

Chapter XI**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the righteous and the ungodly**

Fount of life are the lips of the righteous; fount of wrongdoing are the lips of the ungodly.
 The lips of the righteous produce Wisdom; those of the ungodly, confusion.
 The Lord abominates lying lips; and truthful ones are pleasing to Him.
 The righteous employs his lips to speak good things; the ungodly, to speak underhand things.
 The ungodly man is baleful, he speaks only of wrongdoing. He schemes evil in his depraved heart and at all times sows discord. However, if he does not amend, perdition will suddenly come upon him, and he will be crushed, without there being any remedy for him.
 Among many other things, the Lord abominates: a man of haughty gaze, one of lying tongue, one who spills innocent blood, one who devises perverse schemes in his heart, one whose feet trip lightly to wrongdoing, one who raises false testimony and one who sows discord among brethren.
 Because of his bad conscience, the ungodly flees from himself, without anyone having persecuted him; the righteous, however, remains steadfast like a lion, fearing nothing.
 False scales are abominable in the sight of the Lord; the right weight is what is pleasing to Him.
 Abominable to the Lord is the perverse heart; pleasing to Him are those who act sincerely.
 The ungodly satisfy their hunger with the bread of impiety, and quench their thirst with the wine of injustice.
 The way of the righteous is a shining light that increases daily and grows to perfection. The way of the ungodly, on the contrary, is a tenebrous light which augments daily and grows to complete obscurity.
 The remembrance of the righteous will be blessed with praises; the name of the ungodly will be accursed.
 The life-work of the righteous is to give life; the life-work of the ungodly is to spread sin.
 The hope of the righteous is for the joy of eternal bliss, but the vain hope of the ungodly shall precipitate them into the eternal fire of Hell.
 If the righteous is chastised in this life even for slight faults, how much more will the ungodly be chastised in this life and in the next!
 The righteous will one day be delivered from trials, but the ungodly will be ever more afflicted.
 The blessing of the Lord is poured out upon the head of the righteous; His malediction upon the head of the ungodly.
 The knave deceives his friend by his word; but the righteous frees him from deceit by his Wisdom.
 Untruthful lips are an abomination to the Lord.
 Whoever builds on lies, builds on emptiness, and is as foolhardy as one who tries to grasp with his hand a bird in flight.
 The tongue of the righteous is like refined silver.
 Whoever is double-dealing cleverly ferrets out his friend's secrets to make them known later, but whoever is trustworthy at heart keeps to himself what his friend confides to him.

Chapter XII**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the wise man and the fool**

The fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom, and knowledge of the saints is true prudence.
 Give advice to a wise man, and he will become yet wiser from your teachings. Give advice to a righteous man and he will become yet more righteous from your instructions.
 If you are wise, you will be so to your own profit; but if you are a self-important fool, you will pay the price.
 The wise man does not presume upon his wisdom, but the fool preaches his folly.
 Whoever keeps the company of the wise will end up becoming wise, but whoever keeps the company of fools will end up becoming a fool.
 Wisdom resides in the heart of the prudent, and enlightens the ignorant.
 The fool shows his annoyance at once; the sensible instead dissembles the injury.
 Seeing evil approach, the prudent man withdraws, but the fool goes on ahead and receives the injury.
 Reply to the fool according to his folly, that he may not take himself to be wise.
 From the lips of the wise comes knowledge without presumption; from the lips of the fool comes confusion with self-importance.

Chapter XIII**Divine Wisdom's counsels on fraternal correction**

Whoever loves correction loves Wisdom, but whoever despises it is a fool.
 The fool does not wish to be corrected; therefore he rejects the company of the wise.
 Only with difficulty will you secure that the foolish and presumptuous man accept your correction, for most probably he will disdain it and abhor you; but if you correct the wise man he will accept your correction and thank you for it.
 Whoever corrects the presumptuous fool, receives ridicule from him; whoever corrects the ungodly, receives injury from him.
 Whoever accepts correction is on the way to life, but whoever rejects it has gone astray.
 Whoever rejects correction despises his own soul, but whoever submits to correction becomes master of his own heart.
 Open correction is better than concealed love.
 Wounds received from one who loves, are better than fraudulent kisses from one who loathes.

Chapter XIV**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the virtue of humility and its opposing vice which is pride**

Wherever humility is, there is Wisdom; wherever pride is, there is folly.
 Between the proud there are always conflicts, since they are ruled by folly; but whoever is humble is ruled by Wisdom's counsels.
 On the ungodly man's home God's curse descends, and on the righteous man's His blessing; for He confounds the proud and gives His Grace to the meek and humble of heart.
 Those who possess the fear of God will detest evil. God detests arrogance, pride, all bad conduct and every deceitful tongue.

Chapter XV**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the virtue of generosity and its opposing vice which is avarice**

What good will riches be to the fool if with them he is unable to buy Wisdom?
 A little with the fear of God is worth more than great treasures without His Law.
 Better a little honestly than great profits dishonestly.
 Do not desire to work to become wealthy, and do not fix your gaze on riches you cannot acquire.
 Better to eat beans where there is love, than a fattened ox where there is hatred.
 Riches draw many friends, but the poor man's friends abandon him.
 Whoever turns a deaf ear to the cries of the poor, will not find response at his own cries either.
 Many boast of their riches, but they are poor in Wisdom.
 Those there are who in their very poverty are rich in spirit, because they live content with the little they possess; and others who, possessing great wealth, are poor in spirit because they are not satisfied with what they have.
 Whoever ill-treats the poor, injures the Creator; whoever shows compassion for the poor, honours the Creator.
 The days of the poor are all laborious, but peace of heart is a perpetual banquet.
 Treasures are of no avail if they lead to ungodliness; the exercise of the virtues is fount of Grace and life for the soul.

Chapter XVI**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the virtue of chastity and its opposing vice which is lust**

My child, heed the teaching of My Wisdom, and incline your ear to what My prudence enjoins, so that thus you have My counsels ever present and retain My instructions:
 Do not let yourself be drawn by the seductions of the perverse woman; because the lips of the loose woman are like honeycomb that drips honey, and her words soothing as oil; but the consequences of her pleasure are more bitter than wormwood, and sharper than a double-edged sword. The feet of the loose woman follow ways that lead to Hell, and draw those who have dealings with her down to the abyss. Keep far from her, then, and do not even approach the doors of her house. Thus you will not have to lament following the loss of your soul's beauty and your body's vigour, saying: Why did I disregard Wisdom's advice, and not listen to the voice of those who taught me rightly, and my heart not accept their exhortations!
 Do not let your heart, then, covet the beauty of the corrupt woman, nor let her glances captivate you; because her pleasure is a vile and fleeting thing, and snatches from a man the beauty of his soul.
 Do not let your heart be allured by the charms of the loose woman; nor, seduced, follow her ways. Because many are the men she has degraded, and the strongest have fallen into her net.

Chapter XVII**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the virtue of patience and its opposing vice which is anger**

Impassioned anger and rage leave no place for mercy, for who can suffer the outburst of the furious man?
 The irate man provokes quarrels; the patient calms those that have arisen.
 A gentle reply placates a neighbour's wrath; a harsh word intensifies his fury.
 Whoever is patient governs himself with much prudence; but whoever is not, evidences his folly.

Chapter XVIII**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the virtue of temperance and its opposing vice which is gluttony**

Wine is a licentious thing, and drunkenness is filled with disorders.
 When you sit at table, eat with decency and decorum what is put before you, employing moderation and temperance.
 Control your voracity, so that your soul always be master of your body.
 Do not crave delicacies, as they will be your fare of ruin.
 Do not keep company with those who take food and wine to excess, because you will end up becoming one more of them.
 Those given to excess of wine and those who find their delight in taking drinks, cause distress to parents, enter into arguments, fall into ruin, harm the innocent without the least cause, bawl out despairing ayes at their misfortunes and have their eyesight clouded.
 Do not be deceived by the fine colour of wine, nor by its excellent aroma; because it slips down gently into the body, but will strike you as a serpent and coil up inside of you like a basilisk; your eyes will then follow after another's wife and, insensate, you will say shameful things; you will find yourself as one rudderless and lost amid enormous waves. You will become so enslaved that coming back to your wits you will say: Where can I find wine again?
 Whoever has eaten well spurns even honey; but to the hungry even the bitter appears sweet.

Chapter XIX**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the virtue of charity and its opposing vice which is envy**

A sound heart gives life to the body, but envy cankers the bones.

Never let mercy and truth be taken from you; wind them about your neck and write them in your heart, and you will find grace and a good reputation before God and before men.

Always do good yourself, and never prevent your neighbour from doing so as well.

Do not tell your friend: 'Come back later; I will give you what you want tomorrow,' being able to give today. Do not plan to wrong your friend, since he trusts you; neither take up lawsuits against anyone without just cause. Do not imitate the wrongful ways of the unrighteous, because the perverse are abominable in the eyes of God, Who reserves His intimacies only for the simple of heart.

Whoever despises his neighbour for some defect, has a mean heart; whoever suffers him with patience, is prudent and charitable.

The Lord abhors whoever sows discord among brethren.

The words of a gossip appear kindly and inoffensive, but their venom penetrates to the innermost depths.

Envy brings about quarrels; charity covers all faults.

Mercy and justice are more agreeable to God than sacrifices.

Whoever digs a pit for his neighbour to fall into, will fall into it himself.

Chapter XX**Divine Wisdom's counsels on the virtue of diligence and its opposing vice which is sloth**

Whoever relishes sloth will be full of misery.

A good name is preferable to great riches.

Observe, O idler, the ant, and consider its work, and learn Wisdom from it as well; since the ant, without guide or master, provides itself with nourishment during the summer, gathering its food at harvest-time. Or observe the bee, and learn how it labours to produce rich honey which kings and subjects relish and seek for themselves. The bee, small and frail as it is, for its industry is held in high esteem.

For how long will you sleep on, idler? When will you awaken from your excessive slumber? For you will sleep a little, doze another while, again fold your arms to sleep, and lo!, indigence will come upon you like a brigand, and poverty like an armed man will overpower you. On the contrary, however, if you were diligent, your harvests would be like an abundant wellspring, and misery would fly far from you.

