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# ECCLESIASTES ;

A CONTRIBUTION

TO ITS

INTERPRETATION :

CONTAINING

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK ; AN EXEGETICAL  
ANALYSIS ; AND A TRANSLATION, WITH NOTES.

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להבין משל ומליצה דברי חכמים וחידתם

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An Enquiry into the Meaning of Hamlet's Conduct, and  
the Aim of the Tragedy.

## PREFACE.

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**D**ESVŒUX, in the preface to his book on Ecclesiastes, tells us that about thirty years had elapsed since he had first planned the work, and nearly five-and-twenty since he had published a sketch of his plan ; that the work had cost him a hundredfold the time and study which he had at first imagined would be necessary ; and that he had been obliged again and again to remould the work, casting it into a form different from that which he had before intended.

I might, with reference to the work now submitted to the public, repeat, to a considerable extent, what was said by Desvœux. I cannot, it is true, say that thirty years have passed since I planned my work ; but still, not only is it a very long time since I attained some of the conclusions concerning the interpretation of particular passages in Ecclesiastes, which I still hold, and which I have now for the first time printed ; but a good many years have elapsed

since I prepared for a society, with which I was at the time connected, a paper on Ecclesiastes containing and expressing those conclusions. Afterwards I rewrote and enlarged this paper, with a view to its being published. Other work and other engagements, however, demanded attention; and my paper in its improved form was laid aside. Subsequently, my attention being for a time less occupied with other pursuits, I took up the work anew, and again enlarging it, it assumed that tripartite form which it now presents; the paper above mentioned becoming, to a considerable extent, the basis of the Exegetical Analysis.

When the work was now, as it seemed to me, just ready for the press, I began to perceive the peculiar relation of Ecclesiastes to the post-Aristotelian philosophy. This being seen, I tried to adapt my work, by comparatively inconsiderable alteration; and I gave some account of the fact I had discovered in a pamphlet entitled *Some New Evidence as to the Date of Ecclesiastes*, London, 1872. I found, however, that the adaptation of my work which I had attempted was unsatisfactory. The relation of Ecclesiastes to the post-Aristotelian philosophy was too fundamental to be thus dealt with. Much of the work was accordingly written anew, and a good deal of illustrative matter introduced. The work has certainly cost me an expenditure of time and labour, such as I could not have at all anticipated when my attention was first directed to the subject. Apart from certain circumstances, it is likely that the work

would not now have been published : I might not unreasonably have hesitated before diverting from other pursuits so very considerable an amount of time and thought as was necessary even for the final preparation of the work for the press.

Of late, much has been said, and no doubt with justice, of the grave discouragements which attend upon original research in various departments of natural science. But—in England, at least—the discouragements connected with such research in the field of Biblical science are probably, on the whole, far more severe than those which must be encountered by the physicist or the physiologist. This result is caused, in part, by the generally low condition of Biblical and Oriental learning, and, in part, by various other causes, which I need not here particularly mention. I may be pardoned for alluding to this matter, on account of the probability that changes will be made, especially in relation to the Universities, which may, at least in the next generation, greatly facilitate original research in natural science. And I should certainly desire that this result may be attained. But there is some danger lest suitable provision should not be made for independent, faithful, and thorough Biblical investigation. I hope, however, that the necessity for such provision will be seen, since there are multitudinous problems in relation to the Biblical books which still await solution, and which will probably not be solved without prolonged labour on the part of many in-

investigators possessing not only adequate scholarship, but also suitable natural endowments. At present, it is probable, the energies of not a few who might have done good service in this department of intellectual labour, are diverted to other objects on account of the unfavourable circumstances attendant in England upon Biblical research. Some persons, indeed, may contend that, with regard to the Bible, little of importance remains to be discovered, its interpreters having been so acute and so erudite, and its literature being so vast and so voluminous. Probably, however, Dr. Westcott was, in relation to this matter, nearer the truth when he asserted that "we are at present only on the outskirts of the knowledge of Holy Scripture" (*Academy*, Oct. 1st, 1872).

I have mentioned above the pamphlet in which I gave an account of the conclusions I had attained concerning the relation of Ecclesiastes to the post-Aristotelian philosophy. Some reviews of this pamphlet, both in this country and abroad, may possibly have escaped my notice. Of those which I have seen, I do not know that there is any on which it is necessary that I should here offer a remark, if I except a notice by the distinguished Orientalist, Prof. Ewald, in the *Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* (Oct. 23rd, 1872). Though Prof. Ewald regards my paper as a proof of the advance which Biblical science is making in England, and considers that it contains matter "not unimportant even for more exact science," yet he calls in question my

conclusions as to the date of Ecclesiastes, and as to the connection of the Book with the actual Stoic and Epicurean schools. He professes, however, his willingness to abandon his position with respect to the composition of Ecclesiastes in the Persian period, when satisfactory proof of the later date shall have been furnished. I venture to hope, therefore, that my honoured critic will find such proof in the large amount of additional evidence contained in the following pages, and especially in §§ 4, 12 of the *Introduction*.

Of the three parts into which my work is divided, I have endeavoured to keep the second—the *Exegetical Analysis*—which gives a general view of the interpretation of Ecclesiastes, free from Hebrew quotations or such technicalities as would be unintelligible to readers not possessing a knowledge of the original languages of the Old Testament. The class possessing such knowledge, to any considerable extent, is, I should fear, even among professional interpreters of the Bible, a very small one. This part of the work has, perhaps on account of its origin, referred to above, a somewhat more popular and less scientific garb than it would otherwise have had. If this be a fault, it is one which I have not cared to correct.

The *Translation* differs in no small degree from the Authorised Version, on which, however, it is, to a considerable extent, based. I may observe, that I have not followed the Authorised Version with respect to the usage

of printing supplied words in italics. The practice is one which it is perhaps impossible to adopt with perfect and entire consistency. I venture to hope, however, that my translation will not, on the whole, be found wanting in closeness to the original. The notes appended to the translation will be, I trust, not without value to the student. They must be looked upon as, in some measure, supplementary to such illustrative matter as may be found in the Introduction and Exegetical Analysis.

The function which I have attempted to discharge in the following pages is that of the interpreter. Many expository works on Ecclesiastes have been written, but the present is not an addition to their number. My object is not to deduce moral or religious lessons from the Book, but to set forth its meaning. Simply to attain this object is, however, a task of no small difficulty. The interpreter can scarcely be indifferent with respect to those grave questions which Koheleth discusses. And thus a danger arises lest the interpreter's work should be marred by the intermingling of the subjective, and lest, by toning down, or dimly presenting, some of the conflicting sentiments contained in the Book, he should give an image incomplete and distorted. How far I have avoided these faults the candid and thoughtful reader may decide. Where there is so much which will probably appear new and strange, some things—possibly a good many things—may be deemed unacceptable. Still, it is perhaps not altogether



impossible that my work, on the whole, may be regarded in time to come as having marked some real advance towards the full solution of the great enigma of Koheleth.

T. T.

\* \* \* I may append here a word with respect to the investigations, of which I have published some account at different times, concerning the name "Jehovah,"—a subject of great importance to Biblical science. It was my intention to consolidate and republish the result of these researches, making such change and revision as might seem necessary. Now, however, I am doubtful whether I shall be able to accomplish this intention. Partly on account of certain alleged archæological discoveries, it appears desirable that new lines of research should be opened up, the adequate and thorough prosecution of which would probably require the expenditure of at least some years of time and labour; and this, on account of several different causes, it is not unlikely that I shall be unable to give.

I would mention here, also, as offering a not unpromising field for investigation, a subject more closely connected with the present work—the relation of Stoicism to the New Testament and to the Talmud. To the relation of Stoicism to the Talmud, the attention of English readers was lately to some extent called by an article, on "Marcus Aurelius and the Talmud," from the pen of Prof. Plumptre, in the *Contemporary Review* for January, 1869. With regard to the New Testament, there is the dissertation on "St. Paul and Seneca" appended to Dr. Lightfoot's work on *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*. But the investigation should, perhaps, take a somewhat wider range than that of this dissertation; and I think it not unlikely that additional results of importance may be attained.



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# I.

## INTRODUCTION.

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### §1. THE CHARACTER OF THE BOOK.

**E**CCLESIASTES is distinguished among the books of the Old Testament by strongly marked characteristics. In most of these books the relation to the theocracy is obvious and prominent, but in Ecclesiastes the theocratic element appears, at least on a cursory view, subordinate and insignificant. Ecclesiastes takes a wide and comprehensive survey of humanity, and, dealing with man as man, seems scarcely to regard, if it does not entirely forget, the distinctive peculiarities of the theocratic people. Its character too, in general, appears philosophical rather than religious. Its tone is not that of the prophet declaring to Israel "the word of the LORD," but rather that of the philosopher telling of his investigations concerning the course of things in the world, and of his attempts to solve the intricate problems presented by the nature and condition of mankind. There are indeed particulars in which Ecclesiastes resembles some others of the Biblical books. A portion of its contents may seem not unlike the Proverbs; and there may appear ground for comparison, also, with the Book of Job, in the absence of conspicuous reference to the theocracy, in the subject-matter of the discussion, and in some of the sentiments expressed. But from both of these books Ecclesiastes is widely separated by its peculiar philosophical character. With respect to this character Eccle-

siastes marks an advance upon the Book of Job, which to some readers may more than compensate for its inferiority to the latter in poetical form and balanced parallelism.

The difficulties which Ecclesiastes presents have appeared so great that, with regard to these, our book has been asserted to have a pre-eminence over all the other books of the Old Testament. Not only have particular passages given rise to varying interpretations, but discrepant opinions have been expressed concerning the plan to which the book is conformed, the aim and object to which it owes its origin, the date at which it was written, the author by whom it was composed. Expositors and interpreters, attracted probably to a great extent by the unique and peculiar character of the book, have expended much labour in the investigation of its contents, but, on the whole, the result of their toil can scarcely be said to be other than unsatisfactory. A recent writer speaks of Ecclesiastes as "a book with seven seals," and compares the vexation of the reader, baffled in the search for a consistent meaning, to the toil of him who, attempting to decipher hieroglyphics or cuneiform inscriptions, can discern a meaning here and there, but can trace throughout no self-consistent and congruous sense (Graetz, *Kohelet*, p. 4).

It must not be supposed, however, that the difficulty of the book is caused mainly by the obscurity of its language, though here again the book stands alone, its diction presenting a marked difference from that of any other of the Biblical books. The pre-eminent difficulty of Ecclesiastes has resulted to a large extent from interpreters' having failed to place the book in its true relation to history, as well as from other causes which often tend to obscure the meaning of an author who wrote in a distant age. But, in addition to these more usual causes of difficulty, there would certainly appear to be another, which was inherent in the original composition of the book. The distinction between esoteric and exoteric doctrine, which we find afterwards in

the New Testament (*e.g.* Matt. xiii. 11 ; 1 Cor. ii. 6), appears to have been already operative when Ecclesiastes was written. In treating of his grand themes the author doubtless had in view those who were already initiated in the school of philosophical wisdom. He wrote, not for the frivolous and unlearned, but for earnest and meditative students, whose minds would be braced up and invigorated by grappling with difficulty, and who would be qualified to enjoy that intense pleasure of successful investigation, concerning which our author himself says: "Who is as the wise man? And who as he that knoweth the explanation of a thing? A man's wisdom causeth his face to shine, and the fixedness of his countenance is changed" (viii. 1). The position that Ecclesiastes possesses a designedly enigmatical character is one of no small importance; and it is desirable that the reader should keep it steadily in view while studying and investigating the book.

## § 2. THE ALLEGED SOLOMONIC AUTHORSHIP.

That Ecclesiastes was not written by Solomon is the deliberate verdict of modern criticism; and to this verdict assent must certainly be given. The evidence adduced is, on the whole, so weighty that, if there are any competent Hebraists who would still maintain the Solomonic authorship, it is probable that they are comparatively few. The popular opinion concerning the authorship of our book has, indeed, been opposed by arguments which may not be by themselves conclusive; as, for example, that derived from the use of the preterite in i. 12: "I Koheleth *was* (יָדַעְתִּי) king over Israel in Jerusalem." It may be replied that, if Solomon was the author, the book must have been written at a late period of his life, when he would not unreasonably endeavour to look at his career from the stand-point of the coming generation, or of posterity, rather than from that of his contemporaries. Such a mode of expression as that in question would be suited to one writing a book which was

not designed to gain temporary applause, but to be a *κτηῖμα ἐς αἰὲν*, "a possession in perpetuity." In like manner, it may be said that the words "in Jerusalem," of the same verse, are appropriate as coming from one who takes so wide an outlook over the world and mankind as does the author of our book, and therefore that they do not necessarily imply that the partition of the kingdom was already an historical fact. Again, it has been urged that Solomon would not have been likely to speak uncertainly about his future heir (ii. 18, 19). But this argument perhaps rather tells the other way. A later writer with the history before him might seem the less likely to speak with uncertainty. Moreover, we need not—if Solomon wrote mainly with a view to posterity—find insuperable difficulty in such passages as i. 16, ii. 7, 8, on the ground that it would have been a violation of the dictates of modesty for an author so to write of his own wealth and his own wisdom. More weight must be allowed to Koheleth's speaking of his addiction to folly and recklessness as a philosophical experiment in which he had engaged, and not as impiety or sin of which he sorely repented. Here we seem to discern some evidence that we have before us a fictitious personage. Similarly, in what is said of misgovernment and maladministration, we do not find any trace of that strong personal interest which a monarch with power such as that of Solomon might be expected to feel, especially if he were speaking of what had occurred in his own kingdom (comp. iii. 16, iv. 1, v. 8, viii. 10). And when we come to the exhortation to respect the king (viii. 2—4), and to be yielding to him when he is angry (x. 4), and read of Koheleth's having seen "servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth" (x. 7), we seem rather to have the words of a private subject than of a monarch. It is perhaps yet more improbable that Solomon would have spoken with respect to the "great king" and the "poor wise man" after the manner of ix. 13—18; and



especially does it seem unlikely that he, great king as he was, would have used those, apparently, contemptuous expressions with regard to the "great king," or to such as he, found in ver. 17, "The words of wise men in quietness are heard above *the outcry of one ruling over fools.*" In fact, after the second chapter, the Solomonic or royal character of Koheleth almost, if not altogether, disappears—at any rate till we come to xii. 9; and sometimes Koheleth's personal experience seems to become so shadowy that we might perhaps entirely forget that we are reading a narrative of such experience, if we were not reminded of it by such passages as vii. 15, 23 *sq.*, x. 7. Further, the sacred theocratic name Jehovah is absent from the book; and, in accordance with this absence, we find a searching philosophy instead of the theocratic spirit, with its legal sanctions of earthly good and evil. This philosophical character of the book, differing, as already mentioned, from what appears in Job and the Proverbs, affords an important argument in favour of its late origin. Besides, if Solomon was really the author of Ecclesiastes, it seems not easy to understand why he should call himself *Koheleth*, instead of using his ordinary and well-known name. May we not with probability conclude, from the employment of the name *Koheleth*, that the author of our book did not intend to be understood as meaning that the work was really written by the Solomon of Hebrew history? In addition to what has been said, there is the powerful argument, in favour of the late origin of the book, derived from the fact that its language makes a marked approach to Rabbinical Hebrew. With respect to isolated words or phrases, parallels may perhaps *in part* be found in the earlier literature, but no satisfactory answer can be thus given to an argument drawn from the prevailing and general complexion of the language.

But it may be said, we have, in favour of the traditional belief, at least the statement of the first verse which

ascribes the authorship of the book to the "son of David." With respect to this verse the reply may be made, that it is a superscription resembling to some extent the titles to the Psalms and the subscriptions to the apostolical Epistles, and that thus it may reasonably be questioned whether the first verse was not added by a later hand. But, even on the supposition that the first verse was written by the author himself, little importance need be attached to the words "son of David," if the author had made his fiction sufficiently transparent by the use of the name *Koheleth* instead of *Shelomoh* or Solomon.

The position, then, must certainly be maintained, that *Ecclesiastes* was not written by Solomon, but that the book is the production of an age later than that of this great Hebrew monarch.

### § 3. EVIDENCE THAT ECCLESIASTES WAS WRITTEN BEFORE ECCLESIASTICUS.

Putting aside, therefore, the opinion that *Ecclesiastes* was written by Solomon, we have before us an extended period during which the book must have been composed. The language, it is true, does not allow us to assent to any very early post-Solomonic date. But, as it seems to me, neither the language of the book, nor supposed allusions to contemporary history, can enable us to fix the date certainly within two or three hundred years. Is it possible, then, to find any evidence which may enable us to determine the date of the book either precisely or approximately? Now, as to the date before which *Ecclesiastes* was written, important evidence may, I think, be obtained from *Ecclesiasticus*—or *Sirach*, as the book is sometimes called—taken together with the translator's prologue. If, indeed, we could assent without reserve to the opinion of those who maintain that the prologue furnishes satisfactory evidence that the Old Testament Canon was already definitely fixed, the question which we have before us might be somewhat

more easily settled. It may not, however, be possible to prove that, when the translator speaks of "the law itself, and the prophecies, and the rest of the books" (τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων), the third division, "the rest of the books," or the Hagiographa, was already so definite that no addition could possibly be made to it. Still, it would certainly appear that the translator attributed some degree of antiquity to the books of the Hagiographa, for we read in this same prologue of "the law, and the prophets, and the others who followed in their steps" (τῶν ἄλλων τῶν κατ' αὐτοὺς ἠκολουθηκότων), and of "the law, and the prophets, and the other books of the fathers" (τῶν ἄλλων πατρίων βιβλίων). The attribution of antiquity to the books of the Hagiographa does not, however, afford grounds sufficient to enable us to determine whether or not Ecclesiastes was already numbered among them. But without attempting definitely to settle this question (comp. however, § 17), we may, I think, find evidence of high probability that Ecclesiastes was in existence, not only when the translator wrote the prologue, but even when the Son of Sirach composed his book. There are several places in Sirach which might be supposed, with more or less probability, to indicate an acquaintance with Ecclesiastes, as Sir. xii. 13 *sq.* compared with Ecc. x. 11; Sir. xiii. 25, 26 with Ecc. viii. 1; Sir. xix. 16 with Ecc. vii. 20—22; Sir. xx. 7, xxi. 25, 26, with Ecc. x. 2, 3, 12—14; Sir. xxvii. 26 with Ecc. x. 8.\* Such coincidences as may be found in these and some other places may not be unworthy of consideration, but I would direct the reader's attention more especially to one remarkable passage (Sir. xxxiii. 13—15)†, which may be thus rendered: "As a potter's clay in his hand—all its ways according to his good pleasure—so men in the hand of Him who made them, to

\* Ewald (*Gött. gel. Anz.* 1872, p. 1699) thinks that a comparison might be made between Sir. xxxiii. 15 and Ecc. vii. 27, and between Sir. xl. 11 and Ecc. i. 7.

† Otherwise, Sir. xxxvi. 13—15, according to the edition.

render to them according to His judgment. Opposite to evil is good, and opposite to death is life, so opposite to a pious man a sinner. And so look at all the works of the Highest—two and two, one over against another.” With this passage should be compared Ecc. vii. 13—15: “Behold the work of God; for who can straighten what He hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity enjoy thyself, but in the day of adversity behold. God indeed hath set the one in correspondence to the other, because man findeth nothing after him. I saw all in the days of my vanity: there is a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man prolonging his life in his wickedness.” Corresponding to what is said in the one passage of men and their lot being “in the hand of Him who made them,” like “a potter’s clay,” we find in the other “the work of God” in relation to men described as being such that none “*can straighten what He hath made crooked.*” The words “opposite to evil is good” (ἀπέναντι τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἀγαθόν) should be compared with what is said in Ecclesiastes of “adversity” (רָצָה “evil”) and “prosperity” (טוֹבָה “good”). Then it should be observed that in the words “and opposite to death is life, so opposite to a pious man a sinner,” taking them in the order in which they stand, “death” in the one clause corresponds to “a pious man” in the other, and “life” to “a sinner.” This seemingly inverted order, and this close and remarkable juxtaposition, may be accounted for if we turn to the passage in Ecclesiastes: “There is *a righteous man perishing* in his righteousness, and there is *a wicked man prolonging-his-life* (פְּרֹאֵרִים) in his wickedness.” Again, “look at (ἐμβλεψον εἰς) all the works of the Highest,” answers to “behold (רָא) the work of God.” Perhaps, however, the most important words are those which conclude the passage from Sirach: “Two and two, one over against another” (δύο δύο ἔν κατέναντι τοῦ ἑνός), which should be compared with “God indeed hath set the one in correspondence to the other”

(אֶת־יָדָא לְעִמְת־יָדָא). The Greek words *ἐν κατέναντι τοῦ ἐνός* appear almost as if a direct translation from the Hebrew of Ecclesiastes; and it is the idea of duality in correspondence found in Ecclesiastes, one thing balancing another as made by God, that seems especially to have impressed the mind of the Son of Sirach.\* That the correspondence between the two passages is accidental can scarcely be regarded as probable. That the author of Ecclesiastes borrowed from Sirach is not likely to be maintained after a careful study of the two passages. There remains the possibility that both authors may have been indebted to a common source. But though it is possible that Ecclesiastes possesses to some extent a composite character, yet, if the reader will mark carefully the various points of correspondence, the connection of the passage in Ecclesiastes with the context, and also how in the midst of it occur the words of Koheleth, "I saw all in the days of my vanity," he is not likely to come to the conclusion that the passage was taken bodily from some earlier work and transferred to Ecclesiastes. It must be maintained, then, that the passages Ecc. vii. 13—15 and Sir. xxxiii. 13—15 furnish weighty evidence in favour of the conclusion that Ecclesiastes was already in existence in the days of the Son of Sirach. Now, if the evidence thus adduced is valid, and if we are able to ascertain the time when Sirach was composed, we shall have a date *before which* Ecclesiastes was written. But, before endeavouring to determine this date, it may be desirable to consider the influence exercised on Ecclesiastes by the post-Aristotelian philosophy. This may enable us to determine also a serviceable date *after which* the book was written.

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\* This idea reappears (*πάντα ἴσσοι ἐν κατέναντι τοῦ ἐνός*) in Sir. xlii. 24, 25, but not with the intent of setting forth so prominently the Divine sovereignty as in chap. xxxiii. 13—15, the passage quoted above.

#### § 4. MANIFEST INFLUENCE OF THE POST-ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY.

At first sight it will perhaps appear to many readers improbable that the author of Ecclesiastes possessed any acquaintance with Greek philosophy, but this apparent improbability may disappear on a further consideration of the matter. Whatever improbability might exist with respect to earlier Greek speculation must, through the closer connection of the East and West in consequence of the victories of Alexander, be greatly diminished with respect to post-Aristotelian philosophy. Further, among the philosophical sects which arose after the death of Aristotle a very prominent place must be assigned to the Stoics. Now Stoicism wears to a large extent an Oriental aspect; and besides it is noteworthy that the early Stoic teachers themselves were, for the most part, of Eastern extraction, coming from the islands of the Eastern Archipelago, from Asia Minor, and from Syria. Zeno, the founder of the sect, was from Citium, in Cyprus, a place said to have been colonised by Phœnicians; and he was himself reputed to be of Phœnician descent. When, in Zeno's earlier life, he was, according to Diogenes Laërtius (vii. 2), engaged as a merchant, and was shipwrecked just by the Piræus, he lost a quantity of purple from Phœnicia. And it would certainly appear that, after Zeno had become settled at Athens as a philosophical teacher, he still retained his connection with Eastern and Semitic peoples. He declined, it is said, to accept the Athenian citizenship, and so to sunder or weaken his connection with Citium (Plutarch, *De Stoic. Repugn.* 4). We find, moreover, mentioned among his immediate disciples Persæus, also from Citium, with Herillus from Carthage, Athenodorus from Cilicia, Dionysius of Heraclea in Pontus, Zeno of Sidon—not to be confounded with the Epicurean Zeno of Sidon—and Cleanthes, from Assos in the Troad. Subsequently we read of Chrysippus, from Soli in Cilicia

—if, indeed, this great Stoic teacher was not instructed by Zeno himself—Diogenes of the Babylonian Seleucia, Antipater from Tarsus, Posidonius from Apamea in Syria, and others.\* Now, looking at this strongly marked connection of Stoicism with the East, we may well put aside the notion of its being altogether improbable that a knowledge of the Stoic philosophy should be possessed by a writer living in Palestine; for such, we may suppose, was the position of the author of Ecclesiastes. Indeed, taking into account merely what has been said, it would seem not unlikely that this philosophy gained, at an early period, considerable acceptance among the peoples on the east of the Mediterranean.

Having thus, so far as the Stoic philosophy is concerned, dealt with the notion of its being *à priori* improbable that the author of Ecclesiastes was influenced thereby, we may proceed to consider evidence which the book itself furnishes showing that this influence was really exerted; and the evidence is such as, I think, can scarcely leave any reasonable doubt concerning the matter.

The great principle of Stoic morals was expressed in the formula τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν, “to live conformably to Nature.” That conduct, according to the Stoics, was virtuous which resulted from considering the manifestation in Nature of the Eternal Reason; and the virtuous man, by the exercise of his reason, followed Nature. Now, in the Catalogue of the Times and Seasons, in the third chapter of our book, we have, as it seems to me, a setting forth of this great principle of Stoic ethics. From a theocratic point of view this portion of the book seems to wear a strange and abnormal aspect, but if it be supposed that the Stoic principle of morality is developed

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\* A considerably larger number of names is given by Dr. Lightfoot in notes to the dissertation on “St. Paul and Seneca,” appended to his work on *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 297, 301.

therein, this aspect may be easily and fully accounted for. We shall then have, in iii. 2—8, a compendious statement of the particulars which make up human life, and for each of which there is in Nature a determined season. Each action is to be performed only at the allotted time, since “for everything there is an appointed time, and a season for every matter under heaven.” The righteous man, having respect to the divinely appointed times and seasons, acts conformably thereto; by the wicked man this natural order is disregarded and violated (iii. 16). In the next verse (iii. 17), “I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a season for every matter, and for all the work there,” the last word “there” (עַתָּה) has occasioned perplexity; and a change of the עַתָּה into עֵת has been proposed. But, on the supposition that we have in iii. 1—8 a setting forth of the Stoic moral principle of “living conformably to Nature,” and that verse 17 looks back to what had been said before—this word no longer presents difficulty; nay, it accords so perfectly with the supposition in question as to afford strong evidence of truth. The sense will be, “*There*”—IN THE COURSE OF NATURE—“is a season for every matter, and for all the work” of man. And that the word “there” does thus look back to verses 1—8 is shown, moreover, by the repetition from the first verse of the words עֵת לְכָל־מִשְׁאֵל, “a season for every matter.”\*

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\* There is a passage in Marcus Aurelius (iv. 32) which may be to some extent compared with Ecc. iii. 1—9. In this passage men are spoken of as, one age after another, “marrying, bringing up children, suffering sickness, dying, making war, feasting, trafficking, tilling, flattering, showing arrogance, suspecting, plotting, longing for some persons to die, murmuring at their present state, indulging in love, laying up treasure, seeking after consulships and kingdoms.” With the question (Ecc. iii. 9), “What advantage hath he who worketh in respect of that whereat he toileth?” may be compared the



Thus for that remarkable portion of Ecclesiastes which I have called the Catalogue of the Times and Seasons, as well as for other passages related thereto, a reasonable explanation is found, on the hypothesis that the author of Ecclesiastes was acquainted with and influenced by the Stoic doctrine that there is in the course of Nature a certain definite order to which it is the duty of man to conform his conduct. Still, notwithstanding the evidence thus adduced, some might perhaps think it possible that the author of Ecclesiastes attained the conception of the Life according to Nature altogether independently of the philosophers of the Porch. But the evidence of Stoic influence on our book is very greatly strengthened, when we find that there is reason to recognise the presence, not only of the Stoic ethics, but also of the Stoic physical philosophy. According to this philosophy the course of things in Nature proceeds in a predetermined order, and with invariable sequence. When one cycle is completed the procession of events begins anew, to repeat, even in its minutest particular, what has gone before. Can we doubt that this teaching is reflected, when we read that, "as to all that God doeth, it is to be for ever: there is no making addition to it, and there is no taking away from it" (iii. 14); and that "whatever hath been, it had been long ago before; and what is to be already hath been" (iii. 15), the course of things in the world being but like the revolution of a wheel or circle? And it is worthy of remark here that, in the conception of the course of things as a revolving circle, we may find an adequate explanation of the difficult words which conclude the verse just quoted (iii. 15): "And God will seek after what hath gone before," or, rendered more literally, "And God will seek after what is pursued" (לִמְצוֹת אֲחֵרֵי). Objects on the periphery of a revolving circle seem to chase one another; and, as the circle

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statement in Marcus Aurelius (*l. c.*) respecting the multitudes who in bygone times, after the intense struggle of life, "fell and were resolved into the elements."

rotates, what may have passed out of view appears again in the same order and with the same sequence. "That which was pursued" is, as it were, sought after, and found, and brought back again. In the first chapter, also, indications of the Stoic physical philosophy seem clearly manifest. The toil of Nature is incessant but resultless. The sun continues persistently the same monotonous course; the winds ever blow again according to their circuits; the rivers never so fill the sea that thenceforth it has no place for their waters (i. 5—7). And when we think of the Stoic doctrine that each successive cycle only repeated what had gone before, every thing, every event, and every person, as it were, reappearing, we can account at once for the words, "There is nothing new under the sun. Let there be a thing as to which one saith, Behold this, it is new; it hath been long ago in the olden time which was before us" (i. 9, 10).\* And then, that "there is no memorial of those who went before, and even of those coming after who are to be, there will be no memorial of them with those who will be afterwards" (i. 11)—this would naturally follow if, as the Stoics taught, each successive cycle begins entirely anew, that which went before having been ended by an all-destroying catastrophe. It is true that the author of Ecclesiastes does not mention a general conflagration at the end of each cycle; indeed he speaks of the permanence of *the earth* (i. 4). But this was a matter with respect to which the Stoic teachers themselves differed in opinion.

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\* The opinions of the Stoics seem to have varied as to the question of actual personal identity in the successive cycles—as to whether, for example, in the next cycle, Socrates himself will again marry Xanthippe, and again be accused by Anytus and Meletus, or whether a quasi-Socrates will marry a quasi-Xanthippe, and be accused by a quasi-Anytus and a quasi-Meletus. Seneca, in Ep. xxxvi. 10, declares for actual personal identity: "Veniet iterum qui nos in lucem reponat dies, quem multi recusarent, nisi oblitos reduceret. . . . Æquo animo debet rediturus exire."

Boëthus, as it would appear from Philo (*De Mundi Incorrupt.*), followed by Panætius and Posidonius, denied the Stoic doctrine concerning both the conflagrations (τὰς ἐκπυρώσεις) and the renewal or regeneration (παλιγγενεσίας) of the world. But, apart from the notion of a general conflagration, it was quite possible to maintain the doctrine of cycles, of a periodical revolution in the history of the world, so that "there was nothing new under the sun." Marcus Aurelius (xi. 1) speaks as though history repeated itself in about forty years, and he places among the privileges of a reasonable soul (τὰ ἴδια τῆς λογικῆς ψυχῆς), its ability to discern that those who shall come afterwards will see nothing newer than fell to the lot of their predecessors, and that those who went before saw nothing additional to what their successors were destined to behold. Still it is perhaps questionable whether such a mention of the permanence of the earth as that of i. 4 necessarily involves the denial of a periodic conflagration. The matter of the earth might be conceived of as enduring, even if all memorials of man and his works were consumed.

Koheleth's great thought that "all is vanity" may be regarded, too, as a natural inference from the Stoic doctrines. Amid Nature's sternly invariable revolutions, man can make no real advance; nay, he can secure for himself no permanent place or footing. His perpetual striving must ever be fruitless and vain. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." It may seem, however, that, if there is a pre-determined order in Nature, an all-pervading Providence, a designed mutual conformity between man and the world, then it involves some inconsistency to look upon worldly things and worldly pursuits with contempt, and to speak of them as utterly unsatisfying and vain. But if there is an inconsistency here, it is one of which the Stoics were certainly guilty. Marcus Aurelius, for example, says, that to esteem worldly things is to resemble the man who should set his affection on some mean and insignificant bird flying

past him, which he has no sooner beheld than it passes out of his sight (vi. 15). Worldly things are but as smoke, as very nothingness (x. 31).

Further, on the supposition that Stoic influence is manifested in our book, we may be able readily to account for its recognition of an overmastering Fate or Destiny, since, as is well known, Fatalism was one of the Stoic doctrines. We can understand how it is that Koheleth teaches that neither the swift, nor the mighty, nor the wise, nor the prudent, can command success, but that all are alike exposed to the effects of seasons and accidents (ix. 11); and also that "mankind are snared by an evil season, when it falleth upon them suddenly," like "fishes that are caught in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare" (ix. 12).

It seems unnecessary to adduce in this place more than one other indication of the influence of Stoicism on Ecclesiastes. According to the Stoics, folly is madness; all fools are mad (λέγουσι . . . πάντας τε τοὺς ἄφρονας μαίνεισθαι οὐ γὰρ φρονίμους εἶναι, ἄλλα κατὰ τὴν ἴσην τῇ ἀφροσύνῃ μανίαν πάντα πράττειν—*Diog. Laërt.* vii. 124). And in the class of fools, and consequently of madmen, they included the great mass of mankind:—

“Quem mala stultitia et quemcunque inscitia veri  
Cæcum agit, insanum Chrysippi porticus et grex  
Autumat. Hæc populos, hæc magnos formula reges,  
Excepto sapiente, tenet.”—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 3.

