

and His life of moral struggle with the powers of evil is crowned by a victory which has been continuous but which becomes permanent on the Cross. It does not detract from His glory to find that He grew in the knowledge of men (*ἐγίνωσκε*, ii. 25). It was part of His humiliation to be limited in certain points where His Divinity touched His human nature. There were certain moral qualities, such as obedience and patience, faith and sympathy, necessary for the discharge of His function as the High Priest of humanity. And the Word attained these through the moral discipline of an experience like our own. And out of this conflict the faith of the disciples is slowly but gradually developed. The writer's own love for his Master makes him anxious. And this personal solicitude for the Master's safety and success becomes ours too, until the sense of absolute attainment helps us also to "see and believe."

Christ ist erstanden,
Selig der Liebende,
Der die betrübende
Heilsam' und übende
Prüfung bestanden.

F. R. MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK.

*LITERARY ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BOOK OF
ECCLESIASTICUS.*

THE Prologue. *Let me intreat you to read it with favour and attention.*

Compare George Eliot's description of Adam Bede, in the fifty-first chapter of the novel :—

On some mornings, when he read in the Apocrypha, of which he was very fond, the son of Sirach's keen-edged words would bring a delighted smile, though he also enjoyed the freedom of occasionally differing from an Apocryphal writer.

The Prologue. *When as therefore the first Jesus died,*

leaving this book almost perfected, Sirach his son receiving it after him left it to his own son Jesus, who, having gotten it into his hands, compiled it all orderly into one volume, and called it wisdom.

In the introduction to his lay sermon, Coleridge, after observing that "the inspired poets, historians, and sententiaries of the Jews are the clearest teachers of political economy; in short, that their writings are the statesman's best manual," adds:—

to which I should be tempted with the late Edmund Burke to annex that treasure of prudential wisdom, the Ecclesiasticus. I not only yield, however, to the authority of our church, but reverence the judgment of its founders in separating this work from the list of the Canonical Books, and in refusing to apply it to the establishment of any doctrine, while they counsel it to be "read for example of life and instruction of manners." Excellent, nay, invaluable, as this book is in the place assigned to it by our Church, that place is justified on the clearest grounds. For not to say that the compiler himself candidly cautions us against the imperfections of his translation, and its no small difference from the original Hebrew, as it was written by his grandfather, he so expresses himself in his prologue as to exclude all claims to inspiration or divine authority in any other or higher sense than every writer is entitled to make who, having qualified himself by the careful study of the books of other men, had been drawn on to write something himself. But of still greater weight, practically, are the objections derived . . . from the prudential spirit of the maxims in general, in which prudence is taught too much on its own grounds instead of being recommended as the organ or vehicle of a spiritual principle in its existing worldly relations. In short, prudence ceases to be wisdom when it is not to the filial fear of God, and to the sense of the excellence of the divine laws, what the body is to the soul! Now, in the work of the son of Sirach, prudence is both body and soul.

It were perhaps to be wished that this work, and the Wisdom of Solomon, had alone received the honour of being accompaniments to the inspired writings, and that these should, with a short precautionary preface and a few notes, have been printed in all our Bibles.

The Prologue. They that have learning must be able to profit them which are without, both by speaking and writing.

Compare Hamerton's paragraphs upon the duty of intellectual charities, in his *Intellectual Life* (pp. 350 f.) :—

We to whom the rich inheritance of intellectual humanity is so familiar as to have lost much of its freshness, are liable to under-rate the value of thoughts and discoveries which to us have for years seemed commonplace. It is with our intellectual as with our material wealth ; we do not realize how precious some fragments of it might be to our poorer neighbours. The old clothes that we wear no longer may give comfort and confidence to a man in naked destitution ; the truths which are so familiar to us that we never think about them, may raise the utterly ignorant to a sense of their human brotherhood.

i. 22. *A furious man cannot be justified ; for the sway of his fury shall be his destruction.*

Pride is undoubtedly the original of anger [says Johnson in *The Rambler* (number. 11)] ; but pride, like every other passion, if it once breaks loose from reason, counteracts its own purposes. A passionate man, upon the review of his day, will have few gratifications to offer to his pride, when he has considered how his outrages were caused, why they were borne, and in what they are likely to end at last. Those sudden bursts of rage generally break out upon small occasions ; for life, unhappy as it is, cannot supply great evils as frequently as the man of fire thinks it fit to be enraged.

