

(#1)

xiv. 385 Illumination of the intellect, together with charity inflaming the heart, constitute the gift of wisdom.

b. personified (almost always as feminine).

c. 888 ALFRED Boeth. iii. §1 ba com þær gan in to me heofendun Wisdom. c. 1000 Ag. Gosp. Matt. xi. 19 Wisdom ys gerithwisud fram heora bearnum. 1362 LANGL. P. Pl. A. IV. 87 He hab waget me a-mendes as wisdom him tauhte. 1535 COVERDALE Prov. xiii. 1 Doth not wysdomen crief doth not understandinge put forth hir voyce? 1597 HOOKER Eccl. Pol. v. viii. §1 To prescribe the order of doing . . . is a peculiar prerogative which Wisedome hath, as Queene or soueraigne commandresse ouer other vertues. 1611 Bible Transl. Pref. ¶4 Loue the Scriptures, and wisdome will loue thee. 1742 GRAY Adversity 25 Wisdom in sable garb array'd Immers'd in rapt'rous thought profound. 1784 COWPER Task vi. 97 Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much, Wisdom is humble that he knows no more. 1802 WORDSW. 'I grieved for Buonaparte' 9 Wisdom doth live with children round her knees. 1850 TENNYSON In Mem. cxiv. 22 For she [sc. Knowledge] is earthly of the mind, But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.

c. as one of the manifestations of the divine nature in Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor. i. 24, 30, etc.); hence used as a title of the second person of the Trinity (the Wisdom of the Father); also occas. applied to God or the Trinity.

c. 888 ALFRED Boeth. xli. §4 Se wisdom mæg us callunga ongan tan swylce swylce we sint . . . forþam se wisdom is God. a. 1175 Cott. Hom. 219 þurh his wisdom (se sunne) heo 3e-worhte alle þing. c. 1200 Vices & Virtues 25 De sune of 6e fader akened al swa his wisdom. a. 1225 Ancr. R. 26 Almihtig God, Feder, & Sune, & soðest Holl Gost, also 3e preo boð o God, & o mihte, o wisdom, & o luue. a. 1300 Cursor M. 9730. 1402 Jacke Upland in Pol. Poems (Rolls) 11. 36 Christ, that is the wisdome of God the Father. 1587 GOLDING De Mornay v. (1592) 53 We call him also the wisdome of the Father, yea, and tuen meere and simply wisdome. 1833 NEWMAN Ariens ii. iii. (1876) 160 It would appear that our Lord is called the Word or Wisdom in two respects; first, to denote His essential presence in the Father . . . secondly, His mediatorship. 1855 LYNCH Lett. to Scattered ii. (1872) 32 Wisdom is alive: it is not a thing or quality. It is God. It is God and Man, for it is Christ.

d. Contextually, usually predicative with following inf.: = a wise thing to do; also with a and pl., a piece of wisdom; a wise action or proceeding. (Opp. to FOLLY sb. 1 c.) arch.

1362 LANGL. P. Pl. A. VII. 201 Here nou . . . and holde hit for wisdam. c. 1400 HOCCLIVE Min. Poems xxiv. 215 Is it wysdam as þat it seemeth now, Were it on your fyngre continually? 1482 Cely Papers (Camden) 87 Hyt wylbe whydsom to be sewy of mo. 1593 SHAKS. 3 Hen. VI. iv. vii. 60 Till then, 'tis wisdome to conceale our meaning. a. 1628 F. GREVIL Sidney (1652) 2 Had I grounded my ends upon active Wisdomes of the present. 1764 PRIESTLEY Lect. Hist., Ess. Educ. (1788) p. xv. It is certainly our wisdom to contrive that the studies of youth should tend to fit them for the business of manhood. 1831 SCOTT Ct. Rob. xviii. It is wisdom to choose a better protector. 1884 HELEN JACKSON Ramona i. If she had ever said anything about herself, which she never did—one of her many wisdoms.

e. (a) pl. as attribute of a number of persons; hence, with possessive, as a title of dignity or respect, esp. for the members of a deliberative assembly; also jocularly or ironically. Similarly, without possessive, as in the best wisdoms = the wisest men.

