

## **APPENDIX**

### **4 MACCABEES**

*N.B. The Book of 4 Maccabees is 'hidden' and is not included by the Church under the canonical books of the Old Testament. Partly because of the importance of its contents and its inclusion in the ancient manuscripts of the translation of the Septuagint, it is usually published after the other Books of the Maccabees (1-3).*

#### **CHAPTER 1**

As I am about to discuss a most philosophical proposition, namely, whether devout reason be sovereign over the passions, I would willingly advise you to give the utmost heed unto the philosophy. <sup>2</sup>For the subject is necessary to every one as a path to knowledge: and more especially doth it embrace the praise of the highest virtue: I speak, of course, of prudence. <sup>3</sup>If then, it be evident that reason ruleth over the passions that stand in the way of temperance, namely, gluttony and lust, <sup>4</sup>then it surely also and manifestly beareth the rule over the affections that be contrary to justice, such as malice; and of them that be hindrances to courage, as anger, fear, and pain. <sup>5</sup>How then, is it, peradventure some may say, that reasoning, if it rule the affections, be not also master of forgetfulness and ignorance? Their attempt at an argument is ridiculous. <sup>6</sup>For reason ruleth not his own passions, but such as be contrary to justice, manliness, temperance, and prudence; and yet it overcometh these to withstand them, without destroying them. <sup>7</sup>I might prove unto you, from many and divers considerations, that reason is sole master of the passions; <sup>8</sup>but I shall demonstrate it with the greatest force from the fortitude of such as suffered death in defence of virtue, Eleazar, and seven brethren, and their mother. (*no v.9*) For all of these, contemning sufferings even unto death, demonstrated that reason beareth rule over the passions. <sup>10</sup>For all their virtues, then, it is right that I should commend those men that died with their mother at this time for the sake of uprightness; and for their honours I may count them blessed. <sup>11</sup>For they, winning admiration not only from men in general, but also from their persecutors, for their courage and endurance, became the means of the destruction of the tyranny against their nation, having conquered the tyrant by their endurance; so that by them their country was purified. <sup>12</sup>But we may now at once enter upon the question, having begun, as is our custom, with laying down of the doctrine, and so proceed to the story of these persons, giving glory unto the all wise God.

<sup>13</sup>The question therefore is, whether reason be sovereign of the passions. <sup>14</sup>Let us then determine what is reason, and what is passion, and

how many kinds of passion there be; and whether reason ruleth over all of these. <sup>15</sup>Now reason is, then, the mind accompanied with a life of uprightness, putting foremost the consideration of wisdom. <sup>16</sup>And wisdom is knowledge of Divine and human things, and of their causes. <sup>17</sup>And this is contained in the education of the law; whereby we learn Divine things reverently, and human things profitably. <sup>18</sup>And the forms of wisdom are prudence, justice, courage, and temperance. <sup>19</sup>That which leadeth these is prudence; by whose means, indeed, it is that reason beareth rule over the passions. <sup>20</sup>Of the passions, pleasure and pain are the two most comprehensive; and they also by nature are concerned both with body, and with soul. <sup>21</sup>And there be many attendant affections that compass pleasure and pain. <sup>22</sup>Before pleasure there is lust; and after pleasure there is joy. <sup>23</sup>And before pain there is fear; and after pain there is sorrow. <sup>24</sup>Wrath is an affection, common both to pleasure and to pain, if any will take heed when it cometh upon him. <sup>25</sup>And there is in pleasure a malicious disposition, which is the most multiform of all the affections. <sup>26</sup>In the soul it is arrogancy, and love of money, and vaingloriousness, and contention, and faithlessness, and the evil eye. <sup>27</sup>In the body it is greediness, gluttony, and solitary gormandizing. <sup>28</sup>As pleasure and pain are therefore two growths of the body and the soul, so there are many offshoots of these growths. <sup>29</sup>And reason, the universal husbandman, purging, and pruning these severally, and binding round, and watering, and transplanting, in every way improveth the materials of the morals and affections. <sup>30</sup>For reason is the guide of the virtues, but it is the sovereign of the passions.

Observe then first, through the very things that stand in the way of temperance, that reason is sovereign of the passions. <sup>31</sup>Now temperance consisteth in command of the lusts. <sup>32</sup>But of the lusts, some pertain unto the soul, others unto the body: and over each of these two, reason appeareth to bear sway. <sup>33</sup>For whence is it, otherwise, that when urged on to forbidden meats, we turn ourselves away from the pleasures that are to be had of them? Is it not that reason is able to command the appetites? so do I believe. <sup>34</sup>Hence it is, then, that when we lust after sea creatures, and fowls, and four footed beasts, and all manner of meats that are forbidden us by the law, we abstain by reason of the mastery of reason. <sup>35</sup>For the affections of our appetites are refrained, checked by the temperate understanding, and bent back again; and all the emotions of the body are kept in by reason.

## CHAPTER 2

And what wonder? if the lusts of the soul for the enjoying of beauty are rendered powerless, <sup>2</sup>on this ground, therefore, the temperate Joseph is praised, in that by reason, he subdued upon reflection the indulgence of sense. <sup>3</sup>For when he was young, and ripe for intercourse, by reason he rendered powerless the frenzied desire of his passions. <sup>4</sup>And it is not merely the stimulus of sensual indulgence, but that of every desire, that reason is

able to overcome. <sup>5</sup>For the law saith, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. <sup>6</sup>Now therefore, since it is the law that hath forbidden us to desire, I shall much the more easily persuade you, that reason is able to govern our lusts, as it doth with the passions that are impediments to justice. <sup>7</sup>Since in what way is a solitary gormandizer, and a glutton, and a drunkard reclaimed, except it be clear that reason is lord of the passions? <sup>7</sup>A man, therefore that ordereth his course by the law, even if he be a lover of money, straightway overcometh his own disposition; lending without interest unto the needy, and cancelling the debt of the incoming seventh year. <sup>9</sup>And should a man be parsimonious, he is ruled by the law acting through reason; so that he gleaneth neither his harvest, nor his vintage: and in other things we may perceive that it is reason that overcometh the passions. <sup>10</sup>For the law overcometh even affection for parents, not betraying virtue on their account. <sup>11</sup>And it prevaieth over married love, rebuking it when it transgresseth the law. <sup>12</sup>And it beareth sway over the love of parents toward their children, for they punish them for vice; and it mastereth the love of friends, reproving them when they are wicked. <sup>13</sup>And think it not a paradox when reason, through the law, can prevail even over enmity, <sup>14</sup>not hewing down the cultivated herbage of an enemy, but preserving the substance of enemies from the destroyers, and helping to raise up again what is fallen.

<sup>15</sup>And it is clear that reason overcometh even the more vehement passions, as love of power, vaingloriousness, empty boasting, and arrogancy, and envy. <sup>16</sup>For the temperate understanding repelleth all these malignant passions, even as it repelleth anger: for it overcometh even this. <sup>17</sup>Thus Moses, when he was angry with Dathan and Abiram, nothing did against them in wrath, but tempered his anger by reason. <sup>18</sup>For the temperate mind is able, as I have said, to rise above the passions, and to alter some, and render others powerless. <sup>19</sup>For why, else, doth our most wise father Jacob censure them that were about Simeon and Levi for having slain, contrary to reason, the whole race of the Shechemites, saying, Cursed be their anger. <sup>20</sup>For if reason had not the power of subduing anger, he would not have spoken thus. <sup>21</sup>For at the time when God created man, He planted in him his passions and habits of mind: <sup>22</sup>but at the same time He enthroned among the mind among the senses, as an holy governor over them all; <sup>23</sup>and unto this mind gave He the law. He that adopteth a way of life according to it shall rule a kingdom that is just, and good, and of a good courage. <sup>24</sup>How then, a man may ask, if reason be master of the passions, hath it no mastery over forgetfulness and ignorance?