ii. 5. *For gold is tried in the fire, and acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation.*

There are a few characters [says Macaulay] which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and found pure, which have been weighed in the balance and not found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize, and of these was Milton.

ii. 10. *Look at the generations of old, and see : who did ever put his trust in the Lord and was ashamed ? or who did abide in his fear, and was forsaken ?*

One day, after I had been so many weeks oppressed and cast down therewith, as I was now quite giving up the ghost of all my hopes of ever attaining life, that sentence fell with weight upon my spirit : *Look at the generations of old and see ; did ever any trust in God and were confounded ?* At which I was greatly enlightened

and encouraged in my soul ; for thus, at that very instant, it was expounded to me, Begin at the beginning of Genesis and read to the end of the Revelations, and see if you can find that there was any that ever trusted in the Lord and was confounded. . . . Well, I looked but found it not ; only it abode upon me. Then did I ask first this good man, and then another, if they knew where it was, but they knew no such place. At this I wondered that such a sentence should so suddenly, and with such comfort and strength, seize and abide upon my heart, and yet that none could find it. For I doubted not but it was in holy Scripture. Thus I continued above a year, and could not find the place ; but at last, casting my eye into the Apocrypha books, I found it in Ecclesiasticus. This, at the first, did somewhat daunt me ; but because, by this time, I had got more experience of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less ; especially when I considered that, though it was not in those texts that we call holy and canonical, yet forasmuch as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it. And I bless God for that word, for it was of God to me. That word doth still, at times, shine before my face.—BUNYAN : *Grace Abounding*, 62-65.

ii. 12-13. *Woe unto fearful hearts, and to faint hands, and to the sinner that goeth two ways ! Woe unto the faint heart ! for it believeth not ; therefore it shall not be defended.*

How are we to overcome temptations ? Cheerfulness is the first thing, cheerfulness the second, and cheerfulness the third. . . . We must be of good courage. The power of temptation is in the fainting of our own hearts.—F. W. FABER : *Growth in Holiness*, pp. 98-99.

ii. 14. *Woe unto you that have lost your patience ! and what will ye do when the Lord shall visit you ?*

He that is afraid of pain, is afraid of his own nature ; and if his fear be violent, it is a sign his patience is none at all, and an impatient person is not ready-dressed for heaven. . . . “ Woe be to the man who hath lost patience ; for what will he do when the Lord shall visit him ? ”—JEREMY TAYLOR : *Holy Dying*, ch. iii.

iii. 6-7, 12-13. *He that is obedient to the Lord shall be a comfort to his mother. He that feareth the Lord will honour his father, and will do service unto his parents, as to his masters. My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him*

not as long as he liveth. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him.

About the general conceptions of morals there is a practical agreement. There is no more doubt that falsehood is wrong than that a stone falls to the ground, although the first does not admit of the same ocular proof as the second. There is no greater uncertainty about the duty of obedience to parents and to the law of the land than about the properties of triangles.—JOWETT: Introduction to the *Philebus*.

iii. 21–22. *Seek not things that are too hard for thee, and search not out things that are above thy strength. The things that have been commanded thee, think thereupon.*

Jeremy Taylor, in his *Holy Living*, cites this passage as an illustration of modesty, which is

a grace of God that moderates the over-activeness and curiosity of the mind. . . . Enquire not into the secrets of God, but be content to learn thy duty according to the quality of thy person or employment.

iii. 25. *The conceit of many hath led them astray.*

Quoted by Jeremy Taylor, in his *Holy Living*, under this paragraph :—

Pretend not to more knowledge than thou hast, but be content to seem ignorant where thou art so, lest thou beest either brought to shame, or retirest into shamelessness.

iii. 26. *A stubborn heart shall fare evil at the last ; and he that loveth danger shall perish therein.*

It is a question [says Fénelon in one of his Letters to Men] of diminishing frequent intercourse with vain women, who only study to please ; and all other society which excites a taste for pleasure, tends to throw contempt on piety, and encourage a perilous dissipation. Such society is most harmful even to men who are established in good ways, and naturally much more to a man who is only taking his first steps in a right direction, and whose naturally easy disposition inclines him to go wrong. . . . Should not your repentance bear fruit in humiliation and self-restraint as to contagious society ? “He that loveth danger shall perish therein,” the wise man says. Cost what it may, you must avoid the occasions of sin.