As the door turns on its hinges, so does the slothful turn over in his bed.

The hands of the slothful bring him misery in temporal and spiritual goods; the hands of the active accumulate them for himself.

Whoever tills his land, will be satiated with provisions; whoever loves sloth, will be a burden for others.

Whoever reaps the harvest in summer, acts with common sense; whoever sleeps at harvest time, is senseless.

Chapter XXI**Divine Wisdom's counsels on good government and the common good**

The wise king disperses the ungodly and raises up over them a triumphal arch.

Mercy and justice safeguard the king, and clemency makes his throne stable.

The heart of the wise and prudent king is a wellspring in the hands of God, which He directs wherever He pleases.

Maxims from the lips of the wise and prudent king are like divine oracles, and his tongue will not err on pronouncing judgment.

Those who act wrongfully are abominable to the wise king, because justice is the stay of his throne.

Pleasing to the wise king are lips that always speak the right word; beloved of him will be whoever speaks uprightly.

The apt minister gains the king's will; but the inept will incur his wrath.

A roaring lion and a ravenous bear is an ungodly king over a poor people.

By the blessings of the righteous will a city be exalted, but by the tongues of the ungodly will it be ruined.

Without wise and prudent authority, the people will perish; the governor surrounded by good advisers will act with greater assurance.

Justice is what makes nations great, but injustice makes peoples hapless.

Whoever in a trial shows acceptance of persons acts wrongfully, since for a morsel of bread he will vend justice.

Chapter XXII**Various counsels from Divine Wisdom**

Direct your works to the Lord and your undertakings will be successful.

In man's eyes a person's acts may be considered good or bad, but what matters is God's opinion, who penetrates the interior of the heart with unerring judgment.

By mercy and truth is sin expiated, and by the fear of God is evil avoided.

The heart of man proposes his paths, but God disposes his steps.

Just as gold and silver are tried in fire, so does the Lord try the hearts of His own.

As honey harms those who eat it to excess, so whoever dares scrutinize God's majesty shall be confounded before the inscrutability of His glory.

The wise man is strong, and the learned is robust and valiant.

Do not imitate wrongdoers nor desire their company, because their minds contemplate robberies and their lips speak falsehoods.

Senseless is whoever proposes to do wrong.

Do not go about watching out or seeking for faults in the righteous man's home, do not disturb his rest; because the righteous falls seven times, and always rises up again by the Grace of God. But the ungodly cast themselves deeper and deeper into evil by scorning Grace.

Fear the Lord, My son, and do not mingle with detractors, because perdition will suddenly crash down upon them.

Those who tell the ungodly, "you are upright", deserve divine malediction; those who rebuke him will be laden with God's blessings.

Whoever replies in accord with what is upright and fair, is as one who gives a kiss of peace and a blessing to his friend.

Do not say: "The same wrong he did to me, I will do to him," because each will be judged according to his works.

Do not boast of being a person of importance before the mighty, nor sit in the grandee's seat, because it is preferable that they say to you: "Come up higher", than see yourself humbled in their presence.

Handle your affairs with your loyal friend, and do not disclose your secrets to a stranger; lest he, having heard them, insult you and continually cast them in your face.

Do not frequent your neighbour's home overmuch, if you do not wish him to weary of you and detest you.

As moth to clothing and canker to wood, so melancholy harms man's heart.

If your enemy is hungry, give him to eat; if he is thirsty, give him to drink; for your charity will sear his heart in such fashion that perhaps his hatred may turn to love.

Trust in God with all your heart, and do not trust your own strength. In all your doings think on Him, and He Himself will straighten out your steps.

Do not regard yourself as learned. Fear God and keep far from evil; for your integrity will be your soul's sanctity and your body's refreshment.

Whoever talks much without necessity will not be wanting in sin; whoever moderates his lips is prudent.

Chapter XXIII**Divine Wisdom extols the resolute woman**

Who will find a resolute woman? She is more to be esteemed than all precious things brought from afar and from the utmost ends of the world.

In her the heart of her spouse trusts, to whom she will be a faithful and solicitous companion all the days of her life.

The resolute woman obtains wool and flax and knits with her own hands.

She comes to be like a merchantman, who with her labour brings sustenance from afar.

She rises before dawn to prepare meals for the family and tasks for her servants.

She saw a field and bought it, and with the work of her hands planted a vineyard.

She girds herself with virile fortitude and exerts her arms.

She takes the distaff in her hands and whirls the spindle.

She sees happily that her work is fruitful.

She does not extinguish her lamp at night, so as to watch over the house.

With her hand she succours the mendicant, and stretches out her arms to help the needy.

Her family do not fear cold or snow, because all wear heavy clothing.

She made a garment for herself of the finest linen and purple.

Her husband is highly regarded when seated among the senators and at the public gatherings of his country.

She makes the finest fabrics and rich girdles and sells them to merchants.

Fortitude and decorum are her chief attire, and she smiles at the prosperity that awaits her.

Her lips pronounce wise discourses, and on her tongue is the law of goodness.

She watches over the conduct of her family, and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Her children arose and acclaimed her blessed, and her husband praised her as well, saying:

"Many women have provided their household with all kinds of goods, but you have surpassed them all."

Fleeting and deceitful is beauty in the vain and licentious woman; but the woman who fears the Lord is the one who merits praise for the beauty of her virtues.

Book III**The Book of Wisdom****Prologue**

King Solomon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote the Book of Wisdom during the first ten years of his reign, when he was still a model of virtue, wisdom and prudence. In this Moral Book he sets forth other aspects of the folly of worldly things and the benefits that Wisdom's possession brings.

Chapter I**Introduction to the Book of Wisdom**

Love justice, you who rule the Earth.

Have sentiments worthy of the Lord, and seek Him with simplicity of heart.

Because He lets Himself be found by those who act with integrity, and manifests Himself to those who trust in Him; while perverse thoughts separate from God; and His power, put to the test, corrects fools.

Because into a malign soul Wisdom will not enter, nor dwell in a body enslaved to sin; since the Holy Spirit, Teacher of Wisdom, flies from fantasies, keeps far from indiscreet thoughts, and reproves the ensuing wrongdoing.

Because even though the Spirit of Wisdom is benign, He will not leave blaspheming lips unpunished, since God is witness to man's thoughts, observer of his heart and hearer of his words.

Because the Spirit of the Lord encompasses the whole Earth and knows including what is most hidden. Thus whoever says evil things cannot hide them from Him, nor escape avenging justice.

Because the thoughts of the ungodly will be strictly judged; the words of the ungodly man reach up to God's zealous hearing for the chastisement of his wrongdoing.

Be careful, then, of grumbling, as this does great harm, and restrain the tongue from all detraction; because not one evil word spoken in private will go unpunished; and a lying tongue does the soul to death.

Chapter II

Man's destiny according to God's plan was overturned by man himself through his sins

Do not strive to hasten death by the waywardness of your life, nor draw perdition down upon your soul by the work of your hands.

Because God did not make death, nor is He glad at man's perdition.

He created all things in the Universe to subsist in His presence, and made them salutary; nothing in them was poisonous or harmful. Hell did not exist prior to the fall of the rebel angels.

God created man in original justice, which brings immortality with it; therefore it was God's plan that righteousness in man be perpetual, and he be immortal. But it was man himself who, by his disobedience to God, obtained spiritual and corporal death; and men have become corrupted to such a degree that, by their sinful disorders, they have made an alliance with death, thus becoming ever more deserving of such misery.

Chapter III

The ungodly's iniquitous ideas and deeds

1. The ungodly, intending to justify their disorders, foolishly say among themselves: *"Short and irksome is the time of our life; there is no other after death; no one has ever come back after death to tell us what passes in the other world. So then, we were born by chance; and after this life we will be as if we had never been; because our life is like smoke that promptly vanishes and our soul like a fleeting spark that propels our heart, and afterwards is forever extinguished; and once gone out, our body will be reduced to ashes, and our soul will evaporate like tenuous vapour. Therefore, life will vanish like a mist struck by the sun's rays and dispelled by its heat. Moreover, after death our name shall be forgotten, without any lasting remembrance of our deeds. Our life, then, is a shadow that passes, and after death there is no return."*

2. *"Come, then, let us enjoy the good things of life without restraint; and let us make haste to delight in creatures, according to our desires, while we live. Let us surfeit ourselves with an abundance of delicacies and rich wines, and surround ourselves with all kinds of luxuries and comforts before the flower of our life passes. Let us be crowned with the roses of pleasure before they wither, and leave everywhere the signs of our wantonness. Let none of us cease taking part in the dissolute life; in every place let us leave the signs of our exuberant orgies, for all this is the portion of our inheritance."*

3. *"Let us oppress the righteous and needy, without pardoning the widow or respecting the venerable grey hairs of the aged. Let our strength be the only law of justice, as weakness brings no benefits. Let us, then, lay traps for the righteous man, as he does not approve of our doings, but opposes them, and casts our sins against the Law in our faces, and defames us disclosing our depraved conduct; he assures that he has the knowledge of God and calls himself son of God, and has become the censor of our thoughts. So then, we cannot even bear the sight of him; because his life is unlike our own, for he observes a very different conduct."*

4. *"We are regarded by him as senseless and perverse persons, and he abstains from our ways as from filth; for he believes and proclaims the last things of man, affirms that the righteous, after death, will enjoy eternal life, and he glories to have God as Father. But let us see, then, if his words are true. We shall try him to see if what he says is really so; and thus we shall see what his end will be. For if he truly is a son of God, He will take charge of him and free him from the hands of his adversaries. Let us try him with insults and tortures to see his resignation and test his patience. Let us condemn him to the most infamous death; since, according to his words, his God will save him."*

5. Such perversities the ungodly think and put into practice blinded by their own malice. They have not understood the mysteries of God, nor believed that there are rewards for the righteous, nor taken into account the glory that awaits saintly souls. For God created man with an immortal soul and formed him to His own image and likeness. Through the devil's envy, however, death entered the world when the evil one succeeded in seducing man, and those of the devil's party imitate his ways.

