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Graduation Thesis
by

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Subject

The Book of Ecclesiastes.

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Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.	Page 1 -- 12
II.	General Survey of the Book.	" 12 --- 32.
III.	Title ^{and} its Signification.	" 33 ----- 48
IV.	Author ^{and} Place of Composition.	" 49 --- 65
V.	Style ^{and} Form of the Book.	" 66 --- 72
VI.	^{or} The Language.	" 73 --- 85
VII.	Canonicity of Koheleth.	" 86 --- 95
VIII.	^{or} The Time of Composition.	" 96 --- 109
IX.	Philosophical Systems in the Book.	" 110 --- 119
X.	Historical Sketch of the Exegesis.	" 120 --- 150
XI.	^{or} Translations ^{and} Versions.	" 151 --- 161
XII.	Conclusion.	" 162 -- 163.

Introduction.

The study of the Holy Scriptures, and the comprehension of the different books that compose it, has been furthered greatly by the results of modern exegesis. A more intimate acquaintance with the Semitic languages ^{and} literature, has overthrown many of the theories once held in regard to the Bible, ^{and} has brought about a broader ^{and} deeper insight into the divine purpose ^{and} character of the sacred writings. Yet, modern exegesis, notwithstanding its marvellous achievements, has not succeeded in entirely raising the veil from many of the books of Scriptures. There are still holy writings around which so much mystery hovers, that it seems almost impossible for the human mind to penetrate them. An excellent clue for the understanding of a book is furnished to the thoughtful student, by the knowledge of its author, ^{and} the time in which he lived ^{and} labored. Thus there is little doubt

as to the design of the prophecies of Jeremiah or Ezekiel, since history establishes conclusively, both the character of the authors and the period and circumstances in which they wrote. Far different, however, is it, when not only the author, but likewise the time and contemporaneous history are entirely unknown. The student is then wholly in the field of conjecture. Standing on equal ground, the exegete is at liberty to see in the book, references to diverse historical facts, and to explain the verses to suit his particular point of view. It follows from this, that no two critics, however conscientious and painstaking they may be, need necessarily hold like views. Each, reasoning according to his premises, ascribes to the book under his consideration, such a tendency and character as agrees best with his conception. One may reason more correctly than the other, one may gain more adherents than the other, yet both are inevitably but conjecturing and leave doubt and confusion behind. Although such a mode of exegesis

may bring forth most remarkable, subtle and ingenious theories, yet the student, desirous of gaining information as to such doubtful books of Scriptures, stands perplexed and helpless. One theory may fascinate and convince him, but when he turns to the view of another expounder, his former convictions are overthrown, and he is again wavering and uncertain.

Among the different books of the Bible, which have occupied the attention of thoughtful scholars from the earliest times, we may say that almost none has been so thoroughly investigated and yet with so little apparently conclusive results, as the book of Kohelleth. Opinions most diverse and contradictory, have been advanced with equal fervor, by different schools and thinkers. When we come to the study of Kohelleth, we find that in addition to the difficulties which it shares with other books of the Bible, such as, author, time, place of composition and circumstances which produced it, there are particular and innate peculiarities, which not only

heighten the difficulty of exposition, but even render it unique among all the Sacred writings. Its tone differs radically from that of all other books. The spirit which prevails in our book is not the spirit of the Bible. If we look at its exhortations in behalf of sensual pleasures, we are disposed to regard it as anti-moral. If we look at its apparent skepticism ^{and} doubt, we are prone to pronounce it anti-religious. If we look at its praise of ^{death, vanity of} earthly things, we must consider it pessimistic. When we compare it with other books, we see more clearly the discord in which it stands towards the rest of Scriptures. The book of Esther makes no mention of God, but it has for its theme, the deliverance of the Jews from the persecutor's power, ^{and} hence deserves a place in the Canon. The dramatic dialogue of Job is in many respects analogous to Koheleth, ^{and} teems with skepticism ^{and} attacks against God's justice, but its conclusion is religious, and, in fact, its entire tone tends to steadfast adherence to God ^{and} His precepts. Koheleth, however, closes as he began: "all is vanity," ^{and} recommends sensuous pleasures to the youth, ere old age with its

decrepitude ^{and} miseries, comes, ^{and} ends existence. If, however, we regard the last 6 verses as an integral part of the book, this would fasten, at least, a concluding religious thought to the book, ^{and} thus, perhaps, reconcile its otherwise anti-religious character. But it is a matter of dispute, whether the concluding verses are not the additions of a later compiler (for full discussion see further).—

At all events we breathe, in Koheleth, an entirely different atmosphere from that which surrounds all other books. The different parts of the Scriptures are but one anthem, which sings the praises ^{and} benignity of God. They are filled with the deepest religious convictions, which dispel all doubt ^{and} cavil. Koheleth, on the other hand, sees vanity in every thing, oppression all around, subversion of the eternal plan. Ruin ^{and} despair stare him in the eye wherever he turns.

It is this continual doubt ^{and} suspicion, so apparent in the mind of the author, which but enhances the difficulty of exposition. That he is a thinker deeply in earnest, no one will doubt. That he is sincere, we have no right to dispute. That he evidently has a purpose in mind, some teaching he wishes to inculcate, is but too evident. The great question

6
to be solved is: what this purpose was; and herein lies the difficulty.

But not only are we assailed with innumerable obstacles, when we attempt to discern the true aim of the author, but this problem is vastly increased by the numerous contradictions and inconsistencies with which this book abounds. The student is at times forced to the conclusion, held by some prominent exegetes, that Koheleth has no central theme, but that it is merely a compilation of moral sentences.¹ There is often no real connection visible between two verses, and it is no rare occurrence, to meet two verses in close proximity, which flatly contradict each other. At one time, we are charmed by the joyful tone in which he views life. All he says breathes contentment and hope. No optimist of our age could express himself more happily. But our joy is soon dispelled, by verses which are expressive of the deepest gloom and despair. He bewails the vanity of all earthly endeavors, and finds death preferable to life. Abraham Ibn Ezra has gathered the contradictions found in Koheleth, but he has far from exhausted them. -

¹ Luther, in his "Table Talk", says (p. 400+401): - "Koheleth ist wie ein Talmud aus vielen Büchern zusammengezogen, und hat keinen inneren Zusammenhang."

We will point out some of the most glaring inconsistencies. Their number is so great that for the present we will content ourselves by calling attention to a few only. — In Chapt. I, 11, II 15, 16, III 19, 20, IX 2, 5, he seems to intimate that apparently, the same fate awaits the pious ^{and} impious. But in Chapt. III 17, VIII 12, 13, XI 9, XII 13, 14, he holds that there is divine recompense for man's action, ^{and} exhorts to piety ^{and} righteousness. At one time, he claims to have attained to great wisdom, ^{and} at another, he bewails his lack of wisdom (comp. Chapt. I, 16, II 3, 9, 15, ^{and} VII 23, 24). He recommends rest, ^{and} again activity (IV 6, ^{and} IX 10). — We might continue this comparison ad libitum, but these examples suffice for our purpose. —

As mentioned above, exegetical scholars have abandoned the hope of finding in Koheleth a logical continuity.^I Most exegetical writers are, therefore, satisfied if they can find unity, not in the whole, but, at least, in the different parts.

Thus Koheleth is, at the same time, the most attractive, ^{and} also the most repulsive book, in the Canon. — It is a fact of history, that Frederick the Great, who was in other respects an antagonist of the Bible, studied Koheleth because of its difficulty, ^{and} regarded it as a mirror of court life. — Still

^I See Gockler's commentary, for a complete ^{account} of the great confusion which exists among commentators, ^{and} the futile attempts made to discover it. — ^{the book}

8

Kohaleth will ever be perused by thoughtful men, who delight to turn their gaze from the present, to the immensity of the past & future. Its beautiful introduction, its philosophic character, its wise & valuable maxims, and its religious ending, make a deep impression on the mind of the reader.

In addition to the difficulties thus far enumerated, may be mentioned those of style & language. The style, as a whole, differs entirely from that of the other Canonical books. There is no parallelism, which is so characteristic of Hebrew poetry. But the greatest & most insurmountable difficulty lies in the language. There are many expressions, which are peculiar to Kohaleth, and are found in no other book of the sacred Scriptures. A proper comprehension of such extraordinary expressions, will throw much light upon the time of the author. This but increases the difficulty of the interpretation.

Another very serious & important question is: does Kohaleth contain references to certain systems of philosophy? Some authors have seen in our book, distinct references

9

to sects among the Jews, especially Essenes. There are many commentators, on the other hand, who insist that Koheleth knows nothing of Greek philosophy, but only meant to teach his own people in a time of general gloom and despair.

There is another point to which we must now draw attention. It is, in how far is the text, as we have it, original and free from interpolations? Especially is this the case with Koheleth, where the seeming sceptical tone and the numerous perplexing phrases, offer excellent scope for interpolations and changes.

Graetz has been especially profuse in pointing out what he regards as interpolated passages.

There are other puzzling questions which will be elaborated upon, in the course of our investigation, but the ones we have cited, are the chief difficulties, which assail the critic. It will be our endeavor to explain, if not remove, these difficulties, and arrive at some conclusion as to the book before us. We will do this

however, with a full consciousness of the vastness of the task, and the many failures with which exegetes have met. Modern research has a hard work before it - to vindicate the honor of this book, and redeem it from the many slurs that have been heaped upon it.

A word now as to the position of Koheleth in the different versions of the Bible. Koheleth belongs to the third division of the Bible, called Kethubim (כתובים), and is one of the 5 Megilloth (חומש מגילות). In the Hebrew text it is found 4th in order of 5 Megilloth, and 7th in order of Kethubim or Hagiographa. Lieser, in his translation, follows the order of the Hebrew or Massoretic text, placing it after Lamentations. King James, in his translation, places it after Proverbs and before Song of Solomon. The Talmud¹ places Koheleth 5th in order of Kethubim, between Proverbs and Song of Songs, which order King James adopts. In the Greek writings, a different arrangement prevails. Josephus divides the Bible as follows: I Books of

² This is in all Protestant Bibles

11

Moses, II - 13 Prophets, III - 4 books of moral & lyric contents, viz. 1st Psalms, 2nd Proverbs, 3rd Koheleth, 4th Song of Solomon.^I - The Church Fathers placed Koheleth ^{as} the 14th Book of the Bible - after Proverbs.^{II} The original order of the books of the third Canon was: 1st Davidian Psalms, 2-5 Writings of Solomon, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Koheleth, - 6th Esther, 7th Daniel, 8th Ruth, 9th Ezra.^{III} At first Song of Songs & Koheleth were united as one, because of same authorship; but later, owing to the different uses made of these books for ritual purposes, they were separated.^{IV} Koheleth was placed 4th in the order of Megilloth, because it was read on Shebuoth, the 4th of the holidays. In the Samaritan Canon, Koheleth is not included at all, since they rejected the entire Bible, with the exception of the 5 Books of Moses.^V 22

Having thus pointed out the difficulties in our Book, & having called attention to such introductory matter as seemed necessary, we are now ready to proceed to a critical invest-

^I Josephus, *Contra Apion*, I 8. — ^{II} Melita, by Eusebius, loc. cit.

^{III} vide De Wette, *Einleitung*, p. 30. — ^{IV} Ewald, *Geschichte*, VII 431, 433.

^V *ibid.* p. 241 ff., *Hergfeld* II p. 82-86, 146 ff., also *Blick* p. 685.

igation of the book, and enter into the task we have set ourselves to perform.

General Survey of the Book.

In this article it will be our endeavor to bring forth clearly the design^{ed} import of Koheleth. It has been said, that the book before us is pessimistic in its tone, that it recommends mere sensual enjoyment in a world of uncertainty^{ed} change, and to discontinue all attempts to fathom the future, for man is but the child of chance^{ed} circumstance. "Live while you can, eat, drink^{ed} be merry," was said to be the watchword of our author. "Vanity - all is vanity", it has been asserted, is the key-note to the entire book. Life is but a delusion, human endeavors but futile, all nobler exertions are but pain, and there is no reward beyond the grave, man is left without a protector in this mad, wild life.

Such pessimistic, gloomy thoughts are ascribed to our sublime teacher. We cannot share this view. To us, Koheleth stands as a typical Jew, and such a doctrine would be against the spirit of our religion. Koheleth is no pessimist, nor on the other hand, a defender of Epicurean principles. He stands on a

Jewish basis, and in a time of gloom, cheerlessness and oppression, he raises his voice against the prevailing asceticism of his age, and points to God and religion as the beacon lights amid the profound darkness. In order to bring out our conception of this book, let us lay down, what we regard, the design of Koheleth, and then briefly summarize the contents of our book. The design of Koheleth is to gather together the desponding people of God, into the community of the Lord, by showing the utter insufficiency of all human efforts to obtain real happiness, which neither wisdom, pleasure, industry, nor wealth can secure, but which consists in the calm enjoyment of life, in the resignation to the duties of Providence, in the service of God, in the belief in a future state of retribution, when all that appears mysterious in the present course of the world, shall be solved and rectified. In one word, it aims to show us what is the greatest good, and how we can attain it. Man is distinguished from the animal, by the joy of the soul, which we

feel in the performance of good deeds, and this is the
 highest good for man, which can be attained only in
 religion, in works of virtue, by the union of the material
 and the spiritual. This is the chief thought of the book.
 The beginning ^{1:2} vanity, and the conclusion ^{XII 13}, are the
 beginning and conclusion of the thought of Koheleth. As the
 Psalmist (^{XXXIX} 6, 12) cries out, when he views the short-
 ness of life and the vanity of human exertions, "vain is
 man", but he is not to perish in his vanity, but by it
 to find the way to eternity, so Koheleth starts out
 with vanity, proves this in all human exertions, and
 closes with the thought, although the perishability
 of all things invites us to joy and pleasure, we must
 still look to God and his judgement. (^{XI} 9). There can
 be no worldly prosperity without spiritual life, but
 also not spiritual happiness without worldly pursuit;
 through God to the world, and through the world to
 God. This thought of Mosaism and of the entire pro-
 phetism, which distinguishes biblical religion from the
 two extremes of Heathendom, from Buddhism on the

one hand, with its contempt of this world, ^{and} from
 the religion of Greece on the other, with its deification
 of the world, finds its highest expression in Koheleth.
 He seeks to open the way to biblical religion, ^{and}
 to undermine the foundation of Heathendom. There
 is, in my mind, no doubt that this book arose
 from the clash between Judaism ^{and} heathen creeds.
 Not only was ^{it} to influence ^{and} shape the thought of
 his time, but also to reach non-Jewish circles, ^{and} to
 show the superiority of Judaism over all other re-
 ligions. This view is strengthened by the fact, that
 although he mentions God 27 times, he invariably
 uses the name Elohim, which belongs to God as
 Creator of the Universe, ^{and} not that of Jehovah, which
 only an Israelite was privileged to use. He, further,
 makes no mention of the history of Israel, or of the
 revelation, as if the book wishes to attack its oppo-
 nents on the ground of natural religion. - Before we
 enter upon an investigation of the thought of the
 book, let us say a few words, regarding the method

adopted by our author. This is most striking^{and} effective. Instead of writing an elaborate metaphysical disquisition, philosophically refuting, analyzing, or denouncing, ex-cathedra, the various systems of happiness, which different moods^{and} temperaments have constructed for themselves, Solomon is introduced as recounting his own painful experiences in all these attempts. Thus he could more easily penetrate the hearts of all his readers, for he brings before them the picture of a reputed sage, pronouncing on the highest good for man. Gradually he develops his idea,^{and} it is only towards the conclusion of the book that we see clearly whither his speculations have led him. Let us now investigate the thought of the book.

The book, in fact, consists of a prologue, four sections,^{and} an epilogue. We will give the contents of each.

The Prologue. (I 2-11). It gives the theme or problem, which is to be solved. Assuming that there is no future life, ~~Wheth~~ declares that all human efforts to satisfy the craving soul, here on earth, are vain^{and}

futile (3). This he has set as his task to prove. Conscious man is more deplorable than unconscious nature. Man must speedily quit this life, whilst the earth abides forever (4). The objects of nature depart and again retrace their course, but man vanishes and is forever forgotten. (5-11).

The First Section (I 11 - II 26). This section records the failure of different experiments to obtain happiness for the longing soul, thus corroborating the allegation of the prologue. Koheleth, with all the resources of a monarch at his command, applied himself assiduously to discover, by the aid of wisdom, the nature of earthly pursuits (I 13), and found that they were all fruitless, since they could not verify our destinies (I 15). Reflecting, therefore, upon the large amount of wisdom that he had acquired, he came to the conclusion that it was all useless, as the accumulation of it, only increased his sorrow and pain (I 14-18). He then resolved to try pleasure, to see whether it would yield the desired happiness; but found that this, too, was vain, and hence denounced

it. Although he had procured every imaginable pleasure, he found that it was utterly unable to impart lasting joy (II 3-11). Whereupon he compared wisdom with pleasure, and though he saw that the former had a decided advantage over the latter, yet he recognized that it does not exempt its possessor from death or oblivion, but that the wise and the fool must both die, alike and be forgotten (II 12-16). This made him hate both life and the possessions, which, though acquired by industry, he must leave to another, who may be reckless, convincing him that man has nothing for his toil, but wearisome days and sleepless nights (II 17-23). There is, therefore, he concludes, nothing left for man, but to enjoy himself. Yet this even, he found was not in the power of man, for God gives this power to the righteous and withholds it from the wicked. This is too, after all, but transitory (II 24-26).-

The Second Section (III 1-V 19). - Having shown in the preceding section that neither wisdom nor pleasure can secure lasting happiness, Koheleth shows that neither is industry able to secure it. All the events of life

are permanently fixed, ^{and} hence all human labors are fruitless (III 1-9). God has, indeed, prescribed bounds to man's employment, in harmony with this fixed order of things, but man, in his ignorance, often mistakes it, thus again showing that there is nothing left for man but to enjoy the things of this world, which are the gift of God to the righteous (III 10-13). The ^{secret} cause of this immutable arrangement in the events of life is, that man may fear God, ^{and} feel that it is he, who ordered all things (III 14-15). The apparent success of wickedness does not militate against this conclusion, since there is a fixed day for righteous retribution (III 16-17). But even if, as it is affirmed, all terminates here, ^{and} man & beast have the same destiny, this proves all the more, that there is nothing left for man, but to enjoy his life, since this is his only portion (III 17-22). The state of suffering, however, according to this view, becomes desperate, ^{and} death & not to have been born at all, are preferable to life (IV 1-3). The exertions made, in spite of the prescribed

order of things, arise either from jealousy^{and} fail in their end, or are prompted by avarice^{and} defeat themselves (IV 3-16). Since all things are thus under the control of an Omnipotent God, we ought to serve him acceptably,^{and} trust to his protection under oppression,^{and} remember that the rich oppressor has, after all, not the comfort of the poor laborer,^{and} that he often brings misery upon himself^{and} his children (IV 17 - V 16); these considerations again show that there is nothing left for a man, but to enjoy life, which is the gift of God. (V 17-19). -

The Third Section. (VI 1 - VIII 15). - Riches come now under review, ^{and} they too are shown to be unable to secure happiness (VI 1-9), since the rich man can neither overrule the orders of Providence, nor know what will conduce to his well being (VI 10-12). ^{And} lastly, prudence or common sense is examined, ^{and} shown to be as unsatisfactory as all preceding trials. Koheleth thought, that to live so as to have a good name, to listen to merited rebuke, not to indulge in a re

pinning spirit, but to submit to God's will, to be temperate in religious matters, not to pry into everybody's opinion, to submit to the powers that be, even under oppression, believing that the mightiest tyrant will ultimately be punished, ^{and} that, though righteous retribution is sometimes delayed, yet God will eventually administer rewards ^{and} punishments, that these would bring him lasting happiness (VI-III 13). But, as this did not account for the melancholy fact, that the fortunes of the righteous ^{and} the wicked are sometimes reversed all their life-time, this common-sense view of life also proved vain (VIII 14). Koheleth therefore returns to his oft-repeated conclusion, that there is nothing left for man, but to enjoy the things of this life (VIII 15).

