

# Ecclesiasticus

## Prologue

The Most Holy Prophet Malachias, in the Bethlehem Cave, wrote His second book, called Ecclesiasticus, shortly before His departure from Earth, which took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July in the year 5180. This book was attributed to Jesus of Sirach.

## Chapter I

### God One and Three is by essence Divine Wisdom

True wisdom comes from the Lord God, who is Uncreated Wisdom; which resides in Him eternally, since Wisdom existed in God before anything was created.

Who but God alone has understood in its infinity His Eternal Wisdom, which precedes all things?

And who, before God created anything at all, had already counted the sands of the sea, the drops of rain, and the days of the world, but God who is Wisdom itself? And who had already measured the heights of Heaven, the dimensions of the Earth and the depths of the abyss, but God who is Wisdom itself?

## Chapter II

### The Soul of Christ is by justice Created Wisdom

1. First God created the Most Divine Soul of Christ, according as conceived in the Divine Mind from all eternity. The Soul of Christ is by justice Created Wisdom.

Wisdom will praise His Soul, and His Soul will be honoured in God and glorified in the midst of His people.

He will open His mouth amid God's People, and will be glorified among men in the sight of the Most High.

Amid His People He will be exalted, and will be admired in the assembly of the saints.

And He will be lauded by the multitude of the elect, and will be blest among the blessed, and will say of Himself:

*"I came out of the mouth of the Most High, first-born of all creatures.*

*I caused a light that never fails to be born in the Heavens, and upon mist covered all the Earth.*

*I dwelt in the heights, and set My throne upon a column of cloud.*

*I encompassed the Universe, and penetrated the depths of the abyss, and walked upon the billows of the sea.*

*And in all peoples and in all nations I held the primacy.*

*I subjected the hearts of the mighty and the lowly to My power.*

*And in them I sought rest, and fixed My abode in the heritage of the Lord God.*

*Therefore He commanded, the Creator of all things spoke to Me, and rested in My Tabernacle. And He who made Me, told me: 'Dwell in Jacob, let your inheritance be in Israel, and take root in My elect'.*"

2. Here is the interpretation of the above text: "*Wisdom will praise His Soul*": The Divine Word, Wisdom Uncreated, took possession of Christ's Most Divine Soul, Wisdom Created, which was thereby glorified with utmost fullness of Graces, so as to be honoured and praised by all other creatures, and more especially by the faithful of Holy Church of all times. "*I came out of the mouth of the Most High, first-born of all creatures.*" The Most Divine Soul of Christ was created before any other creature, and, as first-born that He is, exercises supremacy over all others. "*I caused a light that never fails to be born in the Heavens, and upon mist covered all the Earth.*" That light is Mary's Divine Soul, created by God at the demand of Christ's Soul and by means of Him. The mist is Mary's Soul, through which Christ's pre-existent Soul acted on Earth. "*I dwelt in the heights, and set My throne upon a column of cloud.*" Christ's pre-existent Soul, with utmost fullness of beatific vision, was enthroned in Mary's Soul, figured by the cloud column, and through Her Soul He acted on Earth. The Soul of Christ was given primacy and power over the whole Universe, which He totally encompasses, and fixed His abode in Holy Church, which is the heritage of the Lord. The words: "*Therefore He commanded, the Creator of all things spoke to Me, and rested in My Tabernacle,*" mean that the Soul of Christ, after creation, demanded the immediate creation of Mary's Soul, and that She was created, by means of Christ's Soul, by God saying: "*Let there be the Divine Soul of Mary.*" At that very instant, Christ's Most Divine Soul and all the Most August Trinity were enthroned in Mary's Soul, which was constituted God's Tabernacle. The words "*And He who made Me, told Me: 'Dwell in Jacob, let your inheritance be in Israel, and take root in My elect',*" refer to God's Church of all times, in both invisible and visible aspects.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Mary's Soul is by Grace Divine Wisdom**

1. After Christ's Most Divine Soul, and before all else, God created Mary's Divine Soul according as conceived in the Divine Mind from all eternity. Mary's Soul is by Grace Created Wisdom, and says of Herself:

2. "*In the beginning I was created, second-born of all creatures. And I will not cease to be for all ages to come. I exercised My ministry before God in the Holy Mansion; and thus I am established in Sion, and repose in the Holy City, and in Jerusalem is My throne. And I took root in a chosen people, in My God's portion, which is His heritage, and My mansion was in the fullness of all the saints.*

*"I am raised up like the cedar over Lebanon, like the cypress over Mount Sion; exalted am I like the palm tree of Cades, and as the rose planted in Jericho. I am uplifted as fair olive tree in the fields, and as the plane tree in the plazas beside running water. As cinnamon and aromatic balm I exhale fragrance; as chosen*

*myrrh I give off suave odour. My dwelling is full of odorous perfumes, myrrh and incense; and My fragrance is like virgin balsam. I spread out My branches like a verdant tree, and they are full of majesty and beauty. As the vine I yield fruits of suave odour, and My flowers are fruits of glory and riches.*

*“I am the Mother of Fair Love, of Holy Fear, of Knowledge and of Holy Hope. In Me is all Grace of Way and of Truth; in Me is all Hope of life and of virtue. Come to Me all you who love Me, and sate yourselves with My sweet fruits. Because My Spirit is sweeter than honey, and My heritage suaver than the honeycomb. Remembrance of Me shall be kept from generation to generation down through the ages. Those who eat of Me will ever hunger for Me; and those who drink of Me will ever thirst for Me. Whoever listens to Me will never be confounded; and those who are guided by Me will not sin. Those who make Me known will obtain everlasting life.”*

#### **Chapter IV**

##### **The Souls of Christ and Mary were inundated with Divine Wisdom**

To whom has the beginning of Wisdom been revealed? And who knew her designs? To whom was Wisdom’s discipline revealed and displayed? And who understood her secret ways? The Soul of Christ, at the very instant of creation united to the Divine Word, was inundated by God’s Wisdom with utmost fullness: He fathomed His mysteries, understood His designs, knew His ways and fulfilled the Divine Will. Mary’s Soul, espoused to Christ’s Soul from the moment of creation, was inundated with fullness of God’s Wisdom: She fathomed His mysteries, understood His designs, knew His ways and fulfilled the Divine Will.

God Most High, One and Three, Omnipotent Creator, awesome and compassionate King, seated upon eternal throne as Absolute Dominator, was the Creator of Divine Wisdom; and saw, counted and measured Wisdom, in the Holy Ghost, Impulser of all Creation; and by means of the Holy Ghost, poured Wisdom out upon angelic and human beings, and continues to pour her out upon men, according to His bounty, and with greater profusion upon those who love Him. The Soul of Christ was created by God and in God; Who, after having created Christ’s Soul, contemplated Himself in that Soul as in His perfect Image, Prime Exemplar of all creation. All the works of Creation are impregnated with Christ, Who dispenses divine gifts at His good pleasure, and in the measure of the creature’s response to the Graces received. Divine Wisdom dwells in souls in the state of Grace: those in possession of true charity, namely God’s love.

#### **Chapter V**

##### **The Divine Word made Man is the Fount of Divine Wisdom**

1. By virtue of His indissoluble union with the Divine Word, Christ’s Most Divine Soul was constituted Fount of Divine Wisdom; whose gates of access are the eternal commandments.

2. In Divine Wisdom is contained the Book of Life, which is the testament of the Most High and doctrine of Truth: God transmitted the Wisdom of His Law to

Moses, and left Wisdom as inheritance to His Church in accordance with the Holy Covenant made with her. God promised His servant David that from him was to descend the mighty King, Who would sit upon throne of glory forever, the Christ Who overflows with Wisdom in uttermost fullness.

3. Christ as God is Wisdom Uncreated, and as Man is Wisdom Created. Christ's Humanity was the first to know Divine Wisdom, and the only one to know her in the greatest measure possible to a creature. All others can only come to the knowledge of Wisdom through Christ, because the thoughts of Wisdom are more extensive than the sea, and her counsels more profound than the deepest abyss.

4. Divine Wisdom floods all with intelligence. She pours out science like splendorous light that inundates everything. For thus has Wisdom promised, saying: *"I will pour out rivers of living and heavenly water. I, as inexhaustible canal, will irrigate the beds of My garden and will satiate the fruits of My meadow with water, generously overflowing. Because the light of My doctrine, whereby I enlighten all, I diffuse like the light of dawn, and will continue to do so in this world until the consummation of time, and for all eternity. I will penetrate the most hidden nooks and crannies of the Earth with My wise counsels, and I will cast My gaze upon those who live in ignorance, to give them the opportunity to know them. I will continue without cease to pour out Wisdom as promise of salvation, will give her in utmost abundance to those who seek her, and bequeath her as inheritance to My Church. I do not labour for Myself, but for all those who go about in search of truth. I will illuminate with inextinguishable light all those who faithfully hope in Me and persevere in My Grace."*

## **Chapter VI**

### **God, Creator of all things**

He Who lives eternally created all things simultaneously.

Listen, My child, and learn My teachings, and consider in your heart the words I am going to say to you; because I will give you the most apt instructions, and will manifest hidden Wisdom to you.

Apply yourself diligently in attending to My words, as I, in sincerity of spirit, will reveal to you the wonders diffused by God in His works from the beginning, and I will demonstrate to you His science in all truth.

God conceived His works in perfect order; and as from their creation gave laws and assigned offices to them according to their natures.

God created the first man to His image and likeness, and invested him with the qualities corresponding to his nature, dignity and state, giving him dominion over all other created beings inferior to himself. Then, from his rib, God formed the first woman to be his wife.

God gave them both an intelligent soul, and gave them wisdom, knowledge, virtue and beatific vision; with power to appreciate the grandeur of His works, praise His Holy Name and proclaim His wonders. God gave them possession of a law of life, and established an eternal pact with them.

They both contemplated with their eyes the greatness of God's glory, and with their ears heard the majestic divine voice, which imposed upon them a duty to obey, as proof of loyalty.

While the other beings of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms fulfilled their particular laws imposed by God, nevertheless, the first man and woman, making bad use of their freedom, disobeyed the command imposed upon them and sinned against their Creator. However, when they repented of their sin, God forgave them and also told them: "*Keep away from all evil.*"

## **Chapter VII** **God, Magnificent in His works**

Children, I shall bring to your mind the wonders of God: by the Lord's word do His works exist.

As the shining sun illuminates all things, likewise is every work of the Lord full of His magnificence.

Did not the Lord by chance ordain that the saints proclaim the lasting wonders He performed so as to perpetuate His glory? He is the Almighty who penetrates the abysses and the hearts of men, and fathoms all secrets; because the Wisdom of God is infinite, knows the past and the future, and nothing is hidden from His gaze, neither does any thought or word escape Him. All that He created He made lovely by His Wisdom, and has nothing to add or remove from His work. He exists from before the ages, and for ages without end, and ever remains immutable.

Oh! How lovable are all God's works. And that, when you can only understand but as it were a spark of them.

Beings created by God are distinguished by their particular nature and peculiarities, and not one of them is useless, for they all need the others.

All created things are subject to the power of God, who conserves them, and they follow laws that He has established.

Who shall ever have his fill of contemplating God's glory?

Terrible is the Lord, surpassingly great, and admirable His power! Glorify the Lord all you possibly can, since He will always surpass your praises, as His providence is prodigious.

Bless the Lord, exalt Him all you can with all your strength, and do not tire, because you will never come to an end.

