

# Q O H Æ L Æ T H

A COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK  
OF ECCLESIASTES

BY

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*To*  
*The Rev. Canon SVEN LINDER,*  
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## Preface.

The writer does not claim for himself any originality of treatment or any new and important discoveries in the field of exposition of the book called 'Qohælæth'. There is, however, one single point of justification if not for the publication of the commentary, at least for the line of study pursued in the preparation thereof, *viz.* the attempt to reach the inner meaning of the Qohælæth, the inner meaning, if any, that would give coherence to the many baffling discrepancies of thought and wordings, and at the same time furnish a clue to the real purpose of the book. Whether the writer has attained any appreciable results with his studies it is not for him to decide.

To Professor Box of the University of London, who has kindly read through the proofs, the writer desires to convey his deep gratitude for numerous corrections and suggestions.

*Hugo Odeberg.*

*Björklinge, Sweden, 1929.*



## I. Commentary.

1. 1-11 *Prologue*. The writing introduced, its subject indicated.

1. 1. The writing contains »the words of Qohælæth, son of David (who, *i. e.* Qohælæth, was) king of Jerusalem.« The writer of this verse beyond any doubt means *Solomon* to be understood as the speaker. Until the word 'Qohælæth' be found outside Eccl. it is safe to assume that it is a term especially designed by the writer for the purpose of defining at the outset the specific character of Solomon qua originator of the words of the book. The term is on a line with *Soféræth* and *Pokhæræth* (Ezra 2. 55-57, Neh. 7. 57), but does not define Solomon as the *preacher* or *public orator* par préférence (WILDEBOER) but instead wants to convey that Solomon *here*, in the following writing, functions as or speaks in his capacity of '*qohel*'. There is sure to be an allusion to another characteristic of Solomon, revealed in the Proverbs, *viz.* as the bearer of the *Chåkhma* (Wisdom). *Qohælæth*, then, would mean: Solomon, the possessor of the *Chåkhma*, as he would give vent to his teachings in a special circumstance, *viz. in public* (in the *qahal*).

1. 2, 3 *The motto*: '*omer*' (cf. 1 Sam. 19. 24, 2 Sam. 5. 8, Amos 1. 2 EHRlich) equals the Rabbinical '*omer* or *haya 'omer* in the sense of 'used to say'. Close parallels are the frequent instances in *M.* '*Abhoth*, where the life-sentence or motto of every teacher is introduced: 'Rabbi N. N. '*omer*' or '*hu haya 'omer*'. The motto begins: *utter nothingness*<sup>1</sup>, *the whole is nothingness*. And the meaning of this is supplied by the

following: *what (remaining) profit is there for man in all his labour which he labours?* There is no reality or substantiality and permanence in the results of men's works: there is no result at all, the whole wanes into the air and leaves man's hands empty.<sup>1</sup> But there is an important qualification: this applies to the works done *tachath hash-shæmæsh*, under the sun.<sup>2</sup> There is nothing said of works done on a different condition. — The motto, it may be urged, has a *negative* aspect, stated expressly, and a *positive* aspect, hinted at by the qualification *tachath hash-shæmæsh*. The positive aspect would convey the meaning: »*There is another manner of work (or perhaps: another way of living) than that designated by me as 'labour under the sun'; that other way of living has permanent results, yithron*<sup>3</sup>, abiding value; *to that manner of living I want to direct the attention of thoughtful hearers by picturing vividly and emphasizing strongly the nothingness of the life lived 'under the sun'.*» It will be maintained in the course of the following exposition that this doctrine does not imply that the existence of earthly man *per se* is futile, but on the contrary, that man may live that other life *as* an earthly man, and even that this other life may permeate his earthly 'labour'; through living the other life, while on earth, he may even from the 'labour under the sun' evince a result, which becomes 'his portion from that labour', a tribute which that labour gives him in virtue

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* F. C. BURKITT, *Additional Note on the physical meaning of 'Vanity'* (to his article '*Is Ecclesiastes a translation?*' in *J Th ST* xxiii pp. 26-28). As a »poetical equivalent« of *hæbhæl*, BURKITT suggests '*bubble*'. Cf. below III Translation, Chapter 1 note 1.

<sup>2</sup> The expression itself is Semitic, rather than a Græcism, though corresponding with the Greek by ὑφ' ἡλίω. Mc Neile points out its occurrence in the Phœnician inscriptions of Tabnit and Esmunazar (5th century or a little later: LIDZBARSKI, *Ephemeris* ii pp. 156 ff.).

<sup>3</sup> *yithron* is a technical term in Qohælæth; *vide* the *Summary* §7.



of his attitude to earthly life. Further, it shall be urged, the method of the motto *viz.* stating the negative aspect expressly and leaving the positive aspect to be tacitly understood, (or expressed by a finishing climax) is observed as a rule all through the book.

In the sequel, vss 4-11, the 'life under the sun' is pictured summarily. The verses are naturally divided into eight sentences »the eight *unbeatitudes* of this sermon» (DALE). Four of them give instances from nature, the other four refer to human activities. The thesis propounded might be rendered thus: the sum total of the different moments or elements of sub-lunar reality never either increases or diminishes, and these elements or moments themselves can never be changed. This, it might be said, applies both to space and time. No movement in space ever brings anything really *forward*, *i. e.* outside its own eternal course or rayon. No movement, progress of time, ever brings reality into a new state. Nothing new is introduced.<sup>4</sup>

1. 4 The generations succeed each other; nothing is really taken away and nothing is really added. The earth 'remains the same' (this is the meaning of '*omadhæth*') indefinitely. The sameness and repetition is aptly expressed in the whole section by the use of participles.

1. 5 Read *we-zoreach* instead of *we-zarach* (PODECHARD), *sha-'af* or *shæ-'af* instead of *sho'ef*, and put the first word of vs 6 as the last of vs 5 (BURKITT<sup>5</sup>). »*The sun rises and the sun sets and to its place where also it rises does it go*». The 'sun' here probably alludes to the technical 'under the sun', just as 'earth' of the preceding verse alludes to the synonym for 'un-

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. PODECHARD's rendering: 'La nature et la vie, perpétuel et monotone recommencement' (pp. 215. 235).

<sup>5</sup> BURKITT's emendation is natural and to be preferred to EHRLICH's: *zoreach hu sham* > '*orach hash-shæmæsh*.

der the sun', viz. 'on the earth' (8. 14, 16, 11. 2). The earth and the sun are put first, as representing the sum of the phenomena treated of.

1. 6 »*To the South and again to the North, back and forth goes the wind.*» Even the wind does never really reach any new place. 6 b is a bit difficult. Perhaps best: it returns to its turnings, it even continues its turnings. 'Al is = 'æl (late Hebrew and Aramaic). EHRlich's substitution of *hayyareach* (the moon) for *haruach* is ingenious but not convincing.

1. 7. The emphasis in this verse lies on the words '*and yet the sea is not full*'. Nothing is really *added* to the quantity of the sea, although all the rivers go to the sea and although they ever *continue* (*shabhim*) going to the same destination (the sea).

1. 8 All things (not 'words'), *i. e.* all parts of the creation 'under the sun', labour incessantly<sup>6</sup>, beyond description. 8 b opens the question: is the case of the eye and the ear another instance of the repeating, never-increasing, never-finished, never-ceasing, activities, or does the sentence merely refer to the impossibility of finally apprehending and recording these activities? The answer is: both alternatives are true. The impossibility of completing the observation and description of the phenomena passing review before man's senses is another instance of the law propounded. The observations follow the stream of events; they can never be completed, nor is really anything added.

1. 9 expresses two correlative thoughts, not *one* only, as is perhaps usually maintained. 9 a falls under the heading: 'there

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<sup>6</sup>Thus *yeghe'im*, in accordance with the later idiom, where the principal meaning is 'work' and the sense of 'tire, fatigue' gives the nuance: 'work and travail'. Cf. however GES.-BUHL *sub voce*.

is no *minus!*' 9 b under the heading 'there is no *plus!*' 9 a: Do not think, because a thing 'was', that it is away and finished with! 9 b: Do not think that because a thing enters into the arena of time, that it presents something new that adds to that which was before.

1. 10 If there be (or 'let it be that there is') something of which one says: lo! this is new, (the truth is:) it was already present in some or other of the ages that precede ours. The word '*kebhar*' has been much discussed as to meaning (especially in Qohælæth) and derivation. On the basis of its meaning in Jewish Aramaic and Mandæan and an analysis of its occurrences in Qohælæth, the present writer considers that it might approximately be rendered, not by 'already' simply, but by '*now* already' or '*then* already', 'at that time already'. Vs 10 and 9 b belong together as a unity (the seventh sentence).

1. 11 The problems of this vs are: (1) the meaning of *zikkaron* (2) the significance of *rishonim* and '*acharonim*'.

1) *Zikkaron* is perhaps rendered adequately neither by EHRlich's 'historical record'<sup>7</sup> nor by the usual 'remembrance' or 'memory'. For neither does the author mean to state simply that there is nothing 'recorded' of earlier or ancient times. He did certainly not intend to disparage the historical value of the current 'records', the historical writings which indeed went back as far as to the first Beginning of Things; nor does he mean that the men of the present do not commit to memory, what they have been taught about ancient times. The significance is perhaps best understood somewhat as follows: *zikkaron* means 'active memory' a 'remembrance acted upon'. The author, being of a speculative and meditative mind, has observed, how little men of the present generation profit from the experiences and teachings of former times. This is, then,

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<sup>7</sup> »das geschichtliche Verzeichnis«.

another instance of the general rule: 'there is nothing added, no real progress'.<sup>8</sup> The verse is not to be connected with the preceding, hence it does not give the reason for men's inability of recognizing that what seems new has in fact existed in ages long passed: it is an independent sentence.

2) The point disputed is whether the 'first' and 'last' are persons or things. The parallelism with vs 10 makes it probable that the principal reference is to 'periods' or 'ages'; foremost in the writer's mind, then, would perhaps be the picture of the multitudes of human beings living and working in that age or those ages.

11 b Freely: and even with those who shall live last of all (if any 'last' be imagined) there will be no profit from the experiences of the generations that come after us.<sup>9</sup> *La'acharona*, neutral significance: 'at the (set, presupposed) end of times'. Even the last time implies no finality or completion: no result is achieved.

1. 12-2. 26. *Two different modes of living 'under the sun' pursued and tested to their utmost possibilities and consequences. The general rule found to apply to them. Conclusion with hints of the possibility of a different attitude to the sub-lunar existence.*

1. 12-18 The pursuit of Wisdom, *i. e.* of the mode of living directed towards the end of obtaining Wisdom, *nota bene* as a pursuit *tachath hash-shamash*.

1. 12 The perfect *hayithi* does not necessarily imply the

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<sup>8</sup> A simile: the successive course of ages and generations is not like the adding of stone upon stone with the result that a building is at last erected, but like the putting down, taking away and putting down again, of the same stone indefinitely.

<sup>9</sup> Podechard is exact: »et des descendants qui existeront n'y aura pas non plus de souvenir chez eux qui existeront ensuite.»

sense of perfect absolute. Hence it does not intend to state that Qohælæth has finished being king *i. e.* has been dethroned. In fact, it is simply parallel with the perfect tenses of the following verses. The verse might best be paraphrased: »I, Qohælæth, have enjoyed all the advantages, possibilities, and resources, connected with the position and power of a king over the whole of Israel, residing in Jerusalem» or »... the position and power of being the mighty king Solomon».

1. 13 *Nathatti libbi. Nathan libbo* is an important technical term of Qohælæth. It means 'concentrate oneself exclusively on', 'devote oneself with one's whole being to'.

The writer narrates that he concentrated himself on 'inquiring and investigating' or '*seeking and searching out*' by means of *Wisdom*. He employed wisdom to the study and penetration of »all that is done under the heavens». Vs 13 b already contains a hint of the other sphere of human life, *viz.* in the words 'God has given', *nathan 'ælohim*. The 'Divine gift' belongs to the things above the sublunar reality. Here, however, the divine gift is applied in such a way that the conditions of the sublunar world dominates its possessor: thence the activity concerned becomes an 'evil occupation', or rather 'an ill business' (*vide* on 4. 8); '*inyan* = business, occupation, '*ana* = occupy oneself with. — We suggest then that the apparent meaning, »this sore travail hath God given to (= imposed on) the sons of man to be exercised therewith», is certainly the exoteric sense, given to the utterance by the writer himself, but, also, that this is not his deepest intention. His real intention is to give the attentive hearer a hint of *God's gift*, a hint that in the sequel is repeated and at every repetition intensified.

1. 14 The writer's concentrated investigation recorded nothing of value. It is to be remembered that the mere stating of things, 'disinterested scientific research', would to the writer

be of no value. The 'intellectual value', so natural to a modern mind, was non-existent to him. In the very notion of *châkhma*, Wisdom, the notions of 'improvement' and 'perfection' are implied. Precisely the fact that the writer's employment of Wisdom after the manner of *tachath hash-shæmæsh* resulted in nothing but the stating of the truth that all works are breath and pursuit (*re'uth*) of wind, implies that this employment of Wisdom was futile. Wisdom was contaminated by its being mingled and assimilated with the *tachath hash-shæmæsh* aims. This is followed up by

1. 15 That which is crooked cannot become straight (*lithqon*, intransitive infinitive) and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. The sum of crooked things cannot be added or diminished, that which is wanting cannot be made replete.<sup>10</sup> The Wisdom 'under the sun', applied to these facts, could not alter them. Wisdom could not increase the sum of goodness nor diminish the sum of evil. And this in spite of the fact that

1. 16 the writer pursued wisdom 'under the sun' to its utmost limits.<sup>11</sup> After conversing with himself on the futility of this he directs his mind to and concentrates upon

1. 17 the *knowledge* of 'wisdom' and 'folly and stupidity'. The wisdom and its opposite (for the writer is throughout

<sup>10</sup> One need not, as has frequently been suggested after EWALD, change *lehimmanoth* 'be counted' into *lehimmaloth* = *lehimmale*, 'to be completed, filled'; *chaser* means 'to be wanting in counting'. The received text is more forcible than the suggested emendation. As true as it is that one cannot continue counting and adding to the number, when one has reached the end of the thing or things to be counted, as true is it, that what *is not* cannot be made to *be*.

<sup>11</sup> 'more than all that were before me in Jerusalem'; this is a lapse of the adopted role of being king Solomon. The lapse might be either intentional or involuntary. It might perhaps be urged that it is intentional: the writer hints that he really speaks of himself. Cf. however the similar phrase 2. 7, 9. (*Vide* also KUHN).

concerned with opposites: good and bad, *plus* and *minus*) are here the *objects* of investigation. The problem is: if wisdom 'under the sun', considered by itself, is of no avail, perhaps the discernment between wisdom and folly may yet be of some profit. The problem is taken up later. It is here at once answered: even this is a 'vain occupation' (*ra'yon ruach > re'uth ruach* GINSBURG *e. a.*, cf. on 2. 22).<sup>12</sup>

1. 18 The reason: there is nothing added, *viz.* to the sum of wisdom (= good things) under the sun. Here this is expressed in an ironical manner: »for in much wisdom is much grief and if one increases knowledge he increases sorrow«, as if he would say: nothing is won, the relation between the two remains the same. That is the result of the wisdom 'under the sun' if any: it only states the futility and this causes grief and vexation. (*ka'as* and *makh'obhim* are both used of psychical pain; cf. Eccl. 2. 23; 7.9; 11. 10; 1 Sam. 1. 12, 18.)

2. 1-11 The pursuit of 'joy' (*simcha*), *nota bene* 'under the sun', is tested, that also to its utmost limits, as an oriental ruler such as king Solomon is able to do.

2. 1 »I said in my heart: 'come now! I will test thee with joy. And do thou enjoy pleasure!'»<sup>13</sup> *Re'e beṭobh* has here a different use from that in 3. 13, *vide infra*. Even this was vanity.

2. 2 He gives at once the result of his concentration upon pleasure: 'of laughter (amusement) I said '(it is) mad!' and of

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<sup>12</sup> *holeloth wesikhloth*. The parallelism requires that *sikhloth* be a synonym of *holeloth*; hence = stupidity. The ending *-oth* is best interpreted as a singular = *-uth*, (10. 13) (BARTH, *Nominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen* § 259 c, GESENIUS-KAUTSCH 86 l). On this there is fair agreement between expositors.

<sup>13</sup> Of the many emendations proffered to this verse, none is craved by the context. *Vide*, for instances, EHRLICH, ZAPLETAL.

joy 'what does this do!' (what use is it!)

