

## Chapter 16

*Sarai geueth her handmaid Agar as a wife to Abram: 4. who conceiuing despifeth her myftrefse, is therefore afflicted, & flyeth away. 7. But is warned by an Angel to returne and humble herselfe, 15. which she doth and beareth Ifmael.*

**S**arai therefore, the wife of Abram, had brought forth no children: but hauing an handmaid an Ægyptian named Agar, <sup>2</sup> she said to her husband: Behold, our Lord hath closed me, that I might not beare: Goe in vnto my handmaid, if happely of her at the least I may haue children. And when he agreed to her in this request, <sup>3</sup> she toke Agar the Ægyptian her handmaid tenne yeares after that they first dwelled in the land of Chanaan: and gaue her vnto her husband <sup>4</sup>to wife. <sup>4</sup> Who did companie with her, but she <sup>a</sup>)perceauing that she was with childe, despifed her mistrefse. <sup>5</sup> And Sarai said to Abram: Thou doest vniustly against me: I gaue my handmaid into thy bofome, who perceauing herself to be with child, despifeth me. Our Lord iudge betwen me and thee. <sup>6</sup> To whom Abram making answere: Behold, faith he, thy hãdmaid is in thine owne hand, vse her as it pleafeth thee. When Sarai therefore did afflict her, she ranne away. <sup>7</sup> And an Angel of our Lord hauing found her, beside a fountaine of water in the wilderneffe, which is in the way to Sur in the desert, <sup>8</sup> he said to her: Agar, the handmaid of Sarai, whence comest thou? and whither goest thou? who answered: From the face of Sarai my mistrefse doe I flye. <sup>9</sup> And the Angel of our Lord said to her: Returne to thy mistrefse, and humble thy felfe vnder her hand. <sup>10</sup> And again: Multipling, sayth he, wil I multiplie thy feed, and it shal not be numbred for the multitude therof. <sup>11</sup> And againe after that: Behold, faith he, thou art with child, and thou

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<sup>a</sup> Some obey whilest they are rude, or in low state, but hauig got a litle knowlege or aduancement difdaine their aduancers. *S. Gregorie. li. 21. in 1. Reg. 3.*

shalt bring forth a fonne: and thou shalt cal his name Ifmael, becaufe the Lord hath heard thin affliction. <sup>12</sup> He shal be a wild man: his hand shal be againft al men, and al mens hands againft him: and ouer againft al his bretheren shal he pitch his tents. <sup>13</sup> And she called the name of our Lord that fpake vnto her: Thou the God which haft fene me. For she faid: verily here haue I fene the backe partes of him that hath fene me. <sup>14</sup> Therefore she called that wel, the wel of him that liueth and feeth me. The fame is betwen Cadeffe, and Barad. <sup>15</sup> And Agar brought forth a fonne to Abram: who called his name Ifmael. <sup>16</sup> Eightie and fixe yeares old was Abram when Agar brought him forth Ifmael.

## ANNOTATIONS

S. Aug. li. 22.  
c. 47. cont. Fauft.

Luther profit.  
62. 65. & 66.

3 To vvife.) The Manichees did calumniat holie Abraham, and other Patriarches for hauing manie wiues, condemning them of incontinnencie and adulterie for the fame. Luther in the contrarie extreme held it not vnlawful, but indifferent, now in the law of grace, for a man to haue more wiues then one at once. And some English Proteftants hold, that for adulterie, the innocent partie may marie an other, the firft liuing. But the Catholique doctrin diftinguifhing times and caufes, fheweth how pluralitie of wiues was lawful fometime, and at other times, epecially fince Chrif, altogether vnlawful, and vndifpenfable. The fumme of which veritie is this. By the firft inftitution of Mariage in the ftate of innocencie, and law of nature, and by the law of Chrif, it is vnlawful for anie man to haue more wiues, and for anie woman to haue more hufbands, then one. In the one part of which Law notwithstanding God fometime difpenfed. For there be two kindes of preceptes pertaining to the law of nature. One forte are as firft principles of the law of nature, in which God neuer difpēfeth, much leffe anie man. As that one woman may not haue more hufbands then one, becaufe the fame would rather hinder procreation, and fo were directly againft the fruit of mariage. The other forte are as conclufions drowne from the firft principles, in which God fometime difpenfeth, but neuer anie man. As in this prefent example: feeing it is againft natural procreation that one woman should haue manie hufbands, it is conuenient alfo, there being ordinarily as manie men as wemen in the world, that euerie man likwife should be refrained to one wife, for fo procreation may rather be increafed, then if some men haue manie wiues, and others by that occafion haue none at al, except in fome fpécial cafe. As after the

Manichees, condemned pluralitie of wiues in the Patriarches. Luther alloweth it in Chriftians. Other Proteftants in fome cafe.

S. Aug. de bono  
coniugali. ca. 17.

Two fortes of precepts in the law of nature.

- floud, when there was scarcetie of people, God difpenfed with fuch men as in deede were like to make greater procreation by pluralitie of wiues. VVhich appeareth fufficiently by that Sarai perfwaded her owne hufband, to marie an other wife, and he a true feruant of God agreed therto, not as a new thing but as a lawful practife of thofe times. And Moyfes here and in other places ftill fpeaketh of it, as of a cuftome knowne to the people for lawful. *If a man (faith he) haue two wiues, one beloued and the other hated, and they haue children by him, and the fonne of the hated be firft borne, he can not preferre the fonne of the beloued.* Wherby is clere that two wiues were then lawful, and the children of both legitimate, and that the firft borne muft be preferred, without respect of firft or laft mariage. Yet this difpenfation either ceafed before Chrifts time, the caufe ceafing, when the world was replenifhed; or at leaft our Sauour tooke it away, reftoring Matrimonie to the firft inftitution of two in one flefh. Who pleafeth to fee the Doctors that vnderftand, and expound the Scriptures to this effect, may read *S. Auguftin li. 22. c. 30. & 47. con. Fauft. Manich. li. 16. c. 25. & 38. ciuit. & li. 1. de adulter. coniugijs. S. Chriftoftom ho. 56. in Gen. S. Amb. li. de Abraham. c. 4.* Alfo S. Chrifoft. S. Hierom. and S. Bede in 19. Mathei.
- Deut. 21. Pluralitie of wiues fometime allowed.
- Math. 19. By the law of Chrifft in no cafe lawful.
- Gen. 2.