

sary course of his life may impel him to bear or to believe, none shall disturb the serenity of his voluntary actions, nor diminish the reality of his chosen delights.

Ruskin, *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, II, 1

60 *Father Zossima*. The man who lies to himself and listens to his own lie comes to such a pass that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others. And having no respect he ceases to love, and in order to occupy and distract himself without love he gives way to passions and coarse pleasures, and sinks to bestiality in his vices, all

from continual lying to other men and to himself. The man who lies to himself can be more easily offended than anyone. You know it is sometimes very pleasant to take offence, isn't it? A man may know that nobody has insulted him, but that he has invented the insult for himself, has lied and exaggerated to make it picturesque, has caught at a word and made a mountain out of a molehill—he knows that himself, yet he will be the first to take offence, and will revel in his resentment till he feels great pleasure in it, and so pass to genuine vindictiveness.

Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*, Pt. I, II, 2

## 9.15 | *Wisdom and Folly*

Of all the qualities of mind or character that are called virtues, excellences, or perfections, wisdom is, perhaps, the one most universally admired, as it is also, perhaps, the one that is generally thought most difficult to achieve. Socrates is famous for his unwillingness to accept the oracle's judgment of himself as the wisest man in Greece, declaring that only God is wise and that men show some semblance of wisdom only if they realize how little they know. According to Socrates, the philosopher must not be thought of as a wise man, but rather as a lover of or seeker after wisdom.

Some of the quotations below define philosophical or speculative wisdom as the highest form of attainable knowledge, consisting in an understanding of first principles or ultimate causes. The greatest praise that has been given to philosophy is accorded to it by those who identify it with wisdom. For other quotations that express this view or quotations questioning it, the reader is re-

ferred to Section 17.1 on PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHERS.

Wisdom and folly are often thought of by the poets and the historians, as in books of the Old and the New Testament, not as consisting in profound knowledge and abysmal ignorance; rather the wise man is one who knows how to manage all the affairs of life well, while the fool stumbles and blunders and goes astray. This treatment of wisdom overlaps the discussion of prudence or practical wisdom, which the reader will find in Section 9.13. It also touches on the same fundamental question that is raised there—whether or not it is possible to be a wise man without being a man of good moral character.

The quotations below include not only the praise of wisdom, but also the praise of folly, especially the kinds of folly that, upon examination, emerge as wisdom in disguise. They give us examples of fools who speak wisely about matters concerning which pre-

tenders to wisdom fall into folly. They distinguish true wisdom from the counterfeit of wisdom that is exemplified in the cunning of

the Serpent. And they place the beginning of wisdom in wonder or in the fear of the Lord.

1 In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee.

And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.

And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?

And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.

And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

*I Kings* 3:5–13

2 The price of wisdom is above rubies.

*Job* 28:18

3 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

*Psalms* 111:10

4 A reproof entereth more into a wise man than an hundred stripes into a fool.

*Proverbs* 17:10

5 Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words.

*Proverbs* 23:9

6 Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

*Proverbs* 26:5

7 I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit.

For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

*Ecclesiastes* 1:17–18

8 I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness: and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all.

Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.

For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool forever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool.

*Ecclesiastes* 2:13–16

9 Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

*Ecclesiastes* 9:16

10 *Chorus.* Zeus, who guided men to think, who has laid it down that wisdom comes alone through suffering.

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 176

11 *Oceanos.* It is a profitable thing, if one is wise, to seem foolish.

Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 386

12 *Haemon.* A man, though wise, should never be ashamed of learning more, and must unbend his mind.

Sophocles, *Antigone*, 710

13 They amongst men who pretend to wisdom and expend deep thought on words do incur a serious charge of folly.

Euripides, *Medea*, 1225

14 *Theseus.* What fools men are! You work and work for nothing,

you teach ten thousand tasks to one another,  
invent, discover everything. One thing only  
you do not know: one thing you never hunt for—  
a way to teach fools wisdom.

Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 916

- 15 *Chorus*. A tongue without reins,  
defiance, un wisdom—  
their end is disaster.  
But the life of quiet good,  
the wisdom that accepts—  
these abide unshaken,  
preserving, sustaining  
the houses of men.  
Far in the air of heaven,  
the sons of heaven live.  
But they watch the lives of men.  
And what passes for wisdom is not;  
unwise are those who aspire,  
who outrage the limits of man.  
Briefly, we live. Briefly,  
then die. Wherefore, I say,  
he who hunts a glory, he who tracks  
some boundless, superhuman dream,  
may lose his harvest here and now  
and garner death. Such men are mad,  
their counsels evil.

