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THE BOOK OF WISDOM



CHAPTER 1

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 1

(Verse 1). *Love justice you that are the judges of the earth. Think of the Lord in goodness, and seek the Lord in simplicity of heart.* 'Not only act justly but love justice'. A work of justice is meritorious only when done from love of justice; 'A branch of good work has no sap in it unless it shall have remained in the root of charity'. *Justice*, namely, uncreated justice, namely, the correctness of the divine will, and created justice, namely, the correctness of human justice, according to Saint Anselm. I say *love justice* so that we might be conformed to God because according to Psalm 10:8: 'The Lord is just and has loved justice'. Also, that we might be filled with spiritual joy according to Psalm 44:8: 'You have loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows'. Also that we might be blessed according to Matthew 5:6: 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice'.

You that are the judges of the earth, especially you prelates who judge the earth in the public arena, *the earth* of the subject people; 'Those to whom the authority for judging is given'; subject, I say, because of sin. 'Where we do not sin, we are equal'. And the text says well: *earth*, that is, those who love the earth for there is no judgment for the heavenly; 1 Corinthians 2:15 says: 'The spiritual person discerns all things', namely, in hope, 'and is judged', that is, has to be judged, 'by no one'. 'Let such a one be before the beasts of the earth, that is, those living in a beastly manner'.

(Verse 16). *But the wicked with works and words have called it to them, and esteeming it a friend have fallen away, and have made a covenant with it, because they are worthy to be of the part thereof.* I have said well that death is not from God or from nature, *but the wicked* who are against God and neighbour, *with works and words*, : 'In actions and words', *have called it to them*, as if to say: it did not rush to them but they called for it, that is, for impiety and death, as is clear in the first parents in Genesis 3:3 and 19. *And esteeming it a friend*, that is, useful not harmful; 'Because they thought they could sin with impunity'; *they have fallen away*, that is, fell downwards, 'into eternal death'; but, firstly, into the death of guilt, secondly, into the death of temporal punishment, thirdly, into the death of eternal punishment; Hebrews 2:1: 'Therefore, ought we more diligently to observe the things which we have heard, lest perhaps we should let them slip'.

And they made a covenant with it, that is, an inseparable bond, like a betrothal, by their obstinate impenitence; : 'Lest they be separated'; Isaiah 28:15: 'We have entered into a league with death, and we have made a covenant with hell'.

They have rightly gone down into death *because they are worthy to be of the part thereof*, namely, of injustice by holding and defending it just as one defends the part to which one belongs; Romans 1:32: 'They who do such things are worthy of death'.

A progression in sins, of which Sirach 20:9 says: 'There is a progression in evil in a person without discipline', can be noted here; because, firstly, there is an impiety in the heart by consenting to wickedness; then in the hand by completing the work; then a word of defence or self glory; then friendship and a hope of impunity; afterwards a going down by a repetition of a wrongful habit; then a binding by a hardening of the mind; finally a death of final impenitence.

END OF WISDOM 1

Nor the kingdom of hell, that is, eternal perdition, upon the earth, that is, of people made from the earth; Genesis 2:7: The Lord God formed humankind from the dust of the earth. Hence, God wants to show that the death of sin and the perdition of eternal punishment do not come from nature but from a disordered will. Concerning the death of sin, it is clear : 'We do not sin from any necessity but from a disordered will'; concerning the perdition of punishment, it is clear : 'The devil could not have harmed people unless they had agreed'.

For justice is perpetual and immortal. Here he speaks of justice in work from the point of view of retribution; and, firstly, he touches on the reward of justice; secondly, on the punishment of injustice: thirdly, the equity of the penalty or of the punishment inflicted: But the wicked with works and words have called it to them.

(Verse 15). *For justice is perpetual and immortal, as if to say: I have said well that death is not from God nor from nature, but from the injustice of a disordered will. Justice is perpetual by giving eternal life, according to Proverbs 12:28: 'In the paths of justice is life'. And immortal by freeing from perpetual death; hence Wisdom 3:1: The souls of the just are in the hand of God and the torment of death shall not touch them.*

But injustice is the purchase of death, namely, of both temporal and eternal death; Romans 6:23: 'The wages of sin is death'; also Proverbs 12:28: 'The by-way leads to death'.

