

CHAPTER XVIII

The Council Meets on Friday Morning to Substantiate the Case against Our Savior Jesus; They Send Him to Pilate; Most Holy Mary, with St. John and the Three Marys, Goes Forth to Meet Our Lord.

586. Friday morning at dawn, say the Evangelists (Mt. 27:1; Mk. 15:1; Lk. 22:66; Jn. 18:28), the ancients of the people with the chief priests and scribes, who by the doctrine of the law were most respected by the people, gathered together so by common agreement they might substantiate the case against Christ, whom they had already condemned to death as they all desired; however, they wanted to give this judgment some semblance of justice in order to satisfy the people. This council was held in the house of Caiphaz where the Lord was imprisoned. In order to interrogate Him anew they commanded Him to be brought from the dungeon to the hall of the council. The henchmen rushed below to drag Him forth bound and fettered as He was, and while they untied Him from the column of rock they laughed at Him with great ridicule, saying: "Well now, Jesus of Nazareth, how little have thy miracles availed to defend Thee. The power which Thou didst vaunt of being able to rebuild the temple in three days has failed to secure thy escape. But now Thou shalt pay for thy vanities, and thy proud aspirations shall be humiliated. Come, come, for the chief priests and scribes await Thee in order to put an end to thy fabrications and deliver Thee over to Pilate, who will finish Thee once and for all." Having freed His Majesty from the rock they dragged Him up to the council, *and He opened not his mouth.** But the tortures, blows and spittle, which He could not wipe off because his hands were bound, had so weakened and disfigured Him that He caused horror, but not compassion, in the members of the council; such was the wrath they had conceived and contracted against the Lord.

587. They again asked Him to tell them whether He was the Christ (Lk. 22:66), which means the Anointed. Like all their previous questions this was asked with the malicious determination not to listen or admit the truth, but to calumniate Him and fabricate a charge against Him. But the Lord, who desired to die for the truth, denied it not, but at the same time He did not wish to confess it in such a manner that they could despise it, or borrow out of it some pretense for their calumny, for this was not becoming his innocence and wisdom. Therefore He tempered the answer in such a way that if the Pharisees had any mercy they would also take occasion to inquire with proper zeal into the sacrament hidden in his reasonings, but if they had none then it would be understood that the fault was in their evil intention and not in the answer of the Savior. He therefore said to them: "*If I shall tell you that I am He of whom you ask, you will not believe Me; and if I shall also ask you, you will not answer Me, nor let Me go. But I tell you hereafter the Son of Man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God*" (Lk. 22:67-9). The priests answered: *Art Thou then the Son of God?* And the Lord replied: *You say that I am* (Ib. 70). This was as if He had said: You have made a very correct inference that I am the Son of God, for my works, my doctrines, and your Scriptures, and all you are now doing with Me, testify to the fact that I am Christ, the Promised in the law.

588. But that council of the wicked was not disposed to assent to divine truth, though they themselves inferred it very correctly from the antecedents and could easily have believed it. They would neither give assent nor belief, but preferred to call it a blasphemy deserving death. Since

* cf. Is. 53:7; Ps. 37:14 [Ed.]

the Lord had now reaffirmed what He had said before, they all cried out: *What need have we of any further testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth* (Ib. 71). And they immediately came to the unanimous conclusion that He should be brought, as one worthy of death, before Pontius Pilate, who governed Judea in the name of the Roman emperor and was the temporal lord of Palestine. According to the laws of the Roman empire capital punishment was reserved to the senate or the emperor and his representatives in the remote provinces. Cases of such importance as involved the taking away of life were looked upon as worthy of greater attention, and not to be decided without giving the accused a hearing and an opportunity for defense and justification; in these affairs of justice the Roman people yielded to the requirements of natural reason more faithfully than other nations. In regard to this trial of Christ the priests and scribes were pleased with the prospect of having the sentence of death passed upon Christ our Lord by the heathen Pilate, because they could then tell the people that He was condemned by the Roman governor, and this certainly would not have happened if He was not guilty of death. To such an extent had they been filled with darkness by sin and hypocrisy, acting as if they were not the authors of this wickedness and more sacrilegious than the gentile judge. But the Lord arranged it thus so by their own behavior before Pilate they would reveal all their wickedness more plainly, as we shall presently see.