Many of His works are unknown to you, and what you do know of His works is little.

But the Lord made everything, and to those who live virtuously, in Heaven He gives Wisdom in perpetuity truly to know Him according to merits acquired on Earth.

## *Chapter VIII*

### **God, Provident in His works**

There is an order in the Universe established by God's Wisdom, and which obeys the natural laws established by Him. Therefore, beneath a single sun unmoving and perennial in its light, one day succeeds another, and each has its peculiarities which make it different.

From out of those days God designated some as festive and sacred, and left others in the number of ordinary or working days.

All human beings who people the Earth, although they proceed from the first man and woman, nonetheless, all have their characteristics, qualities and peculiarities, for the Lord made them all different by His Infinite Wisdom.

God gave all of them a holy law to fulfil, and some He blessed, exalted, consecrated and took to Himself, for their fidelity to the divine commandments; and nonetheless, others He cursed, ousted and cast from Himself, for their infidelity to those commandments.

As clay in the hands of the potter for him to do and dispose of as he pleases according to his sovereign judgement, so are men in the hands of their Creator, for He it is who brings them into existence, which He conserves or brings to an end. Furthermore, God gives them sufficient Graces for them to save themselves; though in this order of salvation, God respects the human freedom bestowed by Himself, for man to decide between good and evil, between eternal life and eternal death; and both the righteous and the sinner will be judged according to God's just judgement, and sentenced to opposing destinies.

## *Chapter IX*

### **God is Just towards His creatures**

God, invincible King, is infinitely just.

Who will be able to elude God's justice?

In God there is no acceptance of persons: He breaks the haughtiness of the mighty, exterminates the multitude of the proud and shatters the sceptres of the wicked, proportioning men their punishments according to the wickedness of their deeds. He will not cease until He has done justice rewarding the righteous and chastising the ungodly.

The assembly of hardened sinners will be pervaded by eternal fire, and the Wrath of God will blaze out against the nation of the incredulous.

God showed Himself implacable at the sins of the giants of old, who trusted in their might to no avail, and were swallowed up by the Flood.

God did not pardon the town where Lot dwelt, rather He poured out His anger upon the inhabitants for their many abominations; He had no compassion on men who flaunted their unchaste pleasures.

And God did likewise with many others who incurred in those and other perversions. Not a single person who hardens his heart will be immune from His Wrath.

Because mercy and justice are in the Lord's hands: and He can equally placate or discharge His anger; and just as He uses mercy, so too does He chastise. He judges a man according to his deeds.

Therefore, the sinner will not escape a chastisement according to his demerits; nor will the righteous man go without a recompense according to his merits.

Do not say: *"From up above, who is going to see me and think of me? No one will recognize me in this world among such great multitudes; since what is my own person among such a sea of creatures?"*

I tell you, however: *"Your thoughts are insensate. Look! Heaven, Earth, the abyss, and all in them tremble at God's presence; the mountains and the earth's foundations shudder when He gazes upon them."* And yet you say: *"Will God turn His gaze upon me? Will He know all my doings? If I sin, will His eyes be able to see me? If I lie in secret, is He to know? Will He know as well the good deeds I might perform? Therefore, what have I to gain by living bound by the Law?"*

And I answer you: *"God sees all hearts, His decrees are quite far removed from the ideas that certain people form; but of all a strict account will be required at the end of their lives. And who will be capable of enduring God's avenging justice?"*

## **Chapter X**

### **God is Merciful towards His creatures**

God, Invincible King, is infinitely merciful.

Who will be able to enumerate God's mercies?

What is man? And in what can he be useful to God without Grace? And what good does he have but what comes to him from God? And what ill does he have but what comes to him from his own fallen nature and acquiescence to sin?

Few are man's days upon the Earth, and, compared to eternity, they are more insignificant than a drop of water in the sea or a grain of sand in the desert.

God not only shows men the ways of salvation, but moreover is patient and merciful towards them, knowing their rashness, boldness and perverse obstinacy.

The Lord is clement towards men: He teaches, admonishes and guides them as a good Shepherd does His flock.

He is magnanimous towards those who listen to the doctrine of His mercy and are diligent in the practice of His precepts.

How lovingly kind is God's mercy in moments of trial. It is like clouds which transform into water in times of drought.

## **Chapter XI**

### **The Holy Fear of God is the beginning of Divine Wisdom**

The Holy Fear of God is glory and honour; it is prudence, good cheer and crown of triumph.

The last things will go well for one who fears the Lord, and he will be blest on the day of his death.

The fear of God is glorious wisdom, and those who possess that wisdom love it and acknowledge its grandeur.

The beginning of Wisdom is the Holy Fear of God. It is infused into every human being in the mother's womb, is taken into account by those faithful to God, and displayed in the righteous man's conduct.

With the fear of God, good use is made of human science.

True religious spirit is born of the fear of God, keeps and makes man's heart righteous, and proportions him joy and good cheer.

Things will go well for him who fears God, and he will be blessed on the day of his demise.

The fear of God is the fullness of wisdom, which will inebriate with her fruits whoever possesses her; since with her goods she will fill his soul, and with her treasures his heart.

Crown of Wisdom is the fear of the Lord, which fills the soul with peace and fruits of salvation.

The fear of God perceives and values Wisdom according to man's response to Grace, which is a gift of God.

Like rain, Wisdom pours out science, knowledge and intelligence, and augments the glory of those who possess her.

The fear of God is the root of the tree of Wisdom in man, and her branches lead to eternal life.

In the treasures of Wisdom, true religious knowledge resides; to sinners, however, Wisdom is an abomination.

The fear of the Lord banishes sin; whoever does not possess that fear cannot be righteous; and whoever perseveres in it will avoid eternal ruin.

For a certain time the sufferer will bear his pain; later, however, he will be consoled.

The sensible man will think before speaking; and owing to his prudence will be praised by many.

In the treasures of Wisdom are the maxims of life's good conduct; the sinner, however, holds God's worship and service to be abominable.

How great the man who finds Wisdom! But greater still for possessing the fear of God from which Wisdom comes to him.

For the fear of God surpasses all things.

Blessed is the man to whom the gift of the Holy Fear of God has been granted. With whom will you compare him who possesses it?

The fear of God is the beginning of true love, which necessarily implies profession of the true Faith.

## *Chapter XII* **Fruits of Divine Wisdom**

Wisdom infuses life into her children, and welcomes those who seek her; and will go before them along the path of virtue.

Whoever loves Wisdom loves true life; and those who keep watch to find her, will enjoy her suavity.

Those who possess Wisdom will inherit eternal life; and wherever she enters, God will give His blessing.

Those who serve Wisdom give worship to God, Saint of Saints; and those who love her, love God.

Whoever listens to Wisdom will be judge over the nations; and whoever does not lose sight of her, will live secure under her protection.

Whoever places his trust in Wisdom will possess her as inheritance; since Wisdom will keep him company, consolidate him in virtue, smooth out his ways, fill him with gladness, reveal her mysteries to him, and enrich him with treasures of science and knowledge of righteousness.

Whoever turns aside from Wisdom, however, will be forsaken by her and left eternally in the hands of the infernal enemy.

The hands of the craftsman are praised for their art, and the lips of the prudent are praised for their wisdom.

Blessed is the man in whom Wisdom dwells, who ponders her justice and thoughtfully considers Divine Providence. Blessed is the man who studies Wisdom's ways in his heart, and understands her secrets, and goes out after her following in her footsteps, and lies in wait for her to pass by; who peers in through her windows and listens at her doors; who keeps watch by her house, and pitches his own tent beneath her branches; for he will be protected from inclemency and enjoy glorious peace forever.

Whoever fears God will perform good deeds, and whoever observes the Law will possess Wisdom, as she will go out to meet him like a tender mother and welcome him like a virgin spouse. She will nourish him with the bread of life, and give him to drink of the water of knowledge and of salvation.

He will lean on Wisdom, and will not falter; as she will be his stay. He will never be confounded, instead will be acclaimed in the assembly of the just, will be replete with the divine spirit of knowledge and intelligence, of joy and gladness, and will be clothed in a mantle of imperishable glory, with everlasting renown.

Fools will not obtain Wisdom, for she is far from pride and deceit. Liars will have no dealings with her. For Wisdom came forth from God, and is given to the humble and truthful, whom she will guide to the enjoyment of the vision of God.

If you pursue Wisdom, you will attain her, and will wear her as a splendid tunic, and will live with her, and she will ever protect you, and on the day of judgement you will encounter steadfastness in her.

Birds of a feather flock together; likewise truth ever follows the man who puts her into practice.

The lion stalks the prey, and sin ever stalks man: but Wisdom enlightens and fortifies the soul to overcome temptation.

Wisdom concealed and light hidden, of what use are they?

### *Chapter XIII*

#### **Divine Wisdom surpasses any other temporal thing**

Wine and music cheer the heart; but, more than either, the love of Wisdom.

The flute and the psaltery make sweet melody; but more than either, a kindly and gentle tongue.

Grace and beauty please the eyes; but more than either, a display of good works.

The friend and the companion are useful at their moments; but more than either, the prudent wife to her husband.

Brothers, sisters and relatives serve to help in times of affliction; but more than they, the saving mercy of God.

Gold and silver help man; but more than either, good counsel.

Knowledge and valour ennoble the heart; but more than either, the fear of God; as whoever possesses the fear of the Lord lacks nothing; and, possessing it, needs no other help.

The holy joy of a good heart is better than all table delicacies; and whatever he eats, though frugal, always benefits him.

The fear of the Lord is like a paradise of blessings, covered with glory surpassing all glory.

### *Chapter XIV*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the disastrous consequences of original sin**

As a result of original sin, an onerous task was imposed on every man; and a heavy yoke oppresses the children of Adam and Eve from the day they are conceived in their mother's womb until the day they return to the earth from which they were made.

Hardship, worry, anxiety, and the ever-present fear of death, overwhelm the heart of every man: from one who is seated on a magnificent throne, to one who is stretched out on the ground upon ashes; from one who wears purple and crown, to one who dresses in rough skins.

As a result of the first sin, the heart of man lives troubled by the vicissitudes of life, in which superabound cruelty, jealousy, turmoil, upsets, temptations, grudges, conflicts, fear of death; and even at times of rest in bed, bad dreams trouble his mind.

Brief is man's rest in this life; for even in sleep itself, he is startled like one on sentry duty facing the enemy.

All this happens to every living human being; but to sinners, far worse still.

As a result of sin, God permits blood to be spilt in the world, conflicts, wars, tyrannies, famines, ruin and scourges.

All that comes from the earth will return to the earth, just as all waters return to the sea.

All injustice will come to an end, but rectitude will subsist forever.

The posterity of the ungodly will not bear new shoots; since the roots of the perverse are on craggy rocks.

## *Chapter XV*

### **Exhortation to acquire Divine Wisdom. Advantages in following her counsels**

Child: if you desire Wisdom, keep the holy commandments, and God will grant her to you; for Wisdom and discipline come from the Lord God. What pleases Him most is that man places his trust in Him and is docile towards His dispositions. He will heap eternal treasures upon the man who has these virtues.

Child, if you are attentive to Wisdom's counsels, you will learn sound doctrine; and if you apply your mind to them, you will be wise.

Listen, My child, and set My wise counsels in your heart, and never cast them aside; and as faithful slave of Wisdom, place your feet in her stocks, and your neck in her ring; give her your shoulders, and do not chafe at her fetters.