However, the wicked with works and words have called it to them and esteeming it a friend have fallen away, and have made a covenant with it because they are worthy to be of the part thereof. Here he shows the equity of retribution because he shows that the wicked merited this, firstly, by acting unjustly, and for this reason he says: The wicked with works and words have called it to them; secondly, by loving it in a familiar way: and esteeming it a friend they have fallen away; thirdly, by clinging closely to it: and have made a covenant with it; fourthly, by defending it strongly: because they are worthy to be of the part thereof.

Also all you, in general, *who*, by a private judgment, *are the judges of the earth*, of your own body; that is, who 'prudently restrain the body' so that 'your service may be reasonable', as in Romans 12:1.

Note that we read of a fourfold earth, namely, a higher earth, an earth, I say, of the living of which Psalm 26:13 says: 'I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living'. A lower earth, namely, of the dead; Ezekiel 31:18 says: 'Behold, you are brought down with the trees of pleasure to the lowest parts of the earth'. An external world, namely, of the dying, that is, the present world; Revelation 8:13 says: 'Woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth', that is, in the world. An interior world, namely of death, that is, a mortal and earthly body; Sirach 10:9 says: 'Why are earth and ashes proud?' The first earth is not subject to our judgment because it is not under our power and so it is well said to Peter in Matthew 16:19: 'Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth', not upon heaven.

The second earth cannot do penance because it is already judged; John 3:18: 'The one who does not believe is already judged'.

The third earth has to be judged by a judgment of justice, according to Psalm 57:2: 'Judge right things, all you people'.

The fourth earth has to be judged by a judgment of prudent discipline according to Sirach 33:25: 'Fodder, and a wand, and a burden are for an ass; bread and correction and work for a slave', that is, for the body that must be made to serve the spirit as seen in the example of blessed Martin who 'as his strength failed he compelled it to serve the spirit'; also in the example of Saint Paul who said: 'I chastise my body and bring it into subjection', just as it was in the state of innocence; *I bring it* by effort and works of penance. There must be given to this servant a portion of bread lest he or she act in a wanton manner, and an engagement in holy work lest he or she become sluggish.

(Verse 1). *Think*, that is, judge rightly of the Lord in goodness, judge well not badly as do heretics. He advises one to think well both by reading the divine Scriptures piously in their external meaning and by understanding them Piously in their inner meaning. 'Read and understand Scripture with piety'; with piety, namely, by devoutly approving and doing what you understand, not arguing with and despising what you do not understand.

And seek the Lord in simplicity of heart, namely, by directing to the Lord the whole attention of your heart. 'Submit yourselves to the will of the Lord'. Hypocrites do not do this and so are inconstant according to James 1:8: 'A double-minded person is inconstant in all his or her ways'. For this reason Sirach 2:14 says: 'Woe to them that are of a double heart!' A double heart is when its parts concentrate mainly on diverse things and this occasions spiritual death according to Hosea 10:2: 'Their heart is divided, now they will perish'. A heart is single-minded when it concentrates all its faculties on the one simplest thing, namely, on God, according to Sirach 30:24: 'Gather up your heart in God's holiness'. *In simplicity of heart*, that is, in a simple unity of heart. In a rational person faith forms this unity according to the text of Ephesians 4:5: 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'; it forms love in what is longed for, 1 Corinthians 6:17: 'Whoever is joined to the Lord is one spirit'; it forms peace in the irascible, Ephesians 4:3: 'Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace'. The first unity prevents a division of errors in the mind, the second of desires in the affections, and the third of schisms in what is done.

(Verse 2). I have said well: *in simplicity of heart. For the Lord is found* now by grace, Song 3:4: 'I found him whom my soul loves'; *by them that tempt him not* by pretending externally to be one thing but internally are intent on something else. This is how the Scribes and the Pharisees tempted Christ; Matthew 22:18 says against hypocrisy and duplicity: 'Why do you tempt me, you hypocrites?'

And the Lord *shows himself* in the future by glory, 1 John 3:2: 'When he shall appear we shall be like him'; Colossians 3:4: 'When Christ shall appear who is your life then you also shall appear with him in glory. The Lord shows himself to them that have faith in him'; this is spoken against heresy and infidelity.

