

WISDOM OF SOLOMON

¹ Ye that deem the earth, love rightfulness [*or rightwiseness*]; feel ye of the Lord in goodness, and seek ye him in the simpleness of heart.

² For he is found of them, that tempt not him [*or that tempt him not*]; forsooth he appeareth to them, that have faith into him.

³ For why wayward thoughts part [*or sever*] from God; but proved virtue reproveth unwise men.

⁴ For why wisdom shall not enter into an evil-willed soul; neither *it* shall dwell in a body subject to sins.

⁵ Forsooth the Holy Ghost of wisdom shall fly or flee away from a feigned man [*or a feigner*], and he shall take away himself from thoughts, that be without understanding; and *the unwise man* shall be punished of wickedness coming above.

⁶ For the spirit of wisdom is benign, and he shall not deliver a cursed man from his lips; for why God is witness of his reins, and the searcher of his heart is true, and the hearer of his tongue.

⁷ For why the Spirit of the Lord hath filled the world; and this thing, that containeth all things, hath the knowing of voice.

⁸ Therefore this he that speaketh wicked thing [*or For that he that speaketh wicked things*], may not be hid; and doom and punishing shall not pass him.

9 For why asking shall be in the thoughts of a wicked man [*or of the unpious*]. Forsooth the hearing of his words shall come to God, and to the punishing [*or the correction*] of his wickednesses;

10 for the ear of fervent love [*or of the jealous*] heareth all things, and the noise of grutchings shall not be hid.

11 Therefore keep ye you from grutching, that profiteth nothing, and from backbiting spare ye the tongue; for a dark word shall not go into vain; forsooth the mouth that lieth, slayeth the soul.

12 Do not ye covet death, in the error of your life, neither get ye perdition in the works of your hands;

13 for God made not death, neither he is glad in the perdition of living men.

14 For why God made of nought all things, that those should be; and he made the nations of the world able to be healed. For why medicine of destroying is not in those men, neither the realm of hells [*or of hell*] is in earth.

15 For rightfulness is everlasting, and un-deadly; but unrightfulness is getting of death. [*Rightwiseness forsooth is perpetual, and un-deadly; unrightwise-ness forsooth purchasing of death.*]

16 Forsooth wicked [*or unpious*] men called that *unrightfulness* by hands and words, and they guessed [*or esteemed*] it a friend, and floated away, and they putted promises to it; for they be worthy the death, that be of the part thereof.

CHAPTER 2

¹ Forsooth wicked men said, thinking with themselves not rightfully, The time of our life is little, and with annoyance; no refreshing is in the end of a man, and none there is, that is known, that turned again from hells. *[Forsooth unpius men said, thinking with themselves not right, Little and with annoyance is the time of our life; there is not refreshing in the end of a man, and there is not, that be known, turned again from hell.]*

² For we were born of nought, and after this time we shall be, as if we had not been; for why smoke is blown out in our nostrils, and a word of sparkle to stir our heart.

³ For our body shall be quenched ashes, and the spirit shall be scattered abroad as soft air; and our life shall pass as the step of a cloud, and it shall be departed as a mist, which is driven away of the beams of the sun, and is grieved of the heart thereof.

⁴ And our name shall take forgetting by *the passing of* time; and no man shall have mind of our works.

⁵ For why our time is the passing of a shadow, and no turning again of our end there is *[or there is not turning again of our end]*; for it is asealed, and no man turneth again.

⁶ Therefore come ye *[or Cometh then]*, and use we the goods that be, and use we a creature, as in youth, swiftly.

⁷ Fill we us with precious wine and ointments; and the flower of time pass not us.

8 Crown we us with roses, before that they wither; no meadow be, that our lechery pass not by [*or through*].

9 No man of us be there without part of our lechery; everywhere leave we the signs of gladness; for this is our part, and this is our heritage [*or our lot*].

10 Oppress we a poor just [*or rightwise*] man, and spare we not a widow, neither reverence we hoar hairs of an old man of much time.

11 But our strength be the law of rightfulness; for why that that is feeble, is found unprofitable.

12 Therefore deceive we a just [*or the rightwise*] man, for he is unprofitable to us, and *he is* contrary to our works; and he upbraideth [*or reprovably putteth*] to us the sins of law, and he defameth on [*or against*] us the sins of our teaching.

13 He promiseth that he hath the knowing of God, and he nameth himself the son of God.

14 He is made to us into showing of our thoughts.

15 He is grievous to us, yea, to see; for why his life is unlike to other men, and his ways be changed.

16 We be guessed of him *to be* triflers, *that is, men of no virtue*, and he abstaineth himself from our ways, as from uncleannesses; and he before-setteth [*or telleth before*] the last things of just men, and he hath glory, that he hath God *his* father.

¹⁷ Therefore see we, if his words be true; and assay we, what things shall come to him; and we shall know, what shall be the last things of him.

¹⁸ For if he is the very son of God, he shall up-take him, and shall deliver him from the hands of them that be contrary *to him*.

¹⁹ Ask we him by despising and torment, that we know his reverence, and that we prove his patience.

²⁰ By most foul death condemn we him, for why beholding [*or respect*] shall be of his words.

²¹ They thought these things, and they erred; for why their malice blinded them.

²² And they knew not the sacraments of God, neither they hoped the meed of rightfulness [*or of rightwiseness*], neither they deemed the honour of holy souls.

²³ For why God made man unable to be destroyed [*or undeadly*], and *God* made man to the image of his likeness.

²⁴ But by [*or through*] envy of the devil death entered into the world; forsooth they pursue [*or follow*] him, that be of his part.

CHAPTER 3

¹ Forsooth the souls of just men be in the hand of God; and the torment of death shall not touch them.

² They seemed to the eyes of unwise men to die; and torment was deemed the out-going of them.

³ And from just way they went into destroying, and that that is of us the way of destroying [*or destruction*]; but they be in peace.

⁴ Though they suffered torments before men, the hope of them is full of undeadliness.

⁵ They *were* travailed in a few things, *and they* shall be disposed well in many things; for why God assayed them, and found them worthy to himself.

⁶ He proved them as gold in a furnace, and he took them as the offering of burnt sacrifice;

⁷ and the beholding of them shall be in time *of yielding*. Just men shall shine, and they shall run about as sparkles in a place of reeds. [*and in time shall be the beholding of them. They shall shine rightwise, and as sparkles in reedy places they shall run hither and thither.*]

⁸ They shall deem nations, and shall be lords of peoples; and the Lord of them shall reign without end.

⁹ They that trust on him, shall understand truth; and faithful men in love shall assent to him; for why gift and peace is to his chosen men.

¹⁰ But wicked men, by those things that they thought, shall have punishing; which despised just thing, and went away from the Lord.

¹¹ For he that casteth away wisdom and lore, is cursed [*or is unhappy*]; and the hope of wicked men is void, and their travails *be* without fruit, and their works *be* unhabitable, and unprofitable.

12 The women of them be unwitting [*or unwise*], and the sons of them be full wayward [*or most wicked*].

13 The creature of them is cursed; for why *the woman* barren and undefouled is blessed [*or happy is the barren, and the undefouled*], that hath not known the bed in trespass; she shall have fruit in the beholding of holy souls.

14 And a man unmighty to engender or beget, [*or a gelding*], is blessed, that hath not wrought wickedness by his hands, neither thought most wayward [*or wicked*] things against the Lord; for why a chosen [*free*] gift of faith shall be given to him, and a most acceptable [*or most allowed*] heritage in the temple of God.

15 For why the fruits of good travails is glorious, and the root of wisdom that falleth not down.

16 But the sons of adulterers shall be in destroying, and the seed of a wicked bed shall be destroyed [*or outlawed*].

17 And soothly though they shall be of long life, they shall be areckoned into nought; and the last eld *age* of them shall be without honour.

18 And if they be dead swiftlier [*or if swiftlier they shall be dead*], they shall not have hope, neither allowing in the day of knowing.

19 Forsooth wicked nations be of hard ending.

CHAPTER 4

1 How fair is a chaste generation with clearness [*or clarity*]; for the mind thereof is undeadly, for it is known, both with God, and with men.

² When it is present, they pursue *[or follow]* it; and they desire it, when it hath led out itself, and it over-coming getteth by victory the meed of battles undefouled, and is crowned without end.

