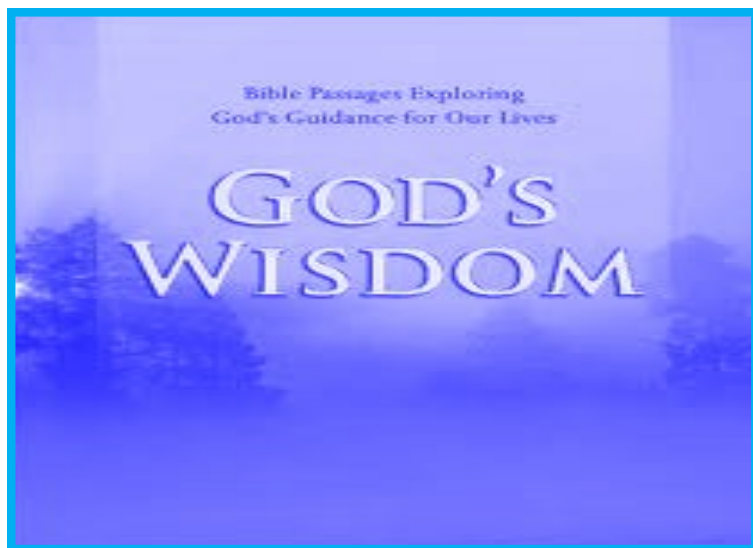


By the present attack through Christ and the Church against wicked infidels and heretics: by the brilliance of miracles, a hail storm of rebukes, a cleansing of troubles, a whirlwind of persecutions, robbery and destruction of possessions, a putting down of powers.

End of Wisdom 5



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THE BOOK OF WISDOM



CHAPTER 5

The Book of Wisdom never existed among the Hebrews. Its style has rather the fragrance of Greek eloquence. The Jews claim that it is a work of Philo; it is then said to be a work of Wisdom because in it the coming of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, and his passion are clearly expressed. This is the Prologue Jerome put before the Book of Wisdom; he shows firstly the origin of this book saying: 'The Book of Wisdom never existed among the Hebrews. Its style, that is, its language is so elegant that it 'has rather the fragrance of Greek eloquence', that is, its taste is more Greek than Hebrew. The Greeks are more eloquent and deeper in their statements than the Hebrews. So, since this book has a most elegant style with the deepest teachings, it is clear that it was written in Greek rather than in Hebrew. Secondly, Jerome names its author when he says: 'The Jews claim that it', namely, the Book of Wisdom 'is a work of Philo' as its compiler but that Solomon was the person who discovered it. While Philo was a Jew he was highly skilled in the Greek language. Jerome says of him in the book *De viris illustribus* that 'he was a Jew of Alexandria of the class of priests'. Thirdly, he gives the reason for the title when he says: 'it is then said to be a work of Wisdom because in it the coming of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, and his passion are clearly expressed'. The translation is based on the Douay Rheims version of the Bible.

**THE COMMENTARY ON THE CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF WISDOM
ARE THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SERAPHIC DOCTOR SAINT BONAVENTURE, OFM**

Chapter 5

Secondly, the state of the just is compared to the state of the unjust in the judgment under three headings

Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them. Here he compares the state of the just to the state of the unjust in the judgment. Firstly, he treats of the constant accusation against the just; secondly, of the forced confession of the reprobate: *These seeing it shall be troubled*; thirdly, the just retribution to both: *But the just shall live for evermore.*

One of the fifteen signs, according to Saint Jerome, will be that the sea will rise above the height of the mountains. *And the rivers*, namely, sweet waters, *shall run together in a terrible manner*, that is, strongly; Exodus 15:10: 'They sank as lead in the mighty waters'.

Or: *The water of the sea*, that is, infernal bitterness, *shall rage against them*, that is, shall hiss and boil as water does when hot iron is put in it; Isaiah 14:9: 'Hell below was in an uproar'. *And the rivers*, namely, of distress, *shall run together in a terrible manner*, because there will be sorrow there over lost goods, shame over evil committed, fear over present punishments.

