

(Verse 28). *That it might be known to all*, namely, by this sign, *that we ought to prevent the sun*, that is, the rising of the sun, *to bless you*, add: to gain your blessing by receiving and collecting the manna lest with the rising of the sun it liquefies from the heat of the sun; so to gain the blessing of grace it is necessary to prevent the sun by watching early, according to Proverbs 8:17: 'They that in the morning may have watched for me, shall find me'; Psalm 5:5: 'In the morning I will stand before you, and will see, because you are not a God that wills iniquity'. *And adore you*, namely, to receive the manna, *at the dawning of the light*, that is, immediately the sun rises, or towards the east where the sun rises; I say, towards the east because, as Saint Damascene says, every thing that is better is to be attributed to God; so because the east is the better part of the heavens, so God is to be adored towards the east, according to Psalm 67:33-34: 'Sing to God, sing to the Lord, who mounts above the heaven of heavens to the east'.

Note, however, that as the manna melted at the rising of the sun, it prefigured, that the old sacrament ceased with the rising of Christ because 'the end of the law is Christ', Romans 10:4.

(Verse 29). *For the hope of the unthankful shall melt away as the winter's ice, and shall run off as unprofitable water*. I have said that it melts in the heat of the sun, and that this is a sign that *the hope of the unthankful shall melt away*. Or: I have said well that one should adore *at the dawning of the light*, for receiving this gift, and this should be done to avoid ingratitude something extremely harmful. *For the hope of the unthankful*, namely, of any wicked person, or especially 'of the Jewish people' *as the winter's ice*; 'Held together by the cold of infidelity', according to Sirach 43:22: 'The cold north wind blows and the water is congealed into crystal'; *melts*, that is, liquefies, that is, dissolves by the heat of the sun of justice on the day of judgment either particular or general; Psalm 67:3: 'As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God'. I say, *melts*, referring to the punishment of loss, namely, by losing all goods whether owned or hoped for, namely, the goods of grace and glory; *and shall run off*, that is, torment will be felt in body and soul, and this refers to the punishment of the senses. I say, *shall run off as unprofitable water*, that is, as useless water that is poured out or thrown out onto the ground; in this way the unthankful is thrown into hell as something useless, according to Matthew 25:30: 'The unprofitable servant throw you out into the exterior darkness'. Therefore, *the hope of the unthankful shall melt away as the winter's ice, and shall run off as unprofitable water*; so above in Wisdom 5:15: *For the hope of the wicked is as dust, which is blown away with the wind*; also Saint Bernard says: 'Ingratitude is a burning wind, drying up the fount of piety, the dew of mercy, the flowing of grace'.

END OF WISDOM 16

THE BOOK OF WISDOM



CHAPTER 16

THE BOOK OF WISDOM—A PROLOGUE BY SAINT JEROME

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 16

Secondly, the torment of the punishment on the guilty is specified

For these things, and by the like things to these, they were worthily punished, and were destroyed by a multitude of beasts. After dealing from chapter thirteen with the consequence of sin regarding the more serious punishments laid down for the condemnation of the wicked, here he deals with the torment of the punishment, and, firstly, of punishments preceding death, namely, in this chapter and in chapter seventeen; secondly, with the punishments brought on by death, namely, in chapters eighteen and nineteen.

Firstly, he deals with the two punishments preceding death

In the first part, he deals, firstly, with punishment on the senses, namely, from the sending of the plagues, namely, in this chapter; secondly, on the punishment of the loss, from the withdrawing of light, in chapter seventeen.

(Verse 25). *Therefore*, because the creature was devoted to the Creator, *even then*, namely, when the children of Israel were fed with manna in the desert, *into all things*, that is, into the taste of everything that was desired, *was transformed*, namely, the creature itself, the manna; *to your grace that nourishes all*, that is, to the generosity of your good will, so that this is understood of uncreated grace; Baruch 4:8: 'You have grieved Jerusalem that nursed you'; *they were devoted to*, that is, they were obedient; 'Sinners are perplexed by this, because while creatures are devoted to their Creator, they refuse. And so the harmony of all creatures is abused'. I say, *they were devoted to the will*, needing to be obeyed, *of them that desired it of you*, namely, loved with a special love like the children of Israel; Deuteronomy 7:6: 'The Lord your God has chosen you, to be God's peculiar people of all peoples that are upon the earth'.

