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THE BOOK OF WISDOM



CHAPTER 8

THE BOOK OF WISDOM—A PROLOGUE BY SAINT JEROME

The Book of Wisdom never existed among the Hebrews. Its style has rather the fragrance of Greek eloquence. The Jews claim that it is a work of Philo; it is then said to be a work of Wisdom because in it the coming of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, and his passion are clearly expressed. This is the Prologue Jerome put before the Book of Wisdom; he shows firstly the origin of this book saying: 'The Book of Wisdom never existed among the Hebrews. Its style, that is, its language is so elegant that it 'has rather the fragrance of Greek eloquence', that is, its taste is more Greek than Hebrew. The Greeks are more eloquent and deeper in their statements than the Hebrews. So, since this book has a most elegant style with the deepest teachings, it is clear that it was written in Greek rather than in Hebrew. Secondly, Jerome names its author when he says: 'The Jews claim that it', namely, the Book of Wisdom 'is a work of Philo' as its compiler but that Solomon was the person who discovered it. While Philo was a Jew he was highly skilled in the Greek language. Jerome says of him in the book *De viris illustribus* that 'he was a Jew of Alexandria of the class of priests'. Thirdly, he gives the reason for the title when he says: 'it is then said to be a work of Wisdom because in it the coming of Christ, the Wisdom of the Father, and his passion are clearly expressed'. The translation is based on the Douay Rheims version of the Bible.

*'She reaches from end to end, that is,
from the divinity to the humanity
in the incarnation in which the lowest
is united to the highest'*

THE COMMENTARY ON THE CHAPTERS OF THE BOOK OF WISDOM ARE THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SERAPHIC DOCTOR SAINT BONAVENTURE, OFM

Chapter 8

Secondly, he shows in three ways how much he loved wisdom

She reaches therefore from end to end mightily, and orders all things sweetly.

Here is shown, after explaining how wisdom is acquired, how much it is to be loved; and he shows this in three ways: firstly, from the desire to have it; secondly, from the decision to acquire it: *I purposed therefore*; thirdly, from the search to find it: *Thinking these things with myself, and pondering them in my heart.*

Thirdly, trust in asking for it

(Verse 21). *And as I knew*, namely, with the most certain knowledge of faith and reason, *that I am not able otherwise to be continent, except God gave it*. 'Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights', James 1:17; continence is the most perfect gift; Sirach 26:20: 'No price is worthy of a continent soul'.

And this also was wisdom, that is, a certain effect in me of wisdom, namely, *to know whose gift it was*; above in verse 4:

It is she that teaches the knowledge of God. I say, *and as I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom, to know whose gift it was, I went to the Lord*, by directing my mind, not with bodily footsteps. In Psalm 33:6: 'Come to the Lord and be enlightened'.

And I besought him, namely, with a word of vocal prayer; James 1:5: 'But if any of you want wisdom ask for it from God'. *And I said with my whole heart*, namely, with fervour of devotion, according to Isaiah 26:9: 'With my spirit within me in the morning early I will watch for you';

in Psalm 118:145: 'I cried with all my heart, hear me, O Lord'.

END OF WISDOM 8

Firstly, on the double desire to have it

In the first part he shows that the desire to have it was occasioned in him, firstly, by its absolute value; secondly, by its comparative value: *And if riches be desired in life*. – He shows its absolute value, firstly, from its power; secondly, from its beauty: *Her have I loved, and have sought her out from my youth, and have desired to take her for my spouse, and I became a lover of her beauty*; thirdly, from its nobility: *She glorifies her nobility*; fourthly, from its usefulness: *For it is she that teaches the knowledge of God*.

(Verse 1). *Therefore*, because wisdom is as has just been described, *she reaches out*, by a powerful but not bodily contact, according to 1 Samuel 10:26: 'whose hearts God had touched'; *from end to end*; 'From eternity to eternity'; or: 'from the beginning of the world to the coming of Christ'; Romans 10:4: 'For the end of the law is Christ unto justice to every one that believes'. 'Because it is the power of God'; 1 Corinthians 1:24: 'Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God'. *And orders all things*, namely, the highest, the middle and the lowest, 'Because she is the wisdom of God'. She *orders all things mightily* by justice, and *sweetly* by mercy; Psalm 24:10: 'All the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth', namely, justice; also Psalm 102:17: 'The mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear the Lord and the Lord's justice unto children's children'.