2. 3 'I speculated in my heart.' *Tarti belibbi* approximately = *nathatti libbi*, hence: *concentrated upon*, rather than: investigated by means of my heart (WILLIAMS), *attracting*<sup>14</sup> *my flesh with wine, all the while my heart deporting itself in* (or: *observing*) *Wisdom*. The last clause is quite natural: he never leaves the platform from which the whole experiment is conducted: he has an object in view, and this object is suggested by his *Wisdom*.

2.4 *Highdalti ma'asai*. The *ma'asim* are to be connected with the following repeated '*asithi*, hence: *great undertakings did I make*, I indulged myself freely in the preparation and procuring of all the implements necessary for a life of pleasure.

2. 5 *Pardesim*, zend: *pairi-daeza*, (*pairi* = περί, *daeza* = heap), 'something walled round', was a common loan-word; passed into Assyrian and Aramaic, probably from Aramaic into Hebrew. (Greek: παράδεισος). In New Hebrew it is comparatively frequent, with pl. *pardesoth*.

2. 6 *I made me reservoirs of water* cannot refer to 'the king's pool' of Neh. 2. 14. »The traditional pools of Solomon are about three miles S. E. of Bethlehem» at the valley of Urtas.<sup>15</sup> *Someach* is intransitive, '*ešim* an accusative of specification' (Isa 5. 6, 34. 13, Prov. 24. 31, 2. 7 KÖNIG, *Lehrgeb.* iii 328 a, b) 2. 7 *Bene baith* (also *yelidhe baith*), *slaves born in the house*. One might compare Gen. 15. 2 *bæn mæshæq bethi*, where however the text is generally considered corrupt. *Miqne bhaqar*

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<sup>14</sup> The sense of *mashakh* = draw > attract (DELITZSCH) would seem to be well established. One usually points to instances from *TB Chag.* 14 a (WRIGHT) *Shab* 87 a *Sifre* § 317. KUHN emends > *lismokh*, to support = refresh.

<sup>15</sup> C. W. WILSON's and P. J. BALDENSPERGER's descriptions of these pools are quoted by WILLIAMS, in his commentary, *quo vide*.



*wa-ṣon: possessions of herds and flocks.* 2. 8 *seghulloth melakhim wehammedhinoth* might mean (1) precious things such as are possessed by kings and the most precious things of every country or (2) the precious things that were sent as tributes from tributary kings and their provinces. *Shidda, shiddoth*; the meaning is lost, but that is no reason for making emendations. The picture introduced by the words 'I procured for myself men-singers and women-singers', further the peculiar nuance of *ta'anughoth* (Cant. 7. 7) makes the general translation *wives, yea, many wives* — the reference being to the harem — tolerably safe. 2. 9 *hosafiti* is intransitive, but need not therefore be read as *hof'al : husafti* (as EHRlich does). The logical complement is to be derived from the idea of 'greatness' present in the sentence. 9 b again emphasizes the fact that the preacher's Wisdom remained with him. But the meaning of this is not covered by a rendering such as e. g. 'Wisdom gave him assistance and kept him away from the worst pitfalls of the life of pleasure' (cf. the verse immediately following.) It means, on the contrary, that however thoroughly he plunged himself into pleasure, his speculative Wisdom stood by his side. Approximately (though not exactly): he was always watching and observing himself and his life. It is to be remembered that Wisdom had not only a negative function but also a positive object. This is put forth in

2. 10 This verse intends to picture two opposite experiences, of which that hinted at in the latter half contains the real teaching, that on which the emphasis lies. '*But (ki)*<sup>16</sup> *I rejoiced in all my labour and that was my portion*<sup>17</sup> *from all my la-*

<sup>16</sup> *ki* after a negative clause = *but*: Ges Kautzsch 163 *a* (cf. PODECHARD).

<sup>17</sup> *chaelqi : chélaeq* is a term by which the writer indicates that he is speaking of an experience of the nobler life in relation to the *tachath hash-shamash* world.

*bour'*. This is the positive function of Wisdom. In pursuing the life of pleasure he has — originally as a means of obtaining pleasure — given himself to planning and working, labouring with the implements of pleasure. Then he has found (— his speculative wisdom has recorded the fact —) that the pleasures themselves, the end for which he had worked, were futile and gave him no real joy. Nevertheless he *did* experience a *real* joy, unforeseen and unlooked for, *viz.* in the very *labour* he had taken. *Libbi sameach* refers to a 'real' joy, in contrast to the joy spoken of in verse 2. It is a joy outside the nexus of the things *tachath hash-shæmæsh*.

2. 11 seems to contradict 1. 10 b but actually, it may be maintained, gives a further hint of the source of the 'real' joy. After recording his strange experience he turns to the works and the labour, in the labouring with which he had experienced joy, to see, if perchance they had a value in themselves. And then he found: the labours and works had no value in themselves: they were *hæbhæl u-re'uth ruach*. There was no 'remaining result' (*yithron*) on which to fix or to which he could attach himself.

2. 12-26 Everything is futile when seen under the aspect *tachath hash-shæmæsh*. If man identifies himself with the life 'under the sun' he must hate it. There is, however, a possibility of using the life under the sun and all the things appertaining thereto, without identifying oneself with them.

2. 12 The lesson given by the pursuit of pleasure and the examination of works performed 'under the sun' are illustrated by a discussion of the difference between wisdom and folly. The statement of 1. 17, 18 finds its explanation here. The aspect of the *tachath hash-shamæsh*-existence, here specially focussed, is that of the 'eternal stream of events, times, generations'. As soon as one looks for the value of a thing with

regard to its place in that eternal stream, one is disappointed. So with Solomon's own wisdom and with the works that seemed to have been a result of his use of his wisdom. Have they, viewed in relation to the succession of times and generations, any preference before the works of *sikhloth*? No! *For what (will) the man (do) who comes after the king.* (Answer:) *what they have done before, i. e. destroy what wisdom may have built and return to folly.* (WILDEBOER.) This interpretation of the difficult latter half vs 12 would seem best to accord with the context and with the writer's trend of thought. Emendations are futile. The 'æth 'ashær kebhar 'asuhu is a reversed variation of the thought of 1. 10, and *kebhar* has the same significance as in that passage.

2. 13, 14 a If, for a short moment, one regards the wisdom and folly without taking into consideration their role in the stream of events, it is obvious that wisdom has preference before folly. It is the same preference that one is apt to assign to light before darkness. But

2. 14 b, in relation to the 'stream of events' the writer has simply to record that 'the same fate is destined for both the fool and the wise'. In the sum total of sublunar reality the wisdom and folly have both their determined 'number and place'. In the stream of events they have both their accorded time.

2. 15 Man himself is in the stream of events in no way preferred by his possession of wisdom.

*Gam 'ani yiqreni; 'ani enforces the -eni* (usual construction: *yiqreni gam 'ani* cf. KÖNIG *Lehrg.* iii 19, Gen. 24. 27, 49 8) »*even (the same) shall meet me*». *yother*, here adverb as in New-Hebrew.

2. 16 repeats the thoughts of 1. 11. *Zikkaron* has the same *nuance* as in the latter passage. One does not learn from the

experiences of the wise man more than one learns from those of the fool. *Be-shæk-kebhar hay-yamim hab-ba'im hak-kol nishkach*: in those coming days already, all will be forgotten. *We-'ekh*: 'ekh = 'ekha, 'how' (of 'sad complaint': WILLIAMS): *and, oh, how does the wise man die even as the fool!*

2. 17 »I hated the life, because grievous in my eyes were the activities under the sun, for all is vanity and pursuit of wind.»

2. 18 The subject of 2. 12 b is resumed.

2. 19 *Shæ-'amalti we-shæ-chakhamti*; the wisdom and the labour are closely united: *which I have done and laboured with in wisdom*. But the reason for the connexion of the terms of wisdom and labour lies deeper: the author wants to allude to the fact that wisdom itself is lost when used on works that have regard to the conditions of the sublunary world, *i. e.* look forward to effects and results. Wisdom is of value only as being present with a man in the moment of his using it, just as joy is only found in the moment of man's meeting with the work. But as soon as they are viewed under the aspect of *tachath hash-shæmæsh*, man with his wisdom is seen to move towards his death and his works to move towards their destruction.

2. 20 *And I turned round to let my heart be despondent*. The verb *sabbothi* pictures the writer's attitude of mind vividly: the despondent and irritated movement, in contrast to the decisive and purposeful determination of *panithi* (2. 11 cf. 7. 25) *Le-ya'esh*; known only in Aramaic. Targum *ad loc.* renders *le-ya'asha yath libbi*, thus using a construction identical with that of Eccl. *Hithpa'el* of the same verb is common in Rabbinic Aramaic (cf. Hebrew *Nif'al*). The sense is not to be doubted. The verse expresses an actual experience with the writer and the doctrinal implication should not be pressed beyond the obvious meaning. The same applies to the

following, although its insertion in this particular context accords with the writer's plan.

2. 21 *Kishron* combines the notions of 'efficiency' and 'success' (cf. 4. 4, 5. 11). *Chælqo*; *chélaeq* here is used to express the truth that in the *tachath-hash-shæmaesh* mode of living there *is* no tribute for man from his work. He must leave that which should be accounted his tribute to another. The sentence is ironical. *Yittenænnu chælqo* is not to be taken as a construction with two accusative objects, but rather *chælqo* is naturally interpreted as an apposition: *he must give it to another, as his (the other one's) portion*.

2. 22 *For what falls to (or: comes to) a man of all his labour and of his heart's striving? Howæ*, participle, not of *haya*, but of *hawa*, since the two verbs, probably, are not to be taken as exact synonyms. One might adduce *hawwa* of Job 6. 2 and also Job 37. 6. The attenuated sense is: *become*, (Neh. 6. 6). *Ra'yon* and *re'uth* on the other hand seem to be synonymous in Qohælæth. *Ra'yon libbo* refers to the intensive pursuit of an object, of which the writer's own experiments with life are typical. *She-hu 'amel*, the relative *she* retrospects both on *'amalo* and *ra'yon libbo* and hence includes these in one logical significance.<sup>18</sup> The punctuation *she* here and 3. 18 with *shwa mobile*, instead of *shæ* with *seghol*, is merely a Massoretic petitesse. (Cf. however GES.-KAUTZSCH 36 and KÖNIG *Lehrg.* i 136.)

2. 23 The first half is to be translated: *for all his days his business ('inyano) is pains and sorrow*, or so at least the MT wants it to be understood. This is indicated by *wa* instead of *we* before *ka'as*, whereby that word only — and not the two words *ka'as 'inyano* as a separate sentence — is connected

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<sup>18</sup> ALLGEIER and others translate *ra'yon*, in agreement with later Aramaic usage, as 'thought', 'deliberation'.

with the preceding word (not with the whole preceding sentence). *Kål yamaw* is adverbial accusative of time (cf. EHRLICH). This at once suits the whole context, and also forms an excellent back-ground for the climactic sequel: *and even in the night his heart does not take rest.*

2. 24-26 Here the writer turns from the picture of the utter despondence inherent in the *tachath-hash-shamæsh* aspect of life to the secret of a different attitude to be taken up by man, and to its ways and means.

2. 24 Two textual difficulties: *ba-'adham* and *shæy-yokhal*. After *'en tobh* one expects the preposition *le*, *la'adham*: *it is not good for*. There is not sufficient reason, however, for changing the more difficult and peculiar reading into the more natural one. The correct method is to seek in the context for an explanation of the unfamiliar construction. Firstly, then, it may be said, that *ba-'adham* implies a greater stress being laid on the word than with the reading *la-'adham*. Such a stress is apposite here. The author, it might be suggested, wants to say: let us turn now from considering man in his hopeless immersion into the things of the sublunar existence, in his identification with the illusory aims and ends of the endless stream of events; let us consider him as a separate being, who is able to take his stand *against* the stream of events, and use the sublunar things instead of being used by them. This is actually what the writer wants to enjoin. *Ba-'adham* then is: 'considering *man* (alone, or first)'. Secondly, as EHRLICH correctly points out, *ba-'adham* is grammatically correct, in the sense of, 'in the case of man'.

*Shæy-yokhal*, again, can impossibly be retained. The natural, correct, translation with that reading retained, can be none other than: *it is not good, in the case of man, that he should eat and and drink etc., even this I have noticed is (a gift) from the hand of God.* The translations attempting at turning the

meaning into the opposite, which the context undoubtedly postulates, in reality emend the text while pretending not to emend it. So V., making it a rhetorical question.<sup>19</sup> The emendation *mish-shæy-yokhal*, easily justified by a supposed haplography of the ending *mem* of *'adham* (EWALD, DELITZSCH, WILDEBOER, EHRLICH, PODECHARD, ALLGEIER *e. a.*) might hence be considered well established.

*There is no good in the case of man but that he should eat and drink and let himself see good in his work.* The starting-point for the interpretation of the new attitude here recommended may be taken from the antithesis between the repeated *tobh*, good, in this verse (and vs 26) and the repeated *ra'*, *ra'a*, evil, of the preceding description of the sublunar existence. Something good can be experienced by man, if he abstains from merging himself into the stream of events, and instead allows this stream to pass by him and uses its moments, or uses the elements of the sublunar reality passing by him in the moment in which they are with him, *but no further*. The instances of 'eating' and 'drinking' picture this attitude well. Eat when you eat and drink when you drink, and enjoy it at the time, but do not consider it any further. The same with your labour. Take the occasion of labour when it presents itself to you, and take the tribute of joy from it *at the time* (as Qohæleth did when he experienced his real joy spoken of in 2. 10) but do not regard the progress of the work and the fate of it in the stream of events (as Qohælæth did, when he found it all futile, acc. to 2. 11). The possibility of doing this, and the joy received therefrom, is a gift from God. *Gam zæ ra'ithi*, hence, is best rendered — grammatically and syntactically perfectly accurate

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<sup>19</sup>LEVY's translation, also forced, is yet marked by originality: »Kein Glück (nämlich) essen und trinken und sich an seiner Arbeit freuen entsteht durch den Menschen, vielmehr sah ich, dass dies aus Gottes Hand kommt.»

—: *precisely this I have beheld* (or: found); *ki miy-yadh ha-’ælohim hi: that it is from the hand of God*. This, and nothing else, is the gift God gives.

2. 25 gives an acute reason for the attitude recommended: *’who is able to eat and who is able to have enjoyment except I myself?’* It is man who is the principal subject, not the things of the passing stream of sublunar realities. The eating does not consist primarily in the food but in the eater, the enjoyment does not depend on the things enjoyed and their fate, but upon the subject enjoying them. Textual difficulties are *yachush* and *mim-mænni*. *Yachush* from *chush* (or *chashash*) gives no meaning in the sense elsewhere in O.T. adhering to the verb = *hasten*. Principal emendations: (1) *ysishtæ* with LXX, Pesh.: *’drink’* (GRAETZ, PODECHARD, ZAPLETAL); of this emendation WILLIAMS rightly: »so rare a word as *yachush* would hardly be substituted for the easy, and dissimilar, *ysishteh*«. (2) *yachus*, which perhaps was read by *Aquila* and *Symmachus* (: EHRlich in the sense of *’amass’*, »geizen«). Best is to supply the meaning of *yachush* from the parallelism with vs 24 a (let his soul see good) and assume some sense of *’enjoying’*. The root is to be compared with Arabic *hassa* (HITZIG-NOWACK) or with the Rabbinic Aramaic *chashash*, generally: *’experience pain’*, but perhaps indefinite: *experience a sensation whatever it may be* (frequently, especially WILLIAMS, pointing to *T B Shab* 140 a). ALLGEIER reads the *yachush* of MT but adopts the common Aramaic sense of *’suffer’* and translates, hesitatingly, *suffer, want (darben)*.

A still greater *crux* is *chus mimmænni*. Those who keep to MT generally render: *more than I* (Solomon), hence in accordance with the argument put forth by Qohælæth in the preceding: *who could have greater possibilities of testing the resources of life than I, the king?* But this translation is



grammatically incorrect; *chus mimmænni* can only be (1) *except I, other than I* or (2) *without me*. The general consensus of expositors (since EWALD) however is that *mimmænni* should be changed into *mimmænnu* = apart from Him (*scil.* God), which gives tolerably good sense. The suggestion may be put forth, however, that *mimmænni* of MT should be retained, but translated correctly: '*except I*'. Qohælæth puts forth the rhetorical question — as an argument that must at once be acquiesced in —: who is it that eats when I eat, if not I myself? Is it perchance the food that eats? An absurd question. Qohælæth has all through the chapter been speaking in the first person of his own experiences and the conclusions reached therefrom. But his own experiences, he maintains as self-evident, are typical for man in general, or rather, can be applied to every man. This is nowhere more apparent than in the verse immediately preceding. (»There is nothing else that is good in the case of *man* ... and this *I* have found *scil.* in my case as in the case of others.«) One should not be tempted by the easy connexion with the following verse with its »before Him (*scil.* God)«, reached by the emendation into *mimmænnu*. That easy connexion really tells as soon against as in favour of the emendation.