(Verse 26). *That your children, might know*, namely, the Israelites according to Exodus 4:22: 'Israel is my firstborn'; Isaiah 1:2: 'I have brought up children'; *O Lord, whom you love*, namely, with an eternal and temporal love; Malachi 1:2: 'I have loved you, says the Lord'. I say, *might know that it is not the growing of fruits*, that is, not natural fruits, grown in the ground, according to Genesis 1:11: 'Let the earth bring forth' etc.; *that nourishes us*, namely as human beings, that is, in so far as we are different from the beasts, namely, according to the rational power or part of the soul. *But your word*, that is, created word, namely, your commandment; Matthew 4:4: 'Not in bread alone do we live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'. Or: *Word*, uncreated, namely, the Son of whom John 17:17 says: 'Your word is truth'; and John 14:6: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'; *preserves them that have Believed in you*; Deuteronomy 8:3: 'God gave you manna for your food, which neither you nor your fathers knew, to show that not in bread alone do we live, but in every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'.

(Verse 27). *For that which could not be destroyed by fire*, namely, the manna, because it became hardened in fire, so that it could be made into cakes, as is clear in Numbers 11:8; *being warmed with a little sunbeam presently melted away*, that is, became liquid, as is clear in Exodus 16:21. So it was necessary to collect it in the morning.

On the punishment of the senses in two ways

(Verse 22). Therefore, he says: *But snow and ice* etc. It has been said, that *in water the fire had more force; but snow and ice*, that is, hail, *endured the force of fire*, that is, the heat which is its property of active power. *And melted not*, that is, did not turn to liquid; so Exodus 9:23-24: 'The Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt and the hail and the fire mixed with it drove on together'; *that they might know*, namely, the Israelites, *that fire burning*, namely, by heat, *destroyed the fruits of the enemies*, that is, of the Egyptians. *Burning in the hail and flashing in the rain*, namely, in brightness. 'The flax and the barley were hurt, because the barley was green and the flax was now in bud', Exodus 9:31.

(Verse 23). *But this same again, that the just might be nourished, did even forget its own strength*. Note that the word: *this*, could be in the ablative case, and explained as: *this*, for this; or in the nominative case, meaning: *But this same again*, add: was done, *that the just might be nourished*, namely, the children of Israel. *Fire did even forget its own strength*, namely, by not destroying the fruits of the land of the just, as is clear in Exodus 9:26, where it reads 'only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, the hail fell not'. And in this way fire forgot the force of its power when the three just men were not harmed in the furnace, as is clear in Daniel 3:49ff.

(Verse 24). *For your creature, namely, any whatever, serving you the Creator*, that is, your will, by which you made everything, according to Psalm 113:3 (or 11): 'God has done all things whatsoever God would'; *grows hot*, that is, is strongly moved and roused, *for their punishment*, of torment, *against the unjust*, that is, your enemies. *And abates its strength*, that is, becomes harmless or innocuous, *for the benefit of them that trust in you*, that is, for the just; for creatures obey those who obey God – as is clear in Joshua 10:13, where we read that the sun stood still at the command of Joshua – and rebel against those who rebel against God; so above in Wisdom 5:21: *The whole world shall fight with him against the unwise*.

Therefore even then it was transformed into all things, and they were devoted to your grace that nourishes all, according to the will of them that desired it of you. Here he touches on the reason for the consolation of the Israelites, firstly, the acknowledgment of the divine gift; secondly, the display of divine worship: *For that which could not be destroyed by fire, being warmed with a little sunbeam presently melted away*; thirdly, the avoiding of ingratitude: *For the hope of the unthankful shall melt away as the winter's ice, and shall run off as unprofitable water*.

In the first place he deals, firstly, with the punishment inflicted by inanimate objects: *For the wicked that denied to know you, were scourged by the strength of your arm, being persecuted by strange waters, and hail, and rain, and consumed by fire*.