Now in the way in which the word הַלְלוֹת “madness”\*

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\* הַלְלוֹת—if indeed הַלְלוֹת is a true plural—is derived from הִלֵּל, a verb which is probably onomatopœtic, representing the resonance of a sounding body when struck. It seems likely that from thus representing the giving forth of sound the word came to denote also the effulgence of light, and afterwards that bursting forth and frenzy characteristic of some forms of mental derangement. The הַלְלוֹת of the Psalms are probably the

is employed in our book we may find, as it seems to me, some reflection of this peculiarly Stoic mode of expression,—that folly is madness; that fools are mad. As an example may be given the words of ii. 12, “And I turned to behold wisdom, and *madness, and folly.*” Probably, however, we ought here to regard the *הַסְּלִיחַ* as intended to qualify and explain the *הוֹלֵלִיחַ* preceding, and accordingly to render, “I turned to behold . . . madness, *even* folly.” But, even without this change, it may be at once seen not only that the ideas of “madness” and “folly” are associated together, but that “madness” stands first, in contrast to “wisdom,” though manifestly it is not mental derangement to which reference is made. Similar is i. 17, “And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know *madness and folly*” (or “madness *even* folly.”) So also “madness” in a moral sense is spoken of in vii. 25: “I proceeded, I and my heart, to know and to explore, and to seek out wisdom and a plan, and to know *the depravity of obduracy and folly, madness.*” Others might, perhaps, be inclined to translate this passage somewhat differently, but I do not see that any change which could be fairly made would much affect the matter we have now under consideration. Again, in ix. 3: “This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one lot to all; therefore indeed the heart of mankind is full of evil, and *madness* is in their heart during their life; and afterwards they go to the dead:” here the “madness” spoken of is manifestly moral. Similarly in x. 13 *הוֹלֵלִיחַ* is used in a moral sense in accordance with the accompanying *רָצָה*: “The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of his talk is *wicked madness.*” Regarded as reflecting the Stoic doctrine, the manner in which our book speaks of “madness” may be reason-

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“arrogant,” whose pride, boasting, and display contrast with the humility and subdued behaviour of the pious. (See Ps. lxxv. 5.)

ably accounted for, but looked at in any other way, it will probably remain a perplexing, if not an inexplicable phenomenon.

On the whole, the evidence thus adduced can scarcely be regarded as other than exceedingly strong and cogent. But it is not only the influence of Stoicism which may be discerned; we have, I think, clear evidence of the presence, also, of the opposed and antithetical doctrine of Epicureanism. I shall call the reader's attention to two places, one of which shall be that much-discussed passage iii. 18—22, the other v. 18—20. The first passage may be given thus: "I said in my heart, with respect to mankind, God means to test them, and to see that they are beasts, even they themselves; for the lot of mankind is also the lot of beasts; and there is one lot to them. As is the death of the one, so is the death of the other; and there is one spirit to them all, and pre-eminence of man over the beasts there is none: for they are all vanity. All are going to one place: all were from the dust; and all are returning to the dust. Who knoweth as to the spirit of mankind whether it goeth up on high, or as to the spirit of the beasts whether it goeth down beneath to the earth? And I saw that there is nothing better than that man should be glad in his works, for that is his portion; for who will bring him to look upon what will be after him?" This passage seems to me to stand in designed opposition to the Stoical teaching which had preceded, and in which the orderly arrangement of the course of nature, and the moral government of the world, had been propounded. In the passage just quoted, the truth of these conceptions is virtually denied, and an Epicurean view of man's condition is set forth. Men are but beasts, having, like them, come forth from the earth, and being, like them, destined to turn again to dust. There is no special divine care manifested on man's behalf. If he is wise, therefore, he will derive the utmost possible enjoyment from the world, during

the continuance of his fleeting life, "for who will bring him to look upon what will be after him?" In the emphatic manner in which it is denied that man has any pre-eminence over the beasts, and asserted that "there is one spirit to them all," we may reasonably trace an allusion to the Stoic distinction between brutes and men, according to which the former possessed an unreasoning soul, while the latter constituted a class by themselves, as alone having a reasonable soul. And, in accordance with this distinction, we may well believe that the Stoics denied to the souls of brutes that measure of immortality (ver. 21), that ascent upwards to the ether, which they allowed with respect to the souls of men. That men and beasts came alike at first from dust or earth (ἄφ' ἧς)\* accords with the Epicurean doctrine as to the origin of animals and men,—

"Quum prorepserunt primis animalia terris,  
Mutum et turpe pecus."—HORACE, *Sat.* i. 3.

The statement that all alike are returning to dust is probably to be understood as conveying in a general way the Epicurean denial of man's immortality, yet without implying that the subtle and minute atoms of which the human soul, according to Lucretius (iii. 425 *sq.*), consists, do not at death disperse themselves like smoke or vapour. The twenty-second verse: "And I saw that there is nothing better than that man should be glad in his works, for that is his portion; for who will bring him to look upon what will be after him?" is to be understood, in accordance with what has been said, as giving the leading principle of Epicurean moral science,—that, man being what he is, happi-

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\* With the A. V. I have rendered ἄφ' ἧς by "dust," but the word must not be understood as necessarily excluding the idea of moisture (Sept. in this place *χοός, χούν*)—a matter of some importance with respect to the Epicurean view of the origin of animals. Even in Gen. ii. 7 the word probably denotes clay or moist plastic earth, such as could be moulded into the figure of a man.

ness or pleasure in this life should be his aim and object, since this is the highest good which he can possibly attain.

The Epicurean conception of life appears with equal clearness in the passage v. 18—20: “Lo, that is what I have seen good, what I have seen suitable, to eat, and to drink, and to experience enjoyment in respect of all one’s toil which he toileth under the sun, during the number of the days of his life, which God hath given him, for that is his portion. Also as to all men to whom God hath given wealth and treasures, and hath given to them power to eat therefrom, and to receive their portion, and to rejoice in respect of their toil: as to this, it is the gift of God, so that he remembereth not much the days of his life, for God is making answer to the joy of his heart.” The last verse—to which I would more especially direct the reader’s attention—contains two statements; first, that the person in so happy a condition as that described, “remembereth not much the days of his life,” and, secondly, according to the translation just given, that “God is making answer to the joy of his heart.” Both of these remarkable statements may, it seems to me, be satisfactorily explained on the supposition that the Epicurean conception of happiness was in the mind of the author of Ecclesiastes when he wrote the passage. In the first statement; in the “not remembering much the days of life,” as they glide by in calm enjoyment, we may discern that *ἀραπαξία*, that perfect tranquillity which the Epicureans so highly esteemed. In the second statement the words of the original translated, “God is making answer to the joy of his heart,” have caused a good deal of difficulty to the interpreters; and from the translation given it may seem at first sight impossible to obtain a consistent sense. The difficulty presents itself in relation to the word *אָנָּן* which thus pointed must be taken as the participle *Hiphil* of *אָנָּן*. Now it would appear that this verb, from having the signification of “answering,” came to denote the alternate singing of responsive choirs (comp.



Ezra iii. 11 ; 1 Sam. xxi. 12).\* This usage may seem, at first, to have little to do with the matter now before us, but if the reader will nevertheless bear this usage in mind, a consideration of the Epicurean theology may help us to a reasonable solution of the difficulty. The Gods were conceived of, according to Epicurean ideas, not only as perfectly happy, but as enjoying a felicity analogous to that which it was the object of the Epicurean philosophy to attain. According to the work of Philodemus on the mode of life of the Gods (*περὶ τῆς τῶν θεῶν εὐστοχομένης διαγωγῆς*)† fragments of which were found at Herculaneum, the Gods, though exempt from sleep and death, require nourishment, possess habitations, and converse in Greek, or in language not greatly differing therefrom. “ In a word, he conceives of his Gods as though they were a society of Epicurean philosophers, possessing everything they can wish for,— eternal life, no care, and continued opportunity for agreeable conversation.” (Zeller, *Die Phil. der Griech.* div. iii. part i. p. 397.) “ But these Gods are innumerable ; for if the number of mortal beings is unlimited, the law of analogy requires that that of immortal beings should not

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\* In the Mishnah, *Moed Katon*, iii. 9, the “ answering ” (עִיבִי) of women lamenting for the dead (בְּעִיבֵי) is distinguished from the קִינָה in that the former is said to imply the utterance of all the women together (שְׂכֵלָן עֹנֵת כְּאַחַד), while the latter expresses one woman’s uttering her lamentation alone first, and then all answering after her (וְכֵלָן עֹנֵת אַחֲרֶיהָ), in accordance, in the view of the Mishmist, with Jer. ix. 20. Additional illustration may be derived from *Berakoth* viii. 8, where it is laid down that when, in a company, an Israelite pronounces a blessing, it is allowed to the company to answer “ Amen ” (עֹיבִין אֲמֵן) while he is still speaking, but in the case of a Samaritan not till the conclusion of the blessing has been heard.

† With the addition *κατὰ Ζήνωνος* or *κατὰ Ζήνωνα*, but it is uncertain which, on account of the imperfection of the MS. The former expression would refer to the founder of Stoicism ; the latter to Zeno of Sidon, the Epicurean.

be fewer." (Zeller, p. 398; Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* i. 19, 50.\*) And Epicurus himself tells Menceceus, in the letter found in Diogenes Laërtius, "You will live as a God among men; for in no respect like to a mortal animal is a man living in the enjoyment of immortal blessings" (x. 135). But if Gods and wise men thus live in an analogous manner, and enjoy the same kind of happiness, they may not unnaturally be conceived of as responsive choirs, singing alternate or harmonious strains. And thus we may dispose not unsatisfactorily of the difficulty in the expression "answering to the joy of his heart." Perhaps, however, the idea intended to be conveyed would be still better expressed, if we translate, "God is making harmony *with* the joy of his heart."† The probability of the interpretation which has been suggested may appear the stronger, if the reader bears in mind what has been said above as to the representation, in the first part of ver. 20, of the Epicurean ἀταραξία; for it is this perfect tranquillity which, according to the Epicurean conception, the Gods pre-eminently enjoy, in that space which they inhabit between the worlds,—the Gods in their tranquil abodes—

" Quas neque concutiunt venti nec nubila nimbis  
Aspergunt neque nix acri concreta pruina  
Cana cadens violat semperque immobilis æther  
Integit et large diffuso lumine rident.  
Omnia suppeditat porro natura neque ulla  
Res animi pacem delibat tempore in ullo."

LUCR. iii. 19—24.

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\* "In qua intelligi necesse est, eam esse naturam, ut omnia omnibus paribus paria respondeant. Hanc *ισορομίαν* appellat Epicurus, id est æquabilem tributionem. Ex hac illud igitur efficitur, si mortalium tanta multitudo sit, esse immortalium non minorem; et si quæ interimant, innumerabilia sunt, etiam ea quæ conservent, infinita esse debere."

† It may be remarked that פִּיִּי is followed by הַ of the person whose praise is celebrated (see 1 Sam. xxi. 12; Ps. cxlvii. 7).

It remains, however, to be remarked that "the Gods" have become in our passage "the Deity" or "God" (הַאֱלֹהִים), and that God, instead of living in utter disregard of men and their wants, is represented as apportioning the duration of life (ver. 18), as well as giving wealth and treasures, and the power of enjoyment when they have been given (ver. 19). To the contact of Epicureanism with Judaism, these departures from the true Epicurean theology may be perhaps with most probability ascribed.\*

There is one other passage in our book, whose accordance with what we know of the post-Aristotelian philosophy it may be well here to mention:—"And further, be admonished, my son, by these: *as to the making of many books there is no end*, and much close study is a wearying of the flesh" (xii. 12). The representation of great literary activity here given appears entirely to agree with the accounts which have come down to us concerning the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers. With respect to the writings of Epicurus, Diogenes speaks of about three hundred rolls (x. 26). The same author tells us that Apollodorus ὁ κηποτύραννος† composed above four hundred books (x. 25), but that Chrysippus, through his surpassing application, left behind him compositions amounting in number to more than seven hundred and five (vii. 180). And as to there being "no end" to the post-Aristotelian book-making, it would appear that the same subjects were again and again discussed, and that, to a considerable extent, successive

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This requires to be borne in mind with respect to the construction in our passage with ב.

\* This is said, of course, on account of the construction of הַאֱלֹהִים with the singular מַעֲנֶה; but on this account little difficulty need be felt, for it would appear that even Philodemus sometimes uses ὁ θεός of "the Deity" or "God" in a general way (e.g. Op. cit. *Herc.* Vol. tom. vi. col. 10).

† The supremacy of Apollodorus in the Garden was probably between about 125 and 90 B.C.

philosophers gave to their works titles identical with those which had been adopted by their predecessors.

The evidence which I have thus brought before the reader is, I venture to think, entirely conclusive. That the post-Aristotelian philosophy exercised an influence on Ecclesiastes must be regarded as manifest and certain. I make this statement with respect to the evidence taken as a whole, but, as it seems to me, it would be difficult to avoid the same conclusion, if the number of congruous facts were considerably fewer, so distinctly do some of these bear the impress of post-Aristotelian ideas and conceptions.

The attempt may be made, however, to evade the force of my argument by a vague and general statement, that Stoicism, in its essence, may have existed in the East before Zeno, and that the principle of making pleasure the end of existence was doubtless acted on by many who never heard of Epicurus.\* So loose a mode of objecting would scarcely perhaps deserve reply, but, even if we were to put aside the particular coincidences of thought, and even of expression, which have been laid before the reader, there would still remain the remarkable fact, that, while in the history of philosophy the appearance of Stoicism and Epicureanism is nearly simultaneous, the Stoical and Epicurean elements appear also *together* in Ecclesiastes. This fact, even on such a general view as that alluded to, would require explanation. Perhaps, however, with the view of preventing some misconception, it may not be out of place for me to say a word or two as to the relation of the post-Aristotelian philosophy, or at least of Stoicism, to previous philosophical systems.

Zeno, after his shipwreck—according to the account in

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\* In accordance with the remark of Grotius: "Non primo Epicuro aut Epicureis in mentem venit in voluptate ea quæ sensibus percipitur beatitudinem esse positam. Sed jam olim multis hominibus cogitatio incidit, quæ tamen vana recte instituto judici comperitur."

Diogenes Laërtius (vii. 1, 2, 3)—having gone to a book-seller's, and, reading the second book of Xenophon's *Memoabilia*, asked where he could meet with men corresponding to the picture drawn by Xenophon: he was directed to Crates the Cynic, who happened to be passing by at the time. Zeno followed him, and became his disciple. Zeno is said, also, to have received instruction from the Megarians Stilpo and Diodorus, as well as from the Academics Xenocrates and Polemo. Indeed it is alleged that for twenty years he attended different philosophical schools, before he established himself as a teacher at Athens. Zeno had moreover, according to the statement reported also by Diogenes (vii. 2), applied himself, in compliance with the direction of an oracle, to reading the books of the ancients. The composite character which the Stoic system possesses appears to be in such accord with these statements as to give evidence in favour of their substantial truth.

Philosophy, according to the Stoics, has a tripartite division into Logic, Physics, and Ethics. We are not, so far as relates to *Ecclesiastes*, very much concerned with the first of these sections, that of Logic (comp., however, note on *Ecc.* xii. 13). We may with probability, however, follow the opinion of Zeller, that the Stoic logic had for its basis that of Aristotle, although in this department Zeno may have owed something to Megarian influence. And it is not unimportant for us to observe that Logic—whatever may have been its relative importance as compared with Physics and Ethics—was an integral part of the Stoic philosophy. This fact must be looked upon as unfavourable to the opinion that Stoicism was imported into Greece from the East. Still it may be thought possible that the Stoic Physics and Ethics may have had an Oriental origin, even if the Logic was a subsequent accretion. But the relation of the Stoic Physics to the teaching of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus can scarcely be doubted. Like his doctrine was that of the Stoics, that all things have been evolved from

fire,\* into which, in order to a new evolution, they are again to be resolved. There is, however, a difference between the teaching of Heraclitus and that of the Stoics which, with regard to our present subject, is particularly worthy of notice. Heraclitus seems to have conceived of a stream originating in the primordial fire, and descending as the world is evolved, but, on the other hand, as ascending when the world is again resolved. I am not aware that there is evidence that he had any idea of a *cycle*, properly so called, or that he formed the conception of the course of things in the world being like a revolving circle. But this idea of revolution we do certainly appear to find among the Stoics. Thus Nemesius (*De Natura Hominis*, cap. 38) tells us that the Stoics considered that the great conflagration would occur when the planets, in certain definite periods of time, had returned to exactly the place which each occupied when first the world was formed; and also that the Gods who were exempt from destruction,† having followed and traced the course of one circuit (*παρηκολούθησαντες μὲ περιόδῳ*), knew therefrom all that is to happen in future cycles and in coming time. Now it would certainly appear that the conception of the course of the world expressed in Ecclesiastes (iii. 14, 15) is not that of the downward or upward stream of Heraclitus, but the revolving circle of the Stoics; for it is to a circle that nothing can be added, and it is from a circle that nothing can be taken away (iii. 14). Here, too, it may be well to remark that, although in the Hindu philosophy there is said to be the idea of the world being again and again evolved and resolved, yet, so far as I know, there is no proof that the conception of the course of things took in this philosophy the form of a cycle or revolving

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\* Στοιχείον εἶναι φάσι τῶν ὄντων τὸ πῦρ, καθάπερ Ἡράκλειτος. (Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* lib. xv., vol. iv. p. 58 ed. Gaisford.)

† According to the orthodox Stoic theology, however, it would seem that Zeus alone is eternal.

circle. The notion of ascribing to this philosophy the doctrine of the cycles as contained in our book, cannot be at all allowed. Apart from the influence of prejudice, such a notion is perhaps little likely to be entertained. That the Stoics derived from the Pythagoreans the conception to which reference has just been made, together with the doctrine of the repetition of precisely the same events in successive cycles, appears not improbable. And it is in accordance with the composite nature of the Stoic system that the idea of revolution should be associated with Heraclitus's conception of the divine world-fire.

So far as our present subject is concerned, I do not know that it is necessary to say more as to the sources of the Stoic Physics. We may pass on to the third branch of philosophy, that of Ethics, and, more particularly, to the inquiry whence was derived the Stoic moral principle of conformity to Nature. In ancient times the philosophical descent of Zeno and the Stoics was traced up to Socrates through Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynic School (comp. Diog. Laërt. vi. 14, and Eusebius, *Præp. Evang.* lib. xv., vol. iv. p. 57 ed. Gaisford). It accords with this pedigree that the duty of obeying natural law is insisted on in the recorded teaching of Socrates, and that the idea of the Life according to Nature was strongly and peculiarly manifested by the Cynics. Here, too, as well as in the department of Physics, the teaching of Heraclitus appears to have had its influence. But if the principle of living according to Nature was not, as found in Stoicism, essentially new, the mode and degree of development of this principle by the Stoics must be regarded as decidedly distinctive. And, I may remark, it is the manner and extent of development of this same principle in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes which must be looked upon as one of the most important points of connection between our book and the post-Aristotelian philosophy.

But, it may be asked, if the various doctrines of Stoicism were thus derived from Greek sources, how is the peculiar

and seemingly foreign character of the system to be accounted for? Two causes may be assigned; first, the circumstances of the time when the system was formed, and, secondly, the Oriental origin of its founder, and of so many of its early teachers. With respect to the first of these causes it has been said: "The Macedonian conquest had broken the independence of the Hellenic States. . . . When political life became impossible, the moral faculties of man were turned inward upon himself, and concentrated on the discipline of the individual soul." (Lightfoot on the *Philippians*, pp. 269, 270, diss. on "St. Paul and Seneca"). Philosophy, too, had decayed in respect of original speculative power, and Sir A. Grant remarks, in his essay on "The Ancient Stoics," "The very decline of thought . . . as it fell away on the speculative side, left the moral side prominent" (*The Ethics of Aristotle*, Essay vi.). That Stoicism should wear a somewhat strange and novel aspect is not altogether wonderful, if it arose under circumstances so different from those which had attended the origin of previous systems. To the second cause—the connection of Stoicism with the East in its early teachers—may be with probability ascribed, at least to a considerable extent, the choice which it made among the doctrines of the Greek philosophers, as well as the spirit in which it dealt with these doctrines. "To this fact," says Dr. Lightfoot, "may be ascribed the intense moral earnestness which was its most honourable characteristic." Hence, too, we may account for the system being so closely connected as it was with theology. "Founded," remarks Zeller, "as their whole view of the world is, upon the theory of one Divine Being—begetting from Himself and containing in Himself all finite creatures, upholding them by His might, ruling them according to an unalterable law, and thus manifesting Himself everywhere—their philosophy bears in general a decidedly religious tone. There is hardly a single prominent feature in the Stoic system which is not,



more or less, connected with theology" (*The Stoics, &c.*, Eng. transl. p. 322).

Here it is important to observe, that, if any system of Greek philosophy could be accepted among the theocratic people, it may be reasonably supposed that Stoicism would find acceptance, moulded as it had been by Oriental influence, and pervaded as it was by a moral and theological spirit.

In bringing to a close the discussion contained in this section, I think I may venture to repeat the assertion that evidence entirely conclusive has been adduced with respect to the influence of the post-Aristotelian philosophy on Ecclesiastes. The effects of the conquests of Alexander, the known connection of early Stoic teachers with the East, and the peculiarly religious character of the Stoic system, have been pointed out as standing in opposition to any supposed *à priori* improbability of such influence being exerted. Manifest coincidences with the post-Aristotelian philosophy, both in thought and expression, have been brought before the reader. These coincidences cannot be referred to the influence of earlier systems of philosophy. No adequate account can be given of them upon such a supposition. Besides, so far as the philosophy of Greece is concerned, the hypothesis of Greek influence prior to the change in the relations of the East and West effected by Alexander can scarcely be looked upon as probable. Lastly, evidence has been adduced of the presence in Ecclesiastes of both Stoicism and Epicureanism. The fact that *both* Stoic *and* Epicurean elements are present, would, by itself, point decisively to the post-Aristotelian philosophy, and to that alone.

#### § 5. THE APPROXIMATE DATE OF THE BOOK.

The influence of the post-Aristotelian philosophy on our book, while it is in other respects a matter of very great interest and importance, affords us valuable aid with respect

to the date after which the book was composed. It would seem most probable that the book was not written till after the death of both Zeno and Epicurus. The year 270 B.C. is given as the year of the death of Epicurus. The precise date of Zeno's death is not known, but it probably occurred some years before 250 B.C. We may then take this year, 250 B.C., as a date *after which* Ecclesiastes was written. Now if—in accordance with what has been before said—the evidence already adduced (§ 3) is valid, and if we are able to ascertain the time when Sirach was composed, we shall have, also, a date *before which* Ecclesiastes was written.

The indications of time which Sirach and its prologue present are not altogether without ambiguity, but from the words of the prologue, *ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὀγδόῳ καὶ τριακοστῷ ἔτει ἐπὶ τοῦ Εὐεργέτου βασιλείως παραγενηθεὶς εἰς Αἴγυπτον*, a reasonable conclusion as to the date of the book may be drawn. It would certainly appear that the translator, who was the author's grandson, went into Egypt in the thirty-eighth year of the reign\* of the second Ptolemy bearing the title Euergetes, Ptolemy Physcon. Further, the conclusion appears well supported that the years of Physcon's reign were reckoned, not from the death of his brother Ptolemy Philometor, but from Physcon's first assumption of regal state, twenty-four years before (170 B.C.). The date at which the translator of Sirach came into Egypt has thus been given as 132 B.C. Now, if we suppose that nearly fifty years had elapsed since the grandfather composed the book, we may place its date at 180 B.C. And this we may assign as a date *before which* Ecclesiastes was written. From 250, the date previously given, to 180 B.C., there is a period of seventy years, somewhere during which

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\* A comparison should be made of the following passages cited by Fritzsche in the introduction to his work on Sirach in the *Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch*: 1 Macc. xiii. 42, xiv. 27; Hagg. i. 1, ii. 1 (i. 15); Zech. i. 7, vii. 1.

the composition of Ecclesiastes may be placed. But while, on the one hand, it would seem likely that Ecclesiastes was written some time before Sirach, so on the other, if we consider how Koheleth has, so to speak, assimilated both Stoicism and Epicureanism, and also how Koheleth is identified with the ancient King Solomon, it may well seem probable that these philosophical systems had already, when Ecclesiastes was written, acquired some degree of age. Perhaps, then, we cannot, on the whole, better satisfy the conditions of the problem than by placing the composition of our book at about 200 B.C., nearly the date assigned by Hitzig on other grounds.\*

Possibly, however, it may be questioned whether the Stoical element in Ecclesiastes does not indicate a Stoicism more fully developed than that of Zeno and his immediate followers. Such a doubt is, perhaps, most likely to be suggested by the representation of the Stoic moral principle in iii. 2—8. According to the statements of Diogenes Laërtius (vii. 89) and Stobæus (ii. 134), it would appear that, by Cleanthes and Chrysippus, this principle was de-

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\* Hitzig, resting on certain supposed historical allusions, gives the year 204 B.C. Mr. Samuel Sharpe, of Highbury, has favoured me with a communication suggesting a date somewhat earlier, his conclusion resting mainly on Ecc. iv. 13, where the "old and foolish king" is taken to be Seleucus Callinicus, and the "poor but wise youth," his relative Achæus. But, in addition to the general objection which may be urged against such a method of determining the date (comp. § 11, *s. f.*), arising from the nature of our book, I do not know that there was any such difference between the age of Callinicus and that of Achæus as could accord with the marked contrast in the passage cited. Neither do I consider it probable that Callinicus would be regarded as pre-eminently foolish, notwithstanding some facts in his history. And I am not aware that Achæus was looked upon as particularly poor, although he gave a marked example of probity and fidelity.

veloped—at any rate in expression—considerably beyond what had been maintained by Zeno. According to Stobæus, Zeno's principle *ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν* became in the hands of Chrysippus *ζῆν κατ' ἐμπειρίαν τῶν φύσει συμβαινόντων*. Certainly it would appear that the principle of “living conformably to Nature” must have been developed as fully as this before such a detailed representation as that of iii. 2—8 could have been given. Some doubt, it is true, may be felt as to whether we can, from the accounts which have come down to us, accurately distinguish between the doctrine of Zeno, of Cleanthes, and of Chrysippus. But the date of Ecclesiastes need not be much affected, if it be supposed, as seems probable, that the author of Ecclesiastes possessed some acquaintance with the teaching of Chrysippus, for the death of that philosopher is placed in 207 B.C. If, however, somewhat recent modifications of Stoic doctrine were put into the mouth of Koheleth, this need not be regarded as inconsistent with what has been said above. Stoicism, as a system, would still have acquired some degree of age.\*

Before closing this section it is worthy of observation how nearly Luther, apparently by the inspiration of genius, attained to a correct view of the age of Ecclesiastes and of other matters connected therewith. (See *Tischreden*, vol. vi. p. 128, ed. Irmischer.) He looked upon the book as composed by Sirach in the Maccabean period, and though in part essentially Solomonic, yet otherwise like a Talmud, with its materials drawn from many books probably found

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\* It may be supposed possible, from the mention of the permanence of the earth in Ecc. i. 4, that Boëthus had already denied the doctrine of the conflagration. The Boëthus of Philo (see p. 15) was probably the contemporary of Chrysippus; and therefore it would appear that the date 200 B.C. would be still unaffected. I do not know, however, that what is said in i. 4 need be ascribed to this source.

in the library of Ptolemy Euergetes. It would thus even appear that Luther perceived or suspected the connection of Ecclesiastes with Greek thought.

### § 6. GENERAL VIEW OF THE DESIGN OF THE BOOK.

We have now arrived at a point in the investigation from which we may be enabled to take a general view of the design and plan of the book. If Greek philosophy found its way into Judæa, it was not likely, even in the more religious form of Stoicism, to have an influence favourable to maintaining in simplicity and integrity the faith and piety of the theocratic people. But, in the shape of Epicureanism, the effect might be expected to be still more marked and manifest. It might, therefore, be thought probable *à priori* that a book like Ecclesiastes, dealing with Greek philosophy, would be intended to dissuade from, and not to encourage, philosophical study. It is in accordance with such a view that, both at the beginning and at the end of the philosophical portion of our book (i. 2 to xii. 8) is found the full, deep utterance, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." In accordance, also, with such a view is the admonition or warning against study and book-making found in xii. 12, and especially also is the emphatic injunction of xii. 13 to fear God and to obey His commands. Thus, in view of what has been already said, it may be regarded as probable that when Ecclesiastes was written, the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies were exerting among the theocratic people an influence adverse to the ancient faith of Judaism. The acquaintance with Greek philosophy which our book displays may induce us to conclude that the book was, probably, with respect to the author himself, a recantation, while it was intended to dissuade others from philosophical speculation, and to recall them to the fear of God and the observance of the Law.

§ 7. THE CONNECTION OF ECCLESIASTES WITH JEWISH HISTORY.  
THE THREE SECTS.

Here, however, the question may be not unreasonably asked, Are the facts of Jewish history in accord with the conclusions just expressed? Do these facts harmonise with the belief that about the year 200 B.C. the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies were exerting such an influence among the Jews as would give occasion for these philosophies to be spoken of after the manner found in Ecclesiastes? These questions may be, I think, most satisfactorily answered in the affirmative.

First; the view I have taken of the design and intention of Ecclesiastes is in harmony with the incontestable fact that, about twenty-four years later than the date 200 B.C.—that is, at the commencement of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes—the effects of Hellenising influence were most signally displayed. The account given in 2 Macc. iv. (comp. 1 Macc. i. 11 *sq.*, and Josephus, *Antiq.* xii. 5, § 1) tells of two successive high-priests bearing *Greek* names, *Jason* and *Menelaüs*. These, moreover, were followed, after no very long interval, by another called *Alcimus*. Then we read of Jewish youths bearing on their heads the *petasus*, after the Greek fashion; of *theori* sent from Jerusalem to the quinquennial festival in honour of the Tyrian Hercules; of a gymnasium opened at Jerusalem; of competitions in throwing the *discus*, and even of the priests being so affected by the Hellenising mania as to disregard and neglect the very service of the Temple. The narrative of the Second Book of Maccabees attributes this state of things to the influence of the high-priest Jason; but it might well be looked upon as probable, even apart from direct evidence, that causes tending to this outburst of Hellenism had been long and slowly at work, and that, prior to those revolutionary attempts of Jason and Antiochus Epiphanes which resulted in the Maccabean war, the people, or a consider-

able portion of them, were already, to no small extent, pervaded with the Hellenising spirit. We have, however, the testimony of 1 Macc. i. 11—13: "In those days there went forth from Israel sons transgressing the law; and they persuaded many, saying, Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles round about us, for, since the day when we were separated from them, many evils have overtaken us. And the proposal seemed good in their eyes. And certain from the people manifested their zeal, and went to the king; and he gave them authority to establish the institutions of the Gentiles." It would seem not unlikely, too, taking into account 1 Macc. ii. 42 (with the probably true reading *Ἀσιδαίων*), that already, before the war, things had gone so far that a distinct party—that of the Assideans—was formed, opposed to Hellenising innovation on the ancestral religion and ancient customs of Judaism.

If, however, we attempt to trace this Jewish Hellenism to its source, and to indicate its historical development, we have to encounter serious difficulty resulting from the scantiness and imperfection of the sources of Jewish history for so long a period prior to the commencement of the reign of Epiphanes. Yet, during the period of considerably more than a century which, at the year 200 B.C., had elapsed since the death of Alexander the Great, we may without difficulty discern various causes which would naturally tend to break down Jewish exclusiveness, and to open a way for the admission of Greek thought and Greek culture. The general influence of Alexander's conquests must, of course, not be neglected. Then, the first three Ptolemies, Soter, Philadelphus, and Euergetes, seem generally to have acted in a mild and lenient manner towards their Jewish tributaries in Palestine. The conciliatory influence of such a policy, it may be reasonably supposed, was strengthened by the privileges conferred on the Egyptian Jews, and, perhaps, at the time, still more considerably

by the translation of the Pentateuch into the Greek language. Then, with reference to Greek philosophy finding acceptance among the Jews, it may be said that the state of things in Palestine under the Ptolemies must probably have been, on the whole, more favourable to philosophical speculation than would have been a condition of political independence. The latter condition, with a more intense national life, would, it seems likely, have been less suitable to the habit of mind which philosophical study requires. It is true that, about the date 200 B.C., the Jews were exposed to suffering through the wars which Antiochus the Great was carrying on against Egypt, "so that," Josephus says, "their situation was not at all behind that of a ship storm-tossed, and distressed by the waves on both sides, between Antiochus's prosperity and its change, on the other hand, to adversity" (*Antiq.* xii. 3, § 3). But to one acquainted with the history of the period when philosophy attained its highest development in Greece, the instability spoken of by Josephus can scarcely seem out of harmony with the supposition that the study of philosophy was at the same time vigorously pursued.

It may be observed, moreover, with reference to that unstable position of the Jews to which reference has just been made, that it is at least not out of harmony with those passages in Ecclesiastes which speak of the uncertainty of human affairs, and of prosperity being suddenly exchanged for adversity. (See xi. 2—4 *et al.*) This may be said, even if the nature of the book requires us to be cautious in admitting the existence of allusions to contemporary history.

Interesting evidence in favour of intercourse on the part of the Jews with Greece about 200 B.C., or somewhat later, is furnished by the letter of the Spartan king to Onias III. as given by Josephus (*Antiq.* xii. 4, § 10), in which it is asserted that both Jews and Spartans were descended from



Abraham. The date of the letter is probably about 190 B.C. (Comp. 1 Macc. xii.)

