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Edited by A.T.S. Goodrick
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The Book of Wisdom

Alfred Thomas Scrope Goodrick (1856–1914) published this translation of the Book of Wisdom in 1913. Educated at Cambridge, Oxford and Göttingen, a Fellow and librarian of St John's, Oxford, and then rector at Winterbourne, Gloucestershire, Goodrick was a scholar of some note and varied interests, translating Grimmelshausen's *Simplicissimus* and editing the memoir of the Civil War soldier Sydnam Poyntz. Traditionally thought to be written by King Solomon, and containing prophecies and moral instruction, the Book of Wisdom is one of the deuterocanonical books of the Bible, its canonicity being disputed. In addition to notes, appendices and indices, an extensive introduction is provided, covering matters of date, composition, authorship, unity and manuscript sources. Using the text prepared by Henry Barclay Swete, with minor emendations, Goodrick has undertaken his own English translation from the Greek. This work of close scholarship remains of relevance to readers interested in Old Testament exegesis.

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Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108053778

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2012

This edition first published 1913
This digitally printed version 2012

ISBN 978-1-108-05377-8 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

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The Oxford Church Bible Commentary

THE BOOK OF WISDOM

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

EDITED BY

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RIVINGTONS

34 *KING STREET, COVENT GARDEN*

LONDON

1913

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P R E F A C E

‘WHEN will the learned man appear,’ asks Harnack, speaking of the Apocrypha, ‘who will at length throw light upon these writings?’ The answer, so far as concerns the Book of Wisdom, is ‘Never.’ No learned man will ever be able to explain the mind of an author who did not know it himself. Such attempts have been made in respect of modern writers, and the result has been unsatisfactory. With regard to the ‘Wisdom of Solomon,’ the time of theories is past. They must still be chronicled, but they are never final. All that remains is to secure a rational exegesis, for which much has yet to be done.

For such exegesis Grimm’s admirable Commentary must always be the foundation. For the summary of the views of previous critics, for the collection of parallel and illuminative passages, and for rational explanation of difficulties, the work stands by itself. Yet it has its faults. Far too little attention is paid to the last chapters of the book, which are indeed generally neglected as of little philosophical interest. Theologically, as a matter of fact, and as representing a distinctly Egypto-Hebraic point of view of God’s Providence, they are infinitely more interesting than the first part, and that they were full of difficulty even for ancient readers is shown by the

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number of variations of interpretation in the versions, far more numerous than in the earlier chapters. Yet these are almost entirely neglected by Grimm, who does not even notice the strange aberrations (or paraphrases) of the Peshitto-Syriac. Moreover, the number of his false citations is amazing. In many cases this is probably due to the printer's error, but not always¹; the present editor has collected upwards of seventy such mistakes—a warning that the book must be treated with the greatest caution in this respect.

The present editor had purposed, and did to a certain extent execute, a careful study of the older commentators enumerated in Mr. Deane's Bibliography of 'Wisdom.' He quickly found that, with the exception of the merely homiletic writers, there were few indeed whose conclusions had not been briefly and acutely summarised by Grimm. Exception must be made in the case of Holkot, whose merits are hereafter discussed, and whose works Grimm seems to have as a rule neglected. Nor is he quite fair to the brilliantly original work of Bretschneider, among later critics. But with the writings called forth by the famous German 'Apokryphenfrage' (which often contained a good deal more than mere polemic) he was thoroughly acquainted, and gives us the results.

Grimm's work, in the form of a judicious adaptation (at times a translation), was presented to English readers by Dr. Farrar in the *Speaker's Commentary*. He added to it much illustration from modern and especially English sources, and, best of all, he supplemented his author's

¹ *E.g.* on 14⁷, after enumerating passages, quite correctly, where *ξύλον* means the cross of Christ, Grimm subjoins Acts 16²⁴, where it means 'the stocks.'

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jeune notes on the last ten chapters so effectively that he is cited by modern German critics (under the name of 'Wace'!) as an independent authority. Unhappily Dr. Farrar did not verify Grimm's references,¹ and he quoted books which he had never seen. Yet at the time of its appearance (1888), and for long after, his work was far the best available for English students. In many respects it is so still.