Note that Wisdom, that is, the Son of God, *reaches mightily* by driving out from heaven the proud devil and its companions; Job 26:12: 'Wisdom has struck the proud one'; Ezekiel 28:16: 'You have sinned and I cast you out from the mountain of God and destroyed you, O Cherub', by overpowering; casting out and driving from the earth the prince of the world; John 12:31: 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out'; by driving out from hell, taking away the spoils of hell, on Zechariah 9:11: 'By the blood of your testament you have cast forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water'.

However, she *orders sweetly* those in heaven, by confirming in grace the Angels in attendance; in Psalm 32:6: 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were established'; those on earth by redeeming the human race with his own blood; 1 Peter 1:18-19: 'Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things as gold or silver, but with the precious blood of Christ'; those in hell by delivering the souls of the Saints, according to Zechariah 9:11: 'By the blood of your testament you have cast forth your prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water'; also in Psalm 67:19: 'You have ascended on high, you have led captivity captive'.

Or as follows: since uncreated wisdom is the middle Person in the Trinity, it can be said that *she reaches from end to end*, that is, from the Father to the Holy Spirit through an identity of substance so that it is not understood of local distance but of a distinction in the Persons; *mightily* with reference to the Father to whom power is attributed; *and orders all things sweetly* with reference to the Holy Spirit to whom kindness is attributed.

Or: *She reaches from end to end*, that is, from the divinity to the humanity in the incarnation in which the lowest is united to the highest; *mightily*, that is, by infinite power; in Psalm 79:3: 'Stir up your might and come to save us'; 'You, in the flesh'. *And orders all things sweetly*, in securing our redemption; Matthew 11:29: 'Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart'. He was *meek* in the nature of assumed humanity; humans are animals gentle by nature, discrete in mind, erect in stature. Gentle in their manner of living; so John the Baptist, one day seeing him walking said: 'Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world', John 1:29. Gentle in preaching; Matthew 4:17: 'Do penance because the kingdom of heaven is at hand'; also John 6:69: 'You have the words of eternal life'; Matthew 11:28: 'Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you'. Gentle in forgiving sins; John 8:11: 'Go, and now sin no more'; also Luke 6:37: 'Forgive, and it shall be forgiven to you'. Gentle in the passion; so Isaiah 53:7: 'He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter'; also Jeremiah 11:19: 'I was as a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim'.

(Verse 2). He continues: *I have loved*, with heartfelt affection *her*, namely, wisdom, because it has such great power; so above in Wisdom 7:10: *I loved her above health and beauty*. *And have sought her out*, that is, I searched for her outside as an effect of good works, according to 1 John 3:18: 'Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth'. *From my youth*, as if to say: in the flower of my life; Proverbs 8:17: 'They that in the morning early', namely, of youth, 'watch for me, shall find me'; so Sirach 6:18: 'Son, from your youth up receive instruction'. *And I have desired*, by zeal in study and reading; Luke 11:9: 'Seek and you shall find'; *to take her for my spouse*. He calls her *spouse* out of his love for her; Proverbs 7:4: 'Say to wisdom, you are my sister and call prudence your friend'. Also, from delight; Proverbs 5:18: 'Rejoice with the wife of your youth'. From inseparability; Matthew 19:9: 'it is not lawful to dismiss a wife except it be for fornication'; but this does not happen with wisdom because *no defiled thing comes into her*, as stated in Wisdom 7:25. From generation: Sirach 24:26: 'Come over to me, all you that desire me, and be filled with my fruits'. *And I became a lover of her beauty*, that is, of the beauty of wisdom, and this by perseverance and a love of fervent devotion that, as it were, makes it habitual; Zechariah 9:17: 'For what is the good thing of God, and what is God's beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing from virgins?' This refers to wisdom that refreshes the affections and chastens or purifies the mind from the corruption of error.