Of no small importance in relation to our present subject is the brief statement of the Mishnah concerning Antigonus of Socho (אַנטיגונוס איש סוכו). According to *Aboth* i. 3, Antigonus came next in the Rabbinical succession after Simon the Just, and received from him the Mishnic tradition. In the passage cited Antigonus is also particularly distinguished as having taught that men should not serve God like hirelings, impelled by the hope of a reward. If we accept the historical position assigned by the Mishnah to Antigonus—and there appears no sufficient reason for discrediting it—we must regard him as living in the first half of the third century before Christ. He is thus the first Jew of whom we have any knowledge as bearing a Greek name—a very noteworthy circumstance; and the question may suggest itself, Has this Greek name of Antigonus any essential connection with his doctrine concerning the hope of reward? Now, as Epicurus was teaching between about 300 B.C. and 270 B.C. it may seem by no means impossible, taking into account Antigonus's Greek name, that his doctrine contains some dim reflection of the Epicurean denial of man's immortality. Indeed it may well be looked upon as far from unlikely that, in accordance with Sir. xxxix. 4, Antigonus had travelled to Athens or some other of the Greek cities; that, affected with admiration for Greek philosophy and culture, he adopted a Greek name, and that though, of course, it cannot be by any means supposed that he abandoned Jewish monotheism or the Jewish ritual, yet that his subsequent theological teaching was to some extent influenced and modified by what he heard either from Epicurus or from one of his disciples. Such an hypothesis is confirmed by the account given in the *Aboth of R. Nathan* concerning Antigonus and the Boëthusians and Zadokites, or Sadducees. According to this account Antigonus had two disciples, Boëthus and Zadok, who reiterated his teaching (שהיו שוגיו בדבריו). This

was done, moreover, by successive generations of disciples ; and thence it arose in the course of time that, through the teaching of Antigonus, the future state and the resurrection of the dead were called in question. And this scepticism in the school of Antigonus resulted in apostasy from the Law on the part of the Boëthusians and Sadducees. Now it is not necessary to maintain the actual personality of Boëthus and Zadok as disciples of Antigonus. Putting this aside, the connecting of the Sadducean denial of a future state with the school of Antigonus is very important ; and, bearing in mind what has been already said as to the Greek name of Antigonus, it may well appear that in the doctrine attributed to Antigonus in the Mishnah, we have a noteworthy indication of the influence of Greek philosophy.

Then it is well worthy to be observed that the Mishnah (*Berakoth*, ix. 5) looks back upon a time when the *Epicureans* (האפיקורסינין) corrupted the Jewish faith, saying that there is only one world. In consequence of this Epicurean doctrine, the Mishnist tells us that מן העולם ועד העולם was used in all forms of blessing in the sanctuary where מן העולם alone had been previously employed. It is true that, with the Old Testament before us (see *Nehem.* ix. 5 *et al.*), we cannot very easily admit that any such change was consequent on the diffusion of the doctrine of Epicurus as to a future state. But, nevertheless, I see no sufficient reason for regarding the word “Epicureans” in the passage cited as equivalent merely to “heretics” or “atheists.”\* It certainly appears to me—especially taking into account evidence before adduced—altogether the most probable conclusion that the Mishnic writer speaks of corruption and apostasy consequent on the acceptance of the true Epicurean doctrine among the Jews, even though what he connects

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\* The reading הריינין, “the heretics,” is probably not to be admitted, in accordance with the critical rule that the more difficult reading is to be preferred.

therewith may not be admissible. Compare also *Sanhedr.* xi. 1; *Rosh Hashshanah*, ii. 1. I do not maintain that the Jews did not sometimes designate as Epicureans those who were not disciples of Epicurus, but this usage is probably to be looked upon as secondary and subordinate.

The sources of Jewish history do not, with regard to Stoicism, furnish us, so far as I know, with any evidence as to its introduction among the Jews prior to 200 B.C., similar to the evidence which has been adduced with respect to Epicureanism; but since, for reasons which have been already mentioned (§ 4), Stoicism would seem to have been especially likely to find favour with Jewish minds, we may well conclude that, if there were among the Jews disciples of Epicurus, there must also have been disciples of his contemporary Zeno. Stoicism, however, would more easily allow of interfusion and incorporation with Judaism than would the doctrines of Epicurus. Probably the adoption of the doctrines of the Porch did not lead to apostasy or occasion any marked or conspicuous change, and on this account—as appears likely—the sources of Jewish history are silent as to the time of the introduction of Stoicism.

It may then, I think, be reasonably affirmed that Jewish history agrees perfectly with the conclusions before expressed—that Ecclesiastes was written about the year 200 B.C., and that its author's design was to maintain the ancient faith of Judaism in opposition to philosophical speculation, and especially to the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies.

If the view which I have so far set forth with regard to the relation of Ecclesiastes to Jewish history is correct, little difficulty will probably be felt in admitting that the book bears, in several particulars, a very important relation to the three great Jewish sects—the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes; though, indeed, it is no new thing to observe that principles characteristic of these sects are already to be discerned in Ecclesiastes, lying in the germ

and awaiting historical development.\* If in Ecclesiastes we really have evidence that, about the year 200 B.C., the doctrines of the Porch and the Garden had found disciples among the Jews, it may very possibly seem that the testimony of Josephus, that the Jews had had for a very long time three kinds of philosophy (*Antiq.* xviii. 1, § 2), and that the sect of the Pharisees came very near to that of the Stoics (*ἡ παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῇ παρ' Ἑλλησι Στωικῇ λεγομένη* — *Vita*, 2), may be far more trustworthy than some recent authors have maintained. If the fact is as before mentioned, we may well hesitate to affirm that, in the statements referred to, the historian diverged from the truth, influenced by a desire to conciliate for Jewish institutions the favour and esteem of his Greek readers. And thus we shall not be disposed readily to allow that we have a Jewish idea awkwardly dressed up in a Greek garb (comp. Graetz, *Gesch.* vol. iii. p. 455, 2nd edit.), when Josephus tells us that “the Pharisees ascribe all things to Fate and God” (*Φαρισαῖοι... εἰμαρμένη τε καὶ θεῶ προσάπτουσι πάντα* — *Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, § 14). Not only is the union of the two ideas of “God” and “Fate” entirely in accordance with the Stoic theology, but the very language employed meets with its parallel in the words of Cleanthes, as quoted by Epictetus (*Man.* 53):

"Ἄγε δὴ [σὺ] μὲν ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ σὺγ' ἡ Πεπρωμένη.

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\* Ewald remarks: “Die Zweifelsucht des Sadduqäer's, die Bedächtigkeit und Scheu des Pharisäers und die Lust zu mürrischer Zurückgezogenheit des Essäers liegen . . . schon in Qoheleth im Keime vor: nur was dort noch durch einen höhern Gedanken zusammengehalten und zu einer Einheit verarbeitet wurde, ist hier auseinandergefallen.” (*Gesch. des V. Isr.* vol. iv. p. 430.) And again: “Es steht schon am Scheidewege dieser drei Richtungen, man sieht hier schon die Möglichkeit wie diese entstehen konnten. . . Eben dadurch hat denn auch diess Buch eine eigne geschichtliche Bedeutung und Wichtigkeit.” (*Die Sal. Schrift.* p. 271.)

And when Josephus (*l. c.*) says further that, according to the Pharisees, the moral character of the actions of men "lies principally in the power of men, although Fate does co-operate in every action," we see brought into view the difficulty which was felt by the Stoics, and which attaches to every system which attempts to reconcile necessity with moral responsibility. It was probably the attempts made by the Stoics to escape from this difficulty which led Plutarch (*De Plac.* i. 27, § 3) to say that they taught that some things were determined by Fate, while others were not so determined (τὰ μὲν εἰμάρθαι, τὰ δ' ἀνειμάρθαι). And this is just what Josephus says of the Pharisees in *Antiq.* xiii. 5, § 9.\* Now in Ecclesiastes, not only does the doctrine of Fatalism present itself, as we have already seen (§ 4), but we have the two ideas of Fate and a personal God (ix. 1, 2—12); and the difficulty of reconciling the conception of a moral government with that of a predestined plan or scheme of the world is conspicuously manifested (§ 12). What we thus find in Ecclesiastes may with reason predispose us strongly to the acceptance of Josephus's testimony as to the Fatalistic doctrine of the Pharisees, and of the statement already cited, that the Pharisees were related to the Stoics.

In the account which Josephus gives of the eschatological doctrine of the Pharisees (*De Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, § 14), he says that they teach that "the souls of good men only are removed into other bodies" (μεταβαίνειν δὲ εἰς ἕτερον σῶμα τὴν τῶν ἀγαθῶν μόνην); and, according to *Antiq.* xviii. 1, § 3, those who have lived virtuously will "have liberty to revive and live again" (ῥαστώνην τοῦ ἀναβιοῦν). From these passages (comp. Acts xxiii. 8) we may infer with some probability that the teaching of the Pharisees concerning the resurrection was a modification of the Stoic doctrine with

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\* Οἱ μὲν οὖν Φαρισαῖοι τινὰ καὶ οὐ πάντα τῆς εἰμαρμένης εἶναι λέγουσιν ἔργον, τινὰ δ' ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ὑπάρχειν συμβαίνειν τε καὶ οὐ γίνεσθαι.

respect to the reappearance of the same, or, as it were, the same persons in successive cycles. If the *same* persons were to reappear, it may have been supposed that their souls would eternally survive, and that they would be clothed in the next cycle with new bodies. The limitation to the souls of good men may have proceeded from an unwillingness to make any admission tending to the conclusion that God is the Author of evil, and that evil is a permanent element in the system of things (comp. § 12). And here it is particularly worthy of remark, that Nemesius (*De Nat. Hom.* cap. 38) says there were those in his day who spoke of the Stoic doctrine concerning a cyclical reproduction and restoration as being the source even of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection (*καὶ διὰ ταύτην τὴν ἀποκατάστασιν φασὶ τινες τοὺς Χριστιανούς τὴν ἀνάστασιν φαντάζεσθαι*). It is deserving notice, also, that in opposing this assertion Nemesius does not allege that the Christian resurrection is to be different in kind from that of the Stoics, but that it will occur only once, and will not take place periodically (*οὐ κατὰ περίοδον ἔσσεσθαι*).

With respect to the Sadducees, I assent—in accordance with what I have said above—to the opinion which connects this sect with the Epicureans.\* What Josephus states as to the teaching of the Sadducees, agrees remarkably well with the Epicureanism of Ecclesiastes. According to Koheleth (*Ecc.* iii. 19—21), none can discern whether the spirit of man goes upward, or the spirit of the beast goes downward. Both man and beast are from the earth, and both are alike returning to dust. Josephus tells us that the Sadducees “do away with the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades” (*De Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, § 14), and that they teach that souls and bodies perish together (*Antiq.* xviii. 1, § 4). Again, in

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\* On this subject authorities are cited by Fabricius, *Bibliotheca Græca*, vol. iii. p. 610.

Ecclesiastes (chap. iv. *passim*) we find the doctrine of Divine Providence denied—if not in express terms, yet at any rate virtually—and the assertion made, in accordance with the Epicurean doctrine, that men are left to themselves in the world: there is no divine scheme or plan to which their conduct is conformed. And the Jewish historian says, concerning the Sadducees, that they “do away with Fate entirely, . . . and they say that good or evil lies before man for his own choice, and that it pertains to everyone to follow his own judgment in accepting the one or the other” (*De Bell. Jud.* ii. 8, § 14: comp. *Antiq.* xiii. 5, § 9).

But though there appears to me to be strong reason for connecting the Sadducees with the Epicureans, yet I think it would be incorrect to regard the Sadducees as wholly, or perhaps even chiefly, a philosophical sect. However paradoxical the opinion may at first sight appear, while connecting the Sadducees with the Epicureans, I at the same time adopt the opinion that the Sadducees were the priestly aristocracy, the centre of the Jewish state between the Return from the Captivity and the Maccabean war, and who, as the New Testament shows, possessed no small political influence even long afterwards. I not only thus follow in part the opinion of Geiger (*Urschrift, &c.*, p. 101 *sq.*), but with him I look upon the name “Sadducees” or “Zadokites” as representing the  $\text{זָדֹקִיטִּים}$  of Ezek. xliii. 19, xliv. 15 *al.*, and consequently the Zadok of R. Nathan appears to me to be most probably a mythical personage invented in order to explain the designation of the Sadducees. This is, perhaps, scarcely the place for a full discussion of the tenets of the Sadducees, but it is, I venture to think, on such a complex view as that I have suggested that the statements of the New Testament, the Talmud, and Josephus can be most fully reconciled. With regard to the New Testament, we are thus enabled to explain that very important passage (Acts v. 17), which speaks of “the high priest and all they who were with him, which is the sect of

the Sadducees" (see also iv. 1), and also those places which speak of the Sadducean denial of the resurrection (Matt. xxii. 23 *al.*)—implying by this denial, as it would certainly appear, the disavowal of a future state—and of their allegation that neither angel nor spirit really exists (Acts xxiii. 8).

To account for the facts concerning the Sadducees we may suppose that when, during the third century B.C., Greek philosophy obtained acceptance among the Jews, Epicureanism was adopted by a large proportion of the sacerdotal class, so that the denial of man's immortality, and of other doctrines connected therewith, became characteristic of the "sons of Zadok." However incredible it may seem at first sight that the ministers of religion should become Epicureans, such a conclusion is entirely in accordance with the Maccabean history, with the part played by the high-priests in the Hellenising apostasy, and with the priests' neglecting the sacrifices of the Temple through their eagerness to engage in the performances which took place in connection with the newly established gymnasium (2 Macc. iv. 13, 14). The adoption of Epicurean principles may well, in the case of many of the priestly class, have prepared them for more open revolt or apostasy.\* And here it should not be passed over, that, though there is nothing, perhaps, which can enable us certainly to identify the Epicureanism of Ecclesiastes with the priests, yet it is remarkable that the answer in chap. v. to the Epicurean sentiments found in chaps. iii. and iv. commences with allusions to the Temple and its services: "Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the house of God," &c. ;

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\* It is worthy of mention that Joseph, son of Tobias, was *nephew of the high-priest*, Onias II. ; and he it was who, neglecting Jewish restraint as to conformity with Gentile customs, gave offence through his conduct at the court of Ptolemy Euergetes, about 230 B.C. (Josephus, *Antiq.* xii. 3.)



“When thou vowest a vow unto God, delay not to pay it,” &c. (chap. v. 1, 4).

As I consider the Sadducees cannot be rightly regarded as pure Epicureans, so neither do I hold that the Pharisees were mere Jewish Stoics. The *Chasidim*, or Assideans of Maccabean times, were probably the common progenitors of both the Pharisees and the Essenes. The Assideans were distinguished by their zeal for the Law and for the maintenance of their ancestral institutions. But so profound had been the influence of Greek philosophy, and so homogeneous did the doctrines of the Porch seem to be with Judaism, that—as appears to have been the case—Assidean conservatism became invested to some extent with a Stoic garb. The Stoical character of the Assideans may have been derived from the adhesion of the Jewish Stoics to that party, when the tendency of the Epicureans—or at least of that portion of them found in the Hellenising party—to open revolt and apostasy became manifest and developed. But, however this may be, the facts seem certainly to point to the close union of Stoicism with conservative Judaism. With respect to this matter the testimony of the Fourth Book of Maccabees is important. Whatever opinion may be formed concerning the date of the book, it exhibits to us Stoicism associated and interwoven with Judaic legalism. The certain indications of Stoicism in Sirach are not perhaps very numerous, but there are some which, as it appears to me, are sufficiently clear (see § 12 and *note*.) And these indications, on account of the age and conservative character of the book, are very important.

After the Maccabean war, the powerful reaction which had been manifested therein appears to have exerted itself in developing or strengthening tendencies to asceticism and stricter legalism. Although the tendencies just mentioned, we may well believe, with Ecclesiastes before us, were by no means latent even before the war, yet it was probably a considerable time afterwards before they gained distinct

expression and embodiment in the Essenes and the Pharisees. These divergent sects, however, after the separation still bear witness, in their respective tenets, to the pre-Maccabean influence of Stoicism. With respect to the Pharisaic doctrines, I have spoken above on some of the more important particulars mentioned by Josephus. In the case of the Essenes probably still more numerous points of connection with Stoicism might be indicated than in that of the Pharisees, but a full discussion of the doctrines and practices of the Essenes might lead us too far away from our proper subject.

The Essenes appear to have carried away with them into their seclusion a name representing *Chasidim*, the designation of the stock whence, according to the view above given, both they and the Pharisees had sprung. I am not able, however, to suggest any new reason for the change which the name, on this view of it, must have undergone. With regard to the Pharisees, their name of פרושין ("separated") entirely agrees with the conclusion I have expressed, that they represented and embodied the tendency to a strict legalism. They were separated and distinguished by their higher ceremonial purity. The clothes of common country people (עֵבֶה הָאֶרֶץ), the Mishnah (*Chagigah* ii. 7) tells us, were of no higher degree of sanctity than that which marked them as worthy to be trodden upon by Pharisees (מִדְרָס לַפְרוּשִׁין). The Pharisee is probably to be identified with the *chaber* (*Demai* ii. 3), and as such he belonged to a society under special restrictions as to its intercourse with common people (*Demai*, l. c.).\* Thus, however the mass of the people may have been affected towards the Pharisees,

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\* "Bertinorius aperte asserit idem esse הָבֵר et פְּרוּשׁ, *Socium et Pharisæum*. . . . *Pharisei*, quia seipsos separabant ab omni immunditie et a cibo immundo, et a plebe de cibo minus sollicita. . . . *Socii* iidem vocati respectu Societatis inter se ad pollutionem vitandam iuitæ." (Guisius, in Surenhusius's Mishnah.)

it is certainly incorrect to say that they *were* Pharisees. The Pharisees were thus outwardly distinguished by their ceremonial legalism, though in their Stoic doctrines they gave evidence—as the Sadducees did by their Epicureanism—how deeply penetrating had been, previous to the Maccabean war, the influence of Greek philosophy. From what I have said the reader may understand the manner in which I accept the statement of Josephus as to the existence of Jewish sects of philosophy (*Antiq.* xviii. 1, § 2).

With respect to the historical position of the author of Ecclesiastes, the contents of the book and the indications which have been reviewed in this section appear alike in harmony with the conclusion that the introduction of Greek philosophy had not as yet resulted in outward division or complete defection. Neither Stoics nor even Epicureans had put themselves quite outside the pale of the theocracy. And thus we may compare, to some extent, the position of the author of our book with that of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who was concerned with the tendency to apostatise, and not with open and manifest apostasy from the faith.

#### § 8. THE CONTRADICTIONS OF ECCLESIASTES.

Our book possesses a remarkable antithetical character, its contrasts not unfrequently assuming the form of decided and obvious contradiction. This antithetical character is specially marked in the two great thoughts of the philosophical part of the book—the Stoic, ALL IS VANITY; and the Epicurean, EAT, DRINK, AND ENJOY. For the sake of further example I may refer to the contrasted particulars of the Catalogue of the Times and Seasons (iii. 2—8); to the prudence recommended in chap. x., as compared with the liberality inculcated in chap. xi., to the contrast between chap. iv., with its Epicurean or Atheistic tendency, and the apology for the divine administration found in chap. v.; to the sharp opposition of iii. 16, 17, and iii. 18—21;

and to the opposed clauses in the famous passage, vii. 16, 17: "Be not righteous overmuch, neither assume thyself to be excessively wise: why shouldest thou be struck with dismay? Be not wicked overmuch, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?" Nay, the book as a whole furnishes an example, the larger or philosophical portion standing in decided antithesis to the conclusion, xii. 13, 14, which inculcates the fear of God and submission to His commandments. One might fancy that the author of Ecclesiastes intended that the contrarities of his book should in some sort reflect and image forth the chequered web of man's earthly condition, hopes alternating with fears, joys succeeded by sorrows, life contrasting with death. It must not be supposed, however, that we can find an adequate explanation in the hypothesis that the author of Ecclesiastes arranged his materials in a varied and artistic manner. Our book does not furnish instances of antithesis only; there are plain and obvious contradictions, as, for example, that between the Stoic and Epicurean elements of the third chapter.

The recognition of contradictory passages has suggested the idea of a dialogue, the statements of a sceptic being introduced in conflict with the author's sentiments, just as in the Epistle to the Romans the Apostle interweaves objections with his argument. Or, again, the book has been regarded as containing the report of a discussion in a learned or philosophical assembly, over which Solomon is represented as presiding. The latter view may be considered preferable to the former. The variety of opinions propounded in the book is apparently more considerable than would comport with the idea of a dialogue between two persons. But, in opposition to any such opinion, it must certainly be maintained that we have throughout the book, from the "Vanity of vanities" of i. 2, to the "all is vanity" of xii. 8, the "words of Koheleth." If at any time the reader imagines that he can detect indications of another

voice, he will probably very soon discover that what seemed so dissimilar was nevertheless part of the teaching of Koheleth's experience. It is Koheleth, for example, who sees wickedness in the place of justice and righteousness, and who concludes that God will judge the righteous and the wicked (iii. 16, 17), and it is Koheleth who concludes that men are but beasts (iii. 18), and who, with regard to man's destiny, asks the question, "Who will bring him to look upon what will be after him?" (iii. 22). The continuity of Koheleth's discourse is well illustrated also by the passages vii. 23—26 and x. 5. Thus, then, we have to do with the perplexing phenomenon that varying sentiments and contradictory opinions are uttered by one and the same speaker. It would afford no adequate explanation of this phenomenon to allege with Prof. Plumptre (Smith's *Dictionary*, art. "Ecclesiastes"), that we have in the book a record of the author's personal experience; that he was a man "in whom the mood of spirit, over-reflective, indisposed to action, of which Shakespere has given us in Hamlet, Jaques, Richard II., three distinct examples, has become dominant in its darkest form;" and that seeming contradictions indicate the oscillations of sentiment and opinion which he experienced in his struggle towards truth. This explanation, even if it were in other respects satisfactory, would still be open to one fundamental objection. If the author of Ecclesiastes had never been "king over Israel in Jerusalem;" if he had never lived in that princely magnificence described in the second chapter, we cannot, with any approach to certainty, determine that we have elsewhere only a record of his personal experience. It seems unlikely that, if he had intended merely to give such a record, he would have introduced it by a description out of harmony with his own condition and history. On the other hand, it is quite possible that Koheleth's experience may represent in part the experience of the author; but if fiction be admitted to be present at all, we cannot draw

any entirely safe and trustworthy line between fiction and fact. If, then, it cannot be admitted that the author gives us in the book a narrative of his varied personal experience, how are we to account for the perplexing phenomenon which we have before us?—for that multiplicity, combined with unity, which the book presents? The true answer to this question is, I think, to be found in the word *Koheleth*, which appears at once as the title of the book and as the name of its author, or at least of the author of the philosophical discourse extending, as before mentioned, from i. 2 to xii. 8.

### § 9. THE ANCIENT JEWISH ACADEMIES.

Before, however, I attempt to determine the meaning of the name *Koheleth*, it seems desirable to say a few words on the somewhat obscure subject of the ancient Jewish academies. In its bearing on the origin of Ecclesiastes the subject is too important to be entirely disregarded. Whether the Jewish schools of wisdom and religious learning are to be connected with the prophetic colleges, it is not necessary here to determine. Apart from the hypothesis of such connection, it is not difficult to discern causes why there should come to be held assemblies of persons devoted to the study of religious wisdom, and why young men and others desirous of becoming acquainted with this wisdom should connect themselves with these assemblies as learners or disciples.\* It is not necessary here, moreover, to consider the causes which, prior to the Exile, may have tended to the origination of such assemblies. After the Return from the Captivity, the difference between the language of the sacred books and the popular idiom—whether fully

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\* Allusions to schools of wisdom have been supposed to be made in several places in the Book of Proverbs, especially in viii. 1—3, ix. 1—4. (See Ewald, *Die Sal. Schrift.* pp. 116, 123, 2nd ed).

manifested at once, or slowly developed—would give birth to schools or colleges for the initiation or training of the uninstructed in the ancient language and literature. Then those who had made great proficiency in sacred learning would not only be distinguished from others by their superior erudition, but their common knowledge would be to some extent a bond of union. It would seem, however, so far as we have any evidence which can afford direction on the matter, that these *literati* did not limit themselves to holding distinct and exclusive assemblies, but that they formed a distinct class in more popular assemblies, connected probably more or less closely with the synagogues. In the Mishnah the *Beth Midrash*, or “Academy,” is sometimes distinguished from the *Beth Keneseth*, or “Synagogue” (*Terumoth* xi. 11), and sometimes apparently identified with it (*Shabbath* xvi. 1, xviii. 1). The admissibility of the people generally to the academies (comp. Luke ii. 46; 1 Cor. xiv. 23) is possibly a matter of some importance with respect to the probability of the institution being known by so general a designation as  $\text{בית מדרש}$  or  $\text{ἐκκλησία}$ .\* This admissibility would not prove, however, that the discourses or discussions were necessarily such as the common people could comprehend (comp. Matt. xiii. 34, 35).

If we do not possess any very direct information as to the constitution of the academies at about the time with which we are at present more particularly concerned, we have at least, in Sir. xxxviii. 24 to xxxix. 11, interesting evidence of the existence of a class of *literati* devoted to sacred learning, and following no secular pursuit. It was not, we are told, for the agriculturist, the builder, the engraver, the coppersmith, the potter, however skilful in their

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\* Still there may have been private classes as well as more public meetings. The great Hillel, in his poverty, is said to have been unable to pay the fees required in the time of She-maiah and Abtalion.

craft, to attain "the wisdom of the scribe." This required seasonable leisure and little distraction through worldly business; so that there might be adequate facility for the study of ancient lore, for the investigation of enigmatical sayings, for foreign travel, and for careful attention to religious exercises. The duly trained scribe should be qualified to stand before great men and governors. "Peoples shall tell of his wisdom, and the congregation shall utter his praise."

The passage from Sirach just cited is, in several particulars, of very considerable importance with respect to our present inquiry. To the allusion to foreign travel the reader's attention has been already directed (§ 7). Then how, at the time, the learned were occupied in the solution of enigmas, and in penetrating into the hidden meaning of proverbial or parabolic sayings (comp. § 1), is shown by the language of xxxix. 2, 3: *καὶ ἐν στροφαῖς παραβολῶν συνεισελεύσεται. ἀπόκρυφα παροιμιῶν ἐκζητήσεται, καὶ ἐν αἰνίγμασι παραβολῶν ἀναστραφήσεται.* Probably, however, the *στροφαὶ παραβολῶν* of ver. 2 are *antithetic* or *responsive* philosophic utterances. And the word *συνεισελεύσεται* may be taken as pointing to the learned man's coming into the assembly where such exercises were taking place. The words, on this view of them, if regarded as indicating a practice common at the time in assemblies of the learned, would be of very considerable importance with regard to the structure of our book (comp. § 8). If a distinction between the *ἀπόκρυφα παροιμιῶν* and the *αἰνίγματα παραβολῶν* is to be made, the former may be taken as comprehending proverbs with two meanings, the true inner and concealed signification belonging to a sphere of thought or action different from that whence the outer dress of language and imagery has been obtained; while the latter expression may be used of parabolic or allegorical stories, like that of the little city and the poor wise man (Ecc. ix.). In both cases, however, the occupation of the learned man



would correspond to what we know of the Rabbinical teachers and scholars of a later day, the "enigmatical parables" representing the Haggadistic element in the Talmud. Then the existence of such a learned class as that of which the passage from Sirach speaks is in accordance with the seemingly contemptuous manner in which, in our book, worldly and unphilosophical persons are spoken of (comp. vi. 3—6); just as afterwards the Rabbinical schoolmen spoke of their countrymen outside the schools as mere עב הארץ

There is not, perhaps, in the passage cited from Sirach any altogether unquestionable reference to *assemblies* of learned men, though in addition to what has been already said, I should think it very probable indeed that the words of xxxviii. 33, ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ οὐχ ὑπεραλοῦνται, "they shall not spring over in the assembly," refer to dexterity displayed in academical disputations.\* And it is well worthy of remark that if ἐκκλησία is used in Sirach of an academical assembly this use would be altogether in harmony with the name *Koheleth*, which, on any acceptable view of it, is connected with לְהִתְנַחֵם = ἐκκλησία (comp. §§ 8, 10). But, putting this evidence aside, if there was such a class of learned men as the passage from Sirach describes, the existence at the time of academical assemblies might be reasonably inferred, even if there were no other reasons conducting towards the same conclusion. And the contents of Ecclesiastes,—its abstruse and philosophical character, its colloquial manner, its various and conflicting sentiments,—all accord with the idea of an assembly of learned men or students of wisdom. And it was, we may

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\* No valid argument against this view can be drawn from the mention immediately afterwards of judicial proceedings, for, as at a later day, learned men who disputed in the academy would probably also exercise judicial functions. Compare, too, the concluding words of the verse: ἐν παραβολαῖς οὐχ ἐπρεθήσονται.

suppose, in such assemblies that Simon the Just and Antigonus propounded the dicta ascribed to them in the Mishnah (*Aboth* i. 2, 3).

Probably the academies were the chief medium through which Greek philosophy and culture were introduced among the Jews. It does not seem likely, however, that this result was attained by the admission of Gentile philosophers to the academies. Rather may we attribute it to the return to Palestine of Jews who had been resident among Greek-speaking peoples, and, in accordance with what has been said in the case of Antigonus (§ 7), to foreign travel on the part of members of the academies (*Sir.* xxxix. 4).

The place in Jerusalem where the meetings of the academies were held at the time when *Ecclesiastes* was written, was, it seems likely, in the Temple precincts. And here probably the priests imbibed those Epicurean sentiments, and that Hellenising spirit, which were destined to issue in such important consequences for Jewish history.

As to the subjects with which the academies concerned themselves, it would seem likely that, in addition to the study of speculative and moral philosophy, there was the handling of the Biblical narratives in a generalised or philosophical manner. Thus it would certainly appear probable that we have in vii. 26 a generalised application of the account of Samson and Delilah in *Judges* xvi. Instead of Delilah and her wiles, we have "the woman who, as to her heart, is nets and snares." The binding of Samson is represented by, "whose hands are bonds;" his escape at first, while he retained his Nazariteship, by, "he who is pleasing to God will escape from her;" his being taken by the Philistines when his locks had been shorn, and the Lord had departed from him, by, "the sinner will be caught by her;" and the words, "I find a more bitter thing than death" represent the voluntary death by which Samson finally escapes from Delilah and her pernicious wiles. So in v. 1 we have apparently a

reference to Samuel's rebuke of Saul after the defeat of Agag. But instead of *Saul* not intending to do wrong, we have a general statement respecting "*fools* offering a sacrifice, though they mean not to do evil." Similarly in vi. 10, *Adam*, "of the earth, earthy," according to the narrative in Gen. ii., is taken to represent the nature of man in general. And probably in the same verse there is a similar generalised application of what is said concerning the antediluvians in Gen. vi. 3. (See note *ad loc.*)

It would perhaps be going too far to assert that natural science was closely studied in the Jewish schools. But, judging from xii. 1—6, it would seem likely that, at least, the tracing of analogies between the condition and life-history of man, and natural and other objects, was pursued to a considerable extent.

The contents of Ecclesiastes may be, then, with probability regarded as reflecting the studies and discussions of the Jewish academies at the time when the book was written. The vast difference between our book and what we find in the Mishnah seems not difficult to account for, if the effects of the powerful Maccabean reaction are fully considered.

What has been said as to the Jewish academies or philosophical assemblies—taking such an assembly as designated by the word *kahal*—may prepare us for considering the important and much-discussed name KOHELETH.

#### § 10. THE NAME KOHELETH.

The first occurrence of the name is at the very commencement of the book (i. 1): "The words of Koheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem." In this verse, and usually, the word, notwithstanding its feminine form, is employed as a masculine proper name. It is found once, however, with the article, as though it were an appellative; once—as if a feminine proper name (vii. 27)—it appears as the subject of a verb having the feminine termination.

Such at least are the phenomena which the text presents, according to its present division and pointing.

With respect to the meaning of the name Koheleth, there is, as it would appear, a considerable agreement of opinion in favour of the interpretation which takes the word as denoting "one who convenes an assembly," though to the idea of convening, that of calling to or addressing an assembly, seems to be not uncommonly added. Some probably would give the greater prominence to the latter idea. In favour of such a view appeal is generally made to the rendering of the Septuagint, Ἐκκλησιαστής. It should be remembered, however, that the private member of an ἐκκλησία, not less than the orator, might be called an ἐκκλησιαστής. Thus the word is used, for example, in Aristotle's *Politics*, iii. 1, where Aristotle speaks of the office of ἐκκλησιαστής as pertaining to all citizens as such. The Septuagint, therefore, by thus translating *Koheleth*, gives no adequate support to the opinion that the word means "one who addresses an assembly," or, as the Authorised Version gives it, "the Preacher." The fact is, however, worthy of note, that the Septuagint does certainly connect the word with the idea of an assembly. The authority of this version is accordingly unfavourable to any rendering which excludes this idea; as, for example, "the Compiler." With respect to this rendering, "the Compiler," it has been said also, and said with justice, that the verb כָּלַף is employed with reference, not to the collecting of *things*, but to the convening or assembling of *persons*. But then we have the difficulty that כָּלַף is the participle active Kal, and the Old Testament furnishes no example whatever of the use of the Kal form of the verb with the sense of convening or assembling, the verb in Kal occurring, in fact, only in the word now under consideration. The idea of assembling persons, or causing them to assemble, appears, however, with sufficient frequency in the Old Testament to render it not improbable that if this idea

could have been expressed by the verb *קָהַל* in Kal, some examples of its being so employed would be found. But in fact we always find, if this verb is used, the Hiphil conjugation employed to express the idea of convening an assembly. We should accordingly have had *מִקְהֵלֶת* *Makheleth*, and not *קֹהֵלֶת* *Koheleth*, to denote "one who convenes an assembly," or, "the Assembler." The opinion that *Koheleth* has this meaning must, therefore, be rejected. If, however, we translate *Koheleth* by "the Preacher," we depart still farther from the evidence of the Old Testament. The verb, neither in Hiphil nor in Niphal, expresses the idea of vocal utterance. It cannot, then, be admitted that *Koheleth* is one who preaches or lectures, even to a few chosen disciples, "speaking wisdom among the perfect." How, then, without departing from the analogy of the language, or disregarding the evidence of the Old Testament, are we to determine the meaning of this important word? In reply it may be said that, if *מִקְהֵלֶת* *Makheleth* would be transitive or causative, meaning "one who assembles," or, "one who convenes an assembly," it would seem natural to regard *קֹהֵלֶת* *Koheleth* as intransitive, and as meaning "one who is an assembly." If it should be contended that this rendering would require *קֹהֵלֶת* to be regarded as a denominative form, there appears no difficulty in the way of supposing that it is such a form, especially if the Kal of *קָהַל* was not in use. From a grammatical point of view there certainly appears to be nothing whatever to prevent our regarding *Koheleth* as meaning "one who is an assembly," or, having regard to the feminine form, "SHE WHO IS AN ASSEMBLY." Whether this rendering is in other respects reasonable remains to be considered.