(Verse 24). *A mighty wind shall stand up against them*, a strong wind, according to Exodus 15:10: 'Your wind blew and the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters', coming out from the caves of the earth, according to Psalm 134:7: 'He brings forth winds out of his stores'; also in Psalm 47:8: 'With a vehement wind you shall break in pieces the ships of Tarshish'; also Job 1:19: 'A violent wind came on a sudden from the side of the desert'. This is the force of the storms of which Psalm 148:8 speaks. *And as; as* is an expression of truth, not of a likeness; *a whirlwind*, that is, a force made up of contrary winds mixed with dust, *shall divide them*.

Or: *a mighty wind* can be called the sentence of the judge, according to Isaiah 11:4: 'With the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked'. Then the *as* refers to a likeness, not to an expression of truth, when it is said: *and as a whirlwind shall divide them*, namely from the good; Job 27:21: 'A burning wind shall take him up and carry him away, and as a whirlwind shall snatch him from his place'; Isaiah 66:15: 'For behold the Lord will come with fire and his chariots are like a whirlwind'.

And to a desert, that is, a terrible, sterile place devoid of any good; of such a place Deuteronomy 32:10 says: 'In a place of horror and of vast wilderness'. *And their iniquity*, namely, their own iniquity and not any other reason is why they are brought there, *shall bring all the earth*, that is, earthly people, according to Isaiah 50:11: 'Walk in the flames which you have kindled'. Or according to another translation: He says *the land of their iniquity*, because, according to Psalm 96:3: 'A fire shall go before him, the judge', who will burn up and leave arid the surface of the earth on which wickedness has been done. *And wickedness*, done by them and which resounds for harm; *shall overthrow*, that is, will be the cause for overturning the thrones of the mighty, that is, kingdoms, towns, fortresses, towers and judgement-seats; Sirach 10:17: 'God has overturned the thrones of proud princes'.

Firstly, on the accusation of the just

Then shafts of lightning shall go directly from the clouds, as from a bow well bent, they shall be shot out, and shall fly to the mark. Here he describes the final war according to the diverse battle lines of creatures. He introduces, firstly, fire waging war and fighting the wicked; secondly, the atmosphere:

And thick hail shall be cast; thirdly, water: The water of the sea shall rage against them; fourthly, a wind or whirlwind coming from the earth: A mighty wind shall stand up against them.

(Verse 22). Therefore, *shafts of lightning shall go directly from the clouds*, that is, against them; 'For the desire, that is, for the will of the leader'; Sirach 43:14: 'The Lord sends forth swiftly the lightnings of his judgment'; also in Psalm 143:6: 'Send forth lightning and you shall scatter them'.

As from a bow well bent, that is, the wicked shall be destroyed like a ray of a rainbow pushed down as the sun rises above it; as if to say: just as a rainbow in the heavens is swiftly and easily dispersed, so shall the wicked be swiftly and easily wiped away, that is, placed beyond the limits of present and eternal life; Baruch 3:19: 'They are cut off and are gone down to hell';

in Psalm 7:13: 'God has bent the bow and made it ready'. *And shall fly to the mark*, namely, only to the wicked so that the good are not touched; above 3:1: *The torment of death shall not touch them. To the mark*; 'To whatever place it is needed; it cannot be contested that divine wisdom is ordered'; so Exodus 9:26: 'Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, the hail fell not'.

(Verse 23). *And thick hail shall be cast upon them from the stone-casting wrath*; anger is called *thick hail* on account of its effect, because it will show itself like stones because it is unbreakable and hard like a stone, or because it is cast by Christ who is called a rock in 1 Corinthians 10:4: 'And the rock was Christ'. Large stones *shall be cast*, that is, heavy and bulky; or: large, that is, fully and in abundance; Psalm 148:8: 'Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds which fulfill his word'; Job 38:22: 'Have you entered into the storehouses of the snow?' Revelation 16:21: 'Great hail, as large as a talent, came down from heaven upon people'.

However, the Greeks read the text as follows: *Shall go from the clouds, as from a bow well bent, they shall fly to the mark, and be full with a stone in which anger lies.* This reading is clearer and seems to be more accurate since the book seems to have been compiled in Greek. *The water of the sea shall rage*, that is, shall be stirred up, *at them*, that is, against them; it will become agitated, stormy and full of foam; Luke 21:25: 'There shall be upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves'.

