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Ecclesiastes

From Commentary on the Old Testament

C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch

adapted for Grace Notes training by Warren Doud

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Ecclesiastes - Keil and Delitzsch

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ECCLESIASTES

Translated by M. G. Easton

Introduction

If we look at the world without God, it appears what it is,—a magnificent, graduated combination of diverse classes of beings, connected causes and effects, well-calculated means and ends. But thus contemplated, the world as a whole remains a mystery. If, with the atheist, we lay aside the idea of God, then, notwithstanding the law of causation, which is grounded in our mental nature, we abandon the question of the origin of the world. If, with the pantheist, we transfer the idea of God to the world itself, then the effect is made to be as one with the cause,—not, however, without the conception of God, which is inalienable in man, reacting against it; for one cannot but distinguish between substance and its phenomena. The mysteries of the world which meet man as a moral being remain, under this view of the world, altogether without solution. For the moral order of the world presupposes an absolutely good Being, from whom it has proceeded, and who sustains it; it demands a Lawgiver and a Judge. Apart from the reference to this Being, the distinction between good and evil loses its depth and sharpness. Either there is no God, or all that is and happens is a moment in the being and life of God Himself, who is identical with the world: thus must the world-destructive power of sin remain unrecognised. The opinion as to the state of the world will, from a pantheistic point of view, rise to optimism; just as, on the other hand, from an atheistic point of view, it will sink to pessimism. The commanding power of goodness even the atheist may recognise by virtue of the inner law peculiar to man as a moral being, but the divine consecration is wanting to this goodness; and if human life is a journey from nothing to nothing, then this will be the best of all goodness: that man set himself free from the evil reality, and put his confidence in nothing. “Him who views the world,” says Buddhism, “as a water-bubble, a phantom, the king of death does not terrify.

What pleasure, what joy is in this world? Behold the changing form—it is undone by old age; the diseased body—it dissolves and corrupts! ‘I have sons and treasures; here will I dwell in the season of the cold, and there in the time of the heat:’ thus thinks the fool; and cares not for, and sees not, the hindrances thereto. Him who is concerned about sons and treasures,—the man who has his heart so entangled,—death tears away, as the torrent from the forest sweeps away the slumbering village.”

The view taken of the world, and the judgment formed regarding it, in the Book of Ecclesiastes, are wholly different. While in the Book of Esther faith in God remains so much in the background that there is nowhere in it express mention made of God, the name of God occurs in Ecclesiastes no fewer than thirty-seven times, and that in such a way that the naming of Him is at the same time the confession of Him as the True God, the Exalted above the world, the Governor and the Ruler over all. And not only that: the book characterizes itself as a genuine product of the Israelitish Chokma by this, that, true to its motto, it places the command, “Fear Thou God,” 5:6, [7], 12:13, in the foremost rank as a fundamental moral duty; that it makes, 8:12, the happiness of man to be dependent thereon; that it makes, 7:18; 11:9; 12:14, his final destiny to be conditioned by his fearing God; and that it contemplates the world as one that was created by God very good, 3:11; 7:29, and as arranged, 3:14, and directed so that men should fear Him. These primary principles, to which the book again and again returns, are of special importance for a correct estimate of it.

Of like decisive importance for the right estimate of the theistic, and at the same time also the pessimistic, view of the world presented by Koheleth is this, that he knows of no future life compensating for the troubles of the present life, and resolving its mystery. It is true that he says, 12:7, that the life-spirit of the man who dies returns to God who gave it, as the body returns to the dust of which it is formed; but the question asked in 3:21 shows that this

preferring of the life-spirit of man to that of a beast was not, in his regard, raised above all doubt. And what does this return to God mean? By no means such a return unto God as amounts to the annihilation of the separate existence of the spirit of man; for, in the first place, there is the supposition of this separate existence running through the Bible; in the second place, גַּתְּהוּ, 12:7*b*, does not point to an emanation; and in the third place, the idea of Hades prevailing in the consciousness of the ages before Christ, and which is also that of Koheleth, proves the contrary. Man exists also beyond the grave, but without the light and the force of thought and activity characterizing his present life, 9:5, 10. The future life is not better, but is worse than the present, a dense darkness enduring “for ever,” 9:6; 11:8; 12:5*b*. It is true, indeed, that from the justice of God, and the experiences of the present life as standing in contradiction thereto, 8:14, the conclusion is drawn, 12:14; 11:9, that there is a last decisive judgment, bringing all to light; but this great thought, in which the interest of the book in the progress of religious knowledge comes to a climax, is as yet only an abstract postulate of faith, and not powerful enough to brighten the future; and therefore, also, not powerful enough to lift us above the miseries of the present.

That the author gives utterance to such thoughts of the future as 12:7 and 11:9; 12:14, —to which Wisd. 3:1 (“The souls of the righteous are in God’ hand, and no trouble moves them”) and Dan. 12:2 (“Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt”) are related, as being their expansion,—warrants the supposition that he disputes as little as Job does in Job 14 the reality of a better future; but only that the knowledge of such a future was not yet given to him. In general, for the first time in the N.T. era, the hope of a better future becomes a common portion of the church’s creed, resting on the basis of faith in the history of redemption warranting it; and is advanced beyond the

isolated prophetic gleams of light, the mere postulates of faith that were ventured upon, and the unconfirmed opinions, of the times preceding Christ. The N.T. Scripture shows how altogether different this world of sin and of change appears to be since a world of recompense and of glory has been revealed as its background; since the Lord has pronounced as blessed those who weep, and not those who laugh; and since, with the apostle (Rom. 8:18), we may be convinced that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us. The goal of human life, with its labour and its sufferings, is now carried beyond the grave. That which is done under the sun appears only as a segment of the universal and everlasting operation, governed by the wisdom of God, the separate portions of which can only be understood in their connection with the whole. The estimate taken of this present world, apart from its connection with the future, must be one-sided. There are two worlds: the future is the solution of the mystery of the present. A N.T. believer would not be able to write such a book as that of Job, or even as that of Ecclesiastes, without sinning against revealed truth; without renouncing the better knowledge meanwhile made possible; without falling back to an O.T. standpoint. The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes is related to revealed religion in its O.T. manifestation,—he is a believer before the coming of Christ; but not such an one as all, or as most were, but of peculiar character and position. There are some natures that have a tendency to joyfulness, and others to sadness. The author of this book does not belong to the latter class; for if he did, the call to rejoice, 11:9, 8; 12, etc., would not as it does pervade his book, as the χαίρετε, though in a deeper sense, pervades the Epistle to the Philippians. Neither does he belong to those superficial natures which see almost everything in a rosy light, which quickly and easily divest themselves of their own and of others’ sorrows, and on which the stern earnestness of life can make no deep and lasting impressions. Nor is he a man of feeling, whom his own weakness

makes a prophet of evil; not a predominately passive man, who, before he could fully know the world, withdrew from it, and now criticises it from his own retired corner in a careless, inattentive mood; but a man of action, with a penetrating understanding and a faculty of keen observation; a man of the world, who, from his own experience, knows the world on all its sides; a restless spirit, who has consumed himself in striving after that which truly satisfies. That this man, who was forced to confess that all science and art, all that table dainties, and the love of women, and riches, and honour yielded him, was at last but vanity and vexation of spirit, and who gained so deep an insight into the transitoriness and vanity of all earthly things, into the sorrows of this world of sin and death, and their perplexing mysteries, does not yet conclude by resigning himself to atheism, putting "Nothing" (*Nirvâna*), or blind Fate, in the place of God, but firmly holds that the fear of God is the highest duty and the condition of all true prosperity, as it is the highest truth and the surest knowledge—that such is the case with him may well excite our astonishment; as well as this also, that he penetrates the known illusory character of earthly things in no overstrained manner, despising the world in itself, and also the gifts of God in it, but that he places his ultimatum as to the pure enjoyment of life within the limits of the fear of God, and extends it as widely as God permits. One might therefore call the Book of Koheleth, "The Song of the Fear of God," rather than, as H. Heine does, "The Song of Scepticism;" for however great the sorrow of the world which is therein expressed, the religious conviction of the author remains in undiminished strength; and in the midst of all the disappointments in the present world, his faith in God, and in the rectitude of God, and in the victory of the good, stands firm as a rock, against which all the waves dash themselves into foam. "This book," says another recent author, "which contains almost as many contradictions as verses, may be regarded as the Breviary of the most modern materialism, and of extreme licentiousness." He who can

thus speak has not read the book with intelligence. The appearance of materialism arises from this, that the author sees in the death of man an end similar to that of beasts; and that is certainly so far true, but it is not the whole truth. In the knowledge of the reverse side of the matter he does not come beyond the threshold, because His hand was not yet there—viz. the hand of the Arisen One—which could help him over it. And as for the supposed licentiousness, 9:7–9 shows, by way of example, how greatly the fear of God had guarded him from concluding his search into all earthly things with the disgust of a worn-out libertine. But there are certainly self-contradictions in the Book of Ecclesiastes. They have a twofold ground. They are, on the one hand, the reflection of the self-contradicting facts which the author affirms. Thus, e.g., 3:11, he says that God has set eternity in the heart of man, but that man cannot find out from the beginning to the end the work which God maketh; 3:12, 13, that the best thing in this world is for a man to enjoy life; but to be able to do this, is a gift of God; 8; 12, 14, that it goes well with them that fear God, but ill with the godless. But there is also the contrary—which is just the ground-tone of the book, that everything has its *But*; only the fear of God, after all that appertains to the world is found to be as *vanitas vanitatum*, remains as the kernel without the shell, but the commandment of the fear of God as a categorical imperative, the knowledge that the fear of God is in itself the highest happiness, and fellowship with God the highest good, remain unexpressed; the fear of God is not combined with the love of God, as e.g., in Ps. 73 it serves only for warning and not for comfort. On the other hand, the book also contains contradictions, which consists in contrasts which the author is not in a condition to explain and adjust. Thus, e.g., the question whether the spirit of a dying man, in contrast to that of a beast, takes its way upwards, 3:21, is proposed as one capable of a double answer; but 12:7 answers it directly in the affirmative; the author has good grounds for the affirmative, but yet no absolute proofs. And while he denies

the light of consciousness and the energy of activity to those who have gone down to Hades, 9:10, he maintains that there is a final decisive judgment of a holy and righteous God of all human conduct, 11:9; 12:14, which, since there is frequently not a righteous requital given on earth, 8:14, and since generally the issue here does not bring to light, 9:2, the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, will take place in eternity; but it is difficult to comprehend how he has reconciled the possibility of such a final judgment with the shadowy nature of existence after death.

The Book of Koheleth is, on the one side, a proof of the power of revealed religion which has grounded faith in God, the One God, the All-wise Creator and Governor of the world, so deeply and firmly in the religious consciousness, that even the most dissonant and confused impressions of the present world are unable to shake it; and, on the other side, it is a proof of the inadequacy of revealed religion in its O.T. form, since the discontent and the grief which the monotony, the confusion, and the misery of this earth occasion, remain thus long without a counterbalance, till the facts of the history of redemption shall have disclosed and unveiled the heavens above the earth. In none of the O.T. books does the Old Covenant appear as it does in the Book of Koheleth, as "that which decayeth and waxeth old, and is ready to vanish away" (Heb. 8:13). If the darkness of earth must be enlightened, then a New Covenant must be established; for heavenly love, which is at the same time heavenly wisdom, enters into human nature and overcomes sin, death, and Hades, and removes the turning-point of the existence of man from this to the future life. The finger of prophecy points to this new era. And Koheleth, from amid his heaps of ruins, shows how necessary it is that the heavens should now soon open above the earth.

It is a view of the world, dark, and only broken by scattered gleams of light, not disowning its sullenness even where it recommends the happy enjoyment of life, which runs through the book in a long series of dissonances, and gives to it a peculiar character. It is thus

intentionally a homogeneous whole; but is it also divided into separate parts according to a plan? That we may be able to answer this question, we subject the contents of the book to a searching analysis, step by step, yet steadily keeping the whole in view. This will at the same time also serve as a preparation for the exposition of the book.

Here below, all things under the sun are vanity. The labour of man effects nothing that is enduring, and all that is done is only a beginning and a vanishing away again, repeating itself in a never-ending circle: these are the thoughts of the book which stand as its motto, 1:2–11.

Koheleth-Solomon, who had been king, then begins to set forth the vanity of all earthly things from his own experience. The striving after secular knowledge, 1:12ff., has proved to him unsatisfactory, as has also the striving after happiness in pleasure and in procuring the means of all imaginable gratifications, 2:1–11; wisdom is vanity, for the wise man falls under the stroke of death as well as the fool, and is forgotten, 2:12–17; the riches are vanity, for they become the inheritance, one knows not whether or a worthy or of an unworthy heir, 2:18–21; and, besides, pure enjoyment, like wisdom and knowledge, depends not merely on the will of man, but both are the gift of God, 2:22ff. Everything has its time appointed by God, but man is unable to survey either backwards or forwards the work of God, which fills eternity, notwithstanding the impulse to search into it which is implanted within him; his dependence in all things, even in pure enjoyment, must become to him a school in which to learn the fear of God, who maintains all things unchangeably, for forms the course of that which is done, 3:1–15. If he sees injustice prevailing in the place of justice, God's time for righteous interference has not yet come, 3:16, 17. If God wishes to try men, they shall see that they are dependent like the beasts, and liable to death without any certain distinction from the beasts—there is nothing better than that this fleeting life should be enjoyed as well as may be, 3:18ff.

Koheleth now further records the evils that are under the sun: oppression, in view of which death is better than life, and not to have been at all is better than both, 4:1–3; envy, 4:4; the restlessness of labour, from which only the fool sets himself free, 4:5, 6; the aimless trouble and parsimony of him who stands alone, 4:7–12; the disappointment of the hopes placed on an upstart who has reached the throne, 4:13–16.

Up to this point there is connection. There now follow rules, externally unconnected, for the relation of man to Him who is the Disposer of all things; regarding his frequenting the house of God, 4:17 [5:1]; prayer, 5:2; and praise, 5:3–6.

Then a catalogue of vanities is set forth: the insatiable covetous plundering of the lowly by those who are above them in despotic states, whereat the author praises, 5:7, 8, the patriarchal state based on agriculture; and the nothingness and uncertainty of riches, which do not make the rich happier than the labourer, 5:9–11; which sometimes are lost without any to inherit them, 5:12–14; and which their possessor, at all events, must leave behind him when he dies, 5:15, 16. Riches have only a value when by means of them a purer enjoyment is realized as the gift of God, 5:17ff. For it happens that God gives to a man riches, but to a stranger the enjoyment thereof, 6:1, 2. An untimely birth is better than a man who has an hundred children, a long life, and yet who has no enjoyment of life even to his death, 6:3–6.

desire stretching on into the future is torment; only so much as a man truly enjoys has he of all his labour, 6:7–9; what man shall be is predestinated, all contendings against it are useless: the knowledge of that which is good for him, and of the future, is in the power of no man, 6:10ff.

There now follow, without a premeditated plan, rules for the practical conduct of life, loosely connecting themselves with the “what is good,” 6:12, by the catchword “good:” first six (probably originally seven) proverbs of two things each, whereof the one is better than the other, 7:1–9; then three with the same catch-

word, but without comparison, 7:10, 11–12, 13–14. This series of proverbs is connected as a whole, for their ultimatum is a counsel to joy regulated by the fear of God within the narrow limits of this life, constituted by God of good and bad days, and terminating in the darkness of death. But this joy is also itself limited, for the deep seriousness of the *memento mori* is mingled with it, and sorrow is declared to be morally better than laughter.

With 7:15, the *I*, speaking from personal experience, again comes into the foreground; but counsels and observations also here follow each other aphoristically, without any close connection with each other. Koheleth warns against an extreme tendency to the side of good as well as to that of evil: he who fears God knows how to avoid extremes, 7:15–18.

Nothing affords a stronger protection than wisdom, for (?) with all his righteousness a man makes false steps, 7:19, 20. Thou shalt not always listen, lest thou hear something about thyself,—also thou thyself hast often spoken harshly regarding others, 7:21, 22. He has tried everything, but in his strivings after wisdom, and in his observation of the distinction between wisdom and folly, he has found nothing more dangerous than the snares of women; among a thousand men he found one man; but one woman such as she ought to be, he found not; he found in general that God made men upright, but that they have devised many kinds of by-ways, 7:23ff.

As the wise man considers women and men in general, wisdom teaches him obedience to the king to whom he has sworn fealty, and, under despotic oppression, patient waiting for the time of God’s righteous interference, 8:1–9. In the time of despotic domination, it occurs that the godless are buried with honour, while the righteous are driven away and forgotten, 8:10. God’s sentence is to be waited for, the more deliberately men give themselves to evil; God is just, but, in contradiction to His justice, it is with the righteous as with the wicked, and with the wicked as with the righteous, here on earth, 8:11–14. In view of these vanities, then, it is the most desirable thing for a man to eat and drink,

and enjoy himself, for that abides with him of his labour during the day of his life God has given him, 8:15. Restless labour here leads to nothing; all the efforts of man to comprehend the government of God are in vain, 8:16ff. For on closer consideration, it appears that the righteous also, with all their actions, are ruled by God, and generally that in nothing, not even in his affections, is man his own master; and, which is the worst thing of all, because it impels men to a wicked, mad abuse of life, to the righteous and the unrighteous, death at last comes alike; it is also the will of God towards man that he should spend this transient life in cheerful enjoyment and in vigorous activity before it sinks down into the night of Hades, 9:1–10. The fruits of one's labour are not to be gained by force, even the best ability warrants it not, an incomprehensible fate finally frustrates all, 9:11, 12.

There now follows, but in loose connection as to thought with the preceding, a section relating to wisdom and folly, and the discordances as to the estimate of both here below, along with diverse kinds of experiences and proverbs, 9:13–10:15. Only one proverb is out of harmony with the general theme, viz., 10:4, which commends resignation under the abullition of the wrath of the ruler. The following proverb, 10:5, 6, returns to the theme, but connecting itself with the preceding; the relation of rulers and the ruled to each other is kept principally in view by Koheleth.

With a proverb relating to kings and princes, good and bad, a new departure is made. Riotous living leads to slothfulness; and in contrast to this (but not without the intervention of a warning not to curse the king) follow exhortations to provident, and, at the same time, bold, and all-attempting activity; for the future is God's, and not to be reckoned on, 10:16–11:6. The light is sweet; and life, however long it may last, in view of the uncertain dark future, is worthy of being enjoyed, 11:7, 8. Thus Koheleth, at the end of this last series of proverbs, has again reached his *Ceterum censeo*; he formulates it, in an exhortation to a young man to enjoy his life—

but without forgetting God, to whom he owes it, and to whom he has to render an account— before grey-haired old age and death overtake him, into a full-toned *finale*, 11:9–12:7. The last word of the book, 12:8, is parallel with the first (Ecclesiastes 1:1): “O! vanity of vanities; All is vain!”

An epilogue, from the same hand as the book seals its truth: it is written as from the very soul of Solomon; it issues from the same fountain of wisdom. The reader must not lose himself in reading many books, for the sum of all knowledge that is of value to man is comprehended in one sentence: “Fear God, for He shall bring every work into judgment,” 12:9ff.

If we look back on this compendious reproduction of the contents and of the course of thought of the book, there appears everywhere the same view of the world, along with the same *ultimatum*; and as a pictorial *overture* opens the book, a pictorial *finale* closes it. But a gradual development, a progressive demonstration, is wanting, and so far the grouping together of the parts is not fully carried out; the connection of the thoughts if more frequently determined by that which is external and accidental, and not unfrequently an incongruous element is introduced into the connected course of kindred matters. The Solomonic stamp impressed on Ecclesiastes 1 and 2 begins afterwards to be effaced. The connection of the confessions that are made becomes aphoristic in Ecclesiastes 3; and the proverbs that are introduced do not appropriately fall into their place. The grounds, occasions, and views which determine the author to place confessions and moral proverbs in such an order after one another, for the most part withdraw themselves from observation. All attempts to show, in the whole, not only oneness of spirit, but also a genetic progress, an all-embracing plan, and an organic connection, have hitherto failed, and must fail.

In presenting this view of the spirit and plan of the Book of Koheleth, we have proceeded on the supposition that it is a post-exilian book,

that it is one of the most recent of the books of the O.T. It is true, indeed, that tradition regards it as Solomonic. According to *Bathra* 15a, the Hezekiah-Collegium [vid., Del. on *Proverbs*, p. 5] must have “written”—that is, collected into a written form—the Book of Isaiah, as also the Proverbs, the Song, and Koheleth. The Midrash regards it as Solomon’s, and as written in the evening of his days; while the Song was written in his youth, and the Proverbs when he was in middle age (*Jalkut*, under 1:1). If in *Rosch haschana* 21b it is said that Koheleth sought to be a second Moses, and to open the one of the fifty gates of knowledge which was unopened by Moses, but that this was denied to him, it is thereby assumed that he was the incomparable king, as Moses was the incomparable prophet. And Bloch, in his work on the origin and era of the Book of Koheleth (1872), is right in saying that all objections against the canonicity of the book leave the Solomonic authorship untouched. In the first Christian century, the Book of Koheleth was an *antilegomenon*. In the Introduction to the Song (p. 505) we have traced to their sources the two collections of legal authorities according to which the question of the canonicity of the Book of Koheleth is decided. The Synod of Jabne (Jamnia), about 90, decided the canonicity of the book against the school of Shammai. The reasons advanced by the latter against the canonicity are seen from *Shabbath* 30b, and *Megilla* 7a. From the former we learn that they regarded the words of the book, particularly 2:2 (where they must have read קְהוֹלֵל, “worthy to be praised”), cf. 7:3, and 8:15, cf. 22, as contradictory (cf. *Proverbs*, p. 31); and from the latter, that they hence did not recognise its inspiration. According to the *Midrash Koheleth*, under 11:9, they were stumbled also by the call to the enjoyment of pleasure, and to walk in the way of the desire of the heart, which appeared to stand in contradiction to the *Tôra* (cf. 11:9 with Num. 15:39), and to savour of heresy. But belief in the Solomonic authorship remained, notwithstanding, uninjured; and the admonitions to the fear of God, with reference to the future judgment, carried them over the

tendency of these observations. Already, at the time of Herod the Great (*Bathra* 4a), and afterwards, in the time of R. Gamaliel (*Shabbath* 30b), the book was cited as Holy Scripture; and when, instead of the book, the author was named, the formula of citation mentioned the name of Solomon; or the book was treated as equally Solomonic with Proverbs and the Song (*Erubin* 21b).

Even the doubtfulness of its contents could give rise to no manner of doubt as to the author. Down till the new era beginning with Christianity, and, in the main, even till the Reformation-century, no attention was paid to the inner and historico-literary marks which determine the time of the origin of a book. The Reformation first called into existence, along with the criticism of dogmatic traditions, at the same time also biblical criticism, which it raised to the place of an essential part of the science of Scripture. Luther, in his *Tischreden* (*Table-Talk*), is the first who explained the Preacher as one of the most recent books of the O.T.: he supposed that the book had not reached us in its completed form; that it was written by Sirach rather than by Solomon; and that it might be, “as a Talmud, collected from many books, perhaps from the library of King Ptolemy Euergetes, in Egypt.” These are only passing utterances, which have no scientific value; among his contemporaries, and till the middle of the century following, they found no acceptance. Hugo Grotius (1644) is the first who, like Luther, rejects its Solomonic authorship, erroneously supposing, with him, that it is a collection of diverse sayings of the wise, *περὶ τῆς εὐδαιμονίας*; but on one point he excellently hits the nail on the head: *Argumentum ejus rei habeo multa vocabula, quae non alibi quam in Daniele, Esdra et Chaldaeis interpretibus reperias*. This observation is warranted. If the Book of Koheleth were of old Solomonic origin, then there is no history of the Hebrew language. But Bernstein (*Quaestiones nonnullae Kohelethanae*, 1854) is right in saying that the history of the Hebrew language and literature is certainly divided into two epochs by the Babylonish

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exile, and that the Book of Koheleth bears the stamp of the post-exilian form of the language.

List of the Hapaxlegomena...

and of the Words and Forms in the Book of Koheleth belonging to a more recent Period of the Language

Aviyonah, 12:5; cf. *Ma'seroth* 4:6, *Berachoth* 36a.

Adam, opp. *ishah*, only at 7:28.

Izzen, Pi., only 12:9; not Talm.

אִי, 10:16; אִילִי, 4:10, instead of the older אִי; cf.

הִי, Ezek. 2:10; like אִי לִי, *Shemoth rabba*, c. 46; אִי

ע, "Alas, now bad!" Targ. Jer. 2, Lev. 26:29; ע' אִי,

"Alas for the meek!" *Berachoth 6b*; cf. *Sanhedrin* 11a.

Illu, "if," 6:6; Esth. 7:4, of אִי (אִי) and לִי (אִי), read אִי, Ezek. 3:6); Targ. Deut. 32:29 = Heb. לִי, common in the Mishna, e.g., *Maccoth* i. 10.

Asurim, only 7:26; cf. Judg. 15:14; *Seder olam rabba*, c. 25; cf. at 4:14.

Baale asupoth, only 12:11; cf. *Sanhedrin* 12a, *Jer. Sanhedrin* x. 1.

Bihel, only 5:1; 7:9; as *Hiph.* Esth. 6:14; cf. the transitive use of the *Pih.* Esth. 2:9, like Targ. *bahel* (= *ithbhel*) and *bhilu*, haste.

Bur, only 9:1; cf. the Talm. *al buriv*, altogether free from error and sin.

Bhuroth, only 11:9; 12:1; cf. *Mibhurav*, Num. 11:28.

Batel, 12:3; elsewhere only in the Chald. of Ezra; common in the Mishna, e.g., *Aboth* i. 5.

Beth olam (cf. Ezek. 26:20), 12:5; cf. *Tosifta Berachoth* iii., Targ. Isa. 14:18; 42:11.

Bchen, 8:10; Esth. 4:16; elsewhere only Targ., e.g., Isa. 16:5.

Baal hallashon, 10:11; cf. *baal bashar*, corpulent, *Berachoth* 13b; *ball hahhotam*, the large-nosed, carrying the nose high, *Taanith* 29a.

Gibber, only at 10:10, to exert oneself; elsewhere: to prevail.

Gummats, only 10:8, Syr., and in the Targ. of the Hag. (cf. Targ. Ps. 7:16).

Divrath, vid., under *ψ*.

Hoveh, 2:22; cf. *Shabbath* vi. 6, *Erubin* i. 10, *Jebamoth* xv. 2.

Holeloth, 1:17; 2:12; 7:25; 9:3; and *holeluth*, madness, only in the Book of Koheleth, 10:13.

Zichron, as primary form, 1:11; 2:16; vid., at Lev. 23:24, the connecting form.

Zman, 3:1; Neh. 2:6; Esth. 9:27, 31; elsewhere only in the bibl. Chald. with שָׁעָה, ὥρα, the usual Mishnic word for καιρός and χρόνος.

Holah (malum), aegrum, 5:12, 15; for this *nahhlah* is used in Isa. 17:11; Nah. 3:19; Jer. 10:19; 14:17.

Ben-hhorim (liber, in contrast to ěvěd, servus), 10:17; cf. חרות (freedom) on the coins of the Revolution of the Roman period; the usual Talm. word, even of possessions, such as *praedium liberum, aedes liberae* of the Roman law.

Hhuts min, only at 2:25 (Chald. *bar min*); frequent in the Mishna, e.g., *Middoth* 2:3.

Hhush, 2:25; in the Talm. and Syr. of sorrowful experiences; here (cf. Job 20:2), of the experiences derived from the senses, and experiences in general, as in the Rabb. the five senses are called חושים.

Hhayalim, 10:10; everywhere else, also in Aram., meaning war=hosts, except at Isa. 30:6, where it denotes *opes*, treasures.

Hhesron, 1:15, a common word in the post-bibl. language.

Hĕphĕts, 3:1, 17; 5:7; 8:6; cf. Isa. 58:3, 13. The primary unweakened meaning is found at 5:3; 12:1, 10. The weakening of the original meaning may have already early begun; in the Book of Koheleth it has advanced as far as in the language of the Mishna, e.g., *Mezia* iv. 6.

Hheshbon, 7:25, 27; 9:10. Plur. at 7:29, *machinationes*; only in 2 Chron. 26:15 in the sense of *machinae bellicae*; but as in Koheleth, so also in *Shabbath* 150a.

Hhathhhatim, only at 12:5.

Tahhanah, 12:4; cf. *thhon*, Lam. 5:3, which is foreign to the Mishna, but is used as

corresponding to the older *rehhaim*, in the same way as the vulgar Arab. *mathanat* and *taḥwan*, instead of the older *raḥa*.

פִּיחַ, *Pih.*, only 2:20. Talm. *Nithpa*. נִתְּפָא, to abandon hope, e.g., *Kelim* xxvi. 8.

Ygiyah, only 12:12; an abstract such as may be formed from all verbs, and particularly is more frequently formed in the more modern than in the more ancient language.

Yother, as a participial adj.: "that which remains" (cf. 1 Sam. 15:15) = "gain," 6:11; 7:11; or "superiority," 6:8. As an adv.: "more" (cf. Esth. 6:6), "particularly," 2:15; 7:16; 12:9; 12:12. In the Talm. Heb., used in the sense of "remaining over" (*Kiddushin* 24b); and as an adv., in the sense of *plus* or *magis* (e.g., *Chullin* 57b).

Yaphēh, 3:11; 5:17, as e.g., *Jer. Pesachim* ix. 9 (*b. Pesachim* 99a): "Silence is well-becoming (יִפְה) the wise; how much more fools!"

Yithron, 2:13 (twice), 7:12 (synon. *mothar*, 3:1); more frequently "real gain," 1:3; 2:11; 3:9; 5:15; 10:10; "superiority and gain," 5:8. Peculiar (= Aram. *yuthran*) to the Book of Koheleth, and in Rabb., whence it is derived.

Kēhhad, 11:6, Isa. 65:25, Chron., Ezra, Nehem., the Chald. *kahhada*; Syr. *okchado*; frequent in the Mish., e.g., *Bechoroth* vii. 4; *Kilajim* i. 9.

Kvar, adv., 1:10; 2:12, 16; 3:15; 4:2; 6:10; 9:6, 7; common in the Mishna, e.g., *Erubin* iv. 2, *Nedarim*, v. 5; in Aram., more frequently in the sense of "perhaps" than of "formerly."

Kasher, 11:6, Esth. 8:5; in the Mishna, the word commonly used of that which is legally admissible; *Hiph.* verbal noun, *hachsēr*, only at 10:10; in the Mishna, of arranging according to order; in the superscription of the tract, *macshirin*, of making susceptible of uncleanness. Cf. e.g., *Menachoth* 48b. The word is generally pointed הִכְשֵׁר, but more correctly הִכְשֵׁר.

Kishron, only at 2:21; 4:4; 5:10; not found in the Mishna.

Lvad, tantummodo, 7:29; similar, but not quite the same, at Isa. 26:13.

Lāhäg, exclusively 12:12; not Talm.; from the verb *lāhäg* (R. לה), to long eagerly for; Syr.

lahgoz, vapour (of breathing, *exhalare*); cogn. *higgāyon* (*hēgēh*), according to which it is explained in *Jer. Sanhedrin* x. 1 and elsewhere.

Lavah, 8:15, as in the Mishna: to conduct a guest, to accompany a traveller; whence the proverb: לְוֹאֵי לְוֹנִיהַ, he who gives a convoy to the dead, to him it will be given, *Kethuboth* 72a; cf. שֵׁם לְוִי, a standing surname, *Nega'im* xiv. 6.

Mdinah, 5:7, and in no book besides before the Exile.

Madda', 10:20; elsewhere only in the Chron. and Dan.; Targ. מַדְדָּע.

Mleah, grävada, only 11:5, as in the Mishna, e.g., *Jebamoth* xvi. 1.

Mālāk, 5:5; cf. Mal. 2:7, in the sense of the later *shluahh shama'im*, delegated of God.

Miskēn, only 4:13; 9:15, 16; but cf. *miskenuth*. Deut. 8:9, and *msukan*, Isa. 40:20.

Masmroth, 12:11 = מַסְרָה, *Jer.* 10:4; cf. Isa. 41:7; 1 Chron. 22:3; 2 Chron. 3:9.

Mattim, 5:1; a plur. only at Ps. 109:8.

Mikrēh, more frequently in the Book of Koheleth than in any other book; and at 3:19, used as explained in the Comm.

Mērots, exclusively 9:11 (elsewhere *mrutsah*).

Māshāk, 2:3; cf. *Chagiga* 14a, *Sifri* 135b, ed. Friedmann.

Mishlahhath, 8:8 (cf. Ps. 78:49).

Nāgā', Hiph. with *ēl*, 8:14, as at Esth. 9:26; Aram. מְטָא, e.g., *Targ. Jer.* to Ex. 33:13.

Nāhäg, 2:3, as in the Mishna, e.g., *Aboda Zara* iii. 4, 54b; cf. Targ. Koh. x. 4.

Nahhath, 6:5, as in the common phrase *nahhath ruahh*; cf. נוֹחַ לוֹ וְגוֹ, "It were better for him," etc., *Jer. Berachoth* 1:2. This נוֹחַ לוֹ, for Koheleth's נֹחַ לוֹ, is frequent.

Nātā', 12:11 (for which, Isa. 22:23, *tākā'*; Mishna, קָבַע; *Jer. Sanhedrin* x. 1), as Dan. 11:45.

סְבַל, *Hithpa.*, only at 12:5.

Sof, 3:11; 7:2; 12:13; Joel 2:20; 2 Chron. 20:16, the more modern word which later displaced the word *ahharith*, 7:8; 10:13 (cf. *Berachoth* i. 1), but which is not exactly equivalent to it; for *sof dāvār*, 12:13, which has the meaning of *summa summarum*, *ahharith davar*, would be inapplicable.

Sāchāl, 2:19; 7:17; 10:3 (twice), 14; Jer. 4:22; 5:21; in the Book of Koheleth, the synonym of the yet more frequently used כָּסִיל, the Targ. word.

Sēchēl, exclusively 10:6.

Sichluth, 1:17 (here with ש), 2:3, 12, 13; 7:25; 10:1, 13 (synon. *ksiluth*, Prov. 9:13).

סכנן, Niph. 10:9; cf. *Berachoth* i. 3. The Targ.-

Talm. *Ithpa*. אִתְּפָן, "to be in danger,"

corresponds with the Niph.

'*Avād*, exclusively 9:1, like the Syr. '*bad*, Jewish-Aram. עוֹבֵד.

'*Adēn* (formed of עֲדָהָן), *adhuc*, with אָ, *nondum*, 4:3.

'*Adēnāh* (of *ād-hēnnāh*), *adhuc*, 4:2; Mishnic עֲדָן, e.g., *Nedarim* xi. 10.

עוֹת, *Hithpa*. only at 12:3.

'*Amād*, 2:9; 8:3, as Jer. 48:11; Ps. 102:27.

Ummāth, vid., under ש.

'*Anāh*, 5:19; 10:19.

Inyān, exclusively in the Book of Koheleth, 1:13; 2:23, 26; 3:10; 4:8; 5:2, 13; 8:16, one of the most extensive words of the post-bibl. Heb.; first, of the object of employment, e.g., *Kiddushin* 6a, "occupied with this object;" also Aram. *Bathra* 114b.

'*Atsāltāyim*, double impurity, i.e., where the one hand is as impure as the other, only at 10:18.

'*Asāh*, with *lēhhēm*, 10:19, as at Dan. 5:1: *āvād lēhhēm*; in the N.T. Mark 6:21, ποιεῖν δεῖπνον. Otherwise Ezek. 4:15, where *asah lehhem* is used of preparing food. With the obj. of the time of life, 6:12; cf. Acts 15:33. With *tov*, not only "to do good," 7:20, but also "to act well," "to spend a pleasant life," 3:12.

Pardēs (Song 4:13; Neh. 2:8), plur. 2:5, flower-gardens, parks, as *Mezī'a* 103a, פרדיסי.

Pēshēr, *explicatio*, 8:1, elsewhere only in the Chald. parts of Dan. Ara. for the older פִּתְרוֹן and פּוֹשֶׁר, of which the Targ. word is פִּשֶׁר and פּוֹשֶׁר, Talm. פִּשְׁרָה, "adjustment of a controverted matter."

Pithgam in the Chald. parts of Ezra and Daniel, but only as a Hebraised Persian word in 8:11, Esth. 1:20; common in the Targ. and in the Syr., but not in the Talm.

Kilkāl (*Kālāl*, Ezek. 1:7; Dan. 10:6), exclusively at 10:10 (on the contrary, at Ezek. 21:26, it means "to agitate").

Ruth, only 5:10; *Keri*, for which *Chethîb* רֵאִית, which may be read רֵאִית, רֵאִית (cf. Ezek. 28:17), or רֵאִית; the latter two of these forms are common in the Mishna, and have there their special meanings proceeding from the fundamental idea of seeing.

רֵדָף, *Niph. part.*, only 3:15.

Ruth, besides the Chald. parts of Ezra, occurs only seven times in the Book of Koheleth, 1:14; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 6; 6:9.

Rayon, 1:17; 2:22; 3:16; elsewhere only in the Chald. parts of Daniel and in the Targ.

ש, this in and of itself is in no respect modern, but, as the Babyl.-Assyr. *sa*, the Phoen. אש, shows, is the relative (originally demonstrative) belonging to the oldest period of the language, which in the Mishna has altogether supplanted the אָשֶׁר of the older Heb. book-language. It is used in the Book of Koheleth quite in the same way as in the Mishna, but thus, that it stands first on the same line (rank) with אָשֶׁר, and makes it doubtful whether this or that which occurs more frequently in the book (ש, according to Herzfeld, 68 times, and אָשֶׁר 89 times) has the predominance (cf. e.g., 1:13f., 8:14; 10:14, where both are used *promiscue*). The use of *asher* as a relative pronoun and relative

conjunction is not different from the use of this in the older literature: *'ad asher lo*, in the sense of "before," 12:1, 2, 6, Mishnic שלא עד, is only a natural turn to the fundamental meaning "till that not" (2 Sam. 17:13; 1 Kings 17:17); and *mibli asher lo = nisi quod non*, 3:11 (cf. *bilti*, Dan. 11:18), for which the Mishnic שלא ובלבד (e.g., *Erubin* i. 10), is only accidentally not further demonstrable. But how far the use of *ש* has extended, will be seen by the following survey, from which we exclude *ש*, standing alone as a relative pronoun or relative conjunction:—*Beshekvar*, 2:16. *Bshel asher, eo quod*, 8:17 (cf. *Jonah* 1:7, 8, 12), corresponding to the Talm. בְּדִיל. *Kol ש*, 2:7, 9, and 11:8. *Kol-ummah ש*, 5:15, corresponding to the Chald. *kol-kavel* כַּד, Dan. 2:40, etc. *ש*, 5:14; 12:7, and in the sense of *quum*, 9:12; 10:3. *mah -ש*, 1:9; 3:15; 6:10; 7:24; 8:7; 10:14; *meh ש*, 3:22. *מש*, 5:4. *'Al-divrath shēllo*, 7:14 (cf. 3:18; 8:2). *Shēgam*, 2:15; 8:14. *Shiddah* and plur. *Shiddoth*, exclusively 2:8. *Shaharuth*, exclusively 11:10, to be understood after *Nedarim* 3:8, "the black-headed," opposed to בעלי השיבות, "the grey-haired."

שכח, *Hithpa.*, only 8:10, the usual word in the Talm., e.g., *Sanhedrin* 13b.

Shalat, 2:19; 8:9, besides only in *Nehemiah* and *Esther* (cf. *Bechoroth*, 7:6, etc.); *Hiph.* 5:18; 6:2, elsewhere only Ps. 119:133.

Shilton, 8:4, 8, nowhere else in O.T. Heb., but in the Mishna, e.g., *Kiddushin* iii. 6.

Shallith, with *ב*, only 8:8 (cf. *Ezek.* 16:30); on the contrary, 7:19; 10:5, as *Gen.* 42:6, in the political signification of a ruler.

שמם, *Hithpo.*, 7:16.

Shiph'luth, 10:18, elsewhere only *Targ. Jer.* 49:24.

Shithi, only 10:17.

Tahath hashshēmēsh, 1:3, agreeing with the Greek ὑφ' ἡλίου, or ὑπὸ τὸν ἡλίον.

Takkiph, in the O.T. Heb. only 6:10; elsewhere in the Chald., *Targ.*, Talm.

Takan, 1:15; *Pih.* 7:13; 12:9, a Mishna-word used in the *Pih.* and *Hiph.*, whence *tikkun* ("putting right," e.g., in the text-hist. *terminus technicus*, *tikkun sopherim*, and "arrangement," e.g., *Gittin* iv. 2, "the ordering of the world") and *tikkānāh* (e.g., *Gittin* iv. 6, "welfare," frequently in the sense of "direction," "arrangement").

This survey of the forms peculiar to the Book of *Koheleth*, and only found in the most recent books of the O.T., partly only in the Chaldee portions of these, and in general use in the Aramaic, places it beyond all doubt that in this book we have a product of the post-exilic period, and, at the earliest, of the time of *Ezra-Nehemiah*. All that *Wagenmann* (*Comm.* 1856), *von Essen* (*Der Predeger Salomo's*, 1856), *Böhl* (*De Aramaismis libri Coheleth*, 1860), *Hahn* (*Comm.* 1860), *Reusch* (*Tübinger Quartalschr.* 1860), *Warminski* (*Verfasser u. Abfassungszeit des B. Koheleth*, 1867), *Prof. Taylor Lewis* (in the American ed. of *Lange's Bibelwerk*, 1869), *Schäfer* (*Neue Untersuchungen ü d. B. Koheleth*, 1870), *Vegni* (*L'Ecclesiaste secondo il testo Ebraico*, Florenz 1871) have advanced to the contrary, rests on grounds that are altogether untenable. If we possessed the original work of *Sirach*, we should then see more distinctly than from fragments that the form of the language found in *Koheleth*, although older, is yet one that does not lie much further back; it is connected, yet loosely, with the old language, but at the same time it is in full accord with that new Heb. which we meet with in the Mishna and the Barajtha-Literature, which groups itself around it. To the modern aspects of the Heb. language the following forms belong:—

1. Verbs *Lamed-Aleph*, which from the first interchange their forms with those of verbs *Lamed-He*, are regularly treated in certain forms of inflexion in the Mishna as verbs *Lamed-He*; e.g., *יִצְטָה* is not used, but *יִצְתָה*. This interchange of forms found in the later language reveals itself here in *יִצָּה*, 10:5, used instead of *יִצָּה*; and if, according to the Masora, *אִזְחָה* (*אִזְחָה*) is to be always written like *אִזְחָה* at 7:26 (except 7:26b), the traditional text herein

discloses a full and accurate knowledge of the linguistic character of the book. The Aram. ישנא for ישנה, at 8:1, is not thus to be accounted for.

2. The richness of the old language in mood-forms is here disappearing. The optative of the first person (the cohortative) is only represented by אֶחְבֶּמָה, 7:23. the form of the subjunctive (jussive) is found in the prohibitive clauses, such as 7:16, 17, 18; 10:4; but elsewhere the only certain examples found are שִׁילֵךְ, *quod auferat secum*, 5:14, and וַיִּגִּיד, 10:10.

In 12:7, וַיִּשָׁב may also be read, although וַיִּשָׁב, under the influence of “ere ever” (Ecclesiastes 12:6), is also admissible. On the contrary, וַיְהִי, 11:3, is indic. after the Mishn. וַיְהִי, and so also is וַיִּנְאֵץ (derived from נִצַּץ, not נִיץ, 12:5. Yet more characteristic, however, is the circumstance that the historic tense, the so-called *fut. consecutivum*, which has wholly disappeared from the Mishna-language, also here, notwithstanding the occasions for its frequent use, occurs only three times, twice in the unabbreviated form, 4:1, 7, and once in the form lengthened by the intentional *ah*, 1:17, which before its disappearance was in frequent use. It probably belonged more to the written than to the spoken language of the people (cf. the Song. 6:9b).

3. The complexion of the language peculiar to the Book of Koheleth is distinguished also by this, that the designation of the person already contained in the verbal form is yet particularly expressed, and without there being a contrast occasioning this emphasis, by the personal pronoun being added to and placed after it, e.g., 1:16; 2:1, 11, 12, 13, 15, 18, 20; 3:17, 18; 4:1, 4, 7; 5:17; 7:25; 8:15; 9:15. Among the more ancient authors, Hosea has the same peculiarity (cf. the Song 5:5); but there the personal pronoun stands always before the verb, e.g., 8:13; 12:11. The same thing is found in Ps. 39:11; 82:6, etc. The inverse order of the words is found only at 2:14, after the scheme of Job 1:15, as also 2:15 follows the scheme of Gen. 24:27. Mishna-forms of expressions such as

מוֹדְרֵי, *Nedarim* i. 1, מְקַבְּלֵי, *Jebamoth* xvi. 7, are not homogeneous with that manner of subordinating the personal pronoun (cf. 7:26; 4:2). Thus we have here before us a separation of the subject and the predicate, instead of which, in the language of the Mishna, the form אֲנִי הִיְתִי אִמָּר (אני) and the like (e.g., *Berachoth* i. 5) is used, which found for itself a place in the language of Koheleth, in so far as this book delights in the use of the participle to an extent scarcely met with in any other book of Scripture (vid., e.g., 1:6; 8:12; 10:19).

4. The use of the demonstrative pronoun הַזֶּה bears also a Mishnic stamp. We lay no particular stress on the fact that the author uses it, as regularly as the Mishna, always without the article; but it is characteristic that he always, where he does not make use of the masculine form in a neuter sense (as 7:10, 18, 29; 8:9; 9:1; 11:6, keeping out of view cases determined by attraction), employs no other feminine form than הַזֶּה, Mishnic הַזֶּה, in this sense, 2:2; 5:15, 18; 7:23; 9:13. In other respects also the use of the pronouns approaches the Mishna language. In the use of the pronoun also in 1:10 and 5:18 there is an approach to the Mishnic הַזֶּה, *nic est*, and הַזֶּה, *haec est*. And the use of הַזֶּה and הַזֶּה for the personal verb reaches in 3:18; 9:4 (vid., Comm.), the extreme.

The enumeration of linguistic peculiarities betokening a late origin is not yet exhausted; we shall meet with many such in the course of the Exposition. Not only the language, however, but also the style and the artistic form of the book, show that it is the most recent product of the Bibl. *Chokma* literature, and belongs to a degenerated period of art. From the fact that the so-called metrical accent system of the three books—Psalms, Job, and Proverbs—is not used in Ecclesiastes, it does not follow that it is not a poetical book in the fullest sense of the word; for the Song and Lamentations, these masterpieces of the שִׁיר and קִינָה, the Minne-song and the Elegy, are also excluded from that more elevated, more richly expressive, and

more melodious form of discourse, perhaps to preserve the spiritual character of the one, and not to weaken the elegiac character of the other, to which a certain melancholy monotone *andante* is suitable. So also, to apply that system of accentuation to the Book of Koheleth was not at all possible, for the symmetrical stichs to which it is appropriate is for the most part wanting in Koheleth, which is almost wholly written in eloquent prose: unfolding its instruction in the form of sentences without symmetrical stichs.—It is, so to speak, a philosophical treatise in which “I saw,” and the like, as the expression of the result of experience; “I said,” as the expression of reflection on what was observed; “I perceived,” as the expression of knowledge obtained as a conclusion from a process of reasoning; and “this also,” as the expression of the result,—repeat themselves nearly terminologically. The reasoning tone prevails, and where the writer passes into gnomic poetry he enters into it suddenly, e.g., 5:9*b*, or holds himself ready to leave it quickly again, e.g., 5:12; 7:13*f*. Always, indeed, where the Mashal note is struck, the discourse begins to form itself into members arranged in order; and then the author sometimes rises in language, and in the order of his words, into the true classic form of the proverb set forth in parallel members, e.g., 7:7, 9; 9:8. The symmetry of the members is faultless, 5:5; 8:8; 9:11; but in other places, as 5:1; 7:26; 11:9, it fails, and in the long run the book, altogether peculiar in its stylistic and artistic character, cannot conceal its late origin: in the elevated classical style there quickly again intermingles that which is peculiar to the author, as representing the age in which he lived, e.g., 7:19; 10:2*f*, 6, 8–10, 16*f*, 11:3, 6. That in the age of the Mishna they knew how to imitate classic masterpieces, is seen from the beautiful enigma, in the form of a heptastich, by Bar-Kappara, *jer. Moëd katan* iii. 1, and the elegy, in the form of a hexastich on the death of R. Abina, by Kar-Kippuk, *b. Moëd katan* 25*b*. One would thus be in error if he regarded such occasional classical pieces in the Book of Koheleth as borrowed. The book, however

fragmentary it may seem to be on a superficial examination, is yet the product of one author. In its oratorical ground-form, and in the proverbs introduced into it, it is a side-piece to Prov. 1–9. We have shown, in the introduction to the Book of Proverbs, that in these proverbial discourses which form the introduction to the older Solomonic Book of Proverbs, which was probably published in the time of Jehoshaphat, the Mashal appears already rhetorically decomposed. This decomposition is much further advanced in the Book of Ecclesiastes. To it is applicable in a higher degree what is there (*Proverbs*, p. 10*f*.) said of Prov. 1–9. The distich is represented in the integral, 7:13, synonymous, 11:4, and synthetic, 7:1, and also, though rarely, in the antithetic form, 7:4; but of the emblematic form there is only one example, 10:1. The author never attempted the beautiful numerical and priamel forms; the proverbial form also, beyond the limits of the distich, loses the firmness of its outline. The tetrastich, 10:20, is, however, a beautiful exception to this. But splendour of form would not be appropriate to such a sombre work as this is. Its external form is truly in keeping with its spirit. In the checkered and yet uniform manner of the book is reflected the image of the author, who tried everything and yet was satisfied with nothing; who hastened from one thing to another because nothing was able to captivate him. His style is like the view he takes of the world, which in its course turned to him only its dark side. He holds fast to the fear of God, and hopes in a final judgment; but his sceptical world-sorrow remains unmitigated, and his forced eudaemonism remains without the right consecration: these two stars do not turn the night into day; the significance of the book, with reference to the history of redemption, consists in the actual proof that humanity, in order to its being set free from its unhappiness, needs to be illuminated by the sun of a new revelation. But although the manner of the author’s representation is the reflection of his own inner relation to the things represented, yet here and there he makes his representation, not without

consciousness and art, the picture of his own manner of thought. Thus, e.g., the drawling tautologies in 8:14; 9:9, certainly do not escape from him against his will. And as was rightly remarked under Gen. 2:1–3, that the discourse there is extended, and forms itself into a picture of rest after the work of the creation, so Koheleth, in 1:4–11 and 12:2–7, shows himself a master of eloquence; for in the former passage he imitates in his style the everlasting unity of the course of the world, and in the latter he paints the exhausted and finally shattered life of man.

Not only, however, by the character of its thought and language and manner of representation, but also by other characteristic features, the book openly acknowledges that it was not written by Solomon himself, but by a Jewish thinker of a much later age, who sought to conceive of himself as in Solomon's position, and clothed his own life-experiences in the confessions of Solomon. The very title of the book does not leave us in doubt as to this. It is in these words: *The words of Koheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem.* The apposition, "king in Jerusalem," appertains, like e.g., 2 Chron. 35:3, to the name of the speaker who is introduced; for nothing is here said as to the place in life held by David, but to that held by him who is thus figuratively named. The indeterminate "king" of itself would be untenable, as at Prov. 31:1. As there the words "king of Massa" are to be taken together, so here "king" is determined by "in Jerusalem" added to it, so far that it is said what kind of king Koheleth was. That by this name Solomon is meant, follows, apart from 1:12ff., from this, that David had only one son who was king, viz., Solomon. The opinion of Krochmal, that a later David, perhaps a governor of Jerusalem during the Persian domination, is meant, is one of the many superfluities of this learned author. Koheleth is Solomon, but he who calls him "king in Jerusalem" is not Solomon himself. Solomon is called "king of Israel," e.g., 2 Kings 23:13; and as in 1:12 he names himself "king over Israel," so, Neh. 13:26, he is called "king of Israel," and along with this designation, "king over all

Israel;" but the title, "king in Jerusalem," nowhere else occurs. We read that Solomon "reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel," 1 Kings 11:42, cf. 14:21; the title, "king in Jerusalem," is quite peculiar to the title of the book before us. Eichhorn supposes that it corresponds to the time subsequent to the division of the kingdom, when there were two different royal residences; but against this view Bloch rightly remarks, that the contrasted "in Samaria" occurs only very rarely (as 2 Kings 14:23). We think that in this expression, "king in Jerusalem," there is revealed a time in which Israel had ceased to be an independent kingdom, in which Jerusalem was no more a royal city.

That the book was not composed immediately by Solomon, is indicated by the circumstance that he is not called Solomon, nor Jedidiah (2 Sam. 12:25), but is designated by a hitherto unheard of name, which, by its form, shows that it belongs, at earliest, to the Ezra-Nehemiah age, in which it was coined. We consider the name, first, without taking into account its feminine termination. In the Arab., *ḡahal* (cogn. *ḡaḡal*) signifies to be dry, hard, from the dryness and leather-like toughness of the skin of an old man; and, accordingly, Dindorf (*Quomodo nomen Coheleth Salomoni tribuatur*, (1791) and others understand *Koheleth* of an old man whose life is worn out; Coccejus and Schultens, with those of their school, understand it of the penitent who is dead to the world. But both views are opposed by this, that the form קהל (קהל, cf. בְּהַל) would be more appropriate; but above all by this, that קהל, in this meaning *aridum, marcidum esse*, is a verbal stem altogether foreign to the northern Semitic. The verb קהל signifies, in the Heb., Aram., and Assyr., to call (cf. the Syr. *kahlonitho*, a quarrelsome woman), and particularly to call together; whence קהל, of the same Sanscrit-Semit. root as the words ἐκ-κλη-σία and *con-cil-ium*, —an extension of the root קל, which, on another side, is extended in the Arab. *ḡalah*, Aethiop. *kalḡa*, to cry. This derivation of the name Koheleth shows that it

cannot mean συναθροιστής (Grotius, not Aquila), in the sense of *collector sententiarum*; the Arab. translation *alajam'at* (also van Dyk) is faultless, because *jam'* can signify, to collect men as well as things together; but לָקַח is not used in that sense of *in unum redigere*. In close correspondence with the Heb. word, the LXX translates, ὁ ἐκκλησιαστής; and the Graec. Venet., ἡ ἐκκλησιάστρια (Ecclesiastes 12:9: ἡ ἐκκλησιάζουσα). But in the nearest signification, “the collector,” this would not be a significant name for the king represented as speaking in this book. In Solomon’s reign there occurred an epoch-making assembly in Jerusalem, 1 Kings 8:1, 2 Chron. 5:2—viz for the purpose of consecrating the temple. The O.T. does not afford any other historical reference for the name; for although, in Prov. 5:14; 26:26, בְּקִהָלָא signifies *coram populo, publice*, yet it does not occur directly of the public appearance of Wisdom; the expressions for this are different, 1:20f., 8:1–4; 9:3, though cognate. But on that great day of the consecration of the temple, Solomon not only called the people together, but he also preached to them,—he preached indirectly, for he consecrated the temple by prayer; and directly, for he blessed the people, and exhorted them to faithfulness, 1 Kings 8:55–61. Thus Solomon appears not only as the assembler, but also as the preacher to those who were assembled; and in this sense of a teacher of the people (cf. 12:9), *Koheleth* is an appropriate name of the king who was famed for his wisdom and for his cultivation of the popular Mashal. It is known that in proper names the *Kal* is frequently used in the sense of the *Hiph*. thus *Koheleth* is not immediately what it may be etymologically = קָרָא, caller, proclaimer; but is = מְקַהֵל, from קָהַל, to assemble, and to speak to the assembly, *contionari*; according to which Jerome, under 1:1, rightly explains: ἐκκλησιαστής, *Graeco sermone appellatur qui coetum, id est ecclesiam congregat, quem nos nuncupare possumus contionatorem, eo quod loquatur ad populum et ejus sermo non specialiter ad unum, sed ad universos generaliter dirigatur*. The

interpretation: assembly = academy or *collectivum*, which Döderlein (*Salomon’s Prediger u. Hoheslied*, 1784) and Kaiser (*Koheleth, Das Collectivum der Davidischen Könige in Jerusalem*, 1823), published, lightly disregards the form of the *n. agentis*; and Spohn’s (*Der Prediger Salomo*, 1785) “O vanity of vanities, said the philosopher,” itself belongs to the vanities.

Knobel in his Comm. (1836) has spoken excellently regarding the feminine form of the name; but when, at the close, he says: “Thus *Koheleth* properly signifies preaching, the office and business of the public speaker, but is then = לְקַהֵל, מְקַהֵל, public speaker before an assembly,” he also, in an arbitrary manner, interchanges the *n. agentis* with the *n. actionis*. His remark, that “the rule that *concreta*, if they have a fem. termination, become *abstracta*, must also hold for *participia*,” is a statement that cannot be confirmed. As חֲתָמָה signifies that which impresses (a seal), and בְּתָרָה that which twines about (chapter), so also חֲבָרָה, Ex. 26:10, that which joins together (the coupling); one can translate such fem. particip., when used as substantives, as *abstracta*, e.g., כְּלָה (from כָּלָה), destruction, utter ruin; but they are *abstracta* in themselves as little as the *neutra* in τὸ ταυτόν, which may be translated by “identity,” or in *immensum altitudinis*, by immensity (in height). Also Arab names of men with fem. forms are *concreta*. To the participial form *Koheleth* correspond, for the most part, such names as (Arab.) *rawiyaton*, narrator of tradition (fem. of *rawyn*); but essentially cogn. also are such words as *'allamat*, greatly learned man; also *khalyfaton*, which is by no means an inf. noun, like the Heb. חֲלִיפָה, but is the fem. of the verbal adj. *khalyf*, successor, representative. The Arabic grammarians say that the fem. termination gives to the idea, if possible, a collective signification, e.g., *jarrar*, the puller, i.e., the drawer of a ship (*Helciaricus*), and *jarrarat*, the multitude drawing, the company (*taife*) drawing the boat up the stream; or it also serves “as an exhaustive designation of the

properties of the genus;" so that, e.g., *'allamat* means one who unites in himself that which is peculiar to the very learned, and represents in his own person a plurality of very learned men. They also say that the fem. termination serves in such cases to strengthen the idea. But how can this strengthening result from a change in the gender? Without doubt the fem. in such cases discharges the function of a neut.; and since *doctissimus* is heightened to *doctissimum*, it is thereby implied that such an one is a pattern of a learned man,—the reality of the idea, or the realized ideal of such an one.

From these Arab. analogues respecting the import of the name *Koheleth*, it follows that the fem. is not to be referred to *Chokma* in such a way as that Solomon might be thereby designated as the representative, and, as it were, the incarnation of wisdom (Ewald, Hitzig, etc.),—an idea which the book by no means supports; for it the author had designed, in conformity with that signification of the name, to let Wisdom herself speak through Solomon's mouth, he would have let him speak as the author of Prov. 1–9 speaks when he addresses the reader by the title, "my son," he would not have put expressions in his mouth such as 1:16–18; 7:23f. One should not appeal to 7:27; for there, where the subject is the dangers of the love of women, *Koheleth*, in the sense of Wisdom preaching, is as little appropriate as elsewhere; just here as the masculine gender of the speaker to be accented, and *Amrah Koheleth* is thus an incorrect reading for *Amar Hakkohleth* (Ecclesiastes 12:8). The name *Koheleth*, without *Chokma* being supplied, is a man's name, of such recent formation as *Sophereth*, Neh. 7:5, for which Ezra 2:55, *Hassophereth*; cf. also Ezra 2:57, פְּדָה הֵן. The Mishna goes yet further in the coining of such names for men *generis fem.* As it generally prefers to use the *part. passivi* in an active sense, e.g., סָבוּר, thinking; רָכֹב, riding; שָׁתוּי, having drunk; so also it forms fem. plurals with a masculine signification,—as *Hadruchoth*, press-treaders, *Terumoth* iii. 4; *Hammshuhhoth*, surveyors, *Erubin* iv. 11; *Halluzoth*, speakers in

a foreign tongue, *Megilla* ii. 1, —and construes these with *mas.* predicates. In these there can be nowhere anything said of a heightening of the idea effected by the transition to *fem.* forms. But the persons acting, although they are men, are thought of as *neut.*; and they appear, separated from the determination of their gender, as the representatives of the activity spoken of. According to this, *Koheleth* is, without regard to the gender, a preaching person. The Book of *Koheleth* thus bears, in its second word, as on its very forehead, the stamp of the Ezra-Nehemiah era to which it belongs.

As the woman of Endor, when she raised Samuel out of Hades at the request of Saul, sees "gods ascending out of the earth" (1 Sam. 28:13), so it is not the veritable Solomon who speaks in this book, but his spirit, for which this *neut.* name *Koheleth* is appropriate. When he says, 1:12, "I, *Koheleth*, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem," he recognises himself not as the reigning monarch, but as having been king. The Talmudic *Aggada* has joined to this הייתי, the fable that Solomon was compelled to descend from the throne on account of his transgression of the law, which was then occupied by an angel in his stead, but externally bearing his likeness; and that he now went about begging, saying: "I, *Koheleth*, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem;" but that they struck him with a stick, and set before him a plate of groats; for they said to him: "How canst thou speak thus? There the king sits in his palace on this throne." In this fiction there is at least grammatical intelligence. For it is a vain delusion for one to persuade himself that Solomon in his advanced age could say, with reference to the period of his life as ruler, "I have been king," *fui rex*—he was certainly always so during the forty years of his reign, and on to the last moment of his life. Or can the words הייתי מלך mean *sum rex*? The case is as follows: הייתי is never the expression of the abstract present, or of existence without regard to time; "I am king" is expressed in this sense by the substantival clause *ani mēlēk*. In every case

where one can translate הייתי by "I am," e.g., Ps. 88:5, the present being is thought of as the result of an historical past (*sum = factus sum*). But at the most, הייתי, when it looks from the present back upon the past, out of which it arose, signifies "I have become," Gen. 32:11; Ps. 30:8; Jer. 20:7; or when it looks back into the past as such, "I have been," Josh. 1:5; Judg. 12:2; Ps. 37:25. Whether this word, in the former sense, corresponds to the Greek perfect, and in the latter to the Greek aorist, is determined only by the situation and connection. Thus in Ex. 2:22 it signifies, "I have become a stranger" (γέγονα = εἰμί); while, on the other hand, in Deut. 23:8, "thou hast been a stranger" (ἐγένου, *fuisti*). That where the future is spoken of, הייתי can, by virtue of the *consecutio temporum*, also acquire the meaning of "I shall become, I shall be," e.g., 1 Kings 1:21, cf. 1 Chron. 19:12, is of no importance to us here. In the more modern language the more delicate syntax, as well as that idea of "becoming," primarily inherent in the verb היה, is disappearing, and הייתי signifies either the past purely, "I have been," Neh. 13:6, or, though not so frequently, the past along with the present, "I was," e.g., Neh. 1:11. Accordingly, Solomon while still living would be able to say מלך הייתי only in the sense of "I have become (and still am) king;" but that does not accord with the following retrospective perfects. This also does not harmonize with the more modern linguistic usage which is followed by *Koheleth*, e.g., 1:9, מֵה־שׁ, *id quod fuit*; 1:10, כבד היה, *pridem fuit*. In conformity with this, the LXX translates הייתי by ἐγενόμην, and the Graec. Venet. by ὑπῆρξα. But "I have been king," Solomon, yet living, cannot say, only *Salomo redivivus* here introduced, as the preacher can use such an expression.

The epilogue, 12:9ff., also furnishes an argument in favour of the late composition of this book, on the supposition that it is an appendix, not by another hand, but by the author himself. But that it is from the author's own hand, and does not, as Grätz supposes,

belong to the period in which the school of Hillel had established the canonicity of the book, follows from this, that it is composed in a style of Hebrew approaching that used in the Mishna, yet of an earlier date than the Mishna; for in the Talmuds it is, clause by clause, a subject of uncertain interpretation,—the language used is plainly, for the Talmudic authorities, one that is antiquated, the expressions of which, because not immediately and unambiguously clear, need, in order to their explanation, to be translated into the language then in use. The author of the book makes it thus manifest that here in the epilogue, as in the book itself, Solomon is intentionally called *Koheleth*; and that the manner of expression, as well as of the formation of the sentences in this epilogue, can in all particulars be supported from the book itself. In "fear God," 12:13a, the saying in 5:6, which is similarly formed, is repeated; and "this is the whole of man," 12:13b, a thought written as it were more in cipher than *in extenso*, is in the same style as 6:10. The word יוֹתֵר ("moreover"), frequently used by the author and בעל, used in the formation of attributive names, 10:11, 20; 5:10, 12; 8:8, we meet with also here. And as at 12:9, 10, 11 a third idea connected ἀσυνδέτως follows two ideas connected by *vav*, so also at 1:7; 6:5. But if this epilogue is the product of the author's own hand, then, in meaning and aim, it presents itself as its sequel. The author says that the *Koheleth* who appears in this book as "wise" is the same who composed the beautiful people's-book *Mishle*; that he sought out not only words of a pleasing form, but also all words of truth; that the words of the wise are like goads and nails which stand in collected rows and numbers—they are given from one Shepherd. The author of the book thereby denotes that the sentences therein collected, even though they are not wholly, as they lie before us, the words of Solomon, yet that, with the Proverbs of Solomon, and of the wise men generally, they go back to one giver and original author. The epilogue thus, by its historic reference to

Solomon, recognises the fiction, and gives the reader to understand that the book loses nothing in its value from its not having been immediately composed by Solomon.

Of untruthfulness, of a so-called *pia fraus*, we cannot therefore speak. From early times, within the sphere of the most ancient Israelitish authorship, it was regarded as a justifiable undertaking for an author to reproduce in a rhetorical or poetical form the thoughts and feelings of memorable personages on special occasions. The Psalter contains not a few psalms bearing the superscription *le-David*, which were composed not by David himself, but by unknown poets, placing themselves, as it were, in David's position, and representing him, such e.g., as 144, which in the LXX excellently bears the superscription *πρὸς τὸν Γολιάδ*. The chronicler, when he seeks to give the reader an idea of the music at the festival of the consecration of the tabernacle and then of the completed temple, allows himself so great freedom, that he puts into the mouth of David the Beracha of the fourth book of the Psalms (Ps. 106:48), along with the preceding verse of Ps. 106 (1 Chron. 16:35f.), and into Solomon's mouth verses of Ps. 132 (2 Chron. 6:41f.). And the prophetic discourses communicated in the O.T. historical books are certainly partly of this sort, that they either may be regarded as original, as e.g., 1 Sam. 2:27ff., or must be so regarded, as 2 Kings 18–20; but not merely where the utterances of the prophets are in general terms reproduced, as at Judg. 6:8–10, 2 Kings 17:13; 21:10–15, but also elsewhere in most of the prophetic discourses which we read in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, the style of the historian makes itself perceptible. Consequently (as also Caspari in his work on the Syro-Ephraimite War, 1849, finds) the discourses in the Chronicles, apart from those which are common to them, bear an altogether different homogeneous character from those of the Book of Kings. It is the same as with the speeches, for instance, which are recorded in Thucydides, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Livy, and other Greek and Roman historians. Classen may be right in the opinion, that the speeches in

Thucydides are not mere inventions, but that, nevertheless, as they lie before us, they are the work of the historian; even the letters that passed between Pausanias and Xerxes bear his stamp, although he composed them on the ground of the verbal reports of the Spartans. It is thus also in the speeches found in Tacitus. They are more Ciceronian than his own style is, and the discourses of Germans have less elaborated periods than those of the Romans; but so greatly was the writing of history by the ancients influenced by this custom of free reproduction, that even a speech of the Emperor Claudius, which is found engraven on brass, is given by Tacitus not in this its original, but in another and freer form, assimilated to his own manner of representation. So also sacred history, which in this respect follows the general ancient custom, depends not on the identity of the words, but of the spirit: it does not feign what it represents the historical person as saying, it follows traditions; but yet it is the power of its own subjectivity which thus recalls the past in all that was essential to it in actual life. The aim is not artistically to represent the imitation which is made as if it were genuine. The arts by which it is sought to impart to that which is introduced into a more recent period the appearance of genuineness, were unknown to antiquity. No pseudonymous work of antiquity shows any such imitation of an ancient style as, e.g., does Meinhold's *Bernsteinhexe*, or such a forgery as Wagenfeld's *Sanchuniathon*. The historians reproduce always in their own individual way, without impressing on the speeches of different persons any distinct individual character. They abstain from every art aimed at the concealment of the actual facts of the case. It is thus also with the author of the Book of Koheleth. As the author of the "*Wisdom of Solomon*" openly gives himself out to be an Alexandrian, who makes Solomon his organ, so the author of the Book of Koheleth is so little concerned purposely to veil the fiction of the Solomon-discourse, in which he clothes his own peculiar life-experiences, that he rather in diverse ways discovers himself as

one and the same person with the *Salomo redivivus* here presenting himself.

We do not reckon along with these such proverbs as have for their object the mutual relationship between the king and his subjects, 8:3–5; 10:4, 16f., 20, cf. 5:8; these do not betray in the speaker one who is an observer of rulers and not a ruler himself; for the two collections of “Proverbs of Solomon” in the Book of Proverbs contain a multitude of proverbs of the king, 16:10, 12–15; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26, 28; 25:2, 3, 4f., 6f., which, although objectively speaking of the king, may quite well be looked on as old Solomonic,—for is there not a whole princely literature regarding princely government, as e.g., Friedrich II’s *Anti-Machiavel*? But in the complaints against unrighteous judgment, 3:16; 4:1; 5:7, one is to be seen who suffers under it, or who is compelled to witness it without the power to change it; they are not appropriate in the mouth of the ruler, who should prevent injustice. It is the author himself who here puts his complaints into the mouth of Solomon; it is he who has to record life-experiences such as 10:5–7. The time in which he lived was one of public misgovernment and of dynastic oppression, in contrast with which the past shone out in a light so much the rosier, 7:10, and it threw long dark shadows across his mind when he looked out into the world, and mediately also upon the confessions of his Koheleth. This Koheleth is not the historical Solomon, but an abstraction of the historical; he is not the theocratic king, but the king among the wise men; the actual Solomon could not speak, 2:18, of the heir to his throne as of “the man that shall be after him,”—and he who has led astray by his wives into idolatry, and thus became an apostate (1 Kings 11:4), must have sounded an altogether different note of penitential contrition from that which we read at 7:26–28. This Solomon who tasted all, and in the midst of his enjoyment maintained the position of a wise man (Ecclesiastes 2:9), is described by the author of this book from history and from sayings, just as he needs him, so as to make him an organ of himself; and so little does he think of making the fiction an

illusion difficult to be seen through, that he represents Koheleth, 1:16; 2:7, 9, as speaking as if he had behind him a long line of kings over the whole of Israel and Judah, while yet not he, but the author of the book, who conceals himself behind *Salomo redivivus*, could look back on such a series of kings in Jerusalem.

When did this anonymous author, who speaks instead of his Solomon, live and write? Let us first of all see what conclusion may be gathered regarding the book from the literary references it contains. In its thoughts, and in the form of its thoughts, it is an extremely original work. It even borrows nothing from the Solomonic Book of Proverbs, which in itself contains so many repetitions; proverbs such as 7:16–18 and Prov. 3:7 are somewhat like, but only accidentally. On the contrary, between 5:14 and Job 1:21, as well as between 7:14 and Job 2:10, there undoubtedly exists some kind of connection; here there lie before us thoughts which the author of the Book of Koheleth may have read in the Book of Job, and have quoted them from thence—also the mention of an untimely birth, 6:3, cf. Job 3:16, and the expression “one among a thousand,” 7:28, cf. Job 9:3; 33:23, may perhaps be reminiscences from the Book of Job occurring unconsciously to the author. This is not of any consequence as to the determination of the time of the composition of the Book of Koheleth, for the Book of Job is in any case much older. Dependence on the Book of Jeremiah would be of greater importance, but references such as 7:2, cf. Jer. 16:8; 9:11, cf. Jer. 9:22, are doubtful, and guide to no definite conclusion. And who might venture, with Hitzig, to derive the golden lamp, 12:10, from the vision of Zechariah, 4:2, especially since the figure in the one place has an altogether different signification from what it has in the other? But we gain a more certain *terminus a quo* by comparing 5:5 with Mal. 2:7. Malachi there designates the priests as messengers (delegated) of Jahve of hosts, along with which also there is the designation of the prophets as God’s messengers, 3:1, Hag. 1:13. With the author of the Book of Koheleth “the messenger” is already, without any name of God being

added, a priestly title not to be misunderstood; מלאך (messenger) denotes the priest as *vicarius Dei*, the delegate of God, שלוח דרחמנא, according to the later title (*Kiddushin 23b*). And a *terminus ad quem*, beyond which the reckoning of the time of its composition cannot extend, is furnished by the "Wisdom of Solomon," which is not a translation, but a work written originally in Alexandrine Greek; for that this book is older than the Book of Koheleth, as Hitzig maintains, is not only in itself improbable, since the latter shows not a trace of Greek influence, but in the light of the history of doctrine is altogether impossible, since it represents, in the history of the development of the doctrine of wisdom and the last things, the stage immediately preceding the last B.C., as Philo does the last; it is not earlier than the beginning of the persecution of the Jews by the Egyptians under Ptolemy VII, Physkon (Joseph. *c. Ap. ii. 5*), and at all events was written before Philo, since the combination of the *Sophia* and the *Logos* is here as yet incomplete. This Book of Wisdom must stand in some kind of historical relation to the Book of Koheleth. The fact that both authors make King Solomon the organ of their own peculiar view of the world, shows a connection that is not accidental. Accident is altogether excluded by the circumstance that the Alexandrian author stands in the same relation to the Palestinian that James stands in to the Pauline letters. As James directs himself not so much against Paul as against a Paulinism misleading to fatal consequences, so that Book of Wisdom is certainly not directly a work in opposition to the Book of Koheleth, as is assumed by J. E. Ch. Schmidt (*Salomo's Prediger*, 1794), Kelle (*Die salom. Schriften*, 1815), and others; but, as Knobel and Grimm assert, against a one-sided extreme interpretation of views and principles as set forth by Koheleth, not without an acquaintance with this book. The lovers of pleasure, who speak in Wisd. 2:1-9, could support that saying by expressions from the Book of Koheleth, and the concluding words there sound like an appropriation of the words

of Koheleth 3:22; 5:17 (cf. LXX); it is true they break off the point of the Book of Koheleth, for the exhortation to the fear of God, the Judge of the world, is not echoed; but to break off this point did not lie remote, since the old Chokma watchword, "fear God," hovered over the contents of the book rather than penetrated them. It is as if the author of the Book of Wisdom, 1-5, wished to show to what danger of abuse in the sense of a pure materialistic eudaemonism the wisdom presented in the Book of Koheleth is exposed. But he also opposes the pessimistic thoughts of Koheleth in the decided assertions of the contrary: (1) Koheleth says: "There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked," 9:2; but he says: there is a difference between them wide as the heavens, Wisd. 3:2f., 4:7; 5:15f.; (2) Koheleth says: "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow," 1:18; but he says: wisdom bringeth not sorrow, but pure joy with it, Wisd. 8:16; (3) Koheleth says that wisdom bringeth neither respect nor favour, 9:11; but he says: it brings fame and honour, Wisd. 8:10; (4) Koheleth says: "There is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever," 2:16; but he says of wisdom in contrast to folly: "I shall obtain by it a deathless name, and shall leave to my descendants an everlasting remembrance," Wisd. 8:13.

The main distinction between the two books lies in this, that the comfortless view of Hades running through the Book of Koheleth is thoroughly surmounted by a wonderful rising above the O.T. standpoint by the author of the Book of Wisdom, and that hence there is in it an incomparably more satisfying *Theodicee* (cf. Wisd. 12:2-18 with Ecclesiastes 7:15; 8:14), and a more spiritual relation to this present time (cf. Wisd. 8:21; 9:17, with Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:13, etc.). The "Wisdom of Solomon" has indeed the appearance of an anti-Ecclesiastes, a side-piece to the Book of Koheleth, which aims partly at confuting it, partly at going beyond it; for it represents, in opposition to Koheleth not rising above earthly enjoyment with the *But* of the fear of God, a more ideal, more spiritual Solomon. If Koheleth says that God "hath made

everything beautiful in his time," 3:11, and hath made mad upright, 7:29; so, on the other hand, Solomon says that He hath made all things εἰς τὸ εἶναι, Wisd. 1:14, and hath made man ἐπ' ἀφθαρσίᾳ, 2:23. There are many such parallels, e.g., 5:9, cf. Koh. 8:13; 8:5, cf. Koh. 7:12; 9:13–16, cf. Koh. 3:10f., but particularly Solomon's confession, 7:1–21, with that of Koheleth, 1:12–18. Here, wisdom appears as a human acquisition; there (which agrees with 1 Kings 3:11–13), as a gracious gift obtained in answer to prayer, which brings with it all that can make happy. If one keeps in his eye this mutual relation between the two books, there can be no doubt as to which is the older and which the younger. In the Book of Koheleth the Old Covenant digs for itself its own grave. It is also a "school-master to Christ," in so far as it awakens a longing after a better Covenant than the first. But the Book of Wisdom is a precursor of this better covenant. The composition of the Book of Koheleth falls between the time of Malachi, who lived in the time of Nehemiah's second arrival at Jerusalem, probably under Darius Nothus (423–405 B.C.), and the Book of Wisdom, which at the earliest was written under Ptolemy Physkon (145–117), when the O.T. was already for the most part translated into the Greek language.

Hitzig does not venture to place the Book of Koheleth so far back into the period of the Ptolemies; he reaches with his chain of evidence only the year 204, that in which Ptolemy Epiphanes (204–181), gained, under the guardianship of the Romans, the throne of his father,—he must be the minor whom the author has in his eye, 10:16. But the first link of his chain of proof is a *falsum*. For it is not true that Ptolemy Lagus was the first ruler who exacted from the Jews the "oath of God," 8:2, i.e., the oath of fidelity; for Josephus (Antt. xii. 1. 1) says directly, that Ptolemy Lagus did this with reference to the fidelity with which the Jews had kept to Alexander the Macedonian the oath of allegiance they had sworn to Darius, which he particularly describes, Antt. xi. 8. 3; besides, the covenant, e.g., 2 Sam. 5:3, concluded in the presence of Jahve with their own native kings

included in it the oath of allegiance, and the oath of vassalage which, e.g., Zedekiah swore to Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Chron. 36:13, cf. Ezek. 17:13–19, had at the same time binding force on the citizens of the state that was in subjection. Also that "the oath of God" must mean the oath of allegiance sworn to a foreign ruler, and not that sworn to a native ruler, which would rather be called "the oath of Jahve," does not stand the test: the author of the Book of Koheleth drives the cosmopolitanism of the Chokma so far, that he does not at all make use of the national name of God connected with the history of redemption, and Nehemiah also, 13:25, uses an oath "of God" where one would have expected an oath "of Jahve." The first link of Hitzig's chain of proof, then, shows itself on all sides to be worthless. The author says, 8:2, substantially the same as Paul, Rom. 13:5, that one ought to be subject to the king, not only from fear of punishment, but for conscience' sake.