Chapter IV

Happiness of the righteous and unhappiness of the ungodly

1. The souls of the righteous, however, are in the hands of God; and the torment of eternal death will not reach them.

2. Nevertheless, the death of the righteous is seen by the ungodly as the greatest of misfortunes, they considering that body and soul are totally and definitively annihilated, and therefore deprived of the consolation of a happy and eternal life; which is a terrible error, since following the death of the righteous his soul will repose forever in eternal happiness. And if, in the sight of men, righteous men suffer torments, their hope is filled with immortality. Their tribulation is slight when compared to the reward they will receive, which shall be very great; because God refined them as gold in fire, found them worthy of Himself by their virtues and received them as victims offered in holocaust; and in due course will give them recompense. Then they will shine out brighter than the sun, will go from one part of the Universe to another with the agility of the Blessed, will judge the nations together with the Supreme Judge, will

rule the peoples and the Lord will reign eternally with them. Those who trust in God understand all these truths, and those who are faithful to His love will be joined to Him; since Grace and peace are for His chosen ones.

3. The ungodly, however, will be chastised according to the measure of their wrongdoing; since they went away from God and despised what is just and upright in His sight. For hapless are those who reject Wisdom and instruction; vain is their hope, unfruitful their labours and useless their industry. Fatuous are their wives and utterly perverse their children. Accursed their race, since the race of the wicked, if not converted, has an entirely disastrous end.

4. Happier is the righteous woman, though barren, and who keeps herself unstained without defiling her couch by adultery; because she will receive her recompense when God calls saintly souls to Himself. Happier too is the celibate, whose hands have not committed villainy, nor has he thought perverse things against God; since he will be given a precious gift for his fidelity and a lofty glory in Heaven, for glorious is the fruit of good works; by them the root of Wisdom never withers.

Chapter V

Death of the chaste and death of the unchaste

1. O how beautiful and resplendent is the generation of those who love chastity! Its fruits are beneficial and sweet to eat; since they blossom from trees ornate from the exercise of the virtue of purity. The remembrance of the chaste is immortal, since their virtue is acknowledged before God and men. While on Earth they are models for imitation; and when dead are remembered with admiration. In Heaven they will be eternally recompensed with the crown of triumph included as reward for their continuous battle on Earth to safeguard chastity. The Grace to see God is reserved for those who are clean of heart.

2. O how vile and repugnant is the generation of those who love impurity! Its fruits are detrimental and bitter to eat, because they are borne by trees corrupted by wanton debauchery. The Lord will abominate those obstinate in licentiousness; since, if not converted, they shall die without honour and be eternally disgraced among the other reprobates; because God will destroy their inordinate passions, reduce them to silence and utter desolation; and their remembrance shall perish forever. Their disorders shall rise up against them, and accuse and torment them without end.

Chapter VI

Christ the King will exterminate the ungodly during the three days of darkness preceding His Glorious Second Coming to Earth

Christ, the Anointed of the Lord God of Hosts, before judging the nations, will arm Himself with all His zeal, and arm His own as well, to avenge Himself of His enemies and put an end to Antichrist. He will take up justice as breastplate, and infallible judgement as helmet. As impenetrable shield He will grasp rectitude. God will make Himself a pointed lance of His inflexible wrath, and the whole Universe will combat with Him against the insensate. Lightning bolts will fly straight at them, fired from the clouds as from a well aimed bow, and will wound unerringly; and from God's wrath, dense and burning hail will fall. The waves of the sea will break against them; and the rivers, every one, will wildly inundate the land, and in scorching whirlwinds they shall be undone. Christ, the anointed of God, by His breath and the brightness of His Divine Countenance, will destroy Antichrist. Satan and his infernal hordes shall be vanquished and enchained for evermore, without any power over men. So it is that, because of the iniquity of the ungodly, the Universe will be purified by most tenebrous fire produced by the Lord's Anointed.

Chapter VII

The Universal Judgment: the righteous and the ungodly

1. On Judgment Day, the righteous, together with Christ, Supreme Judge, will judge the ungodly with extreme rigour. On that day, before those who persecuted them and despised their deeds, the righteous will be revealed with great honour, paramount beauty and utter happiness. The righteous will live eternally, and their recompense will be in the contemplation of God, their minds set on the Most High. In Heaven, from the Lord's hands, the righteous will receive the kingdom of glory and the crown of loveliness.

2. At Judgment, the ungodly, when they see the righteous, with furious consternation, amid agonizing laments and without the least repentance, will say within themselves: *"They, at other times, were the butt of our derision and the object of our contempt. For we, senseless, deemed their lives madness and their end dishonour. Now we see how they are counted among the children of God and have their inheritance among the saints. So then, we lived far from the way of truth, despising the light of justice and the sun of the knowledge of Wisdom. We persisted in following the path of wrongdoing and perdition, forsaking the way of the Lord. Of what use has pride been to us? Or, what benefits has the vain ostentation of our riches brought us?"* The condemned will say such things, not because they feel sorrow for their misdeeds, rather because those in Hell as well have to acknowledge Christ's Divine Justice and bend their knees before Him as the God and Supreme Judge that He is.

Chapter VIII

Exhortation to kings, judges and all kinds of officials to seek Divine Wisdom

1. Wisdom is better than might; and the wise and prudent better than the valiant. Listen, then, O kings, and be attentive; learn all ye judges of the Earth. Give ear to my words you who rule the peoples, and who glory at the vassalage of many nations. For power and might have been given you by the Lord God of Hosts, Who will examine your works, and fathom even your most hidden thoughts. Because if you, being instruments of His universal Kingdom, neither judge with rectitude, nor keep God's Holy Law, nor follow His divine will, He will let His Holy wrath fall upon you; since those who exercise power over others will be judged with extreme rigour. Because on lesser men God will have more compassion; but the mighty will be treated with greater severity; He threatens the more powerful, then, with heavier punishment. For God does not exempt any person from His justice, nor does He respect anyone's rank; since He made the little and the great, and cares equally for all.

2. To you, then, kings and other potentates of Earth, these words of mine are addressed, so that you learn Wisdom and do not err. Because those who shall perform rightly what justice requires will be crowned with sanctity. Whoever takes these words into deep consideration and cherishes them, will be instructed. Luminous and imperishable is Wisdom. She is easily seen by those who cherish Her; and shall be found by those who seek Her. She forestalls those who covet Her, presenting Herself before them. To have the mind occupied in Wisdom, then, is consummate prudence; and whoever keeps watch for love of Her, will afterwards find deserved rest. Because She herself is everywhere seeking those worthy to possess Her, and on the way shows herself to such with pleasure, and on every occasion and dealing they have Her by their side. For the beginning of Wisdom is also the ardent desire to be instructed in her; and to obtain instruction is already to love Wisdom; and to love Her is to keep Her laws; and to keep Her laws is perfect purity of soul, that unites with God. Wisdom, then, leads to the Eternal Kingdom.

3. O kings of the peoples! Cherish Wisdom so as to reign perpetually. Cherish the light of Wisdom you who rule the peoples, and I will declare to you what Wisdom is and how She was engendered, and the mysteries of God shall not be kept hidden from you; for their knowledge and truth will be made clear to you. A wise king is the mainstay of his people. Therefore, take interest in these words of instruction, because they will be of good use to you. The unwise king will never have any part with Wisdom.

Chapter IX

Solomon speaks of the Wisdom he received from God

1. I am a mortal man, like the rest of men. However, given my rank of king, with the object of ruling my people well, I desired the Spirit of Wisdom, asked Her of God, and He granted Her to me. I preferred Her to kingdoms and thrones, and considered wealth as nothing compared to Her. I loved Her more than health and beauty, and proposed to have Her as light of my actions, since Her radiance is inextinguishable. All good came to me together with Her. And I rejoiced devoutly in all these things because Wisdom guided me; however, before receiving Wisdom, I did not know that She was mother of all these goods.

2. Because Wisdom is an infinite treasure for men; and all who make use of Her have part in God's friendship, having kept His Holy Teachings and Laws. God has granted me to express what I feel, and to have thoughts worthy of the gifts received from Him; for God is the Guide of human wisdom, and He who corrects the wise; given that we, our words and our works, are in His hands. He gave me true knowledge of many of the things that exist; since Wisdom, the Architect of it all, instructed me.

3. For what man, without the light of Wisdom, will be able to know God's counsel, or who will be able to find out what it is that God desires? Because the thoughts of man are insecure, and his suppositions mistaken; since the corruptible body burdens the soul and oppresses the mind with unprofitable thoughts. And if we scarcely succeed in conceiving the form of earthly things, and hardly understand what we have before our eyes, who will be able to examine what is in Heaven? And above all, who shall be able to know, O Lord, Your counsels, if You do not give man Wisdom, and from the heights above send down your Holy Spirit? May the paths of the dwellers of Earth thus be made straight and may they learn what things please You; because by Wisdom, O Lord, were saved as many as were acceptable to You from the beginning of the world.

Chapter X

Uncreated Wisdom is by essence God Triune Himself. Created Wisdom is the Most Divine Soul of Christ

1. In Uncreated Wisdom resides the true spirit of intelligence, which: is Holy, Unique, multiform, subtle, eloquent, agile, immaculate, infallible, suave, lover of good, discerning, irresistible, beneficent, lover of men, benign, steadfast, constant, sure, almighty, all-seeing and of spirits all-embracing. For Divine Wisdom is more agile than all things that move, and reaches everywhere, being an utterly Pure Spirit.

2. Created Wisdom is the breath of God's own virtue and emanation of God's own glory. Created Wisdom is the splendour of Eternal Light, the unblemished mirror of the Majesty of God and the Image of His Goodness.

Chapter XI

Divine Wisdom is within reach of all human beings and is of greater worth than all the wealth and learning of the world

1. Divine Wisdom, being by essence God Himself, can do all; and being immutable, renews all, and pours Herself out upon all nations among holy souls, fashioning friends of God. God, who is Wisdom itself, loves whoever dwells with Wisdom: which is more beautiful than the sun, surpasses the entire muster of stars and has no comparison with any other light, as the light of Divine Wisdom is not eclipsed by any ill-will. Divine Wisdom, then, enfolds all things from end to end, gently ordaining them.

