

Wisdom in Exile

The Wisdom Concept in Relation to Heaven's Earthly Life¹

by Duane David Otto

IN A RUINED CITY about 80 miles north of Kandy, India, stands the sacred Bo-tree. Spiritual pilgrims journey there from all over the world to worship and pray, and have done so for centuries, because it is believed to be the place where Buddha attained perfect wisdom, after forty-nine days of mediation. According to Rhys-Davids, "Buddha's Bo-tree is to the Buddhist what the cross is to Christians."²

In a real sense, the Bo-tree symbolizes the stark contrast between Judeo-Christian wisdom as presented in the Bible, and that depicted in other religions, even secular world-views of a more popular persuasion.³ The Bo-tree reaches up toward heaven (as did the tower of Babel). It symbolizes man's belief that nirvana, enlightenment, understanding, the good life, conquest over besetting sins (or however you choose to frame human aspiration) can be achieved by simply climbing a self-made ladder into the heavens.

The cross, however, is the antithesis. "Who shall ascend into heaven and bring God down?" asks the apostle Paul (Romans 10:6). The answer? No one. For it is God who must come down to us if we are to be saved. Thus, the Cross is the symbol of Wisdom incarnate; a particular kind of wisdom that is not of this world. But rather a gift. One that must be received, not earned if it is to take up residence in our hearts. This is the power of God's redemptive story. A story narrated from the beginning of time by Wisdom itself. Listen to how John Montgomery outlines it:

Wisdom begins in the Old Testament as practical guidance, becomes identified with God's law, is conceived as a divine hypostasis; in the New Testament, God's wisdom is declared to be incarnated in Jesus the Messiah, is available to believers through God's Holy Spirit, and will one day mean sin-free fellowship with the Creator in the New Jerusalem. At each stage, God initiates by his grace, and man acts as a recipient.⁴

Montgomery's words are helpful. They, in fact, frame the main question for tonight's talk. And it's this: If wisdom is part and parcel to the story of redemption. And if wisdom is a concept that actually matures and develops within the redemptive plan of God. And if true wisdom is essentially a gracious gift, one that is necessary to live weighty, meaningful, and even exilic lives in a wayward world. The question is then, how committed are we to pursuing Her? And what does that pursuit look like?

¹ Presented: November 19, 2010 at Ithaca Fellowship

² Quoted by John Warwick Montgomery in "Wisdom as Gift", Interpretation, p 56

³ Ibid. 56

⁴ Ibid. 57

That's my question. And it's my desire to explore this basic question of human need with a four-fold approach: First, by *defining* wisdom. Second, by addressing further this *need* for wisdom. Third, by considering the *posture* of the heart for it to be received/nurtured. And lastly, by drawing attention to a specific wisdom motif in the Bible that has grabbed my attention of late, I would like for us to consider what sort of life wisdom creates. I am guessing this last point will create some discussion.

I believe each of these points have something of value to offer. And in the end, it is my hope that each of us tonight will respond in a deeper and more comprehensive way to the call of wisdom. Because as one noted scholar put it, "this call is issued to all those who would live in harmony with God, creation, and human society and hope to experience well-being."⁵ I like that very much, because at the end of the day that is why Ithaka exists.

I. Wisdom Defined

First things first, how should we define true wisdom? Well, that's not an easy question to answer. In my pursuit to find the answer, I sifted through many journals and commentaries. In sum, this is what I've learned: There is a very rich vocabulary of word groups designated for wisdom in the Bible. In fact, according to Professor Fox, there are about eleven concepts in the biblical wisdom literature alone that convey the idea of wisdom. Of these eleven, you can create two groups: Weak and strong.⁶

By virtue of us being educated in a western culture, I would say that we are probably more familiar with the weak concepts. For example: A weak sense of "wisdom" could be "prudence" or "good judgement." It's reflected in the adjective "wise." We might say something like this to a person tonight, "It was very wise of you to stop and ask for directions." No deep meaning of life is implied here. The word is simply used to define good judgment. We use it to convey other virtues, too, like: frugality, sensibility, good intellect, moral intuition and discretion. These are all good virtues to be pursued and praised, thus we designate someone wise if he or she demonstrates them on a consistent level.

