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THE BOOK OF WISDOM



CHAPTER 2

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 2

Secondly, on justice towards a neighbour considered in two ways

For they have said, reasoning with themselves, but not rightly: The time of our life is short and tedious, and in the end of life there is no remedy, and no one has been known to have returned from hell. Above he dealt with justice towards God but here his main concern is with justice towards a neighbour; and firstly, in this chapter by drawing back from being like the unjust; secondly, in the third chapter by provoking to a likeness of the just.

Firstly, it withdraws from being like the unjust by noting three things

In the first part he proposes, firstly, the cause that drives one to live unjustly; secondly, in verse 6 he describes an unjust life: *Come therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present*; thirdly, however, in verse 21 he shows that it is not to be copied: *These things they thought, and were deceived.*

In the first part he touches on the triple cause that drives: the first from the point of view of place; the second from the point of view of nature: *For we are born of nothing*; the third from the point of view of a name or reputation: *And our name in time shall be forgotten.*

(Verses 21, 22, 23, 24, 25). *These things*, namely, what has been said above, *they thought*, and the impious did; *and they were deceived*; so further on in 5:6 he says: *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*; also Proverbs 14:22: 'They err that work evil'. *For their own malice blinded them*, that is, blinded their interior eye; so in the prayer of Jeremiah: 'Woe to us, because we have sinned; therefore, are our eyes become dim'; also 2 Corinthians 4:4: 'The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers'.

And they knew not the secrets of God, that is, the sacred and secret counsels and dispositions concerning the passion and resurrection of Christ; Ephesians 3:3 and 5: 'The mystery has been made known to me, which in other generations was not known'. *Nor hoped for the wages of justice*, 'That is, of the death of Christ', namely, his exaltation on the cross of which Philippians 2:9 says: 'For which cause God also has exalted him'. *Nor esteemed*, 'That is, understood', *the honour of holy souls*, that is, the salvation of holy souls through the death of Christ and the resurrection to be reached; 'They did not understand that the death of Christ is the honour and salvation of souls'; Psalm 138:17: 'But to me your friends, O God, are made exceedingly honourable, their principality is exceedingly strengthened'; also 1 Peter 2:7: 'To you, therefore, who believe, he is honour'.

And I have said well: *Honour*, because *God created humankind incorruptible*, that is, able not to die in the body; 'and to the image', namely, in the soul; Genesis 1:26: 'Let us make humankind to our image and likeness'; 'to the image', in what belongs to nature; 'to his likeness', in what is given; or: 'to the image', in the power of knowing; 'to the likeness', in the power of the will; for image is the principle of knowing, likeness is the reason for loving; Sirach 13:19: 'Every beast loves its own'. Such was how humankind was made.

But by the envy of the devil who envied the happiness of the first parents, *death came into the world.* Against this: Romans 5:12: 'By one man sin entered into this world and by sin death'.

It has to be said that it entered at the suggestion of the devil and by human consent.

They follow him, that is, the devil and they *are on his side*, by envying the just. Such are the impious who are on the side of the devil. 'For he is the head of all the wicked'

To a most shameful death; ‘That is, by death on a cross which, until the passion of Christ was a punishment for criminals, now is the trophy of victory and the glory of the Church’; ‘The cross has passed from the punishments of thieves to the foreheads of emperors’. Because death on a cross is most shameful, the Apostle, to show the value of the death of Christ, says in Philippians 2:8: ‘He humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross’.

The death of Christ was most shameful because of the place since it was outside the city in the location of Calvary, that is, in a place where the heads of the beheaded were thrown, as in Matthew 27:31-33.

Because of the time since it was on a solemn day at the great hour, namely, ‘the sixth hour’, John 19:14. Because of the instrument, since it was on the wood of a cross; 1 Peter 2:24: ‘Who his own self bore our sins in his body upon the tree’.

By reason of the company, since it was between thieves, Luke 23:33. Because of the disgrace, since many reproaches were uttered at the one hanging, as is clear in Matthew 27:39ff.