Thus, then, 8:10 will also stand without reference to the carrying away of the Jews captive by Ptolemy Lagus, especially since the subject there is by no means that of a mass-deportation; and, besides, those who were carried into Egypt by Lagus were partly from the regions round about Jerusalem, and partly from the holy city itself (Joseph. Antt. 12. 1. 1). And the old better times, 7:10, were not those of the first three Ptolemies, especially since there are always men, and even in the best and most prosperous times, who praise the old times at the expense of the new. And also women who were a misfortune to their husbands or lovers there have always been, so that in 7:26 one does not need to think of that Agathoclea who ruled over Ptolemy Philopator, and even had in her hands the power of life and death. Passages such as 7:10 and 7:26 afford no help in reference to the chronology. On the other hand, the author in 9:13–16 relates, to all appearance, what he himself experienced. But the little city is certainly not the fortified town of Dora, on the sea-coast to the west of Carmel, which was besieged by Antiochus the Great (Polybius, v. 66) in the year 218, as at a later

period, in the year 138, it was by Antiochus VII, Sidetes (Joseph. Bell. i. 2. 2); for this Dora was not then saved by a poor wise man within it,—of whom Polybius knows nothing,—but “by the strength of the place, and the help of those with Nicholaus.” A definite historical event is also certainly found in 4:13–16. Hitzig sees in the old foolish king the spiritually contracted, but so much the more covetous, high priest Onias, under Ptolemy Euergetes; and in the poor but wise youth, Joseph (the son of Tobias), who robbed Onias of his place in the state, and raised himself to the office of general farmer of taxes. But here nothing agrees but that Onias was old and foolish, and that Joseph was then a young wise man (Joseph. Antt. xii. 4. 2); of the poverty of the latter nothing is heard—he was the nephew of Onias. And besides, he did not come out of the house “of prisoners” (הַסּוּרִים); this word is pointed by Hitzig so as to mean, out of the house “of fugitives” (הַסּוּרִים), perhaps, as he supposes, an allusion to the district Φιλόλα, which the author thus interprets as if it were derived from φεύγειν. Historical investigation has here degenerated into the boldest subjectivism. The Heb. tongue has never called “fugitives” הַסּוּרִים; and to whom could the Heb. word פִּיקוּלָה (cf. *Berachoth* 28b) suggest—as Φύγελα did to Pliny and Mela—the Greek φεύγειν!

We have thus, in determining the time of the authorship of this book, to confine ourselves to the period subsequent to the Diadochs. It may be regarded as beyond a doubt that it was written under the Persian domination. Kleinert (*Der Prediger Salomo*, 1864) is in general right in saying that the political condition of the people which the book presupposes, is that in which they are placed under Satraps; the unrighteous judgment, 3:16; and the despotic oppression, 4:1; 8:9; 5:7; the riotous court-life, 10:16–19; the raising of mean men to the highest places of honour, 10:5–7; the inexorable severity of the law of war-service, 8:8; the prudence required by the organized system of espionage existing at such a time,—

all these things were characteristic of this period. But if the Book of Koheleth is not at all older than Malachi, then it was written somewhere within the last century of the Persian kingdom, between Artaxerxes I, Longimanus (464–424), and Darius Codomannus (335–332): the better days for the Jewish people, of the Persian supremacy under the first five Achaemenides, were past (Ecclesiastes 7:10). Indeed, in 6:3 there appear to be reminiscences of Artaxerxes II, Mnemon (died about 360), who was 94 years old, and, according to Justin (x. 1), had 115 sons, and of Artaxerxes III, Ochus his successor, who was poisoned by the chief eunuch Bagoas, who, according to Aelian, *Var. Hist.* vi. 8, threw his (Ochus') body to the cats, and caused sword-handles to be made from his bones. The book altogether contains many examples to which concrete instances in the Persian history correspond, from which they might be abstracted, in which strict harmony on all sides with historical fact is not to be required, since it did not concern the author. The event recorded 4:13ff. refers to Cyrus rising to the supremacy of world-ruler (after dispossessing the old Median King Astyages), who left nothing but misery to posterity. Such a rich man as is described in 6:2, who had to leave all his treasures to a stranger, was Croesus, to whom Solon, as 7:8a (cf. Herod. i. 32, 86), said that no one ought to be praised before his end. A case analogous at least to 9:14–16, was the deliverance of Athens by the counsel of Themistocles (Justin, ii. 12), who finally, driven from Athens, was compelled to seek the protection of the Persian king, and ended his life in despair. If we were not confined, for the history of the Persian kingdom and its provinces, from Artaxerxes I to the appearance of Alexander of Macedon, to only a few and scanty sources of information (we know no Jewish events of this period, except the desecration of the temple by Bagoas, described by Josephus, Antt. xi. 7), we might probably be better able to understand many of the historical references of the Book of Koheleth. We should then be able to say to whom the author refers

by the expression, "Woe to thy land when thy king is a child," 10:16; for Artaxerxes I, who, although only as yet a boy at the time of the murder of his father Xerxes (Justin, iii. 1), soon thereafter appeared manly enough, cannot be thought of. We should then, perhaps, be also in possession of the historical key to 8:10; for with the reference to the deportation of many thousands of Jewish prisoners (Josephus, c. Ap. i. 22)—which, according to Syncellus and Orosius, must have occurred under Artaxerxes III, Ochus—the interpretation of that passage does not accord. We should then also, perhaps, know to what political arrangement the author points when he says, 7:19, that wisdom is a stronger protection to a city than "ten mighty men;" Grätz refers this to the *decuriones* of the Roman municipal cities and colonies; but probably it refers to the dynasties (cf. Assyr. *salat*, governor) placed by the Persian kings over the cities of conquered countries. And generally, the oppressed spirit pervading the book would be so much clearer if we knew more of the sacrifices which the Jewish people in the later time of the Persians had to make, than merely that the Phoenicians, at the same time with "The Syrians in Palestine," had to contribute (Herod. vii. 87) to Xerxes for his Grecian expedition three hundred triremes; and also that the people who "dwelt in the Solymeian mountains" had to render him assistance in his expedition against Greece (Joseph. c. Ap. i. 22).

The author was without doubt a Palestinian. In 4:17 he speaks of himself as dwelling where the temple was, and also in the holy city, 8:10; he lived, if not actually in it, at least in its near neighbourhood, 10:15; although, as Kleinert remarks, he appears, 11:1, to make use of a similitude taken from the corn trade of a seaport town. From 4:8 the supposition is natural that he was alone in the land, without children or brothers or sisters; but from the contents and spirit of the whole book, it appears more certain that, like his Koheleth, he was advanced in years, and had behind him a long checkered life. The symptoms of approaching death presenting themselves in

old age, which he describes to the young, 12:2ff., he probably borrowed from his own experience. The whole book bears the marks of age,—a production of the Old Covenant which was stricken in age, and fading away.

The literature, down to 1860, of commentaries and monographs on the Book of Koheleth is very fully set forth in the English Commentary of Ginsburg, and from that time to 1867, in Zöckler's Commentary, which forms a part of Lange's *Bibelwerk*. Keil's *Einleitung*, 3rd ed. 1873, contains a supplement to these, among which, however, the *Bonner Theolog. Literaturblatt*, 1874, Nr. 7, misses Pusey's and Reusch's (cf. the *Tübingen Theol. Quartalschrift*, 1860, pp. 430–469). It is not possible for any man to compass this literature. Aedner's *Catalogue of the Hebrew books in the Library of the British Museum*, 1867, contains a number of Jewish commentaries omitted by Ginsburg and Zöckler, but far from all. For example, the Commentary of Ahron B. Josef (for the first time printed at Eupatoria, 1834) now lies before me, with those of Moses Frankel (Dessau, 1809), and of Samuel David Luzzatto, in the journal, *Ozar Nechmad* 1864. Regarding the literature of English interpretation, see the American translation, by Tayler Lewis (1870), of Zöckler's Commentary. The catalogue there also is incomplete, for in 1873 a Commentary by Thomas Pelham Dale appeared; and a Monograph on Ecclesiastes 12, under the title of *The Dirge of Coheleth*, by the Orientalist C. Taylor, appeared in 1874. The fourth volume of the *Speaker's Commentary* contains a Commentary on the Song by Kingsbury, and on Ecclesiastes by W. T. Bullock, who strenuously maintains its Solomonic authorship. The opinion that the book represents the conflict of two voices, the voice of true wisdom and that of pretended wisdom, has lately found advocates not only in a Hebrew Commentary by Ephraim Hirsch (Warsaw, 1871), but also in the article "Koheleth" by Schenkel in his *Bibelllexikon* (vol. III, 1871). For the history and refutation of this attempt to represent the book in the form of a dialogue, we might refer to Zöckler's Introd. to his Commentary.

The old translations have been referred to at length by Ginsburg. Frederick Field, in his *Hexapla* (Poet. vol. 1867), has collected together the fragments of the Greek translations. Ge. Janichs, in his *Animadversiones criticae* (Breslau, 1871), has examined the Peshito of Koheleth and Ruth; vid., with reference thereto, Nöldeke's *Anzeige* in the *Liter. Centralblatt* 1871, Nr. 49, and cf. Middeldorpf's *Symbolae exegetico-criticae ad librum Ecclesiastis*, 1811. The text of the *Graecus Venetus* lies before us now in a more accurate form than that by Villoison (1784), in Gebhardt's careful edition of certain Venetian manuscripts (Leipzig, Brockhaus 1874), containing this translation of the O.T. books.

Ecclesiastes 1

"Ostendit omnia esse vanitati subjecta: in his quae propter homines facta sunt vanitas est mutabilitatis; in his quae ab hominibus facta sunt vanitas est curiositatis; in his quae in hominibus facta sunt vanitas mortalitatis."
Hugo of St. Victor (†1140).

Ecclesiastes 1:1. The title, 1:1, *The words of Koheleth, son of David, king in Jerusalem*, has been already explained in the Introduction. The verse, which does not admit of being properly halved, is rightly divided by "son of David" by the accent *Zakef*; for the apposition, "king in Jerusalem," does not belong to "David," but to "Koheleth." In several similar cases, such as Ezek. 1:3, the accentuation leaves the designation of the oppositional genitive undefined; in Gen. 10:21*b* it proceeds on an erroneous supposition; it is rightly defined in Amos 1:1*b*, for example, as in the passage before us. That "king" is without the article, is explained from this, that it is determined by "in Jerusalem," as elsewhere by "of Israel" ("Judah"). The expression (cf. 2 Kings 14:23) is singular.

Prologue: The Everlasting Sameness—1:2–11

Ecclesiastes 1:2. The book begins artistically with an opening section of the nature of a preamble. The ground-tone of the whole book

at once sounds in v. 2, which commences this section, "O vanity of vanities, saith Koheleth, O vanity of vanities! All is vain." As at Isa. 40:1 (vid., *l.c.*) it is a question whether by "saith" is meant a future or a present utterance of God, so here and at 12:8 whether "saith" designates the expression of Koheleth as belonging to history or as presently given forth. The language admits both interpretations, as e.g., "saith," with God as the subject, 2 Sam. 23:3, is meant historically, and in Isa. 49:5 of the present time. We understand "saith" here, as e.g., Isa. 36:4, "Thus saith ... the king of Assyria," of something said now, not of something said previously, since it is those presently living to whom the Solomon *redivivus*, and through him the author of this book, preaches the vanity of all earthly things. The old translators take "vanity of vanities" in the nominative, as if it were the predicate; but the repetition of the expression shows that it is an exclamation = *O vanitatem vanitatum*. The abbreviated connecting form of הַבֵּל is here not punctuated הַבֵּל, after the form הַדָּר (הַדָּר) and the like, but הַבֵּל, after the manner of the Aram. ground-form עֲבָד; cf. Ewald, § 32*b*. Jerome read differently: *In Hebraeo pro vanitate vanitatum ABAL ABALIM scriptum est, quod exceptis LXX interpretibus omnes similiter transtulerunt ἀτμός ἀτμίδων sive ἀτμῶν. Hēvēl* primarily signifies a breath, and still bears this meaning in post-bibl. Heb., e.g., *Schabbath 119b*: "The world exists merely for the sake of the breath of school-children" (who are the hope of the future). Breath, as the contrast of that which is firm and enduring, is the figure of that which has no support, no continuance. Regarding the superlative expression, "Vanity of vanities," vid., the Song 1:1. "Vanity of vanities" is the *non plus ultra* of vanity,—vanity in the highest degree. The double exclamation is followed by a statement which shows it to be the result of experience. "All is vain"—the whole (of the things, namely, which present themselves to us here below for our consideration and use) is vanity.

Ecclesiastes 1:3. With this verse commences the proof for this exclamation and statement:

“What profit hath a man of all his labour which he laboureth in under the sun?!” An interrogative exclamation, which leads to the conclusion that never anything right, i.e., real, enduring, satisfying, comes of it. יִתְרוֹן, profit, synon. with *Mohtar*, 3:19, is peculiar to this book (= Aram. יִיתְרוֹן). A primary form, יִתְרוֹן, is unknown. The punctator Simson (Cod. 102a of the Leipzig University Lib.f. 5a) rightly blames those who use יִתְרוֹן, in a liturgical hymn, of the Day of Atonement. The word signifies that which remains over, either, as here, clear gain, profit, or that which has the pre-eminence, i.e., superiority, precedence, or is the foremost. “Under the sun” is the designation of the earth peculiar to this book,—the world of men, which we are wont to call the sublunary world. שׁ has not the force of an accusative of manner, but of the obj. The author uses the expression, “Labour wherein I have laboured,” 2:19, 20; 5:17, as Euripides, similarly, μοχθεῖν μόχθον. He now proceeds to justify the negative contained in the question, “What profit?”

Ecclesiastes 1:4. “One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: and the earth remaineth for ever.” The meaning is not that the earth remains standing, and thus (Hitz.) approaches no limit (for what limit for it could be had in view?); it is by this very immoveable condition that it fulfils, according to the ancient notion, its destiny, Ps. 119:90. The author rather intends to say that in this sphere nothing remains permanent as the fixed point around which all circles; generations pass away, others appear, and the earth is only the firm territory, the standing scene, of this ceaseless change. In reality, both things may be said of the earth: that it stands for ever without losing its place in the universe, and that it does not stand for ever, for it will be changed and become something else. But the latter thought, which appertains to the history of redemption, Ps. 102:26f., is remote from the Preacher; the stability of the earth appears to him only as the foil of the growth and decay everlastingly repeating themselves. Elster, in this fact, that

the generations of men pass away, and that, on the contrary, the insensate earth under their feet remains, rightly sees something tragic, as Jerome had already done: *Quid hac vanius vanitate, quam terram manere, quae hominum causa facta est, et hominem ipsum, terrae dominum, tam repente in pulverem dissolvi?* The sun supplies the author with another figure. This, which he thinks of in contrast with the earth, is to him a second example of ceaseless change with perpetual sameness. As the generations of men come and go, so also does the sun.

Ecclesiastes 1:5. “And the sun ariseth, the sun goeth down, and it hasteth (back) to its place, there to rise again.” It rises and sets again, but its setting is not a coming to rest; for from its place of resting in the west it must rise again in the morning in the east, hastening to fulfil its course. Thus Hitzig rightly, for he takes “there to rise again” as a relative clause; the words may be thus translated, but strictly taken, both participles stand on the same level; שׁוֹאֵף (panting, hastening) is like אָזַח in v. 4, the expression of the present, and יָרַח that of the *fut. instans*: *ibi (rursus) oriturus*; the accentuation also treats the two partic. as co-ordinate, for *Tiphcha* separates more than *Tebir*; but it is inappropriate that it gives to אֲזַח the greater disjunctive *Zakef Quaton* (with *Kadma* going before). Ewald adopts this sequence of the accents, for he explains: the sun goes down, and that to its own place, viz., hastening back to it just by its going down, where, panting, it again ascends. But that the sun goes down to the place of its ascending, is a distorted thought. If “to its place” belongs to “goeth,” then it can refer only to the place of the going down, as e.g., Benjamin el-Nahawendi (Neubauer, *Aus der Petersb. Bibl.* p. 108) explains: “and that to its place,” viz., the place of the going down appointed for it by the Creator, with reference to Ps. 104:19, “the sun knoweth his going down.” But the שׁוֹאֵף, which refers back to “its place,” opposes this interpretation; and the phrase יָרַח cannot mean “panting, rising,” since

שׂאָ in itself does not signify to pant, but to snatch at, to long eagerly after anything, thus to strive, panting after it (cf. Job 7:2; Ps. 119:131), which accords with the words “to its place,” but not with the act of rising. And how unnatural to think of the rising sun, which gives the impression of renewed youth, as panting! No, the panting is said of the sun that has set, which, during the night, and thus without rest by day and night, must turn itself back again to the east (Ps. 19:7), there anew to commence its daily course. Thus also Rashi, the LXX, Syr., Targ., Jerome, Venet., and Luther. Instead of שׂאָ, Grätz would read שׂב אָ, *redit (atque) etiam*; but שׂאָ is as characteristic of the Preacher’s manner of viewing the world as סׁוּבב וגו׳, 6b, and יָן, 8a. Thus much regarding the sun. Many old interpreters, recently Grätz, and among translators certainly the LXX, refer also 6a to the sun. The Targ. paraphrases the whole verse of the state of the sun by day and night, and at the spring and autumn equinox, according to which Rashi translates הָרְוָהּ, *la volonté (du soleil)*. But along with the sun, the wind is also referred to as a third example of restless motion always renewing itself. The division of the verses is correct; 6a used of the sun would overload the figure, and the whole of v. 6 therefore refers to the wind.

Ecclesiastes 1:6. “It goeth to the south, and turneth to the north; the wind goeth ever circling, and the wind returneth again on its circuits.” Thus designedly the verse is long-drawn and monotonous. It gives the impression of weariness. שׂב may be 3rd pret. with the force of an abstract present, but the relation is here different from that in 5a, where the rising, setting, and returning stand together, and the two former lie backwards indeed against the latter; here, on the contrary, the circling motion and the return to a new beginning stand together on the same line; שׂב is thus a part, as the Syr. translates it. The participles represent continuance in motion. In v. 4 the subjects stand foremost, because the ever anew

beginning motion belongs to the subject; in vv. 5 and 6, on the contrary, the pred. stands foremost, and the subject in v. 6 is therefore placed thus far back, because the first two pred. were not sufficient, but required a third for their completion. That the wind goes from the south (דְּרוֹם, R. דר, the region of the most intense light) to the north (צָפוֹן, R. צפן, the region of darkness), is not so exclusively true of it as it is of the sun that it goes from the east to the west; this expression requires the generalization “circling, circling goes the wind,” i.e., turning in all directions here and there; for the repetition denotes that the circling movement exhausts all possibilities. The near defining part. which is subordinated to “goeth,” elsewhere is annexed by “and,” e.g., Jonah 1:11; cf. 2 Sam. 15:30; here סָבַב | סׁוּבַב, in the sense of סָבַיב | סָבַיב, Ezek. 37:2 (both times with *Pasek* between the words), precedes. סָבַיב is here the *n. actionis* of סָבַב.

And “on its circuits” is not to be taken adverbially: it turns back on its circuits, i.e., it turns back on the same paths (Knobel and others), but עַל and שׂב are connected, as Prov. 26:11; cf. Mal. 3:24; Ps. 19:7: the wind returns back to its circling movements to begin them anew (Hitzig). “The wind” is repeated (cf. 2:10; 4:1) according to the figure Epanaphora or Palindrome (vid., the Introd. to Isaiah, c. 40–66). To all regions of the heavens, to all directions of the compass, its movement is ceaseless, ever repeating itself anew; there is nothing permanent but the fluctuation, and nothing new but that the old always repeats itself. The examples are thoughtfully chosen and arranged. From the currents of air, the author now passes to streams of water.

Ecclesiastes 1:7. “All rivers run into the sea, and the sea becomes not full; to the place whence the rivers came, thither they always return again.” Instead of *nhhárim*, *nhhálim* was preferred, because it is the more general name for flowing waters, brooks, and rivers; נַחַל (from נָחַל, *cavare*), אֶפְיָק (from אָפַק, *continere*), and (Arab.) *wadin* (from the root-idea of

stretching, extending), all three denote the channel or bed, and then the water flowing in it. The sentence, “all rivers run into the sea,” is consistent with fact. Manifestly the author does not mean that they all immediately flow thither; and by “the sea” he does not mean this or that sea; nor does he think, as the Targ. explains, of the earth as a ring (גושפּינקא, Pers. *angusht-bâne*, properly “finger-guard”) surrounding the ocean: but the sea in general is meant, perhaps including also the ocean that is hidden. If we include this internal ocean, then the rivers which lose themselves in hollows, deserts, or inland lakes, which have no visible outlet, form no exception. But the expression refers first of all to the visible sea-basins, which gain no apparent increase by these masses of water being emptied into them: “the sea, it becomes not full;” אֵינָנוּ (Mishn. אֵינוּ) has the reflex. pron., as at Ex. 3:2, Lev. 13:34, and elsewhere. If the sea became full, then there would be a real change; but this sea, which, as Aristophanes says (*Clouds*, 1294f.), οὐδὲν γίγνεται ἐπιρρέόντων τῶν ποταμῶν πλείων, represents also the eternal sameness. In v. 7b, Symm., Jer., Luther, and also Zöckler, translate שׁ in the sense of “from whence;” others, as Ginsburg, venture to take שׁ in the sense of מִשָּׁם; both interpretations are linguistically inadmissible. Generally the author does not mean to say that the rivers return to their sources, since the sea replenishes the fountains, but that where they once flow, they always for ever flow without changing their course, viz., into the all-devouring sea (Elst.); for the water rising out of the sea in vapour, and collecting itself in rain-clouds, fills the course anew, and the rivers flow on anew, for the old repeats itself in the same direction to the same end. מִקּוֹם is followed by what is a virtual genitive (Ps. 104:8); the accentuation rightly extends this only to הַלְכִים; for אֲשֶׁר, according to its relation, signifies in itself *ubi*, Gen. 39:20, and *quo*, Num. 13:27; 1 Kings 12:2 (never *unde*). שָׁם, however, has after verbs of motion, as e.g., Jer. 22:27 after שׁוּב, and 1 Sam.

9:6 after הֵלֵךְ, frequently the sense of שָׁמָּה. And שׁוּב with ל and the infin. signifies to do something again, Hos. 11:9, Job 7:7, thus: to the place whither the rivers flow, thither they flow again, *eo rursus eunt*. The author here purposely uses only participles, because although there is constant change, yet that which renews itself is ever the same. He now proceeds, after this brief but comprehensive induction of particulars, to that which is general.

Ecclesiastes 1:8. “All things are in activity; no man can utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, and the ear is not full with hearing.” All translators and interpreters who understand *dvarim* here of words (LXX, Syr., and Targ.) go astray; for if the author meant to say that no words can describe this everlasting sameness with perpetual change, then he would have expressed himself otherwise than by “all words weary” (Ew., Elst., Hengst., and others); he ought at least to have said לְרִיק יֵג. But also “all things are wearisome” (Knob., Hitz.), or “full of labour” (Zöck.), i.e., it is wearisome to relate them all, cannot be the meaning of the sentence; for יֵג does not denote that which causes weariness, but that which suffers weariness (Deut. 25:18; 2 Sam. 7:2); and to refer the affection, instead of to the narrator, to that which is to be narrated, would be even for a poet too affected a *quid pro quo*. Rosenmüller essentially correctly: *omnes res fatigantur h. e. in perpetua versantur vicissitudine, qua fatigantur quasi*. But יֵג is not appropriately rendered by *fatigantur*; the word means, becoming wearied, or perfectly feeble, or also: wearying oneself (cf. 10:15; 12:12), working with a strain on one’s strength, fatiguing oneself (cf. יֵג, that which is gained by labour, work). This is just what these four examples are meant to show, viz., that a restless activity reaching no visible conclusion and end, always beginning again anew, pervades the whole world—all things, he says, summarizing, are in labour, i.e., are restless, hastening on, giving the impression of fatigue. Thus also in strict

sequence of thought that which follows: this unrest in the outer world reflects itself in man, when he contemplates that which is done around him; human language cannot exhaust this coming and going, this growth and decay in constant circle, and the *quodlibet* is so great, that the eye cannot be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing; to the unrest of things without corresponds the unrest of the mind, which through this course, in these ever repeated variations, always bringing back the old again to view, is kept in ceaseless activity. The object to *dābbēr* is the totality of things. No words can comprehend this, no sensible perception exhaust it. That which is properly aimed at here is not the unsatisfiedness of the eyes (Prov. 27:20), and generally of the mind, thus not the ever-new attractive power which appertains to the eye and the ear of him who observes, but the force with which the restless activity which surrounds us lays hold of and communicates itself to us, so that we also find no rest and contentment. With שָׂבַע, to be satisfied, of the eye, there is appropriately interchanged נִמְלֵא, used of the funnel-shaped ear, to be filled, i.e., to be satisfied (as at 6:7). The *min* connected with this latter word is explained by Zöck. after Hitz., “away from hearing,” i.e., so that it may hear no more. This is not necessary. As *sāvā’* with its *min* may signify to be satisfied with anything, e.g., 6:3, Job 19:22, Ps. 104:13; cf. *Kal*, Isa. 2:6, *Pih.* Jer. 51:34, Ps. 127:5. Thus *mishshmoa’* is understood by all the old translators (e.g., Targ. מִלְמַשְׁמַע), and thus also, perhaps, the author meant it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, and the ear is not filled (satisfied) with hearing; or yet more in accordance with the Heb. expression: there is not an eye, i.e., no eye is satisfied, etc., restlessly hastening, giving him who looks no rest, the world goes on in its circling course without revealing anything that is in reality new.

Ecclesiastes 1:9. “That which hath been is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is nothing new under the sun.”—The older form of the

language uses only אֲשֶׁר instead of מִה־שֵׁ, in the sense of *id quod*, and in the sense of *quid-*quid**, כֹּל אֲשֶׁר (Ecclesiastes 6:10; 7:24); but *māh* is also used by it with the extinct force of an interrogative, in the sense of *quodcumque*, Job 13:13, *aliquid (quidquam)*, Gen. 39:8, Prov. 9:13; and *mi* or *mi asher*, in the sense of *quisquis*, Ex. 24:14; 32:33. In הוּא שֵׁ (cf. Gen. 42:14) are combined the meanings *id (est) quod* and *idem (est) quod*; *hu* is often the expression of the equality of two things, Job 3:19, or of self-sameness, Ps. 102:28. The double clause, *quod fuit ... quod factum est*, comprehends that which is done in the world of nature and of men,—the natural and the historical. The bold clause, *neque est quidquam novi sub sole*, challenges contradiction; the author feels this, as the next verse shows.

Ecclesiastes 1:10. “Is there anything whereof it may be said: See, this is new?—it was long ago through the ages (aeons) which have been before us.” The Semit. substantive verb יֵשׁ (Assyr. *isu*) has here the force of a hypothetical antecedent: supposing that there is a thing of which one might say, etc. The הֵן, with *Makkeph*, belongs as subject, as at 7:27, 29 as object, to that which follows. כְּבֵר (vid., List, p. 193) properly denotes length or greatness of time (as כְּבֵרָה, length of way). The ל of לֵךְ is that of measure: this “long ago” measured (Hitz.) after infinitely long periods of time. מִלְּפָנֵינוּ, *ante nos*, follows the usage of מִלְּפָנֵינוּ, Isa. 41:26, and לֵךְ, Judg. 1:10, etc.; the past time is spoken of as that which was before, for it is thought of as the beginning of the succession of time (vid., Orelli, *Synon. der Zeit u. Ewigkeit*, p. 14f.). The singular הֵן may also be viewed as pred. of a *plur. inhumanus* in order; but in connection, 2:7, 9 (Ges. § 147, An. 2), it is more probable that it is taken as a neut. verb. That which newly appears has already been, but had been forgotten; for generations come and generations go, and the one forgets the other.

Ecclesiastes 1:11. “There is no remembrance of ancestors; and also of the later ones who shall come into existence, there will be no remembrance for them with those who shall come into existence after them.” With זָכְרוֹן (with *Kametz*) there is also זָכְרוֹן, the more common form by our author, in accordance with the usage of his age; Gesen., Elst., and others regard it here and at 2:16 as constr., and thus לְרֵאָא as virtually object-gen. (Jerome, *non est priorum memoria*); but such refinements of the old *syntaxis ornata* are not to be expected in our author: he changes (according to the traditional punctuation) here the initial sound, as at 1:17 the final sound, to *oth* and *uth*. לְ אֵין is the contrast of לְ הֵיָהּ: to attribute to one, to become partaker of. The use of the expression, “for them,” gives emphasis to the statement. “With those who shall come after,” points from the generation that is future to a remoter future, cf. Gen. 33:2. The *Kametz* of the prep. is that of the recompens. art.; cf. Num. 2:31, where it denotes “the last” among the four hosts; for there הָא is meant of the last in order, as here it is meant of the remotely future time.

Koheleth’s Experiences And Their Results—1:12–4:16

The Unsatisfactoriness of Striving After Wisdom, 1:12–18

After this prelude regarding the everlasting sameness of all that is done under the sun, Koheleth-Solomon unfolds the treasure of his life-experience as king.

Ecclesiastes 1:12. “I, Koheleth, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem.” That of the two possible interpretations of הָיִיתִי, “I have become” and “I have been,” not the former (Grätz), but the latter, is to be here adopted, has been already shown (p. 647). We translate better by “I have been”—for the verb here used is a pure perfect—than by “I was” (Ew., Elst., Hengst., Zöck.), with which Bullock (*Speaker’s Comm.*, vol. IV, 1873) compares the expression

Quand j’étois roi! which was often used by Louis XIV towards the end of his life. But here the expression is not a cry of complaint, like the “*fuimus Troes*,” but a simple historical statement, by which the Preacher of the vanity of all earthly things here introduces himself,—it is Solomon, resuscitated by the author of the book, who here looks back on his life as king. “Israel” is the whole of Israel, and points to a period before the division of the kingdom; a king over Judah alone would not so describe himself. Instead of “king עַל (over) Israel,” the old form of the language uses frequently simply “king of Israel,” although also the former expression is sometimes found; cf. 1 Sam. 15:26; 2 Sam. 19:23; 1 Kings 11:37. He has been king,—king over a great, peaceful, united people; king in Jerusalem, the celebrated, populous, highly-cultivated city,—and thus placed on an elevation having the widest survey, and having at his disposal whatever can make a man happy; endowed, in particular, with all the means of gaining knowledge, which accorded with the disposition of his heart searching after wisdom (cf. 1 Kings 3:9–11; 5:9).

But in his search after worldly knowledge he found no satisfaction.

Ecclesiastes 1:13. “And I gave my heart to seek and to hold survey with wisdom over all that is done under the sun: a sore trouble it is which God has given to the children of men to be exercised therewith.” The synonyms דָּרַשׁ (to seek) and תִּוֵּר (to hold survey over) do not represent a lower and a higher degree of search (Zöck.), but two kinds of searching: one penetrating in depth, the other going out in extent; for the former of these verbs (from the root-idea of grinding, testing) signifies to investigate an object which one already has in hand, to penetrate into it, to search into it thoroughly; and the latter verb (from the root-idea of moving round about) signifies to hold a survey,—look round in order to bring that which is unknown, or not comprehensively known, within the sphere of knowledge, and thus has the meaning of *bäkkēsh*, one going the

rounds. It is the usual word for the exploring of a country, i.e., the acquiring personal knowledge of its as yet unknown condition; the passing over to an intellectual search is peculiar to the Book of Koheleth, as it has the phrase *נָתַן לְבָבִי*, *animus advertere*, or *applicare ad aliquid*, in common only with Dan. 10:12. The *beth* of *bahhochmah* is that of the instrument; wisdom must be the means (*organon*) of knowledge in this searching and inquiry. With *עַל* is introduced the sphere into which it extends. Grotius paraphrases: *Historiam animalium et satorum diligentissime inquisivi*. But *נִעְשָׂה* does not refer to the world of nature, but to the world of men; only within this can anything be said of actions, only this has a proper history. But that which offers itself for research and observation there, brings neither joy nor contentment. Hitzig refers *הוּא* to human activity; but it relates to the research which has this activity as its object, and is here, on that account, called “a sore trouble,” because the attainment and result gained by the laborious effort are of so unsatisfactory a nature. Regarding *עִנְיָן*, which here goes back to *עָנָה*, to fatigue oneself, to trouble oneself with anything, and then to be engaged with it, vid., p. 194. The words *עִנְיָן רָע* would mean trouble of an evil nature (vid., at Ps. 78:49; Prov. 6:24); but better attested is the reading *עִנְיָן רָע* “a sore trouble.” *הוּא* is the subj., as at 2:1 and elsewhere; the author uses it also in expressions where it is pred. And as frequently as he uses *asher* and *שׁ*, so also, when form and matter commend it, he uses the scheme of the attributive clause (elliptical relative clause), as here (cf. 3:16), where certainly, in conformity with the old style, *נָתַנּוּ* was to be used.

Ecclesiastes 1:14. He adduces proof of the wearisomeness of this work of research: “I saw all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and striving after the wind.” The point of the sentence lies in *וְהָיָה וְהָיָה* = *וְהָיָה וְהָיָה*, so that thus *raïthi* is the expression of the

parallel fact (circumst. perfect). The result of his seeing, and that, as he has said v. 13, of a by no means superficial and limited seeing, was a discovery of the fleeting, unsubstantial, fruitless nature of all human actions and endeavours. They had, as *hevel* expresses, not reality in them; and also, as denoted by *ruth ruahh* (the LXX render well by *προαίρεσις πνεύματος*), they had no actual consequences, no real issue. Hos. 12:2 [1] also says: “Ephraim feedeth on wind,” i.e., follows after, as the result of effort obtains, the wind, *roëh ruahh*; but only in the Book of Koheleth is this sentence transformed into an abstract *terminus technicus* (vid., under *Rth*, p. 640).

Ecclesiastes 1:15. The judgment contained in the words, “vanity and a striving after the wind,” is confirmed: “That which is crooked cannot become straight; and a deficit cannot be numerable,” i.e., cannot be taken into account (thus Theod., after the Syro-Hex.), as if as much were present as is actually wanting; for, according to the proverb, “Where there is nothing, nothing further is to be counted.” Hitzig thinks, by that which is crooked and wanting, according to 7:13, of the divine order of the world: that which is unjust in it, man cannot alter; its wants he cannot complete. But the preceding statement refers only to labour under the sun, and to philosophical research and observation directed thereto. This places before the eyes of the observer irregularities and wants, brings such irregularities and wants to his consciousness,—which are certainly partly brought about and destined by God, but for the most part are due to the transgressions of man himself,—and what avails the observer the discovery and investigation?—he has only lamentation over it, for with all his wisdom he can bring no help. Instead of *לִתְקוֹן* (vid., under *תְּקוֹן*, p. 641), *לִתְקוֹן* was to be expected. However, the old language also formed intransitive infinitives with transitive modification of the final vowels, e.g., *יָבֵשׁ*, etc. (cf. *יִשׁוּן*, 5:11).

Having now gained such a result in his investigation and research by means of

wisdom, he reaches the conclusion that wisdom itself is nothing.

Ecclesiastes 1:16–18. “I have communed with mine own heart, saying: Lo, I have gained great and always greater wisdom above all who were before me over Jerusalem; and my heart hath seen wisdom and knowledge in fulness. And I gave my heart to know what was in wisdom and knowledge, madness and folly—I have perceived that this also is a grasping after the wind.” The evidence in which he bears witness to himself that striving after wisdom and knowledge brings with it no true satisfaction, reaches down to the close of v. 17; יָדַעְתִּי is the conclusion which is aimed at. The manner of expression is certainly so far involved, as he speaks of his heart to his heart what it had experienced, and to what he had purposely directed it. The אָנִי leads us to think that a king speaks, for whom it is appropriate to write a capital *I*, or to multiply it into *we*; vid., regarding this “I,” more pleonastic than emphatic, subordinated to its verb, § 3, p. 642. It is a question whether עַם-לִבִּי, after the phrase (אֶת) דְּבַר עַם (אֶת), is meant of speaking with any one, *colloqui*, or of the place of speaking, as in “thou shalt consider in thine heart,” Deut. 8:5, it is used of the place of consciousness; cf. Job 15:9, (עַמְּדִי) הִיָּה עִמִּי = σύννοια ἐμαυτῶ, and what is said in my *Psychol.* p. 134, regarding συνείδησις, consciousness, and συμμαρτυρεῖν. בְּלִבִּי, interchanging with עַם-לִבִּי, 2:1, 15, cf. 15:1, commends the latter meaning: in my heart (LXX, Targ., Jerome, Luther); but the cogn. expressions, *mdabbērēth ăl-libbah*, 1 Sam. 1:13, and *ldabbēr ăl-libbi*, Gen. 24:45, suggest as more natural the former rendering, viz., as of a dialogue, which is expressed by the Gr. Venet. (more distinctly than by Aquila, Symm., and Syr.): διείλεγμαί ἐγὼ ζῶν τῆ καρδίᾳ μου. Also לֵאמֹר, occurring only here in the Book of Koheleth, brings it near that the following *oratio directa* is directed to the heart, as it also directly assumes the form of an address, 2:1, after בְּלִבִּי. The expression, הֲגִי הָ, “to make

one’s wisdom great,” i.e., “to gain great wisdom,” is without a parallel; for the words, הֲגִי תָ, Isa. 28:29, quoted by Hitzig, signify to show and attest truly useful (beneficial) knowledge in a noble way. The annexed וְהוֹי refers to the continued increase made to the great treasure already possessed (cf. 2:9 and 1 Kings 10:7). The *al* connected therewith signifies, “above” (Gen. 49:26) all those who were over Jerusalem before me. This is like the *sarrâni âlik mahrijja*, “the kings who were my predecessors,” which was frequently used by the Assyrian kings. The Targumist seeks to accommodate the words to the actual Solomon by thus distorting them: “above all the wise men who have been in Jerusalem before me,” as if the word in the text were בִּירוּשָׁלַם, as it is indeed found in several Codd., and according to which also the LXX, Syr., Jerome, and the Venet. translate. Rather than think of the wise (חֲכִימִיא), we are led to think of all those who from of old stood at the head of the Israelitish community. But there must have been well-known great men with whom Solomon measures himself, and these could not be such dissimilarly great men as the Canaanitish kings to the time of Melchizedek; and since the Jebusites, even under Saul, were in possession of Zion, and Jerusalem was for the first time completely subdued by David (2 Sam. 5:7, cf. Josh. 15:63), it is evident that only one predecessor of Solomon in the office of ruler over Jerusalem can be spoken of, and that here an anachronism lies before us, occasioned by the circumstance that the *Salomo revivivus*, who has behind him the long list of kings whom in truth he had before him, here speaks. Regarding אֲשֶׁר הִיָּה, *qu’il y uet*, for אֲשֶׁר הִיָּה, *qui furent*, vid., at 1:10b. The seeing here ascribed to the heart (here = νοῦς, *Psychol.* p. 249) is meant of intellectual observation and apprehension; for “all perception, whether it be mediated by the organs of sense or not (as prophetic observing and contemplating), comprehends all, from mental discernment down to suffering, which veils itself in

unconsciousness, and the Scripture designates it as a seeing" (*Psychol.* 234); the Book of Koheleth also uses the word **הָאֵר** of every kind of human experience, bodily or mental, 2:24; 5:17; 6:6; 9:9. It is commonly translated: "My heart saw much wisdom and knowledge" (thus e.g., Ewald); but that is contrary to the gram. structure of the sentence (Ew. § 287c). The adject. *harbēh* is always, and by Koheleth also, 2:7; 5:6, 16; 6:11; 9:18; 11:8; 12:9, 12, placed after its subst.; thus it is here adv., as at 5:19; 7:16f. Rightly the Venet.: ἡ καρδία μου τεθέαται κατὰ πολὺ σοφίαν καὶ γνῶσιν. *Chokma* signifies, properly, solidity, compactness; and then, like *πικνότης*, mental ability, secular wisdom; and, generally, solid knowledge of the true and the right. *Dăăth* is connected with *chokma* here and at Isa. 33:6, as at Rom. 11:33, γνῶσις is with σοφία. Baumgarten-Crusius there remarks that σοφία refers to the general ordering of things, γνῶσις to the determination of individual things; and Harless, that σοφία is knowledge which proposes the right aim, and γνῶσις that which finds the right means thereto. In general, we may say that *chokma* is the fact of a powerful knowledge of the true and the right, and the property which arises out of this intellectual possession; but *dăăth* is knowledge penetrating into the depth of the essence of things, by which wisdom is acquired and in which wisdom establishes itself.

Ecclesiastes 1:17. By the consecutive *modus huius* (aor. with *ah*, like Gen. 32:6; 41:11, and particularly in more modern writings; vid., p. 198, regarding the rare occurrence of the aorist form in the Book of Koheleth) he bears evidence to himself as to the end which, thus equipped with wisdom and knowledge, he gave his heart to attain unto (cf. 13a), i.e., toward which he directed the concentration of his intellectual strength. He wished to be clear regarding the real worth of wisdom and knowledge in their contrasts; he wished to become conscious of this, and to have joy in knowing what he had in wisdom and knowledge as distinguished from madness and folly. After the statement of the object *lādăăth*,

stands *vdaath*, briefly for **וּלְדַעַת**. Ginsburg wishes to get rid of the words *holēloth vsikluth*, or at least would read in their stead **תְּבוּנָה וְשִׂכְלֻת** (rendering them "intelligence and prudence"); Grätz, after the LXX παραβολὰς καὶ ἐπιστήμην, reads **תְּבוּנָה וְשִׂכְלֻת**. But the text can remain as it is: the object of Koheleth is, on the one hand, to become acquainted with wisdom and knowledge; and, on the other, with their contraries, and to hold these opposite to each other in their operations and consequences. The LXX, Targ., Venet., and Luther err when they render *sikluth* here by ἐπιστήμη, etc. As *sikluth*, insight, intelligence, is in the Aram. written with the letter *samek* (instead of *sin*), so here, according to the Masora **סכלות**, madness is for once written with **ש**, being everywhere else in the book written with **ס**; the word is an ἐναντιόφωνον, and has, whether written in the one way or in the other, a verb, *sakal* (**סכל**, **חכל**), which signifies "to twist together," as its root, and is referred partly to a complication and partly to a confusion of ideas. **הִלְלוֹת**, from **הָלַל**, in the sense of "to cry out," "to rage," always in this book terminates in *ôth*, and only at 10:13 in *ûth* (vid., p. 637); the termination *ûth* is that of the abstr. sing.; but *ôth*, as we think we have shown at Prov. 1:20, is that of a fem. plur., meant intensively, like *bogdoth*, Zeph. 2:4; *binoth*, *chokmoth*, cf. *bogdim*, Prov. 23:28; *hhovlim*, Zech. 11:7, 14; *toqim*, Prov. 11:15 (Böttch. § 700g E). Twice *vsikluth* presents what, speaking to his own heart, he bears testimony to before himself. By *yădă'ti*, which is connected with *dibbarti* (v. 16) in the same rank, he shows the *facit*. **הֵן** refers to the striving to become conscious of the superiority of secular wisdom and science to the love of pleasure and to ignorance. He perceived that this striving also was a grasping after the wind; with **רָעוּת**, 14b, is here interchanged **רָעוּן** (vid., p. 640). He proves to himself that nothing showed itself to be real, i.e., firm and enduring,

unimpeachable and imperishable. And why not?

Ecclesiastes 1:18. “For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.” The German proverb: “Much wisdom causeth headache,” is compared, 12:12*b*, but not here, where כָּעַס and מְכָאוֹב express not merely bodily suffering, but also mental grief. Spinoza hits one side of the matter in his *Ethics*, IV 17, where he remarks: “*Veram boni et mali cognitionem saepe non satis valere ad cupiditates coerendas, quo facto homo imbecillitatem suam animadvertens cogitur exclamare: Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor.*” In every reference, not merely in that which is moral, there is connected with knowledge the shadow of a sorrowful consciousness, in spite of every effort to drive it away. The wise man gains an insight into the thousand-fold woes of the natural world, and of the world of human beings, and this reflects itself in him without his being able to change it; hence the more numerous the observed forms of evil, suffering, and discord, so much greater the sadness (כָּעַס, R. כַּס, cogn. הַס, *perstringere*) and the heart-sorrow (מְכָאוֹב, *crève-cour*) which the inutility of knowledge occasions. The form of 18*a* is like 5:6, and that of 18*b* like e.g., Prov. 18:22*a*. We change the clause *vyosiph daath* into an antecedent, but in reality the two clauses stand together as the two members of a comparison: if one increaseth knowledge, he increaseth (at the same time) sorrow. “יוֹסִיף, Isa. 29:14; 38:5, Ecclesiastes 2:18,” says Ewald, § 169*a*, “stands alone as a *part. act.*, from the stem reverting from *Hiph.* to *Kal* with יֹ- instead of יֹ-.” But this is not unparalleled; in הָיָה יוֹסִיף the verb יוֹסִיף is fin., in the same manner as יוֹסֵף, Isa. 28:16; תּוֹמִיךְ, Ps. 16:5, is *Hiph.*, in the sense of *amplificas*, from יָמַךְ; יָפִיחַ, Prov. 6:19 (vid., *l.c.*), is an attribut. clause, *qui efflat*, used as an adj.; and, at least, we need to suppose in the passage before us the confusion that the *ē* of *kātēl* (from *kātil*, originally *kātal*), which is only long, has somehow passed over into *î*.

Böttcher’s remark to the contrary, “An impersonal *fiens* thus repeated is elsewhere altogether without a parallel,” is set aside by the proverb formed exactly thus: “He that breathes the love of truth says what is right,” Prov. 12:17.

Ecclesiastes 2

The Unsatisfying Nature of Worldly Joy, 2:1–11

After having proved that secular wisdom has no superiority to folly in bringing true happiness to man, he seeks his happiness in a different way, and gives himself up to cheerful enjoyment.

Ecclesiastes 2:1. “I have said in mine heart: Up then, I will prove thee with mirth, and enjoy thou the good! And, lo, this also is vain.” Speaking in the heart is not here merely, as at 1:16, 17*a*, speaking to the heart, but the words are formed into a direct address of the heart. The Targ. and Midrash obliterate this by interpreting as if the word were אֲנִי־נִסְיָהּ, “I will try it” (Ecclesiastes 7:23). Jerome also, in rendering by *vadam et affluam deliciis et fruam bonis*, proceeds contrary to the usual reading of נִסְיָהּ *Niph.* of נִסָּה, vid., at Ps. 2:6), as if this could mean, “I will pour over myself.” It is an address of the heart, and בּ is, as at 1 Kings 10:1, that of the means: I will try thee with mirth, to see whether thy hunger after satisfaction can be appeased with mirth. הִנֵּה־אֲנִי also is an address; Grätz sees here, contrary to the Gramm., an infin. continuing the וְשָׁב; *ūrēh*, Job 10:15, is the connect. form of the particip. adj. *rāēh*; and if *rēh* could be the inf. after the forms *naqqēh*, *hinnāqqēh*, it would be the *inf. absol.*, instead of which הִנֵּה־אֲנִי was to be expected. It is the imper.: See good, sinking thyself therein, i.e., enjoy a cheerful life. Elsewhere the author connects הִנֵּה less significantly with the accus.-obj., 5:17; 6:6; 2:24.

This was his intention; but this experiment also to find out the *summum bonum* proves itself a failure: he found a life of pleasure to be a

hollow life; that also, viz., devotedness to mirth, was to him manifestly vanity.

Ecclesiastes 2:2. "To laughter I said: It is mad; and to mirth: What doth it issue in?" Laughter and mirth are personified; *mholāl* is thus not neut. (Hitz., a foolish matter), but mas. The judgment which is pronounced regarding both has not the form of an address; we do not need to supply *הָאֵלֹהִים* and *אֵלֹהִים*, it is objectively like an *oratio obliqua*: that it is mad; cf. Ps. 49:12. In the midst of the laughter and revelling in sensual delight, the feeling came over him that this was not the way to true happiness, and he was compelled to say to laughter, It has become mad (*part. Poal*, as at Ps. 102:9), it is like one who is raving mad, who finds his pleasure in self-destruction; and to joy (mirth), which disregards the earnestness of life and all due bounds, he is constrained to say, What does it result in? = that it produces nothing, i.e., that it brings forth no real fruit; that it produces only the opposite of true satisfaction; that instead of filling, it only enlarges the inner void. Others, e.g., Luther, "What doest thou?" i.e., How foolish is thy undertaking! Even if we thus explain, the point in any case lies in the inability of mirth to make man truly and lastingly happy,—in the inappropriateness of the means for the end aimed at. Therefore *עֲשֵׂה* is thus meant just as in *עֲשֵׂה פְרִי* (Hitz.), and *מעשה*, effect, Isa. 32:17.

Thus Mendelssohn: What profit does thou bring to me? Regarding *זֶה*, vid., p. 642; *מה-זֶה* = *mah-zoth*, Gen. 3:13, where it is shown that the demonstrative pronoun serves here to sharpen the interrogative: What then, what in all the world!

After this revelling in sensual enjoyment has been proved to be a fruitless experiment, he searches whether wisdom and folly cannot be bound together in a way leading to the object aimed at.

Ecclesiastes 2:3. "I searched in my heart, (henceforth) to nourish my body with wine, while my heart had the direction by means of wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what it was good for the children of men that

they should do, all the number of the days of their life." After he became conscious that unbridled sensual intoxication does not lead to the wished-for end, he looked around him farther, and examined into the following reception for happiness. Inappropriately, Zöckl., with Hengst.: "I essayed in my heart to nourish ..." *תִּגְדֹּר* does not mean *probare*, but *explorare*, to spy out, Num. 10:33, and frequently in the Book of Koheleth (here and at 1:13; 7:25) of mental searching and discovery (Targ. *לְמִשְׁוֹךְ אֲלָל*). With *לְמִשְׁוֹךְ* there then follows the new thing that is contrived. If we read *מִשְׁךְ* and *נָהַג* in connection, then the idea of drawing a carriage, Isa. 5:18, cf. Deut. 21:3, and of driving a carriage, 2 Sam. 6:3, lies near; according to which Hitzig explains: "Wine is compared to a draught beast such as a horse, and he places wisdom as the driver on the box, that his horse may not throw him into a ditch or a morass." But *moshēk* is not the wine, but the person himself who makes the trial; and *nohēg* is not the wisdom, but the heart,—the former thus only the means of guidance; no man expresses himself thus: I draw the carriage by means of a horse, and I guide it by means of a driver. Rightly the Syr.: "To delight (*לְמַבְסִמֵּן*, from *בָּסַם*, *oblectare*) my flesh with wine." Thus also the Targ. and the Venet., by "drawing the flesh." The metaphor does not accord with the Germ. *ziehen* = to nourish by caring for (for which *רָבָה* is used); it is more natural, with Gesen., to compare the passing of *trahere* into *tractare*, e.g., in the expression *se benignius tractare* (Horace, *Ep.* 1:17); but apart from the fact that *trahere* is a word of doubtful etymology, *tractare* perhaps attains the meaning of attending to, using, managing, through the intermediate idea of moving hither and thither, which is foreign to the Heb. *מִשְׁךְ*, which means only to draw,—to draw to oneself, and hold fast (*attractum sive prehensum tenere*). As the Talm. *מִשְׁךְ* occurs in the sense of "to refresh," e.g., *Chagiga* 14a: "The Haggadists (in contradistinction to the Halachists) refresh the heart of a man as with water" (vid., p. 193);

so here, “to draw the flesh” = to bring it into willing obedience by means of pleasant attractions.

The phrase which follows: *vlibbi nohēg bahhochmāh*, is conditioning: While my heart had the direction by means of wisdom; or, perhaps in accordance with the more modern *usus loq.* (vid., p. 639): While my heart guided, demeaned, behaved itself with wisdom. Then the inf. *limshok*, depending on *tarti* as its obj., is carried forward with *vlěhhoz bsichluth*. Plainly the subject treated of is an intermediate thing (Bardach: מְמַצֵּט). He wished to have enjoyment, but in measure, without losing himself in enjoyment, and thereby destroying himself. He wished to give himself over to sweet *desipere*, but yet with wise self-possession (because it is sadly true that *ubi mel ibi fel*) to lick the honey and avoid the gall. There are drinkers who know how to guide themselves so that they do not end in drunken madness; and there are habitual pleasure-seekers who yet know how so far to control themselves, that they do not at length become *roués*. Koheleth thus gave himself to a foolish life, yet tempered by wisdom, till there dawned upon him a better light upon the way to true happiness.

The expression of the *donec viderem* is old Heb. Instead of אֲיִיָּה טוֹב, *quidnam sit bonum* in indirect interrog. (as 11:6, cf. Jer. 6:16), the old form מַה טוֹב (Ecclesiastes 6:12) would lie at least nearer. *Asher yāśsu* may be rendered: *quod faciant* or *ut faciant*; after 2:24; 3:22; 5:4; 7:18, the latter is to be assumed. The accus. designation of time, “through the number of days of their life,” is like 5:17; 6:12. We have not, indeed, to translate with Knobel: “the few days of their life,” but yet there certainly lies in מְסֻפָּר the idea that the days of man’s life are numbered, and that thus even if they are not few but many (Ecclesiastes 6:3), they do not endure for ever.

The king now, in the verse following, relates his undertakings for the purpose of gaining the joys of life in fellowship with wisdom, and first,

how he made architecture and gardening serviceable to this new style of life.

Ecclesiastes 2:4–6. “I undertook great works, built me houses, planted me vineyards. I made me gardens and parks, and planted therein all kinds of fruit-trees. I made me water-pools to water therewith a forest bringing forth trees.” The expression, “I made great my works,” is like 1:16; the verb contains the adj. as its obj. The love of wisdom, a sense of the beautiful in nature and art, a striving after splendour and dignity, are fundamental traits in Solomon’s character. His reign was a period of undisturbed and assured peace. The nations far and near stood in manifold friendly relations with him. Solomon was “the man of rest,” 1 Chron. 22:9; his whole appearance was as it were the embodied glory itself that had blossomed from out of the evils and wars of the reign of David. The Israelitish commonwealth hovered on a pinnacle of worldly glory till then unattained, but with the danger of falling and being lost in the world. The whole tendency of the time followed, as it were, a secular course, and it was Solomon first of all whom the danger of the love of the world, and of worldly conformity to which he was exposed, brought to ruin, and who, like so many of the O.T. worthies, began in the spirit and ended in the flesh. Regarding his buildings,—the house of the forest of Lebanon, the pillared hall (porch), the hall of judgment, the palace intended for himself and the daughter of Pharaoh,—*vid.* the description in 1 Kings 7:1–12, gathered from the annals of the kingdom; 1 Kings 9:15–22 = 2 Chron. 8:3–6, gives an account of Solomon’s separate buildings (to which also the city of Millo belongs), and of the cities which he built; the temple, store-cities, treasure-cities, etc., are naturally not in view in the passage before us, where it is not so much useful buildings, as rather buildings for pleasure (1 Kings 9:19), that are referred to. Vineyards, according to 1 Chron. 27:27, belonged to David’s royal domain; a vineyard in Baal-hamon which Solomon possessed, but appears at a later period to have given up, is mentioned at the close of the Song. That he was fond of

gardening, appears from manifold expressions in the Song; delight in the life and movements of the natural world, and particularly in plants, is a prominent feature in Solomon's character, in which he agrees with Shulamith. The Song, 6:2, represents him in the garden at the palace. We have spoken under the Song, 6:11f., of the gardens and parks at Etam, on the south-west of Bethlehem. Regarding the originally Persian word *pardēs* (plur. *pardesim*, Mishnic *pardesoth*), vid., under Song, 4:13; regarding the primary meaning of *brēchah* (plur. const. *brēchoth*, in contradistinction to *birchoth*, blessings), the necessary information is found under Song 7:5. These Solomonic pools are at the present day to be seen near old Etam, and the clause here denoting a purpose, "to water from them a forest which sprouted trees, i.e., brought forth sprouting trees," is suitable to these; for verbs of flowing and swarming, also verbs of growing, thought of transitively, may be connected with obj.-accus., Ewald, § 281b; cf. under Isa. 5:6. Thus, as he gave himself to the building of houses, the care of gardens, and the erection of pools, so also to the cultivation of forests, with the raising of new trees.

Another means, wisely considered as productive of happiness, was a large household and great flocks of cattle, which he procured for himself.

Ecclesiastes 2:7. "I procured servants and maidens, and also I obtained servants born in the house; also the possession of flocks; I obtained many horned and small cattle before all who were in Jerusalem before me." The obtaining of these possessions is, according to Gen. 17:12ff., to be understood of purchase. There is a distinction between the slaves, male and female (*mancipia*), obtained by purchase, and those who were home-born (*vernae*), the בְּנֵי (יְלִידֵי) בַּיִת, who were regarded as the chief support of the house (Gen. 14:14), on account of their attachment to it, and to this day are called (Arab.) *fada wayyt*, as those who offer themselves a sacrifice for it, if need be. Regarding לֵי הָיָה, in the sense of increasing possession, vid., Song, p. 155; and regarding הָיָה

for הָיָה, vid., at 1:10, 16; at all events, the sing. of the pred. may be explained from this, that the persons and things named are thought of in the mass, as at Zech. 11:5, Joel 1:20 (although the idea there may be also individualizing); but in the use of the pass., as at Gen. 35:26, Dan. 9:24, the Semite custom is different, inasmuch as for it the passive has the force of an active without a definite subject, and thus with the most general subject; and as to the case lying before us in v. 7, we see from Ex. 12:49, cf. Gen. 15:17, that הָיָה (יָהִי) in such instances is thought of as neut. According to Gen. 26:14 and the passage before us, מִקְנֵה לַי lay nearer than מִקְנֵה, but the primary form instead of the connecting form is here the traditional reading; we have thus apposition (*Nebenordnung*) instead of subordination (*Annexion*), as in *zvahim shlamim*, Ex. 24:5, and in *habbaqar hannhosheth*, 2 Kings 16:17, although *vaqar vatson* may also be interpreted as the accus. of the more accurate definition: the possession of flocks consisting in cattle and sheep. But this manner of construction is, for a book of so late an origin, too artificial. What it represents Solomon as saying is consistent with historical fact; at the consecration of the temple he sacrificed hecatombs, 1 Kings 8:63; and the daily supply for the royal kitchen, which will at the same time serve to show the extent of the royal household, was, according to 1 Kings 5:2f., enormous.

There now follows the enumeration of riches and jewels which were a delight to the eye; and finally, the large provision made for revelling in the pleasures of music and of sensual love.

Ecclesiastes 2:8. "I heaped up for myself also silver and gold, and the peculiar property of kings and of countries; I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the children of men: mistress and mistresses." The verb בָּנֵשׁ בָּנֵשׁ, συναγειν, is common to all Semitic dialects (also the to Assyrian), and especially peculiar to the more recent Heb., which forms from it the name of the religious community συναγωγῆ, בְּנֵשֶׁת; it is used here of that which is

brought together merely for the purpose of possession. *Sgüllah* (from *sagal*, Targ., to make oneself possess), properly possession, and that something which specially and peculiarly belongs to one as his property; the word is here meant collect., as at 1 Chron. 29:3: that which only kings and individual countries possess. The interchange of *mlachim*, which is without the article, with the determ. *hammdinoth*, is arbitrary: something special, such as that which a king possesses, the specialities which countries possess,—one country this, and another that. The *hammdinoth* are certainly not exclusively the regions embraced within the dominion of Solomon (Zöckl.), as, according to Esth. 1:1, the Persian kingdom was divided into 127 *mdinoth*. Solomon had a fleet which went to Ophir, was in a friendly relation with the royal house of Tyre, the metropolis of many colonies, and ruled over a widely-extended kingdom, bound by commerce with Central Asia and Africa.—His desires had thus ample opportunity to stretch beyond the limits of his own kingdom, and facilities enough for procuring the peculiar natural and artistic productions which other lands could boast of. *Mdinah* is, first of all, a country, not as a territory, but as under one government (cf. 5:7); in the later philosophical language it is the Heb. word for the Greek πολιτεία; in the passage before us, *mdinoth* is, however, not different from ארצות.

From the singing men and singing women who come into view here, not as appertaining to the temple service (vid., the Targ.), with which no singing women were connected, but as connected with the festivities of the court (2 Sam. 19:36; cf. Isa. 5:12), advance is made to *shiddah vshiddoth*; and since these are designated by the preceding וְתַעֲנוּגוֹת (not וְתַעֲנוּגוֹת) *bne hāādām*, especially as objects and means of earthly pleasure, and since, according to 7:7, sexual love is the fairest and the most pleasant, in a word, the most attractive of all earthly delights (Solomon's *luxus*, also here contradicting the law of the king, Deut. 17:17, came to a height, according to 1 Kings 11:3,

after the example of Oriental rulers, in a harem of not fewer than one thousand women, princesses and concubines), of necessity, the expression *shiddah vshiddoth* must denote a multitude of women whom the king possessed for his own pleasure. Cup-bearers, male and female (Syr., LXX), cannot at all be understood, for although it may be said that the enumeration thus connects itself with the before-named בְּיָיִן, yet this class of female attendants are not numbered among the highest human pleasures; besides, with such an explanation one must read וְשָׂדָה וְשָׂדָה, and, in addition, אֲדָשׁ (to throw, to pour to, or pour out), to which this Heb. שָׂדָה may correspond, is nowhere used of the pouring out of wine. Rather might שָׂדָה, like אֲדָשׁ, *hydria*, be the name of a vessel from which one pours out anything, according to which Aq. translates by κυλίκιον καὶ κυλίκια, Symmachus, after Jerome, by *mensurarum* (read *mensarum*) *species et appositioines*, and Jerome, *scyphos et urceos in ministerio ad vina fundenda*; but this word for *klē mashkēh*, 1 Kings 10:21 (= 2 Chron. 9:20), is not found. Also the Targ., which translates by *dimasaya uvē vnavan*, public baths (δημόσια), and *balneae*, vindicates this translation by referring the word to the verb אֲדָשׁ, “with pipes which pour out (אֲדָשׁ) tepid water, and pipes which pour out hot water.” But this explanation is imaginary; שָׂדָה occurs in the Mishna, *Mikwaoth* (of plunge-baths) 6:5, but there it denotes a chest which, when it swims in the water, makes the plunge-bath unsuitable. Such an untenable conceit also is the translation suggested by Kimchi, כְּלֵי זֶמֶר, according to which the Event. σύστημα καὶ συστήματα (in a musical sense: *concertus*), and Luther: “all kinds of musical instruments;” the word has not this meaning; Orelli, *Sanchuniathon*, p. 33, combines therewith Σιδών, according to the Phoenician myth, the inventress of the artistic song. The explanation by Kimchi is headed, “Splendour of every kind;” Ewald, Elster, and Zöckler find therein a general expression,

following *taanugoth*: great heap and heaps = in great abundance [*die Hülle und Fülle*]. But the synon. of כבוד, “splendour,” is not שד, but עז; and that שדד, like עצם, is referred to a great number, is without proof. Thus *shiddah vshiddoth* will denote something definite; besides, “a large number” finds its expression in the climactic union of words. In the Jerus. Talm. *Taanith* 4:5, *shiddah* must, according to the gloss, be the name of a chariot, although the subject there is not that of motion forward, or moving quickly; it is there announced that *Sichîn*, not far from Sepphoris, a place famed also for its pottery, formerly possessed 80 such *shiddoth* wholly of metal. The very same word is explained by Rashi, *Baba kamma* ix. 3, *Shabbath* 120a, *Erubin* 30b, *Gittin* 8b, 68a, *Chagiga* 25a, and elsewhere, of a carriage of wood, and especially of a chariot for women and distinguished persons. The combination of the synonyms, *shiddah uthivah umigdal*, does not in itself mean more than a chest; and Rashi himself explains, *Kethuboth* 65a, *quolphi dashidah* of the lock of a chest (*argaz*); and the author of *Aruch* knows no other meaning than that of a repository such as a chest. But in passages such as *Gittin* 8b, the *shiddah* is mentioned as a means of transport; it is to all appearance a chest going on wheels, moved forward by means of wheels, but on that very account not a state-chariot. Rashi’s tradition cannot be verified.

Böttcher, in the *Neue Aehrenlese*, adduces for comparison the Syr. *Shydlo*, which, according to Castelli, signifies *navis magna, corbita, arca*; but from a merchant ship and a portable chest, it is a great way to a lady’s palanquin. He translates: palanquin and palinquin = one consignment to the harem after another. Gesen., according to Rödiger, *Thes.* 1365b, thinks that women are to be understood; for he compares the Arab. *z’ynat*, which signifies a women’s carriage, and then the woman herself (cf. our *Frauenzimmer*, women’s apartment, women, like *Odaliske*, from the Turk. *oda*, apartment). But this all stands or falls with that gloss of Rashi’s: *’agalah lmerkavoth nashim usarim*. Meanwhile, of all the

explanations as yet advanced, this last [of splendid coaches, palanquins] is the best; for it may certainly be supposed that the words *shiddah vshiddoth* are meant of women. Aben Ezra explains on this supposition, *shiddoth* = *shvuyoth*, females captured in war; but unwarrantably, because as yet Solomon had not been engaged in war; others (vid., Pinsker’s *Zur Gesch. des Karaismus*, p. 296), recently Bullock, connect it with *shadäim*, in the sense of (Arab.) *nahidah* (a maiden with swelling breast); Knobel explains after *shadad*, to barricade, to shut up, *occlusa*, the female held in custody (cf. *bthulah*, the separated one, virgin, from *bathal*, cogn. *badal*); Hitzig, “cushions,” “bolsters,” from *shanad*, which, like (Arab.) *firash*, λέχος, is then transferred to the *juncta toro*. Nothing of all that is satisfactory. The Babyl. Gemara, *Gittin* 68a, glosses וְגַן וְבָתַיִם by “reservoirs and baths,” and then further says that in the west (Palestine) they say אַתְּדָשׁ, chests (according to Rashi: chariots); but that here in this country (i.e., in Babylon) they translate *shiddah vshiddoth* by *shēdah vshēdathin*, which is then explained, “demons and demonesses,” which Solomon had made subservient to him. This haggadic-mytholog. interpretation is, linguistically at least, on the right track. A demon is not so named from fluttering or moving to and fro (Levy, Schönhak), for there is no evidence in the Semitic language of the existence of a verb שוד, to flee; also not from a verb *sadad*, which must correspond to the Heb. השתחווה, in the sense of to adore (Oppert’s *Inscription du palais de Khorsabad*, 1863, p. 96); for this meaning is more than doubtful, and, besides, שד is an active, and not a passive idea,—much rather שד, Assyr. *sîd*, Arab. *sayyid*, signifies the mighty, from שד, to force, Ps. 91:6. In the Arab. (cf. the Spanish *Cid*) it is uniformly the name of a lord, as subduing, ruling, mastering (*sabid*), and the fem. *sayyidat*, of a lady, whence the vulgar Arab. *sitti* = my lady, and *sîdi* = my lord. Since שדד means the same as שוד, and in Heb. is more commonly used than it,

so also the fem. form *שָׂדָה* is possible, so much the more as it may have originated from *שָׂדָה*, 5 *שָׂדָה* = *שָׂדָה*, by a sharpening contraction, like *סָגִים*, from *סָגִים* (Olsh. § 83c), perhaps intentionally to make *שָׂדָה*, a demones, and the name of a lady (*donna = domina*) unlike. Accordingly we translate, with Gesen. and Meyer in their *Handwört.*: “lady and ladies;” for we take *shiddoth* as a name of the ladies of the harem, like *shēglath* (Assyr. *saklāti*) and *lhhenath* in the book of Daniel, on which Ahron b. Joseph the Karaite remarks: *shedah hinqaroth shagal*. The connection expressing an innumerable quantity, and at the same time the greatest diversity, is different from the genitival *dor dorim*, generation of generations, i.e., lasting through all generations, Ps. 72:5, from the permutative heightening the idea: *rahham rahhamathaim*, one damsel, two damsels, Judg. 5:30, and from that formed by placing together the two gram. genders, comprehending every species of the generic conception: *mash’ēn umash’ēnah*, Isa. 3:3 (vid., comm. *l.c.*, and Ewald, § 172b). Also the words cited by Ewald (Syr.), *rogo urógo*, “all possible pleasures” (Cureton’s *Spicil.* p. 10), do not altogether accord with this passage for they heighten, like *mod mod*, by the repetition of the same expression. But similar is the Arab. scheme, *mal wamwal*, “possession and possessions,” i.e., exceeding great riches, where the collective idea, in itself according to its indetermination free scope to the imagination, is multiplied by the plur. being further added. After Koheleth has enumerated all that he had provided for the purpose of gratifying his lusts, but without losing himself therein, he draws the conclusion, which on this occasion also shows a perceptible deficit.

Ecclesiastes 2:9–11. “And I became great, and was always greater than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And all that mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I refused not any kind of joy to my heart; for my heart had joy of all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour. And I turned myself to all the works which my hands

had done, and to the labour which I had laboured to accomplish: and, behold, all was vain, and windy effort, and there was no true profit under the sun.” In *vhosaphti* there is here no obj. as at 1:16; the obj. is the *gdullah*, the greatness, to be concluded and thought of from *vgadalti*, “and I became great.” To the impers. *הָיָה* for *הָיָה*, 7b, cf. 7a, 1:16, 10. He became great, and always greater, viz., in the possession of all the good things, the possession of which seemed to make a man happy on this earth. And what he resolved upon, in the midst of this *dulcis insania*, viz., to deport himself as a wise man, he succeeded in doing: his wisdom forsook him not, viz., the means adapted to the end, and ruling over this colossal apparatus of sensual lust; *אֵל*, as e.g., at Ps. 16:6, belongs to the whole clause; and *עָמַד*, with *ל*, does not mean here to stand by, sustain (Herzfeld, Ewald, Elster), which it might mean as well as *עָמַד עָלַי*, Dan. 12:1, but to continue (vid., p. 639), as Jerome, and after him, Luther, translates: *sapientia quoquo perseveravit mecum*; the Targ. connects the ideas of continuance (LXX, Syr., Venet.) and of help; but the idea intended is that of continuance, for *נָהַג*, e.g., does not refer to helping, but self-maintaining.

Ecclesiastes 2:10. Thus become great and also continuing wise, he was not only in a condition to procure for himself every enjoyment, but he also indulged himself in everything; all that his eyes desired, i.e., all that they saw, and after which they made him lust (Deut. 14:26) (cf. 1 John 2:16), that he did not refuse to them (*אֵל*, *subtrahere*), and he kept not back his heart from any kind of joy (*מִנֵּי*, with *min* of the thing refused, as at Num. 24:11, etc., oftener with *min*, of him to whom it is refused, e.g., Gen. 30:2), for (here, after the foregoing negations, coinciding with *immo*) his heart had joy of all his work; and this, viz., this enjoyment in full measure, was his part of all his work. The palindromic form is like 1:6; 4:1; cf. *Isa.* p. 411. We say in Heb. as well as in German: to have joy in (*אֵל*, *an*, ב), anything, joy over (*über*, *עָל*) anything, or joy of

(*von*, מן) anything; Koheleth here purposely uses *min*, for he wishes to express not that the work itself was to him an object and reason of joy, but that it became to him a well of joy (cf. Prov. 5:18; 2 Chron. 20:27). Falsely, Hahn and others: after my work (*min*, as e.g., Ps. 73:20), for thereby the causative connection is obliterated: *min* is the expression of the mediate cause, as the concluding sentence says: Joy was that which he had of all his work—this itself brought care and toil to him; joy, made possible to him thereby, was the share which came to him from it.

Ecclesiastes 2:11. But was this יִתְרוֹן a חֵלֶק—was this gain that fell to him a true, satisfying, pure gain? With the words *uphanithi ani* (vid., p. 198) he proposes this question, and answers it. פָּנָה (to turn to) is elsewhere followed by expressions of motion to an end; here, as at Job 6:28, by פָּנָה, by virtue of a *constructio praegnans*: I turned myself, fixing my attention on all my works which my hands accomplished. *La'asoth* is, as at Gen. 2:3 (vid., l.c.), equivalent to *perficiendo*, carrying out, viz., such works of art and of all his labour. The exclamation “behold” introduces the *summa summarum*. Regarding יִתְרוֹן, vid., 1:3. Also this way of finding out that which was truly good showed itself to be false. Of all this enjoyment, there remained nothing but the feeling of emptiness. What he strove after appeared to him as the wind; the satisfaction he sought to obtain at such an expense was nothing else than a momentary delusion. And since in this search after the true happiness of life he was in a position more favourable for such a purpose than almost any other man, he is constrained to draw the conclusion that there is no יִתְרוֹן, i.e., no real enduring and true happiness, from all labour under the sun.

The End of the Wise Man the Same as that of the Fool, 2:12–17

After Koheleth has shown, 1:12ff., that the striving after wisdom does not satisfy,

inasmuch as, far from making men happy, its possession only increases their inward conflicts, he proposes to himself the question whether or not there is a difference between wisdom and folly, whether the former does not far excel the latter. He proceeds to consider this question, for it is more appropriate to him, the old much-experienced king, than to others.

Ecclesiastes 2:12. “And I turned myself to examine wisdom, and madness, and folly: for what is the man who could come after the king, him whom they have made so long ago!”

Mendelssohn’s translation, 12a: “I abandoned my design of seeking to connect wisdom with folly and madness,” is impossible, because for such a rendering we should have had at least מְלִרְאוֹת instead of לְרְאוֹת. Hitzig, otherwise followed by Stuart: “I turned myself to examine me wisdom, and, lo, it was madness as well as folly.” This rendering is impossible also, for in such a case וְהִנֵּה ought to have stood as the

result, after חֲכָמָה. The passage, Zech. 14:6, cited by Hitz., does not prove the possibility of such a brachyology, for there we read not *vqaroth vqeppayon*, but *qaroth iqppaun* (the splendid ones, i.e., the stars, will draw themselves together, i.e., will become dark bodies). The two *vavs* are not correlative, which is without example in the usage of this book, but copulative: he wishes to contemplate (Zöckler and others) wisdom on the one side, and madness and folly on the other, in their relation to each other, viz., in their relative worth.

Hitzig’s ingenuity goes yet further astray in 12b: “For what will the man do who comes after the king? (He shall do) what was long ago his (own) doing, i.e., inheriting from the king the throne, he will not also inherit his wisdom.”

Instead of *āsūhū*, he reads *āsōhū*, after Ex. 18:18; but the more modern author, whose work we have here before us, would, instead of this anomalous form, use the regular form עָשׂוֹתוֹ; but, besides, the expression *ēth asher-kvar ‘asotho*, “(he will do) what long ago was his doing,” is not Heb.; the words ought to have been *kasotho kvar khen i’sah*, or at least *‘asāhū*.

If we compare 12*b* with 18*b*, the man who comes after the king appears certainly to be his successor. But by this supposition it is impossible to give just effect to the relation (assigning a reason or motive) of 12*b* to 12*a* expressed by כִּי. When I considered, Knobel regards Koheleth as saying, that a fool would be heir to me a wise man, it appeared strange to me, and I was led to compare wisdom and folly to see whether or not the wise man has a superiority to the fool, or whether his labour and his fate are vanity, like those of the fool. This is in point of style absurd, but it is much more absurd logically. And who then gave the interpreter the right to stamp as a fool the man who comes after the king? In the answer: "That which has long ago been done," must lie its justification; for this that was done long ago naturally consists, as Zöckler remarks, in foolish and perverse undertakings, certainly in the destruction of that which was done by the wise predecessor, in the lavish squandering of the treasures and goods collected by him. More briefly, but in the same sense, Burger: *Nihil quod a solita hominum agendi ratione recedit*. But in v. 19, Koheleth places it as a question whether his successor will be a wise man or a fool, while here he would presuppose that "naturally," or as a matter of course, he will be a fool. In the matter of style, we have nothing to object to the translation on which Zöckler, with Rabm., Rosenm., Knobel, Hengst., and others, proceeds; the supplying of the verb יַעֲשֶׂה to *meh hāādām* [= what can the man do?] is possible (cf. Mal. 2:15), and the neut. interpret. of the suffix of עָשׂוֹהוּ is, after 7:13, Amos 1:3, Job 31:11, admissible; but the reference to a successor is not connected with the course of the thoughts, even although one attaches to the plain words a meaning which is foreign to them. The words אֵת ... עָשׂוֹהוּ are accordingly not the answer to the question proposed, but a component part of the question itself. Thus Ewald, and with him Elster, Heiligst., construes: "How will the man be who will follow the king, compared with him whom they made (a king)

long ago, i.e., with his predecessor?" But אֵת, in this pregnant sense, "compared with," is without example, at least in the Book of Koheleth, which generally does not use it as a prep.; and, besides, this rendering, by introducing the successor on the throne, offends against the logic of the relation of 12*b* to 12*a*.

The motive of Koheleth's purpose, to weigh wisdom and folly against each other as to their worth, consists in this, that a king, especially such an one as Solomon was, has in the means at his disposal and in the extent of his observation so much more than every other, that no one who comes after him will reach a different experience. This motive would be satisfactorily expressed on the supposition that the answer begins with אֵת, if one should read

עָשׂוֹהוּ for עָשׂוֹהוּ: he will be able to do

(accomplish) nothing but what he (the king) has long ago done, i.e., he will only repeat, only be able to confirm, the king's report. But if we take the text as it here stands, the meaning is the same; and, besides, we get rid of the harsh ellipsis *mēh hāādām* for *mēh yāāsēh hāādām*. We translate: for what is the man who might come after the king, him whom they have made so long ago! The king whom they made so long ago is Solomon, who has a richer experience, a more comprehensive knowledge, the longer the time (viz., from the present time backwards) since he occupied the throne. Regarding the expression *eth asher = quem*, instead of the *asher* simply, vid., Köhler under Zech. 12:10.

עָשׂוֹהוּ, with the most general subj., is not

different from נַעֲשֶׂה, which, particularly in the Book of Daniel (e.g., 4:28f.), has frequently an active construction, with the subject unnamed, instead of the passive (Gesen. § 137, margin). The author of the Book of Koheleth, alienated from the theocratic side of the kingdom of Israel, makes use of it perhaps not unintentionally; besides, Solomon's elevation to the throne was, according to 1 Kings 1, brought about very much by human agency; and one may, if he will, think of the people in the word

'*asuhu* also, according to 1 Kings 1:39, who at last decided the matter. *Meh* before the letters *hheth* and *ayin* commonly occurs: according to the Masora, twenty-four times; before other initial letters than these, eight times, and three of these in the Book of Koheleth before the letter *he*, 2:12, 22; 7:10. The words are more an exclamation than a question; the exclamation means: What kind of a man is that who could come after the king! cf. "What wickedness is this!" etc., Judg. 20:12, Josh. 22:16, Ex. 18:14, 1 Kings 9:13, i.e., as standing behind with reference to me—the same figure of *extenuatio*, as *mah adam*, Ps. 144:3; cf. 8:5.