But then we have what are called the strong concepts. Now, unlike the weak, very little credit can be given to underlying factors such as innate ability, education, expertise in a particular vocation, or even one's exposure to strong family traditions. The origin of this kind of wisdom is a bit more mysterious and divine. In other words, it is less pragmatic and more heavenly in nature. Less to do with effort and discipline, and more to do with the holy imagination and spiritual maturity. Let me give you an example of a strong kind of wisdom. It comes from the pen of the apostle Paul in Colossians 1:28-29. He writes:

We proclaim [Christ], admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me."

⁵ Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature*, p 46.

⁶ Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p 29.

Several things are linked here in Paul's mind. Paul is saying that maturity is the great goal of our lives. In other words, maturity should be the thing we strive for in relationships like parenting, discipleship, education, sanctification, friendship, and so on. What kind of maturity is he talking about? There are several that come to mind. And all of them can be found in the wisdom literature. For example:

- ❖ Is he talking about *physical* maturity? Is the great goal in life to have a strong, healthy, well-developed body. It's a worthy goal. As stewards, we should be concerned with the health and vitality of our bodies, and our children's bodies. But it's not the end all. Is it?
- ❖ Is the ultimate goal *intellectual* maturity? I know quite a few people who work hard to improve their intellectual faculties. They study the Bible, the sciences, history, the arts, medicine, etc. in order to comprehend meanings and perceive relations and causes. But is that the end all?
- ❖ What about *emotional* maturity? Is the goal a balanced personality, to be able to interact with a wide variety of people, to be perceived as responsible, hardworking, intuitive, and stable? Again, we strive to find such balance for ourselves and our kids, but is that the end all?

All of these aspects of maturity are personified as wise-living. Chapters 10-31 of Proverbs affirm the importance of such practical skill in daily life. But it is clear in the mind of Paul that wisdom leading to this kind of maturity is secondary. Paul, rather, is talking about something deeper and more mysterious. He is talking about wisdom that produces Christ-like maturity. The kind as Professor Montgomery put it, "has the status of divine emanation."⁷ Chapters 1-9 of Proverbs present this kind of personification. It is a wisdom deeper and older than frugality. Deeper than good judgment. Deeper than the well of intellect or moral discretion. It begins with a relationship with God. It progresses through seasons of faith. And it matures through holy contemplation and obedience.

II. Our Need for Wisdom

Would you agree that our need for wisdom, in all its complexity, is great? It certainly would be tempting for us to do some cultural analysis at this point. Surely we all could share some anecdotes that pinpoint the disturbed nature of our community and world. After all, the folly of man is the chief characteristic of our old-nature. Our words, selfishness, and poverty of thought and imagination constantly testify to this truth. But perhaps the better approach is this: What says the Lord? What does He say regarding our need of wisdom? In all honesty, that is the chief question for us to consider tonight.

- ❖ It's written in Deuteronomy 32:28 - "*They are a nation void of counsel, and there is no understanding in them. If only they were wise, they would understand this; they would discern their latter end!*" Do here God's pensive cry? God is grieved by the waywardness of his people, Israel. Which tells us His heart is deeply saddened and moved by our self-sufficient thoughts.

⁷ Montgomery, "Wisdom as Gift", Interpretation, p 48.