Secondly, ability to accept her

And I was a witty child and had received a good soul. Here he treats of the ability to receive, firstly, from the point of view of natural application because *I was a witty child*; secondly, from the point of view of grace because *I had received a good soul*; thirdly, from the point of view of purity because *whereas I was more good, I came to a body undefiled*.

(Verses 19, 20). Therefore, he says: *I was a witty child*; note that he is speaking in the person of Solomon. He was *witty* from his natural application; Proverbs 20:11: 'By his inclinations a child is known, if his works be clean and right'. *And had received*, that is, received from the decision of divine election; Acts 1:26: 'The lot fell upon Matthias'; *a good soul*, namely, from grace; 1 Kings 3:3: 'And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the precepts of David his father'.

And whereas I was more good, from the grace added, than I was before from natural application, *I came to a body undefiled*. For according to Saint Augustine temporal goods are the least good, natural goods are in the middle and those freely given are the best. *I came*, I state, by an intention and zeal of the mind, *to a body undefiled*.

But objects for this can hardly be understood literally of Solomon because 'he loved even many foreign women' as is clear in 1 Kings 11:1.

But the solution is clear by distinguishing the times: in his youth he loved purity, but in his old age he loved lust. These things can be understood better of Christ.

Firstly, diligence in searching for wisdom is shown

In the first point he shows three reasons that move one to search for knowledge: firstly, the effect of wisdom in the heart; secondly, its effect in work: *in the works*; thirdly, its effect on speech: *in the exercise of conference with her*.

(Verse 17). *Thinking these things*, namely, what has been said, *with myself*, by meditating on them frequently, *and pondering them in my heart*, namely, on what follows by recalling them to memory lest I forget them; for an animal that 'chews the cud and divides the hoof', namely, by remembering and discerning, is clean, Leviticus 11:3; Luke 2:51: 'Mary kept all these words in her heart'. *Because she is immortal*, namely, by her nature from the effect of immortality that she gives; hence above in verse 13: *by the means of her I shall have immortality*. *In thinking on wisdom* that is, in the mind; 'Whatever is known of her nature is found to be totally immortal and to live always'; below in Wisdom 15:3: 'To know your justice, and your power, is the root of Immortality'.

(Verse 18). *And that there is great delight*, in the affections, *in her friendship*, namely, when she is loved; he says *great* in contrast to the delight of sin which is evil because it leads to eternal torment, according to Saint Gregory 'What delights is passing, what torments is eternal'; 'Bodily delights weigh down the body, while spiritual delights lift up the mind. The more one hungers for bodily delights, the more are they eaten; they please the appetite, but the taste displeases. Spiritual delights, however, increase desire, and the more they are taken the more avidly are they loved'. *In the works of her hands*, that is, in good works that are done by her hands, namely, by her strength and potential; John 15:5: 'Without me you can do nothing'; inexhaustible riches, that is, perfect goodness; for virtue and the work of virtue belong to the genus of goodness; below in Wisdom 10:10: *Made him honourable in his labours*; also above in Wisdom 7:11: *innumerable riches through her hands*. *And in the exercise of conference with her*, namely, in the form of a disputation in which there is a certain struggle between the one presenting and the one responding; *wisdom*, that is, knowledge, and supply: is acquired; Sirach 51:25: 'My soul has wrestled with her'. *And glory*, that is, evidence of clear virtue, *in the communication of her words* that are communicated by a simple collation; Sirach 24:31: 'They that explain me shall have life everlasting'; also Daniel 12:3: 'They that instruct many, as stars for all eternity'. *I went about*; 'diligently and zealously'; Song 3:2: 'I will rise and go about the city'; *seeking*, like the woman of whom Luke 15:8 says: 'She lights a candle, and sweeps the house and seeks diligently until she finds it'. *That I might take her to myself*, namely, as a bride; so above in Wisdom 8:2: *I have desired to take her for my spouse*.