There now follows an account of what, on the one side, happened to him thus placed on a lofty watch-tower, such as no other occupied.

Ecclesiastes 2:13, 14a. "And I saw that wisdom has the advantage over folly, as light has the advantage over darkness. The wise man has eyes in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness." In the sacred Scriptures, "light" is generally the symbol of grace, Ps. 43:3, but also the contrast of an intellectually and morally darkened state, Isa. 51:4. To know a thing is equivalent to having light on it, and seeing it in its true light (Ps. 36:10); wisdom is thus compared to light; folly is once, Job 38:19, directly called "darkness." Thus wisdom stands so much higher than folly, as light stands above darkness. *יִתְרוֹן*, which hitherto denoted actual result, enduring gain, signifies here preference (vid., p. 638); along with *בִּיתְרוֹן* there is also found the form *בִּיתְרוֹן* (vid., Prov. 30:17). The fool walks in darkness: he is blind although he has eyes (Isa. 43:8), and thus has as good as none,—he wants the spiritual eye of understanding (Ecclesiastes 10:3); the wise man, on the other hand, his eyes are in his head, or, as we also say: he has eyes in his head,—eyes truly seeing, looking at and examining persons and things. That is the one side of the relation of wisdom to folly as put to the test. The other side of the relation is the sameness of the result in which the elevation of wisdom above folly terminates.

Ecclesiastes 2:14b, 15. "And I myself perceived that one experience happeneth to them all. And I said in my heart, As it will happen to the fool, it will happen also to me; and why have I then been specially wise? Thus I spake then in my heart, that this also is vain." Zöckler gives to *גַּם* an adversative sense; but this *gam* (= ὁμοως, *similiter*) stands always at the beginning of the clause, Ewald, § 354a. *Gam-ani* corresponds to the Lat. *ego idem*, which gives two predicates to one subject; while *et ipse* predicates the same of the one of two subjects as it does of the other (Zumpt, § 697). The second *gam-ani* serves for the giving of prominence to the object, and here precedes, after the manner of a substantival clause (cf. Isa. 45:12; Ezek. 33:17; 2 Chron. 28:10), as at Gen. 24:27; cf. Gesen. § 121. 3. *Miqrēh* (from *קָרָה*, to happen, to befall) is *quiquid alicui accidit* (in the later philosoph. terminol. *accidens*; Venet. *συμβεβηκός*); but here, as the connection shows, that which finally puts an end to life, the final event of death. By the word *וְדַ* the author expresses what he had observed on reflection; by *אָסֶה ... בְּלִי*, what he said inwardly to himself regarding it; and by *בְּלִי בְּדַ*, what sentence he passed thereon with himself. *Lammah* asks for the design, as *maddu'a* for the reason. *אֵי* is either understood temporally: then when it is finally not better with me than with the fool (Hitz. from the standpoint of the dying hour), or logically: if yet one and the same event happeneth to the wise man and to the fool (Esst.); in the consciousness of the author both are taken together. The *וְ* of the conclusion refers, not, as at 1:17, to the endeavouring after and the possession of wisdom, but to this final result making no difference between wise men and fools. This fate, happening to all alike, is *בְּלִי*, a vanity rendering all vain, a nullity levelling down all to nothing, something full of contradictions, irrational. Paul also (Rom. 8:20) speaks of this destruction, which at last comes upon all, as a *ματαιότης*.

The author now assigns the reason for this discouraging result.

Ecclesiastes 2:16. “For no remembrance of the wise, as of the fool, remains for ever; since in the days that are to come they are all forgotten. And how dieth the wise man: as the fool!” As in 1:11, so here זָכְרוֹן is the principal form, not different from זָכַר. Having no remembrance forever, is equivalent to having no eternal endurance, having simply no onward existence (Ecclesiastes 9:6). עַם is both times the comparat. combin., as at 7:11; Job 9:26; 37:18; cf. יָחַד, Ps. 49:11. There are, indeed, individual historically great men, the memory of whom is perpetuated from generation to generation in words and in monuments; but these are exceptions, which do not always show that posterity is able to distinguish between wise men and fools. As a rule, men have a long appreciating recollection of the wise as little as they have of the fools, for long ago (vid., *bshekvar*, p. 640) in the coming days (הַיְּהִי הַבֵּיָּא, accus. of the time, like the ellipt. הַבֵּיָּא, Isa. 27:6) all are forgotten; הַבֵּיָּא is, as at Ps. 14:3, meant personally: the one as the other; and נִשְׁכַּח is rendered by the Masora, like 9:6, כִּבְּרָ אָבִי, as the pausal form of the finite; but is perhaps thought of as part., denoting that which only in the coming days will become too soon a completed fact, since those who survive go from the burial of the one, as well as from that of the other, to the ordinary duties of the day. Death thus sinks the wise man, as it does the fool, in eternal oblivion; it comes to both, and brings the same to both, which extorted from the author the cry: How dieth the wise man? as the fool! Why is the fate which awaits both thus the same! This is the pointed, sarcastic אֵיךְ (how!) of the satirical Mashal, e.g., Isa. 14:4, Ezek. 26:17; and יָמוּת is = *moriendum est*, as at 2 Sam. 3:3, *moriendum erat*. Rambach well: אֵיךְ *est h. l. particula admirationis super rei indignitate*. What happened to the author from this sorrowful discovery he now states.

Ecclesiastes 2:17. “The life became hateful to me; for the work which man accomplishes under the sun was grievous to me: because all is vain and windy effort.” He hated life; and the labour which is done under the sun, i.e., the efforts of men, including the fate that befalls men, appeared to him to be evil (repugnant). The LXX translate: πονηρὸν ἐπ’ ἐμέ; the Venet.: κακὸν ἐπ’ ἐμοί; and thus Hitzig: as a woeful burden lying on me. But רַע עָלַי is to be understood after *tov al*, Esth. 3:9, etc., cf. Ps. 16:6, and as synon. with לִפְנֵי or בְּעֵינַי (cf. Dan. 3:32), according to which Symmachus: κακὸν γάρ μοι ἐφάνη. This *al* belongs to the more modern *usus loq.*, cf. Ewald, § 217*i*. The end of the song was also again the grievous *ceterum censeo*: Vanity, and a labour which has wind as its goal, wind as its fruit.

The Vanity of Wealth Gathered with Care and Privation, 2:18–23

In view of death, which snatches away the wise man equally with the fool, and of the night of death, which comes to the one as to the other, deep dejection came upon him from another side.

Ecclesiastes 2:18. “And I hated all my labour with which I laboured under the sun, that I should leave it to the man who shall be after me;” i.e., not: who shall come into existence after me, but: who shall occupy my place after me. The fiction discovers itself here in the expression: “The king,” who would not thus express himself indefinitely and unsympathetically regarding his son and successor on the throne, is stripped of his historical individuality. The first and third *ש* are relat. pron. (*quem*, after the *schema egymologicum* עָמַל עָמַל, v. 11, 9:9, and *qui*), the second is relat. conj. (*eo quod*). The suffix of עָמַל refers to the labour in the sense of that which is obtained by wearisome labour, accomplished or collected with labour; cf. פֶּתַח, product, fruit, Gen. 4:12; עֲבוּדָה, effect, Isa. 32:17.

How this man will be circumstanced who will have at his disposal that for which he has not laboured, is uncertain.

Ecclesiastes 2:19. “And who knoweth whether he shall be wise or foolish? and he will have power over all my labour with which had wearied myself, and had acted wisely, under the sun: this also is vain.” הָ ... אֵין, instead of הָ ... אֵין, in the double question, as at Job 16:3. What kind of a man he will be no one can previously know, and yet this person will have free control (cf. שָׁלַט, p.641) over all the labour that the testator has wisely gained by labour—a hendiadys, for הִכָּחֵם with the obj. accus. is only in such a connection possible: “my labour which I, acting wisely, gained by labour.”

In view of this doubtful future of that which was with pains and wisely gained by him, his spirit sank within him.

Ecclesiastes 2:20. “Then I turned to give up my heart on account of [= to despair of] all the labour with which I wearied myself under the sun.” As at 1 Sam. 22:17f., Song 2:17, Jer. 41:14, סָבַב has here the intrans. meaning, to turn about (LXX ἐπέστρεψα = ἐπεστρεψάμην). Hitzig remarks that פָּנָה and שׁוּב signify, “to turn round in order to see,” and סָבַב, on the contrary, “to turn round in order to do.” But פָּנָה can also mean, “to turn round in order to do,” e.g., Lev. 26:9; and סָבַב, “to turn in order to examine more narrowly,” 7:25. The distinction lies in this, that פָּנָה signifies a clear turning round; סָבַב, a turning away from one thing to another, a turning in the direction of something new that presents itself (Ecclesiastes 4:1, 7; 9:11). The phrase, יָאֵשׁ אֶת-בְּלָבוֹ, closely corresponds to the Lat. *despondet animum*, he gives up his spirits, lets them sink, i.e., he despairs. The old language knows only נָתַתּוּ אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹ, to give oneself up, i.e., to give up hope in regard to anything; and נָתַתּוּ אֶת-נַפְשׁוֹ, given up, having no prospect, in despair. The Talm., however, uses along with *nithyāēsh*

(vid., p. 638) not only *noāsh*, but also יָאֵשׁ, in the sense of despair, or the giving up of all hope (subst. יָאֵשׁ), *Mezîa 21b*, from which it is at once evident that יָאֵשׁ is not to be thought of as causative (like the Arab. *ajjasa* and *aiasa*), but as simply transitive, with which, after the passage before us, לָבוֹ is to be thought of as connected. He turned round to give up all heart. He had no more any heart to labour.

Ecclesiastes 2:21. “For there is a man who labours with wisdom, and knowledge, and ability; and to a man who has not laboured for it, must he leave it as his portion: also that is vain, and a great evil.” Ewald renders: whose labour aims after wisdom. But וְיָוֵט דְּבָרָה do not denote obj. (for the obj. of עָמַל is certainly the portion which is to be inherited), but are particular designations of the way and manner of the labour. Instead of שָׁעָמַל, there is used the more emphatic form of the noun: שָׁעָמְלוֹ, who had his labour, and performed it; 1 Sam. 7:17, cf. Jer. 9:5 [6], “Thine habitation is in the midst of *deceit*,” and Hitz. under Job 9:27. *Kishron* is not ἀνδρεία (LXX), manliness, moral energy (Elster), but aptness, ability, and (as a consequence connecting itself therewith) success, good fortune, thus skilfulness conducting to the end (vid., p. 638). בּוֹ refers to the *object*, and יִתְּנֶנּוּ to the result of the work; הַחֶלֶק is the second obj.-accus., or, as we rather say, pred.-accus.: as his portion, viz., inheritance.

That what one has gained by skill and good fortune thus falls to the lot of another who perhaps recklessly squanders it, is an evil all the greater in proportion to the labour and care bestowed on its acquisition.

Ecclesiastes 2:22, 23. “For what has man of all his labour, and the endeavours of his heart with which he wearies himself under the sun? All his days are certainly in sorrows, and his activity in grief; his heart resteth not even in the night: also this is vain.” The question literally is: What is (comes forth, results) to a man from all his

labour; for “to become, to be, to fall to, happen to,” is the fundamental idea of הוּוּה (whence here הוּוּה, γυνόμενον, as at Neh. 6:6, γενησόμενος) or הוּוּה, the root signification of which is *deorsum ferri, cadere*, and then *accidere, fieri*, whence הוּוּה, eagerness precipitating itself upon anything (vid., under Prov. 10:3), or object.: fall, catastrophe, destruction. Instead of שְׁהוּוּה, there is here to be written שְׁהוּוּה, as at 3:18 שְׁהוּוּה. The question looks forward to a negative answer. What comes out of his labour for man? Nothing comes of it, nothing but disagreeableness. This negative contained in the question is established by כִּי, 23a. The form of the clause, “all his days are sorrows,” viz., as to their condition, follows the scheme, “the porch was 20 cubits,” 2 Chron. 3:4, viz., in measurement; or, “their feast is music and wine,” Isa. 5:12, viz., in its combination (vid., Philippi’s *Stat. Const.* p. 90ff.). The parallel clause is וְכַעַם עֲנִינֹו, not וְךָ; for the final syllable, or that having the accent on the penult, immediately preceding the *Athnach*-word, takes *Kametz*, as e.g., Lev. 18:5; Prov. 25:3; Isa. 65:17 (cf. Olsh. § 224, p. 440). Many interpreters falsely explain: *at aegritudo est velut quotidiana occupatio ejus*. For the sake of the parallelism, עֲנִינֹו (from עָנָה, to weary oneself with labour, or also to strive, aim; vid., *Psalmen*, ii. 390) is subj. not pred.: his endeavour is grief, i.e., brings only grief or vexation with it. Even in the night he has no rest; for even then, though he is not labouring, yet he is inwardly engaged about his labour and his plans. And this possession, acquired with such labour and restlessness, he must leave to others; for equally with the fool he fails under the stroke of death: he himself has no enjoyment, others have it; dying, he must leave all behind him,—threefold הַבֵּל הַבָּלִים, vv. 17, 21, 23, and thus הַבֵּל הַבָּלִים.

The Condition of Pure Enjoyment, 2:24–26

Is it not then foolish thus restlessly and with so much self-torment to labour for nothing? In view of the night of darkness which awaits man,

and the uncertain destiny of our possessions, it is better to make use of the present in a way as pleasant to ourselves as possible.

Ecclesiastes 2:24. “There is nothing better among men, than that one eat and drink, and that he should pamper his soul by his labour: this also have I seen, that it is in the hand of God.” The LXX, as well as the other Greek transl., and Jerome, had before them the words בְּאִדָּם שִׂיאֲכֹל. The former translates: “Man has not the good which he shall eat and drink,” i.e., also this that he eats ... is for him no true good; but the direct contrary of this is what Koheleth says. Jerome seeks to bring the thought which the text presents into the right track, by using the form of a question: *nonne melius est comedere ...*; against this 3:12, 22; 8:15, are not to be cited where אִין טוֹב stands in the dependent sentence; the thought is not thus to be improved; its form is not this, for טוֹב, beginning a sentence, is never interrog., but affirm.; thus אִין טוֹב is not = הֲלֹא טוֹב, but is a negative statement. It is above all doubt, that instead of שִׂיאֲכֹל בְּאִדָּם we must read מְשִׂיאֲכֹל, after 3:12, 22; 8:15; for, as at Job 33:17, the initial letter *mem* after the terminal *mem* has dropped out. Codd. of the LXX have accordingly corrected ὄ into πλὴν ὄ or εἰ μὴ ὄ (thus the Compl. Ald.), and the Syr. and Targ. render ש here by אֵלֵא and אֵלֵהוּן [unless that he eat]; Jerome also has *non est bonum homini nisi quod* in his *Comm.*; only the Venet. seeks to accommodate itself to the traditional text. Besides, only ם is to be inserted, not ם כִּי; for the phrase אֵלֵא כִּי is used, but not ש ם כִּי. Instead of *ba-a-da-m*, the form *la-a-da-m* would be more agreeable, as at 6:12; 8:15. Hitzig remarks, without proof, that *bāādām* is in accordance with later grammatical forms, which admit ם = “for” before the object. ם, 10:17, is neither prep. of the object, nor is ἐν, Sir. 3:7, the exponent of the dative (vid., Grimm). *Bāādām* signifies, as at 2 Sam. 23:3, and as ἐν ἀνθ., Sir. 11:14, *inter homines*; also

3:12 designates by טוב בָּם what among them (men) has to be regarded as good. It is interesting to see how here the ancient and the modern forms of the language run together, without the former wholly passing over into the latter; קָשָׁה, *quam ut edat*, is followed by norm. perfects, in accordance with that comprehensive peculiarity of the old syntax which Ewald, by an excellent figure, calls the dissolution of that which is coloured into grey. הָרַךְ טוב ... is equivalent to לוֹ הָרַךְ, Ps. 49:19, the causative rendering of the phrase טוב רָאָה, 3:13, or רַךְ טוֹבָה, 5:17; 6:6. It is well to attend to בְּעֵמְלוֹ [by his labour], which forms an essential component part of that which is approved of as good. Not a useless sluggard-life, but a life which connects together enjoyment and labour, is that which Koheleth thinks the best in the world. But this enjoyment, lightening, embellishing, seasoning labour, has also its *But: etiam hoc vidi e manu Dei esse (pendere)*. The order of the words harmonizes with this Lat.; it follows the scheme referred to at Gen. 1:4; cf. on the contrary, 3:6. Instead of גַּם-יָזָה, neut. by attraction, there is here the immediately neut. גַּם-יָזָה; the book uniformly makes use of this fem. form instead of זָאת (vid., p. 642). This or that is "in the hand of God," i.e., it is His gift, 3:13, v. 18, and it is thus conditioned by Him, since man cannot give it to himself; cf. *minni*, Isa. 30:1; *mimměnni*, Hos. 8:4; *mimměnnu*, 1 Kings 20:33. This dependence of the enjoyment of life on God is established.

Ecclesiastes 2:25. "For who can eat, and who can have enjoyment, without [= except from] Him?" Also here the traditional text is tenable: we have to read חוץ ממנו, after the LXX (which Jerome follows in his *Comm.*) and the Syr. If we adopt the text as it lies before us, then the meaning would be, as given by Gumpel, and thus translated by Jerome: *Quis ita devorabit et deliciis effluet ut ego?* But (1) the question thus understood would require יותר מִמְּנִי, which Gumpel and others silently substitute in place

of חוץ מִ; (2) this question, in which the king adjudicates to himself an unparalleled right to eat and to enjoy himself, would stand out of connection with that which precedes and follows. Even though with Ginsburg, after Rashi, Aben Ezra, and Rashbam, we find in ver. 25 the thought that the labourer has the first and nearest title to the enjoyment of the fruit of his labour (חוץ מִ; thus exemplif. as 4:8, לְמִי ... עַ), the continuation with כִּי, ver. 26, is unsuitable; for the natural sequence of the thoughts would then be this: But the enjoyment, far from being connected with the labour as its self-consequence and fruit, is a gift of God, which He gives to one and withholds from another. If we read מִמְּנִי, then the sequence of the thoughts wants nothing in syllogistic exactness. חוץ here has nothing in common with חוץ = Arab. *hât*, to proceed with a violent, impetuous motion, but, as at Job 20:2, is = Arab. *hss*, *stringere* (whence *hiss*, a sensible impression); the experience (vid., p. 637) here meant is one mediated by means of a pleasant external enjoyment. The LXX, Theod., and Syr. translate: (and who can) drink, which Ewald approves of, for he compares (Arab.) *hasa* (inf. *hasy*), to drink, to sip. But this Arab. verb is unheard of in Heb.; with right, Heiligst. adheres to the Arab., and at the same time the modern Heb. *hass*, חוץ, *sentire*, according to which Schultens, *quis sensibus indulserit*. חוץ ממנו is not = ולא מִ, "except from him" (Hitz., Zöckl.), but חוץ מן together mean "except;" cf. e.g., the Mishnic חוץ מִ' לאמנה וחוץ לִם, beyond the time and place suitable for the thank-offering, חוץ מאחד מהם, excepting one of the same, *Menachoth* vii. 3, for which the old Heb. would in the first case use בָּר (= Aram. לְבַד מִן or זולא בל, and in the second חוץ ממנו (vid., p. 637). Accordingly חוץ ממנו means *practer cum (Deum)*, i.e., unless he will it and make it possible, Old Heb. מִבְּ, Gen. 41:44.

In enjoyment man is not free, it depends not on his own will: labour and the enjoyment of it do

not stand in a necessary connection; but enjoyment is a gift which God imparts, according as He regards man as good, or as a sinner.

Ecclesiastes 2:26. “For to a man who appears to Him as good, He gave wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner He gave the work of gathering and heaping up, in order to give it to him who appears to Him as good: this also is vain, and grasping after the wind;” viz., this striving after enjoyment in and of the labour—it is “vain,” for the purpose and the issue lie far apart; and “striving after the wind,” because that which is striven for, when one thinks that he has it, only too often cannot be grasped, but vanishes into nothing. If we refer this sentence to a collecting and heaping up (Hengst., Grätz, and others), then the author would here come back to what has already been said, and that too in the foregoing section; the reference also to the arbitrary distribution of the good things of life on the part of God (Knobel) is inadmissible, because “this, although it might be called הבל, could not also be called רעות רוח (Hitz.); and perfectly inadmissible the reference to the gifts of wisdom, knowledge, and joy (Bullock), for referred to these the sentence gains a meaning only by introducing all kinds of things into the text which here lie out of the connection. Besides, what is here said has indeed a deterministic character, and לפניו, especially if it is thought of in connection with ולח, sounds as if to the good and the bad their objective worth and distinction should be adjudicated; but this is not the meaning of the author; the unreasonable thought that good or bad is what God’s arbitrary ordinance and judgment stamp it to be, is wholly foreign to him. The “good before Him” is he who appears as good before God, and thus pleases Him, because he is truly good; and the חוטא, placed in contrast, as at 7:26, is the sinner, not merely such before God, but really such; here לפניו has a different signification than when joined with טוב: one

who sins in the sight of God, i.e., without regarding Him (Luke 15:18, ἐνώπιον), serves sin. Regarding ענין, vid., under 23a: it denotes a business, *negotium*; but here such as one fatigues himself with, *quod negotium facessit*. Among the three *charismata*, joy stands last, because it is the turning-point of the series of thoughts: joy connected with wise, intelligent activity, is, like wisdom and intelligence themselves, a gift of God. The obj. of לָחַט (that He may give it) is the store gathered together by the sinner; the thought is the same as that at Prov. 13:22; 28:8, Job 27:16f. The perfect we have so translated, for that which is constantly repeating itself is here designated by the general expression of a thing thus once for all ordained, and thus always continued.

Ecclesiastes 3

The Short-Sightedness and Impotence of Man Over Against God the All-Conditioning, 3:1–15

As pure enjoyment stands not in the power of man, much rather is a gift of God which He bestows or denies to man according to His own will, so in general all happens when and how God wills, according to a world-plan, comprehending all things which man can neither wholly understand, nor in any respect change,—feeling himself in all things dependent on God, he ought to learn to fear Him.

All that is done here below is ordered by God at a time appointed, and is done without any dependence on man’s approbation, according to God’s ordinance, arrangement, and providence.

Ecclesiastes 3:1. “Everything has its time, and every purpose under the heavens its hour.” The Germ. language is poor in synonyms of time. Zöckler translates: Everything has its *Frist* ..., but by *Frist* we think only of a fixed term of duration, not of a period of beginning, which, though not exclusively, is yet here primarily meant; we have therefore adopted Luther’s excellent translation. Certainly זמן (from זמן, cogn. סימן, *signare*), belonging to the more

modern Heb. (vid., p. 637), means a *Frist* (e.g., Dan. 2:16) as well as a *Zeitpunkt*, point of time; in the Semit. (also Assy. *simmu*, *simanu*, with ס) it is the most common designation of the idea of time. עת is abbreviated either from עֲדָת (ועד, to determine) or from עָנָת (from עָנָה, cogn. אָנָה, to go towards, to meet). In the first case it stands connected with מוֹעֵד on the one side, and with עֲדָן (from עָדָד, to count) on the other; in the latter case, with עוֹנָה, Ex. 21:10 (perhaps also עָן and עָנָת in כָּעֵן, כָּעָנָת). It is difficult to decide this point; proportionally more, however, can be said for the original עָנָת (Palest.-Aram. אָנָתָא), as also the prep. of participation אָ is derived from אָנָת (meeting, coming together). The author means to say, if we have regard to the root signification of the second conception of time—(1) that everything has its fore-determined time, in which there lies both a determined point of time when it happens, and a determined period of time during which it shall continue; and (2) that every matter has a time appointed for it, or one appropriate, suitable for it. The Greeks were guided by the right feeling when they rendered זמן by χρόνος, and ע by καιρός. Olympiodorus distinguishes too sharply when he understands the former of duration of time, and the latter of a point of time; while the state of the matter is this, that by χρόνος the idea comprehends the *termini a quo* and *ad quem*, while by καιρός it is limited to the *terminus a quo*. Regarding הָפֵץ, which proceeds from the ground-idea of being inclined to, and intention, and thus, like *πράγμα* and *χρήμα*, to the general signification of design, undertaking, *res gesta*, *res*, vid., p. 638.

The illustration commences with the beginning and the ending of the life of man and (in nearly connection of thought) of plants.

Ecclesiastes 3:2. “To be born has its time, and to die has its time; to plant has its time, and to root up that which is planted has its time.” The inf. לָלֶדֶת signifies nothing else than to bring

forth; but when that which is brought forth comes more into view than she who brings forth, it is used in the sense of being born (cf. Jer. 25:34, לָלֶדֶת = לָלֶדֶת); *ledah*, Hos. 9:11, is the birth; and in the Assy., *li-id-tu*, *li-i-tu*, *li-da-a-tu*, designates posterity, *progenies*. Since now *lālādēth* has here *lāmuth* as contrast, and thus does not denote the birth-throes of the mother, but the child’s beginning of life, the translation, “to be born has its time,” is more appropriate to what is designed than “to bring forth has its time.” What Zöckler, after Hitzig, objects that by *lēdēth* a הָפֵץ [an undertaking], and thus a conscious, intended act must be named, is not applicable; for לָלֶדֶת standing at the beginning comprehends doing and suffering, and death also (apart from suicide) is certainly not an intended act, frequently even an unconscious suffering. Instead of לָלֶדֶת (for which the form לָלֶדֶת is found, cf. לָמוֹט, Ps. 66:9), the older language uses לָלֶדֶת, Jer. 1:10. In still more modern Heb. the expression used would be לִיטַע, i.e., לָטַע (*Shebiith* ii. 1). עָקַר has here its nearest signification: to root up (denom. of עָקַר, root), like עָקַר, 2 Kings 3:25, where it is the Targ. word for הָפֵיל (to fell trees).

From out-rooting, which puts an end to the life of plants, the transition is now made to putting to death.

Ecclesiastes 3:3. “To put to death has its time, and to heal has its time; to pull down has its time, and to build has its time.” That *harog* (to kill) is placed over against “to heal,” Hitzig explains by the remark that *harog* does not here include the full consequences of the act, and is fitly rendered by “to wound.” But “to put to death” is nowhere = “nearly to put to death,”—one who is *harug* is not otherwise to be healed than by resurrection from the dead, Ezek. 37:6. The contrast has no need for such ingenuity to justify it. The striking down of a sound life stands in contrast to the salvation of an endangered life by healing, and this in many situations of life, particularly in war, in the

administration of justice, and in the defence of innocence against murder or injury, may be fitting. Since the author does not present these details from a moral point of view, the time here is not that which is morally right, but that which, be it morally right or not, has been determined by God, the Governor of the world and Former of history, who makes even that which is evil subservient to His plan. With the two pairs of γένεσις καὶ φθορά there are two others associated in ver. 3; with that, having reference, 2*b*, to the vegetable world, there here corresponds one referring to buildings; to פְּרוּץ (synon. הָרוּס, Jer. 1:10) stands opposed בְּנוֹת (which is more than אֲדוּר), as at 2 Chron. 32:5.

These contrasts between existence and non-existence are followed by contrasts within the limits of existence itself:—

Ecclesiastes 3:4. “To weep has its time, and to laugh has its time; to mourn has its time, and to dance has its time.” It is possible that the author was led by the consonance from *livnoth* to *livkoth*, which immediately follows it; but the sequence of the thoughts is at the same time inwardly mediated, for sorrow kills and joy enlivens, Sir. 32:21–24. סְפֹד is particularly lamentation for the dead, Zech. 12:10; and רִקְדָּה, dancing (in the more modern language the usual word for *hholēl*, *kirkēr*, *hhāgǎg*) at a marriage festival and on other festal occasions. It is more difficult to say what leads the author to the two following pairs of contrasts:—

Ecclesiastes 3:5. “To throw stones has its time, and to gather together stones has its time; to embrace has its time, and to refrain from embracing has its time.” Did the old Jewish custom exist at the time of the author, of throwing three shovelfuls of earth into the grave, and did this lead him to use the phrase הֲשֵׁן אֶבֶן? But we do not need so incidental a connection of the thought, for the first pair accords with the specific idea of life and death; by the throwing of stones a field is destroyed, 2 Kings 3:35, or as expressed at ver. 19 is marred; and by gathering the stones together and

removing them (which is called סָקַל), it is brought under cultivation. Does אָחַץ, to embrace, now follow because it is done with the arms and hands? Scarcely; but the loving action of embracing stands beside the hostile, purposely injurious throwing of stones into a field, not exclusively (2 Kings 4:16), but yet chiefly (as e.g., at Prov. 5:20) as referring to love for women; the intensive in the second member is introduced perhaps only for the purpose of avoiding the paronomasia *lirrhoq mahhavoq*. The following pair of contrasts is connected with the avoiding or refraining from the embrace of love:—

Ecclesiastes 3:6. “To seek has its time, and to lose has its time; to lay up has its time, and to throw away has its time.” Vaihinger and others translate לָאָבַד, to give up as lost, which the *Pih.* signifies first as the expression of a conscious act. The older language knows it only in the stronger sense of bringing to ruin, making to perish, wasting (Prov. 29:3). But in the more modern language, אָבַד, like the Lat. *perdere*, in the sense of “to lose,” is the trans. to the intrans. אָבַד, e.g., *Tahoroth*; viii. 3, “if one loses (הִמְאָבַד) anything,” etc.; *Sifri*, at Deut. 24:19, “he who has lost (מְאָבַד) a shekel,” etc. In this sense the Palest.-Aram. uses the *Aphel* אָבַדְתִּי, e.g., *Jer. Mezīa* ii. 5, “the queen had lost (אָבַדְתָּ) her ornament.” The intentional giving up, throwing away from oneself, finds its expression in אָבַדְתִּי.

The following pair of contrasts refers the abandoning and preserving to articles of clothing:—

Ecclesiastes 3:7a. “To rend has its time, and to sew has its time.” When evil tidings come, when the tidings of death come, then is the time for rending the garments (2 Sam. 13:31), whether as a spontaneous outbreak of sorrow, or merely as a traditional custom.—The tempest of the affections, however, passes by, and that which was torn is again sewed together.

Perhaps it is the recollection of great calamities which leads to the following contrasts:—

Ecclesiastes 3:7b. “To keep silence has its time, and to speak has its time.” Severe strokes of adversity turn the mind in quietness back upon itself; and the demeanour most befitting such adversity is silent resignation (cf. 2 Kings 2:3, 5). This mediation of the thought is so much the more probable, as in all these contrasts it is not so much the spontaneity of man that comes into view, as the pre-determination and providence of God.

The following contrasts proceed on the view that God has placed us in relations in which it is permitted to us to love, or in which our hatred is stirred up:—

Ecclesiastes 3:8. “To love has its time, and to hate has its time; war has its time, and peace has its time.” In the two pairs of contrasts here, the contents of the first are, not exclusively indeed (Ps. 120:7), but yet chiefly referred to the mutual relations of peoples. It is the result of thoughtful intention that the *quodlibet* of × pairs terminates this *for* and *against* in “peace;” and, besides, the author has made the termination emphatic by this, that here “instead of infinitives, he introduces proper nouns” (Hitz.).

Ecclesiastes 3:9. Since, then, everything has its time depending not on human influence, but on the determination and providence of God, the question arises: “What gain hath he that worketh in that wherewith he wearieth himself?” It is the complaint of 1:3 which is here repeated. From all the labour there comes forth nothing which carries in it the security of its continuance; but in all he does man is conditioned by the change of times and circumstances and relations over which he has no control. And the converse of this his weakness is short-sightedness.

Ecclesiastes 3:10, 11. “I saw the travail, which God gave to the children of men to fatigue themselves with it—: He hath well arranged everything beautiful in its appointed time; He hath also put eternity in their heart, so that man cannot indeed wholly search through from beginning to end the work which God accomplisheth.” As at 1:14, רָאִיתִי is here seeing

in the way of research, as elsewhere, e.g., at 2:24, it is as the result of research. In ver. 10 the author says that he closely considered the labour of men, and in ver. 11 he states the result. It is impossible to render the word עָנָן everywhere by the same German (or English) word: 1:13, wearisome trouble; 2:26, business; here: *Geschäftigkeit*, the idea is in all the three places the same, viz., an occupation which causes trouble, costs effort. What presented itself to the beholder was (1) that He (viz., God, cf. ver. 10 and ver. 11) has made everything beautiful in its time. The author uses יָפָה as synon. of טוב (v. 17); also in other languages the idea of the beautiful is gradually more and more generalized. The suffix in בְּעֵתוֹ does not refer to God, but to that which is in the time; this word is = ἐν καιρῷ ἰδίῳ (Symm.), at its proper time (vid., Ps. 1:3; 104:27; Jer. 5:24, etc.), since, as with יַחְדָּו (together with) and כָּלֹו (every one), the suffix is no longer thought of as such. Like יָפָה בְּעֵתוֹ as pred. conception belongs to the verb: He has made everything beautiful; He has made everything (falling out) at its appointed time.—The beauty consists in this, that what is done is not done sooner or later than it ought to be, so as to connect itself as a constituent part to the whole of God’s work. The pret. עָשָׂה is to be also interpreted as such: He “has made,” viz., in His world-plan, all things beautiful, falling out at the appointed time; for that which acquires an actual form in the course of history has a previous ideal existence in the knowledge and will of God (vid., under Isa. 22:11; 37:26).

That which presented itself to the beholder was—(2) the fact that He (God) had put אֱתֵר־הַעֲלָם in their hearts (i.e., the hearts of men). Gaab and Spohn interpret *'olam* in the sense of the Arab. *'ilam*, knowledge, understanding; and Hitz., pointing the word accordingly עֲלָם, translates: “He has also placed understanding in their heart, without which man,” etc. The translation of מְבַלִּי אֲשֶׁר is not to be objected to;

וְכִי is, however, only seldom a conjunction, and is then to be translated by *eo quod*, Ex. 14:11, 2 Kings 1:3, 6, 16, which is not appropriate here; it will thus be here also a prep., and with *asher* following may mean “without which,” as well as “without this, that” = “besides that” (Venet. ἄνευ τοῦ ὅτι, “except that”), as frequently כִּי סָפָא, e.g., at Amos 9:8. But that Arab. *’ilam* is quite foreign to the Heb., which has no word מְלָא in the sense of “to rise up, to be visible, knowable,” which is now also referred to for the Assyr. as the stem-word of מְלָא = highland. It is true Hitzig believes that he has found the Heb. מְלָא = wisdom, in Sir. 6:21, where there is a play on the word with מְלָא, “concealed.” σοφία γὰρ κατὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτῆς ἐστὶ καὶ οὐ πολλοῖς ἐστὶ φανερά. Drusius and Eichhorn have here already taken notice of the Arab. *’ilam*; but Fritzsche with right asks, “Shall this word as Heb. be regarded as traceable only here and falsely pointed only at Ecclesiastes 3:11, and shall no trace of it whatever be found in the Chald., Syr., and Rabbin.?” We have also no need of it. That Ben-Sira has etymologically investigated the word חַכְמָה as going back to חָכַם, R. ח, “to be firm, shut up, dark” (vid., at Ps. 10:8), is certainly very improbable, but so much the more probable (as already suggested by Drusius) that he has introduced into חַכְמָה, after the Aram. חָכַם, *nigrescere*, the idea of making dark. Does *eth-ha’olam* in this passage before us then mean “the world” (Jerome, Luther, Ewald), or “desire after the knowledge of the world” (Rashi), or “worldly-mindedness” (Gesen., Knobel)? The answer to this has been already given in my *Psychol.* p. 406 (2nd ed.): “In post-bibl. Heb. *’olam* denotes not only ‘eternity’ backwards and forwards as infinite duration, but also ‘the world’ as that which endures for ever (αἰών, *seculum*); the world in this latter sense is, however, not yet known to the bibl. language, and we will thus not be able to interpret the words of Koheleth of the impulse of man to reflect on the whole world.” In itself, the thought that God has placed the whole world in

man’s heart is not untrue: man is, indeed, a *micro-cosmos*, in which the *macrocosmos* mirrors itself (Elster), but the connection does not favour it; for the discussion does not proceed from this, that man is only a member in the great universe, and that God has given to each being its appointed place, but that in all his experience he is conditioned by time, and that in the course of history all that comes to him, according to God’s world-plan, happens at its appointed time. But the idea by which that of time, אֵל (עוֹלָם), is surpassed is not the world, but eternity, to which time is related as part is to the whole (Cicero, *Inv.* i. 26. 39, *tempus est pars quaedam aeternitatis*). The Mishna language contains, along with the meaning of world, also this older meaning of *’olam*, and has formed from it an adv. עוֹלָמִית, *aeternae*. The author means to say that God has not only assigned to each individually his appointed place in history, thereby bringing to the consciousness of man the fact of his being conditioned, but that He has also established in man an impulse leading him beyond that which is temporal toward the eternal: it lies in his nature not to be contented with the temporal, but to break through the limits which it draws around him, to escape from the bondage and the disquietude within which he is held, and amid the ceaseless changes of time to console himself by directing his thoughts to eternity.

This saying regarding the *desiderium aeternitatis* being planted in the heart of man, is one of the profoundest utterances of Koheleth. In fact, the impulse of man shows that his innermost wants cannot be satisfied by that which is temporal. He is a being limited by time, but as to his innermost nature he is related to eternity. That which is transient yields him no support, it carries him on like a rushing stream, and constrains him to save himself by laying hold on eternity. But it is not so much the practical as the intellectual side of this endowment and this peculiar dignity of human nature which Koheleth brings her to view.

It is not enough for man to know that everything that happens has its divinely-

ordained time. There is an instinct peculiar to his nature impelling him to pass beyond this fragmentary knowledge and to comprehend eternity; but his effort is in vain, for (3) “man is unable to reach unto the work which God accomplisheth from the beginning to the end.” The work of God is that which is completing itself in the history of the world, of which the life of individual men is a fragment. Of this work he says, that God has wrought it עָשָׂה; because, before it is wrought out in its separate “time,” it is already completed in God’s plan. Eternity and this work are related to each other as the accomplished and the being accomplished, they are interchangeably the *πλήρωμα* to each other. אֲצִמָּה is potential, and the same in conception as at 8:17, Job 11:7; 37:23; a knowledge is meant which reaches to the object, and lays hold of it. A laying hold of this work is an impossibility, because eternity, as its name *’olam* denotes, is the concealed, i.e., is both forwards and backwards immeasurable. The *desiderium aeternitatis* inherent in man thus remains under the sun unappeased. He would raise himself above the limits within which he is confined, and instead of being under the necessity of limiting his attention to isolated matters, gain a view of the whole of God’s work which becomes manifest in time; but this all-embracing view is for him unattainable.

If Koheleth had known of a future life—which proves that as no instinct in the natural world is an allusion, so also the impulse toward the eternal, which is natural to man, is no illusion—he would have reached a better *ultimatum* than the following:—

Ecclesiastes 3:12. “Thus I then perceived that among them (men) there is nothing better than to enjoy themselves, and indulge themselves in their life.” The resignation would acquire a reality if טוב לעי meant “to do good,” i.e., right (LXX, Targ., Syr., Jer., Venet.); and this appears of necessity to be its meaning according to 7:20. But, with right, Ginsburg remarks that nowhere else—neither at 2:24, nor 3:22; 5:17; 8:15; 9:7—is this moral rendering given to the

ultimatum; also טוב וְרַי, 13a, presupposes for לעי טוב a eudemonistic sense. On the other hand, Zöckler is right in saying that for the meaning of טוב עשות, in the sense of “to be of good cheer” (Luth.), there is no example. Zirkel compares εὖ πάττειν, and regards it as a Graecism. But it either stands ellipt. for לו טוב (= להיטיב לו), or, with Grätz, we have to read לְרֵאוֹת טוב; in any case, an ethical signification is here excluded by the nearest connection, as well as by the parallels; it is not contrary to the view of Koheleth, but this is not the place to express it. *Bam* is to be understood after *baadam*, 2:24. The plur., comprehending men, here, as at v. 11, wholly passes over into the individualizing sing. But this enjoyment of life also, Koheleth continues, this advisedly the best portion in the limited and restrained condition of man, is placed beyond his control:—

Ecclesiastes 3:13. “But also that he should eat and drink, and see good in all his labour, is for every man a gift of God.” The inverted and yet anacoluthistic formation of the sentence is quite like that at 5:18. אֲכָל־כָּל signifies, properly, the totality of men = all men, e.g., Ps. 116:11; but here and at 5:18; 12:13, the author uses the two words so that the determ. second member of the *st. constr.* does not determine the first (which elsewhere sometimes occurs, as *bthulath Israel*, a virgin of Israel, Deut. 22:19): every one of men (cf. πᾶς τις βροτῶν). The subst. clause *col-haadam* is subject: every one of men, in this that he eats ... is dependent on God. Instead of מִיִּד the word מִתַּת (abbrev. from מִתְּהַנֵּה) is here used, as at 5:18. The connection by *vgam* is related to the preceding adversat.: and (= but) also (= notwithstanding that), as at 6:7, Neh. 5:8, cf. Jer. 3:10, where *gam* is strengthened by *bcol-zoth*. As for the rest, it follows from v. 13, in connection with 2:24–26, that for Koheleth εὐποία and εὐθυμία reciprocally condition each other, without, however, a conclusion following therefrom justifying the translation “to do good,” 12b. Men’s being conditioned in the enjoyment of

life, and, generally, their being conditioned by God the Absolute, has certainly an ethical end in view, as is expressed in the conclusion which Koheleth now reaches:—

Ecclesiastes 3:14. “Thus I discerned it then, that all that God will do exists for ever; nothing is to be added to it, and nothing taken from it: God has thus directed it, that men should fear before Him.” This is a conclusion derived from the facts of experience, a truth that is valid for the present and for the time to come. We may with equal correctness render by *quidquid facit* and *quidquid faciet*. But the pred. shows that the fut. expression is also thought of as fut.; for *יְהִי יְהִי לְעַד* does not mean: that is for ever (Hitz.), which would be expressed by the subst. clause *הוּא לְעוֹלָם*; but: that shall be for ever (Zöck.), i.e., will always assert its validity. That which is affirmed here is true of God’s directing and guiding events in the natural world, as well as of the announcements of His will and His controlling and directing providence in the history of human affairs. All this is removed beyond the power of the creature to alter it. The meaning is not that one ought not to add to or to take from it (Deut. 13:1; Prov. 30:6), but that such a thing cannot be done (vid., Sir. 18:5). And this unchangeableness characterizing the arrangements of God has this as its aim, that men should fear Him who is the All-conditioning and is Himself unconditioned: he has done it that they (men) should fear before Him, *שָׂאָה שׁ, fecit ut*; cf. Ezek. 36:27. *ποιεῖν ἵνα*, Rev. 13:15; and “fear before Him,” as at 8:12f.; cf. 1 Chron. 16:30 with Ps. 96:9. The unchangeableness of God’s action shows itself in this, that in the course of history similar phenomena repeat themselves; for the fundamental principles, the causal connections, the norms of God’s government, remain always the same.

Ecclesiastes 3:15. “That which is now hath been long ago; and that which will be hath already been: God seeketh after that which was crowded out.” The words: “hath been long ago” (*כִּבְרָה הוּא*), are used of that which the present

represents as something that hath been, as the fruit of a development; the words: “hath already been” (*כִּבְרָה הִיא*), are used of the future (*אֲשֶׁר לִי*, τὸ μέλλον, vid., Gesen. § 132. 1), as denying to it the right of being regarded as something new. The government of God is not to be changed, and does not change; His creative as well as His moral ordering of the world produces with the same laws the same phenomena (the *י* corresponds to this line of thought here, as at 14*b*)—God seeks *יְחַזֵּק* (cf. 7:7; Ewald, § 277*d*). Hengstenberg renders: God seeks the persecuted (LXX, Symm., Targ., Syr.), i.e., visits them with consolation and comfort. *Nirdaph* here denotes that which is followed, hunted, pressed, by which we may think of that which is already driven into the past; that God seeks, seeks it purposely, and brings it back again into the present; for His government remains always, and brings thus always up again that which hath been. Thus Jerome: *Deut instaurat quod abiit*; the Venet.: ὁ θεὸς ζητήσῃ τὸ ἀπεληλαμένον; and thus Geier, among the post-Reform. interpreters: *praestat ut quae propulsa sunt ac praeterierunt iterum innoventur ac redeant*; and this is now the prevailing exposition, after Knobel, Ewald, and Hitzig. The thought is the same as if we were to translate: God seeks after the analogue. In the Arab., one word in relation to another is called *muradif*, if it is cogn. to it; and *mutaradifat* is the technical expression for a synonym. In Heb. the expression used is *שְׂמוֹת נִרְדָּפִים*, they who are followed the one by another,—one of which, as it were, treads on the heels of another. But this designation is mediated through the Arab. In evidence of the contrary, ancient examples are wanting.

The Godless Conduct of Men Left to Themselves, and Their End Like that of the Beasts, 3:16–22

Ecclesiastes 3:16. “And, moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that wickedness was there.” The structure of the verse is palindromic, like 1:6; 2:10; 4:1. We

might also render מְקוֹם as the so-called *casus absol.*, so that מִקַּח ... מְשֻׁם is an emphatic בְּמִקְוֹם (Hitz.), and the construction like Jer. 46:5; but the accentuation does not require this (cf. Gen. 1:1); and why should it not be at once the object to רֵאִיתִי, which in any case it virtually is? These two words הַרְשַׁע שָׁמָּה might be attribut. clauses: where wickedness (prevails), for the old scheme of the attributive clause (the *sfat*) is not foreign to the style of this book (vid., 1:13, *nathan = nthano*; and 5:12, *raithi = rithiha*); but why not rather virtual pred. accus.: *vidi locum juris (quod) ibi impietas?* Cf. Neh. 13:23 with Ps. 37:25. The place of “judgment” is the place where justice should be ascertained and executed; and the place of “righteousness,” that where righteousness should ascertain and administer justice; for *mishpat* is the rule (of right), and the objective matter of fact; *tsedek*, a subjective property and manner of acting. רֵשַׁע is in both cases the same: wickedness (see under Ps. 1:1), which bends justice, and is the contrary of *tsēdēk*, i.e., upright and moral sternness. רֵשַׁע elsewhere, like *mēlēk*, *tsēdēk*, preserves *in p.* its *e*, but here it takes rank along with הִסְדָּק, which in like manner fluctuates (cf. Ps. 130:7 with Prov. 21:21). מְשֻׁם is here = שָׁם, as at Ps. 122:5, etc.; the locative *ah* suits the question Where? as well as in the question Whither?—He now expresses how, in such a state of things, he arrived at satisfaction of mind.

Ecclesiastes 3:17. “I said in mine heart: God shall judge the righteous as well as the wicked: for there is there a time for every purpose and for every work.” Since “the righteous” stands first, the word יִשְׁפֵּט has here the double sense of judging [*richtens* = setting upright] = acting uprightly, justly by one, as in the *shofteni* of Ps. 7:9; 26:1, etc., and of judging = inflicting punishment. To the righteous, as well as to the wicked, God will administer that which of right belongs to them. But this does not immediately happen, and has to be waited for a long time, for there is a definite time for every

undertaking (Ecclesiastes 3:1), and for (עַל, in the more modern form of the language, interchanges *promiscue* with לְ and לָ, e.g., Jer. 19:15; Ezek. 22:3; Ewald, § 217*i*) every work there is a “time.” This שָׁם, defended by all the old interpreters, cannot have a temporal sense: *tunc = in die judicii* (Jerome, Targ.), cf. Ps. 14:5; 36:13, for “a time of judgment there is for all one day” is not intended, since certainly the שָׁם (day of judgment) is this time itself, and not the time of this time. Ewald renders שָׁם as pointing to the past, for he thus construes: the righteous and the unrighteous God will judge (for there is a time for everything), and judge (*vav* thus explicat., “and that too,” “and indeed”) every act there, i.e., everything done before. But this שָׁם is not only heavy, but also ambiguous and purposeless; and besides, by this parenthesizing of the words כִּי עַתָּה וְגוֹ' [for there is a time for everything], the principal thought, that with God everything, even His act of judgment, has its time, is robbed of its independence and of the place in the principal clause appropriate to it. But if שָׁם is understood adverbially, it certainly has a local meaning connected with it: there, viz., with God, *apud Deum*; true, for this use of the word Gen. 49:24 affords the only example, and it stands there in the midst of a very solemn and earnest address. Therefore it lies near to read, with Houbig, Döderl., Palm., and Hitz., שָׁם, “a definite time ... has He (God) ordained;” שָׁם (שִׁים) is the usual word for the ordinances of God in the natural world and in human history (Prov. 8:29; Ex. 21:13; Num. 24:23; Hab. 1:12, etc.), and, as in the Assy. *simtuv*, so the Heb. שִׁימָה (שִׁימָה), 2 Sam. 13:32, signifies lot or fate, decree. With this reading, Elster takes exception to the position of the words; but at Judg. 6:19 also the object goes before שָׁם, and “unto every purpose and for every work” is certainly the complement of the object-conception, so that the position of the words is in reality no other than at 10:20*a*; Dan. 2:17*b*. Quite untenable is

Herzfeld's supposition (Fürst, Vaih.), that שָׁם has here the Talm. signification: *aestimatus, taxatus*, for (1) this שָׁם = Arab. *sham*, has not עַל, but the accus. after it; (2) the thought referring to the tie on which v. 18 rests is thereby interrupted. Whether we read שָׁם, or take שָׁם in the sense of עָמוּ (Job 25:2; 23:14, etc.), the thought is the same, and equally congruous: God will judge the innocent and the guilty; it shall be done some time, although not so soon as one might wish it, and think necessary, for God has for every undertaking and for every work its fixed time, also its judicial decision (vid., at Ps. 74:3); He permits wickedness, lets it develop itself, waits long before He interposes (vid., under Isa. 18:4f.).

Reflecting on God's delay to a time hidden from men, and known only to Himself, Koheleth explains the matter to himself in the following verse:—

Ecclesiastes 3:18. "Thus I said then in mine heart: (it happeneth) for the sake of the children of men that God might sift them, and that they might see that they are like the cattle, they in themselves." Regarding עַל־דָּבָר [for the sake of = on account of] as at 8:2, vid., under Ps. 110:4, where it signifies after (κατά) the state of the matter, and above at p. 640. The infin. לָבַר is not derived from בָּוֹר.—לָבוֹר, 9:1, is only the metaplastic form of לָבַר or לָבֵרֶר,—but only from בָּרַר, whose infin. may take the form בָּר, after the form רָד, to tread down, Isa. 45:1, שָׁךְ, to bow, Jer. 5:26; but nowhere else is this infin. form found connected with a suff.; קָהָם, Hos. 11:3, would be in some measure to be compared, if it could be supposed that this = בְּקָהָתָם, *sumendo eos*. The root בָּר proceeds, from the primary idea of cutting, on the one side to the idea of separating, winnowing, choosing out; and, on the other, to that of smoothing, polishing, purifying (vid., under Isa. 49:2). Here, by the connection, the meaning of winnowing, i.e., of separating the good from the bad, is intended,

with which, however, as in לָבֵרֶר, Dan. 11:35, the meaning of making clear, making light, bringing forward into the light, easily connects itself (cf. *Shabbath* 138a, 74a), of which the meaning to winnow (cf. לָהֵבֵר, Jer. 4:11) is only a particular form; cf. Sanhedrin 7b: "when a matter is clear, ברור, to thee (free from ambiguity) as the morning, speak it out; and if not, do not speak it."

In the expression לָבַר הָאֱלֹהִים, the word האֱלֹהִים is, without doubt, the subject, according to Gesen. § 133. 2. 3; Hitz. regards האֱלֹהִים as genit., which, judged according to the Arab., is correct; it is true that for *li-imti-ḥānihim allahi* (with genit. of the subj.), also *allahu* (with nominat. of the subj.) may be used; but the former expression is the more regular and more common (vid., Ewald's *Gramm. Arab.* § 649), but not always equally decisive with reference to the Heb. *usus loq.* That God delays His righteous interference till the time appointed beforehand, is for the sake of the children of men, with the intention, viz., that God may sift them, i.e., that, without breaking in upon the free development of their characters before the time, He may permit the distinction between the good and the bad to become manifest. Men, who are the obj. to לָבַר, are the subject to וְלִרְאוֹת to be supplied: *et ut videant*; it is unnecessary, with the LXX, Syr., and Jerome, to read וְלִרְאוֹת (= וְלִרְהַר): *ut ostenderet*. It is a question whether הֵמָּה is the expression of the copula: *sunt (sint)*, or whether *hēm̄mah lahēm* is a closer definition, coordinate with *shhem bhēm̄mah*. The remark of Hitzig, that *lahēm* throws back the action on the subject, is not clear. Does he suppose that *lahem* belongs to *liroth*? That is here impossible. If we look away from *lahem*, the needlessly circumstantial expression הֵם ... שֶׁהָ can still be easily understood: *hemmah* takes up, as an echo, *bhemmah*, and completes the comparison (compare the battology in Hos. 13:2). This play upon words musically accompanying the thought remains also, when,

according to the accentuation 'שה' בהם' ה' לה', we take *hemmah* along with *lahem*, and the former as well as the latter of these two words is then better understood. The ל in להם is not that of the pure dat. (Aben Ezra: They [are like beasts] to themselves, i.e., in their own estimation), but that of reference, as at Gen. 17:20, "as for Ishmael;" cf. Ps. 3:3; 2 Kings 5:7; cf. לָא, 1 Sam. 1:27, etc. Men shall see that they are cattle (beasts), they in reference to themselves, i.e., either they in reference to themselves mutually (Luther: among themselves), or: they in reference to themselves. To interpret the reference as that of mutual relation, would, in looking back to v. 16, commend itself, for the condemnation and oppression of the innocent under the appearance of justice is an act of human brutishness. But the reason assigned in v. 19 does not accord with this reciprocal rendering of *lahem*. Thus *lahem* will be meant reflexively, but it is not on that account pleonastic (Knobel), nor does it ironically form a climax: *ipsissimi = höchstselbst* (Ewald, § 315a); but "they in reference to themselves" is = they in and of themselves, i.e., viewed as men (viewed naturally). If one disregards the idea of God's interfering at a future time with the discordant human history, and, in general, if one loses sight of God, the distinction between the life of man and of beast disappears.

Ecclesiastes 3:19. "For the children of men are a chance, and the beast a chance, and they both have once chance: as the death of the one, so that death of the other, and they have all one breath; and there is no advantage to a man over a beast, for all is vain." If in both instances the word is pointed מקרה (LXX), the three-membered sentence would then have the form of an emblematical proverb (as e.g., Prov. 25:25): "For as the chance of men, so (*vav* of comparison) the chance of the beast; they have both one chance." מקרה with *segol* cannot possibly be the connecting form (Luzz.), for in cases such as מעשׂ' מ' Isa. 3:24, the relation of the words is appositional, not genitival. This

form מקרה, thus found three times, is vindicated by the Targ. (also the Venet.) and by Mss.; Joseph Kimchi remarks that "all three have *segol*, and are thus forms of the *absolutus*." The author means that men, like beasts, are in their existence and in their death influenced accidentally, i.e., not of necessity, and are wholly conditioned, not by their own individual energy, but by a power from without—are dependent beings, as Solon (Herod. i. 32) says to Croesus: "Man is altogether συμφορή," i.e., the sport of accident. The first two sentences mean exclusively neither that men (apart from God) are, like beasts, the birth of a blind accident (Hitz.), nor that they are placed under the same law of transitoriness (Elst.); but of men, in the totality of their being, and doing, and suffering, it is first said that they are accidental beings; then, that which separates them from this, that they all, men like beasts, are finally exposed to one, i.e., to the same fate. As is the death of one, so is the death of the other; and they all have one breath, i.e., men and beasts alike die, for this breath of life (רוח חיים), which constitutes a beast—as well as a man a נפש חיה) departs from the body (Ps. 104:29). In זָה ... זָה (as at 6:5, Ex. 14:20, and frequently), לָהֶם (mas. as *genus potius*) is separately referred to men and beasts. With the Mishnic בְּמוֹת = bibl. כְּמוֹ (cf. *Maaser Sheni*, v. 2), the בְּמוֹת here used has manifestly nothing to do. The noun מוֹתָר, which in the Book of Proverbs (Prov. 14:23; 21:5, not elsewhere) occurs in the sense of profit, gain, is here in the Book of Koheleth found as a synon. of יתרון, "preference," advantage which is exclusively peculiar to it. From this, that men and beasts fall under the same law of death, the author concludes that there is no preference of a man to a beast; he doubtless means that in respect of the end man has no superiority; but he expresses himself thus generally because, as the matter presented itself to him, all-absorbing death annulled every distinction. He looks only to the present time, without encumbering himself with the historical account of the

matter found in the beginning of the *Tôra*; and he adheres to the external phenomenon, without thinking, with the Psalmist in Ps. 49, that although death is common to man with the beast, yet all men do not therefore die as the beast does. That the beast dies because it must, but that in the midst of this necessity of nature man can maintain his freedom, is for him out of view. הַכֹּל הַכֹּל, the *ματαιότης*, which at last falls to man as well as to the beast, throws its long dark shadows across his mind, and wholly shrouds it.

Ecclesiastes 3:20. "All goes hence to one place; all has sprung out of the dust, and all returns to the dust again." The "one place" is (as at 6:6) the earth, the great graveyard which finally receives all the living when dead. The art. of the first הַעֲפָרָה is that denoting species; the art. of the second is retrospective: to the dust whence he sprang (cf. Ps. 104:29; 146:4); otherwise, Gen. 3:19 (cf. Job 34:15), "to dust shalt thou return," shalt become dust again. From dust to dust (Sir. 40:11; 41:10) is true of every living corporeal thing. It is true there exists the possibility that with the spirit of the dying man it may be different from what it is with the spirit of the dying beast, but yet that is open to question.

Ecclesiastes 3:21. "Who knoweth with regard to the spirit of the children of men, whether it mounteth upward; and with regard to the spirit of a beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?" The interrogative meaning of הָעֵלָה and הַיִּרְדָּת is recognised by all the old translators: LXX, Targ., Syr., Jerome, Venet., Luther. Among the moderns, Heyder (vid., *Psychol.* p. 410), Hengst., Hahn, Dale, and Bullock take the ה in both cases as the article: "Who knoweth the spirit of the children of men, that which goeth upward ... ?" But (1) thus rendered the question does not accord with the connection, which requires a sceptical question; (2) following "who knoweth," after 2:19; 6:12, cf. Josh. 2:14, an interrogative continuance of the sentence was to be expected; and (3) in both cases הַיִּא stands as designation of the subject only for the purpose of marking the interrogative clause (cf.

Jer. 2:14), and of making it observable that *ha'olah* and *hayoredëth* are not appos. belonging as objects to רוּחַ and רוּחַ. It is questionable, indeed, whether the punctuation of these words, הָעֵלָה and הַיִּרְדָּת, as they lie before us, proceeds from an interrogative rendering. Saadia in *Emunoth* c. vi., and Juda Halevi in the *Kuzri* ii. 80, deny this; and so also do Aben Ezra and Kimchi. And they may be right. For instead of הָעֵלָה, the pointing ought to have been הַעֵלָה (cf. הָעֵלָה, Job 13:25) when used as interrog. *an ascendens*; even before א the compens. lengthening of the interrog. *ha* is nowhere certainly found instead of the virtual reduplication; and thus also the parallel הַיִּרְדָּת is not to be judged after הַיִּי, Lev. 10:19, הַדָּר, Ezek. 18:29, —we must allow that the punctuation seeks, by the removal of the two interrog. הָ (ה), to place that which is here said in accord with 12:7. But there is no need for this. For מִי יוֹדֵעַ does not quite fall in with that which Lucretius says (*Lib.* I):

*"Ignoratur enim quae sit natura animai,
Nata sit an contra nascentibus insinuetur?
An simul intereat nobiscum morte diremta?"*

It may certainly be said of *mi yode'a*, as of *ignoratur*, that it does not exclude every kind of knowledge, but only a sure and certain knowledge resting on sufficient grounds; *interire* and יִרְדָּת לְמִי are also scarcely different, for neither of the two necessarily signifies annihilation, but both the discontinuance of independent individual existence. But the putting of the question by Koheleth is different, for it discloses more definitely than this by Lucretius, the possibility of a different end for the spirit of a man from that which awaits the spirit of a beast, and thus of a specific distinction between these two principles of life. In the formation even of the dilemma: Whether upwards or downwards, there lies an inquiring knowledge; and it cannot surprise us if Koheleth finally decides that the way of the spirit of a man is upwards, although it is not

said that he rested this on the ground of demonstrative certainty. It is enough that, with the moral necessity of a final judgment beyond the sphere of this present life, at the same time also the continued existence of the spirit of man presented itself to him as a postulate of faith. One may conclude from the *desiderium aeternitatis* (Ecclesiastes 3:11) implanted in man by the Creator, that, like the instincts implanted in the beasts, it will be calculated not for deception, but for satisfaction; and from the לְמַעַן, Prov. 15:24, —i.e., the striving of a wise man rising above earthly, temporary, common things,—that death will not put an end to this striving, but will help it to reach its goal. But this is an indirect proof, which, however, is always inferior to the direct in force of argument. He presupposes that the Omnipotence and Wisdom which formed the world is also at the same time Love. Thus, though at last, it is faith which solves the dilemma, and we see from 12:7 that this faith held sway over Koheleth. In the Book of Sirach, also, the old conception of Hades shows itself as yet dominant; but after the οὐκ ἀθάνατος υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, 17:25, we read towards the end, where he speaks of Elias: καὶ τὰρ ἡμεῖς ζῶντες ζησόμεθα, 48:11. In the passage before us, Koheleth remains in doubt, without getting over it by the hand of faith. In a certain reference the question he here proposes is to the present day unanswered; for the soul, or, more correctly, according to the biblical mode of conception the spirit from which the soul-life of all corporeal beings proceeds, is a monas, and as such is indestructible. Do the future of the beast's soul and of man's soul not then stand in a solidaric mutual relation to each other? In fact, the future life presents to us mysteries the solution of which is beyond the power of human thought, and we need not wonder that Koheleth, this sober-minded, intelligent man, who was inaccessible to fantastic self-deception, arrives, by the line of thought commenced at v. 16, also again at the *ultimatum*.

Ecclesiastes 3:22. “Thus I then saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his works, for that is his portion; for who can bring him to this, that he gains an insight into that which shall be after him?” Hengstenberg, who has decided against the interrog. signification of the twice-repeated ה in v. 21, now also explains בְּמָה ... אַחֲרָיו, not: What shall become of him after it (his death)? but: What further shall be done after the state in which he now finds himself? Zöckler, although rightly understanding both ה as well as אַחֲרָיו (after him = when he will be separated, or separates from this life, 7:14; 9:3; cf. Gen. 24:67), yet proceeds on that explanation of Hengstenberg's, and gives it the rendering: how things shall be on the earth after his departure. But (1) for this thought, as 6:12 shows, the author had a more suitable form of expression; (2) this thought, after the author has, v. 21, explained it as uncertain whether the spirit of a man in the act of death takes a different path from that of a beast, is altogether aside from the subject, and it is only an apologetic tendency not yet fully vanquished which here constrains him. The chain of thought is however this: How it will be with the spirit of a man when he dies, who knows? What will be after death is thus withdrawn from human knowledge. Thus it is best to enjoy the present, since we connect together (Ecclesiastes 2:24) labour and enjoyment mediated thereby. This joy of a man in his work—i.e., as 5:18: which flows from his work as a fountain, and accompanies him in it (Ecclesiastes 8:15)—is his portion, i.e., the best which he has of life in this world. Instead of בְּמָה־שׁ, the punctuation is בְּמָה, because שִׁיהִיה אַחֲרָיו is a kindred idea; *vid.* ‘regarding מָה under 2:22. And לְרֵאוֹתָּהּ is sued, because it is not so much to be said of the living, that he cannot foresee how it shall be with him when he dies, as that he can gain no glimpse into that world because it is an object that has for him no fixity.

Ecclesiastes 4

The Wrongs Suffered by Man from Man
Embittering the Life of the Observer, 4:1–3

From unjust decisions a transition is now made to the subject of the haughty, unmerciful cruelty of the wide-extended oppressions inflicted by men.

Ecclesiastes 4:1. “And again I saw all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold there the tears of the oppressed, and they have no comforter; and from the hand of their oppressors goeth forth violence; and they have no comforter.” Incorrectly Hahn: And anew I saw,—the observation is different from that of 3:16, though cognate. Thus: And again I saw,—the expression follows the syntactic scheme of Gen. 26:18; regarding the *fut. consec.* brought into view here and at v. 7, vid., above, p. 641, 2. The second *הָעֵשׂ* is *part. pass.*; the first, as at Job 35:9, and also at Amos 3:9, is abstract (i.e., bringing the many separate instances under one general idea) *pluraletantum* (cf. *פְּדוּיֵי*, *redempti*, Isa. 35:10; and *redemptio, pretium redemptionis*, Num. 3:46); the plur. *אֲשֶׁר נָעַ* need not appear strange, since even *חַיִּים* is connected with the plur. of the pred., e.g., Ps. 31:11; 88:4. *דְּמָעָה* has, as at Isa. 25:8 (cf. Rev. 24:4, *πᾶν δάκρυον*), a collective sense. The expression *וּמִיָּד ... בָּהּ* is singular. According to the most natural impression, it seems to signify: “and from the hand of their oppressors no power of deliverance” (carrying forward *אֵין*); but the parallelism of the palindromically constructed verse (as at 1:6; 2:10; 3:16) excludes this meaning. Thus *בָּהּ* is here once—nowhere else—used, like the Greek *βία*, in the sense of violence; Luzzatto prefers the reading *וּבְיָד*, by which the expression would be in conformity with the linguistic usage; but also *מִיד* is explained: the force which they have in their hands is, in going forth from their hands, thought of as abused, and, as taking the form of *שָׂד* or *חֲזָקָה*. In view of this sorrow which

men bring upon their fellow-men, life for Koheleth lost all its worth and attraction.

Ecclesiastes 4:2, 3. “And I praised the dead who were long ago dead, more than the living who are yet in life; and as happier than both, him who has not yet come into existence, who hath not seen the evil work which is done under the sun.” *וְשִׁבְחָהּ* is hardly thought of as part., like *יִקְשִׁים = מִיִּקְשִׁים*, 9:12; the *ם* of the *part. Pih.* is not usually thrown away, only *מְהָרָה*, Zeph. 1:14, is perhaps = *מְהֵרָה*, but for the same reason as *בְּיַתְיָאֵל*, 2 Kings 2:3, is = *בְּבֵית־אֵל*. Thus *וְשִׁבְחָהּ*, like *וְנִתְחַזַּן*, 8:9, is *inf. absol.*, which is used to continue, in an adverbially subord. manner, the preceding finite with the same subject, Gen. 41:43; Lev. 25:14; Judg. 7:19, etc.; cf. especially Ex. 8:11: “Pharaoh saw ... and hardened (*וַיְהַרְבֵּד*) his heart;” just in the same manner as *וְשִׁבְחָהּ* here connects itself with *וְשִׁבְחָהּ אֲנִי וְאַ*. Only the annexed designation of the subject is peculiar; the syntactic possibility of this connection is established by Num. 19:35, Ps. 15:5, Job 40:2, and, in the second rank, by Gen. 17:10, Ezek. 5:14. Yet *אֲנִי* might well enough have been omitted had *וְשִׁבְחָהּ אֲנִי וְאַ* not stood too remote.

Regarding *עַדְנָה* and *עַדְנָן*, *adhuc*, vid., p. 639. The circumstantial form of the expression: *prae vivi qui vivi sunt adhuc*, is intentional: they who are as yet living must be witnesses of the manifold and comfortless human miseries.

It is a question whether v. 3 begins a new clause (LXX, Syr., and Venet.) or not. That *אֵת*, like the Arab. *aiya*, sometimes serves to give prominence to the subject, cannot be denied (vid., Böttcher, § 516, and Mühlau’s remarks thereto). The Mishnic expressions *אֲוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם*, that day, *אֲוֹתָהּ הָאָרֶץ*, that land, and the like (Geiger, § 14. 2), presuppose a certain preparation in the older language; and we might, with Weiss (*Stud. ueber d. Spr. der Mishna*, p. 112), interpret *אֵת* *אֲשֶׁר* in the sense of *אֲוֹתֵי אֲשֶׁר*, *is qui*. But the accus. rendering is more natural. Certainly the

expression שְׁבַח טוֹב, “to praise,” “to pronounce happy,” is not used; but to טוֹב it is natural to suppose יִקְרָאֵהוּ added. Jerome accordingly translates: *et feliciorem utroque judicavi qui necdum natus est*. הָרַע has the double *Kametz*, as is generally the case, except at Ps. 54:7 and Mic. 7:3. Better than he who is born is the unborn, who does not become conscious of the wicked actions that are done under the sun. A similar thought, with many variations in its expression, is found in Greek writers; see regarding these shrill discordances, which run through all the joy of the beauty and splendour of Hellenic life, my *Apologetick*, p. 116. Buddhism accordingly gives to *nirvāna* the place of the highest good. That we find Koheleth on the same path (cf. 6:3; 7:1), has its reason in this, that so long as the central point of man’s existence lies in the present life, and this is not viewed as the forecourt of eternity, there is no enduring consolation to lift us above the miseries of this present world.

Miserable Rivalry and Restless Pursuit, 4:4–6

There follow two other observations, mutually related and issuing in “windy effort:”—

Ecclesiastes 4:4. “And I saw all the labour and all the skill of business, that it is an envious surpassing of the one by the other: also this is vain and windy effort.” The אֵהָיָה refers to this exertion of vigorous effort and skill. The Graec. Venet., by rendering here and at 2:24 בְּשֵׂרוֹן, by καθαρότης, betrays himself as a Jew. With כִּי, *quod*, that which forms the pred. follows the object. the *min* in *mere’ehu* is as in *amatz min*, Ps. 18:18, and the like—the same as the compar.: *aemulatio qua unus prae altero eminere studet*. All this expenditure of strength and art has covetousness and envy, with which one seeks to surpass another, as its poisoned sting.

Ecclesiastes 4:5. There ought certainly to be activity according to our calling; indolence is self-destruction: “The fool foldeth his hands,

and eateth his own flesh.” He layeth his hands together (Prov. 6:10–24:33),—placeth them in his bosom, instead of using them in working,—and thereby he eateth himself up, i.e., bringeth ruin upon himself (Ps. 27:2; Mic. 3:3; Isa. 49:26); for instead of nourishing himself by the labour of his hands, he feeds on his own flesh, and thus wasteth away. The emphasis does not lie on the subject (the fool, and only the fool), but on the pred.

Ecclesiastes 4:6. The fifth verse stands in a relation of contrast to this which follows: “Better is one hand full of quietness, than both fists full of labour and windy effort.” Mendelssohn and others interpret v. 5 as the objection of the industrious, and v. 6 as the reply of the slothful. Zöckler agrees with Hitz., and lapses into the hypothesis of a dialogue otherwise rejected by him (vid., above, p. 656). As everywhere, so also here it preserves the unity of the combination of thoughts. נָחָה signifies here, as little as it does anywhere else, the rest of sloth; but rest, in contrast to such activity in labour as robs a man of himself, to the hunting after gain and honour which never has enough, to the rivalry which places its goal always higher and higher, and seeks to be before others—it is rest connected with well-being (Ecclesiastes 6:5), gentle quietness (Ecclesiastes 9:17), resting from self-activity (Isa. 30:15); cf. the post-bibl. נָחָה רַחוּם, satisfaction, contentment, comfort. In a word, *nahath* has not here the sense of being idle or lazy. The sequence of the thoughts is this: The fool in idleness consumes his own life-strength; but, on the other hand, a little of true rest is better than the labour of windy effort, urged on by rivalry yielding no rest. כָּף is the open hollow hand, and חִפְזָן (Assyr. *hupunnu*) the hand closed like a ball, the fist. “Rest” and “labour and windy effort” are the accusatives of that to which the designation of measure refers (Ges. § 118. 3); the accus. connection lay here so much the nearer, as מְלֵא is connected with the accus. of that with which anything is full. In “and windy effort” lies the reason for the

judgment pronounced. The striving of a man who laboriously seeks only himself and loses himself in restlessness, is truly a striving which has wind for its object, and has the property of wind.

The Aimless Labour and Penuriousness of Him Who Stands Alone, 4:7–12

Another sorrowful spectacle is the endless labour and the insatiable covetousness of the isolated man, which does good neither to himself nor to any other:

Ecclesiastes 4:7, 8. "There is one without a second, also son and brother he has not; and there is no end of his labour; his eyes nevertheless are not satisfied with riches: For whom do I labour, then, and deny all good to my soul? Also this is vain, and it is a sore trouble." That וְאֵין, as in Ps. 104:25; 105:34, has the meaning of בְּאֵין, *absque*, Nolde has already observed in his *Partik-Concordanz: a solitarius*, without one standing by his side, a second standing near him, i.e., without wife and without friend; also, as the words following show, without son and brother. Regarding וְאֵין, for which, with the connect. accus., וְאֵין might be expected (cf. also 2:7, וְצִאָן with *Mahpach*; and, on the other hand, 2:23, וְכַעַס with *Pashta*), vid., under Ps. 55:10. *Gam* may be interpreted in the sense of "also" as well as of "nevertheless" (Ewald, 354a); the latter is to be preferred, since the endless labour includes in itself a restless striving after an increase of possession. The *Kerî*, in an awkward way, changes עֵינָיו into עֵינֹו; the taking together the two eyes as one would here be unnatural, since the avaricious man devours gold, silver, and precious things really with both his eyes, and yet, however great be his wealth, still more does he wish to see in his possession; the sing. of the pred. is as at 1 Sam. 4:15; Mic. 4:11. With *ulmi ani*, Koheleth puts himself in the place of such a friendless, childless man; yet this change of the description into a self-confession may be occasioned by this, that the author in his old

age was really thus isolated, and stood alone. Regarding חֶסֶר with the accus. of the person, to whom, and *min* of the matter, in respect of which there is want, vid., under Ps. 8:6. That the author stands in sympathy with the sorrowful condition here exposed, may also be remarked from the fact that he now proceeds to show the value of companionship and the miseries of isolation:

Ecclesiastes 4:9. "Better are two together than one, seeing they have a good reward in their labour." By *hashshnâim*, the author refers to such a pair; *hæehhad* is one such as is just described. The good reward consists in this, that each one of the two has the pleasant consciousness of doing good to the other by his labour, and especially of being helpful to him. In this latter general sense is grounded the idea of the reward of faithful fellowship:

Ecclesiastes 4:10. "For if they fall, the one can raise up his fellow: but woe to the one who falleth, and there is not a second there to lift him up." Only the Targ., which Grätz follows, confounds אֵילֹו with אֵלוֹ (vid., above, p. 637); it is equivalent to אֹוֹ לֹו, Isa. 3:9, or הוֹי לֹו, Ezek. 13:18. *Hæehhad* is appos. connecting itself to the pronominal suff., as, e.g., in a far more inappropriate manner, Ps. 86:2; the prep. is not in appos. usually repeated, Gen. 2:19; 9:4 (exceptions: Ps. 18:51; 74:14). Whether we translate שָׁיִבֵל by *qui ceciderit* (Ecclesiastes 11:3), or by *quum ceciderit* (Jerome), is all one. וְיָקִים is potential: it is possible and probable that it will be done, provided he is a חֶבֶר טוֹב, i.e., a true friend (*Pirke aboth*, ii. 13).

Ecclesiastes 4:11. "Moreover, if two lie together, then there is heat to them: but how can it be warm with one who is alone?" The marriage relation is not excluded, but it remains in the background; the author has two friends in his eye, who, lying in a cold night under one covering (Ex. 22:26; Isa. 28:20), cherish one another, and impart mutual warmth. Also in *Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan*, c. 8, the sleeping of two together is spoken of as an

evidence of friendship. The *vav* in *vhham* is that of the consequent; it is wanting 10a, according to rule, in *hæehhad*, because it commonly comes into use with the verb, seldom (e.g., Gen. 22:1) with the preceding subj.

Ecclesiastes 4:12. “And if one shall violently assail him who is alone, two shall withstand him; and (finally) a threefold cord is not quickly broken asunder.” The form *yithqpho* for *yithqphehu*, Job 15:24, is like *hirdpfo*, Hos. 8:3 = *hirdphehu*, Judg. 9:40. If we take תִּקַּח in the sense of to overpower, then the meaning is: If one can overpower him who is alone, then, on the contrary, two can maintain their ground against him (Herzf.); but the two אָם, vv. 10, 11, which are equivalent to *ἔάν*, exclude such a pure logical εἰ. And why should תִּקַּח, if it can mean overpowering, not also mean doing violence to by means of a sudden attack? In the Mishnic and Arab. it signifies to seize, to lay hold of; in the Aram. אֶתְקַח = הִתְחַזֵּק, and also at Job 14:20; 15:24 (vid., *Comm.*), it may be understood of a violent assault, as well as of a completed subjugation; as נָשָׂא means to lift up and carry; עָמַד, to tread and to stand. But whether it be understood inchoat. or not, in any case האֹחֵד is not the assailant, who is much rather the unnamed subj. in יִתְקַפֵּי, but the one (the *solitarius*) who, if he is alone, must succumb; the construction of *hithqpho hæehhad* follows the scheme of Ex. 2:6, “she saw it, the child.” To the assault expressed by תִּקַּח, there stands opposed the expression עָמַד נֹגַד, which means to withstand any one with success; as עָמַד לְפָנַי, 2 Kings 10:4, Ps. 147:17, Dan. 8:7, means to maintain one’s ground. Of three who hold together, 12a says nothing; the advance from two to three is thus made in the manner of a numerical proverb (vid., *Proverbs*, vol. I p. 13). If two hold together, that is seen to be good; but if there be three, this threefold bond is likened to a cord formed of three threads, which cannot easily be broken. Instead of the definite specific art. הַסֵּבֶל, we make use of the indefinite.

Funiculus triplex difficile rumpitur is one of the winged expressions used by Koheleth.

The People’s Enthusiasm for the New King, and Its Extinction, 4:13–16

A political observation follows in an aphoristic manner the observations relating to social life, viz., how popularity vanishes away and passes even into its opposite. The author, who here plainly quotes from actual events, begins with a general statement:

Ecclesiastes 4:13. “Better is a youth poor and wise, than a king old and foolish, who no longer understands how to be warned,”—i.e., who increases his folly by this, that he is “wise in his own eyes,” Prov. 26:12; earlier, as עֵינָיו denotes, he was, in some measure, accessible to the instruction of others in respect of what was wanting to him; but now in his advanced age he is hardened in his folly, bids defiance to all warning counsel, and undermines his throne. The connection of the verb יָדַע with ל and the inf. (for which elsewhere only the inf. is used) is a favourite form with the author; it means to know anything well, 5:1; 6:8; 10:15; here is meant an understanding resting on the knowledge of oneself and on the knowledge of men. נִזְהָר is here and at 12:12, Ps. 19:12, a *Niph. tolerativum*, such as the synon. נוֹסֵר, Ps. 2:10: to let oneself be cleared up, made wiser, enlightened, warned. After this contrast, the idea connected with חָכָם also defines itself. A young man (יָלֵד), as at Dan. 1:4, but also Gen. 4:23) is meant who (vid., above, p. 639, under *miskén*) yet excels the old imbecile and childish king, in that he perceives the necessity of a fundamental change in the present state of public matters, and knows how to master the situation to such a degree that he raises himself to the place of ruler over the neglected community.