Euripides, *Bacchae*, 387

- 16 *Socrates*. If you are wise, all men will be your  
friends and kindred, for you will be useful and  
good; but if you are not wise, neither father, nor  
mother, nor kindred; nor any one else, will be  
your friends.

Plato, *Lysis*, 210B

- 17 *Socrates*. God only is wise; and . . . the wisdom of  
men is worth little or nothing. . . . He . . . is the  
wisest, who, like Socrates, knows that his wisdom  
is in truth worth nothing.

Plato, *Apology*, 23A

- 18 *Socrates*. First among the virtues found in the State,  
wisdom comes into view, and in this I detect a  
certain peculiarity.

*Glaucon*. What is that?

The State which we have been describing is  
said to be wise as being good in counsel?

Very true.

And good counsel is clearly a kind of knowl-  
edge, for not by ignorance, but by knowledge, do  
men counsel well?

Clearly.

And the kinds of knowledge in a State are  
many and diverse?

Of course.

There is the knowledge of the carpenter; but is  
that the sort of knowledge which gives a city the  
title of wise and good in counsel?

Certainly not; that would only give a city the  
reputation of skill in carpentering.

Then a city is not to be called wise because  
possessing a knowledge which counsels for the best  
about wooden implements?

Certainly not.

Nor by reason of a knowledge which advises  
about brazen pots, I said, nor as possessing any  
other similar knowledge?

Not by reason of any of them, he said.

Nor yet by reason of knowledge which culti-  
vates the earth; that would give the city the name  
of agricultural?

Yes.

Well, I said, and is there any knowledge in our  
recently-founded State among any of the citizens  
which advises, not about any particular thing in  
the State, but about the whole, and considers how  
a State can best deal with itself and with other  
States?

There certainly is.

And what is this knowledge, and among whom  
is it found? I asked.

It is the knowledge of the guardians, he replied,  
and is found among those whom we were just now  
describing as perfect guardians.

And what is the name which the city derives  
from the possession of this sort of knowledge?

The name of good in counsel and truly wise.

And will there be in our city more of these true  
guardians or more smiths?

The smiths, he replied, will be far more numer-  
ous.

Will not the guardians be the smallest of all the  
classes who receive a name from the profession of  
some kind of knowledge?

Much the smallest.

And so by reason of the smallest part or class,  
and of the knowledge which resides in this presid-  
ing and ruling part of itself, the whole State, being  
thus constituted according to nature, will be wise;  
and this, which has the only knowledge worthy to  
be called wisdom, has been ordained by nature to  
be of all classes the least.

Plato, *Republic*, IV, 428A

- 19 *Socrates*. God is never in any way unrighteous—he  
is perfect righteousness; and he of us who is the  
most righteous is most like him. . . . To know this  
is true wisdom and virtue, and ignorance of this is  
manifest folly and vice. All other kinds of wisdom  
or cleverness, which seem only, such as the wis-  
dom of politicians, or the wisdom of the arts, are  
coarse and vulgar.

Plato, *Theaetetus*, 176A

- 20 *Socrates*. And of all the virtues, is not wisdom the  
one which the mass of mankind are always claim-  
ing, and which most arouses in them a spirit of  
contention and lying conceit of wisdom?

*Protarchus*. Certainly.

*Soc.* And may not all this be truly called an evil condition?

*Pro.* Very evil.

Plato, *Philebus*, 49A

- 21 All men suppose what is called Wisdom to deal with the first causes and the principles of things; so that . . . the man of experience is thought to be wiser than the possessors of any sense-perception whatever, the artist wiser than the men of experience, the master-worker than the mechanic, and the theoretical kinds of knowledge to be more of the nature of Wisdom than the productive. Clearly then Wisdom is knowledge about certain principles and causes.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 981<sup>b</sup>28

- 22 We must inquire of what kind are the causes and the principles, the knowledge of which is Wisdom. If one were to take the notions we have about the wise man, this might perhaps make the answer more evident. We suppose first, then, that the wise man knows all things, as far as possible, although he has not knowledge of each of them in detail; secondly, that he who can learn things that are difficult, and not easy for man to know, is wise (sense-perception is common to all, and therefore easy and no mark of Wisdom); again, that he who is more exact and more capable of teaching the causes is wiser, in every branch of knowledge; and that of the sciences, also, that which is desirable on its own account and for the sake of knowing it is more of the nature of Wisdom than that which is desirable on account of its results, and the superior science is more of the nature of Wisdom than the ancillary; for the wise man must not be ordered but must order, and he must not obey another, but the less wise must obey *him*.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 982<sup>a</sup>5

