goodness but there is also a probability that they too refer to a day of retributive justice. The statements referring to "life" and "death", however, demand more elucidation and lead us, in the following pages, into a long discussion.

THE PROMISE OF LIFE.

What do the Sages mean by "life"? Apart from physical existence, what other meanings has it?

In one proverb "life" clearly means "sustenance". In 27.27 it is stated that the husbandman who is diligent in attending to his flocks will have sufficiency of goat's milk for his food and "life" for his maidens. "Life" here can only mean the means of supporting physical existence.

From this we proceed to notice in 16.15 an even more intensive use of the word.

In the light of the king's countenance is **חַיִּים**  
And his favour is like a cloud of spring rain.

"Life" here can only mean well-being or prosperity, or the conditions that make for well-being or prosperity. A similar meaning underlies the phrase **יְיָ חַיִּים תְּהִי** (1 Sam. 10.24; 2 Sam. 16,16; 1 Kings 1.25ff.). Here the people do not merely mean "May the king live long" but also "May the king prosper".

A further deepening in the meaning of "life" is found in other proverbs. It comes to mean what we would describe as "well-being" or "happiness", without any

reference to physical duration, as for example in the following.

13.12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick  
But desire fulfilled is a tree of **חַיִּים**.

15.4 A healing tongue is a tree of **חַיִּים**,  
But slander therein is a breaking of the spirit.

16.22 Prudence is a well-spring of **חַיִּים** to its  
possessor,  
But the discipline of fools is folly.

"Life" here quite evidently means something more than physical life. It means the life that makes life worth living, which might best be called "happiness".

We now pass on to consider another use of the term **חַיִּים** of great importance in our discussion. For its clearer understanding we turn aside from the Book of Proverbs to consider its significance where its meaning is seen most clearly, in the Book of Deuteronomy.

In Deut. 30.15ff there occurs the following passage which, because of its importance, we translate in full.

"See, I have set before you this day life and good and death and evil. (If you shall hearken unto the commandments of Yahweh your God)<sup>(1)</sup> which I command you this day, to love Yahweh your God and to walk in his

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(1) This clause needs to be inserted (cf. Driver's "Deuteronomy" I.C.C. p.332.)



ways to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, then you shall live and multiply and Yahweh your God shall bless you in the land you go to possess. But if your heart turn and you do not hear and are drawn away and worship other Gods and serve them, I declare unto you this day that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong your days on the ground whither you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, life and death I have set before you, blessing and curse. Therefore, choose life that you and your seed may live, to love Yahweh your God, to hear his voice and to cleave to him, for that is your life and the length of your days, to dwell on the land which Yahweh swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob to give to them."

The general tenor of a passage such as this we discussed in the last chapter. We only need to emphasise here what the lawgiver meant by saying that he had set before the people "life" and good. "Life" meant the life that sprang out of fidelity to instruction, which was the moral favour of Yahweh with its resultant blessings. Yahweh would be with them (4.7) and things would go well with them (4.40; 5.16; 6.18 etc.). They would become not only a prosperous people but a wise and understanding people (4.6). All this was for the nation as a whole and not for the individual in particular. No matter how far the Deuteronomist went in particularising the blessings which were to follow from fidelity to instruction.

they were all for the nation. (cf. Deut. 28). Each man by his righteousness or evil advanced or retarded the righteousness of the whole people. With the man who committed evil the people themselves must deal that it might be cut off from among them (21.21; 22.21,22,24; 24.7).

That a holy nation was the ideal of the Deuteronomist and that it was only such a nation that Yahweh would bless, that the people had not only the duty of fulfilling Yahweh's requirements but of cutting off those who refused to comply with them, and that in Yahweh the whole nation found its "life", meaning the continuance and blessedness of its existence, so much is clear.

From this it follows that instruction was "life", and this is what is to be understood from the exhortation "Choose life that you and your seed may live." It means "Choose to walk in the paths of instruction that you may enjoy the moral favour of Yahweh with all its blessings."

"Life", therefore, has three intensive meanings. It can mean "sustenance", "well-being or happiness", or "the enjoyment of the moral favour of Yahweh with all its blessings" which is to be found in fidelity to instruction.

We now turn to consider how far their meanings apply in the Book of Proverbs. The Proverbs which offer themselves for consideration in this connection occur in collections 10-15 and 1-9. We shall deal in the meantime with those found in 10-15, leaving those in 1 - 9 for further consideration.

"Well-being" or "happiness" would seem to apply in the case of the following proverbs.

- 10.11 A fountain of **מַיִם** is the mouth of the Soddik,  
But the mouth of the Reshaim pours out <sup>harsh-</sup>ness.
- 10.17 A way of **מַיִם** to the keeper of discipline,  
But he who forsakes reproof errs.
- 11.30 The fruit of **צִדְקָה** is a tree of **חַיִּים**,  
And the taker of souls is wise.

There are other proverbs however, where **חַיִּים** is contrasted with "death".

- 11.19 The path <sup>(2)</sup> of **צַדִּיק** leads to **חַיִּים** (3)  
He who pursues evil does so to death.
- 12.28 In the path of **צַדִּיק** is **חַיִּים**  
But the way of **רָשָׁע** leads to death.
- 13.14 The instruction of the wise is a fountain of **חַיִּים**  
To depart from the snares of death  
(4)
- 15.24 The way of **חַיִּים** is (upwards) to the wise man,  
That he may turn from Sheol (below) (4)

(1) Cf. p.97.  
(3) Cf. p.143.

(2) Cf. p.143.  
(4) Probably a gloss.

Here "life" would seem to be contrasted with physical death. This is quite evident in 15.24 which, apart from two easily recognised additions by a glossator, is of the same tenor as the others, only it states "Sheol" instead of "death". If this is so, it would seem that righteousness or the pursuit of wisdom wrought for the individual a prolongation of his physical existence, while אש led to untimely end for those who practised it.

But if these proverbs are to be taken literally, as simple statements of an individual reward and retribution, they are thoroughly contradicted by certain facts recognised and commented on by the Sages in their teaching.

In the first place, we have their unambiguous references to bribery and corruption in the administration of justice which was in the hands of the judges (זִקְנֵי הָעִיר) who were all old men. The greatest fault of these men was their openness to bribery, a form of corruption which time and again called down the wrath of the prophets (Am. 5.12; Micah 7.3; Zeph. 3.3) and which the Sages themselves condemned in no uncertain manner (18.5; 17.26; 17.23; 17.15; 24.24). We cannot take it for granted that the Sages held their beliefs in direct contradiction to their own experience. It would indeed be strange

if, in spite of all their knowledge of the wickedness of old men against which they kept on thundering, they persisted in holding that the bad die young or do not live out half their days.

Again, there are many references in the Book of Proverbs which can hardly be to the wickedness of young men, where the same consideration occurs to one with irresistible force. There is the case of the farmer or dealer who holds back corn in time of scarcity (11.26). He could hardly have been a young man to have had absolute control over rich stores of grain. There is also the disingenuous buyer, with his "Bad, bad!" (20.14). He may have been young, but it looks much more like the comment of a shrewd old man taking advantage of an inexperienced salesman. There is the rich man who oppresses the poor (28.3) and the bad ruler over a poor people (28.15). They, too, may have been young but the greater probability is that they were old. At any rate, whether these men, or types of men, were young or old does not really matter for the fact is that it is not a law of nature that the bad die young and wicked old men must have been all around the Sages plain for eye to see. It is indeed hard to believe that they repeatedly made

assertions which ran full tilt against their own experience.

If these proverbs, therefore, do not fit in with the experience of the Sages, are they dogma imposed upon experience? If so, what kind of dogma? We have already argued that they held strongly to the conviction of some imminent and final judgment in which the Reshaim would be engulfed and from which the faithful would be saved. The whole collection in which the proverbs regarding "life" and "death" occur is saturated with such statements of conviction. Were they firmly convinced of an imminent catastrophic judgment and at the same time exponents of a doctrine of individual reward and retribution? It is hardly possible to think so. If these statements regarding "life" and "death" can be explained in the light of their conviction of an imminent intervention of Yahweh on behalf of his faithful people, it is hardly necessary to call in any other explanation.

Some of their statements about death, at any rate, fit into nothing else than such a background, notably 11.4 and also most probably 10.2 and 10.27.

11.4 Wealth is of no avail in the day of wrath,  
But <sup>אֱלֹהִים</sup> delivers from death.

- 10.2 Treasures of  $\psi$  do not profit,  
But  $\eta\eta\gamma$  delivers from death.
- 10.27 The fear of Yahweh lengthens days,  
But the years of the Reshaim are  
shortened.

We have already noticed (p.123 ) that the day of wrath is not a day of destruction for the isolated individual, but for all the enemies of Yahweh. If delivers from this death it certainly prolongs the individual's life, but only as a member of the community of the faithful. It does not bring with it immunity from sickness and disease. 10.2 seems to be saying the same thing as 11.4, only in different words. The underlying meaning of 11.4 must apply here also. In 10.27 the prolongation of days that the fear of Yahweh brings is contrasted with the shortening of the days of the Reshaim. The assertion that the fear of Yahweh lengthens days need not necessarily apply to any particular individual but to the whole blessed community of which he forms a part. Neither does it mean that their lives will be artificially lengthened but that they will dwell peacefully and secure. The phrase, as we have seen, connotes "security through the vicissitudes of life."<sup>(1)</sup> "The

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(1) See page 149.

years of the Reshaim are shortened" is not necessarily an assertion that every bad man meets with a premature doom. Read in the light of similar statements regarding the Reshaim, it means that the whole community of Reshaim stood under an imminent doom. The doom does not fall here and there on isolated individuals but comes completely and finally for all. The antithesis in the proverb is not one founded on general experience but on the expectation of the Sages. If founded on experience, it has little force. Embodying their expectations, it is a means of hope and strength and consolation, fit to be embodied in a collection of their proverbs.

If these statements, therefore, regarding death are to be interpreted in the light of the Sages' eschatological expectations, what is the "life" with which it is contrasted? We have already noticed in Deuteronomy that the "life" which flows from instruction is not mere physical existence, but the enjoyment of the moral favour of Yahweh with its concomitant blessings of temporal prosperity and preservation from destruction. These bless-



ings referred to the nation and not to the individual. This is the "life" which **חַיִּים** brings and there is no difficulty in understanding our proverbs if we read it in this intensive sense. The path of **חַיִּים** leads to the enjoyment of Yahweh's favour in the circle of the faithful who are preserved by him from destruction. It is true our proverbs do not make all this explicit, but the Sages could take for granted in their pupils the knowledge of the promises made to their patriarchal fathers. They did not need to define their terms every time they used them. Our task is to discover what they took for granted and the underlying assumption that "life" meant the enjoyment of the moral favour of Yahweh and preservation from destruction in the community of the faithful is the one which does best justice to their proverbs.

This leads us to mention one remaining proverb,  
15.31.

The ear that hears the reproof of **אִזְכָּר**  
Shall abide among the wise.

This proverb may mean that the man who listens to the reproof which promotes well-being shall continue in the

circles of wise men. But the phrase "reproof of life" is used in a more intensive sense than that. It refers to the admonitions of instruction and to all that flows from obedience to them (6.23). In Deuteronomy, as we have seen, the life flowing from instruction was the life which the whole nation enjoyed in the favour of Yahweh. The individual who kept instruction shared in this life of the nation and was heir to the promises made to it. Is it possible that the Sages have so declined from the high doctrines of the nation's faith that fidelity to instruction means no more than that a young man shall pass his days in good company? That would indeed be strange, but, we believe, when we come to investigate their teaching in chapters 1 - 9, we shall find they meant something quite different from that.