### CHAPTER 3

But this argument is exceeding ridiculous: for reason seemeth not to bear sway over his own affections, but over those of the body, <sup>2</sup>in such a way as that any one of you may not be able to root out desire, but reason will

provide a way for you not to be enslaved thereby. <sup>3</sup>No one of us is able to root out anger from the soul, but it is possible to withstand anger. <sup>4</sup>No one of us is able to root out malice, but reason hath force to work with us, that we be not overcome by malice. <sup>5</sup>For reason is not a rooter out of the passions, but their antagonist. <sup>6</sup>And this may be more clearly understood by means of the thirst of king David. <sup>7</sup>For after David had fought the Philistines all the day long, he with the soldiers of his nation killed many of them: <sup>8</sup>but when evening fell, came he, sweating and exceeding weary, unto the royal tabernacle, round about which the whole host of our ancestors was encamped. <sup>9</sup>Now all the rest were at supper; <sup>10</sup>but the king, being very much athirst, although he had abundant spring at hand, could not by their means quench his thirst; <sup>11</sup>but a certain irrational desire for the water in the enemy's camp grew stronger and fiercer upon him, undid and consumed him. <sup>12</sup>Wherefore his armourbearers being troubled at this longing of the king, two valiant young soldiers, respecting the desire of the king, put on their full armour, and taking a pitcher, got them over the ramparts of the enemies: <sup>13</sup>and unperceived by the guardians of the gate, they went in search throughout the whole camp of the enemy; <sup>14</sup>and having found discovered the spring, they boldly filled out of it a draught for the king. <sup>15</sup>But he, though parched with thirst, reasoned that a draught reputed of equal value to blood, would be a dire danger to his soul. <sup>16</sup>Wherefore, opposing reason to desire, he poured out the draught for an offering unto God. <sup>17</sup>For the temperate mind hath power to conquer the compulsions of the passions, and to quench the fires of excitement, <sup>18</sup>and to overpower the pains of the body, howsoever extreme, ; and, through the excellency of reason, to abhor all domination by the passions. <sup>19</sup>But this occasion inviteth us to give an illustration of temperate reason from history. <sup>20</sup>For at a time when our fathers in possession of undisturbed peace through obedience to the law, and prospering, so that even Seleucus Nicanor the king of Asia had both set aside money for them for the temple service, and accepted their polity; <sup>21</sup>then certain persons, bringing in new things contrary to the general harmony, suffered many and various disasters.

#### **CHAPTER 4**

For a certain man named Simon, which then was in opposition to Onias, which then held the high priesthood for life, and was an honourable and good man; after that by slandering him in every way, he could not injure him with the people, went away as an exile, with the intention of betraying his country. <sup>2</sup>Whence coming to Apollonius, the military governor of Syria, and of Phoenicia, and of Cilicia, he said, <sup>3</sup>Having good will toward the king's affairs, I am come to disclose that many thousands of private funds are stored up in the treasuries of Jerusalem, that are not the possession of the temple, but pertain to king Seleucus. <sup>4</sup>Apollonius acquainted himself with the particulars of these things, and praised Simon for his care of the king's interests; and

going up to Seleucus, informed him of the treasure: <sup>5</sup>and having receiving authority about it, speedily advanced into our country with the accursed Simon and an exceeding strong host; <sup>6</sup>and said that he came with the command of the king that he should take the private money of the treasury. <sup>7</sup>And the people, indignant at this proclamation, and replying to the effect that it was outrageous that those that had entrusted deposits to the sacred treasury should be deprived of them, resisted as well as they were able. <sup>8</sup>But Apollonius went away with threats into the temple. <sup>9</sup>And while the priests, with women and children were beseeching God in the temple to throw His shield over the sacred place that was despised; <sup>10</sup>and while Apollonius went up with his armed force to the seizure of the treasure, there appeared from heaven angels riding on horseback, with lightning flashing from their weapons, filling them with much fear and trembling. <sup>11</sup>And Apollonius fell down half dead upon the court that is open to all nations, and spread out his hands to heaven, and with tears implored the Hebrews to pray for him, and to propitiate the heavenly host. <sup>12</sup>For he said that he had sinned, so as to be worthy of death; and that if he were saved, he would praise the blessedness of the holy place before all people. <sup>13</sup>Onias the high priest, induced by these words, although for other reasons anxious that king Seleucus should not suppose that Apollonius was slain by human device, and not by Divine punishment, prayed for him; <sup>14</sup>and he being thus unexpectedly saved, departed to manifest unto the king what had happened to him. <sup>15</sup>But on the death of Seleucus the king, his son Antiochus Epiphanes succeedeth to the kingdom: a man of haughty pride and terrible. <sup>16</sup>Who having deposed Onias from the high priesthood, appointed his brother Jason to be high priest: <sup>17</sup>who had made a covenant, if he would give him this authority, to pay yearly three thousand and six hundred and sixty talents. <sup>18</sup>And he committed unto him the high priesthood and rulership of the nation. <sup>19</sup>And he both changed the manner of life of the people, and perverted their civil customs into all lawlessness. <sup>20</sup>So that he not only erected a gymnasium on the very citadel of our country, but also abolished the service of the temple. <sup>21</sup>At which Divine vengeance, being grieved, caused Antiochus himself to war against them. <sup>22</sup>For being at war with Ptolemy in Egypt, he heard that upon a rumour of his death being spread abroad, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had rejoiced exceedingly, and he speedily marched against them. <sup>23</sup>And having subdued them, he established a decree that if any of them lived according to the laws of his country, he should die. <sup>24</sup>And when he could by no means destroy by his decrees the obedience to the law of the nation, but saw all his threats and punishments without effect; <sup>25</sup>for even women, because they continued to circumcise their children, were thrown down headlong along with them, knowing beforehand of the punishment. <sup>26</sup>When, therefore, his decrees were despised by the people, he himself compelled by means of tortures every one of this race, by tasting forbidden meats, to abjure the Jewish godliness.