If you listen to Wisdom, you will receive her teaching; and if you love her, listening you will become wise.

With all your heart go up to her, and with all your strength keep her ways. Seek her with Faith and insistence, for she will reveal herself to you; and once you have her with you, do not forsake her; for in your last moments you will find rest in her, and she will turn into sweetness for you.

Her shackles will be strong defence and virtue's foundation for you; and her chains, garments of glory; for Wisdom is the decor of life, and her fetters are bonds of salvation.

With her you will dress in garments of glory, and she will be crown of felicity for your head.

Child, take hold of sound doctrine from childhood, and you will acquire Wisdom that will endure until the end of your life.

Like one who ploughs and sows, apply yourself to her, and await her good fruits; for her cultivation will cost you a little labour, but afterwards you will eat of her good fruits.

How terribly harsh is Wisdom for fools! The senseless man will not persist in her study; as it will be for him like a heavy burden to try him, that he will not delay in casting off his shoulders.

Because Wisdom's teaching is replete with mysteries, and few are those who accept them; those, however, who do accept them and persevere, will be led into God's presence.

Do not be a rebel to the fear of God, nor approach Him with a deceitful heart.

Do not be a hypocrite before men; nor let your lips give scandal.

Take care that you do not fall and bring shame upon your soul; lest for having approached God with malice, duplicity and deceit, He unmask your secrets in public, execrate you from His Church, and humble you before all.

Keep your thoughts on God's precepts, and ever ponder His commandments, and He will give you a heart constant in good, and Wisdom will be given you according to your desire.

Let the thought of God be fixed in your soul, and let all your talk be of the Most High's precepts.

Wisdom will raise up the humble, and give him a seat among the magnates.

Wisdom, science, knowledge of the Law, charity and how to do good, all come from God. On the contrary, error and darkness are consequences of sin; and those who take pleasure in evil, in evil grow old and perish.

### *Chapter XVI*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the sage and the fool**

The man who keeps God's Law is truly wise, as he will better understand its spirit.

The Holy Law is beloved by the prudent man like gold jewellery.

Whoever is uninstructed in good will not be wise.

The knowledge of the truly wise overflows like a flood, and his counsel is like a fount of life.

Whatever good counsel the wise man hears, he will praise and bear in mind to his greater profit; however, if the fool should hear it, he will despise it and, turning round, cast it behind him.

The counsel of the prudent man is needed in the Church, and what he says shall be pondered with great attention.

The wise man's laughter reveals his inward joy; the fool's laughter betrays his inward bitterness.

The wise man employs his time well considering the Wisdom of the Patriarchs and Prophets of God; he will gather the maxims of those just men in his heart, and fathom as well the mystery of their parables.

He will, moreover, set himself to studying proverbs and will draw out their hidden meaning.

The wise man, rising at early morn, will direct his heart to the Lord who made him, and will turn to prayer in the presence of the Most High. He will open his lips to pray, and ask pardon for his sins; and if it shall please his Sovereign Lord, He will fill him with the spirit of intelligence, and pour out upon him, like rain, the maxims of His Wisdom. In prayer, he will also give thanks to the Lord and will put His counsels and commands into practice, and ponder His hidden judgements.

The wise man will proclaim the teaching he has learnt, and will glory in the Law of the Lord's Testament.

His wisdom will be praised by many, and he will never fall into oblivion, since his remembrance will not be erased and his name will live from generation to generation.

The peoples will proclaim his wisdom, and the Church will sing his praises.

While he lives, his name will be illustrious among a thousand, and when he goes to eternal rest, will possess imperishable glory.

Like a broken vessel is the fool's heart, unable to retain even a drop of wisdom.

To the fool, wisdom is like a house in ruins; and to the insensate, knowledge an unintelligible word.

There is a wisdom for evil as well, which is false and proper to fools.

As shackles on the feet and handcuffs on the wrists, is the Law hateful to the insensate.

The fool's foot is given to intruding into others' houses; but the prudent man is wary of entering.

Fools' hearts are on their lips; and the lips of the wise in their hearts.

When the ungodly curses the devil, it is his own soul he curses.

Whoever teaches the fool is like one who sticks potsherds together.

One who talks of wisdom with a fool speaks with someone asleep; at the end of the discourse the fool will say: "*Who is he?*"

Weep over the dead, because his life has ended; weep over the fool, because his mind has forsaken him.

The dreadful life of the ungodly is worse than death itself.

### *Chapter XVII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the praise to be given to God for His works**

Who is capable of recounting God's works, or who can examine all His wonders? Who will be able to explain the power of His Majesty?

Nothing can be taken from or added to the admirable works of the Lord, nor is there anyone who can understand them fully; for when a man thinks he knows all, he has only just begun.

Hear me all you religious of Mount Carmel:

Blossom like the rose bush planted by running waters.

Pour out suave aroma like incense; put forth graceful branches; flower like lilies; exhale sweet fragrance; intone canticles of praise and bless the Lord in all His works.

Extol God's Holy Name and praise Him with the song of your lips and to the tune of zithers, and you will say thus in His tribute: "*All the works of the Lord are exceedingly good.*"

Hear me you, all others who serve the Lord:

At His word the waters were held back as by a dyke, because at a command of His all that He wills is done, and there is no one who can impede His work of salvation.

In His sight are all men's actions, and nothing is hidden from His eyes.

His vision reaches out to all epochs, and to Him nothing is admirable; for He can never say: "*What is it? What is it for?*" Because all things were created by Him for His purposes.

His blessing inundates like a river in flood.

As the flood inundated the Earth, so will God's Just Wrath be poured out upon the ungodly.

All things that God created are good; many of them, however, have been turned into evil by sinners.

God's goodness moved Him to create all things necessary for man's life: water, fire, wheat, wine, oil, honey, salt, clothing, minerals and plants, and so on.

All God's works are good, and at their moments fulfil their purpose; and there is no saying: this one is worse than that, for at its time everything will fulfil its purpose. Sing then, everyone, all in unison, with your hearts and your lips, blessing the Name of the Lord.

### *Chapter XVIII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on perseverance amid trials**

Hear Me, you religious of Mount Carmel:

Child, when you enter God's service, persevere firm in virtue and in holy fear, and prepare your soul to face temptation.

Humble your heart, and suffer adversity with patience; incline your ear and receive prudent counsel, and do not be impatient in time of trial.

Await your God with hope, cling to Him, and suffer patiently, so that your soul be strengthened by trial and grow further in virtue.

Accept whatever God may send you or permit; and in the midst of pain suffer with constancy, bearing patiently with your wretchedness.

According as gold and silver are refined by fire, so are men pleasing to God refined in the furnace of trials.

In the furnace vessels of clay are put to the test, and in trials righteous men.

### *Chapter XIX*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the confidence of those who fear God**

Trust in God, and He will bring you through safely. Straighten out your ways, and hope in Him. Keep your fear, and grow old united to Him.

You who fear God, confidently await His mercy; and do not turn away from Him, so as not to incur His Wrath.

You who fear God, trust in Him, and you shall not be defrauded of your recompense.

You who fear God, hope in Him; since, for your consolation, His mercy shall come to you.

You who fear God, love Him, and your hearts shall be enlightened.

Contemplate, children, the generations of men, and you shall observe that no one who trusted in the Lord was ever confounded. For who persevered in His commandments and was forsaken? Or invoked Him in humility and simplicity and yet was despised by Him?

### *Chapter XX*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the hope of those who fear God**

God is clement and merciful, and in the day of tribulation shall forgive the sins of those who return contrite to Him, since He is protector of all those who really seek Him.

Those who fear the Lord will not be disobedient to His word; and those who love Him, will follow His ways.

Those who fear the Lord will seek the things that please Him; and those who love Him, will be pervaded by His Holy Law.

Those who fear the Lord will prepare their hearts to serve Him uprightly, and in His service shall sanctify their souls.

Those who fear the Lord will keep His commandments, and maintain their patience until the day He visits them.

For they will say to themselves: *“If we should not do penance, we shall fall into the avenging hands of the Lord, whose justice is immensely more rigorous than that of men”*; for if the Lord is infinitely merciful, He is also infinitely just.

Whoever fears the Lord will not tremble or be afraid of anything, since He is his hope.

Blessed is the soul who fears the Lord, since the eyes of the Lord are turned towards those who fear Him. He is their mighty shield, their powerful support, their stay to avoid stumbling, their succour in falls, the One who raises up the soul and enlightens the eyes, who gives salvation, life and blessings.

But woe to whoever has a deceitful heart, wicked lips and villainous hands!

Woe to whoever pilgrims on earth by two opposing ways!

Woe to men slack and faint of heart, who do not trust in God! For they will not be protected by Him.

Woe to those who lose the spirit of suffering, and abandon upright ways, and go by crooked ways!

What will they do when God summons them to judgement?

## ***Chapter XXI***

### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on observance of the Law of God**

Whoever fears the Lord will embrace His doctrine; and those who keep vigil in search of Him shall obtain His blessing.

Whoever seeks and loves Holy Law will be enriched by her fruits; but whoever acts hypocritically will stumble over Holy Law, which shall be his undoing.

Those who fear the Lord will know how to discern what is right, and their good works shall shine out like a beacon.

The prudent man takes care to reflect well on what he is to do; but the foolish and the proud act rashly on the spur of the moment, without admitting any counsel.

You, child, do nothing without good counsel, so that you need not repent after having acted.

Do not go by a bad road or risk yourself along a rough path, so as not to expose your soul to falls.

Be cautious even with your own children, and be on your guard with your servants.

In all your actions follow the faithful dictates of your upright conscience, since in this consists observance of the Commandments.

Whoever is faithful to God, pays heed to His precepts; and whoever trusts in Him, will suffer no harm at all.

No evil shall befall whoever fears God; on the contrary, in temptation God will protect and deliver him from evil.

The wise man loves God's precepts and laws, and will not break up like a ship in a storm.

The righteous man is faithful to the Law of God, and the Law will be faithful to him.

Whoever is to respond to a question, should reflect first on the answer; and thus, after having prayed, he can reply, will be heard and conserve sound doctrine.

The heart of the fool is as inconstant as a cartwheel; and as the axle turns round, so do his thoughts.

The sinner rejects correction and in the Law seeks his fancy.

Better it is with little intelligence to fear God, than with much to break His Holy Law.

### *Chapter XXII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on pride, the beginning of sin. Pride is the origin of all sin**

By pride, Lucifer and his partisans rebelled against God, their Creator, and were precipitated into the infernal abysses.

By pride, the first man and woman apostatized from God their Creator, disobeying Him and turning their hearts away from Him.

Whoever is drawn along by pride, will abound in cursings; and in the end, pride shall be his ruin.

The Lord always humbled the proud, hurled arrogant princes from their thrones, and in their stead set up the humble; He destroyed the pride of nations at the root, and raised up higher those held in contempt, due to their humility.

God wipes out the remembrance of the proud and safeguards the remembrance of the humble of heart.

Pride makes a man vile, and abominable in the eyes of God.

Pride is loathsome to God and to upright men; and the iniquity of the proud is execrable.

Of what is man conceited, he who is nothing but dust and ashes?

The assembly of the godless proud is a heap of tow, and fiery flames will be their end.

The way of sinners is well paved, but Hell its end.

### *Chapter XXIII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on swearing and lies**

Do not accustom your lips to swearing, because many are the falls on that account.