(Verse 1). *Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them and taken away their labours*, as if to say: The fearful impious shall come to judgment; *then*; 'When people shall be judged', namely, on the last day; and he says *then*, without specification, because 'of that day no one knows', Matthew 24:36; also Acts 1:7: 'It is not for you to know the times or moments which the Father has put in his own power'. *Shall stand*, namely, those who in the present life were seen to fall or lie down; Luke 16:20: 'There was a certain beggar, named Lazarus, who lay at his gate'. On the contrary, the wicked, who now seem to stand, will then lie down; Proverbs 14:19: 'The evil shall fall down before the good'. *Then shall the just stand with great constancy*, that is, constantly and boldly because of the confidence they shall have.

The confidence of the Saints rises from seven things. From the justice of their cause; Job 13:18: 'If I shall be judged, I know that I shall be found just'; also in Psalm 7:9: 'Judge me, O Lord, according to my justice'.

Secondly, from a sufficiency or abundance of proofs; they will have a proof prepared in a written document; Job 31:35: 'He himself that judges would write a book that I may carry it on my shoulder'; also Revelation 20:12: 'The dead were judged by those things which were written in the books'; also by witnesses; Job 16:20: 'Behold my witness is in heaven', namely, God; so Jeremiah 29:23: 'I am the judge and the witness, says the Lord'.

Thirdly, from the faithfulness of the advocates; 1 John 2:1: 'We have an advocate', in heaven, 'Jesus Christ'; also the Holy Spirit; Romans 8:26: 'The Spirit asks for us with unspeakable groanings'; also the Blessed Virgin; and so we call out: 'Our Advocate' etc.

Fourthly, from the weakness of the adversaries, according to the text of Psalm 1:5: 'The wicked shall not rise again in judgment', namely, to accuse the just; Revelation 12:10: 'The accuser of our brethren is cast forth who accused them before our God day and night'.

Fifthly, from the friendship and closeness of their judge; Genesis 37:27: 'For he is our brother and our flesh'; as Saint Bernard said: 'I think, he will not be able to reject me, bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh'.

Sixthly, from the kindness of the assessors, that is, of the Apostles; Matthew 19:28: 'You shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel'; also Job 36:6: 'He gives judgment to the poor'.

Seventhly, from the familiarity of the judge's officials, namely, the Angels; Matthew 13:49: 'The angels shall go out and shall separate the wicked from the just'.

Against those; 'Their persecutors' that have afflicted them; 'In martyrdom' by afflicting them personally; Hebrews 11:37: 'Distressed, afflicted' etc. And who have taken away their bodily labours, namely, by robbing them violently while, however, the Saints joyfully endured this; Hebrews 10:34 'Took with joy the being stripped of your own goods'. Or: spiritual labours by trying to steal their fruit, namely, by provoking them to sin; of this fruit see above in chapter 3:15: *The fruit of good labours is glorious*. Or: both together, : 'By judging their bodily and spiritual labours to be vain and stupid'.

Secondly, on the confession of the reprobate from three points of view

These seeing it shall be troubled with terrible fear. Here he treats of the forced confession of the reprobate; and he treats, firstly, of the motive for such a confession; secondly, the content of the confession: *These are they whom we had some time in derision*; thirdly, the approval of their confession: *Such things as these the sinners said in hell*. The double motive for the confession is treated, namely, affliction over the true happiness of the good, and worry over their own unhappiness: *Saying within themselves, repenting, and groaning for anguish of spirit: These are they, whom we had some time in derision*.

