

Pratt
(081 693 1438)

Wisdom Eucharist.

WISDOM Fuchs

Wisdom euchar

Or

Open your ears, O Christian people
open your ears and hear Good news
open your hearts O royal priesthood
God has come to you

chorus: God has spoken to the people
Alleluia
And the words are words of wisdom
Alleluia

Eucharist on a theme of Wisdom

Opening Hymn God be in my head (171)

God be in my head, and in my understanding
God be in my eyes, and in my looking;
God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;
God be in my heart, and in my thinking;
God be at mine end, and at my departing.

Opening words

Israel comes to greet the Saviour
Judah is glad to see the day
From East and West the peoples travel,
he will show the way

chorus God has spoken
They who have ears to hear the message
" " " " then let them hear
" " would learn the way of wisdom
let them hear God's words

Penitential prayer and litany

chorus God has spoken

Forgive us, Lord, for our failures to respond to your gift of wisdom, and help us to turn towards the light, leaving the dark behind us.

Reader A. Job asked where is wisdom to be found - Let us too seek the source of wisdom and follow her paths

Reader B By Wisdom our paths are straightened and we have been taught what pleases you. (Wis 9.18)

All Give us insight O Loving Lord

Reader C She renews the world and makes us God's friends and prophets (Wis 7.27)

All Inspire us by your friendship to tell out the good news

Reader D To her belongs prudence and perception (Prov 8)

All Guide us, O loving Lord, in our understanding

Reader E She calls us to leave foolishness behind and go forward in the ways of perception (Prov 8)

All Help us to grow towards wholeness and continue on the journey

Reader F The fulness of Wisdom is to listen to God (Si.1.15)

All Help us, O Loving Lord, to discern what it is you want us to do.

Reader G Wisdom is given to all who love God (Si 1.9)

All Deepen our love for you O Lord, and may your wisdom work through us so that we may build up the kingdom here on earth.

Song Peruvian Gloria (Responsorial)

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to the Creator
To God be glory for ever, Alleluia Amen (x3)

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to the redeemer,
To God be glory for ever, Alleluia Amen (x3)

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to the Spirit
To God be glory for ever, Alleluia Amen

Readings

Prov 2.6-12

I Cor 17.30

Discussion in groups (see attached page)

Offertory Hymn God is love

God is love, God's the care, tending each, everywhere
God is love, all is there, Jesus came to show us
That we all might know God.

Chorus: Sing aloud, loud loud, sing aloud loud loud
God is good! God is truth! God is beauty! Praise God.

Jesus here lived for us; strove and died, rose again,
rules our hearts, now as then;
for he came to save us by the truth he gave us. Chorus

To our Lord praise we sing, light and life, friend and kin
coming down love to bring, pattern for our duty, showing God in beauty. Chorus.

Eucharistic prayer (on separate sheet)

Ed O Connor's reflection on the Our Father

At the peace - Sung Shalom

Communion Hymn Do not be afraid (122)

Chorus: Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you,
I have called you by your name, you are mine.

1 When you walk through the waters I'll be with you
You will never sink beneath the waves

Chorus

2 When the fire is burning all around you,
You will never be consumed by the flames

Chorus

3 When the fear of loneliness is looming,
then remember I am at your side.

Chorus

4 When you dwell in the exile of the stranger
remember you are precious in my eyes.

Chorus

Final prayer

Final Hymn Jesus Christ is waiting (Iona)

JESUS CHRIST IS WAITING (Tune: Noel Nouvelet)

1. Jesus Christ is waiting,
Waiting in the streets;
No one is his neighbour
All alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am lonely too.
Make me, friend or stranger,
Fit to wait on you.
2. Jesus Christ is raging,
Raging in the streets
Where injustice spirals
And real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I am angry too.
In the kingdom's causes
Let me rage with you.
3. Jesus Christ is healing,
Healing in the streets;
Curing those who suffer,
Touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I have pity too.
Let my care be active,
Healing just like you.
4. Jesus Christ is dancing,
Dancing in the streets
Where each sign of hatred
His strong love defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus,
I feel triumph too.
On suspicion's graveyard
Let me dance with you.
5. Jesus Christ is calling,
Calling in the streets,
'Come and walk faith's tightrope,
I will guide your feet.'
Listen, Lord Jesus,
Let my fears be few.
Walk one step before me,
I will follow you.