## CHAPTER 5

The tyrant Antiochus, therefore, sitting in public state with his assessors upon a certain lofty place, with his armed soldiers standing in a circle round about him, ordered his bodyguards <sup>2</sup>to seize every one of the Hebrews, and to compel them to taste swine's flesh, and things offered to idols. <sup>3</sup>And if any of them were unwilling to eat the accursed meat, they were to be tortured upon the wheel, and then slain. <sup>4</sup>And when many had been seized, a foremost man of the assembly, an Hebrew by name Eleazar, a priest by family, by profession a lawyer, and advanced in years, and for this reason known to many of the king's followers, was brought before him. <sup>5</sup>And Antiochus seeing him, said, <sup>6</sup>I would counsel thee, old man, before thy tortures begin, to taste the swine's flesh, and save thy life; for I feel respect for thine age and grey hairs, which since thou hast had so long, thou seemest not to be a philosopher, in that thou observest the superstition of the Jews. <sup>7</sup>For wherefore, since nature hath conferred upon thee the most excellent flesh of this animal, dost thou abhor it? <sup>8</sup>For it seemeth foolish not to enjoy what is pleasant, yet not disgraceful; and out of notions of sinfulness, to reject the gifts of nature. <sup>9</sup>And I think that thou wilt be acting still more foolishly, if thou followest vain conceits about the truth. <sup>10</sup>And moreover thou wilt despise me to thine own punishment. <sup>11</sup>Wilt thou not awake from thy trifling philosophy, and give up the foolishness of thy reasonings; and, regaining understanding worthy of thine age, pursue a true philosophy of what is beneficial; <sup>12</sup>and reverencing my kindly admonition, have pity upon thine own years? <sup>13</sup>For bear in mind that, if there be any power that watcheth over this godliness of thine, it will pardon thee all transgressions of the law that thou commitest through compulsion. <sup>14</sup>While the tyrant incited him in this manner to the unlawful eating of flesh, Eleazar begged leave to speak. <sup>15</sup>And having received power to speak, he began thus to deliver himself: <sup>16</sup>O Antiochus, we that are persuaded that we live under a Divine law consider no compulsion to be so powerful as obedience to that law; <sup>17</sup>wherefore we consider that we ought not in any point to transgress the law. <sup>18</sup>And indeed, were our law (as thou supposest) not in truth Divine, and if we wrongly think it Divine, we should have no right even in that case to destroy our godly reputation. <sup>19</sup>Think not therefore the eating of the unclean to be a trifling offence. <sup>20</sup>For transgression of the law, whether it be in small or great matters, is of equal moment; <sup>21</sup>for in either case the law is equally slighted. <sup>22</sup>But thou deridest our philosophy, as though our living by it were contrary to reason. <sup>23</sup>Yet it teacheth us temperance, so that we overcome all pleasures and lusts; and it also exerciseth us in courage, so that we cheerfully undergo every grievance. <sup>24</sup>And it instructeth us in justice, that in all our doings we render what is due; and it teacheth us godliness, that we worship the one only God in a way that becometh His greatness. <sup>25</sup>Wherefore it is that we eat not the unclean; for believing that the law was established by God, we know that the Creator of the world, sheweth us sympathy in giving a law that is according to nature. <sup>26</sup>Those things that are convenient for our souls hath he

directed us to eat; but those that are repugnant to them hath He forbidden. <sup>27</sup>But like a tyrant thou not only compellest us to break the law, but also to eat in such a way that thou mayest deride us as we thus profanely eat: <sup>28</sup>but thou shalt not have this cause of laughter against me; neither will I transgress the sacred oaths of my fathers to keep the law: <sup>29</sup>nay, not if thou pluckest out mine eyes, and melt down mine entrails. <sup>30</sup>I am not so old, or so little a man, but that my reasoning powers in defence of godliness. <sup>31</sup>Now therefore prepare thy wheels, and kindle a fiercer flame. <sup>32</sup>I will not so pity mine old age as to subvert the law of my country. <sup>33</sup>I will not belie thee, O law, mine instructor; neither will I forsake thee, O beloved self control. <sup>34</sup>I will not put thee to shame, O philosophical reason, nor deny thee, O honoured priesthood and knowledge of the law. <sup>35</sup>Mouth, thou shalt not defile mine old age, nor the full stature of a perfect life. <sup>36</sup>My fathers shall receive me pure, not having quailed before thy compulsion, though it be unto death. <sup>38</sup>For thou shalt tyrannize over the ungodly; but neither by words nor by deeds shalt thou master my reasonings about godliness, either by words or deeds.

## CHAPTER 6

When Eleazar had in this manner eloquently answered the exhortations of the tyrant, the spearbearers came up, and roughly haled Eleazar to the instruments of torture. <sup>2</sup>And first they stripped the old man, adorned as he was with the comeliness of godliness. <sup>3</sup>Then tying back his arms and hands, they disdainfully scourged him with stripes, <sup>4</sup>an herald crying out, Obey the king's commands!" But Eleazar, the high minded and truly noble, like as one tortured in a dream, answered it not at all. <sup>6</sup>But while he raised his eyes on high unto heaven, the old man's flesh was stripped off by the scourges, and his blood streamed down, and his sides were pierced through. <sup>7</sup>And falling upon the ground, because his body had no power to support the pains, yet kept he his reason upright and unswerving. <sup>8</sup>Then one of the harsh spearbearers leaped upon his belly, and kicked him in the side with his foot, to keep him upright as he fell. <sup>9</sup>But he endured the pains, and despised the cruelty, and persevered through the indignities; <sup>10</sup>and like a noble athlete, the old man when struck vanquished his torturers. <sup>11</sup>His countenance sweating, and he panting for breath, he was admired by the very torturers for his courage. <sup>12</sup>Wherefore in part because they pitied his old age, <sup>13</sup>in part from the sympathy of acquaintance, and in part from admiration of his endurance, some of the king's attendants said, <sup>14</sup>Wherefore dost thou unreasonably destroy thyself, O Eleazar, with these miseries? <sup>15</sup>We will set before thee some cooked meat; and do thou save thyself by pretending that thou hast tasted swine's flesh. <sup>16</sup>And Eleazar, as though the more bitterly tortured by this counsel, cried out, <sup>17</sup>Let not us which are children of Abraham be so evil advised as by giving way to make use of an unbecoming pretence; <sup>18</sup>for it were irrational, if having lived up to old age in all truth, and having maintained, by observing the law, the reputation of such a life, we should now turn back,

<sup>19</sup>and ourselves become a pattern for ungodliness to the young, as being an example of defiled eating. <sup>20</sup>It would be shameful if we should live on some short time, and that scorned by all men for cowardice, <sup>21</sup>and be condemned by the tyrant for unmanliness, by not contending to the death for our Divine law. <sup>22</sup>Wherefore do you, O children of Abraham, die nobly for your godliness. <sup>23</sup>Ye spearbearers of the tyrant, wherefore do ye linger? <sup>24</sup>When they beheld him so lofty of mind against misery, and unmoved at their pity, they led him to the fire: <sup>25</sup>then with their wickedly contrived instruments they burned upon the fire, and poured stinking liquids into his nostrils. <sup>26</sup>When he was now burned to his very bones, and about to expire, he lifted up his eyes unto God, and said, Thou knowest, O God, that when I might have been saved, I am slain for the sake of the law by tortures of fire. <sup>28</sup>Be merciful unto thy people, and be satisfied with my punishment on their behalf. <sup>29</sup>Let my blood be a purification unto them, and take Thou my life as a recompence for theirs. <sup>30</sup>Thus speaking, the holy man departed nobly in his torments; he stood firm even unto the agonies of death by virtue of reason, in defence of the law. <sup>31</sup>Confessedly therefore, godly reason is master of the passions. <sup>32</sup>For if the passions had overcome reason, I would have borne witness to them of their mastery. <sup>33</sup>But now, since reason conquered the passions, we fittingly award it the authority of first place. <sup>34</sup>And it is but right that we acknowledge the strength of reason, since it prevaieth over external agonies. <sup>35</sup>Were it not so, it would be ridiculous: and I have proved that reason hath not only overcome agonies, but also that it overcome pleasures, and withstandeth them.