THE CLASS CONFLICT IN PROVERBS 1 - 9

Before coming to discuss the meaning of וְיָדֹעַ in chapters 1 - 9, it is necessary to stress, more than we have already done, the class conflict which rages throughout the whole collection. The book belongs, as all scholars have noticed, to a different atmosphere from the rest of Proverbs. Its style is more literary and formal and the unit of thought is more the miniature essay than the pithy proverb. Yet, as regards Saddikim and Reshaim, its teaching corresponds with that of the Psalms and other parts of the Book of Proverbs. One can hardly doubt, for example, that Prov. 2.21 and Ps. 37.9ff. are fundamentally the same. Prov. 2.21 asserts

For the Straight dwell in the land,  
And the Perfect remain in it,  
But the Reshaim are cut off from the land,  
And the Apostates rooted out of it.

The relevant passages in Ps. 37 (vvs. 9, 11, 29) assert

For evil doers are cut off,  
But they who wait on Yahweh inherit the land.

The humble possess the land,  
And take delight in abundance of peace.

The Saddikim possess the land,  
And dwell for ever on it.

It may be the case, and probably is the case, that

Proverbs 2.21,22 is a gloss, but that does not affect the point at issue. It implies that, even after this collection was compiled, these views of class retribution and reward were current and so coloured the views of the glossator that he inserted this passage as an interpretation of the text.

But we need not rest our case for the orthodoxy of the teaching of Proverbs 1 - 9 on the single passage we have quoted. There are other passages no less significant. It is stated in Prov. 3.25,

Be not afraid of sudden terror,  
Or of the devastating storm on the Reshaim,  
For Yahweh is thy ground of hope,  
And he keeps thy foot from the snare.

What is meant by "the devastating storm on the Reshaim"? Is it not that Yahweh shall destroy them as a class? An effective interpretation is afforded us in Psalm 140.  
11.

May he rain hot coals upon them  
Cause them to fall into deep waters,  
That they may rise no more.

It is difficult to believe that the Sages are not thinking in the same terms of thought.

We may take another passage as offering correspondence with expressions used in the main part of the Book of

Proverbs (Chs. 10.1 - 22.16) which we have already interpreted as having a class and not an individual reference.

It is stated in 3.33

The curse of Yahweh is in the house of the Rasha  
But the habitation of the Saddikim is blessed.

As this declaration stands, it may be claimed that the "house of the Rasha" is the dwelling-place of the individual, but this offers no effective parallel to "the habitation of the Saddikim", which is a phrase referring to the whole community. But apart from this point, is it not quite clear when we study the relevant material in the older portion of the book that it is two communities to which reference is made? The statement is closely paralleled by the following proverbs.

12.7 The Reshaim are overthrown and they are not,  
But the house of the Straight stands.

14.11 The house of the Reshaim is overthrown,  
But the tent of the Straight stands.

If we were correct in interpreting these proverbs, along with others of similar tenor, as referring to the community, there cannot be much doubt but that we are correct in this instance also.

Again it will be noticed that in 4. 19.18<sup>(1)</sup> it is

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(1) These verses are better taken reversed.



One can hardly doubt, then, that when it is asserted that the way of the Reshaim is as thick darkness, that reference is being made to a class of men who stood outside the community of the Saddikim and were regarded by them as worthy of devastating judgment.

We are now ready to believe that a strong class conflict runs throughout this first collection, but the facts in support of this contention do not stop at those we have adduced. There is another matter in this connection which calls for investigation. What is meant by the Sages in the copious references to adultery which occur in this collection? In the rest of the book of Proverbs, there are only five possible references to adultery and in two of them the person referred to is hardly a public harlot, viz.,

11.22 A golden ring in a swine's snout,  
A fair woman who turns aside from modesty.

12.4 A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband,  
But she who causes shame is as rottenness in  
his bones.

Prostitutes however are referred to in the following:

22.14 The mouth of a strange women is a deep pit,  
He that is abhorred of Yahweh ~~shall~~ falls  
therein.

23.27 For a whore is a deep ditch,  
And a strange woman is a narrow pit.

29.3 Whoso loves wisdom brings joy to his father,  
But the comrade of harlots consumes his  
substance.

We have thus five possible references to adultery in the rest of the Book of Proverbs, yet whole chapters are devoted to this subject in the first collection. This presents an interesting problem.

It may be, as Oesterley suggests, that in later days this form of vice, largely owing to foreign influences, became more pronounced but, surely, among the loyal sons of instruction, it was not such an all-pervading temptation that the Sages had to inveigh against it by every means at their command. The Sages' pupils were human but one cannot think of them as being tempted in any large numbers by public harlots. The Sages surely did not address their admonitions to such a class of men. Before accepting this explanation, we must see if we cannot find a better.

A line of research is opened up when we notice that "adultery" is a word used to describe the unfaithfulness



of the covenanted people to Yahweh (Jer. 2.2; 3.14; 13.27; 31.22; Hos. 8.9). Fornication, also, is referred to in similar circumstances in Is. 1.21, Jer. 2.20, Ez.16 et passim, Hos.1.2; 3.1. So it is not impossible to believe that the same use of the expression obtains in Proverbs to describe the unfaithfulness of the Israelites to the worship of Yahweh and the requirements of his instruction.

It is Friedlander's contention that the "strange woman" in Prov. 1-9, against whom the Sages' pupils are warned, is a personification of Greek Philosophy.<sup>(1)</sup> She is an allegorical person, just as the figure of wisdom is an allegorical person. If this is the case, the conflict between Saddikim and Reshaim in these chapters has become thoroughly speculative and has resolved itself into a struggle between the supporters of the Jewish religion and the Hellenists.

When we apply this interpretation to the passages which relate to the "strange woman" the results are most illuminating. It is "wisdom" that preserves one from

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(1) "Griechische Philosophie im Alten Testament", p.68 ff.

the "strange woman" "who forsakes the guide of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God" (2.16,17). A strange harlot this surely, who has long since past her youth. Her charms cannot have been so all-enticing that the Sages had to denounce her to their young pupils by every means at their command. "She forgets the covenant of her God." Are the Sages likely to apply such a phrase to a foreign prostitute? Have we seen them so eclectic that they recognised that a covenant made by a foreign woman with her God was worthy of such respect? If it is continence that is referred to in their warnings against her, it brings a strange reward.

For the Straight dwell in the land,  
 And the Perfect remain in it.  
 But the Reshaim are cut off from the land  
 And the Apostates rooted out of it. (2.21,22)

If, however, to go over to the "strange woman" was to apostatise from Yahweh, the meaning of these expressions becomes quite clear. Yahweh was the guide of the nation's youth. It had made a covenant with him to walk in his ways and to keep his instruction. Those who kept that instruction would dwell in the land and be saved from the retribution that would fall on the

Reshaim. In this sense we can understand the saying that the man who clings to "wisdom" and does not go over to the "strange woman", shall not be afraid of sudden terror or of the desolation of the Reshaim when it comes (3.21 ff). The Sages elsewhere, in 29.3 for example, do not say that the adulterer is visited by sudden terror in vengeance for his adultery. They say simply that he consumes his substance, implying, of course, that he is a reprobate and a fool. In Prov. 1-9, however, to go over to the "strange woman" was to be numbered with those who had forsaken "wisdom" in every sense (2.10 ff). One cannot doubt but that downright apostasy is meant.

Against this contention that to go over to the "strange woman" means to apostatise from Yahweh, the two elaborate pictures of the adulteress in 6.20 ff. and 7.1 ff. appear to offer difficulties. They have such an appearance of verisimilitude that it seems almost impossible to believe that the Sages are painting a picture of an allegorical personage. Yet, when we come to study them, we find that they are prefaced by such elaborate introductions that it is most difficult

to believe that they are directed against a prostitute plain and simple. 6.20 runs as follows:

Keep, my son, the commandments of thy father,  
 And forsake not the instruction of thy mother.  
 Bind them about thy heart continually,  
 Hang them around thy neck.  
 When thou walkest it shall lead thee,  
 When thou sleepest, it shall guard thee,  
 When thou wakest, it shall talk with thee.  
 For commandment is a lamp,  
 And instruction is light.  
 And the reproofs of discipline  
 Are the way of life,  
To keep thee from the "strange" woman (1)  
From the smoothness of the tongue of the foreigner.

7.1 ff. is similar:

My son, keep my words,  
 And my commandments store up with thee,  
 Keep my commandments and live,  
 And my instruction as the apple of thine eye.  
 Bind them on thy fingers,  
 Write them on the table of thy mind.  
 Say to wisdom, "My sister art thou!"  
 And call discernment kinswoman,  
To keep thee from the strange woman,  
From the foreigner whose words are smooth.

Is it possible that these strong admonitions are addressed against cohabitation with a harlot? It does not seem likely. It is like using a sledge-hammer to crack a nut. We must give the Sages credit for some sense of proportion and their pupils credit for some sense of decency. The type of youth the Sages in-

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(1) M.T. has  $\text{LXX}$   $\text{LXX}$ . For  $\text{LXX}$  in the sense of paramour see Hos.3.1; Jer.3.1.

structed surely did not need such strong exhortations to prevent them going in to public prostitutes. But if they were living in a time of change, when the whole atmosphere was permeated with new ideas, and the foreign attractions of Hellenism were around them on every hand, we can understand how the Sages would use every means of exhortation at their command to keep them faithful to the instruction of their fathers.

The details of the picture of the adulteress which follow, which seem to offer such conclusive proof that an actual person is meant, are but an amplification of the main statement. They are secondary, not primary. They are a literary embellishment of the main thought, an attempt at realism; but if the "strange woman" herself is an allegorical figure, the addendum of these details does not make her real. Even granted that the general conception and the detailed picture are from one and the same hand, they should be considered separately, the one in the light of the introduction and the other as an embellishment of what is introduced. If the Sages choose to decorate an allegory, they simply impose on us a double task, of looking not only at the

painting but at what lies underneath.

We have, therefore, ample indication of a strong class conflict running through the first nine chapters of the Book of Proverbs. With this knowledge in our minds, we may now pass on to see what the Sages meant when they said that the way of wisdom led to "life".

THE MEANINGS OF "LIFE" IN PROVERBS 1-9.

Turning to the usages of חַיִּים in Proverbs 1-9, we find that in some cases it can be translated by "well-being". 3.22 says -

Keep wisdom and discretion;  
Then are they חַיִּים to thy soul,  
And elegance to thy neck.

The meaning of "life" here is not in much doubt. The writer is saying in different words what is said in 4.9 and 1.9.

She gives to thine head an ornament of beauty,  
Bestows on thee a crown of glory.

For an ornament of beauty she gives to thine head,  
And chains about thy neck.

Wisdom brings to its possessor the attractions of a gracious character, a certain quality of spirit which is a real adornment.

Again, in 4.22 it is stated that the Sages' instructions are "life".

חַיִּים to all that find them,  
And חַיִּים to all their flesh.

חַיִּים in the second line of this promise does not necessarily mean physical healing. It is used also in the

intensive sense of "profit" (12.18). This being so, the saying reads quite naturally as follows:

For they are well-being to all that find them,  
And profit to all their flesh.

The immediately following lines also illustrate this meaning.

With all diligence guard your mind,  
For out of it are the sources of  $\text{חַיִּים}$ .

If "life" has its sources in the mind, the Sages meant by it something more than physical life, which had its source in Yahweh (Gen. 2.7). They meant well-being or happiness.

This is also evident in 3.18.

She is a tree of  $\text{חַיִּים}$  to those that take hold on her,  
And happy is every one who grasps her.

"Life" here is equated with happiness. The expression "tree of life" occurs also in 11.30, 13.12, and 15.4. In 13.12 and 15.4 we have already seen that the phrase refers to the enjoyment of well-being, and in 11.30, a somewhat obscure proverb, it would seem to bear the same meaning.