iv. 17-18. *At the first she will walk with him in crooked ways, and will bring fear and dread upon him, and torment him with her discipline, until she may trust his soul, and try him by her judgments ; then will she return again the straight way unto him, and will gladden him, and reveal to him her secrets.*

Certainly we need a clue into the labyrinth which is to lead us to Him ; and who among us can hope to seize upon the true starting-points of thought for that enterprise, and upon all of them, who is to understand their right direction, to follow them out to their just limits, and duly to estimate, adjust, and combine the various reasonings in which they issue, so as safely to arrive at what is worth any labour to secure, without a special illumination from Himself ? Such are the dealings of wisdom with the elect soul. "She will bring upon him fear, and dread, and trial ; and She will torture him with the tribulation of her discipline, till she try him by her Laws, and trust his soul. Then She will strengthen him, and make Her way straight to him, and give him joy."—NEWMAN, *Grammar of Assent*, ch. ix.

Its general tone is worthy of that first contact between the two great civilizations of the ancient world, and breathes a spirit which an Isaiah would not have condemned, nor a Sophocles or a Theophrastus have despised. There is not a word in it to countenance the minute casuistries of the later Rabbis, or the metaphysical subtleties of the later Alexandrians. It pours out its whole strength in discussing the conduct of human life, or the direction of the soul to noble aims. Here first in the sacred books we find the full delineation of the idea of education through a slow, gradual process. "At first by crooked ways, then will she return the straight way, and comfort him, and show him her secrets."—DEAN STANLEY.

iv. 22. *Accept not the person of any against thine own soul ; and reverence no man unto thy falling.*

I feel it in my power [Keats wrote to his friend Reynolds] to refuse the poisonous suffrage of a public. My own being which I know to be becomes of more consequence to me than the crowds of Shadows in the shape of men and women that inhabit a kingdom. The soul is a world of itself, and has enough to do in its own home.

iv. 24. *For by speech wisdom shall be known, and learning by the word of the tongue.*

I have not [says St. Patrick modestly, in his *Confession*, learned, like others who have drunk in, in the best manner, both law and sacred literature . . . as can be easily proved from the drivel of my writing—how I have been instructed and learned in diction; because the wise man says, “For by the tongue is discerned understanding, and knowledge, and the teaching of truth.”

v. 1. *Set not thy heart upon thy goods; and say not, I have enough for my life.*

Quaerenda pecunia primum est; virtus post nummos. But that *post* never arrives; at least, it did not in Rome, whatever may be the case in England. The very influx of the *nummi* retarded it, and kept *virtus* at a distance. In fact, she is of a jealous nature, and never comes at all, unless she comes in the first place. That which is a man's *alpha* will also be his *omega*; and, in advancing from one to the other, his velocity is mostly accelerated at every step.—JULIUS HARE, in *Guesses at Truth* (second series).

v. 4. *Say not, I sinned, and what happened unto me?*

Compare Ariel's warning sentence to the “three men of sin,” in *The Tempest* (act iii. scene 3):—

Remember

(For that's my business to you) that you three
From Milan did supplant good Prospero;
Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,
Him, and his innocent child; for which foul deed
The Powers, delaying, not forgetting, have
Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,
Against your peace.

v. 5–6. *Concerning propitiation, be not without fear to add sin unto sin: and say not, His mercy is great; He will be pacified for the multitude of my sins.*

We ought to bear our sins in mind, says St. Chrysostom, for not only do we extinguish them by so doing, but we become gentler and more indulgent towards others, and we serve God with greater tenderness, having from that memory of our sins a better insight into His inestimable goodness! Scripture tells us (Ecclus. v. 5), “Be not without fear of a forgiven sin”; and indeed such a fear will be the best security against another fall.—F. W. FABER, *All for Jesus* (p. 79).

v. 11–14. *Be swift to hear, and with patience give answer.*

If thou hast understanding, answer thy neighbour ; if not, lay thy hand upon thy mouth. Honour and shame is in talk : and the tongue of man is his fall. Be not called a whisperer ; and lie not in wait with thy tongue.