The Fourth Section. (VIII 15-12, 7) - In order to display still more effectively his final conclusions, Koheleth gives first a resumé of his investigations. He has found that it is impossible to fathom the works of God by wisdom (VIII 16-17), that all must die ^{and} be forgotten, ^{and} all are subject to God's inscrutable providence. a

2.
And that therefore we are to indulge in pleasure here while we can (IX 1-10). He has learnt further that success does not always attend the strong^{and} skillful (IX 11, 12),^{and} that wisdom, though more advantageous, than ignorance, is still often despised,^{and} counteracted by folly (IX 13-X 3). We are therefore to be patient under sufferings from rulers (X 4), who, by virtue of their power, pervert the order of things (X 5-7). He sees that the exercise of prudence in the affairs of life, will be more to our advantage than folly (X 12-20). We are to be charitable (XI 1-3). We are always to be at our work,^{and} not to be deterred by imaginary failures, since we know not which of our efforts may prove successful (XI 3-6),^{and} thus make life as agreeable as we can. He concludes that the future is all vanity, but as this did not satisfy the desire of the soul, Koheleth concludes, after all tossing of the subject, that enjoyment of this life, together with a belief in a future judgement, will secure real happiness for a man,^{and} that we are, therefore, to live

from our youth, in the fear of God, ^{and} in the belief of a final judgement; then all that is now perplexing will be rectified (XII 1-7). -

The Epilogue (XII 8-12). Thus all human efforts to obtain real happiness are vain (XII 8). This is the experience of the wise ^{and} painstaking Koheleth (XII 9-10). The Sacred Writings alone teach us the way to happiness (XII 11, 12). There is a righteous Judge, who will judge everything we do. We must, therefore, fear Him, ^{and} keep his commandments (XII 13, 14). -

Thus is the synopsis of the thought of this wonderful book. A tone of unity pervades the book from beginning to end, which leads us to one conclusion: that the experiences were made by the august author himself, ^{and} that they were not observations, which he has merely collected. The remarks are made from a profound knowledge of life, ^{and} the world, ^{and} are taken from common life. They have mostly a tinge of melancholy, ^{and} sometimes the color is even thickly laid on. This imparts to the book a deep interest. We

hear a great prince of the past, who possessed the greatest human happiness, philosophizing on the wrong use of life, and stirring us up to the fear of God, virtue and morality. The great author has adopted no definite plan. In his own fashion, he goes through the whole of human life, and throws out his remarks upon its several aspects. He contemplates, teaches, mourns, comforts, imparts counsel, contradicts and corrects himself, and, although the whole betrays the course of mere social ideas, yet the principal thread, upon which all things hinge, is never entirely lost. From this point of view, the apparent contradictions are easily solved. The author is evidently no dogmatic or phlegmatic teacher, but a warm and animated seeker of truth. To a philosopher it is essential to listen to the opposite views. He listens to all objections which can be made, and does not fear the consequence of statements which he admits. In this book, two voices, as it were, speak - both within him. He candidly places before his readers, all the doubts and objections, which are in his inmost soul. He is not an

fraid to talk aloud. It were therefore, wrong, if we were to charge him with all the opinions which he adduces, ^{and} thus requite his openness. Justice demands that we should adhere to that, which this great man gives at the end of his contemplations, as the result of his investigations, i. e. to fear God ^{and} keep his commands. That is the end of his doubts. That is his advice to man. That is the way to unsullied happiness. He did not share the sorrow ^{and} gloom that pervaded his age. His purpose, above all, was to destroy this feeling ^{and} work against it. And here his great argument is, that all things are from God, ^{and} man must submit to God's will. Further he taught, that, after all, dissatisfaction ^{and} gloom led to no result. Since then, there is nothing new under the sun, ^{and} all alike is perishable, the young should not sorrow, but enjoy life, ere old age comes ^{and} ends existence. Dissatisfaction seemed an evil to the author. It was necessary for the author to emphasize the joys of life, in order to suppress the gloom, that pervaded all life during his time. Asceticism increased.

The author wished to awaken interest in life. He does not enjoin eudaemonism, but only attacks the ascetic spirit, that destroyed all hope and all energy in life. He is neither a skeptic nor a materialist, but a religious teacher in a time of general despair & doubt. He belongs to no school or sect (although some have made him a Sadducee, or an Essene, or even a Greek), but was a man of sound, practical views, without any idealism or extravagance. He is, above all, the satiric mirror of the times. He sought to remove the follies that met him at all times and on all sides. In this he resembles all Satiric poets, and has thus an ethical background.

Thus we can rightly say that Koheleth has as religious a tendency as any of the Biblical books. Koheleth stands for true religion, which consists in a calm enjoyment of life and resignation to the will of Providence; willing obedience to His Law, and hope in his final judgement.

Let us now look somewhat nearer to individual parts of our book. There has been much discussion as to the Epilogue, and, as this is a very important consideration,

we will turn our attention ^{to} it.

Krochmal, in 1851, advanced a very original ^{and} ingenious theory as to the last three verses of Koheleth. His view, with slight modifications, was accepted by eminent Jewish scholars, such as Furst, in his work on the Canon of the Old Testament, Bloch ^{and} Graetz. Krochmal's opinion is, that verses from XII 9 to the end, were added at the final settlement of the Canon in Jamnia, 90 A. C., ^{and} were designed to serve not merely as a conclusion to Koheleth, but as a fitting close to the end of the third ^{and} last division of the Jewish Scriptures, known as Hagiographa. Krochmal regards Koheleth as being the last book of that division, although no proof can be brought for this, except his interpretation of the epilogue of that work. He refers the words, "the words of the wise are as goads" (XII 11), to refer to the authors of the several books in this third division. By the ^{בְּעֵלֵי אֲסוּפוֹת}, "the lords of assemblies," he considers the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin to be signified, who are likened to firmly-fixed nails, which cannot be moved. Why the

29.
members of the Jewish council should thus be referred to in the epilogue; ^{and} what is meant by their being thus termed, is hard to divine. Graetz has somewhat modified the view of Krochmal. He regards not only the last three, but the last six verses, as later additions. The first three of these six verses, he believes, are a sort of apology ^{and} defence, given by the Hillelites, who compiled the book, ^{and} who wished to show that Koheleth contained words of truth. The last three verses, he accepts Krochmal's view, & regards as the closing words of the third Canon. - But the rendering given by Graetz, requires several alterations to be introduced into the Hebrew text, which are not sanctioned by the authority of the manuscript, or the ancient versions. All these views we cannot accept. It is true, that if these views are correct, they would entirely vitiate the religious character of the book, and make Koheleth, a pessimist, who ends as he began, "all is vanity". We see, however, no reason for accepting their views. Delitzsch has satisfactorily proven that the style & language

of the epilogue is marked by the same peculiarities, that characterize the other parts of the book. This fact tells strongly against Krochmal's theory, which, after all, has no real basis of evidence. Further, if the epilogue really referred to the closing of the third Canon, it seems very strange, that the early expositions should never have mentioned this fact, and it is remarkable, that no evidence, whatever can be discovered, not even in Talmud sources, of a period in which Koheleth stood at the end of the third division of the Old Testament, which, according to this theory, is its proper place. In fact, the order given by Talmud (see Introd.), places it nowhere near the end. But, as chief argument against this theory, we may mention that the epilogue is found in the version of the Septuagint and in all the other ancient versions. This is certainly a direct overthrow of Krochmal's theory. We are, therefore, firmly of the opinion, that the entire book is the work of one master hand, and that there are no additions or interpolations. — Let us now, in

conclusion, look at Koheleth's description of old age.

This, as will be mentioned, is the most poetical part of our book, ^{Qd} is worthy of more than passing notice. Many theories have been advanced to explain this poem on old age, for such we may call it. Tayler asserts that XII 3-5 are cited from an authorized book of dirges. For this theory, there seems to be no assignable reason, especially for separating these verses from the context. And how can the mourners have sung the latter part of verse 5, "and the mourners go about the street"? Umbreit defends a "storm theory", which supposes that the approach of death is described under the imagery of a gathering storm. Wright, in his commentary, holds that the evil days of the close of life, are described by figures, drawn from "the seven days of death", as the modern Syrians designate the closing days of their winter. - The theory that we accept, however, is the one that explains this poem on old age as allegorical. This theory is the oldest, ^{Qd}, on a point of this sort, has some claim to be deferred to. - We will try to trans-

late it, showing its allegorical character: -

Remember thy Creator, in the days of thy youth!
 Ere the evil days come, and the years approach,
 In which thou shalt say, "I have no pleasure in them";
 Ere the sun be darkened, and the light & the moon & the stars,
 And the clouds keep returning after heavy rains (i.e. old age),
 In the days, when the keepers of the house (the hands & the arms),
 And the strong men (the feet & the legs) bow themselves,
 And the grinding maids (the teeth) cease because they are few,
 And those who look out at the lattice (the eyes) are darkened,
 And the doors (the lips) are shut toward the street,
 While the sound of the grinding is low, and the voice ris-
 eth into a sparrow's (childish treble),
 And all the daughters of song (the words) are faint, and the
 almond tree is in blooming (white hairs),
 And the locust drags itself along, and the capew-berry
 fails (to excite the appetite),
 For the man is on his way to the eternal home,
 And the mourners go about on the streets;
 Ere the silver string (the tongue) be tied,

2. 12. 11. 12.
2.
2.
Here is an omission

And the golden bowl (the head) break,
And the pitcher (the heart) be shivered at the fountain,
And the windlass (the breathing apparatus) break into the pit.-

Thus we have here a most beautiful allegorical poem on the frailties of old age. There are other special parts, that will be mentioned at other places. - The prologue will be noted for its beautiful style, at least when compared with other parts of the book. We will now proceed to an investigation of the time of our book, which is the most vexed question of Koheleth, and which, if properly settled, would decide the aim and purpose of the work we are investigating.

Title of the Book^{2d} its Signification.

The author of the book calls himself קהלת. This name occurs in the book 7 times, - 3 times in the beginning (viz., Chapt. I, 1, 2, 12), 3 times at the end (XII, 8, 9, 10), and once in the middle (VII 27). That this word קהלת is not a proper name, but an appellation, is evident from the article ה with קהלת found in XII, 8^I. Further, in Chapt. VII 27, we find קהלת construed with אמרה a feminine verb,^{II} thus showing conclusively that קהלת cannot be a proper name. It is evident from the context that the King here referred to is Solomon, as he speaks of himself as Son of David, King in Jerusalem. We know from history that David had no other son, who was King over Israel in Jerusalem. The author seems to have been too modest to use his own name, but like Cicero in his dialogues, selects a mouthpiece. Who was so suitable for this purpose as the renowned King Solomon, the wisest man of his age, the founder^{2d} and patron of gnomic poetry. There may be another reason than the one of modesty, which prompted the wise author to

^I The verse reads: - הבל הבלים אמר הקהלת הבל הבל

^{II} " " " - etc. ראה זה מצאתי אמרה קהלת

this can be read אמר דן דלל

conceal his name. It may have been a matter of policy. Living in a time of dire persecution, when spies filled every corner of the land, when violence was rampant, it would have been certain destruction for the author to have affixed his real name. By hiding his identity he was not only safe from the cruel king, but he added to the influence he could exert, by assuming the wise & powerful king Solomon as his speaker. But we will speak more at length on this matter in another connection. Let us now turn our attention to the word קהלת itself. —

According to form, קהלת is an active participle, feminine, Kal, from קהל, kindred with Arabic كَلَّ , Greek καλέω , Latin *calo*, & English *call*. It signifies primarily to call, then to call together, to assemble, to collect. This participle is the only instance in which the Kal is used, as with the words קָהַל שְׁחָדָה , בָּנָה קָהַל , קָהַל שְׁחָדָה . The Niphal נִקְהַל , i. e. the passive of the Kal, means to be called together, to be assembled, to be collected. Therefore the Kal must mean to call together, collect, assemble.¹

¹ See next page?

^I According to this derivation, קהל means, collectress, female gatherer, congregatrix - die Versammlerin. But now three questions suggest themselves; first, what did Solomon collect - assuming the wise king to be the speaker - , second, why does he bear this name קהל, and third, how comes the word to be feminine singular?

Let us answer the first question, what did Solomon collect? Referring to passages where קהל occurs in Niphal^I or in Hiphil^{II}, shows that it is invariably used for collecting persons, especially for religious purposes. According to this, קהל means an assembler of scattered people into the more immediate presence of God; a gatherer of those afar off unto God.^{III} We know that it was customary for wise men to call their disciples together, to impart to them instruction and counsel, and a wise man, as Koheleth is represented to be, is prone to do likewise.

Let us now turn to the second question: why does Solomon have this name attached to him?

^I Ex. xxxii 1, Levit. viii 4, Numbers xvi 3, xvii 2, Joshua xviii 1, xxii 12, Judges xxi 1, 2nd Sam. xx 14, 1st Kings vii 2, 2nd Chron. x 3, xx 26, Esther viii 11, ix 2, 15, 16, 18, Jerem. xxvi 9, Ezek. xxviii 7.

^{II} Ex. xxxv 1, Levit. viii 3, Numbers i 3, viii 9, x 7, xvi 19, xx 8, 10, Deut. xv 10, xxxi 12 + 28, 1st Kings viii 1, xii 21, 1st Chron. xiii 5, xv 3, xxviii 1, 2nd Chron. v 2, xi 1, Ezek. xxviii 13, Job xi 10.

This is not so difficult to answer. Solomon has this name, because it is descriptive of the design of the Book, ^{and} because it connects his labors with his work recorded in 1st Kings, Chap. VIII. There Solomon is regarded as gathering (קָהַל) his people to the worship of God, and here, in our book, he is described as the gatherer of his people who, owing to perplexities ^{and} temptations in the moral government of God, had loosened their ties ^{and} were in imminent danger of becoming totally detached from that community.

We will now discuss the third question: why is Koheleth feminine singular? - It is feminine singular because Solomon personifies wisdom, which appears herself in Proverbs I 10 ^I ^{and} VIII 1, as Koheleth, or gatherer of the people. Such a personification is in perfect keeping with the character of Solomon, who is looked upon as the incarnate wisdom ^{and} is represented as teaching wisdom. ^{II.}

^I This view has been accepted by numerous commentators. St. Augustine says of the word קהלה "sapientia semel per Solomonem accipitur." - This view is accepted further by the following prominent exegetes: - Knobel p. 6, Hengstenberg in Kittos's encyclopaedia Bib. Lit. Art. ed. 1844 vol. 1 p. 594, Ewald, Kritikal Gram. p. 567, Köster, "Das Buch Job u. der Prediger Solomonis," p. 102, Hitzig, "Die Sprüche u. der Prediger Solomonis" p. 128, Kuenen, Kleinert & Knaab's Coheleth p. 7. This view is also accepted in his Real-Encyclopaedia, article Prediger.

Hence we have an explanation why קהלת is used with a feminine verb (אמרה קהלת VII 27). The word קהלת is in apposition with חכמה, which is feminine, hence the verb used with קהלת is feminine.^I There have been some objections raised to this theory, which it may be well to refute now. Such verses as, "I gave my heart to wisdom"; "I acquired wisdom" (I 16, 17, II 12); "wisdom stood by me" (II 9); "wisdom stood far from me" (VII 23), & others are held to be incompatible with the theory proposed.^{II} This objection arises from a confusion of wisdom animating a person, with a personified idea; the wisdom which is concrete in Solomon with absolute wisdom. It must be remembered that, after all, Solomon does not lose his identity. At times he speaks of his own experiences,^{III} & at times he utters the words of wisdom whose organ he is.

The three questions propounded we have attempted to answer according to the theory that appeared best to us. But it must be stated that for centuries, it has been a matter of great dispute as to the title of our book & what it signifies. Commentators have been greatly divided on this subject, & some of the theories advanced

^I Rashi & Ibn Ezra, though they gave a different interpretation of Koheleth, are forced to admit: that it is feminine, owing to wisdom being spoken of. —

^{II} Knobel p. 7

are, we admit, quite plausible & deserve to be mentioned somewhat at length. — We shall therefore show how other exegetes have explained the name Koheleth.

1st Opinion: — Midrash Rabba says that Koheleth means preacher, and this name was applied to Solomon, because his discourses embodied in our book, were delivered before the assembled congregation. This opinion is adopted, besides Midrash Rabba Eccles I 1, by Septuagint, which therefore called the book ἐκκλησιαστής, by Vulgate, which calls it ecclesiastes, by St. Jerome, who says "ἐκκλησιαστής Graeco sermone appellatur qui coetum, i. e. ecclesiam, congregat," by Luther, i. e. Prediger, by Hieronymus, who calls it "conciator," by Geneva version and Authorized version. —

Among modern commentators this explanation has also found many supporters. This view seems to me to be invalid, for the following reasons: — 1st. The verb כהן does not at all include the idea of preaching; 2nd. it ascribes to Solomon an office which is nowhere mentioned in Scriptures, and is quite inconsistent with the contents of the book. The name כהן

is neither a name of office nor rank, but simply describes the act of gathering the people. Those who defend this interpretation of קהל appeal to Chap. XII 9, where Koheleth is said to have taught the people wisdom. But this no more proves Solomon to be a preacher, than a reference to Deut. IV 5, where it is said Moses taught the people the divine institutions, or to Deut. XI 19, where the Israelites are bidden to teach their children, prove that they were preachers. The phrase לִמֵּד דַּעַת simply means: "to impart knowledge", "to inform", without any reference to the way in which it is done. 3rd - The title preacher is too modern^d and quite inconsistent with the book, since II 17th and other appeals, which are in the singular, ("Keep thy foot, when thou goest") - show that these discourses were not delivered before the assembly of the people. 4th - The construction of the feminine verb אָמְרָה (VII 27) is incompatible with this view. 5th - Abstracts are never formed from the active participle. 6th - No instance can be found in which a concrete is first made an abstract^d and then again employed in a per-

this proves
nothing

sonal sense. So much for this interpretation.