(Verse 2). So he continues: *These seeing it*; 'Themselves led from glory to punishment, and their adversaries transferred from punishment to glory'; *shall be troubled with terrible fear*; Exodus 15:15: 'Then were the princes of Edom troubled'; also Ezekiel 7:26: 'Trouble shall come upon trouble', namely, trouble from the affliction of the reassumed body upon the trouble previously experienced from the affliction of the soul previously tortured in the flames of hell. *With terrible fear*, namely, on account of the constancy of their accusers, to whom reference was made above in verse 1. Secondly, on account of the severity of the divine judgments, according to the text of Hebrews 10:31: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God'; also below in 6:6: *Horribly and speedily will he appear to you*. Thirdly, on account of the presence of fearful torturers; Job 20:25: 'The terrible ones shall go and come upon him'. Or in this way: *Troubled*, on account of a disturbing conscience; *with fear*, on account of the irrevocable sentence of the judge; *terrible*, on account of the visible presence of the torments prepared and the fearful torturers. *And shall be amazed at the suddenness*, that is, the sudden attainment, *of their salvation*, namely, by the just, *unexpected*, that is, not expected by the wicked but hoped for by the just, according to the text of Psalm 21:5: 'In you have our fathers hoped'; they have hoped and you have delivered them'. *Groaning, interiorly, for anguish of spirit*, from a reflection on the glory and salvation they have lost; 1 Samuel 4:7-8: 'And the Philistines were afraid, saying: God is come into the camp. And sighing, they said: Woe to us'.

And his zeal will take armour, and he will arm the creature for the revenge of his enemies. Here he treats of the punishment of the wicked under the metaphor of a king moving against his enemies. Firstly, he describes the intention of the king; secondly, his armour: *He will put on justice as a breastplate*; thirdly, war: *shafts of lightning shall go directly*; fourthly, the effect of war: *Their iniquity shall bring all the earth to a desert*; fifthly, the remedy for war: *Wisdom is better than strength*.

(Verse 18). *And his zeal shall take armour*, namely, against the enemy; Proverbs 6:34: 'The jealousy and rage of the husband will not spare in the day of revenge'. 'His arms are truth, justice and judgment'. *And he will arm the creature*, namely, as his army, according to the text in 16:24: *For the creature serving you the Creator, is made fierce against the unjust; for their punishment*; Psalm 93:1: 'The God of revenge has acted freely'.

(Verses 19, 20, 21). *He will put on justice as a breastplate*, justice is compared to a coat of mail or to a breastplate, because, like a coat of mail, it protects the whole body just as justice protects the soul; so 2 Corinthians 6:7: 'By the armour of justice on the right hand and on the left'; Isaiah 59:17: 'He put on justice as a breastplate'. *And will take true judgment instead of a helmet*, or sure judgment; *true judgment*, that is discretion, is compared to a helmet that protects the head, that is, the mind; Proverbs 16:10: 'Divination is in the lips of the king, his mouth shall not err in judgment'.

He will take equity for an invincible shield; equity is compared to a shield that protects the coat of mail, because justice makes one blameless; Isaiah 11:4: 'He shall reprove with equity for the meek of the earth'.

He will sharpen his severe wrath; he says *severe* as opposed to slight anger for he is now severely angry; *for a spear*; the anger of God is compared to a spear because it reaches and will pierce even what is remote; Ezekiel 21:9: 'The sword, the sword is sharpened, and furbished'; also Exodus 15:7: 'You have sent your anger that has devoured them like stubble'. *And the whole world shall fight with him against the unwise*; : 'When the Creator is offended, every creature is offended'; 'The Creator reproves sinners through a subject creature'. It will be a terrible war of which Job 40:27 says: 'Remember the battle, and speak no more'.

Firstly, on the reward for the just and the wicked from two points of view

But the just shall live for evermore. Here he considers the fitting return to the just and to the wicked and, firstly, of the reward of the just; secondly, of the punishment of the wicked: *And his zeal shall take armour.* – He treats of a double reward of the just: firstly, for doing good; and secondly, for victory over evil: *Therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory.*

(Verse 16). *But the just shall live for evermore, and their reward is with the Lord, and the care of them with the most High,* as if to say: such is the life and death of the just. On the other hand *the just shall live for evermore;* ‘They shall live in eternal life’, of which John 17:3 says: ‘Now this is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent’.

Their reward is with the Lord, that is, in the Lord through hope, in Psalm 72:28: ‘It is good for me to adhere to my God’, namely, through love, and ‘to put my hope in the Lord God’; *and their reward;* ‘the reward of work’; for God is the reward of the Saints; Genesis 15:1: ‘I am your protector and your reward exceeding great’;

also Numbers 18:20: ‘I am your portion and inheritance in the midst of the children of Israel’. *And the care of them with the most High,* as if to say: and it is right that their reward be with the Lord because *their care,* that is, their complete concern and attention through faith is *with the most High,* according to Psalm 54:23: ‘Cast your thought upon the Lord who shall sustain you’. Or: *care,* that is, the knowledge of their mind is *with the most High* alone; the just think only on God or on those things that help towards possessing God, according to 1 Corinthians 7:34: ‘The unmarried woman thinks on the things of the Lord’.