589. The executioners therefore brought our Savior Jesus Christ to the house of Pilate in order to present Him before his tribunal still bound with the same chains and ropes in which they had taken Him from the garden. The city of Jerusalem was full of strangers who had come from all of Palestine to celebrate the great Pasch of the Lamb and of the unleavened bread, and because the rumor of his arrest was already spread among the people, and since the Master of life was known to all of them, a countless multitude gathered in the streets to see Him brought in chains through the streets. They were divided in their opinion concerning the Messiah. Some of them shouted: Let Him die, let Him die, this wicked impostor, who deceives the whole world. Others answered: His doctrines do not appear to be so bad, nor his works, for He has done good to many. Still others, who had believed in Him, were much afflicted and wept, while the whole city was in confusion and uproar concerning the Nazarene. Lucifer and his demons were very attentive to what was passing, for seeing himself secretly overcome by the invincible patience and meekness of Christ our Lord, he was stirred to uncontrollable fury by his own pride and haughtiness at the haunting suspicion that such virtues could not be those of a mere man. On the other hand, he assumed that allowing Himself to be abused and despised to such extremes, and to suffer such weakness and as it were faltering of his body, could not coincide with his being the true God; for if He was God (thought the dragon) the divine power of his nature would communicate to his humanity such influences and great effects as would not fail Him, nor consent to what was being done to Him. Lucifer thought this as one who was ignorant of the divine secret, namely that Christ our Lord had suspended the effects which naturally would have overflowed from the Divinity to his human nature, ordaining this so He could suffer to the highest degree possible as I have mentioned above (498). By these misgivings the proud dragon was lashed to still more furious efforts in the persecution of the Lord in order to probe who it was who knew how to suffer torments in such a manner.

590. The sun had already risen while these things happened, and the sorrowful Mother, who saw it all from afar, now resolved to leave her retreat and follow her divine Son to the house of Pilate and to his death on the Cross. When the great Queen and Lady was about to set forth from the Cenacle St. John arrived in order to give an account of all that was happening, for the beloved disciple at that time did not know of the knowledge and vision which most holy Mary

had of all the works and happenings regarding her most beloved Son. After the denial of St. Peter, St. John had retired and observed more from afar what was going on. Recognizing also the sin of his flight in the garden, upon coming into the presence of the Queen he confessed it with tears through the Mother of God and asked pardon for it; then he gave an account of all that passed in his heart and of what he had done and seen in following his Master. St. John thought it well to prepare the afflicted Mother for her meeting with her most holy Son so She might not be overcome by the fearful spectacle of his present condition. Therefore he sought to impress upon Her beforehand some image of his sufferings by saying: "O my Lady, how afflicted is our divine Master! It is not possible to see Him without breaking one's heart, for by the slaps, blows and spittle his most beautiful face is so distorted and disfigured that Thou shalt scarcely recognize Him with thy own eyes." The most prudent Lady listened to his description as if She knew nothing of the events, and She broke out in most bitter tears of heartrending sorrow. The holy women who had come forth with the Lady also listened to St. John, and all of them were filled with grief and terror at his words. The Queen of heaven asked the Apostle to accompany Her and the devout women, and exhorting them all She said: "Let us hasten our steps so my eyes can see the Son of the eternal Father, who took the form of man in my womb, and ye shall see, my dearest friends, to what the love of mankind has driven my Lord and God, and what it costs Him to redeem men from sin and death, and open for them the gates of heaven."

591. The Queen of heaven went forth through the streets of Jerusalem accompanied by St. John and some holy women. Of these not all, but only the three Marys and other very pious women, followed Her to the end. With Her were also her Guardian Angels, whom She asked to open a way for Her to her divine Son. The holy Angels obeyed and acted as her protectors. In the streets She heard the people expressing their various opinions and sentiments concerning the sorrowful events now transpiring in reference to Jesus of Nazareth. The more kindhearted lamented over his fate, and they were the fewest in number; others spoke about the intention of his enemies to crucify Him; others related where He then was and how He was conducted through the streets, bound as a criminal; others spoke of the abuse He was undergoing; others asked what evil He had done to be so mistreated; and finally many in their astonishment or little faith exclaimed: Is this what his miracles have brought Him? Without doubt they were all hoaxes, since He cannot defend or free Himself. All the streets and squares were full of people and excited talk. Yet in the midst of this excitement the invincible Queen (though filled with incomparable bitterness) preserved her constancy and composure, praying for the unbelievers and the evildoers as if She had no other care than to implore grace and pardon for their sins, and She loved them with sincere and heartfelt charity as if She was receiving great favors and blessings at their hands. She permitted no indignation or anger to arise in her Heart against the sacrilegious ministers of the Passion and Death of her beloved Son, nor any sign of such feelings in her exterior conduct; all of them She looked upon with charity and the desire of doing them good.