Ecclesiastes 4:14. “For out of the prison-house he goeth forth to reign as king, although he was born as a poor man in his kingdom.” With כִּי the properties of poverty and wisdom attributed to

the young man are verified,—wisdom in this, that he knew how to find the way from a prison to a throne. As *harammim*, 2 Chron. 22:5 = *haarammim*, 2 Kings 8:28, so *hasurim* = *haasurim* (cf. *masoreth* = *maasoreth*, Ezek. 20:37); *beth haasirim* (*Kerî*; *haasurim*), Judg. 16:21, 25, and *beth haesur*, Jer. 38:15, designate the prison; cf. *Mo'ed katan*, 3:1. The modern form of the language prefers this elision of the א, e.g., אֶפְלוּ = אֶלּוּ, אֶף אֶלְתֵּר, אֶלְאֶתֶר = אֶלְאֶתֶר *post* = אֶתֶר *contra*, etc. The perf. יָצָא is also thought of as having reached the throne, and having pre-eminence assigned to him as such. He has come forth from the prison to become king, וְשָׁשׁ ... כִּי. Zöckler translates: "Whereas also he that was born in his kingdom was poor," and adds the remark: "כי גם, after the כי of the preceding clause, does not so much introduce a verification of it, as much rather an intensification; by which is expressed, that the prisoner has not merely transitorily fallen into such misery, but that he was born in poor and lowly circumstances, and that in his own kingdom כִּי, i.e., in the same land which he should afterwards rule as king." But כי גם is nowhere used by Koheleth in the sense of "*ja auch*" (= whereas also); and also where it is thus to be translated, as at Jer. 14:18; 23:11, it is used in the sense of "*denn auch*" (= for also), assigning proof. The fact is, that this group of particles, according as כי is thought of as demonstr. or relat., means either "*denn auch*," 4:16; 7:22; 8:16, or "*wenn auch*" = *ἐὰν καὶ*, as here and at 8:12. In the latter case, it is related to גם כִּי (sometimes also merely גם, Ps. 95:9; Mal. 3:15), as *ἐὰν* (εἰ) καὶ, although, notwithstanding, is to καὶ ἐὰν (εἰ), even although. Thus 14*b*, connecting itself with לְמַלְךָ, is to be translated: "although he was born (גּוֹלָד, not גּוֹלָד) in his kingdom as a poor man." We cannot also concur with Zöckler in the view that the suff. of בָּם refers to the young upstart: in the kingdom which should afterwards become his; for this reason, that the suff. of תָּחַ,

v. 16*b*, refers to the old king, and thus also that this designation may be mediated, בָּם must refer to him. מַלְכוּת signifies kingdom, reign, realm; here, the realm, as at Neh. 9:35, Dan. 5:11; 6:29. Grätz thinks vv. 13–16 ought to drive expositors to despair. But hitherto we have found no room for despair in obtaining a meaning from them. What follows also does not perplex us. The author describes how all the world hails the entrance of the new youthful king on his government, and gathers together under his sceptre.

Ecclesiastes 4:15, 16a. "I saw all the living which walk under the sun on the side of the youth, the second who shall enter upon the place of the former: no end of all the people, all those at whose head he stands." The author, by the expression "I saw," places himself back in the time of the change of government. If we suppose that he represents this to himself in a lively manner, then the words are to be translated: of the second who shall be his successor; but if we suppose that he seeks to express from the standpoint of the past that which, lying farther back in the past, was now for the first time future, then the future represents the time to come in the past, as at 2 Kings 3:27; Ps. 78:6; Job 15:28 (Hitz.): of the second who should enter on his place (עָמַד, to step to, to step forth, of the new king, Dan. 8:23; 11:2*f*.; cf. קוּם, 1 Kings 8:20). The designation of the crowd which, as the pregnant עַם expresses, gathered by the side of the young successor to the old king, by "all the living, those walking under the sun (הַמְהָה, perhaps intentionally the pathetic word for הַלְכִים, Isa. 42:5)," would remain a hyperbole, even although the throne of the Asiatic world-ruler had been intended; still the expression, so absolute in its universality, would in that case be more natural (vid., the conjectural reference to Cyrus and Astygates, above, at p. 654). הַשֵּׁנִי, Ewald refers to the successor to the king, the second after the king, and translates: "to the second man who should reign in his stead;" but the second

man in this sense has certainly never been the child of fortune; one must then think of Joseph, who, however, remains the second man. Hitzig rightly: "The youth is the second שני, not אחר, in contrast to the king, who, as his predecessor, is the first." "Yet," he continues, "הילד should be the appos. and השני the principal word," i.e., instead of: with the second youth, was to be expected: with the second, the youth. It is true, we may either translate: with the second youth, or: with the second, the youth,—the_ form of expression has in its something incorrect, for it has the appearance as if it treated of two youths. But similar are the expressions, Matt. 8:21, ἄλλος κ.τ.λ., "another, and that, too, one of His disciples;" and Luke 23:32, ἕτερον κ.τ.λ. All the world ranks itself by the side (thus we may also express it) of the second youthful king, so that he comes to stand at the head of an endless multitude. The LXX, Jerome, and the Venet. render incorrectly the all (the multitude) as the subject of the relative clause, which Luther, after the Syr., corrects by reading לפניו for לפניהם: of the people that went for him there was no end. Rightly the Targ.: at whose head (= בְּרִישִׁיהוֹן) he had the direction, לְפָנַי, as with יצא ובא, 1 Sam. 18:16; 2 Chron. 1:10; Ps. 68:8, etc. All the world congregates about him, follows his leadership; but his history thus splendidly begun, viewed backwards, is a history of hopes falsified.

Ecclesiastes 4:16b. "And yet they who come after do not rejoice in him: for that also is vain, and a grasping after the wind." For all that, and in spite of that (*gam* has here this meaning, as at 6:7; Jer. 6:15; Ps. 129:2; Ewald, § 354a), posterity (הָאָ, as at 1:11; cf. Isa. 41:4) has no joy in this king,—the hopes which his contemporaries placed in the young king, who had seized the throne and conquered their hearts, afterwards proved to be delusions; and also this history, at first so beautiful, and afterwards so hateful, contributed finally to the confirmation of the truth, that all under the sun is vain. As to the historical reminiscence from

the time of the Ptolemies, in conformity with which Hitzig (in his *Comm.*) thinks this figure is constructed, vid., above, p. 652; Grätz here, as always, rocks himself in Herodian dreams. In his *Comm.*, Hitz. guesses first of Jeroboam, along with Rehoboam the ילד שני, who rebelled against King Solomon, who in his old age had become foolish. In an essay, "Zur Exeg. u. Kritik des B. Koheleth," in Hilgenfeld's *Zeitschr.* XIV 566ff., Saul, on the contrary, appears to him to be the old and foolish king, and David the poor wise youth who rose to the throne, and took possession of the whole kingdom, but in his latter days experienced desertion and adversities; for those who came after (the younger men) had no delight in him, but rebelled against him. But in relation to Saul, who came from the plough to be king, David, who was called from being a shepherd, is not נולד רש; and to Jewish history this Saul, whose nobler self is darkened by melancholy, but again brightens forth, and who to his death maintained the dignity of a king of Israel, never at any time appears as מלך ... וכסיל. Moreover, by both combinations of that which is related with the בית הסורים (for which הס' is written) of the history of the old Israelitish kings, a meaning contrary to the usage of the language must be extracted. It is true that סור, as the so-called *particip. perfecti*, may mean "gone aside (to a distance)," Isa. 49:21, Jer. 17:13; and we may, at any rate, by סורים, think on that poor rabble which at first gathered around David, 1 Sam. 22:2, regarded as outcasts from honourable society. But בית will not accord therewith. That David came forth from the house (home) of the estranged or separated, is and remains historically an awkward expression, linguistically obscure, and not in accordance with the style of Koheleth. In order to avoid this incongruity, Böttcher regards Antiochus the Great as the original of the ילד. He was the second son of his father, who died 225. When a hopeful youth of fifteen years of age, he was recalled to the throne from a voluntary

banishment into Farther Asia, very soon gained against his old cousin and rival Achaeus, who was supported by Egypt, a large party, and remained for several years esteemed as a prince and captain; he disappointed, however, at a later time, the confidence which was reposed in him. But granting that the voluntary exile of Antiochus might be designated as בית הַאֲסִי, he was yet not a poor man, born poor, but was the son of King Seleucus Callincus; and his older relative and rival Achaeus wished indeed to become king, but never attained unto it. Hence השני is not the youth as second son of his father, but as second on the throne, in relation to the dethroned king reckoned as the first. Thus, far from making it probable that the Book of Koheleth originated in the time of the Diadochs, this combination of Böttcher's also stands on a feeble foundation, and falls in ruins when assailed.

The section 1:12–4:16, to which we have prefixed the superscription, "Koheleth's Experiences and their Results," has now reached its termination, and here for the first time we meet with a characteristic peculiarity in the composition of the book: the narrative sections, in which Koheleth, on the ground of his own experiences and observations, registers the vanities of earthly life, terminate in series of proverbs in which the *I* of the preacher retires behind the objectivity of the exhortations, rules, and principles obtained from experience, here recorded. The first of these series of proverbs which here follows is the briefest, but also the most complete in internal connection.

First Concluding Section

Proverbs Regarding the Worship of God—4:17 [5:1]–5:6 [7]

As an appendix and interlude, these proverbs directly follow the personal section preceding. The first rule here laid down refers to the going to the house of God.

Ecclesiastes 4:17 [5:1]. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and to go to hear is better than that fools give a sacrifice; for

the want of knowledge leads them to do evil." The "house of God" is like the "house of Jahve," 2 Sam. 12:20, Isa. 37:1, the temple; אֵל, altogether like אֱלֹהִים, Ps. 73:17. The *Chethîb* רַגְלֶיךָ is admissible, for elsewhere also this plur. ("thy feet") occurs in a moral connection and with a spiritual reference, e.g., Ps. 119:59; but more frequently, however, the comprehensive sing. occurs. Ps. 119:105, Prov. 1:15; 4:26f., and the *Kerî* thus follows the right note. The correct understanding of what follows depends on כִּי ... רַע. Interpreters have here adopted all manner of impossible views. Hitzig's translation: "for they know not how to be sorrowful," has even found in Stuart at least one imitator; but עֲשׂוֹת רַע would, as the contrast of 'asoth tov, 3:12, mean nothing else than, "to do that which is unpleasant, disagreeable, bad," like 'asah ra'ah, 2 Sam. 12:18. Gesen., Ewald (§ 336b), Elster, Heiligst., Burger, Zöckl., Dale, and Bullock translate: "they know not that they do evil;" but for such a rendering the words ought to have been עֲשׂוֹתָם רַע (cf. Jer. 15:15); the only example for the translation of לעשות after the manner of the *acc. c. inf. = se facere malum*—viz. at 1 Kings 19:4—is incongruous, for למות does not here mean *se mori*, but *ut moreretur*. Yet more incorrect is the translation of Jerome, which is followed by Luther: *nesciunt quid faciant mali*. It lies near, as at 2:24 so also here, to suppose an injury done to the text. Aben Ezra introduced רק before לעשׂ, but Koheleth never uses this limiting particle; we would have to write כי אם לעשות, after 3:12; 8:15. Anything thus attained, however, is not worth the violent means thus used; for the ratifying clause is not ratifying, and also in itself, affirmed of the כסילים, who, however, are not the same as the *rsha'im* and the *hattäim*, is inappropriate. Rather it might be said: they know not to do good (thus the Syr.); or: they know not whether it be good or bad to do, i.e., they have no moral feeling, and act not from moral motives (so the Targ.). Not less violent than this remodelling of

the text is the expedient of Herzberg, Philippson, and Ginsburg, who from לְשֹׁמֵעַ derive the subject-conception of the obedient (הַשְּׁמָעִים): "For those understand not at all to do evil;" the subj. ought to have been expressed if it must be something different from the immediately preceding כְּסִילִים. We may thus render *enam yod'im*, after Ps. 82:5, Isa. 56:10, as complete in itself: they (the fools) are devoid of knowledge to do evil = so that they do evil; i.e., want of knowledge brings them to this, that they do evil. Similarly also Knobel: they concern themselves not,—are unconcerned (*viz.*, about the right mode of worshipping God),—so that they do evil, with the correct remark that the consequence of their perverse conduct is here represented as their intention. But לֹא יָדַע, absol., does not mean to be unconcerned (wanton), but to be without knowledge. Rashbam, in substance correctly: they are predisposed by their ignorance to do evil; and thus also Hahn; Mendelssohn translates directly: "they sin because they are ignorant." If this interpretation is correct, then for לְשֹׁמֵעַ it follows that it does not mean "to obey" (thus e.g., Zöckler), which in general it never means without some words being added to it (*cf.* on the contrary, 1 Sam. 15:22), but "to hear,"—*viz.* the word of God, which is to be heard in the house of God,—whereby, it is true, a hearing is meant which leads to obedience.

In the word הוֹרֹת, priests are not perhaps thought of, although the comparison of v. 5 (הַמְלֹאךְ) with Mal. 2:7 makes it certainly natural; priestly instruction limited itself to information regarding the performance of the law already given in Scripture, Lev. 10:11, Deut. 33:9f., and to deciding on questions arising in the region of legal praxis, Deut. 24:8; Hag. 2:11. The priesthood did not belong to the teaching class in the sense of preaching. Preaching was never a part of the temple cultus, but, for the first time, after the exile became a part of the synagogue worship. The preachers under the O.T. were the prophets,—preachers by a

supernatural divine call, and by the immediate impulse of the Spirit; we know from the Book of Jeremiah that they sometimes went into the temple, or there caused their books of prophecy to be read; yet the author, by the word לְשֹׁמֵעַ of the foregoing proverb, scarcely thinks of them. But apart from the teaching of the priests, which referred to the realization of the letter of the law, and the teaching of the prophets to the realization of the spirit of the law, the word formed an essential part of the sacred worship of the temple: the *Tefilla*, the *Beracha*, the singing of psalms, and certainly, at the time of Koheleth, the reading of certain sections of the Bible. When thou goest to the house of God, says Koheleth, take heed to thy step, well reflecting whither thou goest and how thou hast there to appear; and (with this הַ connects with this first *nota bene* a second) drawing near to hear exceeds the sacrifice-offering of fools, for they are ignorant (just because they hear not), which leads to this result, that they do evil. מִן, *prae*, expresses also, without an adj., precedence in number, Isa. 10:10, or activity, 9:17, or worth, Ezek. 15:2. קָרוֹב is *inf. absol.* Böttcher seeks to subordinate it as such to שָׁמַר: take heed to thy foot ... and to the coming near to hear more than to ... But these obj. to שָׁמַר would be incongruous, and הוֹרֹת clumsy and even distorted in expression; it ought rather to be מִתְּתָדָּ כְּכִסְיִלִים זָבַח. As the *inf. absol.* can take the place of the obj., Isa. 7:15; 42:24, Lam. 3:45, so also the place of the subj. (Ewald, § 240a), although Prov. 25:27 is a doubtful example of this. That the use of the *inf. absol.* has a wide application with the author of this book, we have already seen under 4:2. Regarding the sequence of ideas in זָבַח ... מִתְּתָּה (first the subj., then the obj.), *vid.*, Gesen. § 133. 3, and *cf.* above at 3:18. זָבַח (זָבָחִים), along with its general signification comprehending all animal sacrifices, according to which the altar bears the name מִזְבֵּחַ, early acquired also a more special signification: it

denotes, in contradistinction to עולה, such sacrifices as are only partly laid on the altar, and for the most part are devoted to a sacrificial festival, Ex. 18:12 (cf. Ex. 12:27), the so-called *shlamim*, or also *zivhhe shlamim*, Prov. 7:14. The expression נתן זבח makes it probable that here, particularly, is intended the festival (1 Kings 1:41) connected with this kind of sacrifice, and easily degenerating to worldly merriment (vid., under Prov. 7:14); for the more common word for תת would have been הקריב or שחוט; in תת it seems to be indicated that it means not only to present something to God, but also to give at the same time something to man. The most recent canonical Chokma-book agrees with Prov. 21:3 in this depreciation of sacrifice. But the Chokma does not in this stand alone. The great word of Samuel, 1 Sam. 15:22f., that self-denying obedience to God is better than all sacrifices, echoes through the whole of the Psalms. And the prophets go to the utmost in depreciating the sacrificial cultus. The second rule relates to prayer.

Ecclesiastes 5

Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2 [2, 3]. "Be not hasty with thy mouth, and let not thy heart hasten to speak a word before God: for God is in heaven, and thou art upon earth; therefore let thy words be few. For by much business cometh dreaming, and by much talk the noise of fools." As we say in German: *auf Flügeln fliegen* [to flee on wings], *auf Einem Auge nicht sehen* [not to see with one eye], *auf der Flöte blasen* [to blow on the flute], so in Heb. we say that one slandereth with (*auf*) his tongue (Ps. 15:3), or, as here, that he hasteth with his mouth, i.e., is forward with his mouth, inasmuch as the word goes before the thought. It is the same usage as when the post-bibl. Heb., in contradistinction to התורה, שבתב, the law given in the Scripture, calls the oral law שבעל־פה, i.e., the law mediated על־פה, *oraliter = oralis traditio* (*Shabbath 31a*; cf. *Gittin 60b*). The instrument and means is here regarded as the *substratum* of the action—

as that which this lays as a foundation. The phrase: "to take on the lips," Ps. 16:4, which needs no explanation, is different. Regarding בָּהֵל, *festinare*, which is, like מָהָר, the intens. of *Kal*, vid., above, p. 637; once it occurs quite like our "*sich beeilen*" [to hasten], with reflex. accus. suff., 2 Chron. 35:21. Man, when he prays, should not give the reins to his tongue, and multiply words as one begins and repeats over a form which he has learnt, knowing certainly that it is God of whom and to whom he speaks, but without being conscious that God is an infinitely exalted Being, to whom one may not carelessly approach without collecting his thoughts, and irreverently, without lifting up his soul. As the heavens, God's throne, are exalted above the earth, the dwelling-place of man, so exalted is the heavenly God above earthly man, standing far beneath him; therefore ought the words of a man before God to be few,—few, well-chosen reverential words, in which one expresses his whole soul. The older language forms no plur. from the subst. מועט (*fewness*) used as an adv.; but the more recent treats it as an adj., and forms from it the plur. מועטים (here and in Ps. 109:8, which bears the superscription *le-david*, but has the marks of Jeremiah's style); the post-bibl. places in the room of the apparent adj. the particip. adj. מועט with the plur. מועטים (מועטין), e.g., *Berachoth 61a*: "always let the words of a man before the Holy One (blessed be His name!) be few" (מוע). Few ought the words to be; for where they are many, it is not without folly. This is what is to be understood, v. 2, by the comparison; the two parts of the verse stand here in closer mutual relation than 7:1, —the proverb is not merely synthetical, but, like Job 5:7, parabolical. The ב is both times that of the cause. The dream happens, or, as we say, dreams happen ענין; not: by much labour; for labour in itself, as the expenditure of strength making one weary, has as its consequence, 5:11, sweet sleep undisturbed by dreams; but: by much self-vexation in a man's striving after high and

remote ends beyond what is possible (Targ., in manifold project-making); the care of such a man transplants itself from the waking to the sleeping life, if it does not wholly deprive him of sleep, 5:11*b*, 8:16, —all kinds of images of the labours of the day, and fleeting phantoms and terrifying pictures hover before his mind. And as dreams of such a nature appear when a man wearies himself inwardly as well as outwardly by the labours of the day, so, with the same inward necessity, where many words are spoken folly makes its appearance. Hitzig renders כּסיל, in the connection קוֹלָךְ, as adj.; but, like אָוִיל (which forms an adj. *ěvīlī*), כּסיל is always a subst., or, more correctly, it is a name occurring always only of a living being, never of a thing. There is sound without any solid content, mere blustering bawling without sense and intelligence. The talking of a fool is in itself of this kind (Ecclesiastes 10:14); but if one who is not just a fool falls into much talk, it is scarcely possible but that in this flow of words empty bombast should appear.

Another rule regarding the worship of God refers to vowing.

Ecclesiastes 5:3 [4]-6 [7]. “When thou hast made a vow to God, delay not to fulfil it; for there is no pleasure in fools: that which thou hast vowed fulfil. Better that thou vowest not, than that thou vowest and fulfilllest not. Let not thy mouth bring thy body into punishment; and say not before the messenger of God that it was precipitation: why shall God be angry at thy talk, and destroy the work of thy hands? For in many dreams and words there are also many vanities: much rather fear God!” If they abstained, after *Shabbath* 30*b*, from treating the Book of Koheleth as apocryphal, because it begins with דְּבַרֵי תוֹרָה (cf. at 1:3) and closes in the same way, and hence warrants the conclusion that that which lies between will also be דְּבַרֵי תוֹרָה, this is in a special manner true of the passage before us regarding the vow which, in thought and expression, is the echo of Deut. 23:22–24. Instead of *kaashēr tiddor*, we find there the words *ki tiddor*; instead of

lelohim (= *lělohim*, always only of the one true God), there we have *lahovah ęlohęcha*; and instead of *al-tahher*, there *lo tahher*. There the reason is: “for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee;” here: for there is no pleasure in fools, i.e., it is not possible that any one, not to speak of God, could have a particular inclination toward fools, who speak in vain, and make promises in which their heart is not, and which they do not keep. Whatever thou vowest, continues Koheleth, fulfil it; it is better (Ewald, § 336*a*) that thou vowest not, than to vow and not to pay; for which the *Tōra* says: “If thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee” (Deut. 23:22). נָדָר, which, according to the stem-word, denotes first the vow of consecration of setting apart (cogn. Arab. *nadar*, to separate, نَدَرَ, whence נָדָר), the so-called אָסֶר [vid. Num. 30:3], is here a vow in its widest sense; the author, however, may have had, as there, the law (cf. v. 24), especially *shalme nědęr*, in view, i.e., such peace-offerings as the law does not enjoin, but which the offerer promises (cogn. with the *shalme ndavah*, i.e., such as rest on free-will, but not on any obligation arising from a previous promise) from his own inclination, for the event that God may do this or that for him. The verb שָׁלַם is not, however, related to this name for sacrifices, as חָטָא is to חָטָאת, but denotes the fulfilling or discharge as a performance fully accordant with duty. To the expression הִיא ... חָטָא (twice occurring in the passage of Deut. referred to above) there is added the warning: let not thy mouth bring thy body into sin. The verb *nathan*, with *Lamed* and the inf. following, signifies to allow, to permit, Gen. 20:6; Judg. 1:34; Job 31:30. The inf. is with equal right translated: not to bring into punishment; for חָטָא—the syncop. *Hiph.* of which, according to an old, and, in the Pentateuch, favourite form, is לְחָטִיא—signifies to sin, and also (e.g., Gen. 39:9; cf. the play on the word, Hos. 8:11) to expiate sin; sin-burdened and guilty, or liable to punishment, mean the same thing. Incorrectly, Ginsburg,

Zöck., and others: "Do not suffer thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin;" for (1) the formula: "the flesh sins," is not in accordance with the formation of O.T. ideas; the N.T., it is true, uses the expression $\sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\xi}$ $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$, Rom. 8:3, but not $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha$, that which sins is not the flesh, but the will determined by the flesh, or by fleshly lust; (2) the mouth here is not merely that which leads to sin, but the person who sins through thoughtless haste,—who, by his haste, brings sin upon his flesh, for this suffers, for the breach of vow, by penalties inflicted by God; the mouth is, like the eye and the hand, a member of the $\acute{\omicron}\lambda\omicron\nu$ $\tau\acute{o}$ $\sigma\acute{\omega}\mu\alpha$ (Matt. 5:24f.), which is here called בִּישָׁר ; the whole man in its sensitive nature (*opp.* לֵב , 2:3; 11:10; Prov. 14:30) has to suffer chastisement on account of that which the mouth hath spoken. Gesen. compares this passage, correctly, with Deut. 24:4, for the meaning *peccati reum facere*; Isa. 29:21 is also similar.

The further warning refers to the lessening of the sin of a rash vow unfulfilled as an unintentional, easily expiable offence: "and say not before the messenger of God that it was a שְׁגִיגָה , a sin of weakness." Without doubt *hammälāch* is an official byname of a priest (vid., above, p. 639), and that such as was in common use at the time of the author (vid., p. 650). But as for the rest, it is not easy to make the matter of the warning clear. That it is not easy, may be concluded from this, that with Jewish interpreters it lies remote to think of a priest in the word *hammälāch*. By this word the Targ. understands the angel to whom the execution of the sentence of punishment shall be committed on the day of judgment; Aben Ezra: the angel who writes down all the words of a man; similarly Jerome, after his Jewish teacher. Under this passage Ginsburg has an entire excursus regarding the angels. The LXX and Syr. translate "before God," as if the words of the text were נִגְדָה אֱלֹהִים , Ps. 138:1, or as if *hammalach* could of itself mean God, as presenting Himself in history. Supposing that *hammalach* is the official name of a man, and

that of a priest, we appear to be under the necessity of imagining that he who is charged with the obligation of a vow turns to the priest with the desire that he would release him from it, and thus dissolve (*bibl.* הִפְיֵר , Mishnic הִתִּיר) the vow. But there is no evidence that the priests had the power of releasing from vows. Individual cases in which a husband can dissolve the vow of his wife, and a father the vow of his daughter, are enumerated in Num. 30; besides, in the traditional law, we find the sentence: "A vow, which one who makes it repents of, can be dissolved by a learned man (חכם), or, where none is present, by three laymen," *Bechoroth* 36*b*; the matter cannot be settled by any middle person (שְׁלִיחַ), but he who has taken the vow (הַנוֹדֵר) must appear personally, *Jore deah* c. 228, § 16. Of the priest as such nothing is said here. Therefore the passage cannot at all be traditionally understood of an official dissolution of an oath. Where the Talm. applies it juristically, *Shabbath* 32*b*, etc., Rashi explains *hammalach* by *gizbar shēl-haqdesh*, i.e., treasurer of the revenues of the sanctuary; and in the *Comm.* to Koheleth he supposes that some one has publicly resolved on an act of charity (צְדָקָה), i.e., has determined it with himself, and that now the representative of the congregation (שְׁלִיחַ) comes to demand it. But that is altogether fanciful. If we proceed on the idea that *liphne hammalach* is of the same meaning as *liphne hakkohen*, Lev. 27:8, 11, Num. 9:6; 27:2, etc., we have then to derive the figure from such passages relating to the law of sacrifice as Num. 15:22–26, from which the words *ki shgagah hi* (Num. 15:25*b*) originate. We have to suppose that he who has made a vow, and has not kept it, comes to terms with God with an easier and less costly offering, since in the confession (וְדָוִי) which he makes before the priest he explains that the vow was a *shgagah*, a declaration that inconsiderately escaped him. The author, in giving it to be understood that under these circumstances the offering of the sacrifice is just the direct contrary of a good work, calls to the conscience

of the inconsiderate נודר: why should God be angry on account of thy voice with which thou dost excuse thy sins of omission, and destroy (vid., regarding חַבַּל under Isa. 10:27) the work of thy hands (vid., under Ps. 90:17), for He destroys what thou hast done, and causes to fail what thou purposest? The question with *lammah* resembles those in Ezra 4:22; 7:23, and is of the same kind as at 7:16f.; it leads us to consider what a mad self-destruction that would be (Jer. 44:7, cf. under Isa. 1:5).

The reason [for the foregoing admonition] now following places the inconsiderate vow under the general rubric of inconsiderate words. We cannot succeed in interpreting v. 6 [7] (in so far as we do not supply, after the LXX and Syr. with the Targ.: *ne credas*; or better, with Ginsburg, היא = it is) without taking one of the *vavs* in the sense of “also.” That the Heb. *vav*, like the Greek *καί*, the Lat. *et*, may have this comparative or intensifying sense rising above that which is purely copulative, is seen from e.g., Num. 9:14, cf. also Josh. 14:11. In many cases, it is true, we are not under the necessity of translating *vav* by “also;” but since the “and” here does not merely externally connect, but expresses correlation of things homogeneous, an “also” or a similar particle involuntarily substitutes itself for the “and,” e.g., Gen. 17:20 (Jerome): *super Ismael quoque*; Ex. 29:8: *filios quoque*; Deut. 1:32: *et nec sic quidem credidistis*; 9:8: *nam et in Horeb*; cf. Josh. 15:19; 1 Sam. 25:43; 2 Sam. 19:25; 1 Kings 2:22; 11:26; Isa. 49:6, “I have also given to thee.” But there are also passages in which it cannot be otherwise translated than by “also.” We do not reckon among these Ps. 31:12, where we do not translate “also my neighbours,” and Amos 4:10, where the words are to be translated, “and that in your nostrils.” On the contrary, Isa. 32:7 is scarcely otherwise to be translated than “also when the poor maketh good his right,” like 2 Sam. 1:23, “also in their death they are not divided.” In 2 Chron. 27:5, in like manner, the two *vavs* are scarcely correlative, but we have, with Keil, to translate, “also in the second and third year.” And in Hos.

8:6, וְהוּא, at least according to the punctuation, signifies “also it,” as Jerome translates: *ex Israele et ipse est*. According to the interpunction of the passage before us, וְהוּא is the pred., and thus, with the Venet., is to be translated: “For in many dreams and vanities there are also many words.” We could at all events render the *vav*, as also at 10:11, Ex. 16:6, as *vav apod.*; but בָּרַב וְגוֹי has not the character of a virtual antecedent,—the meaning of the expression remains as for the rest the same; but Hitzig’s objection is of force against it (as also against Ewald’s disposition of the words, like the of Symmachus, Jerome, and Luther: “for where there are many dreams, there are also vanities, and many words”), that it does not accord with the connection, which certainly in the first place requires a reason referable to inconsiderate talk, and that the second half is, in fact, erroneous, for between dreams and many words there exists no necessary inward mutual relation. Hitzig, as Knobel before him, seeks to help this, for he explains: “for in many dreams are also vanities, i.e., things from which nothing comes, and (the like) in many words.” But not only is this assumed carrying forward of the ב doubtful, but the principal thing would be made a secondary matter, and would drag heavily. The relation in v. 2 is different where *vav* is that of comparison, and that which is compared follows the comparison. Apparently the text (although the LXX had it before them, as it is before us) has undergone dislocation, and is thus to be arranged: כִּי בַרְבַּח חֲלֻמוֹת וּדְבָרִים: for in many dreams and many words there are also vanities, i.e., illusions by which one deceives himself and others. Thus also Bullock renders, but without assigning a reason for it. That dreams are named first, arises from a reference back to v. 2, according to which they are the images of what a man is externally and mentally busied and engaged with. But the principal stress lies on וּדְבָרִים, to which also the too rash, inconsiderate vows belong. The pred. וְהוּא, however,

connects itself with “vanity of vanities,” which is Koheleth’s final judgment regarding all that is earthly. The כִּי following connects itself with the thought lying in 6a, that much talk, like being much given to dreams, ought to be avoided: it ought not to be; much rather (*imo*, Symm. ἀλλά) fear God, Him before whom one should say nothing, but that which contains in it the whole heart.

Continuation of the Catalogue of Vanities

The Gradations of Oppression in Despotic States—5:7, 8, [8, 9]

“Fear God,” says the proverb (Prov. 24:21), “and the king.” The whole Book of Koheleth shows how full its author is of this fundamental thought. Thus the transition to the theme now following was at least inwardly mediated. The state-government, however, although one should be subject to it for conscience’ sake, corresponds very little to his idea: and ascending scale of the powers is an ascending scale of violence and oppression.

Ecclesiastes 5:7 [8]. “If thou seest the oppression of the poor and the robbery of right and of justice in the state, marvel not at the matter: for one higher watches over him who is high; and others are high above both.” Like *rash*, *mishpat vatsēdēq* are also the gen. of the obj.; “robbery of the right and of justice” is an expression not found elsewhere, but not on that account, as Grätz supposes, impossible: *mishpat* is right, rectitude, and conformity to law; and *tsēdēq*, judicial administration, or also social deportment according to these norms; גַּזְלֵי, a wicked, shameless depriving of a just claim, and withholding of the showing of right which is due. If one gets a sight of such things as these in a *mdinah*, i.e., in a territorial district under a common government, he ought not to wonder at the matter.

הִתְמַחֵ means to be startled, astonished, and, in the sense of “to wonder,” is the word commonly used in modern Heb. But חִפְזֵ has here the colourless general signification of *res*, according

to which the Syr. translates it (*vid.*, under 3:1); every attempt in passages such as this to retain the unweakened primary meaning of the word runs out into groundless and fruitless subtlety. Cf. *Berachoth* 5a, חִפְזֵ לֹחַ ... אָדָם, “a man who buys a thing from another.” On the other hand, there is doubt about the meaning of the clause assigning the reason. It seems to be intended, that over him who is high, who oppresses those under him, there stands one who is higher, who in turn oppresses him, and thereby becomes the executor of punishment upon him; and that these, the high and the higher, have over them a Most High, viz., God, who will bring them to an account (Knobel, Ew., Elst., Vai., Hengst., Zöckl.). None of the old translators and expositors rises, it is true, to the knowledge that חִפְזֵ may be *pl. majestatis*, but the first חִפְזֵ the Targ. renders by אֱלֹהֵי אֲדִירֵי. This was natural to the Jewish *usus loq.*, for גְבוּהָ in the post-bibl. Heb. is a favourite name for God, e.g., *Beza* 20b, *Jebamoth* 87a, *Kamma* 13a: “from the table of God” (סִשְׁלֹחַן גְבוּהָ), i.e., the altar (cf. Heb. 13:10; 1 Cor. 10:21). The interpretation of חִפְזֵ, however, as the *pl. majest.*, has in the Book of Koheleth itself a support in בּוֹרְאֵיךָ, 12:1; and the thought in which 7b climactically terminates accords essentially with 3:17. This explanation, however, of 7b does not stand the test. For if an unrighteous administration of justice, if violence is in vogue instead of right, that is an actual proof that over him who is high no human higher one watches who may put a check upon him, and to whom he feels that he is responsible. And that above them both one who is Most High stands, who will punish injustice and avenge it, is a consolatory argument against vexation, but is no explanatory reason of the phenomenon, such as we expect after the *noli mirari*; for אֵל־תִּתְמַחֵ does not signify “be not offended” (John 16:1), or, “think it not strange” (1 Pet. 4:12), which would be otherwise expressed (cf. under Ps. 37:1), but μή θαυμάσιος (LXX). Also the contrast, v. 8, warrants the conclusion that in v. 7 the author seeks to

explain the want of legal order from the constitution of a despotic state as distinguished from patriarchal government. For this reason שָׁמַר will not be meant of over-watching, which has its aim in the execution of legal justice and official duty, but of egoistic watching,—not, however, as Hitzig understands it: “they mutually protect each other’s advantage; one crow does not peck out the eyes of another,”—but, on the contrary, in the sense of hostile watching, as at 1 Sam. 19:11, 2 Sam. 11:16, as B. Bardach understands it: “he watches for the time when he may gain the advantage over him who is high, who is yet lower than himself, and may strengthen and enrich himself with his flesh or his goods.” Over the one who is high, who oppresses the poor and is a robber in respect of right and justice, there stands a higher, who on his part watches how he can plunder him to his own aggrandisement; and over both there are again other high ones, who in their own interest oppress these, as these do such as are under them. This was the state of matters in the Persian Empire in the time of the author. The satrap stood at the head of state officers. In many cases he fleeced the province to fatten himself. But over the satrap stood inspectors, who often enough built up their own fortunes by fatal denunciations; and over all stood the king, or rather the court, with its rivalry of intrigues among courtiers and royal women. The cruel death-punishments to which disagreeable officials were subjected were fearful. There was a gradation of bad government and arbitrary domination from high to low and from low to high, and no word is more fitting for this state of things in Persia than שָׁמַר; for watching, artfully lurking as spies for an opportunity to accomplish the downfall of each other, was prevalent in the Persian Empire, especially when falling into decay.

Ecclesiastes 5:8 [9]. The author, on the other hand, now praises the patriarchal form of government based on agriculture, whose king takes pride, not in bloody conquests and tyrannical caprice, but in the peaceful promotion of the welfare of his people: “But the

advantage of a country consists always in a king given to the arable land.” What impossibilities have been found here, even by the most recent expositors! Ewald, Heiligst., Elster, Zöckl. translate: *rex agro factus = terrae praefectus*; but, in the language of this book, not עָבַד but עָשָׂה מֶלֶךְ is the expression used for “to make a king.” Gesen., Win., de Wette, Knobel, Vaih. translate: *rex qui colitur a terra (civibus)*. But could a country, in the sense of its population in subjection to the king, be more inappropriately designated than by שָׂדֵה? Besides, עָבַד certainly gains the meaning of *colere* where God is the object; but with a human ruler as the object it means *servire* and nothing more, and נָעֲבָד can mean nothing else than “*dienstbar gemacht*” [made subject to], not “honoured.” Along with this signification, related denom. to עָבַד, נָעֲבָד, referred from its primary signification to שָׂדֵה, the open fields (from שָׂדֵה, to go out in length and breadth), may also, after the phrase עָבַד הָאֲדָמָה, signify cultivated, wrought, tilled; and while the phrase “made subject to” must be certainly held as possible (Rashi, Aben Ezra, and others assume it without hesitation), but is without example, the *Niph.* occurs, e.g., at Ezek. 36:9, in the latter signification, of the mountains of Israel: “ye shall be tilled.” Under 8a, Hitzig, and with him Stuart and Zöckler, makes the misleading remark that the *Chethîb* is בְּכָל־הִיא, and that it is = בְּכָל־זֹאת, according to which the explanation is then given: the protection and security which an earthly ruler secures is, notwithstanding this, not to be disparaged. But היא is *Chethîb*, for which the *Kerî* substitutes הוּא; בְּכָל is *Chethîb* without *Kerî*; and that בְּכָל is thus a modification of the text, and that, too, an objectionable one, since בכל־היא, in the sense of “in all this,” is unheard of. The *Kerî* seeks, without any necessity, to make the pred. and subj. like one another in gender; without necessity, for היא may also be neut.: the advantage of a land is this, viz., what

follows. And how בָּכַל is to be understood is seen from Ezra 10:17, where it is to be explained: And they prepared the sum of the men, i.e., the list of the men, of such as had married strange wives; cf. 1 Chron. 7:5. Accordingly בָּכַל here means, as the author generally uses הָכַל mostly in the impersonal sense of *omnia: in omnibus*, in all things = by all means; or: *in universum*, in general. Were the words accentuated מֶלֶךְ לְשָׂדֶה נֹעֲבָד, the adjct. connection of לֵשׁ נֹעֲבָד would thereby be shown; according to which the LXX and Theod. translate τοῦ ἀγροῦ εἰργασμένου; Symm., with the Syr., תְּחִי חֹרֶץ עֵיִרְגָּאִסְמֵנִי: “a king for the cultivated land,” i.e., one who regards this as a chief object. Luzz. thus indeed accentuates; but the best established accentuation is מֶלֶךְ לְשָׂדֶה נֹעֲבָד. This separation of נֹעֲבָד from לֵשׁ can only be intended to denote that נֹעֲבָד is to be referred not to it, but to מֶלֶךְ, according to which the Targ. paraphrases. The meaning remains the same: a king subject (who has become a *servus*) to the cultivated land, *rex agro addictus*, as Dathe, Rosenm., and others translate, is a still more distinct expression of that which “a king for the well-cultivated field” would denote: an agriculture-king,—one who is addicted, not to wars, lawsuits, and sovereign stubbornness in his opinions, but who delights in the peaceful advancement of the prosperity of his country, and especially takes a lively interest in husbandry and the cultivation of the land. The order of the words in 8*b* is like that at 9:2; cf. Isa. 8:22; 22:2. The author thus praises, in contrast to a despotic state, a patriarchal kingdom based on agriculture.

The Uncertainty of Riches, and the Cheerful Enjoyment of Life Which Alone Is Praiseworthy—5:9 [10]-6:6

If we fix our attention on the word תְּבוּאָה, 9*a*, which properly denotes that which comes into the barn from without (e.g., Prov. 14:4), v. 9 seems to continue the praise of husbandry, as

Rashi, Aben Ezra, Luzzatto, Bardach, and others have already concluded. But the thought that one cannot eat money is certainly not that which is intended in 9*a*; and in 9*b* the thought would be awkwardly and insufficiently expressed, that it is vain to love riches, and not, on the contrary, the fruit of agriculture. Therefore we are decidedly of opinion that here (cf. above, p. 631), with v. 9 the foregoing series of proverbs does not come to a close, but makes a new departure.

Ecclesiastes 5:9 [10]. “He who loveth silver is not satisfied with silver; and he whose love cleaveth to abundance, hath nothing of it: also this is vain.” The transition in this series of proverbs is not unmediated; for the injustice which, according to v. 7, prevails in the state as it now is becomes subservient to covetousness, in the very nature of which there lies insatiableness: *semper avarus eget, hunc nulla pecunia replet*. That the author speaks of the “*sacra fames argenti*” (not *auri*) arises from this, that not זָהָב, but כֶּסֶף, is the specific word for coin. Mendelssohn-Friedländer also explains: “He who loveth silver is not satisfied with silver,” i.e., it does not make him full; that might perhaps be linguistically possible (cf. e.g., Prov. 12:11), although the author would in that case probably have written the words מְזִיָּה־כֶּסֶף, after 6:3; but “to be not full of money” is, after 1:8, and especially 4:8, Hab. 2:5, cf. Prov. 27:20 = never to have enough of money, but always to desire more.

That which follows, 9*a* β, is, according to Hitz., a question: And who hath joy in abundance, which bringeth nothing in? But such questions, with the answer to be supplied, are not in Koheleth’s style; and what would then be understood by capital without interest? Others, as Zöckler, supply יִשְׂבֹּעַ: and he that loveth abundance of possessions (is) not (full) of income; but that which is gained by these hard ellipses is only a tautology. With right, the Targ., Syr., Jerome, the Venet., and Luther take *lo tvuah* as the answer or conclusion; and who clings to abundance of possessions with his love?—he has no fruit thereof; or, with a

weakening of the interrog. pronoun into the relative (as at 1:9; cf. under Ps. 34:13): he who ... clings has nothing of it. *Hamon* signifies a tumult, a noisy multitude, particularly of earthly goods, as at Ps. 37:16; 1 Chron. 29:16; Isa. 60:5. The connection of אהב with ב, occurring only here, follows the analogy of הַפֶּן בָּ and the like. The conclusion is synon. with *lvilti ho'il*; e.g., Isa. 44:10; Jer. 7:8. All the Codd. read לוּ; לוּ in this sense would be meaningless. The designation of advantage by *tvuah*, the farmer enjoys the fruit of his labour; but he who hangs his heart on the continual tumult, noise, pomp of more numerous and greater possessions is possible, to him all real profit—i.e., all pleasant, peaceful enjoyment—is lost. With the increase of the possessions there is an increase also of unrest, and the possessor has in reality nothing but the sight of them.

Ecclesiastes 5:10 [11]. “When property and goods increase, they become many who consume them; and what advantage hath the owner thereof but the sight of [them with] his eyes?” The verb רָבָה signifies to increase, the רַבֵּב, to be many; but also (which Böttch. denies) inchoatively: to become many, Gen. 6:1; rightly, the LXX, ἐπληθύνθησαν. The author has not a miser in view, who shuts up his money in chests, and only feeds himself in looking at it with closed doors; but a covetous man, of the sort spoken of in Ps. 49:12, Isa. 5:8. If the *hattovah*, the possession of such an one, increases, in like manner the number of people whom he must maintain increases also, and thus the number of those who eat of it along with him, and at the same time also his disquiet and care, increase; and what advantage, what useful result (vid., regarding *Kishron*, above, p. 638, and under 2:21) has the owner of these good things from them but the beholding of them (*rith*; *Kerî*, *ruth*; cf. the reverse case, Ps. 126:4)?—the possession does not in itself bring happiness, for it is never great enough to satisfy him, but is yet great enough to fill him with great care as to whether he may be able to support the demands of so great a household:

the fortune which it brings to him consists finally only in this, that he can look on all he has accumulated with proud self-complacency.

Ecclesiastes 5:11 [12]. He can also eat that which is good, and can eat much; but he does not on that account sleep more quietly than the labourer who lives from hand to mouth: “Sweet is the sleep of the labourer, whether he eats little or much; but, on the contrary, the abundance of the rich does not permit him to sleep.” The LXX, instead of “labourer,” uses the word “slave” (δούλου), as if the original were הַעֲבָדָה. But, as a rule, sound sleep is the reward of earnest labour; and since there are idle servants as well as active masters, there is no privilege to servants. The Venet. renders rightly by “of the husbandman” (ἐργάτου), the עֲבָד הַאֲדָמָה; the “labourer” in general is called עַמְלָה, 4:8 and Judg. 5:26, post-bibl. פֶּעַל. The labourer enjoys sweet, i.e., refreshing, sound sleep, whether his fare be abundant or scanty—the labour rewards him by sweet sleep, notwithstanding his poverty; while, on the contrary, the sleep of the rich is hindered and disturbed by his abundance, not: by his satiety, viz., repletion, as Jerome remarks: *incocto cibo in stomachi angustiis aestuante*; for the labourer also, if he eats much, eats his fill; and why should sufficiency have a different result in the one from what is has in the other? As שָׂבַע means satiety, not over-satiety; so, on the other hand, it means, objectively, sufficient and plentifully existing fulness to meet the wants of man, Prov. 3:10, and the word is meant thus objectively here: the fulness of possession which the rich has at his disposal does not permit him to sleep, for all kinds of projects, cares, anxieties regarding it rise within him, which follow him into the night, and do not suffer his mind to be at rest, which is a condition of sleep. The expression הַשָּׂעָה לְעֵינָיו is the *circumlocutio* of the genit. relation, like הַלֵּל ... לְבִי, Ruth 2:3; אִם ... נָעַם (LXX Ἀμνὼν τῆς Ἀχινοάμ), 2 Sam. 3:2. Heiligstedt remarks that it stands for שָׂבַע הַעֲשִׂיר; but the nouns עֲמָלָה, רַעֲבָה, שָׂבַע form

no *const.*, for which reason the *circumloc.* was necessary; *שָׁבַע* is the *constr.* of *שָׁבַע*. Falsely, Ginsburg: “*aber der Ueberfluss den Reichen—er lässt ihn nicht schlafen*” [but superabundance the rich—it doth not suffer him to sleep]; but this construction is neither in accordance with the genius of the German nor of the Heb. language. Only the subject is resumed in *אֲנִי* (as in 1:7); the construction of *הִגִּיחַ* is as at 1 Chron. 16:21; cf. Ps. 105:14. Of the two *Hiphil* forms, the properly Heb. *הִגִּיחַ* and the Aramaizing *הִגִּיחַ*, the latter is used in the weakened meaning of *ἔἄν*, *sinere*.

After showing that riches bring to their possessor no real gain, but, instead of that, dispeace, care, and unrest, the author records as a great evil the loss, sometimes suddenly, of wealth carefully amassed.

Ecclesiastes 5:12, 13 [13, 14]. “There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, riches kept by their possessor to his hurt: the same riches perish by an evil event; and he hath begotten a son, thus this one hath nothing in his hand.” There is a gradation of evils. *רָעָה חוֹלָה* (cf. *הָלִי רָע*, 6:2) is not an ordinary, but a morbid evil, i.e., a deep hurtful evil; as a wound, not a common one, but one particularly severe and scarcely curable, is called *נִחְלָה*, e.g., Nah. 3:19. *רָא ... הֵשׁ* is, as at 10:5, an ellipt. relat. clause; cf. on the other hand, 6:1; the author elsewhere uses the scheme of the relat. clause without relat. pron. (vid., under 1:13; 3:16); the old language would use *רָאִיתִיהָ*, instead of *רָאִיתִי*, with the reflex. pron. The great evil consists in this, that riches are not seldom kept by their owner to his own hurt. Certainly *לְשָׂמוֹר* can also mean that which is kept for another, 1 Sam. 9:24; but how involved and constrained is Ginsburg’s explanation: “hoarded up (by the rich man) for their (future) owner,” viz., the heir to whom he intends to leave them! That *ל* can be used with the passive as a designation of the subj., vid., Ewald, § 295c; certainly it

corresponds as little as *נָן*, with the Greek *ὑπό*, but in Greek we say also *πλοῦτος φυλαχθεὶς τῷ κερκτημένῳ*, vid., Rost’s *Syntax*, § 112. 4. The suff. of *lra’atho* refers to *b’alav*, the plur. form of which can so far remain out of view, that we even say *adonim qosheh*, Isa. 19:4, etc. “To his hurt,” i.e., at the last suddenly to lose that which has been carefully guarded. The narrative explanation of this, “to his hurt,” begins with *vav explic.* Regarding *’inyan ra’*, vid., above, p. 640. It is a *casus adversus* that is meant, such a stroke upon stroke as destroyed Job’s possessions. The perf. *וְהָיָה* supposes the case that the man thus suddenly made poor is the father of a son; the clause is logically related to that which follows as hypothet. antecedent, after the scheme. Gen. 33:13b. The loss of riches would of itself make one who is alone unhappy, for the misfortune to be poor is less than the misfortunes to be rich and then to become poor; but still more unfortunate is the father who thought that by well-guarded wealth he had secured the future of his son, and who now leaves him with an empty hand.

What now follows is true of this rich man, but is generalized into a reference to every rich man, and then is recorded as a second great evil. As a man comes naked into the world, so also he departs from it again without being able to take with him any of the earthly wealth he has acquired.

Ecclesiastes 5:14 [15]. “As he came forth from his mother’s womb, naked shall he again depart as he came, and not the least will he carry away for his labour, which he could take with him in his hand.” In 13a the author has the case of Job in his mind; this verse before us is a reminiscence from Job 1:21, with the setting aside of the difficult word *שָׂמָה* found there, which Sirach 40:1 exhibits. With “naked” begins emphatically the main subject; *בָּאָשָׁר בָּא = כְּשָׂבָא* is the intensifying resumption of the comparison; the contrast of *לָכֶת*, going away, *excedere vitâ*, is *בִּיא* of the entrance on life, coming into the world. *מֵאוֹמָה* (according to the

root meaning and use, corresponding to the French *point*, Olsh. § 205a) emphatically precedes the negation, as at Judg. 14:6 (cf. the emphasis reached in a different way, Ps. 49:18). נשא signifies here, as at v. 18, Ps. 24:5, to take hence, to take forth, to carry away. The כּ of בְּעַבְדְּךָ is not partitive (Aben Ezra compares Lev. 8:32), according to which Jerome and Luther translate *de labore suo*, but is the *Beth pretii*, as e.g., at 1 Kings 16:34, as the Chald. understands it; Nolde cites for this *Beth pretii* passages such as 2:24, but incorrectly. Regarding the subjunctive אֲשֶׁר יִלְכֵךְ, *quod auferat*, vid., above, No. 2, p. 641. We might also with the LXX and Symm. punctuate אֲשֶׁר יִלְכֵךְ: which might accompany him in his hand, but which could by no means denote, as Hitzig thinks: (for his trouble), which goes through his hand. Such an expression is not used; and Hitzig's supposition, that here the rich man who has lost his wealth is the subject, does not approve itself.

Ecclesiastes 5:15 [16]. A transition is now made to rich men as such, and the registering formula which should go before v. 14 here follows: "And this also is a sore evil: altogether exactly as he came, thus shall he depart: and what gain hath he that laboureth in the wind?" Regarding הוֹ, vid., above, No. 4, p. 642; and regarding שׁ בְּלֵעַ, vid., p. 640. The writing of these first two as one word [*vid.* note below] accords with Ibn-Giat's view, accidentally quoted by Kimchi, that the word is compounded of ך of comparison, and the frequently occurring לַעֲמַת always retaining its ל, and ought properly to be pointed בְּלֵעַ (cf. בְּלֵי, 1 Kings 7:20). הַעֲמַת signifies combination, society, one thing along with or parallel to another; and thus לַעֲמַת bears no ך, since it is itself a word of comparison, בְּלֵעַ-לַעֲמַת "altogether parallel," "altogether the same." The question: what kind of advantage (*vid.*, 1:3) is to him (has he) of this that ..., carries its answer in itself. Labouring for the wind or in the wind, his

labour is רֵוָה (רַעִיוֹן) רֵוָה, and thus fruitless. And, moreover, how miserable an existence is this life of labour leading to nothing!

Ecclesiastes 5:16 [17]. "Also all his life long he eateth in darkness and grieveth himself much, and oh for his sorrow and hatred!" We might place v. 16 under the regimen of the שׁ of שִׁעַר of v. 15b; but the Heb. style prefers the self-dependent form of sentences to that which is governed. The expression 16a has something strange. This strangeness disappears if, with Ewald and Heiligst., after the LXX and Jerome, for יֹאכַל we read יֹאכַל: καὶ ἐν πένθει; Böttch. prefers וְאֶפְסַל, "and in darkness." Or also, if we read אֲכַל for יֹאכַל; thus the Midrash here, and several codd. by Kennicott; but the Targ., Syr., and Masora read יֹאכַל. Hitzig gets rid of that which is strange in this passage by taking כָּל-יָמָיו as accus. of the obj., not of the time: all his days, his whole life he consumes in darkness; but in Heb. as in Lat. we say: *consumere dies vitae*, Job 21:13; 36:11, but not *comedere*; and why should the expression, "to eat in darkness," not be a figurative expression for a faithless, gloomy life, as elsewhere "to sit in darkness" (Mic. 7:8), and "to walk in darkness"? It is meant that all his life long he ate לֶחֶם אֲוִיָּם, the bread of sorrow, or לֶחֶם לְחָץ, prison fare; he did not allow himself pleasant table comforts in a room comfortably or splendidly lighted, for it is unnecessary to understand אֲשֶׁר חִשַׁב subjectively and figuratively (Hitz., Zöck.).

In 16b the traditional punctuation is וְכָעַס. The *perf.* ruled by the preceding *fut.* is syntactically correct, and the verb כָּעַס is common with the author, 7:9. Hitzig regards the text as corrupt, and reads וְכָחַל and כָּעַס, and explains: and (he consumes or swallows) much grief in his, etc.; the phrase, "to eat sorrow," may be allowed (cf. Prov. 26:6, cf. Job 15:16); but יֹאכַל, as the representative of two so bold and essentially different metaphors, would be in point of style in bad taste. If the text is corrupt, it may be

more easily rectified by reading וְכַעַס הַרְבֵּה וְחָלִי וְכַעַס הַרְבֵּה וְחָלִי: and grief in abundance, and sorrow has he, and wrath. We merely suggest this. Ewald, Burger, and Böttch. read only וְכַעַס הַרְבֵּה וְחָלִי; but לוֹ is not to be dispensed with, and can easily be reduced to a mere *vav*. Elster retains וְכַעַס, and reads, like Hitzig, בְּחָלִי: he grieves himself much in his sorrow and wrath; but in that case the word וְקִצְפוֹ was to be expected; also in this way the ideas do not psychologically accord with each other. However the text is taken, we must interpret וְחָלִי וְקִצְפוֹ as an exclamation, like וְהָרָה, Isa. 29:16; וְתָרָה, Jer. 49:16; Ewald, § 328a, as we have done above. That וְחָלִי of itself is a subst. clause = וְחָלִי לוֹ is untenable; the rendering of the noun as forming a clause, spoken of under 2:21, is of a different character. He who by his labour and care aims at becoming rich, will not only lay upon himself unnecessary privations, but also have many sorrows; for many of his plans fail, and the greater success of others awakens his envy, and neither he himself nor others satisfy him; he is morbidly disposed, and as he is diseased in mind, so also in body, and his constantly increasing dissatisfaction becomes at last קִצְפוֹ, he grumbles at himself, at God, and all the world. From observing such persons, Paul says of them (1 Tim. 6:6f.): “They have pierced themselves through (*transfoderunt*) with many sorrows.”

In view of these great evils, with which the possession of riches also is connected: of their deceitful instability, and their merely belonging to this present life, Koheleth returns to his *ceterum censeo*.

Ecclesiastes 5:17 [18]. “Behold then what I have seen as good, what as beautiful (is this): that one eat and drink and see good in all his labour with which he wearieth himself, under the sun, throughout the number of the days of his life which God hath given him; for that is his portion.” Toward this seeing, i.e., knowing from his own experience, his effort went forth, according to 2:3; and what he here, vv. 17, 18,

expresses as his *resultat*, he has already acknowledged at 2:24 and 3:12f. With “behold” he here returns to it; for he says, that from the observations just spoken of, as from others, no other *resultat* befell him. Instead of טוֹבָה (here and at 6:6), he as often uses the words רָאָה טוֹב, 3:13; 2:24, or בְּטוֹב, 2:1. In רָאָה, the seeing is meant of that of mental apperception; in לָרָא, of immediate perception, experience. Our translation above does not correspond with the accentuation of the verse, which belongs to the class of disproportionably long verses without *Athnach*; cf. Gen. 21:9; Num. 9:1; Isa. 36:1; Jer. 13:13; 51:37; Ezek. 42:10; Amos 5:1; 1 Chron. 26:26; 28:1; 2 Chron. 23:1. The sentence הִנֵּה ... אָנִי (with pausal *āni* with *Rebîa*) constitutes the beginning of the verse, in the form, as it were, of a superscription; and then its second part, the main proposition, is divided by the disjunctives following each other: *Telisha Gedhola, Geresh, Legarmeh, Rebîa, Tebir, Tifcha, Silluk* (cf. Jer. 8:1, where *Pazer* instead of *Telisha Bedhola*; but as for the rest, the sequence of the accents is the same). Among the moderns, Hengst. holds to the accents, for he translates in strict accordance therewith, as Tremmelius does: “Behold what I have seen: that it is fine and good (Trem. *bonum pulchrum*) to eat ...” The *asher* in the phrase, *tov asher-yapheh*, then connects it together: good which is at the same time beautiful; Grätz sees here the Greek καλὸν κάγαθόν. But the only passage to which, since Kimchi, reference is made for this use of *asher*, viz., Hos 12:8, does not prove it; for we are not, with Drusius, to translate there by: *iniquitas quae sit peccatum*, but by *quae poenam mereat*. The accentuation here is not correct. The second *asher* is without doubt the resumption of the first; and the translation—as already Dachselt in his *Biblia Accentuata* indicated: *ecce itaque quod vidi bonum, quod pulchrum (hoc est ut quis edat)*—presents the true relation of the component parts of the sentence. The suffix of עָמְלוֹ refers to the general subj. contained in the inf.; cf. 8:15. The period of

time denoted by מְסַפֵּר is as at 2:3; 6:12. Also we read כִּי ... חָלִי, 3:22, in the same connection.

Ecclesiastes 5:18 [19]. This verse, expressing the same, is constructed anakolouthistically, altogether like 3:13: "Also for every man to whom God hath given riches and treasures, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; just this is a gift of God." The anakolouthon can be rendered [into English] here as little as it can at 3:13; for if we allow the phrase, "also every man," the "also" remains fixed to the nearest conception, while in the Heb it governs the whole long sentence, and, at the nearest, belongs to זֶה. Cheerful enjoyment is in this life that which is most advisable; but also it is not made possible in itself by the possession of earthly treasures,—it is yet a special gift of God added thereto. *Nchasim*, besides here, occurs also in Josh. 22:8; 2 Chron. 1:11f.; and in the Chald. of the Book of Ezra 6:8; 7:26. Also *hishlit*, to empower, to make possible, is Aram., Dan. 2:38, 48, as well as Heb., Ps. 119:133; the prevalence of the verbal stem שִׁלַּט is characteristic of the Book of Koheleth. *Helqo*, "his portion," is just the cheerful enjoyment as that which man has here below of life, if he has any of it at all.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 [20]. Over this enjoyment he forgets the frailty and the darkened side of this life. It proves itself to be a gift of God, a gift from above: "For he doth not (then) think much of the days of his life; because God answereth the joy of his heart." Such an one, permitted by God to enjoy this happiness of life, is thereby prevented from tormenting himself by reflections regarding its transitoriness. Incorrectly, Hengst.: Remembrance and enjoyment of this life do not indeed last long, according to Ewald, who now, however, rightly explains: He will not, by constant reflection on the brevity of his life, too much embitter this enjoyment; because God, indeed, grants to him true heart-joy as the fairest gift. The meaning of 19b is also, in general, hit upon. The LXX translates: "because God occupies him with the

joy of his heart;" but for that we ought to have had the word מְעַנֶּה; Jerome helps it, for he reads בשמחה instead of בשמחה: *eo quod Deus occupet deliciis cor ejus*. But also, in this form, this explanation of מְעַנֶּה is untenable; for עֲנָה, the causat. of which would be מְעַנֶּה, signifies, in the style of Koheleth, not in general to busy oneself with something, but to weary oneself with something; hence עֲנָה בִשׁ cannot mean: to be occupied with joy, and thereby to be drawn away from some other thing. And since the explanation: "he makes him sing," needs to argument to dispose of it, מְעַנֶּה thus remains only as the *Hiph.* of עֲנָה, to meet, to respond to, grant a request. Accordingly, Hitz., like Aben Ezra and Kimchi, comparing Hos. 2:23f.: God makes to answer, i.e., so works that all things which have in or of themselves that which can make him glad, must respond to his wish. But the omission of the obj.—of which Hitz. remarks, that because indefinite it is left indefinite—is insufferably hard, and the explanation thus ambiguous. Most interpreters translate: for God answers (Ges. *He. Wört. B.*, incorrectly: answered) him with joy of his heart, i.e., grants this to him in the way of answer. Ewald compares Ps. 65:6; but that affords no voucher for the expression: to answer one with something = to grant it to him; for עֲנָה is there connected with a double accus., and בְּצִדְקָה is the adv. statement of the way and manner. But above all, against this interpretation is the fact of the want of the personal obj. The author behoved to have written מְעַנֶּה אֹתוֹ or מְעַנֶּה אֵתוֹ. We take the *Hiph.* as in the sense of the *Kal*, but give it its nearest signification: to answer, and explain, as in a similar manner Seb. Schmid, Rambam, and others have already done: God answers to the joy of his heart, i.e., He assents to it, or (using an expression which is an exact equivalent), He corresponds to it. This makes the joy a heart-joy, i.e., a joy which a man feels not merely externally, but in the deepest recess of his heart, for the joy penetrates his heart and

satisfies it (Song 3:11; Isa. 30:29; Jer. 15:16). A similar expression, elsewhere not found, we had at v. 9 in אהב בָּ. Why should not ענה בָּ (הענה) be possible with עָנָהוּ, just as ἀμείβεσθαι πρὸς τι is with ἀμείβεσθαι τινα? For the rest, בִּשׁ' לֵב is not needed as obj.; we can take it also as an expression of the state or condition: God gives answer in the heart-joy of such an one. In ענה, to answer, to hear the answer, is thought of as granting a request; here, as giving assent to. Job 35:9 affords a twofold suitable example, that the *Hiph.* can have an enlarged *Kal* signification.

After the author has taken the opportunity of once more expressing his *ultimatum*, he continues to register the sad evils that cling to wealth.

Ecclesiastes 6

Ecclesiastes 6:1, 2. "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and in great weight it lies upon man: a man to whom God giveth riches, and treasures, and honour, and he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he may wish, but God giveth him not power to have enjoyment of it, for a strange man hath the enjoyment: that is vanity and an evil disease." The author presents the result of personal observation; but inasmuch as he relates it in the second tense, he generalizes the matter, and places it scenically before the eyes of the reader. A similar introduction with יֵשׁ, but without the unnecessary *asher*, is found at 5:12; 10:5. Regarding רַבָּה, vid., under 8:6; עַל does not denote the subj., as at 2:17: it appears great to a man, but it has its nearest lying local meaning; it is a great (Ecclesiastes 2:21) evil, pressing in its greatness heavily upon man. The evil is not the man himself, but the condition in which he is placed, as when, e.g., the kingdom of heaven is compared to a merchant (Matt. 13:45f.),—not the merchant in himself, but his conduct and life is a figure of the kingdom of heaven.

Ecclesiastes 6:2. To עֲשֶׂר וְנָדָר, as at 2 Chron.

1:11, 'דָּר [and honour] is added as a third thing.

What follows we do not translate: "and there is nothing wanting ...;" for that אֵינְנוּ with the pleonastic suff. may mean: "there is not," is not to be proved from Gen. 39:9, thus: and he spares not for his soul (LXX καὶ οὐκ κ.τ.λ.) what he always desires. חָסֵר is adj. in the sense of wanting, lacking, as at 1 Sam. 21:16; 1 Kings 11:22; Prov. 12:9. לְנַפְשׁוֹ, "for his soul," i.e., his person, is = the synon. לְעַצְמוֹ found in the later usage of the language; מִן (different from the *min*, 4:8) is, as at Gen. 6:2, partitive. The נִכְרִי, to whom this considerable estate, satisfying every wish, finally comes, is certainly not the legal heir (for that he enters into possession, in spite of the uncertainty of his moral character, 2:19, would be in itself nothing less than a misfortune, yet perfectly in order, 5:13 [14]), but some stranger without any just claim, not directly a foreigner (Heiligst.), but, as Burger explains: *talis qui proprie nullum habet jus in bona ejus cui נכרי dicitur* (cf. נִכְרִיָּה of the unmarried wife in the Book of Proverbs).

That wealth without enjoyment is nothing but vanity and an evil disease, the author now shows by introducing another historical figure, and thereby showing that life without enjoyment is worse than never to have come into existence at all:

Ecclesiastes 6:3. "If a man begat an hundred, and lived many years, and the amount of the days of his years was great, and his soul satisfied not itself in good, and also he had no grave, then I say: Better than he is the untimely birth." The accentuation of 3a is like that of 2a. The disjunctives follow the *Athnach*, as at 2 Kings 23:13, only that there *Telisha Gedhola* stands for *Pazer*. Hitzig finds difficulty with the clause לוֹ ... וְגַם, and regards it as a marginal gloss to 5a, taken up into the text at a wrong place. But just the unexpected form and the accidental nature, more than the inward necessity of this feature in the figure, leads us

to conclude that the author here connects together historical facts, as conjecturally noted above at pp. 653, 654, into one fanciful picture. מֵאָה is obviously to be supplemented by (ובנות) בנימ; the Targ. and Midrash make this man to be Cain, Ahab, Haman, and show at least in this that they extend down into the time of the Persian kingdom a spark of historical intelligence. שָׁן הָרַב interchanges with שָׁן רַב, 11:8, as at Neh. 11:30. In order to designate the long life emphatically, the author expresses the years particularly in days: "and if it is much which (Heiligst.: *multum est quod*) the days of his years amount to;" cf. וַיִּהְיֶה יָמָיו, in Gen. 5. With *vnapsho* there follows the reverse side of this long life with many children: (1) his soul satisfies not itself, i.e., has no self-satisfying enjoyment of the good (*min*, as at Ps. 104:13, etc.), i.e., of all the good things which he possesses,—in a word, he is not happy in his life; and (2) an honourable burial is not granted to him, but קָבַר חָס, Jer. 22:19, which is the contrary of a burial such as becomes a man (the body of Artaxerxes Ochus was thrown to the cats); whereupon Elster rightly remarks that in an honourable burial and an honourable remembrance, good fortune, albeit shaded with sadness, might be seen. But when now, to one so rich in children and so long-lived, neither enjoyment of his good fortune nor even this shaded glory of an honourable burial is allowed, the author cannot otherwise judge than that the untimely birth is better than he. In this section regarding the uncertainty of riches, we have already, 5:14, fallen on a reminiscence from the Book of Job; it is so much the more probable that here also Job 3:16 has an influence on the formation of the thought. נֶפֶל is the foetus which comes lifeless from the mother's womb.

Ecclesiastes 6:4, 5. The comparison of an untimely birth with such a man is in favour of the former: "For it cometh in nothingness and departeth in darkness; and with darkness its name is covered. Moreover, it hath not seen the sun, and hath not known: it is better with it

than with that other." It has entered into existence, בְּהֶבֶל, because it was a lifeless existence into which it entered when its independent life should have begun; and בְּחֹשֶׁךְ, it departeth, for it is carried away in all quietness, without noise or ceremony, and "with darkness" its name is covered, for it receives no name and remains a nameless existence, and is forgotten as if it had never been. Not having entered into a living existence, it is also (*gam*) thus happy to have neither seen the sun nor known and named it, and thus it is spared the sight and the knowledge of all the vanities and evils, the deceptions and sorrows, that are under the sun. When we compare its fate with the long joyless life of that man, the conclusion is apparent: נַחַת ... 'ם, *plus quietis est huic quam illi*, which, with the generalization of the idea of rest (Job 3:13) in a wider sense (vid., above, p. 639), is = *melius est huic quam illi* (זה ... זה, as at 3:19). The generalization of the idea proceeds yet further in the Mishn. גוּחַ לוֹ, e.g.: "It is better (גוּחַ לוֹ לְאָדָם) for a man that he throw himself into a lime-kiln than that (וְאֵל), etc." From this usage Symm. renders נַחַת ... 'ם as obj. לֹא יָדַע, and translates: οὐδὲ ἐπειράθη διαφορᾶς ἑτέρου πράγματος πρὸς ἕτερον; and Jerome: *neque cognovit distantiam boni et mali*,—a rendering which is to be rejected, because thus the point of the comparison in which it terminates is broken, for 5b draws the *facit*. It is true that this contains a thought to which it is not easy to reconcile oneself. For supposing that life were not in itself, as over against non-existence, a good, there is yet scarcely any life that is absolutely joyless; and a man who has become the father of an hundred children, has, as it appears, sought the enjoyment of life principally in sexual love, and then also has found it richly. But also, if we consider his life less as relating to sense: his children, though not all, yet partly, will have been a joy to him; and has a family life, so lengthened and rich in blessings, only thorns, and no roses at all? And, moreover, how can anything be said of the rest

of an untimely birth, which has been without motion and without life, as of a rest excelling the termination of the life of him who has lived long, since rest without a subjective reflection, a rest not felt, certainly does not fall under the point of view of more or less, good or evil? The saying of the author on no side bears the probe of exact thinking. In the main he designs to say: Better, certainly, is no life than a joyless life, and, moreover, one ending dishonourably. And this is only a speciality of the general clause, 4:2f., that death is better than life, and not being born is better than both. The author misunderstands the fact that the earthly life has its chief end beyond itself; and his false eudaemonism, failing to penetrate to the inward fountain of true happiness, which is independent of the outward lot, makes exaggerated and ungrateful demands on the earthly life.

Ecclesiastes 6:6. A life extending to more than even a thousand years without enjoyment appears to him worthless: "And if he has lived twice a thousand years long, and not seen good—Do not all go hence to one place?" This long period of life, as well as the shortest, sinks into the night of Sheol, and has advantage over the shortest if it wants the *רְאוּת ט*, i.e., the enjoyment of that which can make man happy. That would be correct if "good" were understood inwardly, ethically, spiritually; but although, according to Koheleth's view, the fear of God presides over the enjoyment of life, regulating and hallowing it, yet it remains unknown to him that life deepened into fellowship with God is in itself a most real and blessed, and thus the highest good. Regarding *אֵלֵי* (here, as at Esth. 7:4, with perf. foll.: *etsi vixisset, tamen interrogarem: nonne*, etc.), vid., above, p. 637; it occurs also in the oldest liturgical *Tefilla*, as well as in the prayer *Nishmath* (vid., Baer's *Siddur, Abodath Jisrael*, p. 207). *אֵלֵי ... פ*, a thousand years twice, and thus an Adam's life once and yet again. Otherwise Aben Ezra: 1000 years multiplied by itself, thus a million, like *עֶשְׂרִים פְּעֻמִּים*, $20 \times 20 = 400$; cf.

Targ. Isa. 30:26, which translates *שְׂרֵטָתִים* by $343 = 7 \times 7 \times 7$. Perhaps that is right; for why was not the expression *אֵלֵי פִים שְׂנָה* directly used? The "one place" is, as at 3:20, the grave and Hades, into which all the living fall. A life extending even to a million of years is worthless, for it terminates at last in nothing. Life has only as much value as it yields of enjoyment.

Obtaining Better Than Desiring—6:7–9

All labour aims at enjoyment, and present actual enjoyment is always better than that which is sought for in the future.

Ecclesiastes 6:7. "All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet his soul has never enough;" or, properly, it is not filled, so that it desires nothing further and nothing more; *נִמְלָא* used as appropriately of the soul as of the ear, 1:8; for that the mouth and the soul are here placed opposite to one another as "organs of the purely sensual and therefore transitory enjoyment, and of the deeper and more spiritual and therefore more lasting kind of joys" (Zöck.), is an assertion which brings out of the text what it wishes to be in it,—*נִפְּשׁ* and *פֶּה* stand here so little in contrast, that, as at Prov. 16:26, Isa. 5:14; 29:8, instead of the soul the stomach could also be named; for it is the soul longing, and that after the means from without of self-preservation, that is here meant; *נִפְּשׁ* *הַיִּפֶּה*, "beautiful soul," *Chullin* iv. 7, is an appetite which is not fastidious, but is contented. *וְגַם, καὶ ὁμῶς ὁμῶς δέ*, as at 3:13; Ps. 129:2. All labour, the author means to say, is in the service of the impulse after self-preservation; and yet, although it concentrates all its efforts after this end, it does not bring full satisfaction to the longing soul. This is grounded in the fact that, however in other respects most unlike, men are the same in their unsatisfied longing.

Ecclesiastes 6:8. "For what hath the wise more than the fool; what the poor who knoweth to walk before the living?" The old translators

present nothing for the interpretation, but defend the traditional text; for Jerome, like the Syr., which translates freely, follows the Midrash (fixed in the Targ.), which understands החיים, contrary to the spirit of the book, of the blessed future. The question would be easier if we could, with Bernst. and Ginsburg, introduce a comparat. *min* before יודע; we would then require to understand by him who knows to walk before the living, some one who acts a part in public life; but how strange a designation of distinguished persons would that be! Thus, as the text stands, יודע is attrib. to לְעָנִי, what preference hath the poor, such an one, viz., as understands (vid., regarding יודע instead of היודע, under Ps. 143:10); not: who is intelligent (Aben Ezra); יודע is not, as at 9:11, an idea contained in itself, but by the foll. הַחַי ... לְהַי (cf. 4:13, 17; and the inf. form, Ex. 3:19; Num. 22:13; Job 34:23) obtains the supplement and colouring required: the sequence of the accents (*Zakeph, Tifcha, Silluk*, as e.g., at Gen. 7:4) is not against this. How the LXX understood its πορευθῆναι κατέναντι τῆς ζῶης, and the Venet. its ἀπιέναι ἀντικρὺ τῆς ζῶης, is not clear; scarcely as Grätz, with Mendelss.: who, to go against (גג, as at 4:12) life, to fight against it, has to exercise himself in self-denial and patience; for “to fight with life” is an expression of modern coinage. הַחַי signifies here, without doubt, not life, but the living. But we explain now, not as Ewald, who separates יודע from the foll. inf. להלך: What profit has then the wise man, the intelligent, patient man, above the fool, that he walks before the living?—by which is meant (but how does this interrog. form agree thereto?), that the wise, patient man has thereby an advantage which makes life endurable by him, in this, that he does not suffer destroying eagerness of desire so to rule over him, but is satisfied to live in quietness. Also this meaning of a quiet life does not lie in the words הלך ... החי. “To know to walk before the living” is, as is now generally acknowledged

= to understand the right rule of life (Elst.), to possess the *savoir vivre* (Heiligst.), to be experienced in the right art of living. The question accordingly is: What advantage has the wise above the fool; and what the poor, who, although poor, yet knows how to maintain his social position? The matter treated of is the insatiable nature of sensual desire. The wise seeks to control his desire; and he who is more closely designated poor, knows how to conceal it; for he lays upon himself restraints, that he may be able to appear and make something of himself. But desire is present in both; and they have in this nothing above the fool, who follows the bent of his desire and lives for the day. He is a fool because he acts as one not free, and without consideration; but, in itself, it is and remains true, that enjoyment and satisfaction stand higher than striving and longing for a thing.

Ecclesiastes 6:9. “Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the soul: also this is vain and windy effort.” We see from the fin. הִלְחֵף interchanging with מָרָא that the latter is not meant of the object (Ecclesiastes 11:9), but of the action, viz., the “rejoicing in that which one has” (Targ.); but this does not signify *grassatio*,—i.e., *impetus animae appetentis*, ὁρμητῆς ψυχῆς (cf. *Marcus Aurelius*, iii. 16), which Knobel, Heiligst., and Ginsburg compare (for הִלְחֵף means *grassari* only with certain subjects, as fire, contagion, and the life; and in certain forms, as הִלְחֵף for הִלְחֵף, to which הִלְחֵף = תִּלְחֵף does not belong),—but *erratio*, a going out in extent, roving to a distance (cf. הִלְחֵף, wanderer), ῥεμβασμὸς ἐπιθυμίας, Wisd. 4:12.—Going is the contrast of rest; the soul which does not become full or satisfied goes out, and seeks and reaches not its aim. This insatiableness, characteristic of the soul, this endless unrest, belongs also to the miseries of this present life; for to have and to enjoy is better than this constant *Hungern und Lungern* [hungering and longing]. More must not be put into 9a than already lies in it, as Elster does: “the only enduring enjoyment of life consists in the quiet

contemplation of that which, as pleasant and beautiful, it affords, without this mental joy mingling with the desire for the possession of sensual enjoyment." The conception of "the sight of the eyes" is certainly very beautifully idealized, but in opposition to the text. If 9a must be a moral proverb, then Luther's rendering is the best: "It is better to enjoy the present good, than to think about other good."

The Weakness and Short-Sightedness of Man over against His Destiny—6:10–12

The future, toward which the soul stretches itself out to find what may satisfy it, is not man's: a power against which man is helpless fashions it.

Ecclesiastes 6:10. "That which hath been, its name hath long ago been named; and it is determined what a man shall be: and he cannot dispute with Him who is stronger than he." According to the usage of the tense, it would be more correct to translate: That which (at any time) has made its appearance, the name of which was long ago named, i.e., of which the *What?* and the *How?* were long ago determined, and, so to speak, formulated. This כָּבֵר ... שֵׁי does not stand parallel to הָיָה, 1:10; for the expression here does not refer to the sphere of that which is done, but of the predetermination. Accordingly, וְנִוְן ... אָדָם is also to be understood. Against the accents, inconsistently periodizing and losing sight of the comprehensiveness of אֲשֶׁר ... אָדָם, Hitzig renders: "and it is known that, if one is a man, he cannot contend," etc., which is impossible for this reason, that הוּא אָדָם cannot be a conditional clause enclosed within the sentence אֲשֶׁר ... יוּכַל. Obviously וְנִוְדַע, which in the sense of *constat* would be a useless waste of words, stands parallel to וְנִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ, and signifies known, viz., previously known, as passive of יָדַע, in the sense of Zech. 14:7; cf. Ps. 139:1f. Bullock rightly compares Acts 15:18. After יָדַע, *asher*, like *ki*, which is more common, may signify "that," 8:12, Ezek. 20:26; but

neither "that he is a man" (Knobel, Vaih., Luzz., Hengst., Ginsb.), nor "that he is the man" (Ewald, Elst., Zöckler), affords a consistent meaning. As *mah* after *yada'* means *quid*, so *asher* after it may mean *quod* = that which (cf. Dan. 8:19, although it does not at all stand in need of proof); and *id quod homo est* (we cannot render הוּא without the expression of a definite conception of time) is intended to mean that the whole being of a man, whether of this one or that one, at all times and on all sides, is previously known; cf. to this pregnant substantival sentence, 12:13. Against this formation of his nature and of his fate by a higher hand, man cannot utter a word.