2. 26 The first half of this verse, in the meaning that naturally gives itself from the wording, is usually felt as contradicting the general tenor of the book. Hence the expositors (1) *either* regard it as an interpolation, *e. g.* as a gloss by a *chasihd* (MCNEILE, HAUPT, BARTON, PODECHARD and tentatively WILIAMS), (2) try to assign another sense to the passage than the obvious one, *viz.* by explaining it as an enunciation of God's absolute arbitrariness (HERZFELD, BICKELL, SIEGFRIED (?), WILDEBOER, ZAPLETAL, VOLZ); the latter take *tobh lefanaw* to mean »he whom God arbitrarily regards with favour«, and

*choṭe* (sinner) as 'he whom God, arbitrarily, regards with disfavour'.<sup>20</sup> This is a *constructio ad propositum*.

It may be urged that the passage is neither to be treated as an interpolation nor to be reinterpreted. The words used are those occurring in central utterances of Qohæloeth. The gift from God is the positive subject of the section. The verse, in fact, completes the teaching of vss 24 and 25. »To the man who is good in His eyes (*i. e.* who is a good man) God gives (*real*) wisdom and (*real*) knowledge and (*real*) joy.« It was said above (2. 4) that the new attitude of life, giving the possibility of obtaining real joy, is a gift from God. This is repeated here, and summed up with reference to the other elements treated of in the section besides joy, *viz.* wisdom and knowledge. But the passage adds a description and definition of the man who shall be able to take up such an attitude. He must be a man 'good before God'. This is the condition and ground for the obtainment and preservation of the life opposite the 'evil', sublunar *life* (2. 17, 21) *viz.* the *good* life (2. 24). It might be possible to detect in the writer's phraseology a certain play upon the word *ṭobh*. Who obtains the *good*? Answer: the *good*. *We-la-choṭe nathan 'inyan læ- 'æsof we-li-khnos la-theth le-ṭobh lifne ha- 'ælohim*: and to the sinner he leaves the business of gathering and heaping up (only) to give to him who is good before God. The sentence has an ironical touch. The sinner gets the privilege of pursuing those ends the futility of which Qohælæth has so vividly pictured in the preceding. If there be any interpolation in the verse, the words 'to give to (= to pass over to?) *him who pleases God*' might be those suspected. There is a certain inverted parallelism with 2. 18,

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<sup>20</sup> WILDEBOER, a nuance differently: »Dem entsprechend ist auch (*choṭe*) nicht prägnant zu verstehen, sondern als *der sündige Mensch* — und alle sind Sunder — auf dem Gottes Wohlgefallen nicht ruht«.

21, but the parallel does not necessarily *contradict* the statements of 2. 18, 21. The sense agrees with the context: the sinner must pass on his 'good' to the 'good', for only the latter can enjoy it. And he enjoys it by »using it if as he used it not (St. Paul)».

3. 1-8 (The section is closely connected with, and to be interpreted from, 3. 9-15). The writer now returns to his picture of the life under the sun. Everything has its definite number, its place in space and in time. Nothing can be taken away from one side nor added to another. Here the particular thought: 'everything has its place in time', is dwelt upon, and the truth of the statement is forcibly driven home in an enumeration of pairs of opposites.

3. 1 The general rule as a heading. *Zeman*, *appointed time*, hence exactly = definite place in time, in the course of events. *Lak-kol*, literally: to the totality (it would not be inexact to supply: of sublunar reality and to each of its diverse component parts viewed in relation to human affairs).<sup>21</sup> 'eth here = »the period embraced by the event or matter spoken of» (WRIGHT). *Zeman* is Aramaic, but extremely common in Rabbinical language, both Hebrew and Aramaic. *Chéfæš*; one has to choose between two renderings: (1) *Purpose* »that which occupies a man's desire and aims» (WILLIAMS), the meaning which comes nearest to the earlier sense 'desire'; or, the attenuated (2) *thing* (frequent in New Hebrew). The latter is perhaps to be preferred since it includes both active and passive happenings, like those recorded. The Targum translates: 'isqa = work, occupation, thing; *tachath hash-shamaim* forms the final, and emphatic, qualification of the statement. It is to be kept in mind that the general rule propounded and the instances following refer to the *tachath hash-shamaim* (= *tachath hash-*

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<sup>21</sup> KNOBEL finely: »das menschliche Treiben».

*shamash*) conditions. Hence also — and that need scarcely be said — it would be quite against Qohælæth's view to translate the beginning phrase of every following sentence » *'eth le*» in any sense implying: there is a time, when man *ought to* etc., or, when it is his duty to do so and so. Mere facticities<sup>22</sup> of the sublunar stream of life are recorded.

3. 2 *La-lædhaeth* might either be taken as passive *'to be born'* (*there is a time when the child is born*), — one need not emend > *le-hiwwaled*, as does NACHTIGAL and others, — or as active *'to bear'*.<sup>23</sup> Both alternatives must be judged equally correct. Differently PODECHARD who considers the active rendering alone permissible, and HITZIG-NOWACK and EHRLICH who find the passive only possible. The anxiety to obtain a strict antithesis in the verse was already present with the *Targum*, which is however original enough to render also the latter antithese active: *'iddan bechir leqatqala* = there is a chosen time for to kill.

3. 5 *'there is a time to cast stones and time to amass stones'*. The explanations of these antithetical expressions are numerous! As examples may be given (1) throwing stones upon an enemy's land, (from 2 Ki 3. 19, 25) and removing them (HITZIG-NOWACK, WRIGHT, ALLGEIER, WILDEBOER). But this would be mere details of war and peace, which are mentioned

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<sup>22</sup>Facticities, to be sure, that are ordained, but nevertheless facticities that necessarily subsist. The thoughts of vss 1-8 are very well resumed by PODECHARD: »Ce que Qohelèth veut proprement établir, la suite le montre, c'est que chaque chose a son heure marquée par Dieu, heure à laquelle elle arrive nécessairement (vv. 11, 14 ...) avec dans l'ensemble une sorte d'alternance des contraires (2-8) et de retour périodique (15)».

<sup>23</sup>»If this be so the writer begins his catalogue of the times and seasons of man with the season of full maturity, with which he contrasts the season of death. Those, who at one time give life to others, at another have themselves to yield to the law of Death». (WRIGHT.)

vs 8 (2) the plucking away or amassing stones in general, as details of agricultural work (MENDELSON, KNOBEL, PODECHARD); (3) throwing stones aside by pulling down a building, and rebuilding it (DALE, LEIMDÖRFER, ENGELBRETH, GRÆTZ [walls of a city]); (4) the senses of (2) and (3) together (GEIER); (5) throwing and gathering sling-stones (ZAPLETAL); (6) throwing away, *i. e.* spending, *precious* stones and amassing them (*vide* GEIER); (7) the magical means of expelling evil (mentioned by WILLIAMS, referring to J. G. FRAZER, *The Scapegoat*); (8) a metaphor of the coitus and of the abstinence therefrom. The last explanation is given by the *Midhrash Qohælæth ad loc.* and the explanation is accepted by LEVY and WILLIAMS. It is most probably the only correct interpretation.

3. 7 'Rending' would lead the thought to the rending of one's garment on receiving bad news; 'sewing', then, »when the time of mourning has passed» (so WILLIAMS).

3. 9-15 contains the reflections naturally to be connected with the preceding and to which this was intended to point.

3. 9 When everything has its appointed time, what profit, remaining, result, can there be for the worker with all his labour?! He cannot move anything out of its appointed time, he can neither suppress the undesirable nor evoke the desirable.

3. 10 cf. 1. 13 The manner of approach is here different. In vs 1. 13 *Qohælæth* is filled with the picture of the futility, here he works forward to a statement of the better life.

3. 11 'æth *hak-kol* 'asa yafæ *bhe-'itto*. It is very natural to take 'hak-kol' here to signify the same as *lak-kol* of vs 1, and then *be-'itto* to refer to the 'times' spoken of 3. 1-8. But this should not be done without adding the consideration that the words *tachath hash-shamaim* are wanting here. Another consideration: the sentence is enunciated in order to teach the

thoughtful (those who are 'good' in God's eyes) concerning the higher attitude to be taken up by them. They are to conform to the Wisdom of which God's activity is the highest embodiment. »*He has made everything appropriate and good (for such is the significance of yafæ) in its time*«, and he has given men the possibility of conforming to this. The corollary hinted at is: »*do thou receive everything (beautifully) in its appointed time, then thou also wilt find it yafæ (well)*«.

From these premises the difficult sequel will possibly receive a clue: *Gam 'æth ha-'olam nathan be-libbam mib-beli 'ashær lo yimša ha-'adham 'æth ham-ma'asæ 'ashær 'asa ha-'aelohim me-rosh we-'ad sof*. The understanding of the passage hinges on the interpretation of the one word *ha-'olam*. PODECHARD gives an almost complete résumé of the different lines of interpretation pursued by the different commentators up to A. D. 1912. To supplement PODECHARD's completing it to the time of writing: (1) a number of expositors are not satisfied with the MT. SPOHN, GAAB, HITZIG emend > '*elæm* = 'intelligence', GRAETZ, BARTON > '*elæm* = ignorance, BASTHOLM, DÖDERLEIN, HAUPT > *ha'alem* = 'He has put a veil on their heart', BICKELL > *le-bhaqqesh 'eth kâl ha-'illum* or ... *han-næ'alam* = 'He has put in their hearts the desire to search out all that is hidden', EHRLICH > *lehith'alem* = refrain from searching (the hidden things)<sup>24</sup>, J. E. CHR. SCHMIDT > '*elem*, sign, = 'He has inscribed the human heart with the sign that he etc.', KAMENETZKY (*Z At W* 1904 p. 138) > *ha-'amal* = 'the labour'. Of the emendations suggested those giving the sense 'put a veil on their heart *et sim.*' would be possible, if only the context were different.

<sup>24</sup> »aber er gab ihnen auch ein, sich der Forschung zu enthalten, sodass man weiss, wie weit man beim Forschen über die sittliche Weltordnung gehen darf, und wo die Forschung halt machen muss.«

(2) '*olam* is translated 'world', either as 'study' or 'knowledge of the world' (GEIER, SEB. SCHMIDT<sup>25</sup>, ZIRKEL, ENGELBREHT, EWALD, ELSTER<sup>26</sup>, TYLER, RENAN, CHEYNE, LEIMDÖRFER<sup>27</sup>, ZAPLETAL, LEVY<sup>28</sup>, VOLZ<sup>29</sup>) or as 'worldly pursuits' (MENDELSON, GESENIUS) or as taste for the world and the things of the world (KNOBEL). '*Olam* is certainly frequently used in the sense of 'world' in Rabbinical Hebrew and Aramaic ('*alema*), although not in O. T. but: (a) '*olam* also in New Hebrew retains the sense of 'age', 'period', 'everness'; (b) the context, speaking so much of times and periods, would seem to require also in the passage in question some connection with the idea of time. Hence one had better, with the majority of expositors<sup>30</sup>, keep to the O. T. significance of the word or some nuance of it. (3) 'Eternity' in the sense of 'beyond time' (so still KUHN) might be left out of the question, since such a conception had evidently never entered into the mind of Qohælath. (4) 'The (endless) future' (SIEGFRIED, DALE) is also quite unsupported. (5) It might be suggested that the sense best fitting in, on one hand with the considerations given above concerning the preceding context, and on the other hand with the appended sentence, would be somewhat as

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<sup>25</sup> »mundus et in eo omnes res a Deo conditæ».

<sup>26</sup> EWALD and ELSTER: man the microcosm in which macrocosm is reflected.

<sup>27</sup> »die Welt (das Sichtbare)».

<sup>28</sup> »Welche Welt auch immer Gott ihnen in den Sinn gegeben hätte, der Mensch würde doch das Werk Gottes nicht von Anfang bis zu Ende erkennen können. Die Lehre von der Vielheit der Welten (!), die hier durchblickt, gehört dem Epikureismus an.»

<sup>29</sup> »Die ganze Welt.»

<sup>30</sup> HERZFELD, VAHINGER, GINSBURG, KLEINERT, ZÖCKLER, DELITZSCH, PLUMPTRE, WRIGHT, NOWACK, RÜETSCHI, WILDEBOER, MC NEILE, PODECHARD, WILIAMS and KUHN.

follows: God [*Himself*] has made everything appropriate in its times. He has *also* in their (men's) hearts laid down the sum of all times, yet in such a way that man cannot find out the work that God has done from the beginning to the end. The specific sense might be clearer if a paraphrasis be allowed: God Himself has made everything appropriate in its time. And thereunto men should conform. But, evenmore, in men's hearts he has also laid the possibility of making use of all times, except that he cannot, even in regarding God's activity, (— as it was shown that his search was futile when he searched in the things themselves —) stretch himself backward (towards the beginning) or forward (towards the end) or understand God's plan with his work. The *'olam* is a gift of God, and *'olam belibbam* is in fact nothing but, or as much as, the covert definition of the higher attitude of life, lying before man as a possibility. The explanation, then, may be condensed as follows: God has put *'olam* in their hearts = he has given man the privilege of using *all* times, in the moments they pass by him, and turning them into good for himself, by attachment to God and detachment from the stream of events. And that is the way in which man may conform to God's own activity.

3. 12 follows naturally from the preceding: it remains, then, for man to derive the *real* joy from the times given him. *'En tobh bam*; the parallelism with 2. 24 suggests the emendation *ba'adham* (PODECHARD). This is perhaps unnecessary, witness *belibbam* of the preceding. The interpretation of *la'asoth tobh* as εὖ πράττειν 'do well' instead of 'do good', adopted here by the majority of later expositors is well-established; (ctr. KUHN) 'good' never has a moral meaning in the *ultimata* of Qohælæth (2. 24; 3. 22; 5. 18; 8. 15; 9. 7; 11. 9. WILLIAMS). One need not emend into *lir'oth* (as EHRlich does), but instead point to the similar use of the corresponding opposite in 2 Sam. 12. 18 (PODECHARD, WILLIAMS).



3. 14 a, a perfect correspondance with 3. 11, applied to the rule: no *plus* and no *minus* (cf. above 1. 9). 14 b: the natural result with one who attaches himself to God as hinted before, and understands His doing, is that he fears him. 'Asa should be taken as absolute: God has done (performed his doing, his work) — not: God has done it — in order that they should fear him.<sup>31</sup> »*Fear before him*», a construction of veneration, exclusive in Rabbinical language.

3. 15 b *we-ha- 'alohim yebhaqqesh 'æth nirdaf*. The interpretation commonly accepted by modern commentators is in perfect consonance (1) with the teaching of Qohælæth on the details of the stream of events and (2) with the context. Thus: '*and God seeks again that which has passed away*'. Vivid picture of the inevitability of the return of that which has for some time been passed.<sup>32</sup> A syntactical peculiarity is the use of the accusative particle '*æth* with an object in undefined form. (Cf. 7. 7 GES.-KAUTZSCH 117 c.)

3. 16-4. 16 The *tachath-hash-shæmæsh* conditions are again pictured. When viewed by itself the sublunar world is wholly unrighteousness, death, loneliness and strife, unbelief.

3. 16 »I saw *under the sun* in the place of judgement that there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness, that there was wickedness.» The place of judgement and righteous-

<sup>31</sup> ALLGEIER: »(God has made all ...) and God has made those who fear him. »So schliesst sich der Satz ungezwungen an, dass die Verehrer Gottes (8. 12, 7. 18) nicht allein stehen, sondern in dem Bewusstsein schon Kraft finden, dass sie Gottes Geschöpfe sind».

<sup>32</sup> The sense obtained apart from the context is of course: 'And God seeks one who is driven away' (accepted lately by ALLGEIER, with the versions). LEVY, adducing Zeph. 2. 2, Deut 16. 20 and Ps 34. 15 for *biqqesh* = *radhaf*, translates: »Gott erstrebt das schon einmal von ihm erstrebte wieder». EHRLICH translates *biqqesh*: *avenge* (adducing *Prov.* 17. 11). KUHN emends < '*athar niddaf* : »Gott sucht die verwehte Spur immer wieder auf».

ness refer to the seat of authority (the rulers).

3. 17 the view is changed; under the aspect of God's activity it is all natural. The wickedness has not received more place than its due. The time shall come when it shall be judged.