## CHAPTER 7

For like a most skilful pilot, the reason of our father Eleazar steered the vessel of godliness in the sea of passions, <sup>2</sup>and though buffeted by the threats of the tyrant, and overwhelmed with the breakers of torture, <sup>3</sup>by no means did it shift the rudders of godliness, until it sailed into the harbour of victory over death. <sup>4</sup>Not so hath ever a besieged city held out against many and varied machines as did that holy man, when his godly soul was tried with the fiery trial of tortures and rackings, move his besiegers through the reason that shielded his godliness. <sup>5</sup>For Father Eleazar, setting his mind firm like a jutting promontory, brake the raging waves of the passions. <sup>6</sup>O priest, worthy of the priesthood! thou neither didst defile thy sacred teeth, nor profane thy appetite, which had ever embraced the clean and lawful, by partaking of profanity. <sup>7</sup>O man in harmony with the law, philosopher of the Divine life! <sup>8</sup>Of such a character ought those to be that perform the duties of the law, defending it with their own blood, and noble sweat in sufferings even unto death. <sup>9</sup>Thou, O father, hast gloriously established our loyalty to the law by thine endurance; and solemnly avowing the sacred service, thou hast not subverted it; and by thy deeds hast made credible thy words of Divine philosophy. <sup>10</sup>O aged man, more powerful than tortures; O elder, fiercer than

fire; O supreme king over passions, Eleazar! <sup>11</sup>For as our father Aaron, armed with a censer, hastened through the throng of his people, and conquered the fiery angel, <sup>12</sup>even so did the descendent of Aaron, Eleazar, though consumed by the fire, remained unswayed in his reason. <sup>13</sup>And, what is more wonderful, even though he was an old man, though the labours of his body were now spent, and his fibres were already loosed, and his sinews worn out, he recovered youth, <sup>14</sup>in spirit through reason, and by reason like that of Isaac, he rendered powerless the many headed instrument. <sup>15</sup>O man of blessed age, of reverend grey hairs, and life obedient to the law, whom the faithful seal of death hath perfected! <sup>16</sup>If therefore, an old man through godliness despised tortures even unto death, by common consent godly reason is sovereign of the passions.

<sup>17</sup>But perhaps some may say, It is not all that have conquered passions, because not all possess wise reason. <sup>18</sup>But they that have meditated upon godliness with their whole heart, these alone can master the passions of the flesh: <sup>19</sup>they that believe that they die not to God, even as our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob died not to God, they live to God. <sup>20</sup>This circumstance, then, is by no means an objection, that some that have weak reason are governed by their passions: <sup>21</sup>since what person, walking piously by the whole rule of philosophy, and believing in God, <sup>22</sup>and knowing that it is a blessed thing to endure all manner of hardship for virtue, would not, for the sake of godliness, master his passion? <sup>23</sup>For the wise and brave man only is lord over his passions.

## CHAPTER 8

Whence it is, that even the very young, imbued with the philosophy of godly reason, have overcome still more bitter tortures: <sup>2</sup>for when the tyrant was manifestly vanquished in his first attempt, being unable to compel an old man to eat the unclean thing: then indeed, being vehemently swayed with passion, he gave charge to bring others of the adult Hebrews, and if they would eat of the unclean thing, to let them go when they had eaten; but if they refused, to torment even more grievously. <sup>3</sup>When the tyrant had given this charge, seven brethren were brought into his presence, comely, and modest, and well born, and altogether accomplished, along with their aged mother. <sup>4</sup>Whom, when the tyrant beheld, compassing their mother as though they were a chorus, he was pleased at them; and being struck becoming appearance and noble mien, smiled upon them, and calling them near, said, <sup>5</sup>O youths, with favourable feelings I admire each of you; and greatly honouring the comeliness of so numerous a band of brethren, I not only counsel you not to share the madness of the old man which hath been tortured afore, but also encourage you to yield, and to enjoy my friendship. <sup>6</sup>For I possess the power, not only of punishing them that disobey my commandments, but also of doing good unto them that obey them. <sup>7</sup>Put confidence in me, then, and you shall receive places of authority in my

government, if you forsake the ancestral law of your nation; <sup>8</sup>and conforming to the Greek way of life, alter your rule, and enjoy youth's delights. <sup>9</sup>For if you provoke me by your disobedience, you will compel me to destroy you, every one, with terrible punishments by tortures. <sup>10</sup>Have mercy, then, upon your own selves; whom I, although an enemy, pity for your age and comeliness. <sup>11</sup>Will you not reason upon this, that if you disobey, there will be nothing left for you but to die in tortures? <sup>12</sup>Thus speaking, he ordered the instruments of torture to be brought forward, that very fear might prevail upon them to eat of unclean meat. <sup>13</sup>And when the spearmen brought forth the wheels, and the racks, and the hooks, and catapults, and caldrons, and pans, and thumbscrews, and iron hands, and wedges, and bellows, the tyrant continued, <sup>14</sup>Be fearful, young men; and the righteousness which ye worship will be merciful unto you if you transgress the law through compulsion. <sup>15</sup>Now they having heard these words of persuasion, and seeing the fearful instruments, not only were they not afraid, but even answered the arguments of the tyrant, and through their good reasoning destroyed his power. <sup>16</sup>Now let us consider the matter: had any among them been fainthearted and unmanly, what reasonings would they have employed, but such as these? <sup>17</sup>O wretched that we are, and exceeding foolish! when the king exhorteth us, and calleth us unto his bounty, should we not obey him? <sup>18</sup>Wherefore do we cheer ourselves with vain counsels, and venture upon a disobedience that bringeth death? <sup>19</sup>Shall we not fear, O brethren, the instruments of torture, and weigh the threatenings of torment, and shun this vaingloriousness and destructive pride? <sup>20</sup>Let us have compassion upon our age, and relent over the years of our mother, <sup>21</sup>and let us bear in mind that if we disobey, we shall die. <sup>22</sup>And Divine justice will pardon us if we fear the king through necessity. <sup>23</sup>Why withdraw ourselves from most sweet life, and deprive ourselves of this pleasant world? <sup>24</sup>Let us not oppose necessity, nor seek vainglory by our own excruciation. <sup>25</sup>The law itself is not forward to put us to death, if we dread torture. <sup>26</sup>Whence hath such contentiousness taken hold upon us, and such fatal obstinacy approved itself to us, when we might live undisturbed by giving ear unto the king? <sup>27</sup>But nothing of this kind did the young men say, when they were about to be tortured. <sup>28</sup>For they were well aware of the sufferings, and masters over agonies. <sup>29</sup>So that as soon as the tyrant had ceased from counselling them, they altogether with one voice, as from the same soul, said unto him,