The thought in 10b is the same as that at Isa. 45:9; Rom. 9:20f. The *Chethib* שְׁהִתְקִיף is not inadmissible, for the stronger than man is מְרִי ... מְנִיָּה. Also הִתְקִיף might in any case be read: with one who overcomes him, has and manifests the ascendancy over him. There is indeed no *Hiph.* הִתְּ found in the language of the Bible (Herzf. and Fürst compare הִגֵּי, Ps. 12:5); but in the Targ., אִתְּקִיף is common; and in the school-language of the Talm., הִתְּ is used of the raising of weighty objections, e.g., *Kamma* 71a. The verb, however, especially in the perf., is in the passage before us less appropriate. In לֹא יִוָּכַל lie together the ideas of physical (cf. Gen. 43:32; Deut. 12:17; 16:5, etc.) and moral inability.

Ecclesiastes 6:11. "For there are many words which increase vanity: What cometh forth therefrom for man?" The dispute (objection), דִּין, takes place in words; דְּבָרִים here will thus not mean "things" (Hengst., Ginsb., Zöckl., Bullock, etc.), but "words." As that wrestling or contending against God's decision and providence is vain and worthless, nothing else remains for man but to be submissive, and to acknowledge his limitation by the fear of God; thus there are also many words which only increase yet more the multitude of vanities already existing in this world, for, because they are resultless, they bring no advantage for man.

Rightly, Elster finds herein a hint pointing to the influence of the learning of the Jewish schools already existing in Koheleth's time. We know from Josephus that the problem of human freedom and of God's absoluteness was a point of controversy between opposing parties: the Sadducees so emphasized human freedom, that they not only excluded (Antt. xiii. 5. 9; Bell. ii. 8. 14) all divine predetermination, but also co-operation; the Pharisees, on the contrary supposed an interconnection between divine predetermination (εἰμαρμένη) and human freedom (Antt. xiii. 5. 9, xviii. 1. 3; Bell. ii. 8. 14). The Talm. affords us a glance at this controversy; but the statement in the Talm. (in *Berachoth* 33a, and elsewhere), which conditions all by the power of God manifesting itself in history, but defends the freedom of the religious-moral self-determination of man, may be regarded as a Pharisaic maxim. In Rom. 9, Paul places himself on this side; and the author of the Book of Koheleth would subscribe this passage as his testimony, for the "fear God" is the "kern und stern" [kernel and star] of his pessimistic book.

Ecclesiastes 6:12. Man ought to fear God, and also, without dispute and murmuring, submit to His sway: "For who knoweth what is good for man in life during the number of the days of his vain life, and which he spendeth like a shadow? No one can certainly show a man what shall be after him under the sun." We translate אֲשֶׁר only by "ja" ("certainly"), because in Germ. no interrogative can follow "dieweil" ("because"). The clause with *asher* (as at 4:9; 8:11; 10:15; cf. Song, under 5:2), according to its meaning not different from *ki*, is related in the way of proof to that beginning with *ki*. Man is placed in our presence. To be able to say to him what is good for him,—i.e., what position he must take in life, what direction he must give to his activity, what decision he must adopt in difficult and important cases,—we ought not only to be able to penetrate his future, but, generally, the future; but, as *Tropfen* [drops] in the stream of history, we are poor *Tröpfe* [simpletons], who are hedged up within the present. Regarding

the accus. of duration, מִסְפָּר וְגו', pointing to the brevity of human life, vid., at 2:3. With הִבְלֵוּ, the attribute of breath-like transitiveness is assigned to life (as at 7:15; 9:9) (as already in the name given to Abel, the second son of Adam), which is continued by וְיִיָּךְ with the force of a relative clause, which is frequently the case after preceding part. attrib., e.g., Isa. 5:23. We translate: which he spendeth like the (1) shadow [in the nom.] (after 8:13; Job 14:2); not: like a shadow [in the accus.]; for although the days of life are also likened to a shadow, Ps. 144:4, etc., yet this use of עָשָׂה does not accord therewith, which, without being a Graecism (Zirkel, Grätz), harmonises with the Greek phrase, ποιεῖν χρόνον, Acts 15:33; cf. Prov. 13:23, LXX (also with the Lat. *facere dies* of Cicero, etc.). Thus also in the Syr. and Palest.-Aram. *lacad* is used of time, in the sense of *transigere*. *Aharav* does not mean: after his present condition (Zöckl.); but, as at 3:22; 7:14: after he has passed away from this scene. Luzz. explains it correctly: Whether his children will remain in life? Whether the wealth he has wearied himself in acquiring will remain and be useful to them? But these are only illustrations. The author means to say, that a man can say, neither to himself nor to another, what in definite cases is the real advantage; because, in order to say this, he must be able to look far into the future beyond the limits of the individual life of man, which is only a small member of a great whole.

Ecclesiastes 7

Second Concluding Section

Proverbs of Better Things, Things Supposed to Be Better, Good Things, Good and Bad Days—7:1–14

We find ourselves here in the middle of the book. Of its 220 verses, 6:10 is that which stands in the middle, and with 7:1 begins the third of the four *Sedarim* into which the Masora divides the book. The series of proverbs here first following, 7:1–10, has, as we remarked

above, p. 636, the word *tov* as their common catchword, and *mah-tov*, 6:12, as the hook on which they hang. But at least the first three proverbs do not stand merely in this external connection with the preceding; they continue the lowly and dark estimate of the earthly life contained in 6:3ff.

The first proverb is a synthetic distich. The thought aimed at is that of the second half of the distich.

Ecclesiastes 7:1. “Better is a name than precious ointment; and better is the day of death than the day when one is born.” Like רָאָה and יָרָא, so שֵׁם and שְׂמֶנֶךָ stand to each other in the relation of a paronomasia (vid., Song under 1:3). Luther translates: “*Ein gut Gerücht ist besser denn gute Salbe*” [“a good odour (= reputation) is better than good ointment]. If we substitute the expression *denn Wolgeruch* [than sweet scent], that would be the best possible rendering of the paronomasia. In the arrangement טוב ... שֵׁם טוב, *tov* would be adj. to *shem* (a good reputation goes beyond sweet scent); but *tov* standing first in the sentence is pred., and *shem* thus in itself alone, as in the cogn. prov., Prov. 22:1, signifies a good, well-sounding, honourable, if not venerable name; cf. *anshē hashshem*, Gen. 6:4; *vli-shem*, nameless, Job 30:8. The author gives the dark reverse to this bright side of the distich: the day of death better than the day in which one (a man), or he (the man), is born; cf. for this reference of the pronoun, 4:12; 5:17. It is the same lamentation as at 4:2f., which sounds less strange from the mouth of a Greek than from that of an Israelite; a Thracian tribe, the Trausi, actually celebrated their birthdays as days of sadness, and the day of death as a day of rejoicing (vid., Bähr’s Germ. transl. of *Herodotus*, v. 4).—Among the people of the Old Covenant this was not possible; also a saying such as 1b is not in the spirit of the O.T. revelation of religion; yet it is significant that it was possible within it, without apostasy from it; within the N.T. revelation of religion, except in such references as Matt. 26:24, it is absolutely impossible without apostasy from it, or without rejection of its fundamental meaning.

Ecclesiastes 7:2. Still more in the spirit of the N.T. (cf. e.g., Luke 6:25) are these words of this singular book which stands on the border of both Testaments: “It is better to go into a house of mourning than to go into a house of carousal (drinking): for that is the end of every man; and the living layeth it to heart.” A house is meant in which there is sorrow on account of a death; the lamentation continued for seven days (Sirach 22:10), and extended sometimes, as in the case of the death of Aaron and Moses, to thirty days; the later practice distinguished the lamentations (אֲנִינֹת) for the dead till the time of burial, and the mournings for the dead (אֲבֵלוֹת), which were divided into seven and twenty-three days of greater and lesser mourning; on the return from carrying away the corpse, there was a *Trostmahl* (a comforting repast), to which, according as it appears to an ancient custom, those who were to be partakers of it contributed (Jer. 16:7; Hos. 9:4; Job 4:17, *funde vinum tuum et panem tuum super sepulchra justorum*). This feast of sorrow the above proverb leaves out of view, although also in reference to it the contrast between the “house of carousal” and “house of mourning” remains, that in the latter the drinking must be in moderation, and not to drunkenness. The going into the house of mourning is certainly thought of as a visit for the purpose of showing sympathy and of imparting consolation during the first seven days of mourning (John 11:31). Thus to go into the house of sorrow, and to show one’s sympathy with the mourners there, is better than to go into a house of drinking, where all is festivity and merriment; viz., because the former (that he is mourned over as dead) is the end of every man, and the survivor takes it to heart, viz., this, that he too must die. סוֹף follows attractively the gender of הוּא (cf. Job 31:11, *Kerī*). What is said at 3:13 regarding כָּל־הָ is appropriate to the passage before us. הָחִי is rightly vocalised; regarding the form הָחִי, vid., Baer in the critical remarks of our ed. of *Isaiah* under 3:22. The phrase נָתַן אֶל־לֵב here and at 9:1 is synon. with שֵׁם אֶל־לֵב, שֵׁם עַל־לֵב, שֵׁם אֶל־לֵב

(e.g., Isa. 57:1) and שִׂים בְּלִבְךָ. How this saying agrees with Koheleth's *ultimatum*: There is nothing better than to eat and drink, etc. (Ecclesiastes 2:24, etc.), the Talmudists have been utterly perplexed to discover; Manasse ben-Israel in his *Conciliador* (1632) loses himself in much useless discussion. The solution of the difficulty is easy. The *ultimatum* does not relate to an unconditional enjoyment of life, but to an enjoyment conditioned by the fear of God. When man looks death in the face, the two things occur to him, that he should make use of his brief life, but make use of it in view of the end, thus in a manner for which he is responsible before God.

Ecclesiastes 7:3, 4. The joy of life must thus be not riot and tumult, but a joy tempered with seriousness: "Better is sorrow than laughter: for with a sad countenance it is well with the heart. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, and the heart of fools in the house of mirth." Grief and sorrow, כָּעֵס, whether for ourselves or occasioned by others, is better, viz., morally better, than extravagant merriment; the heart is with רַע פֶּה (inf. as רַע, Jer. 7:6; cf. פֶּה רָ, Gen. 40:7; Neh. 2:2), a sorrowful countenance, better than with laughter, which only masks the feeling of disquiet peculiar to man, Prov. 14:13. Elsewhere לֵב יֵיטֵב לֵב = "the heart is (may be) of good cheer," e.g., Ruth 3:7, Judg. 19:6; here also joyful experience is meant, but well becoming man as a religious moral being. With a sad countenance it may be far better as regards the heart than with a merry countenance in boisterous company. Luther, in the main correct, after Jerome, who on his part follows Symmachus: "The heart is made better by sorrow." The well-being is here meant as the reflex of a moral: *bene se habere*.

Sorrow penetrates the heart, draws the thought upwards, purifies, transforms. Therefore is the heart of the wise in the house of sorrow; and, on the other hand, the heart of fools is in the house of joy, i.e., the impulse of their heart goes thither, there they feel themselves at home; a house of joy is one where there are continual

feasts, or where there is at the time a revelling in joy. That v. 4 is divided not by *Athnach*, but by *Zakef*, has its reason in this, that of the words following אֶבֶל, none consists of three syllables; cf. on the contrary, 7:7, חֶכֶם. From this point forward the internal relation of the contents is broken up, according to which this series of sayings as a concluding section hangs together with that containing the observations going before in Ecclesiastes 6.

Ecclesiastes 7:5, 6. A fourth proverb of that which is better (טוֹב מִן) presents, like the third, the fools and the wise over against each other: "Better to hear the reproof of a wise man, than that one should hear the song of fools. For like the crackling of *Nesseln* (nettles) under the *Kessel* (kettle), so the laughter of the fool: also this is vain." As at Prov. 13:1; 17:10, נְעִירָה is the earnest and severe words of the wise, which impressively reprove, emphatically warn, and salutarily alarm. שִׁיר in itself means only song, to the exclusion, however, of the plaintive song; the song of fools is, if not immoral, yet morally and spiritually hollow, senseless, and unbridled madness. Instead of מְשֻׁמֵּעַ, the words מֵאֵשׁ are used, for the twofold act of hearing is divided between different subjects. A fire of thorn-twigs flickers up quickly and crackles merrily, but also exhausts itself quickly (Ps. 118:12), without sufficiently boiling the flesh in the pot; whilst a log of wood, without making any noise, accomplishes this quietly and surely. We agree with Knobel and Vaihinger in copying the paronomasia [*Nessel—Kessel*]. When, on the other hand, Zöckler remarks that a fire of nettles could scarcely crackle, we advise our friend to try it for once in the end of summer with a bundle of stalks of tall dry nettles. They yield a clear blaze, a quickly expiring fire, to which here, as he well remarks, the empty laughter of foolish men is compared, who are devoid of all earnestness, and of all deep moral principles of life. This laughter is vain, like that crackling. There is a hiatus between vv. 6 and 7. For how v. 7 can be related to v. 6 as furnishing evidence, no interpreter has as yet been able to

say. Hitzig regards 6a as assigning a reason for v. 5, but 6b as a reply (as v. 7 containing its motive shows) to the assertion of v. 5, —a piece of ingenious thinking which no one imitates. Elster translates: “Yet injustice befools a wise man,” being prudently silent about this “yet.” Zöckler finds, as Knobel and Ewald do, the mediating thought in this, that the vanity of fools infects and also easily befools the wise. But the subject spoken of is not the folly of fools in general, but of their singing and laughter, to which v. 7 has not the most remote reference. Otherwise Hengst.: “In v. 7, the reason is given why the happiness of fools is so brief; first, the *mens sana* is lost, and then destruction follows.” But in that case the words ought to have been יהוּלל כסיל; the remark, that חכם here denotes one who ought to be and might be such, is a pure *volte*. Ginsburg thinks that the two verses are co-ordinated by כִּי; that v. 6 gives the reason for 5b, and v. 7 that for 5a, since here, by way of example, one accessible to bribery is introduced, who would act prudently in letting himself therefore be directed by a wise man. But if he had wished to be thus understood, the author would have used another word instead of חכם, 7a, and not designated both him who reproves and him who merits reproof by the one word—the former directly, the latter at least indirectly. We do not further continue the account of the many vain attempts that have been made to bring v. 7 into connection with vv. 6 and 5. Our opinion is, that v. 7 is the second half of a tetrastich, the first half of which is lost, which began, as is to be supposed, with *tov*. The first half was almost the same as Ps. 37:16, or better still, as Prov. 16:8, and the whole proverb stood thus:

טוב מעט בצדקה

מרב תבואות בלא משפט:

[and then follows v. 7 as it lies before us in the text, formed into a distich, the first line of which terminates with חכם]. We go still further, and suppose that after the first half of the tetrastich was lost, that expression, “also this is vain,”

added to v. 6 by the punctuation, was inserted for the purpose of forming a connection for כִּי עשק: Also this is vain, that, etc. (כִּי, like *asher*, 8:14).

Ecclesiastes 7:7. Without further trying to explain the mystery of the כִּי, we translate this verse: “... For oppression maketh wise men mad, and corruption destroyeth the understanding.” From the lost first half of the verse, it appears that the subject here treated of is the duties of a judge, including those of a ruler into whose hands his subjects, with their property and life, are given. The second half is like an echo of Ex. 23:8, Deut. 16:19. That which שָׁחַד there means is here, as at Prov. 15:27, denoted by מִתְּנָה; and עֲשָׂק is accordingly oppression as it is exercised by one who constrains others who need legal aid and help generally to purchase it by means of presents. Such oppression for the sake of gain, even if it does not proceed to the perversion of justice, but only aims at courting and paying for favour, makes a wise man mad (הוּלֵל, as at Job 12:17; Isa. 44:25), i.e., it hurries him forth, since the greed of gold increases more and more, to the most blinding immorality and regardlessness; and such presents for the purpose of swaying the judgment, and of bribery, destroys the heart, i.e., the understanding (cf. Hos. 4:11, *Bereschith rabba*, ch. lvi.), for they obscure the judgment, blunt the conscience, and make a man the slave of his passion. The conjecture הָעֵשֶׂר (riches) instead of the word הָעֲשָׂק (Burger, as earlier Ewald) is accordingly unnecessary; it has the parallelism against it, and thus generally used gives an untrue thought. The word הוּלֵל does not mean “gives lustre” (Desvieux), or “makes shine forth = makes manifest” (Tyler); thus also nothing is gained for a better connection of v. 7 and v.6. The Venet. excellently: ἀσάσει. Aben Ezra supposes that מתנה is here = דִּבְרַת מֵת; Mendelssohn repeats it, although otherwise the consciousness of the syntactical rule, Gesen. § 147a, does not fail him.

Ecclesiastes 7:8, 9. There now follows a fourth, or, taking into account the mutilated one, a fifth proverb of that which is better: "Better the end of a thing than its beginning; better one who forbears than one who is haughty. Hasten thyself not in thy spirit to become angry: for anger lieth down in the bosom of fools." The clause 8a is first thus to be objectively understood as it stands. It is not without limitation true; for of a matter in itself evil, the very contrary is true, Prov. 5:4; 23:32. But if a thing is not in itself evil, the end of its progress, the reaching to its goal, the completion of its destination, is always better than its beginning, which leaves it uncertain whether it will lead to a prosperous issue. An example of this is Solon's saying to Croesus, that only he is to be pronounced happy whose good fortune it is to end his life well in the possession of his wealth (*Herod. i. 32*).

The proverb 8b will stand in some kind of connection with 8a, since what it says is further continued in v. 9. In itself, the frequently long and tedious development between the beginning and the end of a thing requires expectant patience. But if it is in the interest of a man to see the matter brought to an issue, an אָרָד will, notwithstanding, wait with self-control in all quietness for the end; while it lies in the nature of the גְּבוּהָ רוּחַ, the haughty, to fret at the delay, and to seek to reach the end by violent means; for the haughty man thinks that everything must at once be subservient to his wish, and he measures what others should do by his own measureless self-complacency. We may with Hitzig translate: "Better is patience (אָרָד = אָרָד) than haughtiness" (גְּבוּהָ, inf., as שָׁפַל, 12:4; Prov. 16:19). But there exists no reason for this; גְּבוּהָ is not to be held, as at Prov. 16:5, and elsewhere generally, as the connecting form of גְּבוּהָ, and so אָרָד for that of אָרָד; it amounts to the same thing whether the two properties (characters) or the persons possessing them are compared.

Ecclesiastes 7:9. In this verse the author warns against this pride which, when everything does

not go according to its mind, falls into passionate excitement, and thoughtlessly judges, or with a violent rude hand anticipates the end. אַל-תִּהְיֶה: do not overturn, hasten not, rush not, as at 5:1. Why the word בְּרוּחָךְ, and not אָרָד or בְּגִישְׁךְ, is used, vid., *Psychol.* pp. 197–199: passionate excitements overcome a man according to the biblical representation of his spirit, Prov. 25:28, and in the proving of the spirit that which is in the heart comes forth in the mood and disposition, Prov. 15:13. כָּעוֹס is an infin., like יִשְׁוֹן, 5:11. The warning has its reason in this, that anger or (כַּעַס, taken more potentially than actually) fretfulness rests in the bosom of fools, i.e., is cherished and nourished, and thus is at home, and, as it were (thought of personally, as if it were a wicked demon), feels itself at home (יָגוּרָה, as at Prov. 14:33). The haughty impetuous person, and one speaking out rashly, thus acts like a fool. In fact, it is folly to let oneself be impelled by contradictions to anger, which disturbs the brightness of the soul, takes away the considerateness of judgment, and undermines the health, instead of maintaining oneself with equanimity, i.e., without stormy excitement, and losing the equilibrium of the soul under every opposition to our wish.

From this point the proverb loses the form "better than," but *toṽ* still remains the catchword of the following proverbs. The proverb here first following is so far cogn., as it is directed against a particular kind of *ka'as* (anger), viz., discontentment with the present.

Ecclesiastes 7:10. "Say not: How comes it that the former times were better than these now? for thou dost not, from wisdom, ask after this." Cf. these lines from Horace (*Poet.* 173, 4):

*"Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
Se puero, censor castigatoreque minorum."*

Such an one finds the earlier days—not only the old days described in history (Deut. 4:32), but also those he lived in before the present time (cf. e.g., 2 Chron. 9:29)—thus by contrast to much better than the present tones, that in

astonishment he asks: "What is it = how comes it that?" etc. The author designates this question as one not proceeding from wisdom: מִחָּ, like the Mishnic חכמה מתוך, and שֶׁאֵל עַל, as at Neh. 1:2; 'al-zeh refers to that question, after the ground of the contrast, which is at the same time an exclamation of wonder. The כִּי, assigning a reason for the dissuasion, does not mean that the cause of the difference between the present and the good old times is easily seen; but it denotes that the supposition of this difference is foolish, because in truth every age has its bright and its dark sides; and this division of light and shadow between the past and the present betrays a want of understanding of the signs of the times and of the ways of God. This proverb does not furnish any point of support for the determination of the date of the authorship of the Book of Koheleth (vid., above, p. 653). But if it was composed in the last century of the Persian domination, this dissatisfaction with the present times is explained, over against which Koheleth leads us to consider that it is self-deception and one-sidedness to regard the present as all dark and the past as all bright and rosy.

Ecclesiastes 7:11, 12. Externally connecting itself with "from wisdom," there now follows another proverb, which declares that wisdom along with an inheritance is good, but that wisdom is nevertheless of itself better than money and possessions: "Wisdom is good with family possessions, and an advantage for those who see the sun. For wisdom affordeth a shadow, money affordeth a shadow; yet the advantage of knowledge is this, that wisdom preserveth life to its possessor." Most of the English interpreters, from Desvoeux to Tyler, translate: "Wisdom is as good as an inheritance;" and Bullock, who translates: "with an inheritance," says of this and the other translations: "The difference is not material." But the thought is different, and thus the distinction is not merely a formal one. Zöckl explains it as undoubted that עַם here, as at 2:16 (vid., l.c.), means *aeque ac*; (but (1) that *aeque*

ac has occurred to no ancient translator, till the Venet. and Luther, nor to the Syr., which translates: "better is wisdom than weapons (מאנא זינא)," in a singular way making 11a a *duplette* of 9:18a; (2) instead of "wisdom is better than wealth," as e.g., Prov. 8:11; (3) the proverb is formed like *Aboth* ii. 2, "good is study connected with a citizen-like occupation," and similar proverbs; (4) one may indeed say: "the wise man dieth with (together with) the fool" = just as well as the fool; but "good is wisdom with wealth" can neither be equivalent to "as well as wealth," nor: "in comparison with wealth" (Ewald, Elster), but only: "in connection with wealth (possessions);" *aeque ac* may be translated for *una cum* where the subject is common action and suffering, but not in a substantival clause consisting of a subst. as subject and an adj. as pred., having the form of a categorical judgment. נַחֲלָה denotes a possession inherited and hereditary (cf. Prov. 20:21); and this is evidence in favour of the view that עַם is meant not of comparison, but of connection; the expression would otherwise be עַם-עֵשֶׂר. וְיִתֵּר is now also explained. It is not to be rendered: "and better still" (than wealth), as Herzf., Hitz., and Hengst. render it; but in spite of Hengst., who decides in his own way, "וְיִתֵּר never means advantage, gain," it denotes a prevailing good, *avantage* (vid., above, p. 638); and it is explained also why men are here named "those who see the sun"—certainly not merely thus describing them poetically, as in Homer ζῶειν is described and coloured by ὀρᾶν φάος ἡελίου. To see the sun, is = to have entered upon this earthly life, in which along with wisdom, also no inheritance is to be despised. For wisdom affords protection as well as money, but the former still more than the latter. So far, the general meaning of v. 12 is undisputed. Buthow is 12a to be construed? Knobel, Hitz., and others regard ב as the so-called *beth essentialiae*: a shadow (protection) is wisdom, a shadow is money,—very expressive, yet out of harmony, if not with the language of that period, yet with the style of Koheleth; and

how useless and misleading would this doubled בְּ be here! Hengstenberg translates: in the shadow of wisdom, at least according to our understanding of v. 11, is not likened to the shadow of silver; but in conformity with that עַם , it must be said that wisdom, and also that money, affords a shadow; (2) but that interpretation goes quite beyond the limits of gnomic brachyology. We explain: for in the shadow (בְּצֶל , like בְּצֶל , Jonah 4:5) is wisdom, in the shadow, money; by which, without any particularly bold poetic licence, is meant that he who possesses wisdom, he who possesses money, finds himself in a shadow, i.e., of pleasant security; to be in the shadow, spoken of wisdom and money, is = to sit in the shadow of the persons who possess both.

Ecclesiastes 7:12b. The exposition of this clause is agreed upon. It is to be construed according to the accentuation: and the advantage of knowledge is this, that “wisdom preserveth life to its possessors.” The Targ. regards דַּעַת הַחִכְמָה as connected genit.; that might be possible (cf. 1:17; 8:16), but yet is improbable. Wherever the author uses דַּעַת as subst., it is an independent conception placed beside חָד , 1:16; 2:26, etc. We now translate, not: wisdom gives life (LXX, Jerome, Venet., Luther) to its possessors; for חַיָּה always means only either to revive (thus Hengst., after Ps. 119:25; cf. 71:20) or to keep in life; and this latter meaning is more appropriate to this book than the former,—thus (cf. Prov. 3:18): wisdom preserves in life,—since, after Hitzig, it accomplishes this, not by rash utterances of denunciation,—a thought lying far behind v. 10, and altogether too mean,—but since it secures it against self-destruction by vice and passions and emotions, e.g., anger (v. 9), which consume life. The shadow in which wisdom (the wise man) sits keeps it fresh and sound,—a result which the shadow in which money (the capitalist) sits does not afford: it has frequently the directly contrary effect.

Vv. 13, 14. There now follows a proverb of devout submission to the providence of God, connecting itself with the contents of v. 10: “Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight which He hath made crooked! In the good day be of good cheer, and in the day of misfortune observe: God hath also made this equal to that, to the end that man need not experience anything (further) after his death.” While רָאָה , 1:10; 7:27, 29, is not different from הִנֵּה , and in 9:9 has the meaning of “enjoy,” here the meaning of contemplative observation, mental seeing, connects itself both times with it. כִּי before מִי can as little mean *quod*, as *asher*, 6:12, before *mi* can mean *quoniam*. “Consider God’s work” means: recognise in all that is done the government of God, which has its motive in this, that, as the question leads us to suppose, no creature is able (cf. 6:10 and 1:15) to put right God’s work in cases where it seems to contradict that which is right (Job 8:3; 34:12), or to make straight that which He has made crooked (Ps. 146:9).

Ecclesiastes 7:14a. The call here expressed is parallel to Sir. 14:14 (Fritz.): “Withdraw not thyself from a good day, and let not thyself lose participation in a right enjoyment.” The ב of בְּטוֹב is, as little as that of בְּצֶל , the *beth essentiae*—it is not a designation of quality, but of condition: in good, i.e., cheerful mood. He who is, Jer. 44:17, personally *tov*, cheerful (= *tov lev*), is *btov* (cf. Ps. 25:13, also Job 21:13). The reverse side of the call, 14a β, is of course not to be translated: and suffer or bear the bad day (Ewald, Heiligst.), for in this sense we use the expression רָעָה רָעָה , Jer. 44:17, but not רָאָה רָעָה , which much rather, Obad. 13, means a malicious contemplation of the misfortune of a stranger, although once, Gen. 21:16, רָאָה בָּ also occurs in the sense of a compassionate, sympathizing look, and, moreover, the parall. shows that בַּיּוֹם רָעָה is not the obj., but the adv. designation of time. Also not: look to = be attentive to (Salomon), or bear it patiently

(Burger), for אָרָךְ cannot of itself have that meaning. But: in the day of misfortune observe, i.e., perceive and reflect: God has also made (cf. Job 2:10) the latter אָרָךְ corresponding, parallel, like to (cf. under 5:15) the former. So much the more difficult is the statement of the object of this mingling by God of good and evil in the life of man. It is translated: that man may find nothing behind him; this is literal, but it is meaningless. The meaning, according to most interpreters, is this: that man may investigate nothing that lies behind his present time,—thus, that belongs to the future; in other words: that man may never know what is before him. But *aharav* is never (not at 6:12) = in the future, lying out from the present of a man; but always = after his present life. Accordingly, Ewald explains, and Heiligst. with him: that he may find nothing which, dying, he could take with him. But this rendering (cf. 5:14) is here unsuitable. Better, Hitzig: because God wills it that man shall be rid of all things after his death, He puts evil into the period of his life, and lets it alternate with good, instead of visiting him therewith after his death. This explanation proceeds from a right interpretation of the words: *idcirco ut* (cf. 3:18) *non inveniatur homo post se quidquam, scilicet quod non expertus sit*, but gives a meaning to the expression which the author would reject as unworthy of his conception of God. What is meant is much more this, that God causes man to experience good and evil that he may pass through the whole school of life, and when he departs hence that nothing may be outstanding (in arrears) which he has not experienced.

Continuation of Experiences and Their Results—7:15–9:12

The Injuriousness of Excesses, 7:15–18

The concluding section, 7:1–14, is now followed by *I*-sections, i.e., advices in the form of actually experienced facts, in which again the *I* of the author comes into the foreground.

Ecclesiastes 7:15–18. The first of these counsels warns against extremes, on the side of good as well as on that of evil: “All have I seen in the days of my vanity: there are righteous men who perish by their righteousness, and there are wicked men who continue long by their wickedness. Be not righteous over-much, and show not thyself wise beyond measure: why wilt thou ruin thyself? Be not wicked overmuch, and be no fool: why wilt thou die before thy time is? It is good that thou holdest thyself to the one, and also from the other withdrawest not thine hand: for he that feareth God accomplisheth it all.” One of the most original English interpreters of the Book of Koheleth, T. Tyler (1874), finds in the thoughts of the book—composed, according to his view, about 200 B.C.—and in their expression, references to the post-Aristotelian philosophy, particularly to the Stoic, variously interwoven with orientalism. But here, in vv. 15–18, we perceive, not so much the principle of the Stoical ethics—τῆ φύσει ὁμολογουμένως ζῆν—as that of the Aristotelian, according to which virtue consists in the art μέσως ἔχειν, the art of holding the middle between extremes. Also, we do not find here a reference to the contrasts between Pharisaism and Sadduceeism (Zöckl.), viz., those already in growth in the time of the author; for if it should be also true, as Tyler conjectures, that the Sadducees had such a predilection for Epicurism,—as, according to Josephus (*Vit.* c. 2), “the doctrine of the Pharisees is of kin to that of the Stoics,”—yet צדקה and רשעה are not apportioned between these two parties, especially since the overstraining of conformity to the law by the Pharisees related not to the moral, but to the ceremonial law. We derive nothing for the right understanding of the passage from referring the wisdom of life here recommended to the tendencies of the time. The author proceeds from observation, over against which the O.T. saints knew not how to place any satisfying theodicee. יָמֵי הַבְּלִי (vid., 6:12) he so designates the long, but for the most part uselessly spent life lying behind him. אֵת-הַכֹּל is not “everything

possible" (Zöckl.), but "all, of all kinds" (Luth.), which is defined by 15*b* as of two kinds; for 15*a* is the introduction of the following experience relative to the righteous and the unrighteous, and thus to the two classes into which all men are divided. We do not translate: there are the righteous, who by their righteousness, etc. (Umbr., Hitzig, and others); for if the author should thus commence, it would appear as if he wished to give unrighteousness the preference to righteousness, which, however, was far from him. To perish in or by his righteousness, to live long in or by his wickedness (מֵאֲרִיךְ, *scil.* יָמִים, 8:13, as at Prov. 28:2), is = to die in spite of righteousness, to live in spite of wickedness, as e.g., Deut. 1:32: "in this thing" = in spite of, etc. Righteousness has the promise of long life as its reward; but if this is the rule, it has yet its exceptions, and the author thence deduces the doctrine that one should not exaggerate righteousness; for if it occurs that a righteous man, in spite of his righteousness, perishes, this happens, at earliest, in the case in which, in the practice of righteousness, he goes beyond the right measure and limit. The relative conceptions הַרְבֵּה and יוֹתֵר have here, since they are referred to the idea of the right measure, the meaning of *nimis*. הַתְּחַבֵּם could mean, "to play the wise man;" but that, whether more or less done, is objectionable. It means, as at Ex. 1:10, to act wisely (cf. Ps. 105:25, הִתְחַבֵּם, to act cunningly). And הִשְׁתַּבַּח, which is elsewhere used of being inwardly torpid, i.e., being astonished, *obstupescere*, has here the meaning of placing oneself in a benumbed, disordered state, or also, passively, of becoming disconcerted; not of becoming desolate or being deserted (Hitz., Ginsburg, and others), which it could only mean in highly poetic discourse (Isa. 54:1). The form תִּשְׁוֹמֵם is syncop., like תִּדְ, Num. 21:27; and the question, with לִמָּה, here and at 17*b*, is of the same kind as 5:5; Luther, weakening it: "that thou mayest not destroy thyself."

Ecclesiastes 7:17. Up to this point all is clear: righteousness and wisdom are good and

wholesome, and worth striving for; but even in these a transgressing of the right measure is possible (Luther remembers the *summum just summa injuria*), which has as a consequence, that they become destructive to man, because he thereby becomes a caricature, and either perishes rushing from one extreme into another, or is removed out of the way by others whose hatred he provokes. But it is strange that the author now warns against an excess in wickedness, so that he seems to find wickedness, up to a certain degree, praiseworthy and advisable. So much the stranger, since "be no fool" stands as contrast to "show not thyself wise," etc.; so that "but also be no wicked person" was much rather to be expected as contrast to "be not righteous over-much." Zöckler seeks to get over this difficulty with the remark: "Kohleth does not recommend a certain moderation in wickedness as if he considered it allowable, but only because he recognises the fact as established, that every man is by nature somewhat wicked." The meaning would then be: man's life is not free from wickedness, but be only not too wicked! The offensiveness of the advice is not thus removed; and besides, 18*a* demands in a certain sense, an intentional wickedness,—indeed, as 18*b* shows, a wickedness in union with the fear of God. The correct meaning of "be not wicked over-much" may be found if for תִּרְשַׁע we substitute תִּתְחַטֵּא; in this form the good counsel at once appears as impossible, for it would be immoral, since "sinning," in all circumstances, is an act which carries in itself its own sentence of condemnation. Thus רִשְׁע must here be a setting oneself free from the severity of the law, which, although sin in the eyes of the over-righteous, is yet no sin in itself; and the author here thinks, in accordance with the spirit of his book, principally of that fresh, free, joyous life to which he called the young, that joy of life in its fulness which appeared to him as the best and fairest reality in this present time; but along with that, perhaps also of transgressions of the letter of the law, of shaking off the scruples of

conscience which conformity to God-ordained circumstances brings along with it. He means to say: be not a narrow rigorist,—enjoy life, accommodate thyself to life; but let not the reins be too loose; and be no fool who wantonly places himself above law and discipline: Why wilt thou destroy thy life before the time by suffering vice to kill thee (Ps. 34:22), and by want of understanding ruin thyself (Prov. 10:21)?

Ecclesiastes 7:18. “It is good that thou holdest fast to the one,”—viz. righteousness and wisdom,—and withdrawest not thy hand from the other,—viz. a wickedness which renounces over-righteousness and over-wisdom, or an unrestrained life;—for he who fears God accomplishes all, i.e., both, the one as well as the other. Luther, against the Vulg.: “for he who fears God escapes all.” But what “all”? Tyler, Bullock, and others reply: “All the perplexities of life;” but no such thing is found in the text here, however many perplexities may be in the book. Better, Zöckler: the evil results of the extreme of false righteousness as of bold wickedness. But that he does not destroy himself and does not die before his time, is yet only essentially one thing which he escapes; also, from v. 15, only one thing, אָבֹד, is taken.

Thus either: the extremes (Umbr.), or: the extremes together with their consequences. The thought presents a connected, worthy conclusion. But if *ēth-kullam*, with its retrospective suffix, can be referred to that which immediately precedes, this ought to have the preference. Ginsburg, with Hitzig: “Whoso feareth God will make his way with both;” but what an improbable phrase! Jerome, with his vague *nihil negligit*, is right as to the meaning. In the Bible, the phrase אָצְרָה ... אָבֹד, *egressus est urbem*, Gen. 44:4, cf. Jer. 10:20, is used; and in the Mishna, אָצְרָה אָבֹד הוֹצֵאתוּ, i.e., he has discharged his duty, he is quit of it by fulfilling it. For the most part, אָצְרָה merely is used: he has satisfied his duty; and אָבֹד, he has not satisfied it, e.g., *Berachoth* 2:1. Accordingly אָצְרָה—since *ēth-kullam* relates to, “these ought

he to have done, and not to leave the other undone,” Matt. 23:23—here means: he who fears God will set himself free from all, will acquit himself of the one as well as of the other, will perform both, and thus preserve the golden *via media*.

***What Protects Him Who with All His Righteousness is Not Free from Sin, and What Becomes Him*, 7:19–22**

The thought with which the following sentence is introduced is not incongruous to that going before. But each one of these moral proverbs and aphorisms is in itself a little whole, and the deeper connections, in the discovery of which interpreters vie with each other, are destitute of exegetical value. One must not seek to be overwise; but the possession of wisdom deserves to be highly valued.

Ecclesiastes 7:19. “Wisdom affords strong protection to the wise man more than ten mighty men who are in the city.” We have to distinguish, as is shown under Ps. 31:3, the verbs אָצְרָה, to be strong, and אָבֹד, to flee for refuge; אָבֹד is the fut. of the former, whence אָבֹד, stronghold, safe retreat, protection, and with אָבֹד, since אָצְרָה means not only to be strong, but also to show oneself strong, as at 9:20, to feel and act as one strong; it has also the trans. meaning, to strengthen, as shown in Ps. 68:29, but here the intrans. suffices: wisdom proves itself strong for the wise man. The ten *shallithim* are not, with Ginsburg, to be multiplied indefinitely into “many mighty men.” And it is not necessary, with Desvoeux, Hitz., Zöckl., and others, to think of ten chiefs (commanders of forces), including the portions of the city garrison which they commanded. The author probably in this refers to some definite political arrangement (vid., above, p. 654), perhaps to the ten archons, like those Assyrian *salat*, vice-regents, after whom as eponyms the year was named by the Greeks. אָבֹד, in the Asiatic kingdom, was not properly a military title. And did a town then need protection only in the

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time of war, and not also at other times, against injury threatening its trade, against encroachments on its order, against the spread of infectious diseases, against the force of the elements? As the Deutero-Isaiah (Ecclesiastes 60:17) says of Jerusalem: "I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness," so Koheleth says here that wisdom affords a wise man as strong a protection as a powerful decemvirate a city; cf. Prov. 24:5a: "A wise man is *ba'oz*," i.e., mighty.

Ecclesiastes 7:20. "For among men there is not a righteous man on the earth, who doeth good, and sinneth not." The original passage, found in Solomon's prayer at the consecration of the temple, is briefer, 1 Kings 8:46: "There is no man who sinneth not." Here the words might be אִין אָדָם צַדִּיק וְגוֹ, there is no righteous man ... *Adam* stands here as representing the species, as when we say in Germ.: *Menschen gibt es keine gerechten auf Erden* [men, there are none righteous on earth]; cf. Ex. 5:16: "Straw, none was given." The verification of v. 19 by reference to the fact of the common sinfulness from which even the most righteous cannot free himself, does not contradict all expectation to the same degree as the *ki* in 7:7; but yet it surprises us, so that Mercer and Grätz, with Aben Ezra, take v. 20 as the verification of v. 16, here first adduced, and Knobel and Heiligst. and others connect it with vv. 21, 22, translating: "Because there is not a just man ..., therefore it is also the part of wisdom to take no heed unto all words," etc. But these are all forced interpretations; instead of the latter, we would rather suppose that v. 20 originally stood after v. 22, and is separated from its correct place. But yet the sequence of thought lying before us may be conceived, and that not merely as of necessity, but as that which was intended by the author. On the whole, Hitzig is correct: "For every one, even the wise man, sins; in which case virtue, which has forsaken him, does not protect him, but wisdom proves itself as his means of defence." Zöckler adds: "against the judicial justice of God;" but one escapes from this by a penitent appeal to grace, for which

there is no need for the personal property of wisdom; there is thus reason rather for thinking on the dangerous consequences which often a single false step has for a man in other respects moral; in the threatening complications in which he is thereby involved, it is wisdom which then protects him and delivers him. Otherwise Tyler, who by the חָכְמָה, which the wise has in wisdom, understands power over evil, which is always moving itself even in the righteous. But the sinning spoken of in v. 20 is that which is unavoidable, which even wisdom cannot prevent or make inefficacious. On the contrary, it knows how to prevent the destruction which threatens man from his transgressions, and to remove the difficulties and derangements which thence arise. The good counsel following is connected by *gam* with the foregoing. The exhortation to strive after wisdom, contained in v. 19, which affords protection against the evil effects of the failures which run through the life of the righteous, is followed by the exhortation, that one conscious that he himself is not free from transgression, should take heed to avoid that tale-bearing which finds pleasure in exposing to view the shortcomings of others.

Ecclesiastes 7:21, 22. "Also give not thy heart to all the words which one speaketh, lest thou shouldest hear thy servant curse thee. For thy heart knoweth in many cases that thou also hast cursed others." The talk of the people, who are the indef. subj. of יְדַבְּרוּ (LXX, Targ., Syr. supply ἀσεβείζ), is not about "thee who givest heed to the counsels just given" (Hitz., Zöckl.), for the restrictive עֲלֵיךָ is wanting; and why should a servant be zealous to utter imprecations on the conduct of his master, which rests on the best maxims? It is the babbling of the people in general that is meant. To this one ought not to turn his heart (לֹא יָתֵן ... לְ, as at 1:13, 17; 8:9, 16), i.e., gives wilful attention, *ne* (אֲשֶׁר לֹא = פֶּן, which does not occur in the Book of Koheleth) *audias servum tuum tibi maledicere*; the particip. expression of the pred. obj. follows the analogy of Gen. 21:9,

Ewald, § 284*b*, and is not a Graecism; for since in this place hearing is meant, not immediately, but mediated through others, the expression would not in good Greek be with the LXX ... τοῦ δούλου σου καταρωμένου σὲ but τὸν δούλον σου καταρᾶσθαι σε. The warning has its motive in this, that by such roundabout hearing one generally hears most unpleasant things; and on hearsay no reliance can be placed. Such gossiping one should ignore, should not listen to it at all; and if, nevertheless, something so bad is reported as that our own servant has spoken words of imprecation against us, yet we ought to pass that by unheeded, well knowing that we ourselves have often spoken harsh words against others. The expression וְגַדְתָּ, “thou art conscious to thyself that,” is like וְפָעַרְתָּ, 1 Kings 2:44, not the obj. accus. dependent on וְגַדְתָּ (Hitz.), “many cases where also thou ...,” but the adv. accus. of time to וְקָלְלִיתָ; the words are inverted (Ewald, § 336*b*), the style of Koheleth being fond of thus giving prominence to the chief conception (v. 20, 5:18; 3:13). The first *gam*, although it belongs to “thine, thy,” as at 22*b* it is also connected with “thou,” stands at the beginning of the sentence, after such syntactical examples as Hos. 6:11; Zech. 9:11; and even with a two-membered sentence, Job 2:10.

The Not-Found, and the Found the Bitterest— A Woman, 7:23-29

The author makes here a pause, looks back at the teaching regarding prudence, already given particularly from v. 15, and acknowledges wisdom as the goal of his effort, especially, however, that for him this goal does not lie behind him, but before him in the remote distance.

Ecclesiastes 7:23. “All this have I proved by wisdom: I thought, Wise I will become; but it remained far from me.” The ב in בְּחָכְמָה is, as at 1:13, that designating the *organon*, the means of knowledge. Thus he possessed wisdom up to a certain degree, and in part; but his purpose,

comprehended in the one word חָכְמָה (vid., above, p. 641, § 2), was to possess it fully and completely; i.e., not merely to be able to record observations and communicate advices, but to adjust the contradictions of life, to expound the mysteries of time and eternity, and generally to solve the most weighty and important questions which perplex men. But this wisdom was for him still in the remote distance. It is the wisdom after which Job, Job 28, made inquiry in all regions of the world and at all creatures, at last to discover that God has appointed to man only a limited share of wisdom. Koheleth briefly condenses Job 28:12-22 in the words following:

Ecclesiastes 7:24. “For that which is, is far off, and deep,—yes, deep; who can reach it?”

Knobel, Hitz., Vaih., and Bullock translate: for what is remote and deep, deep, who can find it? i.e., investigate it; but *mah-shehayah* is everywhere an idea by itself, and means either *id quod fuit*, or *id quod exstitit*, 1:9; 3:15; 6:10; in the former sense it is the contrast of *mah-shēihyēh*, 8:7; 10:14, cf. 3:22; in the latter, it is the contrast of that which does not exist, because it has not come into existence. In this way it is also not to be translated: For it is far off what it (wisdom) is (Zöckl.) [= what wisdom is lies far off from human knowledge], or: what it is (the essence of wisdom), is far off (Elst.)—which would be expressed by the words

מֵה־שֵׁהִיָּה. And if מֵה־שֵׁהִיָּה is an idea complete in itself, it is evidently not that which is past that is meant (thus e.g., Rosenm. *quod ante aderat*), for that is a limitation of the obj. of knowledge, which is unsuitable here, but that which has come into existence. Rightly, Hengst.: that which has being, for wisdom is τῶν ὄντων γνῶσις ἀψευδής, Wisd. 7:17. He compares Judg. 3:11, “the work which God does,” and 8:17, “the work which is done under the sun.” What Koheleth there says of the totality of the historical, he here says of the world of things: this (in its essence and its grounds) remains far off from man; it is for him, and also in itself and for all creatures, far too deep (עֲמֹק עֲמֹק, the ancient expression for the superlative): Who

can intelligibly reach (יִמְצֵא, from אָצַע, *assequi*, in an intellectual sense, as at 3:11; 8:17; cf. Job 11:7) it (this all of being)? The author appears in the book as a teacher of wisdom, and emphatically here makes confession of the limitation of his wisdom; for the consciousness of this limitation comes over him in the midst of his teaching.

Ecclesiastes 7:25. But, on the other side, he can bear testimony to himself that he has honestly exercised himself in seeking to go to the foundation of things: "I turned myself, and my heart was there to discern, and to explore, and to seek wisdom, and the account, and to perceive wickedness as folly, and folly as madness." Regarding *sabbothi*, vid., under 2:20: a turning is meant to the theme as given in what follows, which, as we have to suppose, was connected with a turning away from superficiality and frivolity. Almost all interpreters—as also the accentuation does—connect the two words אָנִי וְלִבִּי; but "I and my heart" is so unpsychological an expression, without example, that many Codd. (28 of Kennicott, 44 of de Rossi) read בְּלִבִּי [with my heart]. The erasure of the *vav* (as e.g., Luther: "I applied my heart") would at the same time require the change of סְבוּתִי into הַסְבוּתִי. The Targ., Jerome, and the Venet. render the word בְּלִבִּי; the LXX and Syr., on the contrary, וְלִבִּי; and this also is allowable, if we place the disjunctive on אָנִי and take וְלִבִּי as consequent: my heart, i.e., my striving and effort, was to discern (Aben Ezra, Herzf., Stuart),—a substantival clause instead of the verbal אָתִּילִבִּי, 1:13; 1:17. Regarding *tur* in an intellectual sense, vid., 1:13. *Hhěshbon* (vid., above, p. 638), with *hhochmah*, we have translated by "*Rechenschaft*" [account, *ratio*]; for we understand by it a knowledge well grounded and exact, and able to be established,—the *facit* of a calculation of all the facts and circumstances relating thereto; נָתַן חֶשְׁבֹן is Mishnic, and = the N.T. λόγον ἀποδοῖδοναι. Of the two accus. 25*b* following

לְדַעַת, the first, as may be supposed, and as the determination in the second member shows, is that of the obj., the second that of the pred. (Ewald, § 284*b*): that רָשָׁע, i.e., conduct separating from God and from the law of that which is good, is *kēsēl*, *Thorheit*, folly (since, as Socrates also taught, all sinning rests on a false calculation, to the sinner's own injury); and that *hassichluth*, *Narrheit*, foolishness, *stultitia* (vid., *sachal*, p. 639, and 1:17), is to be thus translated (in contradistinction to בְּסֵל, i.e., an intellectual and moral obtuseness, living for the day, rising up into foolery, not different from *holeloth*, fury, madness, and thus like a physical malady, under which men are out of themselves, rage, and are mad. Koheleth's striving after wisdom thus, at least is the second instance (וְלִדְעַת), with a renunciation of the transcendental, went towards a practical end. And now he expresses by וְמוֹצֵא one of the experiences he had reached in this way of research. How much value he attaches to this experience is evident from the long preface, by means of which it is as if it were distilled. We see him there on the way to wisdom, to metaphysical wisdom, if we may so speak—it remains as far off from him as he seeks to come near to it. We then see him, yet not renouncing the effort after wisdom, on the way toward practical wisdom, which exercises itself in searching into the good and the bad; and that which has presented itself to him as the bitterest of the bitter is—a woman.

Ecclesiastes 7:26. "And I found woman more bitter than death; she is like hunting-nets. and like snares is her heart, her hands are bands: he who pleaseth God will escape from her; but the sinner is caught by them." As וְשֵׂא, 4:2, so here וְשֵׂא (vid., above, p. 641, 1, and 642, 3) gains by the preceding אָנִי וְסְבוּתִי a past sense; the particip. clause stands frequently thus, not only as a circumstantial clause, Gen. 14:12*f.*, but also as principal clause, Gen. 2:10, in an historical connection. The preceding pred. מָר, in the mas. ground-form, follows the rule, Gesen. § 147. Regarding the construction of the relative

clause, Hitzig judges quite correctly: “היא is copula between subj. and pred., and precedes for the sake of the contrast, giving emphasis to the pred. It cannot be a nomin., which would be taken up by the suff. in לְבָהּ, since if this latter were subject also to מִן הַיָּא would not certainly be found. Also *asher* here is not a conj.” This הוּא (היא), which in relative substantival clauses represents the copula, for the most part stands separated from *asher*, e.g., Gen. 7:2; 17:12, Num. 17:5, Deut. 17:15; less frequently immediately with it, Num. 35:31; 1 Sam. 10:19; 2 Kings 25:19; Lev. 11:26; Deut. 20:20. But this *asher hu* (*hi*) never represents the subj., placed foremost and again resumed by the reflex. pronoun, so as to be construed as the accentuation requires: *quae quidem retia et laquei cor ejus = caju* *quidem cor sunt retia et laquei* (Heiligst.). מְצוֹד is the means of searching, i.e., either of hunting: hunting-net (*mitsodah*, 9:12), or of blockading: siege-work, bulwarks, 9:14; here it is the plur. of the word in the former meaning. חָרָם, Hab.

1:14, plur. Ezek. 26:5, etc. (perhaps from חָרַם to pierce, bore through), is one of the many synon. for fishing-net. אֶסְוִרִים, fetters, the hands (arms) of voluptuous embrace (cf. above, p. 637). The primary form, after Jer. 37:15, is אֶסְוִר, אֶסְוִר; cf. אָבִוּס, אָבִּ, Job 39:9. Of the three clauses following *asher*, *vav* is found in the second and is wanting to the third, as at Deut. 29:22, Job 42:9, Ps. 45:9, Isa. 1:13; cf. on the other hand, Isa. 33:6. Similar in their import are these Leonine verses:

*Femina praeclara facie quasi pestis amara,
Et quasi fermentum corrumpit cor sapientum.”*

That the author is in full earnest in this harsh judgment regarding woman, is shown by 26b: he who appears to God as good (cf. 2:26) escapes from her (the fut. of the consequence of this his relation to God); but the sinner (הַחַיִּיטָא, cf. above, p. 682, note) is caught by her, or, properly, in her, viz., the net-like woman, or the net to which she is compared (Ps. 9:16; Isa.

24:18). The harsh judgment is, however, not applicable to woman as such, but to woman as she is, with only rare exceptions; among a thousand women he has not found one corresponding to the idea of a woman.

Ecclesiastes 7:27, 28. “Behold what I have found, saith Koheleth, adding one thing to another, to find out the account: What my soul hath still sought, and I have not found, (is this): one man among a thousand have I found; and a woman among all these have I not found.” It is the ascertained result, “one man, etc.,” which is solemnly introduced by the words preceding. Instead of אֶסְוִר קֶהָ, the words אֶמַר הַקֶּהָ are to be read, after 12:8, as is now generally acknowledged; errors of transcription of a similar kind are found at 2 Sam. 5:2; Job 38:12. Ginsburg in vain disputes this, maintaining that the name *Koheleth*, as denoting wisdom personified, may be regarded as fem. as well as mas.; here, where the female sex is so much depreciated, was the fem. self-designation of the stern judge specially unsuitable (cf. above, p. 646). Hengst. supposes that *Koheleth* is purposely fem. in this one passage, since true wisdom, represented by Solomon, stands opposite to false philosophy. But this reason for the fem. rests on the false opinion that woman here is heresy personified; he further remarks that it is significant for this fem. personification, that there is “no writing of female authorship in the whole canon of the O. and N.T.” But what of Deborah’s triumphal song, the song of Hannah, the *magnificat* of Mary? We hand this absurdity over to the Clementines! The woman here was flesh and blood, but *pulchra quamvis pellis est mens tamen plean procellis*; and *Koheleth* is not incarnate wisdom, but the official name of a preacher, as in Assyr., for חֲזַנִּים, curators, overseers, *hazanâti* is used. זָה, 27a, points, as at 1:10, to what follows. אֶחָת לְ, one thing to another (cf. Isa. 27:12), must have been, like *summa summarum* and the like, a common arithmetical and dialectical formula, which is here subordinate to מִן, since an adv. inf. such as לְקוֹחַ is to be supplemented: taking one thing

to another to find out the **הַשְׁבִּיחַ**, i.e., the balance of the account, and thus to reach a *facit*, a *resultat*.

That which presented itself to him in this way now follows. It was, in relation to woman, a negative experience: "What my soul sought on and on, and I found not, (is this)." The words are like the superscription of the following result, in which finally the **וְ** of 27a terminates.

Ginsburg, incorrectly: "what my soul is still seeking," which would have required **מְבַקֶּשֶׁת**.

The pret. **בִּקְשָׁה** (with **ק** without *Dagesh*, as at v. 29) is retrospective; and **עוֹד**, from **עוֹד**, means *redire*, again and again, continually, as at Gen. 46:29. He always anew sought, and that, as *biqshah naphshi* for **בִּקְשָׁתִי** denotes, with urgent striving, violent longing, and never found, viz., a woman such as she ought to be: a man, one of a thousand, I have found, etc. With right, the accentuation gives *Garshayim to adam*; it stands forth, as at v. 20, as a general denominator—the sequence of accents, *Geresh, Pashta, Zakef*, is as at Gen. 1:9. "One among a thousand" reminds us of Job 33:23, cf. 9:3; the old interpreters (vid., Dachselt's *Bibl. Accentuata*), with reference to these parallels, connect with the one man among a thousand all kinds of incongruous christological thoughts. Only, here *adam*, like the Romanic *l'homme* and the like, means man in sexual contrast to woman. It is thus ideally meant, like *ish*, 1 Sam. 4:9; 46:15, and accordingly also the parall. **אִשָּׁה**. For it is not to be supposed that the author denies thereby perfect human nature to woman. But also Burger's explanation: "a human being, whether man or woman," is a useless evasion. Man has the name *adam* κατ' ἐξ, by primitive hist. right: "for the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man," 1 Cor. 11:8. The meaning, besides, is not that among a thousand human beings he found one upright man, but not a good woman (Hitz.),—for then the thousand ought to have had its proper denominator, **בְּנֵי אָדָם**,—but that among a thousand persons of the male sex he found only one man such as he

ought to be, and among a thousand of the female sex not one woman such as she ought to be; "among all these" is thus = among an equal number. Since he thus actually found the ideal of man only seldom, and that of woman still seldomer (for more than this is not denoted by the round numbers), the more surely does he resign himself to the following *resultat*, which he introduces by the word **לְבַד** (only, alone), as the clear gain of his searching:

Ecclesiastes 7:29. "Lo, this only have I found, that God created man upright; but they seek many arts." Also here the order of the words is inverted, since **זֶה**, belonging as obj. to **מָצֵאתִי** (have I found), which is restricted by **לְבַד** (vid., above, p. 638), is amalgamated with **רְאֵה** (Lo! see!). The author means to say: Only this (*solummodo hocce*) have I found, that ...; the **רְאֵה** is an interjected *nota bene*. The expression: God has made man **יִשְׂרָאֵל**, is dogmatically significant. Man, as he came from the Creator's hand, was not placed in the state of moral decision, nor yet in the state of absolute indifference between good and evil; he was not neither good nor bad, but he was טוב, or, which is the same thing, יִשְׂרָאֵל; i.e., in every respect normal, so that he could normally develop himself from this positively good foundation. But by the expression **עֲשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל**, Koheleth has certainly not exclusively his origin in view, but at the same time his relative continuation in the propagation of himself, not without the concurrence of the Creator; also of man after the fall the words are true, **עֲשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל**, in so far as man still possesses the moral ability not to indulge sinful affections within him, nor suffer them to become sinful actions. But the sinful affections in the inborn nature of weak sinful man have derived so strong a support from his freedom, that the power of the will over against this power of nature is for the most part as weakness; the dominance of sin, where it is not counteracted by the grace of God, has always shown itself so powerful, that Koheleth has to complain of men of all times

and in all circles of life: they seek many arts (as Luther well renders it), or properly, calculations, inventions, devices (*hhishshvonoth*, as at 2 Chron. 26:15, from *hhishshvon*, which is as little distinguished from the formation *hhěshbon*, as *hhizzayon* from *hhězyon*), viz., of means and ways, by which they go astray from the normal natural development into abnormities. In other words: inventive refined degeneracy has come into the place of moral simplicity, ἀπλότης (2 Chron. 11:3). As to the opinion that caricatures of true human nature, contrasts between the actual and that which ought to be (the ideal), are common, particularly among the female sex, the author has testimonies in support of it from all nations. It is confirmed by the primitive history itself, in which the woman appears as the first that was led astray, and as the seducer (cf. *Psychol.* pp. 103–106). With reference to this an old proverb says: “Women carry in themselves a frivolous mind,” *Kiddushin* 80*b*. And because a woman, when she has fallen into evil, surpasses a man in fiendish superiority therein, the Midrash reckons under this passage before us fifteen things of which the one is worse than the other; the thirteenth is death, and the fourteenth a bad woman. Hitzig supposes that the author has before him as his model Agathoclea, the mistress of the fourth Ptolemy Philopator. But also the history of the Persian Court affords dreadful examples of the truth of the proverb: “Woe to the age whose leader is a woman;” and generally the harem is a den of female wickedness.

Ecclesiastes 8

Wise Conduct Towards the King and Under Despotic Oppression, 8:1–9

If now the sentence first following sings the praise of wisdom, it does not stand out of connection with the striving after wisdom, which the author, 7:23*f*., has confessed, and with the experiences announced in 7:25*ff*., which have presented themselves to him in the way of the search after wisdom, so far as wisdom was attainable. It is the incomparable

superiority of the wise man which the first verse here announces and verifies.

Ecclesiastes 8:1. “Who is like the wise? and who understandeth the interpretation of things? The wisdom of a man maketh his face bright, and the rudeness of his face is changed.” Unlike this saying: “Who is like the wise?” are the formulas מִי הָכֵם, Hos. 14:10, Jer. 11:11, Ps. 107:43, which are compared by Hitzig and others. “Who is like the wise?” means: Who is equal to him? and this question, after the scheme מִי כְמֹכָה, Ex. 15:11, presents him as one who has not his like among men. Instead of כְּהֵ the word כְּחֵם might be used, after לְחֵם, 2:16, etc. The syncope is, as at Ezek. 40:25, omitted, which frequently occurs, particularly in the more modern books, Ezek. 47:22; 2 Chron. 10:7; 25:10; 29:27; Neh. 9:19; 12:38. The regular giving of *Dagesh* to ה after מִי, with *Jethib*, not *Mahpach*, is as at v. 7 after כִּי; *Jethib* is a disjunctive. The second question is not וּמִי בְיָוֵד, but וּמִי יֵדְעַע, and thus does not mean: who is like the man of understanding, but: who understands, viz., as the wise man does; thus it characterizes the incomparably excellent as such. Many interpreters (Oetinger, Ewald, Hitz., Heiligst., Burg., Elst., Zöckl.) persuade themselves that פֶּשֶׁר דְּבָר is meant of the understanding of the proverb, 8*b*. The absence of the art., says Hitzig, does not mislead us: of a proverb, viz., the following; but in this manner determinate ideas may be made from all indeterminate ones. Rightly, Gesenius: *explicationem ullius rei*; better, as at 7:8: *cujusvis rei*. Ginsburg compares גְּבוֹן דְּבָר, 1 Sam. 16:18, which, however, does not mean him who has the knowledge of things, but who is well acquainted with words. It is true that here also the chief idea פֶּשֶׁר first leads to the meaning *verbum* (according to which the LXX, Jer., the Targ., and Syr. translate; the Venet.: ἐρμηνείαν λόγου); but since the unfolding or explaining (*pēshēr*) refers to the actual contents of the thing spoken, *verbi* and *rei* coincide. The wise

man knows how to explain difficult things, to unfold mysterious things; in short, he understands how to go to the foundation of things.

What now follows, 1*b*, might be introduced by the confirming כִּי, but after the manner of synonymous parallelism it places itself in the same rank with 1*a*, since, that the wise man stands so high, and no one like him looks through the centre of things, is repeated in another form: "Wisdom maketh his face bright" is thus to be understood after Ps. 119:130 and 19:9, wisdom draws the veil from his countenance, and makes it clear; for wisdom is related to folly as light is to darkness, 2:13. The contrast, וְעַז ... יִשׁ ("and the rudeness of his face is changed"), shows, however, that not merely the brightening of the countenance, but in general that intellectual and ethical transfiguration of the countenance is meant, in which at once, even though it should not in itself be beautiful, we discover the educated man rising above the common rank. To translate, with Ewald: and the brightness of his countenance is doubled, is untenable; even supposing that יִשׁ can mean, like the Arab. *yuthattay*, *duplicatur*, still עַז, in the meaning of brightness, is in itself, and especially with פָּנָיו, impossible, along with which it is, without doubt, to be understood after *az panim*, Deut. 28:50, Dan. 8:23, and *hē'ēz panim*, Prov. 7:13, or *bphanim*, Prov. 21:29, so that thus עַז פָּנִים has the same meaning as the post-bibl. עֲזוּת פָּנִים, stiffness, hardness, rudeness of countenance = boldness, want of bashfulness, regardlessness, e.g., *Shabbath 30b*, where we find a prayer in these words: O keep me this day from עֲזֵי פָנִים and from עֲזוּת פָּ (that I may not incur the former or the latter). The Talm. *Taanith 7b*, thus explaining, says: "Every man to whom עֲזוּת פָּ belongs, him one may hate, as the scripture says, וְעַז ... יִשׁ (do not read יִשׁ). The LXX translates *μισσηθήσεται* [will be hated], and thus also the Syr.; both have thus read as the Talm.

has done, which, however, bears witness in favour of יִשׁ as the traditional reading. It is not at all necessary, with Hitzig, after Zirkel, to read יִשׁ: but boldness disfigureth his countenance; עַז in itself alone, in the meaning of boldness, would, it is true, along with פָּנָיו as the obj. of the verb, be tenable; but the change is unnecessary, the passive affords a perfectly intelligible meaning: the boldness, or rudeness, of his visage is changed, viz., by wisdom (Böttch., Ginsb., Zöckl.). The verb שָׁנָה (שָׁנָה, Lam. 4:1) means, Mal. 3:6, merely "to change, to become different;" the *Pih.* שָׁנָה, Jer. 52:33, שָׁנָה, 2 Kings 25:29, denotes in these two passages a change *in melius*, and the proverb of the Greek, Sir. 13:24, —

Καρδία ἀνθρώπου ἀλλοιοῖ τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ
 ἕαν τε εἰς ἀγαθὰ ἕαν τε εἰς κακά,

is preserved to us in its original form thus:

לֵב אָדָם יִשָּׁנָה פָּנָיו

בֵּין לְטוֹב וּבֵין לְרָע:

so that thus שָׁנָה, in the sense of being changed as to the sternness of the expression of the countenance, is as good as established. What Ovid says of science: *emollit mores nec sinit esse feros*, thus tolerably falls in with what is here said of wisdom: Wisdom gives bright eyes to a man, a gentle countenance, a noble expression; it refines and dignifies his external appearance and his demeanour; the hitherto rude external, and the regardless, selfish, and bold deportment, are changed into their contraries. If, now, v. 1 is not to be regarded as an independent proverb, it will bear somewhat the relation of a prologue to what follows. Luther and others regard 1*a* as of the nature of an epilogue to what goes before; parallels, such as Hos. 14:10, make that appear probable; but it cannot be yielded, because the words are not מִי חכם, but מִי כהֵחָ. But that which follows easily subordinates itself to v. 1, in as far as fidelity to duty and thoughtfulness amid critical social relations are proofs of that wisdom which sets a

man free from impetuous rudeness, and fits him intelligently and with a clear mind to accommodate himself to the time.

Ecclesiastes 8:2. The faithfulness of subjects, Koheleth says, is a religious duty: "I say: Observe well the kings' command, and that because of the oath of God." The author cannot have written *2a* as it here stands; אָנִי hovers in the air. Hitzig reads, with Jerome, שָׁמַר, and hears in vv. 2–4 a servile person speaking who veils himself in the cloak of religion; in vv. 5–8 follows the *censura* of this corrupt theory. but we have already (vid., above, p. 652) remarked that v. 2 accords with Rom. 13:5, and is thus not a corrupt theory; besides, this distribution of the expressions of the Book of Koheleth between different speakers is throughout an expedient resting on a delusion. Luther translates: I keep the word of the king, and thus reads אֶשְׁמַר; as also does the *Jer. Sanhedrin 21b*, and *Koheleth rabba*, under this passage: I observe the command of the king, of the queen. In any case, it is not God who is meant here by "the king," the words: "and that because of the oath of God," render this impossible, although Hengst. regards it as possible; for (1) "the oath of God" he understands, against all usage, of the oath which is taken to God; and (2) he maintains that in the O.T. scarcely any passage is to be found where obedience to a heathen master is set forth as a religious duty. But the prophets show themselves as morally great men, without a stain, just in this, that they decidedly condemn and unhesitatingly chastise any breach of faith committed against the Assyrian or Chaldean oppressor, e.g., Isa. 28:15; 30:1; Ezek. 17:15; cf. Jer. 27:12. However, although we understand *mēlēk* not of the heavenly, but of an earthly king, yet אֶשְׁמַר does not recommend itself, for Koheleth records his experience, and derives therefrom warnings and admonitions; but he never in this manner presents himself as an example of virtue. The paraenetic imper. שָׁמַר is thus not to be touched. Can we then use *ani* elliptically, as equivalent to "I say as follows"? Passages such as Jer. 20:10

(Elst.), where לֵאמֹר is omitted, are not at all the same. Also Ezek. 34:11, where הֲנִי is strengthened by *ani*, and the expression is not elliptical, is not in point here. And Isa. 5:9 also does not apply to the case of the supposed ellipsis here. In an ingenious bold manner the Midrash helps itself in Lev. 18 and Num. 14, for with reference to the self-introduction of royal words like אֲנִי פִרְעָה it explains: "Observe the *I* from the mouth of the king." This explanation is worthy of mention, but it has little need of refutation; it is also contrary to the accentuation, which gives *Pashta* to *ani*, as to רָאָה, 7:27, and לָבַד, 7:29, and thus places it by itself. Now, since this elliptical *I*, after which we would place a colon, is insufferably harsh, and since also it does not recommend itself to omit it, as is done by the LXX, the Targ., and Syr.,—for the words must then have a different order, שָׁמַר פִּי הַמֶּלֶךְ,—it is most advisable to supply אֶשְׁמַרְתִּי, and to write אֶשְׁמַר אֲנִי or אֲנִי אֶשְׁמַר, after 2:1; 3:17, 18. We find ourselves here, besides, within an *I* section, consisting of sentences interwoven in a *Mashal* form. The admonition is solemnly introduced, since Koheleth, himself a king, and a wise man in addition, gives it the support of the authority of his person, in which it is to be observed that the religious motive introduced by *explic.* (vid., Ewald, § 340*b*) is not merely an appendix, but the very point of the admonition. Kleinert, incorrectly: "Direct thyself according to the mouth of the king, and that, too, as according to an oath of God." Were this the meaning, then we might certainly wish that it were a servile Alexandrian court-Jew who said it. But why should that be the meaning? The meaning "*wegen*" [because of], which is usually attributed to the word-connection עַל-דִּבְרָתָהּ here and at 3:18; 7:14, Kleinert maintains to be an arbitrary invention. But it alone fits these three passages, and why an arbitrary invention? If עַל-דִּבְרָתָהּ, Ps. 45:5; 79:9, etc., means "*von wegen*" [on account of], then also עַל-דִּבְרָתָהּ will signify "*propter rationem, naturam,*" as well as (Ps. 110:4) *ad rationem.*

אֱלֹהִים is, as elsewhere שָׁבַי יְהוָה, e.g., Ex. 22:10, a promise given under an appeal to God, a declaration or promise strengthened by an oath. Here it is the oath of obedience which is meant, which the covenant between a king and his people includes, though it is not expressly entered into by individuals. The king is designated neither as belonging to the nation, nor as a foreigner; that which is said is valid also in the case of the latter. Daniel, Nehemiah, Mordecai, etc., acted in conformity with the words of Koheleth, and the oath of vassalage which the kings of Israel and Judah swore to the kings of Assyria and of Babylon is regarded by the prophets of both kingdoms as binding on king and people (vid., above, p. 652).

Ecclesiastes 8:3. The warning, corresponding to the exhortation, now follows: One must not thoughtlessly avoid the duty of service and homage due to the king: "Hasten not to go away from him: join not in an evil matter; for he executeth all that he desireth." Regarding the connection, of two verbs with one idea, lying before us in אֶל-... תִּלָּךְ, as e.g., at Zech. 8:15, Hos. 1:6, vid., Gesen. § 142. 3b. Instead of this sentence, we might use אֶל-תְּבַהֵל לְלִכְתּוֹת מִפְּנֵי, as e.g., *Aboth* v. 8: "The wise man does not interrupt another, and hastens not to answer," i.e., is not too hasty in answering. As with עָם, to be with the king, 4:15 = to hold with him, so here מִפְּנֵי הַלֵּךְ means to take oneself away from him, or, as it is expressed in 10:4, to leave one's station; cf. Hos. 11:2: "They (the prophets of Jahve) called to them, forthwith they betook themselves away from them." It is possible that in the choice of the expression, the phrase נְבַהֵל מִפְּנֵי, "to be put into a state of alarm before any one," Job 23:15, was not without influence. The indef. דָּבַר רָע, Deut. 17:1; 23:10, cf. 13:12; 19:20, 2 Kings 4:41, etc., is to be referred (with Rosenm., Knobel, Bullock, and others) to undertakings which aim at resisting the will of the king, and reach their climax in conspiracy against the king's throne and life (Prov. 24:21b). אֶל-תִּעַמַד בָּ, might mean: persist not in

it; but the warning does not presuppose that the entrance thereon had already taken place, but seeks to prevent it, thus: enter not, go not, engage not, like 'amad bderek, Ps. 1:1; 'amad babrith, 2 Kings 23:3; cf. Ps. 106:23; Jer. 23:18. Also the Arab. 'amada li = intendit, proposuit sibi rem, is compared; it is used in the general sense of "to make toward something, to stretch to something." Otherwise Ewald, Elst., Ginsb., and Zöckl.: stand not at an evil word (of the king), provoking him to anger thereby still more,— against v. 5, where דָּבַר רָע, as generally (cf. Ps. 141:4), means an evil thing, and against the close connection of עָמַד בָּ, which is to be presupposed. Hitzig even: stand not at an evil command, i.e., hesitate not to do even that which is evil, which the king commands, with the remark that here a *servilismus* is introduced as speaking, who, in saying of the king, "All that pleaseth him he doeth," uses words which are used only of God the Almighty, John 1:14, Ps. 33:9, etc. Hengst., Hahn, Dale, and others therefore dream of the heavenly King in the text. But proverbs of the earthly king, such as Prov. 20:2, say the very same thing; and if the Mishna *Sanhedrin* ii. 2, to which Tyler refers, says of the king, "The king cannot himself be a judge, nor can any one judge him; he does not give evidence, and no evidence can be given against him," a sovereignty is thus attributed to the king, which is formulated in 3b and established in the verse following.

Ecclesiastes 8:4. "Inasmuch as the word of a king is powerful; and who can say to him: What doest thou?" The same thing is said of God, Job 9:12, Isa. 45:9, Dan. 4:32, Wisd. 12:12, but also of the king, especially of the unlimited monarch of a despotic state. *Baasher* verifies as בָּשָׁר at 2:16; cf. Gen. 39:9, 23; Greek, ἐν ᾧ and ἐφ' ᾧ. Burger arbitrarily: *quae dixit* (דָּבַר for דָּבַר), *rex, in ea potestatem habet*. The adjectival impers. use of the noun *shilton* = *potestatem habens*, is peculiar; in the Talm. and Midrash, *shilton*, like the Assyr. *siltannu*, means the ruler (vid., under 5:8). That which now follows is not, as Hitzig supposes, an opposing voice which makes itself

heard, but as v. 2 is compared with Rom. 13:5, so is v. 5 with Rom. 13:3.

Ecclesiastes 8:5. “Whoso remaineth true to the commandment will experience nothing evil; and the heart of the wise man will know a time and judicial decision.” That by מִצְוָה is here to be understood not the commandment of God, at least not immediately, as at Prov. 19:16 (Ewald), but that of the king, and generally an injunction and appointment of the superior authority, is seen from the context, which treats not of God, but of the ruler over a state. Knobel and others explain: He who observeth the commandment engageth not with an evil thing, and the wise mind knoweth time and right. But יָדַע is never thus used (the author uses for this, עָמַד בָּ), and the same meaning is to be supposed for the repeated יָדַע: it means to arrive at the knowledge of; in the first instance: to suffer, Ezek. 25:14; cf. Isa. 9:8; Hos. 9:7; in the second, to experience, Josh. 24:31; Ps. 16:11. It may also, indeed, be translated after 9:12: a wise heart knoweth time and judgment, viz., that they will not fail; but why should we not render יָדַע both times fut., since nothing stands in the way? We do not translate: a wise heart, a wise mind (Knobel), although this is possible, 1 Kings 3:12 (cf. Ps. 90:12), but: the heart of a wise man, which is made more natural by 10:2, Prov. 16:23. The heart of a wise man, which is not hurried forward by dynastic oppression to a selfish forgetfulness of duty, but in quietness and hope (Lam. 3:26) awaits the interposition of God, will come to the knowledge that there is an *eth*, a time, when oppression has an end, and a *mishpat*, when it suffers punishment. Well adapted to the sense in which *eth* is here used is the remark of Elia Levita in his *Tishbi*, that זִקְנוֹ corresponds to the German *Zeit* and the Romanic *tempo*, but עֵת to the German *Ziel* and the Romanic *termino*. The LXX translates καιρὸν κρίσεως; and, inf act, עַת וְסִי is a hendiadys, which, however, consists in the division of one conception into two. The heart of the wise man remaining true to duty will come to learn that

there is a terminus and judicial decision, for everything has an end when it falls under the fate for which it is ripe, especially the sinner.

Ecclesiastes 8:6. “For there is a time and decision for everything, for the wickedness of man becomes too great.” From 6a there follow four clauses with כִּי; by such monotonous repetition of one and the same word, the author also elsewhere renders the exposition difficult, affording too free a space for understanding the כִּי as confirming, or as hypothetical, and for co-ordinating or subordinating to each other the clauses with כִּי. Presupposing the correctness of our exposition of 5a, the clause 6a with כִּי may be rendered parenthetically, and that with כִּי in 6b hypothetically: “an end and decision the heart of the wise man will come to experience (because for everything there is an end and decision), supposing that the wickedness of man has become great upon him, i.e., his burden of guilt has reached its full measure.” We suppose thereby (1) that רָבָה, which appears from the accent on the ult. to be an adj., can also be the 3rd pret., since before וּ the tone has gone back to *áh* (cf. Gen. 26:10; Isa. 11:1), to protect it from being put aside; but generally the accenting of such forms of עֵעֵ hovers between the penult. and the ult., e.g., Ps. 69:5; 55:22; Prov. 14:19. Then (2) that עָלִינוּ goes back to הִאֲדָמָה, without distinction of persons, which has a support in 6:1, and that thus a great רָעָה is meant lying upon man, which finally finds its punishment. But this view of the relation of the clauses fails, in that it affords no connection for v. 7. It appears to be best to co-ordinate all the four כִּי as members of one chain of proof, which reaches its point in 8b, viz., in the following manner: the heart of a wise man will see the time and the judgment of the ruler, laying to his heart the temptation to rebellion; for (1) as the author has already said, 3:17: “God will judge the righteous as well as the wicked, for there is with Him a time for every purpose and for every act;” (2) the wickedness of man (by

which, as v. 9 shows, despots are aimed at) which he has committed, becomes great upon him, so that suddenly at once the judgment of God will break in upon him; (3) he knows not what will be done; (4) no one can tell him how (*quomodo*) it, the future, will be, so that he might in any way anticipate it—the judgment will overwhelm him unexpectedly and irretrievably: wickedness does not save its possessor.