Let neither the Name of God, nor that of other holy things, be continually on your lips, if not with due respect.

The man who swears unnecessarily becomes full of sin, and misfortune shall not be absent from his home.

A lie is despicable in a man, since it is ever to be found on the lips of the senseless.

The liar is even worse than the thief; but both shall have perdition as their inheritance.

The end of the liar is dishonour, since he always bears his own confusion with him.

Whoever lightly believes anything told him, is at heart frivolous and shall find himself belittled.

### *Chapter XXIV*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on sacrifice to God and the priesthood**

God accepts the sacrifice of the righteous man with the greatest pleasure, and will never forget him.

The oblation of the righteous is like a chosen victim on the altar, and is a suave and pleasing odour in the presence of the Most High.

Honour the Lord with a generous heart, and do not reduce the first fruits of your labours.

Offer all your gifts to God with a cheerful countenance; and consecrate your tithes to Him with rejoicing.

By your gifts repay the Most High for what you receive from Him, and present your offerings to Him generously and according to your means, as the Lord is Remunerator and will return you a hundredfold.

Do not offer to the Lord the worst of your gifts, because He will not accept them.

Whoever performs works of mercy, also offers to God salutary sacrifices.

Do not appear empty-handed in the Lord's presence, since God loathes faithless servitude.

The Most High does not accept the gifts of the godless, nor does He regard the oblations of the wicked, neither does He forgive their sins, however many sacrifices they offer Him, if they do not display their sincere repentance; since what is most pleasing to God is to flee from iniquity; and the expiation of sins should begin by withdrawing from unrighteousness.

Whoever observes the Law of God, is the one who offers Him rich offerings; for it is salutary sacrifice to keep the commandments and withdraw from all iniquity.

Whoever offers sacrifices to God of goods robbed from the poor, is like one who decollates a child before his father, since the bread the poor need is life to them, and whoever takes it from them is a murderer.

Filthy is the offering of one who offers sacrifice of badly acquired goods, since by his oblation he dishonours God, Who loathes iniquitous sacrifices.

To withdraw from injustice is like offering a sacrifice of propitiation for injustices, and expiation for sins.

With all your soul fear God and reverence His Priests.

Love your Creator with all your strength, and do not forsake His sacred ministers.

Honour God with all your soul, and respect Priests.

As you are commanded, give your alms to the Priest, so that he can maintain himself and attend worthily to God's worship.

Think not to bribe the Lord by offering Him sacrifices without withdrawing from evil, because He will not accept your gifts.

### *Chapter XXV*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on prayer**

Whoever adores God with good will, shall be protected by Him and his prayer shall reach up to His presence.

The prayer of the humble pierces the clouds, and does not rest until it reaches God, and does not withdraw until the Most High has fixed His gaze upon it.

Whoever serves the Lord devoutly is accepted, and his prayer shall rise up even into His presence.

The Lord disdains neither the orphan's nor the widow's plea, if they let out their groans before Him. Do not the widow's tears by chance course down her cheeks and cry out against whoever makes them flow? Because, from her cheeks, her tears then rise up even to Heaven; and the Lord, who sees and hears all, will flare up in Anger against those who caused them.

God will quickly hear the prayer of the oppressed righteous, and will not delay in doing justice, nor will He set aside His Wrath until crushing the pride of oppressors.

### *Chapter XXVI*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the duties of parents towards their children**

Heed well My counsel, head of the family: never in your life give your wife or your children power over you.

In all things maintain your authority so as not to blemish your reputation as head of the family, and let no one occupy your post.

Do not allow your children to alter your good intentions, since it is preferable that they have recourse to you, rather than see yourself at their mercy.

When the days of your life are coming to an end, make your will in good time and share out your inheritance equitably among those of your children faithful to God.

Instruct and educate your children well from their childhood.

Whoever educates his child well, will afterwards rejoice in the child's good conduct, and will glory in him among his relatives and acquaintances.

Whoever loves his child will reproach and chastise him when he does wrong.

When a father dies who has educated his son well, it is as though he had not died, since he leaves after him one like himself.

Whoever does not educate his son will later have to dress the wounds of the child, at whose every cry he will feel his inner self moved.

A horse not broken in becomes unmanageable; a son left to himself becomes insolent.

If you are too condescending with your son, later he will make you tremble; if you play with him unduly, later he will fill you with grief. Do not laugh with him at vain trifles, lest in the end you have to weep, and he make you gnash your teeth. Do not let him do as he pleases in his youth, and do not overlook his faults, but correct him. Whenever your son so deserves, give him the cane while he is a child, and humble his pride in his youth, lest he harden his heart, and deny you obedience to your great sorrow of soul. Educate your son, and put him to work, so that you may not be accomplice to his disgrace.

Whoever instructs his son well, will be the envy of his enemy, and will be honoured among his friends for his sake.

Raise no objections if a son or daughter of yours desires to embrace the religious life.

Do you have daughters? Keep watch over their virtue; and do not show complaisance at needless fancies.

Marry off your daughter to a man of good sense, and you will have performed a great work.

Over the unmanageable daughter, redouble your vigilance, lest, finding an opportunity, she give vent to her passions.

Keep ceaseless watch over the shameless daughter, and do not be surprised if she pays you no attention. She, like some thirsty traveller, will apply her mouth to every fountain, and drink the water nearest at hand, whatever it may be, and sit by any corner, and open her quiver to any arrow.

A young unmarried daughter is for her parents a very precious treasure to guard, lest her purity be contaminated, and she lose her virginity before entering marriage, and be exposed to her husband's loathing when he cohabits with her.

Parents! Over the bold daughter, reinforce your vigilance, lest some day she be for you the derision of your enemies, object of town gossip and mockery of the populace, and you be shamed in the midst of the people, since the dishonoured daughter is the opprobrium of her parents.

Have your daughter dress decently, and not vainly display her beauty to men, nor have dealings with shameless men, but endeavour to find an honourable and hard-working man to be her husband and give children to God.

Do not delight in your children if they are godless, nor trust them, nor rely on their help in your old age, because it is preferable to have one God-fearing child than a thousand bad children, and more profitable to die childless than to leave behind bad children.

Happy the father and mother who find consolation in the upright conduct of their children.

If you have a faithful servant, care for him as for yourself, treat him like a son, and not unjustly; since if you ill-treat him, and he, cursing you, leaves, which way will you go to seek him? Make sure that he does not lack work, so as not to be idle, since idleness teaches many evils. Give him suitable work; and if he acts badly, reproach him charitably, and even punish him, but be sure not to go too far; and do not take serious decisions concerning him without first seeking advice.

### *Chapter XXVII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the duties of children towards their parents**

The children of Wisdom form the congregation of the righteous; and their spirit is obedience and love.

Son, hearken to the good counsels of your parents, and carry them out, that is if you wish to be saved.

Honour your father and your mother with all your heart.

Remember that, were it not for them, you would not have been born; and make them a return for all they have done for you.

For God wills that father and mother be honoured by their children.

Whoever loves his parents for love of God, will more readily obtain the forgiveness of his sins, will be strengthened further in temptation and his prayer will always be received.

Like one who accumulates treasures, so is one who tributes honour to his parents.

Whoever honours his parents, will afterwards have consolation from his own children, and God will hear his prayer.

Whoever honours his father and his mother prepares himself better for everlasting life.

He who truly fears God, honours his parents, and serves them as his lords, since they gave him his being.

Honour your father and your mother in deed, in word and in all patience, so that their blessings may descend upon you and accompany you till the end of your life.

The paternal blessing makes the son's home secure; but the curse ruins it down to the foundations.

Son, do not glory in what is shameful to your parents, because their shame is no glory to you; since the father's good reputation is the son's glory, and a father without honour is a blot on the son.

Son, succour your father and your mother in their old age, and do not make their lives sad; and if, owing to old age, they become like children again, have compassion on them, and never despise them because you have more vigour than they; since charity towards a parent will not be forgotten.

By bearing with your parents' defects in their decrepitude, you shall receive your recompense.

If you act thus, justice shall be the foundation of your life, and on the day of tribulation there will be one who remembers you; so, just as a sunny day moderates the rigour of ice, charity towards your parents will moderate the rigour of God's Just Wrath at your sins.

O how wretched, and cursed by God, is whoever exasperates and forsakes his parents!

### *Chapter XXVIII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the agèd**

How seemly is Wisdom in persons of advanced years!

Great experience is the crown of the agèd, and the fear of the Lord their glory.

What you did not harvest in your youth, how are you to acquire in old age?

Oh! What a beautiful adornment it is for grey hairs to know how to judge uprightly, and for elders to know how to give good counsel.

Be not wanting in respect towards the agèd, because old age also awaits the young.

Do not despise the discourses of wise old men, and follow their good counsel, because from them you will learn Wisdom and prudence.

### *Chapter XXIX*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on rulers**

How seemly are Wisdom, signal intelligence and the gift of good counsel in those occupying important positions!

Power on Earth is in the hands of God; and He, in His time, raises up someone to govern her advantageously.

The king of a country is praised for the wisdom of his speech.

As is the king of a people, so in general are his ministers; and as the governor of a city, so in general are her inhabitants.

The imprudent king shall be the ruin of his people; the prudence of rulers shall populate cities.

He who is king today, tomorrow shall die. When a man dies, his body will inherit worms, rottenness and ashes.

The wise judge will judge his people with equity, and the realm of the prudent will be secure.

The great magistrates and the powerful enjoy honour; but no one possesses it in greater degree than one who fears God.

One nation often falls into the power of another, because of her injustices, cruelties and outrages.

The prosperity of man is in the hands of God; and it is He who makes the countenance of the good ruler shine out.

Do not become conceited when you see yourself raised up to an important post, because only the works of the Most High are admirable and glorious.

Many tyrants have sat on the throne; and others whom no one suspected bore away the crown.

Many potentates have fallen into great ignominy, and many magnates were delivered up into the power of others.

Because, through one single man of good sense a city will prosper, but a horde of the wicked shall lay her waste. Your eyes see many such things, and your ears shall hear more grievous still than these.

### *Chapter XXX*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on good and bad counsellors**

Do not consult on sanctity with the irreligious, nor on justice with the unjust man, nor on fidelity with the disloyal, nor on war with the coward, nor on gratitude with the envious, nor on piety with the impious, nor on decency with the indecent, nor on diligence with the slothful. Never take counsel from such on these matters.

Always consult with someone who is pious, whom you know keeps the precepts of the Law, whose heart is like your own, and who will have compassion on you if he sees you fallen.

Fashion within yourself a heart of good counsel, because nothing ought to be more estimable to you.

The soul of a devout man sometimes discovers the truth better than many knowledgeable doctors; but, above all, you must pray to the Most High that He straighten your steps along the path of truth.

Let the word of truth precede all your doings, and a sure counsel all your actions.

Good counsel may lead the heart towards good; and evil counsel may lead the heart towards evil; since good and evil are born from the heart; and often, according as is the counsel, so is the conduct.

The man who is truly wise, is so firstly for his own soul, and the fruits of his prudence are worthy of praise; for there are teachers skilful in instructing many, but not in instructing themselves; and there are also those who, when instructing others, first apply the instruction to themselves.

The wise man shall be filled with blessings, and praised by all who know him.

The wise man shall continue to be honoured by his people, and his name shall live forever.

### *Chapter XXXI*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on politeness at table, and moderation in eating and drinking**

Son, during your life examine and endeavour to know your soul well, and in things to which it is badly inclined, do not give it liberty, because not everything is suitable for all, nor everything to the liking of all.