Let us condemn him to a most shameful death. Note that Pilate condemned him with authority, the Jews with persuasion. *For there shall be respect had unto him by his words,* that is, knowledge of the truth of his words; ‘We will see, if after death he can raise up the flesh; for he said: ‘Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it’, John 2:19.

These things they thought and were deceived. Here he shows that the life of such people is to be avoided as erroneous; and, firstly, he treats of the cause leading to their error; secondly, the substance of the error: *And they knew not the secrets of God;* thirdly, the author of the error: *By the envy of the devil, death came into the world.*

A triple consideration from the point of view of place: firstly, the place of the world in verse 1: *The time of our life is short and tedious;* secondly, the place of paradise: *in the end of life there is no remedy;* thirdly, the place of hell: *and no one has been known to have returned from hell.*

(Verse 1). *For the wicked have said, reasoning with themselves, but not rightly.* In 1:16, I said well that *the wicked with works and words have called* injustice and death *to them.* *For the wicked have said,* that is, people deficient in piety towards God and neighbor ‘The voice is from the damned who like brute animals love what is present, despise what is future, and do not hope for eternal rest after this life’. *Reasoning with themselves* because ‘they dare not do so openly’, according to Psalm 13:1: ‘Fools say in their hearts. There is no God’. Were they to say this openly they would be afraid of incurring a punishment. *Reasoning with themselves but not rightly,* rather wrongly. *The time of our life is short and tedious,* because of its brevity, according to Job 14:5: ‘Their days are short’. They are tedious because they are subject to punishment; Job 14:1: ‘A mortal, born of woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries’. *The time of our life;* ‘of the present life’, during which they live for themselves and not for God; so it adds: *our,* and 2 Corinthians 5:15 is against this: ‘They also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again’. *And in the end of life there is no remedy;* ‘That is, rest after death’. This is false because Psalm 65:12, speaking in the person of the saints, says: ‘We have passed through fire and water, and you have brought us out into a refreshment’; also Jeremiah 6:16: ‘Ask for the old paths which is the good way, and walk in it, and you shall find refreshment for your souls’; also Revelation 14:13: ‘Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, says the Spirit that they may rest from their labours’.

And no one has been known to have returned from hell. By this they intend to avoid saying there is a hell; but by the same argument they can say there is no death because no dead person has returned to life. Hence, their argument has no force because in nature there is no crossing from not having to having; and so, in accord with the common law, no one returns from the lower hell; Job 7:9 says: ‘The one who goes down to hell shall not come up’. Some have been said to have come back by a privilege of grace, such as the youth whom John the Evangelist, and Trajan whom Saint Gregory brought back to life. But from the higher hell, Christ brought back and raised up many by himself or by his disciples.

For we are born of nothing and after this we shall be as if we had not been. This gives the motivating reason from the point of view of nature, firstly, from a consideration of our human origin, secondly, from a consideration of our composition: *as if we had not been*, and thirdly, from a consideration of our death: *Which being put out.*

(Verse 2). I have said well that there will be neither remedy nor prayer because we will not be suitable subjects for such things, *for we are born of nothing*, from the soul's immediate origin and the process of the body's origin; 2 Maccabees 7:28: 'Consider that God made them out of nothing and humankind as well'. *And after this*, that is, after this life, we shall be as if we had not been, as if to say: we shall go back into nothingness, according to a text of Saint Damascene: 'Whatever begins from a change, is subject to change'; 'It is natural that what is from nothing can be turned back to nothing'. This is to be understood of the first aptitude, not of necessity, because, by the hand of the Creator, they are held back from falling into nothing.

For the breath in our nostrils is smoke, namely, with reference to our vital, bodily, intrinsic spirit; smoke is like a fiery vapour and the vital spirit is a body as subtle as fire; *smoke*, that is a wind that is breathed, with reference to the external body; James 4:15: 'What is your life? It is a vapour that appears for a little while'; Job 7:7: 'My life is but wind'; Psalm 101:4: 'My days are vanished like smoke'.