Ecclesiastes 8:7, 8. Vv. 7 and 8 thus continue the *For* and *For*: “For he knoweth not that which shall be; for who can tell him who it will be? There is no man who has power over the wind, to restrain the wind; and no one has authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the war; and wickedness does not save its possessor.” The actor has the sin upon himself, and bears it; if it reaches the terminus of full measure, it suddenly overwhelms him in punishment, and the too great burden oppresses its bearer (Hitzig, under Isa. 24:20). This עת ומשׁ comes unforeseen, for he (the man who heaps up sins) knoweth not *id quod fiet*; it arrives unforeseen, for *quomodo fiet*, who can show it to him? Thus, e.g., the tyrant knows not that he will die by assassination, and no one can say to him how that will happen, so that he might make arrangements for his protection. Rightly the LXX καθὼς ἔσται; on the contrary, the Targ., Hitzig, and Ginsburg: when it will be; but כַּאֲשֶׁר signifies *quum*, 4:17; 5:3; 8:16, but not *quando*, which must be expressed by מָתַי (Mishnic אֵימָתַי, אֵימָתַי).

Now follows the concluding thought of the four כִּי, whereby 5b is established. There are four impossibilities enumerated; the fourth is the point of the enumeration constructed in the form of a numerical proverb. (1) No man has power over the wind, to check the wind. Ewald, Hengst., Zöckl., and others understand רוּחַ, with the Targ., Jerome, and Luther, of the Spirit (רוּחַ חַיִּים); but man can limit this physically when he puts a violent termination to life, and must restrain it morally by ruling it, Prov. 16:32;

25:28. On the contrary, the wind הרוח is, after 11:5, incalculable, and to rule over it is the exclusive prerogative of Divine Omnipotence, Prov. 30:4.

The transition to the second impossibility is mediated by this, that in רוּחַ, according to the *usus loq.*, the ideas of the breath of animal life, and of wind as the breath as it were of the life of the whole of nature, are interwoven. (2) No one has power over the day of death: death, viz., natural death, comes to a man without his being able to see it before, to determine it, or to change it. With שְׁלִיט there here interchanges שְׁלִטָן, which is rendered by the LXX and Venet. as abstr., also by the Syr. But as at Dan. 3:2, so also above at v. 4, it is concr., and will be so also in the passage before us, as generally in the Talm. and Midrash, in contradistinction to the abstr., which is שְׁלִטָן, after the forms אָבְדָן, דָּרְבָן, אָבְדָן, etc., e.g., *Bereshith rabba*, c. 85 *extr.*: “Every king and ruler שְׁלִטָן who had not a שוֹלְטָן, a command (government, sway) in the land, said that that did not satisfy him, the king of Babylon had to place an under-Caesar in Jericho,” etc. Thus: no man possesses rule or is a ruler ...

A transition is made from the inevitable law of death to the inexorable severity of the law of war; (3) there is no discharge, no dispensation, whether for a time merely (*missio*), or a full discharge (*dimissio*), in war, which in its fearful rigour (*vid.*, on the contrary, Deut. 20:5–8) was the Persian law (*cf.* above, p. 653). Even so, every possibility of escape is cut off by the law of the divine requital; (4) wickedness will not save (מִלֵּט, causative, as always) its lord (*cf.* the proverb: “Unfaithfulness strikes its own master”) or possessor; i.e., the wicked person, when the עת וּמֵ comes, is hopelessly lost. Grätz would adopt the reading עָשָׂר instead of רָשָׁע; but the fate of the בְּעַל רָשָׁע, or of the רָשָׁע, is certainly that to which the concatenation of thought from v. 6 leads, as also the disjunctive accent at the end of the three first clauses of v. 8 denotes. But that in the words *ba'al resha'* (not

בְּעֵלִי a despotic king is thought of (בְּעֵלִיו), as at 5:10, 12; 7:12; Prov. 3:27; cf. under Prov. 1:19), is placed beyond a doubt by the epilogistic verse:

Ecclesiastes 8:9. “All that I have seen, and that, too, directing my heart to all the labour that is done under the sun: to the time when a man rules over a man to his hurt.” The relation of the clauses is mistaken by Jerome, Luther, Hengst., Vaih., Ginsburg, and others, who begin a new clause with עַתָּה: “there is a time,” etc.; and Zöckl., who ventures to interpret עַתָּה וְגַם as expegetical of וְגַם כָּל־מַעַל וְגַם (“every work that is done under the sun”). The clause וְנִתְּוֹן is an adverbial subordinate clause (vid., under 4:2): *et advertendo quidem animum*. עַתָּה is accus. of time, as at Jer. 51:33; cf. Ps. 4:8, the relation of *’eth asher*, ‘like מִקֵּץ שָׁמַיִם, 1:7; 11:3. All that, viz., the wisdom of patient fidelity to duty, the perniciousness of revolutionary selfishness, and the suddenness with which the judgment comes, he has seen (for he observed the actions done under the sun), with his own eyes, at the time when man ruled over man לִפְנֵי עֵינָיו, not: to his own [the ruler’s] injury (Symm., Jerome), but: to the injury (LXX, Theod., τοῦ κακῶσαι αὐτόν, and thus also the Targ. and Syr.) of this second man; for after *’eth asher*, a description and not a judgment was to be expected. The man who rules over man to the hurt of the latter rules as a tyrant; and this whole section, beginning with 8:1, treats of the right wisdom of life at a time of tyrannical government.

It is with the Righteous as with the Wicked, and with the Wicked as with the Righteous,— It is Best to Enjoy Life as Long as God Grants It, 8:10–15

The theme of the following section shows itself by “and then” to be cognate. It is the opposition of the fate of the wicked and of the righteous to the inalienable consciousness of a moral government of the world; this opposition comes forth, under the unhappy tyrannical

government of which the foregoing section treats, as a prominent phenomenon.

Ecclesiastes 8:10. “And then I have seen the wicked buried, and they came to rest; but away from the holy place they had to depart, and were forgotten in the city, such as acted justly: also this is vain.” The double particle בְּכֵן signifies, in such a manner, or under such circumstances; with “I have seen” following, it may introduce an observation coming under that which precedes (בְּכֵן = Mishnic בְּכֵן), or, with the force of the Lat. *inde*, introduce a further observation of that ruler; this temporal signification “then” (= אָז), according to which we have translated, it has in the Targ. (vid., Levy’s *W.B.*). Apparently the observation has two different classes of men in view, and refers to their fate, contradicting, according to appearance, the rectitude of God. Opposite to the רָשָׁע (“the wicked”) stand they who are described as אֲשֶׁר וְגַם: they who have practised what is rightly directed, what stands in a right relation (vid., regarding בֵּן, as noun, under Prov. 11:19), have brought the morally right into practice, i.e., have acted with fidelity and honour (עָשָׂה בֵּן, as at 2 Kings 7:9). Koheleth has seen the wicked buried; רָאָה is followed by the particip. as predic. obj., as is שָׁמַע, 7:21; but קִבְּרוּם is not followed by וּבְאֵים (which, besides not being distinct enough as *part. perfecti*, would be, as at Neh. 13:22, *part. praes.*), but, according to the favourite transition of the particip. into the finite, Gesen. § 134. 2, by וּבְאוּ, not וּבְאוּ; for the disjunctive *Rebîa* has the fuller form with ׀; cf. Isa. 45:20 with Job 17:10, and above, at 2:23. “To enter in” is here, after Isa. 47:2, = to enter into peace, come to rest.

That what follows וְגַם does not relate to the wicked, has been mistaken by the LXX, Aquila, Symm., Theod., and Jerome, who translate by ἐπληθήθησαν, *laudabantur*, and thus read וְשִׁתְּבוּהוּ (the *Hithpa.*, Ps. 106:47, in the pass. sense), a word which is used in the Talm. and Midrash

along with *ישתכחו*. The latter, testified to by the Targ. and Syr., is without doubt the correct reading: the structure of the antithetical parallel members is chiasmic; the naming of the persons in *1a* precedes that which is declared, and in *1a β* it follows it; cf. Ps. 70:5*b*, 75:9*b*. The fut. forms here gain, by the retrospective perfects going before, a past signification. *מִקְדָּשׁ*, “the place of the holy,” is equivalent to *מִקְוֵה* *קְדוֹשׁ*, as also at Lev. 7:6. Ewald understands by it the place of burial: “the upright were driven away (cast out) from the holy place of graves.” Thus e.g., also Zöckl., who renders: but wandered far from the place of the holy ... those who did righteously, i.e., they had to be buried in graves neither holy nor honourable. But this form of expression is not found among the many designations of a burial-place used by the Jews (vid., below, 12:5, and Hamburger’s *Real-Encykl. für Bibel u. Talm.*, article “Grab”). God’s-acre is called the “good place,” but not the “holy place.” The “holy place,” if not Jerusalem itself, which is called by Isaiah II (Is. 48:2), Neh., and Dan., *’ir haqqodesh* (as now *el-kuds*), is the holy ground of the temple of God, the *τόπος ἅγιος* (Matt. 24:15), as Aquila and Symm. translate. If, now, we find *min* connected with the verb *halak*, it is to be presupposed that the *min* designates the point of departure, as also *הַשְּׁלֵךְ* *בְּנֵי*, Isa. 14:19. Thus not: to wander far from the holy place; nor as Hitz., who points *יִהְיֶה לָכֹה*: they pass away (perish) far from the holy place. The subject is the being driven away from the holy place, but not as if *יִהְיֶה לָכֹה* were causative, in the sense of *יוליכו*, and meant *ejiciunt*, with an indef. subj. (Ewald, Heiligst., Elst.),—it is also, 4:15; 11:9, only the intens. of *Kal*,—but *יִהְיֶה לָכֹה* denotes, after Ps. 38:7, Job 30:28, cf. 24:10, the meditative, dull, slow walk of those who are compelled against their will to depart from the place which they love (Ps. 26:8; 84:2ff.). They must go forth (whither, is not said, but probably into a foreign country; cf. Amos 7:17), and only too soon are they forgotten in the city, viz., the holy city; a younger generation knows nothing

more of them, and not even a gravestone brings them back to the memory of their people. Also this is a vanity, like the many others already registered—this, viz., that the wicked while living, and also in their death, possess the sacred native soil; while, on the contrary the upright are constrained to depart from it, and are soon forgotten. Divine rectitude is herein missed. Certainly it exists, and is also recognised, but it does not show itself always when we should expect it, nor so soon as appears to us to be salutary.

Ecclesiastes 8:11. “Because judgment against the work of the wicked man is not speedily executed, for this reason the heart of the children of men is full within them, to this, that they do evil.” The clause with *asher* is connected first with the foregoing *gam-zeh havel*: thus vain, after the nature of a perverted world (*inversus ordo*) events go on, because ... (*asher*, as at 4:3; 6:12*b*; cf. Deut. 3:24); but the following clause with *’al-ken* makes this clause with *asher* reflex. an antecedent of itself (*asher* = *’al-asher*)—originally it is not meant as an antecedent. *פִּתְגָּם* (here to be written after *נְשִׂיא*, with *פִּ* *raph.*, and, besides, also with *נֶ* *raph.*), in the post-exilian books, is the Persian *paigam*, Armen. *patgam*, which is derived from the ancient Pers. *paiti-gama*: “Something that has happened, tidings, news.” The Heb. has adopted the word in the general sense of “sentence;” in the passage before us it signifies the saying or sentence of the judge, as the Pers. word, like the Arab. *nabazn*, is used principally of the sayings of a prophet (who is called *peighâm-bar*). Zirkel regards it as the Greek *φθέγμα*; but thus, also, the words *אֲפִיזוֹן*, *אֲפִיזוֹן* strangely agree in sound with *σμίλη φρεῖον*, without being borrowed from the Greek. The long *a* of the word is, as Elst. shows, 1:20, invariable; also here *פִּתְגָּם* is the constr. To point *פִּתְגָּם*, with Heiligst. and Burg., is thus unwarrantable. It is more remarkable that the word is construed fem. instead of mas. For since *אֲפִי* is construed neither in the bibl. nor in the Mishnic style with

the finite of the verb, נִעְשָׂה is not the 3rd *pret.*, but the participle. It is not, however, necessary, with Hitz., to read נִעְשָׂה. The foreign word, like the (Arab.) *firdans*, παράδεισος, admits of use in the double gend. (Ewald, § 174g); but it is also possible that the fem. נִעְשָׂה is *per. attract.*

occasioned by הִרְעָה, as Kimchi, *Michlol* 10a, supposes (cf. besides, under 10:15). מְעַשָּׂה is const. governed by *phithgam*, and *hara'ah* is thus obj. gen. The LXX, Syr., and Jerome read מְעַשֵׂי, which would be possible only if *phithgam min*—after the analogy of the Heb.-Aram. phrase, *niphra' ('ithpra') min*, to take one's due of any one, i.e., to take vengeance on him, to punish him—could mean the full execution of punishment on any one; but it means here, as Jerome rightly translates, *sententia*; impossible, however, with *me'ose hara'ah*, *sententia contra malos*. Hengst. supposes that not only the traditional text, but also the accentuation, is correct, for he construes: because a sentence (of the heavenly Judge) is not executed, the work of wickedness is haste, i.e., speedy. Thus also Dachselt in the *Biblia accentuata*.

Mercerus, on the contrary, remarks that the accents are not in the first instance marks of interpunction, but of cantillation. In fact, genit. word-connections do not exclude the keeping them asunder by distinctives such as *Pashta* and *Tiphcha*, Isa. 10:2, and also *Zakeph*, as e.g., Esth. 1:4. The LXX well renders: "Therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully persuaded in them to do evil;" for which Jerome, freely, after Symm.: *absque timore ullo filii hominum perpetrant mala*. The heart of one becomes full to do anything, is = it acquires full courage thereto (Luzzatto, § 590: *gli blastò l'animo*); cf. Esth. 7:5: "Where is he who has his heart filled to do?" (thus rightly, Keil), i.e., whom it has encourage to so bold an undertaking. בָּהֶם in itself unnecessarily heightens the expression of the inwardness of the destructive work (vid., *Psychol.* p. 151f.). The sentence of punishment does not take effect *mhera*, hastily (adv. accus. for *bimherah*, 4:12), therefore men are secure, and they give themselves with full, i.e., with

fearless and shameless, boldness to the practice of evil. The author confirms this further, but not without expressing his own conviction that there is a righteous requital which contradicts this appearance.

Ecclesiastes 8:12, 13. "Because a sinner doeth evil an hundred times, and he becometh old therein, although I know that it will go well with them that fear god, that fear before Him: but it will not go well with the wicked, and he shall not live long, like a shadow; because he feareth not before God." Ewald (whom Heiligst., Elst., and Zöckl. follow), as among the ancients, e.g., Mendelssohn, translates v. 12: "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and live long, yet I know," etc. That an antecedent may begin with *asher* is admissible, Lev. 4:22, Deut. 18:22; but in the case lying before us, still less acceptable than at v. 11. For, in the first place, this *asher* of the antecedent cannot mean "although," but only "considering that;" and in places such as 6:3, where this "considering that" may be exchanged with "although," there follows not the part., but the fut. natural to the concessive clause; then, in the second place, by this antecedent rendering of *asher* a closer connection of 12a and 12b is indeed gained, but the mediation of v. 12 and v. 11 is lost; in the third place, כִּי גַם, in the meaning "however" (*gam*, ὅμως, with affirmative *ki*), is not found; not *asher*, but just this *ki gam*, signifies, in the passage before us, as at 4:14, εἰ καί, although,—only a somewhat otherwise applied *gam ki*, Ewald, § 362b, as כִּי עַל־כֵּן is a somewhat otherwise applied כִּי עַל־כֵּן. Rightly, Hitzig: "In 12a, 11a is again resumed, and it is explained how tardy justice has such a consequence." The sinner is thereby encouraged in sinning, because he does evil, and always again evil, and yet enjoys himself in all the pleasures of long life. Regarding חָטָא for חָטָא, vid., above, p. 641, אַחַת is = מֵאָה פְּעָמִים, an hundred times, as אַחַת, Job 40:5, is = פַּעַם אַחַת; Hengst. and others, inexactly: an hundredfold, which would have required the word מֵאָה; and falsely, Ginsburg,

with the Targ.: an hundred years, which would have required *מֵאָה*, *scil.* שָׁנָה, Gen. 17:17. This *centies* (Jerome) is, like *מֵאָה*, *scil.* בָּנִים, 6:3, a round number for a great many, as at Prov. 17:10, and frequently in the Talm. and Midrash, e.g., *Wajikra rabba*, c. 27: “an hundred deeply-breathed sighs (*מֵאָה פְּעִיּוֹת*) the mother gave forth.” The meaning of *לֹא וּמֵעַרְיָד לֹא* is in general clear: he becomes therein old. Jerome, improbable: *et per patientiam sustentatur*, as Mendelssohn: he experiences forbearance, for they supply *אִפּוֹ* (Isa. 48:9), and make God the subject. *לֹא* is in any case the so-called *dat. ethic.*; and the only question is, whether the doing of evil has to be taken from *עָשָׂה רָע*, as obj. to *וּמֵאָה*: he practises it to him long, or whether, which is more probable, *יָמִים* is to be supplied after 13*a*, so that *הָאֵרִיד* signifies to live long, as at Prov. 28:2, to last long; the *dat. ethic.* gives the idea of the feeling of contentment connected with long life: he thereupon sins wantonly, and becomes old in it in good health.

That is the actual state of the case, which the author cannot conceal from himself; although, on the other hand, as by way of limitation he adds *ki ... ani*, he well knows that there is a moral government of the world, and that this must finally prevail. We may not translate: that it should go well, but rather: that it must go well; but there is no reason not to interpret the fut. as a pure indic.: that it shall go well, viz., finally,—it is a postulate of his consciousness which the author here expresses; that which exists in appearance contradicts this consciousness, which, however, in spite of this, asserts itself. That to *לִי הָאֵלֹהִים* the clause *אֲשֶׁר מִלִּי*, explaining *idem per idem*, is added, has certainly its reason in this, that at the time of the author the name “fearers of God” [*Gottesfürchtige*] had come into use. “The fearers of God, who fear before (*מִלְּפָנָי*, as at 3:14) Him,” are such as are in reality what they are called.

In v. 13, Hitzig, followed by Elster, Burg., and Zöckl., places the division at *יָמִים*: like the shadow is he who fears not before God. Nothing can in point of syntax be said against this (cf. 1 Chron. 29:15), although *בְּצֵל אֲשֶׁר*, “like the shadow is he who,” is in point of style awkward. But that the author did not use so rude a style is manifest from 6:12, according to which *בְּצֵל* is rightly referred to *יָמִים ... וְלֹא*. Is then the shadow, asks Hitzig, because it does not “prolong its days,” therefore *יָמִים קָצֵר*? How subtle and literal is this use of *יָמִים*! Certainly the shadow survives not a day; but for that very reason it is short-lived, it may even indeed be called *קָצֵר יָמִים*, because it has not existence for a single day. In general, *qtsel*, ὥς σκιά, is applicable to the life of all men, Ps. 144:4, Wisd. 2:5, etc. It is true of the wicked, if we keep in view the righteous divine requital, especially that he is short-lived like the shadow, “because he has no fear before God,” and that in consequence of this want of fear his life is shortened by his sin inflicting its own punishment, and by the act of God. *Asher*, 13*b*, as at 11*a*, 12*a*, is the relative conj. Also in v. 14, *אֲשֶׁר* (*ש*) as a pronoun, and *אֲשֶׁר* (*ש*) as a conj., are mixed together. After the author has declared the reality of a moral government of the world as an inalienable fact of human consciousness, and particularly of his own consciousness, he places over against this fact of consciousness the actual state of things partly at least contradicting it.

Ecclesiastes 8:14. “There is a vanity which is done on the earth; that there be just men, to whom it happeneth according to the conduct of the wicked; and that there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the conduct of the righteous—I said, that also this is vain.” The limiting clause with *ki gam*, 12*b*, 13, is subordinated to the observation specified in vv. 10–12*a*, and the confirmation of it is continued here in v. 14. Regarding *הִגִּיעַ*, to happen, vid., above, p. 639, under *נִגַּע*. Jerome translates *כִּם*

כַּסְּ הַיָּדָיִם by *quasi opera egerint impiorum*, and הַיָּדָיִם by *quasi justorum facta habeant; instar operis* ... would be better, such as is conformable to the mode of acting of the one and of the other; for יָד is in the Semitic style of speech a *nomen*, which annexes to itself the word that follows it in the genitive, and runs through all the relations of case. This contradictory distribution of destiny deceives, misleads, and causes to err; it belongs to the illusory shadowy side of this present life, it is a *hevel*. The concluding clause of this verse: "I said, that also this is vain," begins to draw the *facit* from the observation, and is continued in the verse following.

Ecclesiastes 8:15. "And I commended joy, that there is nothing better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and enjoy himself; and that this accompanies him in his labour throughout all the days of his life, which God hath given him under the sun." We already read the *ultimatum*, 15a, in a similar form at 2:24; 3:12, 22; cf. 5:17. With הוּא יָלֵךְ either begins a new clause, and the fut. is then jussive: "let this accompany him," or it is subordinate to the foregoing infinitives, and the fut. is then subjunctive: *et ut id eum comitetur*. The LXX and other Greeks translate less appropriately *καὶ αὐτὸς συμπεροσέσται αὐτῷ*. Thus also Ewald, Hengst., Zöckl., and others: and this clings to him, which, however, would rather be expressed by *וְהוּא יִתְרוֹן לוֹ* or *וְהוּא חֶלְקוֹ*. The verb לִוּהוּ (R. לוֹ, to twist, to bend) does not mean to cling to = to remain, but to adhere to, to follow, to accompany; cf. under Gen. 18:16. The possibility of the meaning, "to accompany," for the *Kal*, is supported by the derivatives לְוִיָּה and לְוִיָּה (particularly לְוִיָּת הַמַּתִּים, convoy of the dead); the verb, however, in this signification extra-bibl. is found only in *Pih.* and *Hiph.*

The Fruitlessness of All Philosophizing, 8:16, 17

Like the distributions of destiny, so also labour and toil here below appear to the author to be

on all sides an inextricable series of mysteries. Far from drawing atheistical conclusions therefrom, he sees in all that is done, viewed in its last causality, the work of God, i.e., the carrying out into execution of a divine law, the accomplishment of a divine plan. but this work of God, in spite of all his earnest endeavours, remains for man a subject of research for the future. Treating of this inexplicable difficulty, the words here used by the author himself are also hard to be understood.

Ecclesiastes 8:16, 17. "When I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to view the business which is done on the earth (for neither day nor night doth he see sleep with his eyes): then have I seen all the work of God, that a man is unable to find out the work which is done under the sun: therefore that a man wearieth himself to seek out, and yet findeth not; and although a wise man taketh in hand to know,— he is unable to find." A long period without a premeditated plan has here formed itself under the hand of the author. As it lies before us, it is halved by the *vav* in *vraithi* ("then I have seen"); the principal clause, introduced by "when I gave," can nowhere otherwise begin than here; but it is not indicated by the syntactical structure. Yet in Chron. and Neh. apodoses of כַּאֲשֶׁר begin with the second consec. modus, e.g., 1 Chron. 17:1, Neh. 4:1, and frequently; but the author here uses this modus only rarely, and not (*vid.*, 4:1, 7) as a sign of an apodosis.

We consider, first, the protasis, with the parenthesis in which it terminates. The phrase לְנַתֵּן אֶת־הַלֵּב לְ, to direct the heart, to give attention and effort toward something, we have now frequently met with from 1:13 down. The aim is here twofold: (1) "to know wisdom" (cf. 1:17), i.e., to gain the knowledge of that which is wisdom, and which is to be regarded as wisdom, viz., solid knowledge regarding the essence, causes, and objects of things; (2) by such knowledge about that which wisdom is in itself "to see earthly labour," and—this arises from the combination of the two resolutions—to comprehend this labour in accordance with the claims of true wisdom from the point of

view of its last ground and aim. Regarding *'inyan*, vid., under 3:10. "On the earth" and "under the sun" are parallel designations of this world.

With *כי גם* begins a parenthetical clause. *Ki* may also, it is true, be rendered as at 17a: the labour on the earth, that he, etc. (Zöckl.); but this restlessness, almost renouncing sleep, is thereby pressed too much into the foreground as the special obj. of the *ruth* (therefore Ginsburg introduces "how that"); thus better to render this clause with *ki gam*, as establishing the fact that there is *'inyan*, self-tormenting, restless labour on the earth. Thus also *אינינו* is easier explained, which scarcely goes back to *läadam*, 15a (Hitz.), but shows that the author, by *'inyan*, has specially men in view. *גם ... ובל* is = *גם ב* *גם בל*: as well by day as by night, with the negat. following (cf. Num. 23:25; Isa. 48:8): neither by day nor by night; not only by day, but also in the night, not. "To see sleep" is a phrase occurring only here; cf. Terence, *Heautontim.* iii. 1. 82, *Somnum hercle ego hac nocte oculis non vidi meis*, for which we use the expression: "In this whole night my eyes have seen no sleep." The not wishing to sleep, and not being able to sleep, is such an hyperbole, carrying its limitation in itself, as is found in Cicero (*ad Famil.* vii. 30): *Fuit mirifica vigilantia, qui toto suo consulatu somnum non vedit.*

With *ור*, "Then I have seen," begins the apodosis: *vidi totum Dei opus non posse hominem assequi*. As at 2:24b, the author places the obj. in the foreground, and lets the pred. with *ki* follow (for other examples of this so-called antiposis, vid., under Gen. 1:4). He sees in the labour here below one side of God's work carrying itself forward amid this restless confusion, and sets forth this work of God, as at 3:11 (but where the connection of the thoughts is different), as an object of knowledge remaining beyond the reach of man. He cannot come to it, or, as *מצא* properly means, he reaches not to it, therefore "that a man wearies himself to seek, and yet finds not," i.e., that the search on the part of a man with all his

endeavours comes not to its aim. *בכל אשר* [Ewald's emendation, instead of the words of the text before us]: for all this, that *quantumcunque* (Ewald, § 362c), which seems to have been approved of by the LXX, Syr., and Jerome, is rightly rejected by Hitzig; *bshel asher* is Heb., exactly equivalent to Aram. *בְּדִיל*, e.g., Gen. 6:3; and is rightly glossed by Rashi, Kimchi, *Michlol* 47b, by *בְּשָׁבִיל שְׁ* and *בְּעֵבוֹר שְׁ*. The accent dividing the verse stands on *yimtsa*, for to this word extends the first half of the apodosis, with *vgam* begins the second. *Gam im* is = *εἰ καί*, as *gam ki* is = *ἐὰν καί*. *יאמר* is to be understood after *אח* *אם*, 7:23: also if (although) the wise man resolves to know, he cannot reach that which is to be known. The characteristic mark of the wise man is thus not so much the possession as the striving after it. He strives after knowledge, but the highest problems remain unsolved by him, and his ideal of knowledge unrealized.

Ecclesiastes 9

The Power of Fate, and the Best Possible Thing for Man in His Want of Freedom, 9:1–12

He cannot attain unto it, for to the thoughts as well as to the acts of man God has put a limit.

Ecclesiastes 9:1. "For all this I brought to my consciousness, and all this I sought to make clear to me, that the righteous, and the wise, and their deeds, are in God's hands: neither love nor hatred stands in the knowledge of man, all lies before them." With *ki* follows the verification of what is said in 8:17b, "is unable to find out," from the fact of men, even the best and the wisest of men, being on all sides conditioned. This conditioning is a fact which he layeth to his heart (Ecclesiastes 7:2), or (since he here presents himself less as a feeling than as a thinking man, and the heart as reflecting) which he has brought to his consciousness, and which he has sought to bring out into clearness. *וְלָבוֹר* has here not the force of an *inf. absol.*, so that it subordinates itself in an adverbial manner (*et ventilando*

quidem)—for it nowhere stands in the same rank with the *inf. absol.*; but the inf. with לָ (לֵ) has the force of an intentional (with a tendency) fut., since the governing הִיִּיתִי, as at 3:15a, הִיָּה, and at Hab. 1:17b, יִהְיֶה, is to be supplied (vid., comm. on these passages, and under Isa. 44:14): *operam dedi ut ventilarem (excuterem)*, or shorter: *ventilaturus fui*. Regarding the form לְבוֹר, which is metapl. for לְבַר, and the double idea of sifting (particularly winnowing, *ventilare*) of the R. בַּר, vid., under 3:18. In the post-bibl. Heb. the words לְהַעֲמִיד עַל בּוֹרִי would denote the very same as is here expressed by the brief significant word לְבוֹר; a matter in the clearness of its actual condition is called דְּבַר עַל בּוֹרִי (from בָּרִי, after the form הָלִי, purity, vid., Buxtorf's *Lex. Talm.* col. 366). The LXX and Syr. have read וּלְבִי רָאָה instead of וּלְבוֹר, apparently because they could not see their way with it: "And my heart has seen all this." The expression "all this" refers both times to what follows; *asher* is, as at 8:12, relat. conj., in the sense of ὅτι, *quod*, and introduces, as at 7:29, cf. 8:14, the unfolding of the זָה,—an unfolding, viz., of the conditioning of man, which 8:17 declared on one side of it, and whose further verification is here placed in view with *ki*, 1a. The righteous, and the wise, and their doings, are in God's hand, i.e., power (Ps. 31:16; Prov. 21:1; Job 12:10, etc.); as well their persons as their actions, in respect of their last cause, are conditioned by God, the Governor of the world and the Former of history; also the righteous and the wise learn to feel this dependence, not only in their being and in what befalls them, but also in their conduct; also this is not fully attained, לֹא יָדָם, they are also therein not sufficient of themselves. Regarding *'avadēhēm*, corresponding to the Aram. *'ovadēhon*, vid., *'avad*, p. 639. The expression now following cannot mean that man does not know whether he will experience the love or hatred of God, i.e.,

providences of a happy nature proceeding from the love of God, or of an unhappy nature proceeding from the hatred of God (J. D. Michaelis, Knobel, Vaih., Hengst., Zöckl.), for אֶהְבֶּה and שָׂן are too general for this,—man is thus, as the expression denotes, not the obj., but the subj. to both. Rightly, Hitz., as also Ewald: "Since man has not his actions in his own power, he knows not whether he will love or hate." Certainly this sounds deterministic; but is it not true that personal sympathies and antipathies, from which love and hatred unfold themselves, come within the sphere of man, not only as to their objects, in consequence of the divine arrangement, but also in themselves anticipate the knowledge and the will of man? and is it less true that the love which he now cherishes toward another man changes itself, without his previous knowledge, by means of unexpected causes, into hatred, and, on the other hand, the hatred into love? Neither love nor hatred is the product of a man's self-determination; but self-determination, and with it the function of freedom, begins for the first time over against those already present, in their beginnings. In הַכֹּל לְפָנָי, "by all that is before him," that is brought to a general expression, in which לְפָנָי has not the ethical meaning proceeding from the local: before them, *prae = penes eos* (vid., Song, under 8:12a), but the purely local meaning, and referred to time: love, hatred, and generally all things, stand before man; God causes them to meet him (cf. the use of הַקֶּרֶה); they belong to the future, which is beyond his power. Thus the Targ., Symm., and most modern interpreters; on the contrary, Luther: "neither the love nor the hatred of any one which he has for himself," which is, linguistically, purely impossible; Kleinert: "Neither the love nor the hatred of things does man see through, nor anything else which is before his eyes," for which we ought at least to have had the words אֲשֶׁר לְפָנָי; and Tyler: "Men discern neither love nor hatred in all that is before them," as if the text were בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר. The future can, it is true, be designated by

אֶהְרִית, and the past by לְפָנַי, but according to the most natural way of representation (vid., Orelli's *Synon. der Zeit*, p. 14) the future is that which lies before a man, and the past that which is behind him. The question is of importance, which of the two words הַכֹּל לִי has the accent. If the accent be on לִי, then the meaning is, that all lies before men deprived of their freedom; if the accent be on הַכֹּל, then the meaning is, that all things, events of all kinds, lie before them, and that God determines which shall happen to them. The latter is more accordant with the order of words lying before us, and shows itself to be that which is intended by the further progress of the thoughts. Every possible thing may befall a man—what actually meets him is the determination and providence of God. The determination is not according to the moral condition of a man, so that the one can guide to no certain conclusion as to the other.

Ecclesiastes 9:2. "All is the same which comes to all: one event happens to the righteous and the wicked, to the good and the pure and the impure; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as with the good, so is it with the sinner; with him that sweareth, as with him that feareth an oath." Hitzig translates: "All are alike, one fate comes on all," adding the remark, that to make מקרה אחד at the same time pred. to הַכֹּל and subm. to באחר לכל was, for the punctator, too much. This translation is indeed in matter, as well as in point of syntax, difficult to be comprehended. Rather, with Ewald, translate: All is as if all had one fate (death) but why then this useless *hevel haasher*, only darkening the thought? But certainly, since in הַכֹּל the past is again resumed, it is to be supposed that it does not mean personally, *omnes*, but neut., *omnia*; and לְכֹל, on the contrary, manifestly refers (as at 10; 3) to persons. Herein agreeing with Ewald, and, besides, with Knobel, Zöckl., and others, we accept the interpunction as it lies before us. The apparently meaningless clause, *omnia sicut*

omnibus, gives, if we separate *sicut* into *sic* and *ut*, the brief but pregnant thought: All is (thus) as it happens to all, i.e., there is no distinction of their experiences nor of their persons; all of every sort happens in the same way to all men of every sort. The thought, written in cyphers in this manner, is then illustrated; the *lameds* following leave no doubt as to the meaning of לְכֹל. Men are classified according to their different kinds. The good and the pure stand opposite the impure; טָמֵא is thus the defiled, Hos. 5:3, cf. Ezek. 36:25, in body and soul. That the author has here in his mind the precepts of the law regarding the pure and the impure, is to be concluded from the following contrast: he who offers sacrifice, and he who does not offer sacrifice, i.e., he who not only does not bring free-will offerings, but not even the sacrifices that are obligatory. Finally, he who swears, and he who is afraid of an oath, are distinguished. Thus, Zech. 5:3, he who swears stands along with him who steals. In itself, certainly, swearing an oath is not a sin; in certain circumstances (vid., 8:2) it is a necessary solemn act (Isa. 65:16). But here, in the passage from Zechariah, swearing of an unrighteous kind is meant, i.e., wanton swearing, a calling upon God when it is not necessary, and, it may be, even to confirm an untruth, Ex. 20:7. Compare Matt. 5:34. The order of the words שָׁבִי יָרָא (cf. as to the expression, the Mishnic יָרָא חֲטָא) is as at Nah. 3:1; Isa. 22:2; cf. above, 5:8b. One event befalls all these men of different characters, by which here not death exclusively is meant (as at 3:19; 2:14), but this only chiefly as the same end of these experiences which are not determined according to the moral condition of men. In the expression of the equality, there is an example of stylistic refinement in a threefold change; כָּטוֹב כָּחַ denotes that the experience of the good is the experience of the sinner, and may be translated, "wie der Gute so der Sünder" [as the good, so the sinner], as well as "so der Gute wie der Sünder" [so the good as the sinner] (cf. Köhler, under Hag. 2:3). This sameness of fate, in which we

perceive the want of the inter-connection of the physical and moral order of the world, is in itself and in its influence an evil matter.

Ecclesiastes 9:3. “This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that one event happeneth to all: and also the heart of the children of men is full of evil; and madness possesseth their heart during their life, and after it they go to the dead.” As *זה*, 1*a*, points to the *asher* following, in which it unfolds itself, so here to the *ki* following. We do not translate: This is the worst thing (Jerome: *hoc est pessimum*), which, after Josh. 14:15, Judg. 6:15, Song 1:8, would have required the words *הָרַע בְּכָל*—the author does not designate the equality of fate as the greatest evil, but as an evil mixed with all earthly events. It is an evil in itself, as being a contradiction to the moral order of the world; and it is such also on account of its demoralizing influences. The author here repeats what he had already, 8:11, said in a more special reference, that because evil is not in this world visibly punished, men become confident and bold in sinning. *Vgam* (referable to the whole clause, at the beginning of which it is placed) stands beside *zeh ra'*, connecting with that which is evil in itself its evil influences. *מְלֹא* might be an adj., for this (only once, Jer. 6:11), like the verb, is connected with the accus., *e ...* Deut. 33:23. But, since not a statement but a *factum* had to be uttered, it is finite, as at 8:11. Thus Jerome, after Symm.: *sed et cor filiorum hominum repletur malitia et procacitate juxta cor eorum in vita sua*. Keeping out of view the false *sed*, this translation corresponds to the accenting which gives the conjunctive *Kadma* to *רַע*. But without doubt an independent substantival clause begins with *וְהוֹי*: and madness is in their heart (vid., 1:17) their life long; for, without taking heed to God's will and to what is pleasing to God, or seeking after instruction, they think only of the satisfaction of their inclinations and lusts.

“And after that they go to the dead”—they who had so given themselves up to evil, and revelled in fleshly lusts with security, go the way of all flesh, as do the righteous, and the wise, and just,

because they know that they go beyond all restraining bounds. Most modern interpreters (Hitz., Ew., etc.) render *aharav*, after Jer. 51:46, adverbially, with the suffix understood neut.: afterwards (Jerome, *post haec*). but at 3:22; 6:12; 7:14, the suffix refers to man: after him, him who liveth here = after he has laid down his life. Why should it not be thus understood also here? It is true *בְּחַיָּו* precedes it; but in the reverse say, sing. and plur. also interchange in v. 1; cf. 3:12. Rightly the Targ., as with Kleinert and others, we also explain: after their (his) lifetime. A man's life finally falls into the past, it lies behind him, and he goes forth to the dead; and along with self-consciousness, all the pleasures and joy of life at the same time come to an end.

Ecclesiastes 9:4. “For (to him) who shall be always joined to all the living, there is hope: for even a living dog is better than a dead lion.” The interrog. *מִי אֲשֶׁר*, *quis est qui*, acquires the force of a relative, *quisquis* (*quicunque*), and may be interpreted, Ex. 32:33, 2 Sam. 20:12, just as here (cf. the simple *mi*, 5:9), in both ways; particularly the latter passage (2 Sam. 20:11) is also analogous to the one before us in the formation of the apodosis. The *Chethib* *יבחר* does not admit of any tenable meaning. In conformity with the *usus loq.*, Elster reads *מִי אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר*, “who has a choice?” But this rendering has no connection with what follows; the sequence of thoughts fails. Most interpreters, in opposition to the *usus loq.*, by pointing *יִבְחַר* or *יִבְחַר*, render: Who is (more correctly: will be) excepted? or also: Who is it that is to be preferred (the living or the dead)? The verb *בָּחַר* signifies to choose, to select; and the choice may be connected with an exception, a preference; but in itself the verb means neither *excipere* nor *praeferre*. All the old translators, with right, follow the *Keri*, and the Syr. renders it correctly, word for word: to every one who is joined (*שוֹתֵף*, Aram. = Heb. *חִבֵּר*) to all the living there is hope; and this translation is more probable than that on which

Symm. (“who shall always continue to live?”) and Jerome (*nemo est qui semper vivat et qui hujus rei habeat fiduciam*) proceed: Who is he that is joined to the whole? i.e., to the absolute life; or as Hitzig: Who is he who would join himself to all the living (like the saying, “The everlasting Jew”)? The expression *יש בְּטָ* does not connect itself so easily and directly with these two latter renderings as with that we have adopted, in which, as also in the other two, a different accentuation of the half-verse is to be adopted as follows:

כִּי מִי אֲשֶׁר יִחְבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-הַחַיִּים יֵשׁ בְּטָחוֹן

The accentuation lying before us in the text, which gives a great disjunctive to *יבחר* as well as to *הח*, appears to warrant the *Chethîb* (cf. Hitzig under Ezek. 22:24), by which it is possible to interpret *מי ... יב* as in itself an interrog. clause. The *Kerî* *יח* does not admit of this, for Dachselt’s *quis associabit se* (sc., *mortuus? = nemo socius mortuorum fieri vult*) is a linguistic impossibility; the reflex may be used for the pass., but not the pass. for the reflex., which is also an argument against Ewald’s translation: Who is joined to the living has hope. Also the Targ. and Rashi, although explaining according to the Midrash, cannot forbear connecting *אל כל-יחה* with *יח*, and thus dividing the verse at *יחה* instead of at *יח*. It is not, however, to be supposed that the accentuation refers to the *Chethîb*; it proceeds on some interpretation, contrary to the connection, such as this: he who is received into God’s fellowship has to hope for the full life (in eternity). The true meaning, according to the connection, is this: that whoever (*quicumque*) is only always joined (whether by birth or the preservation of life) to all the living, i.e., to living beings, be they who they may, has full confidence, hope, and joy; for in respect to a living dog, this is even better than a dead lion. Symmachus translates: *κυνὶ ζῶντι βέλτιόν ἐστιν ἢ λέοντι τεθνηκότι*, which Rosenm., Herzf., and Grätz approve of. But apart from the obliquity of the comparison, that with a living dog it is

better than with a dead lion, since with the latter is neither good nor evil (vid., however, 6:5b), for such a meaning the words ought to have been: *chělv ħî tov lo min ha’aryēh hammeth*.

As the verifying clause stands before us, it is connected not with *יש בְּטָ*, but with *אֶל-כָּל-הַ*, of that which is to be verified; the *ל* gives emphatic prominence (Ewald, § 310b) to the subject, to which the expression refers as at Ps. 89:19, 2 Chron. 7:21 (cf. Jer. 18:16), Isa. 32:1: A living dog is better than a dead lion, i.e., it is better to be a dog which lives, than that lion which is dead. The dog, which occurs in the Holy Scriptures only in relation to a shepherd’s dog (Job 30:1), and as for the rest, appears as a voracious filthy beast, roaming about without a master, is the proverbial emblem of that which is common, or low, or contemptible, 1 Sam. 17:43; cf. “dog’s head,” 2 Sam. 3:8; “dead dog,” 1 Sam. 24:15; 2 Sam. 9:8; 16:9. The lion, on the other hand, is the king, or, as Agur (Prov. 30:30) calls it, the hero among beasts. But if it be dead, then all is over with its dignity and its strength; the existence of a living dog is to be preferred to that of the dead lion. The art. in *הַאֲ* is not that denoting species (Dale), which is excluded by *hammēth*, but it points to the carcase of a lion which is present. The author, who elsewhere prefers death and nonentity to life, 4:2f., 7:1, appears to have fallen into contradiction with himself; but there he views life pessimistically in its, for the most part, unhappy experiences, while here he regards it in itself as a good affording the possibility of enjoyment. It lies, however, in the nature of his standpoint that he should not be able to find the right medium between the sorrow of the world and the pleasure of life. Although postulating a retribution in eternity, yet in his thoughts about the future he does not rise above the comfortless idea of Hades.

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6. He sarcastically verifies his comparison in favour of a living dog. “For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, and have no more a reward; for their memory is forgotten. Their love, as

well as their hatred and their envy, has long ago perished, and they have part no more for ever in all that is done under the sun." The description of the condition of death begins sarcastically and then becomes elegiac. "They have no reward further," viz., in this upper world, since there it is only too soon forgotten that they once existed, and that they did anything worthy of being remembered; Koheleth might here indeed, with his view shrouded in dark clouds, even suppose that God also forgot them, Job 14:13. The suff. of אָהָבָה, etc., present themselves was subjective, and there is no reason, with Knobel and Ginsburg, to render them objectively: not merely the objects of their love, and hatred, and envy, are lost to them, but these their affections and strivings themselves have ceased (Rosenm., Hitzig, Zöckl., and others), they lie (*Kvar 'avadah*) far behind them as absolutely gone; for the dead have no part more in the history which is unfolding itself amid the light of the upper world, and they can have no more any part therein, for the dead as not living are not only without knowledge, but also without feeling and desire. The representation of the state after death is here more comfortless than anywhere else. For elsewhere we read that those who have been living here spend in *Sheol*, i.e., in the deep (R. לַשׁ, to be loose, to hang down, to go downwards) realm of the dead, as *rphäim* (Isa. 14:9, etc.), lying beneath the upper world, far from the love and the praise of God (Ps. 6:3; 30:10), a prospectless (Job 7:7f., 14:6–12; Ps. 88:11–13), dark, shadowy existence; the soul in Hades, though neither annihilated nor sleeping, finds itself in a state of death no less than does the body in the grave. But here the state of death is not even set forth over against the idea of the dissolution of life, the complete annihilation of individuality, much less that a retribution in eternity, i.e., a retribution executed, if not here, yet at some time, postulated elsewhere by the author, throws a ray of light into the night of death. The apocryphal book of the Wisdom of Solomon, which distinguishes between a state of

blessedness and a state of misery measured out to men in the future following death, has in this surpassed the canonical Book of Koheleth. In vain do the Targ., Midrash, and the older Christian interpreters refer that which is said to the wicked dead; others regard Koheleth as introducing here the discourse of atheists (e.g., Oetinger), and interpret, under the influence of monstrous self-deception, v. 7 as the voice of the spirit (Hengst.) opposing the voice of the flesh. But that which Koheleth expresses here only in a particularly rugged way is the view of Hades predominating in the O.T. It is the consequence of viewing death from the side of its anger. Revelation intentionally permits this manner of viewing it to remain; but from premises which the revelation sets forth, the religious consciousness in the course of time draws always more decidedly the conclusion, that the man who is united to God will fully reach through death that which since the entrance of sin into the world cannot be reached without the loss of this present life, i.e., without death, viz., a more perfect life in fellowship with God. Yet the confusion of the O.T. representation of Hades remains; in the Book of Sirach it also still throws its deep shadows (Sir. 17:22f.) into the contemplation of the future; for the first time the N.T. solution actually removes the confusion, and turns the scale in favour of the view of death on its side of light. In this history of the ideas of eternity moving forward amid many fluctuations to the N.T. goal, a significant place belongs to the Book of Koheleth; certainly the Christian interpreter ought not to have an interest in explaining away and concealing the imperfections of knowledge which made it impossible for the author spiritually to rise above his pessimism. He does not rise, in contrast to his pessimism, above an eudaemonism which is earthly, which, without knowing of a future life (not like the modern pessimism, without *wishing to know* of a future life), recommends a pleasant enjoyment of the present life, so far as that is morally allowable:

Ecclesiastes 9:7–10. "Go, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for

long ago hath God accepted thy work. Let thy garments be always white; and let not oil be wanting to thy head. Enjoy life with a wife whom thou lovest through all the days of thy vain life, which He hath given thee under the sun—through all thy vain days: for that is thy portion in life, and in thy labour wherewith thou weariest thyself under the sun. All that thy hand may find to do with thy might, that do; for there is not work, and calculation, and knowledge, and wisdom, in the under world, whither thou shalt go.” Hengstenberg perceives here the counterpart of the spirit; on the contrary, Oetinger, Mendelssohn, and others, discover also here, and here for the first time rightly, the utterance of an epicurean thought. But, in fact, this $\text{וְהָיָה לְךָ חֵן בְּעֵינֵי הָאֱלֹהִים}$ down to $\text{וְהָיָה לְךָ חֵן בְּעֵינֵי הָאֱלֹהִים}$ is the most distinct personal utterance of the author, his *ceterum censeo* which pervades the whole book, and here forms a particularly copious conclusion of a long series of thoughts. We recapitulate this series of thoughts: One fate, at last the same final event, happens to all men, without making any distinction according to their moral condition,—an evil matter, so much the more evil, as it encourages to wickedness and light-mindedness; the way of man, without exception, leads to the dead, and all further prospect is cut off; for only he who belongs to the class of living beings has a joyful spirit, has a spirit of enterprise: even the lowest being, if it live, stands higher in worth, and is better, than the highest if it be dead; for death is the end of all knowledge and feeling, the being cut off from the living under the sun. From this, that there is only one life, one life on this side of eternity, he deduces the exhortation to enjoy the one as much as possible; God Himself, to whom we owe it, will have it so that we enjoy it, within the moral limits prescribed by Himself indeed, for this limitation is certainly given with His approbation. Incorrectly, the Targ., Rashi, Hengst. Ginsb., and Zöckl. explain: For thy moral conduct and effort have pleased Him long ago—the person addressed is some one, not a definite person, who could be thus set forth as such a witness to be commended. Rather with Grotius and others: *Quia Deus favet laboribus*

tuis h. e. eos ita prosperavit, ut cuncta quae vitam delectant abunde tibi suppetant. The thought is wholly in the spirit of the Book of Koheleth; for the fruit of labour and the enjoyment of this fruit of labour, as at 2:24; 3:13, etc., is a gift from above; and besides, this may be said to the person addressed, since 7a presupposes that he has at his disposal heart-strengthening bread and heart-refreshing wine. But in these two explanations the meaning of כִּבְר is not comprehended. It was left untranslated by the old translators, from their not understanding it. Rightly, Aben Ezra: For God wills that thou shouldst thus to [indulge in these enjoyments]; more correctly, Hitzig: Long ago God has beforehand permitted this thy conduct, so that thou hast no room for scruples about it. How significant כִּבְר is for the thought, is indicated by the accentuation which gives to it *Zakef*: from aforesaid God has impressed the seal of His approbation on this thy eating with joy, this thy drinking with a merry heart.—The assigning of the reason gives courage to the enjoyment, but at the same time gives to it a consecration; for it is the will of God that we should enjoy life, thus it is self-evident that we have to enjoy it as He wills it to be enjoyed.

Ecclesiastes 9:8. The white garments, לְבָנִים , are in contrast to the black robes of mourning, and thus are an expression of festal joy, of a happy mood; black and white are, according to the ancients, colour-symbols, the colours respectively of sorrow and joy, to which light and darkness correspond. Fragrant oil is also, according to Prov. 27:9, one of the heart-refreshing things. Sorrow and anointing exclude one another, 2 Sam. 14:2; joy and oil stand in closest mutual relation, Ps. 45:8, Isa. 61:3; oil which smooths the hair and makes the face shine (vid., under Ps. 104:15). This oil ought not to be wanting to the head, and thus the perpetuity of a happy life should suffer no interruption.

Ecclesiastes 9:9. In 9a most translators render: Enjoy life with the wife whom thou lovest; but the author purposely does not use

the word **הַאֲשָׁה**, but **אִשָּׁה**; and also that he uses **חַיִּים**, and not **הַחַיִּים**, is not without significance. He means: Bring into experience what life, what happiness, is (cf. the indetermin. ideas, Ps. 34:13) with a wife whom thou hast loved (Jerome: *quaecunque tibi placuerit feminarum*), in which there lies indirectly the call to choose such an one; whereby the pessimistic criticism of the female sex, 7:26–28, so far as the author is concerned, falls into the background, since eudaemonism, the other side of his view of the world, predominates. The accus. designation of time, “through all the days of the life of thy vanity (i.e., of thy transient vain life),” is like 6:12, cf. 7:15. It is repeated in “all the days of thy vanity;” the repetition is heavy and unnecessary (therefore omitted by the LXX, Targ., and Syr.); probably like **וְהַדֶּרֶךְ**, Ps. 45:5, a *ditto*; Hitzig, however, finds also here great emphasis. The relative clause standing after the first designation of time refers to “the days which He (**הַאֱלֹהִים**, 7*b*) has granted under the sun.” *Hu* in 9*b* refers attractively to **הַלֵּקֶדָה** (Jerome: *haec est enim pars*), as at 3:22; 5:17, cf. 7:2; **הַיָּאֵה** of the Babyl. is therefore to be rejected; this enjoyment, particularly of marriage joys, is thy part in life, and in thy work which thou accomplishest under the sun, i.e., the real portion of gain allotted to thee which thou mayest and oughtest to enjoy here below.

Ecclesiastes 9:10. The author, however, recommends no continual *dolce far niente*, no idle, useless sluggard-life devoted to pleasure, but he gives to his exhortation to joy the converse side: “All that thy hand may reach (i.e., what thou canst accomplish and is possible to thee, 1 Sam. 10:7; Lev. 12:8) to accomplish it with thy might, that do.” The accentuation is ingenious. If the author meant: That do with all might (Jerome: *instanter operare*), then he would have said *bchol-kohhacha* (Gen. 31:6). As the words lie before us, they call on him who is addressed to come not short in his work of any possibility according to the measure of his strength, thus to a work straining his capacity to the uttermost. The reason for the call, 10*b*,

turns back to the clause from which it was inferred: in Hades, whither thou must go (*iturus es*), there is no work, and reckoning (vid., 7:25), and knowledge (**וְדַעַתָּה**), and no wisdom. Practice and theory have then an end. Thus: Enjoy, but not without working, ere the night cometh when no man can work. Thus spake Jesus (John 9:4), but in a different sense indeed from Koheleth. The night which He meant is the termination of this present life, which for Him, as for every man, has its particular work, which is either accomplished within the limits of this life, or is not accomplished at all.

The Incalculableness of the Issues and of the Duration of Life, 9:11, 12

Another reflection, so far not without connection in the foregoing, as the fact of experience, that ability is yet no security for the issue aimed at and merited, is chiefly referred to wisdom:

Ecclesiastes 9:11. “Further, I came to see under the sun, that the race belongs not to the swift, and the war not to the heroes, and also not bread to the wise man, and not riches to the prudent, and not favour to men of knowledge; for time and chance happeneth to them all.” The nearest preceding **רָאָה**, to which this **וְרָאָה** suitably connects itself, is at 8:17. Instead of *redii et videndo quidem = rursus vidi* (cf. 8:9 and under 9; 1), we had at 4:1 the simpler expression, *redii et vidi*. The five times repeated **לֵ** is that of property, of that, viz., by virtue of which one is master of that which is named, has power over it, disposes of it freely. The race belongs not to the swift (**מְרוֹצֵי**, masc. to **מְרוֹצָה**, only here), i.e., their fleetness is yet no guarantee that on account of it they will reach the goal. Luther freely: “To be fleet does not help in running,” i.e., running to an object or goal. “The war belongs not to the heroes,” means that much rather it belongs to the Lord, 1 Sam. 17:47.—God alone gives the victory (Ps. 33:16). Even so the gaining of bread, riches, favour (i.e., influence, reputation), does not lie

in wisdom, prudence, knowledge of themselves, as an indispensable means thereto; but the obtaining of them, or the not obtaining of them, depends on times and circumstances which lie beyond the control of man, and is thus, in the final result, conditioned by God (cf. Rom. 9:16); time and fate happen to all whose ability appears to warrant the issue, they both [time and fate] encounter them and bar to them the way; they are in an inexplicable manner dependent on both, and helplessly subject to them. As the idea of spiritual superiority is here expressed in a threefold manner by הָרִי

(whence הָרִי of the plur., also with the art. 9:1; Ex. 36:4; Esth. 1:13), הָרִי, and הָרִי, so at Isa. 11:2, the gifts of “wisdom,” “counsel,” and “knowledge” follow each other. ‘*Eth* is here “time” with its special circumstances (conjunctures), and *pega*’, “accident,” particularly as an adversity, disappointment of the word is used also without any addition (1 Kings 5:18) of misfortune (cf. שִׁיר פְּגָעִים, Ps. 3, 91). The masc. הָרִי is regulated after הָרִי; ‘*eth* can, however, be used in the masc., Song 2:12; Böttch. § 648, viz., “with the misapprehension of its origin” (v. Orelli).

This limitation of man in his efforts, in spite of all his capacity, has its reason in this, that he is on the whole not master of his own life:

Ecclesiastes 9:12. “For man also knoweth not his time: like the fishes which are caught in an evil net, and like the birds which are caught in the snare—like them are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it suddenly breaks in upon them.” The particles כִּי בְּ are here not so clearly connected as at 8:12; 4:14, where, more correctly, the pointing should be כִּי בְּ (*ki* with the conjunct. accent); *ki* rules the sentence; and *gam*, as to its meaning, belongs to *eth*-‘*itto*. The particular has its reason from the general: man is not master of his own time, his own person, and his own life, and thus not of the fruits of his capabilities and his actions, in spite of the previously favourable conditions which appear to place the result beyond a

doubt; for ere the result is reached of which he appears to be able to entertain a certainty, suddenly his time may expire, and his term of life be exhausted. Jerome translate ‘*itto* (cf. 7:17) rightly by *finem suum*; עַתָּה, with the gen. following, frequently (vid., under Job 24:1) means the point of time when the fate of any one is decided,—the *terminus* where a reckoning is made; here, directly, the *terminus ad quem*. The suddenness with which men are frequently overtaken with the catastrophe which puts an end to their life, is seen by comparison with the fishes which are suddenly caught in the net, and the birds which are suddenly caught in the snare. With שָׁרְיָן (that are caught) there is interchanged, in two variations of expression, הַצְּרִיחוֹת, which is incorrectly written, by v. d. Hooght, Norzi, and others, הַצְּרִיחוֹת. הַצְּרִיחוֹת, a net,—of which the plur. form 7:26 is used,—goes back, as does the similar designation of a bulwark (14*b*), to the root-conception of searching (hunting), and receives here the epithet “evil.” Birds, צִפְרִיִּים (from a ground-form with a short terminal vowel; cf. Assy. *iššur*, from *išpur*), are, on account of their weakness, as at Isa. 31:5, as a figure of tender love, represented in the fem.

The second half of the verse, in conformity with its structure, begins with כִּי בְּ (which more frequently occurs as כִּי בְּמוֹתָם). הָרִי is *part. Pu.* for מִיִּקְשִׁים (Ewald, § 170*d*); the particip. ׁ is rejected, and ק is treated altogether as a guttural, the impracticable doubling of which is compensated for by the lengthening of the vowel. The use of the part. is here stranger than e.g., at Prov. 11:13; 15:32; the fact repeating itself is here treated as a property. Like the fish and the birds are they, such as are caught, etc. Otherwise Hitz.: Like these are they caught, during the continuance of their life in the evil time ...; but the being snared does not, however, according to the double figure, precede the catastrophe, but is its consequence. Rightly, Ginsb.: “Like these are the sons of men

ensnared in the time of misfortune.” רַעָה might be adj., as at Amos 5:13, Mic. 2:3; but since it lies nearer to refer רַעָה to *ra'ah* than to *'eth*, thus *ra'ah*, like the frequently occurring *yom ra'ah* (Ecclesiastes 7:14; cf. Jer. 17:17 with 15:11), may be thought of as genit. An example of that which is here said is found in the fatal wounding of Ahab by means of an arrow which was not aimed at him, so that he died “at the time of the going down of the sun,” 2 Chron. 18:33, 34.

The Further Setting Forth of Experiences, with Proverbs Intermixed—9:13–10:15

Experiences and Proverbs Touching Wisdom and the Contrasts to It, 9:13–10:3

With the words, “further, I saw,” 11a, the author introduced the fact he had observed, that there is not always a sure and honoured position in life connected with wisdom as its consequence; here he narrates an experience which, by way of example, shows how little wisdom profits, notwithstanding the extraordinary result it produces.

Ecclesiastes 9:13. “Also this have I come to see as wisdom under the sun, and it appears great to me.” The Venet. construes falsely: “This also have I seen: wisdom under the sun;” as also Hitzig, who reads נָה (neut. as at 7:27). There is no reason thus to break up the sentence which introduces the following experience. *Zoh* is connected with *hhochmah*, but not as Luther renders it: “I have also seen this wisdom,” which would have required the words זֹאת הַחָכְמָה, but, as Jerome does: *Hanc quoque sub sole vidi sapeintiam*; this, however, since *gam-zoh*, as at 5:15, cf. 18, is attractively related to *hhochmah* as its pred., is = “also in this I saw wisdom,” as the LXX translates, or as Zöckl.: “also this have I seen—come to find out as wisdom,”—also this, viz., the following incident narrated, in which wisdom of exceeding greatness presented itself to me. As Mordecai is called “great among the Jews,” Esth. 10:3, so

here Koheleth says that the wisdom which came to light therein appeared to him great (לְפָנַי, as elsewhere בְּעֵינַי or אֵלַי).

Now follows an experience, which, however, has not merely a light side, but also a dark side; for wisdom, which accomplished so great a matter, reaped only ingratitude:

Ecclesiastes 9:14, 15. “A little city, and men therein only a few,—to which a great king came near, and he besieged it, and erected against it high bulwarks. And he met therein a poor wise man, and who saved the city by his wisdom; and no man thought of that poor man.” What may be said as to the hist. reference of these words has already been noticed; vid., above, p. 654. The “great king” is probably an Asiatic monarch, and that the Persian; Jerome translates verbally: *Civitas parva et pauci in ea viri, venit contra eam*—the former is the subj., and the latter its pred.; the object stands first, plastically rigid, and there then follows what happened to it; the structure of the sentence is fundamentally the same as Ps. 104:25. The expression בּוֹא אֵל, which may be used of any kind of coming to anything, is here, as at Gen. 32:9, meant of a hostile approach. The object of a siege and a hostile attack is usually denoted by עָל, 2 Kings 16:5; Isa. 7:1. Two Codd. of de Rossi’s have the word מְצוּרִים, but that is an error of transcription; the plur. of מְצוּר is fem., Isa. 29:4. מְצוּרִים is, as at 7:26, plur. of מְצוּר (from צוּר, to lie in wait); here, as elsewhere, בְּחֹן and דִּיק is the siege-tower erected on the ground or on the rampart, from which to spy out the weak points of the beleaguered place so as to assail it. The words following וּמָצָא בָּהּ are rendered by the Targ., Syr., Jerome, Arab., and Luther: “and there was found in it;” most interpreters explain accordingly, as they point to 1:10, יֵאמֶר, *dicat aliquis*. But that מָצָא in this sequence of thought is = וּנְמָצָא (Job 42:15), is only to be supposed if it were impossible to regard the king as the subject, which Ewald with the LXX

and the Venet. does in spite of § 294*b*. It is true it would not be possible if, as Vaih. remarks, the finding presupposed a searching; but cf. on the contrary, e.g., Deut. 24:1, Ps. 116:3. We also say of one whom, contrary to expectation, a superior meets with, that he has found his match, that he has found his man. Thus it is here said of the great king, he found in the city a poor wise man—met therein with such an one, against whom his plan was shattered. חָכֵם is the adjective of the person of the poor man designated by *ish miskēn* (cf. 2 Chron. 2:13); the accents correctly indicate this relation. Instead of חָכֵם, the older language would use חָכֵם; it does not, like the author here, use pure perfects, but makes the chief factum prominent by the *fut. consec.* The *ē* of *millēt* is, as at 13:9, that of *limmēd* before *Makkeph*, referred back to the original *a*. The making prominent of the subject contained in *millat* by means of *hu* is favourable to the supposition that *umatsa'* has the king as its subject; while even where no opposition (as e.g., at Jer. 17:18) lies before us this pleonasm belongs to the stylistic peculiarities of the book (vid., above, p. 642, No. 3). Instead of *adam lo*, the older form is *ish lo*; perhaps the author here wishes to avoid the repetition of *ish*, but at 7:20 he also uses *adam* instead of *ish*, where no such reason existed. Threatened by a powerful assailant, with whom it could not enter into battle, the little city, deserted by its men to a small remainder capable of bearing arms (this idea one appears to be under the necessity of connecting with חָכֵם ... מעט), found itself in the greatest straits; but when all had been given up as lost, it was saved by the wisdom of the poor man (perhaps in the same way as Abel-beth-maacha, 2 Sam. 20, by the wisdom of a woman). But after this was done, the wise poor man quickly again fell into the background; no man thought of him, as he deserved to have been thought of, as the saviour of the city; he was still poor, and remained so, and *pauper homo raro vifit cum nomine claro*. The poor man with his wisdom, Hengst. remarks, is Israel. And Wangemann

(1856), generalizing the parable: "The beleaguered city is the life of the individual; the great king who lays siege to it is death and the judgment of the Lord." But sounder and more appropriate is the remark of Luther: *Est exemplum generale, cujus in multis historiis simile reperitur*; and: *Sic Themistocles multa bona fecit suis civibus, sed expertus summam intratitudinem*. The author narrates an actual history, in which, on the one hand, he had seen what great things wisdom can do; and from which, on the other hand, he has drawn the following lesson:

Ecclesiastes 9:16. "And I said: Better is wisdom than strength; but the wisdom of the poor is despised, and his words are not heard." With the words, "I saw," the author introduces his observations, and with "I said" his reflections (vid., above, No. 3, p. 642). Wisdom is better than strength, since it does more for the wise man, and through him for others, than physical force,—more, as expressed in 7:19, than ten mighty men. But the *respect* which wisdom otherwise secures for a man, if it is the wisdom of a poor man, sinks into *despect*, to which his poverty exposes him,—if necessity arises, his service, as the above history shows, is valued; but as a rule his words are unheeded, for the crowd estimate the worth of him whom they willingly hear according to the outward respect in which he is held.

To the lessons gathered from experience, are now added instructive proverbs of kindred contents.

Ecclesiastes 9:17. "The words of the wise, heard in quiet, have the superiority above the cry of a ruler among fools." Instead of *tovim min*, there stands here the simple *min, prae*, as at 4:17, to express the superiority of the one to the other. Hitzig finds in this proverb the meaning that, as that history has shown, the words of the wise, heard with tranquillity, gain the victory over the cry of a ruler over fools. But (1) the contrast of נִחַת and זָעַקָה require us to attribute the tranquillity to the wise man himself, and not to his hearers; (2) מִן מַלְכֵי is not a ruler over fools, by which it would remain

questionable whether he himself was not a fool (cf. Job 41:26), but a ruler among fools (cf. 2 Sam. 23:3, מוֹרֵג, “a ruler among men;” and Prov. 36:30, גִּבּוֹרֵי בְּיָמָיו, “the hero among beasts”), i.e., one who among fools takes the place of chief. The words of the poor wise man pass by unheeded, they are not listened to, because he does not possess an imposing splendid outward appearance, in accordance with which the crowd estimate the value of a man’s words; the wise man does not seek to gain esteem by means of a pompous violent deportment; his words נִשְׁמָעוּ בְּרֵיבִי are heard, let themselves be heard, are to be heard (cf. e.g., Song 2:12) in quiet (Isa. 30:15); for, trusting to their own inward power of conviction, and committing the result to God, he despises vociferous pomp, and the external force of earthly expedients (cf. Isa. 42:2; Matt. 12:19); but the words of the wise, which are to be heard in unassuming, passionless quietness, are of more value than the vociferation with which a king among fools, an arch-fool, a *non plus ultra* among fools, trumpets forth his pretended wisdom and constrains his hearers.

Ecclesiastes 9:18. The following proverb also leans on the history above narrated: “Better is wisdom than weapons of war; and one sinner destroyeth much good.” The above history has shown by way of example that wisdom accomplishes more than implements of war, כְּלֵי מִלְחָמָה (Assyr. *unut tahazi*), i.e., than all the apparatus belonging to preparation for war. But the much good which a wise man is accomplishing or has accomplished, one sinner (חֹטֵא, cf. above, p. 682, note) by treachery or calumny may render vain, or may even destroy, through mere malicious pleasure in evil. This is a synthetic distich whose two parts may be interpreted independently. As wisdom accomplishes something great, so a single villain may have a far-reaching influence, viz., such as destroys much good.

Ecclesiastes 10

Ecclesiastes 10:1. The second half of the foregoing double proverb introduces what now follows: “Poisonous flies make to stink, make to ferment the oil of the preparer of ointment; heavier than wisdom, than honour, weighs a little folly.” We do not need to change זְבוּבֵי מוֹת, on account of the foll. sing. of the pred., either into זְבוּבֵי מוֹת (as possible by Hitz.) or זְבוּבֵי יָמוֹת (Luzz.); both are inadmissible, for the style of Koheleth is not adorned with archaisms such as *Chirek compaginis*; and also such an attrib. clause as זְבוּבֵי יָמוֹת, a fly which dies,” is for him too refined; but both are also unnecessary, for a plur. of the subj., in which the plurality of the individuals comes less into view than the oneness of their character, is frequently enough followed by the sing. of the pred., e.g., Gen. 39:22; Joel 1:20; Isa. 59:12, etc. It is a question, however, whether by זְבוּבֵי מוֹת, death-bringing, i.e., poisonous flies (LXX, Targ., Luther) or dead flies (Symm., Syr., Jerome) is meant. We decide in favour of the former; for (1) זְבוּבֵי מוֹת (Ecclesiastes 9:4; Isa. 37:36), “death-flies” for “dead flies,” would be an affected poetic expression without analogy; while, on the contrary, “death-flies” for “deadly flies” is a genit. connection, such as כְּלֵי מוֹת [instruments of death, i.e., deadly instruments] and the like; Böttcher understands dung-flies; but the expression can scarcely extend to the designation of flies which are found on dead bodies. Meanwhile, it is very possible that by the expression זְבוּבֵי מוֹת, such flies are thought of as carry death from dead bodies to those that are living; the Assyr. *syllabare* show how closely the Semites distinguished manifold kinds of זְבוּבֵי מוֹת (Assyr. *zumbi = zubbi*). (2) In favour of “dead flies,” it has been remarked that that influence on the contents of a pot of ointment is effected not merely by poison-flies, but, generally, by flies that have fallen into it.

But since the oil mixed with perfumes may also be of the kind which, instead of being changed

by a dead body, much rather embalms it; so it does not surprise us that the exciter of fermentation is thus drastically described by $\mu\tilde{\iota}\alpha\iota\ \theta\alpha\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\sigma\alpha\iota$ (LXX); it happens, besides, also on this account, because “a little folly” corresponds as a contrasted figure to the little destructive carcass,—wisdom בְּעַתָּה (“giveth life,” 7:2), a little folly is thus like little deadly flies. The sequence of ideas $\text{יִבֶּה$ יִבֶּה (maketh the ointment stink) is natural. The corrupting body communicates its foul savour to the ointment, makes it boil up, i.e., puts it into a state of fermentation, in consequence of which it foams and raises up small blisters, אֲבַעְבּוּעוֹת (Rashi).

To the asyndeton יִבֶּה יִבֶּה , there corresponds, in 1b, the asyndeton מִדָּבָר מִדָּבָר ; the Targ., Syr., and Jerome, who translate by “and,” are therefore not witnesses for the phrase וּמִדָּבָר , but the Venet. ($\kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \delta\acute{o}\xi\eta\varsigma$) had this certainly before it; it is, in relation to the other, inferior in point of evidence. In general, it is evident that the point of comparison is the hurtfulness, widely extending itself, of a matter which in appearance is insignificant. Therefore the meaning of 1b cannot be that a little folly is more weighty than wisdom, than honour, viz., in the eyes of the blinded crowd (Zöckl, Dächsel). This limitation the author ought to have expressed, for without it the sentence is an untruth. Jerome, following the Targ. and Midrash, explains: *Pretiosa est super sapientiam et gloriam stultitia parva*, understanding by wisdom and honour the self-elation therewith connected; besides, this thought, which Luther limits by the introduction of *zuweilen* [“folly is sometimes better than wisdom, etc.”], is in harmony neither with that which goes before nor with that which follows.

Luzz., as already Aben Ezra, Grotius, Geiger, Hengst., and the more recent English expositors, transfer the verbs of 1a zeugmatically to 1b: *similiter pretiosum nomine sapientiae et gloriae virum foetidum facit stoliditas parva*. But יִבֶּה forbids this transference, and, besides, מִן יִקָּר , “honoured on

account of,” is an improbable expression; also יִקָּר presents a tautology, which Luzz. seeks to remove by glossing מִן , as the Targ. does, by $\text{מִרֹב עוֹשֵׂר וְנַכְסִים}$. Already Rashi has rightly explained by taking יִקָּר (Syr. *jakîr*, Arab. *wakûr*, *wakûr*), in its primary meaning, as synon. of בָּרָךְ : more weighty, i.e., heavier and weighing more than wisdom, than honour, is a little folly; and he reminds us that a single foolish act can at once change into their contrary the wisdom and the honour of a man, destroying both, making it as if they had never been, cf. 1 Cor. 5:6. The sentence is true both in an intellectual and in a moral reference. Wisdom and honour are swept away by a little *quantum* of folly; it places both in the shade, it outweighs them in the scale; it stamps the man, notwithstanding the wisdom and dignity which otherwise belong to him, as a fool. The expressive שָׁמַן רִקְחָה is purposely used here; the dealer in ointments (*pigmentarius*) can now do nothing with the corrupted perfume,—thus the wisdom which a man possesses, the honour which he has hitherto enjoyed, avail him no longer; the proportionally small portion of folly which has become an ingredient in his personality gives him the character of a fool, and operates to his dishonour. Knobel construes rightly; but his explanation (also of Heiligst., Elst., Ginsb.): “a little folly frequently shows itself more efficacious and fruitful than the wisdom of an honoured wise man,” helps itself with a “frequently” inserted, and weakens מִן to a subordinated idea, and is opposed to the figure, which requires a personality.

Ecclesiastes 10:2, 3. A double proverb regarding wisdom and folly in their difference: “The heart of a wise man is directed to his right hand, and the heart of the fool to his left. And also on the way where a fool goeth, there his heart faileth him, and he saith to all that he is a fool.” Most interpreters translate: The heart of the wise man is at his right hand, i.e., it is in the right place. But this designation, meant figuratively and yet sounding anatomically,

would be in bad taste in this distinguishing double form (vid., on the contrary, 2:14). The ל is that of direction; and that which is situated to the right of a man is figuratively a designation of the right; and that to the left, a designation of the wrong. The designation proceeds from a different idea from that at Deut. 5:32, etc.; that which lies to the right, as that lying at a man's right hand, is that to which his calling and duty point him; וְשָׁרָה denotes, in the later Hebrew, "to turn oneself to the wrong side."

Ecclesiastes 10:3. This proverb forms, along with the preceding, a tetrastich, for it is divided into two parts by *vav*. The *Kerī* has removed the art. in וְשָׁרָה and וְשָׁרָה, 6:10, as incompatible with the ש. The order of the words *vgam-baderek kshehsachal holek* is inverted for *vgam kshehsachal baderek holek*, cf. 3:13, and also *rav shēyihyn*, 6:3; so far as this signifies, "supposing that they are many." Plainly the author intends to give prominence to "on the way;" and why, but because the fool, the inclination of whose heart, according to 2*b*, always goes to the left, is now placed in view as he presents himself in his public manner of life. Instead of וְשָׁרָה לְבִי הוּא we have here the verbal clause לְבוֹ הָסֵר, which is not, after 6:2, to be translated: *corde suo caret* (Herzf., Ginsb.), contrary to the suff. and also the order of the words, but, after 9:8: *cor ejus deficit*, i.e., his understanding is at fault; for לְבוֹ, here and at v. 2, is thus used in a double sense, as the Greek *νοῦς* and the Lat. *mens* can also be used: there it means pure, formal, intellectual soul-life; here, pregnantly (*Psychol.* p. 249), as at 7:7, cf. Hos. 4:11, the understanding or the knowledge and will of what is right. The fool takes no step without showing that his understanding is not there,—that, so to speak, he does not take it along with him, but has left it at home. He even carries his folly about publicly, and prides himself in it as if it were wisdom: he says to all that he is a fool, *se esse stultum* (thus, correctly, most Jewish and Christian interpreters, e.g., Rashi and Rambach). The expression follows the scheme

of Ps. 9:21: May the heathen know *mortales se esse* (vid., *l.c.*). Otherwise Luther, with Symm. and Jerome: "he takes every man as a fool;" but this thought has no support in the connection, and would undoubtedly be expressed by סְבָלִים הַמָּוֶה. Still differently Knobel and Ewald: he says to all, "it is foolish;" Hitzig, on the contrary, justly remarks that סְבָלִים is not used of actions and things; this also is true of בְּסִילִי, against himself, 5:2, where he translates *qol ksil* by "foolish discourses."

***The Caprice of Rulers and the Perverted World*, 10:4–7**

Wisdom is a strong protection. To this thought, from which the foregoing group proceeded, there is here subordinated the following admonition.

Ecclesiastes 10:4. This verse shows what is the wise conduct of a subject, and particularly of a servant, when the anger of the ruler breaks forth: "If the ill-humour of the ruler rise up against thee, do not leave thy post; for patience leaves out great sins." Luther connects v. 4 and v. 3 by "therefore;" for by the potentate he understands such an one as, himself a fool, holds all who contradict him to be fools: then it is best to let his folly rage on. But the מוֹשֵׁל is a different person from the סְבָלִים; and אֶל-תִּנְחַם does not mean, "let not yourself get into a passion," or, as he more accurately explains in the *Annotationes*: "remain self-possessed" (similarly Hitzig: lose not thy mental state of composure), but, in conformity with אַל ... תִּלְךָ, 8:3, "forsake not the post (synon. מִעֲמָד and מִצֵּב, Isa. 22:19, cf. 23) which thou hast received." The person addressed is thus represented not merely as a subject, but officially as a subordinate officer: if the ruler's displeasure (רוּחַ, as at Judg. 8:3; Prov. 29:11) rises up against him (עָלָה, as elsewhere; cf. אַף, Ps. 73:21; or חָמָה, 2 Sam. 11:20), he ought not, in the consciousness that he does not merit his

displeasure, hastily give up his situation which has been entrusted to him and renounce submission; for patience, gentleness (regarding מַרְפָּא, vid., Prov. 12:18) וְיִי ... גְּדָ.

This concluding clause of the verse is usually translated: "It appeaseth (pacifieth) great sins" (LXX καταπαύσει, Symm. παύσει). The phrase (חמה) אף הַגִּיחַ is not to be compared, for it signifies quieting by an exhausting outbreak; on the contrary, יניח in the passage before us must signify quieting, as the preventing of an outbreak (cf. Prov. 15:1). It appears more correct to render הַגִּיחַ in both cases in the sense of *ἔαν*, *missum facere*: to leave great sins is = not to commit them, to give up the lust thereto; for *hinniahh* signifies to let go, to leave off, e.g., Jer. 14:9; and to indulge, Esth. 3:8, here as at 7:18; 11:6, "to keep the hands from something." The great sins cannot certainly be thought of as those of the ruler; for on his part only one comes into view, if indeed, according to the old legal conception, it could be called such, viz., cruel proceeding with reference to him who wilfully withdraws from him, and thus proves his opposition; much rather we are to think of the great sins into which he who is the object of the ruler's displeasure might fall, viz., treason (Ecclesiastes 8:2), insubordination, self-destruction, and at the same time, since he does not stand alone, or make common cause with others who are discontented, the drawing of others into inevitable ruin (Ecclesiastes 8:3b). All these sins, into which he falls who answers wrath with wrath, patience avoids, and puts a check to them. The king's anger is perhaps justified; the admonition, however, would be otherwise expressed than by מַקְ אֶל־תְּנוּחַ, if it were not presupposed that it was not justified; and thus without μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος an I-section follows the reflection regarding wise deportment as over against the king's displeasure, a section which describes from experience and from personal observation the world turned upside down in the state.

Ecclesiastes 10:5. "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, like an error which

proceedeth from the ruler." The introduction by the virtual relative *rāithi* is as at 5:12; 6:1.

