

LIFE IS SHORT AND FULL OF PERILS

—from the book *The Salvation of Sinners*—

“Man, his days are as grass; like a flower in the field, this is how he will wither” (Ps. 102:13), states the divinely inspired prophet David. A wildflower that blossoms in a field is exposed to many dangers: the sun beats down on it, people step on it, animals graze on it, fire consumes it, water wilts it, the wind beats it, and ultimately it shrivels up, decomposes, and disappears. This is how man’s life is as well. No human tongue can adequately describe the dangers of this present life to which man is subjected. Pain, suffering, calamities, illnesses, floods, fires, and numerous other unexpected hardships all take a toll on him. Since our life is intertwined with so many dangers and unforeseen snares, it is necessary for us to live with virtuous conduct. At the speed with which we are racing toward death, we must make every effort at present to correct ourselves and our way of life, so that we do not find ourselves in the end shut out of the bridal chamber, lamenting in vain.

The days of our life sail by like a ship being forcefully propelled by high winds at sea. Irrefutably, our life resembles a ship, which was constructed not to remain still, but to sail quickly toward its final destination. Indeed! God did not create us to remain indifferent and negligent, but to work, to labor, and to struggle until we reach the harbor of our salvation. As a ship sails at high speed through the ocean, it leaves no trail behind—not even a trace of the course of its path. Similarly, as our life sails by extremely quickly, it leaves no remnant of who glided by. Everyone, whether they happened to be rich or poor, along with all their actions, fade away without a trail.

While traveling by boat, a seated passenger appears to be stationary as the vessel actually sails forward swiftly on the water. Similarly, it may seem that you are standing motionless, however you are in fact sailing rapidly, day and night, toward death. Life disappears as a puff of smoke, and like the clouds that are quickly dispersed by the wind. In a moment’s time, the person who once appeared more powerful and more attractive than others suddenly turns into dirt and dust. Count all the days of your life, and ask yourself: where did they go? They vanished like a shadow and disintegrated like a cobweb.