The first punishment of the senses inflicted by living objects

In the first part he treats of the punishment of the Egyptians by vile and harmful animals; secondly, contrary to this, the consolation of the Hebrews from delightful animals: *Instead of which punishment, dealing well with your people, you gave them their desire of delicious food, of a new taste, preparing for them quails for their meat*; thirdly, their deliverance from the harmful animals: *For when the fierce rage of beasts came upon these, they were destroyed with the bites of crooked serpents*; fourthly, the reason for the aforementioned punishment and deliverance: *And in this you showed to our enemies, that you are the one who delivers from all evil*.

(Verse 1). *For these things*, namely, because the most miserable people worshipped idols, or because of sins of idolatry, *and by the like things to these*, that is, for other sins of idolatry like the preceding, *they were worthily punished*; Ephesians 5:6: 'Because of these things the anger of God comes upon the children of unbelief'; Deuteronomy 25:2: 'According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be'. The shame of guilt should not be without the beauty of justice or punishment, according to Saint Augustine. *And by a multitude of beasts*, namely, the earth of those devastators such as flies, locusts, and frogs and suchlike; *they were destroyed*, that is gravely afflicted, and perhaps some of them were killed; above in Wisdom 12:23: *You have greatly tormented them by the same things which they worshipped*; Deuteronomy 32:24: 'I will send the teeth of beasts upon them'.

Instead of which punishment, dealing well with your people, you gave them their desire of delicious food, of a new taste, preparing for them quails for their meat. Here, he treats of the consolation of the Israelites, and, firstly, he considers the method of the consolation; secondly, its cause: *To the end that*; thirdly, its swiftness: *But these, after suffering want for a short time, tasted a new meat*; fourthly, the opportunity to hasten: *For it was requisite that inevitable destruction should come upon them that exercised tyranny*.

(Verse 2). *Instead of which punishment*, that is, in place of their torments, as if in contrast to; *dealing well with your people*, namely, the Israelite people, who were ‘his peculiar people’, as stated in Deuteronomy 7:6. *You gave them*, that is, to which people, *their desire of delicious food* that is, the longed for delight; ‘the desire that is accomplished, delights the soul’, as stated in Proverbs 13:19. *Of a new taste*, in a food with a new flavour *preparing for them quails for their meat*, referring to the bird, namely the quail, the quail mother, said to come from the land of Ortygia in which it was first sighted and brought from there; or *preparing for them meats*; and then according to some the plural is used here for the singular when he says: *preparing for them ortygometrām*, that is, quail, according to Psalm 104:40: ‘They asked and the quail came and he filled them with the bread from heaven’; Exodus 16:13: ‘So it came to pass in the evening that quails coming up covered the camp’; also Numbers 11:31: ‘And a wind of the Lord going up, taking quails up beyond the sea, brought them and cast them into the camp’. But one should not use a plural for the singular because it can be explained as: *meats*, that is, in place of the meats.

(Verse 3). *To the end that they indeed*, namely, the children of Israel, *desiring food*, namely of the meats of Egypt, Exodus 16:3, *by means of those things*, namely, the quail, *that were shown*, to be desired, *and sent among them*, to be eaten, *might loathe*, so that they would no longer desire the meats of Egypt and a return to Egypt, *even that which was necessary to satisfy their desire*, that is, urgently needed, Psalm 105:14: ‘They coveted their desire in the desert; also Numbers 11:4: ‘The people burned with desire for meats’, in spite of what Sirach 18:30 says: ‘Go not after your lusts but turn away from your own will’. *But these*, namely, the children of Israel, *after suffering want for a short time*, that is in a little time because their need lasted for a brief time; for God came quickly, according to Isaiah 65:24: ‘Before they call, I will hear’; *want*, that is, a need for food; *tasted a new meat*, that is, unfamiliar or of unfamiliar birds.

