

# ECCLESIASTES, IN HEBREWE *Coheleth*.

## THE ARGUMENT OF ECCLESIASTES.

King *Salomon* a diuine *Preacher*, wherof this Booke is called *Ecclesiastes*, exhorteth al such as haue lerned the principles of good life, to contemne this world: becaufe al thinges therin are vaine, and insufficient to geue repofe to mans foule: shewing that true *felicitie*, which al men defire, *confifteth not* in natural knowlege, gotten by witte and induftrie; nor in worldlie pleafures, much leffe in carnal; nor in riches; nor in auctoritie or dominion; nor *in anie other temporal thing*; as diuers diuerfly thinke: *but only in the true feruice of God*, by flying from finne, and doing good workes, as in the meritorious caufe, *and effentially in the clere vifion of God*: the proper end, for which man was created.

This booke called Ecclesiastes, teacheth to contemne this vworld. Becaufe felicitie confifteth not in anie temporal thing: but in the eternal fight of God.

And fo this Booke conteyneth three principal parts. Firft this diuine preacher confuteth al their opinions, that imagine a falfe felicitie in humane, worldlie, or temporal thinges: to the beginning of the 7. chapter. In the reft of that chapter, and three folowing, he teacheth that true felicitie confifteth in the eternal fruition of God: and is procured by declining from vices, and embracing vertues. In the two laft chapters, he exhorteth al to beginne fpedily to ferue God, and to perfeuere therin to the end of this life.

Diuided into three parts.

## Chapter 01

*Al temporal thinges (in comparifon of true felicitie) are vaine, 4. becaufe they are mutable, 8. neither can anie man attaine perfect knowlege, to his fatisfaction: 12. as appeareth by Salomons owne experience.*

The firft part of this Sermon fheweth, that Felicitie confifteth not in anie temporal thing.

**T**he wordes of Ecclesiastes, the fonne of Dauid, king of Ierufalem. <sup>2</sup> Vanitie of vanities, fayd

Ecclesiastes: vanitie of vanities, & al thinges vanitie. <sup>3</sup> What hath a man more of al his labour, wherby he laboreth vnder the funne? <sup>4</sup> Generation paffeth, and generation cometh: but <sup>a</sup>)the earth ftandeth for euer. <sup>5</sup> The funne rifeth, and goeth downe, and returneth to his place: and there rifing againe, <sup>6</sup> compaffeth by the South, and bendeth to the North: compaffing al thinges, goeth forward in circuite, & returneth vnto his circles. <sup>7</sup> Al riuers enter into the fea, and the fea ouerfloweth not: to the place, whence the riuers iffue forth, they do returne, that they may flow againe. <sup>8</sup> Al thinges are hard: man can not explicate them in word. The eye is not filled with feing, neither is the eare filled with hearing. <sup>9</sup> What is that hath bene? the fame thing that shal be. What is that hath bene done? the fame that is to be done. <sup>10</sup> <sup>b</sup>)Nothing vnder the funne is new, neither is anie man able to fay: Behold this is new: for it hath already gone before in the ages, that were before vs. <sup>11</sup> There is no memorie of former thinges: but neither of thofe thinges verily, which hereafter are to come, shal there be remembrance with them, that shal be in the later end. <sup>12</sup> I Ecclesiastes haue bene king of Ifrael in Ierufalem, <sup>13</sup> and haue propofed in my mind, to feke and fearch wifely of al thinges, that are done vnder the funne. This very euil occupation hath God geuen to the children of men, that they might be occupied in it. <sup>14</sup> I haue fene al thinges, that are done vnder the funne, and behold <sup>c</sup>)al are vanitie, & affliction of fpirit. <sup>15</sup> The puerfe are hardly corrected, and the number of fooles is infinite. <sup>16</sup> I haue fpoken in my hart, faying: Loe I haue bene made great, and haue gone beyond al in wifdom, that were before me in Ierufalem: and my minde hath contemplated manie thinges wifely, and I haue lerned.

---

<sup>a</sup> In the end of this world the earth fhall be purified, & fo remaine for euer.

<sup>b</sup> Mens foules dayly created are of the fame kind as Adams foule: other creatures either were in their kindes from the beginning of the vworld, or are procreated of diuers kindes preexifting. *S. Tho. q. 73. a. 1. ad. 3.*

<sup>c</sup> Al natural thinges are infufficient meanes to attaine felicitie.

<sup>17</sup> And I haue geuen my hart to know prudence, and doctrine, and errors and follie: and I haue perceiued that in theſe alſo there was labour, and affliction of ſpirite,  
<sup>18</sup> for that <sup>a</sup>in much <sup>a</sup>wiſdom there is much indignation: and he that addeth knowlege, addeth alſo labour.

## ANNOTATIONS

18 In much wifdom is much indignation.) How much more anie man profiteth in wiſdom, ſo much more he is angrie with himſelf, for the euils which he hath done: ſo much better he knowveth the ſtrict iudgement of God, which he muſt paſſe: ſo much more he vnderſtandeth the vwant of perfect wifdom: ſo much more he ſeeth that labour is required to procede in vertue: and to conferue that ſmal portion vvhich he hath gotten. Neither is anie man ordinarily affured that he hath gotte anie part of true wifdom, for he knowveth not, vvhether he be vvorthie of loue or hate. *Eccle. 9.*

Wifdom maketh men to be angrie with finne, to feare God, and to proceede in vertue.

## Chapter 02

*Humane delightes are al vaine: 4. as gorgious buildinges, fruitful vinyards, plentie of fiſh, cattle, ſeruant, filuer, gold, muſike: 11. not ſatiſfying mans deſire. 18. Neither can anie man know, how his heyre wil behaue himſelf.*

**I** ſayde <sup>b</sup>therfore in my hart: I wil goe, & flow in delightes, and enioy good thinges. <sup>c</sup>And I ſaw that this alſo was vanitie. <sup>2</sup>Laughter I haue reputed error: and to ioy I haue faide: Why art thou deceiued in vaine? <sup>3</sup>I haue thought in my hart, to withdraw my fleſh from wine, that I might transferre my

<sup>a</sup> Wifdom is the beſt thing in this vvorld, yet is not perfect felicitie, but the meanes to attaine it.