592. Some of them who met Her on the streets recognized Her as the Mother of Jesus of Nazareth, and moved by their natural compassion said: "O sorrowful Mother! What misery has befallen Thee! How lacerated and wounded with sorrow shall thy Heart be!" Yet others said: "What evil account has been given regarding thy Son? Why didst Thou permit Him to introduce such novelties among the people? It would have been better to seclude and detain Him; yet it will teach a lesson to other mothers who learn from thy misery how they must instruct their children." These and other more horrible sentiments were expressed in the hearing of this most sincere Dove, yet all of them She met with burning charity, accepting the pity of the kindhearted,

suffering the impiety of the unbelievers, and not wondering at those who were ignorant, but rather praying to the Most High respectively for one and all.

593. Through the swarming and confused crowds the Angels conducted the Empress of heaven to a sharp turn of the street where She met her most holy Son. With the most profound reverence She prostrated Herself before his royal Person and adored Him more fervently, and with a reverence more deep and more ardent, than ever was given or ever shall be given to Him by all creatures. She arose, and then the Mother and Son looked upon each other with ineffable tenderness, interiorly conversing with each other in transports of ineffable sorrow. The most prudent Lady stepped aside and then followed Christ our Lord, interiorly speaking with His Majesty and with the eternal Father in such words as mortal and corruptible language cannot express. The afflicted Mother said: “Most high God and my Son, I know the burning love of thy charity for men, which obliges Thee to hide the infinite power of thy divinity beneath the form of passible flesh (Philip. 2:7) which Thou didst receive in my womb. I confess thy incomprehensible wisdom in accepting such affronts and torments, and in delivering Thyself, who art the Lord of all creation, for the rescue of man, who is but a servant, dust and ashes (Gen. 3:19). Thou art worthy to receive from all creatures praise and blessing, confession and gratitude* for thy immense goodness. Yet how shall I, who am thy Mother, cease desiring that upon me alone be heaped all thy injuries and not upon thy divine Person, Thou who art the beauty of the angels and the splendor of the glory of thy eternal Father? How shall I not desire thy alleviation in such pains? How shall my heart endure seeing Thee so afflicted, and thy most beautiful face so defiled, and that to the Creator and Redeemer alone is denied compassion and pity in such bitter suffering? Yet if it is not possible for me to relieve Thee as Mother, accept my sorrow and sacrifice in not alleviating Thee as the true and holy Son of God.”

594. The image of her divine Son thus wounded, defiled and bound remained so firmly fixed and imprinted upon the soul of our Queen that during her life it was never effaced, and remained in her mind as distinctly as if She was continually beholding Him with her own eyes. Christ our Good arrived at the house of Pilate, followed by many of the council and a countless multitude of the people. In presenting Him to the judge the Jews remained outside the praetorium or tribunal of Pilate, feigning much religiosity in order not to contract irregularity or uncleanness for the celebration of the Pasch of the unleavened bread (Jn. 18:28), for which they had to be very pure from any uncleanness committed against the law; yet as most absurd hypocrites they paid no attention to the sacrilegious uncleanness with which their souls were defiled in becoming the murderers of the Innocent. Though a heathen Pilate yielded to their ceremonious scruples, and seeing them hesitate to enter his praetorium he went out to meet them. According to the formality customary among the Romans he asked them (Ib. 29-30): *What accusation bring you against this man?* They answered: *If He were not a great malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee* bound and a prisoner. This was the same as saying: We have convinced ourselves of his crimes and are so attached to justice and to our obligations that we would not have begun any proceedings against Him if He were not a great malefactor. Yet despite this Pilate replied: “What are the crimes which He has committed?” The Jews answered (Lk. 23:2): “He is convicted of disturbing the nation; He wishes to make Himself our king and forbids paying tribute to Caesar;† He pretends to be the Son of God, and has preached a new doctrine, beginning in Galilee and continuing through Judea and Jerusalem.” Pilate said: “Take Him then

* cf. Apoc. 5:12 [Ed.]