The 2nd Opinion is: that Koheleth means gatherer or acquirer of wisdom. Solomon is so called, because he, of all men, acquired wisdom. This view is adopted by Rashi and Rashbam.^I

3rd Opinion: Koheleth signifies collector, compiler, and he is so called, because he collected in this book different experiences, and gives expression to various maxims for the benefit of mankind.^{II}

4th Opinion: Koheleth means eclectic (ἐκλεκτικός), and is a name given to Solomon by his father or teacher, because of his skill in selecting and purifying, from the different systems of various philosophers, the sentiments in this book. Thus we find that Plato, whose original name was Aristocles, was called Plato by his teacher, because of the fluency of his speech or the beauty of his person.^{III}

5th Opinion: Koheleth means accumulated wisdom. Solomon is so called because all wisdom is accumulated in him.^{IV} — In refutation of these three different opinions, we may say, that they are all contrary

I. Rashi says: — על שקיחל חכמות הרבה וכן במקום אחר קוראו אגור בן יקח שאגור כל החכמה והקוצה
II. This view is accepted by Grotius, Annotations ad Eccles. I, 1, Mayer, "A Commentary upon Holy Writings of Job, David & Solomon," p. 771, Mandelkern, Commentary on Eccles., translated by Theod. Beckton, p. 130, Miedländer, Der Prediger, p. 91, Heinemann, p. 3.
III. This view is especially advanced by Rosenthal: "Koheleth übersetzt nebst einem Ebräischen

to the meaning of the verb קָרַח , which has only one meaning, i.e. to gather persons, not things. - Against opinion number three we may say, that the book is not a compilation of different sayings^{and} maxims, but it is a regular treatise upon a definite subject and each part gradually develops the design of the author. - Against opinion number five we can say, that Koheleth is an active participle^{and} cannot therefore be taken in a passive sense.

7th Opinion: - Koheleth means penitent,^{and} describes the state of Solomon's heart for his apostasy.^I This view, too, is untenable. The Arabic word is appealed to for this meaning. The Arabic word, however, does not bear out this meaning,^{and} then it is not desirable or commendable to refer to a cognate language for the explanation of a Hebrew word. - Then, we do not find a single passage, which appears like the confession of a sin, or like the language of a repentant heart. This vitiates the spirit of the book.

8th opinion: - Koheleth means concensus, assembly, an academy. Accordingly, the adherents of this

^IThis explanation is favored by Knobel, Holden, Schroder & Schulten.

view, translate the 1st verse thus: Sayings of the Academy of the son of David (חכמים being supplied), or of a member of the academy (בעל being supplied before קהלת)^I. This view is intolerantly harsh. - Besides Chapt. I 12 shows its inconsistency. Solomon addresses his society, adopting their view as: "I oh! Academy, was king in Jerusalem", thus informing his society, over which he was President, who ^{Ed} what he was, as if they did not know it.

9th Opinion: - Koheleth means the reunited, gathered soul, ^{And} describes Solomon's readmission into Judaism, because of his repentance. The defenders of this view therefore translate the first verse thus: "The words of the soul, or person, congregated or gathered unto the congregation, i. e. the son of David, king in Jerusalem."^{II} This explanation is guilty of gross violation of grammar, in assigning to the active participle קהלת a passive sense.

10th Opinion: - Koheleth stands for an old man, ^{And} by this Solomon indicates his weakness of mind in worshipping idols. - This view has recourse to

^I This view is defended by Doederlein, Solomon's Prediger, p. xvi etc., Nachtigal, Koheleth oder die Versammlung der Weisen, p. 20.

^{II} This view was held by Cartwright, Bishop Reynolds's Annotations on Book of Eccles., vol.

Arabic, as did opinion number 7, which, as mentioned before, is unallowable. Besides, there are well known Hebrew words for old man (זקן + שׁיבָה), and had the author intended this as the meaning, he would have used a more popular Hebrew word and not have had recourse to the Arabic.

11th Opinion: - Koheleth signifies exclaiming voice^I; therefore the 1st verse is translated: "The words of the one exclaiming". This far-fetched explanation likewise refers to a cognate language, and hence is rejected.

12th Opinion: - Koheleth means sophist,^{II} and this in the original signification of the word, i.e. a combination of philosophy and rhetoric, קהלל being the same as σοφιστής. Solomon is so called, because he was the cause of a great concourse of people who came to hear him. He therefore differed from the Greek σοφιστής, who obtained his name from the wisdom he professed to impart.

13th Opinion: - Koheleth means philosopher or moralist.^{III}

14th Opinion: - Koheleth means departed spirit of Solomon, who speaks in form of a shadow.^{IV} In answer to these opinions we state that they are so unnatural and far-

^I Held by De Dieu & quoted by Desvieux - also by Holden.

^{II} Desvieux, a Philosophical & Critical Essay on Eccles., p. 479.

^{III} Held by Spohn, Geab & Auerbach.

fetched, that they need only to be stated to be refuted.

Renan saw the difficulty of explaining this title Koheleth satisfactorily, and believed that the ordinary philological methods are inadequate here. He was disposed to regard the letters L. H. L. Th. as the initials of words, which, in some way are descriptive of Solomon.^I

Thus far, we have discussed the different opinions expressed as to the meaning of the title of the book. Let us now investigate how other commentators have solved the third question we propounded, - viz., why is the word Koheleth, feminine singular? - We find here almost the same diversity of opinion that we found in examining the name Koheleth.

1st view: - Koheleth is feminine, because it refers to נפש, the intellectual soul, which is understood.^{II} This view, though virtually the same as the one we have accepted, is very indistinct in consequence of the view of its propounders regarding the signification of the title Koheleth.

2nd view: - Koheleth is feminine singular, to show

^I Compare Ramban and Rashi. ^{II} Rashi, Ramban and Ewald.

the great excellence of the preacher, or his charming style, which the feminine gender indicates.^I

3rd view: - Koheleth is feminine because the preacher travails, like a mother, in spiritual birth of his children, and her tender and motherly affection for them, which is best expressed by the fem. gender.^{II}

4th view: - Koheleth is feminine, to describe the infirmity of Solomon, who appears here as worn out by old age.^{III}

5th view: - Koheleth, although feminine, is here used in a neuter sense,^{IV} because the departed spirit, which Koheleth signifies, has no specific gender.

These views need no refutation, since they stand refuted, if we have succeeded in refuting the signification of the title, Koheleth, on which they are based.

6th view: - The termination ך is not at all feminine, but, as in Arabic is used as an anthesis to the force of a word. So that Koheleth means a preëminent preacher.

Such a usage of feminine ending, has no parallel in Hebrew. Besides, this anthesis means "much". Accordingly קהליךת would signify "much preaching" and not preëminent preacher.

^I Lortinus and Girkel. ^{II} Pineda and Mayer. ^{III} Mercer and Simonis. ^{IV} Auguste.

^V Jahn, Einleitung in das Alte Test., p. 328.

7th view: Koheleth is feminine, from a Hebrew usage of designating, by feminine ^{and} abstract names, persons holding certain ranks ^{and} offices. ^I Against this interpretation we urge the following: - 1st. Koheleth is not the name of rank or office, but describes the act of gathering people together. 2nd. The use of the feminine verb with it, in III 27, is irreconcilable with this view.

3rd. Abstracts, though sometimes expressed by feminines, are never from an active participle. 4th. No single instance can be found, where a concrete is first made an abstract, ^{and} then again taken in a personal sense.

8th view: - The feminine form of Koheleth, arose from a tendency of later Hebrew to use feminine participles with a masculine sense. Thus, in Talmudic Hebrew, we find לקוחות buyers, נקורות stone masons, לעוזות foreigners. (Passive participles, in this state of the language tend to adopt a passive sense.) Take, for instance, סופרת (in Ezra II 57, סופרת in Nehemiah VII 57), פוקרת in Ezra II 57. - It is possible that the name Koheleth was given to the king in this book, just as the name סופרת was given apparently to a scribe. - Delitzsch ^I reminds us, that in Arabic, the

^I This view is accepted by Gesenius, Knobel, Herzfeld, Rupprecht ^{and} Stuart.

^{II} Hoheslied und Koheleth, pp. 212-3

148

feminine termination serves sometimes to intensify the meaning. Thus Koheleth would mean the ideal teacher. - Against this view, though we admit its plausibility, it may be urged, that recourse is had to a foreign language for proof, - which is not admissible - and the fact that we find קהלת construed with אמרה, a feminine verb, shows it to be feminine in structure.

We have thus attempted to trace the different views held by exegetes as to the title Koheleth and its signification. The view that we have accepted seems to us, on the whole, the most satisfactory, and most in keeping with the literal import of the Hebrew.

The Author^I & Place of Composition of Koheleth

The title of the book ascribes the words contained therein, to Koheleth, son of David, king in Jerusalem. In another place^{II}, the enigmatical author speaks of himself as "I, Koheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem." As Solomon was the only son of David, who was king over Israel in Jerusalem, there can be no doubt that Solomon is here meant. This is still further corroborated by the unequivocal allusions made throughout the book, to particular incidents in the life of the great monarch. Compare, for instance, Koheleth I 6, where Koheleth speaks of himself as having acquired more wisdom than all that have been before him in Jerusalem, with ^{1st} Kings III 12, where God says of Solomon - "behold I have given thee a wise heart, so that there was none like thee, etc"; also Koheleth II 4-10, where Koheleth speaks of the great works he has built, with ^{1st} Kings V 27-32, VII 1-8, IX 17-19, X 14-29, where the great cities & buildings constructed by Solomon, are spoken of. - The question to be determined is whether

^I Vide K. Chapt I, 1. ^{II} Chapt I, 2.

Solomon was really the author of the book, or whether he is simply the actor in it, used because of his peculiar appropriateness to speak on the vanity of earthly pursuits?

According to tradition, we are forced to admit that Solomon was the real author. This is, beyond dispute, the unanimous declaration of the Synagogue² & Church, previous to the time of the Reformation. Luther was the first one who dared to assail this traditional view. The remark in the Talmud³, that King Hezekiah⁴ & his associates wrote the book of Koheleth, as well as Isaiah, Proverbs⁵ & Song of Songs, does by no means antagonize this traditional view, since this simply refers to the final editorship. But if we appeal to the internal evidence of the book itself, we must, with equal certainty, conclude that Solomon is the personated author of the sentiments ascribed to him. - We will now proceed to give our arguments against the Solomonic authorship.

1st The book itself does not pretend to have been written by Solomon. All the other writings ascribed to Solomon bear his name on the inscriptions. The Book of Proverbs

³ Baba Bathra, 15a.

begins, "The Proverbs of Solomon," so does the Song of Songs, as well as *Palms* LXXIInd & LXXIV. Now, had this book professed to be Solomon's, his name ~~it~~ would surely have appeared, at least in the superscription.

2nd The enigmatic name, Koheleth, or female gatherer, by which Solomon is designated in this book, shows that he is simply introduced in an ideal sense, as the representative of wisdom.

3rd The sacred writer himself clearly indicates, in Chap. I 12, where he says *אני קהלת הייתי מלך על ישראל בירושלים*, "I, Koheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem," that he assumes Solomon as the speaker, for he represents him as belonging to the past, making him say "I was king etc." Delitzsch^{and} other modern critics regard this use of the past (הייתי), as strongly against the Solomonic authorship. Solomon, evidently, is here represented not as a reigning king, but rather as one, who had in past times exercised regal authority. But the difficulty of this preterite, as agreeing with the Solomonic authorship, is by no means an invention of modern criticism. It has been

4
52

acknowledged from time immemorial² and has given rise to the legend already referred to, that Solomon was dethroned because of his sins, by Ashmodai, king of the demons,³ and was forced to wander from land to land, begging his bread,⁴ crying out all the while, "I, Koheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem."¹ Delitzsch maintains that it is mere self-delusion to endeavor to persuade one's self that Solomon, who was king for forty years without interruption,⁵ and whose reign only terminated with his death, could, in giving a retrospect of his life, have spoken of himself in advanced years, as "I, Koheleth, was king over Israel." He might have used the phrase in the sense of 'I, Koheleth, became, or have become⁶ and still am, king over Israel,' but that sense is inadmissible in Chapt. I, on account of the perfect tenses which follow, which are all used in a perfect signification. Bloch, in his able defense of the Solomonic authorship, attempts to explain the perfect tense ^{הָיִיתִי}, by adducing the story of King Louis XIV. of France, who, after the unsuccessful

¹ So also Midrash Yalkut on Koheleth I 12, Talmud Gittin 68b. Rashi thus explains the first verse: 'I was at first, say he, king over the whole world, then only over Israel, then only over Jerusalem, but last had only my

53

war of the Spanish Succession, was often wont to cry out, 'When I was yet a king!' The French king thus wished to compare his condition of his powerlessness, with his former power^{and} might. No such comparison between the past^{and} present, could have been intended in Chapt. I 12. Although Solomon is represented in this book as taking a retrospect of his life,^{and} as arriving at the conclusion that all his pomp, power^{and} wisdom were but vanity, he is nowhere represented as comparing the sad present with the glorious past, nor as looking back with regret upon past days of enjoyment. Such a comparison would have been foreign to the purpose of the book, though it might be required in order to justify the interpretation sought to be put upon I 12. Thus we have not only ancient witnesses, but also modern criticism which compels us to the conclusion, that the preterite "I was king," represents Solomon merely as the assumed speaker.

4th Various statements found in the book, besides the one mentioned, force still more the conclusion upon us that Solomon is here only the assumed speaker. We will enumerate these

passages: - a) In Chap. I 16, Koheleth says "I have acquired far greater wisdom, than any king who was before me in Jerusalem". It is evident that Koheleth is here, comparing himself with kings. Besides, the adjuncts בירושלים על ישראל² which are used with regard to both,² are used to describe the place of Koheleth's dominion (I 1, 12, 16, II 7, 9) show beyond doubt that they also denote the place of the sovereignty of those with whom Koheleth compares himself. As Solomon, however, was only the second king over Israel, he could not, therefore, refer to a long succession of kings. This shows that he was assumed as speaker at a late period of Jewish history. Kengstenberg ventures to suggest, that as Jerusalem was the seat of an ancient monarchy, as is evident from the fact that a noble member of it went forth to meet Abraham, Solomon could, with propriety, compare himself with the monarchs who preceded him. This explanation is, as Prof. Lewis characterizes it, "simply gratuitous", as Jewish history does not mention any line of kings, who ruled in Jerusalem. The incidental² solitary mention of Melchizedek¹ is too mysterious² circumscribed to just

¹ King of Salem.

ify the comparison with a succession of kings in Jerusalem. - b.) The addition, in Jerusalem (I, 2), which occurs in no other of the reputed writings of Solomon, shows that the book was written at a time, when there was another kingship, which had its position out of Jerusalem, as this distinction became necessary after the Kingdom was divided, and there was a royal seat in Samaria as well as in Jerusalem. - c.) Solomon speaks of his own riches, wisdom and greatness, as unparalleled (I 16, II 7, 9). This is certainly not modest, & is incompatible with true wisdom and greatness, as attained by Solomon. This boasting can be explained only by the supposition that Solomon is here the reputed speaker, and not the real one. - d.) In II 18 & 19, Koheleth declares that he detests all his estates for which he has labored, because he must bequeath them to an utter stranger, who may perchance squander them. This surely implies that he had no children of his own to inherit him, and cannot be reconciled with Solomon, who had an heir-apparent, Rehoboam, who was anxiously waiting for the succession. - e.) Koheleth, in VIII 2-9, recommends to individuals, patiently

56
to submit to the decrees of the king, even when he abuses
his authority; since the tyranny of the king is sure to
provoke the anger of the mass of the people, when deserved
punishment will surely be inflicted upon ^{him} by his own people. This could not have been said by Solomon, who,
after all, was a typical Oriental sovereign. - f.) The
description given of a royal spendthrift, in Eccl 10-19, ^{and} of
the misery which he inflicts upon his people, could not
have been said by Solomon, who was himself a spendthrift,
unless he intended to write a satire upon himself, which
we can hardly suppose. g.) If we assume the Solomonic
authorship, the misery ^{and} violence, depicted in the book
with so much bitterness, must have been brought about
by this monarch's own extravagance ^{and} sin. Now, can we
be willing to believe that the author of these evils, would
speak of them in such terms? Mr. Plumptre, in his art-
icle on Ecclesiastes, in Smith's Biblical Dictionary (p 474),
meets this question, by submitting that "there are forms of
satiety ^{and} self-reproach, of which the half sad, half scornful
retrospect of a man's life, is the most natural expression."

22

But it is impossible to shape the case in question into one of these forms. Here is a man, who has publicly violated God's law, who has built heathen temples, & has therefore caused others to be guilty of violence and injustice, and yet all the confession he has, to make before God and man, is not to acknowledge his sins, but simply to complain of those whom he had made to sin. No religious community of our day would accept such a confession of sin. If we are in doubt of what the ancient Hebrews regarded as a proper retrospect of a man's life, let us compare the prayer of Daniel, or the prayer of Solomon himself, at the dedication of the Temple, or the Penitential Psalms, with the words of Koheleth. Therefore we are justified in saying, that even supposing the state of violence and guilt depicted in this book, could be made to harmonize with the days of Solomon, the bitter complaints of Solomon against others, who simply acted as secondary parts to bring about this wretched state, without the slightest reference to himself, who was the real cause, would preclude entirely the Solomonic authorship. h.) But

10
58

the misery^{and} injustice described in Koheleth, cannot be made to agree with the golden days of Solomon's reign,^{and} is therefore against the Solomonic authorship. Palestine was groaning under the oppression of satraps,^{and} such was the injustice^{and} vice that death was preferable to life (IV 1-4, V 7). Asiatic despotism was rampant, filling the "holy places" with wicked officials, (VII 1-4), suddenly raising servants to posts of honor,^{and} lowering the worthy to degrading posts (X 5-7). Tyranny had penetrated into the privacy of families, so that it actually became dangerous to speak one's own opinion aloud (X 20). Wickedness^{and} crime were perpetrated with impunity, so much so, that the people were encouraged to heinous crimes,^{and} were led to deny the moral government of God (VIII 10+11)^{and} to neglect their duty to their Creator (VI 5). - It is simply preposterous to try to reconcile such a gloomy state of affairs with the age of Solomon. Hengstenberg has seen this,^{and} wisely said: 'Sind nun das die inneren u. die äusseren Zustände des Volkes Gottes', so wird nicht daran gedacht werden, dass

das Buch aus Solomo's Zeiten u. von ihm verfasst sei^I

6) The fact that Solomon is laboring to acquire wisdom, possessions^{and} renown, in order to learn what is good for the children of men, (II 3-9, III 12, 22), thus making philosophical experiments to discover the summum bonum,^{and} to solve the problem of life, is incompatible with the historic Solomon,^{and} is an idea of a much later period than that of the great monarch. It was introduced by those Jews, who bestowed "much study" upon the many books of the Greek philosophers.

7) The reference to a future bar of judgement where all present irregularities will be righted by the Great Judge, whereby Koheleth solves the grand problem of this life, shows that Solomon could not have been the author, but that it must be a post-exilic production. It is evident from a perusal of Scriptures that the idea of a bar of judgement is the result of a development. Let the dim intimations respecting a future state, given under the types^{and} figures, prior to the exile - (Gen I 27, 24, XXXVII 35, Deut. XVIII 10+11, 1st Sam. XI 6, Isah. VIII 19, Ezek. 2

XXXVII 1-4), be compared with the naked truth as declared after the exile, by Daniel (XVII 2, 3), or in the book of Wisdom (II 23, VI 18, 19), or in 2nd Maccabees (VII 9, 36), and the gradual developement of the doctrine, will be recognized. 8.). The strongest argument, however, against the Solomon-ic authorship is its vitiated language^{and} style. Not only do we find words of Aramaic origin, but also of Persian, and, in fact, the entire complexion of the book, shows a later time. We have not that pure Hebrew which is characteristic of the age of Solomon. But we have discussed this more at length in our article on the "Language of Koheleth".