Wisdom: Readings, Notes & Discussion

For Yahweh himself is giver of wisdom, Prov 2-6
from his mouth issue knowledge and understanding.
He reserves his advice for the honest,
a shield to those whose ways are sound;
he stands guard over the paths of equity,
he keeps watch over the way of those faithful to him.
Then you will understand uprightness, equity and fair dealing
the paths that lead to happiness.
When wisdom comes into your heart
and knowledge fills your soul with delight,
then prudence will be there to watch over you,
and understanding will be your guardian.

The true wisdom and the false

After all, Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel; and not by means of wisdom of language, 'wise words which would make the cross of Christ pointless.' 'The message of the cross is folly for those who are on the way to ruin, but for those of us who are on the road to salvation it is the power of God.' As scripture says: *I am going to destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of any who understand.* 'Where are the philosophers? Where are the experts? And where are the debaters of this age? Do you not see how God has shown up human wisdom' as folly? 'Since in the wisdom of God the world was unable to recognise God through wisdom,' it was God's own pleasure to save believers through the folly of the gospel. 'While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom,' we are preaching a crucified Christ: to the Jews an obstacle they cannot get over, to the gentiles foolishness, 'but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is both the power of God and the wisdom of God. 'God's folly is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.' 'Consider, brothers, how you were called; not many of you are wise by human standards,' not many influential, not many from noble families. 'No, God chose those who by human standards are fools to shame the wise; he chose those who by human standards are weak to shame the strong, 'those who by human standards are common and contemptible—indeed those who count for nothing—to reduce to nothing all those that do count for something, 'so that no human being might feel boastful before God. 'It is by him that you exist' in Christ Jesus, who for us was made wisdom from God, 'and saving justice and holiness and redemption.'

Notes on Wisdom (taken from Bauer, Encyclopaedia of Biblical Theology)

There are various meanings to Wisdom in the Scriptures— a human quality deriving from experience and instruction, a divine attribute and power.

In the OT it is a gift of God, to be found in fear of the Lord (= religion) and avoidance of evil (Jb 28: 12-28); it is sometimes equated with the law; as well as being a human quality that equips people to deal with life it is also a mysterious power that equips the recipient for various tasks including ruling (Ex 28.3); it is also the "breath of the power of God" (Wis 7 22-26). She is also shown forth in discernment (Prov 4.3). She is personified and given feminine gender (Prov 8 22.31). She is the designer of all things and existed before creation (Wis 7:21 and 9:9)

In the NT Human and divine wisdom are contrasted. True wisdom comes from God (Father - Eph 1:17) and Christ (Lk 21.15). She brings deeper understanding of the meaning of salvation (1 Cor 1:7-9) and "through perfect wisdom and spiritual understanding you should reach the fullest knowledge of God's will" (Col 1:9). In Jn there is much similarity between the "word" and divine wisdom as presented in the OT.

DISCUSSION POINTERS

1. How do we understand wisdom in the context of our Christian lives?
2. How can the christian community best develop powers of discernment and understanding. How can one identify false wisdom?
3. What implications are there in wisdom being personified as feminine?

Blessed are you, Creator God, calling forth life from the abyss of nothingness, breathing order and beauty into the chaos of creation.

Blessed are you, God, the unfolding dream of our universe, in the range and variety of life, from inanimate to animate creatures, from the vast galaxies to the tiny specks of dust. In all you do, you call forth new life and you invite all living beings to participate in this creative task.