³ But the manyfold engendered multitude of wicked *[or unpius]* men shall not be profitable; and plantings of adultery they shall not give deep roots, neither shall set stable steadfastness.

⁴ Though they burgeon in boughs *[or branches]* for a time, they set unsteadfastly shall be moved of the wind, and they shall be drawn out by the root of the greatness of winds *[or and of the muchliness of winds pulled up by the roots]*.

⁵ For why boughs *[or branches]* unperfect shall be broken altogether; and the fruits of them *be* unprofitable, and sour to eat, and covenable to nothing.

⁶ For why all sons, that be born of wicked men, be witnesses of wicked-ness against fathers and mothers, in their asking.

⁷ But a just man *[or the rightwise]*, though he be before-occupied by death, shall be in refreshing.

⁸ For why worshipful eld *[age]* is not of long time *[or long enduring]*, neither it is reckoned by the number of years;

⁹ the wits of a man be hoary, and the age of eld *is* life without wem *[or undefouled]*.

¹⁰ He pleased God, and was made dearworthy *[or loved]*, and he living among sinners was translated, *or borne over*;

¹¹ he was ravished, lest malice should change his understanding, either lest feigning should deceive *[or beguile]* his soul.

12 For why deceiving of trifling maketh dark good things, and the unstableness of covetousness turneth over [*or over-turneth*] the wit without malice.

13 He was ended in short time, and [*ful*] filled many times;

14 for why his soul was pleasant to [*or pleased*] God; for this thing God hastened to lead him out from the midst of wickednesses;

15 but peoples saw and understood not, neither setted [*or putted*] such things in their hearts or entrails. For the grace and mercy of God is on his saints, and beholding [*or respect*] of God is on his chosen men.

16 Forsooth a just [*or rightwise*] man dead condemneth quick [*or alive*] wicked men; and youth ended swiftness condemneth the long life of an unjust man [*or the unrightwise*].

17 For they shall see the end of a wise man, and they shall not understand, what thing God thought of him, and why the Lord made him less [*or diminished him*].

18 For they shall see, and shall despise him; but the Lord shall scorn them. And after these things they shall be falling down without honour, and in despising among dead men without end.

19 For he shall all-break them swollen without voice, and he shall move them from the foundations; and they shall be desolate till to the last thing. And they shall be wailing, and the mind of them shall perish.

²⁰ They shall come fearedful in the thought of their sins; and their wickednesses on the contrary side shall lead them over.

CHAPTER 5

¹ Then just [*or rightwise*] men shall stand in great steadfastness against them that anguished them, and which took away their travails.

² They shall see, and shall be disturbed with horrible dread, and they shall wonder in the suddeny of *their* health unhoped [*or shall marvel in the suddenness of the unhoped health*];

³ and they shall wail for anguish of spirit, and they shall say, doing penance within themselves, and wailing for the anguish of spirit, These men it be, which we had sometime into scorn, and into like-ness of upbraiding.

⁴ We mad men guessed their life madness, and the end of them without honour;

⁵ how therefore be they reckoned [*or counted*] among the sons of God, and their part [*or lot*] is among saints?

⁶ Therefore we erred from the way of truth, and the light of rightfulness [*or of rightwiseness*] shined not to us, and the sun of understanding rose not up to us.

⁷ We were made weary in the way of wickedness and of perdition; and we went [*or we have gone*] hard ways. But we knew not the way of the Lord;

⁸ what profited pride to us, either what brought the boast of riches to us?

⁹ All those things passed as shadow, and as a messenger before running [*or as a messenger running before*].

¹⁰ And as a ship, that passeth through the flowing water, of [*the*] which when it hath passed, it is not to find a step, neither the path of the bottom thereof in waves.

¹¹ Either as a bird, that flyeth over in the air, of which no proof [*or evidence*] is found of the way thereof, but only the sound of wings beating light wind, and carving [*or cutting*] the air by the might of way, and with wings moved together it flew over, and after this no sign is found of the way thereof [*or of his way*].

¹² Either as an arrow shot out into a place ordained, the air is parted, and is closed again anon, that the passing thereof be not known.

¹³ Right so we born ceased anon to be, and soothly we might show no sign of virtue; but we were wasted in our malice. They that sinned, said such things in hell.

¹⁴ For the hope of a wicked man [*or the unpious*] is as the flower of a briar, [*or thistledown*], which is taken away of the wind, and as small froth [*or foam*] which is scattered abroad of a tempest, and as smoke which is spread abroad of wind, and as the mind of a guest of one day, that passeth forth.

¹⁵ But just [*or rightwise*] men shall live without end, and the meed of them is with the Lord; and the thought of them is with the Highest.

¹⁶ Therefore they shall take of the hand of the Lord the realm of fairness, and a diadem of

comeliness; for he shall govern them with his right hand, and he shall defend them with his holy arm. *[Therefore they shall take the realm of worship, and the diadem of fairness of the hand of the Lord; for with his right hand he shall cover them, and with his holy arm defend them.]*

¹⁷ And his fervent love *[or the jealousy of him]* shall take armour, and he shall arm the creature to the vengeance of enemies.

¹⁸ He shall clothe rightfulness for an habergeon, and he shall take certain doom for a basinet; *[He shall clothe for the breastplate rightwiseness, and he shall take for the helmet certain doom;]*

¹⁹ he shall take a shield that may not be overcome, equity, *either evenness; [he shall take the shield unquenchable equity;]*

²⁰ forsooth he shall whet *[or sharpen]* hard wrath into a spear, and the world shall fight with him against unwitting men *[or against the unwise].*

²¹ Straight sendings-out of lightnings shall go, and as the sides of a rainbow, when the bow of clouds is crooked, they shall be destroyed; and they shall skip into a certain place. *[The sendings-out of lightnings shall go even right, and as at the teasing the bow of clouds bent, they shall be outlawed; and to a certain place they shall leap in.]*

²² And full hailstones shall be sent from a stony wrath, and the water of the sea shall wax white against them, and floods shall run altogether hard.

²³ The spirit of virtue shall stand against them, and as the whirling of wind it shall part them; and the wickedness of them shall bring all the land to desert, and malice shall destroy the seats of mighty men. Wisdom is better than strengths, and a prudent man doeth more than a strong man.

CHAPTER 6

¹ Therefore, ye kings, hear, and understand; and ye judges of the coasts of earth, learn. *[Heareth then, ye kings, and understandeth; learneth, ye doomsmen of the coasts of the earth.]*

² Ye that hold together multitudes, and please you in the companies of nations, give ears; *[Giveth ears, ye that hold together multitudes, and please to you in companies of nations;]*

³ for why power is given of the Lord to you, and virtue *is given* of the Highest, that shall ask your works, and shall search thoughts.

⁴ For when ye were ministers of his realm, ye deemed not rightfully *[or rightly]*, neither ye kept the law of rightfulness, neither ye went by the will of God.

⁵ Hideously *[or Horribly]* and soon he shall appear to you; for why harshest doom shall be made in them, that be sovereigns.

⁶ Forsooth mercy is granted to a little man; but mighty men shall suffer torments mightily.

⁷ For the Lord, which is lord of all things, shall not withdraw the person of any man, neither he shall dread the greatness of any man; for he

made both the little man and the great man, and charge [*or care*] is to him evenly of all men

⁸ But stronger torment nigheth to stronger men.

⁹ Therefore, ye kings, these my words be to you, that ye learn wisdom, and that ye fall not down. [*To you then, kings, be these my words, that ye learn wisdom, and that ye fall not.*]

¹⁰ For they that keep rightfulness [*or right-wiseness*], shall be deemed right-fully; and they, that learn just things, shall find, what they shall answer.

¹¹ Therefore covet ye my words, and love ye those; and ye shall have teaching. [*Coveteth than my words, and loveth them; and ye shall have discipline.*]

¹² Wisdom is clear, and that shall never fade; and it is seen lightly of them that love it, and it is found of them that seek it.

¹³ It before-occupieth them that covet it, that it show itself the former to them.

¹⁴ He that waketh by light to it, shall not travail; forsooth he shall find it sitting nigh his gates.

¹⁵ Therefore to think on wisdom is perfect wit, and he that waketh for it, shall soon be secure.