Note what he says: *have faith in the Lord*, because it is not sufficient to believe in him or to believe him, but to have faith in him, namely, in an act of formed faith, according to Saint Augustine.

Or: *He is found* by devotion of affection. He shows himself in a contemplation of truth; Psalm 33:9: 'Taste' with affection; 'see', with the mind.

It has to be said that every just punishment is understood in itself, namely, in so far as it is a punishment, not in what it is; so it cannot be concluded that it comes entirely from God but it does come from God in so far as it is punishment.

Neither has God pleasure in the destruction of the living, that is, future destruction. Against this: Proverbs 1:26: 'I also will laugh in your destruction and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared'.

It has to be said that there is no delight in punishment in so far as it is a loss of nature, but in so far as it is an effect of justice; so Isaiah 1:24: 'Alas, I will comfort myself over my adversaries, and I will be revenged of my enemies'. And I have said well that there is no delight or rejoicing in perdition which is the way to non-being.

(Verse 14). *For God created all things that they might be*; 'Not that they might perish'. So there is a natural appetite for life inbuilt into everyone, namely, given internally. 'the common conception of a soul is that everything that exists tends towards good', and everything tends towards being; this proves that the being of all things is good. *God made the nations of the earth for health*, that is, created in spiritual health by innocence and able to be restored to health by penitence, lest they perish; for, according to Ezekiel 33:11: 'God does not desire the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from an evil way and live'. I say, *God made the nations of the earth*, namely all born into the world, *for health*. Therefore, that some cannot be cured comes from themselves and not from God; Jeremiah 30:12: 'Your bruise is incurable, your wound is very grievous'.

There is no poison of destruction in them; 'In their nature' referring to the nations, in which there is *no poison of destruction*, 'that is, a poisonous draught of sin', which is the cause of destruction in this present death; Baruch 3:19: 'They are cut off and are gone down to hell'. *Destruction* is called sin because it puts one outside the boundary of the life of nature; in the same way, the death of hell is called sin because it places one outside the boundary of glory; this is spoken as an antiphrasis, just as if poison were to be called medicine, and as if a fish-pond were to be called water lacking fish.

But there is an objection to the words: *There is no poison of destruction in them*, because Ephesians 2:3 says: 'We were by nature children of wrath'.

But it has to be said that the reference here is to actual sin or to nature before the fall, not fallen by sin of which the Apostle is speaking.

On the justice of a work from two points of view

Seek not death in the error of your life neither procure destruction by the works of your hands. Here he encourages justice in work and, firstly, from reasons taken from the point of view of creation; secondly, from the point of view of retribution, as in 1:15: *For justice is perpetual and immortal.*

From the point of view of creation, firstly, by a reason taken from the goodness of the Creator: *For God made not death*; secondly, by a reason taken from the purpose of creation: *For God created all things that they might be*; thirdly, by a reason taken from the condition of a creature: *there is no poison of destruction in them.*

(Verse 12). *Seek not death in the error of your life neither procure destruction by the works of your hands.* As if to say because a lie kills *do not seek death*, that is, a love or desire for it in your affections, that is, death of the soul, which, according to Saint Augustine, is incurred by guilt: 'The true death that people do not fear is the separation of the soul from God who is the blessed life of souls, just as bodily death is the separation of the body from the soul'. I say *seek not death in the error of your life* by bringing death to yourself, according to Proverbs 14:22: 'They err that work evil'; every evil person is in error. *Neither procure*, as a result, the *destruction* of eternal punishment; this is in our power according to Hosea 1:9: 'Destruction is your own, O Israel, your help is only in me. By the works of your hands', as the cause, that is, by the merit of your works. Everyone desires life and happiness and, therefore, no one desires death or perdition. It must be said that this is true in itself; but, accidentally and from the consequence, they are said to desire it who desire the action causing death and perdition. So he puts the consequence for the antecedent by adding, I have said well that error is the cause of death and evil works the cause of perdition.

(Verse 13). *For God*, the author of all things, according to John 1:3: 'All things were made by him', *made not death*, namely, present death.

But against this: Sirach 11:14: 'Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches, are from God'.

It has to be said that this refers to a death of guilt, or if it refers to a death of nature, it refers to privation, not to an experience of pain. With reference to the death of hell from a punishment of damnation, what is said here is true, namely, *God made not death.*

But against this: Every just punishment, every just good, indeed every good is from God.