- 23 *Wisdom* (1) in the arts we ascribe to their most finished exponents, e.g. to Phidias as a sculptor and to Polyclitus as a maker of portrait-statues, and here we mean nothing by wisdom except excellence in art; but (2) we think that some people are wise in general, not in some particular field or in any other limited respect. . . . Therefore wisdom must plainly be the most finished of the forms of knowledge. It follows that the wise man must not only know what follows from the first principles, but must also possess truth about the first principles. Therefore wisdom must be intuitive reason combined with scientific knowledge—scientific knowledge of the highest objects which has received as it were its proper completion. Of the highest objects, we say; for it would be strange to think that the art of politics, or practical wisdom, is the best knowledge, since man is not the best thing in the world.

Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1141<sup>a</sup>9

- 24 It is evident . . . that philosophic wisdom and the

art of politics cannot be the same; for if the state of mind concerned with a man's own interests is to be called philosophic wisdom, there will be many philosophic wisdoms; there will not be one concerned with the good of all animals (any more than there is one art of medicine for all existing things), but a different philosophic wisdom about the good of each species.

But if the argument be that man is the best of the animals, this makes no difference; for there are other things much more divine in their nature even than man, e.g., most conspicuously, the bodies of which the heavens are framed. From what has been said it is plain, then, that philosophic wisdom is scientific knowledge, combined with intuitive reason, of the things that are highest by nature.

Aristotle, *Ethics*, 1141<sup>a</sup>28

- 25 Fools admire and like all things the more which they perceive to be concealed under involved language, and determine things to be true which can prettily tickle the ears and are varnished over with finely sounding phrase.

Lucretius, *Nature of Things*, I

- 26 Because law ought to reform vice and promote virtue, the guiding principles of life can be inferred from it. Wisdom is the mother of all good things, and philosophy has taken its name from the Greek expression that means "love of wisdom." Of all the gifts of the gods to the human race, philosophy is the richest, most bountiful, and most exalted. Besides all its other wisdom, philosophy has informed us that the most difficult thing in the world is to know ourselves. This adage is so decisive for us that credit for it is given not to some person, but to the god at Delphi. The man who knows himself will acknowledge that he has a divine spark within him. He will regard his own nature as a consecrated reflection of God. Therefore what he does and thinks will be worthy of this great gift of the gods. When he has examined and tried himself, he will understand how nobly equipped by nature he entered into life. He will realize how various are the ways for attaining wisdom. At first his mind contained only vague concepts, but these were later illuminated by the help of wisdom. He learns how to be a good man and consequently a happy man.

Cicero, *Laws*, I, 22

- 27 Think, while there's time, how soon Death's pyre may blaze;  
And some brief folly mix with prudent ways:  
At the fit hour 'tis sweet to unbend.

Horace, *Odes*, IV, 12

- 28 Only the wise man is content with what is his. All foolishness suffers the burden of dissatisfaction with itself.

Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, 9

- 29 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.  
For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.  
*I Corinthians 3:18-19*
- 30 For ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise.  
*II Corinthians 11:19*
- 31 [Cato] used to assert . . . that wise men profited more by fools, than fools by wise men; for that wise men avoided the faults of fools, but that fools would not imitate the good examples of wise men.  
*Plutarch, Marcus Cato*
- 32 All that comes to be, work of nature or of craft, some wisdom has made: everywhere a wisdom presides at a making.  
No doubt the wisdom of the artist may be the guide of the work; it is sufficient explanation of the wisdom exhibited in the arts; but the artist himself goes back, after all, to that wisdom in Nature which is embodied in himself; and this is not a wisdom built up of theorems but one totality, not a wisdom consisting of manifold detail co-ordinated into a unity but rather a unity working out into detail.  
*Plotinus, Fifth Ennead, VIII, 5*
- 33 Wisdom insinuates itself into holy souls, and makes them the friends of God and His prophets, and noiselessly informs them of His works.  
*Augustine, City of God, XI, 4*
- 34 We were ensnared by the wisdom of the serpent: we are set free by the foolishness of God. Moreover, just as the former was called wisdom, but was in reality the folly of those who despised God, so the latter is called foolishness, but is true wisdom in those who overcome the devil.  
*Augustine, Christian Doctrine, I, 14*
- 35 If wisdom in the knowledge of the created world is lovely, how lovely is the wisdom which has created all things from nothing!  
*Anselm of Canterbury, Proslogium, XXIV*
- 36 Whatever is divided and multiplied in creatures exists in God simply and unitedly. Now man has different kinds of knowledge, according to the different objects of His knowledge. He has *intelligence* as regards the knowledge of principles; he has *science* as regards knowledge of conclusions; he has *wisdom*, according as he knows the highest cause; he has *counsel* or *prudence*, according as he knows what is to be done. But God knows all these by one simple act of knowledge . . . Hence the simple knowledge of God can be named by all these names; in such a way, however, that there must be removed from each of them, so far as they enter into the divine predication, everything that savors of imperfection; and everything that expresses perfection is to be retained in them. Hence it is said, *With Him is wisdom and strength, He hath counsel and understanding.*  
*Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I, 14, 1*
- 37 Wisdom is a kind of science in so far as it has that which is common to all the sciences, namely, to demonstrate conclusions from principles. But since it has something proper to itself above the other sciences, in so far, that is, as it judges of them all, not only as to their conclusions, but also as to their first principles, therefore it is a more perfect virtue than science.  
*Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I-II, 57, 2*
- 38 Since the word knowledge implies certitude of judgment . . . if this certitude of the judgment is derived from the highest cause, the knowledge has a special name, which is wisdom. For a wise man in any branch of knowledge is one who knows the highest cause of that kind of knowledge, and is able to judge of all matters by that cause; and a wise man absolutely, is one who knows the cause which is absolutely highest, namely God. Hence the knowledge of Divine things is called wisdom, while the knowledge of human things is called knowledge, this being the common name denoting certitude of judgment, and appropriated to the judgment which is formed through second causes. Accordingly, if we take knowledge in this way, it is a distinct gift from the gift of wisdom, so that the gift of knowledge is only about human or created things.  
*Aquinas, Summa Theologica, II-II, 9, 2*
- 39 Since wisdom is the knowledge of Divine things . . . it is considered by us in one way, and in another way by philosophers. For, seeing that our life is ordered to the enjoyment of God, and is directed to this according to a participation of the Divine Nature, conferred on us through grace, wisdom, as we look at it, is considered not only as making us know God, as it is with the philosophers, but also as directing human conduct; since this is directed not only by the human law, but also by the Divine law. . . .  
Accordingly the beginning of wisdom as to its essence consists in the first principles of wisdom, which are the articles of faith, and in this sense faith is said to be the beginning of wisdom. But as regards the effect, the beginning of wisdom is the point where wisdom begins to work, and in this way fear is the beginning of wisdom, yet servile fear in one way, and filial fear, in another. For servile fear is like a principle disposing a man to wisdom from without, in so far as he refrains from sin through fear of punishment, and is thus fashioned for the effect of wisdom. . . . On the other hand, chaste or filial fear is the beginning of wis-

dom, as being the first effect of wisdom. For since the regulation of human conduct by the Divine law belongs to wisdom, in order to make a beginning, man must first of all fear God and submit himself to Him; thus the result will be that in all things he will be ruled by God.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 19, 7

- 40 Wisdom denotes a certain rectitude of judgment according to the Eternal Law. Now rectitude of judgment is twofold: first, on account of perfect use of reason, secondly, on account of a certain connaturality with the matter about which one has to judge in a given instance. Thus, about matters of chastity, a man after inquiring with his reason forms a right judgment if he has learnt the science of morals, while he who has the habit of chastity judges rightly of such matters by a kind of connaturality.

Accordingly it pertains to the wisdom that is an intellectual virtue to pronounce right judgment about Divine things after reason has made its inquiry, but it pertains to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Ghost to judge rightly about them on account of a certain connaturality with them. . . . Now this sympathy or connaturality for Divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God: *He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit*. Consequently wisdom which is a gift, has its cause in the will, which cause is charity, but it has its essence in the intellect, whose act is to judge rightly.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 45, 2

- 41 Folly is fittingly opposed to wisdom. For *sapiens* (wise) as Isidore says "is so named from *sapor* (savour), because just as the taste is quick to distinguish between savours of meats, so is a wise man in discerning things and causes." Therefore it is manifest that folly is opposed to wisdom as its contrary, while fatuity is opposed to it as a pure negation, for the fatuous man lacks the sense of judgment; the fool has the sense, though dulled, and the wise man has the sense acute and penetrating.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 46, 1

- 42 It is part of folly that a man should have a distaste for God and His gifts.

Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 46, 3

- 43 [Pantagruel] took all things in good part, and interpreted every action to the best sense. He never vexed nor disquieted himself with the least pretence of dislike to anything, because he knew that he must have most grossly abandoned the divine mansion of reason, if he had permitted his mind to be never so little grieved, afflicted, or altered at any occasion whatsoever. For all the goods that the heaven covereth, and that the earth containeth, in all their dimensions of height, depth, breath, and length, are not of so much worth, as that we should for them disturb or disorder our

affections, trouble or perplex our senses or spirits.

Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, III, 2

- 44 *Pantagruel*. As he who narrowly takes heed to what concerns the dexterous management of his private affairs, domestic businesses, and those adoes which are confined within the strait-laced compass of one family,—who is attentive, vigilant, and active in the economic rule of his own house,—whose frugal spirit never strays from home,—who loseth no occasion whereby he may purchase to himself more riches, and build up new heaps of treasure on his former wealth,—and who knows warily how to prevent the inconveniences of poverty, is called a worldly wise man, though perhaps in the second judgment of the intelligences which are above, he be esteemed a fool,—so, on the contrary is he most like, even in the thoughts of celestial spirits, to be not only sage, but to presage events to come by divine inspiration, who laying quite aside those cares which are conducive to his body, or his fortunes, and, as it were departing from himself, rids all his senses of terrene affections, and clears his fancies of those plodding studies which harbour in the minds of thriving men. All which neglects of sub-lunary things are vulgarly imputed folly.

Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, III, 37

- 45 It seems to me that all peculiar and out-of-the-way fashions come rather from folly and ambitious affectation than from true reason, and that the wise man should withdraw his soul within, out of the crowd, and keep it in freedom and power to judge things freely; but as for externals, he should wholly follow the accepted fashions and forms. Society in general can do without our thoughts; but the rest—our actions, our work, our fortunes, and our very life—we must lend and abandon to its service and to the common opinions, just as the great and good Socrates refused to save his life by disobedience to the magistrate, even to a very unjust and very iniquitous magistrate. For it is the rule of rules, and the universal law of laws, that each man should observe those of the place he is in.

Montaigne, *Essays*, I, 23, Of Custom

- 46 Stupidity and wisdom meet at the same point of feeling and of resolving to endure human accidents. The wise curb and control the evil; the others are not aware of it. The latter are, so to speak, on this side of accidents, the former beyond them; for the wise man, after having well weighed and considered their qualities and measured and judged them for what they are, springs above them by the power of a vigorous courage. He disdains them and tramples them underfoot, having a strong and solid soul, against which the arrows of fortune, when they come to strike, must necessarily bounce off and be blunted, meeting a body

on which they can make no impression. The ordinary and middle condition of men lodges between these two extremes; which is that of those who perceive evils, feel them, and cannot endure them.