1432 Rolls of Parlt. IV. 403/2 To the right wyse and discrete Commens of this present Parliament. . . Please hit unto youre worthy and noble wisdoms and discretions [etc.]. 1447-8 Shillingford's Lett. (Camden) 108 As hit appereth of record the whiche they remyte to your wysedomys. 1536 CROMWELL in Merriman Life & Lett. (1902) II. 2 As by your wysdomes ye shall thinke may best serue for the kinges highnes purpose. 1587 DENISON Desf. Ministers 60 It may please their wysdomes, who are to be iudged to consider. 1619 J. DENISON Heav. Banquet etc. 317. I will leaue that to their wysdomes who haue place of government. 1631 MARKHAM Country Contentm. i. xix. (ed. 4) 103 Many of the best wisdome of our Nation. 1794 WOLCOTT (P. Pindar) Ode to Tyrants Wks. 1812 III. 251 Even Folly . . . find on your Wisdoms cracks her jokes.

(b) Less commonly in sing. of a single person. 1447-8 Shillingford's Lett. (Camden) 42 Not likely by that mene to be ended lightly, as your wysedom knowyth well. 1598 HAKLUYTT Voy. Ep. Ded. ¶3 The chiefe motives which induced his princely wisdome hereunto. 1612 J. COTTA Disc. Dang. Pract. Phys. i. ix. 72 The parents . . . sent for a wisewoman, & her wisdome came vnto them. a. 1652 A. WILSON in Peck Desid. Curiosa (1735) II. xii. 24 The Maior's Wisdom said, hee knew not my Lord's Hand. 1831 SCOTT Ct. Rob. viii. Can your wisdom possibly entertain a wish to converse with me? f. Phr. in his (or its, etc.) wisdom: now usually ironic.

1852 QUEEN VICTORIA in Hansard CXXIII. 20 To enable the Industry of the Country to meet successfully that unrestricted Competition to which Parliament, in its Wisdom, has decided that it should be subjected. 1863 N. HAWTHORNE Our Old Home 307 Possibly his Lordship thought, in his wisdom, that the good feeling which was sure to be expressed by a company of well-bred Englishmen, at his august and far-famed dinner table, might have an appreciable influence on the grand result. 1930 W. FAULKNER As I Lay Dying 68 If you have no son, it's because the Lord has decreed otherwise in His wisdom. 1974 K. CLARK Another Part of Wood iv. 232 In the 1930's, when the country was at least ten times as rich as it is today, the Treasury 'in its wisdom' twice found it necessary to cut off our annual purchase grant altogether.

our a. Knowledge (esp. of a high or abstruse kind); enlightenment, learning, erudition; in early use often = philosophy, science. †Also, practical knowledge or understanding, expertness in an art. Now only Hist.

c. 950 Lindisf. Gosp. Luke xi. 52 Tulistis clauem scientie, que nomon cęgo wisdomes. 1382 WYCLIF 1 Cor. ii. 13 Not in tuyst wordis of mannis wysdom, but in doctryne of the spirit. c. 1386 CHAUCER ProL 575 The wisdom of an heepe of lerned men Ouf maistres hadde he mo than thries ten. 1460-70 Bk. Quinte Essence i. þe wysdom and þe science of his booke schuld . . . preserued. 1526 TINDALE Acts vii. 22 Moses was lerned in all maner of wisdom of the Egipcians. 1557 in Lodge Illustr. Brit. Hist. (1791) I. 276 The Queene's Maie, knowing the wysdome and skyll of John Brende, Esquier, in the leading and ordering of footemen. 1662 J. CHANDLER Van Helmont's Oriat. 163 This . . . was Zoosophie or the wisdom of keepinge living Creatures together. 1770 LANGHORNE Plutarch (1879) I. 1301/1 What was then called wisdom, which consisted in a knowledge of the arts of government, and the practical part of political prudence. 1875 LIGHTFOOT Comm. Coloss. 99 'Wisdom' in Gnostic teaching was the exclusive possession of the few.

b. pl. Kinds of learning, branches of knowledge. rare.

c. 888 ALFRED Boeth. vii. §3 Mine þeowas sindon wisdomas & craftas & soðe welan. a. 1300 Cursor M. 8482 Of all wisdoms [Solomon] had i-nogh. 1853 F. W. FABER All for Jesus (1854) 130 The Corinthians could not come near us in the variety of our wisdoms and our gifts.

c. In renderings of med. L. names of substances prepared or used by the alchemists, as lute of wisdom (see LUTE sb. 1), salt of wisdom = ALEMBROTH.