¹⁶ For why it goeth about, and seeketh men worthy to it; and in their ways [*or in his ways*] it shall show itself gladly to them, and in all purveyance it shall meet them.

¹⁷ For why the beginning of wisdom is the veriest covetousness of learning. Therefore the busyness of learning is love; [*The beginning forsooth of it most very coveting of discipline. Then care of discipline is loving;*]

¹⁸ and love is the keeping of laws thereof [*or of his laws*]. Soothly the keeping of laws is perfection of uncorruption;

¹⁹ forsooth uncorruption maketh to be next to God.

²⁰ Therefore the covetousness of wisdom shall bring to everlasting realm [*or kingdom*].

²¹ Therefore if ye, kings of the people, delight in seats, and in kings' rods, *or regalties*, love ye wisdom, that ye reign without end. All ye, that be sovereigns to peoples, love the light of wisdom.

²² Soothly what is wisdom, and how it is made, I shall tell; and I shall not hide from you the sacraments of God; but from the beginning of birth I shall seek, and I shall set into the light the knowing thereof, and I shall not pass [*beside the*] truth.

²³ And I shall not have way with envy waxing rotten; for such a man shall not be a partner of wisdom.

²⁴ Forsooth the multitude of wise men is the health of the world; and a wise king is the stablishing [*or the stability*] of the people.

²⁵ Therefore take ye teaching [*or discipline*] by my words, and it shall profit to you.

CHAPTER 7

¹ Forsooth and I am a deadly man, like *other* men, and of earthly kind of him that was made first,

² and in the womb of *my* mother I was formed flesh. In the time of ten months I was curded together in blood, of the seed of man, and by

according delight [*or covenable delighting*] of sleep.

³ And I was born, and took common air, and in like manner I fell down into the earth made [*or fell down into the made earth*]; and I weeping sent out the first voice, like all men.

⁴ I was nursed in wrappings [*or swaddling clothes*], and in great busy-nesses;

⁵ for why no man of kings had other beginning of birth.

⁶ Therefore one entering to life is to all men, and like going out. [*One entry is to all to life, and like issue.*]

⁷ Wherefore I desired, and wit was given to me; and I inwardly called, and the spirit of wisdom came into me [*or there came to me the spirit of wisdom*].

⁸ And I setted wisdom before realms, and seats; and I said, that riches be nought [*or nothing*] in comparison thereof,

⁹ and I comparisoned not a precious stone to it; for why all gold in comparison thereof is a little gravel, and silver shall be areckoned [*or esteemed*] as clay in the sight thereof.

¹⁰ I loved wisdom more than health and fairness; and I purposed to have it for light, for the light thereof may not be quenched [*or is unquenchable*].

¹¹ Forsooth all goods came together to me with it; and unnumberable honesty is by the works thereof.

¹² And I was glad in all things; for this wisdom went before me, and I knew not, for it is the mother of all goods.

¹³ Which *wisdom* I learned without feigning, and I commune without envy; and I hide not the honesty thereof.

¹⁴ For it is treasure without number to men, and they, that used that treasure, were made partners of God's friendship, and were praised for the gifts of knowing [*or commended for the gifts of discipline*].

¹⁵ Forsooth God gave to me to say of sentence, and to before take [*or to take before*] worthy things of these things that be given to me; for he is the leader of wisdom, and amender of wise men.

¹⁶ For why both we, and our words, and all wisdom, and learning of knowing of works *be* in his hand.

¹⁷ Forsooth he gave to me the very knowing of these things that be, that I know the disposition of the world, and the virtues of elements;

¹⁸ the beginning, and the ending, and the middle of times; the changings of whiles, and the endings of times; the changings of manners, and partings [*or the divisions*] of times;

¹⁹ the courses of the year, and the dispositions of stars;

²⁰ the kinds of beasts, and the wraths of wild beasts; the strength of winds, and the thoughts of men; the differences of trees, and the virtues of roots.

²¹ And I learned whatever things be hid and unpurveyed;

²² for why wisdom, the craftmaker [*or craftsman*] of all things, taught me. For in that *wisdom*

unmade is the spirit of understanding, holy, manyfold, one alone [*or only*], subtle, temperate [*or mannerly*], wise, moveable, undefouled, certain, sweet, loving a good deed, which *spirit* forbiddeth nothing to do well [*or that nothing prevented or hindered to do well*];

²³ courteous, benign, stable, secure, having all virtue, beholding all things, and which taketh all spirits able to understand, *he* is clean, and subtle.

²⁴ For why wisdom is more moveable than all moveable things; forsooth it stretcheth forth everywhere [*or it attaineth over all*], for his cleanness.

²⁵ For it is a breathing of God's virtue, and it is some clean coming forth of the clearness of Almighty God; and therefore no defouled thing runneth into it.

²⁶ For it is brightness of everlasting light, and *it* is a mirror without wem of God's majesty, [*or a mirror without wem of the majesty of God*], and *it* is an image of his goodness.

²⁷ And when it is one [*or And since it is one*], it may all things; and it dwelleth in itself, and reneweth all things, and by nations it beareth over itself into holy souls; it maketh the friends of God, and prophets.

²⁸ For God loveth no man, but him that dwelleth with wisdom.

²⁹ For why this *wisdom* is fairer than the sun, and *is* above all the disposition of stars; wisdom comparised to light, [*it*] is found the former.

³⁰ For why night cometh after the light; but wisdom overcometh malice.

CHAPTER 8

¹ Therefore wisdom stretcheth forth from the end till to the end strongly, and disposeth all things sweetly.

² I loved this *wisdom made*[or *This I loved*], and I sought it out from my youth; and I sought to take it a spousess to me, and I am made a lover of the fairness thereof [*or of the form of it*].

³ He that hath the fellowship of God, glorifieth the gentleness thereof [*or It having the company of God, glorifieth the gentleness of it*]; but also the Lord of all things loved it.

⁴ For it is the teacheress of the learning [*or of the discipline*] of God, and chooseress of his works.

⁵ And if riches be coveted [*or be desired*] in life, what is richer than wisdom, that worketh all things?

⁶ Soothly if wit worketh, who is a craftsman [*or craftsman*] more than wisdom, of these things that be?

⁷ And if a man loveth rightfulness [*or right-wiseness*], the travails of this *wisdom* have great virtues; for it teacheth soberness, and prudence, and rightfulness [*or rightwiseness*], and virtue; and nothing is profitabler [*or more profitable*] than these in life to men.

⁸ And if a man desireth multitude of knowing, wisdom knoweth things passed, and guesseth of things to coming [*or to come*]; it knoweth the fellnesses or falsenesses of words, and assoilings or *absolvings* of arguments; it knoweth signs and showings of things to coming, before that they be made [*or the tokens and wonders it knoweth, ere*

they be done]; and the befallings [*or chances*] of times and of worlds.

⁹ Therefore I purposed to bring to me this *wisdom*[*or Then I purposed this to bring to me*], to live together; witting that it shall commune with me of goods, and speaking together of my thoughts, and of mine annoyances, shall be.

¹⁰ For this *wisdom* I shall have clearness at companies, and honour at elder men;

¹¹ I shall be found young and sharp in doom, and in the sight of mighty men I shall be wonderful, and the faces of princes shall worship me [*or shall marvel me*].

¹² They shall abide me, being still, and they shall behold me, speaking; and the while I speak many things, they shall set hands on their mouths.

¹³ Furthermore by this *wisdom* I shall have undeadliness; and I shall leave everlasting mind to them, that shall come after me.

¹⁴ I shall dispose peoples; and nations shall be subject to me.

¹⁵ Hideous kings hearing me shall dread; and in multitude I shall be seen good, and strong in battle.

¹⁶ I shall enter into mine house, and I shall rest with wisdom; for the conversation thereof hath no bitterness, and the dwelling together thereof hath none annoyance, but gladness and joy.

¹⁷ I thought these things at me, and I remembered in mine heart; for why wisdom is undeadly in thought,

¹⁸ and good delighting *is* in the friendship thereof; and honesty with-out default *is* in the works of hands thereof; and wisdom *is* in the strife of speech thereof; and great clearness *is* in the communing of words thereof; I went about, seeking to take *wisdom* to me.