We acknowledge you as the source of all we are and have, and we glorify you with all celestial beings as we say: HOLY, HOLY, etc.

Creator God, from the beginning of time, you call forth life, energising our universe with hope and vitality. Down through the ages you reveal your creative power in the change and transformation of life. You raise up wise and holy people to unravel the hidden mysteries of your creative love. And in due course you sent Jesus to embody in our world the Christian revelation of your Godhead.

Sharing the faith and vision of Jesus, we gather here in the power of your life-giving Spirit to celebrate anew the sacred meal that renews our faith, and nourishes us for our pilgrim journey.

We invoke the Spirit of God, who gathers us in worship, to look lovingly upon these gifts of bread and wine, and transform them into the Body and Blood of Jesus, to sustain and nourish us on our way.

Upon this bread, produced from the womb of Mother Earth, we invoke God's transforming power, as we pronounce anew our Saviour's own words:

TAKE THIS ALL OF YOU AND EAT IT; THIS IS MY BODY WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

Upon this Cup of Wine, crushed from the grapes of nature, we implore God's special blessing, as we pronounce anew the Lord's own words, uttered at the original banquet of our salvation:

TAKE THIS ALL OF YOU AND DRINK FROM IT; THIS IS THE CUP OF MY BLOOD, THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND EVERLASTING COVENANT. IT WILL BE SHED FOR YOU AND FOR ALL, SO THAT SINS MAY BE FORGIVEN. DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

As we celebrate this sacred meal, our hearts awaken to the love and energy that animates all creation. We call to mind all that God has done in our world and we look forward in hope as life unfolds - ordered in harmony and enriched in diversity.

As we share this sacred food, we implore the Holy Spirit to transform our inner being, that we may become more deeply attuned to God's revelation in our world today.

As we share our pilgrim journey, we unite our thoughts and prayers with all who seek the truth, within and outside our Churches.

We rejoice in the fellowship of faith which we share with people of other creeds. And we ask the Spirit to guide and enlighten all who lead us towards the fullness of truth.

In union with all peoples, living and dead, we commit ourselves to the ongoing evolution of life, that goodness may triumph over evil, that pain and suffering may diminish, that justice may prevail; And may we never cease to collaborate with our creative God who begets the possible from the impossible, life from death, hope from despair, and the renewal of all creation in the eternal plan of God.

Through Christ, in Christ, with Christ,
We recall and celebrate God's creative love,
Made possible through the transforming power of
the Spirit, One God,
Living and reigning forever and ever. Amen.

Eucharistic

Prayer

The Future

Wisdom: Readings, Notes & Discussion

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The true wisdom and the false *1 Cor 1*

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London 1963², 132f; A. Maillot, *Allmen* 307; P. Gächter, *Maria im Erdenleben*, Innsbruck 1955³, 160-63; A. Penna, *Geremia*, Turin 1952, 256-60; G. Closen, *Wege in die Hl. Schrift*, Regensburg 1939, 101-15; H. Scesemann, *TDNT* v, 162-6.

Johannes B. Bauer

Wisdom

A. In the *Old Testament* wisdom is an idea with many shades of meaning, and a great many different qualities are grouped under this head and brought into association with it. For practical reasons we shall draw a distinction in the pages which follow between wisdom as teaching (1), as a human quality (2), and as a divine attribute and power (3).

Like all other peoples Israel too had a practical knowledge of the laws governing human life which was based on her own experience. She observed how many repetitions of an event produced the same or a similar outcome. Specific types of constantly recurring experience made a permanent impression upon her, which she then formulated in proverbs. Practical wisdom of this kind developed from prolonged observation is to be found, for instance, in Prov 16:18: 'Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall'. It was inevitable that these maxims should have been assembled and handed on as teaching to those under instruction. This empirical and gnostic wisdom in the form of fixed sayings (see Prov 10:1-22:16), as also of counsel (see Prov 22:22-8), is to be found especially in the Book of Proverbs.