2. It is Divine Wisdom that teaches men divine science and directs their labours. If in this life wealth is coveted, what is there more valuable than Wisdom, creator of all things? If man's industry produces many good things, it is because Wisdom has taught him the art of so doing. If a man loves virtue, that is fruit of Wisdom, for it is She who teaches Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance, and all other virtues, which are the most useful acquisitions for man in this life. If a man desires to know much, She knows all: past, present and future. Therefore, whoever possesses Divine Wisdom, possesses all.

Chapter XII

Divine Wisdom guided the Patriarchs and other righteous of the People of Israel

It is Divine Wisdom that: rescued Patriarch Adam and Matriarch Eve his spouse, from their sin, and gave Adam the power to govern over all things; preserved Patriarch Noah and his family from perishing in the universal Flood by leading them into the Ark; exalted the heroic virtue of Patriarch Job, restoring and multiplying his goods; chose Patriarch

Abraham and conserved him strong in Faith, and made his wife Sarah fecund; freed the righteous Lot from perishing in the chastisement of Sodom; fortified Patriarch Isaac, victim figure of Christ; led Patriarch Jacob by sure ways, showed him the Kingdom of God, enriched him amid his fatigues and protected him from his enemies; did not forsake Patriarch Joseph when sold by his brothers, neither when prisoner in Egypt, instead gave him the government of this nation.

Chapter XIII

Divine Wisdom guided Moses, Caudillo of the People of Israel

1. Divine Wisdom chose Moses to be Caudillo of the People of Israel; helped him to free the Israelites from the Egyptians' oppression, chastising the latter with plagues by means of extraordinary prodigies. Great, O Lord, are Your judgments and ineffable Your works! For when the villainous Egyptians persisted in oppressing Your People, they were plunged into total darkness for seven days; while the Israelites were illuminated by the brightest light.

2. Divine Wisdom guided and protected Moses and his people when miraculously crossing the Red Sea; drowned the Egyptian army in the depths of the sea; promulgated Holy Law through Moses; directed the People of Israel's steps during the years of their desert wanderings, and nourished them with manna when needed; chastised those who dared disobey Holy Law; and brought his People into the Promised Land.

Chapter XIV

Divine Wisdom converted many inhabitants of Canaan territory, and exterminated others, during the conquest carried out by the Israelites under the orders of Caudillo Joshua

1. Oh how good and gentle, O Lord, is your Spirit in all things! Hence You admonish those who have gone astray and correct the faults they commit, so that casting aside malice they may believe in You, O Lord. Because You looked on with indignation at the ancient dwellers of Your Holy Land because of their idolatry and other abominations; but before humbling them by Your power by means of Your armies under Joshua's orders, You exhorted them with wise and holy counsels through Most Holy Melchisedech, so as to obtain their conversion and also avoid their extermination. In Your infinite mercy You sent as well countless plagues of horseflies against those who persisted in rejecting Your Word, in order, by the agonizing stings of these insects, to seek to bow the stubborn necks of many of them through suffering. Thanks to this chastisement, when the armies of Israel led by Joshua arrived, the hearts of many of the inhabitants of Canaan who had not previously accepted Your counsels by preaching, were better disposed towards accepting the true God; and were therefore converted and joined the Chosen People. But those who did not amend through these reproofs and upbraiding, came to experience a chastisement worthy of God's power, being exterminated by Your people's armies.

2. And who shall say to You, Why did you do this? Or who will oppose Your judgments? Or who will dare to defend evil men before You? Or who will censure You for having exterminated nations which You created? Because there is no other God but You, and You care for all things to show that there is no injustice at all in Your judgments. There is no king or prince who can call You to account for those whom You have caused to perish, since You are righteous, and dispose all things rightly, and do not chastise unwarrantedly; since Your power is the fount of justice; and just as You are Lord of all, You are indulgent towards all.

3. You exercise Your justice, then, when men do not believe You to be sovereignly powerful, and You confound the rashness of those who do not acknowledge You. But as You are the sovereign Lord of all, You judge with equanimity and govern us with supreme moderation. Thus You have taught Your people that their judges must also be humane; and have given confident hope to Your children, seeing that when You judge them for their sins, You give them time for penance. Since, if You chastised Your people's enemies with so much circumspection, giving them time to repent of their wickedness, with how much more care will You judge the children of Your people, to whose forebears You made great promises under oaths and covenants?

Chapter XV

Divine Wisdom disposes all and is patient and merciful

You, Lord, dispose all things in fair measure, number and weight; because only You have Supreme Power: and who shall be able to resist the might of Your arm? The whole world is before You as a tiny grain of sand and as a drop of morning dew falling to the ground. But You have mercy towards everyone, the same as You can do everything; and You close Your eyes to the sins of men to give them time to repent and do penance. Because You love all You have created and abhor nothing of what You have made, except those who have been unfaithful to You by choosing eternal damnation. And how could anything endure if You did not so will? Or anything be conserved without Your command? Because You are indulgent towards everyone, for all things are Yours, O Lord, who hold us so dear.

Chapter XVI

Folly and aberration of idolatry. Blessed is the Wood of the Saviour's Cross

1. Certainly all men are vain in whom the Wisdom of God is not found; and who by the good things to be seen and the consideration of created things, do not recognize their Architect; but contrariwise, hold as gods governing the Universe, either fire, or wind, or constellations of stars, or seas, or sun or moon. For if, enchanted by the beauty of such things, they imagine them gods, they ought to know through them how much more beautiful is their master, since He who created them all is the Lord, Creator of all beauty and One True God. Or if they marvel at the virtue and natural influence of these creatures, they should understand through them that He who created them surpasses them in power; since by the greatness and beauty of the creature, man can attain the knowledge of the existence of the Creator. If they, with their ample human science, can penetrate certain mysteries of creatures, how is it that they do

not see more readily, by their means, the Lord who created them? But yet more vain are those who consider works made by the hand of man to be gods; such as all kinds of idolatrous figures of gold, silver, stone, wood and so forth. And for greater folly, offer vows to such idols made by their hands and consult them about their goods, about their children, their marriages, health of the sick and other series of entreaties. They are not ashamed to pray to things devoid of power to help them, and put their vain hope in them.

2. But You, O God, in Your Divine Wisdom, ordered Noah to build an Ark of salvation out of wood: so that with the hope of the entire Earth taking refuge in a barque governed by Your Hand, the immaculate Seeds from which the world was to be supernaturally reborn, be conserved. For blessed the Wood of the Cross of the Divine Saviour that was made and used for the Redemption of the world; but accursed the wood of an idol made by human hand, and accursed the artificer who formed it, and accursed whoever deemed it as god. For the invention of idols was the origin of idolatry, and their discovery the corruption of life, because neither were there any in the beginning, nor will there always be.

Chapter XVII

Idolatry, cause of all evil. Wisdom of God, cause of all good

1. Men, by the inordinate love of their own esteem, or to satisfy their concupiscence, or out of vain hope, or to curry favour with kings and potentates, and from other different motives and aims, gave to many creatures and works formed by their hands the intransferable name of God. Idolatry, in any of its varied manifestations, is the cause of murders, robberies, deceits, perversions, infidelities, disturbances, perjuries, harassment of the good, forgetfulness of God, defilement of souls, uncertainty about births, inconstancies in marriage, disorders of adultery and vice. The abominable worship of idols, then, is the cause, beginning and end of all evils. Idolaters, if not converted, will have their just chastisement, for given up to their idols they bring discredit on the true God, scorning truthfulness, justice and holiness, attributes of the Supreme Maker.

2. O God our Lord! You are benign, truthful and patient, and govern all by Your mercy; for, if we sin, we count on the help of Your Grace to repent, and You are swift to pardon us; and if we do not sin, we know it is Your Grace that sustains us. Because to know You with living Faith, hope in You with full confidence, and love You with perfect Charity is consummate integrity for our soul; and the possession of Divine Wisdom, the root of our eternal immortality.

Book IV

Song of Songs

Prologue

1. King Solomon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote the Book Song of Songs during the years he lived far from the right path, given up to idolatry, licentiousness, profligacy, vainglory and many other vices. The Song of Songs is a moral book in which the sublime mystical espousal between the Divine Bridegroom and the Divine Bride is poetically extolled. The Divine Bridegroom is Our Lord Jesus Christ; and His Divine Bride *par excellence* is the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and by extension Holy Church as well.

2. Solomon wrote the Song of Songs repeatedly using figurative expressions of great poetic beauty and sublime mystical profundity. Nonetheless, at times he employed phrases with a notably worldly sentiment of passion when describing the beauty of the Spouses and the love between the two. Without a shadow of doubt the moral corruption that enslaved his soul when he wrote the Song of Songs had a powerful influence on a considerable portion of the literal text. While it was the Holy Spirit who inspired the sublime doctrinal content of the Book, He nonetheless reproved the expressions of its author that ran counter to Divine Morality, in such fashion that He sent the Prophet Gad on repeated occasions ordering Solomon to rectify them; but the king always responded: "Don't harass me".

3. The present version of the Song of Songs is expressed literally in accord with Divine Morality and in its true doctrinal content.

Chapter I

1. **First Song:** The Most Divine Soul of Christ, enchanted by the beauty and holiness of the Divine Soul of Mary, chosen to be His Spouse by the Eternal Father, with sublime vehemence claims Her so that She become espoused to Him. Therefore, in this Chant is expressed: (a) the desire of Mary to become espoused with Christ and (b) the Espousal between Them both. By extension is expressed the Espousal of the Church with the Most Divine Soul of Christ through espousal with the Divine Soul of Mary.

The Bride:

(a)

O Christ, my Lord and God! Anoint my soul with the most holy exhalation of Your Divine Espousal.

Because Your Love surpasses in suavity and sweetness every other holy consolation, since it is fragrant above the best of balms.

Heavenly oil outpoured

is Your Holy Name, my God:

hence pure souls yearn for Your presence.

Draw Me, and, at the fragrance of Your aromas,

I will run after You

with my retinue of faithful souls.