- ❖ It is written in James 3:13 - *"Who among you is wise and understanding?"* James is reminding the church that God calls all his children to true wisdom. But who among us is really hungry to receive it? According to James wisdom is not just acquired information. But it is knowledge that leads to practical insights with deep spiritual implications for daily life.
- ❖ It is written in Job 28:12 - *"Where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man does not know its worth, and it is not found in the land of the living."* Job is asking who really has divine wisdom? Who has the wisdom of God? Who has the knowledge and the understanding and the skill in issues of eternity? He goes on to say that in order to find it one must understand that God is the source. It cannot be bought with gold from an institution. It is priceless. It is of divine origin.
- ❖ It is written in Isaiah 5:21 - *"Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes."* This is a word of warning to all of us because the world in which we live, move, and have our being believes it already is wise. Optimism and human dependence upon technology and scientific knowledge have increased exponentially over the last century. Yet, to what end? Are we better off? In many ways our progress is merely puffery. False praise has blinded us.
- ❖ From Proverbs 8 we here wisdom herself crying out in the street - *"Does not wisdom call? Does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand; beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud: 'To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the children of man. O simple ones, learn prudence; O fools, learn sense.'" Here in chapter 8, wisdom is almost Christological. Perhaps Paul had this passage in mind as he wrote to the Colossians. She was begotten before all things. She is the counselor of God in creation. She spreads out a feast for those who will receive her. Her call is universal. It is both urgent and important. It is even coupled with warning for those who resist or turn away from the invitation.*

As you can hear, wisdom is a gift that evokes a response. There is no room for complacency or mediocrity. If the days are truly evil, then we can never have too much of her. That is why the the Lord would have us to spend our whole lives searching for wisdom as if she were a rare jewel. In fact, that's how Proverbs describes her. Wisdom is the "principal thing" to get (4:7). It is better than rubies or priceless jewels (8:11). It is like a tree of righteousness (3:18). The price of wisdom is even above gold (Job 28:18). It is better than a strong healthy body (Ecclesiastes 9:16). Better than a heavily defended nation at war (Ecclesiastes 9:18). It is obvious the Lord wants us to "acquire wisdom and with all our acquiring, get understanding" (Prov. 4:7).

Perhaps the best place for us to see our need for wisdom is in the life of Solomon. In I Kings, chapter 3, a remarkable thing happened. While sleeping, the Lord came to Solomon in a dream and asked a question: "Ask what I shall give you," says the Lord (5). At this point in the story Solomon is young. He is the son of a great King. His father loved the Lord dearly. He wants to honor his father's legacy and serve well. But deep down within his heart (and isn't interesting how

dreams have a way of exposing this quiet, unsettled place), he knew his father's throne, the throne of Israel, was beyond his human abilities.

I can't help but wonder if Solomon learned this lesson by watching his father struggle. Maybe it came from Agur, the author of Proverbs 30. We really don't know. Either way, it was an important lesson. One that told him that no matter how much faith, love, charisma, skill, aspiration, knowledge, or good intentions he possessed, his life at some point would be dwarfed by ignorance, mystery, and the hidden providence of God. So to prepare himself for the throne, Solomon asked for the best gift of heaven. To paraphrase D. J. Estes, he asked for the virtue that ultimately exposes the meek and lowly to God's power and purposes in the unknown rhythms of life.⁸

As you may recall God answered. Over Solomon's lifetime he spoke 3,000 proverbs and wrote over a 1,000 songs. Through heaven's wisdom, according to Perdue, he received a "comprehensive, unerring knowledge of all that exists as well as the structure of the cosmos... the activity of the elements, the temporal order... and its association with the heavens, animals, the powers of spirits... humans, and plants."⁹

Bottom line, he had an encyclopedic mind. He had a voracious appetite for the things of the Lord. He wanted to know the Lord in the context of true reality. Thus, in his pursuit of Him, Solomon did not limit himself to the Torah or the contemplation of God, leaving the sciences, the natural world, and world of leisure in the hands of others. On the contrary, he looked upon it as his task to know God in all his glory; things terrestrial as well as things celestial, viewing the order of creation and the wondrous nature of God displayed in physics, cosmology, astronomy, zoology, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, biology, and human history.¹⁰ Through him, the Lord brought peace to the land and to a nation. His breadth of wisdom was like the "sand of the sea." Making his tenure on the throne a time of reconciliation and restoration for all.