Montaigne, *Essays*, I, 54, Of Vain Subtleties

- 47 What does truth preach to us, when she exhorts us to flee worldly philosophy, when she so often inculcates in us that our wisdom is but folly before God; that of all vanities the vainest is man; that the man who is presumptuous of his knowledge does not yet know what knowledge is; and that man, who is nothing, if he thinks he is something, seduces and deceives himself? These statements of the Holy Spirit express so clearly and so vividly what I wish to maintain, that no other proof would be needed against men who would surrender with all submission and obedience to its authority. But these men insist on being whipped to their own cost and will not allow us to combat their reason except by itself.  
Montaigne, *Essays*, II, 12, Apology for Raymond Sebond
- 48 The wisest man that ever was, when they asked him what he knew, answered that he knew this much, that he knew nothing. He was verifying what they say, that the greatest part of what we know is the least of those parts that we do not know; that is to say that the very thing we think we know is a part, and a very small part, of our ignorance.  
Montaigne, *Essays*, II, 12, Apology for Raymond Sebond
- 49 Anyone who has once been very foolish will never at any other time be very wise.  
Montaigne, *Essays*, III, 6, Of Coaches
- 50 *Gratiano*. There are a sort of men whose visages Do cream and mantle like a standing pond, And do a wilful stillness entertain, With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit, As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle, And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!" O my Antonio, I do know of these That therefore only are reputed wise For saying nothing, when, I am very sure, If they should speak, would almost damn those ears Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.  
Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, I, i, 88
- 51 *Portia*. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces.  
Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, I, ii, 13
- 52 *Dogberry*. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns and everything handsome about him.  
Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, IV, ii, 82
- 53 *Celia*. Always the dulness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits.  
Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, I, ii, 58
- 54 *Jaques*. O noble fool!  
A worthy fool! Motley's the only wear.  
Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II, vii, 33
- 55 *Jaques*. Invest me in my motley; give me leave To speak my mind, and I will through and through  
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,  
If they will patiently receive my medicine.  
Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II, vii, 58
- 56 *Touchstone*. The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool.  
Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, V, i, 34
- 57 *Viola*. This fellow is wise enough to play the fool; And to do that well craves a kind of wit.  
Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, III, i, 66
- 58 *Lear*. Dost thou call me fool, boy?  
*Fool*. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.  
*Kent*. This is not altogether fool, my Lord.  
Shakespeare, *Lear*, I, iv, 162
- 59 *Fool*. Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy Fool to lie. I would fain learn to lie.  
*Lear*. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.  
*Fool*. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are. They'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a Fool; and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' the middle.  
Shakespeare, *Lear*, I, iv, 195
- 60 *Fool*. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.  
*Lear*. How's that?  
*Fool*. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.  
Shakespeare, *Lear*, I, v, 44
- 61 *Kent*. Why, fool?  
*Fool*. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach

thee there's no labouring i' the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again. I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

Shakespeare, *Lear*, II, iv, 67

- 62 *Fool*. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Shakespeare, *Lear*, III, vi, 19

- 63 They that have power to hurt and will do none,  
That do not do the thing they most do show,  
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,  
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow,  
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces  
And husband nature's riches from expense;  
They are the lords and owners of their faces,  
Others but stewards of their excellence.

Shakespeare, *Sonnet XCIV*

- 64 Oh! Sir [Batchelor], reply'd Don Antonio, what have you to answer for, in robbing the World of the most diverting Folly, that ever was expos'd among Mankind?

Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, II, 65

- 65 Silence is the virtue of a fool.

Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*,  
Bk. VI, III, 31

- 66 There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise; and therefore those faculties by which the foolish part of men's minds is taken are most potent.

Bacon, *Of Boldness*

- 67 The folly of one man is the fortune of another. For no man prospers so suddenly as by others' errors.

Bacon, *Of Fortune*

- 68 The sciences taken all together are identical with human wisdom.

Descartes, *Rules for Direction  
of the Mind*, I

- 69 I cannot justify that contemptible Proverb, *That fools only are Fortunate*; or that insolent Paradox, *That a wise man is out of the reach of Fortune*. . . 'Tis, I confess, the common fate of men of singular gifts of mind to be destitute of those of Fortune, which doth not any way deject the Spirit of wiser judgments, who thoroughly understand the justice of this proceeding; and being enrich'd with higher donatives, cast a more careless eye on these vulgar

parts of felicity.

Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, I, 18

- 70 Let Providence provide for Fools: 'tis not partiality, but equity in God, who deals with us but as our natural Parents; those that are able of Body and Mind, he leaves to their deserts; to those of weaker merits he imparts a larger portion, and pieces out the defect of one, by the access of the other.

Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, I, 18

- 71 The world is a good judge of things, for it is in natural ignorance, which is man's true state. The sciences have two extremes which meet. The first is the pure natural ignorance in which all men find themselves at birth. The other extreme is that reached by great intellects, who, having run through all that men can know, find they know nothing, and come back again to that same ignorance from which they set out; but this is a learned ignorance which is conscious of itself. Those between the two, who have departed from natural ignorance and not been able to reach the other, have some smattering of this vain knowledge and pretend to be wise. These trouble the world and are bad judges of everything. The people and the wise constitute the world; these despise it, and are despised. They judge badly of everything, and the world judges rightly of them.

Pascal, *Pensées*, V, 327

- 72 *Adam*. Apte the Mind or Fancie is to roave Uncheckt, and of her roaving is no end;  
Till warn'd, or by experience taught, she learn  
That not to know at large of things remote  
From use, obscure and suttle, but to know  
That which before us lies in daily life,  
Is the prime Wisdom, what is more, is fume,  
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence.