The latter part of the verse is corrupt beyond any possibility of reconstruction (so rightly PODECHARD). The difficulties and various emendations are aptly described by WILLIAMS (p. 48, *Additional note* on v. 17).

3. 18 is replete with textual difficulties. (1) The significance of *'al dibhrath: because of or with regard to?* The other occurrences, Ps 9. 4. Eccl. 7. 14, 8. 2, give no real clue. It does not occur in New Hebrew. The word *dibhra* seems to mean either *case of judgement* (Job. 5. 8) or decree, *commandment* (as in New Hebrew). It would seem that there is some nuance of meaning distinguishing the expression from the common *'al debhar* (O. T. and New Hebrew). (2) The words *lebharam ha'elohim: to prove them God* (with the versions)? or *make them clear (seek out, distinguish) God* (in consonance with the New Hebrew use of the verb). Syntactically *'elohim* may be taken as subject and *-am* as object or *vice versa*. (3) *welir'oth* may either be taken as a syncopated *inf. hif'il (lar'oth* usually) or as *inf. qal*. The present writer submits the following translation of the MT.: I said in my heart: *in regard to the sons of men (it behoves) them to seek God and to realize that they are beasts, they by themselves.*<sup>33</sup> This translation would suit the tenor of Qohælæth quite well. One might suggest that

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<sup>33</sup> Treating *am* in *lebharam* as subject, *'elohim* as object, *liroth* as *inf. Qal*. PODECHARD translates: »J'ai dit dans mon cœur, au sujet des fils de l'homme: 'Dieu veut les faire connaître et montrer qu'ils sont quant à eux des bêtes'». LEVY arbitrarily: »ich dachte nach der Weise der Menschen darüber nach, dass Gott sie auserwählt habe, aber ich sah dass sie nur Vieh sind». Before LEVY, LEIMDÖRFER interpreted the verse similarly.

Qohælæth with these words again expresses the distinction between the two attitudes of life. Men should seek God — that is the higher attitude — and recognize that *by themselves* (the expression *by themselves* has an identical force with: 'under the sun') they are nothing but beasts (*i. e.* when life is viewed under the sun).<sup>34</sup> With this interpretation *hemma lahæm* is not pleonastic, but carries all the emphasis contained in the construction.

3. 19 With 3. 18 Qohælæth has introduced a new mode of description of the *tachath hash-shæmaesh* aspect of life in the case of men: they are only as beasts. This is followed up in the sequel. MT. presupposes the interpretation: 'For the children of men are *miqræ* and the beasts are *miqræ*.' It is difficult to guess, what *miqræ* was thought to signify. The RV. margin translates it 'chance'. *Miqræ*, then, would be a technical term, presumably invented by Qohælæth himself to denote approximately: *a being submitted to a life of chance*.<sup>35</sup>

But leaving out the *waw* before the third *miqræ* and disregarding the Massoretic punctuation, a perfectly natural reading is evolved: *ki miqre* (st. cstr.) *bhene ha'adham u-miqre hab-behema miqræ 'æchadh lahæm, i. e. for the lot of the sons of men and the lot of the beast: one and the same lot there is for them. — weruach 'æchad lakkol: and there is one* (and the same) *life-breath for all of them.*

3. 20 *All (of them) go to the same place*; the place is defined in the following: *all of them are from the dust and return to the dust*, hence it is = the grave, the earth, and not = *Sheol*. In 9. 10, however, Qohælæth speaks of *Sheol*; no discrepancy

<sup>34</sup> Emendations: (1) *lo bharam* = God has not distinguished them (given them any distinction before the beast, EHRlich); (2) *libhera'am*: that God has created them (ALLGEIER).

<sup>35</sup> ALLGEIER aptly: »Spielball des Schicksals».

between the two passages is to be deduced from this.

3. 21 *Who knows whether the breath of life of the sons of men goes upward and the breath of life of the beast goes downward to the earth?*<sup>36</sup> To understand the doctrinal teachings of this dictum, one should keep within the limits of critical considerations, and not make the author affirm or deny more or less than he does. Only the breath of life is spoken of here; it is impossible to decide from *this* passage (1) whether Qohælæth accepted or rejected the idea of a *náfæsh* or *neshama* (soul, spirit), (2) whether the 'going upwards' is = the union of the breath of life with the spirit or soul, or whether it implies the conception of a prolonged existence after death; hence it is impossible to conclude from this passage alone what Qohælæth denies on this point. It must be decided from a comparison with other passages. It must be conceded that expositors have been much too ready to jump to conclusions on the basis of this verse. What one may state for certain is that Qohælæth here gives vent to a thesis of a similar import as in 3. 11 b: men are unable to stretch their knowledge backwards or forwards; if they try doing it, they only become entangled in the problems of the events 'under the sun'.

3. 22 The teaching of the higher way impressively repeated. 22 b has also been over-interpreted. It means simply: who is able to lead man beyond his portion, to a point of time beyond that which is given him? »After him» = later on in the stream of events; it does not bear upon the question of an »after-life». (Cf. 6. 12.)

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<sup>36</sup> It has long been agreed that the Massoretic punctuation of *ha-'ola* and *hay-yorædhaeth* is a dogmatic correction, and that the *he*, with the versions (including the Targum), should be understood as interrogative. Only DALE still keeps to *MT.*: »who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of beast that goeth downward to the earth».

4. 1 *We-shabhti 'ani wa-'ær'æ*, best explained as a parallel of *ufanithi* (2. 12). He (re-)turns to his descriptions of sub-lunar conditions. *Ha-'ashuqim*, the first time noun, *oppressions*, the second time = *the oppressed*. *Miy-yadh 'oshegehæm koach: from the hands of their oppressors (is) power*, is difficult in the context, but not impossible. It had best be taken as it stands, without emendations, or false translations made to suit the context.

4. 2 *we' shabbeach-ani*, *lit.: and to praise I*, an admissible construction. The infinitive plays the part of a finite verb. (KÖNIG iii 218 *b*, 225 *e*, GES.-KAUTZSCH 133 *gg*.) *Kebhar: now already*, '*adhænna* (*hapaxlegomenon*, contraction of '*adh* + *henna*, *hitherto*): *now still*.

4. 3 '*adhæn*, also *hapaxlegomenon* = '*adhænna* of 4.2. The consequences are well drawn. The life *under the sun* is indeed so full of meaningless sufferings that it would have been better never to have entered it. With Socratic perseverance and moral earnest Qohælæth draws out the concession that the life under the sun, so valuable in the eyes of and so feverishly pursued by men, would have been 'better' if it had never existed.

4. 4 a very modern, psychologically trenchant observation. As if answering an objection against the preceding: 'but, behold, there is yet so much *kishron* (competence, skill)' Qohælæth rejoins: all of it proceeds from men's envy of each other.

4. 5 The meaning of the phrases of the two parts of the verse has been discussed but is tolerably clear: »*the fool folds his hands and eats his flesh* (by not procuring the food necessary for his nourishment, cf. Isa 9. 19, 49. 29)». Here also one seems to hear an objection answered: 'if skilfulness and diligence are mere envy, is it better, then, to be a lazy fool?' The verse fits in admirably with the context and need

not be regarded as an insertion (SIEGFRIED, MC NEILE, HAUPT, BARTON, PODECHARD, EHRLICH<sup>37</sup>). For it is not out of harmony with the writer's view to state that the lives of the labouring and the lazy *both* — viewed *tachath hash-shaemash* — are equally futile. But, if so, what about

4. 6 »*better is fulness of one hand with quietness than fulness of both hands with labour and pursuit of the evanescent*»?<sup>38</sup> Is not this a contradiction of vs 5? Not necessarily. It may be said that Qohælæth in 2. 12-14 approaches a similar reflexion with regard to wisdom and stupidity, and, moreover, that there is a certain parallelism on the whole between 4. 4-6 and 2. 12-14.<sup>39</sup> Qohælæth really disapproves both of stupidity and laziness. But just as there is no use in exploiting one's wisdom on the futile searching into the things of the passing stream of events, there is no use in giving oneself to incessant labours by way of immersing oneself in the pursuit of the evanescent aims and ends of the *tachath hash-shaemash* existence. Neither break your brains nor toil yourself to exhaustion over the things under the sun! No feverish haste but quiet concentration!

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<sup>37</sup> These expositors think that it is the interpolator who objects to (or seeks to cover) Qohælæth's utterance in vs 4, an utterance which seemed to the interpolator to be conducive to negligence and sloth. »A sentence or a proverb of sapiential origin.»

<sup>38</sup> Arguing that 'hand' cannot be used as a measure neither for rest nor for pursuit of wind, EHRLICH inserts a *waw* before *nachath* and '*amal* and translates: »better having one hand only filled and enjoying rest than having both hands filled and ever having to toil». This gives an excellent sapiential sentence, but does not reproduce Qohælæth's thought, which has nothing to do with a greater or lesser amount of riches (or possessions). *Nachath*, quietness, is a positive and principal element and corresponds to the *real* joy and the *real* wisdom. Of this it is better to have a handful, than two handfuls of the *tachath hash-shaemash* toil.

<sup>39</sup> WILLIAMS wants vs 6 to be understood as a quotation of the argument of the fool, pictured in vs 5 (with Vulg).

4. 7, 8 are a pendant to 2. 18, 19. *'Enau, his eyes, (kethibh)* should be read, as being more natural. The singular of the predicative verb has caused the Massoretic emendation (cf. GES.-KAUTZSCH 145 k). The Massoretic rendering *'inyān (stat. cstr.) ra'* (a business concerned with evil) should be exchanged for the natural *'inyān (stat. abs.) ra'* (an evil business). Whereas 2. 18, 19 showed that the possibility of attaining an aim pursued under the sun was an illusion, this passage pictures a man whose very possession of an aim is an illusion.

4.9-12 SIEGFRIED, BARTON, PODECHARD and EHRLICH regard this passage as a probable insertion. It is difficult to overcome the impression that the sentences contained in the passage do not at all fall in with the object of Qohælæth. Vs 10 is either taken as it stands in the *MT.* and then, usually, rendered: »For if they fall (one or the other), the one lifts up his fellow», or is emended : *ki 'im yippol ha-'æchadh hash-sheni* (transposed here from the latter clause) *yaqim,...* for if one falls, the other lifts up his fellow. *we-'i-lo:* woe to him, *ha-'æchadh*, the solitary one. Vs 12. *And if prevails<sup>40</sup> over him the solitary one, the two will withstand him.* Much discussion is given to possible emendations of this sentence, but the construction is both grammatically and syntactically correct. The missing subject is, in accordance with Qohælæth's language: 'one', 'someone', 'a man'.

4. 13 The subject of the last part of the present st c-tion is well condensed by WILLIAMS: »the transitoriness of popularity». One recognizes the mark of Qohælæth clearly only in verse 16 and in the phrase *tachath hash-shæmæsh* of vs 15. But as the whole of vss 13-16 undoubtedly forms a unity, the entire passage may be reckoned as consonant with the theme of the

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<sup>40</sup> The majority of later expositors want to translate *taqaf* = *attack*. There is, however, no instance of the word being used in that sense.

book. *Lehizzaher*: to be admonished, accept admonition and advice (cf. 12. 12).

4. 14. *Mib-beth hasurim*, the reading of *MT*. is a syncopated form of *ha-'asurim*: out of the house of the prisoners = out of the prison. Disregarding the Massoretic punctuation one may read: *mibbeth hassurim*, out of the house of the rebels. The latter part of the verse can be rendered either: (1) *for even in his kingdom he was born poor*, and this is the more natural translation with regard to the syntactical construction or, possibly, (2) *even although he was born poor in his kingdom*.

4. 15 admits of only one translation: *I have beheld all the (then, at that time) living men — who walked under the sun — (to be) with the second youth that stood up in his stead.* — This might in itself be correct.

4. 16, however, is perhaps corrupt. The text has: *There was no end of all the people of all that was before them (or: of all, before whom he was); yet the last ones (or: those coming after) shall not rejoice in him.* The commentators have searched in vain for the identity of the events here described. The remaining result of an investigation into the question is that it is impossible to identify the happenings here pictured, as well as the 'old king', the 'young one', and the 'second youth' (if the text is correct). But with this follows that it is also impossible to give a correct explanation of the text itself with its many difficult allusions.<sup>41</sup> The teaching propounded, however, is quite clear: although all living men 'under the sun' at one section of the passing stream of events gathered themselves round the king,

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<sup>41</sup> BURKITT on the basis of *hash-sheni* = Aramaic *tinyana* has tried to interpret the passage as a general statement: »I saw all the living under the sun going along with the youthful generation, now occupying the second place, who will one day supplant their elders. There is no end to all the people, those that were before them; yet the last comers do not rejoice thereat, for that also is 'vanity'».



at another section the living men were cold in their feelings towards him.

4. 17-5. 6 Advices with regard to religious observances. The section, like 4. 9-12, seems to fall outside the general scope of the book. Not that it contradicts Qohælæth. On the contrary: the admonition to be careful with giving vows, which might not be kept, corresponds well with Qohælæth's emphasis on the changeableness of life and with his general advice: refrain from stretching yourself forward in time either in pursuit of knowledge or of aims of activity.

4. 17 *Watch thy feet when thou goest to the house of God.* Read with *kethibh*: *raghlækha* (plural). The rest of the verse seems to be corrupt. The text has: *And the approaching to hear from the giving (of) the fools sacrifice for they do not know to do evil* (or possibly: when they do evil).

This must either be left unexplained or else emended in some way. For emendations, however, there are no points of guidance in the text, since the exact bearing of the verse has been altogether obscured.

5. 2 has a clear proverbial character: just as dreams are called forth by a multitude of business, so the use of many words as a rule denotes a foolish mind.

5. 3 *'En chéfæš bak-kesilim*, there is no pleasure, or favour, in the fools. The context requires the meaning; he (God) has no pleasure in fools, which would properly have been: *'en lo chéfæš bak-kesilim*. But the absolute construction here used may be admissible, since the reference is to God.

5. 5 *'al titten 'æth pikha lachaṭi 'æth besarækha*: *do not let thy mouth cause thy flesh to incur the penalty of sin* (WILLIAMS). *Lachaṭi* for *le-hachaṭi*, syncopated inf. hif'il.

The meaning is clear: do not make a vow that thy flesh (= thou) fails to keep and thus becomes culpable. *Lam-mal'akh*,

the Messenger is, from Mal. 2. 7, explained as 'priester' by most expositors. But the preposition of veneration *lifne*, instead of *le*, would rather seem to support the rendering 'angel', in this case some angel functioning at the judgement. (Targum, WILLIAMS). *Sheghagha-hi*, it was unintentional, a sin of frailty.)

*Lamma* is perhaps best interpreted as the equivalent of the New Hebrew *shæmma* = *for fear that, lest*. The same significance is sensed by EHRlich who equals it with the classical *pæn*.<sup>42</sup> *Qol* is a bit difficult, but there might be an allusion to the *qol kesil* of verse 2. The meaning: *lest God be angry with thy foolish babbling*<sup>43</sup> *and destroy the work of thine hands*.

5. 6 Another instance of a text too corrupt to allow reconstruction. The text as it stands might possibly be translated: '*for in a multitude of dreams there are also futilities and many words*' (EWALD), but there is no natural connexion in this either with the preceding or the sequel.

5. 7, 8 This passage cannot be said to resume the thought of 4. 13-16 (as PODECHARD and other expositors treating 4. 17-5. 6 as a distinct interpolation think). If it is to be connected at all with anything in the preceding, it can probably be only with 4. 1. Hence the passage cannot be adduced as a *reason* for regarding 4. 17-5. 6 as an interpolation. The thought here seems to be that the evils described *e. g.* in 4. 1 extend through the whole social structure. Everyone is in fear of the one next above him. It is not to be wondered that those on the lowest step of the ladder are worst off. This is, no doubt, a correct description of the actual conditions at the author's time. *If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent robbing of judgement*

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. ALLGEIER's translation: *Sonst zürnt Gott über deine Äusserung*.

<sup>43</sup> *i. e.* because thou givest solemn vows with no more heed to thy words than the fool to his babbling.

*and justice in the province, do not wonder at the matter: for high keeps watch over high and high ones over them.* The text is clear. The attempt at explaining *gebhohim* as a *plur. maj.*, referring to God, has no foundation in the text and is simply due to a misunderstanding of the author's object. One has imagined that he wanted to conconsole the vexed observer by pointing to the watch kept by God, which would form an analogy with 3. 16, 17.