'To tempt is the same as to test subtly'.

According to this definition there are four ways of tempting God, namely, by wanting to experience the power of God without just cause as did those who tempted Christ by asking for a sign from heaven, as in Matthew 16:1; or to experience his wisdom like the Sadducees who asked him a question that in their judgment was insoluble for those who believe in resurrection, as in Matthew 22:3ff.; or his justice as the Pharisees who, in Matthew 22:16, questioned him about paying taxes: 'Master, we know that you are a true speaker and teach the way of God in truth'; or his mercy when the Jews questioned him about the woman taken in adultery, as in John 8:3ff. Every such temptation arises from mistrust even though nothing about God is to be mistrusted, and so every such temptation is forbidden, so Proverbs 6:16 says: 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'; also Sirach 18:23 says: 'Be not a person who tempts God'.

For perverse thoughts separate from God. This refers to the triple harm to all who despise an exhortation to justice. The first harm is exclusion from the company of God: *For perverse thoughts separate from God*; the second is exclusion from the company of wisdom: *Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul*; the third is exclusion from the company of the Holy Spirit: *For the holy spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful*. The first refers to the Father, the second to the Son and the third to the Holy Spirit. Their presence is assured by a love for justice; so John 14:23 says: 'Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them and we will come to them and will make our abode with them'; they are absent or away wherever there is a hatred of justice.

(Verse 3). *For perverse thoughts separate from God and his power, when it is tried, reproves the unwise.* I have said well that it is clear to all who have faith in him, and not to others, that *perverse thoughts*, or behaviour, *separate from God* in the punishment of the damned; 2 Corinthians 6:14 says: 'What fellowship has light with darkness'; Proverbs 17:20: 'Whoever has a perverse heart shall not find good'; Isaiah 59:2: 'Your iniquities have been barriers between you and your God'.

His power when it is tried, that is, 'true power', according to namely, divine power; reproves by punishing Psalm 6:2: 'O Lord rebuke me not in your indignation'. *The unwise*: 'that is, all foolishness, and he says this about punishment of understanding'.

(Verse 4). *For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul.* I have said well that perverse thoughts separate from God, because *wisdom will not enter* by flowing into such a *malicious soul*. *Wisdom*, I say, 'which is from above and from the first is undefiled' etc.; but the wisdom from below, 'namely, earthly, animal and diabolical' will enter, as James 3:17 says. *Nor dwell*, by remaining, *in a body subject to sins*; it says this with reference to carnal sins that, while being less serious, are, however, more dishonourable.

It is objected that all things desire what is good and, therefore, no soul is malevolent, that is, wanting evil.

In reply it has to be said that no one desires evil for itself but indirectly because something evil is desired, for example, an evil action, not as something evil but as something desirable having an appearance of good.

There is further doubt as to whether a body can be a dwelling either for wisdom or for sin, foolishness or grace; therefore it is false to say: *Wisdom will not dwell in a body subject to sins*.

In reply to this it has to be said that here the word body does not refer only to a bodily part of a person; but by synecdoche, by which a part is used to refer to the whole, body here stands for the whole person in so far as it accedes to the passions of a body. 'Whoever subjects a body to sin is not a spirit'. In such a person wisdom does not dwell and: 'Heretics, Pharisees and false Christians cling to what are deceptions; only the clean of heart can receive the wisdom of God'.

(Verse 5). I have said well that wisdom will not dwell in a body subject to sins; *For the holy spirit of discipline*: 'Who teaches all discipline', and, according to John 16:13: 'The Spirit will teach you all truth', namely, rational, natural and moral wisdom; Psalm 118:66: 'Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge'. The Spirit is so named because the Spirit enkindles life; John 6:64 says: 'It is the Spirit that gives life'. The Spirit is holy in that it purifies and renews according to the text of Psalm 103:30: 'You shall send forth your Spirit and they shall be created and you shall renew the face of the earth'. This is the Spirit of discipline in so far as it takes away ignorance and gives wisdom, according to Isaiah 11:2: 'The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness'. The Spirit *will flee*, that is, will flee now far away, *from the deceitful*, that is, a sinner, according to Psalm 118:155: 'Salvation is far from sinners', especially from a hypocrite who is truly deceitful; Job 13:16: 'No hypocrite shall come before his presence'. *And the spirit will withdraw from thoughts that are without understanding, and shall not abide when iniquity comes in*, that is, false and wrong thoughts; understanding applies only to truth. As the Spirit withdraws there is a punishment of loss, and when the Spirit will not abide there is a punishment of understanding.