These arguments lead us to one conclusion, i. e. that no matter who may be the author, Solomon could not have written this book. The author is veiled in darkness; no amount of investigation can discover him; - he has left his work, but has hidden from the world his name. Solomon, however, is not the author, - that is proven beyond dispute. But now the question suggests itself: can we accuse the unknown author of deception, in palming off his work on us, as that of the wise

king? - Is the use of Solomon's name, in Koheleth, a forgery? - We say emphatically no! and will proceed to give our reasons. - In the first place let us state, that the impeachment of the traditional view of Ecclesiastes, by no means detracts from its trustworthiness, by representing as literary fictions, what the ancient writers regarded as historic fact. It is highly improper for any defenders of the Solomonic authorship, to assert that the book of Ecclesiastes is open to the charge of deceit or falsehood, and that its doctrinal statements must be received with suspicion, if the superscription of the book is viewed not as expressing an historic truth, but a literary device. The experience of Koheleth may have been truly the experience of Solomon, although not a single sentence proceeded actually from his pen. It is worthy of note, that not a single fact is told of the life of Solomon, which might not have been derived from the narrative in the 1st book of Kings. This could scarcely have been the case had Solomon been the

author. Nay, further, the chief events of his life are entirely ignored. It would be entirely unjust to prefer the charge of forgery against Koheleth. It has always been considered allowable for a writer, either in prose or poetry, to portray the sentiments of distinguished men. As, for instance, Delitzsch cites the speeches of great commanders or statesmen, found in Greek ^{and} Roman historians, which were never actually delivered by these men, but arose purely from the imagination of the historian. We can also adduce instances from the old Testament itself. "The pen of the historian", as Delitzsch remarks, "is distinctly noticeable in the greater parts of the prophetic addresses, recorded in books of Kings ^{and} Chronicles. These sacred historians, as is evident from a comparison of similar addresses in the two books, reproduced in their own style, those poems ^{and} speeches, which were suited to their object in view.

The book of Psalms contains not a few psalms, entitled ^{לדוד}, which were not composed by David him-

self, but by unknown poets, who transferred them
selves in ^{thought, to David's} time ^{and} place. Delitzsch regards Psalm CXLIV
as such an instance. Other instances could be
adduced, but these will suffice for our purpose.

We have already shown how advantageous it
was for the unknown author of the book to as-
cribe his work to that king, most famous for
wisdom ^{and} wordly power. "How powerfully would
it act on the mind of the common reader," thought the
unknown writer, "to see that one, who has attained the
acme of greatness, wisdom ^{and} fame, should declare
his strivings but vanity ^{and} wind. Solomon had ex-
perienced all the various phases of life, ^{and} hence
was best able to speak on life. This is the chief reason
that led our author to this literary subterfuge, which
we regard as perfectly eligible ^{and} justifiable. —

As to the place where Koheleth was composed, but
little can be said. According to the traditional view
it is certain, that the book was written in Jerusalem.
But, having refuted this view, we are left but to con-

16.
64
jecture where the author lived. He himself gives no direct clue. It is indisputed that he addressed himself to Palestinian readers. The historical facts, the entire tone^{and} structure prove this. Ewald supposes that he lived in the country, from the numerous allusions to agriculture^{and} country life.

But it is more valid to assume that he lived near the temple at Jerusalem, or, at least, where he had the opportunity of frequenting it. Chapt. IV 17 speaks of the בית האלהים. This can refer only to the Temple at Jerusalem. That of Onias IV was not built till 160

B. C. - The synagogues in the country were not called בית האלהים. In Chapt. VIII 10, he refers to the מקום קודש, which can refer only to the Temple.

Certainly, these proofs are, we admit, but slight, but they, at least, outweigh those in favor of another location. Some recent scholars place our author in Alexandria, but the reference (in XI 1) to the corn trade, does not prove this to be correct. The very same section contains a reference to rain (so XII 2). - Sharpe, in his

"History of Hebrew Nation and its Literature", p. 344, stands alone in preferring Antioch, the capital of the Greek kingdom of Syria. - Kleinert remarks, that 'king in Jerusalem', (II 12), implies a foreign abode. This is met by saying that, at the time of the writer, Jerusalem was no longer a royal city. The author may have traveled, and thus have had personal acquaintance with the dangers of court life, - at least, his acquaintance with it, would lead us to suppose so. - But, after all, this is but conjecture and nothing definite can be known as to his home.

Style and Form of Koheleth.

Style.

In discussing the style of Koheleth, we will lay particular stress, upon the book, in its literary aspect, leaving out of account, the thought he wished to convey^{and} impress. As an author, the characteristics of Koheleth, are in the main Hebraic, ~~though not~~ ^{and} without ~~some~~ ^{any} resemblance to the Greek philosophic thought. His work is without a model. There is a strong dramatic element in it, which reminds us somewhat of the book of Job. That book describes the spiritual struggles of the author, with some poetic amplification. So the author of Koheleth, with a similar poetical license, describes his perplexities to the imaginary person ^{age}, Koheleth. There are passages in which he adopts the tone, style^{and} rhythm of gnomie poetry, though he by no means reaches the literary perfection of Job. — It may be of interest to mention that Köster, in his article on the "Symmetrische Anordnung des Prediger's", attempts to make Koheleth an artist in

the management of strophes. He assumes, with perfect justice, that not only did our author have the book of Job before him, but that he actually imitated the latter's style. Köster regards our book as "eine Morgenländische Rede";² and hence our author utilizes the power of prose rather than of poetry. Koheleth, he believes, nevertheless does possess symmetry² and poetical arrangement. "The author," says Köster, "chooses the seven foot strophe as his model, perhaps with reference to the sanctity attached to the number seven,¹ but he is, by no means, confined to its use. At times his strophes have one verse too much (II 4-11, 12-19, III 1-8, V 12-19), or one verse too little (VIII 8-13) IX 17), or they have one short strophe as introduction (II 1-3 before 4-11). At times, he divides his strophes into two equal parts (II 12-19),² where his speech rises to poetical beauty, he forms shorter² more symmetrical strophes. In Chapt. IV, for instance, the speech approaches near to parallelism of verses. Many of the strophes are marked by the introductory formula, "I saw," or further, "I investigated,"² and by the closing formula,

¹ See Hilffillen's "Sabbath", article on number seven, p. 240.

"all is vanity. When these formulas are found in the middle of a sentence, the author evidently had in mind the divisions according to thought." - We have given this theory somewhat at length, because of its ingenuity, but we must reject ^{it} on the plea that it is a mere sport of fancy. Unity ^{and} consistency in literary form were, if not beyond his reach, surely beyond his opportunities. Even his phraseology is, as a rule, rough ^{and} unpolished. But the author has very strong excuses. He was in no mood for literary beauty. As Noeldeke very justly remarks, his object was not, to produce "ein literarisches Schau-stück." His primary object was to scatter the doubts in his mind. The burden of the mystery of existence pressed too heavily upon him, for him to think much of beauty of style. He wished to teach, ^{and} not to raise admiration; to instruct his people, ^{and} not to leave them a literary monument of his artistic skill. But he was far from despising the literary craft. He recognized that truth is rendered more palatable if put in a beautiful form. In reading over the book, we are struck by

the fact, that the first two chapters are much more carefully worked out in an aesthetic sense than the rest of the book. We are therefore lead to believe that the first two chapters were carefully revised by the author, ^{and} that in them he has attained to some perfection of style; but the rest of the book is so rough & disjointed, that we are induced to regard it as mere loose notes, written solely for the purpose of giving vent to his doubts ^{and} his multifarious thoughts. The thread of thought seems to break every few verses, ^{and} every attempt to restore it fails utterly. We have already noticed the glaring inconsistencies with which the book abounds. We occasionally meet with a sentence, which would not have passed an author's final revision (notably is this the case with VIII 16 & 17). The most obvious hypothesis is: that from Chap. III onwards, we have before us the imperfectly worked up meditations of an unknown author, found, after his death, in close proximity to a highly finished fragment, which apparently professed to be the work of Solomon.

These two parts were united ^{and} circulated, ^{and} in that unfinished form we have them. This, if correct, will explain the author's inconsistencies in thought, ^{and} his roughness of style. It is even possible that the book may not be the work of one man. Luther has already compared it with the Talmud. - Koheleth was not ambitious ^{and} as a rule, abstained from fines writing. Once, indeed, he attempts it, with some success, - we refer to the closing description of old age - but more of this anon. From a poetical point of view, the introduction deserves special mention.

In conclusion, we may sum up by saying, that Koheleth is ^{far} from a masterpiece in literary style ^{and} beauty of perfection. This may in part be due to the impliable nature of the language in which he wrote, which led him to coin new words. But the chief explanation is found, when we consider that our author aimed rather to teach, than to reach artistic perfection. In this respect then, our book stands far inferior to the great poems of our Bible, such as

6.
41
Job, Ruth, or Song of Songs. But his was a time of action, ^{and} not a time for poetical effusions.

Form.

Our book consists of a prologue, four sections, ^{and} an epilogue. The prologue ^{and} epilogue are distinguished by the recurrence of the same phrase at the beginning (I 1, XII 8). The phrase is הבל הבלים אמר קהלת הכל הבל, ^{and} by their ending with two marked sentences (I 11 ^{and} XII 14), embodying the grand problem ^{and} solution proposed by Koheleth. The four sections are indicated by the recurrence of the same formula, giving the result of each experiment of particular efforts to obtain real happiness for the craving soul. The four sections are: First - Chapt. I 11 to II 26, Second - III 1 to V 19, Third - VI 1 to VIII 15, Fourth - VIII 16 to XII 7. The Epilogue is XII 8-14.

The Massorah likewise divides the book into four sections, containing in all 222 verses. The mnemonic word, which contains this number, is כָּבֵר, in the phrase, כָּבֵר מִה שֶׁהִיא כָּבֵר נִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ, Chapt VI 10, which is the middle of the book. The first two sections are of equal length,

each containing 57 verses, the first embracing Chap. I 1 to III 13, the second, Chap. III 14 to VI 12. The third section, which contains 52 verses, ends at Chap. IX 6, and the fourth section, which embraces 56 verses, runs to the end of the book. - These divisions have been made without regard to the logical connection of the book, and hence afford little or no help for arranging the book in its component parts. Thus much for the mechanical form of the book. Our division is not one which is universally accepted. - In our article on the historical exegesis, we have taken pains to give the divisions made by many noted scholars and exegetes. The one that we have accepted has seemed to us to come nearer to dividing the book according to its logical connection, and has formed the basis of our view on the design of Koheleth. The contents of these different divisions, have already been given in a preceding article.

The Language of the Book.

The discussion of the language of Koheleth is of the utmost importance in relation to the time when it was written. As we have mentioned, the linguistic features, which characterize the book of Ecclesiastes, are incompatible with the theory that Solomon was its author. There are many words & forms which point to a late time, when other languages had begun to influence the pure, classical Hebrew of Solomon's times. There are some words, which are found only in such books of the Old Testament as were written at a late period, while others again do not appear in the whole range of Biblical literature, save in this book, but which are in common usage in the Hebrew of the Mishnah. We shall attempt to enumerate some of the words & phrases peculiar to Koheleth:-

1. The word שָׁח (*piel*) is used generally in the sense of "destroy". In the signification of "to lose", is found only in this passage, but is very common in later Hebrew.
2. אִם , if, in Chapt VI 6, found also in Esther VII 4. It is com-

pounded of $\text{לֹא לִי לֵשׁ (אֵין) אֵם}$. It is very common in the Mishnah, e.g. *Maccoth* I 10. — אלו היינו בסנהדרין —

3. אסופות , in the phrase — בעלי אסופות —, as found in Chap. XII 11 only. In this sense it is used in *Sanhedrin* 12a, of those assembled to arrange the calendar.

4. — בור, to search out, found only in Chap. XI 1. Compare with this the Talmudic על בוריו, pure, thoroughly free from faults.

5. גומץ. This word is found only in Chap. X 8. It is used however in both the Chaldee, Syriac & Arabic. — ܓܘܡܥ

6. ^{חוץ מן} ~~החללות~~, outside of, except, only in Chap. II 25. (Chaldee ברמין, Syriac ܕܢܗܝܪ). It is common in the Mishnah, e.g. *Mid. doth* II 3: חוץ משל אולם.

7. ~~החללות~~ ^{החללות}, folly, found only in *Kohelath*. In this signification it occurs once at least in the *Midrash Kohelath*.

8. חילים strength, Chap. X 10. It means everywhere else "armies", except in *Isaiah* XXX 3, where it signifies "riches".

9. חסרון This is a ἀπαξ λεγόμενον in Biblical writings. It occurs, however, frequently in Rabbinic writings, signifying "loss" or "deficit". The phrase חסרון כִּס is frequently employed for "a deficit in the purse".

10. חפץ, desire, matter, or thing. The original meaning, 'desire', is to be found only in Chapt. VIII, XII 1 + 10. In other places of the book as in III 1, 17, V 7, VIII 6, it has already proceeded as far as in the language of the Mishnah, e.g. Baba Mezi'ah IV 6, or Berachoth Va, אדם מוכר חפץ לחברו, "a man sells a thing to his fellow."

11. חשבון reason, understanding, found in Chapt. VII 25, 27, IV 10. This is a true Midrashic term, נתן חשבון, "to render account."

12. התחתים, found only in Chapt. XII 5, in sense of "terrors".

13. טחנה, mill, Chapt. XII 4. Compare טחון in Sam. V 13, a word which is foreign to the Mishnah, but corresponding even with the old ריחים, as the vulgar Arabic *ṣiḥ* ² in the place of ¹ *ṣiḥ*.

14. יתרון, preference, advantage, Chap. II 13, VII 12, more often with signification of real profit, Chap. I 3, II 2, X 10, III 9, V 15, prominence ² advantage V 8. This word is peculiar to our book, ² is borrowed in Rabbinic Hebrew from it. - It may be analogous to the proper name יתרו Jethro, in Exodus.

15. כשרון, 'success, superiority, Chapt. II 21, IV 4, - "advantage", Chapt. V 10. It is found only in Koheleth.

16. לבר. This word is common in other books of the Scriptures,

either with suffix, or when used with reference to the preceding noun, as Exod. XXVI 9; but in Koheleth (VII 29), it is used absolutely in the sense of "only."

17. להג, "study"; found only in XII 12, from להג, Arabic لَهَجَ, to gape, to long for; Syriac ܠܗܓ, vapor.

18. לוח "to accompany." This word is used elsewhere in the sense of to lend or borrow, found in Chap. VIII 15. The verb is used similarly in the Mishnah.^I

19. מדינה country. This word does not occur in any book of a date earlier than the exile. It is very frequently used in the book of Esther, but occurs in Koheleth only twice, in Chap. II 8, and in Chap. V 7.

20. — מולאה, "pregnant", Chap. VI 5 only, as in the Mishnah, e.g. Jebamoth XVI 1. — "צתה מלאה" she was already pregnant on her departure.

21. סוף, "end"; Chap. III 11, VII 2, XII 13, also in Joel II 20, 2nd Chron. XX 16. It is the later word which drove out of use the older אחרית, which also occurs in Koheleth VII 8, X 13. So it is used in Mishnah Berachoth I 1: ער סוף האשמרת, "unto the end of the watch."

22. סכל "folly," found only in Chap. V 6.

I. Ketuboth 72a, analogous is the phrase לוואי ילוכניה, "he who accompanies a dead body, to him will one also give the same honor."

23. עֲבָדָה "deed, work," only in IX 1, like the Syriac ܥܒܕܐ
24. עַדְנָה, "till now, hitherto," found only in IX 2, 3. It is identical with the Mishnaic עַדְנָה, e.g. Nedarim XI 10.
25. עֲנִין, "toil, business," found only in this book, eight times, I 3, II 23, 26, III 10, IV 8, V 2, 13, VIII 16. It is very common in Rabb. Hebrew, where it is used in the sense of "business" in the largest sense of the word. Compare e.g. Kidushin 6a. — עֲסֹקִין בְּאוֹתוֹ עֲנִין — "employed with this matter."
26. פָּרְס, which occurs only in II 5, ^{Ed} in Canticles IV 3, ^{Ed} Neh. II 8, was introduced from Persian into Greek by Xenophon, in the form παράδεισος.
27. פִּתְגָם is a Hebraized Persian word, occurring in the books of Ezra ^{Ed} Daniel, but elsewhere only in Koheleth VIII 11 ^{Ed} in Esther I 20, "message, saying, decision." — It is used in the Targum, whence the decalogue is called עֲשֶׂרָה פִּתְגָמִין, but is not naturalized in the Talmud.
28. רְעוּת רוּח. This word occurs seven times in the books, in I 4, II 11, 17, 26, IV 4, 6, VI 9. In all these cases it is followed by רוּח. The word occurs elsewhere only in the Chaldean parts of Ezra, i. e. V 17, VII 18.

29. שחרות - "youth," found only in XL 10.

30. - שלטון, "a ruler", Arabic Ṣaltūn, Chap. VIII 4, 8. It is found nowhere else in the Old Testament Hebrew, but in the Mishnah, e.g. Kiddushin III 6, - אדבר עליך לשלטון, "I shall speak for thee to the ruler".

This completes the chief words that are peculiar to our book. This list is far from complete, but it will serve to prove, that even in language Koheleth stands unique, and we may say, that our book contains more words, which are foreign to the other books of Holy Scriptures, than any other single book of the Bible.

We will now discuss the question, whether there are Greek words in our book. How important this investigation is, seems almost self-evident, for if it can be shown that such words do exist, this will furnish an excellent and almost conclusive proof, that the book was written in the so-called Grecian period. There has been much said on this subject. - That there are many Greek words in the Targumim and Talmudim is undeniable. G. Jirke, a Roman Catholic scholar, was

the first who affirmed that there were distinct Graecisms in our book,^I but we are not ready to accept the words that he claims are of Greek origin. We will enumerate some of these supposed Greek words, & attempt to refute Girkel's assumption.

It may first be stated that Graetz, in his commentary, accepts the view of Girkel, although he admits Girkel tried to prove too much. - Let us now investigate the so-called Greek words.

- 1.) - יפה in the sense of καλός, "becoming" (III 11, V 17). This is one of the Graecisms that commends itself to Graetz. He points especially to V 17, where he takes טוב אשר יפה - as representing καλὸν καγαθόν. In refutation we may say, that the construction is here mistaken. The second אשר indicates that יפה is a synonym of טוב, "excellent."
- 2.) In the clause למח חכמת אני אז יותר (II 15), the words אז יותר must signify ἔτι μᾶλλον: quid mihi prodest majorem adhuc sapientiae operam dare. But the demonstrative אז means not ἔτι, but "in these circumstances" (compare Jerem. XXII 15). Its position & connection with יותר are for emphasis.

^I See Eichhorn's Allgemeine Bibliothek IV, which contains a summary of Girkel's evidence.

3.) עשות טוב (III 12) is a literal translation of εὖ πράττειν. The very next verse, however, seems to explain this phrase by ראה טוב, - (comp. V 17). Certainly the ethical meaning is against the analogy of II 24, III 22, and similar passages. Tractz has therefore suggested a very good emendation. He reads in place of עשות טוב, ראות טוב.