5. 8 As the text stands: '*and the profit of (the) land, in the totality (of it or of them) it is, a king for a field cultivated.*' The usual rendering: it is a profit for a land in all this to have a king for the cultivated land, accepted even by such cautious critics as WILDEBOER and PODECHARD, is quite impossible. It is an instance of the false method of making out some probable sense first, and then making the text *nolens volens* to fit the sense adopted, whereas the correct method is to consider the text first and use the context as an auxiliary. WILLIAMS translates: »*and the profit of the land is among the whole (of them, i. e. the grasping officials of vs 8) — even the wild land when cultivated has a king.*»<sup>44</sup> This accords well with the syntax of Qohælæth. For *bakkol* = among *all of them* (*viz.* the ones just mentioned) one might compare 3. 19, 20. When PODECHARD for the rendering of *bakkol* with '*in all this*' or '*in everything*', adduces Gen 24. 1, he moves on precarious ground. For the

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<sup>44</sup> »*The field is properly the open wild countryside (2 Sam. xvii. 8), and afterwards a definite portion of this taken up in agriculture (Gen. xxxvii. 7; Mic. ii. 2, 4). So the writer, continuing his thought, adds »(even) the wild land (or, 'a piece of land') when cultivated has a king.*» He means that there is no escape from exactions. If a man leaves his work in a town and takes up a bit of uncultivated land and tills it — he finds that at once the royal officials mark his action, and claim a share of his harvest for the king. Cease, says Qoh., to wonder at exactions; they belong to the system of government; none can escape or elude them.»

sense of *bakkol* presupposed by the usual translation is = *bekhol zoth*, abstractly, whereas *bakkol* in Gen 24. 1 is used concretely.

5. 9-6. 9 The peculiar conditions of the life under the sun illustrated by instances of the vanity of riches.

5. 9 A man pursuing the ends of obtaining riches *as an end* becomes immersed into the stream of the *tachath-hash-shæmæsh* existence, in which no end can ever be attained nor any remaining result reached. The object of illustration is, however, — and this is characteristic of Qohælæth — not a miser or an avid man, who is infatuated with his pursuit of money, but a rich man in general. The lesson is that all riches, viewed under the sun, have every end and result unattained. *'Ohebh bæ-hamon lo thebhu'a: he who loves abundance has no increase; one would have expected 'en lo instead of lo.* As it stands now, it rather means: *he who loves abundance without increase.*

5. 10 It is difficult to understand why the Massoretes preferred *re'ith* to *re'uth*. Perhaps *re'iyya*, common in New Hebrew, influenced them?

5. 11 *has-sabha'*, usually *abundance*, here most naturally = *satiety*. An ironical allusion to vs 9: he is never allowed to be satisfied, but his 'satiety' keeps him awake.

5. 13 *be-'inyan ra'*. Here *'inyan* is best treated, with MT (contrast BAER), as *st. cstr.: in the pursuit of some unhappy affair.* (Cf. 4. 7, 8.)

5. 14 *ke-shæb-ba*, *ke-shæ* here approximately = New Hebrew *kemo shæ*.

5. 15 *kol 'ummath shæ* read, perhaps, with PODECHARD: *ki le-'ummath shæ: and this also is a grievous evil, that as he came so shall he go; an excellent illustration of the point that no result is gained. The result of all his labour has vanished into the air.*

5. 16 The text »*furthermore, all his days he eats in darkness*

*and he troubles much and his sickness together with wrath*» bears evidence of being corrupt. It is syntactically impossible, at least the latter half of the verse. In the first clause the expression 'eats in darkness' craves explanation. LEVY and WILLIAMS adduce Benzinger, *Hebr. Archäologie* 2 p. 96 f. »The lamp had to burn unceasingly... The same applies to the present-day fellah and bedouin; if one says of a person: 'he sleeps in darkness' it amounts to saying 'he has not a penny left with which to buy oil'.» In the present case the sense would be that he is such a miser that he does not use the oil-lamp to light himself with even when eating. But this does not exactly suit the description of the rich man given in the preceding, although it might not be deemed impossible. It seems quite as well founded, however, to adopt the emendation *choshækh wa-'ebhæl*, following LXX, Charkl. and Copt.-Sahid: '*all his days are darkness and sorrow*'. This reading once adopted, one has only to disregard the Massoretic punctuation of *we-kha'as* as a verb, and treat it as a substantive, and to exchange *wechålyo* for *wechåli* in order to obtain a natural sequel: ... *and much pain and illness and irritation* (PODECHARD). This draws an excellent picture of the life of the rich man.

5. 17 The description of the higher life. In that life all the irritating moments of the rich life under the sun are removed. One uses the moments as they pass by, one's whole life through. The technical expressions used in connection with the descriptions of this higher life are here collected in a greater number than before: *ṭobh, yafæ, re'oth ṭobha, nathan lo ha-'ælohim, chælqo*.

5. 18 Continues the description. Such a life is possible even for one who has by chance been given riches. Treat the riches as a gift from God (or rather: know that they are a gift from God and do not try to pursue them beyond what God accords

you). In so far as the riches are from God, He also allows man to enjoy them and deduct his tribute from them. All is a gift from God.

One may notice here: (1) how *hishliṭo*, *makes him the master*, *gives him power over* his riches is put in contrast to the slavery and impotency over against his riches characteristic for the rich man living 'under the sun', (2) how *chélaeq*, tribute, as belonging to the attitude of the higher life, is the corresponding contrast to the *yithron* of the life under the sun. The *chélaeq* remains, but the *yithron* evades man.

5. 19 The text: *for not much will he remember (think of, brood over) the days of his life, for God causes to answer(?) in the joy of his heart.* The only difficulty, obviously, is the hapaxlegomenon *ma'anæ* (= *causes to answer*), or *causes to occupy himself*, either from 'ana = answer or 'ana = work, occupy oneself. As the latter root is actually used — and frequently — in Qohælæth, it seems safe to assume that the corresponding translation is preferable. But, then, the verb has no object. LXX, charkl. Copt., Peshitto presuppose (or read) the object 'him' = *ma'anehu*. This gives good sense: »God occupies him with the joy of his heart.« In contrast to the man 'under the sun' who occupies himself with many diverse, troublesome and fruitless pursuits, God gives the man attached to Him the continuous 'occupation' of experiencing real joy from each passing moment.

6. 1 The picture of the futility of riches 'under the sun' resumed.

6. 2 *we-'enænnu chaser le-nafsho*: he lacks nothing for himself. *Nafsho* mere reflexive. Repeating the exact phrase of 5. 18 Qohælæth here points out the difference between the two ways of using life. The God-attached gets power over his riches, he commands them in every moment God accords him,

but the rich man 'under the sun', although he lacks nothing, has no power over, is not really the master over, his riches, because he looks to the future end: *a stranger consumes it*.

6. 3 'Im yolidh 'ish me'a: *if a man beget hundred children; we-rabh-shæy-yihyu*, should perhaps not, as is usual, be rendered: *so that the days of his years be many*, but, in accordance with New Hebrew syntax, *many as may be the days of his years, i. e. however many the days of his years may be; lo thisba' min hat-tobha*: yet, he is not satisfied by 'the good' (*scil. received*).

6. 5 The Massorettes probably intended: *'although it (the untimely birth) has not even seen the sun nor known it, the latter has rest more than the former*, and that rendering may be accepted, in view of its following up the thought of the preceding verse.

6. 6 *we-'illu*: and if; 'illu very common in New Hebrew.

6. 7 DELITZSCH, followed by WILLIAMS, explains: »All labour, the author means to say, is in the service of the impulse after self-preservation, and yet, although it concentrates all its efforts towards this end, it does not bring full satisfaction to the longing soul.»

It might, however, be questioned, whether Qohælæth really is thinking of the impulse towards self-preservation. Some little difficulty inheres in deciding whether *pihu* stands for sublunar desire in general or the writer's meaning is that all the sublunar desires in the last instance may be reduced to the desire for food and drink.<sup>45</sup>

6. 8 Strangely enough, when observing the apparent dis-

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<sup>45</sup> Figuratively — hence in the sense of the former alternative — *pihu* is taken by PODECHARD, who adduces Prov. 16. 26 pointed to also by DELITZSCH and WRIGHT, as an instance of 'mouth' standing for 'appetite' and Job. 20. 12 of 'pæ' (mouth) = 'enjoyment'. (Cf. WRIGHT and LEVY.) >

connexion between 6. 7 and 6. 8, expositors have regarded vs 7 as an interpolation, treating vs 8 as genuine (MCNEILE, PODECHARD).<sup>46</sup> The fact is that vs 7 expresses Qohælæth's teaching succinctly, whereas vs 8 b leaves one at a loss as to the teaching proffered. The sense might however be: »what (advantage) hath that man among those knowing how to deport themselves, who is poor.» From the point of view of the desires of the sublunar world neither the rich man nor the wise man obtain anything. The rich man *is not* satisfied and the wise, if poor, *cannot* satisfy his desires.

6. 9 follows closely, giving a hint of the greater life: this consists in *seeing* as contrasted with *pursuing*.

*Halåkh nárfæsh*, an apt expression for the desire going ever after (in pursuit of) the things desired.

6. 10-7.<sup>47</sup> The polar opposites of the sublunar life and the better life.

6. 10 The pursuit of desires is futile. Everything has its ordained place and its name, and so also man's place in the sublunar world is preordained. *Wenodha' 'ashær hu 'adham*, exactly: *and it is known that man is man*. Some prefer: *and it is known what man is*, but this would surely require: *we-nodha' mah hu 'adham*. Read *Qere: šæt-taqqif mimmænnu, who is mightier than he*.

6. 11 Either: (1) *since there are so many things increasing nothingness* or (2) *for there are many words that merely increase vanity*. The latter would be conjoined with the

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The latter alternative is taken up by WILDEBOER and ZAPLETAL. On the whole, the former seems more well-founded. An original translation is proffered by ALLGEIER: »*Könnte jemand auch (den Ertrag) von aller Mühe mit seinem Munde kosten, so würde sein Seele davon nicht erfüllt*».

<sup>46</sup> SIEGFRIED, however, attributes the verse to an interpolator (the *Chakham*).

<sup>47</sup> 6. 9 forms the bridge between the two sections; it may be included in either.



preceding and the sense would be: contending with God over one's fate is only so many words without effect, merely increasing vanity. The former makes vs 11 an independent utterance. Both renderings would seem equally admissible (against HITZIG-NOWACK, WILDEBOER, LEIMDÖRFER, LEVY, ZAPLETAL, PODECHARD, WILLIAMS *e. a.* accepting only the latter sense).

6. 12 *We-ya'asem kaššel*, as it stands = *which he makes like the shadow*. The phrase has received different interpretations. The majority render: *which he passes like a shadow*, referring to the Greek διόγειν (ZIRKEL) or, usually, ποιεῖν χρόνον adducing Act. 15. 33, 18, 33 etc. (GRAETZ, BARTON, WRIGHT, WILDEBOER<sup>48</sup>) and Sofokles *Aias* 125 f. (ZAPLETAL). PODECHARD recognizes the same sense but denies its character of Græcism. LEVY finds in the word '*shadow*' a simile for *shelter, protection*.<sup>49</sup> ZAPLETAL proffers for secondary consideration the equation: make them like a shadow = prolong them as a shadow, *i. e.* prolong his life, whereas LEIMDÖRFER had arrived at the very opposite: 'make his life like a shadow = shorten it'. TORCZYNER<sup>50</sup>, examining the occurrences in Qohæ-læth of the word *shadow* (6. 12, 7. 12, 8. 13). emends *kaššel* '*ashær*' with the help of 8. 17 into *beshæl* '*ashær*' = *because*. — There is also the problem, whether the words 'like a shadow'

<sup>48</sup> WILDEBOER refers also to '*dies facere*'. Cicero *ad Attic.* 5. 20.

<sup>49</sup> LEVY translates: »Wer weirs vielmehr, was für den Menschen gut ist im Leben, während seiner gezählten, nchtigen Lebensstage, dass er sie zum (schützenden) Schatten gestalte?« This may be supported by pointing to Symm.: ἵνα ποιήσῃ αὐτὸν σκέπην.

<sup>50</sup> *Dunkle Bibelstellen in Beihefte zum ZAt W* nr 41, 1925 (*Marti-Festschrift*) p. 280. TORCZYNER translates: »Denn wer weiss, was dem Menschen im Leben gut ist..., dass er es tue (besser *weya'asænna*), darum weil (*beshæl* '*ashær*') keiner (wörtlich: wer?) dem Menschen sagen kann, was nach ihm sein wird unter der Sonne«.

are to be referred to *man* (thus PODECHARD) or to his *life*. The present writer would submit as a tentative solution interpreting *we-ya'asem kaşşel* as referring to the higher attitude of life. We have found occasion above for maintaining that one of Qohælæth's definitions of that attitude was: do not pursue the things of the stream of events, but let them pass by you. Hence one might render the phrase in question: 'if not to let them be like a shadow'. The simile used would be, say, that of man sitting watching a shadow gradually passing before him; he himself remains quiet and does not pursue the fleeing shadow. The whole passage, then, would be: *for who knows what is good for man in his life, all the days of his vain life, if not that he should let them be like the shadow, since who (= nobody) can tell a man what shall be after him (or afterwards) under the sun*. The syntactical construction, it may be agreed, at least does not exclude the possibility of this rendering.

In these proverbial sayings Qohælæth pourtrayes artistically, earnestly, and acutely, the attitude of the wise man leading the 'better life' on the contrasting background of the attitude of the fool. The wise man, although eating and drinking and rejoicing in the present, is no sanguinical, light-minded and superficial man. He occupies himself always with *real* gladness, he does not find any element of such happiness in the things the fool pursues as his illusory pleasures. One notices that Qohælæth does not restrict himself to mere abstract rules or definitions of the source of the real joy, but he puts before his hearer, or reader, the picture of men embodying the teaching he gives. And this picture, again, is no mere construction. It is replete with such a truth of design and such a vivid actuality, that even a present-day reader sees the character pourtrayed take form before him. It is to be observed that Qohælæth enjoins neither a comportment of sorrow, dejected mien, melancholy

and sour attitude towards life, nor an illusory optimism putting a veil before his eyes against the sufferings of men. The manly attitude of Qohælæth is expressed in a condensed form in 7. 3

7. 1 The paronymasy of *shem mish-shæmæn* is rendered by Williams: '*better is name than nard*'. *Miyyom hiwwaledho: than the day of one's being born*, need perhaps not be emended. As had been remarked before, the third person in Qohælæth often has the force of 'man in general' or, even, of German 'man', French 'on'.

7. 2 b *for that* (logically: death) *is the end of every man and the living will lay it to his heart*. Cf. Ben Sira 50. 28. *Yitten 'æl libbo*. It is strange that not even PODECHARD recognizes the peculiar Qohælæthian tenor of this phrase. It is met with in 9. 1 and is, surely, in a line with *nathatti libbi*.

7. 3 *beroa' panim yitabh lebh: in the sadness of the countenance the heart is glad*. The real joy is that attained by him who himself has experienced suffering and observed and laid to his heart the sufferings of others. *yitabh lebh*, as is rightly recognized, always signifies 'be joyful, comforted' (Jud. 18. 20, 19. 6, 9, 1 Ki. 21. 7, Ruth 3. 7), never 'be morally good', as the phrase is usually rendered (*e. g.* by HERZFELD, KNOBEL, WANGEMANN, LEIMDÖRFER, WRIGHT and even PODECHARD).

7. 5 *me-'ish shomea': than a man who hears*. The introduction of the word '*ish*' emphasizes »the distinction between two persons« (DELITZSCH, PODECHARD, WILLIAMS).

7. 6 *ki kheqol has-sirim tachath has-sir: as the crackling of thorns under a foot, so is the laughter of the fool*. »The statement of vs 5 is confirmed by the noise, brevity and uselessness of fools' mirth« (WILLIAMS).

7. 6 c, 7 The phrase '*this also is vanity*' should be treated as the introduction of vs 7: '*namely that extortion makes a wise man* (acting as judge or umpire) *foolish and a bribe destroys*

*the heart. Lebh mattana* may also be conjoined, the sense being: 'and destroys a liberal heart' (LEIMDÖRFER). The verse is an old *crux interpretum*. A body of expositors, finding the passage, although beginning with *ki*, 'for', unconnected with the preceding, have proposed the reconstruction of a clause to be read before vs 7, containing a sentence of some sense similar to Prov. 16. 8 a, Ps 37. 16: »*Better is a little with righteousness than much produce without right; for oppression*» etc. (DELITZSCH, followed by SIEGFRIED, WILDEBOER, MC NEILE, ZAPLETAL.)

GRÆTZ reads *methunim* (deliberate) instead of *mattana* — »*and ruins the heart of the deliberate*», pointing out that the *Midhrash Rabba* to the verse preserves the reading *methuna*: »*methuna* it is written, teaching that if Moses had been deliberate he would have been delivered».