## CHAPTER 9

Wherefore dost thou delay, O tyrant? for we are more ready to die than to transgress the commandments of our fathers. <sup>2</sup>For we should disgrace our fathers, if we did not obey the law, and take knowledge for our guide. <sup>3</sup>O counsellor and tyrant of transgression, in thy hatred unto us do not pity us more than we pity ourselves. <sup>4</sup>For we account the mercy that thou offerest us, which ensureth our escape at the price of transgression of the law, to be

worse than death itself. <sup>5</sup>And thou thinkest to infaintheadate us, by threatening us with death by tortures, as though thou hast learned nothing by the death of Eleazar. <sup>6</sup>But if aged men of the Hebrews have died in the cause of godliness after enduring torture, more rightly should we younger men die, scorning thy cruel tortures, which the old man our teacher conquered. <sup>7</sup>Make the attempt then, O tyrant; and if thou putttest us to death for our godliness, think not that thou harmest us by torturing us. <sup>8</sup>For we, through this suffering and endurance, shall bear off the rewards of virtue: <sup>9</sup>but thou, for the wicked and despotic slaughter of us, from the Divine justice, shalt endure eternal torture by fire. <sup>10</sup>When they had said these things, the tyrant was not lonely indignant against them as being refractory, but enraged with them as being ungrateful. <sup>11</sup>So that, at his bidding, the torturers brought forth the eldest of them, and tearing through his tunic, bound his hands and arms on each side with thongs. <sup>12</sup>And when they had laboured hard without effect in scourging him, they hurled him upon the wheel. <sup>13</sup>When the noble youth was stretched out upon this, his limbs were dislocated. <sup>14</sup>And with every limb out of joint, he exclaimed in denunciation, saying, <sup>15</sup>O most accursed tyrant, and enemy of heavenly justice, and cruel hearted; I am no murderer, nor sacrilegious man, whom thou thus usest ill; but a defender of the Divine law. <sup>16</sup>And when the spearmen said, Consent to eat, that you may be released from your tortures, <sup>17</sup>he answered, Not so powerful, O accursed ministers, is your wheel, as to stifle my reason: cut my limbs, burn my flesh, and twist my joints. <sup>18</sup>For through all my torments I will convince you that the children of the Hebrews are alone unconquered in behalf of virtue. <sup>19</sup>While he said this, they heaped up fuel, and setting fire to it, strained him upon the wheel still more. <sup>20</sup>And the wheel was defiled all over with blood, and the hot ashes were quenched by the droppings of gore, and pieces of flesh were scattered round about the axles of the machine. <sup>21</sup>And although the skeleton of his bones was now destroyed, the lofty minded youth and son of Abraham groaned not; <sup>22</sup>but as though transformed by fire into immortality, he nobly endured the rackings, saying, <sup>23</sup>Imitate me, O brethren, and do not ever desert your station, nor abjure my brotherhood in courage: fight the holy and noble fight of godliness; <sup>24</sup>by which means the just providence of our father may become merciful to our nation, and take vengeance of the pestilent tyrant. <sup>25</sup>And saying this, the holy youth broke off his life. <sup>26</sup>And all marvelling at his courageous soul, the spearmen brought him forward that was second in age; and having put on iron bands, bound him with pointed hooks to the catapult. <sup>27</sup>And when, on enquiring whether he would eat before he was tortured, they heard his noble decision, <sup>28</sup>after they with the iron hands had tore all the flesh from the neck unto the chin, these leopards tore off the very skin of his head: but he, bearing with firmness this misery, said, <sup>29</sup>How sweet is every form of death for the godliness of our fathers! and he said unto the tyrant, <sup>30</sup>Thinkest thou not, O most cruel of tyrants, that thou art now tortured more than I, finding the overweening reasoning of thy tyranny defeated by our patience in behalf of our godliness? <sup>31</sup>For I lighten my suffering by the joys that come from virtue.

<sup>32</sup>But thou art tortured with threatenings for ungodliness; and thou shalt not escape, O most abominable tyrant, the vengeance of Divine wrath.

## CHAPTER 10

Now this one, having endured this praiseworthy death, the third was brought along, and exhorted by many to taste, and save his life. <sup>2</sup>But he cried out and said, Know ye not, that the father of those that are dead, begat me also; and that the same mother bare me; and that I was brought up the same tenets? <sup>3</sup>I abjure not the noble relationship of my brethren. <sup>4</sup>Now then, whatever instrument of vengeance ye have, apply it to my body, for ye are able to touch my soul, even if ye wish it. <sup>5</sup>But they, highly incensed at his boldness of speech, dislocated his hands and feet with racking engines, and wrenching them from their sockets, dismembered him. <sup>6</sup>And they dragged round his fingers, and his arms, and his legs, and his ankles. <sup>7</sup>And not being by any means able to strangle him, they tore off his skin, together with the extreme tips of his fingers, flayed him, and then haled him to the wheel, <sup>8</sup>about which the joints of his backbone were loosened; and he saw his own flesh torn to shreds, and streams of blood flowing from his entrails. <sup>9</sup>And when he was about to die, he said, <sup>10</sup>We, O accursed tyrant, suffer this for the sake of Divine virtue and teaching. <sup>11</sup>But thou, for thine ungodliness and shedding of blood, shalt endure torments unceasing. <sup>12</sup>And thus having died worthily of his brethren, they dragged forward the fourth, saying, <sup>13</sup>Do not thou share the madness of thy brethren: but give regard unto the king, and save thyself. <sup>14</sup>But he said unto them, Ye have not a fire so scorching as to make me play the coward. <sup>15</sup>By the blessed death of my brethren, and the eternal punishment of the tyrant, and the glorious life of the godly, I will not disown the noble brotherhood. <sup>16</sup>Contrive tortures, O tyrant; that thou mayest learn even through them that I am the brother of them that were tormented before. <sup>17</sup>When he had said this, the bloodthirsty, and murderous, and unhallowed Antiochus gave order that his tongue be cut off. <sup>18</sup>But he said, Even if ye take away the organ of speech, yet God heareth the silent. <sup>19</sup>Behold, my tongue is put out, cut it off; for not for that shalt thou cut off our reason. <sup>20</sup>Gladly do we lose our limbs in behalf of God. <sup>21</sup>But God shall speedily find you, since ye cut off a tongue that hath been the instrument of Divine melodiousness.

## CHAPTER 11

And when he had died, disfigured in his torments, the fifth leaped forward, and said, <sup>2</sup>I intend not, O tyrant, to beg to be excused from the torment which is in behalf of virtue. <sup>3</sup>But I have come of mine own accord, that by the death of me, thou mayest owe heavenly vengeance a punishment for more crimes. <sup>4</sup>O thou hater of virtue and men, what have we done that