(Verse 4). *For it was requisite* etc., as if to say: and this happened rightly; *for it was requisite*, that is, it was opportune, *that upon them*, namely, the Egyptians, *inevitable destruction should come*, namely of guilt for which they were being punished; Romans 1:20: ‘So that they were inexcusable’; also Romans 2:1: ‘Wherefore you are inexcusable, whoever you are’; *destruction should come*, namely, the distress of a supreme judge’s destructive punishment for their oppression; Job 18:14: ‘Let his confidence be rooted out of his tabernacle, and let destruction tread upon him like a king’; also Proverbs 29:1: ‘Whoever with a stiff neck have despised the one that reproves him or her, shall suddenly be destroyed’. *Upon them*, I refer to the Egyptians, *that exercised tyranny*, that is, a cruel empire over the children of Israel, by oppressing them with hard labour, as is clear in Exodus 1:10-14 and 5:6, and by drowning their children in the river, as is clear in Exodus 1:22. *But to these*, namely, to the Israelites, *it is to shown only*, add: it should be, *how their enemies were destroyed*, so that, seeing their punishment, they might be corrected, according to Proverbs 19:25: ‘The wicked being scourged, the fool shall be wiser’; also Proverbs 21:11: ‘When a pestilent person is punished, the little one will be wiser’.

In a mystical sense Christ in the Sacrament of the altar is fittingly prefigured by the manna, firstly, because he is the bread of angels, namely, of priests, according to Malachi 2:7: ‘Because he [a priest] is the angel of the Lord of hosts’. – Secondly, because it is prepared in heaven, that is, because it is made by heavenly power; John 6:41: ‘I am the living bread that came down from heaven’;

Psalm 64:10: ‘You have prepared their food, for so is its preparation’. – Thirdly, because those who eat it out of desire, that is, devotion, are refreshed, according to Psalm 20:3: ‘You have given the king his heart’s desire’; also in Psalm 77:29-30: ‘God gave them their desire and they were not defrauded of that which they craved’. – Fourthly, because with it there came down and is given the dew of grace, just as dew come down with the manna, as seen in Number 11:9. And so this bread is called the Eucharist; Eucharist means good grace. – Fifthly, because just as the manna looked ‘like coriander seed white,’ so Christ is received under a white cloud; Revelation 14:14: ‘Behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sitting like to the Son of man’. – Sixthly, because it was collected on six days and not on the Sabbath, so Christ is received now under the Sacrament, but in the future Sabbath he will be seen clearly and Isaiah 66:23 says of this: ‘There will be Sabbath after Sabbath’;

1 Corinthians 13:12: ‘But then face to face’; also 1 John 3:2: ‘We shall see him as he is’. – Seventhly, because just as they were fed by this food in the desert until they entered the promised land, so the faithful of the Church are nourished in the desert of this world until the end of the world, according to Matthew 28:20: ‘Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world’.

But snow and ice endured the force of fire, and melted not, that they might know that fire burning in the hail and flashing in the rain destroyed the fruits of the enemies. Here the reason for the affliction of the Egyptians is given: firstly, from the point of view of the ones punished; secondly, from the point of view of the things by which they were punished: *But this same again, that the just might be nourished, did even forget its own strength*; thirdly, from the point of view of God punishing: *For the creature serving you the Creator, is made fierce against the unjust for their punishment; and abates its strength for the benefit of them that trust in you.*

But contra: Numbers 11:8 says that it tasted like 'bread tempered with oil'.

It must be said that in its nature was a definite most sweet taste, namely, as a taste 'like to [flour] with honey'; but by divine grace it had various flavours, namely, according to the various desires, on 1 Corinthians 10:3 says: 'All ate the same spiritual food'.

But contra: That while it had the flavour each person desired, they would not have longed for the meats of Egypt, nor have been sickened over such light food as the manna, but this is against what is read in Numbers 21:5.

It has to be: Good people found in it an excellent flavour, but evil people disliked it. Or it must be said that in food they looked for not only a delightful flavour in its taste, but also colour in its appearance and odour in how it smelt. As Saint Jerome says: Among the rich birds are steamed, for them to be refreshed by their appearance and arrangement, as people sensitive to wine, even when there is said in Proverbs 23:31: 'Look not upon the wine when it is yellow, when the colour thereof shines in the glass; it goes in pleasantly, but in the end it will bite like a snake'

(Verse 21). *For you showed your sustenance*, that is, your power to sustain, *and your sweetness*, that is, your power to delight, *to your children*, namely, by sustaining them by the substance of food and by delighting them with the taste of this food; Psalm 67:11: 'In your sweetness, O Lord, you have provided for the poor'; *you showed*, I say, by giving them sustaining and delightful food. *And serving*, namely, the aforementioned food or bread, *everyone's will*, namely, of those eating, *it was turned to what everyone liked*, that is, to whatever taste; for it had, as already stated, one clear taste by nature, but several by divine grace.