<sup>b</sup> A vvorldlie man may obiect, that ſeing wifdom bringeth not felicitie in his life, it ſemeth beſt to take his pleaſure & eaſe, & not to labour for it.

<sup>c</sup> But the wiſeman cōfuteth this concept. Becauſe vvorldlie ioy is ſhort & vncertaine, neither is anie ioy that men haue in this life true ioy of the bleſſed, but only a conſolation in miſeries.

minde to wifdom, and might auoid follie, til I might fee what should be profitable for the children of men: what is nedeful to be done vnder the funne, in the number of the dayes of their life. <sup>4</sup> I haue magnified my workes, I haue built me houfes, & planted vineyards, <sup>5</sup> I haue made gardens, and orchards, and fet them with trees of al kindes, <sup>6</sup> and I haue made me ponds of waters, to watter the wood of fpringing trees, <sup>7</sup> I haue poffeffed menferuants and wemenferuants, and haue had a great familie: heardes alfo, and great flockes of shepe, aboue al that were before me in Ierufalem: <sup>8</sup> I haue heaped together to myfelf filuer, and gold, and the fubftance of kinges, and prouinces: I made me fingingmen, & finging-wemen, and the delightes of the children of men: cuppes, and goblets to ferue to powre out wines: <sup>9</sup> and I furpaffed in riches al, that were before me in Ierufalem: wifdom alfo hath perfeuered with me. <sup>10</sup> And al thinges, that myne eies defired, I haue not denied to them: neither haue I ftayed my hart, but that it enioyed al pleafure, & delighted itfelf in thefe thinges, which I had prepared: and this I eftemed my portion, if I did vfe my labour. <sup>11</sup> And when I had turned myfelf to al the workes, which my handes had done, & to the laboures, wherein I had fwette in vaine, I faw in al thinges vanitie, and affliction of minde, & nothing to be permanent vnder the funne. <sup>12</sup> I paffed further to contemplate wifdom, and errors, and follie (what is man, quoth I, that he can folow the king his Maker?) <sup>13</sup> and I faw that wifdom fo much excelled follie, as light differeth from darknes. <sup>14</sup> The <sup>a</sup>eyes of a wifeman are in his head: the foole walketh in darknes: and I haue lerned that there was one death of both. <sup>15</sup> And I fayd in my hart: If the fal of the foole & myne fhall be one, <sup>b</sup>what doth it profite me, that I haue beftowed greater labour for wifdom? And fpeaking with my minde, I perceiued that this alfo was vanitie. <sup>16</sup> For there fhall be no memorie of the wife in like maner as of the foole for euer, and the times to come fhall couer

<sup>a</sup> Confideration is the directorie of al good workes.

<sup>b</sup> The conceit of worldlie men not confidering the life to come.

al thinges together with obliuion: the lerned dieth in like maner as the vnlearned. <sup>17</sup> And therfore I haue bene wearie of my life, feing al thinges vnder the funne to be euil, and al thinges vanitie and affliction of fpirite. <sup>18</sup> Againe I detefted al myne industrie, wherwith I haue laboured vnder the funne moft ftudioufly, being like to haue an heyre after me: <sup>19</sup> whom I know not, whether he wil be a wifeman or a foole, and he shal rule in my labours, wherewith I haue fwette and haue bene careful: and is there anie thing fo vaine? <sup>20</sup> Wherfore I ceafed, and my hart hath renounced to labour anie more vnder the funne. <sup>21</sup> For whereas one laboreth in wifdom, and doctrine, and carefulnes, he leaueth the thinges gotten to an idle man: and this therfore is vanitie, and great euil. <sup>22</sup> For what profite shal be to a man of al his labour, and affliction of fpirite, wherwith he is vexed vnder the funne? <sup>23</sup> Al his daies are ful of forowes and miferies, neither by night doth he reft in minde, and is not this vanitie? <sup>24</sup> Is it not better to eate and drinke, and shew vnto his foule good thinges of his laboures? <sup>a</sup>& this is of the hand of God. <sup>25</sup> Who shal fo deuour, and flow with delightes as I? <sup>26</sup> To a man good in his fight, God hath geuen wifdom, and knowlege, and ioy: but to the finner he hath geuen affliction, and superfluous care, to adde, and to gather together, and deliuer it to him that hath pleafed God: but this alfo is vanitie, & vaine carefulnes of the minde.

## ANNOTATIONS

### Chapter 03

*Contrarie thinges fuccede in their feafons, and paffe away, 9. wherof man getteth no perfect knowlege, how long foeuer he liueth, and laboreth to know them: 16. neither wil there be equitie where it ought to be in this world:*

---

<sup>a</sup> It is better to vse that is honeftly gotten for our neceffitie, then to be ftill folicitous to get more.

21. *but in the next, good and euil shal be sepearated, and iudged according to their defertes.*

**A**l thinges haue a time, and in their fpaces al thinges paffe vnder <sup>a)</sup>heauen. <sup>2</sup> A time to be borne, & a time to dye. A time to plant, & a time to pluck vp that which was planted. <sup>3</sup> A time to kil, and a time to heale. A time to defstroy, and a time to builde.

<sup>4</sup> A time to wepe, & a time to laugh. A time to mourne, and a time to dance.

<sup>5</sup> A time to difperfe ftones, and a time to gather.

A time to embrace, and a time to be farre from embracings.

<sup>6</sup> A time to gette, and a time to lofe.

A time to kepe, and a time to caft away.

<sup>7</sup> A time to rent, and a time to fow together.

A time to kepe filence, & a time to fpeake.