thou thus revellest in our blood? <sup>5</sup>Doth it seem evil unto thee that we worship the Creator of all things, and live according to His surpassing law? <sup>6</sup>But this is worthy of honours, not of torments; <sup>7</sup>hadst thou been capable of the higher feelings of men, and possessed the hope of salvation from God. <sup>8</sup>Behold now, being alien from God, thou makest war against them that are godly toward God. <sup>9</sup>As he said this, the spearbearers bound him, and drew him unto the catapult: <sup>10</sup>to which, when they had bound him at his knees and fastened them with iron fetters, they bent down his loins upon the wedge of the wheel; and his body was then dismembered in the manner of a scorpion. <sup>11</sup>With his breath thus confined, and his body strangled, he said, <sup>12</sup>A great favour thou bestowest upon us, O tyrant, by enabling us to show our enduring adherence to the law by means of yet nobler sufferings. <sup>13</sup>He also being dead, the sixth, a mere boy, was brought forth; and when the tyrant asked him whether he would eat, and be delivered, he said, <sup>14</sup>I am indeed younger than my brethren, but in understanding I am as old; <sup>15</sup>for having been born and reared unto the same end, we are bound to die also in behalf on the same cause. <sup>16</sup>So that if you think proper to torment us for not eating the unclean, torment! <sup>17</sup>As he said this, they brought him unto the wheel. <sup>18</sup>Being stretched upon which, with limbs racked and dislocated, he was gradually roasted from beneath. <sup>19</sup>And when they had heated sharp spits, they applied them to his back; and having pierced his sides, they burned away his entrails. <sup>20</sup>And he, while tormented, said, O period good and holy, wherein for the sake of godliness we brethren have been called to a school in sufferings, a contest wherein we have not been defeated! <sup>21</sup>For godly understanding, O tyrant, is unconquered. <sup>22</sup>Armed with upright virtue, I also shall depart with my brethren; <sup>23</sup>but thou, O tyrant, shalt receive the same vengeance, deviser of tortures, and enemy of the truly godly. <sup>24</sup>We six youths have destroyed thy tyranny. <sup>25</sup>For is not thine inability to sway our reason, and to compel us to eat the unclean, thine own destruction? <sup>26</sup>Thy fire is cold to us, thy catapults are painless, thy violence unavailing. <sup>27</sup>For the bodyguards that govern us are not those of a tyrant, but of are Divine law: through this we keep our reason unconquered.

## CHAPTER 12

When he too had undergone blessed martyrdom, and died in the caldron whereinto he had been thrown, the seventh, the youngest of all, came forward: <sup>2</sup>whom the tyrant pitied, though he had been vehemently reproached by his brethren; <sup>3</sup>and seeing him already encompassed with chains, had him brought nearer, and endeavoured to counsel him, saying, <sup>4</sup>Thou seest the end of the madness of thy brethren: for they have died in torture through disobedience; and thou, if disobedient, having first been miserably tormented, shalt thyself perish before thy time. <sup>5</sup>But if thou obey, thou shalt be my friend, and shalt have a charge over the affairs of my kingdom. <sup>6</sup>And having thus exhorted him, he sent for the lad's mother; that, by condoling with her

for the loss of so many sons, he might incline her, through the hope of safety, to render the survivor obedient. <sup>7</sup>And after his mother had urged him on in the Hebrew tongue, (as we shall shortly tell,) he saith, <sup>8</sup>Release me, that I may speak unto the king and all his friends. <sup>9</sup>And they rejoiced exceedingly at the promise of his youth, and quickly loosed him. <sup>10</sup>And he, running up to the pans, said, <sup>11</sup>Ungodly tyrant, and most blasphemous man, wert thou not ashamed, having received prosperity and a kingdom from God, to slay His servants, and to rack the doers of godliness? <sup>12</sup>Wherefore the divine vengeance reserveth thee for eternal fire and torments, which shall cling to you for all time. <sup>13</sup>Wert thou not ashamed, man as thou art, to cut out the tongues of men of like feeling and origin, and having thus abused, to torture them? <sup>14</sup>But they, bravely dying, fulfilled their godliness toward God. <sup>15</sup>But thou shalt groan according to thy deserts for having slain without cause the champions of virtue. <sup>16</sup>Wherefore, he continued, I myself, being about to die, <sup>17</sup>will not forsake the testimony of my brethren. <sup>18</sup>And I call upon the God of my fathers to be merciful unto my race. <sup>19</sup>But thee, both living and dead, will He punish. <sup>20</sup>Thus having prayed, he hurled himself into the pans; and so gave up *his life*.

### CHAPTER 13

If, then, the seven brethren despised afflictions even unto death, it must be confessed on all sides that right reason is sovereign of the passions. <sup>2</sup>For if they had been slaves to the passions, and had eaten of the unholy, we should have said that they had been conquered by them; <sup>3</sup>Now, however, it is not so: but by means of the reason which is commended by God, they mastered their passions. <sup>4</sup>And it is impossible to overlook the mind's supremacy over the passions: for it gained the victory over both passions and afflictions. <sup>5</sup>How then is it possible not to acknowledge the control of passions by right reason, since they drew not back from the pains of fire? <sup>6</sup>For just by means of towers that project before harbours, men break the threatening waves, and so ensure a still course unto vessels that enter port; <sup>7</sup>even so that the seven towered reason of the young men, by securing the harbour of godliness, conquered the intemperance of the passions. <sup>8</sup>For having constituted an holy choir of godliness, they encourage one another, saying, <sup>9</sup>Brothers, let us die like brethren for the sake of the law. Let us imitate the three young men in Assyria, which despised the selfsame civic rights that are accorded us, in a furnace. <sup>10</sup>Let us not be cowards in our demonstration of godliness. <sup>11</sup>And one said, Courage, brother; and another, Nobly endure. <sup>12</sup>And another, Remember whence you came, and who the father was by whose hand Isaac submitted to be slain for the sake of godliness. <sup>13</sup>And one and all, looking upon each other serene and confident, said, Let us sacrifice with our whole heart our souls unto the God Which gave them, and employ our bodies for the keeping of the law. <sup>14</sup>Let us not fear him that thinketh he killeth; <sup>15</sup>for great is the trial of soul and danger of eternal

torment laid up for them that transgress the commandment of God. <sup>16</sup>Let us arm ourselves, therefore, in the abnegation of Divine reason. <sup>17</sup>For if we suffer thus, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob will receive us, and all the fathers will commend us. <sup>18</sup>And as each one of the brethren was haled away, the others exclaimed, Disgrace us not, O brother, nor be false unto them that died before thee. <sup>19</sup>Now you are not ignorant of the bonds of brotherhood, which the Divine and all wise Providence hath imparted through fathers unto children, and hath engendered through the mother's womb: <sup>20</sup>in which these brethren, having remained an equal time; and having been formed for the same period, and increased by the same blood; and having been perfected through the same principle of life; <sup>21</sup>and having been brought forth at equal intervals; and having sucked milk from the same fountains: hence their brotherly souls are reared up lovingly together; <sup>22</sup>and increase the more powerfully by reason of this common nurture, daily companionship, and by other education, and exercise in the law of God. <sup>23</sup>Brotherly love being so sympathetically constituted, the seven brethren had yet a still greater mutual sympathy. <sup>24</sup>For being educated in the same law, and practising the same virtues, and reared up in a just course of life, the increased this sympathy with each other. <sup>25</sup>For a like ardour for what is right and honourable increased their fellow feeling toward each other. <sup>26</sup>for with their godliness they made their brotherly feeling still dearer to them. <sup>27</sup>And yet, although nature, companionship and virtuous habits, had combined to increase the bonds of brotherhood, those that were left endured to behold their brethren, which were ill used for their godliness, tortured even unto death.

