

all '—of the developments of man in the direction of letters. If so, then there is also amongst them a division of scriptural matter suggestive of our duty in regard to the golden aphorisms, the terse presentments of wit and wisdom, profitable in the conduct of life, which are to be found scattered up and down in the writings of all true sages.

The maxims and proverbs devised, collected, reduced to rhythmic order by Solomon, by Agur, by Lemuel,—why were these preserved and incorporated in the sacred code but to give the hint that it would be well for men in every successive generation as a perpetual element in the process of civilization, to gather with care similar conclusions of a practical wisdom wheresoever they shall be recognized?

As a proof that some such practice prevailed among the immediate depositaries of the original collections, we have the Ecclesiasticus of Joshua the son of Sirach, the Panaretus of the pseudo-Solomon, the Treatises of Philo, the Visions, Commands and Similitudes of Hermas, with other subsequent works abounding with gnomes and wise maxims, sedulously read and applied "for examples of life and instruction in manners."

§ 6. *Shakespeare Rich in Aphorisms, and those often Biblical in Tone.*

Now who is there who does not know, that in no field can the gleaner in this regard more quickly gather up a sheaf that shall yield grain worth the winnowing, than in the works of the great poet of England?

So akin in their tone and gravity are many of his sentences to Holy Writ, that very possibly some of them are sometimes quoted by us unconsciously as such. Akin indeed is his English everywhere to the English of the existing Translation, because he was the contemporary of those who executed that work, and he employed, just as they did, the common speech of the day, which, because it did its work at a stroke, seems to us now so telling.

Akin veritably are large numbers of his best dicta to the subject-matter of Holy Writ, for the reason that they are intentional reflections of it. Living in a community into which had freshly passed the divine words—the divine *logoi*, the absolute *rerum rationes*,—he, with all discerning men, recognized them and reproduced their substance. While akin again in another way, in their root and essence, to Holy Writ, are many more of the aphorisms which his spiritual insight enabled him to shape, inasmuch as they, like that, are in the strictest sense, of the truth; based deep down upon Truth's outspread universal rock. (Note VI.)

§ 7. *Caution Against Confounding the Sacred with the Secular Precepts of Wisdom.*

Here again, as before, it is right that I should declare, that in speaking thus, the desire is not to place the secondary literature of this or any other poet or sage, on a level with the primary literature, which has been developed among men; that primary literature is, as we have said, like all originals of things, divine. But I aim to vindicate human literature generally, but especially that of modern civilized man in its manifold and wonderful outgrowths, from the stigma of commonness and uncleanness—of antagonism to God.