

Chapter 30

A right wifeman thinketh humbly of himself, 4. knowing that Gods workes are inscrutable, and perfect: 8. defireth truth in al thinges, & mediocritie in riches. 11. Abhorreth certaine fortes of men, 15. & certaine execrable thinges. 18. Noteth certaine thinges hard to be knowen: 21. other thinges intolerable: 24. others admirable. 32. The tongue dangerous.

The fourth part.
Other fingular precepts, with prayfe of a prudent woman.

The wordes of the Gatherer the fonne of Vomiter. The vifion, that the man fpake, with whom God is, and who being ftrengthened by God abiding with him, fayd: ² I am ^{a)} moft foolish of men, & the wifedom of men is not with me. ³ I haue not learned wifedom, and haue not knowen the fcience of faints. ⁴ ^{b)} Who hath afcended into heauen and defcended? who hath conteyned the fpirit in his handes? who hath bound the waters together as in a garment? who hath rayfed vp al the borders of the earth? what is his name, and what is the name of his fonne, if thou know? ⁵ Euerie word of God tryed by fyre, is a buckler to them that hope in him. ⁶ Adde not any thing to his wordes, and fo thou be reprobued and found a lyer. ⁷ Two thinges I haue asked thee, denie them not to me before I dye. ⁸ Vanitie, and lying wordes make far from me. Beggerie, and riches geue me not: geue only things neceffarie for my fuftenance: ⁹ left perhaps being filled I be allured to denie, and may fay: Who is the Lord? or being compelled by pouertie I may fteale, and forfwear the name of my God. ¹⁰ ^{c)} Accufe not a feruant to his mafter, left perhaps he curfe thee, and thou fal.

^a The wifest man beft knoweth that he wanteth much of perfect wifdom yet in his humilitie fupposeth, that others haue attained fome what more then himself.

^b Chrift the Sonne of God is wifdom it felf, and as the Sonne of man hath perfect wifdom.

^c Bondflaues are to be pitied, and not affliction added to the afflicted.

¹¹ There is ^{a)}a generation that curfeth their father, and that bleffeth not their mother. ¹² A generation, that femeth to itfelf cleane, & yet is not washed from their filthines. ¹³ A generation, whose eies are loftie, and the eielids therof fet vp on high. ¹⁴ A generation, that for teeth hath fwordes, and chaweth with theyr grinding teeth, that they may eate the needie out of the earth, and the poore from among men.

¹⁵ The horfeleach hath ^{b)}two daughters that fay: Bring, bring. Three things are vnfatiable, the fourth neuer fayth it fufficeth. ¹⁶ ^{c)}Hel, and the mouth of the matrice, & the earth which is not fatisfied with water: but the fyre neuer fayth it fufficeth. ¹⁷ ^{d)}The eie, that fcorneth his father, & that despifeth the trauail of his mother, in bearing him, let the rauens of the torrents pick it out, and the young of the eagle eate it.

¹⁸ Three things are hard to me, and of the fourth I am vtterly ignorant. ¹⁹ The way of an eagle in the ayre, the way of a ferpent vpon a rocke, the way of a shippe in the middes of the fea, and ^{e)}the way of a man in youth. ²⁰ Such is alfo the way of an adulterous woman, which eateth, and wyping her mouth fayth: I haue done no euil.

²¹ By three thinges the earth is moued, and the fourth it can not fufteyne. ²² By a feruant when he shal reigne: by a foole when he shal be filled with meate: ²³ By an odious woman when she shal be taken in matrimonie: & by ^aa bondwoman when she shal be heyre to her miftrefse.

^a Foure execrable vices:

Ingratitude.

Hypocrisie.

Infolencie.

Oppreffion of the poore.

^b Cōcupifcence of the flefh, & of the eyes.

^c Enuie, Luxurie, Auarice, & Ambition.

^d Dishonour of parents shal be feuerely punished.

^e Youngmen folowing carnal appetite, can no more geue account of their actiōs, then of the vvayes vvwhich an eagle, a ferpent, and a shippe haue paffed.

²⁴ There are ^{a)}four the leaft thinges of the earth, and they are wifer then the wife. ²⁵ The antes, a weake people, which prepareth in the harueft meate for themfelues. ²⁶ The leueret, a people not ftrong, which placeth his bed in the rocke. ²⁷ The locuft hath no king, and they go out al by their troopes. ²⁸ The ftellion ftayeth on his handes, & tarieth in kings houfes. ²⁹ ^{b)}There are three thinges which go wel, and the fourth that goeth happely. ³⁰ The lyon, the ftrongeft of beaftes shal feare at the meeting of none: ³¹ the cocke gyrded about the loines, and the ramme: alfo the king, againft whom none can refift.

³² There is that ^{c)}hath appeared a foole after that he was lifted vp on high: for if he had vnderftood, he would haue layd his hand vpon his mouth. ³³ And he that ^{d)}ftrongly preffeth the pappes to wring out milke, frayneth out butter, and he that violently cleanfeth his nofe, wringeth out bloud: & he that prouoketh angers, bringeth forth difcordes.

ANNOTATIONS

1 The vvordes of the Gatherer.) Some Interpreters take thefe foure Hebrew wordes, *Agur*, *Iache*, *Ithiel*, and *Vcal*, contained in this firft verfe, to be proper names of men, fuppofing that a certaine wifeman named *Agur*, the fonne of *Iache*, fpake the sentences folowing in this chapter, to his fonnes or fcholars, called *Ithiel* & *Vcal*. And fo this fuppofed *Agur*, not Salomon, fhould be the auctor of this chapter. But the old Interpreter, whom S. Ierom approueth and foloweth, tranflated the fame wordes as noones appellatiues. Neither doth anie ancient Father account this

Some fuppofe one *Agur* to be auctor of this chapter.

But it femeth more probable that only Salomon is auctor of this whole booke.

^a By thefe examples are commended foure vertues:

Induftrie,
Prudence,
Concord,
Humilitie.

^b Other foure:

Fortitude,
Chafitie,
Order,
Iuftice.

^c Fooles ought not to gouerne.

^d Moderation is neceffarie in al actions.

Agur, amongst the writers of holie Scriptures. And if there were a peculiar auctor of this chapter, it is like the same should haue bene placed last, and not before that which now foloweth, and is by al men confessed to be Salomons. And therefore we thinke it more probable; with S. Beda, and the common opinion, that there was no other auctor of anie part of this booke, besides King Salomon. VVho is here called CONGREGANS, the Gatherer, because he gathered these excellent Parables, and Prouerbes; as the fountaine of the Holie Ghost, signified by the word IACHE, pouring forth diuine sentences, for instruction of ITHIEL & VCAL, that is, of all those with whom God is by his grace, and who are strengthened by God abiding with them.

VVhy he is called Gatherer.

23 A bondwoman when she shall be heyre.) Of all things in this world, it seemeth most absurd, that here she doth dominie ouer Catholique religion: which God some times, and in some places suffereth, for the greater merite of his elect.

VVhy God suffereth here she to reigne.