For when the fierce rage of beasts came upon these, they were destroyed with the bites of crooked serpents. Here is shown, firstly, the seriousness of the danger, secondly, the speed of the deliverance: *But your wrath endures not forever*; thirdly, the strength or power of the one who delivers: *For the one that turned to it, was not healed by that which was seen, but by you the Saviour of all.*

(Verse 5). He says, therefore: *For*, equivalent to, I have said well: *but to these it should only be shown how their enemies were destroyed*; *for*, meaning because; *upon these*, namely, the children of Israel, *when the fierce rage of beasts came*, namely, from offences against the heavenly judge, whom they offended by murmuring against him, as is clear in Numbers 21:6: 'The Lord sent among the people fiery serpents'. *They were destroyed*, namely, some of them, *with the bites of crooked serpents*, because they were capable of causing harm; so 1 Corinthians 10:9-10: 'You murmur as some of them murmured and perished by the serpents'.

(Verse 6). *But not forever*, that is, without end in such a way that eternal punishment follows on from temporal punishment, as in Herod in Acts 12:23. *Your wrath*, that is, the effect of your anger, not a movement of your soul, according to Jeremiah 3:12: 'I am the Lord and I am not angry'; *endures*, namely, in the children of Israel; Habakkuk 3:2: 'When you are angry, you will remember mercy'. *But they were troubled*, that is, afflicted, namely, externally and then *troubled* internally; *for a short time*, that is, for a brief moment, *for their correction*, not for condemnation, Isaiah 54:7-8: 'For a small moment have I forsaken you, but with great mercies will I gather you. In a moment of indignation have I hid my face a little while from you, but with everlasting kindness have I had mercy on you, said the Lord your Redeemer'; Jeremiah 30:11: 'I will not utterly consume you, but I will chastise you in judgment that you may not seem to yourself innocent'. *Having a sign of salvation*; 'A bronze serpent placed for a sign and they were healed by looking at it', as is clear in Numbers 21:9. *To put them in remembrance of the commandment of your law*, namely, to be observed, according to Psalm 102:18: 'And are mindful of the commandments to do them', just as a forgetful child is given the strap so that the child might repeat and be resolute in the lesson.

(Verse 7). And I have said well: *having a sign*, not a reason; *for the one that turned to it*, namely, either internally to God by penitence, or externally by looking at the bronze serpent; *was not healed*, that is, not by the bronze serpent, *by that which was seen*, namely, by a bodily eye; *but by you the Saviour of all*, represented by the aforementioned serpent; John 3:14: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up'; just as the dead child could not be roused by the staff of Elisha, to which it was not obedient in this, but by him, as stated in 2 Kings 4:31ff.

And in this you showed to our enemies, that you are the one who delivers from all evil. Here is added the reason for the aforementioned punishment and deliverance, namely, a display of divine justice and mercy, and, firstly, with regard to the punished Egyptians a display of divine justice; secondly, with regard to the freed Hebrews a display of divine mercy and certain other reasons: *But not even the teeth of venomous serpents overcame your children: for your mercy came and healed them.*

(Verse 8). *And in this*, namely, in the affliction of the Egyptians and in the easy deliverance of the Israelites, *you showed*, that is, you wanted to show even though they would not see; *to our enemies*, namely, the Egyptians; the enemies of the just are evil, namely, actively, not passively, because they hate the just, even though the just love them; *you showed*, I say, *that you*, alone, *are the one who delivers from all evil*; Psalm 33:20: 'Many are the tribulations of the just, but out of them all will the Lord deliver them'.

Contra: Why are many not delivered from sin?

It has to be said that it must be understood in this way: God delivers all who are to be delivered, as John 1:9 says: 'Enlightens every person who comes into this world', namely, who are to be enlightened.