In the text just quoted eight things useful for a preacher or doctor in learning about wisdom or in acquiring wisdom are touched on: thinking of it in investigation, remembering it by going to it, delighting in it with love, work by carrying it out, discussion by disputation, communication by collation, going around it by questioning, taking by becoming part of it.

(Verse 3). *She glorifies her nobility by being conversant with God: yes and the Lord of all things has loved her*. In this way *I loved wisdom* etc., and rightly, because uncreated wisdom *is conversant*, that is, shares in and lives with God; 'With the Father because she is coeternal with the Father'; John 14:10: 'I am in the Father, and the Father is in me'; also John 1:1: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God'; *she glorifies her nobility*, that is, represents the nobility of the Father, . For the Son of God in himself represents the glory of the Father, because he is 'the brightness of his glory and the figure of his substance' as in Hebrews 1:3; also Proverbs 10:1 according to another translation: 'A wise son is the glory of a father'. For he shows the Father's glory to the world; so John 8:49-50: 'I seek not my own glory, but I honour etc.' *The Lord of all things*, namely, the Father of whom it is said in Psalm 2:7: 'The Lord has said to me, you are my son, this day have I begotten you'; *has loved wisdom*; 'The Father loves the Son', John 5:20.

(Verse 4). And rightly, *for it is she that teaches the knowledge of God*; Baruch 3:37: 'He found out all the way of knowledge, and gave it to Jacob his servant and to Israel his beloved'. There is a double discipline, namely, of actions and of words; so in Psalm 17:36: 'Your discipline has corrected me unto the end, and your discipline, the same shall teach me'. Note that the discipline of God is formed faith which makes disciples of God; Acts 9:1: 'Saul, as yet breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord', that is, against the faithful. *And is the chooser of God's works*, that is, of the discipline proper to actions; *the chooser of God's works*, that is, teaching one how to choose the works of the discipline of the faith. 'Faith without works is dead', according to James 2:20.

And if riches be desired. Here he shows the desire produced from the comparative value of wisdom and, firstly, in comparison with money which is a perfection of chance; secondly, in comparison with work which is a perfection of nature: *And if sense works*; thirdly, in comparison with virtue which is a perfection of grace: *And if a person love justice*; fourthly, in comparison with knowledge which is a perfection of the understanding: *And if a person desires much knowledge*.

(Verse 5). *And if riches be desired*, even though they should not be desired; 'For they that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil', 1 Timothy 6:9; also in Psalm 61:11: 'If riches abound, set not your heart upon them'; *in life*, namely, in the present life for its nourishment and needs. *What is richer than wisdom, which makes all things?* John 5:17: 'My Father works until now, and I work'; 'I', namely, uncreated wisdom; nor can the One who makes all things be poor. This Person knows how to make silver, gold and such products; so Proverbs 8:18 says: 'With me are riches and glory, glorious riches and justice'; Saint Augustine says: 'The Christian religion is exceedingly rich for in the One who owns everything, it possesses everything'.

Thirdly, on account of the good things pertaining to the contemplative life

(Verse 16). *When I go into my house*, that is, my conscience, by returning from exterior to interior attention, just as 'the disciples' after preaching 'returned with joy' to the Lord, as stated in Luke 10:17. Activity was put before contemplation because of time, not because of dignity, just like Leah before Rachel in Genesis 28:19.

I shall repose myself with her, that is, at the one time I shall rest in her and she with me or in me; Sirach 32:15: 'At the time of rising be not slack, but be first to run home to your house, and there withdraw yourself, and there take your pastime'. I have said well: *I shall repose myself with her, for her conversation*, that is, living with her, *has no bitterness* of external disturbance; Sirach 24:27: 'For my spirit is sweet above honey'; *nor her company any tediousness*, namely, of inner affliction; Sirach 24:29: 'They that eat me shall yet hunger' against being fastidious. These two, namely, the *bitterness* of external disturbance and the loathing of inner affliction, are hostile to quiet. And so he removes them by joining the two opposites together when he says: *but joy*, namely, inner, *and gladness*, namely, external; Sirach 1:18: 'It shall give joy and gladness'; also Sirach 15:5: 'The Lord shall fill them with the spirit of wisdom and understanding'; also Sirach 15:6: 'She shall heap upon them a treasure of joy and gladness'.