It will be found [says Schopenhauer] that all who profess to instruct men in the wisdom of life are specially urgent in commending the practice of silence, and assign manifold reasons why it should be observed ; so that I need not enlarge at greater length on this point. Let me add, however, one or two unfamiliar Arab proverbs, which seem to me particularly relevant :—

Do not tell a friend anything you would hide from an enemy.

A secret is in my custody, if I keep it ; if it escapes me, it is I who am the prisoner.

The tree of silence bears the fruit of peace.

vi. 5-6. *Sweet language will multiply friends ; and a fair-speaking tongue will increase kind greetings. Be in peace with many, nevertheless have but one counsellor of a thousand.*

Speaking of friendship in the *Spectator* (68), Addison observes :—

Among the several fine things which have been spoken of it, I shall beg leave to quote some out of a very ancient author whose book would be regarded by our modern wits as one of the most shining tracts of morality that is extant, if it appeared under the name of a Confucius or of any celebrated Grecian philosopher : I mean the little apocryphal treatise entitled *The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach*. How finely has he described the art of making friends, by an obliging and affable behaviour ! and laid down that precept which a late excellent author has delivered as his own, “that we should have many well-wishers, but few friends !”

Addison then quotes the above verses, and continues :—

With what prudence does he caution us in the choice of our friends ? And with what strokes of nature (I could almost say of Humour) has he described the behaviour of a treacherous and self-interested friend ? *If thou wouldst get a friend, prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him : for some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble. And there is a friend who, being turned to enmity and strife, will discover thy reproach* (vi. 7-9). . . . In the next words he particularizes one of

those fruits of friendship which is described at length by the two famous authors above-mentioned [Cicero and Bacon], and falls into a general eulogium of friendship, which is very just as well as very sublime. *A faithful friend is a strong defence ; and he that hath found such a one, hath found a treasure. Nothing doth countervail a faithful friend, and his excellency is unvaluable. A faithful friend is the medicine of life ; and they that fear the Lord shall find him* (vi. 15 f.). I do not remember to have met with any saying that has pleased me more than that a of friend's being the medicine of life, to express the efficacy of friendship in healing the pains and anguish which naturally cleave to our existence in this world.

vi. 8. *There is a friend that is so for his own occasion ; and he will not continue in the day of thine affliction.*

For 'tis a question left as yet to prove,
Whether love lead fortune, or else fortune love.
The great man down, you mark, his favourite flies ;
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies.
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend ;
For who needs not, shall never lack a friend ;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.

—SHAKESPEARE : *Hamlet* (act iii. scene 2).

O summer-friendship,

Whose flattering leaves, that shadow'd us in our
Prosperity, with the least gust drop off
In the autumn of adversity !

—MASSINGER : *The Maid of Honour* (act iii. scene 1).

vi. 10, 12. *There is a friend who is a companion at the table, and will not continue in the day of thine affliction. . . . If thou be brought low, he will be against thee, and will hide himself from thy face.*

When Fortune in her shift and change of mood
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants
Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

SHAKESPEARE : *Timon of Athens*, act i. scene 1.

vi. 20, 22. *She is very unpleasant to the unlearned : she that is without understanding will not remain with her. For wisdom is according to her name, and she is not manifest unto many.*

The power of liberal studies lies more hid than that it can be wrought out by profane wits. It is not every man's way to hit. Science is not every man's mistress.—JONSON : *Discoveries* (xxiii.).

vii. 6. *Seek not to be judge, lest thou be not able to take away iniquity ; lest at any time thou fear the person of the mighty, and lay a stumbling-block in the way of thy uprightness.*

Compare Scott's account of Scotland in the eighteenth century, in the second chapter of *The Bride of Lammermoor*.

The administration of justice, in particular, was infected by the most gross partiality. A case of importance scarcely occurred, in which there was not some ground for bias or partiality on the part of the judges, who were so little able to withstand the temptation, that the adage, "Show me the man, and I will show you the law," became as prevalent as it was scandalous. One corruption led the way to others still more gross and profligate. The judge who lent his sacred authority in one case to support a friend, and in another to crush an enemy, and whose decisions were founded on family connexions, or political relations, could not be supposed inaccessible to direct personal motives ; and the purse of the wealthy was too often believed to be thrown into the scale to weigh down the cause of the poor litigant.

JAMES MOFFATT.