(b)

The Divine King brought Me into the Tabernacle of His Soul, and became espoused to Me and made Me partaker of His divine secrets.

I will rejoice and will be happy savouring

the ineffable delights of His Love,

which surpass any other fare.

2. **Second Song:** The Divine Mary, on becoming espoused to the Most Divine Soul of Christ, becomes espoused to the Holy Spirit as well. By the action and Grace of the Divine Paraclete, Mary conceives in Her virginal womb the Divine Word made Man, to Whom She later gives birth. In this

chant, therefore, is expressed the Incarnation of the Divine Word and the birth of Christ. By extension is also expressed the conception of the Church.

The Bride:

While the King dwelt in My virginal Womb,

My Divine Spikenard exhaled His aroma.

Spray of myrrh is My Beloved to Me.

With sublime tenderness I will nurse Him in My lap.

Cluster of grapes is my Beloved to Me

in the vineyard of My soul.

3. **Third Song:** The Divine Mary, in union with Saint Joseph, finds Herself immersed in a dark night of the soul on losing the Divine Child Jesus, and returns to Jerusalem seeking Him passionately and with inconsolable anguish, and finds Him in the Temple as Good Shepherd instructing the sheep. In this Chant, then, is expressed Jesus' concealment from His Virginal Parents, the Spouses' joyful meeting and the Divine Child's submissive subjection to His Parents throughout His hidden life in their Nazareth home.

The Bride:

Along the way I lost the Beloved of My Soul.

I sought Him, and did not find Him.

I returned to the city,

and scoured streets and squares

seeking Him whom My Soul loves.

I asked the sentinels who guarded the city:

Did you, by any chance, see Him whom My Soul loves?

Tell me in which lush meadows

He pastures His sheep

or under which spreading tree

He reposes come noontide;

lest wandering about

amid my dark night,

I delay longer in finding Him.

The sentinels:

If You do not know,

O most beautiful among women!

follow the tracks of His flock

and gratify Your longing

with the hope of finding Him,

for soon You will perceive His consolation in Your Soul

since within dwells the One You love so dearly.

The Bride:

However, when I had gone a little past them,

I found Him whom My Soul loves, and held Him;

and will not let Him go until I have made Him

enter My house of Nazareth.

The Bridegroom:

O My Bride!

You are strong like a war chariot

drawn by battle-seasoned horses.

Your simplicity resembles the candour of the turtledove.

Your purity is like a necklace of white pearls.

With neckband of purest gold and silver

will I set off the humility and patience of Your Soul.

I conjure you, daughters of Jerusalem,

by the great love I have for My Spouse,

that you do not disturb Her heavenly jubilee

nor remind Her of Her afflictions.

4. **Fourth Song:** Christ and Mary, sublimely enamoured, manifest one to another: (a) the Divine Love they profess and (b) their role as victims of Calvary. By extension, Christ and Mary express the love they feel for the Church, and the Church expresses her love for Them both.

(a)

The Bridegroom:

How lovely You are, My Spouse, how lovely You are!

Your Soul is Vessel of Holiness.

Your Heart, pulse of divine love.

Your Countenance, mirror of virginity.

Your Head, uplifted like Carmel.

Your bearing, graceful tower of David.

Your eyes, sweet, pure and shining.

Your teeth, candid and immaculate.

Your lips, reflection of purity and charity.

Your tresses radiate a heavenly sparkle.

Wholesome and edifying is Your word.

All beautiful and immaculate are You, My Spouse.

There is no stain in You.

The Bride:

How handsome are You, my Spouse! How gallant!

Your Soul is Fount of Holiness.

Your Heart, Fire of Divine Love.

Your Countenance, Mirror of Divinity.

Your Head, Seat of Wisdom.

Your bearing, unshakable column.

Your eyes are deep and radiant as the sun.

Your hair, long and dark like jet.

Your hands, instruments of God's actions.

Your lips distil exquisite myrrh

of truth and knowledge.

Slender and gallant indeed, are You, my Beloved.

How graceful You are, my Spouse, how graceful You are.

Our Espousal is in flower.

The timbers of our Temple are of cedar

and the panelling is of cypress.

The Bridegroom:

How lovely You are, My Beloved, how lovely You are!

Many virgins have espoused with Me.

But one alone is My Predilect Spouse,

one alone is My Dove, My Perfect,

the One chosen by Me from among the rest:

That is You, best beloved of My Soul.

The Bride:

I am the flower of the field, the lily of the valley.

(b)

The Bridegroom:

Like the lily among thorns

is My Virgin Spouse among virgins.

The Bride:

Like a verdant olive,

is My Spouse slender among men.

5. **Fifth Song:** (a) Mary at the foot of the Cross partakes in Christ's suffering. Mary's mystical death, birth of the Church and fruits of the Lord's Passion. (b) Mary's solitude and colour, and Her jubilee at Her delivery of the Church.

(a)

The Bride:

I stayed in the shadow of My Beloved,

and His fruit was sweet in My throat.

He brought Me into the secrets of His Heart,

and overwhelmed Me with ardent charity.

O souls who love Me,

respond with fragrant flowers

and with choice fruits.

Avail Me! for I am wounded with divine Love.

The lance that transfixed the Heart of My Spouse,

has pierced Mine

and, in most dolorous Delivery,

has left My Soul in darkness.
But the might of His arms sustains Me.

(b)
Though You see Me crushed and alone,
O children of the Church!
I am full of beauty and jubilation,
since in the Tabernacle of My Soul
dwells Him whom I love.
The children of My own People,
angered with Me as well,
are the cause of My abasement.
My Beloved placed Me as guard over His own vineyards
and as Shepherdess over His flock;
but His enemies refused to enter His sheepfold.

The Bridegroom:

I entreat you, daughters of Jerusalem,
by the great love I have for My Spouse,
do not perturb Her heavenly joy,
nor do Her harm by vexing Her.

Chapter II

1. **Sixth Song:** (a) The risen Christ appears to the Virgin Mary who, jubilant, communicates this to the Church. (b) Before His Ascension into Heaven, Christ leaves the care of His vineyards or flocks to Peter and the other Apostles. (c) The Virgin Mary manifests with jubilee Christ's Ascension and (d) exhorts the Apostles and other followers to have Faith in the protection of Christ over His Church, since He cares for her in continual vigilance, though her members no longer see Him.

(a)

The Bride:

The voice of My Beloved!
See Him, He comes glorious leaping over the hills
and crossing the heights.

(b)

The Bridegroom:

You, the men of My predilection,
hunt out the little foxes that spoil the vineyards
because our vineyards are now in flower.

(c)

The Bride:

My beloved scales the heights.
His agility is like that of the roe and of the fawn.

(d)

See Him, He Himself is there,
close up to the wall of our Home,
gazing through the windows,
observing through the shutters.

2. **Seventh Song:** (a) Mary's sublime Dormition. (b) Christ comes seeking Her. (c) Christ exalts the working of the Holy Spirit in the Apostles, whose preaching has given plentiful fruits. (d) Mary awakens from Her Dormition.

The Bride:

(a)

I sleep, but My Soul watches.

(b)

I hear the voice of My Beloved who calls Me.
Here is My Spouse who says to Me:

The Bridegroom:

Awaken, My Spouse, My Dove, My Immaculate.
Arise from the crevice in the rocks where You sleep,
leave the cavity that conceals You.
Show me Your countenance and let Your voice sound in
my ears:

because Your countenance is lovely and Your voice
sweet.

Make haste, My Spouse, My Dove,
My Fair one, and come.
Because winter is now passed,
the mist has dispersed and the rains have ceased.
The flowers have now blossomed,
and pruning time has come
so that the fruits grow forth with greater vigour.

(c)

The voice of the turtle dove has been heard in our land.
The fig tree has budded forth her early fruits.
Now the vineyards in flower exhale their aroma.

(d)

The Bride:

Come, My Spouse and return with Me now
to the Glorious Kingdom where You dwell.
Be quick, My Beloved,
like the roe and the deer upon the hills.
My Beloved is for Me, and I am for My Beloved.
He feeds His flock among the lilies
from daybreak till nightfall.

3. **Eighth Song:** (a) The Divine Mary is assumed into Heaven in the sight of the Apostles, disciples and holy women; who manifest their admiration at the glory that envelops Her. (b) Mary exalts the grandeur of Christ's Royal Throne in Heaven, at whose right She is seated as Queen.

(a)

Choir of the Church Triumphant:

Who is She who comes up as the morning rising,
fair as the moon,
bright as the sun,
terrible as an army set in battle array?

Choir of the Church Militant:

Who is She who rises up from the desert,
like a column of smoke
engulfed in fragrance of myrrh, and of incense,
and of every kind of aroma?

(b)

The Bride:

Behold the throne of My Divine Spouse,
King of Kings,
encircled by the angelic myriads
and other blessed.
All are highly skilled in warfare,
and armed with swords
to defend the flock
from the enemies who prowl about her.
Over a dais of aromatic and incorruptible wood,
the Heavenly King has set up His throne:
the columns are of purest silver,
the back of finest gold,
the base of beautifully embossed ivory,
the canopy and grades tapestried in purple.
Here is the King of kings
displaying upon His Head the imperial crown
with which He was girded on the day of His anointing,
the day He was espoused to Me
with great jubilee of His Soul.

4. **Ninth Song:** (a) The Divine Mary, on entering Heaven, receives the eulogies of Her Divine Spouse, Who accents Her virginity. Mary is crowned Queen of the Universe by the Most Holy Trinity. (b) Christ makes known that by His Passion and Death He has overcome Satan to make way for a new economy of Grace.

(a)

The Bridegroom:

How lovely You are, My Spouse, how lovely You are!
Come, and You will be crowned Queen upon celestial
throne

amid aromas of incense and myrrh.
You wounded My heart with Your sole glance.
How sweet and chaste is Your love, My Spouse!
More pleasing than angelic nectar.
The fragrance of Your perfumes
exceeds all aromas.

A Garden enclosed are You, My Spouse,
Garden enclosed and Fount sealed up.