¹⁹ Forsooth I was a witting child, and I got a good soul.

²⁰ And when I was more good, I came to a body undefouled.

²¹ And as I knew, that else I may not be chaste [*or continent*], no but God give it, and this same thing was wisdom, to know whose this gift was; I went to the Lord, and I besought him, and I said, of all mine entrails [*or of all the entrails of mine heart*].

CHAPTER 9

¹ God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, that madest all things by [*or with*] thy word,

² and ordainedest man by thy wisdom, that he should be lord of creature, which is made of thee,

³ that he dispose the world in equity and rightfulness [*or rightwiseness*], and deem doom in right ruling of heart;

⁴ give thou to me wisdom, that standeth nigh thy seats; and do not thou reprove me from thy children.

⁵ For I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; *I am* a sick [*or a feeble*] man, and of little time, and less to the understanding of doom and of laws.

⁶ And if any man is perfect among the sons of me, if thy wisdom fleeth away from him, he shall be reckoned into nought.

⁷ Forsooth thou hast chosen me king to thy people, and a judge [*or doomsman*] of thy sons and daughters;

⁸ and thou saidest, that I should build a temple in thine holy hill, and an altar in the city of thy dwelling place; the likeness of thine holy tabernacle, which thou madest ready at the beginning [*or that thou preparedest from the beginning*].

⁹ And thy wisdom is with thee, that knoweth thy works, which also was present then, when thou madest the world, and knew what was pleasant to thine eyes, and what was addressed [*or right*] in thy commandments.

¹⁰ Send thou that *wisdom* from thine holy heavens, and from the seat of thy greatness, that it be with me, and travail with me; and that I know what is acceptable [*or allowed*] with thee.

¹¹ For why that *wisdom* knoweth and understandeth all things; and it shall lead me forth in my works soberly, and it shall keep me in his power.

¹² And my works shall be acceptable, and I shall dispose thy people justly [*or rightwisely*], and I shall be worthy of the seats of my father.

¹³ For who of men may know the counsel of God? either who may think, what will God?

¹⁴ For why the thoughts of deadly men *be* dreadful, and our purveyances *be* uncertain.

¹⁵ For why the body that is corrupt[ed], grieveth the soul; and earthly dwelling presseth down the wit, thinking many things.

¹⁶ And of hard we guess *those things*, that be in earth; and we find with travail *those things*, that be in beholding. But who shall search *those things*, that be in heavens?

¹⁷ But who shall know thy wit, no but thou give wisdom/but if thou give wisdom, and send thine Holy Spirit from highest things?

¹⁸ And if the paths of them, that be in lands, be amended, and if men have learned *those things*, that please thee. For why, Lord, whichever pleased thee from the beginning, were made whole by wisdom.

CHAPTER 10

¹ This *wisdom of God* kept him, that was formed first of God, the father of the world, when he alone was made of nought. And *this wisdom* led him out of his trespass, and led [or brought] him out of the slime of the earth,

² and gave to him virtue to hold together all things, *that is, gave to him the lordship over all lower things.*

³ As the unjust man in his ire went away from this *wisdom*, brotherhood perished by the ire of man-quelling. [From this as the unrightwise went away in his wrath, by the wrath of manslaughter perished fraternity.]

⁴ For which thing when the water did away the earth, wisdom healed again; governing a just [or the rightwise] man by a despicable tree.

⁵ This *wisdom* also in the consent of pride, when nations had raised themselves, knew a just man [*or knew the rightwise*], and kept without complaint [*or blame*] to God; and *this wisdom* kept strong mercy in sons.

⁶ And it delivered a just man [*or the rightwise*] fleeing from wicked [*or unpius*] men perishing, when fire came down into the place of five cities.

⁷ For which *wicked men* the land smoking is made desert, into witnessing of waywardness [*or shrewdness*], and trees having fruits in uncertain time; and the mind of an unbelieveful soul standing an image of salt.

⁸ For why men passing wisdom, not only fell in this, that they knew not goods [*or good things*], but also they left to men the mind of their unwisdom, that in these sins, which they did, they might not be hid.

⁹ Forsooth wisdom delivered them from sorrows, that keep it.

¹⁰ Soothly this *wisdom* led forth a just man [*or rightwise*] by rightful [*or right*] ways, that fled from the ire [*or the wrath*] of his brother; and it showed him the realm [*or the kingdom*] of God, and gave to him the knowing of saints; it made him honest in travails, and fulfilled his travails.

¹¹ It helped him in the fraud [*or guile*] of deceivers, and made him honest.

¹² It kept him from enemies, and defended him from deceivers; and it gave to him a strong battle, that he should overcome, and know, that wisdom is the mightiest of all.

13 This *wisdom* forsook not the just [*or right-wise*] man sold, *that is Joseph, when his brothers sold him to men of Ishmael*, but delivered him from sinners; and it went down with him into a ditch, *that is, to the prison of the king of Egypt*;

14 and it forsook not him in bonds, till it brought to him the sceptre of the realm, and power against them that oppressed him; and it showed them liars, that defouled him, and it gave to him everlasting clearness.

15 This *wisdom* delivered a just [*or rightwise*] people, and wholly without complaint [*or blame*], from nations that oppressed it.

16 It entered into the soul of God's servant, and he stood against hideous kings, in great wonders and miracles [*or signs*].

17 And it yielded to just [*or rightwise*] men the meed of their travails, and led them forth in a wonderful [*or a marvellous*] way; and it was to them in covering of the day, and in the light of stars by night.

18 And it translated, *either led over*, them through the Red or the Reed Sea; and bare them over through full much water.

19 But it drowned down the enemies of them into the sea; and led them out from the depth of hells [*or the deepness of hell*], *that is, from the bottom of the sea*.

20 Therefore just men take away the spoils of wicked men [*or rightwise men took away the spoils of unpius men*]; and, Lord, they magnified in song thine holy name, and praised together thine hand overcomer.

²¹ For why wisdom opened the mouth of dumb men, and made the tongues of young children not speaking to be wise [*or fair speaking*].

CHAPTER 11

¹ He addressed the works of them, in the hands of an holy prophet. [*It right ruled the works of them, in the hands of the holy prophet.*]

² They made journey by deserts, that were not inhabited; and they made little houses, *or cottages*, in desert places.

³ They stood against kings [*or enemies*], and avenged them[*selves*] of enemies.

⁴ They thirsted, and they inwardly called thee; and water of a full high stone was given to them, and rest of thirst *was given to them* of an hard stone.

⁵ For by which things the enemies of them suffered pains, for default [*or from the defaulting*] of their drink, and the sons of Israel were glad, when they had plenty; by these things, when these failed to those *enemies*, it was done well with them.

⁶ For soothly for the well of everlasting flood, thou gavest man's blood to unjust men.

⁷ And when they were made less [*or diminished*], in the leading away of young children slain, thou gavest suddenly plenteous water to them [*or thou gave to them abounding water in manner not hoped*];

⁸ and showedest by the thirst, that was then, how thou wouldest enhance thy *servants*, and wouldest slay the adversaries of them.

⁹ For when they were assayed, soothly they took chastising with mercy; they knew, how wicked men deemed with ire [*or how with wrath the unpious men deemed*], should suffer torments.

¹⁰ Soothly thou admonishing as a father, provedest these men; but thou as an hard king asking condemnedest them.

¹¹ For why men absent and *men* present were tormented in like manner.

¹² For why double annoyance had taken them, and wailing with the mind of things passed.

¹³ Soothly when they heard, that it was done well with themselves by their torments, they bethought on the Lord, and wondered on the end of the out-going.

¹⁴ For at the end of the befalling, they worshipped him, whom they scorned cast out in shrewd putting forth; and thou didest not in like manner to just men.

¹⁵ Forsooth for unwise thoughts the wickednesses of them *were punished*; for some men erring worshipped dumb serpents [*or adders*], and superfluous beasts, thou sentest into them a multitude of dumb beasts, into vengeance;

¹⁶ that they should know, that by what things a man sinneth, he is tormented also by these things.