7. 9 'al *tebhahel beruchakha* = *be not rash in thy spirit; likh'os* = *to be angry*, not = *to be troubled or pained*, in view of vs 3.<sup>51</sup>

7. 10 *mæ haya shæ* = *why is it that ...*

7. 11 *ṭobha chākhma 'im nachala*, either (1) *wisdom joined with an inheritance is good* (cf. 2. 16) or (2) *wisdom is good like an inheritance*; *yother le* likewise admits of two renderings: (1) *an advantage for* and (2) *an advantage in the eyes of*.

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<sup>51</sup> SIEGFRIED thinks it impossible to attribute vs 3 and vs 9 to the same author or source, but PODECHARD remarks rightly: »... il vaudrait mieux reconnaître que dans le premier texte *ka'as* désigne le chagrin né d'une épreuve, d'une souffrance réelle (cf. 1. 18, 2. 23, 11. 10) et que dans le second il signifie l'aigreur, la mauvaise humeur et le dépit (cf. Prov. 12. 16, 21. 19, 27. 3). L'insensité est aussi représenté comme un colérique dans 10. 13, Job 5. 2, Prov. 27. 3». 7. 1-12 Acc. to PODECHARD, who attributes the whole of 7. 1-12 to the 'sage(s)', the verse might be directed against Qohælæth and his 'habitual discontent'. But it is incorrect to state that Qohælæth is discontent.

ZAPLETAL, TORCZYNER *e. a.* emend: '*minnachala*' = wisdom is better than an inheritance.

7. 12 for *in the shadow of Wisdom (is as) in the shadow of money*. Here, contrary to in 6. 12, shadow is generally interpreted as a simile for protection. TORCZYNER<sup>52</sup> holds *beṣel* to be corrupt for *ba'al* (master or owner of): *for he who possesses wisdom, possesses also money, and the advantage of the knowledge of wisdom preserves its possessor*. As the text stands the meaning of 12 b is clearly: '*and (but) the profit of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor*'.

7. 13 repeats the thought of 1. 15. *Re'e* means properly 'consider' = acknowledge how it is, in meditating upon it; the reader in reality is admonished to do as Qohælæth himself has done (cf. 8. 17). The verse may be said to form an introduction to

7. 14 which again expresses the rule of the higher attitude towards life: '*in the day of prosperity be in good (be joyful) and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one over against the other*'. The sequel is difficult: '*so that man shall not find after him anything*'. The problem is: to whom does '*after him*' refer? It is generally thought that it refers to man. »Both good and ill will happen in corresponding measure, that thus a man may not know what will be the future events in his lifetime (PODECHARD) or on earth after his death (BARTON) or, possibly = 'that God causes man to experience good and evil that he may pass through the whole school of life, and when he departs hence that nothing may be outstanding which he has not experienced' (DELITZSCH thus summed up by WILLIAMS).» BURKITT (approved by WILLIAMS), has suggested that the Hebrew here corresponds to the Aramaic (Syriac) idiom: to find a thing after a man = find him guilty or responsible for

<sup>52</sup> *Marti-Festschrift* (cf. above on 6. 12) p. 280.

it. Hence the verse should be translated: 'God has made one thing against the other in such a way that no man should find any occasion of complaint against Him.' The translation is supported by Symm.: τοῦ μὴ εὐρεῖν ἄνθρωπον κατ' αὐτοῦ μέμψιν.

In favour of the traditional translation speaks that Qohælæth several times expresses the thought that man is not granted knowledge of the future, but against this is, on the other hand, that it gives no connexion with the context. The translation suggested by BURKITT and WILLIAMS, again, obviously suits the context very well and is also in keeping with Qohælæth's teaching.

7.15 *'æth hak-kol*, not abstract, but = all this, namely the following.<sup>53</sup> *Ma'arikh* (scil. *yamaw*) = prolongs his days, lives long.

7. 16-18 presents no difficulty as soon as one acknowledges the fact that Qohælæth does not intend to proffer any dogmatic rule concerning the meaning of righteousness or wickedness to be observed by man, but instead to picture the characteristic traits of an earnest, thoughtful, modest and mature personality. The teaching of the passage is happily supplemented and elucidated by vss 21, 22. It may be that Qohælæth has in view some characteristic idiosyncrasies of the circles of his time, men calling themselves *ṣaddiqim*, but the rules none the less have general application, and, it may be said, an actuality in every time. Their truth is borne out by the facts of experience. If one makes a review of the different personalities with which one has come in contact and got to know, one is sure to recognize that the finest and noblest characters of them are not to be found among those deporting themselves with a

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<sup>53</sup> PODECHARD to the point: »J'ai vu ces deux choses dans les jours de ma vanité».

manner of exacting or scrupulous perfection; however sincere these may be, one is forced to acknowledge that they as a rule represent a lower stage than that of the really great souls. In *tithchakkem* there is, as has been recognized by PODECHARD, a nuance of affectation (cf. Ben Sira 10. 26, 32. 4) *lamma tishshomem*; *lamma* here also is best rendered *lest thou lose thy senses*. »A morbid scrupulosity often leads to mania» (WILLIAMS). Mania, of course to be taken in a lenient sense: making oneself stupid.

7. 18 *yeše 'ath kullam*, (1) The phrase was earlier taken to mean: shall escape both *i. e.* the fate of the over-righteous and that of the over-wicked. (So Still WILDEBOER.) (2) Later, since GRÆTZ and DELITZSCH, one has been wont to adduce the Rabbinic terminology *yaša yedhe chobhatho, et sim.*, in the sense of fulfilling an obligation. This is accepted *i. a.* by – NOWACK, WRIGHT, PODECHARD, EHRLICH and WILLIAMS<sup>54</sup>. (3) LEVY, followed by ALLGEIER, propounds the interpretation: *will exceed, surpass all (of them)*. (4) LEIMDÖRFER translates *goes with all of them* in the sense of *leads* both the over-righteous and the over-wicked to 'Mässigung'. (2) is decidedly to be preferred. Freely: *will preserve a worthy attitude to all classes of men*.

7. 19 is obviously an insertion, probably a gloss to vs 12. 'Asara *shalliṭim* = ten rulers, refers to the council of ten citizens having charge of the general affairs of a town in Hellenistic times (during the Egyptian rule).<sup>55</sup>

7. 20 The *ki* links up with vs 18. *For, in reality, there is no man in the country perfectly righteous, doing only good and*

<sup>54</sup> »he that fears God will come out free and triumphant as regards both sides of his responsibilities, those towards the righteous and those towards the wicked».

<sup>55</sup> SCHÜRER, *Geschichte des jüd. Volkes*, ii 172.

*never sinning.*

7. 25 *la-dha'ath ræsha' kæsaæl*, to know that wickedness is foolishness; *hassikluth holeloth*: that folly is stupidity.

7. 26 introduces a thought not previously expressed by Qohælæth. But the typical expressions *ṭobh lifne ha'ælohim*, and *choṭe*, and the conclusions drawn, are in keeping with the rest of the book. 'Ashær hi meṣodhim = *who is snares*. The word *maṣodh*, *meṣodhim*, occurs here and in Prov. 12. 12 only; the corresponding verb, (*ṣudh*), is used in Prov. 6. 26 of the adulteress. The present passage no doubt refers precisely to the adulteress although in vs 28 'woman' has a general import. It is difficult to understand why the last clause of the verse has been so universally maintained to enunciate the principle of retribution (MC NEILE, BARTON, PODECHARD). On the significance of *ṭobh lifne ha'ælohim* and *choṭe*, *vide* above on 2. 26. Qohælæth simply expresses the truth that a man who has grasped the higher attitude of life, and attached himself to God, is not ensnared by woman, as he is not ensnared by the sublunar desires in general. As the possibility of adopting such a higher attitude is a gift of God, so this special case is also a Divine gift.

7. 27 'Amera qohælæth; it is generally recognized that the correct reading is 'amar haqqohæleth, which does not change the consonantal text. 'Achath le-'achath limṣo chæshbon. 'Achath is an adverbial accusative, denoting manner or procedure; the feminine form of course denotes neutral significance. »*One (thing) to the other in order to find (the) account, or the reason of things or knowledge.*» The exact meaning of *chæshbon* can only be divined from the context. This would seem to support the sense of *knowledge, discrimination*.

7. 28 a is best conjoined with the last words of the preceding



verse: *which my soul still seeks; but I have not found; the sequel, then, is: I have found one real man among thousand (people) but one woman among all those have I not found.* The sense seems to be perfectly clear; yet many different rearrangements (cf. esp. KUHN) and translations of the text have been proffered.<sup>56</sup>

7. 29 *Lebhadh* = *only*. »Yet, after all, Qoh. says, he has come to one positive conclusion, viz. that the failure of man is not the fault of God, but of his own waywardness» (WILLIAMS). This may be compared with the statement made in ch 3. 11: 'God has made everyting good and appropriate in its time'. God has made man with the object that he should live a better life, such as that sketched by Qohælæth, but instead man has immerged himself in the sublunar aims and desires: »*they have sought out many inventions (or: perversions)*». *Chishshebho-noth* is perhaps an allusion to *chæshbon* of vs 27. WILLIAMS excellently: »In fact Qoh. seems to suggest, they took no trouble to seek the true *rationale* of God's works, but did give their minds to seeking contrivance after contrivance of their own devising.» Cf. Qoh's own experiences (ch. 2).

8. 1-15 Various counsels given by Qohælæth respecting the conduct of man.

8. 1 *Péshær dabhar* = *solution of a thing (i. e. things in general)*. *Péshær* is clearly Aramaic. It occurs in the Aramaic of Daniel (*Dan. 2. 4-7*). *Yeshunna*; imperf. *pu'al* of *shana*, 'change', formed in analogy with the verbs *tertiæ 'alæf*. The sense is: *the hardness of his face is changed*, which is to be

<sup>56</sup>The problems are: (a) does 'thousand' refer only to men, or to people, (b) does 'ellæ', those, refer to the word 'thousand' or to 'ishsha (= among all women), (c) is there an allusion to the thousand wives of Solomon, (d) should the relative beginning the verse be conjoined with the preceding or with the sequel?

recognized as one of Qohælæth's observations of men. In Rabbinical Aramaic the word *peshar*, *pishra* is used in the sense of *explication*, *interpretation*, especially in the Targums. The word corresponds, with regard to derivation, to the Hebrew *pithron*.

8. 2 *'Ani pi mælækh shemor*, lit. I: I, keep the king's mouth. *'Ani* is difficult syntactically. It is scarcely to be explained as elliptic for: *I counsel thee* or similar. Rather one would have recourse to an emendation inserting *'amarti* (I said) after *'ani*. But perhaps the simplest is, with PODECHARD, to emend *'ani* > *'æth*. In any case the meaning of the words following is naturally: *'keep the king's commandment'*. *We-'al dibhrath shebhu'ath 'ælohim; and this having regard to the oath of (obediance to the king sworn before) God.*

8. 3 *tibbahel* signifies (1) *make haste* or (2) *be afraid*. The latter is adopted by WILDEBOER and DE JONG. The former again by the majority of expositors. In this case the writer is (1) either counselling a petitioner or an ambassador at the king's court not to leave him too soon either on account of his having refused to grant the petition or having imposed a disagreeable order (PODECHARD), or else the writer refers to the case of Jewish subjects of a foreign king in general, enjoining them not to fall away from him without due deliberation being first taken or similar. ZAPLETAL joins *'al tibbahel* to the preceding: *'do not be afraid because of the oath'*.

8. 4 *ba-'ashær debhar mæhækh shilton: because the king's word is power. Shilton* usually means 'ruler' but the abstract sense is not impossible.

8. 5 *'eth u-mishpat: time and judgement*. A wise man knows the time or period appointed for each thing, or perhaps better, he knows *that* there is a time for everything and *that* there is judgement, *i. e.* he makes the same observations as Qohælæth

does in 3. 1 and 3. 17. *Yedha*‘ should perhaps be read *yadha*‘ (PODECHARD). The imperf. presupposes the rendering: *the wise man shall know the right time for everything*: this would not imply any power of prevision — which Qoh. has repeatedly denied in the preceding and again denies here, vs 7 — but, instead, that man is able, in the nobler life, to appraise correctly every *present* moment (cf. 9. 10 and § 4. 1. *Scepticism*).

8. 8 *’en ’adham shallit ba-ruach li-khlo ’æth ha-ruach*: *man is not master of the ruach to retain the ruach*. The problem is, what exactly is meant by *ruach*: whether (1) ’wind’ or (2) (a) ’breath’, (b) ’spirit’. (1) is approved by DELITZSCH, WRIGHT, HITZIG-NOWACK, WILDEBOER, SIEGFRIED, MC NEILE, HAUPT, BARTON, (2) by KNOBEL, EWALD, HERZFELD, HENGSTENBERG, GIETMANN, GINSBURG, LEIMDÖRFER, ZAPLETAL, PODECHARD, LEVY, EHRLICH and ALLGEIER. The latest expositors, thus, seem to agree that the reference is to the ’spirit’ or generally ’life’ of man, *i. e.* that the former clause of the verse enunciates the same as the latter. WILLIAMS says »it is almost impossible to decide which rendering is right«, but he seems to prefer the rendering ’wind’, on account of the other sense being tautological. With this we shall have to content ourselves.

*We’ en mishlachath bam-milchama. Mishlachath* is a hapaxlegomenon, but one might compare Ps 78. 4. 9. The sense is in all probability to be expressed by some such word as *’dismissal, discharge, furlough’*. WILLIAMS, however, proposes a new interpretation: »*there is no sending in (that) war*«, meaning, you cannot send some one under you in your stead, no substitution is possible, when you are ordered to the war *with death*. This interpretation is derived from *Eccl. R.* to the present passage: »Nobody can say (to the angel of death): lo, here is my son, or my servant, or one of my household servants, instead of me.« (KUHN > *meluchæshæth = magical*

*means of protection.)*

8. 9 *We-nathon 'æth libbi*; the infinitive may be explained adverbially: *in concentrating my thought and observation upon* or, as is usually done, as a continuation of the finite verb: *and concentrated* (GES.-KAUTZSCH 113 z). *All work done under the sun during the time in which* (or: *there is a time wherein*) *one man lords it over the other to his hurt.*

8. 10 The text has: *And then I saw wicked ones buried and they came and from a holy place they walk and they are forgotten in the city who made so* (possibly: *who had done right*). The text is so obviously corrupt that it is meaningless to try and arrive at a sensible translation. Numerous emendations have been suggested. BURKITT proposes changing *qebhurim* into *qerebhim* (= KUHN) or *meqarebhim*, both emendations implying the sense of participation in the worship at the temple; further he emends *we-yishtakkechu* > *we-yishtabbechu* and translates: »*And further I have seen wicked men at worship, and they who have done so come in and go off on their ways from the Holy Place and boast of it — this also is Vanity.*» It would be beside the point to record all the various emendations proffered by expositors. The only correct treatment of the text is to recognize that it is corrupt beyond recuperation.

8. 11 *'ashær 'en na'asa fithgham ma'ase ha-ra'a mehera*: *because the sentence on the evil work is not executed speedily. Pithgham*, Persian<sup>57</sup>, in Targ., *i.a.*, for 'Divine word'. The Massoretic accentuation, dividing *pithgham* from *ma'ase ha-ra'a* should be disregarded. Likewise the punctuation *na'asa* (fem., not perf.) instead of the expected *na'asæ* (masc.) should be doubted, *pithgham* in all known occurrences being masculine. (Parallel in Theognis 203 ff. RANSTON 20.)

<sup>57</sup> or, perhaps better, Greek ἐπίταγμα (E. A. COWLEY, *The origin of פתגמא*, *JThSt*, xxix, 1928, pp. 54-56).

8. 12 The sense seems to require the translation *though a sinner ... yet I know*. The syntactical construction, however, does not admit such a translation, but instead points to the following meaning: *because the sinner commits evil hundred (times) and prolongs his day: although I know that it will be good for the God-fearing which fear before him*. We seem to have here some sort of an anacoluthon.