<sup>8</sup> A time of loue, and a time of hatred. A time of warre, and a time of peace. <sup>9</sup> <sup>b)</sup>What hath man more of his labour? <sup>10</sup> I haue fene the affliction, which God hath geuen to the children of men, that they may be diftracted in it. <sup>11</sup> He hath made al thinges good in their time, and hath deliuered the world to their difputation, and that man can not finde the worke, which God hath wrought from the beginning vnto the end. <sup>12</sup> And I haue knowne that there was no better thing then to reioyce, and to do wel in his life. <sup>13</sup> For euerie man, that eateth and drinketh, and feeth good of his labour, this is the gift of God. <sup>14</sup> I haue lerned that al the workes, which God hath made, perfeuere for euer: we can not adde anie thing, nor take away from thofe thinges, which God

---

<sup>a</sup> Generation, Corruption, & Alteration pertaine only to thinges of this world vnder heauen, often here defcribed by the terme, Vnder the funne. For fpiritual fubftances are not comprehended in time, nor place. *S. Ierom in hunc locum. to. 7.*

<sup>b</sup> Al this fheweth that nothing of this world is perpetual, but to be vfed interchangeably, in due time, place, maner, and order. For diforder maketh confufion.

hath made that he may be feared. <sup>15</sup> That which hath bene made, the fame is permanent: the thinges that shal be, haue already bene: and God reftoreth that which is pafte. <sup>16</sup> I faw vnder the funne in the place of iudgement impietie, and in the place of iuftice iniquitie. <sup>17</sup> And I fayde in my hart: The iuft and the impious God wil iudge, and then shal be the time of euerie thing. <sup>18</sup> I fayd in my hart of the children of men, that God would proue them, and shew them to be like beaftes. <sup>19</sup> Therfore there is one death of man, and beaftes, and the condition of both equal: as man dieth, fo they alfo dye: al thinges breath alike, and man hath nothing more then beaft: al thinges are fubiect to vanitie, <sup>20</sup> and al thinges paffe to one place: of earth they were made, and into earth they returne together. <sup>21</sup> Who knoweth if the fpirit of the children of Adam afcend vpward, and if the fpirite of beaftes defcend downward? <sup>22</sup> And I haue found that nothing is better then for a man to reioyce in his worke, and that this is his portion. For who shal bring him, to know the thinges that shal be after him?

## ANNOTATIONS

### Chapter 04

*In this world manie innocents are oppreffed, 4. the potent enuied, fometimes contemned, 15. and forfaken by their fubiectes, 17. efpecially when the fuperiors obey not God.*

**I** turned myfelf to other thinges, and I faw the oppreffions, that are done vnder the funne, and the <sup>a)</sup>teares of the innocents, and no comforter: & that they can not refift their violence, being deftitute of al mens helpe. <sup>2</sup> And I praifed rather the dead, then

---

<sup>a</sup> God fuffereth the innocent to be afflicted for a time, of his fpecial prouidence: becaufe they therby merite a great reward. *Pfal.* 71.

the liuing: <sup>3</sup> and happier then both haue I iudged him, that is not <sup>a</sup>)yet borne, nor hath fene the euils that are done vnder the funne. <sup>4</sup> Againe I haue contemplated al the labours of men, and their induftries I haue perceiued to lie open to the enuie of their neighbour: and in this therfore there is vanitie, and superfluous care. <sup>5</sup> A foole foldeth his handes together, and eateth his owne flesh, faying: <sup>6</sup> Better is an handful with reft, then both handes ful with labour, and affliction of mind. <sup>7</sup> Confidering I found alfo an other vanitie vnder the funne: <sup>8</sup> There is one, and he hath not a fecond, not a fonne, nor a brother, and yet he ceafeth not to labour, neither are his eyes fatisfied with riches, neither doth he recount, faying: For whom do I labour, and defraud my foule of good thinges? in this alfo is vanitie, and very il affliction. <sup>9</sup> <sup>a</sup>)It is better therfore that two be together, then one: for they haue profite of their focietie: <sup>10</sup> if one fal, he shal be ftayed vp of the other. Woe to him that is alone: becaufe when he falleth, he hath none to lift him vp. <sup>11</sup> And if two fleepe together, they shal warme eche other: one how shal he be warmed? <sup>12</sup> And if a man preuaile againft one, two refift him: a <sup>b</sup>)triple coard is hardly broken. <sup>13</sup> Better is a child that is poore and wife, then a king old and foolish, that knoweth not to forefee for hereafter. <sup>14</sup> Becaufe out of the prifon, and cheynes fometime there cometh one forth to a kingdom: and an other borne in his kingdom, is confumed with pouertie. <sup>15</sup> I faw al men aliue, that walke vnder the funne, with the fecond yongman, which shal rife vp for him. <sup>16</sup> The number of the people, of al that haue bene before him is infinite: and they that shal be afterward, shal not reioyce in him. But this alfo is vanitie, and affliction of

---

<sup>a</sup> It is in dede better not to be at al then to be in eternal miferie, (*Mat. 26. v. 24.*) but temporal affliction which the iuft suffer is not miferie, as worldlie men efteme it, but a fpecial meane to attaine eternal felicitie.

<sup>b</sup> True charitie not contaminate with enuie, by how much it is increafed in number, fo much it increafeth in ftrengh. *S. Ierom.*



spirite. <sup>17</sup> Take heede to kepe thy foote, when thou entrest into the house of God, and approach thou to heare.

1. *Reg.* 15. <sup>18</sup> For much better is obedience, then the victimes of  
*Osee.* 6. fooles, who know not what euil they doe.

## ANNOTATIONS

9 It is better that two be together.) Besides the commendation of charitie, and freindship amongst men: which is one proper fence of this place: S. Ierom expoundeth it also of the necessitie of Christs dwelling in mans soule, & of his continual afflicting grace: that man alone lie not open to the deceytes of the aduerfarie. The benefite of felshippe (fayth he) is streightwayes shewed in the profite of societie. For if the one fall (as the iust falleth often) Christ raiseth vp his partner: for vvoe to him, vvho falling hath not Christ in him, to raise him vp. If one also slepe, that is, be dissolved by death, and haue Christ vvith him, being vvarmed, and quickned, he fooner reuiueth. And if the diuel be stronger in impugning against a man, the man shal stand, and Christ vvil stand (*pro homine suo, pro sodali suo*) for his man, for his companion. Not that Christs povvre alone is vveake against the diuel, but that freewil is left to man, and we doing our endeavour he becometh stronger in feighting. And if the Father, the Sonne, and the Holie Ghost come vvithal, this fodalitie is not foone broken. Yet that vvich is not foone broken, may sometimes be broken. For this triple coard, vvas in Iudas the Apostle, but because after the morfel the diuel entered into him, this coard was broken. Thus S. Ierom teacheth, that neither can man without Christ resist tentations, nor rise from anie sinne in this life, or in the next; neither vvil Christ vvithout mans consent and endeavour, stay him from falling, nor raise him vp being fallen.