The feminine termination of *קֹהֵלֶת* *Koheleth* has been accounted for by regarding *Koheleth* as personified Wisdom *חֵכְמָה*, or by supposing that Wisdom speaks through *Koheleth*. Such a view might well derive some credibility

from the personification in the Book of Proverbs, where (chap. ix.) Wisdom appears as though she were a queen who has built for herself a palace, and adorned its banquet-hall. That she may entertain those who will acknowledge her sway, she kills her fatted beasts, mingles her wine with spices, and furnishes her table. To bring in her guests to the banquet, she sends forth her attendant maidens, and proclaims her gracious invitation, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled" (Prov. ix. 1—5). In the previous chapter she is represented as being present with Jehovah during His creative work, and as then disporting or exulting before him (Prov. viii. 30). The author of Ecclesiastes, we may well believe, was familiar with this personification of Wisdom in the Proverbs, and it appears not improbable that he had it in view when he formed his conception of *Koheleth*. Still *Koheleth* is certainly not to be identified with the divine Wisdom of the Proverbs. Wisdom, as there personified, cannot be supposed to indulge, even by way of experiment, in jovial revelry (Ecc. ii. 1), or to advance in knowledge (i. 16), or to utter contradictory statements. Wisdom, moreover, as exhibited in the Proverbs, is animated by a deeply religious spirit, which does not manifest itself in *Koheleth*. The wisdom of *Koheleth* is speculative, and does not begin with "the fear of the Lord." This fact may suggest that *Koheleth* is Wisdom in a sense different from that of the Wisdom of the Proverbs. Though not representing perfect and divine wisdom, *Koheleth* may yet be a personification of *Philosophy*. Now *Philosophy* may be considered not only as an abstract idea, but also with reference to the several philosophers whose speculations may be collectively embodied under this designation. And it was after this manner that *Philosophy* appears to have been conceived of by the author of Ecclesiastes. She was KOHELETH, "She who is an assembly," meaning probably, not any actual contemporary academy of which our

author was a member, but rather an ideal assembly of those Jewish philosophers, Stoic, Epicurean, and others, whose opinions were influential at the time when the book was composed. It is, as it appears to me, this assembly, this *הַהַלְוֵה לְהַקְדָּמִים*, of which, as representing Philosophy, Koheleth is the personification. It may be seen at once that the name Koheleth, thus regarded, is in harmony both with the unity and the multiplicity which characterise Ecclesiastes; with the fact that there is but one speaker from i. 2 to xii. 8, though the sentiments uttered are various, discrepant, and conflicting. There is unity, because Philosophy is everywhere present; there is multiplicity; there is discrepancy; on account of the plurality of philosophers who speak by the mouth of Koheleth. Moreover, it is not difficult to see why our author makes Koheleth, as the personification of Philosophy, utter contradictory statements, if it was his intention to warn his readers against philosophical studies (xii. 12), and to teach them that such pursuits were altogether fruitless and vain.

If Koheleth is a personification of an assembly of sages or philosophers, it seems natural to suppose that, as in the case of other personified assemblages of men—as, for example, cities and peoples—the name representing the personification would be feminine. And it is especially deserving of attention that, in the prophets, a feminine participle is repeatedly used to designate a collective personification, as *יֹשֶׁבֶת* “she who inhabits,” for inhabitants collectively (Jer. li. 35), and *אֹיֶבֶת* “she who is an enemy,” for enemies collectively (Mic. vii. 8). This usage gives very important evidence in support of the opinion that *Koheleth*, also, denotes a collective personification.

It may be observed, besides, that the representation of Philosophy as a personified assembly, as concrete instead of abstract, is in accordance with other phenomena which our book presents. Instead of speaking of *law* in the

abstract, Koheleth brings before us a *king* (viii. 2). Caution and reverence in treating of the divine administration is inculcated in the very concrete form, "Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the house of God" (v. 1). The identification of Koheleth, or Philosophy, with Solomon (i. ii.) may be looked upon as a still farther advance in the direction of the concrete, since, embodied in the great Hebrew monarch, Koheleth attains a more perfect unity. We may understand, moreover, how, if the voice of Koheleth is the voice of an assembly, Solomon may be represented as speaking in the first and second chapters, though in some other places we may seem to have sentiments suited rather to a private person than to a monarch. Still, we ought not perhaps to suppose that, in the philosophical portion of the book, the Solomonic character of Koheleth is entirely dropped after the second chapter, even though it may be comparatively disregarded. If any difficulty should be felt to arise from Solomon being regarded as the mouth-piece of *speculative* philosophy; if it should be thought that the endowments or attainments of Solomon lay rather, according to the history, in other directions, it may be said that, whatever advance in knowledge had been effected since the days of this great monarch, or whatever change had been made in the direction of intellectual activity, it would appear that Solomon, with his surpassing powers, was looked upon as having already anticipated the advance and the change. It may be instructive to the reader to compare 1 Kings iv. 29—34 with the seventh chapter of the Book of Wisdom. Not only are Solomon's attainments in natural science in the latter more extended (ver. 18—20), but the seventeenth verse speaks of an accurate knowledge of the nature of things; of acquaintance with the constitution of the *κόσμος*, and with the operation of the elements. Taking such a passage as that just cited into account, we need find little difficulty in understanding how Solomon might be regarded as including within the



range of his comprehensive intellect all the wisdom of the philosophical Koheleth. We may, however, with probability go further than this, and, taking into account the facts both of Ecclesiastes and the Book of Wisdom, may affirm that Solomon was regarded as though the embodiment of all philosophical wisdom: in him Philosophy herself had been enthroned.

On the view which has been thus set forth, it may well appear not inexplicable that קֹהֵלֶת should vary in gender, as it does in our present text. In the first chapter, where the Solomonic character of Koheleth is prominent, the word is masculine, but afterwards—this character not being so much regarded, and Philosophy rather than Solomon speaking—the word becomes feminine (vii. 27). Probably in xii. 8 also we ought to read אֶמְרָה קֹהֵלֶת instead of אָמַר הַקֹּהֵלֶת, for we may well question the use of קֹהֵלֶת with a masculine verb when—as in this case the article would show—the word is not a proper name. The reading in the text may perhaps owe its origin to a desire to assimilate xii. 8 to i. 2, yet without omitting the ה. Very likely also the construction with a masculine verb in the next verse (xii. 9) may have had its influence; but for the construction in the ninth verse, a probable reason can be adduced, namely, that there is an allusion to the Book of Proverbs, and that thus—the Solomonic character of Koheleth again becoming more conspicuous—the word is again determined to the masculine gender.

What has been said above may give the principal reason for the identification of Koheleth with Solomon; but it seems by no means improbable that the author of Ecclesiastes may have been influenced by a motive similar to that for which Cicero, in his treatise on Old Age, introduced the elder Cato as the chief speaker—that the discourse might carry with it greater weight and authority, “quo majorem auctoritatem haberet oratio.” This view is in accordance with the position that the author intended

to warn his contemporaries against the influence of the Greek philosophy, as opposed to the ancient faith of Judaism. And it is not difficult to see a measure of propriety in the fiction by which he introduces the ancient King Solomon as declaring philosophical pursuits to be fruitless and vain. If, indeed, the Greek philosophy was of modern introduction, still, in accordance with what has been already said, it would certainly appear that Solomon was looked upon as having anticipated its doctrines and its speculations.\*

### § 11. THE AUTHOR OF ECCLESIASTES.

The name of the author of Ecclesiastes is now unknown. In this respect, it has already happened with him in accordance with what he himself says of the wise man being forgotten like the fool (ii. 16). Of his profound intellect, however, his book is an enduring monument.† One might think that a man of so great intellectual power must have occupied a distinguished position among his contemporaries; but, on the other hand—considering the way in which he speaks, in the ninth chapter, of the “great king” and the “poor wise man”—it seems likely that he did not so speak without having himself suffered from

“——— the proud man’s contumely,”

and that it is not without an allusion to his own experience that he tells of the poor man’s wisdom being neglected and

\* On the identification of Koheleth with Solomon the reader may compare also Ewald, *Die Sal. Schrift.*, pp. 281, 282, 2nd ed.

† Ewald, contrasting with those who have depreciated our book, says: “Wer das Innere dieses rauh und seltsam scheinenden Buches überdacht hat, wird es voll von Sinn Zusammenhang und Wahrheit finden. Und es muss vielmehr unsre hohe Bewunderung erwecken dass noch in so später Zeit ein so schöpferisches Schriftwerk im Volke Israel entstehen konnte.” (*Die Sal. Schrift.* p. 287.)

despised (ix. 16). Still it is quite possible that he may have been distinguished and honoured among Jewish philosophers, and yet have met with rebuffs from the *profanum vulgus*, the unthinking crowd, or even from such monarchs as Seleucus Callinicus, Antiochus the Great, or Ptolemy Philopator, men who would not improbably have treated with contempt a Jewish philosopher, if chance had brought such a one in their way. But with respect to the details of our author's life, we are treading on uncertain and precarious ground. It would seem not improbable, however, that when his book was written he had already attained an advanced stage of life. From the general tone of the book, and from the acquaintance with philosophy which it displays, it seems also exceedingly probable that he had been in earlier years a strong adherent of one of the philosophical sects: most likely he had been a Stoic. If so, then, as before said (§ 6) our book must be looked on as a recantation of philosophy. And it is *possible* that it is not without an allusion to years which the author had devoted to philosophical speculation, that Koheleth says (vii. 15), "I saw all in *the days of my vanity.*"

With respect to the place where the author lived, I should certainly incline to the opinion that he dwelt at Jerusalem, notwithstanding what Ewald has said (*Die Sal. Schrift.* p. 269). The facts of the book seem certainly to imply that he had lived in the society of advanced thinkers and philosophical students, and that it was for such, in great measure, that he composed his book. On this account it would seem that we cannot with probability assign as his locality any place in Palestine outside of the metropolis. Samaria, indeed, may perhaps have presented not altogether unsuitable conditions, but we cannot suppose that the author of Ecclesiastes was a Samaritan.

Allusion has already been made (§ 7) to Sir. xxxix. 4, a passage from which it would appear that foreign travel, for the purpose of becoming practically acquainted with the

institutions of other countries, was by no means uncommon among learned Jews. That the author of Ecclesiastes had conformed to this custom, in order that he might "try things good and things evil among men," seems by no means improbable. Indeed, I should think it quite likely (comp. § 5) that he had at Athens listened to Chrysippus discoursing on the Stoic doctrines. The possibility of such a visit to Athens should not be lost sight of, even if the supposition is not absolutely necessary to explain that acquaintance with the post-Aristotelian philosophy which our book displays. This possibility of the author's having travelled in foreign countries should be borne in mind, also, in estimating the value, as evidence with respect to the date of the book, of those passages which speak of kings or rulers, or of seemingly contemporaneous circumstances. If the horizon of the author's experience had been thus widened, it is not to be supposed that he must of necessity allude to the condition of Palestine, or to the court of Egypt or of Syria. And of course, in accordance with what has been already said, we should keep in view also, with regard to such supposed allusions, the character of the book,—that it is, in important respects, a work of fiction.

#### § 12. THE THEOLOGY OF ECCLESIASTES.

The composite nature of Ecclesiastes must be, of course, taken into account in considering its theology. If the book sets forth now Stoical and now Epicurean sentiments, we may be prepared to find that, with regard to its theology, there is neither perfect harmony nor entire homogeneity. This remark will apply to the doctrine of our book concerning the immortality of the soul, with respect to which a good deal of interest has been manifested. Certainly it would appear that, in the Epicurean passage iii. 18—22, —whether we take the  $\pi$  of verse 21 as the article or as the interrogative—this immortality is, in accordance with the true Epicurean doctrine, altogether denied. In ix. 5—10

—a passage still essentially Epicurean—we have possibly a conception of the dead as inert and feeble shades dwelling in Sheol (see ver. 10, and comp. xi. 8). But this discrepancy, if such there be, is easily explained on the supposition that the author of Ecclesiastes, in accordance with his practical aim and object, does not deal so much with pure Epicureanism or with pure Stoicism, as with those various philosophical opinions which were promulgated in the Jewish schools of his day. Moreover, we must not forget also, that it was, in all probability, our author's intention to set forth, by way of warning, the fluctuating and discrepant nature of the sentiments propounded by contemporary philosophers (§ 10). In Stoical passages too, we ought probably to recognise a want of agreement, with respect to the doctrine of immortality, reflecting in part that which, according to the ancient authorities, existed among the Stoics. It appears to have been the orthodox Stoic doctrine that the souls of all men survive for a longer or shorter period; those of the good and virtuous till the great world-conflagration, but those of the foolish and wicked for a shorter time only, during which they are subjected to punishment in Hades. It would seem, however, according to Arius Didymus in Eusebius (*Præp. Evang.* lib. xv. p. 68, ed. Gaisford), that some Stoics taught that the souls of men are mingled at death with the Deity, the World-Soul (*Ἐνιοὶ δὲ τὴν μὲν τοῦ ὅλου, αἰδίου τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς συμμίγνυσθαι ἐπὶ τελευτῇ εἰς ἐκείνην*). Expressing, as it seems to me, this latter doctrine, we have the passage Ecc. xii. 7, which speaks of “the dust returning to the earth as it was, and the spirit returning unto God who gave it.” If we understand the last clause to denote the re-absorption of the soul into the Deity, there is then a congruity with the first clause, which points to the dissolution of the body, and to its particles mingling again with the earth. On the other hand, the idea of individual immortality, so far as respects the soul surviving death, probably underlies iii. 17, which

tells of God "judging the righteous and the wicked,"\* and viii. 7, 8, which it seems best to understand as depicting the fears of the sinner with regard to the future, and to certainly approaching death. It may be well here to observe that, though xii. 14, the last verse in the book, possibly implies the idea of individual immortality, yet that probably its primary intention was rather to denote a future vindication of God's moral government, and the revelation of what is now hidden and mysterious with reference thereto.

The frequent use of the abstract designation of God, הַאֱלֹהִים *ha-Elohim*, which would perhaps be most correctly translated "the Deity," is in accordance with the philosophical character of the book, and with the absence—at least from the greater portion of it—of a theocratic standpoint. With this last characteristic accords also the fact that the name *Jehovah* nowhere appears. The absence of the sacred name may possibly be connected with that exaggerated feeling of reverence for it which was manifested by the later Jews. But with respect, at any rate, to the philosophical portion of the book, i. 2 to xii. 8, we need not take this possibility into account. Cosmopolitanism was a marked characteristic of the post-Aristotelian philosophy, and as this philosophy, to so considerable an extent, speaks through *Koheleth*, it may well have seemed to our author a thing out of place, and incongruous, to put into the mouth of *Koheleth* the distinctive and localised name of the God of Israel. At first sight, however, it may appear that, if in *Koheleth's* discourse there is no mention of the theocratic name *Jehovah*, still some things are spoken of specially connected with the theocracy, as the Temple and vows, in v. 1—6. But this reference, there

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\* The position that the doctrine of immortality is, by implication, affirmed in what is here said, suits well the denial of this doctrine in iii. 18—22.

seems no doubt, should be understood figuratively, and as made with the view of inculcating in a veiled and enigmatical manner the duty of caution and reverence in speaking of the divine administration. Similarly in ix. 2 the words "pure" (רִיָּאֵן) and "defiled" (סִטְמָאֵן) may not unreasonably be looked upon as employed in a general or moral sense. And "he who sacrificeth," in the same verse, need not be regarded as meaning merely, an observer of the Levitical law.

It has here to be added that, in Koheleth's discourse, the post-Aristotelian philosophy has become so far assimilated to Judaism, that we have nowhere any mention of a society of Gods living in disregard of men and their wants. This of course relates to Epicureanism. As to the Stoic doctrine, there was probably, in this particular, less difficulty in effecting an assimilation with Jewish monotheism, since it would certainly appear—whatever may be the contradiction involved—that Stoicism, though Pantheistic, yet did not renounce the conception of one supreme personal God; and of supposed inferior or derivative deities the Stoic teachers seem to have taken comparatively small account.

As to the course of things in the world, the Stoics, since their theory was optimistic, had, of necessity, to contend with very serious difficulties connected with the existence of physical and moral evil. The manner in which they explained the difficulty we may see, to a remarkable extent, set forth in the seventh chapter of our book. If our author speaks of evil as set by God over against good; of prosperity having been arranged in correspondence to adversity (vii. 14), his teaching but reflects that of the philosophers of the Porch, who looked upon physical evil as the necessary counterpart of good, and as indispensable to the symmetry and completeness of a well-ordered scheme of things. Thus, for example, Marcus Aurelius declares that the terrible jaws of the fierce lion, deadly poison, and other noxious things, are not to be regarded with aversion or

horror, as though they were monstrous and abnormal, but are to be looked upon as necessarily resulting from the existence of what is fair and beautiful (vi. 36).\* The Stoic conception may perhaps be illustrated, not inaptly, by the idea of a building constructed of many parts corresponding to and fitting into each other, some being protuberant, and others in consequence hollow or indented. Besides, seeming ills and adverse outward circumstances were supposed to be intended by God in order to the due training and exercise of man's moral powers. These circumstances, rightly used, may be made subservient to the wise man's highest advantage. It is in accordance with this teaching that Koheleth recommends that the house of mourning should be visited; that patience under reproach and adversity should be exercised, since he who fears God will come forth from all the trials to which he is subjected. It is for fools to indulge, under untoward circumstances, in irritation and anger (vii. 2—18). And if the Stoics, notwithstanding difficulties which they were unable adequately to solve, still taught that no evil could really happen to the wise man, and that this was possible only in the case of the vicious (comp. Marc. Aurel. ix. 16), Koheleth declares: "Although the sinner doeth evil a hundred times, and yet prolongeth his days, yet surely I know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him; but it will not be well with the wicked man, neither will he lengthen out his days like the shadow, because he feareth not before God" (viii. 12, 13).

As to the degree and the extent of the moral depravity of

\* The influence of the Stoic doctrine in this particular appears clearly manifest also in Sir. xxxiii. 13—15 (see § 3), and in xlii. 24, 25: Πάντα διςσὰ ἐν κατέναντι τοῦ ἐνός, καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲν ἐκλειῖπον. Ἐν τοῦ ἐνός ἐστερέωσε τὰ ἀγαθὰ, καὶ τίς πληθθήσεται ὀρῶν δόξαν αὐτοῦ; Compare xxxiii. 14, ἀπέναντι τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἀγαθόν, κ.τ.λ.



mankind, there is also a singular accord between the teaching of the Stoics and that of Koheleth. Seneca says, "We are wicked; we have been wicked; we shall be wicked;"\* and Koheleth declares, "There is not a righteous man on the earth who doeth well, and sinneth not" (vii. 20). "Moreover, pay no attention to all the words which people speak, so that thou hear not thy servant reviling thee; for thy heart knoweth that thou, even thou, hast many times also reviled others" (vii. 21, 22). If Koheleth could only find "one man out of a thousand" (vii. 28), the Stoics, we are told, declared most men wicked, but talked of one, and perhaps a second, good man as having existed, as though a good man were a strange and unnatural animal, rarer than the phoenix (Alex. Aphrod. *De Fato*, 28). And further, if Koheleth ascribes human depravity to man himself, seeing that "God had made man upright" (vii. 29), Cleanthes, in his hymn to Zeus, declares that nothing in earth, or sea, or sky, is done without Zeus,—

πλὴν ὅποσα ῥέζουσι κακοὶ σφετέρῃσιν ἀνοίαις.

Notwithstanding such explanations of the state of things in the world as Koheleth was able to offer, he declares that he found it impossible to discover any scheme to which, from a moral point of view, man's condition could be seen to conform. It was "far off and exceeding deep: who can find it?" (vii. 24). Even the wise man is foiled when he thinks to understand the work which is being done under the sun (viii. 17). The discovery of what God is doing in the world, or of what He intends, it was entirely beyond the philosopher's power to attain.

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\* "Omnes mali sumus. Quidquid itaque in alio reprehenditur, id unusquisque in suo sinu inveniet. . . . Mali inter malos vivimus." (*De Ira*, iii. 26, § 4.) "Peccavimus omnes, alii gravia, alii leviora. . . . Nec delinquimus tantum, sed usque ad extremum ævi delinquemus." (*De Clem.* i. 6, § 2.)

## § 13. THE STYLE AND DICTION.

It has not been uncommon to regard the language of Ecclesiastes as furnishing the chief argument against the Solomonic authorship. Thus Grotius, to whom is ascribed the merit of having, after Luther (§ 5), shown the way to a more correct view of the origin of the book: "Ego tamen Solomonis esse non puto, sed scriptum serius sub illius Regis, tanquam pœnitentia ducti nomine. Argumentum ejus rei habeo multa vocabula quæ non alibi quam in Daniele, Esdra, et Chaldæis interpretibus reperias." And unquestionably a most powerful argument may be thence derived in support generally of the late origin of the book. The date of the book has already, however—so I venture to think—been determined with a definiteness of result (§ 5) such as no argument derived from the diction is likely to yield. So far, then, as respects the date, it may be sufficient if the language of the book does not appear out of harmony with the conclusion which has been already expressed.

Now, taking into account the date which I have given, the inquiry not unnaturally suggests itself: Does the diction of Ecclesiastes give any unquestionable indications of Greek influence? It is true that the absence of such indications would not be necessarily inconsistent with the conclusions which we have already attained, but still it may reasonably be regarded as probable that a considerable transference of ideas from the Greek philosophy would be accompanied by the importation, to a greater or less extent, of the Greek idiom. Zirkel and Graetz (Graetz, *Kohélet*, p. 179 *sq.*) have adduced various supposed instances of Græcism, the majority of which, perhaps, cannot be regarded as entirely satisfactory, especially when considered apart from other evidence of Greek influence. It may, however, be regarded as quite probable that  $\text{קָלוֹס}$  in Ecc. v. 18 reflects the Greek *καλός*, though it seems quite conceivable that the word might have acquired the sense it bears inde-

pendently of the Greek. A similar remark may be made with regard to the varied use of the same word in the Mishnah (iii. 11, note). But it seems preferable on the whole to admit that we have probably, in the passage cited, a genuine example of Greek influence. A still better example, and one which seems to me pretty certain, is found in the *עֲשֵׂיתָ טוֹב* of iii. 12—a phrase which Zirkel takes as equivalent to *εὖ πράττειν*. No other explanation seems at all admissible. To these examples I would add the remarkable use of *הִפֵּל* in xii. 13; an expression which appears inexplicable, unless it be regarded as reflecting *τὸ καθόλου* or *τὸ ὅλον* of the Greek philosophers (see note *ad loc.*). There is, besides, the repeated employment of plural nouns with a singular verb (i. 10, note); a usage which probably resulted from the author's having in his mind, or attempting to imitate, the well-known construction in Greek of a neuter plural noun with a singular verb, when the objects indicated by the noun are taken collectively. Thus we have at once an explanation of the singular verb in the construction *וְגַרְוֵי בְּיָמֵי יִבְרָאֵשׁ וְגַר* in x. 1; and, with respect to *לִי בְּיָמֵי בֵּית הַקָּהָל* in ii. 7, we have a close parallel to the Greek (see note *ad loc.*).

The examples of Græcism thus adduced cannot be, I think, easily set aside; and they may well be taken into account in our decision with regard to other examples which would be by themselves more doubtful. And it appears to me not unlikely that future research will discover indications of Greek influence in places where Græcisms have not as yet been detected.

The diction of Ecclesiastes is entirely in accordance with what has been said before as to the close connection of the book with the Jewish academies. When Hebrew had ceased to be the language of ordinary communication among the common people, it was still employed in the schools as the "language of the learned," acquiring at the same time various peculiarities which distinguish it from

the earlier idiom. Ecclesiastes stands alone among the Biblical books in the approach which it makes to the Hebrew of the Jewish colleges, as this is exemplified in the Mishnah. And though the difference is still no doubt considerable, it may be reasonably accounted for, if we take into account the wide interval which elapsed between the composition of Ecclesiastes and the redaction of the Mishnah. The resemblance, however, is marked and striking. We have Mishnic words and phrases, or those which are essentially such, and which we find nowhere else in the Old Testament; as *עֲנָנוּ מִן הַיָּם*, *הַיָּם הַיָּם*, *בְּגוֹ הַיָּם*, *בְּקָר*, *שָׁקָה* (ii. 8, note). Other words found in our book have acquired, or are tending towards, a Mishnic sense; as the Niph. of *עָשָׂה*, *מַעֲשֵׂה* (i. 9, 14, notes), *עָלָם* (iii. 11), *נִלְדָה* (iv. 14, note), *הַקָּשֶׁר* (x. 10, note), *אֵי יָהּ* without reference to *place* (xi. 6). Similar indication is given by the wider and more general sense of *עָשִׂיר* (x. 6, 20), and probably other words (see note on x. 16); by the use of the suffix pronoun with reference to an antecedent implied only, and not fully expressed (iv. 12 *et al.*), and, passing over other indications, generally by the abrupt, concise, and elliptical style which characterises our book.

The author of Ecclesiastes has been supposed to have borrowed various words and phrases from earlier writers, as *שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה* viii. 5 (comp. Prov. xix. 16), *כִּפְּתָה* (x. 20) from Prov. i. 17. And indeed we may well regard it as likely that he was thoroughly familiar, not only with the Proverbs, but generally with the earlier Biblical writings. (Comp. § 9.) Still it would certainly not appear that the author of Ecclesiastes at all attempted to imitate the style of the older literature. He probably wrote in the "language of the learned," using for the most part just such Hebrew as was commonly heard in the schools in his day. We may well believe, however, that he would not have allowed his fiction to be in this respect so transparent, if he had intended to convey the impression that his

book had really been written centuries before by King Solomon.

Whether we do or do not entirely agree with Ewald in the high eulogy which he has passed on the artistic skill displayed by the author of Ecclesiastes in his style and diction, we may well be cautious—especially with xii. 10 before us—how we bring against him the charge of writing in a mean and inelegant manner. His art may be of a high order, even if not always, and altogether, identical with that of earlier writers.

Ewald points to the way in which our author plays artistically upon words; adducing as examples  $\text{שָׁמַח}$  and  $\text{שָׂמַח}$  in vii. 1, and  $\text{פָּרַח}$  and  $\text{פָּרַח}$  in vii. 6. It is worthy of notice, too, how also in the seventh chapter, having in view probably the root-meaning of the word, he uses  $\text{פָּרַח}$  in two different senses; so that, at first sight, vii. 3 and vii. 9 seem quite contradictory (see note on vii. 9). From what has just been said some light may be thrown on the difficult word  $\text{יְהַלֵּל}$ , which, it is particularly deserving of attention, occurs also in this same seventh chapter in close proximity to the passages just now cited. The context seems certainly to require that the verb in question should be taken, in vii. 7, in some such sense as “gives lustre to” or “causes to shine forth.” (See note *ad loc.*) Now if it were contended that this sense would be singular, and not fully supported by any other passage in the Old Testament, still, taking into account what has been said, the supposition would not be unreasonable that our author plays upon the word, and employs it in an unusual and paradoxical sense; at the same time, however, bringing back the word nearer to its radical signification.\*

If the usage of placing Ecclesiastes among the poetical books be followed, it should still not be forgotten that, with respect to its conformity to the requirements of poetical

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\* The reader should compare also viii. 8, and note.

form, our book presents a remarkably diversified appearance. If it should be contended, with Ewald, that there is nowhere in the book mere prose, such an assertion must have regard in great measure to the sentiments expressed, and certainly not to any uniform obedience to the laws of poetical parallelism. Without expressing my entire assent to the arrangement given by Ewald in his translation (*Die Sal. Schrift.*, 2nd ed.), I may mention that he distinguishes the following passages and verses as wholly or in part poetical:—i. 2, 4—8, 15, 18; ii. 2, 11,\* 14\*; iii. 1—9, 15, 19, 20; iv. 5, 6; v. 2 (3), 6 (7), 9 (10), 14 (15); vi. 4, 5; vii. 7, 12, 19, 29; viii. 1,\* 5; ix. 4, 17—x. 2; x. 6, 8—13, 18, 20\*; xi. 4, 10; xii. 2, 6, 8. For the diversified appearance which the book thus presents, various reasons may be, with greater or less probability, suggested. It may be supposed that since the discourse of Koheleth is the discourse of a personified assembly (§ 10), our book, as it varies from a poetical to a more prosaic form, reflects the practice of the Jewish schools at the time, some of the speakers, and some only, employing the language of poetry (comp. 1 Cor. xiv. 26). Or again, as in the poetical drama, the variation in question may be regarded as evidence of artistic skill, a higher and more pleasing effect being thereby produced. Or an explanation may be found in the composite nature of the book, its varying aspect agreeing with the varied character of the sources whence our author obtained his materials. And such an explanation may be given without regarding the book as an inartistic patchwork, or denying that, in accordance with xii. 10, our author very carefully adapted and elaborated the materials which he employed. Or, lastly, the book, as regards the aspect of it in question, may be looked upon as reflecting the comprehensive genius of its author, who, it may be

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\* The verses marked by an asterisk are printed by Ewald as only in part poetical.

contended, was endowed, not only with philosophic penetration and insight, but also with the glowing imagination and formative skill of the poet; the structure of the book varying in accordance with the predominance in the author, now of the poetical and now of the philosophic element. I am not anxious to make a selection among these different explanations. It is not perhaps necessary to do so, since probably the diversified structure of the book is not due to any one alone of the causes I have suggested.

The influence which the philosophic character of our book had on its diction should certainly not be overlooked. Though, in accordance with what has been said, we may maintain that our author probably used, for the most part, such Hebrew as was commonly employed in the schools in his time; yet this is not out of harmony with the supposition, that he strove earnestly to give the new philosophic ideas a fuller expression and embodiment, wrestling, as Ewald has it (*Die Sal. Schrift.* 2nd ed. p. 270), with the Hebrew language, in order that he might mould it into an instrument fitted for his purpose. We may thus compare our author with Lucretius, in the difficulty which the great Roman poet tells us that he experienced,—

“Propter egestatem linguæ et rerum novitatem.”

The twenty-fifth verse of the seventh chapter may be, I think, cited as a specially pertinent example of what has just been said.

#### § 14. THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEXT.

A word may here be said on the integrity of our present text of Ecclesiastes. After giving a not inconsiderable measure of attention to the book, I see no reason to doubt that we have it, at least substantially, as it came from the author's hands. It may be conceded that the superscription i. 1 is possibly not genuine (§ 2), and perhaps a few places, as x. 18 (בעצלתים) may be open to suspicion; but

I see no valid reason whatever for the unrestrained employment of critical conjecture, or for the supposition that there are several *lacunæ* in the text, as well as "dislocations" which require to be rectified. The notion of an exceedingly corrupt text may well be looked upon as an endeavour to cut the knot, after failure in the attempt to disentangle and untie it.

#### § 15. THE EPILOGUE.

Particular objection has been made with respect to the verses xii. 9—14, the so-called "epilogue"—a designation to the entire fitness of which, however, I should certainly demur, though, for the sake of convenience, I may be allowed to employ it. But the view which has been already suggested (§ 6) necessarily requires that the verses in question should be regarded as an integral part of the book, and not as a sort of appendix, without which the larger portion of the book (i. 1—xii. 8) would still be complete. If the larger portion of the book possessed a distinctively negative character; if its intention was to set forth the vain and unsatisfying nature of philosophical pursuits, as well as the discrepant and contradictory conclusions which different philosophers had drawn from the same facts, it may well seem fitting, in order to the completeness of the book, that some distinctly positive utterance should follow. It may thus be with probability concluded that the epilogue is an integral part of the book, and that it was intended to turn away the reader's attention from philosophical speculation concerning man and his condition to Authority and Faith; to the fear of God and to the observance of His commandments, in the expectation that what seems abnormal will yet be shown to be right, and that the justice of the divine administration will hereafter be made clearly manifest. With this view the words of the twelfth verse seem entirely congruous: "And further, be admonished, my son, by these: as to the making of many books there is no end,



and much close study is a wearying of the flesh." The word rendered "be admonished," *וְנִזְדָּרָה*, might be translated, "be warned" (comp. iv. 13 and Ezek. xxxiii. 4—6); and it is thus quite suitably used, if the epilogue was written with the intention which I have supposed. And the reasonableness of this view may be still more apparent, if we consider what it is against which the warning is directed—the endless making of books and that close study which is a wearying of the flesh (see § 4). It would thus be implied that no reading and study, however intent, no multiplication of books, however skilfully they might be composed, would avail to solve the great problems arising from the earthly condition and the moral nature of man.

We have next to notice the plural expressions *דְּבַרֵּי חֲכָמִים* "words of wise men" (ver. 11) and *בְּאֵלֶּיךָ* "by these" (ver. 12), expressions which have been supposed to refer to the several books making up the Hagiographa, and to be in accordance with the opinion, that the epilogue was not written by the author of Ecclesiastes with special reference to the work which he was bringing to a conclusion, but that it was composed by the collector of the Hagiographa, with the view of making a suitable conclusion to the collected books, of which it is considered Ecclesiastes was the last. But the idea of the epilogue being a general conclusion to the collected Hagiographa seems a little out of harmony with the special mention of Koheleth in ver. 9. And then, as to the plural expressions referred to, it may be said that they appear quite to agree with the interpretation of *Koheleth*, as "she who is an assembly," which has been already maintained. If the author of Ecclesiastes had been giving the views of various philosophers with regard to human life, he might quite naturally speak of the "words of wise men," and say, "Be warned, my son, by these."