It's an amazing thing. It's mind boggling. But I know what some of you may be thinking - *All of this is astounding! But did he really ask for the "best" thing? After all, look where all this wisdom led him. He eventually lost his way. Perhaps he would have been better off to ask for something else. Like what? Perhaps the same love that burned in his father's soul? A love for Yahweh that would keep him before the Lord walking "in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward" God (I Kings 3:6)?*

It is a sincere question. And many of us have wondered what Solomon's life would have been like if he did. The best response I can give is this: What did God think of his request? Because at the end of the day isn't that really what we want to know? Is God pleased? The answer is yes. Verse 10 tells us why. Because Solomon's heart was in the right posture to receive wisdom.

⁸ D.J. Estes, "Wisdom and Biblical Theology," Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings, p 854.

⁹ Leo Perdue, Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature, p 304

¹⁰ See "Lectures on Calvinism" by Abraham Kuyper to understand the depth and full implications of this world-and-life view.

III. Posture of the Heart

Which brings us to my third point (and indirectly answers the question above). What is the right posture of the heart for wisdom to be received and nurtured? Clearly, the context of Solomon's life at this point is *already* one of love. God loved Solomon and Solomon loved the Lord (2 Samuel 12:24; 1 Kings 3:3). Solomon's request is made in the context of a loving, personal relationship with Yahweh. If one examines the text closely, one even notices the request is preceded by praise, reverence, and humility; something that is often called the fear of the Lord. Listen to what it says:

Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father... At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. And now, O Lord my God, you have made your servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil, for who is able to govern this your great people?" It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.

What is the posture for wisdom to be received? At least three things are in the text.

1. Must Look Up.

First, for wisdom to come, the heart must look up. Spiritual wisdom has a divine origin. God is the possessor of wisdom. The Apostle Paul puts it this way in Romans 11:33, "Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." Wisdom is God's creation. It belongs to Him. From the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth when there was no depths wisdom was brought forth. Later in life Solomon reflected upon the vanity of knowledge and understanding void of this vertical vantage point. Without God knowledge and understanding is vanity. Wisdom finds its life in Yahweh. To seek wisdom apart from Him is foolishness and leads to despair.

2. Must Ask and Seek.

Second, as a gift, wisdom demands a response. In other words, there is effort on our part (Proverbs 2:6; 4:19-27; 6:6). The heart must pray for wisdom and be open to her. Notice God gave an invitation. Solomon responded to her. Wisdom was granted. And hence forth his life was one big quest. In the New Testament, James puts it this way, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting..." (1:5). Asking and seeking go hand in hand. As we seek it, and crave it, we are in dialog with the Lord. We are hungry for Christ's discerning presence because wisdom has a particular goal. Wisdom

speaks to us in this world and provides certain virtues, skills, knowledge, and blessings (cf. Proverbs 1:32; 3:12-18; 8:1-5; 9:1-6).

3. Must Fear the Lord.

Third, there must be faith in Christ. Solomon and James both testify to this truth. In the Old Testament the phraseology of course is “the fear of the Lord.” Fear is the beginning of wisdom. Fear of the Lord is a major theme in the book of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Why? Tremper Longman puts it this way: “Fear is a virtue that leads to piety, praise and humility.”¹¹ Fear, in other words, is a posture of reverence. Reverence or deep respect for Christ prompts one to follow his ways and revere His word, His character, and His creation. Which in turn inspires us to observe carefully the spiritual makeup of our natural and human world. We are more inclined to detect patterns of cause and effect when we are in a position of reverence. We are more inclined to be a people of sensitivity, justice, simplicity, righteousness, curiosity, calmness, focus, good will, and reverent of all that exists.¹² Bottom line, we might say that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of heaven’s earthly life.

Now of course in God’s economy the opposite of fear is “folly” or unbelief, something we all are prone to fall into if our hearts stray from God. Proverbs 15:21 says folly is the opposite of true wisdom. The fool hates “knowledge” and the “fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 1:22, 29). At the root of folly is pride. Pride puffs up. It competes against God and his graces. Thus, as Solomon’s life testifies, the quest for godly wisdom is needed and honorable, but by no means a stroll down a quiet, herbaceous, garden pathway. It is a spiritual battle. Old Testament wisdom literature offers an extensive study of fools and their ways and how to address its sinful nature.