Man without Christs helpe can neither resist tentations, nor rise from sinne.

And without mans free consent Christ wil not stay him, nor raise him vp.

*Prou.* 24. v. 16.

*Ioan.* 13. v. 27.

In purgatorie.

## Chapter 05

*An exhortation to speake discretely, and reuerently of God; 3. to performe vovwes; 6. not to be troubled with imaginations, nor present oppressions of the poore. 9. Avarice is neuer satiate, 11. riches sometimes causeth sicknes, ruine of the bodie, 18. and obliuion of God.*

**S**peake <sup>a)</sup>not anie thing rashly, neither let thy hart be fwift to vtter a word before God. For God is in heauen, and thou vpon the earth: therefore let thy wordes be few. <sup>2</sup> Dreames do folow manie cares, and in manie wordes follie wil be found. <sup>3</sup> <sup>b)</sup>If thou haft vowed anie thing to God, differre not to pay it: for an vnfaithful and foolish promife displeafeth him. But what foeuer thou haft vowed, pay it: <sup>4</sup> and it is much better not to vow, then after a vow not to performe the thinges promifed. <sup>5</sup> Geue not thy mouth to make thy flesh to finne: neither fay thou before <sup>c)</sup>the Angel: There is no prouidence: left perhaps God being wrath againft thy wordes, diffipate al the workes of thy handes. <sup>6</sup> Where manie dreames are, there are manie vanities, and wordes innumerable: but do thou feare God. <sup>7</sup> If thou shalt fee the oppreffions of the poore, and violent iudgements, and iuftice to be fubuerted in the prouince, meruel not at this matter: becaufe there is an other higher then the high, and ouer thefe alfo there are others more eminent: <sup>8</sup> and besides the king of al the earth reigneth ouer his feruant. <sup>9</sup> A couetous man shal not be filled with money: and he that loueth riches, shal take no fruite of them: and this therfore is vanitie. <sup>10</sup> Where great riches are, there are alfo manie that eate them. And what doth it profite the owner, but that he feeth the riches with his eyes? <sup>11</sup> Sleepe is fwete to him that worketh, whether he eate much or litle: but the fatietie of the rich doth not fuffer him to fleepe. <sup>12</sup> There is alfo an other very il infirmitie, which I haue fene vnder the funne: riches kept to the hurt of the owner. <sup>13</sup> For they perish in very euil affliction: he

*Deut. 23.*

*Iob. 20.*

---

<sup>a</sup> Becaufe no man is able to attaine perfect knowlege of God, it behoueth al to fpeake and thinge foberly of him.

<sup>b</sup> Vow or promife once made muft be fulfilled.

<sup>c</sup> The proper Angel which affociateth euerie man.

<sup>a</sup>)hath begotten a fonne, which shal be in great pouertie.  
<sup>14</sup> As he came forth naked from his mothers wombe, fo  
 shal he returne, and shal take nothing away with him  
 of his labour. <sup>15</sup> An infirmitie vtterly miserable: as he  
 came, fo shal he returne. What doth it then profite him,  
 that he hath labored into the winde? <sup>16</sup> Al the dayes  
 of his life he eateth in darknes, and in miserie, and in  
 heauines. <sup>17</sup> This therfore hath femed good to me, that  
 a man eate, and drinke, and take ioy of his labour, wher-  
 with he hath labored vnder the funne, the number of the  
 dayes of his life, which God hath geuen him, and this  
 is his portion. <sup>18</sup> And to euerie man, vnto whom God  
 hath geuen riches, and subftance, and hath geuen him  
 powre to eate of them, and to enioy his portion, and to  
 reioyce of his labour: this is the gift of God. <sup>19</sup> For he  
 shal not greatly remember the dayes of his life, becaufe  
 God doth occupie his hart with delightes.

## ANNOTATIONS

### Chapter 06

*Riches make not men happie, becaufe manie dye shortly:  
 3. and manie rich men wil not vse their riches. 8. Likewife  
 studie to know al fecrete thinges is vanitie, not felicitie.*

**T**here is alfo an other euil, which I haue fene  
 vnder the funne, and that frequent with men:  
<sup>2</sup> A man to whom God hath geuen riches, and  
 subftance, and honour, and nothing is lacking to his foule  
 of al thinges, which he defireth: neither doth God geue  
 him powre to eate therof: but a ftrange man shal eate

---

<sup>a</sup> As temporal riches are often the occafion of their owners ruine: fo  
 vaine philofophie, and herefie auaille not heretikes, nor their folow-  
 ers, but as they came naked from their mothers wombe, the pe-  
 ruerfe Church, fo shal both fuch mafters, and fcolars depart with-  
 out comforth into the wrath which they prepare to themfelues.  
*S. Ierom. in hunc locum.*

it vp. This is <sup>a</sup>)vanitie and great miferie. <sup>3</sup> If a man  
 shal begette an hundred children, and shal liue manie  
 yeares, and haue manie dayes of age, and his foule vfe  
 not the goods of his subftance, and he lacke burial: of  
 this man I pronounce, that the vntimely borne is better  
 then he. <sup>4</sup> For he came in vaine, and paffeth to darknes,  
 and his name shal be cleane forgotten. <sup>5</sup> He hath not  
 fene the funne, nor knowen the diftance of good and  
 euil: <sup>6</sup> although he liued two thoufand yeares, and hath  
 not enioyed good thinges: do not al thinges haften to one  
 place? <sup>7</sup> Al the labour of man is in his mouth: but his  
 foule shal not be filled. <sup>8</sup> What hath the wifeman more  
 then the foole? and what the poore man, but to paffe  
 thither, where life is? <sup>9</sup> Better it is to fee that, which  
 thou maift couete, then to defire that, which thou canft  
 not know. But this alfo is vanitie, and prefumption of  
 fpirite. <sup>10</sup> <sup>b</sup>)He that shal be, his name is already called:  
 and it is knowne, that he is a man, and can not contend  
 in iudgement againft a ftronger then himfelf. <sup>11</sup> There  
 be manie wordes, that haue much vanitie in difputing.