¹⁷ For why thine hand almighty [*or thine almighty hand*], that made the world of matter unseen, was not unmighty to send into them a multitude of bears, either hardy lions,

¹⁸ either beasts of new kind full of ire, and unknown beasts, either *beasts* frothing heat of fires,

either bringing forth the odour of smoke, either sending out from the eyes hideous sparkles; [*or of new kind of unknown beasts, and full of wrath, or spitting breathings of fires, or bringing forth smell of smoke, or putting out grizzly sparks from eyes;*]

¹⁹ of which *beasts* not only the hurting might destroy them, but also the sight [*or the looking*] might slay by dread.

²⁰ For why and without these *beasts* they might be slain by one spirit, and suffer persecution of those their own deeds, and be scattered by the spirit of thy virtue. But also thou hast disposed all things in measure, and in number, and in weight;

²¹ for it was left ever to thee alone to be able to do much; and who shall against-stand the virtue of thine arm?

²² For as the tongue of a balance, so is the world before thee; and as a drop of dew rising before the light [*or a drop of morrowtide dew*], that cometh down into earth.

²³ And thou hast mercy of all things, for thou mayest all things; and thou dissemblest, *either forbear*est, the sins of men, for penance.

²⁴ For thou lovest all things that be, and thou hatest nothing of those, that thou madest; for thou not hating anything ordainedest, either madest.

²⁵ But how might anything dwell, no but thou wouldest?/but if thou wouldest? either how should *a thing* be kept, that were not called of thee?

²⁶ But, Lord, thou lovest souls, thou sparest all things; for those things [*or they*] be thine.

CHAPTER 12

¹ Lord, how good, and how sweet is thy Spirit in all things [*or in us*];

² and therefore thou chastisest by parts these men that err; and thou admonishest [*or thou warnest*], of which things they sin, and thou speakest *to them*, that when they have forsaken malice, they believe in thee, Lord.

³ For *thou wouldst lose* those eld [*or old*] dwellers of thine holy land, which thou loatest;

⁴ for they did works hateful to thee, by medicines, *that is, by witchcrafts, and false divinings, and sacrifices offered to fiends*, and unjust [*or unrightwise*] sacrifices;

⁵ and the slayers of their sons, without mercy, and eaters of entrails [*or the bowels*] of men, and devourers of blood;

⁶ and by the hands of our fathers thou wouldst lose from thy middle sacrament, *that is, from Judea*, fathers and mothers, authors of souls, *that is, of their children*, unhelped;

⁷ that our fathers should take the worthy pilgrimage of God's children, which is to thee the dearworthiest land of all.

⁸ But also thou sparedest these as men, and thou sentest wasps, the before-goers of thine host, that those [*or they*] should destroy them little and little.

⁹ Not for thou were unmighty to make wicked [*or unpious*] men subject to just [*or rightwise*]

men in battle, either to destroy at once, by cruel beasts, either by an hard word;

¹⁰ but thou deemedest by parts, and gavest place to penance, and knewest, that the nation of them was wayward [*or shrewd*], and their malice was kindly, *that is, made hard by long custom*, and that their thought might not be changed without end.

¹¹ For it was a cursed seed at [*or from*] the beginning. And thou not dreading any man, gavest forgiveness to the sins of them.

¹² For why who shall say to thee, What hast thou done? either who shall stand against thy doom? either who shall come in thy sight, *to be* avenger of wicked men? either who shall areckon to thee [*or who shall reckon to thee*], if nations perish, which thou madest?

¹³ For why none other than thou is God, to whom is charge of all things, that thou show, that thou deemest doom not unjustly. [*Forsooth there is none other God than thou, to whom is care of all, that thou show, for not unrightwisely thou deemest doom.*]

¹⁴ Neither king neither tyrant in thy sight shall inquire of these men, which thou hast lost [*or destroyed*].

¹⁵ Therefore since thou art just, thou disposest justly all things, [*or Since then thou art rightwise, all things rightwisely thou disposest*]; also Father, thou condemnest him, that oweth not to be

punished*, and thou guessest him a stranger from thy virtue.

¹⁶ For why thy virtue is the beginning of rightfulness [*or of rightwiseness*]; and for this, that thou art lord of all men, thou makest thee to spare all men.

¹⁷ For thou, that art not believed to be perfect [*or full ended*] in virtue, thou showest virtue; and thou ledest over these men, that know not thee, in hardness.

¹⁸ But thou, lord [*or lordshipper*] of virtue, deemest with peaceableness, and disposest us with great reverence; for it is subject to thee to be able to, when thou wilt.

¹⁹ Forsooth thou hast taught thy people by such works, that it behooveth a *judge* to be just, and benign, *either merciful*; and thou madest thy sons of good hope, for thou deemest, and givest place to penance in sins.

²⁰ For if thou tormentedest the enemies of thy servants, and men due to death with so great perceiving, *either attentiveness*, and deliveredest, and gavest time and place [*or giving time and place*], by which they might be changed from malice;

²¹ with how great diligence deemest thou thy sons, to whose fathers thou gavest oaths and covenants of good promises?

²² Therefore when thou givest chastising [*or discipline*] to us, thou beatest [*or scourgest*] manyfold our enemies, that we, deeming, think

* **CHAPTER 12:15** That is, punishest sometime, to proving of his patience, it is openly of saint Job.

thy goodness; and when it is deemed of us, that we hope thy mercy.

²³ Wherefore and to them, that lived unwisely, and unjustly in their life, thou gavest sovereign torments, by these things which they worshipped.

²⁴ For they erred full long in the way of error, and guessed *to be* gods these things that be superfluous in beasts, and lived by custom of young children unwittingly [*or living by manner of unwise young children*].

²⁵ For this thing thou gavest doom, into scorn, as to children unwitting [*or unwise*];

²⁶ but they, that were not amended by scornings and blamings, feeled the worthy doom of God.

²⁷ For they bare heavily in these things, which they suffered, in which things they suffering had indignation [*or disdained*]; they seeing him, whom they denied sometime them to know, knew *him* very God, by these things which they guessed gods among them, when those were destroyed; for which thing and the end of their condemnation shall come on them.

CHAPTER 13

¹ Forsooth all men be vain, *that is, void of truth*, in which the knowing of God is not; and of these things that be seen good, they might not understand him, that is, and they perceiving the works knew not, who was the worker [*or craftsman*];

² but they guessed gods governors of the world, either the fire, either the wind, either the air made swift, either the compass of stars, either full much water, either the sun and moon;

³ and if they delighted in the fairness of those things, and guessed *them* gods, know they, how much the Lord of those things is fairer than those; for why the engenderer [*or begetter*] of fairness made all these things.

⁴ Either if they wondered on the virtue and works of those things, understand they of those [*things*], that he that made these things, is stronger than those;

⁵ for by the greatness [*or muchliness*] of fairness and of creature the Creator of these might be seen knowingly, *either might be known by his works*.

⁶ But nevertheless yet in these men is less complaint; for they err, in hap seeking God, and willing to find.

⁷ For when they live in his works, they seek, and hold for a sooth, that those things be good, that be seen.

⁸ Again soothly it oweth not to be forgiven to these men.

⁹ For if they might know so much, that they might guess the world, how found they not lightlier the Lord thereof?

¹⁰ forsooth they be cursed, and the hope of them is among dead men, that called gods the works of men's hands, gold, and silver, the finding of craft, and [*the*] likenesses of beasts, either

a stone unprofitable [*or unprofitable stone*], the work of an eld [*or old*] hand.

¹¹ Either if any craftsman, a carpenter, heweth down of the woods a straight tree, and eraseth away perfectly all the rind thereof [*or taughtly pare away all the rind*], and useth his craft diligently, and maketh a vessel full profitable into conversation of life;

¹² soothly he useth the remnants of this work to the making ready of meat;

¹³ and the residue of these things, which he maketh to no work [*or that to none use*], a crooked tree, and full of knots, he engraveth diligently by his voidness, *that is, made of him by his engraving*, and by the knowing of his craft he figureth it, and likeneth it to the image of a man,

¹⁴ either maketh it like to some of beasts, and anointeth with red colour, and maketh the colour thereof ruddy with painture, and anointeth, [*or daubing or painting*] each spot which is in it,

¹⁵ and maketh to it a worthy dwelling place, and setteth it in the wall, and he fasteneth it with iron,

¹⁶ lest peradventure it fall down; and he purveyeth for it, and knoweth, that it may not help itself; for it is an image, and help is needful thereto.