(Verse 9). *For the bites of locusts, and of flies killed them*, namely, the Egyptians who did not worship you; *locusts*, Exodus 10:13ff.; and *flies*, Exodus 8:17; *killed*, literally some of them even though this is not stated there explicitly. *And there was found no remedy for their life*, namely, of the Egyptians, unlike the children of Israel from the serpents; Psalm 37:4: 'There is no health in my flesh, because of your wrath; there is no peace for my bones because of my sins'; Jeremiah 30:12: 'your bruise is incurable, your wound is very grievous'. *Because they were worthy*, namely, in accord with their merits, *to be destroyed by such things*, namely, by vile animals; so Saint Augustine son John says: 'God could have humbled Pharaoh's proud people by bears, by lions, by serpents, but he sent flies and the meanest creatures that their pride might be subdued'. For the same reason people are tormented by fleas; 'Why are you inflated with human pride? Drive off the fleas that you may sleep'.

But not even the teeth of venomous serpents overcame your children. Here is shown the varied reason for the deliverance of the Hebrews; but so as to proceed in an orderly manner, he treats, firstly, of their deliverance; secondly, of the varied reason for their deliverance: *for your mercy came and healed them.*

(Verse 19). *And at another time*, namely, when the animals were recalled, the fire, *above its own power*, namely, its natural power because by a miracle, *burned in the midst of water*, namely, throughout the whole land of Egypt, *to destroy a wicked nation of the earth*, that is, the Egyptians who were an earthly, not heavenly, nation; against what 1 Corinthians 15:49 says: 'As we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear the image of the heavenly'.

Instead of which things you fed your people with the food of angels, and gave them bread from heaven prepared without labour, having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste. Here, dealing with the consolation of the Israelites, he treats, firstly, of the showing of the gift; secondly, the reason for showing it: *For your sustenance showed your sweetness to your children, and serving everyone's will, it was turned to what everyone liked.*

(Verse 20). *Instead of which things*, namely, bad things, that is, in place of and in contrast to the bad things, *the food of angels*, that is, manna prepared by Angels; *you fed your people* etc.; so Psalm 77:25: 'People ate the bread of angels'; or because it prefigured the food of angels, namely, 'the living bread that came down from heaven', John 6:41. *You fed*, I say, *your people*, the children of Israel; this quickly nourished them 'until they were to reach the borders of the promised land', as stated in Exodus 16:35. *And bread prepared*, that is, refreshment, *from heaven*, namely, coming down from heaven, according to Psalm 77:24: 'Rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them the bread of heaven'; *prepared without labour.*

Contra: Because it is said in Numbers 11:8: 'The people went about, and gathering it, ground it in a mill, or beat it in a mortar, and boiled it in a pot, and made cakes thereof of the taste of bread tempered in oil'. I reply: They got it *without* the *labour* of agriculture, but not without the labour of preparing it. But we have labour in producing and preparing it; Genesis 3:19: 'In the sweat of your face'.

Having in it all that is delicious, that is, the effect of every delicious food by producing a similar delight in the one eating; *and the sweetness of every taste*, that is, every sweet flavour; for it tasted to each one as he or she so desired, as Saint Gregory says in Book VI of his *Moralia in Job*.

(Verse 16). *For the wicked that denied to know you, were scourged by the strength of your arm, and being persecuted by strange waters, and hail, and rain, and consumed by fire.* I have said well: *It is impossible to escape your hand; for the wicked that denied to know you, namely, the Egyptians, especially Pharaoh and his servants; denied, I say, in word, so Exodus 5:2: 'I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go'; and in actions of which Titus 1:16 says: 'They profess that they know God but in their works they deny God'. By the strength of your arm, that is, by your strong power; Exodus 15:11: 'Who is like you among the strong, O Lord, who is like to you, glorious in holiness, terrible and praiseworthy, doing wonders?' Being persecuted;* Exodus 6:6: 'I will bring you out from the work prison of the Egyptians with a high arm'; Exodus 15:6: 'Your right hand has slain the enemy'; *and, meaning, that is, being persecuted by strange waters, and hail, hail is like frozen water, and rain, like running water; Exodus 9:34: 'Pharaoh, seeing that the rain and the hail had ceased'; and consumed by fire, fire which came down at the same time; Exodus 9:24: 'The hail and the fire mixed with it drove on together'; also Psalm 104:32: 'God gave them hail for rain, a burning fire in the land'.*

(Verse 17). I have said well: *by fire with hail; which was wonderful;* namely, for one opposite to be destroyed by another, when there is written in Sirach 3:33: 'Water quenches a flaming fire'; so he continues: *in water, which extinguishes all things, namely, things on fire, the fire had more force, that is, acts more strongly with water. For the world fights, that is, as an instrument of punishment; fights, I say, for the world of the just, namely, defending the just; so above in Wisdom 5:21: The whole world shall fight with him against the unwise.* It is implied in the preceding text that the punishment of the Egyptians did not happen according to an order of nature, but according to an order of divine justice defending the Israelites against the Egyptians who oppressed them, Exodus 1:12ff; 'It is not surprising that hail and fire came mixed together, because all things obey the will of the Creator'.