## CHAPTER 14

Moreover, they even urged them on to this ill treatment; so that they not only despised pains themselves, but even overcame the passions of brotherly love. <sup>2</sup>O power of reason, more powerful than kings, and freer than the free! <sup>3</sup>O sacred and harmonious unanimity of the seven brethren in defence of godliness! <sup>4</sup>None of the seven youths played the coward, or shrank back from death; <sup>5</sup>but all, as though they ran the road to immortality, hasted them to death through tortures. <sup>6</sup>For just as hands and feet are moved in harmony with the promptings of the soul, so those holy youths, as though moved by an immortal soul of godliness, advanced unto death for the sake of such godliness. <sup>7</sup>O holy band of seven, band of brethren in harmony! for as the seven days of creation form a circle round about godliness, <sup>8</sup>so the youths in chorus formed a circle round about the sevenfold band, annulling their fear of the tortures. <sup>9</sup>Now we shudder at the recital of the affliction of those young men; but they not only beheld, and not only heard the immediate execution of the threat, but undergoing it, persevered; and that through the pains of fire. <sup>10</sup>And what could more painful? for the power of fire, being sharp and quick, speedily destroyed their bodies. <sup>11</sup>And think it not wonderful that reason bore rule over those men in their torments, when even

a woman's mind despised agonies yet more diverse. <sup>12</sup>For the mother of those seven youths endured the torments of each one of her seven children. <sup>13</sup>And consider how comprehensive is the love of offspring, which draweth every one's feeling into a sympathy rooted deep within, <sup>14</sup>where even animals that are without reason shew a similar sympathy and love for their offspring to that of men. <sup>15</sup>For the tame birds, that frequent the mountains, protect their fledglings upon the housetops; <sup>16</sup>and others, building their nests in mountain tops, and in the precipices of valleys, in holes of trees, or in the tops thereof, hatch their young, and keep off the intruder. <sup>17</sup>And if they are unable to fend it off, they help their offspring in whatsoever manner they are able, by flying in circles round about them, and calling unto them with their own voice, sorrowing all the while for love. <sup>18</sup>But wherefore should we shew proof of sympathy toward offspring on the part of animals that are without reason, <sup>19</sup>when even bees, at the season for making of honeycombs, attack all that come near, and pierce with their sting, as with a sword, them that draw nigh unto their hive, and repel them even unto death? <sup>20</sup>But sympathy for her children turned not aside the young men's mother, which had a spirit that was kindred with that of Abraham.

## CHAPTER 15

O reason of the children, tyrant over the passions, and godliness, dearer to a mother than her children! <sup>2</sup>The mother, when two things were set before her, godliness and the safety of her sons for a time, on the terms of the promise of a tyrant, <sup>3</sup>rather chose the godliness that, according to God, preserveth unto everlasting life. <sup>4</sup>O how can I characterize the affections of parents toward their children, the resemblance of soul and of form engrafted into the small type of a child in a wonderful manner, especially through the greater sympathy of mothers with the feelings of them that are born unto them? <sup>5</sup>For by how much mothers are by nature weak in disposition, and prolific in offspring, by so much the fonder are they of children. <sup>6</sup>And of all mothers, the mother of the seven was the fondest of children, who in seven childbirths had deeply engendered love toward them; <sup>7</sup>and through her many pains undergone with each one, was compelled to feel sympathy with them. <sup>8</sup>Yet, through fear of God, she neglected the temporary salvation of her children. <sup>9</sup>Not but that, by reason of the excellent disposition of her sons, and their obedience to the law, her maternal affection toward them was increased. <sup>10</sup>For they were both just and temperate, and manly, and high minded, and fond of their brethren, and so fond of their mother that they obeyed her by obeying the law even unto death. <sup>11</sup>And yet, though there were so many circumstances connected with love of children to draw on a mother to sympathy, in the case of none of them were the various tortures able to pervert her principle. <sup>12</sup>But she inclined each one separately and all together to death for godliness. <sup>13</sup>O holy nature and parental feeling, and reward of bringing up children, and unconquerable maternal affection! <sup>14</sup>As each one of

them was racked and roasted, the observant mother was prevented by godliness from changing. <sup>15</sup>She beheld her children's flesh dissolve round about the fire, and their extremities quiver upon the ground, and the flesh of their heads down to their chins exposed like masks. <sup>16</sup>O thou mother, that wast tried at this time with more bitter pains than even the pangs of childbirth that thou didst suffer for them! <sup>17</sup>O woman, who along gave birth to such perfect godliness! <sup>18</sup>Thy firstborn dying turned thee not; nor the second, looking at thee piteously in his torments; nor thy third, breathing out his soul. <sup>19</sup>Nor when thou didst behold the eyes of each of them looking boldly in their tortures, or didst see in their nostrils the signs of their approaching death. <sup>20</sup>When thou sawest the burning flesh of children lying upon the flesh of children, hands upon hands cut off, severed heads upon heads, corpses fallen upon corpses; and when thou sawest the place filled with people by reason of the tortures of thy children, thou didst not shed tears. <sup>21</sup>Neither the songs of sirens, nor the voice of swans so draw the hearers to hearing, O voices of children calling upon your mother in the midst of torments! <sup>22</sup>O how great and how many were the torments by which the mother was herself tortured, as her sons did undergo the wheel and the fires! <sup>23</sup>But godly reason, having strengthened her courage in the midst of sufferings, enabled her to forego, for the time, parental love. <sup>24</sup>Although she beheld the destruction of seven children, the noble mother, after one embrace, stripped off *her feelings* through faith in God. <sup>25</sup>For just as in a council chamber, beholding in her own soul vehement counsellors, nature, and parentage, and love of her children, and the racking of her children, <sup>26</sup>she holding two votes, one for the death, the other for the preservation of her children, <sup>27</sup>leaned not unto that which would have saved her children for the safety of a brief space. <sup>28</sup>But this daughter of Abraham remembered his holy fortitude. <sup>29</sup>O mother of a nation, avenger of the law, and defender of godliness, and prize bearer in the battle of the affections! <sup>30</sup>O thou nobler in endurance than men, and more manly than men in patience! <sup>31</sup>For as the ark of Noah, bearing the world in the flood that filled the world, bore up against the waves, <sup>32</sup>so thou, the guardian of the law, when compassed on every side by the flood of passions, and straitened by violent storms that were the torments of thy children, didst bear up nobly against the storms against godliness.

## CHAPTER 16

If, then, a woman, and that an aged one, and the mother of seven children, endured to see her children's torments even unto death, by common confession godly reason is the sole master even of the passions. <sup>2</sup>Thus I have proved that not only men have obtained the mastery of the passions. <sup>3</sup>And not so fierce were the lions that compassed Daniel about, nor the furnace of Mishael that burned with most vehement fire, as that natural love of children that burned within her, when she beheld her seven sons tortured. <sup>4</sup>But with