A few years before the appearance of the *Speaker's Commentary*, in 1881, Mr. Deane had published his elaborate edition of the Old Latin, the Greek Text, and the Authorised Version. To this work, with its full citations from the Fathers and its commonsense way of dealing with difficulties, the editor must acknowledge his great indebtedness. Mr. Deane's estimate of Philo's philosophy, in his Introduction, is severe; but no one who has had to read through the hazy and often contradictory lucubrations of the old Alexandrian will deny that it is to some extent deserved. On the other hand, he speaks too slightly of Bissell's American edition of the Apocrypha, which certainly contains some remarkable interpretations,² but of which the greatest fault is certainly not that it 'seems to be chiefly a compilation from

¹ A single instance may suffice. Grimm on Wisdom 14⁵ quoted the famous 'Illi robur et aes triplex' as from the *second* ode of Horace, Book I. (the equally famous 'Jam satis terris'). Farrar copies the error! As to the second charge: he cites Noack (Introd., 413 n.) as saying that 'Apollon wrote (Wisdom) with the help of St. Paul.' Now Noack's point is to prove the antagonism between Apollon and St. Paul. For other instances see the notes.

Siegfried in *Hast. D. B.*, iv. 931a, cites the works of Farrar and Deane as 'recent English translations.' Both adopt the Authorised Version as their text.

² *E.g.* 15¹⁸.

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German sources.' Dr. Bissell's 'Introductions' are often excellent.

Quite recently there has appeared a small edition of the Book of Wisdom, with Introduction and Notes by Mr. J. A. F. Gregg. Nominally part of the Cambridge Series 'for Schools and Colleges,' this little book really embodies, especially in the Introduction, some of the most valuable results of modern criticism. The notes are excellent in respect of exegesis, but from the necessary limitations imposed on such a work do not deal with many questions which are here discussed.

The edition of 'Wisdom' by the late Father Cornely (Paris, 1910), revised by Zorell, appeared just in time to be utilised by the present editor. It contains undoubtedly the best commentary which has yet been published. The writer is distinguished both for his lucidity of thought and the candour of his statements. He is by no means wedded, like so many of his predecessors, to the Latin version (cf. his notes on 17⁴, 18¹), and he does not hesitate to adopt the opinions of 'A Catholicis' when they appear the better, citing the English version at times with approval. His knowledge of the early commentators is superior even to that of Grimm.

He has, however, his limitations. Apart from the onerous task, imposed on all members of his church, of defending the canonicity of the book, and to that end explaining away the blunders of Pseudo-Solomon, he exhibits certain idiosyncrasies. He holds to the idea that the picture of the persecuted Righteous Man in chap. 2 refers distinctly to the suffering Christ, and he refuses to acknowledge that the 'Wisdom' of the first nine chapters is tacitly forgotten in the last ten. He even

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insists, in spite of the strongest internal evidence, that the person addressed in chaps. 11-12 is not God but Wisdom, though he acknowledges that such Wisdom is there and thereafter treated merely as an attribute of God. On the other hand, he brushes aside without hesitation the time-honoured efforts to extract from the book authority for modern Roman doctrines. See his note on 'refrigerium' in 4⁷. Lastly, we may note that he has little or no acquaintance with the Rabbinic legends and ideas by which so many passages of 'Wisdom' can be elucidated.

Within the last thirty years the recognition of the arbitrary nature of the Jewish canon of Scripture, and the awakened interest in the documents which form the 'bridge' between Old and New Testament doctrine, have produced a number of works of which the result at least should be presented to the student of 'Wisdom.' Some writers, as Bois, Bertholet, André, Grafe, Siegfried (in his all too brief Commentary appended to his translation in Kautzsch's *Apokryphen*), and Zenner, deal directly with the text of the book; while among collateral works those of Edmund Pfeleiderer, Schwally, Charles, Bousset, Margoliouth, Weber, Lincke, Deissmann, Drummond, and others furnish invaluable side-lights. To these should be added numerous articles in Hastings' *Dictionary*, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and in the new edition of Herzog's *Real-Encyclopædie*. The contribution of Mr. F. C. Porter to our knowledge of 'Wisdom's' psychology is dealt with here in a separate Additional Note.

Nor should it be forgotten that within the period mentioned many monumental works of criticism, for the knowledge of which English scholars were once condemned to wait for a translation often inadequate and sometimes

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misleading, have, owing to the increasing knowledge of German in this country, been rendered accessible to multitudes of Biblical students. Gfrörer, Grätz, Langen, Bruch, Budde, Duhm, can now be read in their mother-tongue, and the advantage to English theological knowledge has been incalculable, from the side both of constructive and destructive criticism.