In our nostrils, he says this in a special sense by wanting us to understand the whole body represented by a part, due to the easy exit as if it would be in the nostrils; also, for the sake of an example, because by breathing in and breathing out it is more clearly manifested. *And speech a spark to move our heart*, 'that is, the soul is likened to a spark'; hence, 2 Samuel 14:7: 'They seek to quench my spark'. The soul is called *speech* according to the opinion of infidels because in their thinking the soul is not a reality but only a name or word; it is compared to a *spark* because according to some Philosophers the soul is said to be of a fiery nature. Or better: The soul can be called *speech* from its effect because it has the power to speak; it is compared to a spark on account of its subtle nature and freedom in movement; hence in 3:7 is said: *The just shall shine and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds*; and also because of its short duration, according to the infidels; 'It is like a spark because it immediately becomes nothing'. *To move our heart*, that is, to vivify or make it grow', breathing out is *in our nostrils*, that is, in our bodies for it is ready to leave the body as breath from the nose.

For if he be the true son of God, as he foretold, not by a grace of adoption, as with us, but by a natural property of eternal generation, *God will defend him*, namely, in glory; Isaiah 42:1: 'Behold my servant, I will uphold him'. *And will deliver him*, namely, from punishment; and this is what follows: *from the hands of his enemies*, that is, from those crucifying him who were his enemies. God did both these things for him, for God freed him from punishment, according to Psalm 17:48: 'My deliverer from my angry enemies', namely, on the day of suffering, after he endured mortal death; and raised him up, not immediately, but on the third day, according to Zephaniah 3:8: 'Expect me in the day of my resurrection'; and God defended him with glory on the day of the ascension; so Psalm 72:24 says: 'With your glory you have received me'.

Thirdly, the persecution of Christ is described in its special kind of oppression

Let us examine him by outrages and tortures, that we may know his meekness and try his patience. Here he treats of the special kind of oppression, firstly, how it was leading to death; secondly, the death itself: *Let us condemn him to a most shameful death.*

(Verses 19, 20). Therefore, he says: *outrages*, namely, in words, *and tortures*, namely, in scourges; Hebrews 11:36: 'The saints experienced mockeries and scourges'; *Let us examine him*, that is, let us test him. This was done, as is clear in Matthew 27:29ff., and John 19:1, because he was mocked with abusive words and beaten with whips and, finally, fixed with nails to the yoke of the cross. *That we may know his meekness*, that is, his humility, by which he feared God; Hebrews 5:7: 'Was heard for his reverence'. *Let us try his patience*, namely, by *tortures*; that is, to see if he is truly humble and patient. And truly this was so, because: 'When he was reviled, he did not revile, when he suffered, he threatened not', 1 Peter 2:23. 'What anyone may conceal in oneself, is examined by outrages inflicted'.

And his ways are very different; 'They are made not like others', namely, his actions and discipline; Isaiah 55:8: 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways my ways, says the Lord'.

We are esteemed by him as triflers, and he abstains from our ways. Here he treats the driving force from the point of view of words, and, firstly, he considers their rejection; secondly, their approbation: *he prefers the latter end of the just*; thirdly, his self commendation: *and glories that he has God for his father.*

(Verse 16). Accordingly, *we are esteemed by him as triflers*, that is, doing and saying foolish things; Zephaniah 3:18: 'The triflers that were departed from the law, I will gather together'. *And he abstains from our ways*: 'That is, from our actions and traditions'; *as from filthiness*, and indeed rightly because they were truly unclean; so Ezekiel 36:17: 'Their way was before me like the uncleanness of a menstruous woman'. *And he prefers the latter end of the just*, that is, the end, and indeed rightly because 'the death of the wicked is very evil', but the death of the just is precious, according to Psalm 115:15: 'Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of the saints'; so, in Numbers 23:10: 'Let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them'. Or, *He prefers the latter end of the just*, 'that is, eternal life to pleasure'. *And glories that he has God for his father*; John 8:54: 'It is my Father who glorifies me'.