(Verse 17). Because they are such in the present life, *therefore shall they receive a kingdom of glory,* that is, a beautiful kingdom as a golden or essential reward; Matthew 5:3: ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven’. *And a crown of beauty,* that is, a beautiful crown; ‘With the enemy conquered’; and this applies to the crown or to the accidental reward; 2 Timothy 4:8: ‘There is laid up for me a crown of justice’. For both see Exodus 25:25.

At the hand of God, or, the Lord: ‘That is, from Christ who is called the *hand* and the *arm* and *right hand* of God the Father’. He is the *hand* of God in work: ‘All things were made by him’, John 1:3; the *arm* by protecting, according to Psalm 88:22: ‘My arm shall strengthen him’; the right hand by rewarding; Matthew 25:33: ‘He shall set the sheep on his right hand’; : ‘This is in the future’, from the anger of the heavenly judge; Isaiah 49:33: ‘In the shadow of his hand he has protected me’; Sirach 34:19: ‘He is a powerful protector and strong stay’. *And with his holy right arm,* that is, of his holy power, *he will defend them,* namely, from every attack of the enemy, according to Psalm 26:1: ‘The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?’

(Verse 3). *Saying within themselves,* speaking interiorly, with no leisure for external speech perhaps on account of the vehemence of sorrow. *Repenting,* of the evil they have done; *repenting* but too late like the repentance of the rich man of whom Luke 16:24 says: ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus ... for I am tormented in flames’; *repenting,* rather, in fact, suffering. This is a penitence of desperation, like the penitence of Judas, of whom Matthew 27:3 says that ‘repenting himself, he brought back the thirty pieces of silver’. *And groaning for anguish of spirit,* over the evil of the penalty they have incurred; Isaiah 65:14: ‘You shall cry for sorrow of heart, and howl for grief of spirit’.

These are they, whom we had some time in derision, and for a parable of reproach. Here he states the material of the confession of the impious as they confess their own error, firstly, about the life of the just; secondly, about their own life: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known.*

In the first, they confess, firstly, their contempt and scorn for the Saints; secondly, the condemnation of their state: *We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour;* thirdly, the present rejoicing of the Saints: *Behold how they are numbered among the children of God;* fourthly, their error: *Therefore we have erred.*

(Verse 3). *These are they,* namely, worthy, in the judgment of the impious, of being mocked, *whom we had for some time in derision,* by actions and signs; Job 12:4: ‘The simplicity of the just man is laughed to scorn’; also in Psalm 21:8: ‘All that saw me have laughed me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head’. *And for a parable of reproach,* taunting with words; in Psalm 68:10: ‘The reproaches of them that reproached you have fallen upon me’. But when a good work in a person is reproached, something that is rather reason for praise, this is not a genuine reproach, but something like a reproach, and for this reason it is said here: *for a parable of reproach;* 2 Corinthians 6:8: ‘Through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true’; Acts 5:41: ‘The Apostles went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus’.

(Verse 4). *We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour*, living as foolish children; *fools*, I say, because we did not understand things as they were; Sirach 16:20: 'In all these things the heart is senseless'; 1 Corinthians 14:20: 'Do not become children in sense'. *Their life*, that is, their way of life that was in poverty, work, in what is poorly regarded, in fasting etc.; *We esteemed their life as madness*. In this way Achish regarded David as mad, 1 Samuel 21:14; so also Christ; John 8:48: 'Do we not say well that you are a Samaritan, and have a devil?'; also John 10:20: 'He has a devil and is mad'; in the same way the messenger of Elisha, 2 Kings 9:11: 'Why came this madman to you?' Hosea 9:7: 'Know you, O Israel, that the prophet was foolish, the spiritual man was mad'; 'foolish', namely, in temporal matters, and 'mad', in the judgment of the worldly. *And their end*, that is, their death, *without honour*, namely, of any reward; this is the opposite of what is said in Psalm 138:17: 'Your friends, O God, are made exceedingly honourable also John 12:26: 'Whoever serves me, my Father', who is in heaven, 'will honour'.