Beware of being a glutton at feasts, nor launch yourself at every dish, because excessive eating causes illness, and gluttony ends up in colic and vomiting.

The intemperance of many has caused their death, and whoever is restrained prolongs his life.

My son: Are you seated at a splendid table of tasty dishes? Do not be first to open your mouth, nor say eagerly: *“Oh, how many treats there are here!”*

Remember that the covetous eye is evil. Is there anything worse than the covetous eye? For it covets whatever it sees, and will shed tears on spotting something it can't have.

Don't stretch your hand out to everything you see, lest you brush against your neighbour in the dish.

Give him the consideration you wish for yourself.

Eat with moderation from what they serve you, so as not to be vexing to the rest, and they label you a glutton.

Be the first to finish eating, out of courtesy; and do not show yourself insatiable and be considered greedy.

Don't be the first to ask to drink. A little wine is quite sufficient for a well educated man; moreover, it will not cause you a restless night; for the intemperate man will suffer insomnia, vomiting and stomach cramp; on the other hand, the temperate man shall enjoy sound sleep, as he will sleep till morn and awaken with a cheerful heart.

And if, out of consideration for kind attentions, you overeat, stand up, walk around, and you will feel relief.

Do not provoke those who love wine too much into drinking, because wine has been the downfall of many.

As fire tries the hardness of iron, so drinking wine to intoxication unmask the hearts of the proud.

Wine fortifies and is good, if drunk in moderation. Wine was created to gladden the heart, and not for drunkenness: wine, taken in moderation, gladdens the soul and gives the heart wellbeing. To consume it with moderation is health for soul and body.

Nonetheless, wine taken to excess is the cause of arguments, anger and much havoc.

Wine taken to excess is bitterness of soul. Drunkenness makes the fool bold in offending, stimulates licentiousness, reduces the strength of the body and weakens the will to overcome temptation.

Have they asked you to preside at a banquet? Do not become conceited. Among the diners, behave as one of them. First care well for them, and then sit down to table, to rejoice with them and be praised for your excellent arrangements.

If you are an elder, speak wisely and prudently as befitting your age; but do not disturb the harmony of the musical instruments by lengthy discourses.

When no one listens to you, do not speak to the wind, nor try to display your knowledge out of season.

A performance of good music at a splendid feast is like a ruby set in gold. And like an emerald set in a gold ring, so is the melody of singers, with cheerful and moderate drinking.

Listen in silence, and by your modesty you will conciliate the love of all.

If you are young, speak when necessary in what falls to you; and do not presume in the midst of magnates; and where there are elderly people, do not speak much yourself.

And when the hour to rise from table comes, do not linger; be the first to go home, and rejoice there, provided it be without sinning or haughty words.

And bless God, since He regaled you with His goods.

Hearken to Me, My son, and despise not My counsel, since in the end you will find what I tell you to be true: Be moderate in all your doings, and you will not bring ailments and sicknesses upon yourself.

### *Chapter XXXII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on fraternal correction**

Correct your neighbour fraternally before reproaching him; because the fear of God will thus enter him more readily; and this is the beginning of all Wisdom, which is doctrine of salvation, since in Wisdom is the Law's disposition and teaching on doing right.

Correct a friend for his fault or failing, whether he acted with wrong intention or not, so that he does not commit it again.

Correct a friend for his fault or failing, even though he be a countryman of yours.

It is preferable to correct than to bear a grudge; and do not prevent one who admits his fault against you from asking your forgiveness.

Do not believe lightly that your friend acted with malice, because there are those who slip up in word or action, but without ill-will at heart.

It is not prudent to pass judgements on one's neighbour born of anger or other passion.

The wise and prudent man, before judging his neighbour, makes quite sure of the truth or falsity of his offence, and prefers to excuse rather than condemn.

How becoming it is that one who is corrected show repentance! For whoever detests correction, is on the road to iniquity; but whoever accepts it, is on the road to the fear of God and conversion of heart.

Correction given with anger, and vomiting injury against one's neighbour, is false.

### *Chapter XXXIII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on dealings of married men with women**

Do not separate from the good and sensible wife who, for your fear of the Lord, fell to your lot, because the grace of her modesty is worth more than all gold.

If you have a wife according to your heart, do not despise her as if she were detestable.

Happy the man who lives with a judicious wife.

The resolute woman is the solace of her husband, and has him live out the years of his life in peace.

To have a good wife is a treasure; God generally gives her to the man who so asks.

The grace of the good housewife gladdens her husband. Her good upbringing is a gift of God.

The reserved wife is a gift of God, and the discreet one is priceless.

Grace upon grace is the holy and principled wife; and the chaste wife is priceless.

As the sun shines in the heavens, so do the qualities of the good wife shine in her home.

Eternal foundations on solid rock, are the commandments of God in the heart of the holy wife.

Be not jealous of your wife, lest, turning her to evil, you harm yourself.

Do not let yourself be dominated by your wife, that she may not rise up against your authority, and you be shamed.

If the wife obtains the rule of the house, she will rebel against her husband.

For the husband to be dominated by his wife is ignominious and shameful slavery.

Do not give your wife any leave to go wherever she please; since if you do not keep her ever in hand, she will affront you before your enemies.

As where there is no fence the estate will be despoiled, so where there is no good housewife the goods of the home will be squandered.

The jealous wife is for her husband sorrow and weeping of heart, and her tongue a cat-o-nine-tails for those living with her.

A yoke of unruly oxen is the evil wife. To touch her is like touching a scorpion.

Utterly irksome is the alcoholic wife, who will not hide her shame.

The unchastity of a woman appears in her brazen gaze and in the haughtiness of her eyes.

The wife of bad stock afflicts the spirit, saddens the face and wounds the heart of her husband.

It is preferable to live with a hyena than with a perverse woman.

What a mound of sand is for an old man's feet to climb, so is a talkative woman for a tranquil man.

In woman sin had its beginning, and because of it all die.

Do not fix your gaze on a seductive woman, lest you fall into her net.

Neither have dealings with dancing girls, nor listen to them, if you do not wish to perish by dint of their allurements.

Do not fix your gaze indiscreetly on the damsel, lest her beauty be the occasion of your ruin.

Do not give entrance in your life to harlots, that you may not perish, and moreover lose your patrimony.

Every fornicating woman shall be trampled on like dung.

Do not stroll along the town streets gazing about unnecessarily, nor wander about from square to square; since danger lurks at every corner.

Look away from indecently dressed women, and do not be curious about another's beauty; since many have been lost through woman's beauty, and by it passion is inflamed like fire.

Many, fascinated by the beauty of another's wife, became reprobates, because dealings with her inflame like fire.

Never sit down with another's wife, nor drink wine with her at banquets, lest your heart be inclined towards her and you be drawn down to perdition.

No head is worse than that of the venomous serpent, nor anger worse than that of the evil woman.

Do not regard merely the attractive appearance of a woman, nor become enamoured of her solely for her beauty.

A woman's graces gladden her husband's countenance and excite further his love towards her.

If her words are amiable and gentle, happy is her husband.

Whoever has a good wife possesses a great good, and a help befitting himself and a pillar of support.

#### *Chapter XXXIV*

##### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom in order to repress concupiscence**

Do not let yourself be drawn along by your concupiscences: restrain your appetites.

If you give yourself up to satisfying your inordinate appetites, you will gladden your soul's enemies, and they shall mock you.

Do not relish the company of the rowdy, because conflicts continually break out among them.

Wine to excess and evil women lead astray and discredit even the wisest and most prudent.

Whoever frequents harlots will lose all shame; poverty and ruin shall be his inheritance, and he shall be proposed as an object lesson, despised by all and erased from the Book of Life if not converted.

Whoever rejoices in evil goes by the wrong road; but whoever rebukes his own faults is on the right road.

Whoever is inflamed by the fire of his carnal appetites will not cease to burn until they devour him completely.

Whoever is slave to his carnal appetites will have no rest until he has inflamed someone else with his own fire.

Whoever dishonours his nuptial couch, as one who holds his soul at little worth, is wont to say: *"Who is there to see me? I am in the dark, covered up by walls and no one is spying on me. Whom do I have to fear? The Most High will not consider my misdeeds."* But he does not reflect that God's eyes observe all things, since they are more luminous than the sun, and discover all man's doings, from the depths of the abyss, and as far as the most hidden recesses of the human heart. The adulterer, in the end, shall be dishonoured before all for not having known

the fear of the Lord. And if he does not repent, his own flesh, which served as fuel for the fire of his passions, will serve as fuel for everlasting fire.

### *Chapter XXXV*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on riches and avarice**

Son, do not be eager to acquire boundless riches, because they will avail you nothing on the day of darkness and of Divine Wrath.

Greed for riches extinguishes the spiritual desires of the soul, consumes the vigour of the body and brings sleeplessness.

Disproportionate concern for the future casts out fine sentiments from the soul, and perceptibly diminishes the health of the body.

Do not base your life on riches, nor say: *“I am self-sufficient.”*

Should you be powerful, do not let yourself be carried away by your heart’s conceit, nor say: *“Great is my power, who shall be able to hold me in check and demand an account of my actions?”* Because, if you persist in this attitude, God will punish you.

There is nothing so detestable as the covetous man.

The wealthy covetous man wears himself out amassing riches; and if he rests, it is to satiate his craving for pleasure.

There is nothing more iniquitous than one who craves for money, because the covetous man puts even his own soul up for sale; and still living, tears out his own insides to sell them.

Of what use will riches be to the miser? And of what use will gold be to the covetous man? For both pile up treasures for others, and a stranger will be enriched with their goods.

Whoever is bad towards himself, to whom will he be good?

Whoever is stingy with himself, to whom will he be generous?

Whoever is covetous against his own self, in his meanness receives his deserts for his perverse passion.

The eye of the envious covetous man is evil; since it will not be satiated while he lives.

Whoever builds his house with the goods of others, is like one who amasses stones for his own tomb.

Do not try to take on many businesses; for whoever takes on much accomplishes but little.

There are some who, out of meanness, buy the worst at low price, and afterwards have to spend seven times as much.

The miser’s gift will later be burdensome to you, since he will give little, but afterwards often remind you of it and proclaim it openly.

Unbridled love of gold is incompatible with virtue; and whoever lives for money, will sin until obtaining it.

Many have fallen to the depths because of gold, whose glitter was their undoing.

For those who idolize it, gold is a snare of perdition, and the senseless man is caught in it.

You, child, use rightly what you possess, and make worthy offerings from it to God. Remember that death does not delay in coming, because to die is a law from which no one is exempt. Before dying, in this life, do good to your neighbour, and stretch out your generous hand to the poor, according to your means.

Give to the poor, and take for yourself what is necessary, and thus sanctify your soul.

The just complaint of the poor man rises up from his lips to God's hearing, and divine justice shall not delay in descending upon the oppressor.

The poor man labours with fatigue to be able to eat; and if he stops working, it is to find himself destitute.

Blessed be the rich man who was found without blemish, not setting his mind on gold, nor putting his hope in money, because with his possessions he has done admirable things during life. He was tried by means of gold, and was found perfect thanks to his detachment from material things. So then, for that he shall receive his prize of eternal life; since he could have sinned because of money, but did not; could have done evil, but did not. Therefore, his eternal welfare is assured, and the whole Church shall celebrate his alms.

