

DIVINE NAMES

Sadday. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, the Divine Name is invariably 'Elōhīm, and the name YHWH is not mentioned even once. Likewise in the Book of Proverbs, the names 'Elōhīm and 'Elōab are sometimes found. Ecclesiasticus also frequently uses the name 'El and 'Elōhīm. In a number of psalms, especially in the Second and Third Books (the Elohist books) the names 'El and 'Elōhīm enjoy primacy. In this connection, we should bear in mind that many psalms show the influence of the wisdom literature, and some of them unquestionably belong to it. Similarly, the names 'El and 'Elōhīm are found in *the last words of David* (ii Sam. xxiii 1-7), which are undoubtedly connected with the sapiential literature.

In the *narrative* literature, that is in the narrative sections of the Pentateuch, the Earlier Prophets [Joshua to ii Kings], the Book of Jonah, the narrative portion of Job, and so forth, the Tetragrammaton and 'Elōhīm are both used — in close proximity.

These are the facts. Having noted that the *wisdom* literature differs, relative to our subject, from all the other forms of literature, and seeing that the sapiential category is a universal type of writing and that many of its characteristics are shared by compositions of this class among all the diverse peoples of the ancient East, we must make a study of the wisdom literature of the other nations, too. It is true that the ethos of Israel succeeded in leaving its impress also on the wisdom books of our people; nevertheless they approximate in many respects to the sapiential works produced outside the Israelite ranks. It will not be superfluous, therefore, to take a glance at the surrounding domains.

But as soon as we begin to study them, we are struck by an amazing phenomenon. The wisdom books of the ancient East, irrespective of the people from which they emanated or the language in which they were written, usually refer to the Godhead by an appellative rather than by the *proper* names of the various divinities.

In the sapiential writings of the *Egyptians* the term mostly used is the common noun *ntr* (corresponding to 'Elōab or 'Elōhīm in Hebrew). This practice we already find in the most ancient texts, like those that have reached us in the Papyrus Prisse (ii, 2: 'The ways of the god are not known'), or the Instruction for King Merika-Re (61 and 130: 'The god knows all the names'). So it con-