(Verse 18). *For at one time, as if to say: it did not always happen in the same way; for, meaning but; at one time, the fire was mitigated, namely, until the animals of all who feared the words of Moses could be recalled or brought back from the fields; Exodus 9:19: 'Send and gather together your cattle, and all that you have in the fields', or field; and then in verse 20: 'He that feared the word of the Lord among Pharaoh's servants, made his servants and his cattle flee into houses'. Was mitigated, I say, that the animals which were sent against the wicked, that is, the beasts were sent by a divine action. Not only for this reason, but also, that they might see, the aforementioned variation, and perceive, namely, by this, that they were persecuted by the judgment of God, not by a natural phenomenon.: 'that they might know that every creature has to be ready to suffer the severity of the Creator'; Psalm 9:17: The Lord shall be known when executing judgments', who, as Saint Bernard says, the one causing injuries is not known. And note that the Lord punished Sodom by fire, Genesis 19:24, without clemency because there were no good people among them; but God punished the Egyptians with clemency because the children of Israel were in Egypt and they were good.*

(Verse 10). *But your children, namely, the Israelites; Exodus 4:22: 'My firstborn, Israel', your children, I say, through faith, according to John 1:12: 'He gave them power to be made the children of God, to them that believe in his name'; but not even the teeth of venomous serpents overcame, that is, of the fiery serpents; Deuteronomy 8:15: 'And was your leader in the great and terrible wilderness wherein there was the serpent burning with its breath, and the scorpion and the dipsas'. He is speaking of good people who are children of God, not of evil people.*

For your mercy; here he shows the varied reason for the deliverance of the Israelites, of which the first was the mercy of God; the second, the danger of despair: For they were examined for the remembrance of your words, and were quickly healed, lest falling into deep forgetfulness, they might not be able to use your help; the third, the power of a divine word: For it was neither herb, nor mollifying plaster that healed them, but your word, O Lord, which heals all things; the fourth, a display of divine mercy: For it is you, O Lord, that has power of life and death; the fifth, human weakness: One indeed kills through malice.

I have said well: *But not even the teeth of venomous serpents, that is, the bite of the fiery serpents, overcame your children, that is, the Israelites; for your mercy, that is, the effect of your mercy, came and healed them; Psalm 93:19: 'My foot is moved, your mercy, O Lord, assisted me'; Jeremiah 33:6: 'I will close your wound and give you health'; 'For God wounds and cures', Job 5:18.*

(Verse 11). *For they were examined, namely, some of them, for the remembrance of your words, that is, by a recompense of your commandments, and were quickly healed, or were saved, namely, other penitents after seeing the death or punishment of others; according to Psalm 77:34: 'When God slew them', that is, some of them, 'they sought God', that is other penitents. Or: they were examined, that is, were severely punished, and quickly healed, lest falling, that is, falling internally, into deep, that is, profound, forgetfulness, of despair because of a delay in the help and cure; they might not be able to use your help, that is, the help of your delivering grace, they, I say, because of their despair became unworthy of your mercy; Proverbs 18:3: 'When a wicked person comes into the depth of sins, contempt follows'; Psalm 105:21: 'They forgot God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt'.*

(Verse 12). And I have said well: *for the remembrance of your words; for*, meaning because, it was neither herb, that is, a drink made from herbs, which is absorbed internally by drinking; *nor mollifying plaster*, that is, a plaster put over the source of the pain; *that healed them*, namely, from the bites of the serpents. *But your word, O Lord*, that is, the command to make and look at the bronze serpent, Numbers 21:8-9; *which*, namely, the word, *heals all things*, namely, that are to be healed; so this is a limited application; Psalm 106:20: 'God sent the word and healed them'. Or: *The Word*, uncreated, that is, the Son of whom John 1:1 says: 'In the beginning was the Word'; this Word, 'cures bodies and heals souls from spiritual beasts'; Matthew 4:23: 'healing all manner of sickness and every infirmity'.

