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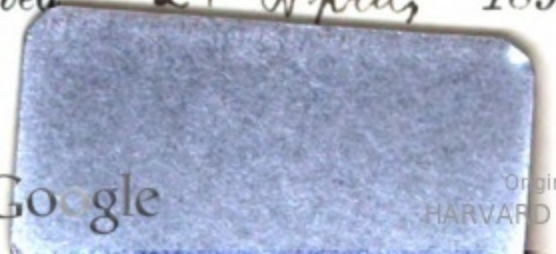

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The Modern Reader's Bible

Wisdom Series

Ecclesiastes

The Wisdom of Solomon

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THE MODERN READER'S BIBLE

A SERIES OF WORKS FROM THE SACRED SCRIPTURES PRESENTED IN MODERN LITERARY FORM

Books — Ecclesiastes, &c. Eng. R. V.

ECCLESIASTES

AND

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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INTRODUCTION

I

THE present number of the Modern Reader's Bible unites in a single volume the biblical *Ecclesiastes* and the apocryphal *Wisdom of Solomon*. It is essential that the two works should be studied together. While they have their respective places in the development of Wisdom literature, yet from the two works previously introduced they stand separated by a gulf as wide as that between primitive and modern thought. *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus*, with all their force and beauty, belong to Hebrew literature; the writings now to be considered form a part of that world literature which is independent of time and nation. In their thought the two works are contrasted to the extent of being antagonistic. But this antagonism is itself a unity; we have here Semitic religious tradition and speculative Greek thought struggling together over the supreme human problems of immortality and Divine providence. No literary styles could be more unlike than those of *Ecclesiastes* and *Wisdom*. The one carries to an extreme the indefinite suggestiveness of Hebrew; in the

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other there is a minuteness of analysis that goes beyond that of classical Greek philosophy. Yet the two agree in casting a spell of fascination over every reader; a spell nowise diminished by the fact that in *Ecclesiastes* every second sentence is a literary puzzle, nor by the rebellious spirit with which the reader of *Wisdom* follows the plunges of his author from passages of the noblest eloquence to subtilties of inference or analogy which delight to delay an argument in full course. Such agreement and contrast make reason enough for studying *Ecclesiastes* and *Wisdom* together; a more important reason yet is the fact that a leading point in their interpretation is the question whether one of the two is not a veiled answer to the other.

Our consideration of these works is at the outset encountered by a critical obstacle of an unusual kind. I have said, in the opening volume of this series, that I consider it unnecessary to introduce historic questions of authorship and date in an edition that aims only at literary appreciation. But obviously an exception must be made where a mistaken view of authorship has been allowed to come in as a disturbing force, and throw a false colour over the interpretation of a classic. This I believe to have been the case in regard to the traditional view that *Ecclesiastes* was written by King Solomon. In this question all the considerations from which authorship is usually inferred — local and historic colour, position in literary development, minutiæ of language which fix the date of a

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book as clearly as handwriting betrays the age of a manuscript — all are on one side, and point to a period of writing centuries later than Solomon. On the other side there is only a single argument. But this is an argument which, if it could be maintained, might outweigh all the rest: for it is the plea that the book itself distinctly asserts that Solomon is its author. If this be true, he would be a bold critic who would run counter to such an assertion, and proclaim a work like *Ecclesiastes* to be a literary fraud. What I desire to show is that, when the whole is carefully studied, the words supposed to proclaim the Solomonic authorship are capable of an entirely different interpretation.

As a preliminary to all interpretation the exact literary form of the work must be settled. *Ecclesiastes* is not a book with a continuous argument, but is a miscellany of wisdom: made up of a number of reasoned compositions, such as I designate essays, and also strings of disconnected brevities — maxims, epigrams, unit proverbs. In these respects the work agrees with *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus*; but it has one important point of difference from them. In *Ecclesiastes* the essays, though each is an independent composition, unite in a common drift of thought; and they are further bound into a unity by a prologue and epilogue. This again is what we might expect. The entirely isolated observations which make up the matter of *Proverbs* were, in *Ecclesiasticus*, found so far drawn to-

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gether as to be grouped into 'essays.' In *Ecclesiastes* there is a further advance, and all the essays are drawn together into a sequence. But this is not inconsistent with the fact that here, as in *Ecclesiasticus*, disconnected sayings are used to fill in gaps between the more important compositions.

This recognition in *Ecclesiastes* of portions of the whole as outside the general argument must not be dismissed as an example of that vicious criticism which, in analysing a book, forms a theory and then pronounces spurious those passages which do not harmonise with it. Partly of course this determination of the technical form of the work is based on internal evidence, and I must leave the arrangement presented below to speak for itself. But it is further supported by the analogy of the other books of wisdom which display the same features. A more important confirmation still is the passage of the epilogue in which the author describes the contents of his work.

> And further, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he pondered, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs.

'Pondered' suggests original composition, and it is unnecessary to remark that a large part of this work bears the impress of a highly individual thinker. 'Sought out' may well mean borrowing from others; there are not a few of the miscellaneous sayings which lack the peculiari-

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ties of expression that characterise the book as a whole, and may be supposed to have been borrowed from others. 'Set in order' describes the careful disposition of the parts between a prologue and epilogue which bind them together. The author goes on to state his conception of the limits of philosophic writing.

> The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well fastened are the words of the collectors of sentences, which are given from one shepherd. And as for more than these, my son, be warned: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

The purpose of the whole of *Ecclesiastes* has been to serve as 'goads,' or stimulus, to wise conduct; and the image of 'nails well fastened' fits in with the special purpose of Essay IV—to secure in pithy notes those results of detail which wise thinking has yielded, in the absence of power to solve the mystery of the whole. Thus to invent and collect, and by arrangement to stamp the whole with the individuality of a single mind—a flock gathered by a single 'shepherd'—this represents to our author the furthest limits to which philosophy can safely go. When he proceeds to warn against what is 'more than these,' it is surely not straining his words to see in them protests against books which in continuous argument pretend to solve the whole mystery of things, the impossibility of which is the chief thought of *Ecclesiastes*.

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With the form of the work thus determined as a suite of five essays, separated by miscellaneous sayings, and bound together by a prologue and epilogue, we are prepared to consider the question whether this *Ecclesiastes* asserts itself as the composition of Solomon. When we turn to the prologue and epilogue, where it is most natural to expect light on the authorship of a work, we find not a single mention of Solomon, nor anything to suggest his personality. Indeed, so markedly is this absent from the epilogue, that those who hold the traditional view are driven to doubting the authenticity of these final sentences. Again, there is no suggestion of Solomon in the miscellaneous sayings, nor in four out of the five essays. On the contrary, there are in these portions of the book several passages which it is difficult to fancy the historic Solomon as writing; and his general tone as he describes life is that of one who endures the oppression of the powerful, or at least sympathises with such suffering, rather than that of one who has held power in his own hands. The connection with Solomon is wholly confined * to what is here called the first essay (from verse 12 of chapter I to the end of chapter II in the biblical arrangement); but this portion of the book is entirely occupied with Solomon. It will be urged that if this section is from the pen of Solomon then the general unity of connection between this

* I have not thought it necessary to refer to the sub-title: on which see below, p. 137.

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and the other sections will extend the Solomonic authorship over the whole work. This is a fair argument; but on the other hand, if it can be shown that the words supposed to assert authorship are susceptible of another interpretation, then this confinement of the personal matter to a single essay will become a consideration of great importance.

This essay opens with the words, "I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem"; and proceeds to narrate a survey of life and all its good things. It is quite natural for a modern reader, in whose mind the idea of individual authorship is a matter of course, to understand these words as announcing the writer of what he is about to read. But to the student of Comparative Literature the expression will be equally suggestive of another meaning — that this King Solomon is not the author but the *hero* of what is to follow. A modern philosopher as a matter of course gives out what he is to say in his own name. But it was a frequent custom in the literatures of antiquity to clothe a philosopher's thinking under some dramatic personality. Thus Plato never speaks in his own name, but puts his thoughts into the mouth of Socrates in dialogue with other personages; no one supposing that Socrates said what is thus attributed to him, but the writer conveying to all that he regards himself as of the school of Socrates. The Pythagoreans made it such a point of honour to speak their thoughts in the name of their common master, that they

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regarded the violent death of one of their number as a judgment on him for the selfishness of speaking in his own name. To how large an extent the same spirit prevailed among the wise men of the Hebrews is powerfully suggested by a passage of the Palestinian Talmud, which says that "Scripture, Mishnah, and Talmud, and Agadah, *and even that which the diligent scholar was destined to point out before his master*, were already spoken to Moses from Sinai."* In the Bible itself we are able to see how much more prominent to its arrangers is the matter of the book than its authorship, in the fact that the titles (outside prophecy) reflect the former; the Books of Job, of Ruth, of Esther, of Joshua, of Judges, of Samuel, of Kings, are works of which these personages are heroes, not authors. But there is a parallel closer at hand. This very companion work to *Ecclesiastes*, which is written in Greek, and belongs to a date not far removed from the Christian era, nevertheless is found to use the same personality of Solomon; its middle essay — like this first essay of *Ecclesiastes* — narrating in the first person an incident of the historic Solomon, and on it as a text preaching in his name to other kings; while this personality, which has not appeared until that part of the book, is dropped when its purpose has been served. In precisely the same way, the author of *Ecclesiastes* in this essay identifies himself for

* Quoted in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, article *Ecclesiastes*. See, also, below, p. 137.

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the moment with Solomon, in order to picture an imaginary experiment which could have been fully carried out only by Solomon, as the one personage who united the supreme forms of wealth, of wisdom, and of power.

It seems reasonable, then, alike from literary usage and force of context, to understand in the opening words of this first essay a reference to something other than authorship. We now catch the significance of the circumstance that outside this particular section no trace of Solomon appears throughout the whole book. We must remember again how the whole weight of internal evidence is found by experts to tend in the opposite direction; so much so that one of the most eminent of them has made the remark that if *Ecclesiastes* be by Solomon there can be no such thing as a history of the Hebrew language. In view of all these considerations it becomes necessary to dismiss altogether the Solomonic authorship of *Ecclesiastes* as a misunderstanding coming down to us by tradition from an uncritical age.

Who the author of the book was, and what is its age, I do not care to discuss. All that I have been anxious about has been to remove, even for the least critical reader, the great obstacle to the understanding of *Ecclesiastes* which the mistake as to its authorship has interposed. I believe no great work has ever been so much misunderstood in its whole spirit as this present book of wisdom. Commentators have come to it with the preconceived idea

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that they were to read the pessimism of a broken-spirited debauchee; and what writing is strong enough to fight against a preconceived idea of interpretation? Those who will resolutely dismiss from their minds associations with the personality of Solomon will, I believe, as they follow the work be able to catch a spirit of a totally different kind.

When we approach *Ecclesiastes* from the side of the scriptural philosophy contained in previous volumes of this series, we find that a great change has come over the spirit of Wisdom literature. The wisdom of *Proverbs* and *Ecclesiasticus* united two ideas: the wise observation which should guide conduct, and the sense of divine harmony in all things which continually presents itself as a theme for adoration. In *Ecclesiastes* we find that a violent divorce has taken place between these two conceptions. As regards wise conduct our author is as devout as his predecessors. But 'wisdom' as a name for the grand harmony of all things has disappeared; and in its place has emerged an idea expressed by the characteristic word 'vanity.' The word 'wisdom' is indeed used for the harmony of the whole in a few negative passages that express the failure to find it; but for the most part there is a studious substitution for it of other terms, such as "the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end." There is further the significant use of the expression "all things"—"all things are vanity," "all things are full of weariness"—to convey what seems a broken unity. And adoration has

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disappeared; reflection has been turned upon the harmony of the universe, and the writer finds only a mystery which he despairs of solving.

The prevailing impression of *Ecclesiastes* is that it is wholly made up of this despair. But if we follow the writer through his sequence of essays, we shall find how he sways between the negative failure to interpret the universe, and certain positive thoughts, which, though subordinate, are yet steadily gaining ground as the thinker proceeds from his commencement to his conclusion.

The Prologue is wholly negative. The totality of things is incomprehensible — a vanity of vanities — and the effort to interpret it is so much lost labour. In the things of nature there is no movement which is not movement in a circle; in human enquiry there is no attainment nor satisfaction. In the succession of events there is no advance, and in the succession of the generations of mankind there is no continuance, or 'remembrance' of one generation by another.

Then we get the First Essay, in which the author takes up the personality of the historic Solomon, as the individual endowed by tradition with the combination of all objects of human envy, in order to describe an imaginary experiment, by which the several kinds of good things are to be successively subjected to review, with the only result that each will be found wanting. First, Solomon is supposed to accumulate all possible objects of pleasure, in-

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cluding those that their enemies would call follies; but all through he is to retain his 'wisdom' or power to analyse. The experiment is supposed successful as an experiment: for his heart does rejoice because of all his labour. But this is his only 'portion' from it; for when he comes to make his survey, all proves 'vanity.'

Next, Solomon is to turn reflection on to wisdom itself, together with its opposite, madness and folly, to see if here any genuine satisfaction is to be found. He sees at once that wisdom excels its opposite as light excels darkness; but this is neutralised by the further consideration that one event of death awaits the two. Next he analyses 'labour'—the production of goods as distinguished from the pleasure which consists in consuming them. But this again appears hateful in the light of death, and the necessity of leaving to another, who may prove to be a fool. There is yet a fourth question before Solomon's experiment will have been exhaustive: may wisdom be found in appreciating the process, as distinguished from the result, whether of pleasure-making or labour? But the thought occurs that this power of appreciating life as it passes is a special gift of God, and does not depend upon the individual himself. The fancied survey has in all its departments ended in illusion.

This first essay then is negative, with one positive thought—that natural happiness, or the appreciation of life as it passes, is a special gift from God.

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Introduction

The Second Essay might be entitled, "The Philosophy of Times and Seasons." A particular theory of life is brought up for examination. It seems very likely that the writer has in mind the preface to the fourth book of *Ecclesiasticus*; but the terms are not precise enough for us to insist upon this. The point of the theory is that the sphere of wisdom does not lie in the Whole but in the Parts; that all things have an interest of their own — have their 'seasons' — and that here may be found an interpretation of life which may stand testing as 'wisdom.' Having stated this view in the form of a sonnet, the Preacher proceeds to meet it with four objections. First, it is true that the parts have an inherent interest of their own; but equally inherent and God-implanted in man is the questioning of the universal — he hath set the 'world' in their heart — and this is a questioning which makes satisfaction impossible. Further, this appreciation of the interest in the details of passing life is a God-given thing, and God will act upon fixed principles which no effort of the individual will ever alter. A third consideration is that the 'seasons' of things are seen reversed: wickedness is seen in the place of judgment. A momentary thought suggests — Does not this imply an hereafter in which all these things will be set right? The thought is dismissed: the facts may equally suggest that there is no difference between man and the beasts in the final event; death is the end of all alike. As a fourth objection

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comes the thought of those things which no 'season' can make interesting; and with a gloomy picture of oppression, envy, and failure this second essay comes to an end.

It has been negative in its general spirit, like the first. But the positive thought of that first essay — that true happiness is the gift only of God — has been repeated with emphasis.

The Third Essay is on the Vanity of Desire. Attainment without satisfaction, attainment followed by hurt and final failure, desire prompting effort only to encounter limitations inherent in humanity itself, while the knowledge of what is truly desirable will be given only by a future which the short life will never see: all these topics are briefly touched. But the place of prominence in this essay is devoted to two companion pictures: on the one hand is exhibited God-given wealth with God-given satisfaction in it, and on the other hand the same wealth granted by God and the satisfaction withheld. This last is pronounced the worst of all fates — an untimely birth is better than he. By contrast we may say that the other side of the picture presents the highest human good; and this is nothing else than the natural, God-given happiness which the previous essays have emphasised.

The Fourth Essay starts with the impossibility of reaching the 'wisdom' that is so far off and so exceeding deep; but recognises an employment yet left for the wise — to search out what distinctions of things are possible to be

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made, as if notes by the way to a wisdom the traveller never expects to reach. The essay is entirely in the form of such disconnected notes. The mournful mysteries and paradoxes of our existence are passed in review by our author, each touched with his marvellous felicity of descriptive suggestion. Only two paragraphs need be noted here. In one he has been describing the spectacle of the oppressor and his innocent victim coming to the same end of death and oblivion, and how such impunity of evil causes the hearts of the sons of men to be fully set in them to do evil. He continues:

> Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and prolong his days, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

In the other case the Preacher breaks away from his gloomy thoughts, to apostrophise in a tone of rapture the man who has found natural happiness.

> Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works.

In this fourth essay then, notwithstanding its general tone of gloom and despair, the writer recognises again the wholesome enjoyment of life, and how it constitutes God's special stamp of approval. And this positive thought is reinforced by another; that, in spite of all appearances to

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the contrary, it cannot be other than well with the righteous and evil with the wicked.

When we come to the Fifth Essay, the positive tone has triumphed over the negative, and made it subservient.

> Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.

Life is a thing of joy. But it is a joy shadowed by the 'judgment.' The word must not be allowed to suggest New Testament ideas, but implies (as regularly in Wisdom literature) that fixed faith in the eternal controversy between good and evil, and the downfall of evil, which will make all conduct responsible. More than this: the gloomy mystery of life is to emphasise its happiness. The coming days of vanity are a reason for cherishing life while it lasts; the coming days of feebleness a reason for a more early recognition of the Creator.

The Epilogue gathers up the results. The totality of things is incomprehensible. The function of wisdom, on its theoretic side, is limited: wise thoughts may be collected on the details, but to go further and attempt the mystery of the whole is lost labour. And on its practical side, all duty is summed up in one conception — human works within the limits of God's commandments.

The whole thought of *Ecclesiastes* is now before us. Its negative side is the abandonment of the mystery of the universe as insoluble. Its positive thoughts are two —

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immovable faith in God and duty, and sympathy with natural happiness. I believe a prejudice has been created against the system of *Ecclesiastes* — especially with those who have had the idea of Solomon in their minds — by the repeated occurrence of such words as 'eat and drink,' 'mirth,' 'be merry'; and they have felt that its philosophy could be summed up in the saying, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." But this is to be misled by a mere feature of literary style. A marked characteristic of *Ecclesiastes* is its use of symbolic phrases; the final essay terminates in a *tour-de-force* of symbolism by which all the infirmities of old age are worked up into a picture of beauty.* Now, just as this writer uses such expressions as 'under the sun' over and over again as a formula for the world of the actual, so the phrase 'eat and drink' is his regular formula to express, not only what is sensuous, but all appreciation of what life brings. This may be traced by a careful reader always, but it becomes indubitable where the expression 'eat and drink' is applied to riches and to labour, and even to honour:

> — a man to whom God giveth riches, wealth, and honour, so that he lacketh nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, etc.

There is throughout no note of abandonment to the revel, but the thought is always of simple satisfaction with the

* Compare the note On Formulæ: below, page 131.

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play of life: and this it is which the Preacher considers the special gift of God to his chosen. I say boldly that there is nothing unwholesome in *Ecclesiastes*. The tradition of Hebrew and Christian religion has in actual fact laid too much stress on the sterner side of things; it is good that at least one of the sacred canon should be found to remind us that one duty of life is happiness, and that nothing in religion can be higher than praise. We should have expected such doctrine from a system of thought in which had been incorporated some simple theory of providence. But to find a thinker whose analysis of the universe has broken down in perplexity, yet clinging resolutely to the ideas of God and duty, and keeping his sympathies with happiness fresh — it is this which makes the chief charm of *Ecclesiastes* as an item in the world's great literature.

But it may be asked, Is there nothing ignoble in the pessimism which, with such painful iteration, insists on linking man with the beasts in their subjection to the common enemy death? Pessimism there is, but surely nothing ignoble. For it is impossible to read *Ecclesiastes* without seeing that the writer is one who longs to believe in a future, which absence of evidence forces him to reject; as he presses his search for intellectual satisfaction it is the hand of death which he finds closing up every avenue of thought along which he has attempted to trace wisdom. The passionate tone with which he dwells upon

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the topic of mortality is prompted by the sense of honour, which will make a man judge with special severity the evidence of what it is his interest to believe. It is however this despair of anything beyond the grave which makes the main point of conflict between *Ecclesiastes* and the companion work which has yet to be considered.

II

In its literary form *The Wisdom of Solomon* is peculiar, not to say unique. It is a series of Discourses on texts. The texts are gnomic sentences standing out in their independence from the surrounding matter, in which the clauses are, after the manner of Greek prose, bound together in the closest relation by connecting particles. Such discourses are an expansion of the maxims, which — as I have used the term in this series — consist of prose comments on gnomic texts; and maxims of this kind form an important part of Wisdom literature.