Keep yourselves therefore from murmuring. This verse recommends caution against evil speech, and it states, firstly, its exhortation; secondly, the necessity for the exhortation: *For an obscure speech shall not go for nought and the mouth that lies, kills the soul.*

(Verse 11). This verse is to be understood as connected in this way: from whom *the tumult of murmuring shall not be hid*, therefore, *keep yourselves from murmuring*, namely, against God, for it *profits nothing*, in fact it rather harms; so 1 Corinthians 10:10 says: 'Some of them murmured and were destroyed by the destroyer'. Verse 11 goes on to say: *refrain your tongue from detraction*, namely, against a neighbour; Job 6:25: 'Why have you detracted the words of truth? Refrain the tongue from detraction'; it does not say: refrain from the neighbour, but from the tongue, namely, your tongue, because, by detraction, one first of all damages oneself. Hence, detraction is worse than the venom of a snake; 'The poison that snakes use to damage others does not harm them; but detraction swallows part of its own poison'. 'Murmurings and detractions are dangerous'; Romans 1:30: 'Detractors, hateful to God'. *Detractors* are referred to in the plural because detraction occurs in many ways, namely, as when a secret good is denied, or made little of when it is public, or when a secret evil is made public, or further divulged when it is public. And I have said well: *Refrain your tongue from detraction for an obscure speech shall not go for nought*: *Obscure*, as is a word of murmuring, *shall not go for nought*, that is, will not remain without punishment, anymore than an idle word; Matthew 12:36: 'Every idle word that you speak, you shall render an account for it in the day of judgment'; therefore, much more for a malicious word. 'An idle word', 'is spoken without benefit for the speaker or the listener'; 'Everything that does not edify listeners becomes a danger for the speakers'. A mouth that lies, namely, by detraction, kills the soul; 'By the point of the sword of sin the soul of a liar is killed'; Psalm 5:7: 'You will destroy all that speak a lie'.

Note that the reference here is to a destructive lie, one that is mortal, not facetious or official: 'A lie is of less guilt when one lies in securing a benefice'. But it seems that a certain lie can be good and meritorious because, by lying, the midwives merited a reward from the just judge, namely, God, who cannot be deceived, as is clear in Exodus 1:15ff.

It must be said that 'it was not a reward for a lie but for the kindness of their piety'. But could the one and the same action be a sin and also have merit for kindness? It would seem that it could: 'For one and the same action, God pardons evil for the sake of good and rewards the good'.

It has to be said that it was one action by interconnection not by indivisibility because the intention to free was different from the will to lie, even though both are connected.

Therefore, one speaking unjust things cannot be hid, neither shall the chastising judgment pass by such a one. Putting aside a foolish confidence in impunity, the text foretells the punishment for evil speech: firstly, because it is brought to judgment; secondly, because it is brought to naught by the judge: *Into the thoughts of the ungodly*; thirdly, because it is made known to all: *For the ear of jealousy hears all things*.

(Verses 8-9). He says therefore: For this reason, because the Holy Spirit has *knowledge of the voice*, that is, of all speech, *one speaking unjust things cannot be hid* from the Holy Spirit at the present moment, like those in Psalm 62:12: 'The mouth is stopped of them that speak wicked things'. So in Hebrews 4:13 we read: 'all things are naked and open to the eyes [of the Spirit]'; also Proverbs 16:2: 'All the ways of people are open to the eyes [of the Spirit]'. *Neither shall the chastising judgment pass by*, by taking no notice of such a one, that is, the one speaking unjust things, but *chastising*, that is, punishing; or *chastising*, that is, at one time taking the body and soul or all the evil works, words and thoughts; *judgment*, namely, in the future; 'all things that are done, God will bring into judgment', Ecclesiastes 12:14.