¹⁷ And he maketh a vow, and inquireth of his chattel, and of his sons, and of weddings; he is not ashamed to speak with him, that is without soul;

¹⁸ and soothly for health he beseecheth a thing unmighty [*or feeble*], and for life he prayeth a thing without life [*or for life he prayeth the dead*], and he calleth an unprofitable thing into help. And for journey he asketh of that thing, that may not go;

¹⁹ and of getting [*or purchasing*], and of working, and of befalling [*or the chance*] of all things he asketh of him, which is unprofitable in all things.

CHAPTER 14

¹ Again another man thinking to sail in a ship [*or another thinking to sail*], and beginning to make journey through fierce waves, inwardly calleth a tree more frail than the tree that beareth him.

² For why covetousness to get *money*[*or winning*] found that *idol*; and a craftsman made it by his wisdom.

³ But thou, Father, governest by purveyance, for thou gavest way in the sea [*or thou hast given in the sea way*], and a most steadfast path among waves;

⁴ showing that thou art mighty to make whole of [*or to heal*] all things, yea, if a man goeth to the sea without ship;

⁵ but that the works of thy wisdom should not be void, for this thing men betake their lives, yea, to a little tree, and they pass the sea, and be delivered by a ship.

⁶ But at the beginning, when proud giants perished, the hope of the world fled to a ship,

and sent again seed of birth to the world, which was governed by thine hand.

⁷ For why blessed is the tree, by which rightfulness was made [*or by the which is done rightwiseness*].

⁸ But the idol which is made by hand is cursed, both it, and he that made it, for soothly he wrought great trespass [*or unbelievfulness*]; soothly that *idol*, when it was frail, was named God.

⁹ Forsooth in like manner the wicked man and his wickedness, [*or the unpious and the unpiousness of him*], be hateful to God.

¹⁰ For why that that is made shall suffer torments, with him that made it.

¹¹ For this thing and to the idols of nations shall not be beholding [*or reward*]; for the creatures of God be made into hatred, and into temptation to the soul of men, and into a trap [*or a mouse-catch*], to the feet of unwise men.

¹² For the beginning of fornication, *that is, idolatry, which is ghostly fornication*, is the seeking out of idols, and the finding of those *idols* is the corruption of life.

¹³ Forsooth those were not at the beginning, neither those shall be without end. [*Forsooth they were not from the beginning, nor shall be into without end.*]

¹⁴ For why the voidness of men found these *idols* into the world; and therefore the end of those is found shortly.

¹⁵ For why the father making sorrow with bitter mourning, made soon to him an image of

the son *that was* ravished; and began to worship him now as a god, that was dead then as a man; and he ordained holy things [*or temples*] and sacrifices among his servants.

¹⁶ Afterward in time coming betwixt, when the wicked custom was strong, this error was kept as a law, and images were worshipped by lordship of tyrants.

¹⁷ The figure of them was brought from afar, which the men might not honour [*or worship*] in open, for they were [*a*] far; and they made an open image of the king, whom they would honour; that by their busyness they should worship him as present, that was absent.

¹⁸ Forsooth the noble [*or the great*] diligence of a craftsman brought in also them, that knew not, to the worshipping of these *things* or of these *kings*.

¹⁹ For he willing more to please the *king*, that took him, *that is, chose him to make an image to the king*, travailed perfectly by his craft, to make a likeness into better, *that is, in making the king fairer*.

²⁰ Soothly the multitude of men, deceived by the fairness of work, guessed [*or esteemed*] him now a god, that was honoured as a man before *that time*.

²¹ And this was the deceit [*or the deceiving*] of man's life; for why men serving greatly, either to affection, either to kings, putted to stones and trees the name that may not be communed [*or the uncommunicable name*].

22 And it sufficed not, that they erred about the knowing of God; but also they living in great battle of unknowing, call so many and so great evils peace.

23 For either they slaying their sons in sacrifice, either making dark sacrifices, either having wakings *[or having watches]* full of madness,

24 keep now neither clean life, neither clean weddings *[or spousals]*; but also one man slayeth another man by envy, either doing adultery maketh sorry *his neighbor*.

25 And all things be meddled *[or mingled]* together, blood, manslaying *[or manslaughter]*, theft, and feigning, corruption, unfaithfulness, disturbing, and forswearing,

26 noise, forgetting of goods of the Lord, defouling of souls, changing of birth, unsteadfastness of weddings, unordaining of lechery and of unchastity. *[strife, the unminding of the goods of the Lord, the defouling of souls, the mis-changing of birth, the unstableness of bridals, the unordaining of lechery and of uncleanness.]*

27 For why the worshipping of cursed idols is the cause, and the beginning, and the end, of all evil.

28 For why either they wax mad, while they be glad; either certainly they prophesy false things, either they live unjustly, either they forswear soon.

29 For the while they trust in idols, that be without soul, they swear evil, and hope not, that they shall be annoyed.

³⁰ Therefore ever either shall come to them worthily; for they deemed evil of God, and gave attention to idols [*or taking heed to maumets*], and they swore unjustly in an idol, and they despised rightfulness [*or rightwiseness*].

³¹ For why an oath is not virtue, but the pain of sinners goeth forth ever-*[more]*, into the breaking of just [*or rightwise*] things.

CHAPTER 15

¹ Forsooth thou, our God, *art* sweet, and true, and patient, and disposeth all things in mercy.

² For if we sin, we be thine, and know thy greatness; and if we sin not, we know, that we be accounted at thee [*or for with thee we be counted*].

³ For why to know thee, is perfect rightfulness [*or full ended rightwise-ness*]; and to know thy rightfulness [*or rightwiseness*], and virtue, is the root of undeadliness.

⁴ Forsooth the thinking out of evil craft of men brought not us into error, neither the shadow of painture [*or of painting*] travail without fruit, an image graven by diverse colours;

⁵ whose beholding [*or sight*] giveth covetousness [*or coveting*] to an unwise man, and he loveth the like-ness of a dead image without soul.

⁶ The lovers of evils be worthy the death, that have hope in such [*things*]; and they that make those, and they that love, and they that worship *be worthy the death*.

⁷ But also a potter, thrusting [*the*] nesh earth, by great travail maketh each vessel to our uses; and of the same clay he maketh vessels that be

clean to use, and in like manner those that be contrary to these; forsooth what use is of these vessels, the potter is judge.

⁸ And he that was made of earth a little before, maketh a god of the same clay with vain travail; and the potter, asked *to yield* the debt of the soul which he had, leadeth himself after a little time *to the earth*, from whence he was taken.

⁹ But he hath care, not for he shall travail, neither for his life is short, but he striveth with goldsmiths and silversmiths; but also he pursueth *[or followeth]* workers of brass, and setteth before glory; for he maketh superfluous *[or over-void]* things.

¹⁰ For the heart of him is ashes, and superfluous earth is his hope, and his life is viler *[or fouler]* than clay.

¹¹ For he knew not *God*, that made him, and that inspired a soul to him *[or that inspired to him a soul]*; and he loveth those things which he hath wrought; and *he knew not God*, that blowed *[or blew]* in him a spirit of life.

¹² But they guessed fleshly delighting *[or a playing place]* to be our life, and the conversation of life *to be* made to winning, *either covetousness*, and that it behooveth to get on each side, yea, of evil.

¹³ Forsooth this man that maketh frail vessels, and graven images of the matter of earth, knoweth that he trespasseth above all men.

¹⁴ Forsooth, *Lord*, all unwise men and cursed be proud over the measure of their soul, and *be*

enemies of thy people, and upbraid it [*or mis-saying to it*];

¹⁵ for they guessed all the idols of nations *to be* gods, that have neither sight of eyes to see, neither nostrils to perceive a spirit, *either wind*, neither ears to hear, neither fingers of hands to touch, but also their feet *be* slow to go.

¹⁶ For why a man made those [*or made them*], and he that borrowed a spirit, made those; for why no man may make a god like himself.

¹⁷ For since he is deadly, by [*or with*] wicked hands he maketh a dead *idol*; for he is better than these *gods*, which he worshippeth; for soothly he lived, when he was deadly, but they *lived* never.

¹⁸ But also most wretched men worship beasts; for why unreasonable *beasts*, compared to these men, be worse than they.