Another feature of the present work is what may be styled Analytic Imagination: not the spontaneous picturing of scenes, of which Hebrew literature has its full share, but a conscious and artificial filling in of details into the outline of another writer. The Plagues of Darkness, of Hail, of the Smiting of the Firstborn, make passages of *Wisdom* which catch the attention of every reader. *Exodus* had

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been content to describe such events in brief though pregnant phrases. The present writer expands those phrases into elaborate and wonderful pictures, with touches that are the product of a reflecting mind turned upon the story of the older writer. It thus appears that this feature of *Wisdom* is of the nature of a comment on a text: in fact, we have here the intrusion of commentary into creative literature.

The next characteristic of the author of *Wisdom* is no less peculiar: he is the great master of the Digression. St. Paul, and St. John in his Gospel, make much use of digressions, and some of their noblest passages are to be ranked under that head. But with the present writer the digression seems to be an end in itself. In the long final discourse there appears an elaborate chain of digressions, and digressions from those digressions, and digressions removed a degree further still, like Chinese boxes one within another; when the last degree of removal has been reached, the writer returns regularly on his steps, picking up without fail the broken threads, and thus resuming his argument by steps as formal as those by which he had departed from it. In my notes will be found a Syllabus of the whole work, in which these transitions are accurately marked; and when the law has been caught, the clear thinking of our author is at once apparent. The spirit of digression appears again in what seem awkward parentheses as they stand in the text, but which fall into

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their natural proportions when they are treated — as I have ventured to treat them — by the modern device of footnotes. For what is a footnote but a digression? And footnotes and digressions alike are, to all intents and purposes, comments upon that portion of the text from which they branch off.

Of a similar kind is one more feature of this author's style. The discourses, though they are independent, are yet, so to speak, 'dove-tailed' together by the way in which the final thought of each leads directly to the next; in the case of the last two the texts are the concluding words of the discourse that precedes. The effect is that each successive composition is of the nature of a digression from the composition standing before it, but a digression which is expanded into an independent piece of writing.

Thus it appears how all the peculiar features of the present writer are variations of one conception, that of a comment on a text. Though I know of no parallel case, yet it is intelligible that such unique literary form should be the product of its age. The language of *Wisdom* is Greek, but it is a part of the literature of Palestine. Now, in the interval that separates between the Old and New Testament the chief literary activity was directed into the channel of oral comment on the law. The spirit of commentary has in this one work crystallised into literary form; and as its representative *Wisdom* will hold a permanent place in world literature.

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The above are the morphological features of *The Wisdom of Solomon*. But another point must here be touched upon. The more the work is studied, the more interesting becomes the question whether it is not an answer — but always a veiled answer — to *Ecclesiastes*. The consideration of this point will force itself upon us as we survey the series of discourses.

The brief Opening Discourse is on Singleness of Heart: how crooked thoughts and murmuring words frighten wisdom away; while "that which holdeth all things together" must hear every secret utterance. At first sight it is difficult to see what is the purpose of this single paragraph, marked out by its form as a separate discourse. Why insist so strongly on the commonplace of the Divine omniscience? and why devote half the paragraph to 'secret murmuring,' which cannot be considered a characteristic vice of the 'judges of the earth' to whom the warning is addressed? But the passage becomes full of point if the author can be understood as glancing at the opening essay of *Ecclesiastes*. In that essay King Solomon was pictured as indulging his soul in all pleasures and 'follies,' only keeping his wisdom with him in order to try the philosophic worth of such a life. The present discourse pronounces such an experiment a contradiction in terms:

> **Wisdom will not enter into a soul that deviseth evil, nor dwell in a body that is held in pledge by sin.**

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The 'murmuring' on which our author lays such stress may well be directed at the pessimism of the Preacher. The concluding thought, that such false speech 'destroyeth a soul,' forms a link to the next discourse.

In the Second Discourse the antagonism to *Ecclesiastes* stands more clearly revealed. Its very text speaks of a mistaken life "courting death"; and the first words of comment declare boldly that God made not death, that righteousness is immortal; it is ungodly men who by their words and life have "made a covenant with death." Their words are presented as an invitation to death in a monologue, in which the ungodly seem to be expanding phrases of the Preacher as they declare that their life is a chance, that there is no return from Hades; come then (they say) let us enjoy the good things that are; and from this they proceed to the further thought of persecuting the righteous because their ways are so different from their own. Is this a fair representation of *Ecclesiastes?* By no means, nor is it meant to be. It is not the Preacher himself that is attacked, but the easy perversion of his views of life which may be made by others. An exalted soul in spite of speculative despair clings to God and duty; but the same theory of life may be wrested by the ungodly to their destruction.

In one of his grand outbursts the author cries that the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God: thus turning against *Ecclesiastes* one of his own phrases (chapter

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ix. 1). Their seeming death is but a trial of them; in the 'time of their visitation' there awaits them splendour, a position in the hierarchy of God, and the grace and mercy he reserves for his chosen.

At this point the tendency to digression appears. The author is going to supplement the monologue of the ungodly in this world with another monologue when they are awakened beyond the grave. But first he breaks off to notice the hopes of the ungodly, that is, the substitutes of earlier thought for this hope of immortality. These substitutes are two: life over again in posterity, and length of days in this world. As to the first, the brood of the ungodly is unstable and rests under a curse: better than this is childlessness with virtue. And again, the old age of the wicked is without honour; whereas (another noble passage declares) the life cut short may be the life crowned; made perfect in a short time, and caught away lest the bewitching of naughtiness should bedim innocence.

The author now returns from his digression: catching up the phrase 'grace and mercy to the chosen,' he paints the overthrow of the opponents of the righteous, how they are in the grave dishonoured carcases, and how for them comes a day of reckoning, when they behold their despised victims standing in great boldness and triumph. Another monologue expresses their amazement, and their sense of the vanity of that in which they had confided. Then the author speaks to emphasise the fleeting nature of all un-

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holy hopes. But here an unexpected trend of thought is found. In a brilliant picture the author describes the whole creation uniting in vengeance — but on whom? Not, apparently, on the wicked themselves, who have thus been followed through their life on earth to a judgment beyond the grave, but on the general empire of wickedness upon earth: for the climax is that

> so shall lawlessness make all the land desolate, and their evil doing shall overturn the thrones of princes

There follows naturally a warning to princes, whose greater responsibility will bring them greater punishment; and this makes the link leading to the third discourse. But meanwhile the question of the final condition of the wicked has been left unsettled.

In the Third Discourse the author has fully assumed the personality of Solomon, and in his name proposes to speak to other kings of wisdom: to speak without grudging, for wisdom desires the multiplication of the wise. Solomon is made to tell how he began with the helpless infancy of other men, and had to pray for the wisdom he sought. From his earliest youth he preferred this wisdom to all other good things.

Here comes one of the grand digressions. He preferred wisdom to all things; but in reality all good things came with her. In giving him this gift God gave him also the knowledge of all human and external nature.

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> For himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that are: to know the constitution of the world, and the operation of the elements; the beginning and end and middle of times; the alternations of the solstices and the changes of seasons; the circuits of years and the positions of stars; the natures of living creatures and the ragings of wild beasts; the violences of winds and the thoughts of men; the diversities of plants and the virtues of roots. All things that are either secret or manifest I learned: for she that is the artificer of all things taught me, even wisdom.

This is a most important passage. The earliest wisdom was a reflection on human life: the 'works of God' in nature are mentioned only as a theme for praise. *Ecclesiastes* had touched external nature only to see in it a meaningless round of irresistible recurrence. But the above words imply that reflection and analysis have been brought to bear upon external nature; what to us is physical science has now become a part of wisdom.

But this digression is at once followed by another. We have seen how in the earlier writers 'wisdom' covered two ideas: wise conduct, and the adoration of the harmony that reigns in all things. In *Ecclesiastes* these two ideas had been divorced: the harmony of things was a mockery, and conduct was all that was left for wisdom. In this work the severed ideas are to be united more closely than ever: the wisdom that animates conduct and the wisdom that reigns through creation are one and the same. In the most famous passage of the book it is proclaimed how

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wisdom is all-pervasive, the spotless mirror of the working of God and an image of his goodness. Even *Ecclesiastes* had seen that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. For once the two thinkers are at one: being compared with light (says the present speaker) wisdom is found to be before it; for to the light of day succeedeth night, but against wisdom evil doth not prevail. She is indeed an effulgence from the everlasting light.

Returning from the digression, the discourse presents Solomon as repeating how he chose wisdom as his bride; for she would bring him riches, understanding, experience, glory abroad and rest at home. The only mode of obtaining this desire he thought to be prayer. *Ecclesiastes* had presented an imaginary incident of Solomon, though one in keeping with the traditional conception of this personage. But here the historic incident of the prayer at Gibeon fits the writer's purpose; and along the lines of that incident Solomon is represented as invoking the wisdom that cometh from on high. Closing with the impossibility of knowing God's will without wisdom, the prayer reaches the thought that, when in the past men did right, it was through wisdom that they were saved: and these words are the text of the discourse which follows.

The Fourth Discourse gives us briefly, what the close of *Ecclesiasticus* had treated at full length, a succession of the Worthies of Israel. But the purpose is very different; the present writer mentions famous men not to praise them,

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but to trace in their career the full conception of wisdom. The preceding discourse had brought together again the elements of wisdom which had been severed in *Ecclesiastes*: the subjective wisdom which reigns in individual conduct, and the objective wisdom which binds together the totality of things. The two are now seen side by side in the Fathers. The discourse touches Adam's self-conquest after his first transgression; Cain falling away from wisdom in his anger; Abraham kept firm under sharpest trial; Lot's wife passing wisdom by and perishing; wisdom entering into the soul of Moses and enabling him to withstand kings. It tells also of the external Power that preserved Adam when he was a lonely thing in the midst of the whole creation; that called righteous Abraham out of his land; that found a way of deliverance for righteous Lot; that watched over the wanderings of Jacob and the checkered career of Joseph; that wrought deliverance for the people of God and guided them along a marvellous way through the Red Sea. But the discourse does not divide the two conceptions of wisdom as I am doing here; there is design in the way the writer sways alternately from the one to the other wisdom as he traverses the succession of the Worthies, as if to insist the more closely upon the union he has in the last discourse proclaimed. When the conclusion is reached, the conception of the objective wisdom as providence stands fully revealed; and it is a detail of God's providential care over his people that

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makes the final words of this discourse, and the text of that which follows:

By what things their foes were punished,
By these they in their need were benefited.

The Fifth and last Discourse is wholly given up to tracing this aspect of Divine providence in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Seven illustrations of the principle are treated at full length. Water was turned into blood for the enemy; water was brought out of the solid rock for the people of God. On the Egyptians came a plague of loathly vermin; dainty quails were sent to satisfy the appetite of the Israelites. While the enemy were plagued to their death by the noxious bites of the locusts, the people of God suffered serpent bites only for admonition, and then found a wondrous salvation. Rain unquenched by fire destroyed the food of Egypt; a rain of manna fed the chosen in the wilderness, sweetly tempered to every taste. Mystic darkness oppressed the oppressors of Israel; for Israel darkness was illumined by a pillar of fire. It was a night of deliverance and song to the fathers, that night which slew the firstborn of Egypt. To the chosen death came indeed as a trial, but in the righteous Phinehas a champion was found; the ungodly ventured a final folly, and upon them came strange death without mercy.

The long digressions of which I have spoken are occupied with kindred themes: how sinners are punished

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in that wherein they have offended; how such measured punishment is the mercy of Omnipotence, leading even God's enemies to repentance; how all idolatry is folly, but there are degrees in that folly, of which the Egyptians in their worship of things hateful shewed the worst; the origin of idolatry is discussed, and its spread till it became a corruption of all life. This matter is rightly presented in the form of digression, for it is outside the strict thought of the text. But discourse and digression have kindred themes: the one celebrates providence, the other connects providence and God.

When we survey *The Wisdom of Solomon* as a whole, two impressions stand out from all others. One is the attitude which seems maintained throughout toward *Ecclesiastes*. The later work cannot be considered a direct answer to the earlier, because considerable part of the matter in each has nothing to represent it in the other. But the idea that the author of *Wisdom* has found a starting point in his antagonism to the thoughts of the Preacher seems forced upon us by the continual contrasts between the two works. *Ecclesiastes* had, without argument, insisted passionately on the limitation of life by the grave. *Wisdom*, equally without argument, assumes immortality as underlying its whole treatment of life. The Preacher, despairing of aught beyond death, rested his ideals on duty and happiness. The later work presents a picture of the ungodly using the same plea to justify their

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life of evil, and awaking beyond the grave to understand their folly. *Ecclesiastes* fancies Solomon undertaking an experiment in evil to see what it yields to wisdom. The other thinker hints how the very act of experiment is fatal to the wisdom sought; and calls up another part of Solomon's life to bring out, in the same imaginative picturing, how by prayer alone is the wisdom to be obtained of God. *Ecclesiastes* had found the whole sum of things an insoluble mystery, and seeks wisdom elsewhere. His successor first goes to God for wisdom, and with the wisdom so obtained unfolds all things of nature and history as an ordered scheme of providence.

The other main point to note is the enlarged conception of 'wisdom' that has come into this its last representative in scriptural philosophy. In *Proverbs* wisdom suggested wise conduct, with an ordered universe to adore. *Ecclesiasticus* adores the wisdom without and reflects on the wisdom within; but he adds the history of God's people, as a theme for that side of wisdom which is praise. In *Ecclesiastes* we must recognise an advance, for reflection has been extended to that which is without. But in appearance there is only a loss: for the works of nature and the course of events yield to his analysis nothing but vanity; life only is left for wisdom, and this is a life miserably limited by the grave. But in the fourth work the discord of *Ecclesiastes* has been harmonised by widening the sphere of wisdom. Life is no longer insoluble

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when life is extended to a future beyond death. History is added to the field which philosophy may analyse, and this writer's analysis sees in it an harmonious scheme of righteousness and the protection of the righteous people. Moreover, external nature is subjected to analysis; but this nature appears no less a theme for adoration. In its latest presentation Wisdom has recovered the harmony between the world within and the world without; and in its enlarged sphere Wisdom is identified with Nature, with Providence, with Immortality.

***

The text followed in this series is that of the Revised Version, for the use of which I must express my obligation to the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge. The marginal alternatives are often adopted. In the two works included in this volume more assistance than usual is necessary to enable the reader to follow the argument. But I have been unwilling to break up the pages of the text by marginal headings, and have preferred to transfer such helps to a Syllabus (at the commencement of the Notes), which is constructed on the principle of representing each paragraph of the text by a paragraph of the Syllabus. The prospectus to the Modern Reader's Bible promises brief notes: I have, I fear, departed from the spirit of the announcement in the present case. But the

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peculiarity of the two works seemed to demand it; and my notes here as elsewhere confine themselves to making the works clear to the literary reader, without attempting detailed or critical exegesis.

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Ecclesiastes

or

The Preacher

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ECCLESIASTES

A SUITE OF ESSAYS WITH MISCELLANEA

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PROLOGUE

ALL IS VANITY

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Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath man of all his labour wherein he laboureth under the sun?

One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; and the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he ariseth. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it turneth about continually in its course, and the wind returneth again to its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again.

All things are full of weariness, man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.

That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there a thing whereof men may say, See, this is new? it hath been already, in the ages which were before us.

There is no remembrance of the former generations; neither shall there be any remembrance of the latter generations that are to come among those that shall come after.

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ESSAY I

in the form of a Dramatic Monologue

SOLOMON'S SEARCH FOR WISDOM

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"I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And
"I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom
"concerning all that is done under heaven: it is a sore
"travail that God hath given to the sons of men to be
"exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are
"done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity, and a
"striving after wind. That which is crooked cannot be
"made straight, and that which is wanting cannot be num-
"bered. I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I
"have gotten me great wisdom above all that were before
"me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart hath had great experience
"of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied my heart to
"know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I per-
"ceived that this also was a striving after wind. For in
"much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth
"knowledge increaseth sorrow.

"I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with
"mirth: therefore enjoy pleasure. And, behold, this also
"was vanity. I said of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth,
"what doeth it? I searched in mine heart how to cheer
"my flesh with wine — mine heart yet guiding me with
"wisdom — and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see
"what it was good for the sons of men that they should do

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"under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me
"great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vine-
"yards; I made me gardens and parks, and I planted trees
"in them of all kinds of fruit; I made me pools of water,
"to water therefrom the forest where trees were reared. I
"bought menservants and maidens, and had servants born
"in my house; also I had great possessions of herds and
"flocks, above all that were before me in Jerusalem; I
"gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treas-
"ure of kings and of the provinces. I gat me men singers
"and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men,
"concubines very many. So I was great, and increased
"more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my
"wisdom remained with me. And whatsoever mine eyes
"desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart
"from any joy: for my heart rejoiced because of all my
"labour, and this was my portion from all my labour.
"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had
"wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do:
"and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and
"there was no profit under the sun.

"And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness
"and folly. For what can the man do that cometh after the
"king? even that which hath been already done. Then I
"saw that wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth
"darkness: the wise man's eyes are in his head, and the
"fool walketh in darkness: and yet I perceived that one

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"event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart,
"As it happeneth to the fool, so will it happen even to
"me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my
"heart, that this also was vanity. For of the wise man,
"even as of the fool, there is no remembrance for ever;
"seeing that in the days to come all will have been already
"forgotten. And how doth the wise man die even as the
"fool! So I hated life; because the work that is wrought
"under the sun was grievous unto me: for all is vanity
"and a striving after wind.

"And I hated all my labour wherein I laboured under
"the sun: seeing that I must leave it unto the man that
"shall be after me, and who knoweth whether he shall be
"a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my
"labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have
"shewed wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity.
"Therefore I turned about to cause my heart to despair
"concerning all the labour wherein I had laboured under
"the sun. For there is a man whose labour is with wisdom,
"and with knowledge, and with skilfulness; yet to a man
"that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his
"portion. This also is vanity and a great evil. For what
"hath a man of all his labour, and of the striving of his
"heart wherein he laboureth under the sun? For all his
"days are but sorrows, and his travail is grief; yea, even in
"the night his heart taketh no rest. This also is vanity.

"There is nothing better for a man than that he should

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"eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his
"labour. This also I saw, that it is from the hand of
"God. For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment
"more than I? For to the man that pleaseth him God
"giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the
"sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that
"he may give to him that pleaseth God. This also is
"vanity and a striving after wind."

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Essay II

THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIMES AND SEASONS

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To every thing there is a season,
And a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born,
And a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill,
And a time to heal;
A time to break down,
And a time to build up;

A time to weep,
And a time to laugh;
A time to mourn,
And a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones,
And a time to gather stones together;
A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to seek,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to cast away;

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A time to rend,
And a time to sew;
A time to keep silence,
And a time to speak;
A time to love,
And a time to hate;
A time for war,
And a time for peace.

What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also, he hath set the world in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end.

I know that there is nothing better for them, than to rejoice, and to get good so long as they live: and also, that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy good in all his labour, is the gift of God. I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God hath done it, that men should fear before him. That which is hath been already; and that which is to be hath already been: and God seeketh again that which is passed away.

And moreover I saw under the sun, in the place of judgement that wickedness was there; and in the place of

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righteousness, that wickedness was there. — I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work. — I said in mine heart, It is because of the sons of men, that God may prove them, and that they may see that they themselves are but as beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; and man hath no pre-eminence above the beasts: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth? Wherefore I saw that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him back to see what shall be after him?

Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold, the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive; yea, better than them both did I esteem him which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. Then I saw all labour and every skilful work, that it cometh of a man's rivalry with his neighbour: this also

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is vanity and a striving after wind. — The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. — Better is an handful of quietness, than two handfuls of labour and striving after wind. Then I returned and saw vanity under the sun. There is one that is alone, and he hath not a second; yea, he hath neither son nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour, neither are his eyes satisfied with riches. For whom then, saith he, do I labour, and deprive my soul of good? This also is vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.

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MISCELLANEA

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i

A Maxim

Two are better than one: because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have warmth: but how can one be warm alone? And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

ii

A Maxim

Better is a poor and wise youth
Than an old and foolish king,

who knoweth not how to receive admonition any more. For out of prison he came forth to be king; yea, even in his kingdom he was born poor. I saw all the living which walk under the sun, that they were with the youth, the

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second, that stood up in his stead. There was no end of all the people, even of all them over whom he was: yet they that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

iii

A Maxim

Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God: for to draw nigh to hear is better than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they know not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few. For a dream cometh with a multitude of business; and a fool's voice with a multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou vowest. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thine hands? For thus it cometh to pass through the multitude of dreams and vanities and many words: but fear thou God.

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iv

A Maxim

If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent taking away of judgement and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for

> One higher than the high regardeth
> And there be higher than they.

But the profit of a land every way is a king that maketh himself servant to the field.

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ESSAY III

THE VANITY OF DESIRE

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He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this also is vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what advantage is there to the owner thereof, saving the beholding of them with his eyes?