Thirdly, he shows the same from zeal in searching for wisdom in three ways

Thinking these things with myself, and pondering them in my heart, that to be allied to wisdom is immortality. Thirdly, he shows here how much he has loved wisdom and this from zeal in searching for her. And on this he shows, firstly, diligence in searching; secondly, ability to accept her: *I was a witty child*; thirdly, trust in asking: *And as I knew*.

(Verse 6). *And if sense*, that is, natural or acquired skill, *works*, because 'art imitates nature' in the way it works, according to Saint Augustine; *who is a more artful worker than she of those things that are*, as if to say: no one; so in Psalm 103:24: 'You have made all things in wisdom'. The Lord filled Bezalel with wisdom so that he would know how to make the furnishings of the tabernacle as recorded in Exodus 31:3ff.

(Verse 7). *And if a person love justice*, namely, general justice, that is, upright human life of which he had said above in Wisdom 1:1: *Love justice* etc. *Her labours*, the labours of wisdom for which one has to work to acquire it, and he speaks of labours in the plural because to possess it one must do much work; 2 Corinthians 11:23: 'In many more labours'; *have*, that is, they acquire, *great virtues*; 'Nothing idle nor lazy in her works'. *For she teaches moderation, and wisdom, and justice, and fortitude, which are such things as people can have nothing more profitable in life*; 'He states the four main virtues'; *moderation*, 'that is, temperance' in taking guard against overflowing evil; below in Wisdom 9:11: *She shall lead me soberly in my works; and she teaches wisdom* in discerning and loving good; *and justice*, in paying debts; *and strength*, 'that is, fortitude', a more apt name for strength, as if by the power to guard what is difficult by standing firm and attacking what is arduous. Of these three, Proverbs 8:14 says: 'Equity is mine, prudence is mine and strength is mine'; 'No one has these virtues, other than a person to whom God, the source of all virtues, gives them, at any time, by any law, to any people. However, while some have a kind of piety they are ignorant of virtue'. According to Saint Augustine, virtue is gained by acquiring it.

It has to be said, that they did not have perfect, but imperfect virtues because they were without merit and lacked form. Or they had them as graces freely given by God even though they were not graces that make one holy.

These are such things as people can have nothing more profitable in life, that is, in the human life of one person with another.

But are not the theological virtues more useful and better?

(Verse 12). *When I hold my peace*, namely, reflecting beforehand on what I am to teach; in Psalm 36:30: 'The mouth of the just shall meditate wisdom'. *They shall wait for me*, namely, waiting in silence, 'not daring to speak', Job 29:23: 'They waited for me as for rain, and they opened their mouth as for a latter shower'. *When I speak*, silence rightly precedes speech because, according to Saint Jerome, 'the teaching of Pythagoras was to be silent for five years and then the learned are to speak'. *And they shall look upon me when I speak*, namely, diligently, as a sign of attention; Job 29:21: 'Being attentive they held their peace at my counsel'. *And if I talk much*, but neither superfluous nor many things, because, according to Proverbs 10:19: 'in the multitude' or in a superfluity 'of words, there shall not want sin'. Note that two or three are plural but do not make a multitude. *They shall lay their hands on their mouths*; 'Not daring to oppose me'; Job 29:9: 'The princes ceased to speak and laid the finger on their mouth'.

(Verse 13). *Moreover by the means of her*, that is, by wisdom, *I shall have immortality*, namely, of eternal glory in heaven; Proverbs 3:18: 'She is a tree of life to them that lay hold on her'. *And shall leave behind me an everlasting memory*; 'Of my works and virtues'; *everlasting*, that is, perpetual, for as long as the world endures; *to them that come after me*; Proverbs 10:7: 'The memory of the just is with praises'; in Psalm 111:7: 'The just shall be in everlasting remembrance'.

I shall set the people in order, and nations shall be subject to me. Here the good things obtained by wisdom are touched on with reference to the duty of ruling, and, firstly, of subjects; secondly, of strangers: *Terrible kings hearing shall be afraid of me; among the multitude I shall be found good, and valiant in war*.