There is another expression in the eleventh verse, *בְּאֵלֵינוּ*, which it may be well here to notice. This phrase has been rendered, "masters of assemblies" and "members

of assemblies." Those, however, who so render the phrase seem not sufficiently to have regarded the evidence as to the meaning of אֲסֻפֹּת furnished by the word אֲסֻפִּים, which denotes, not *assemblies of persons*, but *collections of things*, or *stores*, as may be seen by referring to the passages 1 Chr. xxvi. 15, 17; Neh. xii. 25. The phrase in question, then, אֲסֻפֵי אֲסֻפֹּת may accordingly be taken to mean "men of collections." But "collections" of what? Taking the context into account, it seems not difficult to reply to this question, *collections of the words of wise men*, that is to say, collections of proverbs and of such other utterances as might be included under the comprehensive word מִשְׁלִים. Now, as we are told in ver. 9 that Koheleth "set in order" or arranged *meshalim*, it would appear that Koheleth was to be ranked among the "men of collections." This would agree entirely with the conclusion as to the composite character of Ecclesiastes already indicated. It may be observed also that the tenth chapter of our book, especially, would be in accordance with such a view. This chapter appears manifestly to consist of separate dicta, having for the most part a proverbial cast. It may be added that the fact that, on careful examination, a connecting thought may be found running through the whole, is in accordance with Koheleth's *setting in order* or *arranging meshalim*.

Evidence in favour of the interpretation of *baale asuppoth*, which has just been given, may be obtained also from the words of Sir. xxxiii. 16, in which the Son of Sirach speaks of himself as having "awaked up last of all, as one that gleaneth after the grape-gatherers." The collectors of *meshalim* are here metaphorically spoken of as "grape-gatherers;" and it would appear that several, probably many, such had preceded the Son of Sirach. Taking into account what has been said as to the respective dates of Sirach and Ecclesiastes (§ 5), the words of Sirach just quoted may be regarded as of some importance in relation

both to the composition of Ecclesiastes and the meaning of the words *baale asuppoth*. (See also note on xii. 11.)

We may, then, with probability affirm that the epilogue is an integral part of the book; that the author intended to give therein a hint with regard to the structure of his work, as containing the opinions and dicta of various philosophers and sages; to offer a warning against fruitless speculation; and, especially, to set forth the great positive conclusion towards which it was intended that the readers of the book should be directed and urged, as by goads given out by the one Shepherd.

#### § 16. THE RELATION OF ECCLESIASTES TO THE BOOK OF WISDOM.

There is, between Ecclesiastes and the Book of Wisdom, a noteworthy resemblance, of which it is desirable that some account should be given. Though in neither the one nor the other is the name of Solomon mentioned, yet in both he is in some manner introduced as speaking. Did the author of Wisdom designedly follow the example of Ecclesiastes in connecting his book with the Hebrew monarch? If, with the view of answering this question, we examine some of the contents of Wisdom, we may find indications favourable to the conclusion that the author of Wisdom had the teaching of Koheleth specially in view, and that his clear enunciation of the doctrine of immortality was directed against such Epicurean teaching as that of Ecc. iii. 18—22. What is said of the souls of the righteous being in the hand of God in Wisd. iii. 1, may perhaps recall Ecc. ix. 1. So, in the reasonings of the ungodly in the second chapter, we may fancy that there is an allusion to Koheleth's *לִּפְתָּלִים* when life is compared to the "tracks of a cloud," or to a "mist" vanishing under the rays of the sun (Wisd. ii. 4); and in the call to present enjoyment of Wisd. ii. 6—9 there may well seem some satirical reflection

of Koheleth's repeated exhortation. Koheleth, however, when he summons to enjoyment, never incites to "lying in wait for the righteous" (Wisd. ii. 12), to "oppressing the poor righteous man," and "sparing not the widow" (Wisd. ii. 10). But these, it may be supposed, are introduced as consequences naturally resulting from the denial of immortality. In like manner we may not unreasonably think that there is some reference to Ecc. i. 11, ii. 16, when we read, "And our name will in time be forgotten, and none will remember our works" (Wisd. ii. 4). It is observable that there is a marked contrast between Ecclesiastes and Wisdom in the fact that the latter, in several of its last chapters, deals at considerable length with the theocratic history, or at least with the account of the rescue from Egypt, and with matters relating thereto. The discourse of Solomon, also, in Wisd. vii. viii. stands in strong contrast with what we find in Ecc. i. ii. In the former, for example, it is said of wisdom that "tarrying with her hath no bitterness, nor living with her a pang, but mirth and joy" (Wisd. viii. 16). In the latter we read that "in much wisdom is much grief, and he who addeth to his knowledge addeth to his pain" (Ecc. i. 18). It would seem not unlikely that Ecclesiastes would be distasteful to a mind of Platonising tendency, loving to clothe the stern realities of the world with the ideal hues of its own subjectivity. On this account the author of Wisdom may have felt some antagonism to our book, even if he did not design altogether to write a reply. Still, in introducing Solomon, he very probably intended to put into his mouth what—especially in relation to wisdom and immortality—he may have conceived to be far worthier sentiments than those attributed to Koheleth in Ecclesiastes.\*

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\* The exact date of Wisdom is uncertain. The book was written, not improbably, however, a century later than Ecclesiastes.

## § 17. THE RECEPTION OF ECCLESIASTES INTO THE CANON.

If the view given above as to the design of our book and its relation to Jewish history is correct, it may appear probable that it received at an early date, and while its intention was still well remembered and understood, a place among the Hagiographa. Ecclesiastes may thus have been included among "the rest of the books," even when the prologue to Sirach was composed (comp. § 3). As time, however, advanced, and the circumstances attendant on the composition of the book were forgotten, or only dimly remembered, it is not difficult to see how doubts may have arisen as to the title of Ecclesiastes to a place among the books of the Hagiographa. I should thus account for those misgivings recorded in the Mishnah, as to whether Koheleth does or does not "pollute the hands" (*Yadaim* iii. 5).

A word must here be added as to the meaning of the expression "pollute the hands." At first sight it may seem a strange and unsuitable expression to employ as descriptive of *sacred* books, that they "pollute the hands." The explanation is given, however (*Yadaim* iv. 5), that it was out of regard for the sacred books that they were looked upon as unclean. Greater care and caution are exercised with respect to the unclean than with respect to the clean. In this matter uncleanness is an indication of regard, just as the bones of an ass, though despised and contemptible, are clean, while the venerated bones of the high priest are unclean. No one makes spoons out of the bones of his loved and honoured relations. So, also, the uncleanness of the sacred books is an indication of esteem and love. Heretical books, which are not regarded with affection, do not "pollute the hands" (*Yadaim*, l. c.).\*

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\* Later discussions concerning the canonicity of Ecclesiastes I do not think it necessary here to consider.

## § 18. THE DIVISION OF THE BOOK.

With respect to the division of the book it may be said that, although the portion i. 2 to xii. 8 has, on the whole, a negative character, in accordance with the words "all is vanity," found alike at its commencement and at its close, it may be naturally divided into two parts, i. 2 to vi. 12, and vii. 1 to xii. 8. (1) i. 2—vi. 12: this may be characterised as pre-eminently the negative part, though the positive element, as in the invitation to worldly enjoyment, is not entirely wanting. On the whole, however, it speaks of disappointment, failure, and dissatisfaction; in accordance with the words of vi. 7, 11, "All man's toil is for his mouth, but yet the soul is not filled." "Seeing there are things in abundance which increase vanity, what advantage is it to man?" (2) vii. 1—xii. 8: in like manner this may be called the positive part, since here the positive teaching of Koheleth as to how philosophy may mitigate the evils of life predominates over the negative element. Of anything like a symmetrical and duly subordinated subdivision of these two sections there is apparently no evidence. Besides the two greater sections we have the superscription i. 1, and the epilogue. The epilogue, like the philosophical portion of the book, may be divided into two sections, (1) xii. 9—12, containing appended and explanatory matter; (2) xii. 13, 14, the general conclusion of the whole book. We shall thus, if we assign an independent place to the superscription i. 1, have a division into five parts (I.) i. 1; (II.) i. 2—vi. 12; (III.) vii. 1—xii. 8; (IV.) xii. 9—12; (V.) xii. 13, 14; or, if we subdivide the two greater sections, (II.) and (III.), the whole book may be represented thus:—

(I.) i. 1.

(II.) i. 2—vi. 12.

(1) i. 2—11.

- (2) i. 12—ii. 26.  
 (1) i. 12—15; (2) i. 16—18; (3) ii. 1, 2; (4) ii. 3—23; (5) ii. 24—26.
- (3) iii. 1—11.  
 (1) iii. 1—8; (2) iii. 9—11.
- (4) iii. 12, 13.
- (5) iii. 14—17.  
 (1) iii. 14, 15; (2) iii. 16, 17.
- (6) iii. 18—iv. 16.  
 (1) iii. 18—22; (2) iv. 1—3; (3) iv. 4—6; iv. 7—12; (5) iv. 13, 14; (6) iv. 15, 16.
- (7) v. 1—17.  
 (1) v. 1—7; (2) v. 8—12; (3) v. 13—17.
- (8) v. 18—20.
- (9) vi. 1—12.  
 (1) vi. 1—6; (2) vi. 7—12.
- (III.) vii. 1—xii. 8.  
 (1) vii. 1—29.  
 (1) vii. 1; (2) vii. 2—10; (3) vii. 11, 12; (4) vii. 13—18; (5) vii. 19—22; (6) vii. 23—29.
- (2) viii. 1.
- (3) viii. 2—13.  
 (1) viii. 2—5; (2) viii. 6—8; (3) viii. 9, 10; (4) viii. 11—13.
- (4) viii. 14, 15.
- (5) viii. 16, 17.
- (6) ix. 1—10.  
 (1) ix. 1—6; (2) ix. 7—10.
- (7) ix. 11—18.  
 (1) ix. 11, 12; (2) ix. 13—18.
- (8) x. 1—20.
- (9) xi. 1—6.
- (10) xi. 7—xii. 8.  
 (1) xi. 7, 8; (2) xi. 9—xii. 8.
- (IV.) xii. 9—12.
- (V.) xii. 13, 14.

## II.

# EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS.

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**N**EXT after the superscription (i. 1), which attributes the authorship of what follows to "Kohelah, the son of David, king in Jerusalem," we come to the noble prologue (i. 2—11), in the first verse of which is sounded the key-note of the philosophical portion of our book, and especially of the first section of it, i. 2 to vi. 12. The prologue, in fact, may be, to some extent, compared to an overture which the skilful musician has so arranged as to give an anticipation of the composition which is to follow, and also to prepare the mind of the hearer for listening to its strains. "Vanity of vanities, said Kohelah, vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (i. 2). Man's incessant and restless labour yields him no profit, no permanent and enduring possession (i. 3). The earth, by her stern persistence, mocks the fruitless strivings of the generations of men, as they come and go in endless succession (i. 4). Human life is like the course of the sun, the wind, and the rivers, which appear to be always pursuing some object never to be grasped, striving after a goal which they are destined never to attain. The sun issues forth, day after day, from the east, mounts up the vault of heaven until he has reached the meridian, and then he descends at once towards the western horizon. He never stops in his course at mid-day, as though he had then attained the end for which he issued forth with the dawn: he never sinks beneath the horizon to enjoy repose. Even throughout the night he is still



hastening onward, that, at the appointed hour, he may again reach his eastern starting-place (i. 5). The wind, great though its changes may be, seems never to have accomplished the purpose for which it puts forth its power. It never subsides into a state of lasting quiescence: it never even finds a station which it can permanently occupy. It "veereth about continually," yet it ever "bloweth again, according to its circuits" (i. 6). The streams flow onward to the ocean; but the time never comes when the sea, filled to overflowing, refuses to receive their waters. The thirst of the sea is never quenched; the waters of the rivers are lost; and yet, with unavailing constancy, they still pour their contributions into its bosom (i. 7). Nor does this fruitless activity pertain to the sun, the wind, and the rivers alone. Nature all around is engaged in labour incessant, but resultless; motion monotonous, though multiform; change which tends to its own reproduction, but which presents such variety and complication, that, in contemplating it, the powers of man fail; human language, in the attempt to describe it, is exhausted: "A man cannot tell it; the eye is not satisfied in seeing it, and the ear is not filled from hearing it" (i. 8). Sometimes, indeed, the unvarying succession may appear to be interrupted: it may seem that the vast and complex machinery of Nature has yielded an unexpected and novel product. Some one, ignorant of the past, may say: "Behold this; it is new:" but "it hath been long ago in the olden time which was before us" (i. 9—11).

But it may be said, although the forces of Nature generally can never attain the end of their activity, and enjoy lasting repose, yet the case is different with Man, on account of the high powers with which he is endowed; and it may be supposed possible that, by the use of these, he may secure to himself real and substantial good, that which shall still all longing and desire, and which shall yield him full and perfect satisfaction throughout all the days of his life. It may be granted, perhaps, that this has

not yet been attained, but then those who sought for it may not have possessed the appliances necessary to ensure success ; or, even if they had these, they may have lacked the skill required to use them aright ; or, again, they may have been deficient in perseverance—in that energy which knows no obstacle, in that resoluteness which brooks no defeat.

There was none in Hebrew history, we may well believe, who could be so fitly introduced to answer such reasoning as the renowned monarch Solomon. If any on earth could ever have attained perfect satisfaction, surely he might have done so, the glory of whose reign was so transcendent, whose dominions were so ample, whose fame was so widely extended, whose wealth was so abundant, whose voluptuousness could be so fully gratified, whose wisdom was so profound and yet so practical, whose enterprises were so magnificent and so successful.

We may thus be enabled to see that there was good reason for the prominence given in our book to the experience of the illustrious monarch : for “ what can the man do who cometh after the king ? ”

It would appear probable that, in the portion of our book from i. 12 to ii. 25, after some general statements with respect to Koheleth's wide survey of human life, we have first, in i. 16—18, an account of his speculative study of the world, and then, in the second chapter, of two practical experiments. The investigation generally was in accordance with the desire for knowledge which God has implanted in man (i. 13). Of the general result it is said, that, having seen all the works done under the sun, Koheleth found all to be empty and vain : there were distortions and deficiencies, whose cure and remedy was beyond human art and skill (i. 14, 15). Koheleth's investigations, as a student of “ wisdom and knowledge,” and of heedless and senseless folly, failed to yield him satisfaction. He found that “ in much wisdom is much grief ; and he who addeth to his knowledge addeth to his pain ” (i. 18).

We come now to Koheleth's first practical experiment (ii. 1, 2), in which, laying aside the character of a student or a sage, with fools he became a fool, joining in their jovial revelry and boisterous mirth (ii. 1). But the laughter of fools was as the crackling of the burning thorns. The noisy blaze was but for a moment; the gloom was deep and enduring. Of their laughter he said: "Frenzied it is," and of their mirth, "What good doth this do?" (ii. 2).

But though riotous mirth had thus failed to yield Koheleth that satisfaction of his nature which he was seeking, that "good for mankind, which they may do under the heavens, throughout the number of the days of their life," yet what unreasoning revelry could not give might perhaps be obtained from more prudent enjoyment. The excitement of wine and folly might be cautiously indulged in, the "heart guiding wisely" (ii. 3). Under the conduct of the judgment, pleasure of a higher kind might be conjoined with sensual delights. Koheleth engaged accordingly in executing great works, in the building of palaces, in the planting of vineyards and orchards, and in the laying out of parks and gardens. He acquired possessions, too, in servants and maidens, oxen and sheep, silver and gold and treasure. He obtained also singers, both male and female, and "the voluptuous pleasures of mankind, a wife and a harem" (ii. 4—8).

From the success which Koheleth achieved, and the pleasure which he derived from his works, it might seem that he had now attained the supreme good, and that though this was beyond the reach of ordinary men, yet that it might be possessed and enjoyed by one pre-eminent in power, in wealth, and in wisdom. Koheleth's satisfaction was not destined, however, to be enduring. After a while his joy passed away, and all was found to be evanescent and vain. Still, on a comparison of wild, unrestrained folly and its pleasures with wisdom and prudence, as exercised in controlling and guiding enjoyment, he found that

the latter has as great advantage over the former, "as the light hath greater advantage than the darkness. As for the wise man, his eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness." There was one fate, however, which awaited alike the wise man and the fool. Much as Koheleth had accomplished, he still found himself confined within bounds which he could not pass. He must leave his possessions and the works in which he had so much delighted, and die, even as the fool dieth; and then he must be succeeded by another in whose power it would be to mar or destroy the work in accomplishing which he had displayed so much skill and wisdom. And this no power of his could prevent; for he must cease for ever from exercising control over the fruits of his own labour and toil. And when a man has succumbed to the inexorable doom, what remains to him of the success he may have achieved through toil, and pain, and sorrow; by laborious days and sleepless nights? All is vanity (ii. 9—23).

Koheleth's two experiments thus proved that full satisfaction was to be obtained neither from riotous revelry nor from the calm and prudent enjoyment of worldly things. The supreme good was in neither case to be found with "the man who eateth and drinketh, and causeth himself to find enjoyment in respect of his toil" (ii. 24). In this result Koheleth perceived "the hand of God," for if any could thus have obtained full and perfect satisfaction, surely it was Koheleth, whose powers were so vigorous, and whose appetite for pleasure was so keen (ii. 25). There was, indeed, a certain measure of enjoyment which, in accordance with the Divine appointment, might be obtained from worldly things; but he who, by sedulously labouring, heaping up, and accumulating, endeavours to pass beyond the limit thus fixed, is a sinner, whose earnest striving will prove to be but "vanity and a pursuit of the wind." Not perfect and unending bliss, but moderate, limited, and partial enjoy-

ment, was allowed to man while awaiting his certain and inevitable doom (ii. 24—26).

It may be seen that the Catalogue of the Times and Seasons (iii. 1—8) follows in close connection with what had been before said with respect to the limits appointed for man. It is now affirmed that there are times and seasons, fixed and determined, for all the affairs and pursuits of men. "For every thing there is an appointed time, and a season for every matter under heaven; a season for giving birth and a season for dying; a season for planting and a season for rooting up what was planted; a season for slaying and a season for healing," and so on (iii. 1—8). This catalogue appears to be given as an enumeration of the various particulars which make up human life from its commencement to its close, or, so to speak, as a kind of syllabus of human life. It is asked, in view of this enumeration of changing and transitory seasons, "What advantage hath he who worketh, in respect of that whereat he toileth?" (iii. 9). Nevertheless the successive generations of men still go on planting and rooting up, slaying and healing, breaking down and building up. How is this to be accounted for, if they gain thereby no profit, no substantial and enduring advantage? We may find an answer to this question in the verses which follow (iii. 10, 11). It is God Himself who is ever leading them on: they are accomplishing the travail which He has allotted them. He has made all these occupations beautiful and attractive in their respective seasons, and He has also "set the world in their heart," so that they are moved by an internal impulse to occupy themselves with its pursuits. Thus, urged by their own appetites, passions, and inclinations, they perceive not the Divine hand, nor from the beginning of life even to its end, do they "find out the work which God hath wrought" (iii. 10, 11). From the pursuits of life, Koheleth affirms, man could obtain no good except such seasonable and transitory enjoyment as

was allowed by the "gift of God" (iii. 12, 13). This accords with what had been already said (ii. 26).

Times and seasons had been spoken of in which the natural propensities of men may be lawfully indulged; and in this respect the Divine appointments are unchangeably fixed: "I perceived that, as to all that God doeth, it is to be for ever: there is no making addition to it; and there is no taking away from it; and God so arranged it, that they may fear before Him," that is, may fear before Him, seeing the inflexible decision of His character. The course of things, in its invariable sequence, is like a revolving circle, objects on whose periphery are seen again and again in their former position: "Whatever hath been, it had been long ago before, and what is to be already hath been, and God will seek after what hath gone before;" that is, what in the rotation has passed by, or, more literally, "what is pursued," objects on a revolving circle seeming to pursue and chase one another; and God will seek after the past, in order to bring it back again in due season (iii. 14, 15).

Yet, notwithstanding the unvarying order of nature and the fixedness of the Divine appointments, men nevertheless are found disregarding the allotted times and seasons, and acting in a manner which is altogether ill-timed and unseasonable: "I saw under the sun the place of judgment, there was wickedness; and the place of righteousness, there was wickedness. I said in my heart, God will judge the righteous and the wicked; for there is a season for every matter, and for all the work there" (iii. 16, 17).

But, on the other hand, the fact that wickedness was to be found where there should be judgment and righteousness, and that God does not at once interfere to correct and redress this state of things, might suggest the conclusion that there are in reality no appointed times and seasons for human actions; that there is no pre-arranged order in the world; that virtue and vice, righteousness and iniquity, are not to be distinguished by any divine appointment; that

the moral accountability of man is, in fact, a conceit and a fiction. Thus it may be maintained that the condition of men is like that of beasts, or, that men are themselves beasts, and that the present state of things is intended "to test them," and to let it be seen that they are but beasts. "The lot of mankind is also the lot of beasts;" "as is the death of the one, so is the death of the other." Who knows that the spirit of a man goes upward, or that the spirit of a beast goes downward? No: a man has no pre-eminence above a beast. Both are of the dust, and both turn to dust again, and there is an end of them both. Let a man, therefore, enjoy the world while he is in it; for this is his only portion. "For who will bring him to look upon what will be after him?" (iii. 18—22).

Throughout the fourth chapter, it may be observed, there is no mention of the Deity. What is there said may not, perhaps, contain so express a denial of the moral government of the world as that found in the last verses of the third chapter, but the tendency appears certainly to be in the same direction: God troubles Himself not with human affairs. The tear of the oppressed is unheeded; none interposes on their behalf; none comes to console them in their affliction: "On the side of those oppressing them there was might, but they had no comforter." More fortunate than theirs, it is urged, is the condition of the dead; and better still that of him who has not as yet been born, and has not seen the grievous work done under the sun (iv. 1—3). Then, again, if a man prospers in the world, as the result of his exertions, others, instead of rejoicing at his prosperity, are stirred with envy; and thus an excuse is given to the fool who does not exert himself at all, but, folding his hands, suffers penury and want. "Better," he says, "is a handful with quiet than the two hands full with toil and a pursuit of the wind" (iv. 4—6). Then follow (iv. 7—12) observations on individual isolation, as well as on the advantage of union and co-operation.

This subject is probably introduced in order to show that men are left to themselves. If they unite to accomplish any purpose, they can then succeed; but there is no Deity who either helps the solitary individual or interferes with his fate. The miser who has neither son nor brother, goes on vainly amassing wealth, regardless of the question which naturally suggests itself, "For whom am I toiling, and depriving myself of enjoyment?" If two are together, and one of them falls down, the other can help his companion to rise again, "but woe to the one who falleth, when there is not a second to raise him up." If two lie together they may derive warmth one from the other, "but as to one, how can he be warm?" So again, in the case of an assault, though one may be overpowered, two can oppose an effectual resistance, "and a threefold cord is not quickly broken,"—this being not improbably a proverbial expression, setting forth the advantage of close and intimate union (iv. 8—12). The next verse speaks of "a king, old and foolish, who hath no longer the sense to accept admonition." At first sight there may seem to be here a break in the continuity of thought, but a very little reflection may suffice to show that a king who will accept from others neither admonition nor warning is a signal example of isolation. So also the leading idea appears clearly discernible in the mention of "the prison house," the place of constrained separation from the world: "Out of the prison house he went forth to reign,"—words not, probably, to be taken of any historical fact, but merely as vividly depicting how the supposed old and foolish king cuts himself off from the experience of others. Possibly, also, it may be implied that, spurning admonition, the king acts like one who, coming out of a prison, throws off all restraint in the joy of his new liberty. The disastrous effect of such a king's misgovernment is shown in the poverty of his subjects. A person young in years, and poor, if but wise and prudent, would be a better ruler than the old self-willed king (iv. 13, 14).



It might be considered, however, that what had been said was only of partial application ; and accordingly, in the last two verses of the chapter, we have presented to us a more comprehensive view extending to three generations : “ I have seen all the living that walk under the sun, with the second child who is to stand in their stead.” On this comprehensive view two observations are made. The first of these is that “ there is no end to all the people.” This observation concerning the limitless number of the people is made, not improbably, in opposition to the idea that man’s condition is conformed to a divinely appointed plan. Looked at in the aggregate, humanity presented to the view no definiteness such as would suggest the idea of design. The second observation is, with regard to the connection of thought, particularly important : “ As to all that was before them, even those who come after rejoice not therein.” Previously the isolation of individuals had been spoken of, but now a separateness in the interests of whole generations is asserted (iv. 15, 16).

If, however, there is a Deity presiding over the affairs of men, might we not expect to find unity instead of disintegration ? harmony instead of discord ? Would the individual be left to fall unheeded and alone ? Would success depend on union and co-operation ? Would the poor man suffer from the reckless misgovernment of the self-willed king ? Would the weak be oppressed, down-trodden, and left without a comforter ?

“ Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the House of God, for more acceptable is it to draw nigh to hear, than for fools to offer a sacrifice, though they mean not to do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart hasten to utter a word before God ; for God is in heaven and thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words be few.” He who treats of Divine things, comes, as it were, into the very Temple of God. Therefore, in speaking of the way in which the world is ordered and governed, there should be

caution, deliberation, reverence. The speech of a man who talks at random concerning the Divine administration may be compared with the unacceptable sacrifice of the fool, who means not to do evil, although in his heedlessness he may disregard the law (v. 1, 2). Besides, it is a serious matter to speak before God: the vow once made could not be retracted; the word spoken before God was irrevocable: "What thou vowest, pay. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Allow not thy mouth to make thy body sin." The discourse of a man who says a great deal, and speaks hastily, is likely to be wanting in consistency and coherence; and it may thus be compared to a dream, in which images are presented to the mind without order, and the circumstances of which are wholly deficient in congruity: "As a dream cometh with much confusion, so cometh a fool's voice with a multitude of words." "As in a multitude of dreams there are vanities, so also is it with an abundance of words: but fear thou God" (v. 3—7).

By insisting on the necessity of caution, deliberation, and reverence, the way is prepared for observations in defence of the Divine administration, and in reply to what had been before said (comp. iv. 1 with v. 8.): "If thou seest in a country the oppression of the poor and the perversion of right and justice, wonder not at the matter; for One higher than the high observeth it, and there are powers high above them" (v. 8). It is shown, further, that there is a distribution of earthly good more nearly equal than may at first sight appear. In some respects all men stand on the same footing. The produce of one field may supply the wants of both the peasant and the prince: "As to the produce gained from the land, it is shared among all; the king is dependent on the field" (v. 9). If some men have greater wealth than others, their enjoyment of life is not on this account necessarily enhanced. With the increase of wealth cupidity and avarice become stronger and more

intense : " He who loveth silver is not satisfied with silver, nor any one who setteth his affection on riches with his income " (v. 10). " When wealth increaseth, they increase who eat it ; and what profit hath the owner thereof, except the beholding with his eyes ? " (v. 11). The poor labourer who earns his bread by daily toil, and enjoys at night refreshing repose, may have an advantage over the man of abounding wealth : " Sweet is the sleep of the labourer, whether he eat little or much, but as to the satiety of the rich man, it alloweth him not to fall asleep " (v. 12). Moreover, it would have been well for some men never to have become rich, since wealth may be " kept by its owner to his injury " (v. 13). " And that wealth perished in a grievous business ; for he begat a son, and there was nothing in his hand ; "—meaning probably that the son was a spendthrift, a reckless prodigal ; and so the parent, his wealth having been dissipated, is left to pass his declining days in darkness and sorrow, affliction and anger (v. 14—17).

So signal an example of evil consequences resulting from the keeping and reservation of wealth, and of failure to enjoy the pleasures of the passing hour, gives an opportunity for its being again asserted that it is fitting and suitable for a man to derive present and seasonable gratification from the earthly good which circumstances may offer. And if it is given him to possess wealth, and to enjoy prosperity, he should allow his days to glide by in calm and tranquil pleasure, feeling that his life is in harmony with that of God Himself (v. 18—20).

It has been already shown that the possession of wealth is accompanied by drawbacks and counterpoises which tend to equalise the condition of men. If wealth does not yield enjoyment and satisfaction, its possession may even be looked upon as a calamity. This is exemplified in the case of one to whom God gives wealth and honour, which he is not permitted to enjoy. Perhaps, on attaining the summit

of his ambition, he may be suddenly reduced to perury by some sinister occurrence; or perhaps, by the stroke of death, he may be cut off childless, and a stranger may take his possessions (vi. 1, 2). Nor is happiness the necessary result of the possession of wealth, together with a numerous family and protracted longevity, not even though a man should beget a hundred children, and live two thousand years. He who ever postpones to the future satisfaction and fruition, may possibly be so intent on preparation for future enjoyment as to neglect even to provide a sepulchre which may perpetuate his name. And dying without having reached the goal he proposed to attain, he departs in the darkness, and his name is covered with darkness (vi. 3—6).

The intent pursuit of wealth, the eager, unremitting striving after earthly things, fails to appease the cravings of man's nature: he is left still unsatisfied and hungry: "All man's toil is for his mouth, but yet the soul is not filled" (vi. 7). There is, as was before asserted, a certain limited measure of enjoyment possible for men, and, with respect to this, they are to a great extent on a footing of equality: "For what advantage hath the wise over the fool? what over the poor who knoweth how to walk before the living?" (vi. 8). Better, it is true, than a continued restless striving after future earthly good is this present moderate enjoyment, "the sight of the eyes," but even this is vain and empty (vi. 9). Man possesses now, as he always has possessed, a feeble nature. This was indicated by the name long ago given to him, *Adam*, of the earth, earthy (comp. Gen. v. 2). His restless striving after the perfect good must necessarily, therefore, be fruitless. So weak and impotent a creature cannot possibly gain the victory over the One mightier than he, who has determined that he shall not find a perpetual unalloyed satisfaction in any earthly pursuits or pleasures: "As to what hath been, his name was given to him long ago, and it was known that he is man (*adam*); and he cannot contend with Him who is

mightier than he" (vi. 10). He may indeed resist the Divine appointments: he may in many ways, as we have seen, add to the vanity of his earthly lot, but "what advantage is it to man?" (vi. 11). The question may then be asked, Can nothing be found to assuage the cravings of man's nature? Is there no pursuit to which, without "increasing vanity," he may apply himself throughout "the days of his vain life?" "For who knoweth what is good for man in life, during the number of the days of his vain life, and that he may make them like the shadow, since who can tell man what will be after him under the sun?" (vi. 12). With this question the negative section of the philosophical part of our book ends; with the next chapter the answer to the question commences.

The positive section (vii. 1 to xii. 8) exhibits wisdom as of surpassing value to man, but yet not as perfect and unalloyed good. This part of our book is, moreover, tentative, grappling with problems which it does not profess to have solved. At its close (xii. 8), as at the commencement of the negative part (i. 2), is sounded that full, deep utterance, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

At the outset the immaterial is preferred before the material and sensuous, a good reputation before fragrant oil or precious ointment: "Better is a good name than fragrant ointment, and the day of death than the day of one's birth" (vii. 1). It appears unlikely that there is in the latter part of the verse any reference to a state of future blessedness. More probably is it to be taken in accordance with the ancient dictum that none was to be accounted happy before his death, since throughout life the future is uncertain. A good name which has been gained may be injured or destroyed by a man's subsequent acts, but, when life has been finished and sealed by death, this is no longer possible. Moreover death may teach lessons of especial value to the living; may communicate to them just views of life, and awaken a seriousness of

disposition indispensable to those who would be truly wise. Those who desire this preparation of heart should visit "the house of mourning," and ponder its lessons on the brevity of life and the solemn mystery of death. The heart chastened and subdued may become calm and tranquil, even if the countenance is saddened and pensive (vii. 2—4). With the pursuit of true wisdom the laughter and merriment of fools is incongruous: it is but like the crackling of the burning thorns. Better is it to be reproached by a wise man than to listen to such mirth (vii. 5, 6). Still, to hear the reproach even of the wise is to endure present pain, though this pain may be followed by improvement in the character of him who bears the reproach. We may thus trace a connection with the verse which follows: "For the infliction of pain maketh a wise man shine forth, but a gift corrupteth the heart" (vii. 7). The view thus suggested appears entirely in accordance with the next two verses: "Better is the end of a thing than its beginning; better is the man of patient spirit than the man of proud spirit. Be not in haste to stir up anger in thy spirit, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools" (vii. 8, 9). He who is involved in calamity and misfortune is not unlikely to look back with regret on days gone by and on former times, and to ask, Why were they better? Such a question, Koheleth teaches, is not the dictate of wisdom (vii. 10). Other possessions, indeed, may be lost, but, to the wise man, one possession of surpassing excellence still remains: "Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, and better too to those who see the sun. For wisdom serveth as a protection, and money serveth as a protection; but knowledge hath an advantage: wisdom preserveth in life those who possess it" (vii. 11, 12). Moreover, to resist Omnipotence is useless. It is the part of a wise man to conform his conduct to the Divine appointments, and not to engage in a struggle so fruitless and unavailing. Prosperity and adversity are alike of Divine appointment, and each should

be allowed to exercise its proper influence on the character ; and this influence, if exercised at all, must be exercised during life, since " man findeth nothing after him : " " Behold the work of God, for who can straighten what he hath made crooked ? In the day of prosperity enjoy thyself, but in the day of adversity behold. God, indeed, hath set the one in correspondence to the other, because man findeth nothing after him " (vii. 13, 14). The apparent moral anomalies of the world do, however, severely test the wise man. He may see a good man cut off in the midst of an honourable and useful course, possibly, in consequence of his firm and uncompromising integrity, while to a notorious sinner is allowed a long life ; nay, his very wickedness may seem profitable and advantageous. He who observes such facts may be tempted to conclude that God puts no difference between good and evil, and consequently he may plunge into sin, and become " foolish " and " over much wicked ; " or, on the other hand, there is danger lest he should assume to be " excessively wise " and " righteous over much," sitting in judgment on the Holy One, and calling in question the wisdom and justice of His doings : " I saw all in the days of my vanity : there is a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man prolonging his life in his wickedness. Be not righteous over much, neither assume thyself to be excessively wise : why shouldest thou be struck with dismay. Be not wicked over much, neither be thou foolish : why shouldest thou die before thy time ? It is well that thou shouldest take hold of the one admonition, and also from the other decline not thy hand ; for he who feareth God will come forth from them all." Such a one is neither over much wicked, nor righteous over much : he comes forth from all the trials to which the difficulties of God's moral government subject him (vii. 15—18). But the wise man attains this victory, not only because he is under the guidance of wisdom, but because wisdom rules over him. To coerce the evil still

existing in his nature, Wisdom has to dominate within him with a power greater than that of ten rulers in a city (vii. 19): "For there is not a righteous man on the earth, who doeth well and sinneth not" (vii. 20). Absolute moral perfection is not to be expected; the taint of evil pervades humanity: "Moreover, pay no attention to all the words which people speak, so that thou hear not thy servant reviling thee. For thy heart knoweth that thou, even thou, hast many times also reviled others" (vii. 21, 22).