The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the fulness of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt; and those riches perish by evil adventure; and if he hath begotten a son, there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he go again as he came, and shall take nothing for his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a grievous evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that he laboureth for the wind? All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he is sore vexed and hath sickness and wrath.

Behold, that which I have seen to be good and to be comely is for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy good in all his labour, wherein he laboureth under the sun, all the days of his life which God hath given him: for this is his

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portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour: this is the gift of God. For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is heavy upon men: a man to whom God giveth riches, wealth, and honour, so that he lacketh nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease. If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, but his soul be not filled with good, and moreover he have no burial: I say, that an untimely birth is better than he. For it cometh in vanity, and departeth in darkness, and the name thereof is covered with darkness; moreover it hath not seen the sun nor known it: this hath rest rather than the other — yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, and yet enjoy no good: do not all go to one place?

All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. For what advantage hath the wise man more than the fool, or the poor man that hath understanding, in walking before the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this also is vanity and a striving after wind. Whatsoever he be, his name was given him long ago, and it is known that he is

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MAN: neither can he contend with him that is mightier than he.

Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better? For who knoweth what is good for man in his life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

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A Maxim

A good name is better than precious ointment;
And the day of death than the day of one's birth.

It: better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the luse of feasting: for that is the end of all men, and the ling will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laugter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is mle glad. The heart of the wise is in the house of mouing, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is tter to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to h the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns unde pot, so is the laughter of the fool. This also is vanit

urely extortion maketh a wise man foolish;
nd a gift destroyeth the understanding.

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vii

A Maxim

Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof :
And the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry : for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.

viii

A Maxim

Wisdom is as good as an inheritance: **yea, more excellent is it for them that see the sun. For wisdom is a defence, even as money is a defence : but the excellency of knowledge is that wisdom preserveth the life of him that hath it.**

ix

A Maxim

Consider the work of God :
For who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?

In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider : God hath even made the one side by

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side with the other, to the end that man should not find out anything that shall be after him.

x

A Maxim

All this have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his evil-doing.

Be not righteous over much;
Neither make thyself over wise:
  Why shouldest thou destroy thyself?
Be not over much wicked;
Neither be thou foolish:
  Why shouldest thou die before thy time?

It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from that withdraw not thine hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

xi

A Maxim

Wisdom is a strength to the wise man
More than ten rulers which are in a city.

For there is not a righteous man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not. Also take not heed unto all words

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that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee; for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

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Essay IV

THE SEARCH FOR WISDOM

WITH NOTES BY THE WAY

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All this have I proved in wisdom. I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me: that which is is far off, and exceeding deep: who can find it out? I turned about, and my heart was set to know and to search out, and to seek wisdom and the reason of things, and to know that wickedness is folly, and that foolishness is madness.

And I find a thing more bitter than death: even the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands; whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her.

Behold, this have I found, saith the Preacher, laying one thing to another, to find out the account, which my soul still seeketh, but I have not found: one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found.

Behold, this only have I found: that God made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.

Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? A man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the hardness of his face is changed.

I counsel thee, Keep the king's command: and that in regard of the oath of God. Be not hasty to go out of his

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presence; persist not in an evil thing: for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. Because

> The king's word hath power;
> And who may say unto him, What doest thou?

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall know no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth time and judgement. For to every purpose there is a time and judgement; because the misery of man is great upon him, for he knoweth not that which shall be. For who can tell him how it shall be? There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath he power over the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war. Neither shall wickedness deliver him that is given to it.

All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun. There is a time wherein one man hath power over another to his hurt: and withal I saw the wicked buried, and they came to the grave; and they that had done right went away from the holy place, and were forgotten in the city. This also is vanity. Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and prolong his days, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he

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prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.

There is a vanity which is done upon the earth: that there be righteous men unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous. I said that this also is vanity. Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat and to drink and to be merry; and that this should accompany him in his labour all the days of his life which God hath given him under the sun.

When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth — for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes — then I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because however much a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea, moreover, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it. For all this I laid to my heart, even to explore all this: that the righteous and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God; whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth it not, all is before them. All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil

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in all that is done under the sun, that there is one event unto all. Yea also, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For to him that is joined with all the living there is hope — for a living dog is better than a dead lion — for the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward. For the memory of them is forgotten: as well their love as their hatred and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun.

Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let not thy head lack ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, — all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in life, and in thy labour wherein thou labourest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest.

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time: as the

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fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

I have also seen wisdom under the sun on this wise, and it seemed great unto me. There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

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xii

The words of the wise spoken in quiet are heard
More than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

xiii

Wisdom is better than weapons of war:

But one sinner destroyeth much good.

xiv

Dead flies cause the ointment of the perfumer to send
forth a stinking savour:
So doth a little folly outweigh wisdom and honour.

xv

A Maxim

A wise man's heart is at his right hand;
But a fool's heart is at his left.

Yea also, when the fool walketh by the way, his understanding faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.

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xvi

If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not
thy place;
For yielding allayeth great offences.

xvii

A Maxim

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as it were an error which proceedeth from the ruler:

Folly is set in great dignity,
And the rich sit in low place.

I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.

xviii

He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it;
And whoso breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite
him.

xix

Whoso heweth out stones shall be hurt therewith;
And he that cleaveth wood is endangered thereby.

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xx

An Epigram

If the iron be blunt,
And one do not whet the edge,
Then must he put to more strength:
But wisdom is profitable to direct.

xxi

If the serpent bite before it be charmed,
Then is there no advantage in the charmer.

xxii

A Maxim

The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious;
But the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. A fool also multiplieth words: yet man knoweth not what shall be; and that which shall be after him, who can tell him?

xxiii

The labour of fools wearieth every one of them;
For he knoweth not how to go to the city.

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xxiv

An Epigram

Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child,
And thy princes eat in the morning!
Happy art thou, O land, when thy king is the son
of nobles,
And thy princes eat in due season,
For strength and not for drunkenness.

xxv

By slothfulness the roof sinketh in;
And through idleness of the hands the house leaketh.

xxvi

A feast is made for laughter,
And wine maketh glad the life:
And money answereth all things.

xxvii

An Epigram

Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought;
And curse not the rich in thy bedchamber:
For a bird of the air shall carry the voice,
And that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

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xxviii

Cast thy bread upon the waters:
For thou shalt find it after many days.

xxix

Divide a portion into seven,
Yea, even into eight:
For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.

xxx

An Epigram

If the clouds be full of rain,
They empty themselves upon the earth:
And if a tree fall toward the south or toward the north,
In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be.

xxxi

He that observeth the wind shall not sow;
And he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

xxxii

As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind,
Nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child:
Even so thou knowest not the work of God who doeth all.

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xxxiii

A Maxim

In the morning sow thy seed,
And in the evening withhold not thine hand:

for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.

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ESSAY V

LIFE AS A JOY SHADOWED BY THE JUDGMENT

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Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. Yea, if a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all; and remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for youth and the prime of life are vanity.

The Coming of the Evil Days

A Sonnet

Remember also thy Creator in the days of thy youth:

Or ever the evil days come,
And the years draw nigh,
When thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them:

Or ever the sun,
And the light,
And the moon,
And the stars,
Be darkened,
And the clouds return after the rain:

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Ecclesiastes

In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble,
And the strong men shall bow themselves,
And the grinders cease because they are few,
And those that look out of the windows be darkened,
And the doors shall be shut in the street;

When the sound of the grinding is low,
And one shall rise up at the voice of a bird,
And all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

Yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high,
And terrors shall be in the way;

And the almond tree shall blossom,
And the grasshopper shall be a burden,
And the caperberry shall burst:

Because man goeth to his long home,
And the mourners go about the streets:

Or ever the silver cord be loosed,
Or the golden bowl be broken,
Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain,
Or the wheel broken at the cistern:

And the dust return to the earth,
As it was;
And the spirit return unto God
Who gave it.

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EPILOGUE

ALL IS VANITY—FEAR GOD

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Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity.

And further, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he pondered, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words, and that which was written uprightly, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well fastened are the words of the collectors of sentences, which are given from one shepherd. And as for more than these, my son, be warned: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

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The

Wisdom of Solomon

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THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

A SUITE OF DISCOURSES

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DISCOURSE I

SINGLENESS OF HEART

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Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth,
Think ye of the Lord with a good mind,
And in singleness of heart seek ye him.

Because he is found of them that tempt him not, and is manifested to them that do not distrust him. For crooked thoughts separate from God; and the supreme Power, when it is brought to the proof, putteth to confusion the foolish. Because wisdom will not enter into a soul that deviseth evil, nor dwell in a body that is held in pledge by sin. For a holy spirit of discipline will flee deceit, and will start away from thoughts that are without understanding, and will be put to confusion when unrighteousness hath come in. For wisdom is a spirit that loveth man, and she will not hold a blasphemer guiltless for his lips. Because God beareth witness of his reins, and is a true overseer of his heart, and a hearer of his tongue; because the spirit of the Lord hath filled the world, and that which holdeth all things together hath knowledge of every voice. Therefore no man that uttereth unrighteous things shall be unseen; neither shall Justice, when it convicteth, pass him by. For in the midst of his counsels the ungodly shall be searched out, and the sound of his words shall

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come unto the Lord to bring to conviction his lawless deeds; because there is an ear of jealousy that listeneth to all things, and the noise of murmurings is not hid. Beware then of unprofitable murmuring, and refrain your tongue from backbiting; because no secret utterance shall go on its way void, and a mouth that belieth destroyeth a soul.

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DISCOURSE II

IMMORTALITY AND THE COVENANT WITH DEATH

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Court not death in the error of your life;
Neither draw upon yourselves destruction by the works of your hands.

Because God made not death: neither delighteth he when the living perish. For he created all things that they might have being; and the generative powers of the world are healthsome, and there is no poison of destruction in them, nor hath Hades royal dominion upon earth: for righteousness is immortal. But ungodly men by their hands and their words called death unto them; deeming him a friend they consumed away, and they made a covenant with him because they are worthy to be of his portion.

For they said within themselves, reasoning not aright: "Short and sorrowful is our life; and there is no healing "when a man cometh to his end, and none was ever known "that gave release from Hades. Because by mere chance "were we born, and hereafter we shall be as though we "had never been; because the breath in our nostrils is "smoke, and while our heart beateth reason is a spark, "which being extinguished, the body shall be turned into "ashes, and the spirit shall be dispersed as thin air. And

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"our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall
"remember our works; and our life shall pass away as the
"traces of a cloud, and shall be scattered as is a mist,
"when it is chased by the beams of the sun, and over-
"come by the heat thereof. For our allotted time is the
"passing of a shadow, and our end retreateth not; be-
"cause it is fast sealed, and none turneth it back. Come
"therefore and let us enjoy the good things that now are;
"and let us use the creation with all our soul as youth's
"possession. Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and
"perfumes, and let no flower of spring pass us by; let us
"crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered;
"let none of us go without his share in our proud revelry;
"everywhere let us leave tokens of our mirth: because
"this is our portion, and our lot is this. Let us oppress
"the righteous poor: let us not spare the widow, nor
"reverence the hairs of the old man gray for length of
"years, but let our strength be to us a law of righteous-
"ness; for that which is weak is found to be of no service.
"But let us lie in wait for the righteous man, because he
"is of disservice to us, and is contrary to our works, and
"upbraideth us with sins against the law, and layeth to
"our charge sins against our discipline. He professeth to
"have knowledge of God, and nameth himself servant of
"the Lord. He became to us a reproof of our thoughts.
"He is grievous unto us even to behold, because his life is
"unlike other men's, and his paths are of strange fashion.

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"We were accounted of him as base metal, and he ab-
"staineth from our ways as from uncleannesses. The
"latter end of the righteous he calleth happy; and he
"vaunteth that God is his father. Let us see if his words
"be true, and let us try what shall befall in the ending of
"his life: for if the righteous man is God's son, he will
"uphold him, and he will deliver him out of the hand of
"his adversaries. With outrage and torture let us put him
"to the test, that we may learn his gentleness, and may
"prove his patience under wrong. Let us condemn him
"to a shameful death; for he shall be visited according to
"his words."

Thus reasoned they, and they were led astray. For their wickedness blinded them; and they knew not the mysteries of God, neither hoped they for wages of holiness, nor did they judge that there is a prize for blameless souls. Because God created man for incorruption, and made him an image of his own proper being; but by the envy of the devil death entered into the world, and they that are of his portion make trial thereof.

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died; and their departure was accounted to be their hurt, and their journeying away from us to be their ruin: but they are in peace. For even if in the sight of men they be punished, their hope is full of immortality; and having borne a little chastening, they

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shall receive great good. Because God made trial of them, and found them worthy of himself; as gold in the furnace he proved them, and as a whole burnt offering he accepted them. And in the time of their visitation they shall shine forth, and as sparks among stubble they shall run to and fro. They shall judge nations, and have dominion over peoples; and the Lord shall reign over them for evermore. They that trust on him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love: because grace and mercy are to his chosen.

But the ungodly shall be requited even as they reasoned, they which lightly regarded the righteous man, and revolted from the Lord: for he that setteth at nought wisdom and discipline is miserable. And void is their hope and their toils unprofitable, and useless are their works. Their wives are foolish, and wicked are their children; accursed is their begetting.* For good labours have fruit of great renown; and the root of understanding cannot fail. But children of adulterers shall not come to maturity, and the seed of an unlawful bed shall vanish away. For if they live long they shall be held in no account, and at the last their old age shall be without honour; and if they die

* Because happy is the barren that is undefiled, she who hath not conceived in transgression; she shall have fruit when God visiteth souls. And happy is the eunuch which hath wrought no lawless deed with his hands, nor imagined wicked things against the Lord; for there shall be given him for his faithfulness a peculiar favour, and a lot in the sanctuary of the Lord more delightsome than wife or children.

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quickly they shall have no hope, nor in the day of decision shall they have consolation. For the end of an unrighteous generation is alway grievous. Better than this is childlessness with virtue. For in the memory of virtue is immortality, because it is recognised both before God and before men; when it is present men imitate it, and they long after it when it is departed; and throughout all time it marcheth crowned in triumph, victorious in the strife for the prizes that are undefiled. But the multiplying brood of the ungodly shall be of no profit, and with bastard slips they shall not strike deep root, nor shall they establish a sure hold. For even if these put forth boughs and flourish for a season, yet, standing unsure, they shall be shaken by the wind, and by the violence of winds they shall be rooted out. Their branches shall be broken off before they come to maturity; and their fruit shall be useless, never ripe to eat, and fit for nothing. For children unlawfully begotten are witnesses of wickedness against parents when God searcheth them out.

But a righteous man, though he die before his time, shall be at rest. For honourable old age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor is its measure given by number of years: but understanding is gray hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is ripe old age. Being found well pleasing unto God he was beloved of him, and while living among sinners he was translated. He was caught away lest wickedness should change his understanding, or guile

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deceive his soul; for the bewitching of naughtiness bedimmeth the things which are good, and the giddy whirl of desire perverteth an innocent mind. Being made perfect in a little while he fulfilled long years: for his soul was pleasing unto the Lord; therefore hasted he out of the midst of wickedness.

But as for the peoples, seeing and understanding not, neither laying this to heart, that grace and mercy are with his chosen, and that he visiteth his holy ones:* they shall see, and they shall despise; but them the Lord shall laugh to scorn. And after this they shall become a dishonoured carcase, and a reproach among the dead for ever. Because he shall dash them speechless to the ground, and shall shake them from the foundations, and they shall lie utterly waste, and they shall be in anguish, and their memory shall perish. They shall come, when their sins are reckoned up, with coward fear; and their lawless deeds shall convict them to their face. Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of them that afflicted him, and them that make his labours of no account. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear, and shall be amazed at the marvel of God's salvation.

They shall say within themselves, repenting, and for

* But a righteous man that is dead shall condemn the ungodly that are living, and youth that is quickly perfected the many years of an unrighteous man's old age; for the ungodly shall see a wise man's end, and shall not understand what the Lord purposed concerning him, and for what he safely kept him.

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distress of spirit shall they groan: "This was he whom "aforetime we had in derision, and made a parable of "reproach; we fools accounted his life madness and his "end without honour. How was he numbered among sons "of God? and how is his lot among saints? Verily we "went astray from the way of truth; and the light of "righteousness shined not for us, and the sun rose not for "us. We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and de- "struction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts; "but the way of the Lord we knew not. What did our "arrogancy profit us? and what good have riches and "vaunting brought us? Those things all passed away as "a shadow, and as a message that runneth by; as a ship "passing through the billowy water, whereof, when it is "gone by, there is no trace to be found, neither pathway "of its keel in the billows; or as when a bird flieth through "the air, no token of her passage is found, but the light "wind, lashed with the stroke of her pinions, and rent "asunder with the violent rush of the moving wings, is "passed through, and afterwards no sign of her coming is "found therein; or as when an arrow is shot at a mark, "the air disparted closeth up again immediately, so that "men know not where it passed through: so we also, as "soon as we were born, ceased to be; and of virtue we "had no sign to shew, but in our wickedness we were "utterly consumed."

Because the hope of the ungodly man is as chaff carried

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by the wind, and as foam vanishing before a tempest; and is scattered as smoke is scattered by the wind; and passeth by as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day. But the righteous live for ever, and in the Lord is their reward, and the care for them with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive the crown of royal dignity and the diadem of beauty from the Lord's hand; because with his right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he shield them. He shall take his jealousy as complete armour, and shall make the whole creation his weapons for vengeance on his enemies; he shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and shall array himself with judgement unfeigned as with a helmet: he shall take holiness as an invincible shield, and he shall sharpen stern wrath for a sword. And the world shall go forth with him to fight against his insensate foes. Shafts of lightning shall fly with true aim, and from the clouds, as from a well-drawn bow, shall they leap to the mark; and as from an engine of war shall be hurled hailstones full of wrath; the water of the sea shall be angered against them, and rivers shall sternly overwhelm them; a mighty blast shall encounter them, and as a tempest shall it winnow them away. And so shall lawlessness make all the land desolate, and their evil-doing shall overturn the thrones of princes.

Hear therefore, ye kings, and understand; learn, ye judges of the ends of the earth; give ear, ye that have dominion over much people, and make your boast in mul-

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titudes of nations. Because your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High, who shall search out your works, and shall make inquisition of your counsels; because being officers of his kingdom ye did not judge aright, neither kept ye law, nor walked after the counsel of God. Awfully and swiftly shall he come upon you, because a stern judgement befalleth them that be in high place: for the man of low estate may be pardoned in mercy, but mighty men shall be searched out mightily. For the Sovereign Lord of all will not refrain himself for any man's person, neither will he reverence greatness, because it is he that made both small and great. And alike he taketh thought for all; but strict is the scrutiny that cometh upon the powerful. Unto you, therefore, O princes, are my words, that ye may learn wisdom and fall not from the right way. For they that have kept holily the things that are holy shall themselves be hallowed; and they that have been taught them shall find what to answer. Set your desire therefore on my words; long for them, and ye shall be trained by their discipline.

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Discourse III

in the form of a Dramatic Monologue

SOLOMON'S WINNING OF WISDOM

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Wisdom is radiant and fadeth not away;
And easily is she beheld of them that love her,
And found of them that seek her.

She forestalleth them that desire to know her, making herself first known. He that riseth up early to seek her shall have no toil, for he shall find her sitting at his gates. For to think upon her is perfectness of understanding, and he that watcheth for her sake shall quickly be free from care. Because she goeth about, herself seeking them that are worthy of her; and in their paths she appeareth unto them graciously, and in every purpose she meeteth them. For her true beginning is desire of discipline; and the care for discipline is love of her; and love of her is observance of her laws; and to give heed to her laws confirmeth incorruption; and incorruption bringeth near unto God: so then desire of Wisdom promoteth to a kingdom. If therefore ye delight in thrones and sceptres, ye princes of peoples, honour Wisdom, that ye may reign for ever.

But what Wisdom is, and how she came into being, I will declare, and I will not hide mysteries from you; but I will trace her out from the beginning of creation, and bring the knowledge of her into clear light, and I will not

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pass by the truth. Neither indeed will I take pining envy for my companion in the way: because envy shall have no fellowship with wisdom, but a multitude of wise men is salvation to the world, and an understanding king is tranquillity to his people. Wherefore be disciplined by my words, and thereby shall ye profit.

I myself also am mortal, like to all, and am sprung from one born of the earth, the man first formed. And in the womb of a mother was I moulded into flesh in the time of ten months, being compacted in blood of the seed of man and pleasure that came with sleep. And I also, when I was born, drew in the common air, and fell upon the kindred earth, uttering, like all, for my first voice the self-same wail; in swaddling clothes was I nursed, and with watchful cares. For no king had any other first beginning; but all men have one entrance into life, and a like departure. For this cause I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon God, and there came to me a spirit of wisdom. I preferred her before sceptres and thrones, and riches I esteemed nothing in comparison of her; neither did I liken to her any priceless gem, because all the gold of the earth in her presence is a little sand, and silver shall be accounted as clay before her. Above health and comeliness I loved her; and I chose to have her rather than light, because her bright shining is never laid to sleep.