(Verse 14). He says, therefore: *I shall set*; 'I shall teach' by ruling and governing *the people* who have the Law. A people is a large number of persons living under one law, like the Judeans under the law of Moses. *And nations*, that is, the gentiles who do not have the Law, and they are called nations because they are not reborn, but remain uncircumcised and in sin; in Psalm 46:4: 'He has subdued the people under us and the nations under our feet'; Isaiah 55:4: 'Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, for a leader and a master to the Gentiles'. I say that the *nations shall be subject to me* through obedience.

(Verse 15). *Terrible kings hearing shall be afraid of me*, that is, tyrants and the wicked; hence, all the surrounding kings were made tributaries to Solomon, 1 Kings 9:21; also Isaiah 60:14: 'And the children of them that afflict you shall come bowing down to you'. *Among the multitude*, 'namely of the faithful', *I shall be found good*, 'that is, kind', *and valiant in war* 'namely with the adversaries'. All this was fulfilled in Christ in a spiritual sense, and they can be understood of Christ.

It has to be said, as just stated, the question presupposes no reference to God but deals with the human life of one person in relation to another person. However, nothing is more useful to people than these virtues because they benefit a person in what has to be done and endured: to be done because the right decision about what is to be done is made through patience, while justice ensures that it is done correctly; in enduring because by temperance we act correctly towards the moderate passions, by fortitude we act correctly towards the choleric passions. 'What could be lacking to a person who is temperate, prudent, strong and just?'

(Verse 8). *And if a person desires much knowledge, she knows things past, and judges of things to come; she knows the subtleties of speeches, and the solutions of arguments; she knows signs and wonders before they be done, and the events of times and ages*. Some have: *And a likeness of knowledge*, but this is incorrect because one's present knowledge can be more properly called a likeness of knowledge than knowledge since it is mixed with much doubt and ignorance. I say, *if a person desires much knowledge*, namely, speculative, 'By their nature, all people desire to know'; *she*, namely, wisdom, *knows things past and judges of things to come*, with certitude while they are hidden because of the nature of time for which the past has gone and the future has not yet happened. I say, *she knows things past* etc.; so by her, Moses was taught and prophesied about the past;

Genesis 1:1: 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth'; also about the future, Deuteronomy 18:15: 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet of your nation and of your brethren like unto me'. *She knows the subtleties of speeches*, that is, of simple propositions such as figures of speech, obscure subtleties, and not only the subtleties of simple propositions but also of composite propositions, and so he continues: *and the solutions of arguments*, that is, of reasoning that lies concealed due to the ambiguity of human cunning; Sirach 39:3: The wise person, 'will search out the sayings of renowned people and will also enter into the subtleties of parables'. So Christ, 'in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge', could not be trapped in speech, as is clear in Matthew 22:15ff; and Solomon who was taught by wisdom could not be ignorant of any word of the Queen of Sheba, as is clear in 1 Kings 10:3. *She knows signs*, namely, lesser events that occur beyond nature, *and wonders*, events that are beyond the normal course of nature, *before they be done*, in fact just as surely as when they have happened.

On these two things John 4:48 says: 'Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not'. These are hidden also because of natural difficulty, for 'a miracle', according to Saint Augustine, 'is a difficult and unusual work beyond the hope and understanding of the admirer'. *She knows wonders before they be done*, that is, things that happen in the present, *and wonders before they be done*, that is, events to occur in eternity and in the future. These are not for humans to know; so Acts 1:7: 'It is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father has put in his own power'; such things are hidden because of an unknown cause.