4.) הלך נפש (II 7) = ὁρᾷ τὴν ψυχῆς. But this phrase is a common idiomatic Hebrew expression for 'the roving of the desire'.

5.) יצא את כלם (II 15). The Hebrew writer found no other equivalent for μέγα βελίξεν. But, unless he borrowed the idea (i.e. of cultivating the mean in moral principles), why should he have tried to express the technical term?

6.) כי זה כל האדם (III 3). "A pure Graecism τοῦτο παντὸς ἀνθρώπου. But how could he otherwise have expressed the idea of the universal obligation to fear God? (Comp. opening words of III 19). To these may be added: - 7.) ביום טובה (VII 14) = εὐημερία. But in XII 1 ימי הרעה is used, which evidently stands in contrast with ביום טובה.

8.) The technical term טור (I 13, II 3, VII 25) = ἀετρεῖαι. But this word is good Hebrew for "to explore".

9) פתגם (VIII 11) = φθίγμα. We have already shown the word to be of Persian derivation.

10.) פרוס = παράδεισος. But this word, too, is of Persian origin.

Even granting that there are 3 or 4 words or phrases of very disputable Greek origin, this would by no means furnish conclusive proof. Any peculiar word or construction Girkel² and his adherents set down as un-Hebraic,² and hurried to explain it by some Greek parallel, ignoring the capacity of development inherent in the Hebrew language. If the author of Koheleth really thought in Greek, the Greek coloring of the language would surely not have been confined to such a few expressions. Whether there are Greek influences underlying our book, will be discussed in a separate article. It is sufficient here to say that the language *per se* contains no well-ascertained Graecism, at least according to our judgement. There are undoubted words of Chaldaic² and Aramaic origin, to be found only in Mishnah² and Talmud. "If Koheleth belongs to the classical period, Hebrew language has no hist-

ory; remarks Delitzsch. That which gives characteristic flavor to the old Hebrew style, vanishes away in our book. The Mishnaic peculiarities are very interesting, ^{and} confirm our view as to its origin. The author resembles the Mishnah in his questioning ^{and} reflective spirit, ^{and} helped to form the linguistic instrument which they required. As a whole the language is rhetorical ^{and} dialectic prose, which however becomes more elevated as the investigation increases, till towards the end, it culminates in true poetical beauty.

Let us now, in conclusion of this article, enumerate some of the striking grammatical peculiarities of our book. These, too, will but confirm our standpoint of the late origin of Hokeleth.

1.) The ordinary historic tense (the imperfect with ^{con-}versive) is hardly ever used. The scholar's instinct but three times reveals itself in the adoption of this old literary idiom (i. e. I 17, IV 1, 7), but elsewhere he adopts the usage of the Mishnah.

2.) The use of the moods is more restricted in Ho-

84.
heleth. The cohortative occurs only once. (VII 23). The Jussive occurs only rarely.

3) The personal pronouns are used after the verb, where no contrast or emphasis can have been designed. Thus אני follows the verb in the 1st person in I 6, II 1, 2, 13, 15, 18, 20, IV 1, 4, 7, V 17, VI 25, VIII 25.

4) The participle is frequently employed, and the use of this personal pronouns after the participle to indicate the subject, is a striking characteristic of Koheleth.

5) ו is very frequently employed and is peculiar to this book, and the particles, such as כי, והם, אשר, כאשר are very numerous, the personal pronoun is commonly used in place of the substantive verb. (I 5, 7, 10, III 18, V 18). All these peculiarities are significant of the late period of the book.

85

Halachas based on Koheleth.

It may be of interest to make mention that there are several laws^{and} customs, which are based on certain verses of Koheleth, ^{and} which were in vogue in the life of the Jews of old, ^{and} perhaps are observed still to-day.

Chap. I 2. The word ^{הבלי} occurs 7 times (the plural ^{הבליים}) is taken as equivalent to two). On this the Halacha based the following rule, that on returning from a funeral, we should stand still seven times, in order to be reminded of the vanity of all earthly existence (Baba Bathra 100 b).

Chap. I 15. "that which is crooked, cannot be made straight, ^{and} that which is wanting, cannot be supplied". From this verse the Talmud concludes that the intentional neglect of morning ^{and} evening prayers, cannot be repaired (Berachoth 26a).

Chap. I 8. In every deed, which is not done in the spirit of the law, a prohibition is broken (Goma 19 b).

Chap. V 5. The non-fulfillment of vows, causes the death of children. If the wife is not particular in the payment of vows, this is sufficient excuse for divorce.^I

^I Kethuboth 72 a.

Chap. VII. 10. Man must obey the officers (Pes. Hash. 25b).

Chap. IX. 4. We are allowed to touch the corpse of an animal on Sabbath, in order to give it for food to dogs, but it is forbidden to touch the dead body of a man, even of a king, on Sabbath (Sabbath 30b).

Chap. XI. 2. Be careful of the seventh day of the week, and also of the seventh day of circumcision. Be likewise careful of the seven days of Pesach, and of the days of Sukkoth; also of the other festivals of the year, - which are included in the particle גם in the verse. תן חלק לשבעה וגם לשמונה.

Canonicity of Koheleth.

It is not surprising that these strange meditations, containing so much that appears heretical, should have had great difficulty in penetrating into the Canon. - An old Rabbinical law lays down the general principle that ^Iכל כתבי הקדש מטמאין הידים, "all holy writings defile the hands", i.e. we are not permitted to touch sanctified dishes without previous purification of the hands. This so peculiar a rule was intended to distinguish the sacred canonical books, from the profane^d & esoteric writings. The author of the Mishnah, regarding Koheleth^d & its sister book, Song of Songs, as canonical, says: שיר השירים וקהלת מטמאין את הידים, that these books also defile the hands. But in close connection he informs us that, regarding Koheleth a lively discussion took place, between the schools of Hillel^d & Shammai, and a few decades later in the synod at Jamnia (90 A.C.), whether it too defiles the hands^d & is therefore canonical. Rabbi Jose reported in the name of Rabbi Meir, that that assembly at Jamnia decided authoritatively, that Koheleth does not defile the hands,^d & is then

^I See Mishnah Jeda'im III 5.

not canonical.^I According to R. Simon b. Jochai, the book of Koheleth forms one of the subjects of dispute between the rival schools of Hillel² and Shammai, that in this case, the Shammaites are exceptionally the more lenient: ר' שמעון אומר: קהלת מקולי בית שמאי, ומחומרי בית הלל. On the other hand, R. Simon b. Asai reports, that he possesses a tradition from the 72 wise men, that on the day that R. Eliezer b. Azariah was elected Patriarch, it was also decided that Shir Hashirim³ and Koheleth are canonical² and defile the hands. The distinguished R. Akibah however, admits, that there did for a long time exist doubt as to the sanctity of Koheleth² and its position in the Canon. In answer to this assertion, R. Jochanon b. Joshua testifies that Koheleth does produce Levitical uncleanness,² and deserved a place in the Canon. Thus is the discussion in the Talmud. - When, now, we ask, why it was that such doubt existed as to the worth of Koheleth,² and as to its right to be included in the Canon, we find nothing in the Mishnah that will throw light on this question. We do, however, find the solution for this problem

^I See Babli Megilla, 7a.

in the Tosefta, as well as in the Babylonian Talmud & the Midrashim. The first one to raise the veil, was R. Simon b. Menassia, a cotemporary of R. Jehuda Ha Nassi. He reports that the Song of Songs does defile the hands, because it is a product of divine inspiration. Koheleth, however, does not defile the hands, because it represents the subjective wisdom of Solomon.^I To this, the חכמים objected, that Solomon had written not only Koheleth, but thousands of proverbs & songs, as it is said: "And he spake three thousand proverbs, & his songs numbered one thousand & five."^{II} From this they argue that since Koheleth has maintained its existence, & all his other poems have not, this alone proves its divine origin. In order to meet the objection that it is possible to suppose, that Solomon has made arbitrary choice of all his poems & maxims, & has written down some & omitted others, & hence the existence of Koheleth would be no proof of its highest worth & divine character, the sages refer R. Simon to Proverbs. XXX 6, where in direct connection with the words כל אמרה,

^I Tosefta, Jedaiah II. Ed. Zuckermandel p. 683.

^{II} 1st Kings, V 12.

אלוה צרופה מן הוא לחסיו בו, that "all the words of God are refined, he is a shield to those who put their trust in him," it says, אל תוסיף על דבריו, 'thou shalt not add to His (God's) words'. Since now Solomon has written the book of Koheleth, it follows from this, that it sprang not from his own speculative wisdom, but from the immediate inspiration of God.

A far more weighty reason, why the Rabbins^{Ed} particularly the Shamaites labored to exclude Koheleth from canonicity is stated by R. Jehudah bar Samuel in the name of Rav. He says^I בקשו חכמים לגנוז ספר קהלת מפני שרבריו כותרין זה את זה, "the Rabbins sought to hide Koheleth (i.e. withdraw it from public use), because it contains contradictory phrases. In one place, II 2a, it says, 'I said of laughter, it is praiseworthy';" ^{Ed} in VII 3 it says, "Sorrow is better than laughter". In VIII 15, joy is designated as the greatest of blessings, ^{Ed} in II 2b it is produced vain^{Ed} futile. Now, "asks the Talmud, "since these evident contradictions exist, why did the Rabbis not hide it ^{Ed} withdraw it from general use?"

ומפני מה לא גנזוהו. To which they reply: "because the beginning, ^{Ed} conclusion of the book contain divine truths".

— מפני שתחילתו דברי תורה, וסופו דברי תורה. — The beginning referred to is I 3, where it says, "What gain hath a man of all his labor, which he doeth under the sun?", which they explain thus: that "man has no lasting gain of such labor as is 'under the sun' (i.e. on this earth), but that he has a decided gain in that spiritual work, which is beyond the sun^Q & before the sun, i.e. Torah, or divine wisdom.^I Just as the beginning of the book contains precepts which are in full accord with the teaching of the Bible, so also the conclusion teaches a most sacred principle. — Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "fear God, & keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (XII 13). — These two verses are regarded, by the Rabbis of the Talmud, as the motto of the entire book, & the result of Koheleth's doubts^Q & investigations. These two verses are the poles around which all the heterogeneous, contradictory problems rotate.^{II} — According to this lofty conception of our book, the Rabbins defended its maintenance in the Canon, & its distribution among the people.

The Talmud, however, gives a third reason, why so

^I See Pesikta de Rabbi Kahanah VIII, Ed. Buber, p. 65 b, also Babli Pesachim 54a, & Nedarim 37.
^{II} Compare Joseftah & Michnah Sukkoth II 6 — also Babli Jebamoth 22 b, & Berachoth 26 a.

many found objection to the canonicity of Koheleth. In the *Psikta de Rav Kahanah*, Buber's edition, p. 68, we read: - אמר ר' בנימין בן יפת, בקשו חכמים לגנות ספר קהלת, לפי שמצאו בו דברים שהם מטים לצד מיות. "The Rabbins sought to hide Koheleth, because they found in it, certain phrases, which, incline to heresy." "Could Solomon have declared, 'say they', that man has no advantage of all his striving? Does he include the study of the Bible?" יכול אפילו בעמלה של תורה בכלל. But on reflection they abandoned their decision, "for", they argue, "had Solomon used the indefinite expression עמל לכל לצד מה יתרון לצד בכל עמל, this could be understood to include also the study of the Torah; but it says עמלו, ² by this personal pronoun, Solomon wished to designate only such endeavors as are selfish ³ for material gain, not, however, the unselfish, spiritual study of Holy Writ: -

חזרו אמרו, אילו אמר הכתוב בכל עמל, היינו אומרים, אפילו בעמלו של תורה כשהוא

אומר בכל עמלו, בעמלו הוא שאינו מועיל, אבל בעמלה של תורה מועיל !

Having refuted this apparent heresy, the Talmud is ready with another more striking heretical phrase. Could Solomon have said, they ask in astonishment,

^{II} Compare Koheleth Rabba, to XI 9.

— והלך בדרכי לבך, ובמראי עיניך — "Rejoice oh! youth in thy youth, & let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, & walk in the ways of thy heart, & in the sight of thine eyes" (XI 9). Does not Moses (Numbers XV 39) directly forbid this, when he says, "You shall not go after your hearts & after your eyes, after which you go"? Is there then no law & no judge, & shall every barrier be broken down? But when they considered the conclusion of the supposed heretical verse, "But know, that for all this, God will bring thee to judgement," they exclaimed unanimously: — יפה אמר שלמה — "Solomon has spoken well," since by that pious conclusion, the apparently sensual principle stands all the more condemned & circumscribed.

Although the teachers of the Talmud differ widely in the reasons they assign for the objections raised against Koheleth, they all agree in this point, viz. that the Rabbis only intended to make Koheleth apocryphal, while all the time it remained an integral part of the Canon. But in Abboth of Rabbi Nathan I, it is reported that Koheleth as well as the other Solomonic writings,

were, in fact, removed from the Canon. They remained thus excluded, till the men of the Great Synod came ^{and} explained all objectionable passages, ^{and} reinstated the books in their proper place:—

בראשונה היו אומרים שיר השירים משלי וקהלת גנוזים היו, שהם אומרים נשלוח ואינן מן
הכתובים ועמרו וגזרו אותם, עד שבאו אנשי כנסת הגדולה ופרשו אותם :

From all this it is evident, that the objections raised against our book, were the result of ignorance of its true import ^{and} nobility. When, however, its inner truth ^{and} its importance were recognized by deeper research, no one disputed its right in the Canon, ^{and} it has since maintained itself on a perfect footing with other Hagiographical writings. The dispute was finally settled by the Synod of Jamnia (118 A.C.), when it was decided that both *Kohelleth* ^{and} *Shir Hashirim* defile the hands ^{and} are therefore canonical.

The result attained by the Rabbis in vindication of the sanctity of *Kohelleth*, came to a pronounced expression in the period of the Gaonim (600-1000 A.C.). Thus the Targum, in several places, speaks of Solomon

as a prophet.^I The opening phrase of Koheleth, Targum translates: — פתגמי נבואה ראיתנא קהלת הוא שלמה בר דוד מלכא דיהו בירושלם

"Prophetical words which Koheleth, i.e. Solomon, the son of David, king in Jerusalem, prophesied." Thus the Targum calls our attention, that we have here not a common production of human wisdom, but a product of a higher inspiration, since it is the Prophet Solomon, who, by the spirit of God, speaks on the vanity of the world. Thus he surpresses all doubt as to the holiness of Koheleth. The Midrash on Koheleth I 1, compares Solomon with a counsellor of a powerful king, who said to his favorite, "ask, what shall I give thee"? This shrewd diplomat, instead of asking for gold or silver or power, asked for the hand of his daughter, and thus obtained all these. So God asked his favorite Solomon, "what shall I give thee"? And the wise king, instead of asking for earthly goods, prayed for wisdom, by which he would secure all other blessings. Pleased at the wise request of Solomon, God granted him not only wisdom, but

^I See Rosh Hashonah 21 b, also Megilla 14a, which speaks of 48 prophets, among which the הלכות גדולות mention Solomon. See also M'reh II 44.

all other blessings. Then, the Midrash says, the spirit of God descended upon Solomon, and he composed the three books, Mishle, Shir and Koheleth: —

מִיד שְׂרָתָה עָלָיו רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה סְפָרִים הִלְלוּ, מִשְׁלֵי, וְשִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים, וְקֹהֶלֶת :

The canonicity of Koheleth was rarely disputed in the ancient Christian church. The fifth occu-menical council at Constantinople pronounced decisively in its favor.

We have thus sought to point out the battles Koheleth had to fight before it gained recognition. But its intrinsic value and the truths it teaches, prevailed over all opposition, and vindicated its right to belong to the sacred books. — The discussion as to the time when Koheleth was admitted into the Canon, we reserve for another place.

The Time of Koheleth.

Before we attempt to prove our opinion as to the time when Koheleth was composed, it may be advisable first to refute the dates advanced by others. — First in importance, is the remarkable theory, so ably defended by Grætz, the learned Prof. of Berlin. He asserts that the book was written at the time when Herod threw his son, Alexander, into prison about 8 B. C. — He seeks to prove this by ⁱⁿternal evidence from the book itself. He assumes, in the first case, very rightly, that the language, form^d syntax of the book show that it was written in a later, ^d especially in the post-exilian period. He then states, also with justice, that Koheleth speaks of a tyrantic king, who was not of the Jewish nation. This king must have lived near the author, for he warns: "leave his presence, for he can do all he desires". It must have been a king, therefore, who lived in Jerusalem^d ruled over Judæa. We cannot refer the book to the Asmonean princes or kings, from Jonathan to Hyrcan II, for they

were not from a foreign nation, but hereditary kings of Jewish origin. He must therefore believe that this king spoken of must have been a resident ^{and} still a foreigner, who ruled over Juda ^{and} in Juda, ^{and} who nevertheless did not belong to the Jewish nation. His princes are referred to as upstarts, while the actual noblemen of the land are treated as slaves ^{and} degraded. This king is referred to as himself a slave ^{and} parvenu. This must, Graetz argues, refer to Herod, who was himself an Idumean slave, ^{and} who was forced upon the Jews by the Romans, ^{and} who was very tyrannical. - Accepting Herod as the king attacked, Graetz believes that the pessimistic tone, the despair, which prefers death to life, becomes ~~more~~ intelligible ^{and} explainable. The old ^{and} foolish king (referring to IV 13), who will not listen to warning can refer only to Herod. The youth, who is to be the successor ^{and} whom the people love, must mean Alexander, the son of Mariamne, whom Herod had thrown into prison, because he suspected that he was plotting against his life (IV 13-14). The

king whom it is necessary to obey, because of the vow of allegiance made to him, and who does what he pleases, must refer to Herod (VIII 2-7). The king, to whom everything is reported through his numerous spies must refer to Herod (X 20). The book, could not have any other foreign king in view, for the Jews were accustomed to be ruled over by a foreign king, and would not despair on this account. No other king and no other time, Graetz asserts, agrees so accurately with the references in this book, as Herod and his time. — We have given Graetz's theory somewhat in full, for its ingeniousness recommends it to careful thought, and it appears, at first sight, captivating and convincing. But yet, we are loathe to accept it. There are certain reasons, which appear to us sound and conclusive arguments, that militate against this theory. That the book of Koheleth was looked upon as holy Scriptures in the days of Herod the Great, is evident from the following narrative related in the pages of the Talmud^I. Let us first preface the narrative with a few explanatory clauses. In the early part of his reign,

^I Baba Bathra 4a.

Herod put to death the members of the Sanhedrin party, partly in revenge for the insult done him for having once been tried before that body,^I and partly because he feared their influence among the people. He however spared Simon b. Shetach, on account of his righteousness, and also Baba b. Buta, a disciple of the school of Shammai. The latter was however, by order of the king, deprived of his eyesight. Some time after, Herod wanted to know whether that Rabbi was hostile to him for the loss of his sight, or grateful because his life had been spared. Herod used to go about disguised, in order to learn the feeling of the Jews toward him and his government. Accordingly, he visited Ben Buta in disguise, and complained to him of the tyrannical yoke to which the Jews were subjected. "See, master," said the monarch, "what this wretched slave (i.e. Herod) is doing?" "And what can I do to him," was the reply of Buta. "Curse him, master," rejoined his visitor. "Curse not the king, even in thy thoughts," said Ben Buta, quoting the words of Koheleth (I 20). "But he is no king,"

^I Josephus, Antiquities XIV 9, 4.