"Life", therefore, in some instances, would seem to



mean "well-being" or "happiness", but this does not exhaust its meaning in the minds of the Sages. To them also, as in Deuteronomy, instruction is "life". In 4.13 they admonish the young man -

Take fast hold of discipline, let her not go;  
Guard her, for she is thy חַיִּים .

The nature of this "life" is suggested by the immediately succeeding statement -

In the path of the Reshaim do not go,  
And walk not in the way of evil-doers.

If there is any connection at all between verses 13 and 14, and they at least belong to the same scheme of thought, the "life" which flows from instruction is right living, that is, good conduct in the sight of Yahweh.

To live, therefore, was not merely to prolong one's days, nor even to enjoy happiness, it was to walk in the way of instruction. This is quite clearly stated in 9.6 and 6.23.

Forsake the foolish and live,  
And go in the way of discernment.

For the interpretation is a lamp,  
And the instruction is light,  
And reproof and discipline "  
Are the way of חַיִּים .

The "life" which was found in instruction was not mere physical well-being. It was the enjoyment of the favour of Yahweh. That is, it was life in its moral and religious aspects, the life that was life indeed. It was moral in so far as it flowed from obedience to wisdom or instruction. It was religious in so far as it depended on the favour of Yahweh. This seems to be implied in the following statement. (8.35).

For he who finds me finds <sup>וְיָדָע</sup>  
 And draws forth favour from Yahweh.  
 He that misses me does violence to himself;  
 All that hate me love death.

"Life", therefore, in its fullest meaning is moral life, springing out of fidelity to instruction, which draws forth the favour of Yahweh. But in other instances instruction seems, at first sight, to bring to the individual another kind of life, life in the sense of continuance of physical existence. In 9.11 it is stated of wisdom,

For in me are thy days made many,  
 And there are added <sup>(1)</sup> unto you years of life.

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(1) <sup>וְיָדָע</sup> is probably to be read.

4.10 and 3.1 make similar statements.

Hear, my son, and receive my words,  
And there are added unto you many years of life.

My son, my instruction do not forget,  
And my commandments keep in mind.  
For length of days and years of life  
And peace they add to thee.

Here it does seem as though fidelity to instruction brings long life to the individual, but the long life referred to does not necessarily mean a life that is protected from sickness and disease but a life that is saved from the devastating storm imminent for the Reshaim. This is clear from 3.23 ff. Wisdom is "life" to the young man's soul and beauty to his neck and then there comes the issue:

Then thou walkest securely in thy way  
And thy foot strikes against nothing.  
If thou sittest <sup>(1)</sup>down, thou art not afraid.  
When thou liest down, thy sleep is sweet.  
Thou art not afraid of sudden terror,  
Of the desolation of the Reshaim when it comes.

Those who disregard wisdom are caught in sudden calamity (1.26 ff).

Yea, I laugh in (the day of) your calamity,  
When distress and anguish come upon you  
I mock when your fear comes as a storm,  
And your destruction comes as a whirlwind. <sup>(2)</sup>

(1) Reading **רוא לך**.

(2) For this rendering see Toy, p.25.

This calamity fell on the whole class of scoffers, not on the individual only (1.28-32). On the other hand, those who hearkened to wisdom dwelt safely unvisited by evil (1.33).

Here we have wisdom rescuing its adherents from a devastating judgment falling on the whole class of apostates who had rejected the fear of Yahweh. To join himself to this class of men who followed wisdom and instruction was a man's security for length of days. He was not necessarily preserved from sickness or disease but he lived in the favour of Yahweh who was the protector of all his class. He guarded the paths of judgment and kept the way of his pious ones (2.8). In the day of calamity, especially, the benefit of this protection would be realised in preservation from destruction, as is seen in 2.20 ff.

That thou mayest walk in the way of good men,  
And keep the paths of the Saddikim,  
For the Saddikim dwell in the land, etc.

Thus those sayings which seem to promise long life to the individual do not necessarily refer to an isolated individual recompense but rather to the life which he enjoys as a member of a favoured community. He lives

protected by the favour of Yahweh, but this favour is not extended to the isolated individual but to the select community, of which, by his fidelity to wisdom or instruction, he evinces himself a member. How the Sages explained the premature death of individuals belonging to this community we do not know, but as long as Yahweh was looked upon as exercising his favour to the class as a whole and his imminent intervention on their behalf was looked for, there was sufficient force in these expectations to give point to their assertions that wisdom and instruction brought "life" or "length of days". When we remember that the "life" was more than physical life and "length of days" was security through life's vicissitudes we have a clearer understanding as to what their exhortation to their pupils really meant. They were calling them to hold fast to instruction that they might obtain its promises, the enjoyment of the favour of Yahweh with its blessings of prosperity in the community of the faithful and, in the day of vengeance on evil-doers, preservation from destruction.

One further problem regarding "life" in collection 1-9 remains to be elucidated, but in the light of our

findings in the last chapter, it need not detain us long. How are we to understand the Sages' assertion that death follows on going over to the "strange woman"? When we meet with such phrases as "The ways of Sheol are her house, going down to the chambers of death" or "None that go to her return, nor do they attain to the paths of "life"" (7.27 and 2.19), what do they mean? They hardly mean that he who goes into the house of the adulteress meets with sudden death, for this was contradicted by everyday experience. The phrase also **בְּבֵיתָהּ יָמוּתוּ** **לֹא יָשׁוּבִים** is peculiar, suggesting "house" is used in more than a literal sense, in fact, used in the sense we have already met with in the "house" of the Saddikim, meaning the whole community of the Saddikim. "The paths of life" also is a phrase which can only mean the paths of well-being or happiness or the moral favour of Yahweh. This is quite clear from v.2.20. "That thou mayest walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the Saddikim." We may therefore reject, as we have already rejected, the explanation that immorality is meant or that the house of the adulteress led to premature death.

If, however, as we have already claimed, adultery meant apostasy, the sure retribution of death is in accordance with the teaching of the Sages. The apostates were cut off from Yahweh's favour and already on the road to Sheol. The man who kept the paths of the Saddikim, on the other hand, was on the path of life, the path which was as a shining light which shone more and more till the day was full (4.18). The "house" of apostasy was a house of death as he who entered it would find in the coming judgment.

THE REWARD OF RICHES AND HONOUR AND LIFE.

We now come to deal with the nature of the promises held out to the man who feared Yahweh and walked in the way of instruction.

It will help us to understand these promises better if we dwell first of all on the picture of the good man as it is presented to us in the Book of Psalms. Psalm 112 is of so much importance in this connection that we translate it in full.

- |    |     |  |
|----|-----|--|
| ע  | 1.  | Blessed is the man who fears Yahweh,                     |
| ב  |     | Who in his commandments greatly delights.                |
| א  | 2.  | His seed is mighty in the land;                          |
| ד  |     | The generation of the Straight is blessed.               |
| ה  | 3.  | Wealth and riches are in his house,                      |
| ו  |     | And his <b>אָפֶּיִךְ</b> endures for ever.               |
| ז  | 4.  | There arises a light for the Straight,                   |
| ח  |     | Even he who is gracious, compassionate and<br>righteous. |
| ט  | 5.  | It is well with the gracious and benevolent;             |
| י  |     | He maintains his cause in judgment.                      |
| יא | 6.  | For he is not moved for ever.                            |
| יב |     | For a memorial is the Saddik for ever.                   |
| יג | 7.  | Of evil tidings he is not afraid;                        |
| יד |     | His mind is fixed, trusting in Yahweh.                   |
| טו | 8.  | His mind is sustained, he does not fear,                 |
| טז |     | Until he sees (his desire) upon his enemies.             |
| יז | 9.  | He gives freely to the poor;                             |
| יח |     | His <b>אָפֶּיִךְ</b> stands for ever;                    |
| יט |     | His <b>הוֹרָה</b> is exalted in honour.                  |
| כ  | 10. | The Rasha sees and is vexed;                             |
| כא |     | He gnashes his teeth and melts away;                     |
| כב |     | The expectation of the Reshaim perishes.                 |



What is the nature of the blessings that come to the man delineated in this Psalm?

We must notice first of all that he is blessed because he belongs to a community which is blessed. Verse 5b might be better translated, as W.E. Barnes suggests, The dwellings of the Straight are blessed, for וְיָ in the text can refer to a number of people dwelling together. (cf. Ps. 14.5; 24.6; 73.15).

This is made clear also in v.4, "There arises a light for the Straight." The light does not arise for the Straight man personally, but for the Straight as a class.

This good man also shall have his cause maintained in judgment and not be moved for ever. We have seen וְיָ used in Psalms 1 and 37 of the final judgment of Yahweh on his enemies and this apparently is the meaning here. Only in some such connotation can we understand the immediately following assertions that he shall not be moved for ever and stand as a memorial for ever. Such statements, if they are to have any meaning at all, imply an endurance more permanent than the ordinary life of any individual. Asserted of an individual as such they are pointless and can only be regarded as a bit of

exuberance on the part of the writer. The Psalm is written with such economy, as far as phraseology is concerned, that there is little room for such extravagance. The repeated assertions must mean something and we suggest that the eschatological expectations of the Psalmist is the reason for their being. If this is so, the conclusion of the Psalm quite naturally follows;

The Rasha sees and is vexed;  
He gnashes his teeth and melts away;  
The expectation of the Reshaim perishes.

This last line is similar to that in Prov. 10.28 where, we believe, it is asserted of the Reshaim that they shall meet with an inclusive and final judgment. The reward, therefore, to the ideal man of this Psalm is not so much personal as social. He shares, or shall share, in the good fortune of his class. He lives in an atmosphere of promise and hope. Whether or not at the present moment he possesses wealth and power, he has all the expectation of them for he endures in Yahweh's favour when Reshaim are done away. His children are mighty in the land and he himself (most probably his name after him continued in his children) stands as a memorial for ever.

So much for the promises held out to the Saddik in

this Psalm but, before leaving it, one point might be dealt with. Briggs says, apropos of the phrase, "wealth and riches are in his house" that "He enjoys prosperity in accordance with the blessings of the Deuteronomic law (Deut.28)."<sup>(1)</sup> This is quite true, but not in the sense in which Briggs evidently understands it, although he himself finds it difficult to determine whether it refers to the present or the future of the man. It is quite clear, however, in studying Deut. 28, that the blessings and also curses contained therein refers to the people and not to the isolated individual. If the Soddik in the Psalm is heir to these blessings it is only because he belongs to the blessed community. That this is the case we see from a scrutiny of vvs. 1.2, and.4.

Blessed is the man who fears Yahweh,  
 Who in his commandments greatly delights.  
 His seed shall be mighty in the land;  
 THE DWELLINGS OF THE STRAIGHT ARE BLESSED.  
 .....  
 THERE ARISES A LIGHT FOR THE STRAIGHT,  
 Even he who is gracious, compassionate and righteous.

That is how the blessing comes, not to the individual but

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(1) Psalms Vol. II. p. 385.

to the class.

We may now turn from Psalms to Proverbs.

It is stated there of Wisdom,

3.16 Length of days is in her right hand,  
And in her left hand riches and honour.

also in 8.18.

Riches and honour are with me,  
Surpassing wealth and <sup>עֲדָתִי</sup>.

These statements in themselves are by no means straightforward assertions that wisdom brings wealth and honour to the individual. 8.18b if correct, is very peculiar and suggests that something more than pure material gain is meant. The statements, also, must be related to other statements made regarding wisdom. In 8.11 it is stated that it is better than corals and elsewhere that it is more to be desired than pure gold (3.14, 15; 8.11,19). If the man, therefore, who has found wisdom has found something that is better than these things, there is not much point in saying that its reward is material gain. What, therefore, do the Sages mean by their assertions?