Your immaculate virginity
is Paradise of sweet and plentiful fruits:
Refreshing pomegranates,
fragrant apples,
delicious grapes...

Spikenard and saffron, myrrh and aloe
are fruits of Your orchard.

O My Beloved!

Fount of gardens are You, wellspring of living waters.
Like the spring water that gushes down the mount
to fertilize the earth,
thus is Your grace poured out upon men.

(b)

Begone, gale from the north!
And come you, gentle southerly breeze,
refresh My Garden balmily,
and let her aromas spread out over the world.

The Bride:

How beautiful You are, My Spouse, how beautiful You
are!

Your head is covered with glory,
Your hair shines like the sun.

Chapter III

1. **Tenth Song:** Sublime dialogue between Christ and His Spouse the Church.

The Bridegroom:

I am going, I am going to My Garden, My Spouse,
to gather from My myrrh and from My balsam,
to eat virgin honey of My honeycomb,
to eat of My bread and drink of My wine.

The Bride:

Let my Spouse come to His Garden
and eat of her choice fruits.

My Beloved came down to His Garden:

He delights in its aromas,
relishes its fruits
and decks Himself with its flowers.

My Beloved is for me
and I am for my Beloved.

The Bridegroom:

O My Spouse,
how upright the tread of your feet,
how pure your demeanour!
How brimful of wheat your grain-bin!
From you issue wellsprings of living water.
From you the light shines forth.

You stand up straight like a tower of ivory.
How fair and blessed you are,

O kindest and most delicious Spouse!
Let all My children come to My Garden,
and eat and drink their fill.

2. **Eleventh Song:** Apostolate of the Church and the fruits of her labour.

The Bride:

I am happy, since I am entirely my Beloved's,
and His Heart is One with mine.
Yes, then, dearly beloved Spouse,
let us go out into the fields together,
let us rise early and go out to the vineyards
and see if the vine is now budding,
if the flowers are opening
and the pomegranates sprouting.

O my Spouse!

Your Garden is an orchard
in which thrive
the most varied aromatic plants,
and every kind of exquisite fruit.
I have kept it all for You!

The Bridegroom:

How fair and gracious you are, My Spouse!
Kindest and fairest garden of delights.
Your figure resembles the palm tree,
on it grow dates with delicious and refreshing juice.
3. **Twelfth Song:** Mystical Espousal of Christ with souls called to the state of perfection.

The Bridegroom:

Open to Me the door of your soul,
My beloved, and I will anoint you
with the mystical espousal of virgins.
As zealous lover I range about your home day and
night,
My head covered with dew
and My locks with the night frost.

The soul:

I said to the Spouse: My Beloved!
I have already taken off the old garment,
and washed the dust of the highway from my feet.
And He set in my soul
the seal of Espousal between us both.

4. **Thirteenth Song:** (a) Christ, as most zealous Spouse, subjects souls to a trial of love and fidelity. Dark night of the soul. (b) Assaults of Satan. (c) Search for the Bridegroom; (d) and the joyful reunion between the bride and the Bridegroom.

The Bride:

(a)

I heard the Voice of my Spouse,
and I sensed that He was knocking at my door.

I went out hastily to meet Him,
lifting the latch for Him to enter,
but He had disappeared.

Moved to the very depths
I sought Him but did not find Him;
I called Him, but He did not respond.

(b)

Lost in the darkness of the night,
I became a prey to robbers,
who, mocking me derisively,
struck me heartlessly,
covering me with wounds.

(c)

I conjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
if you find my Beloved,
to tell Him that I am faint with love.

Choir of virgins:

What is there in your Beloved above the rest,

fairest soul,
that you conjure us in this way?

The Bride:

My Beloved is gallant and considerate,
noblest is His cradle,
chosen from among the rest of men.
The echo of His voice is so gentle,
He is wholly enviable.

That is my Beloved, that is my Spouse,
daughters of Jerusalem.

Choir of virgins:

And where did your Beloved go
fairest soul,
so that we may seek Him with you?

(d)

The Bride:

However, as dawn broke,
I found my Beloved Spouse at last.
He came up to me
and took my hands.

All of Him exuded delicious myrrh,
that enraptured my soul with suavest consolation.

5. **Fourteenth Song:** Vehement desires of the Church
that all those outside her fold form part of her.

The Bride:

O you who are not yet mine!
Who shall grant me that you might be simple like children
so that I might nurse you
as mother at my breasts,

clasp you in my lap
and heap Graces upon you!

My Spouse would satiate you with heavenly bread and
wine,

hold you close in His arms,
and give you to share in the secrets of His Heart.

6. **Fifteenth Song:** Triumph of the Church in the Last
Times.

Choir of mankind:

Who is she who rises up from the desert
overflowing with delights, leaning upon her Beloved?

The Bridegroom:

She is my dearly beloved Spouse
whom I cleansed and renewed on Calvary
and led by pathways of eternal life.

Afterwards I drew her up from the prostration
to which adulterers of truth
had reduced her.

The Bride:

Place me, my Spouse, as a seal upon your heart
because my yearning is adamant,
and my love stronger than life itself.

The fire of your divine dart has cleaved me,
my being is ablaze in it and I am wounded unto death.

My heart is a divine volcano,
that neither seas nor rivers will be able to extinguish.

Nor can be acquired by any riches.

My Beloved is for me,
and I am for my Beloved.

Book V Ecclesiastes

Prologue

1. King Solomon, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes, of moral character, in which are expounded other aspects of the folly of worldly things, and the benefits that the possession of Divine Wisdom entails.

2. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, written by Solomon at seventy years of age and therefore one year prior to his death, is reflected a certain repentance for a considerable part of the turpitude of his life, as well as his disillusionment with the vanity of things of the Earth, which he possessed with opulence and inordinate appetites. Across the pages of Ecclesiastes, Divine Wisdom preaches against the vanity of human things, so that men, while they live in this world, learn to govern themselves wisely and know how to direct their footsteps towards eternal blessedness.

Chapter I

Vanity of human things that do not lead man to his supernatural end

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity: If man does not employ his life in the service of God, what lasting benefit does he gain from all the work he labours at on Earth?

One generation passes and another comes: some die and others are born, and what the former left the latter take; but the Earth remains ever stable.

The sun rises and sets; rises again and is hidden, and so on and on.

The wind blows right around the Earth in a continuous cycle.

The rivers enter the sea, and it does not overflow; and from the sea, by the evaporation of its waters from the effects of the sun, the wellsprings are replenished again and rivers once more flow towards the sea.

All things of earth hold their mysteries, which man can scarcely understand and much less explain.

The eye does not tire of looking nor the ear of hearing.

What has been up till now, the same will continue to be.

What has been done up until now, the same will continue to be done.

Regarding common things basic to man, there is nothing new under the sun, nor can anyone say: "Here is something new", because it already occurred in previous ages with identical or similar characteristics.

Chapter II

Vanity of human wisdom or science which does not lead man to his supernatural end

I, Solomon, king of Israel and author of this book, can speak from personal experience of the vanity that human wisdom is for man when not directed to the supernatural destiny of his soul; for while it is true that God inspires man to labour at comprehending the things He has created, He does so in order that this redound to the greater service of His divine plans.

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I, then, often proposed in my heart to carry out meticulous investigations into the things of this world with the object of being held wiser by men. I even applied my heart to further increasing my knowledge concerning prudence and doctrine, folly and error; however, not with the idea of amending my life, but to make myself appear wiser. I thought then: Here I am exalted and in the forefront of human wisdom, more so than all who have gone before me. In my studies I observed how much men do for their sole material advantage, and not for the good of their souls; for perverse men with difficulty amend and the number of fools is incalculable. Now I see that however often I have put my knowledge to the service of my personal glory and not to God's, it all amounted to no more than vain labour and vexation of spirit.

For all the wisdom that someone might have concerning the things that exist in the world, God's knowledge of them is infinitely greater. It is certainly true that, on a strictly human scale, a wise man differs from an ignorant man in the way that light can differ from darkness; however, considering that both eventually die the same, I thought in my heart: if I, who consider myself wise, have to die the same as the ignorant, what is the use of my applying myself assiduously to acquiring knowledge for my own personal glory? And reasoning now over this, I reached the conclusion that human wisdom, of itself, is vanity.

Chapter III

Vanity of riches and pleasures that distance man from his supernatural end

I also said in my heart: I shall revel in every delight and enjoy without restraint the good things of this world. But later I came to see that this too was vanity.

I ordered magnificent works to be done, I built myself houses, planted vineyards; I laid out gardens and orchards, planting in them every species of tree. I constructed reservoirs to irrigate the tree plantations. I possessed numerous wives, many men and women slaves, and came to have a large family. I also possessed many herds of cattle, very many flocks of sheep, more than all those who had gone before me. The great riches I already possessed in silver and gold I increased yet further from tributes paid to me by kings of other nations, and from the heavy taxes with which I burdened my people. I surrounded myself with men and women singers, and with whatever serves to delight man; I used precious vessels and flagons to serve wine at my table; and surpassed in wealth all who had lived before me. In short, I did not deny my eyes anything they desired, nor forbid my heart to enjoy every kind of pleasure and take delight in the things I had prepared; rather I considered this to be my portion, to take pleasure in my work. But looking back at all the works of my hands, and considering the labours at which I had so uselessly toiled, I see that all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and that nothing is stable in this world.

So then, if man dispenses with God, what benefit will he gain from all the toil and vexation of spirit with which he burdens himself in this world? Is this not vanity? Nevertheless, it is a gift of God that man live in peace of spirit, piously enjoy his work, and eat and drink with moderation. Who shall be able to indulge himself and abound in delights as much as I, and withal I am unhappy? To the man who is right-minded in His presence, God gives Divine Wisdom, knowledge and good cheer; but leaves the sinner with his troubles and useless worries to accumulate and hoard goods which will later go to others; which is vanity and useless torment of soul.