(Cf. PHILOSOPHER 4, 5 b, PHILOSOPHICAL 4.) 1460-70 [see LUTE sb. 1]. 1576 BAKER Geiner's Jewell of Health 37 The Lute of Wysewdom, which resisteth the fire marvelously. 1800 tr. Lagrange's Chem. II. 23 Alembroth, Salt of the Art, Salt of Wisdom.

3. a. Wise discourse or teaching; with a and pl., a wise saying or precept. Now rare or arch.

c. 1175 Lamb. Hom. 125 Imong þan muchela wisdoma þe ure drihten lerdre his apostles. c. 1205 LAY. 25628 Elic bi his wite wisdom seiden. c. 1250 Gen. & Ex. 462 On two tables of tyel and bras Wrot he þat wisdom. 1303 R. BRUNNE Handl. Synne 1379 Anoper wisdoma a clerk vsd tellep. c. 1400 LYDG. Chocle & Bird 274 Min. Poems (Percy Soc.) 189 To here a wisdom thyn eres been half deaf. 1493 [H. PARKER] Dives & Pauper (1496) ix. iv. 350/2, I shall teche the thre wysedomes whiche yf thou kepe them well they shall do the moche proufyte. 1531 ELYOT Gov. iii. xxv. In his fables the foxe, the hare, and the wolfe, though they neuer spoke, do teache many good wysedomes. 1860 SALA Badd. Peer. I. vii. 127 Listen then, to the wisdom of Pollybank.

b. In the titles of two books of the Apocrypha, viz. The Wisdom of Solomon (often abbrev. Wisdo-; or The Book of Wisdom), and The Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach (commonly called Ecclesiasticus). Cf. also Wisdom literature, etc. in 5.

1430-40 Wycliffite Bible Wisd. (heading) Heer gynneþ the prolog in the booc of wisdom. 1611 Bible (title) The Wisdome of Solomon. Ibid. (title) The Wisdome of Iesus the sonne of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus. 1875 PLUMPTRE in Expositor I. 336 Those [words] which are found in Philo and in the Epist. but not in Wisdom. 1912 E. C. SELWYN Oracle: N. T. iii. 78 The fact that Wisdom also contains an anticipation of one of the three Temptations of Christ.

†4. Sanity, 'reason'. (Cf. WISE a. 4.) Obs. rare. 1603 SHAKS. Meas. for M. iv. iv. 5 Pray heauen his wisdome be not tainted.

5. Comb. a. attrib., as wisdom-book, -lecture, etc.; Wisdom literature, a collective term for the biblical books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon, and Ecclesiasticus, and the Epistle of James; so Wisdom books, poetry, versification. (See also WISDOM TOOTH.) b. instrumental, objective, etc., as wisdom-bred, -giving, -seasoned, -seeming, -working adjs.

c. 1200 Trin. Coll. Hom. 187 Of þe strengþe þe ure drihten us to mægeþt specc. *wisdom boc and seib, Fortitudo simplicitatis domini. 1887 CHEYNE Job & Solomon 180 The Wisdom-books of the Old Testament proper. 1832 TENNYSON Enone 121 Power. . . *wisdom-bred And throned of wisdom. 1667 MILTON P. L. ix. 679 O Sacred, Wise, and *Wisdom-giving Plant, Mother of Science. a. 1644 QUARLES Sol. Recent. ch. xii. 9 Because his true repentant soul was wise. He read this *wisdom-lecture. 1887 CHEYNE Job & Solomon 180 The book now before us—the largest and most comprehensive in the *Wisdom-literature. 1809-10 COLERIDGE Friend (1818) III. 112 The title of sophist, . . . *wisdom-monger, in the same sense as we say, an iron-monger. 1895 R. G. MOULTON Proverbs 169 The metres of *Wisdom poetry. a. 1644 QUARLES Sol. Recent. Sol. xi. 1 Thy *wisdom-seasoned breast. 1826 E. INVENS. Babylon I. ii. 74 A *wisdom-seeming ignorance. 1816 SHAKS. Sunset 36 To make hard hearts Dissolve away in *wisdom-working grief.

Hence *wisdomful a., full of wisdom; †wisdomhood, wisdom; *wisdomless a., destitute of wisdom; †wisdomness, (a) contained wisdom, wise signification or implication; (b) affected or spurious wisdom; *wisdomship, (with possessive) as a title of (ironical) respect (cf. 1 e).