Let us take 8.18 in its context.

18. Riches and honour are with me,  
Surpassing wealth and <sup>חַיִּים</sup> (1)
19. My fruit is better than gold, (.....)  
And my revenue than choicest silver.
20. In the path of <sup>חַיִּים</sup> I walk,  
In the midst of the paths of judgment, (2)
21. To cause them that love me to inherit "existence,"  
And their treasures I shall fill.

This statement, taken in its entirety, contains a paradox. Wisdom, which is better than gold, is a means to an end which is seemingly lesser than itself. The solution of this paradox is surely to be found in the fact that wisdom is better than gold in that it is full of promise. It leads to "life", the "life" that is to be found in the community of the faithful with all its concomitant blessings. It causes them that love it to inherit "existence" and it will fill their treasures.

This is probably more clear in 3.15ff where it is stated of wisdom:

15. She <sup>is</sup> more precious than corals,  
And all that may be desired <sup>(3)</sup> is not to be  
compared to her,
16. Length of days is in her right hand,  
And in her left hand riches and honour.
17. Her ways are ways of delight,  
And her paths peace.

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(1) Here occurs a gloss ( <sup>חַיִּים</sup> ).

(2) <sup>חַיִּים</sup> usually translated "substance". If so, the only example of its use .

(3) Reading <sup>חַיִּים</sup> of 8. .

18. She is a tree of <sup>וְיָד</sup> to those that lay hold  
 on her,  
 And happy is every one who grasps her.

Here again wisdom is more precious than corals,  
 high above everything that the mind of man can desire.  
 We cannot possibly believe that temporal prosperity was  
 the sole reward of those who grasp her, or that this is  
 all that is meant by her being "a tree of life". As we  
 have already dealt with the meaning of this phrase, all  
 that we need now suggest is that this larger meaning we  
 have already explicated is the meaning of the statement  
 as a whole.

One statement remains to be dealt with in this  
 first collection, asserting, as it seems to do, a purely  
 material recompense for faithfulness to Yahweh. In  
 3.9,10 we find the promise.

Honour Yahweh with thy substance,  
 And with the first of all thy produce.  
 And thy barns will be filled with corn,<sup>(1)</sup>  
 And thy vats overflow with must.

This exhortation evidently refers to the practice  
 of offering the first fruits of the land to Yahweh, but  
 this was a communal offering for communal blessings and  
 not a private offering for private blessings (cf. Deut.  
 26 1-11). The promises also which followed the honouring

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(1) Reading <sup>לֶחֶם</sup> LXX.

of Yahweh were to the whole nation and not merely to the faithful individual. These promises are the promises referred to in Prov. 3.9,10 which is quite clearly based on Deut. 27.4 and 11, or some similar statement. In the absence of all evidence, we have no right to believe that promises once made to the nation have been transferred to the individual, nor have we to regard this statement as evidence in itself. The individual, in honouring Yahweh with the first fruits of his substance, was taking part in the practice of the faithful people and, in identification with them, looked for the blessing that would come upon the faithful.

In the light of these findings we must now deal with the interpretation of two remaining proverbs, which belong to the collection 21 - 22.16. This collection, as we have seen reason to believe, stands fairly near to the first nine chapters in point of time. The proverbs are -

21.21 He who pursues after <sup>צדקה</sup> and <sup>חסד</sup>  
Finds <sup>חיים</sup>, <sup>צדקה</sup> and honour.

22.4 The reward of humility the fear of Yahweh,  
Riches and honour and <sup>חיים</sup>.

These proverbs, because of absence of context, are

more difficult to deal with than similar ones already mentioned. The Sages may here mean that Yahweh directly rewards the man who fears him with riches and honour and life but if this collection in point of time is earlier than 1 - 9 this is most difficult to believe. The doctrine of individualism cannot have reached such a high stage here and fallen away in some strange manner in 1 - 9. Also, as we have already seen, references to Saddik and Rasha as members of two opposing classes are an outstanding feature of this collection and the belief runs strong in a communal judgment (21.7,12,18). There is little need for asserting such a judgment if it is accepted as a truism in the case of the individual that the reward for  $\text{יִרְאֵהוּ}$  and the fear of Yahweh is riches and honour and life. If, however, the riches and honour and life are to be found in the community, these sayings are simply assertions that he who pursues wisdom and adheres to the fear of Yahweh shares and shall share in them. The whole question of the interpretation of these proverbs turns, therefore, on the manner in which riches and honour and life are brought to the individual, whether they come to him as a direct reward from Yahweh or whether they are blessings promised to the whole community.



It should be noticed in this connection that the two proverbs do not exactly assert the same thing. 21.21 says that the man who pursues after  $\text{צָדִיק}$  and  $\text{נֶסֶךְ}$  finds  $\text{חַיִּים}$ ,  $\text{צָדִיק}$  and  $\text{קְבוּרָה}$ . 22.4 says the reward is  $\text{עֵשֶׂר}$  and  $\text{קְבוּרָה}$  and  $\text{חַיִּים}$ . It may be, as the LXX reading suggests, that in 21.21 the insertion of  $\text{צָדִיק}$  is an error but it is also quite possible that it is correct as it stands and should be read in the sense of "salvation".<sup>(1)</sup> If this is so, the salvation wrought by Yahweh was not salvation for the individual but for the whole community and the use of the word would be decisive in determining the intention of this Proverb and its fellow. But whether this word can be accepted as it stands or not, the teaching of Proverbs 1 - 9 should warn us against interpreting these proverbs as illustrations of a purely individualistic doctrine and the references to a class judgment in the collections in which they occur should show that the Sages had not solved their problem of retribution and reward in such a decisive manner.

Summing up our researches, therefore, as to the reward accruing to the good man in Proverbs, he would appear to be in the same case as the good man in the

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(1) A similar assertion is made in 8.18. They can hardly both be errors.

Psalms. The man who keeps instruction and walks in the fear of Yahweh may or may not be blessed with temporal prosperity, but he lives in the favour of Yahweh and his days are full of promise and hope. Heir to the promises made to Israel he lives in the expectation of a day of judgment, when Yahweh will intervene to vindicate his own. In that glad day he and his class will enter into permanent enjoyment of the moral favour of Yahweh, with all its concomitant blessings. Those who come under the ban of Yahweh shall be exterminated from off the earth and go down hopeless into Sheol. Such, in general outline, is the teaching of the Book of Proverbs, regarding the reward of fidelity to Yahweh and the retribution that follows on those who forsake the ways of righteousness and live in opposition to his will.

Some further questions, however, remain to be answered before we can fully understand the Sages' teaching. What was their outlook on the riches and poverty that came to the individual? What were the alleviations of adversity and what was the relation of Yahweh to his individual worshipper? These questions shall engage our attention in the next four chapters.

THE SAGES AND RICHES.

We shall study first of all some proverbs dealing with the Sages' attitude to riches. There were three legitimate ways, they held, in which a man may become rich, by inheritance, by diligence and toil or by shrewdness. We give examples of proverbs bearing out these conclusions.

Inheritance.

19.14 House and riches are an inheritance from fathers,  
But from Yahweh comes a prudent wife.

Oesterley makes the following comment on this passage. "This is, from one point of view, an anomalous saying for a Hebrew Sage, both because prosperity, such as house and riches, were (sic) believed to come from God, and also because it was the father who chose a wife for his son. From this point of view, the Sage, in his anxiety to set forth the blessing of a "good wife", ignored theology and custom. On the other hand, however, the first line states what was obviously the fact, while the second would be the conviction of every pious mind. All depends upon the point of view."<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) Op.cit. p.158.

Oesterley creates unnecessary difficulties in saying that the Sage ignored theology and custom. There is probably no contrast between the first and second lines, ("but" can equally well be translated "and"), but if there is a contrast, it is one between what is and what is not inherited. He is much nearer the truth in his alternative suggestion. As Wildeboer points out, "The inheritance falls to good and bad, but a prudent wife comes only to him, to whom Yahweh has goodwill." (Das Erbgut fällt Guten und Bösen zu, allein eine weise (1) Frau bekommt nur der, an dem Jahwe Wohlgefallen hat.) This seems the point of view suggested by 18.22

Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing,  
And obtains favour from Yahweh.

The favour of Yahweh, therefore, is not implied in the inheritance of house or riches. The first line of the proverb is simply a statement of fact.

#### Diligence and Toil.

10.4 Slackness of hand maketh poor,  
But the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

11.16 A gracious woman retaineth honour,  
And diligent men retain riches.

(1) "Die Sprüche". D.G. Wildeboer p.57.

(2) Reading קרוינים LXX.

- 12.11 The tiller of his ground is satisfied  
with bread,  
But he who pursues vain things finds  
himself lacking.<sup>(1)</sup>
- 13.4 The sluggard desires but has nothing,  
But the diligent is made fat.
- 21.5 The plans of the diligent lead to plenty  
But everyone who hates, hastes only to want.
- 14.23 In all travail there is profit,  
But talk of the lips tends only to want.

### Shrewdness

- 17,2 A wise servant bears rule over a profligate  
son,  
He shares the estate with the brothers.

These methods of acquiring wealth have no theological significance. They are plain observations from experience. They do not lend any support to the view that riches are a direct reward for goodness at the hands of Yahweh. Far from its being suggested that the acquisition of wealth is the outcome of goodness, there are certain proverbs which suggest that men become rich by violence (1.13) or by usury (27.13), practices, needless to say, which the Sages strongly condemned.

The Sages did hold, however, that riches, unjustly acquired, brought little profit with them but it does

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(1) Reading *is 100?* cf. Deut. 15.8.

not necessarily follow that the sorrow they so often invoked was a direct retribution at the hands of Yahweh. At least, if this was their belief, they do not clearly assert it in their proverbs dealing with the matter.

The following sayings illustrate their views.

- 20.21 An inheritance may be got hastily at the beginning,  
But its final condition is not blessed.
- 28.20 A faithful man is plenteous in blessings,  
But he who makes haste to be rich does not pass unpunished.
- 28.22 A man with evil eye hastens after riches,  
Not knowing that want overtakes him.
- (1)
- 21.6 He who gets treasures by a lying tongue,<sup>(2)</sup>  
Pursues a vapour and the snares of death.

These proverbs may involve some doctrine of retribution but it is not necessarily that of direct intervention by Yahweh. They seem rather to be shrewd observations from experience. If they illustrate any doctrine of retribution it is that involved in a belief in a moral law which is even leisurely in its operation. It is the final condition of hastily acquired wealth that shall not be blessed

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(1) Reading הַעֵל LXX.V.  
(2) Reading הַבֵּל לֶדָר וּמִקְשֵׁי - קִיָּה Oesterley after Sternagel  
p.177.

(20.21). Want overtakes or comes to meet the man of evil eye (28.22). There is little element of surprise or disaster in these proverbs. They seem just to assert, what men of wisdom and experience are surely at all times justified in asserting, that ill-gotten wealth is never a certain quantity nor is it any passport to happiness, depending as it does on the character of its possessor.

This leads us on to study their teaching on the value of riches themselves. Here it is clearly evident that the value of riches to the Sages depended on the character of their possessor. Character, indeed, was superior to wealth, as is quite evident from the following proverbs.

20.15 There is gold and abundance of corals,  
But wise lips are a precious jewel.

22.1 A good<sup>(1)</sup> name is better than great riches,  
To be well thought of is better than  
silver or gold.

16.8 Better a little with righteousness,  
Than much produce with injustice.

(1) Adding *זיב*. LXX. T.V.