But with her there came to me all good things together,

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and in her hands innumerable riches. And I rejoiced over them all because Wisdom leadeth them; though I knew not that she was the mother of them. As I learned without guile, I impart without grudging; I do not hide her riches. For she is unto men a treasure that faileth not; and they that use it obtain friendship with God, commended to him by the gifts which they through discipline present to him. But to me may God give to speak with judgement, and to conceive thoughts worthy of what hath been given me. Because himself is one that guideth even Wisdom, and that correcteth the wise; for in his hand are both we and our words, all understanding, and all acquaintance with divers crafts. For himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that are: to know the constitution of the world, and the operation of the elements; the beginning and end and middle of times; the alternations of the solstices and the changes of seasons; the circuits of years and the positions of stars; the natures of living creatures and the ragings of wild beasts; the violences of winds and the thoughts of men; the diversities of plants and the virtues of roots. All things that are either secret or manifest I learned: for she that is the artificer of all things taught me, even Wisdom.

For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding, holy, alone in kind, manifold, subtil, freely moving, clear in utterance, unpolluted, distinct, unharmed, loving what is good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, loving toward man, stedfast,

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sure, free from care, all-powerful, all-surveying, and penetrating through all spirits that are quick of understanding, pure, most subtil. For Wisdom is more mobile than any motion; yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness. For she is a breath of the power of God, and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty; therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her. For she is an effulgence from everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness. And she, being one, hath power to do all things; and remaining in herself, reneweth all things; and from generation to generation, passing into holy souls, she maketh men friends of God and prophets. For nothing doth God love save him that dwelleth with Wisdom. For she is fairer than the sun, and above all the constellations of the stars; being compared with light she is found to be before it: for to the light of day succeedeth night, but against Wisdom evil doth not prevail, but she reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength, and ordereth all things graciously.

Her I loved and sought out from my youth, and I sought to take her for my bride, and I became enamoured of her beauty. She glorifieth her noble birth, in that it is given her to live with God, and the Sovereign Lord of all loved her. For she is initiated into the knowledge of God, and she chooseth out for him his works. But if riches are a desired possession in life, what is richer than Wisdom,

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which worketh all things? And if understanding worketh, who more than Wisdom is an artificer of the things that are? And if a man loveth righteousness, the fruits of Wisdom's labour are virtues: for she teacheth soberness and understanding, righteousness and courage; and there is nothing in life for men more profitable than these. And if a man longeth even for much experience, she knoweth the things of old, and divineth the things to come; she understandeth subtilties of speeches and interpretations of dark sayings; she foreseeth signs and wonders, and the issues of seasons and times. I determined therefore to take her unto me to live with me, knowing that she is one who would give me good thoughts for counsel, and encourage me in cares and grief. Because of her I shall have glory among multitudes, and honour in the sight of elders, though I be young. I shall be found of a quick conceit when I give judgement, and in the presence of princes I shall be admired. When I am silent, they shall wait for me; and when I open my lips, they shall give heed unto me; and if I continue speaking, they shall lay their hand upon their mouth. Because of her I shall have immortality, and leave behind an eternal memory to them that come after me. I shall govern peoples, and nations shall be subjected to me. Dread princes shall fear me when they hear of me; among my people I shall shew myself a good ruler, and in war courageous. When I am come into my house, I shall find rest with her; for con-

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verse with her hath no bitterness, and to live with her hath no pain, but gladness and joy.

When I considered these things in myself, and took thought in my heart how that in kinship unto Wisdom is immortality, and in her friendship is good delight, and in the labours of her hands is wealth that faileth not, and in assiduous communing with her is understanding, and great renown in having fellowship with her words, I went about seeking how to take her unto myself. Now I was a child of parts, and a good soul fell to my lot; nay rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled. But perceiving that I could not otherwise possess Wisdom except God gave her me, — yea, and to know by whom the grace is given, this too came of understanding, — I pleaded with the Lord and besought him; and with my whole heart I said:

O God of the fathers, and Lord who keepest thy mercy, who madest all things by thy word; and by thy wisdom thou formedst man, that he should have dominion over the creatures that were made by thee, and rule the world in holiness and righteousness, and execute judgement in uprightness of soul: Give me Wisdom — her that sitteth by thee on thy throne — and reject me not from among thy servants; because I am thy bondman and the son of thy handmaid, a man weak and short-lived, and of small power to understand judgement and laws. For even if a man be perfect among the sons of men, yet if the wisdom that cometh from thee be not with him, he shall be held in

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no account. Thou didst choose me before my brethren to be king of thy people, and to do judgement for thy sons and daughters. Thou gavest command to build a sanctuary in thy holy mountain, and an altar in the city of thy habitation: a copy of the holy tabernacle which thou preparedst aforehand from the beginning. And with thee is Wisdom, which knoweth thy works, and was present when thou wast making the world, and which understandeth what is pleasing in thine eyes, and what is right according to thy commandments. Send her forth out of the holy heavens, and from the throne of thy glory bid her come; that being present with me she may toil with me, and that I may learn what is well-pleasing before thee. For she knoweth all things and hath understanding thereof; and in my doings she shall guide me in ways of soberness, and she shall guard me in her glory. And so shall my works be acceptable, and I shall judge thy people righteously, and I shall be worthy of my father's throne. For what man shall know the counsel of God? or who shall conceive what the Lord willeth? For the thoughts of mortals are timorous, and our devices are prone to fail. For a corruptible body weigheth down the soul, and the earthy frame lieth heavy on a mind that is full of cares. And hardly do we divine the things that are on earth, and the things that are close at hand we find with labour; but the things that are in the heavens who ever yet traced out? And who ever gained knowledge of thy counsel, except

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thou gavest Wisdom, and sentest thy holy spirit from on high? And it was thus that the ways of them which are on earth were corrected, and men were taught the things that are pleasing unto thee; and *through Wisdom were they saved.*

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DISCOURSE IV

THE WORLD SAVED THROUGH WISDOM

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Through Wisdom were they saved.

Wisdom guarded to the end the first-formed father of the world, that was created alone; and delivered him out of his own transgression, and gave him strength to get dominion over all things. But when an unrighteous man fell away from her in his anger, he perished himself in the rage wherewith he slew his brother. And when for his cause the earth was drowning with a flood, Wisdom again saved it, guiding the righteous man's course by a poor piece of wood.

Moreover, when nations consenting together in wickedness had been confounded, Wisdom knew the righteous man, and preserved him blameless unto God, and kept him strong when his heart yearned toward his child.

While the ungodly were perishing, Wisdom delivered a righteous man, when he fled from the fire that descended out of heaven on Pentapolis: to whose wickedness a smoking waste still witnesseth, and plants bearing fair fruit that cometh not to ripeness. Yea, and a disbelieving soul hath a memorial there, a pillar of salt still standing: for having passed Wisdom by, not only were they disabled from recognising the things which are good, but they also

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left behind them for human life a monument of their folly; to the end that where they went astray they might fail even to be unseen. But Wisdom delivered out of troubles those that waited on her.

When a righteous man was a fugitive from a brother's wrath, Wisdom guided him in straight paths; she shewed him God's kingdom, and gave him knowledge of holy things; she prospered him in his toils, and multiplied the fruits of his labour; when in their covetousness men dealt hardly with him, she stood by him and made him rich; she guarded him from enemies, and from those that lay in wait she kept him safe, and over his sore conflict she watched as judge: that he might know that godliness is more powerful than all.

When a righteous man was sold, Wisdom forsook him not, but from sin she delivered him; she went down with him into a dungeon, and in bonds she left him not till she brought him the sceptre of a kingdom and authority over those that dealt tyrannously with him; she shewed them also to be false that had mockingly accused him, and gave him eternal glory.

Wisdom delivered a holy people and a blameless seed from a nation of oppressors. She entered into the soul of a servant of the Lord, and withstood terrible kings in wonders and signs. She rendered unto holy men a reward of their toils; she guided them along a marvellous way, and became unto them a covering in the daytime and a

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flame of stars through the night. She brought them over the Red Sea, and led them through much water; but their enemies she drowned, and out of the bottom of the deep she cast them up. Therefore the righteous spoiled the ungodly; and they sang praise to thy holy name, O Lord, and extolled with one accord thy hand that fought for them: because Wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of babes to speak clearly.

She prospered their works in the hand of a holy prophet. They journeyed through a desert without inhabitant, and in trackless regions they pitched their tents. They withstood enemies, and repelled foes. They thirsted, and they called upon thee, and there was given them water out of the flinty rock, and healing of their thirst out of the hard stone. *For by what thing their foes were punished, by these they in their need were benefited.*

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DISCOURSE V

JUDGMENTS ON THE WICKED TURNING TO BLESSINGS ON GOD'S PEOPLE

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By what things their foes were punished,
By these they in their need were benefited.

When the enemy were troubled with clotted blood instead of a river's ever-flowing fountain, to rebuke the decree for the slaying of babes, thou gavest them abundant water beyond all hope: having shewn them by the thirst which they had suffered how thou didst punish the adversaries. For when they were tried, albeit but in mercy chastened, they learned how the ungodly were tormented, being judged with wrath: for these, as a father, admonishing them, thou didst prove; but those, as a stern king, condemning them, thou didst search out. Yea, and whether they were far off from the righteous or near them, they were alike distressed; for a double grief took hold on them, and a groaning at the remembrance of things past. For when they heard that through their own punishments the others had been benefited, they felt the presence of the Lord. For him who long before was cast forth and exposed they left off mocking. In the last issue of what came to pass they marvelled, having thirsted in another manner than the righteous.

But in requital of the senseless imaginings of their

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unrighteousness, wherein they were led astray to worship irrational reptiles and wretched vermin, thou didst send upon them a multitude of irrational creatures for vengeance —

— That they might learn, that by what things a man sinneth by these he is punished. For thine all-powerful hand, that created the world out of formless matter, lacked not means to send upon them a multitude of bears or fierce lions, or new-created wild beasts, full of rage, of unknown kind, either breathing out a blast of fiery breath, or blowing forth from their nostrils noisome smoke, or flashing dreadful sparkles from their eyes; which had power not only to consume them by their violence, but to destroy them even by the terror of their sight. Yea, and without these might they have fallen by a single breath, being pursued by Justice, and scattered abroad by the breath of thy power. But by measure and number and weight thou didst order all things.

For to be greatly strong is thine at all times; and the might of thine arm who shall withstand? Because the whole world before thee is as a grain in a balance, and as a drop of dew that at morning cometh down upon the earth. But thou hast mercy on all men, because thou hast power to do all things; and thou overlookest the sins of men to the end that they may repent. For thou lovest all things that are, and abhorrest none of the things which thou didst make. For never wouldest thou have

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formed anything if thou didst hate it; and how would anything have endured, except thou hadst willed it? or that which was not called by thee, how would it have been preserved? But thou sparest all things, because they are thine, O Sovereign Lord, thou lover of men's lives; for thine incorruptible spirit is in all things. Wherefore thou convictest by little and little them that fall from the right way, and, putting them in remembrance by the very things wherein they sin, dost thou admonish them, that escaping from their wickedness they may believe on thee, O Lord. For verily the old inhabitants of thy holy land, hating them because they practised detestable works of enchantments and unholy rites — merciless slaughters of children, and sacrificial banquets of men's flesh and of blood — confederates in an impious fellowship, and murderers of their own helpless babes, it was thy counsel to destroy by the hands of our fathers; that the land which in thy sight is most precious of all lands might receive a worthy colony of God's servants. Nevertheless even these thou didst spare as being men, and thou sentest hornets as forerunners of thy host, to cause them to perish by little and little. Not that thou wast unable to subdue the ungodly under the hand of the righteous in battle, or by terrible beasts or by one stern word to make away with them at once; but judging them by little and little thou gavest them a place of repentance, not being ignorant that their nature by birth was evil, and their

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wickedness inborn, and that their manner of thought would in no wise ever be changed, for they were a seed accursed from the beginning. Neither was it through fear of any that thou didst leave them then unpunished for their sins. For who shall say, What hast thou done? or who shall withstand thy judgement? And who shall accuse thee for the perishing of nations which thou didst make? or who shall come and stand before thee as an avenger for unrighteous men? For neither is there any God beside thee that careth for all, that thou mightest shew unto him that thou didst not judge unrighteously; neither shall king or prince be able to look thee in the face to plead for those whom thou hast punished. But being righteous thou rulest all things righteously, deeming it a thing alien from thy power to condemn one that doth not himself deserve to be punished. For thy strength is the beginning of righteousness, and thy sovereignty over all maketh thee to forbear all. For when men believe not that thou art perfect in power, thou shewest thy strength, and in dealing with them that know it thou puttest their boldness to confusion. But thou being sovereign over thy strength, judgest in gentleness, and with great forbearance dost thou govern us; for the power is thine whensoever thou hast the will. But thou didst teach thy people by such works as these how that the righteous must be a lover of men; and thou didst make thy sons to be of good hope, because thou givest repentance when men have sinned. For if on

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them that were enemies of thy servants and due to death thou didst take vengeance with so great heedfulness and indulgence, giving them times and place whereby they might escape from their wickedness: with how great carefulness didst thou judge thy sons, to whose fathers thou gavest oaths and covenants of good promises! While therefore thou dost chasten us, thou scourgest our enemies ten thousand times more; to the intent that we may ponder thy goodness when we judge, and when we are judged may look for mercy.

Wherefore also the unrighteous that lived in folly of life thou didst torment through their own abominations. For verily they went astray very far in the ways of error, taking as gods those animals which even among their enemies were held in dishonour, deceived like foolish babes. Therefore as unto unreasoning children thou didst send thy judgement to mock them. But they that would not be admonished by a mocking correction as of children shall have experience of a judgement worthy of God. For through the sufferings whereat they were indignant, being punished in these creatures which they supposed to be gods, they saw, and recognised as the true God him whom before they refused to know. Wherefore also the last end of condemnation came upon them.

For verily all men by nature were but vain who had no perception of God, and from the good things that are seen they gained not power to know him that is, neither by

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giving heed to the works did they recognise the artificer; but either fire, or wind, or swift air, or circling stars, or raging water, or luminaries of heaven, they thought to be gods that rule the world. And if it was through delight in their beauty that they took them to be gods, let them know how much better than these is their Sovereign Lord; for the first author of beauty created them. But if it was through astonishment at their power and influence, let them understand from them how much more powerful is he that formed them; for from the greatness of the beauty even of created things in like proportion does man form the image of their first maker. But yet for these men there is but small blame. For they too peradventure do but go astray while they are seeking God and desiring to find him; for living among his works they make diligent search, and they yield themselves up to sight, because the things that they look upon are beautiful. But again even they are not to be excused. For if they had power to know so much, that they should be able to explore the course of things, how is it that they did not sooner find the Sovereign Lord of these his works? But miserable were they, and in dead things were their hopes, who called them gods which are works of men's hands—gold and silver, wrought with careful art, and likenesses of animals, or a useless stone, the work of an ancient hand. Yea, and if some woodcutter, having sawn down a tree that is easily moved, skilfully strippeth away all its bark, and fashioning

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it in comely form maketh a vessel useful for the service of life; and burning the refuse of his handiwork to dress his food eateth his fill; and taking the very refuse thereof which served to no use—a crooked piece of wood and full of knots—carveth it with the diligence of his idleness, and shapeth it by the skill of his indolence; then he giveth it the semblance of the image of a man, or maketh it like some paltry animal, smearing it with vermilion, and with paint colouring it red, and smearing over every stain that is therein; and having made for it a chamber worthy of it, he setteth it in a wall, making it fast with iron: while then he taketh thought for it that it may not fall down, knowing that it is unable to help itself—for verily it is an image, and hath need of help—when he maketh his prayer concerning goods and his marriage and children, he is not ashamed to speak to that which hath no life; yea, for health he calleth upon that which is weak, and for life he beseecheth that which is dead, and for aid he supplicateth that which hath least experience, and for a good journey that which cannot so much as move a step, and for gaining and getting and good success of his hands he asketh ability of that which with its hands is most unable; again, one preparing to sail, and about to journey over raging waves, calleth upon a piece of wood more rotten than the vessel that carrieth him.* For blessed hath been wood

* For that vessel the hunger for gains devised, and an artificer, even Wisdom, built it. And thy providence, O Father, guideth it along. Because

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through which cometh righteousness. But the idol made with hands is accursed, itself and he that made it; because his was the working, and the corruptible thing was named a god. For both the ungodly doer and his ungodliness are alike hateful to God; for verily the deed shall be punished together with him that committed it. Therefore also among the idols of the nations shall there be a visitation; because, though formed of things which God created, they were made an abomination, and stumblingblocks to the souls of men, and a snare to the feet of the foolish.

For the devising of idols was the beginning of fornication, and the invention of them the corruption of life. For neither were they from the beginning, neither shall they be for ever; for by the vaingloriousness of men they entered into the world, and therefore was a speedy end devised for them. For a father worn with untimely grief, making an image of the child quickly taken away, now honoured him as a god which was then a dead man, and delivered to those that were under him mysteries and solemn rites. Afterward, the ungodly custom, in process

even in the sea thou gavest a way, and in the waves a sure path, shewing that thou canst save out of every danger, that so even without art a man may put to sea. And it is thy will that the works of thy wisdom should not be idle. Therefore also do men entrust their lives to a little piece of wood, and passing through the surge on a raft are brought safe to land. For in the old time also, when proud giants were perishing, the hope of the world, taking refuge on a raft, left to the race of men a seed of generations to come, thy hand guiding the helm.

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of time grown strong, was kept as a law, and by the commandments of princes the graven images received worship. And when men could not honour them in presence because they dwelt far off, imagining the likeness from afar, they made a visible image of the king whom they honoured, that by their zeal they might flatter the absent as if present. But unto a yet higher pitch was worship raised even by them that knew him not, urged forward by the ambition of the artificer. For he, wishing peradventure to please one in authority, used his art to force the likeness toward a greater beauty; and the multitude, allured by reason of the grace of his handiwork, now accounted as an object of devotion him that a little before was honoured as a man. And this became a hidden danger unto life, because men, in bondage either to calamity or to tyranny, invested stones and stocks with the incommunicable Name. Afterward it was not enough for them to go astray as touching the knowledge of God; but also, while they live in sore conflict through ignorance of him, that multitude of evils they call peace. For either slaughtering children in solemn rites, or celebrating secret mysteries, or holding frantic revels of strange ordinances, no longer do they guard either life or purity of marriage, but one brings upon another either death by treachery, or anguish by adulterate offspring. And all things confusedly are filled with blood and murder, theft and deceit, corruption, faithlessness, tumult, perjury, turmoil, ingratitude for benefits

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received, defiling of souls, confusion of sex, disorder in marriage, adultery and wantonness. For the worship of those nameless idols is a beginning and cause and end of every evil. For their worshippers either make merry unto madness, or prophesy lies, or live unrighteously; or lightly forswear themselves, for, putting their trust in lifeless idols, when they have sworn a wicked oath they expect not to suffer harm. But for both sins shall the just doom pursue them, because they had evil thoughts of God by giving heed to idols, and swore unrighteously in deceit through contempt for holiness. For it is not the power of them by whom men swear, but it is that Justice which hath regard to them that sin, that visiteth always the transgression of the unrighteous.

But thou, our God, art gracious and true, longsuffering, and in mercy ordering all things. For even if we sin, we are thine, knowing thy dominion. But we shall not sin, knowing that we have been accounted thine; for to be acquainted with thee is perfect righteousness, and to know thy dominion is the root of immortality. For neither were we led astray by any evil device of men's art, nor yet by painters' fruitless labour, — a form stained with varied colours, the sight whereof leadeth fools into lust; their desire is for the breathless form of a dead image. Lovers of evil things, and worthy of such hopes as these, are both they that do, and they that desire, and they that worship. For a potter, kneading soft earth, laboriously mouldeth

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each several vessel for our service, — nay, out of the same clay doth he fashion both the vessels that minister to clean uses, and those of a contrary sort, all in like manner: but what shall be the use of each vessel of either sort, the craftsman himself is the judge. And also, labouring to an evil end, he mouldeth a vain god out of the same clay, — he who, having but a little before been made of earth, after a short space goeth his way to the earth out of which he was taken, when he is required to render back the soul which was lent him: howbeit he hath anxious care, not because his powers must fail, nor because his span of life is short, but he matcheth himself against goldsmiths and silversmiths, and he imitateth moulders in brass, and esteemeth it glory that he mouldeth counterfeits. His heart is ashes, and his hope of less value than earth, and his life of less honour than clay: because he was ignorant of him that moulded him, and of him that inspired into him an active soul, and breathed into him a vital spirit; but he accounted our very life to be a plaything, and our lifetime a gainful fair; for, saith he, one must get gain whence one can, though it be by evil. For this man beyond all others knoweth that he sinneth, out of earthly matter making brittle vessels and graven images.