From the Revised Version little or no assistance has been derived. It is perhaps the least successful of the translations of the Apocrypha undertaken by the revisers. It is diffuse without being explanatory; and it includes some of the worst faults which made the New Testament revision fail, *e.g.* the attempt to represent the same Greek word by the same English word in whatever sense it occurs. In the case of the author of Wisdom, who, with a vocabulary at once limited and peculiar, had to make the same Greek word serve as the equivalent for many ideas, this is especially unhappy. The best renderings will generally be found, not in the text, but in the margin of the Revised Version.¹

On two points the editor has ventured to differ from his predecessors: on one, from most; on the other, from practically all. He cannot accept the assumption that the Book of Wisdom is a homogeneous whole, written by the same pen, at the same time, and with the same purpose. Secondly, a careful study of the text has convinced him that the author did not really know Greek. For both these views he trusts that he has submitted sufficient grounds. The establishment of the

¹ For an instance of something like absolute mistranslation see 15⁶, where the meaning of *ἔρχεται εἰς* seems to be completely misunderstood.

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second would at all events clear away a mass of difficulties from the interpretation of 'Wisdom.'¹

The text adopted for translation is Swete's, but with occasional corrections from Fritzsche, chiefly on the ground of the closer correspondence of the latter with the ancient versions. These the editor has examined and utilised to the best of his ability, and in particular he has used throughout the Hexaplar version of the Syriac, which has been greatly neglected, as reputed to be a mere slavish version of the Septuagint text. But which text? The whole importance of the version depends upon that.

Quotations, where it seemed that they really tended to elucidation, have been given in full, even at the risk of considerably increasing the volume of the book. It is unfair to expect the ordinary student to spend time over the consultation of every authority quoted; it is still more disappointing for him to look out a reference with pains and trouble, and to find that the merest verbal

¹ Dr. J. H. Moulton, in his admirable 'Prolegomena,' writes as follows of the New Testament authors: 'There is not the slightest presumption against the use of Greek in writings purporting to emanate from the circle of the first believers. They would write as men who had used the language from boyhood, not as foreigners painfully expressing themselves in an imperfectly known idiom. . . . It does not appear that any of them used Greek as we may sometimes find cultivated foreigners using English, obviously translating out of their own language as they go along.' This is no doubt absolutely true with regard to the New Testament authors: they wrote the *κοινή*; but Pseudo-Solomon does not write the *κοινή*. He writes classical Greek exactly as Dr. Moulton's cultivated foreigner would write English—with a scanty vocabulary and a tendency to old-fashioned forms of expression. It is much to be desired that some critic of Dr. Moulton's capacity and knowledge would turn his attention to the Greek of 'Wisdom.'

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correspondence is contained in the passage cited. The references to Philo, it may be remarked, are given, in accordance with modern usage, to the sections of the various books and not, as in the old cumbrous system, to the volumes and pages of Mangey's edition.

A. T. S. GOODRICK.

WINTERBOURNE RECTORY,

October 1912.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Most of the abbreviations used in this work explain themselves the following, which occur only occasionally, may be noticed :—

J. Q. R. = *Jewish Quarterly Review*.

J. R. A. S. = *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*.

Bousset, *Rel. des Jud.* = *Religion des Judentums im Neutestamentlichen Zeitalter*, Berlin, 1903.

Schürer, *H. J. P.* = *History of the Jewish People*, English translation, vol. iii., Edinburgh, 1886.

Bois, *Essai* = *Essai sur les origines de la Philosophie Judéo-alexandrine*, Toulouse, 1890.

The following are common to the volumes of this series :—

Ⲛ = the Hebrew text.

Ⲙ, Ⲙ^A, Ⲙ^N, etc. = the various Greek MSS. of the Old and New Testaments.

Ⲛ = the Old Latin Version.

Ⲛ^P = the Syriac Peshitto.

Ⲛ^h = the Syriac Hexaplar.

Ⲛ^{PAL} = (in this volume) the fragments of the Syriac Palestinian Version.

Ⲛ = Targum, Ⲛ^{JON}, Targum of Jonathan, Ⲛ^{ER}, the Jerusalem Targum.

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