15.16 Better is a little with the fear of Yahweh,  
Than great treasure and trouble with it.

The first two of these proverbs are specially important suggesting as they do that real wealth was spiritual wealth. Wisdom and a good reputation were evidently to the Sages of more value than silver or gold. Is it possible, then, that they thought that material wealth was a sure sign of Yahweh's favour when it was not to be compared with character or wisdom? Are not righteousness and the fear of Yahweh more to be esteemed than wealth without these things (16.8; 15.6)? The Sages were more spiritually-minded men than has usually been admitted. They were not utilitarians.

At the same time, they did not despise wealth. They regarded it as a source of stability and power. They also knew the deleterious effects of poverty and, as we shall see in the next chapter, against that poverty which comes through indolence or pleasure-seeking they warned their disciples strongly. In the meantime, we take some proverbs which suggest that wealth is not to be despised.

18.11 The rich man's wealth is his strong city,  
As an high wall is his hedge.<sup>m</sup>

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(1) Reading *יְהוָה*? suggested by LXX.T.V.



10.15 The rich man's wealth is his strong city,  
The destruction of the poor is their poverty.

13.8 The ransom of a man is his riches,  
Yet a poor man listens not to reproof.

The text of 13.8b may be out of order, but for want of a better, we have taken it as it stands. The proverb probably means, "By riches a man can often buy off trouble How foolish therefore to acquiesce in poverty!"

There are other sayings which might be taken as warnings against poverty.

18.23 The poor man uses entreaties,  
But the rich man answers gruffly.

14.20 The poor man is lightly esteemed by his neighbour,  
But a rich man has many friends.

19.4 Wealth adds many friends,  
But the poor man is separated from his friends.

19.7 All the kinsmen of a poor man give him second  
place,  
How much more do his friends stand aloof from  
him.

These proverbs may have more than a touch of worldly wisdom in them, yet they are sane statements as to the value of wealth and as warnings to young men against the deleterious effects of poverty they are particularly impressive. They contain no hint of theological doctrine. The poor man is separated from his friend just because he is poor. It is not implied at all that he is a sinner.

Of the insecurity of riches the Sages have something to say. Their retention depends on constant diligence. Even when got, they are like a bird, ready to fly away.

27.23 Insist on knowing the state of thy flocks  
And pay attention to thy herds;<sup>(1)</sup>  
For riches are not for ever,  
And wealth does not endure from generation  
to generation.<sup>(2)</sup>

23.4 Toil not to become rich,  
Cease from thy dishonest gain, <sup>(3)</sup> (----gloss----)  
For riches<sup>(4)</sup> make to themselves wings,  
Like a vulture that flies<sup>(5)</sup> towards heaven.

It is suggested in one place, 30.7, that the happiest condition is the mean between poverty and riches, but this proverb is too sophisticated and personal to represent generally the teaching of the Sages.

For a short summary of the typical qualities that are needed for the creation of wealth, we cannot do better than turn to the picture of the ideal woman in 31. 10-31. It is the picture of a woman it is true, but it illustrates all the qualities which, in the mind of the Sages, were necessary for a prosperous and happy life. She is diligent (13), adventuresome in business (14), an

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- (1) Reading לְעֵדוּתָהּ demanded by parallelism.  
(2) Reading וְעֵדוּתָהּ לְעֵדוּתָהּ suggested by LXX.S.  
(3) Reading וְעֵדוּתָהּ לְעֵדוּתָהּ Oesterley after Grassemann. p.179.  
(4) Reading עֵדוּתָהּ.  
(5) וְעֵדוּתָהּ Q.

early riser (15), shrewd (16), an energetic worker (17), and she sells her produce to advantage (18). She is kindly also (20), careful of the health of her household (21), wise in speech (26), and a capable mistress (27). It is such an one who will reap the reward of diligence (31) and it is quite evident that the reward did come from diligence. She simply had all the qualities that go to make success. It is no wonder the Sages asserted that a man who obtained a wife like this obtained favour from Yahweh but it is doubtful if they implied he thereby obtained a direct reward of goodness at his hand.

The following therefore seems to be the Sages' attitude to wealth. Riches are obtained in various ways, by inheritance, by diligence and toil, by shrewdness, by violence and by usury. They do not indicate the favour of Yahweh nor does their absence indicate his displeasure. While their value depends on the character of their possessor, they are by no means to be despised. Poverty, especially, is to be avoided as leaving men open to much humiliation. Riches, however, are not the most important things in life. Righteousness and the fear of Yahweh far outweigh them in intrinsic worth. Lastly, riches are insecure and their retention depends on constant diligence.

THE SAGES AND POVERTY.

We now turn to deal with the outlook of the Sages on poverty.

There are five words used to signify "poor man" in Proverbs:

1. אֲבִיּוֹן The man who is needy, chiefly in material things. cf. 14.31; 30.14; 31.9,20.
2. לַד The man who is poor and weak.  
Occurs 14 times.  
Is contrasted with עָשִׂיר in 10.15; 22.16; 28.11.  
Is parallel to אֲבִיּוֹן in 14.31.
3. עָבִיר The pious, poor man, usually afflicted in his poverty.  
Occurs 8 times.  
Is contrasted with לְעֵצִים 3.34; עֵצִים 16.19.  
Is parallel to אֲבִיּוֹן 30.14; 31.9,20.
4. אִישׁ מְחַסְרוֹ The man who finds himself in want.  
21.17; cf. also 6.11; 11.24; 14.23; 21.5; 22.16; 28.27.
5. לֹאֵשׁ The man who exists in grievous poverty.  
Occurs 15 times.  
Is contrasted with עָשִׂיר 13.8; 14.20; 18.23; 22.2,7; 28.6.

It is difficult to find English words which will give the exact shades of meaning of each of these Hebrew terms. It certainly seems to be impossible to do so and make a euphonious translation of the proverbs in every case, yet the distinction between the terms, as far as possible,

ought to be maintained. We have retained the word "poor" as a general translation but, in dealing with the proverbs, have classified them under their various terms. If the meaning of these terms be kept in mind, it adds greater significance to the proverbs and puts a sharper edge on the conclusions we seek to draw.

Before coming to the elucidation of the meaning of these proverbs, one interesting point should be noticed. In referring to the poverty to which a man is brought by his own fault, the Sages are fond of using derivatives of the verbs רָחַץ or רָחַץ. A man thus brought to poverty is רָחֵץ חֲסוּר or רָחַץ. He is never רָחֵץ, רָחֵץ or רָחֵץ. The following proverbs will illustrate this point.

Stem רָחַץ

- 14.23 In all travail there is profit,  
But talk of the lips tends only to want.
- 21.17 The man who comes to want is the lover of  
pleasure,  
The lover of wine and strong drink does not  
become rich.

cf. also 6.11; 11.24; 22.16.

Stem רָחַץ

- 10.4 Slackness of hand makes a poor man  
But the hand of the diligent maketh rich. (1)

(1) LXX. S.T., however, read רָחַץ instead of רָחַץ.  
Ku hn would emend to read רָחַץ עֲנִיָּה ('the slack  
hand is punished with poverty')

28.19 The tiller of his ground has plenty of bread,  
But he who pursues vain things has plenty of  
poverty.

23.21 The drunkard and the glutton come to poverty,  
And indolence clothes one with rags.

It would probably be going too far to say that **עִשְׂתָּוִת** or **עָנִי**, always referred to the individual brought to poverty through his own fault, but certainly they sometimes had this connotation. The terms **עָנִי**, **עָנִי** or **עָנִי** do not seem to be employed at all in this connection. The significance of this will be seen later on in our discussion.

We turn now to the causes of poverty. These are discerned by the Sages by shrewd observation and may be classified as follows:

#### Sheer Laziness.

6.6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard etc.

24.30 I went by the field of the sluggard, etc.

cf. also 13.4; 14.23; 19.15; 20.4; 20.13.  
27,23.

#### Intemperance and Extravagance.

23.20,21 Be not found among the drunkards,  
Nor among the gluttonous eaters of flesh;  
For the drunkard and the glutton come to  
poverty,  
And indolence clothes one with rags.

The pursuit of vain projects.

- 28.19 The tiller of his ground has plenty of bread,  
But he who pursues vain things has plenty  
of poverty.

Lack of discipline.

- 13.18 Poverty and reproach to the despiser of  
discipline,  
But the heeder of reproof is honoured.

Niggardliness.

- 11.24 There is that scattereth and is still increas-  
ed,  
But he who holds back what is meet surely  
comes to want.

Suretyship.

- 22.26 Be not among those who pledge themselves,  
Among the bondsmen for others' debts.  
If you have nothing with which to pay,  
Why should your bed be taken from under you?

Wickedness or oppression by others.

- 28.3 A rich man who oppresses the poor,  
Is like a torrential rain - there is no bread.
- 28.15 A growling lion and a roving bear -  
A wicked ruler over a poor people.

There is one further proverb which suggests a cause  
of poverty, but its meaning is most ambiguous. 22.16

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(1) Reading  $\gamma' \psi \gamma$  for  $\psi \gamma$  .

reads:

עֵשֶׂק גַּל לְחַבּוֹת לוֹ כִּי־יָגֵן לְעָשִׂיר אֶזְ-לְמַחְסוֹר :

A literal translation of this proverb runs, He that oppresses the poor to cause increase to him, a giver to a rich man only to cause want. No matter how we may turn this proverb there is always a residue of uncertainty in its meaning. It may mean that the man who oppresses the poor to increase his gain and who gives (bribes) to the rich shall surely come to want. On the whole, this is its most natural meaning, but it rather forces the interpretation of the second half-line. On the other hand, the meaning may be that the man who oppresses the poor causes him to prosper (probably through increased application), while the man who gives to the rich only brings him to want, i. e., his money is too easily gotten and he spends carelessly. This interpretation suggested by Steuernagel, seems even more forced than the first. Various attempts have been made to emend the text by Toy, Kuhn and others but they need not detain us as an emended text would afford us no sure conclusion in our study.



Leaving this doubtful proverb aside, therefore, it is quite evident, from the other proverbs we have tabulated, that the Sages held a strongly objective outlook on the causes of poverty. The examples we have given cover the whole range of their thought on the subject and they all suggest that the causes of poverty may be ascertained by a discriminating experience of life. That poverty was the result of laziness, extravagance, lack of discipline or foolish suretyship was observable fact. There is no trace of any a priori doctrine of reward or punishment influencing their judgment.

It should be noted, moreover, that a man may be poor or made poorer, through no fault of his own. He may be weak and helpless ( 57 ) and, because of his very helplessness, preyed upon by those who have the advantage over him in strength. A rich man may deprive him of his bread or a ruler may ravage his crops and he has no redress (28.3; 28.15). The Sages' sympathies are with him. They do not suggest that he is suffering for his sins.

This brings us to deal with the Sages' attitude to the poor man generally.

In dealing with the words used for "poor man" in Proverbs, we pointed out that two of them seemed to be used with a more adverse connotation than others. The Sages were fond of using derivatives of the verbs **קטר** or **קטר** when referring to a man brought to poverty through his own fault, and that **איש קטר** or **קטר** may sometimes designate such men. When we turn, however, to their attitude to the poor, we find that any adverse suggestion there may be in these words simply melts away. In their judgment of the treatment to be given to the poor man we find no references to the causes of his poverty. **קטר**, **קטר** and **קטר** used indiscriminately of poor people who, because they are poor, must be treated with sympathy and kindness.

We take the following passages in illustration of this teaching:

קטר

- 17.5 He who mocks the poor reproaches his maker, (1)  
 And he who rejoices over him who is perishing  
 does not go unpunished.
- 28,27 He who gives to the poor - there is no want;  
 He who shuts his eyes - many curses.