Chapter IV

Man's inordinate efforts are vanity, since everything has its time

All things have their time, and everything there is under the heavens takes place within its appropriate term: There is a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to sow, and a time to reap; a time to sicken, and a time to get well; a time to build, and a time to pull down; a time to laugh, and a time to cry; a time to dance, and a time to mourn; a time to gather stones, and a time to scatter them; a time to embrace, and a time to detest; a time to win, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and time to cast aside; a time to sew, and a time to mend; a time to speak, and a time to keep silent; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

Of what use is so much toil in life for things that later have to end? I have seen the suffering that always accompanies man in his efforts, which is the just penalty for his sins. All things that God made are good for man, provided he uses them at their proper time and in accord with God's plan; but, because of sin, man oftentimes toils to use them according to his cravings, and not according to the proper end for which they were created. However, I know that there is nothing better for man than to do good in his life, be of good cheer, eat and drink moderately and see the good his work brings him, since this is a gift from God. I have seen that all things God has created, always subsist in one way or another, and that we cannot add to or subtract from what God has made in order that He be feared and adored. What was made, that same remains; what is to be, already was, because God renews what is past.

Chapter V

The vanity of the miseries of life

I have seen under the sun wrongdoing in place of piety, and injustice instead of justice. And I said in my heart: God is to judge the righteous man and the ungodly; because for each the time arrives to be called to order. The man who does not act uprightly and becomes a slave to his lower passions: in what does he differ from a beast? The difference between one and the other is that a man should behave as a man acting uprightly, and not as a beast. Besides, a man of depraved life is worse than the beasts, since they at least act in accordance with the natural laws God has placed in them. I understand, then, that there is nothing better for a man than to act uprightly and attend to his occupations with pious good spirits, since this is what God requires of him while he lives.

I turned my attention to other things, and I saw the violence committed on Earth, the tears of the innocent without anyone to console them, and the impossibility of their freeing themselves from the hands of their oppressors, lacking all human succour. I considered that any good action of man comes from God alone.

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I also contemplated all the labours of men, and I came to see that their disproportionate successes and talents are exposed to envy and persecution from others; so that undue concern for material things is vanity and needless care. Though I have also seen the lazy, arms folded, saying foolishly, "*Better is a small handful of goods together with repose, than two handfuls by dint of hard work and vexation of heart*"; which is vanity and sloth.

Considering further, I found another vanity under the sun: A man who lived alone, without wife, without children, without brothers or sisters, without any heir; who never wearied of gathering wealth, and who never once reflected, saying: "*I, why do I toil so much for my gain to the detriment of my soul?*" Vain indeed, then, is his conduct. It is preferable for a man who lives alone to share his goods with the needy, and thus at least count on their company; for good company usually has its advantages; since if one falls another will support him. Alas for whoever has no one to help him up when he falls! And if someone should attack either of the two, both will offer resistance; since a cord of many threads is hard to snap.

Far better a penniless youth, if he is wise, than an old and foolish king who is unprovided for the future; because sometimes from prison and from shackles a man comes up to reign; while another born to the throne ends up in misery.

Enter the House of God with the proper dispositions, considering the sacred place it is, and approach intending to listen to what He tells you in your heart, and do it; because obedience is far better than the sacrifices of fools, who are not fully mindful of how much ill they do to others and to themselves.

Chapter VI

The vanity of speaking improperly, breaking vows, avarice, injustice and other disorders

Do not speak without thinking first, nor let your heart be quick to express itself; because God hears all and will judge you severely. Be moderate, then, in your words; since in much talk there will be no lack of folly.

If you have made a vow to God, be sure to fulfil it, because faithless and imprudent promises displease Him. Therefore, fulfil what you have promised; for it is much better to make no vows, than to break those you have made.

Do not let your tongue be occasion of sin, nor say: "*There is no providence*"; lest God, angry at your words, destroy all the work of your hands. By letting the imagination run loose in useless daydreams, man falls into much vanity.

If you see the poor oppressed, violence prevailing in lawsuits and justice subverted in a nation, do not wonder or be alarmed at these disorders; for he who has a high post has another over and above him; and over the latter there is someone else higher up still; over them all is the king, and over the king is God.

The covetous will never have enough money, and the lover of excessive riches will not reap any benefit from them, which is vanity; since he shall not enjoy them in peace, for where there are great riches there are also many to consume them; and for the miser this is great suffering. The honourable worker, on the contrary, sleeps peacefully, whether he eats much or little; but the wealthy man is so full of delicacies that they scarcely let him sleep.

Besides, hoarding riches can bring to their owner the terrible consequence of their being stolen by thieves. If this happens he will find himself reduced to the greatest misery; and as he came forth from his mother's womb, so will he leave this world, possessing nothing of all he acquired by his labours. Therefore, I hold it to be a good thing that a man eat and drink moderately, live uprightly and cheerfully relish the fruits of his fatigues for the days God grants to him. When God bestows wealth and property on a man, if he puts them to God's service and does not employ them for evil, it is good that he wholesomely enjoy them, since this is a gift from God.

If the man to whom God has given wealth, property and honour, and who lacks nothing of all that he desires, by his covetousness does not venture to use his riches sensibly to prevent them from being used up, then by his meanness he will leave them to the mercy of strangers following his death, who will squander them in a few days without attaching any importance to them.

Chapter VII

The best for man, and the value of Divine Wisdom

Of what use to man is the vain investigation of things beyond him, if he has no concern for his soul's fundamental needs, nor ponders the brevity of life?

A good reputation is of greater value than the most costly perfumes; and the day of the righteous man's death is better than that of his birth.

It is better to go to a house of mourning than to one of feasting; because in the first is remembered the end of every man, and gives us opportunity to reflect upon what we should do so that death may not catch us in mortal sin.

The seriousness and gravity of the righteous is better than the false smile of the ungodly flatterer; because the aspect of the righteous will be for many motive to avoid other faults and to amend for those already committed. Thus the heart of the wise and prudent is where there is rectitude and discipline; and the heart of the fool is where there is licentiousness.

Better to be censured by the wise and prudent, than to be seduced to evil by the blandishments of the fool.

Do not be quick tempered, because anger nests in the heart of the fool.

Some say that past times were better than the present, for the sole reason of being past; which is folly, since present times often surpass in virtue and prosperity many past times.

I have seen the righteous die in righteousness, and the ungodly die in ungodliness. Therefore, do not pile up sin upon sin, nor seek to live thoughtlessly, lest death catch you unawares.

In your desire to be righteous, do not fall into extremes and idiosyncrasies, nor try to know more than is convenient; lest you fall into absurdity.

It is good that with preference you help the righteous, but do not withdraw your hand from others who are not so, since whoever fears God turns no one away.

Divine Wisdom makes a wise man stronger, but does not make him faultless.

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Do not stop to hear all that is said, lest you hear complaints against yourself, and your conscience remind you that you too have often murmured about others.

O how wonderful to delve into Divine Wisdom! Who shall ever fathom it!

Chapter VIII

Vanity of the seductress

I examined everything in the interior of my soul with the object of knowing, considering and seeking wisdom and the reason behind things, and of understanding the ungodliness of the fool and the error of the imprudent. I found that more bitter than death is the seductress, a noose of seduction and a net for the heart; her hands are shackles. Whoever is righteous flees from the seductress; whoever is ungodly falls prey to her seduction. I arrived at this conclusion, contrasting one thing with another to ascertain the reason for the loss of so many men, without yet having completely discovered it. Among a thousand men I found a few with wisdom, but among the women with whom I have lived I found only one wise. I also reached the conclusion that God created man and woman righteous; that the first woman sinned for not having rebuffed Satan's seduction; and that the first man sinned for not having rebuffed his spouse's seduction. Sin, then, entered the world through a woman.

Chapter IX

The honest man. Virtue, unknown. Uncertainty of destiny

Who like the truly wise? Divine Wisdom is reflected in the face of the man with righteous heart; folly is reflected in the face of the man with ungodly heart. The wise man keeps the commandments given by God, and keeps the just laws given by the legitimate temporal authority.

Whoever keeps the Commandments of God and the upright laws of His legitimate representatives, can always rely on God's protection during life, and above all at the hour of death. The heart of the wise man endeavours to do good during life, knowing that he has to render an account of his actions at the hour of death. Man has no power to prolong his life, neither does he possess arms with which to oust death. At that moment the ungodliness of the fool will avail him nothing.

In my considerations, I also took into account the following vanities: I saw that many ungodly men were given splendid funerals, having been honoured in the city as righteous during life, when they were hypocrites. There are also many men who do evil without fear, when they see the ungodly live contentedly for long years, with God in no hurry to call them to judgment; but it must be borne in mind that, while it is true that the ungodly commit a hundred wrongs, and the good suffer them in patience, God at the same time will reward those who fear Him with eternal life, whilst He will chastise those others, if they do not convert, with eternal death. How often temporal evils come upon the righteous in this world as if they were chastised for wrongdoing; while the ungodly enjoy prosperity, comfort and security as if rewarded for having done righteous deeds. But it must be borne in mind that, in this world, the intelligence of man will never come to understand completely why God acts in one manner or another; and the greater the effort made to understand, the more obscure it all seems; for whoever, pretending to be wise, says that he understands it all, is not to be believed.

Chapter X

Temperance and prudence

I turned all these things over in my heart trying to understand them as best I could: the righteous and the wise, and their works, are in the hands of God, and all the same they are not entirely sure whether they deserve love or hatred. As far as purely temporal things are concerned, they happen equally to the righteous and to the ungodly, to the good and to the bad, to the clean and to the unclean, to whoever offers sacrifices to God and to whoever despises them. In this way, then, the innocent is treated like the sinner, and whoever takes an oath truthfully like the perjurer. This then, is a mystery difficult to unravel, to see that, in this world, the same merely temporal things happen to all. And if, in view of this, man does not act uprightly and prudently, and take into account the end of all things and the eternal destiny that awaits each, he will give himself up wholly to iniquity, thinking that, in this world, the righteous and the ungodly are treated alike.