Secondly, the purpose of the persecution of Christ is described

Let us see then if his words be true. Here in the person of the Jews he treats, firstly, of the purpose for the persecution of Christ, which was that they wanted to know the truth about Christ; secondly, he adds, how they were able to know this: *For if he be the true son of God, God will defend him, and will deliver him from the hands of his enemies.*

(Verses 17, 18). *Let us see then if his words be true*, as if to say: let us see, as if from afar, for what reason he so glories when speaking of his death; John 11:47: 'The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council' against Jesus. *Let us see then if his words be true*, namely, that he is in truth the Son of God. The centurion who, seeing him calling out and dying, the movement of the earth and other signs, saw and knew this and said in Matthew 27:54: 'Indeed this was the Son of God'. *And let us prove*, from nearby, by exposing him to crucifixion and death, *what shall happen to him*, namely, if he will be able to free himself; Matthew 27:42: 'He saved others, himself he cannot save'. *And we shall know*, or: so that we may know, *what his end shall be*, namely, if he will rise up. And we shall know this from guarding his tomb; so Matthew 27:63: 'Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again'.

The text continues: *Which being put out, our body shall be ashes, and our spirit shall be poured abroad as soft air.* I have said well that the soul is compared to a spark because a spark is quickly extinguished, and because our body will be ashes put out, namely, after the extinction of the soul that, according to infidels, is extinguished in death. But the text is more accurate: *Which being put out* etc. This refers to the driving reason from a reflection on its undoing, and firstly, from a reflection on its undoing in the body; secondly, in the spirit, as: *our spirit shall be poured abroad as soft air*; thirdly, in its life: *and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud.*

(Verse 3). He says, therefore: *Which*, namely, the soul, *being put out*, according to them, *our body shall be ashes*; Sirach 17:31: 'All human beings are dust and ashes'; also Genesis 18:27: 'I will speak to my Lord whereas I am dust and ashes'. Through absorbing natural moisture, the body is consumed and turns into ash; *and our life*, our vital bodily life, *shall pass away*, that is, by going back into its component principles; *as soft air*, that is, easily and invisibly; air is said to be soft because it evades touch. Or: non-bodily *life*, that is, the soul, shall be poured abroad, that is, vanish and be dissipated according to some as in Psalm 102:16: 'For the spirit shall pass in him and he shall not be, and he shall know his place no more'. *And our life shall pass away*, that is, it will cease totally from the annihilation of its principles. *As the trace of a cloud* that cannot be seen after the breaking up of a cloud; Job 30:15: 'As a wind you have taken away my desire', namely temporal; also in Job 7:9: 'As a cloud is consumed and passes away, so the one that shall go down shall not come up'. *And shall be dispersed as a mist*, a mist being the remnant of a cloud; a cloud is made up of the heavier and lower vapours, a mist of the lighter vapours. *Which*, like a mist, *is driven away as the beams of the sun*, with the heat of the surrounding air uniting and dispersing the parts of the cold vapour; *and overpowered with the heat thereof*, the cold of the cloud is driven by the heat to the interior parts and so accidentally it condenses parts of the matter and so overpowers and afterwards turns it into water; Job 37:21: 'The air on a sudden shall be thickened into clouds and the wind shall pass and drive them away'.

And our name in time shall be forgotten. Here is shown the driving reason from the point of view of fame or name; firstly, the taking away of fame is treated; secondly, the reason for the taking away, for the text says: *Our time is as the passing of a shadow.*

(Verse 4). He says, therefore: *And our name*, as if to say: not only will our essence or substance pass into nothing, but also *our name*, that is, our fame as a person, *in time shall be forgotten*, that is, with the passing of time; Proverbs 10:7: 'The name of the wicked shall rot'. *And no one shall have remembrance of our works*, regarding our life; Job 18:17: 'Let their memory perish from the earth'; also in Psalm 9:7: 'Their memory has perished with a noise'; but on the contrary: 'The just shall be in everlasting remembrance'. But it is objected that the works of many wicked people, namely, Cain, Pharaoh, Nero etc. are still remembered.

It has to be said this opinion applies to the reprobate and so it is not out of place to say that it is false. Or it has to be said that they are not remembered with a praiseworthy memory or with one useful to them; it is of this the book is speaking here. But it is objected that the actions of many reprobate are remembered as distinguished and praiseworthy.