Into the thoughts of the ungodly, that is, concerning the thoughts of the ungodly in which the sin is less than in evil speech, *inquisition shall be made*, that is, an enquiry and examination by a judge, according to Psalm 10:6: 'The Lord tries the just and the wicked'; Job 42:2: 'I know that no thought is hid from you'. And if there will be an enquiry into thoughts, how much more stringent it will be for speech; for this reason the text adds: *And the hearing of their words will come to God, for the chastising of their iniquities*, as if to say: not only for thoughts. *And*, meaning but, *the hearing of their words*, that is an examination, *before God*, as before the examiner and judge, will come, and *for the chastising*, that is, the punishment of *iniquities* that were committed by speaking unjust things; Genesis 18:20: 'The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is multiplied and their sin is become exceedingly grievous'.

(Verse 10). And I have said well that God will come *for the chastising*; because *the ear of jealousy*, I say of the jealousy of God who is jealous for souls as for brides, *hears all things*, that is, knows as one who hears everything, that is, words whether they be evil, good or indifferent, just as a jealous man carefully listens to the words of a bride and of those speaking about her; Exodus 20:5: 'I am the Lord your God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me'. *And the tumult of murmuring*, by which people murmur against God; Sirach 33:5: 'The heart of a fool is like a wheel of a cart'. The text says *tumult* because a person murmuring is like someone making a noise with the teeth but not speaking clearly. *Shall not be hid*, but made known to the whole world; Luke 12:2: 'There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hidden that shall not be known'; Exodus 16:12: 'I have heard the murmuring of the children of Israel'.

Also, note that the Spirit is said to withdraw because necessarily a guilty action precedes the withdrawal of grace, for God is the first to approach and the last to go away. Even though the Spirit withdraws from them, they will not remain exempt from correction. So the text continues: *and shall not abide when iniquity comes in*. Correction is made with words but the Spirit's withdrawal is accompanied with beatings. I say a deceitful person *shall not abide* in the future, that is, he or she will be punished when iniquity comes in, namely, because of the iniquity that comes in. 'A deceitful person will be punished for iniquity when the judgment day comes'. Coming in implies oppressing because it is described as coming in just as one who oppresses comes in. Or: The Spirit shall not abide, that is, the person will be taken body and soul together for punishment.

The justice of speech considered in three ways

For the spirit of wisdom is benevolent. This is an admonition for justice in speech, to withdraw from wrong words. Firstly, it takes away a presumption of immunity from those who speak in an evil way; secondly, it foretells their punishment: *Therefore, the one who speaks unjust things cannot be hid*; thirdly, it advises to beware of wrongful speech: *Keep yourselves therefore from murmuring which profits nothing*.

Firstly, it takes away a presumption of immunity that can arise from the mercy of judgment: *Benevolent*; secondly, it can arise from ignorance: *God is witness of the inmost feelings*; thirdly, it can arise from powerlessness: *The spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world*.

(Verse 6). He says: *The spirit of wisdom is benevolent*. I have said well that *it will flee from the deceitful*. *The spirit of wisdom is benevolent* referring to the uncreated wisdom of the Son from whom the Holy Spirit is given, or to created wisdom that the Son gives, as stated later in Wisdom 12:1: *O how good and sweet is your spirit, O Lord, in all things!* Psalm 142:10 says: 'Your good spirit will lead me into the right land'. The Spirit *will not acquit the evil speaker from his or her lips*, even though it is benevolent, because, 'discipline and mercy are much weakened if one is had without the other'. Or, in this way: because it is benevolent, it will not acquit the evil speaker, for benevolence is contrary to evil: 'It will not acquit the evil speaker, that is, one cursing', who is cursed because this person is acting against a command of God who forbids cursing; Psalm 118:21: 'They are cursed who depart from your commandments'; this is cursing in the present moment. Also, Matthew 25:41 says: 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels'; this is cursing in the future. *From his or her lips*, that is, from a sin of the lips or from the punishment one has merited by a sin of the lips; Matthew 12:37 says: 'By your words you shall be condemned'; also Psalm 139:10 says: 'The labour of their lips shall overcome them'. Note that the result is put before the cause when cursed is stated before speaking evil.