† cf. Mt. 22:21 [Ed.]

yourselves and judge Him according to your laws, for I do not find a just cause for judging Him.” The Jews replied: “It is not permitted us to sentence anyone to death (Jn. 18:31), nor to execute such a sentence.”

595. During all these demands and responses most holy Mary was present, with St. John and the women who followed Her, for the holy Angels made room for them where they could hear and see all that was passing. Shielded by her mantle She wept tears of blood, pressed forth by the sorrow which pierced her virginal Heart. In her interior acts of virtue She faithfully reproduced those practiced by her most holy Son, while in her pains and endurance She copied those of his body. She asked the eternal Father to grant Her the favor of not losing sight of her divine Son as far as was naturally possible until his death, and thus She saw Him except when He was secluded as a prisoner. Considering it proper that the innocence of Jesus our Savior become known amid the false accusations and calumnies of the Jews, and that He was being condemned to death without guilt, the most prudent Lady fervently prayed that the judge be not deceived, and that he obtain the light of truth that Christ was delivered over to him by the envy of the priests and scribes. In virtue of this prayer Pilate clearly saw the truth and was convinced of the innocence of Christ and of his being a victim of their envy (Mt. 27:18); and for this same reason the Lord declared Himself more openly to him, though Pilate did not cooperate with the truth made known to him. It profited not him but us, and it served to convict the priests and Pharisees of their perfidy.

596. In their indignation the Jews wanted to find Pilate very favorable in this matter so he would immediately pronounce the sentence of death against the Savior Jesus. When they perceived his hesitation they ferociously raised their voices, accusing Him over and over again of revolting against the government of Judea, deceiving and stirring up the people (Lk. 23:5), and calling Himself Christ, that is, an anointed King. This malicious accusation they pressed particularly, hoping to stir Pilate to fear for the temporal welfare of his government with which he was charged by the Romans. Among the Jews the kings were anointed, so for this reason they added that Jesus was called Christ, that is anointed King, and also because Pilate as a gentile knew nothing of the anointing of kings, and hence needed to understand that to call Him Christ among the Jews was the same as calling Him the anointed king of the Jews. Pilate asked the Lord (Mk. 15:4): “What dost Thou answer to the accusations which they bring against Thee?” His Majesty answered not one word in the presence of his accusers, causing much wonder in Pilate at such silence and patience (Ib. 5). But desiring to examine more closely whether He was truly a king, he withdrew from the clamoring Jews and brought the Lord into the praetorium. There he asked Him face to face (Jn. 18:33): Tell me, *art Thou the king of the Jews?* Pilate could not bring himself to think that He was in fact a king since he knew Christ was not reigning, and thus he questioned Him in order to learn whether He was a king by right and if He possessed his kingdom. Our Savior answered him (Ib. 34): *Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me?* Pilate replied (Ib. 35): *Am I a Jew? Thy own nation, and the chief priests, have delivered Thee up to me. What hast Thou done?* Jesus answered: *My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence* (Ib. 36). The judge partly believed this response of the Lord and therefore answered: *Art Thou a king then, since Thou hast a kingdom?* Christ did not deny it, but added saying: *Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice* (Ib. 37). Pilate wondered at this answer and asked (Ib. 38): *What is truth?* But without waiting for an answer he left Him in the praetorium and said to the Jews

(Ib. 38-9): *I find no cause in Him. But you have a custom that I should release one unto you at the Pasch; will you, therefore, that I release unto you Jesus or Barabbas?* This Barabbas was a thief and murderer who at that time was in prison for having killed someone in a brawl. All the people raised their voice and said (Ib. 40): “We demand that you release Barabbas, and crucify Jesus.” In this demand they persisted until it was granted.