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(1) Reading **קטר** (LXX. ἀπολαύματα).

- (1)
- 29.13 Poor man and "creditor" meet together,  
Yahweh gives light to the eyes of them  
both.

ל

- 14.31 He who oppresses the poor reproaches his  
maker,  
But he who is kind to the poor does him  
honour.
- 19.17 He who is kind to the poor lends to Yahweh  
And his good deed he pays back to him.
- 22.9 He who has a kindly eye is blessed,  
Because he gives of his bread to the poor.

cf. also 21.13; 22.16; 22.22,23;  
28.8; 29.7.

ל and עני

- 14.21 He who despises his neighbour sins,  
But happy is he who pities the poor.
- 30,14 There is a generation whose teeth are swords,  
And their jaw teeth as knives to devour the  
needy from the earth and the poor from the  
ground.
- 31.9 Open thy mouth, judge righteously;  
And do justice to the poor and needy.

Not only do these proverbs illustrate the fact that  
the Sages had an indiscriminate compassion for the poor  
but two of them stand out with special significance in  
another connection. 17.5 and 14.31 suggest that it is

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(1) M.T. עני a late word. Appears only in Psalm  
107; 55.12; 72.14. Vulgate reads "creditor".

his Maker Who is responsible for the poor man's condition. Not only has Yahweh placed him in this position but his sympathies are with him (19.17; 21.13; 22.22,23). This does not look as though the Sages were convinced that poverty was the result of sin.

We may move even further than these conclusions. The Sages not merely inculcate a kindly treatment of the poor but they even suggest that poverty is preferable to riches under certain conditions. We take, for example, the following proverbs:

- 15.17 Better a dish of herbs and love there,  
Than a fatted ox and hatred with it.
- 16.19 Better be lowly of mind with the poor,  
Than divide the spoil with the proud.
- 28.6 Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity,  
Than he who is false in his ways though rich.

cf. also 20.15; 22.1; 16.8; 15.16 in previous chapter.

The last proverb (28.6 - which is repeated in 19.1) is of some importance. It clearly states that there is such a person as a poor man walking in his integrity. If prosperity were the reward of integrity, this should not be. On the other hand, there is he who is false in his

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(1) לְיָדָיו for לְיָדָיו .

ways yet he is rich. If the doctrine of individual retribution held good, this also should not be. The truth is, as all these proverbs suggest quite clearly, there is such a circumstance as righteous poverty.

Not only do the Sages believe in the integrity of certain poor man, but they suggest that in honest poverty there is a certain dignity and even superiority over prosperous wickedness. There are conditions under which poverty is preferable to riches, e.g.,

19.22 The fruit of a man may be lacking, (1)  
But better be poor than a liar.

28.11 Wise in his own eyes is the rich man,  
But the poor man of discernment sees through  
him.

For all the Sages have to say on the advantages of wealth, it is not difficult to see that their sympathies lie in the direction of honest poverty. Can we possibly hold that they believed that poverty was the condition of a man who was "stricken of the Lord"? If Yahweh was responsible for the poor man's condition and to reproach him was to reproach his Maker, it is impossible to believe that he was suffering for his own sin. Neither was poverty in the eyes of the Sages, a state to be condemned

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(1) Reading רֵחַ אִישׁ יִכְרֹתוֹ after LXX.

It was something to be avoided if one could, but there were certain conditions under which it was preferable to riches. They believed, moreover, that poverty was the result of causes which were mostly ascertainable. It may certainly in many cases be the outcome of wrongdoing, but in no wise do they assert it was a punishment wrought by Yahweh on secret sin.

THE SAGES AND ADVERSITY.

We have gathered together in this chapter the references of the Sages to adversity. Here again, as in the case of poverty, their strongly objective outlook is manifest. They do not find the causes of a man's adversity in secret delinquencies, which result in open punishment. They suggest that they may be ascertained by the discrimination that discovered the causes of poverty. These causes are often within a man's own compass, but more often they lie outside his control. They are set in operation by others and he is caught in a net not of his own weaving. The Sages' teachings on the subject of adversity are a tacit acknowledgment of the complexity and intricacy of society, through which a man can steer himself only by the exercise of the utmost self-discipline and wisdom.

Lack of prudence is largely responsible for the adversity a man brings upon himself. A proper conduct of the affairs of life demands circumspection in a high degree. The lack of this quality is apt to issue in trouble if not in ruin as the following proverbs show.

- 14.16 The wise man fears and turns from evil,  
But the fool takes part therein<sup>b</sup> confidently.
- 20.25 It is a snare to a man that he cry rashly,  
"Holy!"  
And after vows to make enquiry.
- 25.7c What your eyes have seen  
8a Bring not hastily forth for strife (to the  
court)  
8b For<sup>(2)</sup> what wilt thou say in the upshot,  
c When your neighbour puts you to shame?
- 26.6 He cuts off his feet, he drinks violence,  
Who sends a message by the hands of a fool.

In the matter of suretyship, especially, this lack of prudence is strongly condemned. The admonitions on this subject may seem to us to be somewhat hard-hearted, but no doubt they applied particularly to suretyship on behalf of strangers (6. 1-5), although, as anyone knows, there is good reason for caution in pledging oneself even on behalf of friends. At any rate, the Sages held that circumspection in this matter was much needed and the wisest policy was to refrain.

- 11.15 He who goes surety for another suffers,  
But he who hates suretyship is secure.
- 17.18 A man lacks sense who pledges himself,  
Who goes surety in the presence of his neighbour.
- 20.16) Take off his garment who goes surety for another,  
27.13) And he that goes surety for a stranger hold in  
pledge.

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(1) <sup>לך</sup> לXX. S.T.  
(2) Reading '>.



Of the adversity that is brought on a man by others the Sages have much to say. One cannot possibly believe that they held it was all a man's own fault and a just punishment for sin. If by any remote possibility that be true, they show a most unconscionable sympathy for the sinner. As a matter of strict exegesis, they make it quite clear that the good man suffers from adversity and that through no fault of his own.

We might classify the causes of innocent suffering as follows:

False accusation.

- 19,28 A false witness scoffs at justice,  
And the mouth of Reshaim pours out wrong.
- 25.18 A maul, a sword, and a sharp arrow,  
A man who bears false witness against his  
neighbour.

Bribery and Corruption.

- 18.5 To favour the Rasha is not good,  
To turn away the Saddik from justice.
- 17.23 The Rasha takes a bribe from his bosom  
To deflect the course of justice.

Spoliation and oppression.

- 24.15 Lie not in wait against the habitation of the  
Saddik,  
Despoil not his dwelling place.

29.2 When the Saddikim rule<sup>(1)</sup> the people rejoice,  
But when the Reshaim<sup>(2)</sup> govern, men groan.

Family troubles.

- 21.9) It is better to dwell in the corner of a  
25.24) housetop,  
Than with a quarrelsome woman in a wide<sup>(3)</sup> house
- 10.1 A wise son makes his father glad,  
But a foolish son is a grief to his mother.
- 17.21 He who begets a rascally son does so to his  
sorrow,  
And the father of a churlish son has no joy.
- 17.25 A grief to his father is a rascally son,  
And bitterness to her that bore him.
- 19.13 A rascally son is a calamity to his father,  
And a quarrelsome woman is a continual dripping.
- 19.26 He who assaults his father and drives away his  
mother,  
Is a son who acts shamefully and disgracefully.

cf. also 20.20; 23.24,25; 27.11; 30.17.

These are some of the ways, at any rate, in which  
adversity comes to men and we cannot say that it is all  
their own fault. Much, however, can be done to avoid  
adversity by wise and prudent conduct. The Sages stress  
especially the disciplining of children. Reproof and

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(1) Reading	בְּרָדוֹת	for	בְּרָדוֹת
(2) Reading	לְשָׁעֵי	for	לְשָׁעֵי
(3) Reading	לְחַב	for	לְחַב

correction form the growing character, which is prone to evil, and guide it into right paths. A wise upbringing, if it cannot shield a boy from all the vicissitudes of life, can protect him from those of his own creating. The outcome of this discipline is not a prudential morality which will lead him to temporal prosperity, but wisdom and knowledge to make him adequate to face the demands of life and triumph over its temptations. The necessity and value of such discipline are set forth in the following proverbs.

12.1 The lover of discipline is a lover of knowledge  
But he that hates reproof is a boor.

13.1 A wise son loves" discipline,  
But a "scorner" does not listen to rebuke.

22.15 Folly is bound up in the mind of a child,  
But the rod of discipline removes it.

cf. also 13.24; 19.18; 23.13,14.

17.10 A reproof enters deeper into a man of discern-  
ment,  
Than a hundred stripes into a fool.

21.11 Smite a "scorner" and the simple learns prudence,  
Instruct a wise man and he receives knowledge.

25.12 Earrings of gold and ornaments of fine gold,  
A wise reprover at a hearing ear.

The fact that the Sages regarded the discipline of

a parent or the reproof of a friend as having a salutary effect on conduct leads one to ask, Did they not regard adversity as having the same value? It is certainly an easy transition from the discipline of a father to the discipline of Yahweh and we find it made below.

- 3.11 Reject not, (my son)<sup>(1)</sup>, the discipline of Yahweh,  
 And do not spurn his reproof;  
 12 For whom he loves he<sup>(2)</sup> chastens, (3)  
And whom<sup>(3)</sup> he delights in he pains.

This, however, is the only passage where we find it suggested that adversity is a loving discipline at the hands of Yahweh. It is strange that it should be so, but when we remember the intense class consciousness of the Sages and their belief in the imminence of Yahweh's vindication, we can see that the personal problem was swallowed up in the social problem and was relieved by their social expectations.

For all the objectivity of the Sages' outlook on adversity we must be careful to notice, however, that it had an inward as well as an outward aspect. Its power to depress a man depended very largely on his own disposition. The Sages laid great stress on a man's own

(1) Perhaps delete.

(2) Omit <sup>היה</sup>.

(3) Reading <sup>אשר</sup> for <sup>כי</sup>.

(3a) Reading <sup>אשר</sup> (LXX) for <sup>אשר</sup>.

sensitiveness as a provider of his joys and sorrows, so that the measure of his adversity depended not so much on outward circumstances as on his own inward power to meet them and to triumph over them. We quote the following proverbs as illustrating this element in their teaching:

- 12.25 Anxiety in a man's mind depresses it,  
But a kind word makes it glad.
- 15.13 Joyous heart makes happy face,  
But in sorrow of heart the spirit is broken.
- 15.15 All the days of the afflicted are bad days,  
But the cheerful man has a continual feast.
- 17.22 A joyous heart is a healthful medicine,  
But a broken spirit dries up the bones.
- 18.14 A man's spirit sustains his weakness,  
But a broken spirit who can bear?

Adversity also has its ameliorations. Apart from the knowledge of Yahweh's sustaining care and belief in his coming vindication, it is greatly relieved by friendship. The Sages could hardly have stressed this source of amelioration so strongly if they had believed that adversity was the result of sin. The presumption in the two following proverbs is that it is the adversity of the good man which is exercising their minds.

17.17 The true friend loves at all times,  
And a brother is born for adversity.

27.10 Thy friend and thy father's friend forsake  
And go<sup>(1)</sup> to the house of thy brother in the day  
of thy calamity. not  
(Better is a neighbour that is near than a  
brother that is far off).<sup>(2)</sup>

Above all things the good man must have faith. In his adversity he must hope and trust and persevere. He must keep on believing that goodness will vindicate itself for it had Yahweh behind it. "Do not say, I will requite evil, Trust in Yahweh and he will save you" (20.22). Here we are led back to those great proverbs which assert that Yahweh lives and reigns and will vindicate those who put their trust in him. Many a good man struggling with adversity must have been enheartened by these proverbs to live the life of patience and of hope.

