

THE ARGUMENT OF THE BOOKE OF WISDOM.

As wel of the auctor, as of the auctoritie of this booke, there haue bene diuers opinions among the lerned. But in proceffe of time, the first is probably discuffed, the other is clerly decided by the Church. For concerning the former doubt, *Manie ancient Fathers alleage sentences of this Booke, as the sayinges of Salomon.* Namely S. Ireneus (*apud Eusebium, lib. 5. c. 8. Hist.*) S. Clement of Alexandria, *li. 5. & 6. Stromat.* Origen, *ho. 12. in Leuit. & li. 8. in Epist. ad Rom.* S. Athanasius, *in Synopfi. & Orat. 2. cont. Arrian.* S. Bafil, *li. 5. cont. Eunomianos* S. Epiphanius, *heresi. 67.* S. Gregorie Nazianzen, *lib. de Fide.* S. Gregorie Niffen, *in Testimonijs ex vet. Testam. cap. de Natiuitate ex Virgine.* S. Chrifoft. *hom. 33. & 34. in Mat.* S. Cyril of Alexandria, *li. 10. c. 4.* Also S. Cyprian *li. de exhortat. Martyrum. c. 12. & li. 3. c. 59. ad Quirin. & li. de Mortalitate.* S. Hilarie *in Pfal. 117.* S. Ambrose, *li. de Salomone. c. 1.* and diuers others suppose Salomon to be auctor of this booke. To whom likewise some of them ascribe the booke of Ecclesiasticus. But S. Ierom *Præfatione in libros Salomonis* testifieth that some ancient writers affirme this booke to be written by Philo a Jew, and the other by Iesus the sonne of Sirach. And S. Auguftin very plainly (*li. 17. c. 20. de ciuit.*) saith, *custom preuailed, that the bookes of Wisdom, & Ecclesiasticus, for some similitude of speech are called Salomons: but the more lerned assuredly iudge that they are not his.* What then shal we say, feing so manie other ancient lerned Doctors cite them as his. The answer is easie. And sufficiently insinuated by S. Auguftin, that these two bookes being like vnto the other three, which are Salomons, were also called his. VVherto we may adde a like example in the two first bookes of Kings, which are called the bookes of Samuel, though he writte not al the first, nor anie part of the second. Moreouer al these *fiue* are called by one general title *Sapiential*

Both the auctor & auctoritie of this booke were fometimes doubtful.

The same doubt is of Ecclesiasticus.

It is most probable, that Philo a Jew writte this booke collecting manie sentences of Salomons.

*Argum.
lib. Reg.*

bookes. In so much that the Church readeth in the Sacred Office before al Epistles, taken out of anie of these five bookes, not *Lectio Prouerbiorum*, or *Ecclesiastæ*, &c. but ftill *Lectio libri Sapientiæ*. The solution therefore is very probable, that this booke of wisdom was written by Philo Iudeus, not he that liued after Chrif, but an other of the fame name, nere two hundred yeares before. And Ecclesiasticus by Iefus the fonne of Sirach. Who not only imitated Salomon, but alfo compiled their bookes, for most part of Salomons sentences; conferued til their times by tradition, or in feperated scrolles of papers; yea they fo vtter some sentences in his person, as if himself had written them. As touching *the auctoritie of these two bookes*, and some others, it is euident that *the Iewes refuse* them. And therefore manie ancient Fathers writing againft them, fpared sometimes to vrge such bookes, as they knew would be reiected. Efpecially hauing abundant testimonia of other holie Scriptures, for deciding matters of faith againft them. Euen as our Sauour himself proued the Refurrection of the dead againft the Sadduces, out of the bookes of Moyfes, which they confessed for Canonical Scripture, denying other partes, where the fame point might otherwise haue bene more euidently shewed. And fo S. Ierom in respect of the Iewes faide these bookes were not Canonical. Neuertheles he did often alleage testimonia of them, as of other diuine Scriptures: sometimes with this parenthesis [*fi cui tanem placet librum recipere*] in *cap. 8. & 12. Zachariæ* other times, especially in his laft writings, abfolutely without such restrictions, as in *cap. 1. & 56, Ifaiæ* & in *18. Ieremiæ*. Where he professeth to alleage none but Canonical Scripture.

As for al the other ancient fathers here aboue mentioned, ascribing this booke to Salomon, and manie others cited by Doctor Iodocus Coccius (*To. 1. Thefauri. li. 6. art. 9.*) they make no doubt at al, but that it is Canonical Scripture, as appeareth by their expresse termes, *Diuine Scripture, Diuine word, Sacred letters, Prophetical faying, the Holie Ghoft faith*, & the like. Finally as wel ancient General counfels, namely that of

Five Sapiential
bookes of the
old testament.

The Iewes denie
these bookes to
be Canonical.

They are
iudged by very
manie ancient
fathers, and
afterwards de-
fined by the
Church to
be Canonical
Scriptures.

Chap. 7. 8. 9.

Mat. 22.

Exo. 3.

Charthage, an. D. 419. with others, as the later of Florence, and Trent haue declared this booke to be Canonical. And that conformably to the moft ancient, and lerned Fathers, as S. Auguftin, not only iudgeth himfelf, but alfo plainly teftifieth (*li. de Prædeftinat. Sanct. c. 14.*) faying: *The fentence of the booke of wifdom ought not to be reiected* (by certaine inclining to Pelagianifme) *which hath bene fo long publicuely read in the Church of Chrif, and receiued of al Chriftians, Byshops, and others, euen to the laft of the Laitie, Penitents, and Catecumes (cum veneratione diuina auctoritatis) with veneration of diuine auctoritie. Which alfo the excellent writers, next to the Apoftles times, alleaging for witnes (nihil fe adhibere, nife diuinum teftimonium crediderunt) thought they alleaged nothing but diuine teftimonie.*

Et li. 17.
c. 20. Ciu.

The fumme and contents of this booke is an Infruction, and Exhortation to Kinges and al Magiftrates, to minifter iuftice in the commonwealth, teaching al fortes of vertues vnder the general names of Iuftice & Wifdom, with frequent Prophecies of Chrifts Coming, Paffion, Refurrection, & other Chriftian Myfteries. Al may be commodioufly diuided into three partes. In the fix firft chapters, the auctor admonifheth al Superiors to loue and exercife iuftice and wifdom. In the next three, he teacheth that Wifdom procedeth only from God, & is procured by prayer & good life. In the other tenne chapters, he sheweth the excellent effects, and vtilitie of Wifdom and Iuftice.

The contents.

Diuided into
three parts.