God is the witness of the inmost feelings, as if to say: in truth they are punished for their sins, even secret sins, since *God is the witness of the inmost feelings*, that is, of the affections or 'carnal delights whose source is in the inmost feelings'. God has sure knowledge as a witness of the matter for which God gives testimony; Jeremiah 29:23: 'I am the judge and the witness, says the Lord'. *And God is a true searcher of the heart*, that is, thoughts come out of the heart, as stated in Matthew 15:19. *God is a true searcher*, that is, an infallible searcher, so 1 Corinthians 2:10 says: 'The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God'; also Jeremiah 17:10 says: 'I am the Lord who searches the heart and tests the inmost feelings'; Psalm 7:10 says: 'The searcher of hearts and inmost feelings is God'. *And God is a hearer of the tongue*, that is, of the words that make up speech and a *hearer*, that is, one who knows immediately without the report of another; Psalm 93:9 says: 'God formed the ear, shall God not hear?' This is equivalent to saying: Yes. And note that the text mentions the organs for the actions coming from them, since the organs are closer to the soul than what the soul does, and in the same way God is closer than anyone else and knows all human actions whether they be interior or exterior.

(Verse 7). *For the spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world and that which contains all things has knowledge of the voice*. This is equivalent to saying: I have said well that the Spirit can do this; *for the spirit of the Lord*, not taken as intransitive, that is, which is Lord. 'The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Spirit is Lord'; or taken as transitive, that is, the Spirit who is from the Lord, according to the text of Isaiah 61:1: 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me'; also 'The Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father shall give testimony of me'. *The spirit has filled the whole world*, by assisting all things, by being present to and holding them together Jeremiah 23:24: 'Do I not fill heaven and earth'," 'God is everywhere, within everything but not closed in, outside everything but not excluded, above everything but not raised up, below everything but not put down'. *And that which contains all things, namely*, the Holy Spirit who contains all things and maintains them with power. For just as Boethius proves in his book *De Consolatione*: 'The world from such diverse and contrary parts could not come together into one form, and the discordant diversity once joined would break up unless there was One who could join and hold together what was joined'. *Has knowledge of the voice*, that is, of all speech and languages, from knowing all things. From this it is clear that the Spirit can know and punish all things, actions because of a universal presence and words because of a universal knowledge.

That which contains all things, 'that is, the Holy Spirit who contains all things, that is, the Church', for whatever is outside it is nothing, similar to being outside the ark of Noah. *Has knowledge of the voice*, by speaking as a cause, 'that is, the Spirit gives understanding of Scripture to people'; or formally: the Spirit *has knowledge of the voice*, that is, with the Son of whom John 1:1 says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'.

The text can be interpreted allegorically of the temporal coming of the Holy Spirit. It mentions, firstly, the person of the One sent when it says: *the Spirit*; secondly, the eternal origin: *of the Lord*; thirdly, the temporal mission: *has filled*; fourthly, the manifestation of the mission: *And that which contains all things*.

Therefore, the text says: *the Spirit of the Lord has filled*; 'with gifts', *the whole world*, 'that is, the Church spread throughout all lands'. *And that which contains all things*, 'that is, a man who has a likeness to every creature', for which reason, in the last chapter of Mark, *every creature* is mentioned. *Has knowledge of the voice*; : 'Of the diverse languages by the Holy Spirit' as is clear in Acts 2:4.

By reason of its extension, the early Church is compared to *the whole world*, according to Psalm 18:5: 'Their sound has gone forth into all the earth'.

Secondly, by reason of its perfection implied in the roundness of the earth; Song 6:8: 'One is my dove, my perfect one'.

Thirdly, by reason of its stability, Ecclesiastes 1:4: 'The earth stands forever'.

Fourthly, by reason of its compression and chastisement; 1 Corinthians 4:9: 'I think that God has set forth us apostles, the last, as it were men appointed to death', just as the earth is the last body and so is bruised and crushed by all.

Fifthly, by reason of provisioning and keeping the human race alive for it lives from and is provisioned by the earth, as in the early Church; Job 9:13: 'Under whom they stoop that bear up the world', namely, the apostles and their followers; however, they are not broken because Psalm 74:4 says: 'I have established the pillars thereof'.

Sixthly, by reason of the adorning and producing of all the virtues, according to Genesis 1:11: 'Let the earth bring forth the green herb and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, which may have seed in itself upon the earth'.

Seventhly, by reason of the waters, that is, the source of wise healing doctrine, according to the text of Genesis 2:6: 'A spring rose out of the earth, watering all the surface of the earth'.