Secondly, this is shown from the intention to acquire it

I purposed therefore to take her to me to live with me, knowing that she will communicate to me of her good things, and will be a comfort in my cares and grief. He has shown above, how much he would love wisdom and this comes from a desire to have it; here, from the proposal to acquire it and this for the good things that come from it, and, firstly, on account of the good things that relate in common to both lives; secondly, on account of the good that pertains to the active life: *For her sake I shall have glory*; thirdly, on account of what pertains especially to contemplation: *When I go into my house.*

Firstly, on account of the good things pertaining to both lives

(Verse 9). *Therefore*, because of what it is, *I purposed*, that is, I decided firmly in my heart, *to take her*, namely, divine wisdom, not some other adulterous wisdom, such as poetic discipline called 'a product of prostitution' by Boethius in *De consolatione philosophiae*; *to take her to me*, not only to another, against those who only teach others but do not teach themselves; the Apostle reproves these in Romans 2:21: 'You who teach another teach not yourself'. *To feast* are in no way affected by Sacred Scripture; 2 Kings 7:2: 'You shall see it with your eyes, but shall not eat thereof'; also he says *to feast with me*, that is, to feast together and at the same time to be renewed; in the good things of wisdom we are fed and renewed; so Proverbs 9:5: 'Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine that I have mingled for you'; and in it are good things; so Proverbs 8:31: 'My delights were to be with the children of the human race'.

We should offer the first course as something prepared from vegetation, from lilies of goodness; Song 2:16-17: 'Who feeds among the lilies, till the day break and the shadows retire'. The second course, prepared from the flesh of a young goat, that is, detestation of every sin and evil, both carnal and spiritual; from these two young goats it willingly eats, like Isaac in Genesis 27:9. The third dish of the broiled fish of patience and tribulation: 'They offered him a piece of a broiled fish', Luke 24:42. The last course of the fruit of the spirit, that is, of works of devotion; Song 5:1: 'Let my beloved come into his garden and eat the fruit of his apple trees'. *Knowing that she will communicate to me of her good things*. This is symbolic of the invitation in Revelation 3:20: 'I will come to you, and will sup with you, and you with me'; and he says: *of her good things*, in the plural because good things present and future. *And will be a comfort*; 'That is comfort'; *in my cares*, referring to the mind, according to Ecclesiastes 12:12: 'Much study is an affliction of the flesh'. *And grief*, in work and this with reference to the affections; 2 Corinthians 1:8: 'We were pressed out of measure above our strength, so that we were weary even of life'.

Secondly, on account of the good things pertaining to the active life

For her sake I shall have glory among the multitude, and honour with the ancients, though I be young. Here he touches on the good things pertaining to the active life, something especially necessary for prelates, and firstly, with reference to giving judgment; secondly, with reference to the work of teaching: *They shall wait for me when I hold my peace*; thirdly, with reference to the task of converting: *Moreover by the means of her I shall have immortality*; fourthly, with reference to the duty of ruling: *I shall set the people in order*. – With reference to giving judgment he touches on two things: firstly, authority; secondly, discretion: *Though I be young, I shall be found of a quick conceit in judgment.*

(Verse 10). *For her sake I shall have* the brightness of fame, namely, by wisdom which 'is glorious' as stated above in Wisdom 6:13; Matthew 5:16: 'Let your light shine before others'; also in Philippians 2:15-16: 'Among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life to my glory in the day of Christ'. *Among the multitude*, namely, to the younger; *and honour*, namely, of reverence, *with the ancients*, that is among the older; Job 29:8: 'The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the old men rose up and stood'. From these two things one becomes a person of great authority, namely, from fame among the young and reverence among the older. *Though I be young*, that is, strong and careful in enquiring.

(Verse 11). *And I shall be found of a quick conceit*, that is, subtle in penetrating and finding *in judgment*; 'Judging everything according to the laws'; this is what Daniel did, as is clear in Daniel 13:45ff. *And*, supply: so, *in the sight of the mighty*, that is, of minor prelates, *I shall be admired, and the faces of princes*, that is, of higher prelates, *shall wonder at me*. This was literally true of Solomon, as is clear in 1 Kings 10:1, 7, where it is said that 'the Queen of Sheba having heard of the fame of Solomon' etc., says: 'I have found that your wisdom is greater than the fame which I heard'. This was also true of our Saviour; so Matthew 14:1-2: 'The Tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus and said to his servants' etc. It is also true of a perfectly wise person; Sirach 24:3: 'In the midst of her own people she shall be exalted and shall be admired in the holy assembly'.