But most foolish were they all, and of feebler soul than a babe, the enemies of thy people, who oppressed them. Because they even accounted all the idols of the nations to be gods — which have neither the use of eyes for seeing,

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nor nostrils for drawing breath, nor ears to hear, nor fingers for handling, and their feet are helpless for walking; for a man made them, and one whose own spirit is borrowed moulded them * — yea, and the creatures that are most hateful do they worship. For being compared as to want of sense, these are worse than all others; neither, as seen beside other creatures, are they beautiful so that one should desire them; but they have escaped both the praise of God and his blessing.

For this cause were these men worthily punished through creatures like those which they worship, and tormented through a multitude of vermin. Instead of which punishment, thou, bestowing benefits on thy people, preparedst quails for food, food of rare taste, to satisfy the desire of their appetite; to the end that thine enemies, desiring food, might for the hideousness of the creatures sent among them loathe even the necessary appetite; but these, thy people, having for a short space suffered want, might even partake of food of rare taste. For it was needful that upon those should come inexorable want in their tyrannous dealing, but that to these it should only be shewed how their enemies were tormented.

For even when terrible raging of wild beasts came upon

* For no one hath power, being a man, to mould a god like unto himself, but being mortal he maketh a dead thing by the work of lawless hands; for he is better than the objects of his worship, forasmuch as he indeed had life, but they never.

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thy people, and they were perishing by the bites of crooked serpents, thy wrath continued not to the uttermost; but for admonition were they troubled for a short space, having a token of salvation, to put them in remembrance of the commandment of thy law. For he that turned toward it was not saved because of that which was beheld, but because of thee, the Saviour of all. Yea, and in this didst thou persuade our enemies, that thou art he that delivereth out of every evil. For them verily the bites of locusts and flies did slay, and there was not found a healing for their life, because they were worthy to be punished by such as these; but thy sons not the very teeth of venomous dragons overcame, for thy mercy passed by where they were, and healed them. For they were bitten, to put them in remembrance of thine oracles; and were quickly saved lest, falling into deep forgetfulness, they should become unable to be roused by thy beneficence. For of a truth it was neither herb nor mollifying plaister that cured them, but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things; for thou hast authority over life and death, and thou leadest down to the gates of Hades, and leadest up again. But though a man may slay by his wickedness, yet the spirit that is gone forth he turneth not again, neither giveth release to the soul that — Hades hath received.

But thy hand it is not possible to escape; for ungodly men, refusing to know thee, were scourged in the strength of thine arm, pursued with strange rains and hails and

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showers inexorable, and utterly consumed with fire. For —what was most marvellous * of all—in the water which quencheth all things the fire wrought yet more mightily. Instead whereof thou gavest thy people angels' food to eat, and bread ready for their use didst thou provide for them from heaven without their toil, bread having the virtue of every pleasant savour, and agreeing to every taste: for thy nature manifested thy sweetness toward thy children, while that bread, ministering to the desire of the eater, tempered itself according to every man's choice. But snow and ice endured fire, and melted not, that men might know that fire was destroying the fruits of the enemies, burning in the hail and flashing in the rains. And this element again, in order that righteous men may be nourished, hath even forgotten its own power. For the creation, ministering to thee its maker, straineth its force against the unrighteous for punishment, and slackeneth it in behalf of them that trust in thee for beneficence. Therefore at that time also, converting itself into all forms, it ministered to thine all-nourishing bounty, according to the desire of them that made supplication; that thy sons, whom thou lovedst, O Lord, might learn that it is not the growth of the earth's

* For the world fighteth for the righteous. For at one time the flame lost its fierceness, that it might not burn up the creatures sent against the ungodly, but that these themselves as they looked might see that they were chased through the judgement of God; and at another time even in the midst of water it burneth above the power of fire, that it may destroy the fruits of an unrighteous land.

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fruits that nourisheth a man, but that thy word preserveth them that trust thee. For that which was not marred by fire, when it was simply warmed by a faint sunbeam melted away; that it might be known that we must rise before the sun to give thee thanks, and must plead with thee at the dawning of the light. For the hope of the unthankful shall melt as the winter's hoar frost, and shall flow away as water that hath no use.

For great are thy judgements, and hard to interpret; therefore souls undisciplined went astray. For when lawless men had supposed that they held a holy nation in their power, they themselves, prisoners of darkness, and bound in the fetters of a long night, close kept beneath their roofs, lay exiled from the eternal providence. For while they thought that they were unseen in their secret sins, they were sundered one from another by a dark curtain of forgetfulness, stricken with terrible awe, and sore troubled by spectral forms. For neither did the dark recesses that held them guard them from fears; but sounds rushing down rang around them, and phantoms appeared, cheerless with unsmiling faces. And no force of fire prevailed to give them light, neither were the brightest flames of the stars strong enough to illumine that gloomy night: but only there appeared to them the glimmering of a fire self-kindled, full of fear; and in terror they deemed the things which they saw to be worse than that sight on which they could not gaze. And they lay helpless, made the sport of

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magic art, and a shameful rebuke of their vaunts of understanding: for they that promised to drive away terrors and troublings from a sick soul, these were themselves sick with a ludicrous fearfulness. For even if no troublous thing affrighted them, yet, scared with the creepings of vermin and hissings of serpents, they perished for very trembling, refusing even to look on the air, which could on no side be escaped.* But they, all through the night which was powerless indeed, and which came upon them out of the recesses of powerless Hades, all sleeping the same sleep, now were haunted by monstrous apparitions, and now were paralysed by their soul's surrendering; for fear sudden and unlooked-for came upon them. So then every man, whosoever it might be, sinking down in his place, was kept in ward shut up, in that prison which was barred not with iron: for whether he were a husbandman, or a shepherd, or a labourer whose toils were in the wilderness, he was overtaken, and endured that inevitable necessity; for with one chain of darkness were they all bound. Whether there were a whistling wind, or a melodious noise of birds among the spreading branches, or a measured fall of water running violently, or a harsh crashing of

* For wickedness, condemned by a witness within, is a coward thing, and, being pressed hard by conscience, always forecasteth the worst lot. For fear is nothing else but a surrender of the succours which reason offereth; and from within the heart the expectation of them being less maketh of greater account the ignorance of the cause that bringeth the torment.

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rocks hurled down, or the swift course of animals bounding along unseen, or the voice of wild beasts harshly roaring, or an echo rebounding from the hollows of the mountains: all these things paralysed them with terror. For the whole world beside was enlightened with clear light, and was occupied with unhindered works; while over them alone was spread a heavy night, — an image of the darkness that should afterward receive them. But yet heavier than darkness were they unto themselves.*

Whereas thou didst provide for thy people a burning pillar of fire, to be a guide for their unknown journey, and withal a kindly sun for their proud exile. For well did the Egyptians deserve to be deprived of light and imprisoned by darkness, they who had kept in close ward thy sons, through whom the incorruptible light of the law was to be given to the race of men.

After they had taken counsel to slay the babes of the holy ones, and when a single child had been cast forth and saved to convict them of their sin, thou tookest away from them their multitude of children, and destroyedst all their host together in a mighty flood. Of that night were our fathers made aware beforehand, that, having sure

* But for thy holy ones there was great light; and the Egyptians, hearing their voice but seeing not their form, counted it a happy thing that they too had suffered; yet for that they do not hurt them now, though wronged by them before, they are thankful; and because they had been at variance with them, they made supplication to them.

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knowledge, they might be cheered by the oaths which they had trusted. So by thy people was expected salvation of the righteous and destruction of the enemies; for as thou didst take vengeance on the adversaries, by the same means, calling us unto thyself, thou didst glorify us. For holy children of good men offered sacrifice in secret, and with one consent they took upon themselves the covenant of the divine law, that they would partake alike in the same good things and the same perils; the fathers already leading the sacred songs of praise. But there sounded back in discord the cry of the enemies, and a piteous voice of lamentation for children was borne abroad. And servant along with master punished with a like just doom, and commoner suffering the same as king, yea, all the people together, under one form of death, had with them corpses without number; for the living were not sufficient even to bury them, since at a single stroke their nobler offspring was consumed. For while they were disbelieving all things by reason of the enchantments, upon the destruction of the firstborn they confessed the people to be God's son. For while peaceful silence enwrapped all things, and night in her own swiftness was in mid course, thine all-powerful word leaped from heaven out of the royal throne, a stern warrior, into the midst of the doomed land, bearing as a sharp sword thine unfeigned commandment; and standing it filled all things with death; and while it touched the heaven it trode upon the earth.

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Then forthwith apparitions in dreams terribly troubled them, and fears came upon them unlooked for: and each —one thrown here half dead, another there — made manifest wherefore he was dying: for the dreams, perturbing them, did foreshew this, that they might not perish without knowing why they were afflicted.

But it befell the righteous also to make trial of death, and a multitude were stricken in the wilderness. Howbeit the wrath endured not for long. For a blameless man hasted to be their champion: bringing the weapon of his own ministry, even prayer and the propitiation of incense, he withstood the indignation, and set an end to the calamity, shewing that he was thy servant. And he overcame the anger, not by strength of body, not by efficacy of weapons; but by word did he subdue the minister of punishment, by bringing to remembrance oaths and covenants made with the fathers. For when the dead were already fallen in heaps one upon another, standing between he stopped the advancing wrath, and cut off the way to the living. For upon his long high-priestly robe was the whole world, and the glories of the fathers were upon the graving of the four rows of precious stones, and thy majesty was upon the diadem of his head. To these the destroyer gave place, and these the people feared; for it was enough only to make trial of the wrath.

But upon the ungodly there came unto the end indignation without mercy. For their future also God foreknew,

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how that, having changed their minds to let thy people go, and having speeded them eagerly on their way, they would repent themselves and pursue them. For while they were yet in the midst of their mourning, and making lamentation at the graves of the dead, they drew upon themselves another counsel of folly, and pursued as fugitives those whom with intreaties they had cast out. For the doom which they deserved was drawing them unto this end, and it made them forget the things that had befallen them; that they might fill up the punishment which was yet wanting to their torments, and that thy people might journey on by a marvellous road, but they themselves might find a strange death.

For the whole creation, each part in its several kind, was fashioned again anew, ministering to thy several commandments, that thy servants might be guarded free from hurt. Then was beheld the cloud that shadowed the camp, and dry land rising up out of what before was water, out of the Red Sea an unhindered highway, and a grassy plain out of the violent surge; by which they passed over with all their hosts, these that were covered with thy hand, having beheld strange marvels. For like horses they roamed at large, and they skipped about like lambs, praising thee, O Lord, who wast their deliverer. For they still remembered the things that came to pass in the time of their sojourning, how that instead of bearing cattle the land brought forth lice, and instead of fish the

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river cast up a multitude of frogs. But afterwards they saw also a new race of birds, when, led on by desire, they asked for luxurious dainties; for, to solace them, there came up for them quails from the sea. And upon the sinners came the punishments not without the tokens that were given beforehand by the force of the thunders.* For as the notes of a psaltery vary the character of the rhythm, even so did the elements, changing their order one with another, continuing always the same, each in its several sound: as may clearly be divined from the sight of the things that are come to pass. For creatures of the dry land were turned into creatures of the waters, and creatures that swim trode now upon the earth; fire kept the mastery of its own power in the midst of water, and water forgat its quenching nature; contrariwise, flames wasted not the flesh of perishable creatures that walked among them, neither melted they the ice-like grains of ambrosial food that were of nature apt to melt. For in all things,

* For justly did they suffer through their own wickednesses, for grievous indeed was the hatred which they practised toward guests. For whereas the men of Sodom received not the strangers when they came among them, the Egyptians made slaves of guests who were their benefactors. And not only so, but God shall visit the men of Sodom after another sort, since they received as enemies them that were aliens; whereas these first welcomed with feastings, and then afflicted with dreadful toils, them that had already shared with them in the same rights. And moreover they were stricken with loss of sight, even as were those others at the righteous man's doors, when, being compassed about with yawning darkness, they sought every one the passage through his own door.

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O Lord, thou didst magnify thy people, and thou didst glorify them and not lightly regard them; standing by their side in every time and place.

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Syllabus and Notes

to

Ecclesiastes

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SYLLABUS

*** Each paragraph in this Syllabus represents a paragraph in the text.*

Prologue

All is Vanity

The totality of things is incomprehensible, and the effort to interpret it is lost labour.

In things of nature there is no movement which is not movement in a circle.

In human enquiry there is no attainment.

In the succession of events there is no advance.

In the succession of human generations there is no continuity.

Essay I

in the form of a Dramatic Monologue

Solomon's Search for Wisdom

The Preacher identifies himself for the moment with King Solomon, as supreme in wealth and wisdom, in order to trace a fancy experiment: the turning reflection on to all kinds of human effort, only to find that they yield nothing to analysis.

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1. The accumulation without limit of all pleasures, including follies (but the 'wisdom,' or analysing power, being retained all through): the survey presents nothing that is not illusory.

2. Analysis turned on to wisdom itself [the reflective faculty and its appropriate expression in conduct]: this infinitely superior to its opposite, yet both are involved in the same death.

3. Reflection turned on to 'labour' [i.e. production of goods as distinguished from consumption]: this made hateful by the necessity of leaving to a successor who may be a fool.

4. Is wisdom to be found in appreciating the process [as distinguished from the result] whether of pleasure-making or labour? But such appreciation of life is a gift of God, and is not in the power of the seeker. The survey ends in illusion.

Essay II

The Philosophy of Times and Seasons

A Theory. — The sphere of wisdom does not lie in the Whole, but in the separate Parts: all things have an interest of their own [have their 'seasons']. — This having been stated (in sonnet form) is met with four objections.

1. The Parts have an inherent interest of their own — but equally inherent in man is the questioning of the universal, which can never be satisfied.

2. The appreciation of this interest of the Parts is a God-given thing — and God acts on fixed principles which the individual cannot influence.

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3. The 'seasons' of things are seen reversed: wickedness in place of judgment.

Objection. — Such facts argue an hereafter for rectification.

Rejoinder. — The facts fit equally with the view that man is not different in his end from the beasts.

4. There are things to which no 'season' can give an interest: suffering under oppression — skill attained at the price of bitter competition — effort recognising its own purposelessness.

Essay III

The Vanity of Desire

Attainment without satisfaction.

Attainment attended by hurt.

Attainment attended by hurt and followed by failure.

Side by side, a real good: God-given wealth with God-given satisfaction in it — and the worst of evils: God-given wealth and the satisfaction withheld.

Desire prompts effort, only to encounter limitations inherent in humanity.

Knowledge of what to desire belongs to a future which the short life never reaches.

Essay IV

The Search for Wisdom with Notes by the Way

Wisdom [interpretation of the Whole] is unattainable: but tentative approaches may be made, notes on the analysis of things.

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Feminine temptation is worse than death.

A wise man is a rarity; a wise woman not yet found.

The Creator's design in man was moral: his own bent is utilitarian.

The wise man's spirit is reflected in his countenance.

Non-resistance a religious duty and a point of wisdom: within its limits there is safety; whereas the wisdom of resistance could only be proved in a future the individual will not live to see.

Sin is encouraged by the spectacle of the oppressor and his innocent victim coming to the same end of death and oblivion: but in spite of such impunity it is not well with the wicked.

The spectacle of the righteous unfortunate and the wicked prosperous brings despair of wisdom: there seems nothing better than enjoyment.

The vastness of the survey of things makes wisdom unattainable.—This alone is more than any can solve: that the fate of the righteous for good or ill is a secret of God; the same death comes to all, and for the dead there is no portion in any thing.

Happiness in life is the sign of God's acceptance: cultivate it before the grave cuts the life short.

Capacity does not secure attainment: time and chance happen to all.

Wisdom achieving where strength failed is yet forgotten because united with poverty.

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Essay V

Life as a Joy shadowed by the Judgment

Life is a thing of joy — shadowed by responsibility — the coming days of vanity a reason for cherishing life while it lasts — the coming years of feebleness a reason for an early recognition of the Creator.

Epilogue

All is Vanity — Fear God

The totality of things is incomprehensible.

The function of wisdom [analytic] is limited: detailed reflections and the working up of these, for the purpose of stimulus [goads] and securing steps of advance [nails] — anything beyond this is lost labour.

The summary of wisdom [practical]: human works within the limits of Divine commandments.

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NOTES

On Literary Formulæ in Ecclesiastes

One of the characteristic features of style in this writer is the employment over and over again of certain phrases, which have the effect of formulæ. But they are not used with the precision and uniformity of philosophic terms; on the contrary they are artistically varied, and add a subtle literary charm to the book.

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.
All things are full of weariness.
All is vanity and a striving after wind.
This also was vanity.
There is a vanity which is done upon the earth.
It cometh in vanity, and departeth in darkness (III).
There be many things that increase vanity (III).

Etymologically the word for 'vanity' is suggestive of breath or vapour. But the force of these formulæ is best appreciated by noting how the word occupies the position which in other biblical philosophy is occupied by the word 'wisdom,' in the sense of the universal harmony or one-ness. Thus 'vanity' to this thinker connotes the failure to satisfy the reflective faculty.

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In this connection 'all' or 'all things' is suggestive: it is antithetic to the conception of a unity in the universe.

All that is done under heaven.
All the works that are done under the sun.
What it was good for the sons of men that they should do under the heaven all the days of their life.
The work that is wrought under the sun.
There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the sun.
Who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?
Thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.
All the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun.

(many others)

The whole group of expressions, *under the sun*, or *upon the earth*, etc., make formulæ for the objective world, antithetic to the world of consciousness and reflection which fills the thought of the book. Another antithesis to these expressions is the following:

The work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end (*II*).
The work of God who doeth all (*xxxii*).
Consider the work of God . . . God hath even made [*prosperity*] *side by side with* [*adversity*].

These are formulæ, not for the phenomena, but for the underlying principles which are hidden, and (Ecclesiastes thinks) impossible to discover. The two formulæ clash in one passage:

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I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun: because however much a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it (IV).

Another set of expressions are used to introduce distinct stages or steps in the reflective process.

I communed with mine own heart.
I said in mine heart.
I searched in mine heart how . . .
Then I looked.
And I turned myself to behold.
I returned, and saw.
All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto . .
etc.

The following make an important group.

There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour (I).
Who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, more than I?
Nothing better for them than to rejoice and to get good so long as they live: and also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy good in all his labour is . . . (II).
There is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his works (II).
Good . . . and comely . . . to eat and to drink, and to enjoy good in all his labour (III).

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Riches and wealth and . . . power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour (*III*).
God giveth riches, wealth, and honour, so that he lacketh nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof (*III*).
Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun than to eat and to drink and to be merry: and that this should accompany him in his labour all the days of his life (*IV*).

When all these passages are read together it becomes evident that the expression *eat and drink* is not used by this writer in the limited sense of indulging sensuous appetite, but as a formula for *appreciation* in the widest extent: some of these passages applying *eat and drink* to riches, to labour, and even to honour. A similar remark may be made as to *mirth*: the last quotation makes it an element of *labour*. As a fact, Ecclesiastes never dwells upon the revel, or the sensuous, by itself: all happy appreciation of life is treated as one.

The word *labour* has the appearance of being used as a formula.

What hath a man of all his labour, and of the striving of his heart wherein he laboureth under the sun? (*I*).
I hated all my labour . . . seeing that I must leave it unto the man that shall be after me (*I*).
Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do (*I*).
etc.

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The sense suggested seems to be the effort of production, as antithetic to consumption.

The word *time* enters into the usage of formulæ.

> *To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven* (*II*).
> *He hath made everything beautiful in its time* (*II*).

> *A wise man's heart discerneth time and judgement: for to every purpose there is a time and judgement* (*IV*).
> *For man also knoweth not his time . . . so are the sons of men snared in an evil time* (*IV*).

It will be argued below (pages 143–8) that the word *time* in the two sets of passages points to totally different ideas.

In reference to the word *wisdom* itself a distinction may be made. To a great extent the word is used in this book in a very general sense, as the equivalent of knowledge, or the antithesis to folly.

> *To know wisdom, and to know madness and folly* (*I*).
> *Whose labour is with wisdom, and with knowledge, and with skilfulness* (*I*).

It approaches a formula when used of the reflective process, either for the process itself or its results.

> *All this have I proved in wisdom . . . to seek wisdom and the reason of things* (*IV*).
> *To search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven* (*I*).

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I have seen wisdom under the sun in this wise, and it seemed great unto me (*IV*).
(*Mine heart yet guiding me with wisdom*) (*I*).
Also my wisdom remained with me (*I*).