8. 13 *Kaššēl* here also, as in 6. 12 and 7. 12, has been the subject of discussion. (1) TORCZYNER here, as in 6. 12, emends > *bešhæl* which gives good sense. (2) HITZIG, followed lately by WILLIAMS, suggests joining the word, against the MT, to the latter clause (»as a shadow is he who«), but this results in an impossible construction of the Hebrew. (3) *Kaššēl* is referred to the subject (»as a shadow he shall not lengthen« (THILO *e.a.*) or (4) to the predicate, giving the very opposite sense (»he shall not prolong his days like a shadow«) or (5) to the object (»he shall not prolong his days which are like a shadow«). The present writer suggests treating *kaššēl* in analogy with 6. 12, although this also is not quite satisfactory: »and 'good' (as a technical term) *there shall not be for the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days like a shadow (i. e. although he may prolong his days, as verse 12 asserts, he shall not do it as the godfearing does, who obtains real 'good' from his enjoyment of the passing days) because he does not fear before God.*« What would seem to support treating the verse as a hint of the higher life are (1) the occurrence of two technical terms for that life (or *three!*, if the interpretation of *kaššēl* be accepted) and (2) the fact that this rendering alone removes the discrepancy between vss 12 and 14.

8. 14 *Yæsh hæbhæl 'ašær na'asa*. One notices the peculiar *a vanity which is done*; it may be suggested that the *nif'al* of 'asa here is used in the same sense as frequently in New-

Hebrew: *a vanity which happens*. *Ma'ase* might be rendered *karma*; to the righteous happens what corresponds to the *karma* of the wicked and *vice versa*.

8. 15 One of the characteristic conclusions pointing definitely to the »better life«. Together with the accustomed technical expressions Qohælæth here introduces a new phrase: *wehu yilwænnu bha-* 'amalo, and this accompanies him (keeps close to him) *in his labour*. This phrase has a peculiar force: it states that the real joy of the nobler life assimilates with man, accompanies him every moment of his life. It is to be understood as an exact parallel to and a variant of the excellent description of 5. 19: *God occupies him with joy*.

8. 16-9. 10 A repetition and variation of the lesson of the futility of stretching oneself 'forward', either with regard to knowledge or desire, gives the background for a repetition and variation of the picture of the nobler life.

8. 17 b *beshael 'ashaer*, an Aramaism = Aramaic *bedhil de*. The general position of Qohælæth is here beautifully rendered: all labour of men can be defined as a search for something, day after day, but his destiny is: not to *find*; and the wise man labours to know, and his destiny is: never to attain knowledge. The whole applies to the labour and search for knowledge in the sublunar world.

9. 1 *la-bhur*, to clarify, explain; inf. of *barar*, instead of *labhor*, suits the context and is syntactically admissible. It need not be emended > *lathur* (GRÆTZ, ZAPLETAL) nor > *welibbi ra'a* ('and my heart saw' PODECHARD). *Whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth it not*. *Hakkol lifnehæm* can only mean *all of it lies behind them viz. in time*. *Lifne*, before, with regard to time, at any stage of the language means only: *earlier than*, never: *in front of, in the future*. The text is probably corrupt. As it stands it would signify: *all of it has been* (ordained?)

*long before their time.*<sup>58</sup>

9. 2 *Hakkol ka'ashær lakkol, all of it like as to all* would seem to denote some rule of correspondence. But no one, it may be maintained, can really pretend to translate or explain the sentence. Therefore PODECHARD's emendation > *hæbhæl ka'ashær lakkol*, joining *hæbhæl* to the preceding, may be worth considering: *all of it is vanity in their sight; inasmuch as for all there is one fate*. The sequel gives a good review of contrasts obtaining in Qohælæth's time.

9. 3 *Kol 'ashær na'asa; all that happens. We'acharaw 'æl ham-methim, and after that: to the dead!*

9. 4 *Ki mi 'ashær yibhchar(?)*. Qere: *yechubbar: is joined*. The MT undoubtedly understands the text thus: *for to him who is joined with all the living there is hope*, and nothing better can be proffered. The *kethibh* is inexplicable.

9. 5 *the dead know nothing and there is no reward for them i. e. they have completely lost all connection with the things under the sun* (cf. vs. 6 b). Nothing is said here of the real fate of the dead. That very problem belongs to the futile pursuit of searching 'under the sun'.

9. 7 Here begins again the description of the noble life. Enjoy the moments in joy and happy heart for *already now in the present (kebhar)* God has accepted thy works; He likes you to do what you do *i. e. the works given you by Him in every moment*.

9. 9 The nobler life implies a different attitude to woman than that entailed by the life under the sun. In the noble life man receives as a gift from God a beloved wife. The picture is

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<sup>58</sup> Strange that among expositors only LEIMDÖRFER and ALLGEIER keep to the meaning suggested by the text itself. LEIMDÖRFER: »Alles ist vor ihnen her (bestimmt)» (contrast KUHN: alles ist ihnen *vorherbestimmt*), ALLGEIER: »Alles ist vergangen».

certainly drawn from life.

9. 10 A new element of the description of the higher attitude of life. Translate with A. V., PODECHARD and WILLIAMS, disregarding the Massoretic accentuation: »*whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might*«. <sup>59</sup> Put all your concentration, your joy, and your ability, to the accomplishment of the works that you find before you in every moment of your life. This is the very opposite of the slaving and toiling attitude towards work, which follows from a life »under the sun«. All the futile desires, the consideration of what becomes of the results of one's works, all fear, anxiety, insatiety, and dissatisfaction, are removed from the man who gives all his strength to the duties of the moment. <sup>60</sup> 10 b seems really to enunciate that there is no personal (or perhaps better: active) life in Sheol. <sup>61</sup>

9. 11-16 Illustrations of the incongruities of the life under the sun.

9. 11 *Mēroš* hapaxleg. = *m<sup>e</sup>ruša*, *course*, *running*.

9. 12 *Yuqashim*, 'snared', interpreted as part. po'al without

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. BÔ YIN RĀ, *Das Buch vom lebendigen Gott*<sup>1</sup> p. 50: »Tätig sollst du sein und *wirken* auf deinem Wege, wo immer zu *Tat* und *Wirken* du *Kraft* und *Begabung* in dir findest!«

<sup>60</sup> Cf. BÔ YIN RĀ, *Das Buch vom Glück* p. 73: »Wer entschlossen ist sein Glück zu schaffen für den giebt es keinen grauen Alltag, keine Furcht und keine Sorge mehr. Er wird sich heute nicht um das was morgen sein mag sorgen und jedoch wird jeder seiner Tage ihm den kommenden Tag auf beste Weise vorbereiten«.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. however KUHN p. 45 f.: »Solange der Mensch lebt, hat er Aussicht ... das sich ihm ... Gelegenheit bietet zu irgendeiner weisheitsvollen Tätigkeit ... Lässt er das Leben, statt es mit solchem Inhalt auszufüllen ... unbenützt dahingehen, so ist es für immer verloren ... wobei es für Koh. selbstverständlich ist, dass, wenn Gott einem Menschen in diesem Leben seine Gnade zuwendet, seine *Hoffnung* ... mit dem Tode nicht zu Ende ist.«



preformative *mem*. But is it better to emend > *meyuqashim*, explaining the error as haplography.

9.14 The identity of the happenings here recorded cannot be ascertained. *Meşodhim* should be emended > *meşurim*: *siege-works*, clearly required by the context (MC NEILE, PODECHARD.)

9. 16 The lesson drawn from the illustration belongs to the same category as that of 9. 11, and that again repeats the statement of 8. 14. There is no correspondence in the world 'under the sun' between man's value and the fate meted out to him. (Cf. Theognis 233 f., RANSTON 39.)

9. 17-10. 4 clearly breaks up the continuity between 9. 16 and 10. 5. The verses consist in proverbial sentences on the subject of wisdom and folly. Naturally the expositors who deny the unity of the book regard these verses as emanating from a different source from Qohælæth. SIEGFRIED attributes 9. 13-10. 3, and MC NEILE, BARTON 9. 17-10.3 to »the *chakham*«, PODECHARD marks 9. 17-10. 4 as »sixième groupe de sentences: éloge de la sagesse et des sages«. But even if the essential unity of composition of Ecclesiastes be recognized, the verses in question will have to be treated as interpolations.

9. 17 a *moshel bak-kesilim*, a ruler among fools or he that speaks in proverbs among fools (PODECHARD). The verse has about as many translations as there are expositors.<sup>62</sup> Best perhaps: the words (of prayer) of the wise spoken in quiet are heard (by God) rather than the loud cry of him who conducts public prayer among the fools. (This is, approximately, WIL-

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<sup>62</sup>J. E. CHR. SCHMIDT: »Besser: dem leisen Rathe des Weisen zu gehorchen, als dem Gebieter-schreien des Thoren« (Similarly LEIMDÖRFER.) NACHTIGAL: »Ruhige Vernunft zwar hört mehr des Weisen Rede, als Narren hören das Geschrei ihres Führers«. ALLGEIER: »Die Worte von Weisen werden in Ruhe gesprochen, jedoch überhört von dem Geschrei des Herrschers

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LIAMS' rendering on the basis of the Targum.)

10. 1 *yabh'ish yabbia'*: *will stink, will pour forth* is corrupt. PODECHARD emends > *yabh'ishu ma'ase: dead flies infect the preparation of the perfumer's oil*. The second clause as it stands: *weightier (yaqar being an Aramaism) than wisdom, than honour, is a little folly.*)

10. 4 *marpe yanniach, tranquillity will set aside great offences* (WILLIAMS), better: *will guard against*.

10. 5-7 Here the list of incongruities is resumed.

10. 8-13 contain proverbial sayings of a similar character as those of 9.17-10. 4. It is difficult to detect in them the object always sensed in Qohælæth.

10. 8 *Chofer gummaş, he that diggeth a pit. Gummaş* is Aramaic (det. *gumşā*. Cf. Mand. *kumşe*. G. R. 89. 9).

10. 9 *massia' 'abhanim, he who moves stones*.

10. 15 *'ashær lo yadha' lalækhæth 'æl 'ir, for he knoweth not how to go to the city*. The sense is (1) either: »the way to a town is so plainly marked ... that it can only be missed by a fool« (WILLIAMS) or (2) »The physical toil of the fools wearies each so much that he does not know how to get home« (*idem*). The former alternative seems preferable.

10. 16 *Shæm-malkekha na'ar* (1) when thy king is child or (2) when thy king is a servant, a parvenu (PODECHARD). Best is: *childish. We-saraikh bab-boqær yokhelu: and thy princes eat in the morning* »instead of attending to their duties, Jer xxi 12. The typical morning meal of the Oriental is very light ...

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unter den Toren». LEVY: »Worte der Weisen, in Ruhe gehört, sind besser als das Geschrei eines Herrschers unter den Toren«. THILO: » ... als unter Narren Tyrannengebrüll«. KUHN (*mizaaqath* > *miss<sup>e</sup>hoqob*): » ... besser als die Scherze eines (witzigen) Spruchredners unter den Toren. WRIGHT (cf. HAHN): »Words of wise men uttered in quiet are heard, better than the shout of a ruler among fools«.

morning revelling was looked upon naturally as the extreme of profligacy.» (WILLIAMS.) Cf. Isa 5. 11, 22.

10. 17 *Big-gebhura we-lo bhashsh<sup>e</sup>thi: in a manly way and not in debauchery* (THILO, PODECHARD).

10. 18 ‘*Ašaltaim* is difficult. It is recommended to read instead the simple ‘*ašluth* (sloth): *by slothfulness the roof sinketh in. Šifluth* also is a hapaxlegomenon: *idleness*.

10. 19 *we-hak-kæsæf ya‘anæ ‘æp hak-kol: and money answers all of it; hak-kol* always retrospects or refers to something concrete. Here it retrospects on *læchæm* and *yayin: money answers (= provides) all of it*.

10. 20 *mädäda* ‘uncertain; probably Aram. = *knowledge, insight > mind, thought*.

11. 1 *shallach lachmekha ‘al pene hamayim, send forth thy bread upon the face of the waters*, generally taken to be an exhortation to charity. WILLIAMS gives an excellent review of the various other interpretations applied and himself decides in favour of: *send forth bravely that which ought to be thy support, in commercial ventures in ships on the face of the waters: it will not be lost*. It is, however, probable that the ‘waters’ are used as a simile for ‘the world’ or for ‘time’, and that the proverb actually refers to the performance of some good deed. The simile is: thy deed will drive with the waves far away, you will lose sight of it and forget it, and then, many years after, when you least expect it, it will return to you.

11. 2 is well paraphrased by WILLIAMS: *do not put your eggs all into one basket*. The Hebrew proverb is probably as wide in meaning as the English one adduced. It might even include the performance of good deeds.

11. 3 *sham yehu; the form yehu* is generally recognized to be a Massoretic miscréant. Either read: *yæhæwe: there it rests* (PODECHARD) or simply *hu : there it is*.

11. 5 This verse clearly proceeds from Qohælæth. *Ka-‘aşamim* bears the mark of being corrupt on the surface of it. One should perhaps with DRIVER, LEVY and PODECHARD emend > *ba‘aşamim* (‘*Just as thou dost not know what is the way of the breath (of life) into the bones of the womb of the woman with child*’). For similar pointing to the mysteries of birth cf. Job 10. 8-11, Ps 139. 15, 16. (Cf., however, 1.6.)

11. 8 b *we-yizkor ‘ath yeme ha-choshæq ki harbe yihyu kâl shæb-ba habhæl*: *but let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many, all that cometh is vanity*. One does not know for certain to what this admonition refers. The days of darkness are suitably = death. *Kâl shæb-ba habhæl*, again, is a difficult construction. If one recognizes in this verse one of the usual admonitions to the nobler attitude of life, one must also own that the admonition has a character very different from that of all the earlier, similar sections. Qoh. seems here to introduce into the contemplation of the nobler life precisely that consideration for the fate and end of things which he has hitherto disparaged as belonging to the world under the sun.

11. 9 Here the full power of joy seems to be restricted to the time of youth; also the very enjoyment is treated with a restriction pointing forwards to the judgement to come. Contrast the rest of the book where Qohælæth (1) reiterately states that the *real* joy belongs to *all the days of ones life* and (2) enjoins the attachment to God in the present, leaving aside all fear of the coming judgement for the wicked who pursue the futile ends of the sublunar world.

11. 10 again, the youth and prime of life in themselves are pronounced to be vanity. One notices the antithetical force of ‘thy heart’ and ‘thy flesh’. It is as if some reader of the book of *Qohælæth* had found it rather dangerous reading for youths and then commented upon it in this way.

12. 1-7 follows up the line begun in the preceding pseudo-description of the better life in a very poetical way. It is clearly discernible that the interest of this writer is to picture the frailties and sombre aspects of decrepitude and death with as dark colours as possible.

12. 3 ff. are since of old in parts interpreted metaphorically, each simile referring to some member of the human body. The explanations of these similes have caused discussions (*Vide* THILO). But these questions are of value neither for the textual and linguistic study of the book nor for the determination of thought and teachings of the author or authors. The verses have a strange and ominous poetical character.

12. 3 *Ki mi'eṭu*, the pi'el seems to require the sense: *because they produce but little* (corn), but it is often thought to be a mere emphasis on the intransitive sense: *because they are but few* (the teeth?). 12. 4 *weyaqum leqol haṣṣipor*: *and one rises up at the voice of a bird*, the decrepit being light of sleep. The text is probably corrupt. PODECHARD proffers > *we yid-dom qol*: *and the voice of the bird becomes silent* (cf. DE JONG), KUHN (*yaqum* > *yimmaq*) *dwindles into the voice of a bird*.

12.5 *gam mig-gabhoah yira'u wechathchattim bad-ḏærækh*; also one fears high places and terrors are in the way. *Weyaneṣ*, impf. hif'il from *naṣaṣ*, denominative, drive blossoms, blossom. The consonantal text probably, however, represents some form of *na'aṣ*, *despise*, e. g. in some passive gender, which would give the meaning: *and the almond-tree shall be despised* (PODECHARD: *wino'aṣ*). *Weyistabbel hæ-chaghabh*, *and the grasshopper* (1) *shall be heavy* or (2) *shall drag itself along*, as a burden. *Wethafer* impf. hil'il from *parar*: *shall break*. PODECHARD emends > *wethufar*, *shall be broken, without effect*. *Ki holekh ha-'adham 'æl beth 'olamo we-sabhebhu bhash-shuq has-sofedhim*: *for man is going to*

*his everlasting home* (cf. Ps. 49. 11, Tob. 3. 6, Targ Isa 14. 18, Tos. Ber. 3) and *the* (professional) *mourners go about the street* (»in which the dying man is: they want to be hired, and take care to be near the house when the death actually takes place«, WILLIAMS).

12. 6 The metaphors are resumed, but now they refer to death itself, not to the state of decrepitude. *Yirchaq* (kethibh) or *yeracheq* (qere) 'be far' or 'be removed', are equally improbable; the emendation > *yinnatheq* is natural, when reference is to a cord: *before the silver cord is snapped asunder; we-tharus*, 'shall run' or 'rush', is usually emended into some word meaning 'be broken'. PODECHARD suggests *we-theros*: *and the golden bowl is broken*. The metaphor is that of a lamp filled with oil, suspended by a silver cord. The burning lamp, as is well-known, was a common simile for life.

