

Chapter 12

In youth is fitteft time, and moft meritorious to ferue God. In age the fame is more and more neceffarie, but harder to beginne, and leffe gratful. 8. In this booke the preacher hath shewed, that al worldlie thinges are vanitie, 13. and that true felicitie is only procured by wifdom, which confifteth in the feare of God; and obferuation of his commandments.

Remember thy Creator in the dayes ^{a)}of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, & the yeares approach, of which thou maift fay: They please me not, ² before the funne, and light, and moone, and ftarres be darke, and the cloudes returne after the raine: ³ when the keepers of the houle shal be moued, and the ftrongeft men shal ftagger, and the grinders shal be idle in a smal number: and they shal waxe darke that looke through the holes: ⁴ and they shal shut the doores in the ftreate, at the basenes of the grinders voice, and they shal rife vp at the voice of the birde, and al the daughters of fong shal be deafe. ⁵ The high thinges also shal feare, and they shal be afrayd in the way, the almondtree shal florish, the locuft shal be fatted, and the capertree shal be deftroyed: becaufe man shal goe into the houle of his eternitie, and the mourners shal goe round about in the ftreate. ⁶ Before the filuer coard be broken, and the golden headband recurre, and the water pot be broken vpon the fountaine, and the wheele be broken vpon the cefterne, ⁷ and the duft returne into his earth, from whence it was, and the fpirite returne to God, who gaue it. ⁸ Vanitie of vanities, sayd Ecclesiastes, and al thinges vanitie. ⁹ And wheras

The preacher.

^a An admonition to al in general to liue wel in this world, remembering the day of general iudgement before which fuch signes shal come as are described here, and by our Sauour. *Mat. 24.* And likewise euerie one is admonished in particular to ferue God diligently whiles he hath time, before death come, when al his fenfes & former helps shal faile.

Ecclesiastes was most wise, he taught the people, and declared the things that he had done: and searching forth made many parables. ¹⁰ He sought profitable words, and wrote words most right, and full of truth. ¹¹ The words of women are as prickles, and as nails deeply stricken in, which by the counsel of masters are given of one part. ¹² More than these my words require not. Of making many books there is no end: and often meditation is affliction of the flesh. ¹³ ^{a)} Let vs all hear together the end of speaking. Feare God, and observe his commandments: for this is every man: ¹⁴ and all things that are done, God will bring into iudgement for every error, whether it be good, or euil.

Hidden, or
obscure thing.

^a This is the brief summe of all profitable doctrine: Feare God, & kepe his commandments.