For instance to be a “fool” is not woodenly synonymous with “ignorance” although our world would like us think so. This worldview has a long history. Ever since the theft of knowledge in the Garden of Eden human beings have associated wisdom with just head knowledge. But that is not so. To be a fool is to be someone who is morally indifferent or antagonistic to the Lord. You could be one of the brightest theologians at Princeton Seminary and in God’s eyes still be a fool. Why? Because a fool “values autonomy rather than revering Yahweh’s word and character, so it chooses to follow the path characterized by wicked behavior that results in death in all its manifestations.”¹³ Wicked behavior should not just be defined with legalistic terms like greed, lust, envy, or jealousy. It is much more. At the core, it is any behavior motivated by a heart that is unresponsive to Christ’s gracious call and rule.

IV. The Way of Wisdom

This distinction between the wise and foolish is important. Because well-intentioned Christians sometimes ignore the call of wisdom because they don’t

¹¹ Tremper Longman, “Fear of the Lord,” Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings, p 205.

¹² Robert Perry, The Virtues of Ignorance: Complexity, Sustainability, and the Limits of Knowledge, p 57

¹³ D.J. Estes, “Wisdom and Biblical Theology” Dictionary of the OT, p 854.

want to fall prey to pride and its puffery. They are of the opinion that wisdom is too costly to pursue. Like Solomon, it might be the undoing of one's soul. So they play it safe. They focus only on a personal relationship with Jesus, but in so doing they miss out on the God-given virtues that equip us to serve Christ, our families, and this world with biblical depth, relevancy, and integrity. Which brings us to my fourth and last point. How should we pursue divine wisdom? What kind of life does she create? Scripture offers several insights. Tonight, I'd like to present just one. It is the concept found in Proverbs 3:13-20. It reads as follows:

Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding, [14] for the gain from her is better than gain from silver and her profit better than gold. [15] She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. [16] Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. [17] Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. [18] She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed. [19] The LORD by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; [20] by his knowledge the deeps broke open, and the clouds drop down the dew.

Notice this passage does not contain weak references of wisdom. There are no instructions for moral behavior or right living. Rather, wisdom in this context is presented as weighty. It is life changing. It is divine, heavenly, and worthy of praise and adoration. And the key words in this passage are the "tree of life." Many biblical scholars (e.g., Victor Hurowitz) recognize that this as a reference to the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Life itself. To be sure, some argue it is only a metaphor. But as I see it, this argument breaks down when one considers the references to Genesis 2 and 3. For example:

- ❖ verse 13 begins, "Blessed is the one who finds wisdom."
- ❖ verses 14 & 15 speak of the value of wisdom.
- ❖ in verse 17, we are told wisdom creates peace and pleasantness that is found only in God's presence.
- ❖ verses 19-20 speak of the role wisdom played in creation and the role it continues to play in maintaining God's world. All of these virtues are Edenic in nature. And yet they are offered in the here and now.

All of us here, at least, know that Eden was the home of our first parents. The 2nd and 3rd chapters of Genesis tell the famous story of their births, marriage, work, and departure after eating from the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Why were they banished? In order to keep them from eating from the Tree of Life. So to keep them and their descendants from returning, God stationed cherubs to the east of the Garden and a sharp/fiery sword to guard the Tree of Life.

Now, I am not suggesting to you tonight that we all need to pack a bag and go on a good-old adventure in search of the lost Garden of Eden. The Bible doesn't contain stories of this kind. We can leave the odyssey tales to J.R. Tolkien, Homer, and Adapa. Nonetheless, as Victor Hurowitz tells us, the Bible does in fact prescribe a pathway for "regaining access to the Tree of Life in particular and

the blessings of Paradise in general” this side of heaven.¹⁴ What is the prescription? To put it succinctly, it is this:

The way back to the Tree of Life is through Wisdom.