5. 100

urged the stranger. "And if he were only a rich man, it is also written (רכסיב): "curse not the rich in thy bed chamber", citing the concluding words of the same passage (X 20). "True", rejoined the crafty enquirer; "if the ruler acts according to the practices of thy people, but that fellow does not do so." "I am afraid of him", rejoined Buta. "But there is none here who can tell him but I & thou", answered Herod. "It is written", said Ben Buta, quoting again from that same passage in Koheleth, "the birds of heaven shall carry the voice, & that which hath wings shall tell the matter." - Although this narrative may at first strike the reader as legendary, it appears, on a closer examination, worthy of credence. No one has ever called its truth in question. - If this story be true, it is a proof that Koheleth was quoted in the days of Herod, as if coordinate authority with the Law of Moses, & even if its historical truth be questioned, it is clear from the foregoing, that the compilers of the Talmud had not the faintest conception that our book sprang into exist-

ence in the days of Herod.

Bloch cites another example to show that Koheleth was quoted in Herod's time, as of equal importance with other Scriptural books: - On one occasion, two teachers had a controversy as to the shape of the world and the movements of the sun. Here Koheleth I 5 was the verse around ^{which} the whole discussion turned. This shows that the most ancient and Jewish divines referred to the book of Koheleth as Canonical Scriptures.

Another narrative from the Talmud (Sabbath 30 b), is even more interesting: - Gamliel was sitting one day, explaining to his disciples that, in the Messianic age, it would come to pass, that the curse pronounced on woman, in Paradise, would be removed, and that a woman would be able to bear a child right away. In proof of this, he quoted the words from Jeremiah (XXXI 8), "she travailes and brings forth at once". A disciple, laughing at this, said: "Rabbi, it is written, 'there's nothing new under the sun'" (Koheleth I 9). Gamliel said to him: "come, I will show thee instances even in this world."

He went out ^{and} showed his pupils hens that lay eggs every day. By this example, Gamliel wished to prove that there was nothing novel in the opinion propounded, as something analogous might be observed even in the present dispensation. - Another day, Gamliel was sitting, explaining to his disciples that, in the new dispensation, trees would bear fruit every day, in accordance with the prophecy of Ezekiel (xviii 23) "it shall bring forth boughs ^{and} bear fruit," that is, even as the tree shall produce boughs every day, so shall it bear fruit. One of his disciples, laughing, said: "there is nothing new under the sun". Gamliel quickly replied: "come, ^{and} I will show you instances in this world." He went out ^{and} pointed out to him the caper-berry, which bears fruit ^{and} leaves at all seasons of the year. - The importance of this story is, as far as our present purpose is concerned, that it tends to show the incorrectness of Graetz's theory. Had ^{Kohleleh} Hillel been a product of Herod's days, Gamliel need not have given himself any trouble to refute, by far-fetched illustrations, his refractory disciple, inasmuch as the

8. 103

entire force of the latter's argument rested on the assumption of the canonicity of the book of Koheleth.

In *Josefta Berachoth*, II end, it says: "Hillel, the elder used to say, 'appear not naked, when others are dressed, and not dressed when others are clothed, do not stand when others sit, nor sit when others stand, do not laugh when others cry, and do not cry when others laugh, for it is said, 'there is a time to weep and a time to laugh' (Koh. III 4a). Hillel was president of the Sanhedrin in the time of Herod (8 or 10 A.C.). Now, if Koheleth were, as Graetz assumes, composed in B.C., there would be only 18 years between this time and the time of Hillel's death. Even granting that Hillel said this at his death, of which there is doubt, is it reasonable that Hillel did not know the late origin of this book, & that he would introduce the two arguments brought from the book of Koheleth with שואמר? This evidently proves that, in the time of Hillel & Herod, Koheleth was regarded as canonical. - Another most excellent refutation of Graetz's hypothesis is given in

Jerus. Berachoth VIII 2, ^{2d} Jer. Nasir V 3, ^{2d} also in Beresheth Rabba 91, ^{2d} Koheleth Rabba VII 12. It is related there that 300 Nasirites came to Jerusalem to offer up their offerings, but they did not possess the means. Simon b. Shetach, then Pres. of the Sanhedrin, came to King Jannai, ^{2d} said to him that 300 Nasarites wished to bring their offerings, but lacked the requisite means, ^{2d} if Jannai would give half, he would furnish the other half. Jannai consented. Soon after, he learned that the Nasarites had offered only from his donation, ^{2d} Simon b. Shetach had given nothing. Jannai being enraged at this, Simon B. Shetach was compelled to flee for his life. But he was soon recalled, through the influence of his sister, Salome. Jannai now asked him why he had deceived him. To which Simon replied that he had not done so. "You", said Simon, "gave half of your money, & half of my learning," for it is said: "In the shadow of wisdom, ^{2d} in the shadow of silver (Koheleth VII 12a),

— דכתיב כי בצל החמה בצל הכתר — Jannai ^{2d} Simon lived about 105-79 B. C. Now, the fact that Simon b. Shetach

quotes the verse from Koheleth, ^{and} introduces it with דכתיב, which was used only with canonical books, proves that at that time, an entire century before that proposed by Graetz, Koheleth was already written ^{and} was part of the Canon. These arguments, we believe, are of sufficient weight to render the view of Graetz untenable. But these ^{arguments} ~~articles~~ serve, not only as a refutation of the Herodian time of the book, but also of the view that places the books in the time of the Maccabees ^I. Another view ascribes our book to the Greek period, ^{and} the chief argument that they bring forth is, that there are distinctly visible in our book, Greek influences, ^{and} Greek words & systems of philosophy. This view we are compelled to regard as entirely erroneous, for succeeding articles will show that not only are there no Greek words in Koheleth, but no distinct references can be found to Greek philosophy. If it were composed at that time, it is but natural to suppose that Greek allusions would abound, but we are unable to find any such, ^{and} until we are able to find these, we cannot accept the time proposed. Renan, in speaking

^I This view is held by Stitzig ^{and} Ziskel.

116
on this question, says: "nothing is less certain than that Greek philosophy is visible in Ecclesiastes. Everything absolutely explains itself in this book, by the logical development of Jewish thought. The author is probably of a later date than Epicurus. His style is Semitic, & no Greek words can be discovered nor Greek influences discovered."

There are other views held by some quite distinguished critics, but which are, in the very face, untenable, & some even absurd. Thus, Hugo Grotius believes it was composed in the time of Zerubabel. - Hengstenberg asserts, that our book was written in the time of Nehemiah or Artaxerxes. — The traditional view, which ascribes it to the golden age of Solomon, will be amply refuted in a separate chapter. - But the view which is accepted by most critics ^{heartily} and which we most endorse & fall in with, is the view that places its authorship in the time of the Persian rule over Judaea, when Persian satraps held sway, in a most tyrannical way. - This view appears to us most in consonance with the entire tone of the book. The internal evidence makes it likely that the author

lived between 444th and 328 B. C. The simple reason why no more definite date can be assigned is, that Jewish history is almost a blank from the death of Nehemiah (about 415 B. C.), down to the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes (about 175 B. C.). The annals of the Persian empire too are very deficient from the death of Xerxes (465 B. C.), to the appearance of Alexander the Great, in the stage of history. But ere the Persian empire was broken up, Ecclesiastes had appeared, and his work been recognized by the leaders of the Jewish people, as worthy to be inserted among the Jewish writings, as bearing upon its brow the unmistakable impress of divine inspiration.

We have said that internal evidence favors the date proposed. Let us look at this somewhat more closely. First we must state, that the Rabbinic Hebrew offers arguments, that it must have been written in the latter part of the Persian government, for that style of Hebrew was then in vogue. We believe that the Old Testament Canon was not closed till that time, for which we refer to our chapter on "Canonicity of Koheleth". The Jews had long since lost

the feeling of trust^{and} gratitude, with which, "in better days",^I they regarded the court of Persia. The desecration of the Temple by Bagoes, is but one of the cruel calamities that befel Judaea, in the closing days of the Persian empire. The book evidently speaks of a time of great^{and} general oppression. It is a conjecture of Delitzsch, that IV 3 contains a reminiscence of Artaxerxes II Mneumon (died about 360), who was 94 years old,^{and} according to Justyn, had 115 children. If we knew more of this period, we should be able to offer plausible illustrations.

Certainly the state of society described in Koheleth suits the time proposed. The unrighteous judgement (III 16), the despotic oppression (IV 1, VIII 9, I 8), the riotous court-life (X 16-19), the raising of mean men to the highest dignity (X 5-7), the prudence required because of the organized system of espionage, - all these things were characteristic of the period. It was a period of the densest gloom, - as is well known in history,^{and} in such a despondent age, it is easy to suppose that despair seized hold of the people,^{and} that, to eradicate this

I (Koh. VII 10)

destructive despair, Hohenleth set himself to work. The time of Herod, would, we admit, suit equally well to the state of affairs therein described, but as this view has been amply refuted, we are constrained to accept the Persian rule as the most probable date. Still, we must admit in the spirit of Justice, that the circumstances described can be made to agree with any dark period in Jewish history, and it is only a matter of opinion, which view we accept. To us, it has appeared plausible to accept the date proposed, as most in agreement with the internal evidence, the language and complexion of the book, and the close of the Canon.

Each new critic but advances a new theory on this perplexing subject. Some future exegete may perhaps bring to light some new date, as yet undreamt of, which may carry with it more conclusiveness than does, to our mind, any hypothesis so far advanced.

Philosophical Systems of Koheleth.

We have now arrived at a subject that is fraught with great difficulties, and about which great critics have so bitterly disputed, that we approach it with considerable hesitancy. - Many illustrious men have been inclined to see in Koheleth distinct Grecian influences. If we could trace Greek influences, linguistic or philosophical, in the strange book before us, its date would be decided. Taking into account the circumstances of the writer, we might assign it to the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator, when the Egyptian rule began to be calamitous to Judea, or to the reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes.¹ But in a spirit of modesty we say, that to our mind it appears that no such Greek philosophy can be definitely fixed upon our book. Koheleth is conspicuous for its want of Jewish background, nor does it show any affinity for Babylonian or Persian theology. It obviously stands at the close of the Jewish humanistic movement, and gives an entirely new color to the traditional humanism, by its skeptical tone and its commendation of sensuous

¹ This view is accepted by Geiger, Hildeke, Hitzig, Tyler & Thompson, truly an august body of men.

pleasure. It is, we say, perfectly possible to hold that there are distinctly Epicurean doctrines in the book. We can imagine how dangerously attractive Epicureanism must have been, when we call to mind that the word Epicurus, became a synonym, in the Talmudic literature, for infidel or even atheist.¹ "No intellectual movement could withdraw itself from the influences, which proceeded from the victory of the Greeks over the Grecian world." But the Epicurean affinities, which have been believed to have been discovered in Koheleth, are far from striking. In order to show the similarity between Koheleth² and Epicureanism, they bring proof from the *Natura Rerum*, by Lucretius. But if points of contact with Lucretius are to be hunted for, ought we not also to mention the discrepancies between "the wise man" and the poet? We emphasize the difference, for instance between the festive mirth, recommended by Koheleth (IX 7, 8),² and the simple pleasure, so beautifully sung by Lucretius (II 20-33). The number of vague affinities between Koheleth² and Epicureanism might have

¹ Vide Sanhedrin 10.1, Aboth II 4, and Genesis Rabbah 19.

been increased, but we can find no distinct allusion to any scholastic doctrine of Epicurus. Dean Plumptre¹ assumes the doctrine of Atomism for example; but this cannot be found there by even the keenest exegesis; the plurality of words² is not even alluded to, and the denial of the spirit, if implied in III 21, is merely implied in the old Hebrew sense, familiar from Job and the Psalter. The recommendation of eating and drinking, coupled with sensuous pleasure (V 18-20), requires no philosophic basis. Lastly, there is nothing in the phraseology, either of the Hebrew or Septuagint, to suggest an acquaintance with Epicureanism. There may be some thoughts which appear analogous to Epicurean philosophy, but they are not borrowed from, nor written against that system, but simply express the advice of the author to his people. Independent of Epicureanism, Koheleth may perhaps teach certain of their doctrines, without having derived them from that source. There are in the Talmud many passages which have an Epicurean ring, and yet no one will believe that they are due to Epicurean influences. Why may we

¹ Vide his "Ecclesiastes" p. 47.

4. 117

not say the same for our book? A stronger ^{case} can be made for the influence of Stoicism. This system has undoubtedly Oriental affinities, ^{and} these would naturally commend it to the Jewish mind. We know that, at a later time, Stoicism exercised a strong fascination upon the greatest of minds. Philo, the Book of Wisdom, ^{and} the fourth book of the Maccabees, have undoubted allusions to it, ^{and} some allusions to it have also been found in the oldest Jewish sibyl (140 B.C.), ^{and} in the Targum of Onkelos.¹ But how does the case stand with Koheleth? Are there any traces of Stoic terminology? It is true that terminology varied within certain limits, ^{and} could not be accurately reproduced in Hebrew. Still, even under the contorted forms of expressions to which a Stoic or a semi-Stoic might be driven, we could hardly fail to recognize the familiar Stoic expressions, such as εἰ μαρμένη, πρόνοια, φαντασία, φύσις, φρόνησις, ἀρετή. - The Septuagint version ought to help us here. But among the 20 words almost exclusively peculiar to the Greek of Koheleth, the only two technical philosophical words are σοφία ^{and} γνῶσις.

¹ See Neubinger in Graetz's Monatschrift 1873, p. 566.

Can we however detect distinct references to Stoic philosophy? Great stress has been laid on the catalogue of times^{and} seasons (found in Chapt III 1-5), which is regarded as an expansion of Stoic doctrines. But the idea that there is an appointed order of things,^{and} that every action has its place in it, is much more the corollary of the doctrine of destiny, than the doctrine of duty. Stoicism rests on this practical basis, that men were meant to conform to the universal order, acquiescing in that which was inevitable,^{and} making the best of that which can not be altered. This exactly is missing in Koheleth. He does ^{not} end the Catalogue of Times^{and} Seasons with the Stoic principle, "fulfil thy appointed task"; but with the despondent reflection, "what profit hath he that worketh, in that wherein he toileth?" (III 9). - A second argument, advanced by those who see Stoicism in our book, is: that the idea that "there is nothing new under the sun" (I 9), is a phase of the Stoic doctrine of cyclical revolutions. But all that gave form^{and} color to the Stoic doctrine is entirely absent, - especially the idea of ἐκπύρωσις. The idea

as it is found in our book, has nothing Stoic or even philosophical about it. It is only an old man's observation that human actions, like phenomena in nature, tend to repeat themselves in successive generations. We admit that there are analogies between Stoicism and the ideas of Koheleth. Dr. Kalisch has collected some of them in a very valuable philosophico-religious dialogue. Prominent among these, is the frequent and peculiar use of the terms, 'madness' and 'folly'. - Dean Plumptre, who by the way is the chief advocate of the Greek theory, says: 'From the followers of Jeno he learned to look upon virtue and vice in their intellectual aspect. The common weaknesses and follies were to him, as to the Stoics, so many forms of insanity' (I, 7, II, 2, VII, 25, IX, 3). But we must remember that not only did the Stoics divide men into wise men and fools, but it was common also with the ancient sages, and hence, we are not compelled to see in this a Stoic principle. Another point of contact with Stoicism, is undoubtedly the Determinism of our book, which leaves no room for freedom of the will. But such determinism need not necessar-

ily have been learned from the school of Genoa. It is genuinely Semitic. Indeed, nowhere is virtual Determinism more forcibly expressed than in the Old Testament, as for instance in Isa. LXIII 17, 'Oh Lord! why hast thou caused us to err from thy ways, & hardened our heart from thy fear?' - One of the greatest points of difference, however, between the Stoic philosophy & that of our book, is the doctrine of God. Such faith as Solomon hath in God, is in a transcendent, not an immanent Deity. The germs of a doctrine of Immanence, characteristic of the Stoics, found no lodgment in the mind of our author. - - - Mr. Tyler has ventured on a theory which is so peculiar & odd, that it deserves special mention. He supposes that Stoic & Epicurean doctrines were set over against each other by our author, in order, by the clash of opposites, to deter the reader from dangerous & unsatisfying investigations. The goal of the author's philosophising thus became the negation of all philosophy. Such a theory, has, in fact, occurred to many an early expositor (see our article on Historical Sketch), but it seems

out of harmony with the character of the author, as revealed in his book. He is not such a weak-kneed wrestler for truth. At times he may appear a Stoic or an Epicurean, but he is always in deep earnest to find the truth, no matter how ²his opinions may fluctuate. We see, therefore, no necessity to explain this enigmatical book, by a supposed contact with Greek philosophy. Koheleth is, in fact, a native Hebrew philosopher. He is the first Jew, who set to work "to seek ²and explore by wisdom, the things which are done under Heaven (I 13). Koheleth is but the forerunner of more systematic philosophers. His ideas are nothing less than scholastic. Whatever seeming Stoicism there is, is but primitive Jewish in origin. - His seeming Epicureanism, if it be not sufficiently explained as a reaction against the gloom of his times, may perhaps be more or less closely connected, not with Greek philosophy, but with the banquet-halls of Egypt. Koheleth's invitation to enjoy life, reminds us of the call, "eat ²and be merry", which accompanied the Egyptian funeral ser-

ices. May not we suppose that our author has traveled in Alexandria? He may have envied and sought to imitate the light-hearted joy of the valley of the Nile, but yet there is no reason to suppose that he was influenced by Egyptian theories, and embodied Egyptian songs and dirges in his book, as some suppose. Whatever in Koheleth appears to have a ring of other systems of thought, appears to us can be strictly explained on a strictly Jewish foundation. He is above all a Jew, and thought as such. His own thoughts may have led him to conclusions similar to those reached by the Stoics and Epicureans, and yet he may not even have known of the existence of these schools. We have found that there are no Greek philosophical doctrines in Koheleth, and, had he been influenced by these rival schools, he would no doubt have given room to them in his own book. He wished to teach Jews vital truths, and had no concern with other theories. He desired to refute the prevalent views of his time, and arouse faith in God, and obedience to

His decrees. Hellenic teaching was in no wise necessary for an ardent thinker like Koheleth.

We therefore maintain that we are not in duty bound to accept Grecian or other influences in our book. All that the book contains is strictly Jewish, and finds adequate explanation in Jewish philosophy.

Historical Sketch of Exegeses.

From the earliest times, scholars of the Bible, Jewish as well as Gentile, have bent their efforts in expounding our book. And as a consequence, a library has grown around this book, which it would be almost impossible to enumerate. In the following essay, we will attempt to give a brief historic sketch of the exegeses of Koheleth. We will, for greater convenience divide our subject into two parts, 1st The Jewish exegeses, 2nd the Christian expositors.