The two last quotations — from the imaginary experiment of Solomon — are specially important: he is experimenting in folly, but retaining all the while 'wisdom' that could reflect on the folly.

Title

Ecclesiastes, or The Preacher. — The Greek word 'Ecclesiastes' was used by the translators of the Septuagint to express a Hebrew word *Qoheleth*. As the Hebrew word does not occur elsewhere, all that we can learn as to the original title may be summed up under two heads: (1) that it is connected etymologically with the general idea of 'collecting' or 'gathering': (2) that the Seventy thought it represented by the Greek word they used for it. This word, in Classical Greek, means simply a 'Member of Assembly,' and I see no reason why the title of this book need do more than suggest 'One of the Wise'; the word 'Counsellor' is often used in this sense (e.g. *Job*, chapter xii. 17). The Vulgate, however, interpreted it as the *caller* of an assembly, and expressed this by the Latin word *Concionator*; which Luther further altered into *Preacher*, and this title has unfortunately survived. It is impossible now to alter it; but there is nothing in the book that fits in with it.

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Notes

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. These words are found in the R.V., but such editorial sub-titles are omitted in the present edition. There is no evidence to show that such titles were part of the original works, or to indicate what authority of tradition they bring. On the other hand they are often out of keeping with the matter to which they are prefixed (e.g. *Psalms* xxxiv, lii); or at least describe correctly only the beginning, and not the whole, of what they introduce (compare *Ecclesiasticus* volume, page *xvi*). In the present case they seem to be based on the opening words of Essay I, the addition of an editor who did not perceive that such words would apply only to that essay. It may be pointed out, moreover, that it was a tendency of antiquity to describe loosely a whole work by what was a prominent part of it. Thus the biblical title to *Proverbs* uses the expression "The Proverbs of Solomon," etc., although other authorship is recognised in the book itself, and further, the title "The Proverbs of Solomon" is repeated at the point (chapter x) where these actually begin. The title is further explained by the tendency (see Introduction, page xii) to speak of all proverb literature by the name of the Solomon who was regarded as its founder. To such an extent does this prevail in ecclesiastical tradition that Clement (of Alexandria) and Cyprian use 'Solomon' even for *Ecclesiasticus*, although that collection of wisdom has an author who names himself, and is named at the outset by his translator. — It is hardly necessary to add that the words are of no force in the question of the authorship of the book.

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Prologue

For the general argument of the prologue see the Syllabus.

Page 7. *Vanity of vanities:* for this formula see above, page 131. — *Saith the Preacher:* for the word *Preacher* see above, page 136. These or similar words constitute a formula that partly takes the place of the *My son* of other wisdom books. It is significant that the latter is only used in the epilogue. The older type of Men of Wisdom held a firmly established system, and so spoke down to their readers; the present writer has failed to solve life's mystery, and so speaks only as 'One of the Wise' to others his equals. But when he, in the epilogue, is proclaiming this negative attitude as the true wisdom, he falls naturally into the authoritative *My son*.

Page 7. *All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again.* So far as a circle can be said to have a starting point, this passage makes the sea the fountain for the round of waters: from the sea rises vapour, which falls in rain on the land, percolates into rivers, and so runs back to the sea. Similarly Homer:

> *The mighty strength of Ocean's fathomless flow,*
> *Forth out of whom all rivers and all the sea-waves go,*
> *And all deep-slumbering wells and fountains sunlight plashing.**

The same thought (with a slight difference in the process) is the foundation of one of the most beautiful similes in English poetry (in Sir John Davies's *Nosce teipsum*).

* *Iliad*, xxi. 19 (Way's translation).

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And as the moisture, which the thirsty earth
Sucks from the sea, to fill her empty veins,
From out her womb at last doth take a birth,
And runs a lymph along the grassy plains:

Long doth she stay, as loth to leave the land,
From whose soft side she first did issue make;
She tastes all places, turns to every hand,
Her flowery banks unwilling to forsake:

Yet nature so her streams doth lead and carry,
As that her course doth make no final stay,
Till she herself unto the ocean marry,
Within whose watery bosom first she lay:

E'en so the soul, which in this earthly mould
The spirit of God doth secretly infuse,
Because at first she doth the earth behold,
And only this material world she views:

At first her mother earth she holdeth dear,
And doth embrace the world, and worldly things
She flies close by the ground, and hovers here,
And mounts not up with her celestial wings.

Yet under heaven she cannot light on aught
That with her heavenly nature doth agree:
She cannot rest, she cannot fix her thought,
She cannot in this world contented be.

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I have thought it worth while to support this conception at full length, because so omniscient a writer as Lord Macaulay blundered over it, and fastened his own blunder on the author he was reviewing. In the celebrated essay on Robert Montgomery occurs the following passage.

> *We would not be understood, however, to say, that Mr. Robert Montgomery cannot make similitudes for himself. A very few lines further on, we find one which has every mark of originality, and on which, we will be bound, none of the poets whom he has plundered will ever think of making reprisals:*
>
> *"The soul, aspiring, pants its source to mount,*
> *As streams meander level with their fount."*
>
> *We take this to be, on the whole, the worst similitude in the world. In the first place, no stream meanders, or can possibly meander, level with its fount. In the next place, if streams did meander level with their founts, no two motions can be less like each other than that of meandering level and that of mounting upwards.*

It is plain that Macaulay thought only of the prosaic fountain of a stream, which must be its highest point; Montgomery, with Homer, and Ecclesiastes and poetry, conceives the sea to be the true and ultimate fountain of the moving water. Again, the reviewer parsed the sentence wrongly, in not seeing that *level* was 'proleptic': when a maid "scrubs a floor clean" she scrubs

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it *till* it is clean, not *when* it is clean; so streams meander *till* they are level with their fount, the sea. So far from being original with Robert Montgomery, the couplet is a legitimate echo of the much praised simile of Davies; and the whole verse about "tasting all places" and "turning to every hand" is summed up in the suggestive "meander" of the later poet. A poetic conception that trips up Lord Macaulay is one as to which the readers of the present volume will not object to be cautioned.

Essay I

For the argument of the essay see the Syllabus.

Page 11. *I the Preacher was king*, etc. The author is here identifying himself with Solomon, for the purpose of describing, in his person, an imaginary experiment. (See Introduction, pages x–xiii, xv.)

Pages 11, 12. *Mine heart yet guiding me with wisdom . . . also my wisdom remained with me.* The experiment included the pleasures that are called follies: he will give himself freely to them, but retain the wise reflecting power that can analyse them. (Compare above, page 136.) On the idea of thus experimenting in folly see a note on *Wisdom* I (below, page 178).

Page 12. *For my heart rejoiced because of all my labour; and this was my portion from all my labour.* The point of this sentence is that the imaginary experiment is successful considered as an experiment, that the goods accumulated do bring their impression of pleasure: but when reflection is turned upon them there is no satisfaction. This element of the argument is neces-

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sitated by the fixed idea of the author, which recurs again and again, that a man may possess all objects of happiness, and yet may lack the happiness they ought to bring. (See Introduction, pages xx–xxii.)

Page 13. *And I hated all my labour*, etc. The Syllabus suggests the difference between this and the second paragraph: in both there is accumulation of good things, but the first experiment was accumulating only to consume; this is the interest of production itself, e.g. moneymaking, as distinct from spending a fortune. (See above, page 134.) Both are distinct from the following paragraph, which deals with the *process* (of pleasure or labour) as distinct from the final result: appreciation of life as it flows along, not the achievement of great results in enjoyment.

Page 13. *There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink*: for these and similar expressions see above, page 133–4.

Page 14. *This also I saw, that it is from the hand of God.* This is the first appearance of what is one of the two positive ideas of the book, — that appreciation of life (or natural happiness) is the gift of God. (See Introduction, page xv, etc.)

Essay II

For the general argument of this essay see the Syllabus.

In a sonnet a certain theory of life is stated, and in prose this theory is discussed and rejected. The form of the sonnet is a combination of stanza and pendulum structure. The latter

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sways between one side and the other of a number of antitheses or 'oppositions' (see *Ecclesiasticus* volume, pages 109, 191) which are regarded as identical or related:

positive and negative
production and destruction
joy and sorrow
collection and dispersion
speech and silence
love and hate.

Page 17. *To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.* These important words contain the gist of the theory of life which this essay is to review. Caution is required to prevent the misunderstanding of this epigrammatic statement of it. It is natural to associate, as Plumptre and others have done, the expression 'time and season' with the Greek word *kairos*, which in a particular phase of ancient thought was as prominent as perhaps the word 'evolution' is in our own day. But I wish to show that 'time and season' in the present passage represent a totally different set of ideas from 'time' associated with other terms in other parts of *Ecclesiastes*.

The idea underlying the special usage of the Greek word *kairos* is precisely that embodied in Shakespeare's familiar saying:

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the remnant of their lives
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

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It is part of the fatalism of Greek thought, but represents a favourable aspect of fate; the drift of things is irresistible, but an individual, by watching and adapting himself to it, can make irresistible destiny achieve his purpose. Hence the maxim of Pittacus: "Know the *kairos*," the opportunity. Hence, at the opening of Sophocles' *Electra*, Orestes says:

The true, right time is come,
The mightiest master of all works of men.

The idea (in a limited sense) has been allegorised by Spenser in his Occasio (*Faerie Queene*, II. iv): the lame Hag —

Her lockes, that loathly were, and hoarie gray,
Grew all afore, and loosely hong unrold;
But all behinde was bald, and worne away,
That none thereof could ever taken hold: —

for of course we must "take time by the forelock."

The same idea seems to underlie the expression 'time and judgement' in one of the most difficult passages of the present work. (Essay IV, paragraph 6; page 41.) The whole paragraph (see the Syllabus) seems to lay down the doctrine of passive obedience or non-resistance, and this argument is used:

Whoso keepeth the commandment shall know no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth time and judgement. For to every purpose there is a time and judgement; because the misery of man is great upon him, for he knoweth not that which shall be. For who can tell him how it shall be? There

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> *is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power over the day of death;* etc.

Within the limits of obedience to authority there is safety. But (the objection seems to occur) is not resistance to evil the part of the wise man? The truly wise man (answers Ecclesiastes) knows that resistance to evil, like every other human action, is limited by its 'time'; and only the hidden future will show by the event whether the resistance is justified by success, or proves a vain struggle against the inevitable. If this interpretation is correct, 'time' here is used in the sense of the Greek *kairos*, and this is linked with the biblical *judgement*, the good or evil of a thing demonstrated by the event.

Akin to this is another passage of this work, in which 'time' enters into another formula. The argument (paragraph 11 of Essay IV; page 44) is that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong:

> *But time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.*

This 'time' is the converse of *kairos*: the moment, not when man may master his fate, but when his fate masters him.

But the 'time and season' of Essay II represent a different thought altogether, for which we have to go back to an important passage of *Ecclesiasticus*. [That is, if we assume *Ecclesi-*

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asticus to be the earlier work; if not, the passage is none the less a clear indication of the theory of life which both authors notice, the one to accept and the other to reject it.] In the Preface to Book IV the son of Sirach undertakes to give the principles upon which Divine praise is to be based.

> *All the works of the Lord are exeeeding good, and every command shall be accomplished in his season. None can say, What is this? wherefore is that? for in his season they shall all be sought out. . . . He beholdeth from everlasting to everlasting, and there is nothing wonderful before him. None can say, What is this? wherefore is that? for all things are created for their uses. . . . His ways are plain unto the holy; so are they stumblingblocks unto the wicked.*

Details follow of things — water, fire, iron, salt, etc. — good for the godly, for sinners turned into evil; winds and terrors that shall be ready for vengeance in their 'seasons.'

> *Therefore from the beginning I was resolved, and I thought this, and left it in writing: All the works of the Lord are good; and he will supply every need in its season. And none can say, This is worse than that: for they shall all be well approved in their season.*

The writer is making a formal reconciliation between the traditional adoration of the works of the Lord, and the growing difficulty of the recognition of evil in the world. His reconciliation is, that there is no absolute good or absolute evil, but that

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all things have their share of good and of evil. They are not to be looked at in themselves, but to be 'sought out' in God's 'season,' that is, when his use of them has shown them as containing good or containing evil; what he expresses in one place by 'seasons' he expresses in another place by 'uses.' So far does he carry the argument that he will not admit that one thing is 'worse' [or better] than another: it is a question of the 'season' of each.

Whether the allusion be to the work of the son of Sirach or not, this is clearly the theory which Ecclesiastes here reviews: that all things are by their 'seasons' demonstrated to have their part in good. The notion of an absolute good (or *summum bonum*) has been the thought of Essay I; now he deals with the other view, that good is to be looked for in the Parts; that there are *multa bona;* that everything has a share of good, and that appreciation of life is to be adjusted to this. The expression 'time and season' is a temporal one; the meaning is not temporal, but is what we should express by the metaphor of *place:* "there is a *place* for all things in our estimate of good." Hence the total divergence from the idea of the Greek *kairos*. The latter implies a 'season' which alone *makes* a thing good. But the 'seasons' of *Ecclesiasticus* are God's seasons of approving things—seasons required only to *reveal* the relation of a thing with good and with evil, which relation belongs to it always. That this is the meaning is abundantly clear, not only from the sonnet-like statement of the theory, but also from the arguments by which it is met: that the interest of the 'Parts' does not exclude the interest of the Whole, that the places of

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these 'Parts' are seen reversed, that there are 'Parts' which can have no place in a scheme of good.

Page 18. *Also he hath set the world in their heart.* The margin offers the alternative *eternity* instead of world: either expresses what is required, the antithesis of universal and particular. *The work that God hath done*, etc.: see above, page 132. On the whole passage compare Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, paragraph 3 of Book I. He quotes this verse and proceeds:

> *declaring not obscurely, that God hath framed the mind of man as a mirror or glass, capable of the image of the universal world, and joyful to receive the impression thereof, as the eye joyeth to receive light; and not only delighted in beholding the variety of things and vicissitude of times, but raised also to find out and discern the ordinances and decrees, which throughout all those changes are infallibly observed. And although he doth insinuate that the supreme or summary law of nature, which he calleth* The work which God worketh from the beginning to the end, *is not possible to be found out by man; yet that doth not derogate from the capacity of the mind, but may be referred to the impediments, as of shortness of life, ill conjunction of labours, ill tradition of knowledge over from hand to hand, and many other inconveniences, whereunto the condition of man is subject.*

The latter part of this comment would not have been admitted by Ecclesiastes; nevertheless it is a real answer to his diffi-

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culty. The failure of the Preacher to find harmony in the universe is due to his confinement of the enquiry to the short life of a single thinker; the evil of such limitation is pointed out by the literary representative of that Inductive Philosophy which is an organisation of all thinkers, from generation to generation, for the solution of what Ecclesiastes pronounced insoluble.

Page 19. *There is a time there for every purpose:* the *there* is the indefinite future implied in the preceding *shall*: "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked." The words naturally suggest judgment beyond death. But the important point of the passage is that this is a passing thought, immediately rejected in favour of the other thought, that there is nothing to support such a future for man more than for the brutes. (See the Syllabus; and above page xvii.) No other passage recognises any future existence: the expression of the final sonnet, *And the spirit return unto God who gave it*, clearly means that by death man will become what he was before birth. On the contrary, the negative of existence after death is insisted upon in place after place of this book.

Page 20. *The fool foldeth his hands together*, etc. I understand these words as the interposition of an imaginary objector, and the words that follow, *Better is an handful of quietness*, etc., as the rejoinder of Ecclesiastes. Such citation of objections in the words of the supposed objector occurs more than once in *Job.*

Miscellanea

ii. There is no historical allusion here: it is a maxim of general experience on the Vanity of Kingship. *Out of prison he*

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came forth to be king; yea, even in his kingdom he was born poor. I understand by the *prison* the womb; and for *born poor* compare: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither."* The thought of the whole is: In essence, apart from outward trappings, the king is as poor as the poor youth: at birth one was as poor as the other. And what do these outward trappings amount to? When the old king is gone, all the world flocks to his successor; but that successor will be equally forsaken in his turn. — *The youth, the second* has no necessary reference to the *poor and wise youth*: the main antithesis of *king* and *poor* was merely strengthened by the further antithesis of *old and foolish* and *youth and wise.*

iii. A maxim founded upon an image (compare *Ecclesiasticus* I. xxii): pious volubility no better than the talking in sleep of an overworked brain.

iv. A maxim with the text in the middle: compare x, xvii. [For the maxim in general, compare the *Ecclesiasticus* volume of this series, page *xi.*] The saying puts two conceptions of government: one looking upon the people as a field for extortion, the other upon the land as a thing to be developed.

Essay III

For the general argument of this essay see the Syllabus.

Page 30. *He shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart.* Cheyne

* Similar words are found in Essay III.

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understands: "he will not think much on the (few) days of his life," and this is a simple explanation. On the whole, however, I prefer a different interpretation. It must be remembered that it is a fixed idea of the book that natural happiness is the direct and special gift of God to the individual. Such an individual will not "take much thought for his life": the happiness comes in answer to his prayers almost before they are offered. This is confirmed by the corresponding passage in Essay IV (page 44); especially note the word *already*:

> ***Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted thy works.***

The picture is one of simple happiness, free from the burden of thought.

Page 30. ***All the labour of man is for his mouth:*** compare *Proverbs* **II. ccx. The word *mouth* is a formula for desire or natural wants: compare the similar formulæ above, page 133. — *For what advantage hath the wise man more than the fool*, etc.: that is, they both have the same natural necessities.**

Page 30. ***His name was given him long ago . . . Man.*** **The remark rests upon the ancient idea of a name as a formula of definition. Thus limitation is inherent in a man's humanity.**

Miscellanea

v, vii. These two maxims must be taken together, though the proverb separating them clearly has no connection with them.

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The thought rests upon a series of 'oppositions' (compare above, page 143, and *Ecclesiasticus* II. xxxix):

The good name (only established at death)	Ointment, the symbol of the feast (*Psalm* xxiii. 5)
Mourning and rebuke	Laughter and song
Death (summing up the whole life)	Birth (commences opportunity for feasting)
The end	The beginning
Patience (looking to the end of things)	Anger (the impatience that does not wait to prove things)
The former days (which can be seen as wholes)	The present days (and therefore seen imperfectly)

viii. *The excellency of knowledge is that wisdom preserveth the life of him that hath it.* Both wisdom and money defend against external attack, but wisdom also affects the life itself — that is *eu zēn*, not *zēn* only, the life of character.

ix. *God hath even made the one* [prosperity] *side by side with the other* [adversity], *to the end that man should not find out anything that shall be after him.* This is presented as the reflection which is proper for adversity. With it compare:

There is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him back to see what shall be after him? (*II*).

For who knoweth what is good for man in his life, . . . for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun? (*III*).

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Notes

The misery of man is great upon him, for he knoweth not that which shall be. For who can tell him how it shall be? There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; etc. (*IV*).

These passages read together bring out how the impossibility of man's reading the future is one of the fixed ideas of Ecclesiastes. This seems to give a clew to one of the sources of his intellectual despair. He belongs to a stage of philosophic development which has just grasped the crushing thought of 'law.' or invariable sequence, in nature and human events. To us, such law seems to imply power of foreseeing the future when the laws of things have been traced. But this would conflict with a more fundamental conception of the Hebrew mind — the inscrutability of the Creator, which plays such an important part in the earlier speeches of Job in answer to the Friends. Accordingly Ecclesiastes seems to recognise an element of the incalculable in Divine providence, sufficient to defeat all efforts to foresee: and thus man has the double 'misery' of perceiving law, and yet being powerless to secure the event by acting on law. So the sense of the present maxim is: If your [wise] action results in prosperity, be glad of it; if notwithstanding all your wisdom adversity comes, remember this is the incalculable dispensation of the Creator, without which man would be able to read into the future.

x. This is a maxim with the text in the middle (compare iv, xvii); moreover, it is unique in having, not a couplet, but a sextett for text. — *Be not righteous over much . . . yea, also from that* [wickedness] *withdraw not thine hand*, etc. Some

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readers are shocked at this sentiment; others (like Plumptre) would explain away the words by 'gentle irony,' or otherwise. I see no difficulty. Here, as in so many other sayings, Ecclesiastes is simply reading into the form of precepts the mysteries of providential dealings. The fact of providential dispensation that the scrupulously just may yet fail, and the unscrupulous achieve good results, is here made a basis for conduct. The history of Israel has many cases in which treacherous assassination has worked the deliverance of God's people: with such a thought in his mind our author says that even from wickedness the wise man may not be able wholly to withdraw his hand. But he immediately adds the corrective: in this perplexity of providential dispensation "the fear of the Lord" for motive is the safe guide. For the reputation of the Preacher it is fair to put side by side with this the opposite principle in Essay IV (paragraph 7, page 42): in spite of this same providential mystery he clings to the idea that it is well with the righteous and ill with the unpunished sinner.

xi. *Wisdom is a strength . . . more than ten rulers which are in a city.* It is clear that the word *ruler* cannot here mean a supreme ruler; for the multiplication of such by ten would be the opposite of an advantage. The 'rulers' must be the king's officers or agents, and then the meaning of the maxim is clear: wisdom in the king is better than the multiplication of officers, for it is a mistake to punish small offences, nor is it well for the king to be informed of everything that goes on.