## ANNOTATIONS

### Chapter 07

*It is in vaine to feke, and vnpoſſible to know al nat-  
 ural thinges. 2. It importeth to leade this ſhorte life in  
 mortification, 4. poenance, 8. and patience: 12. ſeeking  
 wiſdom, with competent temporal meanes; 15. prouid-  
 ing for the next world; 24. not yelding to concupiſcence.*

**V**hat <sup>c</sup>)nedeth a man to feke thinges greater  
 then himfelf, wheras he is ignorant, what is

<sup>a</sup> Al this ſhevveſh evidently that felicitie confiſteth not in riches.

<sup>b</sup> It is plainly preached (faith S. Iero.) of the coming of Chriſt,  
 vvhofe name was geuen, and knovven before he vvas borne in  
 fleſh.

<sup>c</sup> None can perfectly knowv the nature of al thinges preſent, or to  
 come.

profitable for him in his life, in the number of the dayes of his peregrination, and the time that paffeth as a shadow? Or who can tel him what shal be after him vnder the funne?

*Prou. 22.* <sup>2</sup> Better is a good name then precious ointments: and the day of death, then the day of natiuitie. <sup>3</sup> It is better to goe to the houle of mourning, then to the houle of banketing: for in that the end of al men is signified, and he that liueth thinketh what shal be. <sup>4 a)</sup> Anger is better then laughter: becaufe by fadnes of the countenance, the mind of the offender is corrected. <sup>5</sup> The hart of wifemen where fadnes is, and the hart of fooles where mirth. <sup>6</sup> It is better to be rebuked of a wifeman, then to be deceiued with the flaterie of fooles. <sup>7</sup> Becaufe as the found of thornes burning vnder a potte, fo the laughter of a foole: but this alfo is vanitie. <sup>8</sup> Oppreffion trubleth the wife, and shal deftroy the ftreingth of his hart. <sup>9</sup> Better is the end of a fpeech, then the beginning. <sup>b)</sup> Better is the patient man then the arrogant. <sup>10</sup> Be not quickly angrie, becaufe anger refteth in the bofom of a foole. <sup>11</sup> Say not: What is the caufe thinkeft thou that the former times were better then they are now? for this maner of queftion is foolish. <sup>12</sup> Wifdom with <sup>c)</sup> riches is more profitable, and doth more profite them that fee the funne. <sup>13</sup> For as wifdom protecteth, fo money protecteth. But lerning and wifdom haue this much more, that they geue life to their owner. <sup>14</sup> Confider the workes of God, that no man can correct whom he hath defpifed. <sup>15</sup> In the good day enioy good thinges, and beware before of the euil day. For as this, fo that alfo hath God made, that man finde not againft him iuft complaints. <sup>16</sup> Thefe thinges alfo I faw in the dayes of my vanitie: The iuft man perisheth in his iuftice, and the impious liueth a long time in his malice. <sup>17</sup> Be not iuft too much:

The 2. part.

True felicitie is procured by good life, and confifteth in the eternal fight of God.

<sup>a</sup> Anger rightly vfed, is commendable & beneficial to correcte our owne faultes and others.

<sup>b</sup> But haftie, or immoderate anger is finful and hurtful.

<sup>c</sup> Likewise moderate riches profite the feruants of God, fo that they fette not their mind vpon them.

neither be more wife, then is neceffarie, left thou become more dul. <sup>18</sup> Doe not impiously much: and be not foolish, left thou dye not in thy time. <sup>19</sup> It is good that thou hold vp the iuft; yea and from him withdraw not thy hand: becaufe he that feareth God, neglecteth nothing. <sup>20</sup> Wifdom hath ftreingthned the wife aboue tenne princes of the citie. <sup>21</sup> For there is no iuft man in the earth, that doth good, and finneeth not. <sup>22</sup> But to al wordes alfo, that are fpoken, do not applie thy hart: left perhaps thou heare thy feruant curfing thee. <sup>23</sup> For thy confcience knoweth, that thou alfo hath curfed others. <sup>24</sup> I haue proued al thinges in wifdom. I haue fayd: I wil become wife, & it departed farder from me <sup>25</sup> much more then it was: and a depe profunditie, who shal finde it? <sup>26</sup> I haue vewed al thinges with my minde, that I might know, and confider, and might feke wifdom, and reafon: and that I might know the impietie of the foole, and the errour of the imprudent: <sup>27</sup> and I haue found that a woman is more bitter then death, who is the fnare of hunters, and her hart a nette, her handes are bandes. He that pleafeth God, wil auoide her: but he that is a finner, wil be caught of her. <sup>28</sup> Loe this haue I found, fayd Ecclefiaftes, one thing and an other, that I might finde reafon, <sup>29</sup> which yet my foule feketh, and I haue not found it. <sup>a)</sup> A man of a thoufand I haue found one, <sup>b)</sup> a woman of al I haue not found. <sup>30</sup> Only this I haue found, that <sup>c)</sup> God made man right, and he hath intangled himfelf with infinite queftions. Who is fuch a one as the wife? and who hath knowne the refolution of the word.

*3. Reg. 8. 2. Par. 6.  
Pro. 20. 1. Ioan. 1.*

The preacher.

The obfcure thing.

## ANNOTATIONS

<sup>a</sup> Mans reafon which is the fuperior part of his foule, rarely thinketh good:

<sup>b</sup> Senfualitie ftill inclineth to euil.

<sup>c</sup> God made man right, & he of his owne wil fel from God fee *S. Aug. li. 14. c. 11. ciuit.*

## Chapter 08

*A signe of true wifdom appereth in obferuing Gods commandments, 6. in this shorte time of meriting eternal reward. 9. Rule of others, 11. and want of feare hurt manie. 14. Why God fuffereth the wicked to prosper, and the iuft to be afflicted in this life, no mortal man can know.*