It has to be said to this that these actions were not their own but of God in them, according to the text of Isaiah 26:12: 'Lord, you have wrought all our works for us'. (Verse 5). To be remembered, two things are necessary, namely, a strong impression and frequent repetition and he excludes both when he adds: *Our time is as the passing of a shadow*, because it passes quickly; I Chronicles 29:15: 'Our days upon earth are as a shadow and there is no stay'. I say: *Our time is as the passing of a shadow*, that is, time spent in doing our own will, not God's; but sometimes the Lord will accept this time; Psalm 74:3: 'When I shall take a time, I will judge justices'. *And there is no going back of our end*, from the impossibility of going back; Job 10:21: 'Before I go and return no more to a land that is dark and covered with the mist of death'. *For our return is fast sealed*, that is, under a closed seal. 'Fast sealed as if it cannot be seen because it is not'. *And no one returns* to life, namely, by the common law; Psalm 48:12: 'Their sepulchres shall be their homes forever', namely, according to their opinion, but according to truth all at some time will rise by divine power; 1 Corinthians 15:51: 'We shall all indeed rise again, but we shall not all be changed'.

Note, however, that the life and condition of the wicked is said to be smoke due to the blinding of reason, as stated further on in 2:21: *Their own malice blinded them*; also Romans 1:21: 'Their foolish heart was darkened'. It is compared to a *breath* because of the disturbance of an irritable unrest, Isaiah 57:20: 'The wicked are like the raging sea'; to a *spark* because of the inflaming of desire, Sirach 23:22: 'A hot soul is a burning fire, it will never be quenched'; to *air*, because of the emptiness of intention; to *ashes*, because of the bareness of the works, as in 3:11: *Their works are unprofitable*; to a *cloud*, because of a resistance to grace; to a lighter *mist*, because of the elevation or elation of the mind; to a *shadow*, because of an external false appearance.

(Verse 13). *He boasts that he has the knowledge of God*; 'That is, to know everything as God', and this as belonging to his essence. *And he calls himself the son of God*, 'that is, consubstantial and coeternal with God', as a person; John 5:18: 'He also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God'. In this way, every person who has knowledge of God in the mind, is a son of God by grace in the affections; so in Psalm 81:6: 'I have said, you are gods', namely, by knowing good and evil, 'and sons of the most High'.

He is become a censurer of our thoughts. Here he states the driving force from the point of view of thoughts, and, firstly, he treats of how the thoughts of the Jews were made manifest by Christ; secondly, the effect of this manifestation, not from the point of view of being caused by Christ, but from the point of view of the Jews, namely, their envy: *He is grievous to us, even to behold.*

(Verse 14). *He is become a censurer*, that is, in making evident, *our thoughts*; 'He brings our thoughts into the light', that is, makes them known publicly; so Matthew 9:4: 'Why do you think evil in your hearts?' So the word 'expose' in Matthew 1:19 is taken to mean make manifest where it says: 'Not willing publicly to expose her'.

(Verse 15). *He is grievous to us, even to behold*, namely, because of making our sins manifest; 'Light is annoying to sick eyes'; John 3:20: 'For everyone who does evil hates the light'. That they were not able to see him was a sign of envy; so 1 Samuel 18:9: 'Saul did not look on David with a good eye', namely, because he envied him. *For his life is not like others*, namely, the whole external life or conduct.

Against this: Hebrews 2:17: 'It behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren'.

It must be said, that the Apostle is speaking of a likeness in a nature subject to suffering, and here to the likeness of sin.

Note, however, that his life or conduct was dissimilar to others in its beginning because he was conceived and born without sin; Isaiah 6:13: 'That which shall stand therein shall be a holy seed', that is, in Mary; Matthew 1:20: 'That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit'. And in its middle because he lived without sin; 1 Peter 2:22: 'Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth'. And in its end because he died without being bound to death; Psalm 68:5: 'Then did I pay that which I took not away'.