The words of the following verse, "I said, I will be wise, but it was too far off for me," &c. appear certainly to have a close connection with what had been said just before. The moral condition of mankind, and the moral government of God, presented a problem which baffled all attempts at solution: "I said, I will be wise, but it was too far off for me. That which was far off and exceeding deep, who could find it?" The inquiry in which Koheleth now engaged was not to result in the same success as he had before attained (vii. 23, 24). This investigation was directed apparently towards two objects,—first, to the discovery of the philosophy of man's moral condition—the reason why it was what it was, or the plan of which it was the embodiment—and secondly, to the acquiring a knowledge of moral evil in its fuller development and manifestation. With respect to the second branch of the investigation, Koheleth does not appear to have been altogether unsuccessful, but with regard to the first, in the main, he failed, though he found that man, at first made upright by God, had "sought out many inventions." It would appear that the inquiry was conducted inductively, and that the plan of man's moral condition was sought for by the successive examination of individual characters or particular facts. In the course of the inquiry Koheleth was led to conclusions especially unfavourable to the moral character of woman: "I proceeded, I and my heart, to know, and to explore, and to seek out wisdom and a plan, and to know the depravity



of obduracy and folly, even madness. And I find a more bitter thing than death, the woman who, as to her heart, is nets and snares, whose hands are bonds: he who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the sinner will be caught by her. See, this I found, said Koheleth, considering one by one to find a plan, which my soul hath up to this time sought, but I have not found: one man out of a thousand I found, but a woman in all these I found not. See, this only I found, that God had made man upright, but they had sought out many inventions" (vii. 25—29).

What had been said about Koheleth's inquiry and its results, gave an opportunity for speaking of the deep joy of the wise man, when he has solved a problem, or conducted an investigation to a successful issue: "Who is as the wise man? and who as he that knoweth the explanation of a thing? a man's wisdom causeth his face to shine, and the fixedness of his countenance is changed" (viii. 1).

In the seventh chapter Koheleth had treated of the wise man with respect to Providence—to "the work of God" in relation to the circumstances and conditions of man's earthly lot. In the eighth chapter he advances beyond this, and speaks of the wise man in relation to Law. In a very effective manner, the concrete appears to be put for the abstract. A king is brought before us, as though he were Law personified or embodied. His power is derived from God, the fountain of law. He is God's vicegerent, as is shown by the fact that he can adjure men, putting them under the sanctions and penalties connected with such adjuration (comp. Lev. v. 1; 1 Sam. xiv. 24; Matt. xxvi. 63); for this is probably what is implied in the mention of "the oath of God:" "I say, Observe the king's commandment, and that on account of the oath of God. Be not in haste to go from before him: persist not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever he pleaseth: because the king's word is with authority, and who can say unto him, What doest

thou? He who observeth what is commanded hath experience of no evil thing, and the heart of the wise man discerneth both season and law" (viii. 3—5). Men do, however, very commonly disobey law. Disobedience is followed by suffering; the conscience is disturbed, and the soul is troubled by fears of future punishment: "Because for every matter there is a season and a law, the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not what will be; for how it will be, who can tell him?" (viii. 6, 7). Especially do the fears of men converge towards that great crisis of existence, death—that war from which there is neither exemption nor discharge: "There is no man having control over the wind, so as to hold in the wind, and there is no control over the day of death; and there is no discharge in war; and wickedness will not deliver those who commit it" (viii. 8). Difficulty or uncertainty may attach to some of the expressions in this verse and in those immediately preceding, but still there appears to be no sufficient reason for questioning that, the subject of law having been introduced by what had been said about the king, we have in these verses statements concerning the general operation of law, especially in relation to man as a transgressor. We then have brought before us another fact respecting law, that it does not appear in this world in full and unsullied majesty. Injustice and oppression sometimes occupy the place of the holy, and sit on the seat of justice: "I saw all this, and I gave my heart to all work which was done under the sun, even in the season when man ruled over man to his injury" (viii. 9). And this was looked upon, not as a surprising and abnormal portent, but as a thing so little strange and unusual that the wicked rulers passed away like other men, and were buried like them; and by and by "they were forgotten in the city where they had so done" (viii. 10). Another apparent imperfection in the operation of law is manifested in delay occurring before merited punishment is inflicted. Transgressors in consequence become embold-

ened: "Because the sentence against the evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of mankind is fully set in them to do evil" (viii. 11). Still, if Justice does not at once poise her balance, it must not be inferred that she will never make her award. The penalty may overtake the transgressor not the less certainly, if it travel with slow and halting step. The reward of the righteous may be not the less sure, even if it be for a while delayed: "Although the sinner doeth evil a hundred times, and yet longeth his days, yet surely I know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. But it will not be well with the wicked man, neither will he lengthen out his days like the shadow, because he feareth not before God" (viii. 12, 13). The comparison with the shadow would thus imply that a wicked man's life will not be lengthened out as a shadow is when sunset approaches. In fact, however, if length of life or other manifest advantage is the due reward of the wise and righteous man who obeys law, it does sometimes happen, not only that he never receives his due, but even that he suffers from evils which should have been inflicted on the disobedient; while, on the other hand, the wicked man passes a life as calm, tranquil, and prosperous as if he had been doing "the work of the righteous" (viii. 14). But, if this is the fact, why should wisdom be so painfully pursued? Why should the house of mourning be preferred to the banquet? "And I commended enjoyment, because there is nothing good for man under the sun, except to eat, and to drink, and to enjoy, for this will accompany him in his toil, during the days of his life, which God hath given him under the sun" (viii. 15).

In the verses viii. 16—ix. 2, an advance is made upon the position, just before maintained, that to *some* righteous men it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and that to *some* wicked men it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; a position which is consistent with the conclusion that generally "the work of God" in

punishing or rewarding man is seen in the apportionment to them of earthly good or evil, and that thus is given, on the whole, a manifest indication whether men have been obedient or disobedient, righteous or wicked. But, in opposition to such a conclusion, it is affirmed in the passage just cited that men cannot thus distinguish the work of God, and that it is not possible to discern His love or His hatred in the outward circumstances of men, or in "all that is before them." "When I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to see the busy work which was being carried on upon the earth—for indeed neither by day nor night doth it see sleep with its eyes—then I saw, as to all the work of God, that man cannot find out the work which is done under the sun, because that, though man should toil to seek it, yet will he not find it out, and even if the wise man should think to know it, he will not be able to find it out. For I laid all this to heart, even to investigate all this, that the righteous and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God, yet men discern neither love nor hatred in all that is before them. All is alike to all: there is one lot to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the pure, and to him that is defiled, and to him who sacrificeth, and to him who sacrificeth not: as is the good man, so is the sinner; he who sweareth, as he who feareth an oath" (viii. 16—ix. 2).

The fact that the present condition and external circumstances of men do not correspond to their moral character and actions, but that "all is alike to all," affords a provocative to reckless wickedness:—"Therefore, indeed, the heart of mankind is full of evil, and madness is in their heart during their life, and afterwards they go to the dead. For in the case of one who is associated with all the living there is confidence, for, even a living dog, he is better than the dead lion" (ix. 3, 4). The teeming life which a man sees around him, while he is associated with the living, not unnaturally gives rise to a feeling of hope and confi-

dence. "Even a living dog, he is better than the dead lion," was probably a proverbial expression, implying contempt for the dead, and indicating also that life, while it lasted, was to be prized and enjoyed. "For the living know that they will die, but as for the dead they know not anything, and they have no further recompense, for the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, as well as their hatred and their envy, hath long ago perished, and they have no more for ever any part in anything that occurreth under the sun" (ix. 5, 6).

Koheleth's reprehension of the moral administration of the world seems now to have reached a climax, and, in accordance with this, his exhortation to enjoyment and activity while in the world, has a greater amplitude than what had preceded:—"Go, eat thy bread with gladness, and drink thy wine with a cheerful heart, for long ago hath God approved thy works. At every season let thy garments be white, and let there not be any lack of ointment on thy head. Enjoy life with the woman whom thou lovest, during all the days of thy vain life, which He hath given thee under the sun" (ix. 7—9). The tenth verse must be understood in a sense agreeing with the context. As life was to be regarded as the time for enjoyment, so also was it the time for activity. The prospect beyond death was dark and gloomy. If, indeed, it was to be supposed that existence would be at all continued, there would be no longer in Sheol the exercise of thought, imagination, or activity:—"All that thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is neither work, nor plan, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol, whither thou art going" (ix. 10). It certainly appears most probable that Sheol does not denote "the grave," but that gloomy subterranean receptacle, the supposed dwelling-place of the inert and feeble shades. (Comp. Isa. xiv. 9—18).

Nor is it moral excellences alone which fail to meet with their due reward in the world. The case is similar with

respect to physical and intellectual attainments and endowments :—" Again I saw under the sun that neither to the swift is the race, nor to the men of might the battle, nor yet to wise men bread, nor yet to prudent men riches, nor yet to men of discernment favour, but seasons and accidents happen to them all. For man also knoweth not his season: like fishes that are caught in an evil net, and like birds that are caught in a snare, so they, mankind, are snared by an evil season, when it falleth upon them suddenly " (ix. 11, 12).

That an external reward may not be gained by intellectual excellence and skill, even when successfully and beneficially exerted, is illustrated by the case of a little city which, when it had few to defend it, and was besieged by a powerful monarch, was delivered by a poor wise man—who, however, even after he had been thus successful, was disregarded and despised :—" I saw also this example of wisdom under the sun, and it appeared great unto me: a little city, and few men within it, and a great king came against it, and surrounded it, and built great forts over against it. And he found in it a poor wise man, and the latter delivered the city by his wisdom, yet no man remembered that same poor man. And I said, Wisdom is better than might, but the wisdom of the poor man is despised, and as to his words they are not heard " (ix. 13—16). This narrative points to one of the causes why intellectual excellence may fail of obtaining an external reward—the unwillingness not uncommonly manifested among men, to recognise mental power when dissociated from extrinsic and artificial advantages. Where these advantages are highly valued, it is probable that there the "poor wise man" will suffer injustice, and that his wisdom will be neglected and despised. The philosopher, if needy and obscure, may be regarded with proud disdain by "fools" who pay servile homage to the "great king," with his armies and his forts, or even to the ignorant plebeian who dazzles their eyes with

glittering wealth. Nevertheless, the men of thought are true kings, even though they may lack the outward semblance of royalty, and wisdom is a power in the world, such as neither wealth nor artificial distinction can confer: "The words of wise men in quietness are heard above the outcry of one ruling over fools" (ix. 17). But, great as is the power of wisdom, evil also possesses great power: one poor wise man may defeat a great king; but one sinner can render valueless and corrupt much of the good which wisdom has attained:—"Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner may destroy much that is good" (ix. 18).

From the mischievous influence exerted by one sinner the transition is easy to the evil effect which a little folly may produce in the character of a wise man: "Dead flies cause the perfumer's ointment to stink and putrefy, so doth a little folly a man esteemed on account of wisdom and honour" (x. 1). Care ought therefore to be exercised, in order that a little folly may not corrupt and spoil a character otherwise beautiful and symmetrical. He who would acquire and retain a reputation for wisdom ought to be eminently prudent. We are thus brought to the general subject of the tenth chapter, in which Koheleth, leaving behind the great problem of man's moral condition, descends to the level of common life, and insists on the importance of practical wisdom, tact, prudence, caution. The thread of thought running through the whole chapter appears very clearly manifest. A wise man discerns the course of circumstances without, and so he is enabled to do the right thing at the proper time. His "heart is at his right hand, but a fool's heart is at his left" (x. 2). The fool has not the prudent self-restraint to conceal his folly, but, even as he goes along, he makes his deficiency conspicuous: "He saith to all that he is a fool" (x. 3). By prudence and submission the anger even of a ruler may be appeased, and the consequences of his wrath averted:

—“ If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, quit not thy place, for yielding letteth great offences remain quiet ” (x. 4). The advantages of prudence and practical wisdom may be shown by adducing examples of evil resulting from the opposite qualities. Imprudence and the want of practical wisdom are conspicuous, when a ruler, passing by men of superior ability or fitness, assigns prominent positions to persons who do not possess appropriate qualifications:—“ There is an evil which I saw under the sun, it appearing as an error which proceedeth from the ruler : Folly is put in very exalted positions, while great men remain in a lowly rank. I saw servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth ” (x. 5—7). Circumspectness, prudence, and practical wisdom are necessary not only to the prince and courtier, but even to him who labours in digging or hewing. If he is careless in digging a pit, he may fall into it ; if he is incautious in breaking down a fence, a serpent may bite him (x. 8). And in a similar manner, “ He who quarrieth stones may be hurt by them : he who cleaveth trees may be endangered by them. If the iron be blunt, and he sharpen not the edge, then hath he to exert great strength, but the right guidance of wisdom is an advantage ” (x. 9, 10). Moreover, what has been said about digging, cleaving trees, quarrying stones, &c., may have been intended to intimate figuratively that prudence and practical wisdom are required in intercourse with *men*. At any rate, the lesson is set forth in what follows. There are unduly loquacious people who resemble serpents in the mischief which they inflict, and who require to be treated with great tact and skill, if they are to be rendered innocuous:—“ If the serpent, without charming, will bite, the babbler is no better ” (x. 11). This foolish loquacity, with its mischievous results, contrasts strongly with the well-ordered and prudent speech of the wise man:—“ The words of a wise man’s mouth are acceptable, but the lips of a fool swallow up himself. The



beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of his talk is pernicious madness : man knoweth not what it is that will be ; and what will be after him, who can tell him ? ” (x. 12—14). The latter part of ver. 14, “ Man knoweth not,” &c., may possibly be the words of the fool arrogating to himself a knowledge of the future superior to that of other men ; but far more probably they are intended to convey the idea that, as a man’s knowledge is limited, his speech ought to be prudent and restrained. With respect to the following verse (ver. 15), it may be observed that “ not to know how to go to a city ” was probably a proverbial expression, used to denote clownish ignorance and deficiency of practical wisdom : “ The toil of fools wearieth each of them, because he knoweth not how to go to a city ” (x. 15). Especially disastrous are the consequences likely to ensue when the government of a country is in the hands of persons who are at once incompetent and imprudent, and when its princes pass amid revelry and feasting the time which ought to be devoted to the concerns of the state :—“ Woe to thee, O land, whose king is a boy, and whose princes eat in the morning. Happy art thou, O land, whose king is of noble descent, and whose princes eat at the proper season, for strength, and not for carousing ” (x. 16, 17). The next two verses contain what were probably prudential maxims or proverbs, the first relating to the evil effects of indolence :—“ By great slothfulness the framework is decayed, and by slackness of hands the house drippeth through ” (x. 18). The following verse appears designed to teach the value of money, and consequently the importance of a prudent economy :—“ They prepare food for laughter, and wine maketh life joyful, but money answereth for all things ” (x. 19). Prudence, moreover, should regulate not only actions and words, but even the thoughts and purposes of the heart. Thoughts of evil may, in an unguarded moment, or a time of seeming security, give birth to words, and these it may be impos-

sible to recall:—"Even in thy thoughts revile not the king, nor in thy bedchamber revile the great man; for the bird of heaven may carry the sound, and that which hath wings may tell of the matter" (x. 20). With this verse Koheleth's exhortations to prudence and caution reach a climax. What immediately follows stands in antithesis and contrast.

Care, circumspectness, and caution, thrift and economy, may become excessive. And after all, so uncertain is the future, and so feeble and short-sighted is man, that the most careful precautions against future evil may be fruitless. The storm of adversity may suddenly and in a moment dissipate the wealth accumulated during long years of prudent saving and painful self-denial. It is the part, therefore, of a wise man to act with liberality towards those who need his help; for they in turn may be able to befriend and succour him, if it should ever be his lot to suffer from adverse fortune:—"Cast thy bread upon the surface of the waters, for in the course of time thou wilt find it. Give a portion to seven, and even to eight, for thou knowest not in what way calamity will come upon the earth" (xi. 1, 2). The sky is perhaps at present clear, but soon it may become black with the clouds of adversity. The winds may rush forth to struggle together for the mastery; and the bright sunshine may be succeeded by the raging and pitiless storm. Then the most stately tree may be laid prostrate by a sudden blast, never to regain its former magnificence, but, where it falls, whether on the south, or on the north, there to be (xi. 3). To perfect and absolute security none can attain. The most anxious watching of external circumstances may be fruitless. Besides, a too careful solicitude about the future may result in timorousness, disqualifying for the active duties of life:—"A man watching the wind will not sow, and one looking at the clouds will not reap" (xi. 4). The dispensations of Divine Providence are hidden as the way of the

wind, and mysterious as the growth of the embryo in the womb (xi. 5). "In the morning sow thy seed, and at evening rest not thy hand, for thou knowest not which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will be alike good" (xi. 6).

And now Koheleth finds opportunity to begin his last exhortation to present enjoyment, and, especially to appropriate and seasonable indulgence in pleasure during the continuance of youth. Youth is the morning of life. The rising sun then makes the world appear bright and beautiful. "And the light is sweet, and pleasant it is to the eyes to behold the sun" (xi. 7). But neither the morning nor the day can always continue: the time of darkness is approaching. The day will soon be gone. While it lasts, as much enjoyment as possible should be secured:—"If men live many years let them rejoice in them all, and let them remember the days of darkness, for they will be many" (xi. 8). It seems likely that, by the darkness spoken of, and contrasted apparently to life, as a time of light, is meant, not old age, but the darkness of Sheol, that "darkness like the deep gloom of the shadow of death, and where there is no order, and where the shining is like deep gloom" (Job x. 22). So suitable is enjoyment to youth, that he who then rejects pleasure must be looked upon as acting unseasonably (comp. iii. 1—8, 16, 17), and violating the course of nature,—conduct for which he may expect to be brought into judgment. "Enjoy, O young man, thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and according to the sight of thine eyes, and know that concerning all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away affliction from thy body, for youth and dawning-time are vanity" (xi. 9, 10).

In considering the first verse of the twelfth chapter, we should bear in mind the exhortation to enjoyment which had preceded. The "remembering of the Creator in the

days of youth," even if it implies a general regard for the appointed times and seasons, will, in accordance with the context, more especially point to youthful pleasure and enjoyment as being in conformity with the very nature of man as created by God. In the previous chapter (ver. 8), enjoyment throughout the whole of life had been spoken of in contrast to "the days of darkness," but now life itself is distinguished into different seasons, and youth is followed by days of evil, and days when pleasure has departed. "And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the days of evil come, and years arrive when thou wilt say, I have no pleasure in them" (xii. 1). In the winter of age there may be no longer the clear and bright sky; but the thick clouds returning constantly after the rain, may hide the sun and the light by day, and the moon and the stars by night (xii. 2). The natural decay and dissolution of the body is described in beautiful, though, for the most part, metaphorical language in the verses 3—7. Probably the body is conceived of at first as though a noble mansion or regal palace. The guard, the keepers of the house, tremble. The men of might bow themselves, possibly through fear, or on account of the lengthened period during which they have remained on duty. The reference in these expressions to the shaking arms and bending knees of old age, may be admitted as probable without much difficulty. And it seems scarcely necessary to comment on the significance of "the grinding women" becoming few, and ceasing from their labours, and of "the women looking out at the lattice-windows" being darkened (xii. 3). The reference to the failure of the teeth and to the impaired power of vision is not to be mistaken. The fourth verse presents greater difficulty: "And the two-leaved door is shut in the street, when the sound of the mill faileth, and it becometh the voice of a bird; and all the daughters of song are brought low" (xii. 4). "The door being shut," may well refer to the approach of the chin to the nose, and to the

mouth falling in through the loss of the teeth. "The sound of the mill," it would appear, must be understood of *the voice*, probably because the tongue, teeth, and other parts of the mouth, which are used in grinding the food or in eating, are set in motion also in speaking. "Becoming the voice of a bird," would thus indicate that change in the voice which Shakespeare has described in the well-known quotation:—

"His big manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound."

The failure of the *song-voice* would then be denoted by the words, "the daughters of song are brought low." In the following verse we have no longer a description of the body as a house. At first (ver. 5) it would seem that aged persons are spoken of without metaphor, but afterwards new and remarkable figures are introduced. "Also they are afraid of what is high, and terrors are in the way, and the almond tree blossometh, and the locust is a burden to itself, and the caper-berry splitteth open, for man goeth to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about in the street (xii. 5). The first part of the verse probably represents the timidity characteristic of old age, and the difficulty, through feebleness, of making any ascent, or of encountering any obstacle which may be met with in the road. The almond-tree, covered in winter by a profusion of pale-hued blossoms, would be a not inappropriate symbol of the hoary head of age. The locust seemingly bent and bowed down by its own weight, may well represent great decrepitude; while the caper-plant, with its fruit no longer erect, but directed downward to the earth, to which at last it yields up its seeds, would point to the final act of dissolution. The symbols employed would thus be placed in appropriate gradation. And with this view the conclusion of the verse is in accordance, if we take it to denote the funeral procession, with attendant mourners, conveying the corpse to

the grave, "the everlasting home." In the next verse Koheleth goes back a little to the period before dissolution, reverting probably to the conception of a house and its appointments:—"Before the cord of silver is detached, and the golden bowl broken, and a water-jar shattered at the spring, and the wheel broken at the cistern" (xii. 6). Underlying the first part of the verse is probably the idea of the house being left in darkness through the failure of its lamp; and, in the second part, that of the supply of water to the house being interrupted. Whether or not Koheleth has in view, at first the spinal cord, and the skull containing the brain, and then the circulatory apparatus, when he speaks of the fountain and cistern, the language points at any rate to the cessation of the bodily functions in death, when, according to the next verse, "the dust returneth to the earth as it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it" (xii. 7). That there is in this verse any indication of the continued immortality of the individual human soul, certainly appears altogether improbable. Rather would it seem to denote the re-absorption of the soul into God, as the dust of the body mingles again with the earth. And it is this conception of the entirely transient nature of human existence which seems required by what follows:—"Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth, all is vanity" (xii. 8). By this utterance the whole of the book from i. 2 is, as it were, enclosed and shut in. This utterance, it should be observed, does not stand at the end of the book; a fact probably of important significance. We now, therefore, pass out of the circle enclosed with the words, "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

With the ninth verse commences the *epilogue*, xii. 9—14, though it is not to be implied by the use of this designation that this last portion of the book is an appendage of comparatively little importance. Probably, however, we are to regard the words of Koheleth as ending with the last clause

of the eighth verse, "all is vanity." At any rate, Koheleth is now *spoken of*, and even in the thirteenth verse the formula "said Koheleth" is not used. This is especially noteworthy. In what follows the words "all is vanity" of ver. 8, it seems likely that the author designed to give to the careful and thoughtful reader some clue to the meaning and structure of his book:—"And moreover since Koheleth was wise, he still further taught the people knowledge; and he paid attention and investigated: he set in order many proverbs. Koheleth sought to find pertinent words, and what was written was right, words of truth. The words of wise men are like goads, and those of the editors of collections like nails driven in; they were given by one Shepherd" (xii. 9—11). In what is said about "teaching the people knowledge," and "setting in order many proverbs," there is probably an allusion to the Book of Proverbs, and to its generally popular character; but when we consider the special prominence which would be given to the Book of Proverbs by what follows, if the reference were solely to it, we may well feel that more than this was intended, and especially that the author cannot have meant to exclude the book just coming to an end. The truth would appear to be, that while, in accordance with his fiction concerning Solomon, he has, to some extent, in view *both* the Book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, it is to the latter he mainly refers. We may infer, then, that our book was to be regarded as a collection of "the words of wise men," and as such, that it was "right;" that its words were "pertinent words," and "words of truth." Its words, moreover, were to be like "nails driven in," and like "goads" given forth by "one Shepherd." But for what purpose are the goads to be employed? Whither does the Shepherd urge his flock? Is it meant that they are to be driven to a secure fold and to new pastures?

"And, further, be admonished, my son, by these: as to the making of many books there is no end; and much close study

is a wearying of the flesh" (xii. 12). To understand how the philosophical part of our book was to "admonish," or "warn," we must not forget that it contains discrepant and contradictory passages; that even its positive teaching does not appear wholly satisfactory, but is included within the all-encircling "vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Koheleth had sought for the supreme good in worldly things, and his temporary success had passed into despair, in the prospect of the inevitable fate which awaited him. He had seen the seasons fixed in the constitution of nature disregarded with apparent impunity. He had witnessed oppression and suffering without redress or consolation. The place of the holy was occupied by the wicked. Integrity and prudence could not secure the wise man against evil. The righteous and the unrighteous were seen faring alike. God's love and hatred could be distinguished by no external manifestations. The attempt to solve the great problem of man's moral condition was hopeless even for the wisest. Now if we take all this into account it may not be difficult to understand how what had been set forth in our book was intended to "admonish" or "warn" the reader against devoting his days and nights to fruitless and unavailing study; and against "making books without end," on the attractive but impracticable problem of God and humanity. So far the lesson taught is negative, warning the reader against fruitless speculation. The concluding verses contain the positive lesson, showing that the design of the book was to lead the reader from philosophy to authority and faith. "The conclusion of the discourse, the universal law, let us hear. Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the universal law for man. For God will bring all the work into judgment, concerning everything hidden, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (xii. 13, 14.) "Fear God, and keep His commandments," was the universal law for which the way had been prepared by the preceding discussion. Philosophy, confessing her



weakness and incompetence, retires in humble submission to Faith.

The last verse (xii. 14) probably involves the doctrine of immortality, though it seems not unlikely that its true import is different from that commonly assigned to it. We may take it as stating that God will bring into judgment "all the work," with special reference to that work which now even the wisest cannot find out (viii. 17), but which is dark and mysterious, like the way of the wind and the growth of the embryo (xi. 5); that He will bring to light what is hidden and anomalous—will vindicate His conduct,

"And justify the ways of God to men."

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III.  
TRANSLATION,  
WITH NOTES.

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- I.  
1 **T**HE words of Koheleth, the son of David, king in  
Jerusalem.  
2 Vanity of vanities, said Koheleth, vanity of vanities, all  
3 is vanity. What profit is there to man in respect of all  
4 his toil which he toileth under the sun? One generation  
is always going, and another generation coming, but the  
5 earth abideth for ever. And the sun ariseth, and the  
sun setteth, and then is hastening to his place where he  
6 ariseth. Going southward and veering about northward,  
the wind veereth about continually, and then bloweth
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1. On this verse see Introd. § 2. *Koheleth*:—Introd. § 10.

2. *Said*,—probably to be preferred to “saith,” so that Koheleth and his experience may be placed in the past. Comp. ver. 12.

5. *Hastening to his place*, &c.—Rightly regarded by the Chaldee interpreter as speaking of the sun’s nocturnal journey, though we have not here the sun conveyed in a boat by the stream of Oceanus, as in the Greek poets. The conception of the sun’s nightly voyage appears also to have existed in ancient Egypt.

6. *Going southward*, &c.—I prefer to connect these words with what follows rather than with the previous verse. *Bloweth again*:—more lit. “returneth.”

again, according to its circuits. All the streams flow to 7  
 the sea, but, as for the sea, it is not full: to the place  
 whither the streams flow, thitherward they repeat their  
 flow. All language is wearied out: a man cannot tell it; 8  
 the eye is not satisfied in seeing it; and the ear is not  
 filled from hearing it. What hath been, that it is which 9  
 will be; and what hath been done, that it is which will be  
 done; and there is nothing new under the sun. Let there 10  
 be a thing as to which one saith, Behold this; it is new:  
 it hath been long ago in the olden time which was before  
 us. There is no memorial of those who went before; and 11  
 even of those coming after, who are to be, there will be no  
 memorial of them with those who will be afterwards.

I Koheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And 12, 13

7. *All the streams.*—The reference is probably not so much to perennial rivers as to streams intermitting with the summer's heat, such as were generally the streams of Palestine. Sept. *χείμαρροι*. *Thitherward.*—שם must not be regarded as equivalent to משם.

8. *All language.*—A. V. "All things," but this rendering of כל הרברים seems here less suitable. *The ear is not filled.*—Obviously not because the ear can hear more, but on the contrary, because all of nature's multiform toil cannot be heard, since it cannot be fully told; and therefore the sense of satisfaction is not felt, the hearing never being fully accomplished.

9. *What hath been done:*—or, perhaps, "What hath occurred," in accordance with the use of the Niph. of עשה in Rabbinical Hebrew. Comp. ver. 14; ii. 17; iv. 1, 3.

10. *Which was before us.*—The singular היה is probably used on account of bygone ages or cycles (עלמים) being conceived of together as one whole, perhaps because of their being supposed, according to the Stoics, exactly to resemble each other. Comp. as to the sing. verb, i. 16; ii. 7; x. 1. On ver. 9—11 see *Introd.* § 4.

12. *Being done.*—See note on ver. 9.

13. *I gave my heart, &c.*—Comp. Sir. xxxix. 4. *Employment:*—ענין. This word appears to denote bustling, or at least busy,

I gave my heart to investigating and making search with wisdom concerning all which was done under heaven: this grievous employment God hath given to mankind to busy  
 14 themselves therewith. I saw all the works which were done under the sun; and lo, all was vanity and pursuit of  
 15 the wind. What is crooked cannot be straightened; and  
 16 what is wanting cannot be supplied. I spake with my heart, saying, Lo, I have acquired greatness, and have accumulated wisdom, above any one who before me was over Jerusalem; for my heart had become abundantly

employment (Sept. *περισπασμός*). In the Mishnah the word occurs in a weaker sense, denoting "subject," "matter," &c., e.g. *Cholin* x. 1, *מה שאמיר בענין* "What is said in this case." The word עמל, which we had in ver. 3, makes more conspicuous the grievousness or oppressiveness of labour, like our word "toil."

14. *Works which were done.*—See note on ver. 9. מעשה is frequently used in the Mishnah with the sense "occurrence," "affair," &c. See e.g., *Baba Bathra*, x. 8, *מעשה בא לפני רבי ישמעאל* "the matter came before R. Ishmael;" *Berakoth* ii. 5, *מעשה ברבן גמליאל* "an instance occurred in the case of R. Gamaliel." *Vanity and pursuit of the wind*:—הבל ורעות רוח. Possibly, consistency may seem to require that we should render, either by "vanity and fruitless endeavour," or, by "vapour and pursuit of the wind," rather than transmute the metaphor in the case of one expression only. But neither of these modes of rendering seems always suitable.

15. *Supplied.*—From the sense of "dividing" and "apportioning," מנה would seem to have come to denote "arranging," "reducing to order" what is abnormal or irregular, and so "rectifying" or "supplying" deficiencies.

16. *Any one who before me was over Jerusalem.*—כל אשר היה לפני. Perhaps, however, we might more literally render "All which before me was over Jerusalem." Koheleth's predecessors would thus be conceived of together as making up one whole, and not individually. This would seem quite in accordance with our author's style and mode of thought. *Comp.* i. 10.

acquainted with wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom and knowledge, madness and folly : I perceived that even this very thing was a pursuit of the wind : For in much wisdom is much grief ; and he who addeth to his knowledge addeth to his pain. II.

I said in my heart, Come now, I will test thee with mirth, and acquaint thyself with enjoyment ; and, lo, that also was vanity. Of laughter I said, Frenzied it is ; and of mirth, What good doth this do ? I revolved it in my heart to draw out with wine the powers of my body, and, my heart guiding wisely, also to seize upon folly, until I should discover where is this good for mankind, which they may do under the heavens throughout the number of the days of their life. I engaged in great works ; I built for myself houses, I planted for myself vineyards. I prepared for myself gardens and parks ; and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made for myself pools of water, to water therefrom the plantations of growing trees. I acquired slaves both male and female, and I had slaves who were born to me in the house ; I had also possessions in herds and flocks more abundant than those of any who were before me in Jerusalem. I gathered together for 8

17. *Madness*.—See Introd. § 4.

II. 3. *To draw out*.—So that, under the stimulus of wine, pleasure might be as intense as possible. *The powers of my body*.—Perhaps as literal a rendering of *אֵת בְּשָׂרִי* as is practicable. *This good*.—The great object which both Stoicism and Epicureanism sought to attain.

7. The singular verb *היה לי* in *בני בית היה לי* may be accounted for on the ground of the *בני בית* being conceived of collectively as property. There is here, it seems likely, an indication of Greek influence. Comp. for example, *ἄνδράποδα πενήκοντα ἢ πλείω* (Plato, *Republic*, ix. 578, E.).