597. Pilate was much disturbed by the answers of our Savior Jesus and the obstinacy of the Jews. For on the one hand, seeing they were so determined on the death of the Lord, he well knew it would be difficult to satisfy them without consenting to their demands; and on the other hand, he clearly saw they persecuted Him out of mortal envy (Mt. 27:18), and their accusations about his disturbing the people were false and ridiculous. In regard to the imputation that He had made Himself king, he was likewise satisfied of the contrary by the answers of Christ and by his humility, poverty, and patient forbearance regarding their calumnies. By the light and grace which Pilate received he knew the Lord was truly innocent, although he never penetrated the greatness of his innocence, remaining ignorant of this mystery and of the dignity of his divine Person. The living words of Christ created an exalted idea of Him in his mind and made him think some great mystery was connected with Him; hence he desired to free Him, and finally determined to send Him to Herod, as I shall relate in the following chapter. But the helps he received did not prove efficacious since Pilate made himself unworthy by his sins and paid attention only to his worldly prospects, allowing himself to be governed by them and not by the dictates of justice; more by the suggestions of Lucifer, as I have related above (423), than by the truth which he clearly knew. Having understood it, he proceeded as a wicked judge in continuing to discuss the cause of the Innocent with those who were his declared enemies and false accusers. But his greatest crime was to act against the dictates of his conscience, condemning Him to death, and first to such an inhuman scourging (as we shall see), without any other cause than to satisfy the Jews.

598. Though Pilate for these and other reasons was a most wicked and unjust judge in thus condemning Christ, whom he held to be a mere man, though good and innocent, yet his crime was much smaller than that of the priests and Pharisees. This was not only because they were moved by envy, cruelty, and other vices, but also because they sinned in not acknowledging Christ as their true Messiah and Redeemer, God and man, such as He had been promised in the law which the Hebrews professed and believed. For their own condemnation the Lord permitted that in their very accusations they called Him Christ and anointed King, thus confessing with their lips what they denied and discredited in their proceedings. They were obligated to believe this truth which they confessed in their words, and thus come to the understanding of the true anointment of the Savior, which was an unction prefigured in the ancient kings and priests, and consisted in the anointment mentioned by David (Ps. 44:8), yet different from all the rest, namely the unction of the Divinity united with his humanity by which the soul of Christ was anointed with the gifts of grace and glory corresponding to the hypostatic union. All these mysteries of truth were providentially hidden beneath the accusations of the Jews, though they in their perfidy would not believe them and in their envy interpreted them falsely, since they imputed to the Savior the desire of making Himself king without his being one, whereas the truth was the exact opposite: He was in every respect the supreme Lord, but did not wish to show or make use of the power of a temporal king. He had not come into this world to command men but to obey (Mt. 20:28). Still greater was the blindness of the Jews in hoping for a temporal king as their Messiah and at the same time calumniously asserting that Christ made of Himself a king. It seems they sought for their Messiah a king so powerful they would not be able to resist Him, although they

then would have to receive a king by compulsion and not with the free will benevolently desired by the Lord.

599. Our great Lady profoundly understood these hidden sacraments, and the wisdom of her most chaste Heart made use of them to excite heroic acts of all the virtues. Other children of Adam, conceived in original sin and defiled by their own sins, are customarily disturbed and oppressed in proportion to the increase of sorrow and tribulation, and excited to impatience and other inordinate passions. But most holy Mary, who was not actuated by sin or its effects, or by mere nature, was impelled by exalted grace to just the opposite course of action, for the great persecutions and the vast waters of affliction and sorrow could not extinguish the fire of divine love in her inflamed Heart (Cant. 8:7); on the contrary, they were fuel which fed and inflamed the fire of that heavenly soul to petition grace for sinners when their need was greatest and the malice of men reached its height. O Queen of virtues, Mistress of creatures, and sweetest Mother of Mercy! How hard of heart I am, how slow and insensible, that my soul is not annihilated by sorrow at what I understand of thy sufferings and those of thy divine Son! That I still live knowing all I know should cause in me a sorrow unto death. It is a crime against love and piety to beg favors from the innocent whom we see suffering torments. With what truth can we then say as creatures that we have the love of God, of our Redeemer, and of Thee, my Queen, who art his Mother, if Thou and He alone drink the most bitter chalice of such cruel sorrows and suffering while we are draining the chalice of the pleasures of Babylon? O that I would understand this truth! O that it would penetrate into my deepest heart and pierce my very soul at the sight of such inhuman torments of my Savior and his afflicted Mother! How can I conceive that anyone can do me an injustice in persecuting me, can offend me by despising me, or insult me by abhorring me? How can I complain of suffering even if I am blamed, neglected, and contemned by the world? O great Captainess of the martyrs, Queen of the courageous, Mistress of all the imitators of thy Son, if I am thy daughter and disciple as Thou dost condescend to call me, and since my Lord desires me to merit, do not reject my longing desire to follow thy footsteps on the Way of the Cross. If in my weakness I have fallen do Thou, my Lady and Mother, obtain for me the courage of a contrite heart, justly humiliated because of its vile ingratitude. Gain for me through thy prayers the love of the eternal Father, which is so precious that only thy powerful intercession can obtain it and only my Lord and Redeemer can merit it for me.