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VIII, 188

- 73 *Samson*. What is strength without a double share  
Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burdensom,  
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
By weakest suttleties, not made to rule,  
But to subserve where wisdom bears command.

Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 53

- 74 *God*. He who receives  
Light from above, from the fountain of light,  
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;  
But these are false, or little else but dreams,  
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.  
The first and wisest of them all profess'd  
To know this only, that he nothing knew;  
The next to fabling fell and smooth conceits,  
A third sort doubted all things, though plain  
sence;  
Others in vertue plac'd felicity,  
But vertue joyn'd with riches and long life,

- In corporal pleasure he, and careless ease,  
The Stoic last in Philosophic pride,  
By him call'd vertue; and his vertuous man,  
Wise, perfect in himself, and all possessing  
Equal to God, oft shames not to prefer,  
As fearing God nor man, contemning all  
Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and life,  
Which when he lists, he leaves, or boasts he can,  
For all his tedious talk is but vain boast,  
Or subtle shifts conviction to evade.  
Alas what can they teach, and not mislead;  
Ignorant of themselves, of God much more,  
And how the world began, and how man fell  
Degraded by himself, on grace depending?  
Much of the Soul they talk, but all awrie,  
And in themselves seek vertue, and to themselves  
All glory arrogate, to God give none,  
Rather accuse him under usual names,  
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite  
Of mortal things. Who therefore seeks in these  
True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion  
Far worse, her false resemblance only meets,  
An empty cloud.  
Milton, *Paradise Regained*, IV, 288
- 75 No God and no human being, except an envious one, is delighted by my impotence or my trouble, or esteems as any virtue in us tears, sighs, fears, and other things of this kind, which are signs of mental impotence; on the contrary, the greater the joy with which we are affected, the greater the perfection to which we pass thereby, that is to say, the more do we necessarily partake of the divine nature. To make use of things, therefore, and to delight in them as much as possible (provided we do not disgust ourselves with them, which is not delighting in them), is the part of a wise man. It is the part of a wise man, I say, to refresh and invigorate himself with moderate and pleasant eating and drinking, with sweet scents and the beauty of green plants, with ornament, with music, with sports, with the theatre, and with all things of this kind which one man can enjoy without hurting another. For the human body is composed of a great number of parts of diverse nature, which constantly need new and varied nourishment, in order that the whole of the body may be equally fit for everything which can follow from its nature, and consequently that the mind may be equally fit to understand many things at once. This mode of living best of all agrees both with our principles and with common practice; therefore this mode of living is the best of all, and is to be universally commended.  
Spinoza, *Ethics*, IV, Prop. 45, Schol.
- 76 The ignorant man is not only agitated by external causes in many ways, and never enjoys true peace of soul, but lives also ignorant, as it were, both of God and of things, and as soon as he ceases to suffer ceases also to be. On the other hand, the wise man, in so far as he is considered as such, is scarcely ever moved in his mind, but, being conscious by a certain eternal necessity of himself, of God, and of things, never ceases to be, and always enjoys true peace of soul. If the way which, as I have shown, leads hither seem very difficult, it can nevertheless be found. It must indeed be difficult since it is so seldom discovered.  
Spinoza, *Ethics*, V, Prop. 42, Schol.
- 77 The latter Part of a wise man's Life is taken up in curing the Follies, Prejudices, and false Opinions he had contracted in the former.  
Swift, *Thoughts on Various Subjects*
- 78 The learn'd is happy nature to explore,  
The fool is happy that he knows no more.  
Pope, *Essay on Man*, Epistle II, 263
- 79 No place so sacred from such fops is barred,  
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's churchyard:  
Nay, fly to Altars; there they'll talk you dead:  
For Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread.  
Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,  
It still looks home, and short excursions makes;  
But rattling nonsense in full volleys breaks,  
And never shocked, and never turned aside,  
Bursts out, resistless, with a thund'ring tide.  
Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, III, 622
- 80 [Johnson's] superiority over other learned men consisted chiefly in what may be called the art of thinking, the art of using his mind; a certain continual power of seizing the useful substance of all that he knew, and exhibiting it in a clear and forcible manner; so that knowledge, which we often see to be no better than lumber in men of dull understanding, was, in him, true, evident, and actual wisdom.  
Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (1784)
- 81 The greybeard, old Wisdom, may boast of his treasures,—  
Give me with gay Folly to live;  
I grant him calm-blooded, time-settled pleasures,  
But Folly has raptures to give.  
Burns, *Written on a Window of the "Globe Tavern," Dumfries*
- 82 The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock; but of wisdom, no clock can measure.  
Blake, *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 7
- 83 If the fool would persist in his folly he would become wise.  
Blake, *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 7
- 84 *Faust*. Through the world I have but flown.  
Whatever I craved, I seized it by the hair,  
Whatever sufficed not, I let fare.