Many think vainly, saying: "*No one can live forever; nor hope in the existence of another lasting life; better, therefore, to be a live slave than a dead king. For though it is true that the living know they will die, as long as they live they have the chance of enjoying this life. But the dead are of no use for anything, since neither are they able to enjoy this world nor do they have any recompense in another life, so that their memory is buried in oblivion.*"

But, to whoever is righteous, I say: "*Go and eat your bread with gladness and drink your wine with gusto, as long as your actions are pleasing to God. Enjoy a holy life all the days given you to live, since that is your portion in this world as recompense for the work at which you labour. Let your soul be clean at all times, and the oil of Grace be not lacking, so that you be rewarded by eternal life and your memory shine out forever.*"

Whatever good work you can perform, do it without delay, because after death you will have no further opportunities for acquiring merit by good works.

Chapter XI

Wisdom is worth more than strength

There is a species of wisdom that I esteem as decidedly great: there was once a town with few inhabitants against which a powerful king came up, besieged it, built strongholds on all sides and encircled it completely. During the siege, a poor but wise man who found himself inside the town, counselled the citizens on how best to liberate it; and they, following his instructions, succeeded in doing so; but, later, nobody remembered the wise man any more. Faced

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with this, I thought: If wisdom is worth more than strength, why should the wisdom of the wise man be despised, though he be poor, and his memory not be lasting? For the soft-spoken words of the wise man are more efficacious than the bellowing of the powerful fool. Wisdom then, is better than weapons of war; for though a man possess a great army, if he acts foolishly in the stratagems of war, he loses everything.

Chapter XII

Wisdom, temperance and prudence in man

Dead flies fallen into perfume spoil its fragrance; likewise a little untimely stupidity stains the most brilliant wisdom and glory. The heart of the wise is always in his right hand to act uprightly, and the heart of the fool is in his left to act wrongfully. The fool, in his career, judges all to be such. When a magnate is placed over you, do not abandon your post, because your watchfulness will avoid very grave sins.

Here is another folly I have observed: the prince places the fool in the highest post, and the wise and prudent in the lowest. I have seen servants on horseback, and princes walk about on foot like servants.

He who secretly tells another's ill, is like the serpent that strikes noiselessly.

The fool talks much. The fruit of the fool's toil will be affliction, because he does not even know the way to town. Unfortunate are you, O land, whose king is wanting in wisdom and prudence, and whose princes are more concerned about dining than about good government. On the contrary, blessed is the nation whose king is noble in his deeds, in his wise government and in the use of arms, and whose princes eat to keep alive and not to gorge themselves with delicacies.

By neglecting to re-roof, the entire roof will give way; by lazy work badly done, the house will be full of leaks.

Do not speak ill of anyone in the privacy of your room, because even the birds of the air will bear off your words and songsters will publish what you have said.

Chapter XIII

Liberality, youth and old age

Give alms to the poor without seeking any recompense, since at the end you will encounter your eternal reward.

When the clouds are laden they pour down abundant rain upon the earth. Thus should you distribute your alms.

Whoever stays observing the wind will never sow; and whoever keeps watching the clouds will never reap.

As you are ignorant of the route by which the soul enters the body, and the manner that bones are set up in the womb of the expectant mother, in the same way neither do you know God's works, who is He who makes everything.

Light is sweet, and to behold the sun is a delight to the eyes.

Were a man to live many years, and in all of them enjoy good spirits, let him reflect that the days of eternity are unending; and that when they come, you will realize the vanity of many things from the past.

O youth, vain are your thoughts when you say to yourself: "I will enjoy myself in the world in my youth, I will delight in temporal goods while a young man, and follow the cravings of my flesh and what pleases my eyes." Well, know that God will call you to account for all this on the day He shall judge you. Therefore, cast anger from your heart, and put away the malice of your flesh. For foolish is the youth who gives himself over to the pleasures of the world.

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the time of trials comes, and the years of old age draw nigh, full of vexations and ailments. Do not wait to do good, then, until your hands and legs are atremble.

Remember God before your mind begins to fail with the years, and dementia then hinder you from acting meritoriously, for lack of judgment in your actions; and before your body, converted into dust, returns to the earth from whence it came, and your soul departs to its eternal destiny.

Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Fear God and keep His Commandments, because this alone avails man.

God will call us to account at judgement for any action that has not been done uprightly.

Ninth Part

The Order of Mount Carmel The Prophets Elias and Eliseus

Book I

The Order of Mount Carmel or Order of Essenes

Chapter I

General aspects of the Carmelites or Essenes

1. The Order of Carmelites or Essenes was founded by the Most Blessed Virgin Mary on the 16th of July in the year 4280 in Her apparition to the Prophet Saint Elias on Mount Carmel. The name Carmelites, then, comes from this privileged Mount where the Order was founded, where its See was, and where the first Carmelite communities were located. The name Essene comes from the Lake of Essenia, today the Dead Sea, since after the foundation of the Order, many Carmelite religiosos established their communities on the banks of this lake, and adopted the name which High Priest and Monarch Melchisedech had given it in honour of the heavenly Queen Essenia.

2. The Order of Carmel from its beginnings was formed by three branches: that of men religiosos, that of women religiosas and that of men and women terciarios. The men religiosos of the first branch, like the women religiosas, lived in their respective convents, since they followed community life in rigorous observance of the Holy Rules. Candidates to the religious life were tried over a long period of several years before being admitted. Essenian Religiosos, both men and women, were indescribably pure and pious, and wore a white habit and cream cloak. Those of the Third Order, the single as well as the married and the widowed, were bound to comply with the spirit of the Order according to the state of life of each. Essenes who lived married life observed much rigour among themselves. It was common for couples to live in pious continence for a certain time following the nuptial ceremony. Their marriages were monogamous and indissoluble, since married members had the sacred obligation not to accept either repudiation or polygamy.

3. The Order of Mount Carmel was always distinguished by the heroic asceticism imposed by its Founder, the Prophet Saint Elias, on its members, especially those of the two branches of religiosos, consisting in a rigorous life of prayer and sacrifice. The name Essenes means saintly religiosos, since they ardently aspire to sanctity.

4. The members of the primitive Carmelite Order were well known for their fidelity in observing Moses' Law, and also for their love and respect toward the Jerusalem Temple. Before setting out for the Temple, they prepared by prayer, rigorous fasts, discipline and other penances. In historical periods when there were no political obstacles, Essenes went up to the Temple at least three times a year, bringing generous gifts. Moreover, within the Temple they had a place reserved for themselves. Essenian families went up to the Temple bringing with them even their unweaned children.

5. The Carmelites or Essenes were distinguished from the start by their special and exalted devotion and veneration for the future Mother of God. In their Cave on Mount Carmel there was an altar dedicated to the Divine Lady, erected by the Prophet Elias. Essenes visited this cave frequently to implore the Coming of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, already honouring Her from before She was born. This singular Carmelite devotion to the Mother of God was recompensed by the Divine Lady with most abundant Graces and extraordinary privileges, especially by the most loving predilection and maternal solicitude which the Divine Soul of Mary always bore Her beloved Order. Essenes, by their prayers and penances, brought forward the Coming of the Messias.

6. On Essenian feastdays, especially those of a Marian character, for which there were great pilgrimages to Mount Carmel, the Triple Benediction was brought from the Temple of Jerusalem to the Cave of Elias, always by ministry of the Soul of Christ, and placed there to be adored by all, the same Triple Benediction remaining in the Ark of the Covenant within the Temple by virtue of Sacramentality. Likewise the Superior General of the Essenes gave Benediction with the Most Sacred Mystery, with very special Graces, among them sanctifications. These Graces were multiplied during the long stay of the Hallowed Sacrament in Elias's Cave on account of the Babylonian captivity, given the solemn worship rendered to the Mystery, very frequently borne in procession around Mount Carmel.

7. Besides the Prophets Elias and Eliseus, the four prophets called Major, the twelve prophets called Minor and many other prophets pertained to Mount Carmel. Some of them occupied posts as superiors.

Chapter II

The Essenian or Elian priesthood

1. Among the male Carmelite or Essenian religiosos there existed a priesthood which was conferred on many members of the different communities scattered throughout Israelite territory and abroad. The Essenian priesthood was also called Elian priesthood in honour of Elias, Founder of the Order and first Essenian Priest.

2. The real and true Essenian or Elian priesthood, while superior to the real and true Levitical priesthood, was nevertheless immensely inferior to the real and true Ministerial Priesthood of the Order of Melchisedech. The Essenian priesthood did not possess the internal and eternal character of the real and true priesthood of the Order of Melchisedech. The Essenian priesthood, though different from the Levitical priesthood, was comparable to it, for in essence both had the same external character and were extinguished in the person at death. The Essenian priesthood was superior to the Levitical by reason of the sublimity of celibacy together with the dignity of the matter used in sacrifice. The Essenian priesthood, like the Levitical priesthood, was an imperfect participation in the Eternal High Priesthood of Christ through the Priesthood of Mary. The Essenian priesthood, like the Levitical priesthood, was a reflection of the real and true Priesthood according to the Order of Melchisedech.

3. There were four grades of the Essenian priesthood: the first grade was that of priestly coadjutor, equivalent in minor grade to our diaconate; the second was that of Essenian priest, equivalent in minor grade to our priesthood; the third was that of Essenian chief priest, equivalent in minor grade to our episcopate; the fourth was that of Essenian High Priest, equivalent in minor grade to our Papacy.

4. The Superior General or Essenian High Priest had his See at Mount Carmel.

Chapter III

The Sacred Cape or Mantle of Elias

The Sacred Cape or Mantle of Elias was the apt material element required for the rite of Essenian priestly anointing. This garment fell from the hands of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary upon the Founder of the Carmelites during Her apparition on Mount Carmel, thus conferring upon him all the grades of the Essenian priesthood. With this Cape or Mantle, Elias conferred the Essenian priesthood in its different grades on other Carmelite religiosos. The Prophet Elias, on being rapt up to Mary's Planet, let half of his Cape or Mantle fall upon the Prophet Eliseus, and bore the other half away with him. In this way, in his mission to the inhabited planets, Elias was able to confer the Essenian priesthood on many with the half of the Cape he had taken with him; and Eliseus, as likewise his successors, in their mission on Earth, could also confer the Essenian priesthood on many with the other half of the Cape given to him. This half-Cape or Mantle was kept in the Cave of Elias on Mount Carmel. This garment was later given the ornamental