In the ancient Near East this wisdom was prized as a benefit of culture.

Hence the kings in particular felt themselves responsible for maintaining and encouraging it. The fact that Solomon is mentioned three times in the Book of Proverbs (1:1; 10:1; 25:1) as its author justifies us in concluding that at an early stage the royal court of Jerusalem took over this tradition of the cultivation of wisdom. The wisdom of foreign peoples was known in Israel also: that of the Edomites (Jer 49:7; Obad 8), the Babylonians (Jer 50:35; 51:57) and the Egyptians (1 Kings 4:30), and among the Israelites foreign wisdom was drawn upon without restriction. In Prov 22:17-23:11 the hagiographer follows an Egyptian model (the Book of the Wisdom of Amenemope) and in the case of Prov 30, 31 it can be gathered from the title and the content alike that it presents us with non-Israelite wisdom. Nevertheless Israelite wisdom had a character of its own. Foreign wisdom was given a religious aspect and assimilated to faith in Yahweh. Whereas Egyptian wisdom is addressed only to scribes and officials, that is, is meant for one specific class, Israelite wisdom applies to the covenant people as a whole. This appears clearly in the Book of Proverbs: only a few verses are concerned specifically with court life (see 14:28; 16:12; 19:12), most of them are addressed quite in general to 'everyman'.

While this experiential wisdom also bears specifically Israelite traits, nevertheless when we compare it with the prophetic writings it becomes clear that it does not represent any typical Israelite form of thought. The prophets speak of Yahweh's sovereign *commandment*. The sage, on the other hand, with

Wisdom

his *counsel*, intends his message rather for the intelligent consideration of man. Often he adduces motives for it of a utilitarian kind. Man's own interests are central to his message. The message of the prophets can be understood only against the background of salvific history. It is addressed to the covenant people or to individuals as members of the covenant people in their historical situation. The sage, on the other hand, addresses man as man, and thereby abstracts from his historical connections. The earlier experiential wisdom of Israel, therefore, has an international and universally humanist character.

Side by side with this universal and humanist wisdom drawn from experience, and at first not even connected with it, another idea is to be found in Israel, one which envisages wisdom not as acquired knowledge but rather as a gift bestowed by Yahweh. Eliphaz receives his teaching in the form of a nocturnal revelation (Job 4:12-16). For Elihu wisdom is not the fruit of age and experience alone, but an effect of God's spirit (Job 32:6-9), who forces the sage to speak as once he forced the prophets (Job 32:19f). Where wisdom is expected from God in this manner the whole of the Old Testament revelation already in existence could be summed up under the concept of wisdom. This identification of law and wisdom is actually made in Sir 24:23-34: law offers the fullness of wisdom. The wise man no longer forms his teaching on the basis of experience and observance. Now he steep himself in the holy scriptures of Israel in order himself to become wise, and as one learned in the law to be of service to the uninitiated in speech and in

writing (see the prologue of the Greek translator of Sirach).

The author of the Book of Wisdom also incorporates profane knowledge into the wisdom bestowed by revelation. Divine wisdom has imparted all possible knowledge to 'Solomon' (Wis 7:21). He has been instructed by God in all branches of Greek science (7:17-20). 'Solomon', the prototype of the Wisdom teacher, thus owes all his knowledge to God and to the divine wisdom. The experiential wisdom which originally existed as an independent category side by side with religious wisdom is forced to give place increasingly to religious wisdom, until finally it becomes subsumed under it. The fact that Israel summed up religious and profane knowledge as a single whole under the concept of wisdom has its significance for the confrontation between her and the gentiles who surrounded her. Since this concept also occupied an important place in the hellenistic intellectual world, it could serve as a bridge for the encounter with hellenism.

2. Corresponding to the twofold character of wisdom as teaching we also find in the Old Testament a twofold understanding of wisdom as a human quality. It is (a) a gift of God which is imparted to individual men as an act of grace; but it is also (b) a natural quality which is acquired by experience and imparted through instruction.