**T**he wifdom of a man <sup>a)</sup>shineth in his countenance, and the moft mightie wil change his face. <sup>2</sup> I obferue the mouth of the king, and the precepts of the oath of God. <sup>3</sup> Haften not to depart from his face, nor continew thou in an euil worke: becaufe al that he pleafeth, he wil doe, <sup>4</sup> and his word is ful of powre: neither can anie man fay to him: Why doft thou fo? <sup>5</sup> He that kepeth the precept, fhall finde no euil. The hart of a wifeman vnderftandeth time and anfwer. <sup>6</sup> There is a time for al bufines, and opportunitie, and much affliction of man: <sup>7</sup> becaufe he is ignorant of thinges paff, and thinges to come he can know by no meffenger. <sup>8</sup> It is not in mans powre to prohibite the fpirite, neither hath he powre in the day of death, neither is he fuffered to reft when warre is at hand, neither fhall impietie faue the impious. <sup>9</sup> Al thefe thinges I haue confidered, and gaue my hart on al the workes, that are done vnder the funne. Sometime man ruleth ouer man to his owne hurt. <sup>10</sup> I faw the impious buried: who alfo when they yet liued, were in holie place, and were praifed in the citie as men of iuft workes. But this alfo is vanitie. <sup>11</sup> Becaufe fentence is not fpeedely pronounced againft the euil, the children of men committe euils without anie feare. <sup>12</sup> But yet a finner by this that he doth

---

<sup>a</sup> As probable coniecture of a mans inward difpofition is made by his exteriour countenance: fo his good workes fhining before men are good signe of internal vertues; which in dede are right and meritorious, when the intention is fincere, referring al to Gods glorie, & edification of others, without defire of vaine praife in the world.

euil an hundred times, & by patience is borne withal, I know that it shal be good to them that feare God, which dread his face. <sup>13</sup> Let there be no good to the impious, neither let his dayes be prolonged, but as a shadow let them paffe, that feare not the face of our Lord. <sup>14</sup> There is also an other <sup>a</sup>)vanitie, which is done vpon the earth. There are iust men, to whom euils happen, as though they had done the workes of the impious: and there are impious men, which are so secure, as though they had the dedes of the iust. But this also I iudge most vaine. <sup>15</sup> I therefore haue praised mirth that there was no good thing for a man vnder the funne, but that he should eate, and drinke, and be glad: and this only he should take away with him of his labour in the dayes of his life, which God hath geuen him vnder the funne. <sup>16</sup> And I haue set my hart to know wisdom, and to vnderstand the distraction that is in the earth: There is a man that dayes and nightes taketh no slepe with his eyes. <sup>17</sup> And I vnderstood that man can finde no reason of al those workes of God, that are done vnder the funne: and the more he shal labour to feke, so much the lesse he can finde: yea if the wiseman shal say, that he knoweth, he is not able to finde it.

But he feareth.

## ANNOTATIONS

### Chapter 09

*None knoweth (certainly and ordinarily) whether they be in Gods grace or no. 4. The euil are in worse case dead then aliue, 11. neither can we know the event of temporal things, nor the terme of our life, nor how grateful others wil be towards vs. 16. Sure it is, that wisdom is better then strength.*

---

<sup>a</sup> By this terme vanitie is still vnderstood that felicitie is not in prosperous things of this world: neither are all men miserable, that suffer aduersitie.



**A**l theſe thinges haue I difcourſed in my hart, that I might curiouſly vnderſtand them: there are iuſt men and wife, and their workes are in the hand of God: and yet <sup>a</sup>man knoweth not, whether he be worthie of loue, or hatred: <sup>2</sup> but al thinges are referued vncertaine for the time to come, becauſe al thinges do equally chance to the iuſt and impious, to the good and the euil, to the cleane and vncleane, to him that immolateth victimes, and him that contemneth ſacrifices. As the good ſo alſo is the finner: as the periured, ſo he alſo that ſweareth truth. <sup>3</sup> This is a very euil thing among al, which are done vnder the funne, that the ſame thinges chance to al men. Wherby alſo the hartes of the children of men are filled with malice, and with contempt in their life, and after that they ſhal be brought downe to hel. <sup>4</sup> There is no man that may liue alwayes, and that can haue confidence of this thing: better is <sup>b</sup>a dog liuing then a lion dead. <sup>5</sup> For the liuing know that they ſhal dye, but the dead know nothing more, neither haue they reward anie more: becauſe the memorie of them is forgotten. <sup>6</sup> Loue alſo, and hatred, and enuies haue periſhed together, neither haue they part in this world, and in the worke, that is done vnder the funne. <sup>7</sup> Goe therfore and eate thy bread in ioy, & drinke thy wine with gladnes: becauſe thy workes pleaſe God. <sup>8</sup> At al time let thy garments be white, and let not oyle fal from of thy head. <sup>9</sup> Enioy life, with thy wife whom thou loueſt, al the dayes of the life of thy inſtabilitie, which are geuen to thee vnder the funne, al the time of thy vanitie: for this is the portion in life, and in thy labour, wherwith thou laboreſt vnder the funne. <sup>10</sup> Whatſoeuer thy hand is able to doe, worke it inſtantly: for neither worke, nor reaſon, nor wiſdom nor knowlege

---

<sup>a</sup> Mortal men ſuffering calamities knowv not vvwhether the ſame be inflicted for their prooffe and merite as in Iob and Tobie, or for their finnes only, as in Pharao, & the Ægyptians: but ſhal know in the iudgement after their death.

<sup>b</sup> A finner in this life may amend if he wil, & become iuſt: but after death he can not repent. *chap. 11. v. 3.* Myſtically, the Gentiles were iudged by Salomon better then the Iewes. *S. Ierom.*

shal be in hel, whither thou doft haften. <sup>11</sup> I turned me to an other thing, and I faw vnder the funne, that neither running is of the fwift, nor warre of the ftrong, nor bread of the wife, nor riches of the lerned, nor grace of the artificers: but time and chance in al. <sup>12</sup> Man knoweth not his owne end: but as fishes are taken with the hooke, and as birdes are caught with the fnare: fo men are taken in the euil time, when it shal fudenly come vpon them. <sup>13</sup> This wifdom alfo I haue fene vnder the funne, and haue proued it to be very great: <sup>14</sup> A litle citie, and few men in it: there came againft it a great king, and compaffed it, and builded fortes round about, and the fiege was perfited. <sup>15</sup> And there was found in it a man poore and wife, and he deliuered the citie by his wifdom, and no man afterward remembred that pooreman. <sup>16</sup> And I fayd, that wifdom is better then ftrength: how then was the wifdom of the pooreman contemned, & his wordes were not heard? <sup>17</sup> The wordes of the wife are heard in filence, more then the crie of a prince among fooles. <sup>18</sup> Better is wifdom, then weapons of warre: and he that shal offend in one point, shal lofe manie good thinges.