¹⁹ But neither by sight any man may of these beasts behold goods [*or good things*]; forsooth they have driven away [*or fled*] the praising of God, and his blessing.

CHAPTER 16

¹ For these things, and things like these, they suffered torments worthily, and they were destroyed by multitude of beasts.

² For which torments thou disposedest well thy people, to which thou gavest covetousness of their delighting a new savour, making ready meat to them a curlew, *that is, a multitude of curlews*.

³ That soothly they coveting meat, were turned away, yea, from needful coveting, for those

things that were showed, and sent to them; but these men made poor in short time, tasted new meat.

⁴ For soothly it behooved perishing to come on them without excusing, using [*or haunting*] tyranny; but to show only to these *Hebrews*, how their enemies were destroyed.

⁵ Forsooth when the fierce ire of beasts came on them, they were destroyed by the bitings of wayward serpents. But, *Lord*, thine ire [*or wrath*] dwelled not without end;

⁶ but they were troubled in short time to amending [*or correction*], and had a sign of health, to remembering of the commandment of thy law.

⁷ For he that was converted, was healed not by that that he saw, but by thee, Saviour of all men [*or saviour of all*].

⁸ Forsooth in this thou showedest to our enemies, that thou it art [*or thou art*], that deliverest from all evil.

⁹ Forsooth the bitings of locusts and of flies killed them, and health of their life was not found; for they were worthy to be destroyed of such things.

¹⁰ But neither the teeth of dragons, neither of venomous beasts overcame thy children; for why thy mercy came, and healed them.

¹¹ For they were tormented in mind of thy words, *that is, that they should be mindful of thy behests*, and they were healed swiftly [*or swiftly they were saved*]; lest they falling into deep forgetting of *God*, [*they*] might not use thine help.

12 For neither herb, neither plaster healed them; but, Lord, thy word, [*or but thy word, Lord*], that healeth all things.

13 Lord, thou art, that hast power of life and of death; and ledest forth to the gates of death, and ledest again.

14 But soothly a man slayeth his soul by malice; and when the spirit is gone out, it shall not turn again, neither *the body* shall again-call the soul, which is received;

15 but it is impossible to escape thine hand.

16 For why wicked [*or unpius*] men, denying to know thee, were tormented by the strength of thine arm; they suffered persecution by new waters, and hails, and rains, and were wasted by fire.

17 For why that was wonderful, the fire had more might in the water, that quencheth all things; for why the world was avenger of just [*or rightwise*] men.

18 For why sometime the fire was mild [*or tamed*], lest the beasts should be burnt, that were sent to wicked [*or unpius*] men; but that they seeing should know, that they suffer persecution by the doom of God.

19 And sometime *the fire* burnt on high on each side in the water, above the virtue of fire, to destroy the wicked nation of the land.

20 For which things thou nourishedest thy people with meat of angels, and thou gavest from heaven bread made ready to them, without travail; having all delighting in itself, and the sweet-ness of all savour.

21 For thou showedest thy chattel [*or thy substance*], and thy sweetness, which thou hast, to sons; and *the bread* serving to the will of each man, was turned to that, that each man would.

22 Forsooth snow and ice suffered the might [*or the strength*] of fire, and melted not; that they should know, that fire burning, in hail and rain lightning, destroyed the fruits of enemies.

23 Soothly again this *was wonderful*, also fire forgot his virtue, that just men should be nourished.

24 For why the creature serving to thee the Maker, waxeth white [*or burneth out*] into torment against unjust [*or unrightwise*] men, and is made lighter [*or softer*] to do well, for them that trust in thee.

25 For this thing and all things transfigured then, *that is, changed from the property of their kind*, served to thy grace, nourisher of all things, to the will of them, that be desired of thee;

26 that, Lord, thy sons should know, which [*or whom*] thou lovedest, that not the fruits of birth, *that is, not only fruits coming forth of earth*, feed men, but thy word keepeth them, that believe in thee.

27 For why that that might not be destroyed of fire, *that is, manna*, melted anon *as it was* made hot of a little beam of the sun;

28 that it were known to all men, that it behooveth to come before the sun to thy blessing, and to worship [*or honour*] thee at the rising of the light.

²⁹ Forsooth the hope of an unkind man shall melt away as ice of winter, and shall perish as superfluous water.

CHAPTER 17

¹ Forsooth, Lord, thy dooms be great, and thy words may not be fully told out [*or untellable*]; unlearned souls erred for these [*or for these the undisciplined souls erred*].

² For the while wicked men hold for steadfast, that they may be lords of [*or be able to lordship to the*] holy nation, they were fettered with bonds of darkneses, and of long night, and were enclosed under roofs; and they fugitives were subject to everlasting [*or perpetual*] purveyance.

³ And the while they guess them to be hid in dark sins, they were scattered by dark hiding of forgetting [*or by the dark veil of forgetting they be scattered*], dreading hideously, and disturbed with full great wondering.

⁴ For the den that withheld them, kept not without dread; for why sound coming down disturbed them, and sorrowful persons appearing to them, gave dread to them.

⁵ And soothly no might [*or strength*] of fire might give light to them, and the clear flames of [*the*] stars might not lighten that hideous night.

⁶ Soothly sudden fire full of dread appeared to them [*or there appeared to them sudden fire, full of dread*]; and they were smitten with the dread of that face, that was not seen, and guessed those things to be worse, that were seen.

⁷ And *[the]* scorns of witchcraft were laid to, and the glory of wisdom *was* chastising with despising *[or correction with strife]*.

⁸ For they, that promised themselves to put away dreads and disturbings *[or perturbations]* from a sick soul, were full with scorn, and were sick for dread.

⁹ For why though nothing of the wonders against kind disturbed them, they were moved *[or stirred]* by the passing of beasts, and by the hissing of adders,

¹⁰ and they trembled, and perished *[or fearful, they perished]*; and denied, that they saw the air, which a man might not escape *[or flee]* by any reason; for why worst things before-occupy often, while the conscience reproveth.

¹¹ For since wickedness is dreadful, it is given into condemnation of all men; for why a conscience disturbed presumeth ever^{*[more]*} wicked things.

¹² For why dread is nothing, but help of presumption, and showing of thought of helps *[or betraying of the helps of thought]*.

¹³ And the while less abiding is from within, it guesseth greater power of that cause, of which it giveth torment.

¹⁴ Forsooth they, that came into a mighty night, and coming above *[or overcoming]* from *[the]* lowest things, and from *[the]* highest things, they sleeping the same sleep,

15 were hurled sometime by dread of wonders against kind, sometime the souls failed by leading over; for why sudden dread and un hoped, came on them.

16 Afterward if any of them had fell [*or had fallen*] down, he was kept enclosed in prison, without iron;

17 for if any churl was, either shepherd, either a workman of fields, and was before-occupied, he suffered need that might not be escaped [*or unescapable*]. For why all men were bound together by [*or with*] one chain of darknesses;

18 either a wind hissing, either sweet sound of birds betwixt the thick boughs of trees, either the fierceness of water running down greatly,

19 either a strong sound of stones cast down, either the running unseen of beasts playing [*or the unseen course of playing beasts*], either the strong voice of beasts lowing, either echo sounding [*or rebounding*] again from [*the*] highest hills, made them failing for dread.

20 Forsooth all the world was lightened [*or lighted*] with clear light, and was not withholden in works hindered [*or contained in works not letted*].

21 But a grievous night, the image of darknesses, that was to coming [*or to come*] on them, was set on them alone; therefore they were grievouser [*or more grievous*] to themselves than the darknesses.

CHAPTER 18

¹ But full great light there was to thine holy *servants[or thy saints]*, and soothly enemies heard the voice of them, but they saw not the figure, *either shape*; and for also they suffered not by the same things, they magnified thee.

² And for they were hurt before, they did thankings to thee, for they were not hurt; and that difference should be *betwixt them and Egyptians*, they asked thee, God.

³ For which thing they had a burning pillar of fire, the leader of unknown way; and thou gavest the sun, without hurting of good harbour.

⁴ Forsooth they *were* worthy to want [*or to lack*] light, and to suffer the prison of darkneses, which held [*or kept*] thy sons enclosed; by which *sons[or by whom]* the uncorrupt light of law began to be given to the world.