(a) The first idea is to be found especially in the popular writings, in the prophets and in the later wisdom writings (Sir, Wis). There wisdom is the prerogative of God, and for this reason when it is imparted to men it appears in a manner similar to the spirit of God,

Ecclesiasticus

as a mysterious power equipping the recipient for various kinds of task. Divine wisdom is veiled from man, he does not know the way to it (Job 28:12-27; Bar 3:15-35). To petition for this wisdom would be presumptuous, for it would make man like God (Gen 3:5, 22; see also Ezek 28:1-5). As the possessor of wisdom, however, Yahweh can impart it to men. It endows them with mysterious powers such as the interpretation of dreams (Gen 41:38f; Dan 1:17) and sorcery (Ex 7:11-13; see Wis 10:16), but also artistic skill and the cunning of the craftsman (Ex 28:3; 31:3, 6; 36:1f). But it is above all upon kings, rulers and judges that God bestows wisdom, in order to equip them to discharge their functions rightly. Thus he gives it to Moses (Num 11:17, 25) and his assistants (Num 11:25; Deut 1:13), to the king (Prov 8:15f; 16:10), David (2 Sam 14:17, 20; see 23:1f), Solomon (1 Kings 3:11, 28), and the messianic king of the future (Is 11:2-5).

Whereas in the earlier writings wisdom is imparted chiefly to rulers, later it is offered to all (Prov 2:6; see also 1:20; Ps 32:8; Sir 1:9). Wisdom has become more 'democratic'. Admittedly certain prior conditions are mentioned for the reception of wisdom. Only one who stands in God's favour (Eccles 2:26), who loves God (Sir 1:10), only holy souls (Wis 7:27) obtain wisdom. In the most recent texts Israel is mentioned especially as the possessor of wisdom (Sir 24:8; Bar 3:36; Wis 10:17). Israel reflects upon her long past and realizes the significance of being a chosen people.

Now that the circle of those who receive wisdom is changed, other effects

produced by the possession of wisdom are mentioned also: knowledge of God (Job 11:6-9; Wis 9:17), righteousness (Prov 2:6f; Wis 9:17f), wisdom in speech (Job 32:8, 18-20, Sir 39:6; Wis 6:22-5), the spirit of prophecy (Wis 7:27).

(b) Even the most recent of the Old Testament writings recognises a twofold way of arriving at wisdom: prayer (Wis 7:7; 8:21) and instruction (Wis 6:9). Whereas the later writings regard wisdom predominantly as a gift of God, in the earlier stages it was regarded more as a natural quality to be gained through education and experience. For wisdom is first and foremost prudence in the affairs of life, the capacity to guide one's life into happy and prosperous channels. But manual skill is also described as wisdom. The craftsman counts as one who is 'wise of hand' (Sir 9:17). Even the carpenters, goldsmiths and weavers who fashion idolatrous images are called 'wise' (Is 40:20; Jer 10:9). Here wisdom has the force of 'skillfulness'. In a further usage it is the experienced and prudent counsellor who is accounted wise (2 Sam 13:3; 14:2; 20:16), the old man who has been able to accumulate experience throughout a long life (Job 8:8; 12:12; 15:10), the 'scribes' who are well versed in the law (Jer 8:8f). In the period of the monarchy 'scribe' designates the highest of state officials (see 2 Kings 25:19). There seems to have been a special class of 'sages', who enjoyed high repute (Is 3:3; 5:21; 29:14; Jer 8:8; 18:18). This class was probably identical with that of the scribes (Jer 8:8). These sages, together with the prophets and priests,

belong to the leading classes of intellectuals in Israel from the eighth century onwards. Probably it is they who assembled the wisdom sayings and employed them in instructing others. In the post-exilic period the sages are no longer royal officials, but those learned in the scriptures who search the law (Sir 39:1) and interpret it in the 'house of instruction' (Sir 39:8; 51:23).

