

¹يُوجَدُ شَرٌّ قَدْ رَأَيْتُهُ تَحْتَ الشَّمْسِ وَهُوَ كَثِيرٌ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ،² رَجُلٌ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ غِنًى وَمَالًا وَكَرَامَةً، وَلَيْسَ لِنَفْسِهِ عَوْرٌ مِنْ كُلِّ مَا يَشْتَهُي، وَلَمْ يُعْطِهِ اللَّهُ اسْتِطَاعَةً عَلَى أَنْ يَأْكُلَ مِنْهُ، بَلْ يَأْكُلُهُ إِنْسَانٌ غَرِيبٌ. هَذَا بَاطِلٌ وَمُصِيبَةٌ رَدِيئَةٌ هُوَ.³ إِنْ وَلَدَ إِنْسَانٌ مِئَةً، وَعَاشَ سِتِينَ كَثِيرَةً حَتَّى تَصِيرَ أَيَّامُ سِنِيهِ كَثِيرَةً، وَلَمْ تَسْبِعْ نَفْسُهُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ، وَلَيْسَ لَهُ أَيْضًا دَفْنٌ، قَافُولٌ، إِنْ السَّقَطُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ.⁴ لِأَنَّهُ فِي الْبَاطِلِ يَجِيءُ وَفِي الظَّلَامِ يَذْهَبُ، وَاسْمُهُ يُعْطَى بِالظَّلَامِ.⁵ وَأَيْضًا لَمْ يَرَ الشَّمْسَ وَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ. فَهَذَا لَهُ رَاحَةٌ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ ذَلِكَ.⁶ وَإِنْ عَاشَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مُضَاعَفَةً وَلَمْ يَرَ خَيْرًا، أَلَيْسَ إِلَى مَوْضِعٍ وَاحِدٍ يَذْهَبُ الْجَمِيعُ.⁷ كُلُّ تَعَبِ الْإِنْسَانِ لِقَمِهِ وَمَعَ ذَلِكَ قَالَتِ النَّفْسُ لَا تَمْلِكُ.⁸ لِأَنَّهُ مَاذَا يَبْقَى لِلْحَكِيمِ أَكْثَرَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِ. مَاذَا لِلْفَقِيرِ الْعَارِفِ السُّلُوكَ أَمَامَ الْأَحْيَاءِ.⁹ رُؤْيُ الْعُيُونِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ شَهْوَةِ النَّفْسِ. هَذَا أَيْضًا بَاطِلٌ وَقَبْضُ الرِّيحِ.¹⁰ الَّذِي كَانَ فَقَدَ دُعِيَ بِاسْمِ مَنْذُرٍ زَمَانٍ، وَهُوَ مَعْرُوفٌ أَنَّهُ إِنْسَانٌ، وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُخَاصِمَ مَنْ هُوَ أَقْوَى مِنْهُ.¹¹ لِأَنَّهُ تُوْجَدُ أُمُورٌ كَثِيرَةٌ تَزِيدُ الْبَاطِلَ. فَأَيُّ فَضْلٍ لِلْإِنْسَانِ.¹² لِأَنَّهُ مَنْ يَعْرِفُ مَا هُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلْإِنْسَانِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ مُدَّةَ أَيَّامِ حَيَاةِ بَاطِلِهِ الَّتِي يَقْصِيهَا كَالظِّلِّ. لِأَنَّهُ مَنْ يُخَيِّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ بِمَا يَكُونُ بَعْدَهُ تَحْتَ الشَّمْسِ.

¹There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men:²A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity, and it is an evil disease.³If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.⁴For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness.⁵Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing: this hath more rest than the other.⁶Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good: do not all go to one place?⁷All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.⁸For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?⁹Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit.¹⁰That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is man: neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he.¹¹Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better?¹²For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?