(Verse 5). Therefore, *how are they numbered among the children of God by grace*; Romans 8:15: 'For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)'; also John 1:12 'He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name'. *And their lot is among the saints*, that is, a portion of glory of which we read in Psalm 141:6: 'May my portion, O Lord, be in the land of the living'; also Colossians 1:12: 'Who has made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light'. These are against two things they used to say; for they said the life of the Saints is madness and their end without honour.

(Verse 6). *Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice has not shone unto us, and the sun of understanding has not risen upon us*. This is what they end up saying to themselves; so the text of Psalm 63:9 is verified: 'And their tongues against them are made weak'. *We have erred*, they say; for they have approved false things as true; Saint Augustine, however, says that 'it is proper to an error to affirm false as true'; Isaiah 19:14: 'The Lord has caused Egypt to err in all its works, as a drunken man staggers and vomits'. *From the way of truth*; 'of the Gospel of divine law, for believing'; Isaiah 53:6: 'All we like sheep have gone astray, everyone has turned aside into their own way'. *And the light of justice*, for working; taken as intransitive *the light of justice* is the justice that is light, according to the text of Psalm 96:11: 'Light is risen to the just'; also Proverbs 4:18: 'The path of the just, as a shining light, goes forward and increases even to perfect day'. *Has not shone unto us*; Isaiah 59:9: 'We looked for light, and behold darkness!' This was the cause of their error just as a lack of light is a cause of straying. *And the sun of understanding*, namely, for enlightening; 'Christ, the sun of justice, who rises on those who fear God', as in Malachi 4:2 *has not shone unto us*. Note, this is not a fault in the sun but in those lying in darkness, neither wanting to get up nor trying to open their eyes; Psalm 57:9: 'A fire' of envy 'has fallen on them and they shall not see the sun'. The material sun rises on the good and the bad, as is clear in Matthew 5:45: 'The Father makes the sun to rise upon the good and the bad', but the sun of understanding rises only on the good, as is clear here.

(Verse 15). *For the hope of the wicked is as dust, which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm: and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind, and as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passes by*.

As if to say: they spoke the truth, for the hope of the wicked, namely, for temporal prosperity in which the wicked place their hope; Isaiah 28:15: 'We have placed our hope in lies'; *as dust*, that is, thistle-down, like the fragility of flesh; *which is blown away with the wind*, that is, in a light breeze; 'Dust expresses the fragility of flesh that is taken away quickly by a wind of sickness or trouble'; Isaiah 40:6: 'All flesh is grass'.

The fragility of flesh is well compared to thistle-down because it gives rise to the thorns and thistles of temptations; Genesis 3:18: 'Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you'. *And as thin froth*, produced by a stirring of the waters, *which is dispersed by the storm*. *And a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind*, applies to the vanity of boasting;

'This is the appetite for human favour and vulgar boasting that is dispersed by a storm of present or eternal trouble and adversity'; Hosea 10:7: 'Samaria has made her king to pass as froth upon the face of the water'; also Jeremiah 23:19: 'Behold the whirlwind of the Lord's indignation shall come forth, and a tempest shall break out and come upon the head of the wicked'.

And as a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind, referring to the shortness of life; James 4:15: 'For what is our life? It is a vapour which appears for a short time'; because when wafted upwards, it necessarily vanishes, according to Psalm 36:20: 'The enemies of the Lord, presently after they shall be honoured and exalted, shall come to nothing and vanish like smoke'; Just as smoke is dissolved by wind, so is human life by a change of circumstances'.

And as the remembrance of a guest of one day that passes by, referring to the short duration of fame; Job 13:12: 'Your remembrance shall be compared to ashes'. People are compared to living as a stranger in this life because we are pilgrims and strangers in an alien home, according to Psalm 38:13: 'I am a stranger with you and a sojourner as all my fathers were'; also Hebrews 11:13: 'Confessing that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth'.