⁵ When they thought to slay the young children of just men [*or the infants of rightwise men*]; and when one son was put forth, and delivered, thou tookest away the multitude of sons, *that is, of the first engendered of Egypt*, for the leading-over of them, and thou lostest [*or spoiledst*] them altogether in strong water.

⁶ Forsooth that night was known before of our fathers, that they witting verily to which oaths they believed, should be more patient [*or steadfast*].

⁷ Forsooth health of just [*or rightwise*] men was received verily of thy people, and also destroying of unjust [*or unrightwise*] men.

⁸ For as thou hurtedest our adversaries, so thou excitedest also us, and magnifiedest us.

⁹ For why just [*or the rightwise*] children of good men made sacrifice privily, and disposed the law of rightfulness [*or rightwiseness*] into according; they *disposed or assigned* just [*or rightwise*] men to receive goods and evils in like manner, and sung [*or singing*] praisings to the Father of all men.

¹⁰ But [*the*] unseemly voice of enemies sounded, and weepful wailing of beweepers of young children was heard.

¹¹ Forsooth the servant was tormented by like pain with the lord; and a man of the people suffered things like the king.

¹² Therefore in like manner all men by [*or with*] one name of death had dead men unnumberable, for neither quick men sufficed to bury; for why the nation of them, that was clearer *than others*, was destroyed in one moment.

¹³ Forsooth of all *Egyptians* men not believing for benefices [*or benefits*], promised them then to be God's people, when the destroying of the first engendered [*or begotten*] things was first.

¹⁴ Forsooth when all things held restful silence, and the night had the middle [*or the mean*] way in his course,

¹⁵ Lord, thy word almighty [*or thine almighty word*] coming [*or going out*] swiftly from heaven, came from the king's seats;

¹⁶ a sharp sword bearing thy commandment not feigned, came forth, overcomer into the middle of the land of destroying [*or of death*];

and it stood, and filled all things with death, and it stood in earth, and stretched forth till to heaven.

¹⁷ Then anon the sights of evil dreams disturbed them, and dreads not hoped came above.

¹⁸ And another man cast forth half quick [*or half alive*] into another place, showed for what cause of death he died.

¹⁹ For why sights that disturbed them, beforewarned these things, that they should perish not unwittingly [*or unknowingly*], why they suffered evils.

²⁰ Forsooth [*the*] temptation of death, *that is, punishment by death*, touched then also just [*or rightwise*] men, and moving altogether [*or a stirring*] of [*the*] multitude was made in desert [*or in wilderness*]; but thine ire [*or wrath*] dwelled not long.

²¹ For a man without complaint hasted to beseech [*or to pray*] for peoples, and he brought forth prayer the shield of his service, and he alleged prayer by incense, and againststood ire [*or withstood to the wrath*]; and he setted an end to the need, and showed that he was thy servant.

²² Forsooth he overcame companies, not by virtue of body, neither by armour of power; but he remembered the oaths, and the testaments of fathers, and by word he made him subject, that travailed himself.

²³ For when dead men fell down by heaps, each on other, he stood betwixt [*or between*] *dead men and living*, or *the dead and the quick*, and cut away the fierceness of *burning*, and parted that way, that led to quick men.

²⁴ For why all the world, by signifying either figure, was in the cloth [*or the priest's cape*] lasting to the heels, which he had; and the great things of fathers were engraved in four orders of stones; and, *Lord*, thy magnificence [*or great doing*] was written in the diadem of his head.

²⁵ Forsooth he that destroyed, gave stead to these things, and dreaded these things, for why the temptation alone was sufficient to ire. [*To these forsooth he gave stead, that destroyed, and these things he full out dreaded; forsooth there was alone sufficient tempting of wrath.*]

CHAPTER 19

¹ Forsooth ire [*or wrath*] without mercy came on wicked men [*or the unpious*] till into the last, *that is, till to the drowning of them*; for why *God* before-knew also the things to coming [*or to come*] of them.

² For when they were turned, and had suffered, that they should lead out them, and had before-sent them with great busyness, the deeds of repenting pursued them.

³ For they having yet mourning betwixt the hands, and they be-weeping at the sepulchres of dead men [*or weeping at the monuments of the dead*], took to them another thought of unknowing; and they pursued those *Hebrews*, as fleers away, which they praying had sent forth.

⁴ For why worthy need [*or necessity*] led them to this end, and they lost remembering of these things, that had befallen, that punishing should

[ful] fill those things, that failed *[or lacked]* of torments,

⁵ and that soothly thy people should pass wonderfully; forsooth that they should find a new death.

⁶ For why each creature serving to thine behests, was reformed to his kind at *[or from]* the beginning, that thy children should be kept unhurt.

⁷ For why a cloud beshadowed the castles *[or the tents]* of them, and dry earth appeared in water that was before, and a way without hindering *appeared* in the Reed Sea, and a field burgeoning from full great depth; *[For a cloud shadowed the tents of them, and in the water that was before, the earth appeared dry; and in the Red Sea way without hindrance, and a burgeoning field of full great depth;]*

⁸ by which *field* all the nation passed, that was covered with thine hand; forsooth they saw thy marvels and wonders.

⁹ For they as horses devoured *[or gnawed]* meat, *that is, took the armours of Egyptians, which they saw dead on the brink of the sea,* and as lambs they made full out joy, magnifying thee, Lord, that *[or for thou]* deliveredest them.

¹⁰ For they were mindful yet of those things, that were done in the dwelling of them *among Egyptians*; how the land brought forth flies, for the nation of beasts, and the flood brought forth multitude of paddocks *[or frogs]* for fishes.

¹¹ Forsooth at the last they saw a new creature of birds, when they were led by covetousness *[or*

lust], and asked meats of feast [*or of delicious eating*].

¹² For in the speaking to, *that is, at the asking of them*, of their desire, a curlew ascended [*or went up*] to them from the sea;

¹³ and dis-eases [*or travails*] came on sinners, and not without provings [*or evidences*] of those things, that were done before by the fierceness [*or the force*] of floods. For they suffered justly, by [*or after*] their wickednesses; for they ordained more abominable unhospitality.

¹⁴ Soothly some received not unknown comelings; soothly others took good men harboured into thralldom [*or good guests into servage*].

¹⁵ And not only *they did* these things, but soothly also another beholding [*or respect*] of them was, that they against their will received strangers.

¹⁶ Forsooth they that used the same ordinances, tormented with cruelest sorrows them, that received with gladness. [*Who forsooth with gladness received them, that had used the same informings, with most cruel sorrows they tormented.*]

¹⁷ Forsooth they were smitten with blindness, as they in the gates of the just man [*or the rightwise*], when they were covered with sudden darknesses; each man sought the passing of his door.

¹⁸ Forsooth while elements be turned into themselves, as the sound of manner [*or of quality*] is changed in organ, and all things keep

their sound; wherefore it may be guessed of that certain sight.

¹⁹ Beasts of the field were turned into beasts of water; whatever were swimming things, went in the land.

²⁰ Fire in water had power above [*or strength over*] his virtue; and water forgot the kind quenching [*or his quenching kind*].

²¹ Again-ward flames of corruptible beasts dis-eased not the fleshs of *Hebrews* going together; neither departed that good meat, that was departed lightly as ice. [*Flames again-ward travailed not the flesh of the corruptible beasts going together; nor dissolved it, that lightly was dissolved as ice, good meat.*]

²² Forsooth, Lord, thou magnifiedest thy people in all things, and honouredest; and despisedest not, and helpedest them in each time and in each place [*or in all place standing nigh to them*].

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Wycliffe's Bible with Modern Spelling, was made in response to requests from readers who wanted my Wycliffe's Old and New Testaments and Apocrypha in one volume. Printing limitations dictated the number of pages available to me and the letter size. In my previous books, Wycliffe's Bible, Wycliffe's Old Testament, Vols. 1 amp 2, Wycliffe's New Testament, and Wycliffe's Apocrypha, I have tens of thousands of rewritten verses, presented in parentheses "()", to provide help in comprehending the 14th century Middle English vocabulary and grammar. In this present volume, with space at a premium, those "helps" had to be eliminated, to make room for the text of the Apocrypha.

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