On the day of good things, do not forget ills; and on the day of ills, do not forget good things.

### *Chapter XXXVI*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on loans and sureties**

Whoever is compassionate lends to his neighbour in need, and whoever is generous in giving to the poor observes the commandments of the Lord.

Lend to your neighbour in his time of need, and you in your time return to him what he has lent you.

Keep your word to the one who lent to you, and behave faithfully towards him, and you will find what you need at all times.

Many afterwards regarded borrowed money as their own, and caused those who did them the favour to rue.

Many, until they receive a loan, kiss the hand of the one who can give it to them, and in a humble tone make promises; but, when it is time to pay back, they request unnecessary extensions and blame lack of time; and though well able to pay back the loan, they make great difficulties about it, and return scarcely half the debt.

Whoever is kind gives surety to his needy neighbour, but the niggardly abandons him to his indigence.

Do not be unmindful of the benefit done you by your guarantor, because he has risked his property and even his life for you.

The thankless man leaves his guarantor in a predicament.

Ill-considered sureties have been the ruin of many well-off men, and have shaken them up like the billows of the sea, even causing them to emigrate and wander errant among strange peoples.

Whoever entangles himself in ruinous sureties and whoever gets involved in many transactions, will never be free from lawsuits.

Succour your neighbour according to your means, but also look to yourself, so as not to fall unduly into penury, since bread and water are necessary for life, and house and clothing to shelter the body.

### ***Chapter XXXVII***

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the rich and the powerful**

Whoever handles pitch will be tarred by it; and whoever deals with a proud man, will become like him.

Do not be ambitious to have dealings with a rich and powerful man; since it may befall you that, as long as you are useful to him, he will take advantage of you, and when you are of no more value to him, he will abandon you; and then you shall be like the earthenware jar that, being beside the cauldron, shatters on knocking against it.

All beasts associate with their own kind, and with those of his own kind every man keeps company.

Can the wolf and the lamb live together, without the former devouring the latter? Well, the same happens when the iniquitous and the righteous live side by side. Accordingly, the wolf striking up friendship with the lamb, is like the iniquitous striking up friendship with the righteous.

The wild ass is prey to the lion in the wild; so also are the poor often fodder for the rich.

The rich man, if he slips, has many to help him up; but the poor man, if he falls, is rejected even by his friends.

If the rich man speaks, all applaud, and though he utter nonsense, they agree with him; but if the poor man speaks wisely, no notice is taken of him.

The rich man speaks, and all are silent, and then praise his words to the skies; the poor man speaks, and they say: "*Who is he?*", and is not taken into account.

Prosperity for the disorderly man is an ill, and the treasures he finds further hasten his ruin.

There is one who by exaltation later finds himself humbled, and one who by humiliation later finds himself exalted.

Gifts and presents blind judges' eyes, and are like a muzzle on the mouth for censuring evil.

Like the rake who dishonours an innocent damsel, is one who violates justice by force.

## Chapter XXXVIII

### Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on moderation of the tongue

You, My children, hearken to My teachings on ruling the tongue; whoever observes them, shall not be lost on account of his speech, nor slither into perverse doings.

The sinner is caught in his foolish speech, and the slanderer will be ruined by his own lips.

Be steadfast in the way of the Lord and in the divine truth and knowledge that you profess and feel; and may words of peace and justice issue from your lips.

Children, let this be your prayer in order to moderate tongue and thought:

*“Who shall place a lock on my mouth, and on my lips an inviolable seal, so that I may not slip up with my tongue, and this be my perdition?*

*Oh, Lord, my Father and Master of my life! Do not abandon me to the indiscretion of my lips, nor permit me to slip up because of them.*

*Who shall there be to use the whip on my thoughts, and give Wisdom’s reproofs to my heart, so as to rebuke my errors, so that from them sins may not spring up, nor my ignorance increase, nor my shortcomings multiply and I finally fall before the enemy, and he rejoice to see it? O Lord, my Father and God of my life! Do not abandon me to my thoughts’ promptings, do not permit haughtiness in my eyes, and keep me from every evil desire.”*

Child, do not accustom your lips to indiscreet language, because this always contains some sinful word.

Whoever habitually uses insulting words, will amend with difficulty.

Be attentive in listening to others’ words, so that you may understand them and be enabled to give a wise and veridical answer. Until you have listened, answer not a word; and, while someone else is speaking, do not interrupt him.

If you understand the topic in question, answer your neighbour according to the facts; but, if not, cover your mouth with your hand to prevent indiscreet words that may confuse him, and moreover shame you by your foolishness.

Honour and glory accompany the sensible man’s discourse, but the tongue of the fool becomes his own ruin.

Do not insist on something outside your responsibility, nor join with sinners to judge or censure the lives of others.

There is one who, by keeping silent, is acknowledged wise; and there is one who, by much talking, is acknowledged a fool.

The wise man is silent until the opportune moment; the fool speaks without limit or measure.

Whoever speaks too much, annoys and makes himself hateful.

The wise man makes himself agreeable by his words; the fool makes himself loathsome by his silliness.

The fatuous man’s maxim will be reproved, since his timing is inopportune.

The garrulous man is known from afar by his speech; and the sensible man gives him a wide berth.

Chaff is separated from grain when the sieve is shaken; likewise, the more one speaks, the more one's defects are revealed.

As the well-cultivated tree is known by its fruits, so the human heart is known by the expression of its thoughts.

Praise no one before he has spoken, because speech is the measure of a man.

Tell the sins of others to neither friend nor foe; because those who hear you will avoid you, fearing you will do the same to them.

And if you have sinned, do not disclose it imprudently; because many, on hearing, though apparently excusing your frailty, interiorly will despise you.

Have you heard a word against your neighbour? Bury it in your breast, since you will surely not burst for keeping it secret.

As a woman in childbirth is restless till she has given birth to her child, so the fool to whom a secret has been confided is restless until he has told it to others.

### *Chapter XXXIX*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on murmuring**

Beware of becoming a gossip, and of your tongue being the cause of tangles that afterwards put you to shame, because the gossip brings upon himself hatred, enmity and shame.

If you blow on a spark, you make a flame spring up; if you spit, it goes out; the one and the other proceed from the mouth.

Speak with justice as much about the lowly man as about the great.

Terrible in a town is the foul-mouthed man, who shall be hated for his speech.

Is there anyone who has not sinned by his tongue?

Happy is one who abstains from sinning by the tongue, because he shall not feel the goad of remorse.

Do not spread malign and offensive words heard by you against your neighbour, and you will not find yourself accused of evil talk.

The murmurer and the two-faced man are accursed, because they perturb those who live at peace.

The slanderous tongue has shattered many lives, and has scattered people from one town to another; it has ruined strong and wealthy cities, and destroyed the palaces of magnates to the foundations; it has annihilated the strength of peoples, and wasted away valiant populations.

The calumniating tongue has cast valiant women from their homes and deprived them of the fruit of their labours.

Whoever gives ear to defamatory tongues, will have neither rest for his soul nor peace in his home, nor find a good friend to console him.

A whip lash bruises, but a tongue lash breaks even bones.

Many have perished by the sword, but many more have fallen through their tongue's fault.

Blessed be whoever has not used his tongue to calumniate, nor experienced in his soul the fury of his own vicious tongue, nor endured its burden or the bonds

of its chains; for whoever calumniates, as long as he does not restore the good name he took away, is subject to a yoke stronger than iron, and to chains heavier than bronze. The confusion and remorse resulting from one's own slanderous tongue are worse than the greatest tortures of this world.

Blessed be the righteous man who was fodder for the calumniating tongue; for those who fear the Lord and hope in Eternal Bliss will not be confounded by calumniating tongues, however voracious may be their fire.

Those who abandon God shall fall into the clutches of their own evil tongue, that will light its fire within them, which shall not be put out, breaking loose against them like a lion, and like a leopard tearing them apart.

Hedge your ears in with thorns, and do not listen to the evil tongue, and set gate and padlock to your mouth.

Melt down your gold and silver, and make of them a balance for your words, and a well-fitting bridle for your mouth, and do not slip up in your speech, so that you do not fall prostrate before the enemies who prowl about you, and your fall be incurable, mortal and everlasting.

### *Chapter XL*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on idle dreams**

Vain hopes are for the foolish man, and idle dreams give wings to the imprudent. Whoever bases his life on deceptive visions, is like one who endeavours to seize a shadow or pursue the wind.

Forecasting, omens, idle dreams and false visions are superstitious things: since can something pure issue from an impure fount, and can truth issue from a lie?

Unless dreams and visions come from God, take no notice of them; and even knowing that they are from God, do not act lightly, but with the counsel of a prudent and experienced person.

Dreams led many into error, and for having placed their confidence in them were lost.

Fulfil the Law of God without haggling, and you will not go astray, since in it no lie at all exists; for perfect Wisdom resides in faithful fulfilment of the Law.

Experience, trials and temptations make man prudent and reflective; because one who lacks experience, knows little; but one who has been involved in many affairs acquires great sagacity.

Whoever has been misled, becomes more cautious.

### *Chapter XLI*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on meekness, modesty and humility**

Son, attend to your affairs with meekness; and not only will you be praised, but also loved by men.

The higher you see yourself raised up, the more you should humble yourself in all things, and you will find grace before God.

Because, though God is infinitely great, He only deems Himself honoured by the humble of heart.

The heart of the really wise man is known for his endeavour to acquire additional true Wisdom; and because his ear is always tuned to hear her prudent counsel.

The man truly wise and prudent of heart will abstain from sin; and by good works, will prosper in virtue.

Don't make enquiries which go beyond your capacity; nor employ yourself in investigating matters exceeding your powers; but think ever on what God has commanded you, and do not be a curious investigator of His mysteries.

Because you have no need of seeing with your eyes the mysteries concealed from you, and which you believe by Faith.

Free yourself from investigating and being curious about superfluous things, because before your eyes you have many good things in which you ought to employ your understanding.

The man of obstinate heart will fare badly on the day of judgement; and whoever loves danger will perish in it.

The man who follows two opposing ways will not come to a good end, as that is how he will meet his ruin.

The perverse heart will become increasingly hardened in evil; and the obstinate sinner will pile up sin upon sin.

The proud who have made of themselves an edifice unyielding to true Wisdom, with difficulty shall obtain salvation; because the plant of sin will take ever deeper root in them, without their scarcely realizing it.

### *Chapter XLII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on mercy to the poor and wretched**

Son, do not deny the poor man your alms, nor turn your eyes away from him.

Do not despise one who suffers hunger, nor exasperate the poor in his need by your lack of succour.

Do not afflict the heart of the destitute, nor put off succouring the distressed.

Do not scorn the plea of the afflicted, nor turn your back on the needy.

Do not turn away from the needy on account of the anger his importunity may have kindled in you.

Give no grounds, to those who ask of you, for them to curse you behind your back because of your meanness; since if in the bitterness of their soul they curse you, you will also be held guilty in the eyes of God.

Show yourself affable to those who are poor, incline your ear to them without disdain, reply to them benignly and pay them the debt of alms required of you by charity.

As water puts out a burning fire, so alms expiate sins.

Deliver, from the hands of the proud, the man who suffers affront, and do not consider it burdensome.

Be merciful to orphans, deal with them as a father; and God, who is your Father, will be more merciful to you.

God it is who observes the good each one does, and bears it in mind for the future; whoever does good, when he has a fall shall find a stay.