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Notes

Essay IV

For the general argument of the essay see the Syllabus.

Page 41. *I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me . . . I turned about, and my heart was set . . . to search out,* etc. These words contain the purpose of the essay, and make clear its difference from Essay I. The words imply two stages of thought (compare above, page 133): the first (like Essay I) recognises the hopelessness of solving the mystery of things; then another suggests the possibility of a partial or tentative solution: and this Essay IV follows out.

Page 41. *They have sought out many inventions:* the antithesis is between moral and utilitarian. A commentary on this saying of Ecclesiastes is the common reflection of modern writers that a man will endure insinuations against his moral character with more equanimity than suggestions of his mental incompetence.

Page 41. *I counsel thee, keep the king's command, and that in regard of the oath of God.* The general doctrine of passive obedience or non-resistance: the same combination of thoughts as in *Romans* xiii. 1–7, though of course St. Paul is providing for a very different situation of things — a 'kingdom not of this world' in the midst of secular rule. *Whoso keepeth the commandment shall know no evil thing,* etc. For this difficult passage see above, page 144.

Page 42. *And withal I saw the wicked buried,* etc. This passage becomes clear when the paragraphs are arranged as in the text (see also the Syllabus). The thought is: There is a

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time when an individual has the power to oppress another; the wicked oppressor dies and is buried; similarly the righteous victim is taken away [by death] from the holy place and the city: both have the same end, and the sight of this 'vanity' of providence encourages sin. This is strikingly parallel to a difficult saying in *Job* (chapter xxi. 29): the two passages explain one another.

Have ye not asked them that go by the way?
And do ye not know their tokens?
That the evil man is spared in the day of calamity?
That they are led away in the day of wrath?
Who shall declare his way to his face?
And who shall repay him what he hath done?
Moreover he is borne to the grave,
And they shall keep watch over his tomb;
The clods of the valley are sweet unto him,
And all men draw after him.

Both passages are concerned with the providential mystery of the oppressor and wicked man honoured in the time of their death. — *Though a sinner do evil . . . yet surely I know*, etc. A paradox: in spite of appearances, it is not so; or in spite of individual cases, the principle of judgment on the wicked is sound. The importance of the passage is the maintenance of moral principle side by side with complete scepticism as to understanding the mystery of God's ways. (Introduction, page xxii.)

Page 43. *Then I commended mirth*, etc.: for *mirth, eat and*

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drink, etc., see above, page 134. The point of *commended* is, that this seems an inevitable deduction from the facts.

Page 43. *The business that is done upon the earth . . . all the work of God*: for these phrases see above, page 132.

Page 44. *Madness is in their heart while they live*: this does not apply to the wicked only, but to all; *madness* being one of the synonyms of laughter (as well as of folly) in Essay I.

Page 44. *God hath already accepted thy works*: for the importance of this thought in the whole argument, see Introduction, page xix. For *already* compare above, page 151. *All the days of thy vanity*, etc.: the point of these impressive reiterations is the same as that of Essay V: the briefness of life is reason for appreciating to the full what is given.

Page 44. *Time and chance happeneth to them all . . . for man also knoweth not his time*: see above, page 145.

Miscellanea

xxii. *Yet man knoweth not what shall be*: see above, page 152.

xxiv. *Thy princes eat in the morning*: compare such passages as *Acts*, chapter ii. 15; *Isaiah*, chapter v. 11.

xxx. According to the structure of an epigram (*Proverbs* volume, page xxii) the two lines standing out to the left ought to contain a couplet proverb complete in itself. In substance this principle is carried out here; only the nouns of the preceding lines need substituting for the pronouns; thus the form would be:

Full rain clouds empty themselves upon the earth,
And the tree, where it falleth, there shall it be.

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The saying puts the thought of irresistible necessity, as in the prologue.

xxxii. For an interesting parallel compare *Psalm* cxxxix. 13–16.

Essay V

For the general argument see the Syllabus. Compare also Introduction, page xx.

Page 57. *But know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement.* This is not (1) an ironical challenge: revel away, but the judgment will come down upon thee. (2) Nor a reference to any 'day of judgment' in the far future. It is the main positive thought of the book that happiness is God's best gift; but it must be happiness with a sense of responsibility; for their enjoyment, as for everything else, men must be prepared to give account. Throughout the O. T. the word 'judgment' implies the irreconcilable antagonism of good and evil, the recognition of which makes responsibility. This passage by itself is sufficient to differentiate the 'joy' of our author from the abandon of the reveller.

Sonnet. The form of this sonnet is the pendulum structure (*Proverbs* volume, page 166): the middle lines put symbolic descriptions of old age; the left hand lines drop the symbolism and speak in plain terms. [The lines indented on the extreme right are subordinate clauses.]

The matter of the sonnet is a *tour-de-force* of symbolism, under which are veiled the symptoms of senile decay followed

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by death. It is very likely that some of the symbols may be lost; but it is not difficult, without straining, to see a possible interpretation for each; and some of them have passed into traditional use. The poetic beauty of the passage is marvellous. It has, however, been the subject of extraordinary ingenuity in pressing details to too literal significance. Those who are curious are referred to the notes of Plumptre, or the elaborate edition of Dr. Ginsburg. I attempt no more than a simple suggestion for each detail.

Or ever the sun, and the light . . . be darkened: in view of the opening words of Essay V, which take the 'light' and 'sun' as symbols of the whole happiness of conscious existence, it is clear that the *darkening* of this light is the gradual failing of the joy of living. — *And the clouds return after the rain:* an exquisite symbol, closely akin to the last. In youth we may overstrain and disturb our health, but we soon rally; these are storms that quickly clear up. In age the rallying power is gone: "the clouds return after the rain." — *The keepers of the house shall tremble:* Cheyne understands of the hands and arms, the trembling of which is a natural accompaniment of old age. Compare in the parallel below (page 163) the withered fist knocking at death's door. — *The strong men shall bow themselves:* the stooping frame; the plural is merely by attraction to 'keepers.' — *The grinders cease because they are few:* obviously of the teeth. — *Those that look out of the windows be darkened:* the eyes becoming dim. — *The doors shall be shut in the street:* the general connection of ideas makes it inevitable that the 'folding-doors' should be the jaws; clenched jaws are so marked a feature in the

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skull that it is not difficult to associate them with the picture of old age. — *When the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low:* these must be taken together: appetite, sleep, and speech are all feeble. *Grinding* must be interpreted as *grinders* in the previous part of the sonnet: the loud or low sound of such grinding may fitly typify the eagerness of appetite or the reverse. The early waking or short sleeping of the old is well known. The *daughters of music* are the tones of the voice. — *They shall be afraid of that which is high, and terrors shall be in the way:* the gait of old age is, through physical feebleness, much what the gait of a person terrified is for other reasons. Compare Sackville's lines:

Next saw we Dread, all trembling how he shook,
With foot uncertain proffered here and there.

The almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and the caper-berry shall burst: the three are linked together as being images from natural objects, not because of their symbolising similar things. The *blossoming* of the *almond tree* I believe to be the sparse white hairs of age. It would be unlikely that this obvious symptom should be omitted; and of the almond tree these two things are established: (1) it is the first to blossom (and its Hebrew name is founded on this), (2) though not strictly white its blossoms look white by contrast with other blossoms (see Sir W. Smith's dictionary s.v. page 97 b). The whitish blossoms solitary while all is bare around just yield the image required. The *grasshopper* is evi-

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dently a symbol for a small object, which is nevertheless heavy to feeble age. *The caper-berry shall burst:* the last stage of its decay: the failing powers at last give way. And then follows the dropping of the symbolism: "Man goeth to his long home."

So far we have had symbols for failure of powers; now for actual death and dissolution. *Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken:* a symbol from the house-lamp of gold, suspended by a silver cord, suddenly slipping its cord and breaking, its light becoming extinguished. For *bowl* in this sense compare *Zechariah*, chapter iv. 2, 3. — *Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern:* these are exquisite symbols for the sudden and violent cessation of every-day functions. Compare the popular proverb: "The pitcher goes to the well once too often." — *And the spirit return unto God who gave it:* this by analogy with the previous line must be interpreted to mean no more than that the man becomes just what he was before he was born.

With this symbolic picture of Old Age may be paralleled an elaborate passage of Sackville, which it may be interesting to have side by side with the text.

And next in order sad Old Age we found,
His beard all hoar, his eyes hollow and blind;
With drooping cheer still poring on the ground,
As on the place where nature him assigned
To rest, when that the sisters had untwined
His vital thread, and ended with their knife
The fleeting course of fast declining life.

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There heard we him with broken and hollow plaint
Rew with himself his end approaching fast;
And all for nought his wretched mind torment
With sweet remembrance of his pleasures past,
And fresh delights of lusty youth forwaste.
Recounting which, how would he sob and shriek,
And to be young again of Jove beseek.

But and the cruel fates so fixed be
That time forpast cannot return again,
This one request of Jove yet prayed he;
That in such withered plight and wretched pain
As eld (accompanied with his loathly train)
Had brought on him, all were it woe and grief,
He might awhile yet linger forth his life,

And not so soon descend into the pit,
Where death, when he the mortal corpse hath slain,
With retchless hands in grave doth cover it,
Thereafter never to enjoy again
The gladsome light, but in the ground ylain,
In depth of darkness waste and wear to nought,
As he had never into the world been brought.

But who had seen him, sobbing how he stood
Unto himself, and how he would bemoan
His youth forpast, as though it wrought him good
To talk of youth, all were his youth foregone:
He would have mused, and marvelled much, whereon

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This wretched age should life desire so fain,
And knows full well life doth but length his pain.

Crookback'd he was, tooth shaken, and blear-eyed;
Went on three feet, and sometimes crept on four;
With old lame bones that rattled by his side,
His scalp all pill'd, and he with eld forlore;
His wither'd fist still knocking at death's door;
Tumbling and drivelling as he draws his breath:
*For brief, the shape and messenger of death.**

Epilogue

See the Syllabus.

He pondered, and sought out, etc. . . . *of making many books there is no end.* For the whole of this paragraph see Introduction, pages viii, ix. — *God shall bring every work into judgement:* see above, page 158.

* From the Induction to the *Mirror for Magistrates.*

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Syllabus and Notes

to

The Wisdom of Solomon

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Syllabus

**** *Each paragraph in this Syllabus represents a paragraph in the text.*

Discourse I

Singleness of Heart

The Lord is found by singleness of heart — crooked thoughts and murmuring words frighten wisdom away — and that which holdeth all things together hears every secret utterance. The final words, "a mouth that lieth destroyeth a soul," are the link with Discourse II.

Discourse II

Immortality and the Covenant with Death

Death no part of the Divine creation, for righteousness is immortal — it has come invited into the world by the words and life of the wicked.

1. By their Words. — Monologue of the Ungodly: despair of aught beyond this life converting into luxury and antagonism to the righteous.

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2. By their Life: wickedness blinds them to the wages of holiness — and being thus of the 'portion' of the devil (whose envy was the means of death's entering into the world) they make trial of death.

The seeming death of the righteous is only a trial of them — in the time of their visitation there awaits them splendour, a position in the divine hierarchy, and Divine grace and mercy.

Digression. — The Hopes of the Ungodly [substitutes for immortality]. — (1) Life in posterity. But the brood of the ungodly is unstable and accursed: better is childlessness with virtue.

(2) Long life. But their old age is without honour; and a life cut short may be a life perfected.

The ungodly who ignore the grace and mercy vouchsafed to the chosen shall be suddenly overthrown — dishonoured carcases among the dead — in the day of reckoning amazed at the salvation of their former victims.

Monologue of the Ungodly: the derided righteous among the saints — their own great things passed away without a trace left.

The author breaks in: Vanity of the ungodly hopes — immortality of the righteous — the whole creation uniting to overwhelm the foes of God.

The personality of King Solomon is gradually assumed in a final appeal to kings, as those on whom will fall a sterner judgment because of their greater position: this makes the transition to the next discourse.

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Syllabus

Discourse III

in the form of a Dramatic Monologue

Solomon's Winning of Wisdom

Wisdom meeteth every purpose of her seekers — from first desire of discipline to a final kingship by the side of God. Kings therefore are addressed.

The author (identifying himself with wise King Solomon) will speak of Wisdom to his brother kings — without grudging, for Wisdom desires the multiplication of the wise.

He began like all other kings, and had to pray for Wisdom — he preferred her to all other good things.

Digression. — But in reality all other good things came with her — God gave him knowledge of all human and external nature in giving him Wisdom.

For Wisdom is all-pervasive [moral and intellectual Wisdom are one] — an effulgence from everlasting light and an image of Divine goodness.

Her then he sought as a bride: for she would bring riches, understanding, experience, glory abroad and rest at home.

The mode of obtaining this Wisdom he thought to be prayer — this thought was the result of a pure nature and understanding.

Solomon's Prayer for Wisdom. — Closing with the impossibility of knowing God's will without Wisdom, it reaches the

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thought that, when in the past men did right, it was through Wisdom that they were saved: which is the topic of the next discourse.

Discourse IV

The World saved through Wisdom

[The history included in this discourse presents Wisdom sometimes as subjective, the character of an individual — and sometimes as objective, Divine Providence ruling events.]

Wisdom protected Adam in his loneliness;

and appeared in his self-conquest, and rise to the dominion over all things. Cain in his anger fell away from Wisdom;

Wisdom preserved the righteous from the Flood.

Wisdom called righteous Abraham;

and Wisdom kept him blameless under sharpest trial.

Wisdom found out a deliverance for righteous Lot:

Lot's wife, passing Wisdom by, perished.

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Wisdom guided Jacob in his varied career.

Wisdom raised Joseph from a dungeon to a sceptre.

Wisdom delivered a holy people from their oppressors:

entering into the soul of Moses, so that he withstood kings:

guiding and protecting the people in their marvellous passage.

In the desert Wisdom marvellously supplied their wants.

[The supplying of water for the thirsty Israelites suggests the thought that becomes the text for the next discourse.]

Discourse V

Judgments on the Wicked turning to Blessings for God's People

1. Thirst. — Water turned into undrinkable blood for the Egyptians — water brought out of the solid rock for the Israelites.

2. Appetite. — For the Egyptians a plague of loathly vermin.

A. Digression. — Vermin on vermin-worshippers: men punished by that in which they sin.

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AA. Digression.— Such measured punishment (admonishing to repentance) is the mercy of Omnipotence —just as again the wicked inhabitants of the holy land perished by little and little through the hornets that were forerunners of the coming people— by such sovereignty over his strength God teaches his people love of men, and hope under chastisement.

A. Digression Resumed. This mocking punishment of vermin on vermin-worshippers meet for those so far gone in the folly of idolatry as to worship what their very enemies dishonoured.

B. Digression.— For all idolatry is folly, but there are degrees in its folly.— Least blamable are those who worship the works of God in Nature— next, those who make gods out of the works of men's hands, silver, gold, painted wood: corrupting what God has created.

C. Digression.— For idolatry is a corruption, and not a thing from the beginning nor destined to last. — Origin of Idolatry in the vaingloriousness of man: images for remembrance, gradually coming to be worshipped— the ambition of the artist assisting— a hidden danger that culminated in imaging the incommunicable Name— all moral dissolution follows, especially perjury.

B. Digression Resumed. The worshippers of our God are saved from the folly of idolatry— like that of the potter, treating life as a fair for selling images made out of the clay into which he must soon return.

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Syllabus

A. Digression Resumed. But the last degree of folly is that of the Egyptian oppressors: adding to all other idolatry the worship of things hateful.

2 Resumed. So the Egyptians suffered from loathly vermin: while for God's people dainty quails were sent to satisfy appetite.

3. Noxious Bites. — Locusts and flies plagued the enemy without healing — the Israelites the serpent bites but admonished, and then salvation was found.

4. Rain of fire and hail destroying the food of Egypt — rain of manna feeding the people of God — the same fire raging or slackening its power to work the Creator's will.

5. Darkness imprisoned the oppressors.

To guide the Israelites night was illuminated by the pillar of burning fire.

6. The Night of Deliverance and Song — a night of destruction to the firstborn of Egypt.

7. Death came as a trial to the righteous, but a champion was soon found.

To the ungodly in their final folly came a strange death without mercy.

Summary. — Thus, reviewing the whole deliverance, we see the elements of nature interchange like the notes of a psaltery to magnify God's people.

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NOTES

On Footnotes

It is a fact that writers of antiquity — Hebrew, Greek, Roman — and English writers who (like Milton) composed under the immediate influence of ancient literature, used parenthetic sentences of length and complexity such as would be used by no modern writer in any language. To some extent this reflects a real difference in mental habits as regards involution of thought. But the difference is partly due to an advance in the mechanism by which literature is presented to the eye. In such matters as punctuation and the use of brackets, and in paragraphing, the printed page does far more to assist the comprehension of the subject matter than was done by the manuscripts of antiquity or the earliest printed books. But the most important device of this kind is the 'footnote.' It is clear that the footnotes of modern books are no more than parentheses, removed to a distance so as not to interrupt the main flow of the argument; their matter has an indicated place in the order of the thought, but their separation assists the mind to hold the train of thought suspended while the subordinate matter is being taken in. It seems to me, then, legitimate to apply this device to some of the elaborate parentheses in such a work as *Wisdom*. It is

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hardly necessary to explain that by putting such portions of the text into footnotes I am not meaning to suggest that they are 'glosses,' or that they have any less authority as representatives of the writer's thought than the rest of the matter. All that is meant is that the passages so treated carry their parenthetic character to the degree which in a modern work would be indicated by the use of footnotes. To the modern reader, whose mental attitude is determined by the custom of such devices, this treatment seems a necessity, if such works as *Wisdom* are to be appreciated without being weighted with an appearance of awkwardness which in reality does not belong to them.

Title

The early title is *The Wisdom of Solomon;* and in uncritical ages it was supposed to be his composition. St. Jerome and the Vulgate, throwing over this tradition, entitle it *The Book of Wisdom*. It is also often cited (in ancient and modern literature) simply as *Wisdom*.

Discourse I

For the argument see the Syllabus.

The language of *Wisdom*, especially in the full rendering of the Revised Version, is transparently clear; the difficulties of the book lie in the argument, and especially in the order of the thought. Thus, in regard to this first discourse, while the sentences are clear, the difficulty is to see any point in the whole,

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apart from the question of the relation between this work and *Ecclesiastes*. The denunciation of crooked thoughts and blaspheming or murmuring words seems to have little relevance to judges of the earth.

One explanation might be this: the first part of this discourse deals with improper thoughts, the rest with improper words, the opening words of the following discourse speak of 'life' and 'works': thus thoughts, words, and actions of evil are mentioned before the death they bring is contrasted with immortality and righteousness. But (1) there is no symmetry in the whole argument such as this explanation would suggest. (2) It runs counter to the division into discourses. This division is very marked. (*a*) The 'texts' of the first three discourses are the only independent sentences in the whole work; all others being bound into grammatical sequences. If the texts of the last two have particles connecting them with what precedes, yet these sentences are so unmistakable as new departures that their connection with the preceding context simply illustrates the characteristic of form next to be mentioned. — (*b*) This is that the final thought of each discourse directly leads to the commencement of the next. This is brought out in the Syllabus.

On the other hand, the matter of this discourse receives point at once, if we understand a veiled attack on *Ecclesiastes* and the fancied experiment of Solomon.

Love righteousness.
In singleness of heart seek ye him.
He is found of them that tempt him not.
Crooked thoughts separate from God.

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Wisdom will not enter into a soul that deviseth evil, nor dwell in a body that is held in pledge by sin.

All these have direct relevance to the supposed experimenter's idea of "laying hold on folly" while his "wisdom remained with him."

It may be worth noting that Milton's interpretation of the temptation in Eden has the same underlying idea of experimenting in evil as the supreme sin.

Knowledge of good, bought dear by knowing ill. (iv. 222.)

Let him boast
His knowledge of good lost, and evil got,
Happier had it sufficed him to have known
Good by itself, and evil not at all. (xi. 87.)

What fear I then, rather, what know to fear,
Under this ignorance of good and evil . . .
Here grows the cure of all, the fruit divine,
Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue to make wise. (ix. 773.)

So with regard to the latter part: the idea of *wisdom* as a *spirit that loveth man*, the denunciation of *murmuring*, *blaspheming lips*, *backbiting*, may well be called forth by the pessimism of Ecclesiastes; his passionate reduction, in the name of wisdom, of human to the level of brute life seems a 'blasphemy' on the "wisdom that loveth man"; and his reiteration of 'vanity' in regard to every department of human life is a 'murmuring' and 'backbiting.' Ecclesiastes keeps saying that "all

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things are vanity": the present writer insists that "that which holds the all things together" must hear such slander of his wisdom.