Whatever escaped, I let it go.  
 I've but desired and but achieved, each hour,  
 And then again have wished, and so with power  
 Stormed through my life; at first with power and  
 greatness;  
 But now life moves with cautious, wise sedateness.  
 Well do I know the sphere of earth and men.  
 The view beyond is barred to mortal ken;  
 A fool! who thither turns his blinking eyes  
 And dreams he'll find his like above the skies.  
 Let him stand fast and look around on earth;  
 Not mute is this world to a man of worth.  
 Why need he range through all eternity?  
 Here he can seize all that he knows to be.  
 Thus let him wander down his earthly day;  
 When spirits spook, let him pursue his way;  
 Let him find pain and bliss as on he stride,  
 He! every moment still unsatisfied.

Goethe, *Faust*, II, 5, 11433

- 85 *Faust*. Yes, to this thought I hold unswerving,  
 To wisdom's final fruit, profoundly true:  
 Of freedom and of life he only is deserving  
 Who every day must conquer them anew.  
 Thus here, by danger girt, the active day  
 Of childhood, manhood, age will pass away.  
 Aye! such a throng I fain would see,  
 Stand on free soil among a people free.  
 Then might I say, that moment seeing:  
 "Ah, linger on, thou art so fair!"  
 The traces of my earthly being  
 Can perish not in æons—they are there!  
 That lofty moment I now feel in this:  
 I now enjoy the highest moment's bliss.  
 Goethe, *Faust*, II, 5, 11573
- 86 Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop  
 Than when we soar.  
 Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, III, 231
- 87 Wisdom attempts nothing enormous and dispro-  
 portioned to its powers, nothing which it cannot  
 perform or nearly perform.  
 Emerson, *The Conservative*
- 88 The wise through excess of wisdom is made a fool.  
 Emerson, *Experience*
- 89 It is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate  
 things.  
 Thoreau, *Walden: Economy*
- 90 Wisdom is of the soul, is not susceptible of proof, is  
 its own proof,

Applies to all stages and objects and qualities and  
 is content,  
 Is the certainty of the reality and immortality of  
 things, and the excellence of things;  
 Something there is in the float of the sight of  
 things that provokes it out of the soul.

Whitman, *Song of the Open Road*, VI

- 91 The only medicine for suffering, crime, and all  
 the other woes of mankind, is wisdom. Teach a  
 man to read and write, and you have put into his  
 hands the great keys of the wisdom box. But it is  
 quite another matter whether he ever opens the  
 box or not.  
 T. H. Huxley, *A Liberal Education*
- 92 There is a limit to human knowledge, and both  
 sacred and profane writers witness that overwis-  
 dom is folly.  
 Newman, *Essay on the Development  
 of Christian Doctrine*, Pt. II, V, 6
- 93 *Pierre*. All we can know is that we know nothing.  
 And that's the height of human wisdom.  
 Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, V, 1
- 94 *The Mason*. The highest wisdom is not founded on  
 reason alone, not on those worldly sciences of  
 physics, history, chemistry, and the like, into  
 which intellectual knowledge is divided. The  
 highest wisdom is one. The highest wisdom has  
 but one science—the science of the whole—the  
 science explaining the whole creation and man's  
 place in it. To receive that science it is necessary  
 to purify and renew one's inner self, and so before  
 one can know, it is necessary to believe and to  
 perfect one's self. And to attain this end, we have  
 the light called conscience that God has implant-  
 ed in our souls.  
 Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, V, 2
- 95 The king says. . . . Hain't we got all the fools in  
 town on our side? And ain't that a big enough  
 majority in any town?  
 Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*, XXVI
- 96 Behold, the fool saith, 'Put not all thine eggs in  
 the one basket'—which is but a manner of saying,  
 'Scatter your money and your attention;' but the  
 wise man saith, 'Put all your eggs in the one bas-  
 ket and—WATCH THAT BASKET.'  
 Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson's  
 Calendar*, XV