8. *Provinces*.—See 1 Kings iv. 7—19, though the translation “countries” is perhaps not inadmissible. Notwithstanding that *בְּדִינֹתָ* only has the article, it would appear that this word, as well

myself also silver and gold, and the treasure of kings and of the provinces; I procured for myself singers male and female, and the voluptuous pleasures of mankind, a wife  
 9 and a harem. And I became great, and I accumulated, more than any one who had been before me in Jerusalem:  
 10 also my wisdom continued with me. And nothing that my eyes desired did I keep from them; I debarred my heart from no enjoyment: for my heart was gladdened by all my toil; and this was my portion out of all my toil.  
 11 And I turned to look on all my works which my hands had wrought, and on the toil which I had toiled to accomplish; and, lo, all was vanity and a pursuit of the wind, and there  
 12 was nothing to yield advantage under the sun. And I turned to contemplate wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what can the man do who cometh after the king? what  
 13 hath been already done. And I saw that wisdom hath as

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as מלכים is to be taken as genitive after כגלת: comp. vii. 25, רשע ככל והככלור. *A wife and a harem.*—That appears to be the true explanation which regards שדה as identical with the Mishnic שידה, taken to denote a soft moveable seat or conveyance, *pilentum*, though this would certainly not seem to be the only meaning of שידה in the Mishnah (e.g. *Kelim* xxii. 8). Taking the word as signifying “a couch,” or a *pilentum*, it seems quite in accordance with the genius of the Semitic languages to suppose that it is used by Koheleth metaphorically and euphemistically of a wife, with reference merely to sexual gratification. This explanation of שדה ושרות seems to suit well the רעננות preceding. As to Biblical Hebrew, the metaphor by which a wife is spoken of as a *garment* should be compared. (See Mal. ii. 16.) The use of λέχος by the Greek poets in a similar sense is probably to be accounted for in a different manner. See Sophocles, *Antig.* 573, 1225, 1303.

9. *Any one who had been before me.*—See note on i. 16.

11. *Turned:*—*scil.* from mere enjoyment.

12. *What can the man do?* &c.—Apparently a current proverb. This is probably the cause of the elliptical construction in the Hebrew.

great advantage over folly, as the light hath greater advantage than the darkness. As for the wise man, his eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness: yet I, even I, perceived that one fate befalleth them all. And I said in my heart, As the fate of the fool will be the fate which will befall me, even me; and why then have I excelled in wisdom? and I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For there is no memorial in perpetuity of the wise man more than of the fool, because that, in the times that are coming, all will long ago have been forgotten: and how, alas, dieth the wise man like the fool! And I hated life, for grievous unto me was the work which was done under the sun: for all was vanity and a pursuit of the wind. And I hated all my toil at which I was toiling under the sun, because I should resign it to the man who shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he will be a wise man or a fool? yet will he be master over all my toil wherewith I have toiled, and which I have wrought wisely under the sun: this also was vanity. So I proceeded to give my heart up to despair concerning all the toil wherewith I had toiled under the sun. For if there be a man whose toil hath been wise, and skilful, and prosperous, yet to a man who hath not toiled at it, will he have to give it, to be his property: this also is vanity and a great evil. For what is there to man in respect of all his toil, and the striving of his heart, wherewith he toileth under the sun? For all his days are passed in pains and in harassing occupation: even in the night his heart resteth not: as for this also, it is vanity. Good is not with the man who catcheth and

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17. *Work, &c.*—Notes on i. 9, 14.

24. *Good is not with the man who catcheth and drinketh, &c.*—These words, it appears to me most probable, contain a general conclusion referring back to ver. 3. The experiment did not result in the finding of the “good for mankind which they may do under the sun throughout the number of the days of their life.” Our passage, thus regarded, does not assert that “it is

drinketh, and causeth himself to find enjoyment in respect of his toil : this also I saw that it was from the hand of  
 25 God ; For who eateth ? or who hath so good an appetite as  
 26 I have ? For to a man who is pleasing to him, hath he given wisdom, and knowledge, and gladness ; but to the sinner hath he given the task of gathering and amassing, to give to him who is pleasing to God : this also is vanity  
 III. and a pursuit of the wind.

- 1 For everything there is an appointed time, and a season
- 2 for every matter under heaven ; A season for giving birth and a season for dying ; a season for planting and a season

*not good* for men to eat and to drink," &c., but it only denies that therein could be found the supreme good, the *summum bonum*. No striving or toil could transform worldly things into such a perfect good, for it had been otherwise arranged by "the hand of God." It may be added, that the words of the next verse, "For who eateth?" &c., are entirely consistent with this view. Koheleth's powers were such that if any could have thus obtained this perfect good, surely it was he. If, however, altering the text, we read *מי שיאכל*, and translate "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat," &c., ver. 25 seems not so easy of explanation. The difficulty which may present itself on a comparison of this verse with what is said elsewhere, is probably to be met by the supposition that we have here a conception of "good" allied to that of the Stoics, the perfect good according to the nature of a reasonable being as such (Diog. Laërt. vii. 94), but that in other passages we have the Epicurean "good," or an approximation thereto. Comp. *Introd.* § 8.

26. *Hath he given.*—Notice the pret. *נתן*, the divine appointment being unalterably fixed.

III. 2. *A season for giving birth.*—It may perhaps seem, at first sight, that we ought to have had as antithesis to a *season for dying* "a season for being born." But the expression in the text probably has reference to the duration of pregnancy being fixed and determined by Nature. Similarly, a *season for dying* would imply that the duration of human life is limited by Nature. Comp. Job xiv. 5, 6.



for rooting up what was planted ; A season for slaying and 3  
 a season for healing ; a season for breaking down and a  
 season for building ; A season for weeping and a season for 4  
 laughing ; a season for wailing and a season for dancing ;  
 A season for casting away stones and a season for collect- 5  
 ing stones ; a season for embracing and a season for  
 keeping far from close embrace ; A season for seeking and 6  
 a season for letting go ; a season for keeping and a season  
 for casting away ; a season for rending and a season for 7  
 sewing ; a season for keeping silence and a season for  
 speaking ; A season for loving and a season for hating ; 8  
 a season for war and a season for peace. What advantage 9  
 hath he who worketh in respect of that whereat he toileth ?  
 I have seen the task which God hath given to mankind to 10  
 busy themselves with. He hath made all beautiful in its 11

4. *Dancing*, or "skipping joyfully."

5. *For keeping far from close embrace*.—Probably to be understood *de re venerea*. Comp. the use of חֶבֶק in Prov. v. 20. The season spoken of is to be looked upon as determined by the appointments of Nature. Comp. Lev. xv. 24.

6. *Letting go*.—This sense, or "giving up as lost" seems required by the antithesis. Gesenius (*Thes.*) gives the sense "*promisso habuit, verloren geben.*"

11. *Beautiful*,—יִפְה. There is probably no sufficient reason for translating the word here by "suitable," though this translation appears certainly to be required in v. 18. In the Mishnah, the word is found with significations diverging very widely from the original sense. Thus, in *Zabim* ii. 2, we have בֵּין רַע בֵּין יִפְה "whether evil or good;" and in iii. 1, with reference to the case of a man having an issue and another ceremonially pure getting up together into "a strong tree," בְּאֵילֵן יִפְה. Comp. also *Makshirin* v. 10 ; *Mikvaoth* x. 6 ; *Nazir* vii. 4, יִפְה אִמְרַת "thou hast spoken very well;" *Zebachim* viii. 2, דְּמֵי הַיִּפְה שְׂבָהָה "the price of the best beast among them;" *Shebiith*, i. 1 ; *Terumoth* ii. 4, 6 ; *Kerithuth* vi. 6, יִפְה עֲשָׂרָה זָזו "worth ten zuzim," *et al.* The sense of the word in Ecc. v. 18 shows an approach to the Mishnic diction.

- season : also he hath set the world in their heart, so that, from the beginning even to the end, man findeth not out  
 12 the work which God hath wrought. I perceived that there  
 is no good in them except to enjoy and to prosper in one's  
 13 life; And also, as to all men who eat and drink, and  
 experience enjoyment in all their toil, that it is a gift of  
 14 God. I perceived that, as to all that God doeth, it is to  
 be for ever : there is no making addition to it ; and there  
 is no taking away from it ; and God so arranged it, that  
 15 they may fear before him. Whatever hath been, it had  
 been long ago before, and what is to be, already hath  
 been, and God will seek after what hath gone before.  
 16 And further I saw under the sun the place of judgment,  
 there was wickedness ; and the place of righteousness,  
 17 there was wickedness. I said in my heart, God will judge

12. *In them.*—Meaning probably in the various pursuits, &c. specified in ver. 2—8. These are taken as making up the circle of life, that world corresponding to which is man's heart. *To prosper.*—לעשות טוב “to be occupied with good.” The idea of “doing good” in a moral sense appears improbable. The phrase is probably a Græcism = εἶ πράττειν.

15. *Hath gone before.*—More literally, “is followed after,” or “is pursued.” Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, lib. xv. 179 sq. may be compared :—

“ Ipsa quoque assiduo labuntur tempora motu  
 Non secus ac flumen. Neque enim consistere flumen,  
 Nec levis hora potest : sed ut unda impellitur unda,  
 Urgeturque prior veniente, urgetque priorem,  
 Tempora sic fugiunt pariter, pariterque sequuntur,  
 Et nova sunt semper.”

Probably, however, the conception underlying the expressions employed by Koheleth is that of a revolving circle or wheel, and not that of a stream, according to the conception of Heraclitus. See *Introd.* § 4.

17. *All the work:*—*scil.* of man. *There:*—in the appointed course of things, but referring back to ver. 1—8, as shown by the use

the righteous and the wicked; for there is a season for every matter, and for all the work there. I said in my heart, with respect to mankind, God meaneth to test them, and to see that they are beasts, even they themselves; For the lot of mankind is also the lot of beasts; and there is one lot to them: as is the death of the one, so is the death of the other; and there is one spirit to them all, and pre-eminence of man over the beasts there is none: for they are all vanity: All are going to one place: all were from the dust: and all are returning to the dust. Who knoweth as to the spirit of mankind whether it goeth up on high, or as to the spirit of the beasts whether it goeth down beneath to the earth? And I saw that there is nothing better than that man should be glad in his works, for that is his portion; for who will bring him to look upon what will be after him?

IV.

And, again, I saw all the acts of oppression which were being wrought under the sun; and lo, there was the tear of the oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of those oppressing them there was might; but they had no comforter. And I pronounced the dead who had already died more fortunate than the living who were still alive, And more blessed than both him who had not yet

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again of עת לכל הפעם as in ver. 1. This tends to confirm the view taken of כס in ver. 12.

19. *The lot of.*—Notice, however, the pointing in the Hebrew.

21. *Whether it goeth up, &c.*—Taking the ה in העלה and הירדת as the interrogative. It appears, however, not impossible to consider the ה as the article, if, in accordance with the primary signification of ידע, we take מי יודע in the sense “Who discerneth?” The verse may then be translated “Who discerneth the spirit of mankind, that which goeth up on high, or the spirit of the beasts, that which goeth down beneath to the earth?” With “that which goeth up,” and “that which goeth down,” we should have to understand “as they say.” The general sense would thus be the same.

- existed, who had not seen the grievous work which was  
 4 wrought under the sun. And I observed, as to all the  
 toilsome yet prosperous undertakings, that hence ariseth  
 one man's being envied by another: this also is vanity and  
 5 a pursuit of the wind. The fool foldeth his hands, and  
 6 eateth his own flesh: Better is a handful, with quiet,  
 than the two hands full, with toil and a pursuit of the  
 wind.
- 7, 8 And again, I saw vanity under the sun. There is one,  
 but there is not a second; moreover he hath neither son nor  
 brother; and there is no end to all his toil; also his eye is  
 not satisfied with riches; yet for whom am I toiling and  
 depriving myself of enjoyment? this also is vanity, and it  
 9 is a grievous business. Two are better than one, because  
 10 they have a good reward in respect of their toil. For if  
 they fall, the one will raise up his companion; but woe to  
 the one who falleth when there is not a second to raise him  
 11 up. Also, if two lie down, then they are warm; but as to

IV. 5. *Eateth his own flesh*:—becomes emaciated.

6. The words *a handful* and *the two hands full* scarcely express adequately the difference between מלא כף and מלא הידים, the first of which expressions would properly denote the palm or hollow of the hand filled, and the latter, as much as could be grasped by the palm and fingers, each of the two hands being thus made into a ball (comp. Fuerst, *Lex.* s. v. קָפָן). It would be allowable, I may add, in point of grammar (see e.g. Jud. vi. 38), to translate, "Better is a handful of quiet than the two hands full of toil," &c., but such metaphorical language would be excessively strained. It is probably better to take נחה &c., as adverbial accusatives with the sense I have given.

8. *His eye*,—according to the Keri; but the Kethib, which gives the plural, is probably correct. Compare x. 12, and note.

9. *Two*:—literally "the two" (השנים). So also "the one" (האחד), the article making more prominent the idea of mere number, the contrast between one as such and more than one as such.

one, how can he be warm? And if one overpowereth a man, 12  
 two will withstand the attack; and a threefold cord is not 13  
 quickly broken. Better is a youth, poor but intelligent, 13  
 than a king old and foolish, who hath no longer the sense  
 to accept admonition: For out of the prison-house he went 14  
 forth to reign; for also in his reign poverty ariseth. I have 15  
 seen all the living that walk under the sun, with the second  
 child who is to stand in their stead. There is no end to 16  
 all the people: as to all that was before them, even those  
 who come after rejoice not therein; so that this also is  
 vanity and a pursuit of the wind. V.

Take heed to thy steps when thou goest to the House of 1  
 God; for more acceptable is it to draw nigh to hear, than

12. It appears to me that **האחד** must be taken as the subject of the verb preceding; that the suffix in **יִתְקַבֵּל** must be regarded as an indefinite pronoun, "a man," "any one," while that in **נִבְרָא** is taken as referring back to **האחד**. The use of the suffix with the weakened force of an indefinite pronoun need not occasion much difficulty in view of some other passages in our book.

13. *Better*:—meaning, probably, better suited to govern. In the Mishnah it is laid down (*Horaioth* iii. 8) that even a bastard, if wise and taught in Jewish learning, takes precedence of a plebeian high priest, that is, a high priest unskilled in the learning of the schools (**כהן גדול עם הארץ**).

14. The second *for*, as it appears, looks back to ver. 13, "Better is a youth," &c. The reckless misgovernment of the old and foolish king tends to the poverty of his subjects. *Poverty ariseth*:—or, more literally, "the poor is born," **נוֹלַד רֵשׁ**. Here again we may recognise an approach to the Mishmic diction. Illustrative passages may be found in *Nedarim* ix. 2, where **נוֹלַד** is used of that which *ariseth* afterwards; *Temurah* iii. 5, **אִף** "although they may have contracted a blemish;" more literally, "although a blemish may have *arisen* in them," *Terumoth* viii. 8.

15. Meaning apparently that, in the time of the second generation, the population becomes entirely changed.

V. 1. *To draw nigh to hear*, &c.—Said probably with latent

- for fools to offer a sacrifice, though they mean not to do  
 2 evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart  
 hasten to utter a word before God ; for God is in heaven and  
 3 thou upon earth ; therefore let thy words be few. For, as  
 a dream cometh with much confusion, so cometh a fool's  
 4 voice with a multitude of words. When thou vowest a vow  
 unto God, delay not to pay it ; for he hath no pleasure in  
 5 fools : what thou vowest, pay. Better is it that thou should-  
 est not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.  
 6 Allow not thy mouth to make thy body sin ; and say not  
 before the minister, that it was an error : why should God  
 be angry concerning thy voice, and destroy the work of  
 7 thy hands ? For as in a multitude of dreams there are  
 vanities, so also is it with an abundance of words : but  
 fear thou God.  
 8 If thou seest in a country the oppression of the poor and

reference to 1 Sam. xv. 22. *Mean not to do evil*,—by thoughtlessly sacrificing.

3. *With much confusion*.—ברב ענין: intended probably to represent the multiplicity of images and confused action of a troubled dream. This sense of ענין would easily connect itself with that of “busy employment.” See note on i. 13.

6. *Minister*.—Priest or other attendant concerned with the matter in question. Dr. Graetz considers that we ought not to think of a priest as represented by מלאך: “sondern an einen einfachen Boten der von dem Tempelamt beordert wurde, die Gelöbnisse einzufordern. Der גובר oder Tempelbote hatte das Recht bei Versäumnissen von Gelübden zu pfänden.” The word גובר, “treasurer,” occurs in Ezra i. 8. As to its use as the designation of a religious functionary see Mishnah, *Peah* i. 6; ii. 8, *et al.* *An error*.—A discharge from vows in error (נדרי שגגות) in certain cases was allowed. See Mishnah, *Nedarim* iii. 1 *sq.* ; ix. 10. Comp. also *Terumoth*, iii. 8.

8. *A country*.—As this verse seems certainly to look back to iv. 1, where “all the acts of oppression wrought *under the sun*” are spoken of, “a country” is probably to be preferred to “a province,” as A. V. renders. In the Mishnah (e.g. *Maasar*

the perversion of right and justice, wonder not at the matter; for One higher than the high observeth it, and there are powers high above them. And as to the produce 9  
gained from the land, it is shared among all; the king is dependent on the field. He who loveth silver is not satisfied 10  
with silver, nor any one who setteth his affection on riches, with his income: this also is vanity. When wealth 11  
increaseth, they increase who eat it; and what profit hath the owner thereof, except the beholding with his eyes? Sweet is the sleep of the labourer, whether he eat little or 12  
much; but as to the satiety of the rich man, it alloweth him not to fall asleep. There is a distressing evil I have seen 13  
under the sun, wealth kept by its owner to his injury. And 14  
that wealth perished in a grievous business; for he begat a son, and there was nothing in his hand. As he came forth 15  
from his mother's womb naked, so shall he go back again, as he came; and he shall take nothing in respect of his toil, which he can carry with him in his hand. And this 16  
also is a distressing evil, that, altogether as he came, so he should go: and what advantage is it to him that he should toil for the wind? Also all his days he eateth in darkness, 17

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*Sheni* iii. 4) מדינה is used of the *country* as distinguished from *Jerusalem*. Similarly we distinguish between the *metropolis* and the “*provinces*.”

9. *Dependent on the field*:—or, if we translate with the A. V., “served by the field,” the general sense of the passage will be the same.

17. *All his days*.—That is, as I take it, all his days after his son had squandered the father's property. *Eateth*:—liveth, life being represented by one of the principal actions connected therewith. Such a mode of speaking seems to be in harmony with the philosophical style of our author. Compare also the prominence given to “eating” in ver. 19; ii. 25; vi. 2. *In darkness*:—expressive perhaps of the obscurity of the condition to which he is reduced. *Endureth affliction*.—If we take חללי as equivalent to חללי לי, then it would seem that the suffix must be supplied with קצף.

and suffereth much vexation, and endureth affliction, and  
 18 anger. Lo, that is what I have seen good, what I have  
 seen suitable, to eat, and to drink, and to experience enjoy-  
 ment in respect of all one's toil which he toileth under the  
 sun, during the number of the days of his life, which God  
 19 hath given him, for that is his portion. Also as to every  
 man to whom God hath given wealth and treasures, and  
 hath given to him power to eat therefrom, and to receive  
 his portion, and to rejoice in respect of his toil: as to this,  
 20 it is the gift of God. So that he remembereth not much the  
 days of his life, for God maketh answer with the joy of his  
 VI. heart.

1 There is an evil which I saw under the sun; and a heavy  
 2 affliction was it unto men; A man to whom God giveth  
 wealth, and treasures, and honour, and he lacketh for him-  
 self nothing of all which he desireth, yet God empowereth  
 him not to eat therefrom, but a stranger eateth it: as for  
 3 this, it is vanity and a grievous affliction. If a man should  
 beget a hundred, and live many years, so that the days of  
 his years should be in abundance; yet if his soul be not  
 satisfied with good, and if also he hath not possessed a

18. *Lo, that is what I have seen.*—This affords an illustration showing that the enjoyment of good is not to be postponed, and referring back, as it would appear, to iii. 12, 13. *Suitable.*—On פֶּה see note on iii. 11.

20. *He remembereth not, &c.* :—*i.e.* he to whom so happy a lot has fallen, and whose days glide by in calm enjoyment, with little to distinguish one from another. See Introd. § 4. *For God maketh answer with.*—The second כִּי is probably to be thus explained: “His days pass by so tranquilly, *for* he has attained consummate happiness, a felicity answering to the Divine.”

VI. 2. *To eat therefrom* :—to enjoy what he possesses.

3. *Not satisfied with good* :—on account, possibly, of inordinate cupidity. *Possessed a sepulchre.*—In his lifetime, which sepulchre, after his death, might prevent his name from being “covered with darkness.”



sepulchre, I said that an abortion is better than he; For 4  
 he came in vanity, and he goeth away in darkness; and his 5  
 name will be covered with darkness. Moreover he hath not 6  
 seen the sun, nor known rest, even he more than the other.  
 Even if one hath lived a thousand years twice over, but hath 6  
 not experienced good; do not all go to one place?

All man's toil is for his mouth, but yet the soul is not 7  
 filled. For what advantage hath the wise over the fool? 8  
 what over even the poor who knoweth how to walk before  
 the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the con- 9  
 tinued movement of the soul: this also is vanity and a  
 pursuit of the wind. As to what hath been, his name was 10  
 given to him long ago, and it was known that he is man;  
 and he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.  
 Since there are things in abundance which increase vanity, 11  
 what advantage is it to man? For who knoweth what is 12  
 good for man in life, during the number of the days of his

4. *In vanity.*—Naked and empty-handed. Comp. v. 15. I do not see how הַנֶּפֶשׁ can be made the subject in this and the following verse. Probably, however, the language used is designed to refer to *both* the abortion and the person whose case is supposed, or at least this person is spoken of in language borrowed, for the most part, from the case of the abortion.

5. *He hath not seen the sun.*—Perhaps there may be implied here, and in the comparison with the abortion, a philosophical contempt for the mere *χρηματιστής* and the man inordinately occupied with worldly and material acquisition.

9. *This also is vanity.*—To be referred, probably, to “the sight of the eyes.”

10. *He is man.*—הוּא אָדָם with reference probably to the narrative in Gen. ii., meaning that man's name, *adam*, appropriately expresses his feeble nature, since he was moulded in dust or earth (*aphar min haadamah*). *Cannot contend.*—Taking into account what has just been said, it would seem probable that in יָדִין there is an allusion to Gen. vi. 3. The הוּא בֶּשֶׂר in the latter passage should also be taken into account.

vain life, and that he may make them like the shadow, since  
 VII. who can tell man what will be after him under the sun ?

- 1 Better is a good name than fragrant ointment, and the  
 2 day of death than the day of one's birth. Better is it to go  
 to the house of mourning than to go to the banqueting  
 house ; for the former is the end of all men, and the living  
 3 will lay it to his heart. Better is sorrow than laughter ;  
 for, with a gloomy countenance, the heart becometh better.  
 4 The heart of wise men is in the house of mourning, but the  
 5 heart of fools is in the house of mirth. Better is it to hear  
 the rebuke of a wise man, than for a man to hear the song  
 6 of fools. For as the noise of the thorns under the pot, so is  
 7 the laughter of the fool : this also is vanity. For the in-

12. *Make them like the shadow.*—Attain great longevity, his days being lengthened out, as a shadow is by the setting sun. Comp. viii. 13.

VII. 1. *A good name.*—It is worthy of observation, however, that the Stoics, according to Diog. Laërt. vii. 102, placed a good reputation (εὐδοξία) among things indifferent (ὀυδέτερα), that is, things neither good nor evil, though of such things some were to be preferred to others. The influence of Stoicism on the teaching of this seventh chapter is conspicuous. (Introd. § 12). *Of one's birth* :—הַיְקָלְרִי. The suffix has here again (comp. note on iv. 12) the weakened force of an indefinite pronoun.

2. *Banqueting house.*—One might perhaps question as to whether “ house ” or “ place ” is the better rendering of בֵּית in this verse and in ver. 4. Probably, however, it is best to understand the *beth mishteh* of the house where a *marriage feast* is celebrated.

7. The sixth verse is to be regarded, I think, as parenthetical, and the כִּי of ver. 7 as connected with ver. 5. The article in העשק may then be looked upon as referring back to the גְּעֵרַת הַחֵם. The Poel verb יְהוֹלִל appears to have the meaning of “ making manifest,” “ causing to shine forth,” or “ giving lustre,” which last sense was adopted by Desvœux. The connection forbids the rendering of the A.V., “ maketh a wise man mad.” As to the employment of יְהוֹלִל in Job xii. 17, and Isa.

fiction of pain maketh a wise man shine forth, but a gift  
 corrupteth the heart. Better is the end of a thing than its  
 beginning; better is the man of patient spirit than the man  
 of proud spirit. Be not in haste to stir up anger in thy  
 spirit, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Say not,  
 How was it that the former days were better than these?  
 for thou hast not, guided by wisdom, inquired concerning  
 this. Wisdom is as good as an inheritance, and better too  
 to those who see the sun. For wisdom serveth as a pro-  
 tection, and money serveth as a protection; but knowledge  
 hath an advantage: wisdom preserveth in life those who

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xliv. 25, it may be said that the sense of "making manifest," "bringing to light," "causing to shine forth" the real character of the persons spoken of, is not unsuitable. Comp. *Introd.* § 13. *The infliction of pain*:—more literally "the pressure" or "constraint" *scil.* put upon a man's tendencies and inclinations. *A gift corrupteth, &c.*—It may seem that there is here little congruity with ver. 5. But it should be remembered that *hearing the song of fools*, and *obtaining a gift*, may be taken as diverse modes of *receiving pleasure*. Here, as elsewhere (*comp. chap. x. passim*) the author of *Eccles.* is probably arranging proverbial dicta of Jewish philosophers, with reference to their inner kernel of meaning, not their outward form.

9. It would certainly appear that the כעס contrasted with שחוק in ver. 3 is not to be identified with the כעס of ver. 9. This latter, which "rests in the bosom of fools," is that irritation of mind which is opposed to resignation and calm submission.

11. *As good as an inheritance.*—As to the sense of עב compare ii. 16. Such an interpretation as, for example, that of Graetz, "dass Weisheit beim Besitze von Land und Acker dienlich sei," is not at all admissible.

12. *Wisdom serveth as a protection.*—It would scarcely suit to translate more literally, "Wisdom is in the character of a shadow." *Preserveth in life.*—By imparting a knowledge of the world and of the conditions of life; or perhaps, as the A.V., "giveth life," if we understand the words as referring to the

- 13 possess it. Behold the work of God ; for who can straighten  
 14 what he hath made crooked ? In the day of prosperity  
 enjoy thyself ; but, in the day of adversity, behold. God,  
 indeed, hath set the one in correspondence to the other,  
 15 because man findeth nothing after him. I saw all in  
 the days of my vanity : there is a righteous man perish-  
 ing in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man prolong-  
 16 ing his life in his wickedness. Be not righteous overmuch,  
 neither assume thyself to be excessively wise : why should-  
 17 est thou be struck with dismay ? Be not wicked overmuch,  
 neither be thou foolish : why shouldst thou die before thy  
 18 time ? It is well that thou shouldst take hold of the one  
 admonition, and also, from the other, decline not thy hand ;  
 for he who feareth God will come forth from them all.  
 19 Wisdom is a power to the wise man, greater than ten rulers

higher intellectual life of the **הַחַיִּים** living in a world above that of common men (**עַם הָאָרֶץ**). Comp. vi. 5, and note.

14. *The one in correspondence to the other.*—Possibly there is underlying the words **זֶה לַעֲבֹתָ זֶה** the conception of life as a path, on the opposite sides of which, and parallel to one another, stand the circumstances of prosperity and adversity, the things good and the things evil, which each man has to encounter. If life was thus conceived of, we may be enabled better to understand the *all* of ver. 18 : “ He who feareth God will come forth from them *all*.” Comp. *Intro.* § 12. *Man findeth nothing after him.*—Comp. the last words of chap. iii.

15. *I saw all.*—Meaning, probably, all of man’s earthly life, or especially, all relating to it that was seemingly crooked and abnormal. *My vanity.*—While I was seeking for satisfaction in worldly things, or, before I had given up as hopeless the attempt to solve the problems connected with man’s earthly condition. *There is.*—It occurs in the world. *In his righteousness.*—Or, perhaps, “ *by his righteousness,*” “ *by his wickedness.*”

16. *Struck with dismay.*—Possibly said with a special reference to Job xl. 3—5 and xlii. 1—6.

19. *Ten.*—A full number : comp. Gen. xxxi. 7 ; Job xix. 3. In the Mishnah (*Megillah* i. 3), a great city is defined as one

which were in the city. For there is not a righteous man 20  
 on the earth who doeth well, and sinneth not. Moreover, 21  
 pay no attention to all the words which people speak, so  
 that thou hear not thy servant reviling thee. For thy heart 22  
 knoweth that thou, even thou, hast many times also reviled  
 others. All this I tested by wisdom : I said, I will be wise ; 23  
 but it was too far off for me. That which was far off and 24  
 exceeding deep, who could find it ?

I proceeded, I and my heart, to know, and to explore, 25  
 and to seek out wisdom and a plan, and to know the

in which there are *ten* men of leisure. Ten men were required  
 for the formation of a synagogue.

23. *All this.*—Meaning, probably, what had been said in vii.  
 1—22, and which it would appear had been said in answer to  
 the questions with which the sixth chapter closes. *It* :—wisdom  
 רַחֲמֵיָהּ, as shown by the feminines הִיא and רַחֲמֵיָהּ.

24. *That which was far off.*—רַחֲמֵיָהּ מֵהָרְחֵק. It should be  
 remembered that Koheleth is narrating his *past* experience.

25. *A plan* :—*i.e.* of the moral administration of the world.  
 The idea represented by הַחֲשִׁבֹן is, probably, *the thought under-  
 lying and manifested in the condition of man viewed as the subject of a  
 moral government.* The word with this sense is perhaps best  
 rendered by “a plan.” Similarly, if we take the word in the  
 same sense, we shall have in ix. 10, first, מַעֲשֵׂה “work” or  
 “action,” and then חֲשִׁבֹן “device” or “plan.” From the use  
 of חֲשִׁבֹן to denote “weaving,” the transition is easy to the idea  
 of “devising” or “planning.” The passage 2 Chron. xxvi. 15  
 is here instructive. The word חֲשִׁבֹן appears to me to have the  
 sense of “plan” also in the Mishnah, in *Aboth* iv. 22, וְרַע שֶׁחָבַל  
 לְפִי הַחֲשִׁבֹן, which I translate, “And know that all will be  
 according to the plan.” This sense I defend to some extent on  
 account of what precedes, but more particularly from what  
 follows : “And let not thy thought cause thee to trust that  
 Sheol will be a place of refuge for thee, since without thy con-  
 currence thou art created, and without thy concurrence thou art  
 born, and without thy concurrence thou livest, and without thy  
 concurrence thou diest, and without thy concurrence thou wilt

- 26 depravity of obduracy and folly, even madness. And I find a more bitter thing than death, the woman who, as to her heart, is nets and snares, whose hands are bonds: he who is pleasing to God will escape from her, but the  
 27 sinner will be caught by her. See, this I found, said  
 28 Koheleth, considering one by one, to find a plan; Which my soul hath up to this time sought, but I have not found: one man out of a thousand I found, but a woman  
 29 in all these I found not. Only see, this I found, that God

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undergo judgment, and render up an account (ליתן דין וחשבון) before the King of the kings of kings, the Holy One; blessed be He." With respect to the use of חשבון to denote the account to be rendered to God, the word may be looked upon as pointing to the thoughts underlying a man's actions,—the reason why he acted as he has done. This use of it is thus not repugnant to its employment to denote a "plan." Stoical influence is probably to be detected in *Aboth* iv. 21, 22, as in the words of Ecclesiastes. *The depravity of obduracy and folly.*—רשע ככל והסכלות. As to the article, compare ii. 8.

26. *Nets and snares*, &c.—Said probably not only with a general allusion to *Weiberlist*, but our author may have had in his mind several particulars given concerning Samson and Delilah. See *Introd.* § 9.

27. *Considering*.—This word, it would appear, must be supplied from what had been previously said of seeking and exploring. *One by one.*—אחת לאחת. It might have been expected that the masculine אחד לאחד would have been used to denote *the men and women* whose characters Koheleth considered, but special prominence is given to women both in what precedes and in what follows. This is perhaps, on the whole, the best way of accounting for the feminine.

28. *One man out of a thousand.*—See *Introd.* § 12.

29. *Many inventions.*—Probably meaning the devices and contrivances (המְשִׁבְּנִיּוֹת) of civilisation, regarded as marking degeneracy from a primitive state of natural simplicity and purity. The reader need scarcely be reminded how, in the golden age of the classic poets, neither plough furrowed the soil, nor ship traversed the ocean. And, indeed, upon the supposition

had made man upright, but they had sought out many in- VIII.  
ventions. Who is as the wise man? and who as he that 1  
knoweth the explanation of a thing? a man's wisdom  
causeth his face to shine, and the fixedness of his counte-  
nance is changed.

I say: Observe the king's commandment, and that on 2  
account of the oath of God. Be not in haste to go from 3

that man was bound strictly to conform to the ordinances of Nature, and to submit unreservedly to her restraint, it is not difficult to see how agriculture, navigation, and other arts might be regarded as evidences of moral debasement. Accordingly Horace, after speaking of the first navigator's audacity and fortitude, says:—

“ Nequidquam Deus absceidit  
Prudens Oceano dissociabili  
Terras, si tamen impie  
Non tangenda rates transiliunt vada.  
Audax omnia perpeti  
Gens humana ruit per vetitum et nefas.”

*Carm. i. 3.*

VIII. 1. *The fixedness of his countenance.*—עו פניו, denoting the stern, grave countenance and rigid features of the man eagerly pursuing an investigation, or bent on finding the solution of a difficult problem. Comp. הַעֵזָה פְּנֵיהָ in Prov. vii. 13, an expression intended probably to denote the fixed, amorous gaze of the “strange woman.” Comp. also Prov. xxi. 29.