1845 Blackw. Mag. Feb. 156/2 Its wondrous *wisdomful speech. 138 WYCLIF Sel. Wks. III. 99 As Seynt Poul seip, In him þer alle tresoures of kunnyng and of *wisdomhund. 1608 MACHIN Dumb Knt. iv. 1. I am mad. . . all wit-tung. *wisdomlesse. 1878 Marprel. Epit. (1843) 21 It is a hard matter . . . to conceale all the *wisdomnes of this syllogisme. 1668 E. KEMP Reas. Use Ch. Prayers in Publick 14 So impertinent a piece of gravity, so unreasonable a piece of wisdomness. 1692 Vindication Pref. A. 2, Their cool *Wisdomships can be as Hot as their Neighbours in their own Concerns.

wisdom ('wɪzdəm). Forms: 1- wisdom; 3 (Orm.) wissdom, (wistom), 3-5 wysdom, wisdam, 3-7 wisedom, wisdome, 4 wisdame, (wijsdam), 4-6 wysdome, (Sc. wisdome), 4-7 wisedom, 5 wisedam, wysdam(e), wysedom, (wijsdom, wysedomme, wisedom, wysdome, whysdom), 5-6 wysedome, (6 wisdoume, -dum(e), wisz-, wyszome, 7 Sc. wosdome). [OE. wīsdōm = OFris., OS. wīsdōm, MDu. wījsdom, OHG., MHG. wīstum (G. weistum legal sentence, precedent), ON. wīsdóm (Sw., Da. wisdóm): see WISE a. and -DOM.] The quality or character of being wise, or something in which this is exhibited.

1. a. Capacity of judging rightly in matters relating to life and conduct; soundness of judgement in the choice of means and ends; sometimes, less strictly, sound sense, esp. in practical affairs: opp. to folly.

Beowulf 1959 Offa was . . . wide gearweod, wisdome heold ebel sinne. c. 1000 Inst. Polity ii. in Thorpe Laws II. 306 Þurh cynniges wīsdom folc wylþ gesellic, gesundful, & sigefæst. c. 1175 Lamb. Hom. 123 þer wit and þene wisdom þe ure drihten us sende. c. 1200 ORMIN 8974 Hire suno wex & þraf i wisdom & inn elde. a. 1225 Ancr. R. 6 He mai þe vitre riwe chaungen, efter wisdom. a. 1225 Leg. Kath. 485 Ichulle fardon þe wisdom of þeos wise worldmen. a. 1300 Cursor M. 8857 Godde ne had him sli wisdom Giuen, als he gaf salomon. 1340-70 Alex. & Dind. 102 3if god sente eury gome. . . Wordliche wīsdam & wītutliche. a. 1375 Cato 409 in Minor Poems fr. Vernon MS. 587 Forþure þi wille wip wisdom. c. 1400 26 Pol. Poems x. 21 At þe þre of wysdom, foly þou soujt. 1450-1530 Myrr. our Ladye i. 183 The mooste wyse wysdome of god. 1513 MORE Edz. V in Hall Chron., Edw. V (1548) 2b. Yf grace turne hym to wisdome. 1535 COVERDALE Prov. ix. 10 The feare of the Lorde is the begynnyng of wysdome. 1563 Homilies, Rogation Wk. iii. Rrrj. Thus wisdome can not be atteneid, but by the direction of the spirite of God, and therefore it is called spirittuall wisdome. 1594 SHAKS. Rich. III. iii. vii. 16 Your Discipline in Warre, Wisdome in Peace. 1597 HOOKER Eccl. Pol. v. lvi. §5 That which moutheth God to worke is goodnes, and that which ordereth his worke is wisdome. 1633 G. HERBERT Temple, Providence xvi. Each creature hath a wisdom for his good. 1640 WILKINS Disc. New Planet ix. 204 Wee allow every Watch-maker so much wisdom as not to put any motion in his Instrument, which is superfluous. a. 1708 BEVERIDGE Thes. Theol. (1711) III. 28 By wisdom, I mean that attribute in God, whereby He orders and manages whatsoever He takes in hand, by the best means, in the best manner and to the best end. 1784 COWPER Task vi. 88 Knowledge and Wisdom, far from being one, Have ofttimes no connexion. 1875 MANNING Mission Holy Ghost