## ANNOTATIONS

### Chapter 10

*Confidering the great difference between wifdom and fol-  
lie, 4. it behoueth to refift vehement tentations diligently.  
5. As when euil, & ignorant men haue auctoritie ouer  
the wife. 8. The wicked often fal into their owne fnares,  
10. are hard, yet not vnpoſſible to be corrected. 11. De-  
tracters are like ferpents. 12. Wife graue princes are  
profitable; childish are hurtful to the commonwealth;  
18. which by their negligence tendeth to ruine: 20. yet  
fubiectes ought not to iudge euil of them.*

**F**lies <sup>a</sup>dying marre the sweetnes of ointment. Wifdom and glorie is more precious, then a litle and temporal follie. <sup>2</sup> The hart of a wifeman is in his righthand, and the hart of a foole is in his lefthand. <sup>3</sup> Yea and the foole walking in the way, wheras himfelf is vnwife, eftemeth al men fooles. <sup>4</sup> If the fpirite of him that hath powre, afcend vpon thee, leaue not thy place: becaufe carefulnes wil make the greateft finnes to ceafe. <sup>5</sup> There is an euil that I haue fene vnder the funne, as it were by errorr proceding from the face of the prince: <sup>6</sup> A foole fet in high dignitie, and the rich to fitte beneth. <sup>7</sup> I haue fene <sup>b</sup>feruants vpon horfes: and princes walking on the ground as feruants. <sup>8</sup> He <sup>c</sup>that diggeth a pitte, shal fal into it: and he that breaketh the hedge, a ferpent shal bite him. <sup>9</sup> He that remoueth ftones, shal be afflicted in them: and he that cutteth trees, shal be wounded of them. <sup>10</sup> If the iron shal be blunt, and that not as before, but shal be made blunt, it shal be sharpened by great labour, and after induftrie shal wifdom folow. <sup>11</sup> If a ferpent bite in filence, nothing leffe then it hath he, that detracteth fecretly. <sup>12</sup> The wordes of the mouth of a wifeman grace: and the lippes of the vnwife shal throw him downe headlong. <sup>13</sup> The beginning of his wordes is follie, and the later end of his mouth is moft wicked errorr. <sup>14</sup> A foole multiplieth wordes. A man is ignorant what hath bene before him: and what shal be after him, who can tel him? <sup>15</sup> The labour of fooles shal afflict them, that know not to goe into <sup>d</sup>the citie. <sup>16</sup> ♣Woe to thee ô land, whose king is a childe, and whose princes eate in the morning. <sup>17</sup> Bleffed is the land, whose king is noble, & whose princes eate in their time

---

<sup>a</sup> Bafe & vicious men mixt with the good corrupt the whole companie: much more a mortal finne in a mans foule deftroyeth al the vertues, that were there before.

<sup>b</sup> Euil men aduanced feme to profper:

<sup>c</sup> but they fal into their owne trappes.

<sup>d</sup> Such as feke by fenfe and reafon to obtaine true knowlege, enter not into the citie, the Church. They labour in vaine and are afflicted in ftudie of Scriptures, when they walke in the defert, and can not finde the citie. *S. Ierom.*

to refection, and not to riotoufnes. <sup>18</sup> In flouthfulnes the rooffe of the houfe ſhal goe to ruine, & in the infirmitie of the handes the houfe ſhal droppe through. <sup>19</sup> They make bread for laughter, and wine that liuing they may make merie: and to money al thinges obey. <sup>20</sup> In thy cogitation detract not from the king, and in the ſecret of thy chamber curfe not the richman: becauſe euen the birdes of the ayre wil carie thy voice, and he that hath winges wil declare the ſentence.

## ANNOTATIONS

This text, and manie others, haue two ſenſes.

1.  
In kinges and al ſuperiours are required mature age, & diligent care of the cōmon good.

2.  
Antiquitie in matter of faith and religion is to be folowed, not noueltie.

Alſo mortification and labour is required in Paſtors, not delicacie nor eaſe.

16 VVoe to thee ô land, vvhofe king is a childe.) S. Ierom (as in moſt part of his commentaries vpon this booke) expoundeth this paſſage in two ſenſes: ſimply according to the firſt apparance of the letter; and myſtically concerning the Church. The wiſeman ſemeth in dede (ſayth he) to reprove the principalitie of yongmen, and to condemne luxurious iudges; for that in the one by want of age is infirme wiſdom; in the other, mature age is weakened by delicacies. And contrarywiſe he approueth a prince of good partes, & liberal education; & commendeth thoſe Iudges, which do not preferre voluptuoufnes before publique affayres: but after great labour, and adminiſtration of the commonwealth, are conſtrained as by neceſſitie to take meate. Yet to me (faith this great Doctor) ſomething more ſacred ſemeth to lye hidde in the letter: that in Scripture they are called yongmen, who forſake old auctoritie, and contemne ancient precepts of forefathers; who neglecting Gods commandment, deſire to eſtabliſh traditions of men. Touching which points, our Lord threatneth Iſrael by Ifaias, for that this people hath refuſed the water of Siloe, that runneth with ſilence, and hath turned away the old fiſhpond, chooſing the ſtreames of Samaria, and gulſes of Damafcus, I wil geue yongmen to be their princes, and deluders ſhal rule ouer them. Read Daniel:

*Iſa. 8.*

Thou ſhalt finde God ancient of dayes. Read the Apocalips of S. Iohn: Thou ſhalt finde the head of our Sauour white as ſnow, and as white wool. Ieremie alſo becauſe he was wiſe and grauitie was reputed in his wiſdom, was forbid to cal himſelf a childe. VVoe therfore to the land, whoſe king is the diuel, who alwayes coueting nouelties, rebelled in Abſalom againſt the father.