Many cease to give, not out of hardness of heart, but for fear of being unjustly made fun of; nonetheless, be yourself generous of soul to the poor and humble, not making him wait day after day before giving him alms.

In fulfilment of God's commandment, succour the poor, and in his need do not send him away empty-handed.

Employ your money, for love of God, to help your needy neighbour, and do not hide it under a flagstone to rot.

Employ your treasures according to the precepts of the Most High, and they will benefit you more than gold.

Place your alms in the heart of the poor, and in return the Lord will deliver you from evil, since this will battle against the infernal enemy better than the shield of the mighty and the lance of the best of warriors.

### ***Chapter XLIII***

#### ***Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the responsibility of the sinner***

Do not say: "*My sin is God's doing*"; for God does not procure what He detests. Neither say: "*He induced me to sin*"; since He loathes every error and abomination.

In the beginning of creation God made man and woman with free will, giving them His laws and precepts; whose fulfilment or otherwise depends on human liberty. Salvation, however, lies in the faithful observance of divine laws.

God has placed water and fire before you: stretch out your hand, then, to what pleases you best.

Good and evil are before you, eternal life and eternal death; it is you who must choose. And according to the choice you make, shall be your happiness or perdition; for Wisdom is infinite, and her power strong and irresistible, and she sees all without intermittence. The Lord has His eyes fastened on those who fear Him, and He observes all the actions of humankind. He has commanded no one to act godlessly, because it is not pleasing to Him to have disloyal and faithless children.

Neither say: "*I sinned: and what evil has befallen me for that?*" Because God, though patient and long-suffering, will give you your deserts.

Do not seek to lose fear of forgiven sin, nor pile up sin upon sin.

Do not say presumptuously: "*The mercy of the Lord is great: Why amend? He will forgive me my many sins*"; for as He exercises His mercy, so too He exercises His indignation out of His hatred for sin.

The good or evil in a man's heart is reflected on his countenance; since the countenance is the mirror of the soul.

Practise justice before you die, because, after death, the time to merit is over.

Like the leaves of a blooming tree, of which some fall off and others bud forth, so is the generation of flesh and blood: some die and others are born.

Every corruptible work must perish in the end, and its artisan will suffer the same fate; it is virtue, however, that prevails, and whoever practises virtue shall be glorified for it everlastingly.

### *Chapter XLIV*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on friendship**

The faithful friend is a powerful bulwark; and whoever finds him, finds a treasure.

A great treasure is the faithful friend; there is no gold or silver which can outweigh his kindness.

The faithful friend is balsam of life and medicine of immortality, and those who fear the Lord will find one.

Whoever fears God, will succeed in obtaining good friends, for they shall be as he is.

The friend, if he is true and constant, will be for you as another self, and will act with loyalty in your affairs.

Love your friend and be loyal to him; for if you should reveal his secrets you will not win him back.

Whoever reveals a friend's secrets, loses credit with others, and with difficulty will find a true friend afterwards.

Do not be ashamed to defend your friend, nor hide from his countenance; but if he later repays you badly, be silent and suffer it.

Like a man who wastes his patrimony, is someone who by his own fault loses his neighbour's friendship. Like someone who lets a bird escape out of his hand, whoever through his own fault lets a friend escape maybe will not see him again.

Whoever throws stones at birds, will drive them away; and whoever speaks ill of a friend, dissolves the friendship.

If you unsheathed the sword against your friend, do not despair, there may still be hope for his return; if you reproached your friend, have no fear, there may still be opportunity for reconciliation. But if you betrayed your friend revealing his secrets, it is unlikely that he will return.

Do not seek to break with a friend because he defers paying you back the money you lent him, nor look down on your brother for the sake of gold.

Be faithful to the friend in his poverty, so that thus you may enjoy his goods in his prosperity. Stand by him in time of trial, so that you may have a share too in his time of fortune.

The good friend fights at his friend's side, and takes up the shield in his defence against the enemy.

In your heart do not forget your friend, nor lose his memory in the midst of your affluence.

If you have many friends, let one in a thousand be your counsellor.

Beware lest your bad conduct turn your neighbour from friend into enemy, as you will be accused of notoriety, infamy and shame.

There are those who out of human respect promise a friend what they cannot deliver, and the profit they gain from that is to make an enemy.

The mild word multiplies friends and appeases enemies; for meekness speaks for much in a virtuous man.

Advise a friend that he is being calumniated, so that he look to his good name.

### *Chapter XLV*

#### **Exhortations on Divine Wisdom on precaution against false friendships**

Do not consider anyone as your friend, nor easily trust in him, if beforehand you have not put his friendship to the test; for there are those who are friends only for their profit, and do not persevere as such in times of trial.

True friendship is not tested in prosperity but in adversity.

In prosperity, even the enemy is friend; it is in misfortune, however, where the true friend is known.

There are besides friends who easily turn into enemies, and then reveal, to your shame, your defects; there are also friends who are companions at your table in prosperity, and cease to be so in the day of your penury.

There are some who say: "*I am your friend*", but later are only so in name.

Some are friends in entertainments, and adversaries in afflictions.

Keep far from your enemies, and be on the alert with your friends.

The palate discerns insipid foods, and the discreet heart lying words.

Never ever trust your enemy, for as acid which destroys iron, so is his ill-will. And although he turns to you and shows himself obliging, be on your guard and avoid him.

Do not place him by your side, lest he overthrow you and take your post; do not seat him at your right, lest he take away your seat.

Who will sympathize with the snake-charmer bitten by the snake, and the tamer mangled by the wild animal? It will be the same for one who takes a wicked man as company and becomes enmeshed in his sins.

For the enemy has honey on his lips, but in his heart he is planning some way to throw you into the ditch; and if he feigns to help you out, he will trip you up.

The enemy sheds crocodile tears before you; but given the occasion, he can not have enough of your blood, and if misfortune comes upon you, you will find him against you.

Do not bring every kind of person into your house, for the traps of the malevolent are many.

Do not allow the corrupt man into your house, for he will turn it upside down like a whirlwind, and will despoil you of the good you possess.

Live far from one who has power to take away your life, and you will not go about troubled by the fear of death.

The perverse soul loses herself, will be the laughing stock of her enemies and will follow the fate of the godless.

## *Chapter XLVI*

### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on charity towards neighbour**

Remember the Law, the Covenant with the Almighty, and do not detest your neighbour, but forgive him his offences.

Do not look with scorn on the man who repents of his sins, and do not cast them in his face. Remember that you are all worthy of reproach.

Forget about all injuries received from your neighbour, and do nothing to harm another.

Forgive your neighbour when he affronts you, and thus, when you implore forgiveness, you too will be forgiven.

In all your doings, remember your last end, and you will never ever sin.

A man bears a grudge against another, and dares to ask God for salvation? He does not have compassion on others, and dares to ask of God forgiveness for his sins? Being wretched flesh, bears anger and asks God for reconciliation? Who will have pity on his misdeeds?

Do not let yourself be borne away by arrogance towards your neighbour, lest your fortitude crumble owing to your blunder, and the leaves fall from the tree of your virtue, and it be left without fruit, withered and barren.

Give yourself up to the fear of God, and do not be irate towards your neighbour.

Pitch and resin make the fire flare up, and a violent quarrel makes the blood boil.

Remember your last end, and do not bear hatred towards anyone: for your body is to decay, you are to be judged with all rigour, and there is an everlasting punishment for the trespassers of the Law.

Whoever desires to be avenged will experience the Lord's vengeance; God will keep an exact tally of his sins.

Do not rejoice at the death of your enemy, since you must all die.

Do not treat the servant badly who works loyally, nor the labourer who sacrifices his life to your profit.

Love the judicious servant as your own soul. Do not deny him his liberty, nor dismiss him and leave him in misery.

He kills his neighbour who deprives him of his subsistence; and he sheds the labourer's blood who unjustly withholds his wages.

Whoever takes away his neighbour's bread gained by his sweat, is like one who murders him.

Do not reprehend anyone before investigating; and, having investigated, reprehend in justice.

Do not praise a man for his mere looks, nor despise anyone for his mere outward appearance; for the bee is little among flying creatures, but the fruit of its labour is delicious.

Whoever rubs his eyes will bring forth tears; and whoever rightly touches his friend's heart, will move him to worthy feelings.

Do not leave off consoling those who weep, and keep company with the afflicted.

Do not deem it wearisome to visit the sick, since charity will thereby take deeper root in you.

Keep away from disputes and you will avoid sins, for the irate man starts quarrels and raises discord among friends, and sows enmity among those who live in peace.

Smoke rises up through the chimney ahead of the fire; thus, likewise, insults precede bloodshed.

### *Chapter XLVII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the sinner's conversion to God**

Child, convert to the Lord and stop sinning.

Pray before the Face of the Lord and amend your life.

Turn back to the Lord, and withdraw from wickedness, and detest from the heart all that is abominable.

Study the commandments and judgements of God, and be constant in virtue and in prayer to the Most High.

Tread the pathway that leads to holiness, in company with those who live in Grace and praise God.

Praise God for the remainder of your life, and glory in His mercy.

Oh! How great is the Lord's mercy! And how much His clemency for those who are converted to Him!

Do not defer your conversion to the Lord, putting it off from one day to the next; because His Anger will come unexpectedly, and on the day of vengeance will put an end to you.

Do not let yourself be borne along by every breeze, nor go by just any way; since that is how every two-faced sinner acts.

Have no part in the mistaken way of bad men.

Child, have you sinned? Do not sin again. Pray rather for past faults so that they may be forgiven you.

As from the sight of a snake, flee from sins; for if you come close to them, they will strike you. Their teeth are lion's, which kill men's souls.

Every sin is a double-edged sword: harming the body and bringing about the death of the soul.

Violence and pride reduce the estate to nothing.

### *Chapter XLVIII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on charity, prudence and self-control**

Child, do not be harsh on doing good to your neighbour, nor accompany your benefactions with unkind words.

As the dew is more agreeable to man than the sun's rigour, likewise a kind word is more agreeable to your neighbour than the benefaction itself, for the gentle word is worth more than the gift.

The righteous man knows how to combine one with the other; but the fool and the badly reared give the benefaction with harshness and insults, and draw tears from their neighbour's eyes.

Before becoming a judge of others, be yourself an example of justice; and before speaking, learn.

Before judging anyone, examine yourself, so that you be compassionate towards your neighbour and find mercy in God's presence.

Lest you should fall into sin, invigorate your weakness with salvation's medicine; and if alas you should sin, convert at once.

Let nothing prevent you from praying at all times, nor be ashamed of doing good deeds until death, for God's recompense is everlasting.

Let your prayer go forth accompanied by deep humility, upright intention and true contrition; for if not, instead of obtaining God's mercy, you will further enkindle His Wrath.

Remember that the last day shall come, the day of God's Holy Wrath, the time of retribution, in which God shall turn His Countenance away from the impious.

Bear poverty in mind in time of plenty, and hardship in time of affluence.

As the weather changes from dawn to dusk, thus all passes swiftly before God's eyes.

The wise man is always on the alert, and on the day of temptation will keep from sin.

Proper to the man of good sense is knowing and learning Wisdom better, and praising too whoever finds her.

Those who listen to wise sayings and put them into practice, become wise, and shower proverbs and maxims upon the rest.

There exists a refined and malicious sagacity that should not be confused with prudence.

There is one who expounds the truth frankly and vigorously, and is taken to be proud; and one who humbles himself but whose heart is full of malice; so that, finding occasion to do evil, he will do it.