(Verse 13). *For it is you, O Lord*. I have said well that *your word heals all; for it is you, O Lord*, namely, the Creator of all things, that has power of life and death, that is, of giving life and ending life, according to 1 Samuel 2:6: 'The Lord kills and makes alive'; also Sirach 11:14: 'Life and death are from God'.

But contra: Because it was said above in Wisdom 1:13: 'God made not death'. I reply: It has to be said that while God is neither the meritorious nor efficient cause of death, God has power over death to prevent it, just as while God is not the cause of evil, God has power over evil because God knows and is able to draw good out of evil.

It has to be said about the objection that death is not from God, that in death there is a loss of life, which is nothing and so does not have an efficient cause, but rather an ineffective cause; also, it is a punishing torment which is something and is from God who inflicts it justly on sinners because of their sins.

And leads down to the gates of death, that is, to the final moment of life, *and brings back again*, as is clear in Hezekiah, Isaiah 38:1ff.

(Verse 14). *A man however kills indeed through malice*, as if to say: you can kill and make alive in this way; *however*, meaning but; *a man* can kill himself but not bring himself to life, and this is what he says: *a man*, namely, a sinner, called a man from ground; *kills indeed his soul*, that is, certainly, *through malice*, of guilt, for which reason Psalm 10:6 says: 'Whoever loves iniquity hates his or her own soul'; this is to kill oneself; for the sinner is a two edged sword for the sinner kills both body and soul; Sirach 21:4: 'All iniquity is like a two edged sword'. *And when the spirit is gone forth*, namely, from the body by death, *it shall not return*, namely, into the body in this life; Job 10:21: 'Before I go and return no more to a land that is dark and covered with the mist of death'; also 2 Samuel 14:14: 'We all die, and like waters that return no more, we fall down into the earth';

But contra: Because it is said in Psalm 145:4: 'The spirit shall go forth and the person shall return into the earth'. It has to be said that this is understood of a return into the earth as its natural dwelling place and of the body by its nature; but the words of the Psalm about the return to the earth apply to the justice of retribution and this by divine power.

Neither shall the one, namely, a human person, *call back, the soul*, separated from the body, *that is received*, in its place, namely, in glory or in punishment; Sirach 11:3: 'Wherever a tree falls, whether to the south or to the north, there shall it be'.

(Verse 15). *But it is impossible to escape your hand*, namely, your power both now or in the future, and in life or death; Job 10:7: 'There is no one that can deliver out of your hand'; so Psalm 138:7 says: 'Whither shall I go from your spirit or whither shall I flee from your face?' 'The hand of the Lord is not shortened', in fact it is extremely long and holds everything, according to Psalm 94:4: 'In your hand, O Lord, are all the ends of the earth'.

The second punishment of the senses inflicted by inanimate objects

For the wicked that denied to know you, were scourged by the strength of your arm, being persecuted by strange waters, and hail, and rain, and consumed by fire. Here he treats of the punishments inflicted on the Egyptians by inanimate objects; and, firstly, the punishment of the Egyptians is considered; secondly, in contrast the consolation of the Israelites: *Instead of which things you fed your people with the food of angels*; thirdly, the reason for the punishment of the Egyptians: *But snow and ice endured the force of fire, and melted not, that they might know that fire burning in the hail and flashing in the rain destroyed the fruits of the enemies*; fourthly, the reason for the consolation of the Israelites: *Therefore even then it was transformed into all things, and was obedient to your grace that nourishes all, according to the will of them that desired it of you*.

In the first part he states the cause of what the Egyptians merited; secondly, the method and form: *And which was wonderful, in water, which extinguishes all things, the fire had more force: for the world fights for the just*; thirdly, the difference from the point of view of more and less: *For at one time, the fire was mitigated, that the beasts which were sent against the wicked might not be burned, but that they might see and perceive that they were persecuted by the judgment of God*.