A. Jewish Expositions.

The Book of Wisdom^F, may, in a certain sense, be looked upon as the first comment upon Koheleth. The troubles^{and} evils, which sprang from the lack of retributive justice, brought the book of Koheleth into existence. These evils had assumed still greater proportions in the times of the author of the Book of Wisdom. Both then attack the same evils. Like the author of Koheleth, the unknown writer of the Book of Wisdom, assumes the wise Solomon as the speaker, in order to add to the authority^{and} influence of his warnings. He even imitates the very language of Koheleth. Others again have regarded this apocryphal book as opposing the

^F The date of this book is a subject of much dispute. The dates given by different scholars range from 217 B.C. to 50 A.C. Græty in his History Vol. III p. 315, 493, places it in time of the persecutions in the reign of Caligula. Jobst, in his Geschichte des Judenthums, Vol. I p. 376, places it in the pre-Philonic period, and puts its authorship in Alexandria. Ewald, in his Alterthumskunde, p. 354, Vol. II, ascribes it to the time when the Ptolemaic dynasty had reached its worst

sentiments expressed in Koheleth, or to supplement^{and} vindicate its misunderstood passages.

The Midrash to Koheleth is very extensive.^I The exact time of its composition is likewise a subject of much doubt.^{II} The Midrashic view of Koheleth is that King Solomon wrote it to expose the futility^{and} vanity of earthly pursuits^{and} carnal pleasures, ^{and} to show that true happiness can be obtained only by the fear of God, ^{and} by obedience to His will ^{and} commands. These ancient Rabbins have grasped the proper view of Koheleth, although their peculiar style precluded a regular historic-critical commentary. In this way Midrash Yalkut, on Koheleth I:2, refers to the well-known legend, that Solomon was dethroned because of his sins by Ashmodai, king of the Demons, ^{and} expelled from his capital, as an example of the dire effects of sin. Then Solomon went around the towns ^{and} provinces of Israel, ^{and} cried aloud: "I am Koheleth, whose name was formerly Solomon, who was king over Israel in Jerusalem, but, through my sins, have been driven from my throne ^{and} residence." It was at this time that he wrote the book of Koheleth. In

I. We refer to the Midrash Koheleth in Rabba ^{and} Yalkut.

II The dates assigned, vary from 300 to 550 A.C. Jung has shown that the Midrash Koheleth in Rabba was written very late.

consequence of this, he was forgiven^{ed} & reinstated in his throne^{ed} & power. - This Midrashic legend is based upon the phrase, I was king over Israel, i.e. ^{ed} am king no more.

We now come to make mention of the work of the celebrated Rashi (1040-1105) on Koheleth. Ever since the beginning of the seventh century, a decided reaction against the allegorizing method took place, in favor of a more literal^{ed} & grammatical exegesis. Rashi, although considerably influenced by this spirit, still adheres to the traditional view of the book. He too maintains the legend of Ashmodai, ^{ed} that Solomon, when brought to repentance, wrote this book to reprove the worldly of their follies, ^{ed} urge them by his sad experiences to return to God. The commentary of Rashi is especially valuable for its grammatical notes & traditional lore.

Rashbam (1085-1155), a grandson of Rashi, was the first one to elucidate the true design of Koheleth. He saw clearly that Chap. I 2-11 contains the burden of the argument, that it contrasts the speedy passage of human life, with the permanent^{ed} & unchangeable existence of nature, thus showing the advantages of the latter over the former. All the ensuing

experiences related in the book, intended to dispel the melancholy effect of this contemplation, were useless, and that comfort could alone be found in a calm enjoyment of life, in resignation to Providence, in the belief of a future state, when all that is perplexing shall be rectified. Rashbam, in his lucid vision, saw further that the first two verses of the prologue overthrow the Solomonic authorship. — It may be of interest to call attention to a radical difference between the commentary of Rashi and that of Rashbam. While Rashi refers almost constantly to the *Midrash*, Rashbam has not a single allusion to the *Midrash*, but rather appeals to logical reasoning for his proof.

Ibn Ezra (1092-1167), though occupying so prominent a position in the Spanish schools of exegeses, did comparatively little towards evolving the true design of our book. He, too, held to the traditional view that *Koheleth* is the product of Solomon in his old age, in order to give the rising generation the benefit of his experiences. As to the design of *Koheleth*, Ibn Ezra holds that, since

the works of God, though good in themselves, do not produce a good effect upon all men, owing to the various dispositions, modes of thinking, etc., of the recipients, - just as the same sun which bleaches the garment, tans the face of the bleacher, - God inspired Solomon to explain these things unto men, ^{and} to show them the right way, to show that all the devices of men are vanity, that fear of God alone can render man happy, ^{and} that this fear can be obtained only by the pursuit of wisdom. - His commentary was severely hampered by the fact that he introduced frequently his favorite theories as to astrology ^{and} philosophy, ^{and} thus could not trace the logical sequence of the text. - Still it is a storehouse of learning, ^{and}, in point of grammatical explanation, exceeds any of the present day.

The next work of prominence, that turned its attention to the difficulties of our book, is the celebrated Zohar, or the Talmud of the Kabbala, as it has been termed. It is now almost conclusively established that this work was composed in the second half of the thir-

teenth century.^I This book seeks to overcome the hard sayings^{and} apparent contradictions in Koheleth, by the assumption that our author quotes the language of ignorant unbelievers in order to expose their folly.

To the time of the Sohar, we must ascribe the Midrash Temurah, which is based upon Koheleth. This Midrash seeks to prove that all the opposites found in the world, such as wealth^{and} poverty, beauty^{and} deformity, intelligence^{and} ignorance, add but to the harmony of the whole, ^{and} proclaim the wisdom of the Creator. They must therefore be received with thankfulness^{and} resignation. - This teaching the Midrash Temurah derives from Chap. III 1-8, connecting it with Psalm CXXXVI.^{II.}

Isaac Arama (1475-1530) expresses his astonishment at the diverse opinions of writers with regard to it. He maintains that all preceding writers have erred in this point, i.e. that they alter the real sense of the book into palatable sentiment, ^{and} yet, he thinks, not one of them has put such sense into it as to derive wholesome food from this rock (i.e. this book). Rejecting, therefore, all pre-

^I This book has often been ascribed to Simon b. Jochari, but with no historic truth, ^{and} Joet, in his *Geschichte des Judenthums* etc, Vol. III p. 74-81, believed it to be the work of several rather than of one scholar. But he, too, places its time in the closing years of the 13th century.

7. 126

ious opinions, he believes that Koheleth is entirely consistent with orthodoxy, that every statement is plain,¹ that it contains the sublimest of all contemplations,² & teaches the highest order of human wisdom. He could not understand why the Rabbins were disposed to regard it as apocryphal,³ & only added it to the Canon, because of its pious beginning⁴ & conclusion. He believes that the objections against it were not due to the fact, that men could not find the good sense of the book, but because of fear for the multitude, who waste the riches of the law. But because it is the custom of ignorant men to look only at the beginning⁵ & end of a book,⁶ & since these evidently teach the fear of God, the Rabbins determined not to exclude it.

Moses Landsberger (1724) represents Kabbalistic interpretation at its highest stage. He does not assign any design to the book, nor admit any literal meaning, but explains all passages according to the rules *Grammatica*⁷ & *Notarion*.⁸ This commentary is very short⁹ & this is its redeeming feature. On Chap. I 15, 'The crooked cannot be made straight,' he says that this refers to Cain, Korach, Balaam, Achitophel,

¹ This was a favorite method of the Kabbalists & consists in this: - *Grammatica* means, that every letter of a word is reduced to its numerical value, & the word is explained by another of the same quantity. - *Notarion* means, that every letter of a word is taken as the initial or abbreviation of a word.

8.
127

Ghazis Doeg, who have no portion in the life to come.

Now a new spirit arose in Judaism. With the appearance of Mendelsohn came the dawn of reason. This great scholar turned the thoughts of the Jews to a proper study of the word of God. His first effort to this effect, was very significantly the publication of a commentary to Kohelleth, which appeared in 1770 A. C.^I. Mendelsohn also complains, that "nearly all the commentators, who have preceded me, have almost entirely failed in doing justice to their task." Mendelsohn believed that the design of our author was to propound the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the necessity of leading a cheerful and contented life. He believed that the unknown writer interposed this cardinal teaching, with lessons of minor importance, such as, worship, politics, domestic economy and so on. Mendelsohn divides the book into 13 sections.

David Friedlander (1788), a disciple of Mendelsohn, published a translation of Kohelleth, according to the teaching of his master, together with an introduction of his own. This work is of the greatest importance, not only because it

^I This commentary has been translated into German by J. J. Rabe, and into English by Thos. Preston.

embodies the view of the immortal Mendelsohn, but because it marks the beginning of rational exegesis. From his time, it may be said, modern exegesis begins, and a broader, more scientific method prevails. The book is now studied in a more liberal and deeper sense. - Friedlander's commentary adopts the division adopted by his teacher, but gives the contents of the 13 sections, which Mendelsohn had not done.

Herzfeld (1838). No commentator since the time of Rashbam, has so strongly adhered to the literal and grammatical meaning as Herzfeld. He advanced a new theory. The design of our book is to demonstrate the vanity of all things, and by thus showing the exertions of all men to be vain, the sacred writer tries to comfort his unhappy nation, who imagined that they alone are given up to misfortune. He refutes Knobel, who had asserted that the book contains many later Hebrew words, which speak against the Solomonic authorship. Herzfeld proves that there are only 11 expressions and constructions foreign to the old literature, and

10.
129
about eight or ten Chaldaisms. Herzfeld has therefore been looked upon as the champion of those who adopt the antiquity of the book ^{and} its Solomonian authorship. But in 1855, he published his "History", in which he denies the Solomonic authorship, ^{and} changes his opinion as to its design. He now admits that its purpose is to teach the vanity of earthly exertions. It is therefore a gross error to regard Herzfeld as the defender of the traditional view.

Ludwig Phillipson (1854). He expressed his disapproval of the preceding views regarding Koheleth, ^{and} advanced a new theory. The object of the book, according to him, is to show that a belief in the vanity of human life, is not only compatible with the belief in God, ^{and} in moral efforts, but that by combining the two together, the sole end ^{and} value of life is manifested. According to this distinguished divine, Koheleth consists of three parts ^{and} an epilogue. The first part extends from Chap. I 2 to III 22 ^{and} has three

sections. After giving the main observation, as if it were a motto that "all is vanity" (I 2), the sacred author shows that it applies to all things in general (which forms the first section I 3-11), to things in particular (which forms the second section I 12-II 23), and then deduces a rule of life and shows its soundness (Third section II 24-III 22). - The second part extends from Chap. IV 1 to XI 8 and has two sections. Koheleth considers the more important events of human life, from the point of view attained (section I Chap. IV 1 to VII 12), and describes the conduct of a wise man following the given rule of life (section II Chap. VIII 1 to XI 8). - The third part extends from Chap. XII 9 to XII 8. It gives the result of the whole investigation, a close application of his established rule of life, and concludes with the main observation, that all is vanity. - The Epilogue (XII 9-14) was added by the author shortly after the completion of the book, in consequence of some scruples that arose among some friends to whom he read his work.

He warns that the book is not to be read with levity of mind, and shows us in a brief way its religious standpoint.

S. D. Luzatto (1860). This is a most curious commentary.¹ He firmly asserts that the book denies the immortality of the soul, and recommends carnal delights as the only thing left for man. It was written, according to Luzatto, after the Babylonian captivity, by a man named Koheleth, who, to invest it with authority, ascribed it to Solomon, whose name did originally appear in the book. The contemporary sages, knowing the real author, erased the name Solomon, put Koheleth in its place, and left the rest to brand the impostor. In the course of ages this was forgotten. The later sages, being unable to exclude it from the Canon, although they saw that it contained heretical sentiments, added three verses. The first that they added was XI 6 b, "and know that, for all this, God will bring thee to judgment"; secondly they added XII 1 a, "remember thy Creator

¹ Luzatto's view is in the Ozer Nachmad: Briefe u. Abhandlungen Jüdischer Literatur betreffend, herausgegeben von Ignatz Blumenfeld. Dritter Jahrgang, Wien 1860. pp. 15-25.

in the days of thy youth;" and the third verse they added was xii 8 b, "and the spirit returns unto God who gave it." The first is an addition of eight words, the second of five, the third of six words. As the word האלהים occurs twice, it must be taken as one word, which hence leaves eighteen words. These are the י"ח מלין תקון סופרים mentioned in Sabbath 97a. This had not been understood before the time of Luzzatto. The Professor tells us however in a later letter, that he has formed a better opinion of the book.

Bloch. This writer is now the leading Jewish scholar, who still clings to the traditional view of its Solomonic authorship. He assumes that all later words and forms, which occur in Koheleth, are to be traced to copyists, who introduced considerable interpolations into the work of Solomon. He insists upon the unity of the work, but allows that words and passages have been added to it, in later times. He regards the Epilogue (xii 8-14) as such an interpolation. As to the tendency of Koheleth, he

is of the opinion, that it consists of sorrowful reflections upon the deficiencies of human life, lamentations over the discordances of nature^{and} spirit^{and} it, ^{and} painful declarations concerning the unsatisfactory character of all earthly things, ^{and} the vanity of all earthly possessions.

Dr Isaac M. Wise assumes that Koheleth was composed in what is known as the Grecian period (200 B.C.). It could not have been written later, as shortly after that the third Canon was closed. Ecclesiastes IV 13-17 ^{and} IX 17, he believes, point to Antiochus the Great ^{and} the child Ptolemy Epiphanes, ^{and} verse 20 to the tax-collector Joseph ^{and} his sons. Chap. IX 13 points to the fate of Hannibal. Koheleth, as a word, he regards as signifying 'the congregation', which, in better times reigned over Israel in Jerusalem, but was now deposed by the incursions of Grecian philosophy ^{and} customs. The learned Rabbi believes that our book argues against this philosophy. He calmly reviews all the claims of the Grecians, with all the philosophisms

and sophisms of the age, the fatalism^{and} astrology of the Orient, the Skepticism^{and} Epicureanism of the Greeks. He rebukes the supposed importance of the kings, and inveighs against insatiable wealth, power^{and} enjoyment. He describes how he has tried all the supposed comforts of the people. He has denied immortality^{and} the happiness of virtue. Like his people, he has thrown aside all tradition^{and} revelation. Yet he finds but vanity, ^{and} nothing else. Draining the cup of joy to the very dregs, brings but bitterness^{and} vexation of spirit. Still the kings reign^{and} oppress. Death comes^{and} all alike must answer his summons. Therefore, he concludes, that the only consolation left to man, is to trust^{and} fear God. - Koheleth seeks to prove, that all systems of philosophy do not bring happiness, but that it alone can be attained in God.

B Christian Expositors

Turning from an examination of the Jewish critics, to those of the Christian, we find that much more was done by them, and hence the library that confronts us here, is much larger. We will first briefly mention some of the early Church Fathers, who studied our book. The first commentary written by a Christian, is a metaphor by Gregory (Thaumaturgus) of Cappadocia (210-270). The design of our book he conceives to be, to show that all earthly affairs, are vain, in order to lead us to the contemplation of heavenly things. Like the Midrash, he regards the book as prophetic. Some time after this commentary appeared, St. Jerome published in Latin a commentary on this book. He explains the book allegorically, & thus easily overcomes all inherent difficulties that the book may present. Whenever a thought appeared perplexing, he ascribed it as the saying of a skeptic whom he introduces as speaking. This view is adopted by St. Ambrose (340-397) and St. Augustine (354-430). Another of the patristic writers on this book is Olympiodorus, known as 'Monachus' (550 A.D.). He regards

Kohleth as treating on natural philosophy, which is otherwise wanting in the Scriptures. Kohleth, he argues, intersperses this otherwise abstruse treatise with a few moral sentiments and maxims.

John Brentius (1528) the Suiabian Reformer, was the first Protestant who wrote on our book. Kohleth is, according to him, an appendix of the Thora. The Law teaches that man by himself is unable to act virtuously. With this Kohleth agrees, & teaches that all the powers of man, wisdom, reasoning &c, greatly deviate from the natural employment of things & things. There is not one, who if left to himself could acquire righteousness in the presence of God, or live in happy relation with his fellow. Brentius, contrary to other writers, insists that Kohleth rather teaches man to enjoy the good of God, than to despise the world & its affairs.

Martin Luther (1532) This great Reformer, developed the thought propounded by Brentius. He sees in our book, a condemnation of evil men, but not of the creatures themselves. The book, intends to teach us, says Luther, to see with grateful hearts, the things present, & the creatures of God; to have quiet

15,
+ tranquil hearts, + a mind filled with cheerfulness, + contentment towards God.
Luther discerned that Solomon could not be its author. In his Table Talk,
he says: "Das Buch ist zu viel abgebrochen. So hat Solomon das Buch nicht
geschrieben, sondern es ist zur Zeit des Macabäer von Sirach gemacht."

Melanchthon (1556) succeeded still more in making plain the true design of
Ecclesiastes. It aims to teach the doctrine of Providence, + the necessity of obedi-
ence + submission, + the importance of attending to our calling.

Hugh Broughton (1605) the famous Hebraist, embodied the design of our
book, in the form of a syllogism, based on Nathan's speech to David, regard-
ing the eternal throne. ^I "If all things under the sun, are subject to vanity,
then the eternal throne promised to David, must be of another world. But
all things under the sun, are subject to vanity. Therefore thus shall the man
to look to the judgment of God for another world, + unto the eternal throne."

The Jesuits, stimulated by the zeal of the Protestants, determined not to
be outdone. We therefore find large folio volumes, some as much as 1500
pages, written on our book. But notwithstanding their bulk, they have done

^I 1st Chronicles XVII 12.

but little for a proper comprehension of our book. We will mention one of these.
Lorinus (1609) This commentary is especially useful for historical purposes, since it gives a résumé of the Patristic literature on Ecclesiastes. Its critical & exegetical value is but slight. He holds the old traditional view, that the sacred writer teaches natural discipline, but at the same time, things empty & vain are distinguished from things which are profitable, & admonitions are given, to pursue the one, & relinquish the other, that God may be feared & obeyed.

Thus far, all the commentaries we have noted, have been in Latin. It may be of interest to make mention of the first English commentary, written by Thomas Granger (1621) He, too, in our book, Solomon's ethics, he treats "the Sinner's Bond." We now come in our historical sketch to an important man, Stugo Grotius (1644). His commentary to the Scriptures gave a new & lofty tone to the interpretation of the Bible in general, & to Ecclesiastes in particular, through the profound erudition, & great liberality in it. As to the purpose of his book, he assumes that it is a collection of different opinions concerning happiness, as propounded by those who were reputed sages. This will explain

the heretical & difficult passages, which we cannot accept. All different opinions are mixed up with his argument, as Aristotle does, before giving his final opinion. The beginning & end sufficiently attest the obvious drift of the book. But the main merit of Grotius lies in his shrewd discovery, that Solomon is not its author, which no commentator has made, since Luther's time. "I believe," says he, "that the book is not the product of Solomon, but was written in the name of that king, as led by repentance to it."

Dr. John Smith. (1666) a member of the Royal College of Physicians, published a very curious critical-anatomical treatise upon the six former verses of the 12th chapt, in which he endeavours to show, that Solomon was thoroughly conversant with all the modern discoveries of anatomy, as well as with the Harveian theory of the circulation of the blood.