*Dan. 7.*

*Apoc. 1.*

*Iere. 1.*

VVoe to that land whoſe Iudges, and Princes loue the pleaſures of this vvorld. VVho, vntil the day of death come, ſay: Let vs eate and drinke, for to morrow we ſhal dye. Contrariwwiſe bleſſed is the land of the Church, vvhofe King is Chriſt, the Sonne of the freeborne, deſcending from Abraham, Ifaac, and Iacob, the ſtock of Prophetes, and of al Saintes, ouer vvhom finne ruled not:

and for that caufe they vvere truly free: of vvhom vvas borne the holie Virgin Marie more free: hauing no fhrubbe, nor branch out of the fide, but her vvhole fruite fprung forth into a floure: *Cant. 2.* faying in the Canticles: I am the floure of the filde, the lillie of the valleyes. The princes alfo of this land are the Apoftles, and al faintes, vvho haue their king the fonne of the freeborne, the fonne of the freevvoman, not of the bondvvoman Agar, but borne of the freedom of Sara. Neither do they eate in the morning, nor quickly. For they feke not pleafure in this prefent vvorld; but shal eate in their due time, vvhen the time of revvard shal come, and they shal eate in fortitude, and not in confufion. Al the good of this prefent vvorld is confufion: but of the future vvorld is perpetual fortitude. Thus farre S. Ierom. VVhofe difcourfe vve haue here cited at large for a tafte of his profound expofition of this vvhole booke; that fuch as haue opportunitie, may read the reft in the auctor himfelf. *To. 7.*

The B. Virgin more free from finne then the Patriarches.

## Chapter 11

*Workes of mercie are neceffarie, whiles we haue time, 3. becaufe after death none can merite: 4. neither muft we differ to beginne, nor ceafe from good dedes, 8. but ftill mindful of death and iudgement: 10. auoiding wrath and malice.*

The 3. part. An exhortation to beginne quickly, and perfeuere in Gods feruice.

**C**aft thy bread vpon the paffing waters: <sup>a</sup>)becaufe after much time thou shalt finde it. <sup>2</sup> Geue a portion <sup>b</sup>)to feuen, and alfo to eight: becaufe thou knoweft not what euil shal be vpon the earth. <sup>3</sup> If the cloudes be ful, they wil powre out raine vpon the earth. If the tree shal fal to the South, or to the North, in what place foeuer it shal fal: <sup>c</sup>)there shal it be. <sup>4</sup> He that obferueth the winde, foweth not: and he that confidereth the cloudes, shal neuer reape. <sup>5</sup> As thou art ignorant which is the way of the fpirite, & how the bones are framed together in the wombe of her that conceiueth

<sup>a</sup> Of al vertues, the workes of mercie, corporal and fpiritual, moft auaille for obtaining eternal felicitie: *Mat. 25.*

<sup>b</sup> So the fame be grounded in true faith, beleuing al that is written in the old and new teftament fignified by feuen & eight.

<sup>c</sup> After death none can either merite or demerite.

childe: fo thou knowest not the workes of God, who is the maker of al. <sup>6</sup> In <sup>a</sup>the morning low thy feede, and in the euening let not thy hand ceafe: for thou knowest not which may rather fpring, this or that: and if both together, it shal be the better. <sup>7</sup> The light is fweete: and it is delectable for the eyes to see the funne. <sup>8</sup> If a man shal liue manie yeares, and shal haue reioyced in them al, he muft remember the darkefome time, and manie dayes: which when they shal come, the thinges pafte shal be reprov'd of vanitie. <sup>9</sup> Reioyce therfore yongman in thy youth, and let thy hart be in good, in the dayes of thy youth, and walke in the wayes of thy hart, and in the fight of thyne eyes: and know that for al thefe God wil bring thee into iudgement. <sup>10</sup> Take away anger from thy hart, and remoue malice from thy flesh. For youth and pleafure are vaine.

## ANNOTATIONS

### 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 grateful. 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.*

**R**emember thy Creator in the dayes <sup>b</sup>of thy youth, before the time of affliction come, &

<sup>a</sup> Both in youth and old age do good workes.

<sup>b</sup> An admonition to al in general to liue wel in this world, remembering the day of general iudgement before which fuch finnes fhall come as are defcribed here, and by our Sauour. *Mat. 24.* And likewise euerie one is admonifhed in particular to ferue God diligently whiles he hath time, before death come, when al his fenfes & former helps fhall faile.

the yeares approach, of which thou maift fay:  
 They pleafe me not, <sup>2</sup> before the funne, and light, and  
 moone, and ftarres be darke, and the cloudes returne  
 after the raine: <sup>3</sup> when the kepers of the houfe shal  
 be moued, and the ftrongeft men shal ftagger, and the  
 grinders shal be idle in a final number: and they shal  
 waxe darke that looke through the holes: <sup>4</sup> and they  
 shal shut the doores in the ftreate, at the bafenes of the  
 grinders voice, and they shal rife vp at the voice of the  
 birde, and al the daughters of fong shal be deafe. <sup>5</sup> The  
 high thinges alfo 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 houfe of his eternitie, and the  
 mourners shal goe round about in the ftreate. <sup>6</sup> Before  
 the filuer coard be broken, and the golden headband re-  
 curre, and the water pot be broken vpon the fountaine,  
 and the wheele be broken vpon the cefterne, <sup>7</sup> and the  
 duft returne into his earth, from whence it was, and the  
 fpirite returne to God, who gaue it. <sup>8</sup> Vanitie of vanities,  
 fayd Ecclesiastes, and al thinges vanitie. <sup>9</sup> And wheras  
 Ecclesiastes was moft wife, he taught the people, and de-  
 clared the thinges that he had done: and fearching forth  
 made manie parables. <sup>10</sup> He fought profitable wordes,  
 and wrote wordes moft right, and ful of truth. <sup>11</sup> The  
 wordes of wifemen are as prickles, and as nailes deeply  
 ftricken in, which by the counfel of maifters are geuen  
 of one pafour. <sup>12</sup> More then thefe my fonne require  
 not. Of making manie bookes there is no end: and often  
 meditation is affliction of the flesh. <sup>13</sup> <sup>a</sup>) Let vs al heare  
 together the end of fpeaking. Feare God, and obferue his  
 commandments: for this is euerie man: <sup>14</sup> and al thinges  
 that are done, God wil bring into iudgement for euerie  
 error, whether it be good, or euil.

The preacher.

Hidden, or  
 obfcure thing.

## ANNOTATIONS

<sup>a</sup> This is the brief fumme of al profitable doctrine: Feare God, & kepe his commandments.