*INSTRUCTION WHICH THE GREAT
QUEEN OF HEAVEN GAVE ME.*

600. My daughter, great is the neglect and inattention of men in failing to consider the works of my most holy Son and penetrate with humble reverence into the mysteries which He has concealed within them for the remedy and salvation of all. But many do not know, and others are astonished, that the Lord consented to be presented as a criminal before iniquitous judges and be examined by them as a wicked malefactor, that they were allowed to treat Him as an ignorant fool, and that He did not make use of his divine wisdom to defend his innocence and convict the Jews and all his enemies of their malice since He could so easily have done it. Yet these sentiments of wonder should be especially united to a deep veneration for the judgments of the Lord, who disposed all things connected with the Redemption according to his equity, goodness and rectitude, and in a manner befitting all his attributes, without denying any of his enemies sufficient help to perform good works if they wished to cooperate with his grace, using their free

will for the good. He desired all of them to be saved (I Tim. 2:4), and if not all of them attain this salvation no one can justly complain of the divine mercy, which was superabundant.

601. But beyond this I desire thee, my dearest, to understand the instructive lessons contained in these works, for in each one of them my Son acted as the Redeemer and the Teacher of men. In the silence and meekness which He maintained during his Passion, permitting Himself to be reputed as a wicked and foolish man, He left to mankind a lesson just as important as it is unnoticed and unpracticed by the children of Adam. Because they do not heed the contagion communicated to them by Lucifer because of sin which is perpetuated in the world, they do not seek in the Physician the medicine of suffering which the Lord in his immense charity has left to the world in word and deed. Let men then consider themselves conceived in sin (Ps. 50:7), and let them realize how strong has grown in them the hellish seed of pride, presumption, vanity, self-esteem, avarice, hypocrisy, deceitfulness, and all other vices. Each one ordinarily seeks to advance his own honor and vainglory, struggling to be applauded and renowned. The learned and those who think themselves wise wish to be applauded and looked up to, bragging about their knowledge; the unlearned try to appear wise; the rich glory in their riches and wish to be respected because of them; the poor strive to be and appear rich, anxious to gain the approbation of the wealthy; the powerful seek to be feared, worshipped and obeyed. All of them are pursuing the same deceit of seeking to appear to be what they are not in fact, and failing in reality to come up to what they appear to be. They palliate their faults and extol their virtues and abilities; they attribute to themselves goods and blessings as if they had not received them from God; they receive them as if they were owed to them and not due to his generous kindness. Instead of being grateful for them they abuse them as weapons against God and against their own selves. Commonly all are swollen by the mortal poison of the serpent, and are so much the more anxious to drink it the more deeply they are already wounded and weakened by his lamentable assaults. The Way of the Cross by the imitation of Christ in humble Christian sincerity is deserted, because there are so few who walk upon it.

602. In order to crush the head of Lucifer and overcome pride and arrogance, my Son observed this patient silence in his Passion, permitting Himself to be treated as an ignorant and foolish criminal. As the Teacher of this philosophy and the Physician of the sickness of sin He would not deny the charges nor defend or justify Himself, nor refute those who accused Him, showing us by his own living example how to oppose and counteract the intentions of the serpent. In His Majesty was put into practice that teaching of the Wise Man (Eccles. 10:1): *Wisdom and glory is more precious than a small and shortlived folly*; for it is better for human frailty to be at times considered ignorant and wicked than to make a vain show of virtue and wisdom. Without number are those who are entangled in this dangerous error, who desiring to appear wise speak much and multiply words like the foolish (Eccles. 10:14), for they only lose what they strive so much to attain since they become known as foolish. All these vices arise from the pride rooted in human nature. But do thou, my daughter, preserve the doctrine of my divine Son and that which comes from me. Abhor human ostentation, suffer in silence, and let the world consider thee ignorant, for it does not know where true wisdom dwells (Bar. 3:15ff.).