During the 17th century, many treatises appeared, but although many of these have special merits, still they tended but little towards clearing up the mysteries that surrounded our book. We will now briefly sketch the chief commentaries of the 18th century:-

140

De Hamel. (1703) This author made a decided approach towards the real design of our book. "The aim of Ecclesiastes, he says, is to collect the different opinions of men, concerning the end of the righteous & the wicked; and to lay down at the end, what we ought to think respecting it. The conclusion of the book, furnishes the solution to its purpose, i.e. to fear God, & keep his precepts.

Other matters introduced, are the opinions of the mass of the people. At times, he appears to assent to their views, but instantly refutes them, being fully convinced of one thing, that happiness cannot be sought in created things, but in God.

Mathieu Prior (1715). This great statesman, wrote the admirable poem, "Solomon on the Vanity of the World". He makes the whole book, a soliloquy, divided into three books. The first book shows the insufficiency of knowledge, & introduces Rabbins & philosophers, with whom he discusses. The second book proves the insufficiency of pleasure, & herein he discusses with his wives & their attendants. The third book shows the insufficiency of power, wherein he is taught by an angel, to help him out of his difficulties. The remedy for the ills of life, is entire resignation to the will of God.

Desrochers (1760). This commentary is one of the most elaborate and curious works we possess. The author's intention, says Desrochers, is to treat the immortality of the soul, or rather the necessity for another existence. He puts his argument in the form of three leading propositions, as follows:

I. No labor of men, can be so profitable, as to secure for them, lasting contentment & satisfaction. II. Earthly goods are so far from making us happy, that they may be looked upon even as obstacles to our ease & tranquillity. III. Men do not know what is, or is not truly advantageous to them, either because of ignorance, or because they are unmindful, what will occur after death.

Therefore, there must be a state of true & solid happiness out of this world.

Herder (1778). This poet, assumed that there are two voices in our book: He says "Es sind zwei Stimmen zu unterscheiden, die eines Glückes der Wahrheit sucht, während eine andere Stimme ihn oft unterbricht und meistens damit endet, 'was zuletzt das Resultat des Lebens bleibe.' Man kann das Buch also in zwei Columnen theilen, davon die eine dem armatteten Luder, die andere, den warnenden Lehrer gehört." As to the import of the book,

I Vide his "Briefe das Studium der Theologie betreffend", 2^{te} T. II p. 135 v. 136.

he says" Nichts kein Buch aus dem Alterthume bekannt, welches die
Summe des Menschlichen Lebens, z seine Abwechselungen, und Wichtigkeit,
Entwürfen und Geschäften und Vergnügen, und zugleich was wahr, dauernd,
und lobnend ist, eindringlicher beschriebe, als dieses." ^I

Eichhorn. (1770). It is remarkable that Eichhorn reached the same
result, independently of Herder. He regards the book as a dialogue between
a calm engineer, and a passionate thinker. There is evidently he says, an inter-
change of two different persons. There is an observer, who looks gloriously life,
and the destiny of man. By his side, stands an aged sage, who assuages the fire of
the hasty youth, and leads him back to the path of truth and shows him that evil has
a good side."

Jacobi. (1779). maintains that Koheleth is meant to be exclusively a guide
for courtiers. The main intention of the author, he says, is not to describe
the life of man, but it aims to place before us, the life of courtiers.
This it does with a masterly skill. It gives them valuable advice how
to conduct themselves, in the presence of the king & his court.

149

Jahn (1793). Although Jahn was a strict Roman Catholic, he was so influenced by the spirit of liberal biblical criticism, that contrary to all tradition, he urged that the language and import of Hodeish, preclude a Solomonian authorship. He agrees with Luther, in holding that contentment & satisfaction are the keywords of our book.

Nachtigal. (1798). All theories hitherto propounded, are discarded by the discoveries this writer made. He informs us, that our book contains the investigations of several associations among the Jews. It contains propositions which at that time, were the limits of philosophic speculations, and which seem to have been proposed intentionally to agitate & explain doubts, and thus to develop the intellectual faculties. He divides the book into two parts - I a prose part II The poetical parts, consisting of three kinds of poetry. 1/ antiphones. i.e. poetical treatise upon one subject made by different singers. 2/ maxims of the sages. 3/ hidden questions and their solutions.

We now turn our attention to the present century. Here we

breathe an entirely different atmosphere - More has been done since the beginning of this century for this book, than in all preceding ages. Gotthilf Christian Kautz (1804). This scholar defends a very ingenious & extraordinary view. He assures us that the lives of the house of David, from Solomon down to Hezekiah, are faithfully & plainly chronicled in Kohélet in strict chronological order, that the overthrow of the Jewish state is pragmatically balanced in it, & through this historic key, every difficulty is removed. Kohélet is an oriental poem, Kautz divides the book into 16 sections. I) The prologue I 1-11. II) The life of Solomon II 12-III 11. III) Solomon's successors Jeroboam, Rehoboam & Abiam III 12-26. IV) The life of Aza. III 1-15. V) The life of Jehoshaphat III 16-22. VI) The life of Jehoram IV 1-6. VII) Hezekiah, Sennacherib IV 7-12. VIII. Joash & Amaziah IV 13-16. IX) Uzzah IV 17-V 19. X) Contrast between Joash & Ahez VI 1-12. XI) Hezekiah, Manasse & Ammon. VII 1-14. XII) Reflections on Josiah VII 15-VIII 13. XIII) The expression of the assembly regarding these Kings. XIV) Jehoiachin VIII 11-14. XV) Jehoiachin & Zedekiah X 5-XI 8.

XVI/Conclusion XI 9 - XII 14.

Ewald (1826). He regards the author as a pious Israelite, whose heart was touched by the miseries of his people. But he had no practice or skill in writing. This book is evidently his first production. The style is but little developed & there is little flow of his thoughts. The words are never strictly measured. The author frequently speaks too strongly in his enthusiasm & frequently only hints at what is in his mind. The author lived after the exile (100 yrs. before Alexander) in a time of oppression, & wished to mitigate the misfortunes of the people, by offering salutary precautions. He recommends patience & endurance, denounces rebellion & too liberal sentiments. Above all, he teaches fear of God. De Wette, undeterred by this lofty purpose ascribed to our book, held, that Koheleth propounds a doctrine of wisdom, which shows the uselessness of all things, & the reality of enjoyment alone. He gives no hope of a future existence, & the view he propounds, inclines to fatalism, scepticism & epicureanism according to De Wette.

Stitzig (1854). has successfully penetrated into the true design of our book. "The author, says Stitzig, was induced to write his book by the dire circumstances of the times; he wrote not from mere inclination, but from bitter necessity, to teach how men are to shape themselves to life in general, & how to act in a peculiar time like his own."

Stengstenberg (1859). maintains that it is misleading to represent *Kohélet* as occupied with any single narrow theme. The book has no plan, its object being to inculcate various lessons, all of which are designed to make us fear God. Hence the description of the vanity of all that is earthly, since he knows only what he has in God, to whom "Vanity of vanities all is Vanity" has become a living consciousness. Stengstenberg has discovered two facts which are of great value:

- 1) that at the time of the author, it was dangerous to speak freely.
- 2) the author wished to arouse the dependency of the people, by pointing out the importance of life, as a good gift from God.

Ernest Renan calls *Kohleth* "un livre charmant, le seul livre charmant, qui ait été composé par un juif."^I In another place he says, that *Kohleth* is, "le charmant écrivain qui nous a laissé cette délicate fantaisie philosophique, aimant la vie, tout en voyant la vanité." To represent in his translation, the character of Hebrew rhythm, which is light, dancing & elegant, Renan adopts the metre of old French poetry. Strange to say, this great critic still adheres to the traditional view as to its authorship, although he believes it has been revised at a later date. As to the design of *Kohleth*, Renan believes that the book teaches the vanity of everything. The world repeats continually a series of phenomena, progress can be observed nowhere. The past has been like the present, & the present is like that which is to come. The present is bad, the past has not been better, & the future will not be preferable. Every attempt to ameliorate human affairs is chimerical. Crime is a folly, but wisdom is not recompensed. The villain is honored, as the virtuous

I. Vide *L'Antichrist* p. 101.

ought to be. Kings are arbitrary, judges are corrupt, & the people are ungrateful. The best is to enjoy one's life with the wife of our youth. Still it is advisable to avoid extravagance. We cannot possibly overcome our destiny. A quiet life can be secured only by opposing no prejudices of men, but striving only to live in justice. Koheleth, Crenan holds, was a worthy man, devoid of prejudices, but discouraged by the baseness of his times & the sad conditions of human life. He was not as fervent as Job, & more phlegmatic. He entertained no hopes of a Messiah, & denied resurrection. Like all pessimists of talent, he loved life, & recommended its enjoyment. Crenan does not recognize any Greek influence that swayed Koheleth. The author, he submits, is of a later date than Epicurus. It seems he did not receive a Greek education. His style is Semitic. In all his language, there is not a Greek word, nor a characteristic Hellenism. Such is Crenan's view on our book. —

Dean Chumtze. The book of Jobeleth is a sort of biographical confession, revealing occasionally his intention. He lived in Judea circa 200 B.C., in a place not very far from Jerusalem. Trained as a child in a synagogal school, he lived at a time when religion was, mostly formal & ritualistic. He is the son of wealthy parents & was trained in agriculture. In his youth he lost his mother. He saw through the emptiness & hypocrisy of religion in his day. He travelled much, & finally settled in Alexandria. Here he experienced & observed oppressions of the government. In Alexandria, he met a true friend, who guarded him against moods of despair. He fell in with a woman, but escaped from her. In order to find consolation, he turned to art & Greek philosophy, especially of the Epicureans & Stoics. He shows familiarity with anatomy & physiology. But these studies did not satisfy him, with regard to the question, as to the mystery of life. Experience having taught him to shun the more

to his old faith, he became more cheerful, & began to debate in the philosophic schools. But after a painful illness, he came to believe in immortality & a personal God. It was at this time that he was led to become a writer, & to put on record the results of his experience. There are two voices in the book, the voice of faith prevails at last over that of pessimism.

In reading Thompson's commentary, we are almost led to believe that he possessed a biography of the unknown writer.

We have thus carried the reader through a vast labyrinth of exegetical acumen. At the conclusion of it all, we stand no nearer a definite result. Each critic advances & defends his own theory. Not till the greatest writer himself, were to come on earth, with the voice of thunder, decide between the hostile camps, would peace ensue in regard to our book. What lessons of forbearance and toleration ought we to learn from this sketch!

Translations and Versions of Koheleth.

A. Ancient Versions. A comparison between the Hebrew text, as it lies before us, & the ancient translators, shows us a marked discrepancy between them. Critics have offered many theories to account for this fact. Some have supposed that the translators had a different text before them. Others, that these early translators had a meagre knowledge of Hebrew, and misunderstood its meaning. Some have held that the translators intentionally deviated from the original, and hence their renderings are false; while others have insisted, that our text is corrupt, & the version of the ancient translators is the correct one. Let us briefly notice these ancient versions. I. The Septuagint. This Greek translation differed widely from others, by the fact that it adheres very closely, carrying this so far, as at times to be unintelligible.^I It is very peculiar in its style. The particle $\alpha\kappa$ which occurs 71 times in Koheleth, is in 42 instances regarded as the sign of the accusative,^{II} and in 29 instances, it is rendered by $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon$.^{III} This barbarism can be accounted for, when we refer to Agadim megis. This particle $\alpha\kappa$ was looked upon as having a mystical

I. Vide Bleek's "Einleitung in das Alte Testament". p. 77.

II. These are: I 13, II 3, 10, 12, 16, 20, 24, III 11, 15, IV 3, 5 (twice), 8, 10, 13, 15 (twice), 18, 19, VII 1, 3 (twice), 14, 18 (twice), 21, VIII 8, 9, 16 (twice), IX 7, 10, 12, 15, X 20, XI 5, 6.

meaning. Hence the Greek translator, was desirous of indicating this particle in Greek, whenever a passage appeared to him fraught with deep significance. This peculiarity reminds us strongly of Aguilas's translation, but it must also be mentioned, that in the more than half of the passages, in which α of the accusative occurs in the original, this characteristic rendering of Aguilas's i. e. $\sigma\upsilon\upsilon$ is not found. This fact affords the theory of Gratz¹, that the Septuagint version is really an improved edition of Aguilas's. This is really an important consideration for if it is the work of Aguilas, the Septuagint version cannot be earlier than 130 B. C. Supposing this to be the first Greek version of the book, we obtain here an argument for the Herodian date of Gratz. It seems clear that the Septuagint as it stands, is a composite work, but it is possible that an early version once existed, independent of Aguilas's. Upon the whole, there seems to be no sufficient reason for doubting that there was a Septuagint version of *Koheloth* distinct from Aguilas's, as Origen in his *Hexapla*, and St. Jerome² I Vide his *Koheloth* Anhang. p. 173 ff. Before Gratz, Frank was inclined to regard the Septuagint as Aguilas's work (*Vorstudien* p. 238, note 4).

attest, & that this version in its original form goes back to one of the last centuries before Christ. The following are the leading peculiarities of this Greek version: I. Often whole passages and phrases from the Agada are introduced in this translation. II.

II Such sentences ~~are~~ apparently flavored of heterodoxy, are made orthodox by adding or explaining away some words. III. He often changes letters or sounds for those which are similar in appearance or sound, ^{III} IV Very frequently, the same phrase is rendered according to the will of the translator, who frequently adds words or alters them, when it is thought necessary to obtain a particular sense.

II. Aquila Versio. The Septuagint had fallen into bad repute among the Jews, and this induced Aquila, a Jewish proselyte, who flourished about 100 A.D. to undertake a new translation, which he executed with a most slavish dependence upon the text. As suggested above, he translated the mysterious $\sigma\kappa$ with $\sigma\upsilon\kappa$. The Talmud speaks in very flattering terms of this version. ^{IV}

I/II 12, 11, III 14, IV 17, V 1, VI 8, VII 6, 12, 21, VIII 1, IX 17, 19 XI 9, XII 9

II). Compare Greek transl. of I 18, II 3, V 16, 17, VII 22, VIII 6, 9, 12, with text.

161 [unclear] in the Hebrew text

III Symmachus Version. This is greatly superior to its predecessors, and was held in high esteem by the Fathers of the Church. The fragments that remain show that this version aimed rather at giving the sense of the Hebrew, in intelligent & elegant Greek, than at being slavishly literal. Yet he sometimes follows the Septuagint, even in its Agadic interpretations. The Best Version that antiquity has produced, is undoubtedly, IV the Syriac Version. It is preserved to us entire, & is of the greatest value in a comprehension of the Old Testament. Syriac being a cognate language, the translator has been able to give the very roots of the original and to follow the very order of the Hebrew words.

One of the most important translations of Ecclesiastes is the one contained in the Vulgate, written by St. Jerome. As to the general peculiarities of this Latin translation, we may say, 1, that St. Jerome has largely followed the Agadic explanations, I & has also taken words in a double sense, according to the same method. II.

2. He has misunderstood the usage of certain phrases. III.

I. Ecclesiastes I 11, II 13, 17, IV 1, VI 8, VII 3, 6, 12, IX 3, 6, X 17, 19, XI 8.

II " VII 18, X 10.

III " I 16, 17.

3. He has altered words & whole phrases, sometimes to avoid certain discrepancies ^I and sometimes omitting them altogether. ^{II}

4. He abounds in inconsistencies, ^{III} & looser unaccountable paraphrases ^{IV}
The Reformers in their translations, have for the most part, drawn upon this Latin version.

VI. The Chaldee Paraphrase is the first entire commentary upon our book. It based its view upon the well known legend of Ashmodai, referred to before. The inferiority of its style, and the legends and allusions found in it, show that it was written at the end of the 5th or 6th Century. But though it was committed to writing at this period, when the late portions of it were introduced, still it is easy to discern, that it contains Midrashic legends & Agadic interpretations as old and even older than the Christian era. The paraphrase is extremely allegorical & spiritual. But it has great value, inasmuch as it anticipated modern criticism, for the author saw that Solomon could not possibly be the author of Ecclesiastes. This paraphrase is further

I Ecclesiastes. I 10, II 12, VII 19, X 19, 18.

II. " I, 5, II 12, IV 12, VIII 4.

III. " I 9. compare with III 15, IV 7.

of the greatest importance to historical exegesis, inasmuch as it contains the Arabic interpretations to Koheleth, and furnishes us with the sources of all the other preceding versions.

B. Version of the Reformers. As soon as the Reformation began in Germany, Luther felt that the only way to maintain the spirit of Reform, was by making the masses of the people, acquainted with the Bible & its tenets. He therefore deemed it of the utmost value, to translate the Scriptures. When we consider that before his time, the Hebrew had been but little cultivated among the Christians, and that such as did desire to study Hebrew, had no lexicons or grammars at their disposal, save those in German, it will be obvious that Luther could not have made his translation, without the aid of the Vulgate. He therefore finds much resemblance between the two. Notice the following instances.

The Vulgate. I. 9.

Quid est quod fecit? - Spiritum quod
futurum est. Quid est quod factum est?
Spiritum quod faciendum est.

Luther I. 9.

Was ist das geschetien ist? Eken
das Komach geschehen wird.
Was ist das man gethan hat?
Eken das man wieder thun wird.

The Swiss or Zurich Version arose by the work of Luther, & the good results accomplished in Germany, the ministers of the Church of Zurich undertook to render the Scriptures into the Swiss language. They followed Luther in some parts of the Bible. In others they were original. Koheler belongs to the latter. They were very unhappy in their translation of our book, giving it such thoughts which are not at all in the text.

There are other noteworthy translations besides those enumerated, as for instance, those of King James, Leeser, in English, and Philippi, Fries, & others in German. These latter have been faithful to the text, and are noteworthy monuments of biblical study. It is due to their excellent work, that a better knowledge of our book and of the Scriptures in general, is springing up.

Conclusion.

We have thus discussed the main questions that arise in investigating the book before us, and have sought to answer the difficulties we enumerated in the Introduction. In how far we have succeeded, we will leave to the reader to decide. We admit the doubts that have arisen in our mind, as we came to a conclusion regarding any vexed point. Much mystery hovers about this wonderful book, and an excellent field is here offered to the thoughtful critic. Hard has been the struggle, that Koheleth has had to gain recognition, and harder still has it been to arrive at a clear comprehension of his aim and intention. The more this book will be studied, the more fascinating will it become. Whatever we may say derogatory to our author, we must give him the palm for sincerity. He stands before our minds as a true Jewish teacher, mindful of the mystery of existence, aware of the trials and tribulations of life, hard tried on the stormy sea of our earthly pilgrimage, but, amidst all tempest aroused by doubt and gloom, he clings fast to the Rock

of Salvation". In the hands of Providence, he bids his people consign their fate. There is a God, whose chief attributes are love and justice. Cling to Him, believe in His ultimate judgement. This is true happiness, and man's only hope and refuge. May Judaism ever be guided by the conclusions of Koheleth's investigations, and seek, in God, the solution of the perplexities in this world.

Our work is ended. Darkness confronted us when first we turned to this, our book, but we hope that at last we have reached some light. Koheleth deserves an honorable place in the ranks of authors. Future exegetes, no doubt, will recognize in him, the faithful champion of God, of truth and of right. —