That passes by, because we move from life to death; Lamentations 1:12: 'O all you that pass by the way, attend and see if there is any sorrow like to my sorrow'; Also Ecclesiastes 1:4: 'One generation passes away, and another generation comes'. *Of one day*, because we are here but for a short time; so Hebrews 13:14 says: 'We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come'.

(Verse 13). *So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be*, that is, soon after birth; or: *we ceased to be* immediately, that is, we begin to cease, 'What is our life other than a journey towards death?' 'So also the journey of this life is uncertain and unstable'; Job 14:1-2: 'A mortal; born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries, comes forth like a flower, and is destroyed, and flees as a shadow, and never continues in the same state'.

Or: *we forthwith ceased to be*, because of an increase in sin. *And have been able to show no mark of virtue*, namely, good behaviour in our life; Mark 16:17: 'And these signs shall follow them that believe'.

Galatians 6:17: 'I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body'.

But we are consumed in our wickedness; John 8:21: 'You shall die in your sin'. *Such things as these the sinners said in hell*. Behold, the confirming of their confession by fitting examples, firstly, by an example of dust; secondly, of froth: *as a thin froth*; thirdly, of smoke; fourthly, of the memory of a guest.

(Verse 14). *Such things as these the sinners said in hell*; who, I say, spoke an inner word from remorse of conscience, although not perhaps an exterior word, since they are in hell without bodies until the day of judgment and without bodily organs, even though they have the potential of these organs; Luke 16:23: 'Lifting up his eyes'. That is, the power to see which he had used in this present life with the organs of the eyes.

Such things as these the sinners said in hell. How did the author know they spoke like this in hell since he had never been there, nor had another come from thereto speak about it; hence above in chapter 2:1: *No one has been known to have returned from hell*.

It can be said that he knew this from a revelation of the Holy Spirit because, every truth spoken by someone, is given at the prompting of the Holy Spirit; also 2 Peter 1:21: 'The holy people of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit'. Or: *They said*, that is, they had been able to say.

However, Christ is called *sun*, because the sun is spoken of as if it were the only light; alone shines; Christ shines in a singular way, that is, more than all others as the light and eye of the world; John 1:9: 'That was the true light that enlightens everyone who comes into this world', even by an illumination of natural knowledge. 'For he is the master who has his chair in heaven and teaches the hearts of people on earth', as Saint Augustine says. Also John 8:12: 'I am the light of the world'.

Also, because [Christ is the light] by the illumination of the moon, that is, of the Church; Sirach 50:6: 'He shone in his days as the moon at the full', namely, from the rays cast by the sun. Also, because he is the source of all warmth, that is, of spiritual love; Psalm 18:6-7: 'He has set his tabernacle in the sun'; and later: 'there is no one who can hide from his heat'; 2 Maccabees 1:22: 'The time came that the sun shone out, which before was in a cloud, there was a great fire kindled, so that all wondered'; also Luke 12:49: 'I am come to cast fire on the earth', that is, warmth.

Also, because he is the father of spiritual plants, that is, of all spiritual growth; John 15:5: 'Those who abide in me, and I in them, the same bear much fruit, for without me you can do nothing'. He is called *the sun of understanding* because only by the eye of understanding is his light grasped, for by its ray, namely, by the spirit of the intellect is understanding enlightened.

We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. Here he treats of the confession of the error of the wicked about their own life; and, firstly, they confess the burden of their life; secondly, its blindness: *the way of the Lord we have not known*; thirdly, its uselessness: *What has pride profited us*; fourthly, its instability: *All these things have passed*.

(Verse 7). Accordingly, *we wearied ourselves*, from our own effort, *in the way of iniquity*, as guilty now; Jeremiah 9:5: 'They have laboured to commit iniquity'; and *destruction* for punishment in the future; Proverbs 2:22: 'The wicked shall be destroyed from the earth, and they that do unjustly shall be taken away from it'. Nor is it surprising if we have wearied ourselves from our own effort because *we have walked through hard ways*, hard of their nature, namely, the ways of sinners that severely afflict the soul now from remorse of conscience. For the order of divine justice does not allow, even for a moment, that there could be sin without punishment. Hence 'Lord, you have commanded, and so it is, that a disordered soul is a punishment for itself'; Sirach 21:11: 'The way of sinners is made plain with stones'.