the reason that is grounded in godliness, the mother quenched passions so great and powerful. <sup>5</sup>For we must consider this also: that had the mother been faint hearted, as being their mother, she would have lamented over them; and peradventure might have spoken thus: <sup>6</sup>Ah, wretched I, and many times miserable; who having borne seven sons, are become the mother of none. <sup>7</sup>O seven vain childbirths, and seven periods of labour, and unfruitful givings of suck, and miserable nursings at the breast. <sup>8</sup>Vain for your sakes, O sons, have I endured many pangs, and the still more trying anxieties of upbringing. <sup>9</sup>Alas, my children, some of you unmarried, and some that have married to no profit, I shall not see your children, nor have the happiness of being called grandmother. <sup>10</sup>Ah that I, who had so many and fair children, should be a lone widow, full of sorrows! <sup>11</sup>Nor, should I die, shall I have any of my sons to bury me. <sup>12</sup>But with such a lament as this the holy and God fearing mother bewailed none of them, and neither attempted to dissuade any of them from dying, nor, as they died, did she grieve. <sup>13</sup>But as one possessed of a mine of adamant, and as one bringing forth again her full number of sons to immortality, she rather with supplications exhorted them to death for the sake of godliness. <sup>14</sup>O woman, soldier of God for godliness, thou, aged and a woman, hast conquered through endurance even a tyrant; and thou but weak, hast been found more powerful in deeds and words. <sup>15</sup>For when thou wast seized along with thy children, thou stoodest looking upon Eleazar in torments, and saidst unto sons in the Hebrew tongue, <sup>16</sup>O sons, noble is the contest; to which you being called as a witness for the nation, strive zealously for the laws of your country. <sup>17</sup>For it were shameful that this old man should endure pains for the sake of righteousness, and that you that are younger should be afraid of the tortures. <sup>18</sup>Remember that through God ye obtained existence, and have enjoyed it. <sup>19</sup>And for this reason ye ought to bear every affection because of God; <sup>20</sup>for Whom also our father Abraham was forward to sacrifice Isaac our progenitor, and shuddered not at the sight of his own paternal hand descending down with the sword upon him. <sup>21</sup>And the righteous Daniel was cast unto the lions; and Ananiah, and Azariah, and Mishael, were thrown into a furnace of fire; yet they endured through God. <sup>22</sup>You, then, having the like faith toward God, be not troubled. <sup>23</sup>For it is unreasonable that they that know godliness should not stand up against these afflictions. <sup>24</sup>With these arguments, the mother of seven, exhorting each of her sons, encouraged and persuaded each of her sons to die rather than transgress the commandment of God. <sup>25</sup>And they saw this also, that they that die unto God, live unto God; as Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the patriarchs.

## CHAPTER 17

And some of the spearbearers said that when she herself was about to be seized for the purpose of being put to death, she threw herself upon the pile, rather than that they should touch her person. <sup>2</sup>O thou mother, that

together with thy seven children didst destroy the violence of the tyrant, and frustrate his wicked intentions, and exhibit the nobleness of faith! <sup>3</sup>For thou, like an house nobly built upon the pillar of thy children, endured unmoved the earthquake of the tortures. <sup>4</sup>Be of good cheer, then O holy minded mother, holding fast the firm hope of thy steadfastness with God. <sup>5</sup>The moon in heaven with the stars appeareth not so gracious, as thou art established honourable before God, and fixed in the firmament with thy seven sons, whom thou didst illuminate with godliness unto the stars. <sup>6</sup>For thy bearing of children was after Abraham our father. <sup>7</sup>If it were possible for us to paint as on a tablet the godliness of thy story, would not the onlookers shudder at beholding the mother of seven children enduring for the sake of godliness divers tortures even unto death? <sup>8</sup>And it had been a worthy thing to have inscribed upon the tomb itself these words as a memorial to those of our nation. <sup>9</sup>Here an aged priest, and an aged woman, and seven sons, are buried through the violence of a tyrant, who wished to destroy the polity of the Hebrews. <sup>10</sup>These also avenged their nation, looking unto God, and enduring torments unto death. <sup>11</sup>For it was truly a divine contest that was carried on by them. <sup>12</sup>For at that time virtue presided over the contest, approving the victory through endurance, namely incorruptibility in eternal life. <sup>13</sup>Eleazar was the first to contend: and the mother of the seven children entered the contest; and the brethren contended. <sup>14</sup>The tyrant was the antagonist; and the world and living men were the onlookers. <sup>15</sup>And reverence for God conquered, and crowned her own athletes. <sup>16</sup>Who did not marvel at the athletes contending for the law code? Who were not astonished? <sup>17</sup>The tyrant himself, and all his council, marvelled at their endurance; <sup>18</sup>through which also they now stand beside the Divine throne, and live a blessed life. <sup>19</sup>For Moses saith, And all the sanctified ones are under Thy hands. <sup>20</sup>These therefore, having been sanctified through God, have been honoured not only with this honour, but that also by their means the enemy overcame not our nation; <sup>21</sup>and that the tyrant was punished, and their country purified: <sup>22</sup>for they became, as it were, a ransom for the sin of the nation. <sup>22</sup>And through the blood of these godly people, and the atonement wrought by their death, Divine Providence saved Israel, which had aforetime been afflicted. <sup>23</sup>For the tyrant Antiochus, looking to the virtue of their courage, and to their endurance in torture, proclaimed that endurance as an example to his soldiers. <sup>24</sup>And he made them noble and brave for fighting on foot, and for siege; and pillages and stormed the towns of all his enemies.

## CHAPTER 18

O Israelitish children, offspring of the seed of Abraham, obey this law, and in every way be godly, <sup>2</sup>knowing that godly reason is master of the passions, and those not only inward but outward. <sup>3</sup>Wherefore those that gave up their souls to pains for the sake of godliness, were not only admired by men, but were also deemed worthy of a divine inheritance. <sup>4</sup>And the nation

through them obtained peace, and having renewed the observance of the law in their own country, drove the enemy out of the land. <sup>5</sup>The tyrant Antiochus was both punished upon earth, and is punished now that he is dead; for when he was quite unable to compel the Israelites to observe foreign customs, and to forsake the manner of life of their fathers, <sup>6</sup>then, departing from Jerusalem, he made war against the Persians. <sup>7</sup>And the mother of the seven children spake these righteous words unto her children: I was a pure virgin, and went not beyond my father's house; but kept watch over the built rib. <sup>8</sup>No destroyer of the desert, or ravisher of the plain, corrupted me, neither did the seducing serpent of deceit defile the chastity of my virginity; <sup>9</sup>and in the time of my maturity I remained with my husband: when these sons did come of age, their father died. Blessed was he, for he lived a life marked by the blessing of children, and suffered not the sorrow of the time of childlessness. <sup>10</sup>And while he was yet with you, he taught you the law and the prophets. <sup>11</sup>He read to you of Abel, which was murdered by Cain; of Isaac, which was offered as an whole burnt offering; and of Joseph in prison. <sup>12</sup>And he told you of the zealous Phinehas; and taught you about Ananiah, Azariah, and Mishael in the fire. <sup>13</sup>And he glorified Daniel in the den of lions, and blessed him. <sup>14</sup>And he put you in mind of the scripture of Isaiah, which saith, Even if thou pass through the fire, it shall not burn thee. <sup>15</sup>He sang to you with words of David the psalmist, when he saith, Many are the afflictions of the righteous. <sup>16</sup>He declared unto you the proverb of Solomon, who saith He is a tree of life unto them that do His will. <sup>17</sup>He affirmed the words of Ezekiel, which said, Shall these dry bones live? <sup>18</sup>For he forgat not the song which Moses taught, which saith, <sup>19</sup>I will kill, and I will make to live: this is your life, and the length of your days. <sup>20</sup>O that bitter, and yet not bitter, day wherein the bitter tyrant of the Greeks quenched fire with fire in his cruel caldron, and brought with seething rage the seven sons of Abraham unto the catapult, and unto all his torments! <sup>21</sup>He pierced their eyeballs, and cut out their tongues, and put them to death with varied tortures. <sup>22</sup>Wherefore divine retribution hath pursued, and shall pursue, the pestilent wretch. <sup>23</sup>But the children of Abraham, with their victorious mother, are gathered together to the choir of the fathers, and have received pure and immortal souls from God; <sup>24</sup>unto Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.