In the wicked there is no real prudence.

In dress, laughter and bearing, is often revealed what there is in each human being.

### *Chapter XLIX*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on health and good cheer**

Better the poor man with healthy and virile strength, than the wealthy man weak and plagued with ill-health.

Bodily health, accompanied by holiness and virtue of soul, is preferable to all gold and silver.

There is no material wealth of greater value than bodily health; and there is no good above wholesome joy of heart.

A holy death is preferable to a bitter life; and eternal rest to lasting sickness; but best of all is to accept God's will.

The finest delicacies put before a closed mouth are like dishes of food placed on a tomb; since the deceased can neither eat nor smell them: so is the rich man who because of ill-health cannot enjoy his wealth.

Do not allow sadness to take hold of your soul, nor let melancholy afflict you; for the life of the righteous man should be accompanied by wholesome joy of heart, since good cheer is a treasure not absent from holiness. And man's wholesome joy makes his life easier to bear.

You, who desire to please God, cheer up and gladden your heart; be temperate, direct your soul to holiness and cast sadness far from you, as it has killed many, and is good for nothing.

### *Chapter L*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on doctors and patients**

Honour the doctor who treats you uprightly, because the Most High has placed him to care for the health of your body; because medicine comes from God.

The science of the good doctor affords him honour, and he will be praised before the great.

The Most High is the One who provides medicinal substances on earth and inspires men of medical science to make proper use of them, and the prudent man is not to reject the medicines necessary to him.

The Most High gave men medical knowledge so that they might honour Him with the wonderful effects that proceed from it; and therefore the divine will is that men know the virtue and efficacy of medicines for curing illnesses; since with them the doctor gives health to the body and relieves pain, and the pharmacist elaborates them so that God's creatures may not perish at every illness.

By God's providence, health is spread and maintained among men.

Child, in your sickness send for the doctor, as the Lord has placed him as guardian over your health, and do not send him away, since you need him.

Because you will often need to be attended by the doctor; who, if pious, will pray to the Lord that what he prescribes for your relief be effective and restore your health, which is the aim of his profession.

Child, if your illness is very serious, let this not make you impatient; instead pray to the Lord, cleanse your heart of every fault, and also send for the doctor; whom God will enlighten so that he give you efficacious remedies for your ailment.

### *Chapter LI*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on true and false shame**

Children, bear very much in mind what I am to tell you: one who hides his ignorance out of shame is worthier of esteem than one who hides his wisdom out of shame.

Be shamefaced according to my wise teachings; but it is not praiseworthy before God to be ashamed of everything before men, nor does every shame merit divine approval.

You ought never to be ashamed:

Of professing, defending and propagating divine laws and teachings, of living in chastity amid a corrupt society, of being considered poor and of humble state, of pronouncing sentence against the impious, of demanding a fair wage from chiefs at work, of standing up for the rights of your inheritance, of preventing frauds against yourself and your neighbours, of reproving and chastising rebellious children with due severity, of watching over your daughters' virtue, of reproaching and condemning your spouse's bad steps, of having strong locks on your storeroom when light-fingered hands are about, of counting and weighing on an exact scales whatever you deliver or receive, of correcting halfwits and fools, of defending the aged from the scorn and mockery of the young, of supporting the legitimate religious and civil authorities, as also of every other act of virtue.

You, then, should be ashamed before men:

Of betraying the divine Faith, laws and teachings; of committing adultery and fornication, of raising false testimony, of robbing and defrauding, of disobeying the legitimate religious and civil authorities, of perpetrating injustice, of failing to comply with oaths and agreements, of failing in charity to a neighbour, of divulging secrets entrusted, of calumniating and defaming, of slipping into laziness and sloth, of pride and striving for power, as also of every other vice and sin.

## *Chapter LII*

### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on mourning and prayer for the dead**

A noble heart sheds sincere tears for the dear departed, prepares them and gives them pious burial.

According to the bonds of affection which united you to the deceased, mourn a day or two out of respect for his person; but at the same time console yourself with the hope that he will obtain everlasting rest.

Do not let yourself be drawn into hopeless sorrow, as that is proper to pagans; rather pray for the deceased's soul so that the merciful God grant him eternal glory.

Let the deceased's presence serve you to meditate on the last things, to further improve your own life.

Think that, as he has been judged, so will you, for you all have to die and submit to God's judgement.

After burying the dead, do not give yourself up to grief for their absence, since that will profit them nothing and will do you harm; rather, considering their eternal rest, let their remembrance rest in you as well, and console yourself for their departure.

### *Chapter LIII*

#### **Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on many other vices which the truly wise must avoid**

Child, use your time well, and avoid evil.

Do not be ashamed of telling the truth, for your soul's good; as there is a shamefulfulness that leads to sin, and there is too a shamefulfulness that brings the glory and Grace of God.

Do not be considerate to anyone if it is to your soul's harm.

Do not have false charity when you see your neighbour fall, rather reprove him and exhort him to good.

Do not keep your words in check when they can be salutary for others, nor cover up your wisdom when the occasion requires you to display it for God's glory and your neighbours' edification; for in speaking well wisdom is made known; prudence, discretion, science and sound teaching are made known in the words of the man of good sense.

Steadfastness in virtue consists in good works.

Do not contradict the truth, rather accept it with goodwill.

Do not be ashamed of being ignorant about topics of human science unnecessary for your salvation.

Do not be ashamed of confessing your sins, nor sin out of fear or consideration for anyone.

Have no acceptance of persons of high standing.

Strive for justice for the good of your soul, and fight to the death for the truth; God will combat for you against the enemy.

Do not be rash in speaking, nor remiss and negligent in good works.

In your house do not be like a lion, terrifying and oppressing your family and servants; but neither yield to their idle fancies.

Do not let your hand be open to receive and closed to give.

Do not do evil, and evil will not overtake you.

Keep away from the wicked man, and you will be far from wrongdoing.

Child, do not sow evils and you will not have to reap them multiplied.

Do not rashly ask the Lord for a throne to rule, nor ask the king for a seat of honour.

Do not consider yourself righteous in God's eyes, as He knows the heart; neither seek to appear wise in the king's eyes in order that he give you a good post.

Do not seek to be a judge out of vain ambition, lest you do not have the strength to repress evil, or you are unnerved in the presence of the powerful, and come to act against equity.

Do not pile up sin upon sin, since you will not go unpunished for even a single one.

Do not be fainthearted in doing good, nor abandon your prayers, nor desist from giving alms.

Do not be presumptuous, saying: “*God does not regard my bad or good conduct, rather the offerings I make Him, which He accepts as being of great number and worth.*”

Do not mock the unfortunate and afflicted, for God, who sees all, is the one who humbles and exalts.

Do not raise false testimony against your friend or against your enemy.

Refrain from lying and from piling up lies since, besides offending God, you will not end up well before men.

Do not reject farmwork, or any other decent employment, however laborious it may be, for God wishes that man pray and toil.

Do not keep company with sinners who refuse to amend; and remember the Holy Wrath of God, which will not delay.

Humble your spirit as far as you can; for worm of conscience, fire and cold will chastise the impious.

Do not stoke up the fire of your concupiscence, lest its flames engulf you.

Do not lend to the covetous man; should you lend him anything, deem it lost.

Do not accompany the rash man, lest his ills come upon you as well, for he will do according to his caprice, and you for your imprudence will perish with him.

Have no dispute with the ill-tempered man, nor go with him along lonely paths, for in his outbursts blood does not matter to him; and when there is no one to help you, he may tear you to pieces.

Do not consult with fools, for they will only value whatever pleases them; and besides, will not be able to keep the things you tell them silent.

Do not reveal your heart to just anyone, lest he show you false friendship and then mock and affront you.

Do not envy the sinner’s glory and wealth, for his life will not turn out well.

Keep from despising the righteous for his poverty, and from greatly esteeming the sinner for his wealth.

### ***Chapter LIV***

#### ***Exhortations of Divine Wisdom on the death of the righteous and of the godless***

All that proceeds from the earth, will turn back into earth.

O death! How sweet and hopeful is your remembrance for one who lives at peace with God, and is employed in virtuous deeds; for one who values the material things of this life as nothing and whom solely God’s service and the hope of possessing Him satisfies; for the sick who has lost all hope of health in this life and thinks solely of living eternally happy in the other; for the very aged and decrepit who, finding themselves considered a hindrance by their children and other relatives, place their confidence in the reward they will receive in Heaven for their much suffering and labour.

O death! How bitter and desperate is your remembrance for the ambitious man, who directs all his efforts to the acquisition of wealth thinking that in affluence and wellbeing lies all the happiness that can be attained; for the proud, who

prefers his capricious ideals and erroneous convictions to divine Law and teachings alleging that the only things of value in his life are his own criteria and esteem of his person; for the libertine, who lives given up to carnal pleasures, delicacies and other concupiscences and worldly entertainments, considering that sensual delight is the sole happy end to be obtained.

Ponder frequently that death already existed before you did, and that it will continue to befall men after you depart from this life, since it is a sentence passed by God on all mortals as chastisement for sin.

Why be upset and why rebel at the thought of death? What better thing can befall you than God's good pleasure, whether it be in ten or twenty or a hundred years' time?

Think that, in the other life, no account is asked of the length of time you have lived in this life, but the manner in which you have lived.

Alas for you, ungodly men who abandon the Law of the Most High Lord and God! If you are not converted, when you die your inheritance shall be malediction.

Those who persist in impiety shall pass from temporary malediction to everlasting perdition.

Worldly life is counted in days, but good works endure forever.

### **Ecclesiasticus: Epilogue**

1. I, Most Holy Prophet Malachias, after having laid down the doctrine of Wisdom and holy morality, tell you: come to Me you who lack instruction, and frequent My school so that you learn Divine Wisdom. Till when have you to lack this boon? What reply do you give Me, your souls parched with thirst? Once more I open My mouth to invite you again saying: 'Come to Me, so that without payment I may impart Divine Wisdom to you; bow your necks to her yoke, that your soul receive her wise counsels; for Wisdom is close by whoever desires her, and whoever seeks will find her. Hear My instructions, the more the better, and you will possess goods which surpass any other treasure. Comfort your soul with God's mercy and glorify Him, for in praising Him you will never be confounded. Act according to Divine Wisdom before time has flown by, so that hereafter God may give you eternal recompense.

2. Glorify God Most High with this prayer of praise: *"I will glorify Thee, O my Lord and King, I will praise Thee, O God my Saviour! I will tribute thanksgiving to Thy Name, for Thou art my helper and my protector, and Thou dost deliver my soul from perdition, from the bonds of the slanderous tongue and the lips that forge lies, showing Thyself to be my defender before my enemies. By Thy great mercy, deliver me: from the infernal enemies who prowl and roar about me seeking to devour me; from the power of those who attempt to take my life away; from the many trials which come upon me; from the asphyxia of the engulfing flames of my passions. When my soul shall find itself at death's door, I will turn to every side and find no human help or relief; and therefore will I turn my eyes*

*trustingly to Thee, remembering Thy mercy, O Lord, Thy manner of acting from the world's beginning, and how Thou savest those who patiently hope in Thee, and deliverest them from their enemies. In times of trial, O my Lord and Father, whenever I called upon Thee Thou didst not forsake me. Therefore, without cease I will laud Thy Holy Name, and with thanksgiving I will praise, glorify and bless It, for ever and ever. Amen. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!"*