But against this: Matthew 7:13: 'Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction'. It has to be said that it is easy to enter, as if it were paved with flowers, namely, with the sweetness and temporal pleasure of present delight; but it is difficult to walk on because of remorse of conscience; more difficult to leave because of the separation from present pleasure; but most difficult after leaving because of the torment of hell.

The way of the Lord, namely, by which the Lord comes to us, by which we go to him, namely, charity, according to the text of 1 Corinthians 12:31: 'I show you yet a more excellent way'; and so Job 21:14: 'Who say to God, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of your ways'. One who has such ignorance 'shall not be known'.

(Verse 8). *What has pride profited us*, namely, in an excellence of honours, as if to say: nothing; it rather has done harm, because it is said in Psalm 30:24: 'The Lord will repay them abundantly that act proudly'; Proverbs 16:18: 'Pride goes before destruction'; Luke 1:51: 'He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart'. *Or the boasting of riches*, namely, of the abundance of exterior goods, *what has it brought us*, as if to say: nothing; Ecclesiastes 5:9: 'one who loves riches shall reap no fruit from them'; also Luke 6:24: 'Woe to you that are rich, for you have your consolation'.

All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a message that runs on, and as a ship that passes through the waves, whereof when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters. Here by several metaphors, he treats of the confession of the instability of the state of the reprobate firstly, by the metaphor of a *shadow*; secondly, of a message: *like a message*; thirdly, of a ship: *as a ship*; fourthly, of a bird: *as a bird*; fifthly, of an arrow: *Or as an arrow*.

(Verses 9, 10). *All those things are passed away*, namely, riches, delights and the honours of secular power; so 1 John 2:16-17: 'For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world'. And further on: 'And the world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof'; that is, desirable for what is in them, namely, in external appearance, not in substance; so 1 Corinthians 7:31 says: 'The fashion of this world passes away'. *Like a shadow*, namely, by darkening the mind; Sirach 34:2: 'Whoever gives heed to lying visions is like a person who catches at a shadow, and follows after the wind', because when a soul turns itself to what is earthly it is darkened and eclipsed by the earth coming between it and the true sun.

And like a message that runs on, by withdrawing the mind in its passage; Job 9:25: 'My days have been swifter than a message'.

And as a ship that passes through the waves, enduring many trials; Luke 10:41: 'You are troubled about many things'. *Whereof when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found*, namely, in the water; Proverbs 30:18-19: 'Three things are hard to me, and the fourth I am utterly ignorant of: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent upon a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man in youth'. *Nor the path of its keel in the waters*, that is, of a small boat that usually, to avoid danger, travels with a larger boat, according to the verse:

The prow is the front part of a boat, the stern the last part. Call its side the timbers, and its keel the belly.

(Verses 11, 12). *Or as when a bird*, namely, by exalting the heart in pride and wantonness; Proverbs 10:4: 'Whoever trusts in lies feeds the winds, and runs after birds that fly away'.

Flies through the air, that is, swiftly, *no mark can be found*, that is, a clear sign, *of the passage of which; but only the sound*, is heard, *the sound*, I say, *of the wings beating the light air*, that is, a movement of air, 'Wind is a movement of air'; and *parting it*, that is, dividing, *by the force of her flight*, namely, quiet.

So a light sound of fame accompanies the wicked, according to Psalm 48:12: 'They have called their lands by their names'; Isaiah 18:1: 'Woe to the land, the winged cymbal, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia'. *She moved her wings*, namely, to another place; Hosea 9:11: 'Ephraim has flown away like a bird'. *And there is no mark*, that is, no clear sign, *found afterwards of her way*; Proverbs 30:18-19: 'Three things are hard for me ...the way of an eagle in the air'; also Job 28:7: 'The bird has not known the path, neither has the eye of the vulture beheld it'.

Or as when an arrow, namely, by wounding a heart lethally, *is shot at a mark*, by an archer; Proverbs 7:23: 'Till the arrow pierce his liver'. *The divided air*, that is, by the passage of the arrow, *presently comes together again, so that the passage thereof is not known*; 'Because it leaves no trace of itself'.