The passion of Christ is described in a special way, firstly, in its triple cause

Let us therefore lie in wait for the just person because he is not for our turn, and he is contrary to our doings. Here he describes in a special way the persecution of Christ, and it treats, firstly, of the cause; secondly, of the aim, as in 2:17: *Let us see then if his words be true*; thirdly, the method as in 2:19: *Let us examine him by outrages and tortures.*

He treats in three ways the reason why the Jews persecuted Christ: firstly, from the point of view of their actions; secondly, from the point of view of their thoughts, as in 2:14: *He is become a censurer of our thoughts*; thirdly, from the point of view of their words, as in 2:16: *We are esteemed by him as triflers.*

In the first part from the point of view of their actions he treats of a triple cause, of which the first is a detestation of the actions of the Jews; the second, an accusation and proclaiming of our transgressions, as in 2:12: *he upbraids us with transgressions and divulges against us the sins of our way of life*; thirdly, a commendation of Christ, as in 2:13: *He boasts that he has knowledge of God and calls himself the son of God.*

(Verse 12). *Let us therefore lie in wait for the just person who is not for our turn, and is contrary to our doings.* Because I said: *let our strength be the law of injustice*, and we are not able to do this without lying in wait for the just person; *let us therefore lie in wait for the just*, so that we may be able to exercise freely the law of our strength. I say, *let us lie in wait for the just person* deceitfully, that is, for Christ who by antonomasia is called just; Jeremiah 23:6: 'This is the name that they shall call him: The Lord our just one'; 1 Peter 2:22: 'Who did no actual sin'; nor did he contract original sin in his conception; so Jeremiah 23:5: 'I will raise up to David a just branch', that is Christ in the branch, that is, in his conception; Isaiah 45:8: 'Let justice spring up together, I the Lord have created him'. Or: *Let us therefore lie in wait for the just person* could be the cry of any evildoers against any just person, something against which the Apostle in 1 Thessalonians 4:6 warned: 'That no one overreach a brother in business'; this is how the Apostle acted; hence 2 Corinthians 7:2: 'We have injured no one', namely, by an action; 'we have corrupted no one', by bad example; 'we have overreached no one', in speech. *Who is not for our turn*; 'When, however, they might see his value in everything', according to Acts 10:38: 'Who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil'. But they regarded him as useless in temporal matters, so John 11:48: 'The Romans will come and take away our place and nation'. *Who is contrary to our doings*, namely, just as good is contrary to evil, according to Sirach 33:15: 'Good is set against evil, and the sinner against a just person'. *Who upbraids us with transgressions of the law*; so John 7:19: 'Did not Moses give you the law and yet none of you keep the law?' *And divulges against us the sins of our way of life*, that is, against us, or by turning back on us *the sins of our way of life*, that is, by saying that we sin by teaching our traditions, or by upholding or forcing them to be upheld; so Matthew 15:3: 'Why do you also transgress the commandment of God for your tradition?'

Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth. Here he describes an unjust life, and, firstly, he treats of a harmony among the unjust and their mutual encouragement to the dissolution of their lives; secondly, the oppression of the just, with the words: *Let us oppress the poor* etc.

Firstly, therefore, they are exhorted to devote themselves to relaxation, firstly, *speedily*; secondly, abundantly, as in 2:7: *Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments*; thirdly, openly as in 2:8: *Let us crown ourselves with roses*; fourthly, commonly or with all taking part, as in 2:9: *Let none of us go without a part in luxury*; fifthly, with joy, as in 2:9: *Let us everywhere leave tokens of joy.*

(Verse 6). *Come therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present, and let us speedily use the creatures as in youth*, as if to say: because the present life passes and we have no hope of a future life, they say, *Come*; for 'the ownership of anything is not pleasant without a companion', and so they encourage one another. This is the morning antiphon of the devil. For note that just as in the Church of the just there are different antiphons and cries of *Come* for the different feasts, so also in the synagogue of sinners. One is an antiphon of vanity as in Genesis 11:4: 'Come, let us make a city and tower'. Another is an antiphon of wickedness as in Genesis 37:20: 'Come, let us kill him and cast him into some pit'. The third is an antiphon of avarice and greed as in Proverbs 1:11: 'Come, with us, let us lie in wait for blood, let us hide snares for the innocent without cause'. The fourth is an antiphon of pleasure of which he says in this verse: *Come therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present.* The text of Matthew 25:41: 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels'. I say, *let us enjoy* by loving with affection and by desiring nothing more; 'to enjoy is to cling to something for itself'; *the good things that are*, that is, goods *present*, *and let us use* them by delighting with affection; 'To use is to take something into the faculty of the will'; 'Every human evil is to enjoy what ought to be used and to use what ought to be enjoyed'. I say, *let us use the creatures*, namely, with the Creator disdained; otherwise there would be no sin in using creatures. *As in youth*, that is, while we were young; the senses of youth are more perceptive of delight than the senses of the aged; so 2 Samuel 19:35 says: 'I am this day fourscore years old, are my senses quick to discern sweet and bitter?' Also Ecclesiastes 11:9: 'Rejoice, therefore, in your youth'. *Speedily*; 'Lest we and those things pass before we enjoy them' according to Isaiah 22:13: 'Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we shall die'.