Do you see the irony in this? According to Genesis, Adam and Eve were expelled from Paradise for misusing what? Wisdom. They coveted understanding and knowledge in order to be like God. Thus they were banished from the Garden. But ironically, we are told that wisdom is the way back into the Garden. Wisdom restores us to the place we were banished. Which brings us full circle to the what Paul is saying to us in his writings to the early church. Remember Jesus is Wisdom Incarnate. His death was necessary for the gates of Paradise to be reopened. The fiery sword that once guarded the holy of holies fell upon his body. And now you and I, by virtue of his shed blood are able to enter into the primordial blessings that our first parents enjoyed. Surely this glory is only in part, but the journey has begun and wisdom is creating heaven’s earthly life.

Conclusions

Years ago when I started to pay close attention to the call of Lady Wisdom, I suppose I responded as any good student would.

- ❖ I thought she was calling me to a more obedient walk with Jesus. I am still convinced that is true.
- ❖ I thought she was calling me to greater faith, knowledge, and understanding. I am still convinced that is true.
- ❖ I thought she was calling me to greater acts of devotion, mercy and justice. That much is still true.
- ❖ I thought she was calling me to be more circumspect, disciplined, cunning, witty, discreet, frugal, and productive. And all that is still true.

But what I am now just beginning to see, as the Lord shines His light on the matter, is that I spent very little time in the wisdom literature because all of these imperatives could be addressed and wrestled with in other places of Scripture. The wisdom literature was just for those occasions when life was upside down. And right from wrong seemed distorted. It was medicine for the soul. Not the place to find a full course meal.

But that is wrong. Wisdom is a worldview. As my vision of Jesus grows, I am amazed to see the role of Wisdom grow in my life. Kind of like what Montgomery was saying at the beginning of this talk. Wisdom is part and parcel to the story of redemption. Wisdom is a concept that should develop and grow as we mature. Thus as my vision of Jesus grows, I see Him more and more as a Sage, a Wise man, One who sparred with the wisdom teachers of His day. Exchanging wit and truisms with His followers. He’s a Man intimately connected to His surroundings, deeply concerned with the regularities of life, and the patterns of cause and effect. And what boggles my mind all together, and excites me to high heaven, is that he was a Man at every moment and every event aware of the wisdom found with His Father’s creation. Thomas Merton once reflected:

¹⁴ Victor A. Hurowitz, “Paradise Regained: Proverbs 3:13-20 Reconsidered, p 50.

Every moment and every event of every man's life on earth plants something in his soul. For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in the minds and wills of men. Most of these unnumbered seeds perish and are lost, because men are not prepared to receive them: for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of freedom, spontaneity, and love (Thomas Merton *Essential Writings*, p 57).

The sum of it is this: Wisdom is calling out to us. We need her. She affirms the providence of God, the order of the cosmos, the divine gift of life, and the goal of human life. But the dilemma for many of us is that we misinterpret the call. We define it according to our warped or cultural interpretation of the Christian life. We don't see creation as a world full of meaning, order, and wonder. We tune her out. The seeds of contemplation and reverence fall on sterile soil. Thus we are left vulnerable and weak before a worldly tyrant that demands conformity.

It is my hope and prayer that tonight you will hear Her call afresh. Perhaps this talk creates more questions than it answers. And that is okay. That is where I am. Little consideration is given to the subject, so one has to be proactive in finding Her. But hopefully something was awakened, and that deep ache that you feel inside perhaps has a name and a the prospect of resolution.

That is my prayer.

Questions:

1. What place does wisdom have in contemporary education?
2. What is the goal of education? Discipleship?
3. What place does wisdom have in our pursuit of Christ?
4. How does wisdom address cause and effect? - retribution. What problems does it pose? Distortions? Must be careful not to put too much emphasis on it. Automatic retribution denies God the freedom to act according to divine will. That is why the psalmists in 72 and 77 are frustrated with the seemingly easy life of the wicked.
5. Do you agree with John Stott's observation: "Christianity is growth without depth."