2. *I say, &c.*—Rather than resort to critical conjecture it seems preferable to suppose an ellipsis, even if this latter course is not altogether free from difficulty. *The king's commandment*:—or, with Ewald, “den Mund des Königs,” the king's mouth being the source whence law proceeds:

3. *Be not in haste, &c.*—An injunction to the practice of respect and reverence (comp. x. 4). It would certainly appear, however, that the king here spoken of is *ideal*, the embodiment or personification of law, and the representative of God, who, according to Stoic doctrine, was Himself Eternal Law. This view may derive increased credibility from the extent to which

before him: persist not in an evil thing; for he doeth  
 4 whatsoever he pleaseth: Because the king's word is with  
 authority, and who can say unto him, What doest thou?  
 5 He who observeth what is commanded hath experience of  
 no evil thing, and the heart of the wise man discerneth  
 6 both season and law. Because for every matter there is a  
 season and a law, the misery of man is great upon him.  
 7 For he knoweth not what will be, for how it will be, who  
 8 can tell him? There is no man having control over the

the ideal enters into the description of the king in *Sanhedrin* ii. 2—5. The king is here described as neither judging nor judged. He is free from the Levirate law. None may marry his widow. If one of his relations dies, he must not leave the palace to join the funeral procession. None but himself may ride on his horse, sit on his throne, or handle his sceptre. None may look upon him when naked, or while at the bath. Before even his corpse the people must prostrate themselves on the ground. The presence of the ideal can scarcely be denied, however much of these details may have been actually followed out with respect to an Oriental king. The quasi-divine character of the king appears also conspicuous. The high priest, however, partook of the nature of man, and represented man (Heb. v. 1); and the law of the Mishnah in his case (*Sanhedr.* ii. 1) differs greatly from that laid down with respect to the king: "The high priest judges and is judged," &c.

5. *Season and law.*—The עת or "season," as ordered by the Eternal Reason, becomes an ordinance (חוק) or "law" for the regulation of human conduct.

6—8. In these verses we have, vividly depicted, that fear and perturbation of mind from which, according to the Stoics, it was the great privilege of the wise man to be free. He gained this reward for his conformity to the eternal law of Nature.

6. *Great upon him.*—Presseth upon him like a heavy burden.

7. *He knoweth not what will be, &c.*—Expression of the consciousness of guilt and fear of punishment. *How it will be:*—or, perhaps, "when" instead of "how," as A.V.

8. *Having control over the wind.*—There may be here a play on



wind, so as to hold in the wind; and there is no control over the day of death; and there is no discharge in war; and wickedness will not deliver those who commit it. I 9  
 saw all this, and I gave my heart to all work which was done under the sun, even in the season when man ruled over man to his injury. And then I saw the wicked buried; 10  
 and they had come, and from the place of the holy they went; and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this also is vanity. Because the sentence against 11  
 the evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of mankind is fully set in them to do evil. Although the 12  
 sinner doeth evil a hundred times, and yet prolongeth his days, yet surely I know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before him. But it will not be well with 13  
 the wicked man, neither will he lengthen out his days like the shadow, because he feareth not before God.

There is vanity which is wrought on the earth, that there 14  
 are righteous men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked, and that there are wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said

the two senses of רוח, "wind" or "spirit." In Stoic phraseology, the soul of man was a πνεῦμα ἐπιθερμον. *There is no discharge in war* has apparently a similar double meaning, and is thus said with reference to the last conflict, the death-agony.

10. *Buried.*—Not cast out to the dogs and vultures. *They had come, and from the place of the holy they went:*—implying that there was no apparent break or disruption of the usual course of things, at the departure of the wicked rulers. Neither God nor man so interposed as to eject them from "the place of the holy." Notice how well the future יהלכו agrees with the idea of continuity. *Where they had so done:*—or "that they had so done:" their abnormal and wicked conduct was forgotten. *This also is vanity.*—That the way in which the wicked rulers had acted when in "the place of the holy" should even be forgotten, showed how imperfect was the reign of law.

- 15 that this also is vanity. And I commended enjoyment, because there is nothing good for man under the sun, except to eat, and to drink, and to enjoy, for this will accompany him in his toil, during the days of his life, which God hath given him under the sun.
- 16 When I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to see the busy work which was carried on upon the earth—for indeed neither by day nor night doth it see sleep with its eyes—

14. *This also is vanity.*—These words are appropriately used, as the statement with regard to imperfection attending the operation of law had been, in this verse, advanced still further.

16. *Neither by day nor night doth it see sleep with its eyes.*—It would certainly appear that these words are not to be understood of man's persistent application to toil for the sake of gain or for the means of subsistence, but rather of the entirety of action proceeding in the world, and comprehending the work of God in relation to man; and that "the busy work" *הענין* thus conceived of is said, by a bold metaphor, never to "see sleep with its eyes." The supposition that the Divine work just mentioned is even principally referred to, accords with what follows and with what had been said before, ver. 12—15. The reader may compare with the sixteenth and seventeenth verses the Erdgeist's description of his activity in Goethe's *Faust*:—

" In Lebensfluten,  
 Im Thatensturm,  
 Wall' ich auf und ab,  
 Webe hin und her  
 Geburt und Grab,  
 Ein ewiges Meer,  
 Ein wechselnd Weben,  
 Ein glühend Leben,

So schaff' ich am sausendem Webstuhl der Zeit,  
 Und wirke der Gottheit lebendiges Kleid ; "

And the words with which the Erdgeist, before vanishing, answers Faust:—

" Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst  
 Nicht mir."

Then I saw as to all the work of God, that man cannot find 17  
 out the work which is done under the sun, because that,  
 though man should toil to seek it, yet will he not find it  
 out; and even if the wise man should think to know it, he IX.  
 will not be able to find it out. For I laid all this to heart, 1  
 even to investigate all this, that the righteous and the  
 wise, and their works, are in the hand of God, yet men dis- 2  
 cern neither love nor hatred in all that is before them. All  
 is alike to all: there is one lot to the righteous and to the  
 wicked, to the good and to the pure and to him that is de-  
 filed, and to him who sacrificeth and to him who sacri-  
 ficeth not: as is the good man, so is the sinner; he who  
 sweareth, as he who feareth an oath. This is evil in all 3  
 that is done under the sun, that there is one lot to all;  
 therefore indeed the heart of mankind is full of evil, and  
 madness is in their heart during their life; and afterwards  
 they go to the dead. For in the case of one who is asso- 4  
 ciated with all the living, there is confidence; for, even a  
 living dog, he is better than the dead lion. For the living 5  
 know that they will die; but as for the dead they know not  
 anything, and they have no further recompense, for the  
 memory of them is forgotten. Their love, as well as their 6  
 hatred and their envy, hath long ago perished, and they

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IX. 1. Koheleth had to grapple with two seemingly conflicting conclusions: on the one hand, that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God; on the other, that their earthly lot afforded no indication of either his love or his hatred.

3. *That is done*:—or, “that occurs,” as in previous passages. See also note on ver. 6. *Afterwards*:—אֲחֵרָיִךְ. The suffix has here undergone a further weakening, as compared with passages previously noticed. Hitzig compares Jer. li. 46, and illustrates by *nachdem, nachher*.

4. *Associated*:—adopting, as more probable, the *Keri*. *All the living*.—The “all” is not superfluous, but points to the abundance of life around, as promoting the confidence spoken of.

have no more for ever any part in anything that occurreth  
 7 under the sun. Go, eat thy bread with gladness, and drink  
 thy wine with a cheerful heart; for long ago hath God ap-  
 8 proved thy works. At every season let thy garments be  
 white, and let there not be any lack of ointment on thy  
 9 head. Enjoy life, with the woman whom thou lovest,  
 during all the days of thy vain life, which He hath given  
 thee under the sun, during all the days of thy vanity; for  
 that is thy portion in life, and in thy toil whereat thou  
 10 toilest under the sun. All that thy hand findeth to do, do  
 it with thy might, for there is neither work, nor plan, nor  
 knowledge, nor wisdom in Sheol, whither thou art going.  
 11 Again, I saw under the sun that neither to the swift is the  
 race, nor to the men of might the battle, nor yet to wise  
 men bread, nor yet to prudent men riches, nor yet to men  
 of discernment favour, but seasons and accidents happen to

6. *Anything that occurreth.*—I have rendered the pret. נִעְשָׂה in this and some preceding verses by the present, as though it were נִעְשָׂה. This, however, can scarcely be avoided, though the pret. is probably still used on account of the experience of Koheleth being placed in the past: see i. 2, note. But as the state of things in the world, as described by Koheleth, still continued, it is not wonderful that we should find some indications more appropriate to present time, as in ver. 5.

7. *Long ago hath God approved thy works:*—probably said in marked contradiction of the doctrine of *future* rewards and punishments.

8. *At every season* may be understood as opposed to any custom requiring abstinence from the wearing of white garments at certain times and on certain occasions. *Ointment:*—perfumed oil or other unguent.

10. *Plan.*—Comp. note on vii. 25.

11. *The swift and the men of might* are not sure of success. *The men of discernment*, however great their knowledge of men, and however keen their insight may be, yet fail of gaining acceptance and popularity.

them all. For man also knoweth not his season: like 12  
fishes that are caught in an evil net, and like birds that  
are caught in a snare, so they, mankind, are snared by an  
evil season, when it falleth upon them suddenly.

I saw also this example of wisdom under the sun, and it 13  
appeared great unto me:—A little city, and few men within 14  
it; and a great king came against it, and surrounded it,  
and built great forts over against it. And he found in it a 15  
poor wise man, and the latter delivered the city by his  
wisdom, yet no man remembered that same poor man.  
And I said, Wisdom is better than might; but the wisdom 16  
of the poor man is despised, and as to his words, they are  
not heard. The words of wise men in quietness are heard 17  
above the outcry of one ruling over fools. Wisdom is better 18

12. *Snared by an evil season.*—The author speaks apparently of the evil season as though it were like the net in a bird-catcher's trap, suddenly enclosing the unwary victim.

14—16. What is said of the little city and the great king *may* describe an historical fact, but I should rather take it as a parable illustrating the teaching of ver. 16, that “wisdom is better than might.” The same lesson is taught also by the well-known story of Ulysses and the Cyclops in the *Odyssey*. So, too—as in ver. 17 we are told that the wisdom of the poor man was despised—we find, in Homer, the Cyclops uttering contemptuous words of Ulysses, a person so different from what he had expected:—

ἀλλ' αἰεὶ τινα φῶτα μέγαν καὶ καλὸν ἐέγμην  
ἐνθάδ' ἐλεύσεσθαι, μεγάλην ἐπιειμένον ἀλκίην,  
νῦν δέ μ' ἔων ὀλίγος τε καὶ οὐτις ἀνὸς καὶ ἄκκος  
ὄφθαλμοῦ ἀλώσειν, ἐπεὶ μ' ἔδαμάσσατο οἴνω.

(*Od.* ix. 513—516.)

15. *And he found in it.*—The great king was unexpectedly confronted by the poor wise man, whose skill was brought into direct antagonism with the king's might.

17. *The outcry of one ruling over fools.*—Notice the contrast between “the words of wise men in quietness,” and “the outcry of one ruling over fools,” implying probably a philosopher's con-

than weapons of war, but one sinner may destroy much  
X. that is good.

1 Dead flies cause the perfumer's ointment to stink and  
putrefy, so doth a little folly a man esteemed on account of  
2 wisdom and honour. A wise man's heart is at his right  
3 hand, but a fool's heart is at his left. And even in the  
road, as the fool walketh, his heart faileth, and he saith to  
4 all that he is a fool. If the spirit of the ruler rise up  
against thee, quit not thy place; for yielding letteth great  
5 offences remain quiet. There is an evil which I saw under  
the sun, it appearing as an error which proceedeth from  
6 the ruler: Folly is put in very exalted positions, while great  
7 men remain in a lowly rank. I saw servants upon horses,  
8 and princes walking as servants upon the earth. He who  
diggeth a pit may fall into it: and as to him who breaketh  
9 through a fence, a serpent may bite him. He who quarrieth  
stones may be hurt by them: he who cleaveth trees may  
10 be endangered by them. If the iron be blunt, and he

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tempt for the "great king;" a view which comports well with the description "one ruling over fools."

X. 1. A plural nominative *זְבוּיֵי מוֹרֵי* is found here with singular verbs *יבאישׁ יביע*. The reason probably was, that the verb was conformed to the conception of the subject collectively as a whole. It would thus be analogous to the Greek construction of a neuter plural nominative with a singular verb. See i. 10, and note.

8. *Heart*.—The word would seem to approach here to the meaning of our phrase "common sense."

6. *Great men*.—The word *עשיר*, from denoting "a rich man," seems to have come to signify one possessing those qualities which might be looked for in a rich man, fitting their possessor for an exalted rank.

9. *By them*:—meaning, perhaps, by detached fragments. See Hitzig *ad loc*.

10. Though the general sense seems pretty clear, yet the language presents several difficulties. With respect to the concluding words, it would certainly appear that *תִּקְשֶׁר* must be

sharpen not the edge, then hath he to exert great strength, but the right guidance of wisdom is an advantage. If the serpent, without charming, will bite, the babbler is no better. The words of a wise man's mouth are acceptable, but the lips of a fool swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of his talk is pernicious madness. But the fool multiplieth words : man knoweth not what it is that will be, and what will be after him, who can tell him ? The toil of fools wearieth each of them, because he knoweth not how to go to a city. Woe to thee, O land, whose king is a boy, and whose princes eat

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taken as the Inf. constr. followed by *הכמה* in the genitive. The word *הכשר* may be illustrated by referring to the frequent use in the Mishnah of a form which appears to be essentially the same, *הכשר*, denoting "predisposition," or "direction," and which is employed with a special reference to the law of Lev. xi. 38, according to which law, water falling on seed *predisposes* it to become ceremonially unclean, or *gives it a direction* towards uncleanness. And in this passage of Ecclesiastes it would not perhaps be amiss to take the word as signifying the predisposition and pre-arrangement of the materials to be wrought and the instruments to be employed, so that danger and unnecessary exertion may be avoided, and the work successfully performed. If this view is taken, "pre-arrangement" might be substituted for "right guidance." A general application of the passage to human affairs appears not very difficult to discern.

12. *The lips* :—representing the idea "language:" accordingly we have in the Hebrew a singular verb.

15. *Each of them*.—The transition to the singular in the suffix pronoun is perhaps to be accounted for by supposing that the conception changes from that of plurality to the individual fool standing apart from others, while he displays his want of tact and practical acquaintance with the ways of men.

16. *A boy*.—*נער* may be here used not merely of youth, but metaphorically, in accordance with the Rabbinical dictum, *זקן זה שקנה חכמה*, "He is aged who has acquired wisdom."

17 in the morning. Happy art thou, O land, whose king is of  
 noble descent, and whose princes eat at the proper season,  
 18 for strength, and not for carousing. By great slothfulness  
 the framework is decayed, and by slackness of hands the  
 19 house drippeth through. They prepare food for laughter,  
 and wine maketh life joyful, but money answereth for all  
 20 things. Even in thy thoughts revile not the king, nor in  
 thy bedchamber revile the great man, for the bird of heaven  
 may carry the sound, and that which hath wings may tell  
 XI. of the matter.

1 Cast thy bread upon the face of the waters, for in the

If this view is accepted, *בן הוריים* in the next verse may be regarded as denoting one possessed of such intellectual or other qualities as might be reasonably looked for in a person of noble or of free birth (comp. ver. 6). And thus it is said (*Aboth* vi. 2) that none is to be esteemed a *ben chorin* except the man who exercises himself in the study of the Law. Dr. Graetz takes *נער* as denoting "a slave," with a special historical application. But, without adopting this view, it may well be maintained, in view of the antithesis in *בן הוריים*, that *naar* does not merely express youth, but involves the idea of lowly condition or mean birth.

17. The *ב* in *בגבורה* and *בשרי* has a signification analogous to the *ב* of price.

18. Dr. Graetz thinks that the apparently dual termination in *עלתיים* belongs properly to the following word *יבד*, and that the first two letters of the latter word have been written twice over. *Drippeth through*:—the rain comes through.

19. *They prepare food*.—The food required for a feast and conviviality. *Answereth for all*:—or, "is equivalent to all," the idea of "answering" easily passing into that of equivalency (comp. v. 20).

20. *The great man*:—comp. ver. 6.

XI. 1. *Upon the face of the waters*.—The idea which has been suggested appears not altogether improbable, that the conception here is that of thin cakes which would at first float on the surface of the water (*על פני המים*). Afterwards, however, like



course of time thou wilt find it. Give a portion to seven 2  
 and even to eight, for thou knowest not in what way cala- 3  
 mity will come upon the earth. If the clouds become filled 3  
 with rain, they pour it out upon the earth; and whether  
 a tree fall on the south, or on the north, in the place where 4  
 the tree falleth, there will it be. A man watching the wind 4  
 will not sow, and one looking at the clouds will not reap. 5  
 As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, nor how 5  
 the bodily framework ariseth in the womb of her who is  
 pregnant, so thou knowest not the work of God who doeth

alms given promiscuously to the needy, the bread would seem to be utterly lost. The phrase על פני המים is used in the Mishnah of a ship floating on the water (*Ohaloth* vi. 5), as well as of other things in similar positions (*Parah* ix. 6; *Bitsah* v. 2). The notion that the author of Ecclesiastes alludes to the sowing of rice on muddy land, or allowing it to drop through water into the soil, seems unsuitable. In addition to the difficulty in the way of this opinion resulting from the language employed, there is the objection, that we have apparently no evidence that the cultivation of rice had already become, when Ecclesiastes was written, well known in Palestine; though it must be maintained that this was the case when the Mishnah was composed. See for example *Shebi'ith* ii. 7, where *orez* (אורז) is spoken of as putting forth its roots before the commencement of the year. And in *Demai* ii. 1, we have *orez* grown in Israel distinguished from that which was imported.

3. *And whether a tree fall, &c.*:—implying the uncertainty of the quarter from which calamity comes, and the powerlessness of man to guard against it.

5. *As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind*:—referring back to the previous verse. *Nor how the bodily framework ariseth*:—or, more literally, “what is the way of the bodily framework.” The כ in כעצמים would thus represent the preceding כחשׁר אינך כעצמים. *Her who is pregnant*:—מליאה. In the Mishnah מליאה occurs, though rarely, in the same sense. The more usual word is מעוברת. *The work of God who doeth all*:—comp. viii. 17.

6 all. In the morning sow thy seed, and at evening rest not  
 thy hand, for thou knowest not which will succeed, whether  
 7 this or that, or whether both will be alike good. And the  
 light is sweet, and pleasant it is to the eyes to behold the  
 8 sun. But if men live many years, let them rejoice in them  
 all, and let them remember the days of darkness, for they  
 9 will be many: all that cometh is vanity. Enjoy, O young  
 man, thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the  
 days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and  
 according to the sight of thine eyes, and know that con-  
 cerning all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

6. *Which*:— $\text{לֹא יָדָע}$ , without reference to place, a usage which appears in the phraseology of the Mishnah.

8. *They will be many*.—Compare the words of Antigone with respect to the time she would have to pass in Hades:—

ἐπεὶ πλείων χρόνος  
 ὄν δ'εἶ μ' ἀρέσκειν τοῖς κάτω τῶν ἐνθάδε  
 ἐκεῖ γὰρ αἰεὶ κείσομαι.

SOPHOCLES, *Antig.* 74—76.

*All that cometh is vanity*:—These words are perhaps best understood of the shadowy and insubstantial condition of the dead amid the darkness of Sheol:—

“Jam te premet nox fabulæque Manes,  
 Et domus exilis Plutonia.”—HORACE, *Carm.* i. 4.

“Nos, ubi decidimus,  
 Quo pater Æneas, quo dives Tullus et Ancus,  
 Pulvis et umbra sumus.”—HORACE, *Carm.* iv. 7.

9. *All these things*:—the living conformably or not with these precepts, indulgence in pleasure during youth being required by the law of the times and seasons. *Will bring thee into judgment*:—meaning, as it would certainly appear, that the youth who refuses to gratify his appetites, and stifles his passions, commits a crime against Nature. It might be thought, perhaps, that we have here a *reductio ad absurdum* of the ethical principle of “living conformably to Nature.” But I should rather incline to the opinion that, however much an orthodox Stoic would have disavowed such an application of the principle just mentioned,

Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away affliction from thy body ; for youth and dawning-time are vanity. 10 XII.

And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, 1  
 before the days of evil come and years arrive, when thou  
 wilt say, I have no pleasure in them ; Before the sun is 2  
 darkened, and the light, and the moon, and the stars ; and  
 the clouds return after the rain, In the day when the guards 3  
 of the house tremble, and the men of might are bent, and  
 the grinding-women cease, because they have become very  
 few, and the women looking out at the lattice windows are  
 darkened ; And the two-leaved door is shut in the street, 4  
 when the sound of the mill faileth, and it becometh the  
 voice of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought  
 low : Also they are afraid of what is high, and terrors are 5  
 in the way, and the almond tree blossometh, and the locust

it is an application which was actually made and taught in the Jewish schools. Dr. Graetz rightly resists the weakening of the sense of this verse by translators and interpreters.

10. *Remove sorrow, &c.*—The admonition here given appears to agree entirely with the view I have taken of the previous verse. *Dawning-time* :—in accordance with, and probably looking back to, ver. 7.

XII. 1. *Thy Creator.*—The plural in the Hebrew (בּוֹרֵאֵךְ), as more abstract than the singular, may be regarded as better suited to the language of philosophy.

3. *The women looking out at the lattice windows.*—In illustration of the figure here used, reference may be made to the phrases אִישׁוֹן עֵין “little man of the eye,” and אִישׁוֹן בֵּת עֵין “little man daughter of the eye,” both phrases denoting the pupil. The “lattice window” would thus probably signify the iris.

4. *The sound of the mill.*—This, it would appear, must be understood of the voice ; and if the varied motions of the mouth and its parts in speaking are taken into account, such a view may seem not altogether improbable. *It becometh.*—Possibly, on the whole, the best rendering.

5. *They are afraid.*—Old men are probably spoken of, without metaphor. *The almond tree blossometh.*—I do not feel able to

is a burden to itself, and the caper-berry splitteth open, for man goeth to his everlasting home, and the mourners go

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adopt the opinion that in what is here said of the שָׁקֵד, רֶחֶב, and אֲבִיוֹנָה, there is a veiled allusion to that failure of the reproductive function common in advanced age. I doubt the possibility of making the language employed square with such an opinion; but apart from this, the interpretation in question seems not well to harmonise with the last part of the verse, which appears certainly to speak, not of commencing decrepitude, but of the grave and the funeral procession. Still, it must, I think, be admitted that such a figurative description of the matter in question would not be alien from the Rabbinical mode of speaking. Thus in the tract *Niddah* v. 7, a woman, at different periods of life, is spoken of as an unripe fig, a ripening fig, and a fig fully ripe. And with respect to matters pertaining to women, we have (*Niddah* ix. 11) the figure of different species of vines, one of which yields black and another red wine, while of one the wine is scanty and of another abundant. The vine which yields no wine is spoken of as the vine of *Dorkati*, a word which is regarded as derived from דֹר "generation," and קָטִיעַ "cut off." Comp. also *Niddah* ii. 5. *And the locust is a burden to itself.*—Sept. καὶ παχυρθῆ ἡ ἀκρίς. *The caper-berry splitteth open.*—Sept. καὶ διασκεδασθῆ ἡ κάππαρις. "The caper-shrub is very common in Palestine, and the sight of pods which have opened, and are nearly fallen off, must, of course, be very frequent" (E. F. C. Rosenmüller, *Mineralogy and Botany of the Bible*, translated in *Bib. Cabinet*). It is worthy of notice here, with reference to the sense of אֲבִיוֹנָה, that in *Maaseroth* iv. 8 it is given as the law, according to R. Akiba, that, while other parts of the caper-plant are exempt from the law of tithe, the *abiyonoth* are liable, "because they are fruit." That פָּרַר should have the intransitive signification "splitteth open," appears in accordance with the analogy of the sense of the Hiphil conjugation in a good many verbs, and as to the use of פָּרַר in this conj. otherwise than metaphorically no insuperable difficulty need be felt. *In the street.*—Graetz, however, contends that שוּק necessarily means a market, and not a street. With this view may be contrasted the rendering of the Peshito in Acts ix. 11. Πορεύθητι ἐπὶ τῆς ὁδοῦ

about in the street; Before the cord of silver is detached, 6  
 and the golden bowl broken, and a water-jar is shattered at  
 the spring, and the wheel broken at the cistern; And the 7  
 dust returneth to the earth, as it was, and the spirit  
 returneth unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, said 8  
 Koheleth, all is vanity.

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τὴν καλουμένην Εὐθεΐαν is translated by זל לשוקא דבתקרא ררישא.  
 "In the street" is probably to be taken in a general way, just  
 as we sometimes use the phrase.

6. *Before, &c.*—It would appear that, in the previous verse, the corpse had been conceived of as carried to the grave, attended by the mourners. Koheleth now goes back a little. *The cord of silver.*—To understand this of the spinal cord seems to involve no difficulty. The figure seems quite suitable, considering the general colour and shining appearance of the spinal marrow. Aristotle notices its λιπαρότης (*De Part. Animal.* ii. 7). *Detached.*—I give this rendering without confidence, as both the true reading and the sense are doubtful. *The golden bowl broken.*—I know of no opinion preferable to that which understands the "golden bowl" of the skull, for such a reference would be entirely congruous with an allusion just before to the spinal column. It is not perhaps necessary to press the figure too closely, so as to make a difficulty about the "breaking" of the golden bowl. If, however, the golden bowl is a lamp-bowl feeding the flame of life, then our passage represents, apparently, a physiological view different from that of Aristotle, who seems to have looked upon the brain as cold, and to have supposed that the heat of the blood was moderated in the head. *A water-jar.*—Of the nouns in this verse כר alone is without the article, *perhaps* because in a duly-furnished house there were several water-jars. That, in the latter part of the verse, there is some allusion to the circulation of the blood, seems not improbable, considering that there would appear to have been, among both the Peripatetics and the Stoics, at least some dim notion of the fact.

7. *As it was.*—The author of Ecclesiastes may have had Gen. ii. 7 in view here. *The spirit returneth unto God who gave it.*—There is probably still allusion to the narrative in Gen. ii. Comp. also Introd. § 12.

9 And moreover, since Koheleth was wise, he still further  
 taught the people knowledge; and he paid attention, and  
 10 investigated: he set in order many proverbs. Koheleth  
 sought to find pertinent words, and what was written was  
 11 right, words of truth. The words of wise men are like goads,  
 and those of the editors of collections like nails driven in:

9. *Set in order.*—That this is the true rendering of *הִתְקַן* may well be defended, especially on account of the words *הִתְקַן* and *הִתְקַן* which precede, and which would be appropriately used of the attention and investigation preparatory to due arrangement. *Proverbs.*—This rendering is open to objection, as being too narrow and restricted. Proverbs, parables, and fables are all *meshalim*. Still it should not be forgotten that there is here, not improbably, an allusion to the Book of Proverbs.

11. *Those of the editors of collections.*—The opinion appears to me to be correct that there is an ellipsis of *דְּבָרֵי* before *בְּעֵלֵי אִסְפֹּרֹת* (comp. Preston *ad loc.*). For other instances of ellipsis I may refer the reader to viii. 1 and xi. 5. *The editors of collections.*—See Introd. § 15; and in addition to what I have there said, I may ask the reader to compare Sir. xxxiii. 16 with the use of *אָסַף* of collecting ears of corn, gleaning (Ruth ii. 7), and of gathering in produce (Exod. xxiii. 10). Much of Hebrew learning consisted in the gathering and storing up of the dicta of sages, of *meshalim*. (Comp. Job vii. 8 *sq.*; xii. 3; xiii. 12; xv. 18 *sq.*; xvi. 4.) Thus the phrase *בְּעֵלֵי אִסְפֹּרֹת* “men of collections,” might perhaps be translated “learned men,” and so furnish a still closer parallel to *הַכַּמְיִם*. Still, the wisdom of the persons designated by the expression in question is evidently conceived of as imparted to others; and besides, as I have remarked (Introd. § 15), there is probably an allusion to the composite structure of our present book. So that, on the whole, “editors of collections” may be as good a rendering as is attainable. *Nails driven in.*—The idea that there is an allusion to tent-pins or stakes seems not improbable, considering the context. The “wise men” and the *baale asuppoth* are, as would appear to be implied, under-shepherds deriving their words from one *ἀρχιποίμην*.

they were given by one Shepherd. And further, be admonished, my son, by these : as to the making of many books there is no end ; and much close study is a wearying of the flesh. 12

The conclusion of the discourse, the universal law, let us 13

12. On this verse see *Introd.* § 15.

13. *The universal law.*—The כָּל in this verse occasioned me a good deal of difficulty, till I derived what appears to me a reasonable and probable solution from that very frequent formula of the Mishnah זֶה הַכֹּלֵל, meaning “this is the general rule,” or, “this is the universal law.” After particular examples or precepts have been stated or discussed, the discussion is very commonly closed by giving a general rule introduced by the formula just quoted. There is here, it seems to me, a pretty certain trace of the influence of the Greek philosophy, and especially of that Aristotelian inductive method which aimed at proceeding from Particulars to a Universal, τὸ καθόλου. And it is this expression, or possibly τὸ ἅλον used in a similar sense (comp. Plato, *Republic*, bk. ii. 377 A.), that, as appears to me probable, הַכֹּלֵל represents. Further, it may be reasonably maintained that both הַכֹּלֵל and הַכֹּל are essentially of the same signification, and that both mean strictly “the totality.” Indeed, in accordance with the analogy of verbs, פָּלַל = פָּל, עָע, The pointing of כָּלֵל with *a* instead of *o* would make no essential difference. I think, then, that through the influence of the Aristotelian philosophy (comp. *Introd.* § 4) it was already, when *Ecclesiastes* was written, a common practice in the Jewish schools to close a discussion with the statement of a universal principle or law, and that the author of *Ecclesiastes* here conforms to a usual practice. At a subsequent period, and prior to the composition of the Mishnah, הַכֹּלֵל seems to have been used instead of הַכֹּל to express the idea of a universal law, the change having been made possibly for the sake of greater distinctness of expression. *The universal law for man.*—The כָּל here must be understood in the same sense as that preceding, though it remits its article to the genitive following. The impracticability of the rendering, “for this is all men,” affords a strong argument in

14 hear. Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the universal law for man. For God will bring all the work into judgment, concerning everything hidden, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

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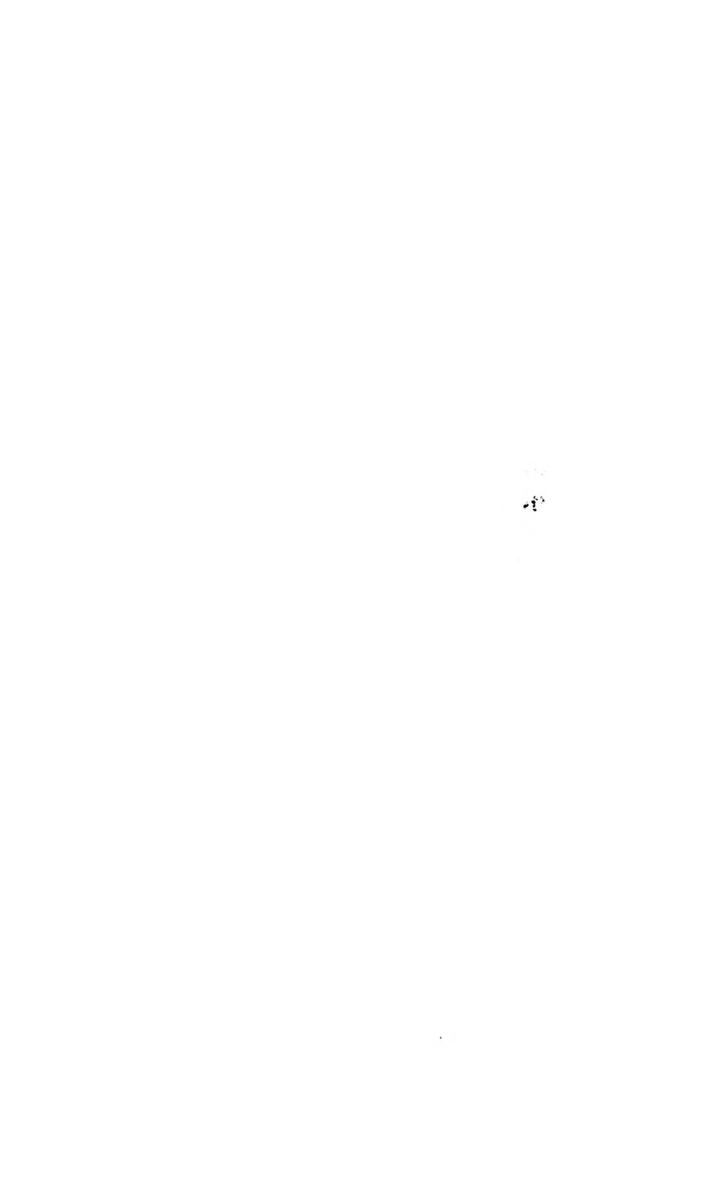
favour of the position that כל is here to be understood in a peculiar technical sense.

14. *All the work*:—אֵת כָּל מַעֲשֵׂהָ, Sept. *σύμπαν τὸ ποίημα*. Compare אֵת כָּל עֲמַל, iv. 4. I should, however, very strongly incline to the opinion that we ought to point מַעֲשֵׂהָ as in the const. state before הָאֱלֹהִים, and translate, "For all God's work will He bring into judgment," though I have not ventured to introduce this change into the text of my translation (comp. viii. 17; xi. 9). To express the sense usually attributed to this verse it would seem that we should rather have had כִּי עַל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יבִיאֵךְ הָאֱלֹהִים בְּמִשְׁפַּט. The opinion that this verse speaks of the judgment of each individual man, and not of the vindication of the Divine administration, seems not in harmony with the general tenor of the book. *Everything hidden* may be taken as referring to such mysterious and seemingly anomalous facts as had been previously spoken of. The Peshito inserts וְגַלְיָא "and manifest;" and indeed, if the passage spoke of the judgment of individuals, such an addition might not be unsuitable. But the fact that this addition is not in the Hebrew affords an argument against the ordinary view, and in favour of that which I have given. The author of Ecclesiastes says "everything hidden," not "everything hidden and everything manifest." This argument, if it stood alone, however, might not be of sufficient strength: comp. Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5.









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