Discourse II

For the argument of the whole see the Syllabus.

Page 73. *God made not death . . . righteousness is immortal:* compare below (page 75) "God created man for incorruption, and made him an image of his own proper being."— *Ungodly men called death unto them:* there is no allusion at this point to the Fall as related in *Genesis* (which is introduced later on); the reference is to the ungodly of the monologue that immediately succeeds. — *Deeming him a friend . . . and they made a covenant with him.* It is tempting to compare Isaiah (chapter xxviii), particularly as the present writer has many echoes of Isaiah. But the 'covenant with death' in that writer is a totally different idea.

> *Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through it shall not come unto us: . . . And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.*

In this passage the covenant with death is that he shall pass them by and take others. But in *Wisdom* the ungodly, instead of holding death as something hostile, accept him for a friend,

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that is, fall in with the fact that they must die, and make this the basis for a life of revelry.

Pages 73–5. Monologue of the Ungodly. The important point is the relationship of this with *Ecclesiastes*.

None . . . gave release from Hades	*Neither hath he power over the day of death . . . there is no discharge in that war*
The breath in our nostrils is smoke . . . the spirit shall be dispersed as thin air . . . scattered as is a mist, etc.	*The life of thy 'vanity' [metaphor of 'vapour' in repeated forms of expression]*
The body shall be turned into ashes	*The dust return to the earth as it was*
Our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man shall remember our works	*The memory of [the dead] is forgotten; as well their love, as their hatred and their envy, is now perished*

The general spirit of this first portion of the monologue is even more suggestive of *Ecclesiastes* **than the parallel phrases. The monologue proceeds:** *Come therefore and let us enjoy the good things that now are; and let us use the creation with all our soul as youth's possession.* **This is close to the opening of Essay V in** *Ecclesiastes;* **and the further expansion of it suggests the Preacher's "Eat and drink," etc. So** *This is our portion* **echoes the Preacher's reiteration of** *This is his portion.* **The third part of the monologue passes on to the oppression of the righteous poor. This of course is entirely opposed to the spirit of** *Eccle-*

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siastes. But it is noticeable that, in that book, it was the picture of oppression (Essay II) which suggested the thought of a judgment to come, though the thought was rejected. The present writer makes the rejection of such future judgment lead directly to the oppression. The general view of the whole then is that the monologue is based, not on the views of Ecclesiastes, but on the easy perversion of them which (the author thinks) may be made by the ungodly.

Pages 75–6. The true view of the Death of the Righteous. The conception includes these ideas:

The death is only apparent [*seemed to have died*].

It is a *chastening*, a *making trial of them* (compare the idea of the prologue to *Job*).

It is a sacrifice they offer to God [*as a whole burnt offering he accepted them*. Thus the death of the godly is brought into line with the whole institution of sacrificial ritual. Compare St. Paul's 'living sacrifice' in *Romans* xii. 1].

There is a *time of visitation* for the righteous, quite distinct from the *day of reckoning* [below, page 78: *They shall come when their sins are reckoned up*] for the wicked: when they attain their true position in some heavenly hierarchy [*They shall judge nations* (so *Ecclesiasticus* I. xiii: "He that giveth ear unto her shall judge the nations") *and have dominion over peoples*: the allusion may be to such "sons of God" as appear in the prologue to *Job*, or in *Psalm* lxxxii].

Page 76. *Because grace and mercy are to his chosen*: these words should be noted as the exact point of junction with the

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digressions that follow: the words are caught up again as the argument is resumed (page 78).

Pages 76–8. This is a Digression (see the Syllabus) on the Hopes of the Ungodly, their substitutes for the Hope of Immortality. Their hopes are two: (1) Life in posterity, (2) Long life in this world; but the whole is best considered together, as the ideas attaching to the two are entangled.

1. The brood of the ungodly is accursed:

Their wives foolish: hence *the begetting accursed.*

Children of sin reach no maturity [*bastard slips*, etc.] — share the short-livedness of the wicked generally — and their hopelessness in death.

Thus the children witnesses to wickedness of the parents [compare *Ecclesiasticus* I. xliv; and on the general subject IV. v].

Better than this is childlessness with virtue.

For the celibate and chaste *a peculiar favour* — and *a lot in the sanctuary of the Lord.* [Compare *Isaiah*, chapter lvi. 1–8; and (?) *Psalm* lxxiii. 17, where a similar phrase is used in connection with the kindred problem of prosperous wickedness.]

[If there be children]: *the root of understanding cannot fail.*

Childlessness and virtue: universal recognition of virtue and immortal memory.

2. The ungodly setting their hopes in long life.

They shall be *requited even as they reasoned* [taken at their word: "Our life is short," etc.].

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Toils, hope, works, unprofitable.
Whereas the life cut short may be the life perfected.
Good labours have fruit of great renown.
In the memory of virtue is immortality.
Honourable old age — not in *years* alone — but in *the unspotted life.*
Perfection quickly reached — snatched away for fear of spoiling.
When dead, the good are none the less a condemnation of the ungodly living. [Page 78: footnote.]

Page 76: footnote. These sentences are not necessary to the general drift of the paragraph; but are a special enlargement of the idea "accursed begetting."

Page 78: footnote. The only possible way of finding a place for these sentences is to understand them as a footnote exegetical of the idea in the word 'visiteth': even though dead the righteous man convicts the wicked of not understanding a visitation of God.

Pages 78–80. The Overthrow of the Ungodly: partly a monologue (in quotation marks), partly the words of the author. The end of the wicked:

Sudden and hopeless overthrow [in this life].
Dishonour among the dead, and anguish.
Their memory on earth shall perish.
[A day] when *their sins are reckoned up* [comparison with paragraph on pages 75–6 makes this different from the 'time of visitation' of the righteous]: they miserably

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recognise the triumph of their despised victims, and blindness of their own hopes.

[Their further future left untouched: see next note.]

Page 80. *He shall take his jealousy as complete armour*, etc. This brilliant description appears not to relate to the overthrow of the ungodly who have been presented as rising from the dead and mourning their folly. Those overthrown in this passage are represented by the general term *his enemies*: and the final words, *So shall lawlessness make all the land desolate, and their evil doing shall overturn the thrones of princes*, connect the destruction with those who are yet living on earth to be affected by it. It thus appears to be a general destruction directed against what might be called the empire of evil on earth. The necessity (according to the scheme of the book) of making the close of this discourse join on to the next has led the writer to leave the subject of the 'ungodly' treated so far, and pass suddenly to that which affects 'princes,' such as in the next discourse King Solomon will directly address.

Thus the idea of JUDGMENT, which in Wisdom literature generally is a principle undetermined by time or place, in the present writer covers four distinct incidents: (1) The overthrow [in death] of the individual sinner; (2) His 'day of reckoning' beyond the grave [the future beyond that day left blank]; (3) The 'time of visitation' for the righteous, when their seeming death is changed for a glorious position in a Divine hierarchy; (4) A supernatural overthrow of the powers of evil on earth. The 'day of the Lord' in prophetic literature sometimes combines (1) an immediate vindication of the chosen people, the

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evil amongst them being sifted out; and (2) a final overthrow of 'the nations,' with the chosen people left supreme. The prophecy of Joel is a clear type.

The details of this description seem like an enlargement from the similar interposition for judgment in *Isaiah*, chapter lix. 17–20.

Discourse III

For the general argument see the Syllabus.

Page 85. *She forestalleth them*, etc.: for the general spirit of this passage compare *Ecclesiasticus* I. xiii, xxiv, 1. — *So then desire of Wisdom promoteth to a kingdom:* this, taken with the words immediately preceding, *bringeth near to God*, seems to make *kingdom* refer to the position in the Divine hierarchy mentioned in the preceding discourse.

Page 85. *I will not hide mysteries from you . . . envy shall have no fellowship with wisdom, but a multitude of wise men is salvation to the world:* this (especially in a book written in Greek) must be a stroke directed at the 'Mysteries,' or confinement of doctrine to the Initiated, which was a feature of early Greek thought. Compare the use of the word throughout the New Testament (especially *Ephesians*, chapter iii. 9). There is no corresponding word in the Old Testament.

Pages 86–8. These two paragraphs constitute a digression (see the Syllabus), after which the idea of seeking 'her' as a bride is resumed. — *With her there came to me all good things . . . she was the mother of them:* compare *Proverbs* I. v, vi; and especially sections 5 and 6 of I. xvii. — *To know the constitution*

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of the world, etc.: for the whole of this passage compare Introduction, page xxx. The successive clauses are intended as a summary of the various branches of what we should call 'Natural History' [*thoughts of men* would mean anthropological rather than ethical science]. A foundation for the attribution of this to Solomon would be *I Kings*, chapter iv. 33. But the probable significance of this is, not natural science, but wise sayings founded on things of the animal or vegetable world: fables, apologues, riddles (compare such sayings of Agur as *Proverbs* V. vi, viii, xi, xii). There is no tradition, or trace in Wisdom literature, of the application of analysis to external nature for its own sake before the present passage. (Introduction, page xxx.) — *All things that are either secret or manifest:* possibly there is another reference here to the 'mysteries,' or knowledge of the initiated; but the phrase may be general, as in *Ecclesiasticus* I. viii: "The things that have been commanded thee, think thereupon; for thou hast no need of the things that are secret." It is natural to compare *Deuteronomy*, chapter xxix. 29: but there the reference is probably confined to secret sin and visible judgment. — *For in her there is a spirit quick of understanding:* this celebration of Wisdom is the counterpart in the present book of the monologues of Wisdom in *Proverbs* (I. xvii) and *Ecclesiasticus* (Preface to Book II), and of the well-known passage in *Job*, chapter xxviii. Its position in the argument is to identify objective wisdom [*mirror of the working of God*] with subjective wisdom [*image of his goodness*]. Compare Introduction, pages xxx–xxxi.

Pages 88–92. These paragraphs resume the general purpose

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of the discourse: to found on the historic Prayer of Gibeon (*I Kings*, chapter iii) an incident of Solomon's gaining of wisdom by prayer and the gift of God, to counterpoise the imaginary incident of Solomon's search for wisdom in Essay I of *Ecclesiastes*. — *A good soul fell to my lot; nay rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled.* This much-disputed passage is important in theology rather than in literary interest, on account of its bearing upon the question of the pre-existent soul. It may be remarked, however, that in any case it betrays rather than conveys a view on that subject: in the general argument of the passage its only force is that, good as he knew himself to be, he yet felt that he could obtain true wisdom only by prayer.

Discourse IV

For the argument, and relation to the other discourses, see the Syllabus. Compare Introduction, page xxxi. — *She shewed him God's kingdom:* a reference to Jacob's Vision of God and the Angels, and his exclamation, "This is the gate of heaven" (*Genesis*, chapter xxviii). — *From those that lay in wait she kept him safe:* an allusion to the appeasing of the wrath of Esau. — *Over his sore conflict:* the mysterious 'wrestling' of Jacob (*Genesis*, chapter xxxii).

Discourse V

For the argument, and the Chain of Digressions, see the Syllabus, and compare Introduction, page xxxiii.

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Page 101. *To rebuke the decree for the slaying of babes:* here (as in Instance II) the idea of 'nemesis' is added to the main argument: the bloody river was fit retribution on the shedders of innocent blood.—*Having shewn them by the thirst which they had suffered how thou didst punish the adversaries.* This is a corollary to the main argument. The main thought is, what punished the foe became blessings to God's people; the corollary is, that God's people experienced the punishment in question just enough to appreciate the punishing of the foe, and no more. —*Yea, and whether they were far off from the righteous or near them*, etc. The thought of this obscure passage is: The Egyptians suffered, when the Israelites were with them [the plague of water changed to blood], and when they were far away [by the news of the rock yielding water to quench thirst]; in the latter case a double grief took hold of them, [the deliverance of their foe] and the mortifying memory of their own unrelieved thirst: when they realised that water, in which they had suffered punishment, had been made a miraculous blessing to the enemy, they felt the presence of the Lord. Even in the first case they left off mocking Moses; but in this final manifestation they could only marvel, and think how very different their own thirst had been.

Page 102. *That they might learn*, etc. I have thought it best to represent here the abrupt commencement of a paragraph in the middle of a sentence: a solecism of style just fitting in with the unique use of digressions in this book. (See the Syllabus.) The sentences preceding this break of the paragraph are not carried sufficiently far to make the argument

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appear. The argument is resumed, after the Chain of Digressions, on page 112. Before the break the author has only mentioned irrational vermin sent upon the Egyptians; after the digression he contrasts this torment with the dainty food sent to satisfy the appetite of the Israelites; only when the two are put together is the argument apparent, that appetite is the point which was made a punishment to the one and a joy to the other.

This paragraph commences digression A of the Syllabus; from which B is a further digression, and C is a digression from B; then B digression is resumed, then A is resumed, and finally the argument (Instance II of the principle of the text) is recovered. But in this digression A, which is on the topic that men are punished in that wherein they have sinned, there is a digression (AA) that such measured punishment is the mercy of Omnipotence; after which digression A is resumed and concluded. All this subordination is represented to the eye in the Syllabus; and in these notes the commencement of each section is indicated.

Page 102. *For to be greatly strong is thine:* these words commence Digression AA. (See Syllabus.) For the sentiment compare *Ecclesiasticus* I. liii (page 55).

Page 105. *Wherefore also the unrighteous . . . thou didst torment through their own abominations:* at this point is resumed Digression A: the vermin coming as nemesis upon vermin-worshipping Egyptians. — *As unto unreasoning children*, etc.: this is a thought added to the main thought of the digression: the vermin plague on vermin-worshippers was a childlike correc-

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tion, but when this was slighted there came real destruction on the Egyptians.

Page 105. *For verily all men by nature were but vain who had no perception of God:* here commences Digression B. (See the Syllabus.) It is occupied with the degrees in the folly of idolatry. — *Let them know how much better than these is their Sovereign Lord:* the whole passage is founded on the widely diffused tradition of Abraham, which is thus given in the *Qur'an* vi. 75.

> *Thus did we show Abraham the kingdom of heaven and of the earth, that he should be of those who are sure. And when the night overshadowed him he saw a star and said, "This is my Lord"; but when it set he said, "I love not those that set." And when he saw the moon beginning to rise he said, "This is my Lord"; but when it set he said, "If God my Lord guides me not I shall surely be of the people who err." And when he saw the sun beginning to rise he said, "This is my Lord, this is greatest of all"; but when it set he said, "O my people! verily, I am clear of what ye associate with God; verily, I have turned my face to him who originated the heaven and the earth."*

Page 106. *Yea, and if some woodcutter*, etc. Though such idolatry is a common topic of Hebrew literature, yet this passage seems inspired by *Isaiah*, chapter xliv. 12–20: besides the emphasis on using the residue to make the god, there is the noticeable phrase (after the further digression, page 111): *his heart*

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is ashes (Isaiah's: "he feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside").

Page 107: footnote. This is clearly a digression of the nature of a modern footnote, on the words *more rotten than the vessel that carrieth him.* Two points are conceived as differentiating the wood of the ship from the wood of the idol: (1) the design implied in a ship is an element of wisdom; (2) the ship in its navigation is a subject of providential guidance. From this last the thought widens to the providential guidance of a helpless raft, and of the ark.

Page 107. *For blessed hath been wood through which cometh righteousness.* The word *righteousness* may here be used in the sense of setting right, vindication, salvation (compare *Isaiah*, chapter li. 5, lvi. 1), in allusion to the "raging waves": but it is not so used elsewhere in this book, unless perhaps in the close of Essay II (page 80): "he shall put on righteousness as a breastplate." Or it may simply imply right doing; wood used for the righteous purpose of carrying travellers in safety.

Page 108. *For the devising of idols was the beginning of fornication:* here begins Digression C, on the Origin of Idolatry. (See the Syllabus.) *Fornication* or adultery is a regular image in the O.T. for departure from God.

Page 110. *But thou, our God, art gracious and true:* at these words we resume Digression B, on the Folly of Idolatry. (See the Syllabus.)

Page 111. *But most foolish were they all:* here we pass back to Digression A: the main point in which is the monstrous idea of vermin-worship — and almost immediately the main argument

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is recovered, at the words *For which cause were these men worthily punished.* The contrast of dainty quails with loathly vermin makes Instance II of the text of Discourse V.

Page 112: footnote. This is clearly a parenthesis of the nature of a footnote to the idea: "a man made them."

Page 112. *For even when terrible raging of wild beasts:* Instance III of the text. (See the Syllabus.)

Page 113: *But thy hand it is not possible to escape:* and **page 114: footnote.** The difficulties of this passage (which I would call subtle rather than obscure) are considerably reduced by the recognition of certain sentences as a footnote. Read without the footnote the paragraph is regular in its order of thought. First: the writer contrasts the destruction by fire fierce enough to burn amid water with the bounty of food wrought by fire [*tempered*] into every variety of taste. This last rests upon the tradition that the manna was cooked food. Then he repeats the contrast: the unmelting snow and hail were evidence that the fire was a destructive force sent against God's enemies; on the other side, fire slackened to act according to the desire of each eater. The footnote adds a distinct marvel: this fire so fiercely destructive must have restrained itself so as not to destroy the lice and similar creatures still plaguing the Egyptians. Compare the same circumstance noted in the peroration: page 121.—*For that which was not marred by fire:* this is a further contrast brought out of the account of the manna: while the tempering fire harmed not [but improved] the miraculous food, yet a faint sunbeam destroyed it (*Exodus*, chapter xvi. 21): a miracle designed to teach early rising to offer praise.

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Notes

Page 115: *For great are thy judgements:* here begins a fifth Instance: the Plague of Darkness contrasted with the Miraculous Light of the Israelites. There is a slight shifting of the point here: a contrasted curse and blessing rather than the same thing acting as curse and blessing. But the spirit of the text is illustrated. The whole is a magnificent filling in, by 'analytic imagination,' of details into the phrase of *Exodus*: "darkness that might be felt." — *All sleeping the same sleep now were haunted by monstrous apparitions.* The writer's difficulty is: the darkness being absolute, how can he enrich his picture with visible terrors? He evades this by the thought that sleep belongs to darkness, and yet sees terrors in dreams. The same idea is utilised below (page 119) for the deaths of the firstborn.

Page 116: footnote. This reflection (breaking a sustained passage of imaginative picturing) is best treated as a footnote commenting on the terror painted in the sentence to which it is attached. The final words of the note are difficult, but seem to mean this: the brave man has the rational plan of escape to divert his mind from the terror; whereas the coward, having less expectation [of escape] gives his whole attention to the unknown terror.

Page 117: footnote. It seems to me that these words are an elaborate parenthesis. The contrast to the Plague of Darkness clearly begins with the words *Whereas thou didst provide for thy people a burning pillar of fire;* the *whereas* cannot connect with anything but the preceding paragraph. The words I have relegated to a footnote are exegetical of *yet heavier than darkness*

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were they unto themselves; they express the uncomfortable thoughts suggested to the Egyptians as they heard through the darkness the sound of Israelite voices.

Page 117. *For well did the Egyptians deserve:* once more the idea of nemesis is added to the main argument.

Page 117. *After they had taken counsel:* here commences Instance VI: the same night brought deliverance to the Israelites and death to the firstborn of the Egyptians. Again the thought of nemesis is added to the main argument: the slaying of the firstborn fitly punished the Egyptians for slaying the males of the Israelites.

Page 119. *But it befell the righteous also to make trial of death.* Here begins the final Instance of the text: Death as a form of mercy to the Israelites in the incident of Phinehas: Death as utter destruction to the Egyptians in the Red Sea.

Page 120. *For the whole creation, each part in its several kind, was fashioned again anew:* here commences the peroration, or summary. (See the Syllabus.) It draws into one view the past [*they still remembered the things that came to pass in the time of their sojourning:* and plagues of Egypt are enumerated], and the present [*then was beheld the cloud . . . and dry land rising up out of what before was water,* etc.], and the future [*but afterwards they saw also a new race of birds*]: in order to make a basis for the climax that the elements of nature interchanged like the notes of a psaltery.

Page 121: footnote. This lengthy passage is clearly an elaborate parenthesis or note exegetical of the word *tokens.* The Egyptians did not perish so suddenly but that the thunders

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reminded them that it was for their sins that they were going to be destroyed. The footnote enlarges upon these sins, making an elaborate parallel between the inhospitality of the men of Sodom (punished by an overwhelming of fire) and the greater inhospitality of the Egyptians towards the Israelites. The parallel is carried to the degree of making the plague of darkness a counterpart to the sudden blinding of the men of Sodom by the angels (*Genesis*, chapter xix. 11).

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