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- (1) Delete ~~5x~~ which has been inserted in the M.T. through a misreading of the relevant passage in the "Proverbs of Achikar". See Oesterley p. 241.
- (2) Probably gloss.

THE SAGES AND YAHWEH.

We now pass on to an appreciation of the Sages' beliefs concerning Yahweh. We have already dealt fully with their belief in him as the champion of the Saddikim and enemy of the Reshaim, the supreme judge who will bring their cause to judgment and to reward and retribution. This grand conception of Yahweh was never far from the Sages' thought but there are certain details in the picture which may now be filled in as illustrating the richness of conception and as throwing further light on his attitude to men.

One preliminary point must be disposed of before we pursue our discussion and that is the relevance of 30, 1-4 to the general teaching of the Sages. This fragment seems to disclaim any possibility of knowing Yahweh or understanding his ways, but we can hardly regard it as a characteristic utterance of the Sages. The typical Hebrew Wise Man would never have said, "I have not learned wisdom," nor would he have questioned his knowledge of the Holy One. This fragment is more akin to the scepticism of the late Greek period than to the certitude of the prophetic era on

which the teaching of the Sages is based. So we may leave it out of account in our survey of their thought.

What, then, are the attributes of Yahweh believed in by the Sages? They are touched upon in standard books and do not call for much investigation. We give them in brief summary.

He is the creator of heaven and earth (3.19.20), of men, both rich and poor (22.2), with all their faculties (20.12). He sustains the world in being (3.20). He is omnipotent and omniscient and oversees bad and good (21.1; 15.11; 15.3). All the ways of men are before him and there is no wisdom or counsel able to stand against him (5.21; 21.30). Man proposes but Yahweh disposes (19.21; 16.9). He is, one need hardly say, the implacable foe of all forms of evil (12.22; 16.5; 20.10 etc.).

The supremacy of Yahweh in the world of men raises the problem of the existence of suffering and evil. The Sages did not seek to speculate on this problem but found its practical solution in their doctrine of a class retribution and reward. Their belief in the imminent intervention of Yahweh on behalf of his faithful people supplied their lack of speculative philosophy and reconciled <sup>the</sup> government



of Yahweh to the conditions of the world as they knew them.

There is one aspect of Yahweh's being which we may specially touch upon as having relevance to our study. He is set forth as the only true judge of a man's actions, and as the only being who can estimate the worth of the inward disposition. The following proverbs assert this point of view:

- 16.2 All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes  
But Yahweh tests the spirit.
- 21.2 Every way of a man is straight in his own eyes,  
But Yahweh tests the mind.
- 17.3 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold,  
And Yahweh tests the mind.

This brings us to a crucial question, Did the Sages believe that this inner judgment by Yahweh was made manifest in outward reward or punishment? Certainly all the proverbs do is to assert that Yahweh's esteem of a man may be different from his self-esteem but are we entitled to move further than that and say that the Sages held that Yahweh intervened in life to bring about a correspondence between a man's merits and deserts?

We cannot deduce that from the proverbs above noted but there are others which might lend support to this view.

Here are some sayings which refer to Yahweh as the rewarder of human actions.

- 12.2 A good man wins Yahweh's good-will,  
But a man of evil designs he condemns.
- 25.21 If thine enemy hunger, give him to eat;  
And if he be thirsty, give him to drink.  
22 For thou shalt snatch up coals upon his head,  
And Yahweh shall reward thee.
- 16.7 When Yahweh is pleased with the ways of a man,  
Even his enemies he causes to be at peace with  
him.

The first two proverbs do not go any length in asserting that temporal prosperity is a reward at the hands of Yahweh for personal goodness. 12.2 simply says that Yahweh is pleased with the good man and against the evil man. 25.21.22 is in the same vein as 20.22. It is an admonition against vengeance. The man who is wronged is invited to have patient faith in Yahweh. Yahweh shall vindicate, not necessarily reward with temporal prosperity. Indeed v.22 is in all probability a scribal comment on v.21, but even if it stands it can hardly be taken as proof that the good man will come into temporal prosperity.

16.7 offers more difficulty. As a statement of fact it is diametrically opposed to the experience of the

Psalmists. There the godly man was by no means at peace with his enemies and the salvation he expected was the help which Yahweh would send to the whole faithful community (cf. Ps. 140 dealt with on p.73 ff.)<sup>(1)</sup> The statement also would seem to be contradicted by Prov. 1.11ff and 24.15. It requires investigation.

(2)

Wildeboer cites in illustration of the supposed doctrine contained in the Proverb, Gen. 26.27-31; 31.24; 2 Sam. 19. 9-15. Both Oesterley and Wildeboer also agree that Jer. 39<sup>2</sup> is a case in point. These references certainly point to occasions when enemies showed some kindness to men who presumably enjoyed the favour of Yahweh but they are simply incidents in their career and nothing more. One cannot possibly hold that Jacob or David or Jeremiah lived constantly at peace with their enemies. As support to the presumed doctrine of the proverb, the references are quite irrelevant.

When we examine the text of the proverb, however, it is not at all clear that it is a doctrinal statement. The LXX provides us with quite a different version. Lit-

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(1) There is abundance of material to illustrate this point Cf. Pss. 3.11.17.31 etc.

(2) Die Sprüche p. 48.

erally translated it runs.

Acceptable to Yahweh are the ways of just men,  
And by them even enemies become friends.

As regards the M.T. *ו'שׁוֹן* does not mean "to cause to be at peace" but "to make peace." (cf. B.D.B. p.1023). If this is so, the Massoretic version runs:

When Yahweh is pleased with the ways of a man,  
Even his enemies make peace with him.

This differs, of course, from the LXX version but both of them agree that the peacemaking is of human agency and not brought about by the intervention of Yahweh. There we must leave the matter. The most probable conjecture is that the Sages simply meant that the ways of righteousness are the ways of peace.

These proverbs therefore, in so far as they refer to Yahweh, afford but little evidence of dogma, yet they deal directly with his relation to good and evil men. They show him as one who favours the good men and is opposed to the wicked, but they afford no evidence of a fixed belief in an equitable distribution of deserts.

However, it may still be asserted that there is a dogmatic element in the Sages' thought which states that goodness issues in some form of temporal prosperity and

wickedness in some form of calamity. The sense in which this is true we have already noted in our chapters dealing with the Saddikim and Reshaim and their ultimate reward and retribution, but it may be objected that there are proverbs asserting a more local and limited intervention on the part of Yahweh. Such proverbs are as follows:

- 15.25 Yahweh roots up the house of the proud,  
But he establishes the border of the widow.
- 22.22 Rob not the poor because he is poor,  
Oppress not the needy at the gate;  
23 For Yahweh pleads his cause,  
And robs those robbing them.

To these might be added

- 16.5 An abomination to Yahweh is every proud-minded  
man,  
Assuredly he does not go unpunished.

This proverb need not detain us long. The first clause is the same as 11.20a and the second the same as 11.21a. The proverb, therefore, seems to be built up out of existing material and its meaning depends on the meaning of its original parts. We have already dealt with 11.21 suggesting that it can only be properly interpreted in the light of a final judgment and 11.20 with its reference to the "perfect-of-way" suggests the same class consciousness involved in this doctrine of a final judg-

ment. If 16.5 is as closely related to these proverbs as we suggest, the punishment by Yahweh of the proud-minded man is not a special intervention on his behalf.

Regarding 15.25 and 22.22, 23, their essential feature is the assertions they make concerning Yahweh. They are the outcome of a burning faith in the righteousness of Yahweh and in the certainty of retribution falling on evil-doers. The Sages are not blandly stating that Yahweh intervenes at the present moment on behalf of the widow or the poor rooting up the cause of the proud and pleading the cause of the needy at the gate. They are inveighing against abuses that went on day and daily without let or hindrance. To the wickedness of men they are opposing their almost reckless belief in the righteousness of Yahweh. They are rebelling against the actual state of things and asserting a righteousness which would yet revenge itself on evil.

The manner of that vengeance is clearly stated by the prophets. It will come through an inclusive judgment on all evil doers. Isaiah 10. 1-4a runs as follows:

1. Woe unto them who decree decrees of iniquity,  
And to the writers who write oppression,

2. To turn aside the humble from judgment,  
And to rob the afflicted of their right <sup>(1)</sup>  
That widows may be their prey,  
And that they may plunder the orphans.
3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation,  
And in the devastation that comes from far?  
To whom will ye flee for help,  
And where will you leave your wealth?
4. .... (2).

The meaning of this prophecy is quite clear and should be decisive for the meaning of the statements in Proverbs. Yahweh, who is the champion of the fatherless and the widow (Deut. 10.18), will take vengeance for the wrongs done to them in the day of his visitation.

In this connection the phrase " **בית גאון** " need not necessarily be understood as referring to the actual house of the proud man. This would seem to require the use of some such phrase as **בית גאון** or **בית גאון**. **בית**, as we have already seen, can mean much more than an actual dwelling-place. It can mean "household" or

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- (1) Omitting **עמי** probably result of dittography: overloads line.
  - (2) 4a, which in all probability completed the proverb, is corrupt, but its loss does not affect the point we are making.

"family" or "descendants or an organised body" or even "community. (See B.D.B. p. 108ff). The use of the plural in the phrase suggests the latter connotation meaning that Yahweh in the coming judgment roots up the proud as a class but exercises his favour to the widow.

We may now deal with two particular proverbs which appear to say something about the relationship of the individual to Yahweh, viz:-

10.3 Yahweh does not suffer the soul of the  
Saddik to hunger,  
But he rejects the desire of the Reshaim.

18.10 A strong tower is the name of Yahweh,  
The Saddik runs into it and is set on high.

The text 10.3 presents a difficulty. It is found in a group of 3:3 rythms which makes the first half line too long. The probability is that **יְהוָה** is an insertion and should be removed. Not only does its removal improve the balance of the two halves of the proverb but it also improves their parallelism. **נַפְשׁוֹ צָדִיק** is contrasted with **וְהַיִּתּוֹת וְשֹׂמְרֵי** and **לֹא יִרְעֵיב** with **יְהִדְרֵךְ**.

The proverb thus emended reads.

The soul of the Saddik does not suffer to hunger  
But the evil desire of the Reshaim abruptly  
thrusts aside.



To this reconstruction the tenses of the verbs present a difficulty. There is just a possibility, however, that "Yahweh" was inserted through a misreading of the fem. termination in  $\text{יְעִיבֶהּ}$  and when once inserted  $\text{יְהִיבֶהּ}$  was altered to correspond.

The proverb thus read accords excellently with 21.10,26 and 29.7 but another reading is still possible. It may mean, People are ready to gratify the good request of the Saddik but thrust aside abruptly the evil desire of the Reshaim. The difficulty in this interpretation is that those who were of such a nature as to gratify the request of the Saddik are hardly likely to be so brusque as the use of the word  $\text{יְהִיבֶהּ}$  would imply. It seems more like the action of the Reshaim themselves. Also, if the Reshaim, as we have reason to believe, were a powerful section in the community, as a general rule they were not likely to have been so brusquely treated.

Returning, however, to the possibility that the text of the proverb may be the original text or even accepting it as altered at the hands of a redacter, what does it mean? As a statement of fact it says no more than that Yahweh satisfies the longing of the Saddik but does not satisfy the Reshaim. This does not mean that the Reshaim

present petitions to Yahweh which are turned aside.

( נִיֵּן ) is not used in that connection. It means that the evil intention of their soul is abruptly thrust away by Yahweh. To the Soddik, however, he is gracious. How far that graciousness brings benefit to him as an individual the proverb does not say.