Knobel, Hengst., and others give to the ך of אֲשֶׁר the meaning of "according to," or "in consequence of which," which harmonizes neither with *ra'ah* nor with *rāithi*. Also Kleinert's translation: "There is a misery—I have seen it under the sun—in respect of an error which proceedeth from the ruler," is untenable; for by this translation *ra'ah* is made the pred. while it is the subj. to אֲשֶׁר, and *kishgagah* the unfolding of this subject. Hitzig also remarks: "as [*wie ein*] an error, instead of which we have: in respect to [*um einen*] an error;" for he confounds things incongruous. Hitz., however, rightly recognises, as also Kleinert, the ך as *Caph veritatis*, which measures the concrete with the idea. Isa. 13:6, compares the individual with the general which therein comes to view, Ezek. 26:10; Neh. 7:2; cf. 2 Sam. 9:8. Koheleth saw an evil under the sun; something which was like an error, appeared to him altogether like an error which proceedeth from the ruler. If we could translate אֲשֶׁר by *quod exiit*, then ך would be the usual *Caph similitudinis*; but since it must be translated by *quod exit*, וְגַר כִּשׁׁ places the observed fact under a comprehensive generality: it had the nature of an error proceeding from the ruler. If this is correct, it is so much the less to be assumed that by אֲשֶׁר־לֵיט God is to be understood (Dan. 5:21), as Jerome was taught by his *Hebraeus*: *quod putent homines in hac inaequalitate rerum illum non juste et ut aequum est judicare*. It is a governor in a state that is meant, by whom an error might easily be committed, and only too frequently is committed, in the promotion of degradation of persons. But since the world, with its wonderful division of high and low, appears like as it were an error proceeding from the Most High, there certainly falls a shadow on the providence of God Himself, the Governor of the world; but yet not so immediately that the subject of discourse is an "error" of God, which would be a saying more

than irreverent. יָצָה = יָצָה is the metaplastic form for יָצָה or יָצָה (for which at Deut. 28:57 incorrectly יָצָה), not an error of transcription, as Olsh. supposes; vid., to the contrary, above, No. 1, p. 641. מְלַפֵּן (Symm. ἐξ ἔμπροσθεν) with יָצָה is the old *usus loq.* There now follows a sketch of the perverted world.

Ecclesiastes 10:6, 7. "Folly is set on great heights, and the rich must sit in lowliness. I have seen servants upon horses, and princes like servants walking on foot." The word הַסִּכָּל (with double *seghol*, Aram. סִכְלָו) is used here instead of those in whom it is personified. Elsewhere a multiplicity of things great, such as עֲמִים, מִים, and the like, is heightened by רַבִּים (cf. e.g., Ps. 18:17); here "great heights" are such as are of a high, or the highest degree; *rabbim*, instead of *harabbim*, is more appos. than adjunct. (cf. Gen. 43:14; Ps. 68:28; 143:10; Jer. 2:21), in the sense of "many" (e.g., Ginsburg: "in many high positions") it mixes with the poetry of the description dull prose. *'Ashirim* also is peculiarly used: *divites = nobiles* (cf. שׁוֹטֵט, Isa. 32:5), those to whom their family inheritance gives a claim to a high station, who possess the means of training themselves for high offices, which they regard as places of honour, not as sources of gain. *Regibus multis*, Grotius here remarks, quoting from Sallust and Tacitus, *suspecti qui excellunt sive sapientia sive nobilitate aut opibus*. Hence it appears that the relation of slaves and princes to each other is suggested; *hoc discrimen*, says Justin, 41:3, of the Parthians, *inter servos liberosque est quod servi pedibus, liberi nonnisi equis incedunt*; this distinction is set aside, princes must walk *'al-haarëts*, i.e., *bregel (braglëhëm)*, and in their stead (Jer. 17:25) slaves sit high on horseback, and rule over them (the princes),—an offensive spectacle, Prov. 19:10. The eunuch Bagoas (vid., above, p. 653), long all-powerful at the Persian Court, is an example of the evil consequences of this reversal of the natural relations of men. any severe labour, at the same time faces the dangers connected therewith.

***That Which is Difficult Exposes to Danger; That Which is Improper Brings Trouble; That Which Comes Too Late is Not of Use*, 10:8–11**

How much time, thought, and paper have been expended in seeking to find out a close connection between this group of verses and that going before! Some read in them warnings against rising in rebellion against despots (Ginsb.); others (e.g., Zöckl.) place these proverbs in relation to the by no means enviable lot of those upstarts (Zöckl.); more simply and more appropriately, Luther here finds exemplified the thought that to govern (*regere homines et gerere res humanas*) is a difficult matter; on the other hand, Luzz. finds in 8–11 the thought that all depends on fate, and not on the wisdom of man. In reality, this section forms a member in the carrying forward of the theme which the author has been discussing from 9:13: wisdom and folly in their mutual relations, particularly in difficult situations of life. The catchword of the foregoing section is מְרַפָּא, patience, resignation, which guards against rendering evil for evil; and the catchword of the following section is הַכְשִׁיר, considerate and provisory straining of the means toward the accomplishment of that which one purposes to do. The author presents a prelude in four sentences, which denote by way of example, that whoever undertakes **Ecclesiastes 10:8, 9.** "He that diggeth a pit may fall into it; whoso breaketh down walls, a serpent may sting him. Whoso pulleth out stones may do himself hurt therewith; he who cleaveth wood may endanger himself thereby." The futures are not the expression of that which will necessarily take place, for, thus rendered, these four statements would be contrary to experience; they are the expression of a possibility. The fut. יִפּוֹל is not here meant as predicting an event, as where the clause 8a is a figure of self-punishment arising from the destruction prepared for others, Prov. 26:27. Sir. 27:26. גִּמְקָן is, Prov. 26:27, the Targum word for שֶׁחַת, ditch, from גִּמְקָן = שִׁנָּה, *depressum esse*.

גִּדְרֵי (R. גַּד, to cut), something cutting off, something dividing, is a wall as a boundary and means of protection drawn round a garden, vineyard, or farm-court; פֶּרֶץ גִּדְרֵי is the reverse of גִּדְרֵי פֶּרֶץ, Isa. 58:12. Serpents are accustomed to nestle in the crevices and holes of walls, as well as in the earth (from a city-wall is called חוֹמָה and חָל); thus he who breaks into such a wall may expect that the serpent which is there will bite him (cf. Amos 5:19). To tear down stones, *hissi'a*, is synon. of *hhatsav*, to break stones, Isa. 51:1; yet *hhotsēv* does not usually mean the stone-breaker, but the stone-cutter (stone-mason); *hissi'a*, from *nasa'*, to tear out, does not also signify, 1 Kings 5:31, "to transport," and here, along with wood-splitting, is certainly to be thought of as a breaking loose or separating in the quarry or shaft. *Ne'etsav* signifies elsewhere to be afflicted; here, where the reference is not to the internal but the external feeling: to suffer pain, or reflex.: to injure oneself painfully; the derivat. *'etsev* signifies also severe labour; but to find this signification in the *Niph.* ("he who has painful labour") is contrary to the *usu loq.*, and contrary to the meaning intended here, where generally actual injuries are in view. Accordingly בָּם יִסְכֵּן, for which the Mishn. בְּעַצְמוֹ יִסְכֵּן, "he brings himself into danger," would denote, to be placed in danger of life and limb, cf. *Gittin* 65b, *Chullin* 37a; and it is therefore not necessary, with Hitzig and others, to translate after the *vulnerabitur* of Jerome: "He may wound himself thereby;" there is not a denom. סָכַן, to cut, to wound, derived from סָכַן (שָׁכַן), an instrument for cutting, a knife.

The sum of these four clauses is certainly not merely that he who undertakes a dangerous matter exposes himself to danger; the author means to say, in this series of proverbs which treat of the distinction between wisdom and folly, that the wise man is everywhere conscious of his danger, and guards against it. These two verses (8, 9) come under this definite point of view by the following proverb;

wisdom has just this value in providing against the manifold dangers and difficulties which every undertaking brings along with it. This is illustrated by a fifth example, and then it is declared with reference to all together.

Ecclesiastes 10:10. "If the iron has become blunt, and he has not whetted the face, then he must give more strength to the effort; but wisdom has the superiority in setting right."

This proverb of iron, i.e., iron instruments (בְּרִזֵּל, from בָּרַר, to pierce, like the Arab. name for iron, *hadid*, means essentially something pointed), is one of the most difficult in the Book of Koheleth,—linguistically the most difficult, because scarcely anywhere else are so many peculiar and unexampled forms of words to be found. The old translators afford no help for the understanding of it. The advocates of the hypothesis of a Dialogue have here a support in אִם, which may be rendered interrogatively; but where would we find, syntactically as well as actually, the answer? Also, the explanations which understand חֵילִים in the sense of war-troops, armies, which is certainly its nearest-lying meaning, bring out no appropriate thought; for the thought that even blunt iron, as far as it is not externally altogether spoiled (*lo-phanim qilqal*), or: although it has not a sharpened edge (Rashi, Rashbam), might be an equipment for an army, or gain the victory, would, although it were true, not fit the context; Ginsburg explains: If the axe be blunt, and he (who goes out against the tyrant) do not sharpen it beforehand (*phanim*, after Jerome, for *lphanim*, which is impossible, and besides leads to nothing, since *lphanim* means *ehedem* [formerly], but not *zuvor* [prius], Ewald, § 220a), he (the tyrant) only increases his army; on the contrary, wisdom hath the advantage by repairing the mischief (without the war being unequal);—but the "ruler" of the foregoing group has here long ago disappeared, and it is only a bold imagination which discovers in the *hu* of 10a the person addressed in v. 4, and represents him as a rebel, and augments him into a warlike force, but recklessly going forth

with unwhetted swords. The correct meaning for the whole, in general at least, is found if, after the example of *Abulwalid* and Kimchi, we interpret גַּבַּר הַחַיִּים of the increasing of strength, the augmenting of the effort of strength, not, as Aben-Ezra, of conquering, outstripping, surpassing; גַּבַּר means to make strong, to strengthen, Zech. 10:6, 12; and חַיִּים, as plur. of חַיִּל, strength, is supported by גַּבּוּרֵי חַיִּים, 1 Chron. 7:5, 7, 11, 40, the plur. of גַּבּוּר חַיִּל; the LXX renders by δυνάμεις δυνάμωσεῖ [and he shall strengthen the forces], and the Peshito has חַיִּל for δυνάμεις, Acts 8:13; 19:11 (cf. Chald. Syr. אֲתַחֲזִיל, to strengthen oneself, to become strengthened). Thus understanding the words יְגַיַּר of *intentio virium*, and that not with reference to sharpening (Luth., Grotius), but to the splitting of wood, etc. (Geier, Desvoeux, Mendelss.), all modern interpreters, with the exception of a few who lose themselves on their own path, gain the thought, that in all undertakings wisdom hath the advantage in the devising of means subservient to an end. The diversities in the interpretation of details leave the essence of this thought untouched. Hitz., Böttch., Zöckl., Lange, and others make the wood-splitter, or, in general, the labourer, the subject to קָהָה, referring והוא to the iron, and contrary to the accents, beginning the apodosis with *qilqal*: "If he (one) has made the iron blunt, and it is without an edge, he swings it, and applies his strength."

לֹא־פָּנִים, "without an edge" (*lo* for *blo*), would be linguistically as correct as לֹא בָּנִים, "without children," 1 Chron. 2:30, 32; Ewald, § 286*b*; and *qilqal* would have a meaning in some measure supported by Ezek. 21:26. But granting that *qilqal*, which there signifies "to shake," may be used of the swinging of an axe (for which we may refer to the Aethiop. *kualkuala*, *kalkala*, of the swinging of a sword), yet קָלְקַל (קָלְקַל אִתּוֹ) could have been used, and, besides, פָּנִים means, not like פִּי, the edge, but, as a somewhat wider

idea, the front, face (Ezek. 21:21; cf. Assy. *pan ilippi*, the forepart of a ship); "it has no edge" would have been expressed by והוא לֹא (פִּיפִיּוֹת) פָּה, or by (מוֹרֵט, מוֹחֵד) והוא אֵינְנוּ מְלַטֵּשׁ פָּה, We therefore translate: if the iron has become blunt, *hebes factum sit* (for the *Pih.* of intransitives has frequently the meaning of an inchoative or desiderative stem, like מַעֲטָה, to become little, *decrescere*, 12:3; בָּהָה, *hebescere*, *caligare*, Ezek. 21:12; Ewald, § 120*c*), and he (who uses it) has not polished (whetted) the face of it, he will (must) increase the force. והוא does not refer to the iron, but, since there was no reason to emphasize the sameness of the subject (as e.g., 2 Chron. 32:30), to the labourer, and thus makes, as with the other explanation, the change of subject noticeable (as e.g., 2 Chron. 26:1). The order of the words קָלְ ... והוּא, *et ille non faciem (ferri) exacuit*, is as at Isa. 53:9; cf. also the position of *lo* in 2 Sam. 3:34; Num. 16:29.

קָלְקַל, or pointed with *Pattach* instead of *Tsere* (cf. *qarqar*, Num. 24:17) in bibl. usage, from the root-meaning *levem esse*, signifies to move with ease, i.e., quickness (as also in the Arab. and Aethiop.), to shake (according to which the LXX and Syr. render it by ταρασσειν, דָּלַח, to shake, and thereby to trouble, make muddy); in the Mishn. usage, to make light, little, to bring down, to destroy; here it means to make light = even and smooth (the contrast of rugged and notched), a meaning the possibility of which is warranted by קָלְקַל, נָח, Ezek. 1:7, Dan. 10:6 (which is compared by Jewish lexicographers and interpreters), which is translated by all the old translators "glittering brass," and which, more probably than Ewald's "to steel" (temper), is derived from the root *qal*, to burn, glow. With *vahhaylim* the apodosis begins; the style of Koheleth recognises this *vav apod.* in conditional clauses, 4:11, cf. Gen. 43:9, Ruth 3:13, Job 7:4, Mic. 5:7, and is fond of the inverted order of the words for the sake of emphasis, 11:8, cf. Jer. 37:10, and above, under 7:22.

In 10*b* there follows the common clause containing the application. Hitzig, Elster, and Zöckl. incorrectly translate: “and it is a profit wisely to handle wisdom;” for instead of the inf. absol. הָדָה, they unnecessarily read the inf.

constr. הַכְשִׁיר, and connect הַכְּמָה הַכְשִׁיר, which is a phrase altogether unparalleled. *Hichsir* means to set in the right position (vid., above, p. 638, *kaser*), and the sentence will thus mean: the advantage which the placing rightly of the means serviceable to an end affords, is wisdom—i.e., wisdom bears this advantage in itself, brings it with it, concretely: a wise man is he who reflects upon this advantage. It is certainly also possible that הַכֵּשׂ, after the manner of the *Hiph.* הַשְׂכִּיל and הַצְלִיחַ, directly means “to succeed,” or causatively: “to make to succeed.” We might explain, as e.g., Knobel: the advantage of success, or of the causing of prosperity, is wisdom, i.e., it is that which secures this gain. But the meaning prevalent in post-bibl. Heb. of making fit, equipping,—a predisposition corresponding to a definite aim or result,—is much more conformable to the example from which the *porisma* is deduced. Buxtorf translates the *Hiph.* as a Mishnic word by *aptare, rectificare*. Tyler suggests along with “right guidance” the meaning “pre-arrangement,” which we prefer.

Ecclesiastes 10:11. The last proverb of this series presents for consideration the uselessness of him who comes too late. “If a serpent bite without enchantment, the charmer is of no use.” The Talm. interprets this אַם, like that of v. 10, also as interrog.: Does the serpent bite without its being whispered to, i.e., without a providential determination impelling it thereto? *Jer. Peah*, i. 1. But לַחֵשׁ, except at Isa. 26:16, where whispering prayers are meant, signifies the whispering of formulas of charming; “serpents are not to be charmed (tamed),” לַחֵשׁ, *Jer.* 8:17. Rather for בָּעַל הָלֵל the meaning of slander is possible, which is given to it in the Haggada, *Taanith 8a*: All the beasts will one day all at once say to the serpent: the lion

walks on the earth and eats, the wolf tears asunder and eats; but what enjoyment hast thou by thy bite? and it answers them: “Also the slanderer (לְבַעַל הַלְשׁוֹן) has certainly no profit.” Accordingly the Targ., Jerome, and Luther translate; but if אַם is conditional, and the *vav* of *vēn* connects the protasis and the apodosis, then *ba’al hallashon* must denote a man of tongue, viz., of an enchanting tongue, and thus a charmer (LXX, Syr.). This name for the charmer, one of many, is not unintentional; the tongue is an instrument, as iron is, v. 10: the latter must be sharp, if it would not make greater effort necessary; the former, if it is to gain its object, must be used at the right time. The serpent bites בְּלִי לֶחֶם, when it bites before it has been charmed (cf. *blo yomo*, Job 15:32); there are also serpents which bite without letting themselves be charmed; but here this is the point, that it anticipates the enchantment, and thus that the charmer comes too late, and can make no use of his tongue for the intended purpose, and therefore has no advantage from his act. There appropriately follow here proverbs of the use of the tongue on the part of a wise man, and its misuse on the part of a fool.

The Worthless Prating and the Aimless Labour of the Fool, 10:12–15

It is wisdom, as the preceding series of proverbs has shown, to be on one’s guard to provide oneself with the right means, and to observe the right time. These characteristics of the wise man v. 11 has brought to view, by an example from the sphere of action in which the tongue serves as the instrument. There now follows, not unexpectedly, a proverb with reference to that which the words of a wise man and the words of a fool respectively bring about.

Ecclesiastes 10:12. “The words of a wise man’s mouth are grace; but the lips of a fool swallow him up.” The words from a wise man’s mouth are חַן, graciousness, i.e., gracious in their contents, their form and manner of utterance,

and thus also they gain favour, affection, approbation, for culture (education) produces favour, Prov. 13:15, and its lips grace (pleasantness), which has so wide an influence that he can call a king his friend, Prov. 22:11, although, according to 9:11, that does not always so happen as is to be expected. The lips of a fool, on the contrary, swallow him, i.e., lead him to destruction. The *Pih*. בָּלַע, which at Prov. 19:28 means to swallow down, and at Prov. 21:20 to swallow = to consume in luxury, to spend dissolutely, has here the metaphorical meaning of to destroy, to take out of the way (for that which is swallowed up disappears). שִׁפְתוֹת is parallel form to שִׁפְתָּי, like the Aram. סַפְתָּוּ. The construction is, as at Prov. 14:3, “the lips of the wise תְּשִׁיבָם preserve them;” the idea of unity, in the conception of the lips as an instrument of speech, prevails over the idea of plurality. The words of the wise are heart-winning, and those of the fool self-destructive. This is verified in the following verse.

Ecclesiastes 10:13. “The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness; and the end of his mouth is mischievous madness.” From folly (absurdity) the words which are heard from a fool’s mouth rise to madness, which is compounded of presumption, wantonness, and frenzy, and which, in itself a symptom of mental and moral depravity, brings as its consequence destruction on himself (Prov. 18:17). The adjective רָעָה is as in חָלִי רָע, which interchanges with רָעָה הוֹי 6:2; 5:12, etc. The end of his mouth, viz., of his speaking, is = the end of the words of his mouth, viz., the end which they at last reach. Instead of *holeloth*, there is here, with the adj. following, *holeluth*, with the usual ending of *abstracta*. The following proverb says how the words of the fool move between these two poles of folly and wicked madness: he speaks much, and as if he knew all things.

Ecclesiastes 10:14. “And the fool maketh many words: while a man yet doth not know that which shall be; and what shall be when he is no more, who can show him that?” The *vav* at the beginning of this verse corresponds to the Lat.

accedit quod. That he who in 12b was named *ksil* is now named *hassachal*, arises from this, that meanwhile *sichluth* has been predicated of him. The relation of 14b to 14a, Geier has rightly defined: *Probatum absurditas multiloquii a communi ignorantia ac imbecillitate humana, quae tamen praecipue dominatur apud ignaros stultos*. We miss before *lo-yeda*’ an “although” (*gam*, Neh. 6:1, or *ki gam*, 8:12); the clause is, after the manner of a clause denoting state or condition, subordinated to the principal clause, as at Ps. 5:10: “an open grave is their throat לֹשֶׁן יָדָה, although they smooth their tongue, i.e., speak flatteringly.” The LXX, Syr., and Jerome seek to rectify the tautology *id quod futurum est et quod futurum est* (cf. on the other hand, 8:7), for they read יָהּ ... מֵה שֶׁהִיא. But the second *quod futurum* certainly preserves by מֵמֵת its distinguishing nearer definition. Hitzig explains: “What is done, and what after this (that is done) is done.” Scarcely correctly: *aharav* of the parallel passage, 6:12, cf. 7:14; 9:3, requires for the suffix a personal reference, so that thus *meaharav*, as at Deut. 29:21, means “from his death and onwards.” Thus, first, the knowledge of the future is denied to man; then the knowledge of what will be done after his death; and generally, of what will then be done. The fool, without any consciousness of human ignorance, acts as if he knew all, and utters about all and everything a multitude of words; for he uselessly fatigues himself with his ignorance, which remains far behind the knowledge that is possible for man.

Ecclesiastes 10:15. “The labour of the foolish wearieth him who knoweth not how to go to the city.” If we do not seek to explain: labour such as fools have wearies him (the fool), then we have here such a *synallage numeri* as at Isa. 2:8, Hos. 4:8, for from the plur. a transition is made to the distributive or individualizing sing. A greater anomaly is the treatment of the noun עָמַל as fem. (greater even than the same of the noun *pithgam*, 8:11, which admitted of attractional explanation, and, besides, in a foreign word was not strange). Kimchi, *Michlol*

10a, supposes that עמל is thought of in the sense of עִיֵּצַת עמל; impossible, for one does not use such an expression. Hitzig, and with him Hengst., sees the occasion for the synallage in the discordance of the masc. עִיֵּצַת; but without hesitation we use the expressions יִחַל, Mic. 5:6, יִיָּט, Josh. 6:26, and the like. 'Amal also cannot be here *fem. unitatis* (Böttch. § 657. 4), for it denotes the wearisome striving of fools as a whole and individually. We have thus to suppose that the author has taken the liberty of using 'amal once as fem. (vid., on the contrary, 2:18, 20), as the poet, Prov. 4:13, in the introduction of the Book of Proverbs uses *musar* once as fem., and as the similarly formed אָרָא is used in two genders. The fool kindles himself up and perplexes himself, as if he could enlighten the world and make it happy,—he who does not even know how to go to the city. Ewald remarks: "Apparently proverbial, viz., to bribe the great lords in the city." For us who, notwithstanding v. 16, do not trouble ourselves any more with the tyrants of v. 4, such thoughts, which do violence to the connection, are unnecessary. Hitzig also, and with him Elst. and Zöckl., thinks of the city as the residence of the rulers from whom oppression proceeds, but from whom also help against oppression is to be sought. All this is to be rejected. Not to know how to go to the city, is = not to be able to find the open public street, and, like the Syrians, 2 Kings 6:18f., to be smitten with blindness. The way to the city is *via notissima et tritissima*. Rightly Grotius, like Aben Ezra: *Multi quaestionibus arduis se faitgant, cum ne obvia quidem norint, quale est iter ad urbem*. אָל-עִיר is vulgar for אֶל-הָעִיר. In the Greek language also the word πόλις has a definite signification, and Athens is called ἄστυ, mostly without the art. But Stamboul, the name of which may seem as an illustration of the proverbial phrase, "not to know how to go to the city," is = εἰς τὴν πόλιν. Grätz finds here an allusion to the Essenes, who avoided the city—*habeat sibi!*

THIRD CONCLUDING SECTION, WITH THE FINALE AND EPILOGUE

(A.) Warnings Against Idle Revelry and Improvidence, and a Call to a Fresh Effort After a Happy Improvement of Life—10:16–11:7

The Prosperity of a Country, Its Misfortune, and Thoughtful Foresight, 10:16–20

Interpreters have sought in every way to discover a close connection between the following proverbs of the bad and good princes, and those that precede. Hitzig, rightly dissatisfied with this forced attempt, cuts the knot by putting vv. 16–19 into the mouth of the fool, v. 15: Koheleth, v. 20, refers to him this rash freedom of speech, and warns him against such language; for, supposing that vv. 16–19 were the words of Koheleth, in v. 20 he would contradict himself. This unworthy perversion of the contents of the section rectifies itself. The supposed words of the fool belong to the most peculiar, most impressive, and most beautiful utterances of the חכם which the Book of

Koheleth contains, and the warning, v. 20, against cursing the king, stands in no contradiction to the "woe," v. 16; Isaiah under Ahaz, Jeremiah under Zedekiah, actually show how the two are in harmony; and the apostles even in the times of Nero acted on their "honour the king." Rather it may be said that the author in v. 16, from fools in general (v. 15) comes to speak of folly in the position occupied by a king and princes. But "folly" is not the characteristic name for that which is unseemly and indecorous which is blamed in these high lords. From 10:16, the Book of Koheleth turns toward the conclusion; since it represents itself as a discourse of Solomon's on the subject of the wisdom of life, and all through has a sharp eye on rulers and their surroundings, it is not strange that it treated of it in 10:4–7, and again now returns to the theme it had scarcely left.

Ecclesiastes 10:16, 17. "Woe to thee, O land, whose king is a child, and whose princes sit at table in the early morning! Happy art thou, O

land, whose king is a noble, and whose princes sit at table at the right time, in manly strength, and not in drunkenness!" Regarding אֵי, vid., above, p. 637. Instead of אֵי, the older language would rather use the phrase אֲשֶׁר נֵטַר מְלִכּוֹ; and instead of *na'ar*, we might correctly use, after Prov. 30:22, 'ēved; but not as Grätz thinks, who from this verse deduces the reference of the book of Herod (the "slave of the Hasmonean house," as the Talm. names him), in the same meaning. For *na'ar*, it is true, sometimes means—e.g., as *Ziba's* by-name (2 Sam. 19:18 [17])—a servant, but never a slave as such, so that here, in the latter sense, it might be the contrast of בְּנֵי־הוֹרִים; it is to be understood after Isa. 3:12; and Solomon, Bishop of Constance, understood this woe rightly, for he found it fulfilled at the time of the last German Karolingian Ludwig III. *Na'ar* is a very extensively applicable word in regard to the age of a person. King Solomon and the prophets Jeremiah and Zechariah show that *na'ar* may be used with reference to one in a high office; but here it is one of few years of age who is meant, who is incapable of ruling, and shows himself as childish in this, that he lets himself be led by bad guides in accordance with their pleasure. In 16*b*, the author perhaps thinks of the heads of the aristocracy who have the phantom-king in their power: intending to fatten themselves, they begin their feasting with the break of day. If we translate *yochēēlu* by "they eat," 16*b* sounds as if to breakfast were a sin,—with us such an abbreviation of the thought so open to misconception would be a fault in style, but not so with a Hebrew. אָבַל (for אָבַל לָחֵם, Ps. 14:4) is here eating for eating's sake, eating as its own object, eating which, in the morning, comes in the place of fresh activity in one's calling, consecrated by prayer. Instead of אֵי, 17*a*, there ought properly to have been אֲשֶׁר־יָד; but (1) אֲשֶׁר־יָד has this peculiarity, to be explained from its interjectional usage, that with the suff. added it remains in the form of the *st. constr.*, for we say e.g., אֲשֶׁר־יָד for אֲשֶׁר־יָד; (2) the sing.

form אֲשֶׁר, inflected אֲשֶׁר־יָד, so substitutes itself that אֲשֶׁר־יָד, or, more correctly, אֲשֶׁר־יָד, and אֲשֶׁר־יָד, Prov. 29:19, the latter for אֲשֶׁר־יָד are used (vid., under Song 2:14).

Regarding *bēn-hhorim*, vid., above, p. 637; the root-word signifies to be white (vid., under Gen. 40:16). A noble is called *hhor*, Isa. 34:12; and one noble by birth, more closely, or also merely descriptively (Ges. *Lehrgeb.* p. 649), *bēn-hhorim*, from his purer complexion, by which persons of rank were distinguished from the common people (Lam. 4:7). In the passage before us, *bēn-hhorim* is an ethical conception, as e.g., also *generosus* becomes such, for it connects with the idea of noble by birth that of noble in disposition, and the latter predominates (cf. Song 7:2, *nadiv*): it is well with a land whose king is of noble mind, is a man of noble character, or, if we give to *bēn-hhorim* the Mishnic meaning, is truly a free man (cf. John 8:36). Of princes after the pattern of such a king, the contrary of what is said 16*b* is true: they do not eat early in the morning, but *ba'et*, "at the right time;" everywhere else this is expressed by *b'itto* (Ecclesiastes 3:11); here the expression—corresponding to the Greek ἐν καιρῷ, the Lat. *in tempore*—is perhaps occasioned by the contrast *baboqēr*, "in the morning." Eating at the right time is more closely characterized by *bighvurah vlo vashshthi*. Jerome, whom Luther follows, translates: *ad reficiendum et non ad luxuriam*. Hitz., Ginsb., and Zöckl., "for strengthening" (obtaining strength), not: "for feasting;" but that *beth* might introduce the object aimed at (after Hitz., proceeding from the *beth* of exchange), we have already considered under 2:4. The author, wishing to say this, ought to have written לגבורה ולא לשתי. Better, Hahn: "in strength, but not in drunkenness,"—as heroes, but not as drunkards (Isa. 5:22). Ewald's "in virtue, and not in debauchery," is also thus meant. But what is that: to eat in virtue, i.e., the dignity of a man? The author much rather represents them as eating in manly strength, i.e., as this requires it (cf. the plur. Ps. 71:16 and

Ps. 90:10), only not *bashti* (“in drunkenness—excess”), so that eating and drinking become objects in themselves. Kleinert, well: as men, and not as gluttons. The Masora makes, under *bashti*, ‘the note לִית, i.e., לִישׁ has here a meaning which it has not elsewhere, it signifies drunkenness; elsewhere it means the weft of a web. The Targ. gives the word the meaning of weakness (חֲלָשׁוּת), after the Midrash, which explains it by בְּחָשִׁישׁוֹ (in weakness); Menahem b. Saruk takes along with it in this sense נְשָׁתָה, Jer. 51:30. The Talm. *Shabbath* 10a, however, explains it rightly by שְׁלִיִּיץ.

Ecclesiastes 10:18. Since, now, v. 19 has only to do with princes, the following proverb of the consequences of sloth receives a particular reference in the frame of this mirror for princes: “Through being idle the roof falleth; and through laziness of the hands the house leaketh.” Ewald, Redslob, Olsh., Hitz., and Fürst, as already Aben Ezra, understand the dual עֲצָל of the two idle hands, but a similar attribut. adject.-dual is not found in Heb.; on the contrary, *ephraim*, *mrathaim* Jer. 50:21, *rish’athaim*, and, in a certain measure, also *riqmathaim*, speak in favour of the intensification of the dual; *’atsaltaim* is related to *’atslah*, as *Faulenzen* [being idle, living in idleness] to *Faulheit* [laziness], it means doubled, i.e., great, constant laziness (Ges. *H. Wört.*, and Böttch. in the *N. Aehrenl.*, under this passage). If *’atsaltaim* were an attribut. designation of the hands, then *shiphloth hadaim* would be lowness, i.e., the hanging down of the hands languidly by the side; the former would agree better with the second than with the first passage. Regarding the difference between *hammqareh* (the beams and joists of a house) and *hamqareh* (*contignans*), vid., note below. Since exceeding laziness leaves alone everything that could support the house, the beams fall (יָבֵדָה, *Niph.* מָבֵדָה), and the house drops, i.e., lets the rain through (יָדָרָה, with *o*, in spite of the intrans. signification); cf. the Arab. proverb of the three things which make a house

insufferable, under Prov. 19:13. Also the community, whom the king and the nobles represent, is a בַּיִת, as e.g., Israel is called the house of Jacob. If the rulers neglect their duty, abusing their high position in obeying their own lusts, then the kingdom (state) becomes as a dilapidated house, affording no longer any protection, and at last a *machshelah*, a ruined building, Isa. 3:6. It becomes so by slothfulness, and the prodigal love of pleasure associated therewith.

Ecclesiastes 10:19. “Meals they make into a pleasure, and wine cheereth the life, and money maketh everything serviceable.” By עֲשִׂים, wicked princes are without doubt thought of,—but not immediately, since 16b is too remote to give the subject to v. 19. The subject which *’osim* bears in itself (= *’osim hēm*) might be syntactically definite, as e.g., Ps. 33:5, אֶהְבֶּה, He, Jahve, loves, thus: those princes, or, from v. 18: such slothful men; but *’osim* is better rendered, like e.g., *omrim*, Ex. 5:16 (Ewald, § 200a), and as in the Mishna we read קוֹרֵין and the like with gramm. indefin. subj.: they make, but so that by it the slothful just designated, and those of a princely rank are meant (cf. a similar use of the *inf. abs.*, as here of the part. in the historical style, Isa. 22:13). Ginsburg’s rendering is altogether at fault: “They turn bread and wine which cheereth life into revelry.” If עֲשִׂה and לָקָם as its object stand together, the meaning is, “to prepare a feast,” Ezek. 4:15; cf. *’avad lhēm*, Dan. 5:1. Here, as there, *’osim lēhēm* signifies *coenam faciunt* (*parant*). The ל of ‘שֶׁל is not the sign of the factitive obj. (as *lēl*, Isa. 44:17), and thus not, as Hitz. supposes, the conditioning ל with which adv. conceptions are formed,—e.g., Lam. 4:5, לָמַטְּ, הָאֵדָה, where Jerome rightly translates, *voluptuose* (vid., E. Gerlach, *l.c.*),—but, which is most natural and is very appropriate, it is the ל of the aim or purpose: *non ad debitam corporis refectioem, sed ad hera ludicra et stulta gaudia* (Geier). שְׂחוק is laughter, as that to which he utters the sentence (Ecclesiastes 2:2): Thou art

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mad. It is incorrect, moreover, to take *lēhēm vyaim* together, and to render *ysammahh hayaim* as an attribut. clause to *yain*: this epitheton ornans of wine would here be a most unsuitable weakening of the figure intended. It is only an apparent reason for this, that what Ps. 104:15 says in praise of wine the author cannot here turn into a denunciatory reproach. Wine is certainly fitted to make glad the heart of a man; but here the subject of discourse is duty-forgetting idlers, to whom chiefly wine must be brought (Isa. 5:12) to cheer their life (this sluggard-life spent in feasting and revelry). The fut. יִשְׂמַח is meant in the same modal sense as יִגְבֹּר, 10a: wine must accomplish that for them. And they can feast and drink, for they have money, and money יַעַבְדֵּךְ ... הַכֹּל־. Luther hits the meaning: "Money must procure everything for them;" but the clause is too general; and better thus, after Jerome, the Zürich Bible: "unto money are all things obedient." The old Jewish interpreters compare Hos. 2:23f., where עָנָה, with *accus. petentis*, signifies, "to answer a request, to gratify a desire." But in the passage before us הַכֹּל is not the obj. accus. of *petentis*, but *petiti*; for 'anah is connected with the accus. of that to which one answers as well as of that which one answers, e.g., Job 40:2, cf. 9:3. It is unnecessary, with Hitzig, to interpret יַעַבְדֵּךְ as *Hiph.*: Money makes all to hear (him who has the money),—makes it that nothing is refused to his wish. It is the *Kal*: Money answers to every demand, hears every wish, grants whatever one longs for, helps to all; as Menander says: "Silver and gold,—these are, according to my opinion, the most useful gods; if these have a place in the house, wish what thou wilt (εὔξαι τί βούλει), all will be thine;" and Horace, *Epod.* i. 6. 36 s.:
*"Scilicet uxorem cum dote fidemque et amicos
Et genus et formam regina pecunia donat."*
The author has now described the king who is a misfortune and him who is a blessing to the land, and princes as they ought to be and as they ought not to be, but particularly luxurious

idle courtiers; there is now a warning given which has for its motive not only prudence, but also, according to 8:2, religiousness.
Ecclesiastes 10:20. "Curse not the king even in thy thought; and in thy bed-chamber curse not the rich; for the birds of the air carry away the sound, and the winged creature telleth the matter." In the Books of Daniel and Chronicles, מְדַע, in the sense of γυνῶσις, is a synon. of הַשְׂכִּיל and הַחֲכָמָה; here it is rightly translated by the LXX by συνείδησις; it does not correspond with the moral-religious idea of conscience, but yet it touches it, for it designates the quiet, inner consciousness (*Psychol.* p. 134) which judges according to moral criteria: even (*gam*, as e.g., Deut. 23:3) in the inner region of his thoughts one must not curse the king (cf. 7:4f.) nor the rich (which here, as at 6b, without distinction of the aristocracy of wealth and of birth, signifies those who are placed in a high princely position, and have wealth, the *nervus rerum*, at their disposal) in his bed-chamber, the innermost room of the house, where one thinks himself free from treachery, and thus may utter whatever he thinks without concealment (2 Kings 6:12): for the birds of the air may carry forth or bring out (Lat. *deferrent*, whence *delator*) that which is rumoured, and the possessor of a pair of wings (cf. Prov. 1:17), after the *Chethîb* (whose ה of the art. is unnecessarily erased by the *Kerî*, as at 3:6, 10): the possessor of wings (double-winged), shall further tell the matter. As to its meaning, it is the same as the proverb quoted by the Midrash: "walls have ears." Geier thinks of the swallows which helped to the discovery of Bessus, the murderer of his father, and the cranes which betrayed the murderer of Ibycus, as comparisons approaching that which is here said. There would certainly be no hyperbole if the author thought of carrier-pigeons (Paxton, Kitto) in the service of espionage. But the reason for the warning is hyperbolic, like an hundred others in all languages:
*"Aures fert paries, oculos nemus: ergo cavere
Debet qui loquitur, ne possint verba nocere."*

Act Prudently, But Not Too Prudently—The Future is God's; Enjoy Life—The World to Come is Dark, 11:1–8

There are interpreters (as e.g., Zöckl.) who regard the concluding part of the book as commencing with 11:1, and do not acknowledge any connection with that which immediately precedes; but from 10:16 the book draws to its conclusion. לָחַם, 10:19, affords an external connection for the proverb here following; but, since the proverb 10:20 lies between, the sequence after the same catchword is uncertain. Whether there is here a more inward connection, and what it is, is determined by the interpretation of 11:1, which proceeds in two fundamentally different directions, the one finding therein recommended unscrupulous beneficence, the other an unscrupulous spirit of enterprise. We decide in favour of the latter: it is a call, derived from commercial pursuits, to engage in fresh enterprise.

Ecclesiastes 11

Ecclesiastes 11:1. "Let thy bread go forth over the watery mirror: for in the course of many days shalt thou find it." Most interpreters, chiefly the Talm., Midrash, and Targ., regard this as an exhortation to charity, which although practised without expectation of reward, does not yet remain unrewarded at last. An Aram. proverb of Ben Sira's (vid., Buxtorf's *Florilegium*, p. 171) proceeds on this interpretation: "Scatter thy bread on the water and on the dry land; in the end of the days thou findest it again." Knobel quotes a similar Arab. proverb from Diez' *Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien* (Souvenirs of Asia), II 106: "Do good; cast thy bread into the water: thou shalt be repaid some day." See also the proverb in Goethe's *Westöst. Divan*, compared by Herzfeld. Voltaire, in his *Précis de l'Écclésiaste en vers*, also adopts this rendering:

*Repandez vos bien faits avec magnificence,
Même aux moins vertueux ne les refusez pas.
Ne vous informez pas de leur reconnaissance—*

Il est grand, il est beau de faire des ingrats.

That instead of "into the water (the sea)" of these or similar proverbs, Koheleth uses here the expression, "on the face of (עַל־פְּנֵי) the waters," makes no difference: Eastern bread has for the most part the form of cakes, and is thin (especially such as is prepared hastily for guests, *'ughoth* or *matstsoth*, Gen. 18:6; 19:3); so that when thrown into the water, it remains on the surface (like a chip of wood, Hos. 10:7), and is carried away by the stream. But חֲלֵשׁ, with this reference of the proverb to beneficence, is strange; instead of it, the word חֲלֵשָׁהּ was rather to be expected; the LXX renders by ἀπόστειλον; the Syr., *shadar*; Jerome, *mitte*; Venet. πέμπε; thus by none is the pure idea of casting forth connected with חֲלֵשׁ. And the reason given does not harmonize with this reference: "for in the course of many days (*brov yamin*, cf. *mērov yamim*, Isa. 24:22) wilt thou find it" (not "find it again," which would be expressed by תְּשׁוּבָה תִּמְצָא). This indefinite designation of time, which yet definitely points to the remote future, does not thus indicate that the subject is the recompense of noble self-renunciation which is sooner or later rewarded, and often immediately, but exactly accords with the idea of commerce carried on with foreign countries, which expects to attain its object only after a long period of waiting. In the proper sense, they send their bread over the surface of the water who, as Ps. 107:33 expresses, "do business in great waters." It is a figure taken from the corn trade of a seaport (vid., p. 654), an illustration of the thought: seek thy support in the way of bold, confident adventure. Bread in חֲלֵשׁ is the designation of the means of making a living or gain, and bread in חֲלֵשָׁהּ the designation of the gain (cf. 9:11). Hitzig's explanation: Throw thy bread into the water = venture thy hope, is forced; and of the same character are all the attempts to understand the word of agricultural pursuits; e.g., by van der Palm: *sementem fac muxta aquas* (or: *in loca irrigua*); Grätz even

translates: "Throw thy corn on the surface of the water," and understands this, with the fancy of a Martial, of begetting children. Mendelssohn is right in remarking that the exhortation shows itself to be that of Koheleth-Solomon, whose ships traded to Tarshish and Ophir. Only the reference to self-sacrificing beneficence stands on a level with it as worthy of consideration. With Ginsburg, we may in this way say that a proverb as to our dealings with those who are above us, is followed by a proverb regarding those who are below us; with those others a proverb regarding judicious courageous venturing, ranks itself with a proverb regarding a rashness which is to be discountenanced; and the following proverb does not say: Give a portion, distribute of that which is thine, to seven and also to eight: for it is well done that thou gainest for thee friends with the unrighteous mammon for a time when thou thyself mayest unexpectedly be in want; but it is a prudent rule which is here placed by the side of counsel to bold adventure:

Ecclesiastes 11:2. "Divide the portion into seven, yea, eight (parts); for thou knowest not what evil shall happen on the earth." With that other interpretation, עָלִידָה was to be expected instead of *'al-haarets*; for an evil spreading abroad over the earth, a calamity to the land, does not yet fall on every one without exception; and why was not the רָעָה designated directly as personal? The impression of the words תֵּן ... לְשֵׁם, established in this general manner, is certainly this, that on the supposition of the possibility of a universal catastrophe breaking in, they advise a division of our property, so that if we are involved in it, our all may not at once be lost, but only this or that part of it, as Jacob, Gen. 32:9, says. With reference to 1a, it is most natural to suppose that one is counselled not to venture his all in one expedition, so that if this is lost in a storm, all might not at once be lost (Mendelss., Preston, Hitz., Stuart); with the same right, since 1a is only an example, the counsel may be regarded as denoting that one must not commit

all to one caravan; or, since in v. 2 לחמך is to be represented not merely as a means of obtaining gain, that one ought not to lay up all he has gathered in one place, Judg. 6:11, Jer. 41:8 (Nachtigal); in short, that one ought not to put all into one business, or, as we say literally, venture all on one card. חֶלֶק is either the portion which one possesses, i.e., the measure of the possession that has fallen to him (Ps. 16:5), or נָתַן חֶלֶק means to make portions, to undertake a division. In the first case, the expression נתן ... לְ follows the scheme of Gen. 17:20: make the part into seven, yea, into eight (parts); in the second case, the scheme of Josh. 18:5: make division into seven, etc. We prefer the former, because otherwise that which is to be divided remains unknown; חֶלֶק is the part now in possession: make the much or the little that thou hast into seven or yet more parts. The rising from seven to eight is as at Job 5:19, and like the expression *ter quaterque*, etc. The same inverted order of words as in 2b is found in Esth. 6:3; 2 Kings 8:12.

Ecclesiastes 11:3. With this verse there is not now a transition, εἰς ἄλλο γένος (as when one understands v. 1f. of beneficence); the thoughts down to v. 6 move in the same track. "When the clouds are full of rain, they empty themselves on the earth: and if a tree fall in the south, or in the north—the place where the tree falleth, there it lieth." Man knows not—this is the reference of the verse backwards—what misfortune, as e.g., hurricane, flood, scarcity, will come upon the earth; for all that is done follows fixed laws, and the binding together of cause and effect is removed beyond the influence of the will of man, and also in individual cases beyond his knowledge. The interpunction of 3 a: אִם יִמְלֹאוּ הָעֲבִים גְּשָׁם (not as by v. d. Hooght, Mendelss., and elsewhere הָעֲבִים, but as the Venet. 1515, 21, Michael. הָעֲבִים, for immediately before the tone syllable *Mahpach* is changed into *Mercha*) appears on the first glance to be erroneous, and much rather it appears that the accentuation ought to be

אם-ימלאו העבים גשם על-הארץ יריקו

but on closer inspection גשם is rightly referred to the conditional antecedent, for “the clouds could be filled also with hail, and thus not pour down rain” (Hitz.). As in 4:10, the fut. stands in the protasis as well as in the apodosis. If A is done, then as a consequence B will be done; the old language would prefer the words נמלאו ...

ואם (כי) והריקו, Ewald, § 355b: as often as A happens, so always happens B. יריקו carries (without needing an external object to be supplied), as internally transitive, its object is itself: if the clouds above fill themselves with rain, they make an emptying, i.e., they empty themselves downwards. Man cannot, if the previous condition is fixed, change the necessary consequences of it.

The second conditioning clause: *si ceciderit lignum ad austrum aut ad aquilonem, in quocunque loco cociderit ibi erit*. Thus rightly Jerome (vid., above, p. 609). It might also be said: *ואם-יפול עץ אם בדרום ואם בצפון*, and if a tree falls, whether it be in the south or in the north; this *sive ... sive* would thus be a parenthetic parallel definition. Thus regarded, the protasis as it lies before us consists in itself, as the two *vim* in Amos 9:3, of two correlated halves: “And if a tree falls on the south side, and (or) if it fall on the north side,” i.e., whether it fall on the one or on the other. The *Athnach*, which more correctly belongs to יריקו, sets off in an expressive way the protasis over against the apodosis; that a new clause begins with *vim yippol* is unmistakable; for the contrary, there was need for a chief disjunctive to *בץ*. *Mqom* is *accus. loci* for *bimqom*, as at Esth. 4:3; 8:17. *Sham* is rightly not connected with the relat. clause (cf. Ezek. 6:13); the relation is the same as at 1:7. The fut. יהוא is formed from הָוָה, whence 2:22, as at Neh. 6:6, and in the Mishna (*Aboth*, vi. 1; *Aboda zara*, iii. 8) the part. הָוָה. As the jussive form יהי is formed from יהִי, so יהוה passes into יהו, which is here written יהוא. Hitzig supposes that, according to the passage

before us and Job 37:6, the word appears to have been written with א, in the sense of “to fall.” Certainly הוה has the root-signification of *delabi, cadere*, and derives from thence the meaning of *accidere, existere, esse* (vid., under Job 37:6); in the Book of Job, however, הוה may have this meaning as an Arabism; in the *usus loq.* of the author of the Book of Koheleth it certainly was no longer so used. Rather it may be said that יהו had to be written with an א added to distinguish it from the abbreviated tetragramm, if the א, as in אָבוּא, Isa. 28:12, and הָלָה, Josh. 10:24, does not merely represent the long terminal vowel (cf. the German-Jewish דוא = thou, דיא = the, etc.). Moreover, יהוא, as written, approaches the Mishnic inflection of the fut. of the verb הוה; the sing. there is יהא, and the plur. יהו, according to which Rashi, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi interpret יהוא here also as plur.; Luzzatto, § 670, hesitates, but in his Commentary he takes it as sing., as the context requires: there will it (the tree) be, or in accordance with the more lively meaning of the verb הוה: there will it find itself, there it continues to lie. As it is an invariable law of nature according to which the clouds discharge the masses of water that have become too heavy for them, so it is an unchangeable law of nature that the tree that has fallen before the axe or the tempest follows the direction in which it is impelled. Thus the future forms itself according to laws beyond the control of the human will, and man also has no certain knowledge of the future; wherefore he does well to be composed as to the worst, and to adopt prudent preventive measures regarding it. This is the reference of v. 3 looking backwards. But, on the other hand, from this incalculableness of the future—this is the reference of v. 3 looking forwards—he ought not to vie up fresh venturesome activity, much rather he ought to abstain from useless and impeding calculations and scruples.

Ecclesiastes 11:4. “He who observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.” The proverb is not to be understood literally, but in the spirit of the whole *paraenesis*: it is not directed against the provident observation, guided by experience, of the monitions and warnings lying in the present condition of the weather, but against that useless, because impossible, calculation of the coming state of the weather, which waits on from day to day, from week to week, till the right time for sowing and reaping has passed away. The seed-time requires rain so as to open up and moisten the ground; he who has too much hesitation observes (שמר, as at Jos 39:1) the wind whether it will bring rain (Prov. 25:23), and on that account puts off the sowing of the seed till it is too late. The time of harvest requires warmth without rain (Prov. 26:1); but the scrupulous and timid man, who can never be sure enough, looks at the clouds (cf. Isa. 47:13), scents rainy weather, and finds now and never any security for the right weather for the gathering in of the fruits of the field. He who would accomplish and gain anything, must have confidence and courage to venture something; the conditions of success cannot be wholly reckoned upon, the future is in the hand of God, the All-Conditioning.

Ecclesiastes 11:5. “As thou hast no knowledge what is the way of the wind, like as the bones in the womb of her who is with child; so thou knowest not the work of God who accomplisheth all.” Luther, after Jerome, renders rightly: “As thou knowest not the way of the wind, and how the bones in the mother’s womb do grow; so,” etc. The clause, *instar ossium in ventre praegnantis*, is the so-called *comparatio decurtata* for *instar ignorantiae tuae ossium*, etc., like thy ignorance regarding the bones, i.e., the growth of the bones. כִּבְּרָהּ, because more closely defined by הַמָּהּ, has not the art. used elsewhere after ׀ of comparison; an example for the regular syntax (vid., Riehm, under Ps. 17:12) is found at Deut. 32:2. That man has no power over the wind, we read at

8:8; the way of the wind he knows not (John 3:8), because he has not the wind under his control: man knows fundamentally only that which he rules. Regarding the origin and development of the embryo as a secret which remained a mystery to the Israel. Chokma, vid., *Psychol.* p. 209ff. For עָצַם, cf. Ps. 139:15 and Job 10:11. Regarding *mleah*, pregnant (like the Lat. *plena*), vid., above, p. 639. With fine discrimination, the fut. לֹא תִדְעַ in the apodosis interchanges with the particip. יֹדֵעַ יִדְעַ in the protasis, as when we say: If thou knowest not that, as a consequence thou shalt also not know this. As a man must confess his ignorance in respect to the way of the wind, and the formation of the child in the mother’s womb; so in general the work of God the All-Working lies beyond his knowledge: he can neither penetrate it in the entireness of its connection, nor in the details of its accomplishment. The idea *’oseh kol*, Isa. 44:24, is intentionally unfolded in a fut. relat. clause, because here the fut. in the natural world, as well as in human history, comes principally into view. For that very reason the words אֲתֵּדְעָה־בָּל are also used, not: (as in passages where there is a reference to the world of creation in its present condition) *eth-kol-elleh*, Isa. 66:2. Also the growth of the child in the mother’s womb is compared to the growth of the future in the womb of the present, out of which it is born (Prov. 27:1; cf. Zeph. 2:2). What is established by this proof that man is not lord of the future,—viz. that in the activity of his calling he should shake off anxious concern about the future,—is once again inferred with the combination of what is said in vv. 4 and 2 (according to our interpretation, here confirmed).

Ecclesiastes 11:6. “In the morning sow thy seed, and towards evening withdraw not thine hand; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether both together shall well succeed.” The cultivation of the land is the prototype of all labour (Gen. 2:15b), and sowing is therefore an emblem of all activity in

one's pursuit; this general meaning for אֲלֵךְ ... דָּדִי (like 7:18; synon. with אֲלֵךְ ... דָּדִי, Josh. 10:6, of the older language) is to be accepted. The parallel word to *babokër* is not *ba'ëTrëv*; for the cessation from work (Judg. 19:16; Ps. 104:23) must not be excluded, but incessant labour (cf. Luke 9:62) must be continued until the evening. And as v. 2 counsels that one should not make his success depend exclusively on one enterprise, but should divide that which he has to dispose of, and at the same time make manifold trials; so here also we have the reason for restless activity of manifold labour from morning till evening: success or failure (Ecclesiastes 5:5b) is in the hand of God,—man knows not which (*quid*, here, according to the sense, *utrum*) will prosper (vid., regarding *kasher*, above, p. 638), whether (אִם) this or (וְאִם) that, and whether (אִם וְאִם), etc.; vid., regarding the three-membered disjunctive question, Ewald, § 361; and regarding *këhhad*, above, p. 638; it is in common use in the more modern language, as e.g., also in the last benediction of the *Shemone-Esra*: באחד ... ברבנו, "bless us, our Father, us all together." שְׁנֵיהֶם goes back to the two הָאֵלֹהִים, understood neut. (as at 7:18; cf. on the contrary, 6:5). The LXX rightly: καὶ ἐὰν (better: εἴτε) τὰ δύο ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ ἀγαθὰ. Luther, who translates: "and if both together it shall be better," has been misled by Jerome.

The proverb now following shows its connection with the preceding by the copula *vav*. "The tendency of the advice in vv. 1, 2, 6, to secure guarantees for life, is justified in v. 7: life is beautiful, and worthy of being cared for." Thus Hitzig; but the connection is simpler. It is in the spirit of the whole book that, along with the call to earnest activity, there should be the call to the pleasant enjoyment of life: he who faithfully labours has a right to enjoy his life; and this joy of life, based on fidelity to one's calling, and consecrated by the fear of God, is the most real and the highest enjoyment here below. In this sense the *fruere vita* here connects itself with the *labora*:

Ecclesiastes 11:7, 8. "And sweet is the light, and pleasant it is for the eyes to see the sun; for if a man live through many years, he ought to rejoice in them all, and remember the days of darkness; that there will be many of them. All that cometh is vain." Dale translates the copula *vav* introducing v. 7 by "yes," and Bullock by "truly," both thus giving to it a false colouring. "Light," Zöckler remarks, stands here for "life." But it means only what the word denotes, viz., the light of life in this world (Ps. 56:14; Job 33:30), to which the sun, as the source of it, is related, as אִשְׁמֵךְ is to אִשׁ. Cf. Eurip. *Hippol.*, ὦ λαμπρὸς αἰθὴρ κ.τ.λ., and *Iphigen. in Aulis*, 1218–19, μὴ μ' ἀπολέσης κ.τ.λ.: "Destroy not my youth; to see the light is sweet," etc. The ה in אִשְׁמֵךְ has the short vowel *Pattach*, here and at 1 Sam. 16:7, after the Masora.

The *ki* beginning v. 8 is translated by Knobel, Hitz., Ewald, and others by "*ja*" (yes); by Heiligstedt, as if a negative preceded by *immo*; but as the *vav* of 7a is copulative "and," so here the *ki* is causal "for." If it had been said: man must enjoy himself as long as he lives, for the light is sweet, etc., then the joy would have its reason in the opportunity given for it. Instead of this, the occasion given for joy has its reason in this, that a man ought to rejoice, viz., according to God's arrangement and ordinance: the light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to see the sun; for it ought thus to be, that a man, however long he may live, should continue to enjoy his fair life, especially in view of the night which awaits him. *Ki im* are not here, as at 3:12; 8:15, where a negative precedes, to be taken together; but *ki* assigns the reason, and *im* begins a hypothetical protasis, as at Ex. 8:17, and frequently. *Im*, with the conclusion following, presents something impossible, as e.g., Ps. 50:12, *si esurirem*, or also the extreme of that which is possible as actual, e.g., Isa. 7:18, *si peccata vestra sint instar coccini*. In the latter case, the clause with the concessive particle may be changed into a sentence with a concessive conjunctive, as at Isa. 10:22: "for though thy people, O Israel, be as numerous as the sand of the sea;" and here: "though a man

may live ever so many years." The second *ki* after וְיִי is the explicat. *quod*, as at 2:24; 4:4; 8:17, etc.: he must remember the days of darkness, that there shall be many of them, and, at all events, not fewer than the many years available for the happy enjoyment of life. In this connection *kol-shebbā'* denotes all that will come after this life. If Hitz. remarks that the sentence: "All that is future is vanity," is a false thought, this may now also be said of his own sentence extracted from the words: "All that is, is transitory." For all that is done, in time may pass away; but it is not actually transitory (הֶבֶל). But the sentence also respects not all that is future, but all that comes after this life, which must appear as vain (*hēvel*) to him for whom, as for Koheleth, the future is not less veiled in the dark night of Hades, as it was for Horace, i. 4. 16 s.:

*"Jam te premet nox fabulaeque Manes
Et domus exilis Plutonia."*

Also, for Koheleth as for Horace, iv. 7. 16, man at last becomes *pulvis et umbra*, and that which thus awaits him is *hēvāl*. Tyler is right, that "the shadowy and unsubstantial condition of the dead and the darkness of Sheol" is thus referred to. הָבָא signifies not that which is *nascens*, but *futurum*, e.g., *Sanhedrin 27a*, "from the present וְלֵהבֵא and for the future" (for which, elsewhere, the expression לְעֵתִיד לָבֵא is used). The Venet. construes falsely: All (the days) in which vanity will overtake (him); and Luther, referring בֵּא as the 3rd pers. to the past, follows the misleading of Jerome. Rightly the LXX and Theod.: πᾶν τὸ ἐρχόμενον.

(B.) Finale, with an Epiphonema—11:9–12:7, 8

In 11:7, 8, having again reached the fundamental saying of his earthly eudaemonism, the author now discontinues this his *ceterum censeo*, and artistically rounds off his book; for having begun it with an *ouverture*, 1:2–11, he concludes it with a *finale*, 11:9–12:7. Man, in view of the long night of

death into which he goes forth, ought to enjoy the life granted to him. This fundamental thought of the book, to which the author has given a poetic colouring, 11:7, 8, now amplifies itself into an animated highly poetical call to a young man to enjoy life, but not without the consciousness that he must render unto God an account for it. That the call is addressed not to a man as such, but to the young man,—including, however, after the rule *a potiori fit denominatio*, young women,—is explained from this, that the *terminus a quo* of an intelligent, responsible enjoyment of life stands over against the *terminus ad quem*, the night of death, with its pre-intimation in hoary old age. Without any connecting word, and thus as a new point of departure, the *finale* begins:

Ecclesiastes 11:9. "Rejoice, young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know, that for all this God will bring thee to judgment." The parallel בְּיָמֶי shows that the *beth* in בְּיָמֶי (with י aspirated) does not introduce the reason of the joy, but the time suitable for it. Instead of *vyithav libbcha*, "let thy heart be of good cheer," as the expression might also be, the words are *vithivcha libbcha*, "make thy heart of good cheer to thee,"—so, viz., that from this centre brightness may irradiate thy countenance (Prov. 15:13) and thy whole personality, vid., *Psychologie*, p. 249. *Vhhuroth*, the period of youth, is here and at 12:1 = Num. 11:28, *vhhurim*, as the only once occurring *n'uroth*, Jer. 32:30, is = the elsewhere generally used *n'urim*; the form in *ōth* is the more modern (cf. *kluloth*, Jer. 2:2). "Ways of the heart" are thus ways into which the impulse of the heart leads, and which satisfy the heart. מְרֵ עֵין, at 6:9, designates the pleasure felt in the presence of the object before one; here, a sight which draws and fastens the eyes upon it. The *Chethîb* has the plur. מְרָאִי, which is known to the language (Dan. 1:15; Song 2:14), and which would here designate the multitude of the objects which delight the eyes, which is not unsuitable; the

Pih. הַלֵּךְ denotes also elsewhere, frequently, e.g., Ps. 131:1, walking, in an ethical sense; Hitz., Zöckl., and others interpret the first כ as specifying the sphere, and the second as specifying the norm ("according to the sight of thine eyes"); but they both introduce that wherein he ought to act freely and joyfully: in the ways of thy heart, into which it draws thee; and in the sight of thine eyes, towards which they direct themselves with interest. The LXX B. renders, "and not after the sight of thine eyes." This "not" (μή), which is wanting in A.C., is an interpolation, in view of the warning, Num. 15:39, against following the impulse of the heart and of the eyes; the Targ. also therefore has: "be prudent with reference to the sight of thine eyes." But this moralizing of the text is superfluous, since the call to the youthful enjoyment of life is accompanied with the *nota bene*: but know that God will bring thee to an account for all this; and thus it excludes sinful sensual desire. In the midst of an address, where a yet closer definition follows, בָּמַסָּ is thus punctuated, 12:14, Job 14:3, Ps. 143:3; here, in the conclusion of the sentence, it is בָּמַסָּ. Hitzig supposes that there is denoted by it, that the sins of youth are punished by chronic disease and abandonment in old age; Knobel and others understand by the judgment, the self-punishment of sins by all manner of evil consequences, which the O.T. looks upon as divinely inflicted penalties. But in view of the facts of experience, that God's righteous requital is in this life too frequently escaped, 8:14, the author, here and at 3:17; 12:14, postulates a final judgment, which removes the contradiction of this present time, and which must thus be in the future; he has no clear idea of the time and manner of this final judgment, but his faith in God places the certainty of it beyond all doubt. The call to rejoice is now completed by the call to avoid all that occasions inward and outward sorrow.

Ecclesiastes 11:10. "And remove sorrow from thy heart, and banish evil from thy flesh: for youth and age, not yet grown to grey hairs, are

vain." Jerome translates: *aufer iram a corde tuo*, and remarks in his *Comm.*: *in ira omnes perturbationes animi comprehendit*; but כָּעַס (R. כָּס, *contundere, confringere*) does not signify anger, but includes both anger and sorrow, and thus corresponds to the specific ideas, "sadness, moroseness, fretfulness." The clause following, Jerome translates: *et amove malitiam a carne tua*, with the remark: *in carnis malitia universas significat corporis voluptates*; but רָעָה is not taken in an ethical, but in a physical sense: כָּעַס is that which brings sorrow to the heart; and רָעָה, that which brings evil to the flesh (בְּשָׂר, *opp.* לֵב, 2:3, Prov. 14:30). More correctly than the Vulgate, Luther renders: "banish sorrow from thy heart, and put evil from thy body." He ought to free himself from that which is injurious to the inner and the outer man, and hurtfully affects it; for youth, destined for and disposed to joy, is *hēvēl*, i.e., transitory, and only too soon passes away. Almost all modern interpreters (excepting the Jewish), in view of Ps. 110:3, gives to שְׁחֵרוֹת the meaning of "the dawn of the morning;" but the connection with יְלֻדוֹת would then be tautological; the Mishn.-Midrash *usus loq.*, in conformity with which the Targ. translates, "days of black hair," proves that the word does not go back to שְׁחָר, morning dawn, morning-red, but immediately to שְׁחֹר, black (vid., above, p. 641), and as the contrast of שִׁיבָה (non-bibl. שִׁיבוֹת, 'סִיב, 'סָב), *canities*, denotes the time of black hair, and thus, in the compass of its conception, goes beyond יְלֻדוֹת, since it comprehends both the period of youth and of manhood, and thus the whole period during which the strength of life remains unbroken.

Ecclesiastes 12

Ecclesiastes 12:1. With 12:1 (where, inappropriately, a new chapter begins, instead of beginning with 11:9) the call takes a new course, resting its argument on the transitoriness of youth: "And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, ere the days of

evil come, and the years draw nigh, of which thou shalt say: I have no pleasure in them." The *plur. majest.* בּוֹרְאֵיִם = עֲשִׂים as a designation of the Creator, Job 35:10, Isa. 54:5, Ps. 149:2; in so recent a book it cannot surprise us (cf. above, p. 709), since it is also not altogether foreign to the post-bibl. language. The expression is warranted, and the Midrash ingeniously interprets the combination of its letters. Regarding the words *'ad asher lo*, commonly used in the Mishna (e.g., *Horajoth* iii. 3; *Nedarim* x. 4), or *'ad shello* (Targ. *'ad dlo*), *antequam*, vid., above, p. 640. The days of evil (viz., at least, first, of bodily evil, cf. *κακία*, Matt. 6:34) are those of feeble, helpless old age, perceptibly marking the failure of bodily and mental strength; parallel to these are the years of which (*asher*, as at 1:10) one has to say: I have no pleasure in them (*bahēm* for *bahēn*, as at 2:6, *mehēm* for *mehēn*). These evil days, adverse years, are now described symptomatically, and that in an allegorical manner, for the "ere" of 1*b* is brought to a grand unfolding.

Ecclesiastes 12:2. "Ere the sun becomes dark, and the light, and the moon, and the stars, and the clouds return after the rain." Umbreit, Elster, and Ginsburg find here the thought: ere death overtakes thee; the figure under which the approach of death is described being that of a gathering storm. But apart from other objections (vid., Gurlitt, "zur Erlk. d. B. Koheleth," in *Sutd. u. Krit.* 1865), this idea is opposed by the consideration that the author seeks to describe how man, having become old, goes forth (הֵלֵךְ, 5*b*) to death, and that not till v. 7 does he reach it. Also Taylor's view, that what precedes 5*b* is as a dirge expressing the feelings experienced on the day of a person's death, is untenable; it is discredited already by this, that it confuses together the days of evil, 1*b*, and the many days of darkness, i.e., the long night of Hades, 11:8; and besides, it leaves unanswered the question, what is the meaning of the clouds returning after the rain. Hahn replies: The rain is death, and the return is the entrance again into the nothingness which went before the entrance into this life. Knobel, as already Luther

and also Winzer (who had made the exposition of the Book of Koheleth one of the labours of his life), sees in the darkening of the sun, etc., a figure of the decay of hitherto joyful prosperity; and in the clouds after the rain a figure of the cloudy days of sorrow which always anew visit those who are worn out by old age. Hitz., Ewald, Vaih., Zöckl., and Tyler, proceeding from thence, find the unity of the separate features of the figure in the comparison of advanced old age, as the winter of life to the rainy winter of the (Palestinian) year. That is right. But since in the sequel obviously the *marasmus senilis* of the separate parts of the body is set forth in allegorical enigmatic figures, it is asked whether this allegorical figurative discourse does not probably commence in v. 2. Certainly the sun, moon, and stars occur also in such pictures of the night of judgment, obscuring all the lights of the heavens, as at Isa. 13:10; but that here, where the author thus ranks together in immediate sequence הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ ... הַיָּרֵחַ, and as he joins the stars with the moon, so the light with the sun, he has not connected the idea of certain corresponding things in the nature and life of man with these four emblems of light, is yet very improbable. Even though it might be impossible to find out that which is represented, yet this would be no decisive argument against the significance of the figures; the *canzones* in Dante's *Convito*, which he there himself interprets, are an example that the allegorical meaning which a poet attaches to his poetry may be present even where it cannot be easily understood or can only be conjectured. The attempts at interpreting these figures have certainly been wholly or for the most part unfortunate. We satisfy ourselves by registering only the oldest: their glosses are in matter tasteless, but they are at least of linguistic interest. A Barajtha, *Shabbath* 151-152*a*, seeking to interpret this closing picture of the Book of Koheleth, says of the sun and the light: "this is the brow and the nose;" of the moon: "this is the soul;" of the stars: "this the cheeks." Similarly, but varying a little, the Midrash to Lev. c. 18 and to Koheleth: the sun = the

brightness of the countenance; light = the brow; the moon = the nose; the stars = the upper part of the cheeks (which in an old man fall in). Otherwise, but following the Midrash more than the Talmud, the Targum: the sun = the stately brightness of thy countenance; light = the light of thine eyes; the moon = the ornament of thy cheeks; the stars = the apple of thine eye. All the three understand the rain of wine (Talm. בכי), and the clouds of the veil of the eyes (Targ.: “thy eye-lashes”), but without doing justice to שוב אחר; only one repulsive interpretation in the Midrash takes these words into account. In all these interpretations there is only one grain of truth, this, viz., that the moon in the Talm. is interpreted of the נשמה, *anima*, for which the more correct word would have been נפש; but it has been shown, *Psychol.* p. 154, that the Jewish, like the Arab. psychology, reverses terminologically the relation between רוח (נשמה), spirit, and נפש, soul.

The older Christian interpretations are also on the right track. Glassius (as also v. Meyer and Smith in “The portraiture of old age”) sees in the sun, light, etc., emblems of the *interna microcosmi lumina mentis*; and yet better, Chr. Friedr. Bauer (1732) sees in 2a a representation of the thought: “ere understanding and sense fail thee.” We have elsewhere shown that רוח חיים (נשמת) and נפש חיה (from which nowhere נפש חיים are related to each other as the *principium principians* and *principium principatum* of life (*Psychol.* p. 79), and as the root distinctions of the male and female, of the predominantly active and the receptive (*Psychol.* p. 103). Thus the figurative language of v. 3 is interpreted in the following manner. The sun is the male spirit רוח (which, like שמש, is used in both genders) or נשמה, after Prov. 20:27, a light of Jahve which penetrates with its light of self-examination and self-knowledge the innermost being of man, called by the Lord, Matt. 6:23 (cf. 1 Cor. 2:11), “the light that is in thee.” The light, viz., the clear

light of day proceeding from the sun, is the activity of the spirit in its unweakened intensity: sharp apprehension, clear thought, faithful and serviceable memory. The moon is the soul; for, according to the Heb. idea, the moon, whether it is called ירח or לְבָנָה is also in relation to the sun a figure of the female (cf. Gen. 37:9f., where the sun in Joseph’s dream = Jacob-Israel, the moon = Rachel); and that the soul, viz., the animal soul, by means of which the spirit becomes the principle of the life of the body (Gen. 2:7), is related to the spirit as female σκεῦος ἀσθενέστερον, is evident from passages such as Ps. 42:6, where the spirit supports the soul (*animus animam*) with its consolation. And the stars? We are permitted to suppose in the author of the book of Koheleth a knowledge, as Schrader has shown, of the old Babyl.-Assyr. seven astral gods, which consisted of the sun, moon, and the five planets; and thus it will not be too much to understand the stars, as representing the five planets, of the five senses (Mish. הרגשות, later חושים, cf. the verb, 2:25) which mediate the receptive relation of the soul to the outer world (*Psychol.* p. 233). But we cannot see our way further to explain 2b patholo.-anatom., as Geier is disposed to do: *Nonnulli haec accommodant ad crassos illos ac pituosos senum vapores ex debili ventriculo in cerebrum adscendentes continuo, ubi itidem imbres (גשם) h.e. destillationes creberrimae per oculos lippientes, per nares guttatim fluentes, per os subinde excreans cet., quae sane defluxiones, tussis ac catharri in juvenibus non ita sunt frequentia, quippe ubi calor multo adhuc fortior, consumens dissipansque humores.* It is enough to understand עָבִים of cases of sickness and attacks of weakness which disturb the power of thought, obscure the consciousness, darken the mind, and which *ahhar haggëshëm*, after they have once overtaken him and then have ceased, quickly again return without permitting him long to experience health. A cloudy day is = a day of misfortune, Joel 2:2, Zeph. 1:15; an overflowing rain is a scourge of God, Ezek. 13:13; 38:22; and one visited by misfortune after misfortune complains, Ps. 42:8 [7]: “Deep

calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.”

Ecclesiastes 12:3. To the thought: Ere the mind and the senses begin to be darkened, and the winter of life with its clouds and storms approaches, the further details here following stand in a subordinate relation: “That day when the watchers of the house tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, and the grinders rest, because they have become few, and the women looking out of the windows are darkened.” Regarding עֵינַיִם with art.: *eo (illo) tempore*, vid., under Song 8:8. What follows is regarded by Winzer, with Mich., Spohr, and partly Nachtigal, as a further description of the night to which old age, v. 2, is compared: Watchers then guard the house; labourers are wearied with the labours and cares of the day; the maids who have to grind at the mill have gone to rest; and almost all have already fallen asleep; the women who look out from the windows are unrecognisable, because it has become dark. But what kind of cowardly watchers are those who “tremble,” and what kind of (*per antiphrasin*) strong men who “bow themselves” at evening like children when they have belly-ache! Ginsburg regards vv. 2–5 as a continuation of the description of the consequences of the storm under which human life comes to an end: the last consequence is this, that they who experience it lose the taste for almonds and the appetite for locusts. But what is the meaning of this quaint figure? it would certainly be a meaningless and aimless digression. Taylor hears in this verse the mourning for the dead from v. 2, where death is described: the watchers of the house tremble; the strong men bow themselves, viz., from sorrow, because of the blank death has made in the house, etc.; but even supposing that this picture had a connection in v. 2, how strange would it be!—the lookers out at the windows must be the “ladies,” who are fond of amusing themselves at windows, and who now—are darkened. Is there anything more comical than such little ladies having become darkened

(whether externally or internally remains undetermined)? However one may judge of the figurative language of v. 2, v. 3 begins the allegorical description of hoary old age after its individual bodily symptoms; interpreters also, such as Knobel, Hitz., and Ewald, do not shrink from seeking out the significance of the individual figures after the old Haggadic manner. The Talm. says of *shomrē habbayith*: these are the loins and ribs; of the *anshē hehhayil*: these are the bones; of *harooth baarūbboth*: these, the eyes. The Midrash understand the watchers of the house, of the knees of the aged man; the men of strength, of his ribs or arms; the women at the mill, of the digestive organs (סִמְכָה, the stomach, from *omasum*); those who have become few, of the teeth; the women looking out at the window, of the eyes; another interpretation, which by *harooth* thinks of the lungs, is not worth notice. Here also the Targ. principally follows the Midrash: it translates the watchers of the house by “thy knees;” strong men by “thine arms;” the women at the mill by “the teeth of thy mouth;” the women who look out at the window by “thine eyes.” These interpretations for the most part are correct, only those referable to the internal organs are in bad taste; references to these must be excluded from the interpretation, for weakness of the stomach, emphysema of the lungs, etc., are not appropriate as poetical figures. The most common biblical figures of the relation of the spirit or the soul to the body is, as we have shown, *Psychol.* p. 227, that of the body as of the house of the inner man. This house, as that of an old man, is on all sides in a ruinous condition. The *shomrē habbayith* are the arms terminating in the hands, which bring to the house whatever is suitable for it, and keep away from it whatever threatens to do it injury; these protectors of the house have lost their vigour and elasticity (Gen. 49:24), they tremble, are palsied (רָעַו, from רָעַע, *Pilp.* רָעַע, bibl. and Mishn.: to move violently hither and thither, to tremble, to shake), so that they are able neither to grasp securely, to hold fast and use, nor actively to keep back and forcibly avert

evil. *Anshē hēhhayil* designates the legs, for the *shoqē hīsh* are the seat of his strength, Ps. 147:10; the legs of a man in the fulness of youthful strength are like marble pillars, Song 10:15; but those of the old man *hith'authu* (*Hithpa.* only here) have bowed themselves, they have lost their tight form, they are shrunken (בְּרַעוּת, Job 4:4, etc.) and loose; 4 Macc. 4:5 calls this τὴν ἐκ τοῦ γήρωος νοθρότητα ποδῶν ἐπικύφωον. To maidens who grind (cf. חֲטָבֵי בָּרָה, Num. 11:8 and Isa. 47:2) the corn by means of a hand-mill are compared the teeth, the name of which in the old language is masc., but in the modern (cf. Prov. 29:19), as also in the Syr. and Arab., is fem.; the reference of the figure to these instruments for grinding is not to be missed; the Arab. *ḥīnat* and the Syr. *ṭahonto* signify *dens molaris*, and we now call 6 of the 32 teeth *Mahlzähne* (molar teeth, or grinders); the Greeks used for them the word μύλαι (Ps. 57:7, LXX). Regarding חֲטָבֵי בָּרָה, LXX ἤργησαν (= ἀεργοὶ ἐγενήθησαν), vid., above, p. 637 The clause כִּי יוֹטְטוּ (LXX ὅτι ὠλιγόθησαν) assigns the reason that the grinders rest, i.e., are not at work, that they have become few: they stand no longer in a row; they are isolated, and (as is to be supposed) are also in themselves defective. Taylor interprets *mi'etu* transitively: the women grinding rest when they have wrought a little, i.e., they interrupt their labour, because on account of the occurrence of death, guests are now no longer entertained; but the beautiful appropriate allegory maintains its place against this supposed lamentation for the dead; also יוֹטְטוּ does not signify to accomplish a little (Targ.), but to take away, to become few (LXX, Syr., Jerome, Venet. Luther), as such as *Pih.* as 10:10, קָהָה, to become blunt. And by חֲטָבֵי בָּרָה we are not to think, with Taylor, of women such as Sidera's mother or Michal, who look out of the window, but of the eyes, more exactly the apples of the eyes, to which the *orbita* (LXX ἐν ταῖς ὀπαῖς; Symm. διὰ τῶν ὀπῶν) and the eyelids with the eye-lashes are related as a window is to those who look out; אֶרְבָּבָה

(from אֶרְבָּבָה, R. רב, to entwine firmly and closely) is the window, consisting of a lattice of wood; the eyes are, as Cicero (*Tusc.* i. 20) calls them, *quasi fenestrae animi*; the soul-eyes, so to speak, without which it could not experience what sight is, look by means of the external eyes; and these soul-bodily eyes have become darkened in the old man, the power of seeing is weakened, and the experiences of sight are indistinct, the light of the eyes is extinguished (although not without exception, Deut. 34:7). **Ecclesiastes 12:4.** From the eyes the allegory proceeds to the mouth, and the repugnance of the old man to every noise disturbing his rest: "And the doors to the street are closed, when the mill sounds low; and he rises up at the voice of a bird; and all the daughters of song must lower themselves." By the door toward the street the Talm. and Midrash understand the pores or the emptying members of the body,—a meaning so far from being ignoble, that even in the Jewish morning prayer a *Beracha* is found in these words: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the world, who hast wisely formed man, and made for him manifold apertures and cavities. It is manifest and well known before the throne of Thy Majesty, that if one of these cavities is opened, or one of these apertures closed, it is impossible for him to exist and to stand before Thee; blessed art Thou, O Lord, the Physician of the body, and who doest wondrous words!" The words which follow אֶרְבָּבָה ... חֲטָבֵי בָּרָה are accordingly to be regarded as assigning a reason for this closing: the non-appearance of excretion has its reason in defective digestion in this, that the stomach does not grind (Talm.: בשביל קורקבן וגו'). But the dual דְּלִתִּים suggests a pair of similar and related members, and אֶרְבָּבָה a pair of members open before the eyes, and not such as modesty requires to be veiled. The Targum therefore understands the shutting of the doors properly; but the mills, after the indication lying in חֲטָבֵי בָּרָה [grinding maids], it understands of the organs of eating and tasting, for it translates: "thy feet will be fettered, so that thou canst not go out into the street; and

appetite will fail thee.” But that is an awkward amalgamation of the literal with the allegorical, which condemns itself by this, that it separates the close connection of the two expressions required by **בְּשֹׁפֵל**, which also may be said of the reference of **דְּלֹת** to the ears, into which no sound, even from the noisy market, penetrates (Gurlitt, Grätz). We have for **דְּלֹתִים** a key, already found by Aben Ezra, in Job 41:6 [2], where the jaws of the leviathan are called **דְּלֹתַי פָּנָי**; and as Herzf. and Hitz. explain, so Samuel Aripol in his *Commentary*, which appeared in Constantinople, 1855, rightly: “He calls the jaws **דְּלֹתִים**, to denote that not two **דְּלֹתוֹת** in two places, but in one place, are meant, after the manner of a door opening out to the street, which is large, and consists of two folds or wings, **דְּלֹתוֹת**, which, like the lips (**הַשִּׁפְתַּיִם**, better: the jaws), form a whole in two parts; and the meaning is, that at the time of old age the lips are closed and drawn in, because the teeth have disappeared, or, as the text says, because the noise of the mill is low, just because he has no teeth to grind with.” The connection of **סִגְרוֹ** and **בְּשֹׁפֵל** is, however, closer still: the jaws of an old man are closed externally, for the sound of the mill is low; i.e., since, when one masticates his food with the jaws of a toothless mouth, there is heard only a dull sound of this chewing (*Mumpfelns*, vid., Wiegand’s *Deut. W.B.*), i.e., laborious masticating. He cannot any more crack or crunch and break his food, one hears only a dull munching and sucking.—The voice of the mouth (Bauer, Hitz., Gurlitt, Zöckl.) cannot be the meaning of **קוֹל הַט**; the set of teeth (Gurlitt indeed substitutes, *3b*, the cavity of the mouth) is not the organ of voice, although it contributes to the formation of certain sounds of words, and is of importance for the full sound of the voice.

