

Chapter 31

An exhortation to chaſtitie, temperance, 8. and to workes of mercie, 10. with praife of a valiant wife woman.

The wordes of Lamuel the king. The viſion wherwith his mother inſtructed him. ² What ô my beloued, what ô the beloued of my wombe, what ô beloued of my vowes? ³ Geue not thy ſubſtance to wemen, & thy riches to deſtroy kinges. ⁴ Geue not to kinges, ô Lamuel, geue not wine to kinges: becauſe there is no ſecrete where drunknes reigneth, ⁵ & left perhaps they drinke, & forget iudgements, & change the cauſe of the children of the poore. ⁶ Geue ſtrong drinke to them that be ſad, and wine vnto them, that are of a penſiue minde: ⁷ let them drinke, and forget their pouertie, and not remember their forow any more. ⁸ Open thy mouth to ^athe dumme, & to the cauſes of al the children that paſſe: ⁹ open thy mouth, ^bdecree that which is iuſt, & iudge the needie & poore. ¹⁰ ♣A valiant woman ^cwho ſhal finde? far, and from the vtmoſt borders is the price of her. ¹¹ The hart of her husband truſteth in her, and he ſhal not neede ſpoyles. ¹² She ſhal render good, and not euil, al the dayes of her life. ¹³ She hath fought wool and flaxe, and hath wrought by the counſel of her handes. ¹⁴ She is become as a marchants ſhippe, bringing her bread from farre. ¹⁵ And ſhe hath riſen in the night, and geuen pray to her houſhold, and meates to her handmaidens. ¹⁶ She hath vewed a filde, and bought it, of the fruite of her handes ſhe hath planted a vineyard. ¹⁷ She hath gyrded her loines with ſtrength, and hath ſtrengthened her arme. ¹⁸ She hath taſted, and ſene that her traficke is good: her lampe ſhal not be extinguished in the night. ¹⁹ She hath put her hand to ſtrong

VVordes pertaining to Salomon, ſpoken to him by his mother: who here calleth him Lamuel, ſignifying, *God vvith him.*

^a Doctrine is moſt profitable to thoſe, that are modeſtly dumme, more vvilling to heare then to ſpeake.

^b The chief & moſt proper office of a king is to do iuſtice.

^c A vvoman of ſuch perfectiõ as is here deſcribed, is in dede rare, yet poſſible to be found.

things, and her fingers haue taken hold of ^{a)}the fpindle.
²⁰ She hath opened her hand to the needie, and ftretched
out her palmes to the poore. ²¹ She shal not feare for
her houfe in the coldes of fnow: for al her houshold
are clothed with duple. ²² Tapeftrie clothing she hath
made to herfelf: filke, and purple is her garment. ²³ Her
husband is noble in the gates, when he shal fitte with
the fenatours of the land. ²⁴ She ^{b)}made findon, and fold
it, and deliuered a girdle to the Chananeite. ²⁵ Strength
and beautie is her garment, and she shal laugh in the
later day. ²⁶ She hath opened her mouth to wifedom,
and the law of clemencie is in her tongue. ²⁷ She hath
confidered the pathes of her houfe, and hath not eaten
her bread idle. ²⁸ Her children arofe, and commended
her to be moft bleffed: her husband, and he prayfed her.
²⁹ Manie daughters haue gathered together riches: thou
haft paffed them al. ³⁰ ^{c)}Grace is deceitful, and beau-
tie is vayne: the woman that feareth our Lord shal be
prayfed. ³¹ Geue ye to her ^{d)}of the fruite of her handes:
and let her workes praife her ^{e)}in the gates.

ANNOTATIONS

10 A valiant vvoman vvho shal finde?) Vpon occasion
of his mothers moft prudent admonition, the wifeman fingularly
praifeth a perfect vertuous woman. And that in an exquisite kind
of ftile: in Tetramical Iambike verfe, with perfect order and num-
ber of the Alphabet letters. Signifying, as S. Ierom teacheth,
that as none can reade, or fpeale wordes, vnles they firft lerne
to know the letters: fo we can not attaine to know the greater
Myfteries in holie Scriptures, except we beginne with moral good
life, according to that the Prophet fayth: By thy commandments

The praife of a
right vvife woman
vvritten in verfe,
& in order of the
Alphabet.

Proem. lament.

Pfal. 118. v. 104.

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- ^a Flaxe on the diftafe fignifieth purpofe to do good workes, yarne
on the fpindle the vvorke vvell begune, which geueth confidence in
God that the fame fhall be perfect and haue due revvard.
- ^b They make and fel cloth, which lerning and obferuing Gods lavv,
do teach it others.
- ^c External comelines is not durable: but the feare of God is more
vvorthie of praife.
- ^d Good vvorkes fhall be revwarded,
- ^e at the tribunal feate of iudgement.

Chapter 31

I haue vnderftood. And therefore wife Salomon, by inftinct of the Holie Ghoft, as wel by the maner of ftile, as by the doctrine contained, concludeth his Booke of Parables, with praife both of the Church in general, which hath al the vertues, and good properties here mentioned; and of euerie faithful foule, fincerely feruing God, which either in dede, or in defire of mind, hath fuch part of them, as may fuffice to the attaining of eternal life. For concerning the whole Church, S. Auguftin in two Sermons (*217. and 218. de temp.*) S. Beda *vpon this place*, and other Fathers fhew it euidently. Touching alfo particular foules, not only of holie men, but alfo of vvemen, the frailer fexe, holie Scriptures, and Ecclefiastical monuments yelde manie examples, befides the moft Excellent and immaculate virgin Mother of God; as of Sara, Rebecca, Lia, Rachael, Elizabeth, Marie Magdalen, Martha, and innumerable others, moft precious pearles, deare fpoufes of Chrifft, and fingular ornaments of his Church.

The Church hath al good properties requifite.

A faithful foule hath them at leaft in defire.

Rare and excellent wemen both in the old and nevv teftament.