He who possesses knowledge of men, a sound understanding and prudence in managing the affairs of life is accounted wise. The object of behaving wisely is to attain uninterrupted happiness in one's personal life, and this is achieved by regulating one's conduct in accordance with a prudence that is based upon experience (see Prov 10:4, 8, 10, 14, 17). But the wise man also takes into account a higher retribution, one which rewards actions which are morally good in this present age, and punishes evil behaviour (see Prov 10:3, 6, 22, 27, 29). The motive for behaving wisely is to a large extent personal happiness. The wise man does what is morally good not because it is good in itself, but because it obtains a reward and because evil-doing brings punishment upon itself (see Prov 5:1-20). But religious motivations are also to be found, especially in the more recent writings (Sir 7:36; 35:13-24; Wis 9:8). The norms of wise conduct are experience and insight into the consequences of one's actions (see Prov 16:18, 19, 21, 24, 26), the wisdom of the elders and their experiences of life (Prov 1:8; 2:1; 3:1), what is pleasing to God (Prov 11:1; 12:22; 15:9), and in the later wisdom writings the law of Yahweh (Sir 6:37; 17:11; Wis 16:6; 18:4). In cases in which the law of

Yahweh is the norm of wise conduct the sinner is accounted a fool, while the righteous is wise and prudent. Sin is then folly, while God's commandments contain the highest wisdom (see Ps 14:1; Sir 1:26f).

(c) Yahweh is the wise. The prophets praise the wisdom of God (Is 28:29; 31:2; 40:13f; Jer 10:12; 51:15; see also Job 9:4; 12:13; 26:12). In other passages wisdom appears less as an attribute of God than as a distinct entity with an existence of its own, the way to which is known to Yahweh alone, and which he has penetrated to its depths (Job 28:23, 27; Bar 3:32). In Prov 1:20-33; 8:1-21; 9:1-6 wisdom is personified in the feminine as a preacher. She extols her prerogatives and exhorts men to pay heed to her instruction. In Prov 8:22-31 wisdom speaks of her own origins. God possessed her from the beginning and she was already born before the beginning of creation. When God created the world she was at his side. A hymn to wisdom of a similar character is to be found in Sir 24:1-22. Wisdom exalts herself because of her origins and the blessings which she confers. She went forth from the mouth of Yahweh, sought for a resting-place throughout the entire world, and finally, at the behest of the Creator, who formed her, pitched her tent in Israel, where she grew and bore rich fruit. In Sir 24:23 this wisdom is identified with the law of Moses. Wisdom appears still more as a subsistent entity in Wis 7:22-8:1. Wisdom is a being who is understanding (7:22), who has come forth from God (7:25) and is God's image (7:26). Special works are ascribed to her. She penetrates and permeates all in a manner similar to the Stoic

world reason (7:24; 8:1). She chooses a just one (10:5), leads men in their activities (9:11; 10:10), preserves (10:1, 5) and rescues them (9:18). She loves men (1:6), takes up her abode in them (1:4), and makes them friends of God and of the prophets (7:27). Divine qualities are ascribed to reason. She is immutable (7:27) and all-powerful (7:23, 27). She appears to subsist as a person in her own right, and as distinct from God. She lives with God; God loves her (8:3). She is initiated into God's secret knowledge, and is a chooser of his works (8:4). She is present at the creation of the world (9:9). She directs the course of the world (7:23, 24, 27; 8:1). She sits beside God's throne (9:4). She has come forth from God, and therefore participates in the divine nature (7:25f).