בְּשׂוֹק, “to the street,” is here = on the street side; **שֹׁפֵל** is, as at Prov. 16:19, infin. (Symmachus: ἀγρειωθείσης τῆς φωνῆς; the Venet.: ἐν τῷ ταπεινῶσθαι τὴν φωνήν), and is to be understood

after Isa. 29:4; **טַחְנָה** stands for **רַחֵם**, as the vulgar Arab. *ṭahûn* and *mathana* instead of the antiquated *rahâ*. Winzer now supposes that the picture of the night is continued in 4b: *et subsistit (vox molae) ad cantum galli, et submissius canunt cantatrices (viz., molitrices)*. Elster, with Umbreit, supposes the description of a storm continued: the sparrow rises up to cry, and all the singing birds sink down (flutter restlessly on the ground). And Taylor supposes the lament for the dead continued, paraphrasing: But the bird of evil omen [owl, or raven] raises his dirge, and the merry voice of the singing girls is silent.

These three pictures, however, are mere fancies, and are also evidently here forced upon the text; for **קוֹל יָקוּם** cannot mean *subsistit vox*, but, on the contrary (cf. Hos. 10:14), *surgit (tollitur) vox*; and **קוֹל יָקוּם** cannot mean: it (the bird) raises itself to cry, which would have required **קוֹל יָקוּם לְתַת**, or at least **לְקוֹל**, after **קוֹם** **לְמַלְחָמָה**, etc.; besides, it is to be presumed that **צַפּוֹר** is genit., like **קוֹל עֹגֵב** and the like, not nom. of the subj. It is natural, with Hitz., Ewald, Heiligst., Zöck., to refer *qol tsippor* to the peeping, whispering voice (“Childish treble” of Shakespeare) of the old man (cf. *stiphtseph*, Isa. 29:4; 38:14; 10:14; 8:19). But the translation: “And it (the voice) approaches a sparrow’s voice,” is inadmissible, since for **קוֹם** the meaning, “to pass from one state to another,” cannot be proved from 1 Sam. 22:13, Mic. 2:8; **קוֹם** signifies there always “to rise up,” and besides, *qol tahhanah* is not the voice of the mouth supplied with teeth, but the sound of the chewing of a toothless mouth. If *lqol* is connected with a verb of external movement, or of that of the soul, it always denotes the occasion of this movement, Num. 16:34; Ezek. 27:28; Job 21:12; Hab. 3:16. Influenced by this inalienable sense of the language, the Talm. explains **וּיקוֹם ... צַר** by “even a bird awakes him.” Thus also literally the Midrash, and accordingly the Targ. paraphrasing: “thou shalt awaken out of thy sleep for a bird, as for thieves

breaking in at night.” That is correct, only it is unnecessary to limit יִקְוֹם (or rather יִקְוֹם, which accords with the still continued subordination of v. 4 to the *eo die quo* of v. 3a) to rising up from sleep, as if it were synonymous with יִעֹר: the old man is weak (nervously weak) and easily frightened, and on account of the deadening of his senses (after the figure of v. 2, the darkening of the five stars) is so liable to mistake, that if even a bird chirps, he is frightened by it out of his rest (cf. *hēkim*, Isa. 14:9).

Also in the interpretation of the clause וַיִּשְׁחֻ ... הַשִּׁיר, the ancients are in the right track. The Talm. explains: even all music and song appear to him like common chattering (or שׁוֹחֵה, according to other readings, שִׁיחָה); the proper meaning of יִשְׁחֻ is thus Haggad. twisted. Less correctly the Midrash: בְּנוֹת הַשִּׁיר are his lips, or they are the reins which think, and the heart decides (on this curious psychol. conception, cf. *Chullin* 11a, and particularly *Berachoth* 61a, together with my *Psychol.* p. 269). The reference to the internal organs is *à priori* improbable throughout; the Targ. with the right tact decides in favour of the lips: “And thy lips are untuned, so that they can no more say (sing) songs.” In this translation of the Talm. there are compounded, as frequently, two different interpretations, viz., that interpretation of בְּן הַשֵּׁב, which is proved by the בָּל going before to be incorrect, because impossible; and the interpretation of these “daughters of song” of “songs,” as if these were synonymous designations, as when in Arab. misfortunes are called *banatu binasan*, and the like (vid., Lane’s *Lex.* I p. 263); בְּת קוֹל, which in Mish. denotes a separate voice (the voice of heaven), but in Syr. the separate word, may be compared. But יִשְׁחֻ (fut. *Niph.* of שָׁחַח) will not accord with this interpretation. For that בְּן הַשֵּׁב denotes songs (Hitz., Heiligst.), or the sound of singing (Böttch.), or the words (Ewald) of the

old man himself, which are now softened down so as to be scarcely audible, is yet too improbable; it is an insipid idea that the old man gives forth these feeble “daughters of song” from his mouth. We explain יִשְׁחֻ of a being bowed down, which is external to the old man, and accordingly understand *bnoth hashshir* not of pieces of music (Aq. πάντα τὰ τῆς φῶδης) which must be lowered to *pianissimo*, but according to the parallel already rightly acknowledge by Desvoeux, 2 Sam. 19:36, where the aged Barzillai says that he has now no longer an ear for the voice of singing men and singing women, of singing birds (cf. בְּר זְמִירָא of a singing bird in the Syrian fables of Sophos, and *banoth* of the branches of a fruit tree, Gen. 49:22), and, indeed, so that these are a figure of all creatures skilled in singing, and taking pleasure in it: all beings that are fond of singing, and to which it has become as a second nature, must lower themselves, viz., the voice of their song (Isa. 29:4) (cf. the *Kal*, Ps. 35:14, and to the modal sense of the fut. 10:10, יִגְבֹּר, and 10:19, יִשְׁמַח), i.e., must timidly retire, they dare not make themselves heard, because the old man, who is terrified by the twittering of a little bird, cannot bear it.

Ecclesiastes 12:5a. From this his repugnance to singing, and music, and all loud noises, progress in the description is made to the difficulty such aged men have in motion: “Also they are afraid of that which is high; and there are all kinds of fearful things in the way ...” The description moves forward in a series of independent sentences; that בְּיָוִם שׁ to which it was subordinate in v. 3, and still also in v. 4, is now lost sight of. In the main it is rightly explained by the Talm., and with it the Midrash: “Even a little hillock appears to him like a high mountain; and if he has to go on a journey, he meets something that terrifies him;” the Targ. has adopted the second part of this explanation. גְּבִיָּה (falsely referred by the Targ. to the time lying far back in the past) is understood neut.; cf. 1 Sam. 16:7. Such decrepid old men are

afraid of (יִרְאוּ, not *videbunt*, as the LXX, Symm., Ar., and the Venet. translate, who seem to have had before them the defective יראו) a height,—it alarms them as something unsurmountable, because their breath and their limbs fail them when they attempt it; and *hathhhattim* (plur. of the intensifying form of הַת, *consternatio*, Job 41:25), i.e., all kinds of *formidines* (not *formido*, Ewald, § 179a, Böttch. § 762, for the plur. is as in *salsilloth*, ‘*aph’appim*, etc., thought of as such), meet them in the way. As the sluggard says: there is a lion in the way, and under this pretence remains slothfully at home, Prov. 24:13; 22:13, so old men do not venture out; for to them a damp road appears like a very morass; a gravelly path, as full of neck-breaking hillocks; an undulating path, as fearfully steep and precipitous; that which is not shaded, as oppressively hot and exhausting—they want strength and courage to overcome difficulties, and their anxiety pictures out dangers before them where there are none.

Ecclesiastes 12:5b. The allegory is now continued in individual independent figures: “And the almond tree is in blossom.” The Talm. explains הַשֵּׁי הַיָּדָא of the haunch-bone projecting (from leanness); the Midrash, of the bones of the vertebral column, conceived of as incorruptible and as that round which will take place the future restoration of the human body,—probably the cross bone, *os sacrum*, inserted between the two thigh bones of the pelvis as a pointed wedge; cf. Jerome in his *Comm.*: *quidam sacram spinam interpretantur quod decrescentibus natium cornibus spina accrescat et floreat*; לוֹא is an Old Heb., Aram., and Arab. name of the almond tree and the almond nut (vid., under Gen. 30:37), and this, perhaps, is the reason of this identification of the emblematic שֶׁקֶד with לוֹא (the *os sacrum*, or *vertebra magna*) of the spine. The Targ. follows the Midrash in translating: the רִישׁ שֵׁן (the top of the spine) will protrude from leanness like an almond tree (viz., from which the leaves have been stripped). In these purely arbitrary

interpretations nothing is correct but (1) that שֶׁקֶד is understood not of the almond fruit, but of the almond tree, as also at Jer. 1:11 (the rod of an almond tree); (2) that יָנֵא (notwithstanding that these interpreters had it before them unpointed) is interpreted, as also by the LXX, Syr., Jerome, and the Venet., in the sense of blossoming, or the bursting out of blossoms by means of the opening up of the buds. Many interpreters understand שֶׁקֶד of almond fruit (Winzer, Ewald, Ginsb., Rödiger, etc.), for they derive יָנֵא from יָנֵא, as Aben Ezra had already done, and explain by: *fastidit amygdalam (nucem)*, or *fastidium creat amygdala*. But (1) יָנֵא for יָנֵא (Hiph. of יָנֵא, to disdain, to treat scornfully) is a change of vowels unexampled; we must, with such an explanation, read either יָנֵא, *fastiditur* (Gaab), or יָנֵא; (2) almond nuts, indeed, belong to the more noble productions of the land and the delicacies, Gen. 43:11, but dainties, κατ’ ἐξ., at the same time they are not, so that it would be appropriate to exemplify the blunted sensation of taste in the old man, by saying that he no more cracks and eats almonds. The explanation of Hitzig, who reads יָנֵא, and interprets the almond tree as at Song 7:9 the palm, to denote a woman, for he translates: the almond tree refuses (viz., the old man), we set aside as too ingenious; and we leave to those interpreters who derive יָנֵא from יָנֵא, and understand הַשֶּׁקֶד of the *glans penis* (Böttch., Fürst, and several older interpreters), to follow their own foul and repulsive criticism. יָנֵא is an incorrect reading for יָנֵא, as at Hos. 10:14, קָאם for קָם, and, in Prov., רִישׁ for רִישׁ (Ges. § 73. 4); and besides, as at Song 6:11, הַנִּצֵּוּ, regular Hiph. of נִצֵּוּ (נוֹצֵוּ, Lam. 4:15), to move tremblingly (vibrate), to glisten, blossom (cf. נוֹס, to flee, and נִסָּן, Assyr. *nisannu*, the flower-month). Thus deriving this verbal form, Ewald, and with him Heiligst., interprets the blossoming almond tree as a figure of the winter of life: “it is as if the almond tree

blossomed, which in the midst of winter has already blossoms on its dry, leafless stem." But the blossoms of the almond tree are rather, after Num. 17:23, a figure of special life-strength, and we must thus, thrown back to נאץ from נאץ (to flourish), rather explain, with Furrer (in Schenkel's *B. L.*), as similarly Herzf.: the almond tree refuses, i.e., ceases, to blossom; the winter of old age is followed by no spring; or also, as Dale and Taylor: the almond tree repels, i.e., the old man has no longer a joyful welcome for this messenger of spring. But his general thought has already found expression in v. 2; the blossoming almond tree must be here an emblem of a more special relation. Hengst. supposes that "the juniper tree (for this is the proper meaning of שקד) is in bloom" is = sleeplessness in full blossom stands by the old man; but that would be a meaningless expression. Nothing is more natural than that the blossoming almond tree is intended to denote the same as is indicated by the phrase of the Latin poet: *Intempestivi funduntur vertice cani* (Luther, Geiger, Grot., Vaih., Luzz., Gurlitt, Tyler, Bullock, etc.).

It has been objected that the almond blossoms are not pure white, but according to the variety, they are pale-red, or also white; so that Thomson, in his beautiful *Land and the Book*, can with right say: "The almond tree is the type of old age whose hair is white;" and why? "The white blossoms completely cover the whole tree." Besides, Bauer (1732) has already remarked that the almond blossoms, at first tinged with red, when they are ready to fall off become white as snow; with which may be compared a clause cited by Ewald from Bodenstedt's *A Thousand and One Days in the Orient*: "The white blossoms fall from the almond trees like snow-flakes." Accordingly, Dächsel is right when he explains, after the example of Zöckler: "the almond tree with its reddish flower in late winter, which strews the ground with its blossoms, which have gradually become white like snow-flakes, is an emblem of the winter of old age with its falling silvery hair."

Ecclesiastes 12:5c. From the change in the colour of the hair, the allegory now proceeds to the impairing of the elasticity of the highs and of their power of bearing a load, the *malum coxae senile* (in a wider than the usual pathological sense): "And the grasshopper (i.e., locust, חָגַב, Samar. חַרְגָּבָה = חַרְגָּבָה, Lev. 11:22) becomes a burden." Many interpreters (Merc., Döderl., Gaab, Winz., Gesen., Winer, Dale) find in these words חַרְגָּבָה חַרְגָּבָה the meaning that locust-food, or that the chirping of grasshoppers, is burdensome to him (the old man); but even supposing that it may at once be assumed that he was a keen aeridophagus (locusts, steeped in butter, are like crabs (shrimps) spread on slices of butter and bread), or that he had formerly a particular delight in the chirping of the τέττιξ, which the ancients number among singing birds (cf. Taylor, *l.c.*), and that he has now no longer any joy in the song of the *tettix*, although it is regarded as soothing and tending to lull to rest, and an Anacreon could in his old days even sing his μακαρίζομέν σὲ τέττιξ,—yet these two interpretations are impossible, because חַרְגָּבָה may mean to burden and to move with difficulty, but not "to become burdensome." For the same reason, nothing is more absurd than the explanation of Kimchi and Gurlitt: Even a grasshopper, this small insect, burdens him; for which Zöckl., more naturally: the hopping and chirping of the grasshopper is burdensome to him; as we say, The fly on the wall annoys him. Also Ewald and Heiligstedt's interpretation: "it is as if the locust raised itself to fly, breaking and stripping off its old husk," as inadmissible; for חַרְגָּבָה can mean *se portare laboriose*, but not *ad evolandum eniti*; the comparison (Arab.) *tahmmal* gains the meaning of hurry onwards, to proceed on an even way, like the Hebr. חַשְׁבִּים, to take upon the shoulder; it properly means, to burden oneself, i.e., to take on one's back in order to get away; but the grasshopper coming out of its case carries away with it nothing but itself. For us, such interpretations—to which particularly, the advocates of the several hypotheses of a storm, night, and mourning, are

constrained—are already set aside by this, that according to the allegory ויִן' השׁ' הח' must also signify something characteristic of the body of an old man. The LXX, Jerome, and Ar. translate: the locust becomes fat; the Syr.: it grows. It is true, indeed, that great corpulence, or also a morbid dropsical swelling of the belly (*ascites*), is one of the symptoms of advanced old age; but supposing that the (voracious) locust might be an emblem of a corpulent man, yet הסתבל means neither to become fat nor to grow. But because the locust in reality suggests the idea of a corpulent man, the figure cannot at the same time be intended to mean that the old man is like a skeleton, consisting as it were of nothing but skin and bone (Lyra, Luther, Bauer, Dathe); the resemblance of a locust to the backbone and its joints (Glassius, Köhler, Vaih.) is not in view; only the position of the locust's feet for leaping admits the comparison of the prominent *scapulae* (shoulder-blades); but shoulder-blades (*scapulae alatae*), angular and standing out from the chest, are characteristics of a consumptive, not of a senile habit. Also we must cease, with Hitz., Böttch., Luzz., and Gratz, to understand the figure as denoting the φαλλός to be now impotent; for relaxation and shrinking do not agree with הסתבל, which suggests something burdensome by being weighty.

The Midrash interprets החגב by “ankles,” and the Targ. translates accordingly: the ankles (אֶסְתְּוֹרִי, from the Pers. *ustuwâr*, firm) of thy feet will swell—unsuitably, for “ankles” affords no point of comparison with locusts, and they have no resemblance to their springing feet. The Talm., glossing החגב by “these are the buttocks” (*nates*) (cf. Arab. *'ajab*, the *os coccygis*, Syn. *'ajuz*, as the Talm. עגבות interchanges with עכוז), is on the right track. There is nothing, indeed, more probably than that חגב is a figure of the *coxa*, the hinder region of the pelvis, where the lower part of the body balances itself in the hip-joint, and the motion of standing up and going receives its impulse and direction by the

muscular strength there concentrated. This part of the body may be called the locust, because it includes in itself the mechanism which the two-membered foot for springing, placed at an acute angle, presents in the locust. Referred to this *coxa*, the loins, יסתבל has its most appropriate meaning: the marrow disappears from the bones, elasticity from the muscles, the cartilage and oily substance from the joints, and, as a consequence, the middle of the body drags itself along with difficulty; or: it is with difficulty moved along (*Hithpa.* as pass., like 8:10); it is stiff, particularly in the morning, and the old man is accustomed to swing his arms backwards, and to push himself on as it were from behind. In favour of this interpretation (but not deciding it) is the accord of חגב with עגב = κόκκυξ (by which the *os coccygis* is designated as the cuckoo's bone). Also the verbal stem (Arab.) *jaḥab* supplies an analogous name: not *jaḥab*, which denotes the air passage (but not, as Knobel supposes, the breath itself; for the verb signifies to separate, to form a partition, Mish. מחיצה), but (Arab.) *jaḥabat*, already compared by Bochart, which denotes the point (dual), the two points or projections of the two hip-bones (vid., Lane's *Lex.*), which, together with the *os sacrum* lying between, form the ring of the pelvis.

Ecclesiastes 12:5d. From the weakening of the power of motion, the allegory passes on to the decay of sensual desires, and of the organs appertaining thereto: “And the caper-berry fails ...” The meaning “caper” for האֵב is evidence by the LXX (ἡ κάππαρις, Arab. *alkabar*), the Syr., and Jerome (*capparis*), and this rendering is confirmed by the Mishnic אביונות, which in contradistinction to תמריות, i.e., the tender branches, and קפריסין, i.e., the rind of fruit, signifies the berry-like flower-buds of the caper bush, according to Buxtorf (vid., above, p. 636). This Talm. word, it is true, is pointed אביונות; but that makes no difference, for אביונות is related to אביונות merely as making the word

emphatic, probably to distinguish the name of the caper from the fem. of the adj. אָבִיּוֹן, which signifies *avida, egena*. But in the main they are both one; for that אָבִיּוֹנָה may designate “desire” (*Abulwalîd: aliradat*; Parchon: התאוה; Venet.: ἡ ὄρεξις; Luther: *alle Lust*), or “neediness,” “poverty” (the Syr. in its second translation of this clause), is impossible, because the form would be unexampled and incomprehensible; only the desiring soul, or the desiring, craving member (vid., Kimchi), could be so named. But now the caper is no named, which even to this day is used to give to food a more piquant taste (cf. Plutarch’s *Sympos. vi. qu. 2*). It is also said that the caper is a means of exciting sexual desire (*aphrodisiacum*); and there are examples of its use for this purpose from the Middle Ages, indeed, but none from the records of antiquity; Pliny, *Hist. Nat. xx. 14 (59)*, knew nothing of it, although he speaks at length of the uses and effects of the *capparis*. The Talm. explains האבִי by חמדה, the Midrash by תאוה, the Targ. by מחכבא, interpreting the word directly without reference to the caper in this sense. If *haaviyona* thus denotes the caper, we have not thence to conclude that it incites to sexual love, and still less are we, with the Jewish interpreters, whom Böttch. follows, to understand the word of the *membrum virile* itself; the Arab. name for the caper, *itar*, which is compared by Grätz, which has an obscene meaning, designates also other aromatic plants. We shall proceed so much the more securely if we turn away from the idea of sexual impulse and hold by the idea of the impulse of self-preservation, namely, appetite for food, since אָבִיּוֹן (from אָבָה, the root-meaning of which, “to desire,” is undoubted) denotes a poor man, as one who desires that which is indispensable to the support of life; the caper is accordingly called *aviyona*, as being *appetitiva*, i.e., exciting to appetite for food, and the meaning will not be that the old man is like a caper-berry which, when fully ripe, bursts its husks and scatters its seed (Rosenm., Winer in his *R. W.*, Ewald, Taylor, etc.), as also the LXX, Symm. (καὶ

διαλυθῆ ἢ ἐπίπονος, i.e., as Jerome translates it, *et dissolvetur spiritus fortitudo*, perhaps ἐπίπονος, the strength or elasticity of the spirit), and Jerome understand the figure; but since it is to be presupposed that the name of the caper, in itself significant, will also be significant for the figure: *capparis est irrita sive vim suam non exerit* (וְתִפֵּר as inwardly trans. *Hiph.* of פָּרַר, to break in pieces, frustrate), i.e., even such means of excitement as capers, these appetite-berries, are unable to stimulate the dormant and phlegmatic stomach of the old man (thus e.g., Bullock). Hitzig, indeed, maintains that the cessation of the enjoyment of love in old age is not to be overlooked; but (1) the use of artificial means for stimulating this natural impulse in an old man, who is here described simply as such, without reference to his previous life and its moral state, would make him a sensualist; and (2) moral statistics show that with the decay of the body lust does not always (although this would be in accordance with nature, Gen. 17:17; Rom. 4:19) expire; moreover, the author of the Book of Koheleth is no Juvenal or Martial, to take pleasure, like many of his interpreters, in exhibiting the *res venereae*.

Ecclesiastes 12:5e. And in view of the clause following, the ceasing from nourishment as the last symptom of the certain approach of death is more appropriate than the cessation from sexual desire: “For,” thus the author continues after this description of the enfeebled condition of the hoary old man, “man goeth to his everlasting habitation, and the mourners go about the streets.” One has to observe that the *antequam* of the *memento Creatoris tui in diebus junvetutis tuae* is continued in vv. 6 and 7. The words *’ad asher lo* are thrice repeated. The chief group in the description is subordinated to the second *’ad asher lo*; this relation is syntactically indicated also in v. 4 by the subjective form וְיִקּוּם, and continues logically in v. 5, although without any grammatical sign, for וְיִגְאֵץ and וְתִפֵּר are indicative. Accordingly the clause with כִּי, 5b, will not be definitive; considerably the accentuation does not begin a new verse with

כי: the symptoms of *marasmus* already spoken of are here explained by this, that man is on his way to the grave, and, as we say, has already one foot in it. The part. הַלֵּךְ is also here not so much the expression of the *fut. instans* (*iturus est*), like 9:10, as of the present (Venet.: ἄπεισι); cf. Gen. 15:2, where also these two possible renderings stand in question. “Everlasting house” is the name for the grave of the dead, according to Diodorus Sic. i. 51, also among the Egyptians, and on old Lat. monuments also the expression *domus aeterna* is found (vid., Knobel); the comfortless designation, which corresponds to the as yet darkened idea of Hades, remained with the Jews in spite of the hope of the resurrection they had meanwhile received; cf. Tob. 3:6; *Sanhedrin* 19a, “the churchyard of *Huṣal*,” “to be a churchyard” (*beth ‘olam*); “at the door of the churchyard” (*beth ‘olam*), *Vajikra rabba*, c. 12. Cf. also above, p. 637, and Assy. *bit ‘idii* = בית עֵד of the underworld (Bab.-Assyr. Epic, “*Höllenfahrt der Istar*,” i. 4).

The clause following means that mourners already go about the streets (cf. סָבַב, Song 3:3, and *Pil.* Song 3:2; Ps. 59:7) expecting the death of the dying. We would say: the undertaker tarries in the neighbourhood of the house to be at hand, and to offer his services. For *hassophdim* are here, as Knobel, Winz., and others rightly explain, the mourners, *saphdanin* (*sophdanin*), hired for the purpose of playing the mourning music (with the horn שיפּוּרָא, *Moëd katan* 27b, or flute, חֲלִילִים, at the least with two, *Kethuboth* 46b; cf. Lat. *siticines*) and of singing the lament for the dead, *qui conducti plorant in funere* (Horace, *Poet.* 433), along with whom were mourning women, מְקוֹנְנוֹת (Lat. *praeficae*) (cf. Buxtorf’s *Lex. Talm.* col. 1524 s.),—a custom which existed from remote antiquity, according to 2 Sam. 3:31; Jer. 34:5. The Talm. contains several such lamentations for the dead, as e.g., that of a “mourner” (הַהוּא) (ספּדָנָא) for R. Abina: “The palms wave their heads for the palm-like just man,” etc.; and of

the famed “mourner” Bar-Kippuk on the same occasion: “If the fire falls upon the cedar, what shall the hyssop of the walls do?” etc. (*Moëd katan* 25b)—many of the ספּדָנִים were accordingly elegiac poets. This section of v. 5 does not refer to the funeral itself, for the procession of the mourners about the bier ought in that case to have been more distinctly expressed; and that they walked about in the streets before the funeral (Isa. 15:3) was not a custom, so far as we know. They formed a component part of the procession following the bier to the grave in Judea, as *Shabbath* 153a remarks with reference to this passage, and in Galilee going before it; to mourn over the death, to reverse it, if possible, was not the business of these mourners, but of the relatives (Hitz.), who were thus not merely called הַסּוּפְדִים. The Targ. translates: “and the angels will go about, who demand an account of thee, like the mourning singers who go about the streets, to record what account of thee is to be given.” It is unnecessary to change כְּסוּפְדִי into כְּסוּפְרִי (*intar scribarum*). According to the idea of the Targumist, the *sophdim* go about to collect materials for the lament for the dead. The dirge was not always very scrupulously formed; wherefore it is said in *Berachoth* 26a, “as is the estimate of the dead that is given, so is the estimate of the mourners (singers and orators at the funeral), and of those who respond to their words.” It is most natural to see the object of the mourners going about in their desire to be on the spot when death takes place.

Ecclesiastes 12:6, 7. A third *‘ad asher lo* now follows (cf. 5:1, 2); the first placed the old man in view, with his *désagrément* in general; the second described in detail his bodily weaknesses, presenting themselves as forerunners of death; the third brings to view the dissolution of the life of the body, by which the separation of the soul and the body, and the return of both to their original condition is completed. “Ere the silver cord is loosed, and the golden bowl is shattered, and the pitcher is broken at the fountain, and the wheel is shattered in the well, and the dust returns to

the earth as that which it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." Before entering into the contents of these verses, we shall consider the form in which some of the words are presented. The *Chethib* ירחק we readily let drop, for in any case it must be said that the silver cord is put out of action; and this word, whether we read it ירחק or ירחק (Venet. μακρυσθη), is too indefinite, and, supposing that by the silver cord a component part of the body is meant, even inappropriate, since the organs which cease to perform their functions are not removed away from the dead body, but remain in it when dead. But the *Keri* ירתק ("is unbound") has also its difficulty. The verb רתק signifies to bind together, to chain; the bibl. Heb. uses it of the binding of prisoners, Nah. 3:18, cf. Isa. 40:19; the post-bibl. Heb. of binding = shutting up (contrast of פתח, *Pesikta*, ed. Buber, 176a, whence *Mezia* 107b, שורא וריתקא, a wall and enclosure); the Arab. of shutting up and closing a hole, rent, split (e.g., *murtatik*, a plant with its flower-buds as yet shut up; *rutûk*, inaccessibility). The Targumist accordingly understands ירתק of binding = lameness (palsy); Rashi and Aben Ezra, of shrivelling; this may be possible, however, for גרתק, used of a "cord," the meaning that first presents itself, is "to be firmly bound;" but this affords no appropriate sense, and we have therefore to give to the *Niph.* the contrasted meaning of setting free, *discatenare* (Parchon, Kimchi); this, however, is not justified by examples, for a privat. *Niph.* is unexampled, Ewald, § 121e; גלבב, Job 11:12, does not mean to be deprived of heart (understanding), but to gain heart (understanding). Since, however, we still need here the idea of setting loose or tearing asunder (LXX ἀνατραπή; Symm. κοπήναι; Syr. גתפסק, from פסק, *abscindere*; Jerome, *rumpatur*), we have only the choice of interpreting *yērathēq* either, in spite of the appearance to the contrary, in the meaning of *constingitur*, of a violent drawing

together of the cord stretched out lengthwise; or, with Pfannkuche, Gesen., Ewald, to read ינתק ("is torn asunder"), which one expects, after Isa. 33:20; cf. Judg. 16:9, Jer. 10:20. Hitzig reaches the same, for he explains ירחק = יחרק, from (Arab.) *kharak*, to tear asunder (of the sound of the tearing); and Böttcher, by adopting the reading יחרק; but without any support in Heb. and Chald. *usus loq.*

גלה, which is applied to the second figure, is certainly a vessel of a round form (from גלל, to roll, revolve round), like the גלה which received the oil and conducted it to the seven lamps of the candlestick in Zech. 4; but to understand ותרץ of the running out of the oil not expressly named (Luther: "and the golden fountain runs out") would be contrary to the *usus loq.*; it is the metapl. form for ותרץ, *et confringitur*, as ירוץ, Isa. 42:4, for ירץ, from רצע, cogn. רעע, Ps. 2:9, whence גרץ, 6b, the regularly formed *Niph.* (the fut. of which, תרוץ, Ezek. 29:7). We said that oil is not expressly named. But perhaps it is meant by הזהב. The *gullah* above the candlestick which Zechariah saw was, according to v. 12, provided with two golden pipes, in which were two olive trees standing on either side, which sunk therein the tuft-like end of their branches, of which it is said that they emptied out of themselves *hazzahav* into the oil vessels. Here it is manifest that *hazzahav* means, in the one instance, the precious metal of which the pipes are formed; and in the other, the fluid gold of the oil contained in the olive branches. Accordingly, Hitzig understands *gullath hazzahav* here also; for he takes *gullah* as a figure of the body, the golden oil as a figure of the soul, and the silver cord as a figure of vital energy.

Thus, with Hitz., understanding *gullath hazzahav* after the passage in Zechariah, I have correctly represented the meaning of the figures in my *Psychol.* p. 228, as follows:—"The silver cord = the soul directing and bearing the body as living; the lamp hanging by this silver

cord = the body animated by the soul, and dependent on it; the golden oil = the spirit, of which it is said, Prov. 20:27, that it is a lamp of God." I think that this interpretation of the golden oil commends itself in preference to Zöckler's interpretation, which is adopted by Dächsel, of the precious *fluidum* of the blood; for if *hazzahav* is a metaphorical designation of oil, we have to think of it as the material for burning and light; but the principle of bright life in man is the spirit (*ruahh hhayim* or *nishmath hhayim*); and in the passage in Zechariah also, oil, which makes the candlestick give light, is a figure of the spirit (v. 6, *ki im-bruhhi*). But, as one may also suppose, it is not probable that here, with the same genit. connection, *הכסף* is to be understood of the material and the quality; and *hazzqahav*, on the contrary, of the contents. A golden vessel is, according to its most natural meaning, a vessel which is made of gold, thus a vessel of a precious kind. A golden vessel cannot certainly be broken in pieces, but we need not therefore understand an earthenware vessel only gilded, as by a silver cord is to be understood only that which has a silver line running through it (Ges. in the *Thes.*); *רצוף* may also denote that which is violently crushed or broken, Isa. 42:3; cf. Judg. 9:53. If *gullath hazzahav*, however, designates a golden vessel, the reference of the figure to the body, and at the same time of the silver cord to the vital energy or the soul, is then excluded,—for that which animates stands yet above that which is animated,—the two metallic figures in this their distribution cannot be comprehended in this reference. We have thus to ask, since *gullath hazzahav* is not the body itself: What in the human body is compared to a silver cord and to a golden vessel? What, moreover, to a pitcher at the fountain, and to a wheel or a windlass? Winzer settles this question by finding in the two double figures only in general the thoughts represented: *antequam vita ex tenui quasi filo suspensa pereat*, and (which is essentially the same) *antequam machina corporis destruat*. Gurlitt also protests against the allegorical explanation of the details, but he cannot refrain

from interpreting more specially than Winzer. Two *momenta*, he says, there are which, when a man dies, in the most impressive way present themselves to view: the extinction of consciousness, and the perfect cessation, complete ruin, of the bodily organism. The extinction of consciousness is figuratively represented by the golden lamp, which is hung up by a silver cord in the midst of a house or tent, and now, since the cord which holds it is broken, it falls down and is shattered to pieces, so that there is at once deep darkness; the destruction of the bodily organism, by a fountain, at which the essential parts of its machinery, the pitcher and windlass, are broken and rendered for ever useless. This interpretation of Gurlitt's affords sufficient support to the expectation of the allegorical meaning with which we approached v. 6; and we would be satisfied therewith, if one of the figures did not oppose us, without seeking long for a more special allegorical meaning: the pitcher at the fountain or well (*בד*, not *הבד*, because determined by *'al-hammabu'a*) is without doubt the heart which beats to the last breath of the dying man, which is likened to a pitcher which, without intermission, receives and again sends forth the blood. That the blood flows through the body like living water is a fact cognizable and perceptible without the knowledge of its course; fountain (*מקור*) and blood appear also elsewhere as associated ideas, Lev. 12:7; and *nishbar*, as here *vtishshabër*, into a state of death, or near to death, Jer. 23:9; Ps. 69:21. From this *gullath hazzahav* must also have a special allegorical sense; and if, as Gurlitt supposes, the golden vessel that is about to be destroyed is a figure of the perishing self-consciousness (whereby it is always doubtful that, with this interpretation, the characteristic feature of light in the figure is wanting), then it is natural to go further, and to understand the golden vessel directly of the head of a man, and to compare the breaking of the skull, Judg. 9:53, expressed by *vataritz eth-gulgotto*, with the words here before us, *vatharutz gullath hazzahav*; perhaps by *gullath*

the author thought of the cogn.—both as to root and meaning-גלגלת; but, besides, the comparison of the head, the bones of which form an oval bowl, with *gullath* is of itself also natural. It is true that, according to the ancient view, not the head, but the heart, is the seat of the life of the spirit; “in the heart, Ephrem said (*Opp. Syr.* ii. 316), the thinking spirit (*shuschobo*) acts as in its palace;” and the understanding, the Arabians also say, sits in the heart, and thus between the ribs. Everything by which בשר and נפש is affected—thus, briefly formulated, the older bibl. idea—comes in the לב into the light of consciousness. But the Book of Koheleth belongs to a time in which spiritual-psychical actions began to be placed in mediate causal relation with the head; the Book of Daniel represents this newer mode of conception, 2:28; 4:2; 7:10; 7:15. The image of the monarchies seen in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, 2:32, 28, had a golden head; the head is described as golden, as it is the *membrum praecipuum* of the human body; it is compared to gold as to that which is most precious, as, on the other hand, ראש is used as a metaphorical designation of that which is most precious. The breaking to pieces of the head, the death-blow which it receives, shows itself in this, that he who is sick unto death is unable to hold his head erect, that it sinks down against his will according to the law of gravity; as also in this, that the countenance assumes the aspect which we designate the *facies hippocratica*, and that feeling is gradually destroyed; but, above all, that is thought of which Ovid says of one who was dying: *et resupinus humum moribundo vertice pulsat*.

If we now further inquire regarding the meaning of the silver cord, nothing can obviously be meant by it which is locally above the golden bowl which would be hanging under it; also גלת הכסף itself certainly admits no such literal antitype,—the concavity of the גלגלת is below, and that of a גלה, on the other hand, is above. The silver cord will be found if a

component part of the structure of the body is pointed to, which stands in a mutually related connection with the head and the brain, the rending asunder of which brings death with it. Now, as is well known, dying finally always depends on the brain and the upper spinal marrow; and the ancients already interpreted the silver cord of the spinal marrow, which is called by a figure terminologically related to the silver cord, חוט השדרה (the spinal cord), and as a cord-like lengthening of the brain into the spinal channel could not be more appropriately named; the centre is grey, but the external coating is white. We do not, however, maintain that *hakkēsēph* points to the white colour; but the spinal marrow is related, in the matter of its value for the life of man, to the brain as silver is to gold. Since not a violent but a natural death is the subject, the fatal stroke that falls on the spinal marrow is not some kind of mechanical injury, but, according as ירתק [is unbound] is explained or is changed into ינתק [is torn asunder], is to be thought of either as constriction = shrinking together, consuming away, exhaustion; or as unchanging = paralysis or disabling; or as tearing asunder = destruction of the connection of the individual parts. The emendation ינתק most commends itself; it remains, however, possible that ינתק is meant in the sense of morbid contraction (vid., Rashi); at any rate, the fate of the גלה is the consequence of the fate of the חבל, which carries and holds the *gullah*, and does not break without at the same time bringing destruction on it; as also the brain and the spinal marrow stand in a relation of solidarity to each other, and the head receives from the spinal marrow (as distinguished from the so-called prolonged marrow) the death-stroke. As the silver cord and the bowl, so the pitcher and the well and the wheel stand in interchangeable relation to each other.

We do not say: the wheel at the fountain, as is translated by Hitz., Ewald, and others; for (1) the fountain is called בַּאֵר, not בּוֹר, which,

according to the usage (vid., Hitz. under Jer. 7:9), signifies a pit; and particularly a hole, for holding water, a cistern, reservoir; but for this there was no need for a wheel, and it is also excluded by that which had to be represented; (2) the expression *galgal ʿel-habor* is purposely not used, but *hagalgal ʿel-habor*, that we may not take *ʿel-habor* as virtual adj. to *galgal* (the wheel being at the בור), but as the designation of the place into which the wheel falls when it is shattered. Rightly, the LXX renders *ʿal-hammabuʿa* by ἐπὶ τῆς πηγῆς, and *el-habor* by ἐπὶ τὸν λάκκον. The figure of a well (*mabbuʿa*) formed by means of digging, and thus deep, is artistically conceived; out of this the water is drawn by means of a pitcher (כַּד, Gen. 24:14, a word as curiously according with the Greek κάδος as those mentioned in pp. 505 and 552, whence [Arab.] *kadd*, to exhaust, to pitcher-out, as it were; syn. דָּלִי, a vessel for drawing out water; Assyr. *di-lu*, the zodiacal sign of the water-carrier), and to facilitate this there is a wheel or windlass placed above (Syr. *gilgla dvira*), by which a rope is wound up and down (vid., Smith's *Bibl. Dict.* under "well"). The Midrash refers to the deep draw-well of the hill town of Sepporis, which was supplied with such rollers serving as a pulley (polyspast). Wheel and pitcher stand in as close mutual relation as air and blood, which come into contact in the lungs. The wheel is the figure of the breathing organ, which expands and contracts (winds and unwinds) itself like a draw-rope by its inhaling and exhaling breath. The throat, as the organ of respiration and speech, is called גְּרוֹן (Ps. 115:7) and גְּרִיזוֹת (vid., under Prov. 1:9), from גָּרָה or גָּרָה to draw, σπᾶν τὸν ἄερα, Wisd. 7:3). When this wheel makes its last laborious revolution, there is heard the death-rattle. There is a peculiar rattling sound, which they who once hear it never forget, when the wheel swings to an end—the so-called choking rheum, which consists in this, that the secretion which the dying cannot cough up moves up and down in the air-passage, and finally chokes him. When thus the breathings become always weaker, and

sometimes are interrupted for a minute, and at last cease altogether, there takes place what is here designated as the breaking to pieces of the wheel in the pit within—the life is extinguished, he who has breathed his last will be laid as a corpse in the grave (בּוֹר, Ps. 28:1, and frequently), the σῶμα has become a πῶμα (Mark 6:29; cf. Num. 14:32). The dust, i.e., the dust of which the body was formed, goes back to the earth again like as it was (originally dust), and the spirit returns to God who gave it. בָּשֶׁב subordinates itself to the *ʿad asher lo*, also in the form as subjunct.; the interchange of the full and the abbreviated forms occurs, however, elsewhere is the indic. sense, e.g., Job 13:27; Ewald, § 343b. *Shuv ʿal* occurs also at 2 Chron. 30:9; and אָל and עָל interchange without distinction in the more modern language; but here, as also at 6b, not without intention, the way downwards is to be distinguished from the way upwards (cf. 3:21). בְּאֶשֶׁר הָיָה = בְּשֵׁהָיָה, *instar ejus quod fuit*. The body returns to the dust from which it was taken, Gen. 3:19, to the dust of its original material, Ps. 104:29; and the spirit goes back to the God of its origin, to whom it belongs.

We have purposely not interrupted our interpretation of the enigmatical figures of v. 6 by the citation and criticism of diverging views, and content ourselves here with a specification of the oldest expositions. The interpretation of *Shabbath 152a* does not extend to v. 6. The Midrash says of the silver cord: זו חוט השדרה (as later, Rashi, Aben Ezra, and many others), of the golden vessel: זו גלגלת (as we), and it now adds only more in jest: "the throat which swallows up the gold and lets the silver run through." The pitcher becoming leaky must be ברס, the belly, which three days after death is wont to burst. And as for *hagalgal*, reference is made to the draw-wells of Sepporis; so for *el havor*, after Job 21:33, to the clods of Tiberias: he lies deep below, "like those clods of the deep-lying Tiberias." The Targ takes its own way, without following the Midrash, and translates: "before

thy tongue [this of הבל] is bound and thou art unable to speak any more, and the brain of thy head [this the גלה] is shattered, and thy gall [= כד] is broken with thy liver [= המבוע], and thy body [= הגלגל] hastens away [רוץ of נרץ] into the grave." These interpretations have at least historical and linguistic value; they also contain separate correct renderings. A *quodlibet* of other interpretations is found in my *Psychol.* p. 229, and in Zöckler, *ad loc.* A principal error in these consists in this, that they read Koheleth as if he had been a disciple of Boerhaave, and Harvey, and other masters. Wunderbar in his *Bibl.-Talm. medicin* (1850) takes all in earnest, that the author knew already of the nervous system and the circulation of the blood; for, as he himself says, there is nothing new under the sun. As far as concerns my opinion, says Oetinger in his exposition (*Sämmt. Schrift. herausg. von Ehmann*, IV p. 254), I dare not affirm that Solomon had a knowledge *systematis nervolympatici*, as also *circuli sanguinis*, such as learned physicians now possess; yet I believe that the Holy Spirit spake thus through Solomon, that what in subsequent times was discovered as to these matters might be found under these words. This judgment also goes too far; the figure of death which Koheleth presents contains no anticipation of modern discoveries; yet it is not without its value for the historical development of anthropology, for science and poetry combine in it; it is as true to fact as it is poetically beautiful.

The author has now reached the close. His Koheleth-Solomon has made all earthly things small, and at last remains seated on this dust-heap of *vanitas vanitatum*. The motto-like saying, 1:2, is here repeated as a *quod erat demonstrandum*, like a summary conclusion. The book, artistically constructed in whole and in its parts, comes to a close, rounding itself off as in a circle in the epiphonema:

Ecclesiastes 12:8. "O vanity of vanities, saith Koheleth, all is vain." If we here look back to v. 7, that which is there said of the spirit can be no

consolation. With right, Hofmann in his *Schriftbeweis*, I 490, says: "That it is the personal spirit of a man which returns to God; and that it returns to God without losing its consciousness, is an idea foreign to this proverb." Also, *Psychol.* p. 410, it is willingly conceded that the author wished here to express, first, only the fact, in itself comfortless, that the component parts of the human body return whence they came. But the comfortless avers of the proverb is yet not without a consoling reverse. For what the author, 3:21, represents as an unsettled possibility, that the spirit of a dying man does not downwards like that of a beast, but upwards, he here affirms as an actual truth. From this, that he thus finally decides the question as an advantage to a man above a beast, it follows of necessity that the return of the spirit to God cannot be thought of as a resumption of the spirit into the essence of God (resorption or emanation), as the cessation of his independent existence, although, as also at Job 34:14, Ps. 104:29, the nearest object of the expression is directed to the ruin of the soul-corporeal life of man which directly follows the return of the spirit to God. The same conclusion arises from this, that the idea of the return of the spirit to God, in which the author at last finds rest, cannot yet stand in a subordinate place with reference to the idea of Hades, above which it raises itself; with the latter the spirit remains indestructible, although it has sunk into a silent, inactive life. And in the third place, that conclusion flows from the fact that the author is forced by the present contradiction between human experience and the righteousness of God to the postulate of a judgment finally settling these contradictions, 3:17; 11:9, cf. 12:14, whence it immediately follows that the continued existence of the spirit is thought of as a well-known truth (*Psychol.* p. 127). The Targ. translates, not against the spirit of the book: "the spirit will return to stand in judgment before God, who gave it to thee." In this connection of thoughts Koheleth says more than what Lucretius says (ii. 998 ss.):
Cedit item retro, de terra quod fuit ante,

*In terras, et quod missum est ex aetheris oris
Id rursus caeli rrellatum templa receptant.*

A comforting thought lies in the words אֲשֶׁר נְתַנָּה. The gifts of God are on His side ἀμεταμέλητα (Rom. 11:29). When He receives back that which was given, He receives it back to restore it again in another manner. Such thoughts connect themselves with the reference to God the Giver. Meanwhile the author next aims at showing the vanity of man, viz., of man as living here. Body and spirit are separated, and depart each in its own direction. Not only the world and the labours by which man is encompassed are “vain,” and not only is that which man has and does and experiences “vain,” but also man himself as such is vain, and thus—this is the *facit*—all is הַבֵּל, “vain.”

(C.) The Epilogue—12:9-14

In an unexpected manner there now follows a postscript. Since the book closes with the epiphonema 12:8 as having reached the intended goal, the supposition that what follows 12:8 is from another hand is more natural than the contrary. Of the question of genuineness there cannot be here properly anything said, for only that which is not what it professes to be and ought to be, is spurious; the postscript is certainly according to tradition an integral part of the Book of Koheleth (Bullock), but not as an original organic formal part of it, and still less does it expressly bear self-evidence of this. At the least, those who regard Solomon as the author of the book ought to contend against the recognition in 12:9ff. of an appendix by a later hand. Hahn, however, regards the same Solomon who speaks in v. 8 as continuing to speak in v. 9, for he interprets אָמַר, which, however, only means *inquit*, as perf., looking back to the completed book, and regards this retrospect as continued in v. 9ff., without being hindered by the interchange of the *I* and of the following historical *he*, which is contained in “saith Koheleth.” Dale even ventures the assertion, that the Book of

Koheleth could have closed with the unsatisfying pure negative, v. 8, as little as the Gospel of Mark with “and they were afraid” (Mark 16:8). As if v. 13f. expressed postulates not already contained in the book itself! The epilogue has certainly manifestly the object of recommending the author of the book, Koheleth-Solomon, and of sealing the contents of the book. If Solomon himself were the author, the epilogue would stand in the same relation to the book as John 21:24f. to the fourth Gospel, of the Johannean origin of which a voice from the apostolic church there bears witness.

It is a serious anachronism when modern interpreters of Scripture occupy the standpoint of the old, who take the name of the man after whom the book is entitled, without more ado, as the name of its author from first to last. To what childish puerilities a bigotry so uncritical descends is seen in the case of Christ. Fried. Bauer (1732). In this section, vv. 9-12, he says Solomon turns especially to his son Rehoboam, and delivers to him this *Solennel* -discourse or sermon as an instruction for his future life. He recommends it [the sermon] at once on account of the author, v. 9, and of its contents, v. 10, which accord, v. 11, with his other writings, and from which altogether Rehoboam could find sufficient information, so that to write to him several books would be unnecessary. After this apostrophe to his son the preacher turns round to the entire *auditorio*, and addresses them in הַכֹּל נִשְׁמָע. But we are all permitted to hear what is the final aim and intention of this sermon: Fear thou God, and keep His commandments; for such ought every man to be, etc.

A rationalism not less fruitful in wonderful conceits appeared over against this dreamy irrationalism. Döderlein (1784) says of Koheleth: “As it appears, so the author feigned, that this was a lecture or treatise which Solomon delivered before his literary academy; for this academy I am inclined to understand under the name ‘Koheleth.’ ” The epilogue appears to him as an appendage by another hand. Such is the opinion also of J. E. Ch.

Schmidt (1794), Bertholdt (in his *Einleit.* 1812ff.), Umbreit (1818, 20), and Knobel (1836), who maintain that this appendage is aimless, in form as in doctrine, out of harmony with the book, revealing by the “endless book-making” a more recent time, and thus is an addition by a later author. This negative critical result Grätz (1871) has sought, following Krochmal (in his *More nebuchozeman*, 1851, 54), to raise to a positive result. Vv. 9–11 are to him as an apology of the Book of Koheleth, and vv. 12–14 as a clause defining the collection of the Hagiographa, which is completed by the reception into it of the Book of Koheleth; and this bipartite epilogue as an addition belonging to the period of the Synod of Jabneh, about A.D. 90 (vid., above, p. 636).

If, nevertheless, we regard this epilogue as a postscript by the author of the book himself, we have not only Herzfeld on our side, who has given his verdict against all Knobel’s arguments, but also Hitzig, who (Hilgenfeld’s *Zeitsch.* 1872, p. 566) has rejected Grätz’ Herod-hypothesis, as well as also his introduction of the epilogue into the history of the canon, or, as Geiger (*Jüd. Zeitsch.* 1872, p. 123) has expressed himself, has dealt with it according to its merit. Also in Bloch’s monograph on the Book of Koheleth (1872) there are many striking arguments against placing the authorship of the book in the Herod-Mishn. period, although the view of this critic, that the book contains notes of Solomon’s with interpolations, and an epilogue by the collector, who sought to soften the impression of the gloomy pessimism of these notes, is neither cold nor hot.

We have already (p. 648) shown that the epilogue is written quite in the same style as the book itself; its language is like that of the chronicler; it approaches the idiom of the Mishna, but, with reference to it, is yet somewhat older. That the first part of the epilogue, vv. 9–11, serves an important end, is also proved (p. 648),—it establishes the book as a production of the Chokma, which had Solomon as its pattern; and the second part, vv. 12–14, bears on it the stamp of this Chokma, for it places all the teaching of the book under the

double watchword: “Fear God,” and “There is a judgment” (Job 28:28; 19:29; cf. Ecclesiastes 5:6; 11:9). In the book, Koheleth-Solomon speaks, whose mask the author puts on; here, he speaks, letting the mask fall off, of Koheleth. That in his time (the Persian) too much was done in the way of making books, we may well believe. In addition to authors by profession, there have always been amateurs; the habit of much writing is old, although in the course of time it has always assumed greater dimensions. A complain in reference to this sounds strange, at least from the mouth of an author who has contented himself with leaving to posterity a work so small, though important. We nowhere encounter any necessity for regarding the author of the book and of the epilogue as different persons. The spirit and tone of the book and of the epilogue are one. The epilogue seals only the distinction between the pessimism of the book and the modern pessimism, which is without God and without a future.

Ecclesiastes 12:9. In connection with v. 8, where Koheleth has spoken his last word, the author, who has introduced him as speaking thereto, continues: “And, moreover, because Koheleth was wise he taught the people knowledge; he applied and searched out and formed many proverbs.” The postscript begins with “and” because it is connected with the concluding words of the book—only externally, however; nothing is more unwarrantable than to make v. 8 the beginning of the postscript on account of the *vav*. The LXX translate *καὶ περισσὸν* (Venet. *περιττὸν*) ὄτι; as Hitz.: “it remains (to be said) that Koheleth was a wise man,” etc.; and Dale may be right, that *ויתר* is in this sense as subj., pointed with *Zakeph gadhol* (cf. Gen. 16:16; 20:4, and the obj. thus pointed, Ex. 23:3). But that Koheleth was “a wise man” is nothing remaining to be said, for as such he certainly speaks in the whole book from beginning to end; the *וַיִּתֵּן*, unconnected, following, shows that this his property is presupposed as needing no further testimony. But untenable also is the translation: So much

the greater Koheleth was as a wise man so much the more, etc. (Heinem., Südfeld); עוֹד does not signify *eo magis*; the Heb. language has a different way of expressing such an intensification: כל הגדול מחברו יצרו גדול ממנו, i.e., the higher the position is which one assumes, so much the greater are the temptations to which he is exposed. Rightly, Luther: "This same preacher was not only wise, but," etc. וַיֵּתֶר signifies, 7:11, "and an advance (benefit, gain);" here וַיֵּתֶר שׁ, "and something going beyond this, that," etc.—thought of as accus.-adv.: "going beyond this, that = moreover, because" (Gesens., Knobel, Vaih., Ginsb., Grätz); vid., above, p. 638. Thus 'od is in order, which introduces that which goes beyond the property and position of a "wise man" as such. That which goes beyond does not consist in this, that he taught the people knowledge, for that is just the meaning of the name *Koheleth*; the statement which 'od introduces is contained in the concluding member of the compound sentence; the afterword begins with this, that it designates the Koheleth who appears in the more esoteric book before us as חכּם, as the very same person who also composed the comprehensive people's book, the *Mishle*. He has taught the people knowledge; for he has placed, i.e., formed "*stellen*," to place, as "*Schriftsteller*" = author; modern Heb. מְחַבֵּר; Arab. *muṣannif*), many proverbs, as the fruit of nature reflection and diligent research. The obj. *mshalim harbēh* belongs only to *tiqqēn*, which ἁσυσδέτως (according to the style of the epilogue and of the book, as is shown above, p. 648) follows the two preparative mental efforts, whose *resultat* it was. Rightly, as to the syntax, Zöckler, and, as to the matter, Hitzig: "Apparently the author has here not 1 Kings 5:12, but the canonical Book of Proverbs in his eye." The language is peculiar. Not only is תִּקְּן exclusively peculiar (vid., above, p. 641) to the Book of Koheleth, but also אָזַן, *perpendere* (cf. Assy. *uzunu*, reflection), to consider, and the *Pih*. חִקֵּר.

Regarding the position of *harbeh*, vid., above, p. 665.

Ecclesiastes 12:10. It is further said of Koheleth, that he put forth efforts not only to find words of a pleasant form, but, above all, of exact truth: "Koheleth strove to find words of pleasantness, and, written in sincerity, words of truth." The unconnected beginning *biqqesh Koheleth* is like *dibbarti ani*, 1:16, etc., in the book itself. Three objects follow *limtso*. But Hitz. reads the *inf. absol.* וְכָתוּב instead of וְכָתוּב, and translates: to find pleasing words, and correctly to write words of truth. Such a continuance of the *inf. const.* by the *inf. absol.* is possible; 1 Sam. 25:26, cf. 31. But why should וְכָתוּב not be the continuance of the finite (Aq., Syr.), as e.g., at 8:9, and that in the nearest adverbial sense: *et scribendo quidem sincere verba veritatis*, i.e., he strove, according to his best knowledge and conscience, to write true words, at the same time also to find out pleasing words; thus sought to connect truth as to the matter with beauty as to the manner? *Vchathuv* needs no modification in its form. But it is not to be translated: and that which was right was written by him; for the ellipsis is inadmissible, and מִן כָּתוּב is not correct Heb.

Rightly the LXX, καὶ γεγραμμένον εὐθύτητος, כָּתוּב signifies "written," and may also, as the name of the Hagiographa כְּתוּבִים shows, signify "a writing;" *kakathuvah*, 2 Chron. 30:5, is = "in accordance with the writing;" and *blo kākathuv*, 2 Chron. 30:18, "contrary to the writing;" in the post-bibl. the phrase הַכְּתוּב אָמַר = ἡ γραφὴ λέγει, is used. The objection made by Ginsburg, that *kathuv* never means, as *kthav* does, "a writing," is thus nugatory. However, we do not at all here need this subst. meaning, וְכָתוּב is neut. particip., and יִשֶּׁר certainly not the genit., as the LXX renders (reading וְכָתוּב), but also not the nom. of the subj. (Hoelem.), but, since יִשֶּׁר is the designation of a mode of thought and of a relation, the accus. of manner, like *vyashar*, Ps. 119:18; *emeth*, Ps. 132:11; *emunah*, Ps. 119:75.

Regarding the common use of such an accus. of the nearer definition in the passive part., vid., Ewald, § 284c. The asyndeton *vchathuv yosher divre emeth* is like that at 10:1, *mehhochmah michvod*. That which follows *limtso* we interpret as its threefold object. Thus it is said that Koheleth directed his effort towards an attractive form (cf. *avne-hephets*, Isa. 54:12); but, before all, towards the truth, both subjectively (יִשְׁר) and objectively (אֱמֶת), of that which was formulated and expressed in writing.

Ecclesiastes 12:11. From the words of Koheleth the author comes to the words of the wise man in general; so that what he says of the latter finds its application to himself and his book: "Words of the wise are as like goads, and like fastened nails which are put together in collections—they are given by one shepherd." The LXX, Aq., and Theod. translate *darvonoth* by βούκεντρα, the Venet. by βουπληγες; and that is also correct. The word is one of three found in the Jerus. Gemara, *Sanhedrin* x. 1, to designate a rod for driving (oxen)—דרבן (from דרב, to sharpen, to point), מלמד (from למד, to adjust, teach, exercise), and מרדע (from רדע, to hold back, *repellere*); we read *ka-darvonoth*; Gesen., Ewald, Hitz., and others are in error in reading *dorvonoth*; for the so-called light *Metheg*, which under certain circumstances can be changed into an accent, and the *Kametz chatuph* exclude one another. If דרבן is the goad, the point of comparison is that which is to be excited intellectually and morally. Incorrectly, Gesen., Hitz., and others: like goads, because easily and deeply impressing themselves on the heart as well as on the memory. For goads, *aculei*, the Hebrews use the word קוצים; *darvonoth* also are goads, but designed for driving on, thus *stimuli* (Jerome); and is there a more natural commendation for the proverbs of the wise men than that they incite to self-reflection, and urge to all kinds of noble effort? *Divre* and *darvonoth* have the same three commencing consonants, and, both for the ear and the eye, form a paronomasia. In the following

comparison, it is a question whether *ba'ale asuppoth* (plur. of *ba'al asuppoth*, or of the double plur. *ba'al asuppah*, like e.g., *sare missim*, Ex. 1:11, of *sar mas*) is meant of persons, like *ba'al hallashon*, 10:11, cf. *ba'al knaphayim*, 10:20, or of things, as *ba'al piphiyoth*, Isa. 41:15; and thus, whether it is a designation parallel to חכמים or דברי. The Talm. *Jer. Sanhedrin* x. 1, wavers, for there it is referred first to the members of the assemblies (viz., of the *Sanedrium*), and then is explained by "words which are spoken in the assembly." If we understand it of persons, as it was actually used in the Talm. (vid., above, p. 637), then by *asuppoth* we must understand the societies of wise men, and by *ba'ale asuppoth*, of the academicians (Venet.: δεσπότες ξυναγαμάτων; Luther: "masters of assemblies") belonging to such academies. But an appropriate meaning of this second comparison is not to be reached in this way. For if we translate: and as nails driven in are the members of the society, it is not easy to see what this wonderful comparison means; and what is then further said: they are given from one shepherd, reminds us indeed of Eph. 4:11, but, as said of this perfectly unknown great one, is for us incomprehensible. Or if we translate, after Isa. 28:1: and (the words of the wise are) like the fastened nails of the members of the society, it is as tautological as if I should say: words of wise men are like fastened nails of wise men bound together in a society (as a confederacy, union). Quite impossible are the translations: like nails driven in by the masters of assemblies (thus e.g., Lightfoot, and recently Bullock), for the accus. with the pass. particip. may express some nearer definition, but not (as of the genit.) the effective cause; and: like a nail driven in are the (words) of the masters of assemblies (Tyler: "those of editors of collections"), for ellipt. genit., dependent on a governing word carrying forward its influence, are indeed possible, e.g., Isa. 61:7, but that a governing word itself, as *ba'ale*, may be the governed genit. of one omitted, as here *divre*, is without example.

It is also inconsistent to understand *ba'ale asuppoth* after the analogy of *ba'ale masoreth* (the Masoretes) and the like. It will not be meant of the persons of the wise, but of the proverbs of the wise. So far we agree with Lang and Hoelem. Lang (1874) thinks to come to a right understanding of the "much abused" expression by translating, "lords of troops,"—a designation of proverbs which, being by many acknowledged and kept in remembrance, possess a kind of lordship over men's minds; but that is already inadmissible, because *asuppoth* designates not any multitude of men, but associations with a definite end and aim. Hoelem. is content with this idea; for he connects together "planted as leaders of assemblies," and finds therein the thought, that the words of the wise serve as seeds and as guiding lights for the expositions in the congregation; but *ba'ale* denotes masters, not in the sense of leaders, but of possessors; and as *ba'ale brith*, Gen. 14:13, signifies "the confederated," *ba'ale shvu'ah*, Neh. 6:18, "the sworn," and the frequently occurring *ba'ale ha'ir*, "the citizens;" so *ba'ale asuppoth* means, the possessors of assemblies and of the assembled themselves, or the possessors of collections and of the things collected. Thus *ba'ale asuppoth* will be a designation of the "words of the wise" (as in *shalishim*, choice men = choice proverbs, Prov. 22:20, in a certain measure personified), also of those which form or constitute collections, and which stand together in order and rank (Hitz., Ewald, Elst., Zöckl., and others). Of such it may properly be said, that they are like nails driven in, for they are secured against separations,—they are, so to speak, made nail-feast, they stand on one common ground; and their being fixed in such connection not only is a help to the memory, but also to the understanding of them. The Book of Koheleth itself is such an *asuppah*; for it contains a multitude of separate proverbs, which are thoughtfully ranged together, and are introduced into the severe, critical sermon on the nothingness of all earthly things as oases affording rest and refreshment; as similarly, in the later Talmudic literature, Haggadic parts

follow long stretches of hair-splitting dialectics, and afford to the reader an agreeable repose. And when he says of the "proverbs of the wise," individually and as formed into collections: *נְתַנּוּ מְרֻעָה אֶחָד*, i.e., they are the gift of one shepherd, he gives it to be understood that his "words of Koheleth," if not immediately written by Solomon himself, have yet one fountain with the Solomonic Book of Proverbs,—God, the one God, who guides and cares as a shepherd for all who fear Him, and suffers them to want nothing which is necessary to their spiritual support and advancement (Ps. 23:1; 28:9). "*Mēro'eh ehad*," says Grätz, "is yet obscure, since it seldom, and that only poetically, designates the Shepherd of Israel. It cannot certainly refer to Moses." Not to Moses, it is true (Targ.), nor to Solomon, as the father, the pattern, and, as it were, the patron of "the wise," but to God, who is here named the *ἀρχαιομην* as spiritual preserver (provider), not without reference to the figure of a shepherd from the goad, and the figure of household economy from the nails; for *רְעָה*, in the language of the Chokma (Prov. 5:21), is in meaning cogn. to the N.T. conception of edification. Regarding *masmroth* (iron nails), vid., above, p. 639; the word is not used of tent spikes (Spohn, Ginsb.),—it is masc., the sing. is *מִשְׁמָר* (מִסְמָר), Arab. *mismâr*. *מִסְמָרִים* = *מְרֻעָה* (cf. Dan. 11:45 with Gen. 31:25), post-bibl. (vid., *Jer. Sanhedrin*) *קְבוּעִים* (Jerome, in *altum defixi*). *Min* with the pass., as at Job 21:1; 28:4, Ps. 37:23 (Ewald, § 295*b*), is not synonymous with the Greek *ὑπό* (vid., above, p. 547). The LXX well: "given by those of the counsel from one shepherd." Hitzig reads *מְרֻעָה*, and accordingly translates: "which are given united as a pasture," but in *mēro'eh ehad* there lies a significant apologetic hint in favour of the collection of proverbs by the younger Solomon (Koheleth) in relation to that of the old. This is the point of the verse, and it is broken off by Hitzig's conjecture.

Ecclesiastes 12:12. With *vyother mehemmah* the postscript takes a new departure, warning against too much reading, and finally pointing

once more to the one thing needful: "And besides, my son, be warned: for there is no end of much book-making; and much study is a weariness of the body." With "my son," the teacher of wisdom here, as in the Book of Proverbs, addresses the disciple who places himself under his instruction. Hitzig translates, construing *mehemmah* with *hizzaher*: "And for the rest: by these (the 'words of Koheleth,' v. 10) be informed." But (1) הַזְהַר, according to usage, does not signify in general to be taught, but to be made wiser, warned; particularly the imper. הַזְהַר is cogn. with הַשְׁמַר (cf. *Targ. Jer. Ex. 10:28*, אֲזַדְדֶה לָּךְ = הַשְׁמַר לָּךְ), and in fact an object of the warning follows; (2) *min* after *yothēr* is naturally to be regarded as connected with it, and not with *hizzaher* (cf. *Esth. 6:6*, *Sota vii. 7*; cf. *Ps. 19:12*). The punctuation of *vyother* and *mehemmah* is thus not to be interfered with. Either *hēmumah* points back to *divre* (v. 11): And as to what goes beyond these (in relation thereto) be warned (Schelling: *quidquid ultra haec est, ab iis cave tibi*, and thus e.g., Oehler in Herzog's *R. E. vii. 248*); or, which is more probable, since the *divre* are without a fixed beginning, and the difference between true and false "wise men" is not here expressed, *hemmah* refers back to all that has hitherto been said, and *vyother mehemmah* signifies not the result thereof (Ewald, § 285e), but that which remains thereafter: and what is more than that (which has hitherto been said), i.e., what remains to be said after that hitherto said; Lat. *et quod superest, quod reliquum est*.

In 12b, Hitzig also proposes a different interpunction from that which lies before us; but at the same time, in the place of the significant double sentence, he proposes a simple sentence: "to make many books, without end, and much exertion of mind (in making these), is a weariness of the body." The author thus gives the reason for his writing no more. But with 12:8 he has certainly brought his theme to a close, and he writes no further; because he does not write for hire and without an aim, but for a high end, according to a fixed plan; and whether he will leave off with this his

book or not is a matter of perfect indifference to the readers of this one book; and that the writing of many books without end will exhaust a man's mind and bring down his body, is not that a flat truism? We rather prefer Herzfeld's translation, which harmonizes with Rashbam's: "But more than these (the wise men) can teach thee, my son, teach thyself: to make many books there would be no end; and much preaching is fatiguing to the body." But נִזְהַר cannot mean to "teach oneself," and *ēn qētz* does not mean *non esset finis*, but *non est finis*; and for *lahach* the meaning "to preach" (which Luther also gives to it) is not at all shown from the Arab. *lahjat*, which signifies the tongue as that which is eager (to learn, etc.), and then also occurs as a choice name for tongues in general. Thus the idea of a double sentence, which is the most natural, is maintained, as the LXX has already rendered it. The *n. actionis* עֲשׂוֹת with its object is the subject of the sentence, of which it is said *ēn qēts*, it is without end; Hitzig's opinion, that *ēn qēts* is a virtual adj., as *ēn 'avel*, *Deut. 33:4*, and the like, and as such the pred. of the substantival sentence. Regarding לְהַגִּי, *avidum discendi legendique studium*, vid., above, p. 639. C. A. Bode (1777) renders well: *polygraphiae nullus est finis et polymathia corpus delessat*. Against this endless making of books and much study the postscript warns, for it says that this exhausts the bodily strength without (for this is the reverse side of the judgment) truly furthering the mind, which rather becomes decentralized by this πολυπραγμοσύνη. The meaning of the warning accords with the phrase coined by Pliny (*Ep. vii. 9*), *multum non multa*. One ought to hold by the "words of the wise," to which also the "words of Koheleth," comprehended in the *asuppah* of the book before us, belong; for all that one can learn by hearing or by reading amounts at last, if we deduct all that is unessential and unenduring, to a *unum necessarium*:

Ecclesiastes 12:13. "The final result, after all is learned, (is this): Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the end of every man." Many expositors, as Jerome, the Venet.,

and Luther, render נִשְׁמָע as fut.: The conclusion of the discourse we would all hear (Salomon); or: The conclusion of the whole discourse or matter let us hear (Panzer, 1773, de Wette-Augusti); Hitzig also takes together *soph davar hakol* = *soph davar kol-haddavar*: The end of the whole discourse let us hear. But הַכֹּל for כִּלְנוּ is contrary to the style of the book; and as a general rule, the author uses הַכֹּל for the most part of things, seldom of persons. And also *soph davar hakol*, which it would be better to explain ("the final word of the whole"), with Ewald, § 291a, after *ymē-olam mosheh*, Isa. 63:11 (cf. *Proverbs*, p. 442, note), than it is explained by Hitzig, although, in spite of Philippi's (*Sta. const.* p. 17) doubt, possible in point of style, and also exemplified in the later period of the language (1 Chron. 9:13), is yet a stylistic crudeness which the author could have avoided either by writing *soph davar hakol*, or better, *soph kol-haddavar*. נִשְׁמָע, Ewald, § 168b, renders as a particip. by *audiendum*; but that also does not commend itself, for נִשְׁמָע signifies nothing else than *auditum*, and acquires the meaning of *audiendum* when from the empirical matter of fact that which is inwardly necessary is concluded; the translation: The final word of the whole is to be heard, *audiendum est*, would only be admissible if also the translation *auditum est* were possible, which is not the case. Is נִשְׁמָע thus possibly the pausal form of the finite נִשְׁמָע? We might explain: The end of the matter (*summa summarum*), all is heard, when, viz., that which follows is heard, which comprehends all that is to be known. Or as Hoelem.: Enough, all is heard, since, viz., that which is given in the book to be learned contains the essence of all true knowledge, viz., the following two fundamental doctrines. This retrospective reference of *hakol nishm'a* is more natural than the prospective reference; but, on the other hand, it is also more probable that *soph davar* denotes the final *resultat* than that it denotes the conclusion of the discourse. The right explanation will be that which combines the retrospective reference of *hakol*

nishm'a and the resultative reference of *soph davar*. Accordingly, Mendelssohn appears to us to be correct when he explains: After thou hast heard all the words of the wise ... this is the final result, etc. *Finis (summa) rei, omnia audita is = omnibus auditis*, for the sentence denoting the conditions remains externally undesignated, in the same way as at 10:14; Deut. 21:1; Ezra 10:6 (Ewald, § 341b). After the clause, *soph ... nishm'a, Athnach* stands where we put a colon: the mediating *hocce est* is omitted just as at 7:12b (where translate: yet the preference of knowledge is this, that, etc.). The sentence, *eth-naeolohim yra* ("fear God"), repeating itself from 5:6, is the kernel and the star of the whole book, the highest moral demand which mitigates its pessimism and hallows its eudaemonism. The admonition proceeding therefrom, "and keep His commandments," is included in *lishm'a*, 4:17 [5:1], which places the hearing of the divine word, viz., a hearing for the purpose of observing, as the very soul of the worship of God above all the *opus operatum* of ceremonial services.

The connection of the clause, *ki-zeh kol-haadam*, Hitzig mediates in an unnecessary, roundabout way: "but not thou alone, but this ought every man." But why this negative here introduced to stamp כִּי as an *immo* establishing it? It is also certainly suitable as the immediate confirmation of the rectitude of the double admonition finally expressing all. The clause has the form of a simple judgment, it is a substantival clause, the briefest expression for the thought which is intended. What is that thought? The LXX renders: ὅτι τοῦτο πᾶς ὁ ἄνθρωπος; also Symm. and the Venet. render *kol haadam* by πᾶς ὁ ἄνθρ., and an unnamed translator has ὅλος ὁ ἄνθρ., according to which also the translation of Jerome is to be understood, *hoc est enim omnis homo*. Thus among the moderns, Herzf., Ewald, Elst., and Heiligst.: for that is the whole man, viz., as to his destiny, the end of his existence (cf. as to the subject-matter, Job 28:28); and v. Hofmann (*Schriftbew.* II 2, p. 456): this is the whole of

man, viz., as Grotius explains: *totum hominis bonum*; or as Dale and Bullock: “the whole duty of man;” or as Tyler: “the universal law (ל, like the Mishnic לל) of man;” or as Hoelem.: that which gives to man for the first time his true and full worth. Knobel also suggests for consideration this rendering: this is the all of man, i.e., on this all with man rests. But against this there is the one fact, that *kol-haadam* never signifies the whole man, and as little anywhere the whole (the all) of a man. It signifies either “all men” (πάντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ πᾶ. ἄνθρ. οἱ ἄνθρ. πᾶ.), as at 7:2, *hu soph kol-haadam*, or, of the same meaning as *kol-haadam*, “every man” (πᾶς ἄνθρωπος), as at 3:13; 5:18 (LXX, also 7:2: τοῦτο τέλος παντὸς ἀνθρώπου); and it is yet more than improbable that the common expression, instead of which *haadam kullo* was available, should here have been used in a sense elsewhere unexampled. Continuing in the track of the *usus loq.*, and particularly of the style of the author, we shall thus have to translate: “for this is every man.” If we use for it: “for this is every man’s,” the clause becomes at once distinct; Zirkel renders *kol-haadam* as genit., and reckons the expression among the Graecisms of the book: παντὸς ἀνθρώπου, viz., πρᾶγμα. Or if, with Knobel, Hitz., Böttch., and Ginsburg, we might borrow a verb to supplement the preceding imperat.: “for this ought every man to do,” we should also in this way gain the meaning to be expected; but the clause lying before us is certainly a substantival clause, like *meh haadam*, 2:12, not an elliptical verbal clause, like Isa. 23:5; 26:9, where the verb to be supplied easily unfolds itself from the ל of the end of the movement.

We have here a case which is frequent in the Semitic languages, in which subj. and pred. are connected in the form of a simple judgment, and it is left for the hearer to find out the relation sustained by the pred. to the subj.—e.g., Ps. 110:3; 109:4, “I am prayer;” and in the Book of Koheleth, 3:19, “the children of men are a chance.” In the same way we have here to explain: for that is every man, viz., according to his destiny and duty; excellently, Luther: for

that belongs to all men. With right, Hahn, like Bauer (1732), regards the pronoun as pred. (not subj. as at 7:2): “this, i.e., this constituted, that they must do this, are all men,” or rather: this = under obligation thereto, is every man. It is a great thought that is thereby expressed, viz., the reduction of the Israelitish law to its common human essence. This has not escaped the old Jewish teachers. What can this mean: *zeh kol-haadam*? it is asked, *Berachoth 6b*; and R. Elazar answers: “The whole world is comprehended therein;” and R. Abba bar-Cahana: “This fundamental law is of the same importance to the universe;” and R. Simeon b. Azzai: “The universe has been created only for the purpose of being commanded this.”

Ecclesiastes 12:14. As we render *zeh kol-haadam* as expressive of the same obligation lying on all men without exception, this verse appropriately follows: “For God shall bring every work into the judgment upon all that is concealed, whether it be good or bad.” To bring into judgment is, as at 11:9 = to bring to an account. There the punctuation is $\psi\text{מב}$, here $\psi\text{מב}$, as, according to rule, the art. is omitted where the idea is determined by a relative clause or an added description; for *bmishpat* ‘*al kol-ne’llam* are taken together: in the judgment upon all that is concealed (cf. Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5, τὰ κρυπτά). Hitzig, however, punctuates here $\psi\text{מב}$, and explains ל as of the same meaning as the distributive ל, e.g., Gen. 9:5, 10; but in this sense ל never interchanges with ל. And wherefore this subtlety? The judgment upon all that is concealed is a judgment from the cognition of which nothing, not even the most secret, can escape; and that על משפט is not a Germanism, is shown from 11:9; to execute judgment on (Germ. *an*) any one is expressed by ב, Ps. 119:84, Wisd. 6:6; judgment upon (*über*) any one may be expressed by the genit. of him whom it concerns, Jer. 51:9; but judgment upon anything (Symm. *περὶ παντὸς παροραθέντος*) cannot otherwise be expressed than by ל. Rather ל may be rendered as a

connecting particle: “together with all that is concealed” (Vaih., Hahn); but כל-מעשה certainly comprehends all, and with כל-נעלם this comprehensive idea is only deepened. The accent dividing the verse stands rightly under נְעָלָם; for *sive bonum sive malum* (as at 5:11) is not related to *ne'llam* as disjoining, but to *kol-ma'aseh*.

This certainty of a final judgment of personal character is the Ariadne-thread by which Koheleth at last brings himself safely out of the labyrinth of his scepticism. The prospect of a general judgment upon the nations prevailing in the O.T., cannot sufficiently set at rest the faith (vid., e.g., Ps. 73, Jer. 12:1–3) which is tried by the unequal distributions of present destiny. Certainly the natural, and particularly the national connection in which men stand to one another, is not without an influence on their moral condition; but this influence does not remove accountability,—the *individuum* is at the same time a person; the object of the final judgment will not be societies as such, but only persons, although not without regard to their circle of life. This personal view of the final judgment does not yet in the O.T. receive a preponderance over the national view; such figures of an universal and individualizing personal judgment as Matt. 7:21–23, Rev. 20:12, are nowhere found in it; the object of the final judgment are nations, kingdoms, cities, and conditions of men. But here, with Koheleth, a beginning is made in the direction of regarding the final judgment as the final judgment of men, and as lying in the future, beyond the present time. What Job 19:25–27 postulates in the absence of a present judgment of his cause, and the Apocalyptic Dan. 12:2 saw

as a dualistic issue of the history of his people, comes out here for the first time in the form of doctrine into that universally-human expression which is continued in the announcements of Jesus and the apostles. Kleinert sees here the morning-dawn of a new revelation breaking forth; and Himpel says, in view of this conclusion, that Koheleth is a precious link in the chain of the preparation for the gospel; and rightly. In the Book of Koheleth the O.T. religion sings its funeral song, but not without finally breaking the ban of nationality and of bondage to this present life, which made it unable to solve the mysteries of life, and thus not without prophesying its resurrection in an expanded glorified form as the religion of humanity.

The synagogal lesson repeats the 13th verse after the 14th, to gain thereby a conclusion of a pleasing sound. The Masoretic *Siman* (*vox memorialis*) of those four books, in which, after the last verse, on account of its severe contents, the verse going before is repeated in reading, is ית"קק. The י refers to ישעיה (Isaiah), ת to תריסר (the Book of the Twelve Prophets), the first ק to קהלת, the second ק to קינות (Lamentations). The Lamentations and Koheleth always stand together. But there are two different arrangements of the five *Megilloth*, viz., that of the calendar of festivals which has passed into our printed editions: the Song, Ruth, Lamentations, Koheleth, and Esther (vid., above, p. 498); and the Masoretic arrangement, according to the history of their origin: Ruth, the Song, Koheleth, Lamentations, and Esther.