(Verses 7, 8, 9). *With costly wine*, internally for the taste, and to cause heat interiorly; *and ointments*, externally for touch, and to cause heat externally; *let us fill ourselves*, by a superfluous and immoderate use; Amos 6:6: 'They drink wine in bowls and anoint themselves with the best ointments'. *And let not the flower of the time pass by us*, that is, pleasure for sight; Jeremiah 48:9: 'Give a flower to Moab for in its flower it shall go out'. Such have no care for the heavenly autumn but only for the flower of this present life.

Let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered; Isaiah 40:7: 'The flower is fallen'; and in 28:1: 'Woe to the fading flower'. *Let us crown ourselves with roses*, to give delight with their scent; but Isaiah 28:1 says: 'Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim!' *Let no meadow escape our riot*, that is, no pleasant place; it says this to include all places; Jeremiah 2:20: 'For on every high hill and under every green tree you did prostitute yourself'. *Let none of us*, is said so as to include all people. Such was Sodom in which not even ten just people could be found, as is clear in Genesis 18:32.

I say: *Let none of us go without a part in luxury*, that is, without a part, namely, by not joining in or by being exempt. *Let us everywhere leave tokens of our joy*; this is said to indicate everything in what is done; Ezekiel 16:25: 'At every head of the way you have set up a sign of your prostitution'. *For this*, namely, such a dissolute life, *is our portion*, namely, for our soul, *and this our lot*, namely, for our body. Or: portion and lot are in fact the same but differ in their use because portion applies to the one receiving and lot applies to the one giving; Isaiah 57:6: 'In the parts of the torrents is your portion, this is your lot'. On the contrary, the just person says: 'The Lord is the portion of my inheritance'; also: 'You are the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever'.

Let us oppress the poor just person, and not spare the widow, nor honour the ancient grey hairs of the aged. Here he describes an unjust life in its oppression of the good, firstly, because they oppress without reverence for a person, secondly, because they do it without fear of justice, as in 2:11: *But let our strength be the law of justice*.

(Verses 10, 11). *Let us oppress*; 'It is the voice of the damned'; *the poor just person*, whoever he or she may be; Job 24:4: 'They have oppressed together the meek of the earth'. *And not spare the widow*; Psalm 93:6: 'They have slain the widow and the stranger, and they have murdered the fatherless';

Nor honour the ancient grey hairs of the aged, that is, every aged person; Baruch 4:16: 'Who have not revered the ancient'. *But let our strength be the law of justice*, that is, we regard as lawful everything we are able to do; Habakkuk 1:3: 'There is a judgment but opposition is more powerful'. Or: *justice*, hence *Interlinearis*: 'As if we may have strength for justice', that is, what we will not be able to do by justice we may do by violence.

For that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth, as if to say: we do not oppress only the poor and the weak, such as widows and the aged, but anyone we can; *for that which is feeble*, namely, in itself, as a widow, a poor or aged person, *is found to be nothing worth*, namely, to others; hence, little or no care has to be taken for them.

The Lord did not think in this way for: he 'has chosen the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible that he may confound the strong'. Paul did not think in this way for he said in 2 Corinthians 12:9 that 'power is made perfect in infirmity'.

This is interpreted allegorically of heretics who do not spare the poor just person, that is, the Christian people, nor the widow, namely, the Church, nor the aged, that is, the Apostles and Prophets.