All these statements appear to point to a second divine person, but in view of the strict monotheism of the Old Testament this is extremely improbable. It is significant that in the Book of Wisdom (as also in Proverbs and Sirach) invocations in prayer are never directed to wisdom, but only to God, who can impart wisdom as his gift (Wis 9:4). On the other hand, in the Book of Wisdom wisdom is more than a mere poetic personification of a divine attribute. This appears especially from Wis 7:25f, where wisdom's connection with God is described. It can hardly be said of an attribute or quality that it proceeds from God, or that it is the image of his goodness. Wisdom, therefore, occupies an intermediate position between a subsistent person and a mere attribute of God. The concept of wisdom shares this intermediate position with the concepts of $\nearrow$ word and

$\nearrow$ spirit. As dynamic concepts, they stand for a function of God in relation to the world in its concrete essence. These dynamic concepts are in conformity with a specific mode of thought which envisages in plastic and concrete terms a relationship which we are accustomed to represent to ourselves in abstract ones. Wisdom as described in Wis 7:22-8:1, therefore, is in the last analysis God himself in his work in and upon the world.

This representation of the divine activity under the image of wisdom is significant not only from the literary point of view, but also, and chiefly, from the theological one. In presenting divine wisdom in this form the Old Testament hagiographers have paved the way for the New Testament revelation concerning Christ.

B. In the *New Testament* wisdom does not appear to have the same significance which is ascribed to it in the Old. Only rarely do we find human wisdom referred to in commendatory terms (Acts 7:22; 1 Cor 6:5; Lk 16:8). Moral and religious wisdom (Lk 2:40, 52) and the wisdom of the scribes are attributed to Jesus who teaches with power (Mk 6:2; Mt 13:54; see also Lk 2:47). Paul wishes his Christians to be 'wise as to what is good' (Rom 16:19). The human wisdom of self-will, which leaves no room for the divine wisdom, is rejected (1 Cor 1:17-29; 2:4ff, 13; 3:19; 2 Cor 1:12; Rom 1:22; Jas 3:15), for it derives from the flesh (2 Cor 1:12), the world (1 Cor 2:6; 3:19), and ultimately from the devil (Jas 3:15). In its self-sufficiency this human wisdom cannot apprehend the wisdom of God which is revealed especially in his mysterious

Wisdom

plan of salvation (Rom 11:33). Thus the 'wisdom of the wise' sees in the message of the Cross only folly, whereas it is precisely the power of God that is revealed in it (1 Cor 1:18f). Human wisdom, which holds the wisdom of God for folly, thereby itself becomes folly (1 Cor 3:19). Yet the basic capacity for apprehending the revealed truth is not denied to the wise of this world from the outset. Always conscious that the mission with which he has been entrusted is for the wise and the foolish alike (Rom 1:14), in Corinth Paul actually wins over a few of the wise to faith (1 Cor 1:26). But he who is wise in the human and worldly sense, if he wishes to become truly wise, must first become a fool (1 Cor 3:18), i.e. he must first recognise that the wisdom of this world is folly. True wisdom comes from above (Jas 3:17), from God (Jas 1:5), from the Father (Eph 1:17f), from Christ (Lk 21:15; Eph 1:9), from the Spirit (1 Cor 12:8). It explicates the knowledge contained in faith to ever clearer and broader apprehension. It reveals itself in a deep understanding of the event of salvation (1 Cor 2:7-9; Eph 1:8ff, 17-21), but also in the recognition of the divine will and the moral obligations arising from it (Col 1:9f; Jas 3:13, 17). This wisdom, far from consisting in pure and unrestricted speculation, is bound up with moral maturity (1 Cor 3:1-3). Thus there is a wisdom which is reserved to mature christians (1 Cor 2:6).

