

A SONG OF WISDOM

AN EXPERIMENT IN PARAPHRASE.

For the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas.

I CALLED her name,
From God she came,
I willed her at my mortal birth :
Wisdom is she
Who came to me,
But who shall understand her worth ?

I know that her
I did prefer
Before all kingdoms and all thrones,
Neither did I
Esteem so high
Riches or countless precious stones.

Silver and gold,
All treasures old
Compared to her are small as sand.
She at pleasure
Pours out treasure
Innumerable through her hand.

I loved, and love
Her now above
Health and beauty and wealth withal ;
Good things I sought
She with her brought,
Who was the mother of them all.

Blackfriars

I chose, instead
Of light, to wed
Her presence darkness never mars;
Nor can black doubt
Her light put out
That rules the order of the stars.

Being compared
With light, she fared
Before it and outshone the sun.
Light, unto dark
Must yield its spark
But she her radiance to none.

She, the brightness
Of all rightness,
Being one, she can do all things.
Ever sweetly,
She discreetly
Maketh the friends of God and kings.

Changing never,
Once for ever
Remaining in herself the same,
She makes anew
All good things true
And brings to holy ones her name.

I will not hide
Through guile or pride
But hasten to communicate
Her bounty which
Doth now enrich
My low but not unwise estate.

A Song of Wisdom

For God did give
Me as I live
To speak of wisdom as I would
Nor is He loth
To guide us both,
Director of the wise and good.

As I received,
So I conceived
Thoughts worthy of what wisdom taught;
Within His hand
We jointly stand
And He my skill of truth has wrought.

Wisdom is mine
That can divine
All hidden things and unforeseen :
She scans the prime
And end of time
And measures all that lies between.

My wisdom knows
How to dispose
The varied courses of the skies.
The seasons change
Within her range
Who knows what virtue in them lies.

No elements
With their contents,
No high diversities of race
Can now elude
The plenitude
Of her all vivifying grace.

Blackfriars

She knoweth then
The thought of men,
Where their subtle reason reaches;
With quick conceit
She, spirit sweet,
Every wise solution teaches.

Therefore I take
Her and will make
Her henceforth with me to abide,
Knowing that she
Will comfort me
In grief and cares, and be my bride.

And all my days
I shall have praise
Under the banner of her name :
Because of her
Men shall confer
Upon me an immortal fame.

Now her I crown
With faint renown
Who led me all the ways I trod.
Where dwelleth she,
This One in Three?—
She sitteth by the throne of God:

EDWIN ESSEX, O.P.

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