

**THE PARADOX OF LIFE: OR,  
CHRISTIAN KOHELETH, A POEM.  
WITH A SHEAF OF SACRED  
SONNETS AND OTHER POEMS**

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The Paradox of Life: Or, Christian Koheleth, a Poem. With a Sheaf of Sacred Sonnets and Other Poems by James S. Blackwood

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**JAMES S. BLACKWOOD**

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CHRISTIAN KOHELETH.

A Poem.

WITH A SHEAF OF SACRED SONNETS  
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

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## THE PARADOX OF LIFE ;

OR,

CHRISTIAN KOHELETH.

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**T**HE subject proposed, in reply to a despondingly anxious young friend, perplexed by the book *Koheleth, or Ecclesiastes* of Solomon, the original author (as I believe, notwithstanding modern critics) of that profound treatise, whatever scribe may in any subsequent age have arranged Solomon's thoughts in the canon. The aphorism that *all is vanity*, has a true and appropriate sense in relation to the time and state of fallen man, but has also practical limits. It does not forbid the pursuit of happiness, nor prove happiness unattainable, nor infringe on the goodness or wisdom of God. It helps to regulate that pursuit, and direct to its attainment, in subjection to the Divine Will. It is proved true

in respect of the scientific infidels—Agnostics and Positivists; also of self-indulgent sensualists and debauchees, as well as of avaricious wealth worshippers, and the vulgar crowd of mere party politicians. Rising higher, it brands the loftiest and most successful ambition, instancing the Emperor Charles the Fifth as a conspicuous proof. The source of disappointment in all these cases traced to the fallen condition of man, who seeks happiness apart from God. But this being admitted, it is objected that the good and wise, and their pursuits and designs, are also subject to vanity. The answer is, that the revelation of the fall of man, of a future state, and of a condition of probation here for that state alone supplies the solution. Instance of a patient sufferer attaining happiness, present and prospective, in the most painful circumstances long endured—the story of Lucy a true one. Noble conduct of a British officer hunting in Chinese Tartary—an incident founded in fact. Allusion to the English lady nurses in the hospitals of the Crimean War, exhibiting the practical power of faith and virtue. A condemnation of war, but a justification of legitimate war as being sometimes necessary, and so the promoter of manly virtue is noted. The result of all is that Love and Faith can extract the