

PROVERBS 30

THE WORDS OF AGUR

The two concluding chapters of this Book are an appendix to the Proverbs of Solomon. Nothing certain is known of the writers, and it is vain to speculate in places where God is silent. It is far better to give our full interest – mind and heart – to the matter of instruction, rather than to indulge in unprofitable curiosity respecting the human penmen.

Agur's words in this chapter were "a prophecy," or a Divine instruction, that was given unto Ithiel and Ucal – probably two of his scholars. Perhaps they came to him for instruction, and he was led to express himself (verses 2-4) in the most humbling sense of his own ignorance. "You come to me for instruction, but surely I am more brutish than any man – not having the advantages of learning wisdom, or the knowledge of the holy God, and of the holy revelation of His name and His Son's name." Surely Agur is here speaking with a reference to the Lord and His Anointed Messiah (Whose name, in those times, was not yet known). The child of God will compare himself with his perfect Standard. And in the perception of his own shortcomings, the clear-sighted penitent will feel that he can never abase himself as he ought before his God; he desires to lie lower still – infinitely lower – in the dust. Paul compared himself with the spirituality of the Lord's perfect law, and exclaimed, "I am carnal, sold under sin!" In the presence of the holy God, Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me; for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips!" Job, under the manifestation of the power of God, sunk into a confession of his absolute nothingness and unworthiness. David, in the full view of the wisdom of God, was made to see the perverseness of his own folly; and he took up the very confession of Agur: "So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee!" The nearer our contemplation of God, and the closer our communion with Him – the deeper will be our self-abasement before Him. It is good, therefore, for even the wisest and holiest of people to take up Agur's humiliating confession, for genuine humility is the only path of wisdom.

Nothing is learned by abstract speculation alone. We must bring out the Bible; for within its pages, all is light and purity! Although "secret things belong to the Lord our God," yet "the things that are revealed" are our holy directory. Everything is intended to influence our heart and life. "Every word of God is pure." Of what other book in the world can this be said? God's Word has stood the trial, and no dross has been found in it. In fact, it is more precious than gold! (Ps. 19:10) Having God for its Author, it contains truth without any errors. The

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ Agur's confession of faith, and his prayer to God – verses 1-10
- ❖ A series of six separate quatrains, describing four wicked generations, four unsatisfiable things, four unsearchable things, four intolerable things, four little and wise things, and four stately things – verses 11-33



entirety of Scripture is Scripture, and all Scripture is profitable! Every verse in the Bible has this stamp upon it: "THE WORD OF JEHOVAH!" But this holy reverence is combined with trust in God! What a blessed trust indeed, which brings a shield of special favor over His trembling child! What would the child of God do in a time of terror, if he or she did not find a shield and a hiding-place in the heart of Jesus? If the Word of God is pure, it must be a sure ground of trust. Nothing honors the Lord so much as when His child turns immediately to Him in every time of need!

Having found God to be his Father and Defender, Agur quickly exercised the privileges of a child: "Two things have I required of thee: deny me them not before I die." Measuring carefully the weakness that lay within him, and the dangers that lay before him; he perceived that the two extremes were points of temptation, and so he pleaded for support there. He saw one set of temptations pressing on the wealthy, and another set of temptations pressing on the poor. He feared that if he was exposed to either stream, he would be carried away like a withered leaf upon the water. He pleaded, therefore, for a safer place between the two. He who repeats Agur's prayer may not always find the "happy medium" between poverty and riches which he counts so favorable to spiritual safety, but he will certainly obtain the spiritual safety upon which his heart is set. He will obtain his desire, which is good – either through the means which he specifies, or through others which God judges to be better. The Captain of his salvation will either keep the weak safe in the center, or He will strengthen him to fight upon the front lines.

The rest of this chapter is taken up with Divinely inspired words of wisdom in the form of six separate quatrains, or four-line stanzas. First, Agur gives an account of some wicked generations of people, who are abominable to all who are virtuous and good. In verse 17, he adds a terrible threatening to disobedient children, for a warning to the first of these four wicked generations. Next, he specifies four things which are insatiable, which never say, "It is enough!" Then we have an account of four things that are unsearchable, and too wonderful to be fully known. The first three are natural things, and are only designed as comparisons for the illustration of the fourth, which is a mystery indeed; for none except the Lord can fully explain the workings of love that go between the hearts of a man and a woman. Agur also speaks of four sorts of persons who are very troublesome to the places where they live, and to the relationships which they are in. Having specified these four kinds of people who seem great and yet are really contemptible, he then specifies four things that are little and yet are very admirable; and that is followed by an enumeration of four things which are majestic, stately, and great. And with that, the words of Agur draw to a close.

Lord, we pray that You would open and explain Your Words to us! Help us to see Christ in them and through them; for in Him, we shall find all we need. Amen.