The second proverb however, sheds some light upon this question. It tells us that the Soddik finds the thought of Yahweh a means of strength in time of evil fortune. Just as a man runs into a tower in time of disturbance or of war, so the Soddik turns to Yahweh and finds in him his refuge and his strength. The statement finds its parallel in the Psalms under circumstances which lead us to believe that the writer was by no means enjoying temporal prosperity. (cf. Ps. 28.8 and 61.4), yet we can understand its significance if we remember the faith the Soddik put in the favour of Yahweh and the imminence of his deliverance.

These proverbs are really proverbs which are intended to console or strengthen the Soddik and have little to say to us on the nature of the favour Yahweh shows to the man who puts his trust in him. For his expectation in this

direction we must look to the main content of the teachings of Psalmists and Sages, to their sense of social solidarity and to their burning conviction that Yahweh the living God would soon appear to vindicate his own.

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to low contrast and scan quality. It appears to be a continuation of the same subject matter, possibly discussing the historical or theological context of the teachings mentioned in the first block.]

THE SAGES' DOCTRINE OF REWARD AND RETRIBUTION.

We now draw near to the end of our investigation into the doctrine of reward and retribution held by the Hebrew Sages. Up to this point we have made certain discoveries. We have traced the evolution of the terms "Saddik" and "Rasha" outside the Psalms and the Wisdom Literature. We have seen that to be "saddik" was to be "in the right" with Yahweh, to be "rasha" was to be "in the wrong" with him. We have seen these two terms evolving, keeping their form but altering their content, till about the 6th century B.C. The one came to mean "loyal Israelite, worshipping Yahweh and keeping the laws of Israel in their entirety" and the other "disloyal Israelite or heathen aggressor." In the Psalms we have seen that Saddikim and Reshaim refer to two classes of men, referred to under a variety of names, who stand in opposition to each other. The Saddikim are the loyal worshippers of Yahweh. The Reshaim are not loyal worshippers of Yahweh and are regarded by the Saddikim as his enemies. The Saddikim, as a class, are poor and depressed, longing for deliverance. The Reshaim are dominant and enjoy a considerable measure of temporal prosperity. The Saddikim look for their vindication at Yahweh's hands. This vindication is not merely personal but social. It is the vindication of the

whole community to which the individual Saddik belongs. In this vindication the Reshaim as a class shall be swept away. This intervention, moreover, is looked upon as imminent.

In Proverbs we have traced the same evolution in the content of the terms Saddik and Rasha as we have already seen in the books outside the Wisdom Literature. Beginning with the simple meaning of innocent and guilty party in a law court, the terms come to denote two distinct types or classes of men, the one loyal to Yahweh and following out his Instruction, the other disloyal or opposed to him and in their speech and actions coming under his condemnation. We have also noticed an acute class conflict in the Book of Proverbs between these two classes of men. We have seen, moreover, that the Sages' reference to wealth and poverty and adversity do not bear out a doctrine of individual reward and retribution. Neither is the reward of "life" a prolongation of individual existence but rather ~~to~~ the enjoyment of the moral favour of Yahweh in the community of the faithful, and, in the day of vengeance on evil-doers, preservation from destruction.

We have also seen that outside Proverbs, in Jeremiah and Ezekiel we have no doctrine of a purely individual reward or retribution which would justify the statement that "there is a strictly individual retribution;

judgment is daily executed by God, and finds concrete expression in man's outward lot. Thus the outward lot of the individual harmonises perfectly with his inward character."

Lastly, we notice in the Book of Proverbs a large number of proverbs dealing with the reward of the Soddikim and the retribution of the Reshaim. We have seen that they can be interpreted in one of two ways. They either refer to a purely individual doctrine of reward and retribution which means that each individual is rewarded or punished as a unit isolated from his class (X), or they can refer to a reward or retribution that comes to the groups as wholes, involving the individual but rewarding him as a member of his class or punishing him as a member of his class (Y).

To come to a final decision on the matter, how are we to interpret such proverbs? It seems to us that the first interpretation (X) must be set aside. It is without support from other relevant literature nor does it find a firm basis in the proverbs themselves. Its consequence that a man's fortunes are the index of his character is without demonstration in the proverbs which refer to wealth or poverty or adversity. If we adopt the second interpretation, therefore, we may construe its implication in one of two ways. It may either mean that the Reshaim are involved in successive disasters which

Yahweh brings upon them as a class and from which the Saddikim go free or it may mean that the Reshaim are involved in a final judgment by which the Saddikim, as a community, are vindicated and enter into the permanent enjoyment of the favour of Yahweh. In a word, the proverbs would be related to the teaching of the prophets, either to their teaching on Yahweh's communal judgment on wickedness or to their eschatological teaching. It is difficult in the prophets' teaching to separate the one from the other at times and just as difficult in the Book of Proverbs. The prophets assert the righteousness of Yahweh in his judicial attitude to men. "Its action is naturally two-sided; towards the wicked it is vengeance, while for the righteous it means vindication and deliverance; and usually the two sides of the idea will be displayed in the same act of judgment, the deliverance of the righteous being effected through the destruction of the wicked, but frequently the second is so emphasised that the other is almost or quite left out of view." (1) We find the same phenomena in the Book of Proverbs. Some of the Sages' sayings simply assert destruction on the Reshaim, some assert their destruction and the vindication of the Saddikim. Some we have already mentioned seem quite definitely to involve eschatological teaching (e.g. 11.6; 12.7; 13.22; 14.11; 14.19).

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(1) H. D. B. Art. "Righteousness in O.T." Vol.4, p.279f.

To point out the stage in the teaching of the prophets/<sup>to which</sup> individual proverbs belong seems to us an impossible task. In a book of proverbs, embodying various collections, going back in all probability into the pre-exilic period and not closed till well on in the post-exilic period, it is not possible to refer all the proverbs contained in it to a single point of development.<sup>(1)</sup> We are simply concerned to suggest that they embody the expectations of the Israelites over a long period and are not expressions of a narrow, limited dogma. We would say of these proverbs what A. B. Davidson says of certain Psalms<sup>(2)</sup> "They give back..... the faiths and hopes already contained in the mind of the community and long cherished. And these hopes and faiths are in the main eschatological. When the Psalms speak of the judgment (1.5; 7.6ff; 35.23 etc.) and of the meek inheriting the earth (37.13), of seeing God's face in righteousness (17.15), of the upright having dominion speedily over the unrighteousness (49.14), and much of the same kind, they are not uttering vague hopes never before expressed, but reflecting the certainties of faith as old at least as the prophets of the 8th century, the certainty of a judgment of God (Is. 1.24ff. 2.3.), and of the rise behind it of a kingdom of righteousness (Is. 1.26; 9.7;

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(1) The following seem to be points of contact. 2.21=Is. 57.13; 60.21; 65.9; 10.28 and 11.23= Is. 65. 13,14; 10.25= Is. 66.15; 11.4=Zeph. 1.18; (11.18=Hos. 10.12); (11.28=Is. 60.21); 13.9=Is. 60. 19,20; 14.11=Is. 33.20; (21.18=Is. 43. 3,4); 22. 22,3=Is. 10. 1-4a, Mal. 3.5.

(2) H. D. B. Vol. I. A. B. Davidson, "Eschatology" p. 736.



11.4ff), and peace (Is. 2.4; 9.7; 11.9), and everlasting joy (Is. 9.3, Hos. 2.18ff)" (1)

In relating these proverbs which refer to the reward of the Saddikim and retribution on the Reshaim to the teachings of the prophets and the expectations of the Psalmists and in suggesting that some of them, at least, have an eschatological background, we would guard against a possible misunderstanding. When we use the word "eschatology" we use it only with reference to the eschatology of the prophets and in no way as related to apocalyptic eschatology. The eschatology of the prophets was an eschatology of the nation and not an eschatology of the individual. We entirely agree with Charles when, in writing of this conception, he states, "Though the kingdom itself was to be for everlasting, there was no such

(1) See also v. Gall, op. cit., p. 226.

"Am Gerichtstag wird es den Frommen wohlergehen, da werden sie die Früchte ihrer Taten geniessen, aber dem Gottlosen ergeht es übel (Jes. 3, 10f. Ezech. 18. Ps. 1.1ff; 63.12.) Da schafft Gott Recht dem Bedrückten (Ps. 18.4.27, 5.103.6), er belohnt die anawim, die "Demütigen" (Ps. 10,12.22; 22.27; 76.10; 140.13; 147.6.149.4.) Den Frommen ist er Hilfe und Schutz in der letzten Not (Ps. 23,1ff. 28.5ff; 33.18ff.92.13ff.), sie werden Gottes Angesicht sehen (Ps.11.7ff.) und im Land der Lebenden bleiben (Ps. 27.13; 142.6), denn er errettet sie vom Tod (Ps. 30.4: 68.21; 102.21; 103.4; 116;8). Diese letzte Redensart zeigt uns, wie die Strafe für die Gottlosen zu verstehen ist; es ist der Tod, welcher sie trifft, die Vernichtung des Daseins (Jes. 66.16; Amos 9.10; Seph. 1,3; 3,11). Am Tage der Heimsuchung and des Verderbens fallen sie unter die Erschlagenen (Jes. 10.4; Ps. 63,10; 94.17). Jahweh vernichtet die Frevler, das ist die Hoffnung, die die Psalmen immer wieder aussprechen. (Ps. 7, 13ff; 10.15; 12.4; 17.13; 26.9; 27.2; 28.4; 31.24; 35,1ff; 52.7; 54.7; 55.24; 68.3.7; 73.18; 75.9; 92,10; 94.13.23; 104.35; 109.29; 129.3ff; 139.19; 140.11ff; 146.9; 147.6.)"

promise for the individual who lived to share its glories. He should enjoy it for an indefinite period and then depart from God's presence into Sheol."<sup>(1)</sup> None of the proverbs even suggests such an advanced position as may be reached in Pss. 49 and 73 or as may be implicit in the Book of Job. The Sages had quite manifestly not got beyond the Sheol conception nor had Ben Sira. What we suggest is that their proverbs fall into line with the teaching of the prophets which asserts the coming security, permanence and happiness of the community, while at the same time they held, as the prophets also held, to the popular eschatology of the individual. The individual placed his hopes in the community of the faithful and fervently longed to share in its vindication, but Sheol was always in the background. The goodness of Yahweh must be enjoyed in the land of the living or not enjoyed at all. Apocalyptic eschatology eased the strain of this position but that came later than the period covered by the Book of Proverbs. In the latest portion of the book there are just suggestions that Yahweh's dominion also extends to Sheol but the implications of such a suggestion were never worked out in the minds of the Sages.<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) R. H. Charles, "Between the Old and New Testaments," p. 20.

(2) See Oesterley, *op. cit.* Excursus V. "The doctrine of immortality," p. lxiv. We are in entire agreement with his conclusions.

There was much still to be done before the implications of the absolute sovereignty of Yahweh were worked out in the minds of men who had risen to such high conceptions of his being and requirements as we find in the Old Testament; but the very failure of the Sages and others to rise to any doctrine of personal immortality, with all the light it sheds on the problem of reward and retribution, came from their concern with the spiritual-ethical "this-life" and its implications and this, as v. Hugel truly points out, is the real foundation of any sane and spiritual apprehension of Eternal Life. <sup>(1)</sup>

The expectations of the Sages, limited though they were to this life and its experiences, were not so utilitarian as they have often been supposed to be. If our researches have led us to a truer understanding of their teaching, each man looked for his reward, not in an isolated and selfish recompense, but in the vindication of his whole class because he believed in the supremacy of Yahweh as Lord and Heilbringer and in a righteousness which would yet be manifested to all his faithful people.

Finis.

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(1) "Eternal Life," p. 22.

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