The explicit statements about wisdom to be found in the New Testament are relatively few in number. The influence of the Old Testament idea of wisdom on the portrayal of Christ in the New

Testament is all the more significant on this account. Paul calls Christ the wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24, 30). A comparison of pauline statements about Christ with the wisdom literature shows that Paul has transferred specific traits, which occur especially in the Book of Wisdom, as attributes of the divine wisdom to Christ. Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col 1:15; see also Wis 7:26), the firstborn of all creation (Col 1:15; see also Prov 8:22; Sir 1:4). Through him all things have come to be, and we too exist through him (1 Cor 8:6; see also Wis 9:1). It is due to him that the cosmos continues to be maintained in existence (Col 1:17; see also Wis 8:1; 7:27). Christ is the reflection of his (God's) glory, and the image of his being (Heb 1:3; see also Wis 7:25f). An approximation between Christ and the divine wisdom is already apparent in the synoptic gospels. In Mt 11:18f the works performed by Christ are compared with the works of wisdom. Mt 11:25-30 is still clearer on this point: in order to give a clear statement of his relationship with the Father and his significance for men Jesus avails himself of the hymnic expressions in which the Old Testament has described the relationship of the divine wisdom to God and to men (see Job 28:25-8; Prov 8:22-35; Sir 1:1-10; 24:18; Bar 3:27-38; Wis 6-9). But the influence which can be recognised most clearly of all is that of the divine wisdom of the Old Testament upon the portrayal of Christ in the fourth gospel. A comparison shows that the author of the prologue lays under contribution ideas which bear the stamp of the wisdom literature. Between the 'word' of the prologue

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and the divine wisdom of the Old Testament there exists a correspondence which cannot be overlooked (see Prov 1:29; 3:19; 8:22, 30, 35; Sir 24:6, 8; Wis 7:22, 25-30; 8:1). In the gospel itself Christ represents his relationship with the Father and with men in a manner similar to that by which the relationships between wisdom and God and wisdom and men are depicted in the wisdom literature.

Like wisdom Christ too has come forth from God (Jn 8:42; see also Sir 24:3; Wis 7:25). Both have been beloved by God from the very beginning (Jn 3:35; 17:24; see also Prov 8:27-31; Wis 8:3; 9:9). God has given all things into their hand (Jn 3:35; see also Wis 10:1-11:1). As God is at work, so too are the Son and wisdom (Jn 5:17, 19; Wis 11:17; 15:1; 7:22; 8:1; 7:27). In fact both live in intimate union with God (Jn 14:10f; (see also Prov 8:30; Wis 8:3), and are initiated into the knowledge of God (Jn 8:28; 14:24; see also Wis 8:4). Like wisdom, the Son too has been sent into the world in order to redeem it (Jn 3:17; see also Wis 9:17f). Wisdom takes up its abode in men and thereby draws down upon them the love of God (Wis 1:4; 7:27f). Likewise the Son lives in the men who love him and thereby establishes an inner relationship between God and mankind (Jn 14:20-23). In order to come to the Son or to wisdom man first needs God's grace (Jn 6:44; see also Prov 2:6; Sir 39:6; Wis 8:21). Men's destiny is decided according to the attitude which they adopt towards wisdom and to the Son (Jn 5:22, 27; see also Prov 8:35f; Wis 6:18; 10:1-11:1). For these can bestow and maintain life like God

himself (Jn 6:27, 51; see also Prov 8:35; Wis 16:26).

He who observes the commandments of wisdom and of the Son thereby obtains eternal life (Jn 8:51; see also Wis 6:18). He who takes these as his guide does not walk in darkness, for wisdom and the Son are light to men (Jn 8:12; see also Wis 7:26; 10:17; 18:3f). Since both derive from God they are free from sin (Jn 8:46; see also Wis 7:25, 30). Because they come from heaven they can bring a heavenly message to men (Jn 3:12; see also Wis 9:16f). Wisdom and Son alike bestow their friendship upon men (Jn 15:15; see also Wis 7:14, 27), preserve and protect them (Jn 17:12; see also Wis 9:11).

Thus the mysterious figure of the divine wisdom has great significance. The New Testament hagiographers found in the Old Testament presentation of wisdom apt concepts in which they could present the generation of Christ by God before the world began, the part he played in the creation of it, and his significance for mankind in a language that was current among the Jews. Surely we are justified in saying that in Christ it was the divine wisdom become man that they were contemplating.

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