12. 7 The interest centres in the interpretation of the return of the *ruach* to God who gave it. As both PODECHARD and WILLIAMS rightly acknowledge, *one* interpretation at least is excluded: that referring the return to an absorption into the Divine being. The *ruach* must be taken to mean a separate entity. But whether it was thought to represent the real ego of the man who died, so that the latter would continue as a conscious personality, or the separation between the 'dust' and the 'breath' meant the dissolution of the being as such, to that question one can only proffer guesses. It must also be recognized that the ideas of the writer of this verse does not throw any light upon the doctrine of Qohælæth, since it may be said that, at the least, it is highly problematic whether Qohælæth was the author of this section.

12. 9-10; 12. 11; 12. 12; 12. 13, 14 are additions, probably affixed to the book in different stages. 12. 9, 10 is aptly characterized by WILLIAMS as an »Encomium of Qoh. and his

efforts». The addition would naturally emanate from a disciple. 12. 11 Lit.: *The words of the wise are as goads* (used to goad the oxen) *and as nails well fastened, masters of collection* (? , or 'stores'?, the sense of the word 'asuppoth, being uncertain), *they are given by one shepherd* (God). Masters of collections (*ba'ale 'asuppoth*) are, probably, the words of the wise, suitably arranged in collections to be 'nailed' to memory. 12. 12: »With the exception of the words which have been given by one shepherd, and approved by the council and consent of the wise, be careful of proffered teachings. Be contented with the books approved of old». 12. 13 *sof dabhar*: final words, the end of the matter, or the recapitulation. 12. 14 *'im tobh 'im ra'*, *whether it be good or bad* refers to 'every work'. Nothing, not evil itself could be hidden from God.

*Note on the canonicity of the book.*

Qohælæth's place in the O.T. Canon has never been seriously questioned by the Christian Church. Among the Jews, on the other hand, the book cannot be said to have been unanimously and *unreservedly* accepted until well up in the fifth century. The Jewish tradition (*Mishna Yadhaim* 3, 5, *Edhuyoth* 5, 3) records that the canonicity (the power of defiling the hands) was a matter of controversy between the schools of Shammai (against) and Hillel (in favour of) and that the synod at Jamnia (A.D. 95) with a majority vote decided with Be Hillel. Much discussion must have gone on in the time of the Tannaim and Amoraim (*Bab. Talmud Shab.* 30 a, b, *Meghilla* 7 a, *Babh. Bath.* 3 b, 4 a, *Midhr. Eccl. R.* to 1. 3.) The objections were doctrinal difficulties and supposed contradictions. It is a mistake to appeal to inclusion of the book among the five Megilloth as a demonstration of the value put upon it, for the

liturgical use of these was (with the exception of Esther) not established until in post-Talmudic times and that only by degrees. (I. ELBOGEN, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst*<sup>2</sup> pp. 184 ff.)



## II. Summary.

### § 1. The disposition of the book.

The structure of Qohælæth is not built upon any pre-conceived plan of strict successive developments. The divisions made in an analysis of the book are therefore doomed to be more or less arbitrary.<sup>63</sup>

Yet the book is not without ordered plan. This may be characterized thus: there are three, different, although inter-related, elements developed by the writer *viz.* (a) the futility and unworthiness of the life 'under the sun', (b) the possibility of man adopting an attitude towards life which lifts him above the sublunar reality, (c) proverbial sayings of a sapiential character, which are however adopted for the purpose of illustrating one or the other of the said themes. The three elements are not treated successively but extend throughout the whole writing. Besides Qohælæth proper, we have, further, of course to recognize some interpolations and additions.

The *principal* element, — that is the thesis of the present commentary — is the theme of the »better life«. If now, we mark out the passages which belong to this category, we are actually able to state a certain progressive development. In

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<sup>63</sup> As examples of excellent but differing analyses and résumés of the contents of the book reference may be made to those given by WILLIAMS, THILO and KUHN respectively.

the following disposition, with its arbitrary divisions, the said principal passages are indicated in a parallel column.

Divisions:

The expressions of the principal theme:

1. 1-11 Prologue. The writing introduced, its subject indicated.

I. 12-2. 26 Two different modes of living 'under the sun' pursued and tested to their utmost consequences.

3. 1-15 Everything has its definite place in time.

3. 16-4. 16 The *tachath hash-shæmæsh* conditions pictured. The sublunar reality viewed by itself is injustice, death, loneliness and strife exclusively.

4. 17-5. 6 Advices with regard to religious observances.

—) 1. 13 a very slight allusion: the 'gift' of God.

1) 2. 10 My heart found 'joy' out of all my toil; this was my 'share' from all my toil.

2) 2. 24-26 Nothing 'better' than accepting the moment (*eat* and *drink*) and have 'joy'. This a 'gift' from *God*.

3) 3. 11-14 God gives men the sum of *all times*, if they attach themselves to him ('fear' him) and do not aspire beyond the moment present (forwards or backwards).

4) 3. 22 Man ought not to stretch his imaginations and desires either forward or backward, but should *rejoice* in the *works* of the present. This is his *share*.

5) 4. 6 The better life gives 'quietness' (peace) whereas the sublunar life is continual unrest and futile toil.

5. 7, 8 Injustice due to the whole social structure.

5. 9-6. (8) 9 The peculiar conditions of the life under the sun illustrated by instances of the vanity of riches; man the slave of his riches.

6. (9) 10-7. 29 The polar opposites of the sublunar life.

6) 5. 17-19 'Good' for a man is to enjoy the moment, 'all the days' of his life. That is his 'share'. God's 'gift' is that He makes man a 'master' of his riches in the moments he enjoys them.

7) 6. 9 'Better' is 'eyes' sight' (of the nobler life) than the pursuit of desires (of the sublunar life).

8) 7. 1 Good for man *all the days* of his life is to let his days be like the *shadow* letting them pass by him without stretching himself after them or towards them.

9) 7.2-13 Proverbial sentences on 'better things', adopted to illustrate the attitude of the 'better' life.

10) 7. 14 In the nobler life man is able even to enjoy both good and *evil days*.

11) 7. 18 In the nobler life man is able to *fulfil obligations in opposite directions*.

12) 7. 26 The good, being attached to God, escape even sexual desires.

8. 1-15 Various counsels given by Qohælæth concerning man's conduct; proverbial sayings. Evil conditions of sublunar life.

8. 16-9. 10 A repetition and variation of the theme of the futility of aspiring beyond the moment given, either with regard to knowledge or with regard to desire.

9.11-10.20 Illustrations of the incongruities of the life under the sun.

11. 1-6 Proverbial sentences.

11. 7-12. 8 Youth and decrepitude (by a later reader,

13) 7. 29 God *created man with the object that he should live the noble life.*

14) 8. 1, 5, 6 proverbial sentences adopted.

15) 8. 12 he who fears God shall enjoy '*good*' in spite of evil surrounding him; he learns to treat his days as a *shadow*.

16) 8. 15 the joy of the better life becomes man's *constant and permanent companion 'all the days'* of his life.

17) 9. (4). 7-10

a) God *accepts the works* of the good life in the very *moment they are done*.

b) The good life implies *happiness with a beloved woman*.

c) Positive teaching: the *works* of every moment, the works given man by God, on them he should *concentrate* his whole being in every moment.

(9-4 The term '*bittachon*', hope, may possibly be a technical term of allusion to the '*better life*')

wanting to make the book more suitable for the young generation).

12. 9-10 »Encomium of Qohælæth and his efforts» (WILLIAMS).

12. 11-14 Two final sayings and advices. Conclusion.

## § 2. The composition of the book.

1. The book is a unity. It is not composed of different sources. The only reasons for assuming Ecclesiastes to be a compilation of various sources, *viz.* (a) apparent discrepancies in meaning and (b) different literary character of the several pieces of the book, are insufficient.<sup>64</sup> The discrepancies are seen largely to be due to the writer's peculiar way of picturing vividly the two different modes of life to their extreme consequences. The different literary character of some pieces from that of others is explained when one realizes that Qohælæth makes use of *either* current proverbs which he adopts to the objects of his own writing *or* proverbial sayings made by himself for the purpose. This has been pointed out in each case in the commentary.

2. What supports the thesis of the essential unity of the book is that, apart from the peculiarities inherent in the proverbial style, the language and terms used in Qohælæth are throughout the same.

The most important champions of the theory of different sources are MC NEILE, BARTON and PODECHARD. The theories

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<sup>64</sup> *Vide* STAVE p. 266.

of BICKELL, SIEGFRIED and the system of sources evolved by the latter have been finally demolished by PODECHARD. Mc NEILE's ingenious theory may be summed up thus: there are three main sources (1) Qohælæth proper; (2) the sayings of the *Chakham*, or Wise man, being the proverbial sayings, *meshalim*, found 4. 5, 9-12; 6. 7, 9 a; 7. 1 a, 4-12, 19; 8. 1, 9. 17 f.; 10. 1-3, 8-14 a, 15, 18 f.; 12. 11 f. »bearing on life and nature, perhaps culled from various sources»: (3) the insertions by the *Chasidh*, or Pious man, who disapproved of and tried to correct such of Qohælæth's utterances and statements that seemed to him impious or susceptible of being so understood: 2. 26; 3. 14 b, 17; 5. 1-7; 7. 18 b, 26 b, 29; 8. 2 b, 3 a, 5, 6 a, 11-13; 11. 9 b; 12. 1 a, 13 f. To these sources are of course added the Editor and the Glossator. The passages here indicated might be tested in the commentary. Some are, of course, recognized as glosses or interpolations, but that is a different matter (*vide* below). Some passages again owe their inclusion in Mc NEILE's list of *chakham* or *chasidh*-sentences to an incorrect translation. This applies in particular to 8. 11-13.

WILLIAMS<sup>65</sup> has produced a statistical diagram of the results of a comparison of the style of the three supposed sources, which diagram shows that, to quote the author, there is no »difference between the three authors, save only that the writings of the *Chakham* have a greater proportion of such words and phrases than the other two, which is only to be expected in proverbs». (The conclusion, hence, is the same as that reached from a different starting-point by the present writer.)

BARTON, PODECHARD (and JASTROW) in all *essentials* follow Mc NEILE, hence there is no object in examining the details of

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<sup>65</sup> p. xxi.

source-divisions of those expositors.

3. There are, however, interpolations and additions. *The Epilogue* is generally recognized as an addition and its additional character is so obvious that it need not be further demonstrated. But as has been advanced in the commentary, there are also other passages that cannot very well be attributed to Qohælæth:

1) the interpolations, vss 7. 19; 9.17-10.4; 10. 8-13

2) the strange, poetical, piece extending about 11. 7-12. 7. Some of the terms used by Qohælæth in the preceding part of the book recur here, but they are put to a use that not only is in discrepancy with, but actually annuls, the whole teaching of Qohælæth. The piece has much to do with youth, to which it addresses solemn warnings, going so far as to draw an impressive picture of coming decrepitude and death in order to move the hearer from the pursuit of the lusts of youth. — Some (*e. g.* THILO) regard also the Prologue (1. 1, 2) as additional.

### § 3. Relations and affinities.

The relations and affinities of Ecclesiastes have been examined minutely by PODECHARD.<sup>66</sup> He gives the results of his examinations under the following headings: (1) *Ecclesiastes and Ben Sira*, (2) *Ecclesiastes and the Book of Wisdom*, (3) *Ecclesiastes and the Apocalyptic Literature*, (4) *Ecclesiastes and the doctrines of the Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes*, (5) *Ecclesiastes and Greek Philosophy*. The present writer openly avows that he has no single detail of original discovery to add to the records given by PODECHARD in his Introduction and Commentary, at least as regards the domains of (1) – (3),

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<sup>66</sup> pp. 55-109.

and he seriously doubts that anybody will be able to add anything as far as the sources hitherto known are concerned. (1) Ben Sira had of course long ago been adduced. There is general agreement concerning the conclusions reached by PODECHARD<sup>67</sup>: »Au cas ou il y aurait dépendance entre les deux auteurs, l'Ecclesiaste serait certainement l'original. La pensée est chez lui bien à sa place dans un contexte qui l'appelle et lui convient. Elle fait essentiellement partir du système d'idées de Qohælæth. Surtout, elle exprime pour lui une réalité physique; il parle sans figures. Dans Ben Sira, nous sommes en présence de considérations générales sur les crimes des méchants et sur la ruine qui menace les oeuvres, tandis que le juste est affermi et ne chancelle pas;» This of textual parallels. With regard to parallels of thought PODECHARD thinks it probable that they are due to Ben Sira borrowing from Qohælæth.

The parallels of thoughts or ideas recorded are: 1. 4 = Ben Sira 14. 18; 1. 18 = Eccles:us 21. 12; 2. 23 = B. S. 40. 1-7; 3. 7 = B. S. 20. 5; 3. 11 = B. S. 39. 33-34, 21; 3. 20 = Eccles:us 16. 28; 17. 1 = B. S. 41. 10; 4. 8 = B. S. 14. 4; 5. 1-2 = B. S. 7. 14; 5. 3-5 = B. S. 18. 22-24; 5. 11 b = B. S. 34. 1; 6. 1-2 = B. S.; 11. 16-17; 7. 12 a = B. S. 14. 26-27; 7. 20-22 = 19. 10 13-16; 7. 26 b = Eccles:us 26. 23; 8. 11-13 = B. S. 5. 4-7; 9. 16 = B. S.; 13. 22; 10. 11 = B. S. 12. 13; 10. 12 = Eccles:us 21 c 27 etc. Further, as parallels of the passages of Qohælæth enjoining joy and happiness PODECHARD records: B. S. 14. 1-19; 30. 15-24; 38. 16-23.

The parallels between *Wisdom of Solomon* and Qohælæth give a negative result in the opinions both of PODECHARD and WILLIAMS. The passages of *Wisdom of Solomon*, coming un-

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<sup>67</sup> pp. 57 f. In his introduction he cautiously denies that they are definite but they are born out by his investigations in the commentary.



der consideration, are 1. 16; 2. 9, 22; 3. 2, 3; 8. 10, 13, 16. *Wisdom* is directed against a quasi-epicureical philosophy of life. It is not with Qohælæth that he joins issue. »In brief, the materialists attacked by the *Book of Wisdom* were persons who, by mental calibre, religious faith, or rather the want of it, and lack of practical sympathy, were quite other than the patient, God-fearing, and kindly author of the book of Ecclesiastes» (WILLIAMS p. xxx)

The points in which it has been suggested that Qohælæth is dependent upon the *Apocalyptic Literature* or refers to the specific religious thoughts and speculations from which those writings emanated are (1) the ideas of an after-life, (2) the claim of the apocalyptist to know and reckon the times and periods for God's dealings with man for the beginning till the end. Both points are, rightly, dismissed by PODECHARD. The sphere of thought in which Qoh. is moving is quite different. His teachings on the after-life are too undecided to allow either of a passive influence or a controversial issue. When, again, Qohælæth denies that man can know anything of the future, this has no reference to eschatological questions but merely to the personal desire of men to know and plan for the immediate future.

PODECHARD goes into detail in his examination and rejection of the theories of Qohælæth's dependence upon and connection with the ideas peculiar (or recorded as peculiar) to the Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes. It is certainly true that he cannot be classified as belonging to one or the other of those three parties, as far as our records of their relative positions and tenets go. PODECHARD makes rather much of the fact that Qohælæth combines two ideas which were a matter of controversy between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: with the Pharisees he holds that everything, especially human affairs,

is subjected under Divine Providence, with the Sadducees he holds that man is the artisan of his own happiness or misfortune. This proves that he is anterior to both parties. — It may be submitted that PODECHARD'S arguments are not quite to the point. The angle from which the problem is to be approached, is not the various details of doctrine on Providence Retribution and After-Life. Here we move on uncertain ground. The fact that tells best is, according to the view of the present writer, that the history of the beginnings of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and still more, of the Essenes, is so uncertain that it is quite impossible to draw any conclusions at all. The peculiar position of Qohælæth would, of course, be in keeping with a Sadducean atmosphere better than with a Pharisean or Essene. But positive proofs for an affinity with the Sadducees cannot be obtained. This is clear already from the fact that LEVY, who made this identification of Qohælæth with Sadduceism his thesis, did not succeed in establishing his point.

The question of Qohælæth's relation to Hellenistic, philosophical ideas is, on the other hand, easily settled. To be sure, if one would try to press him into some specific school, or know what specific philosophy has influenced him, there would be no end of baffling difficulties.<sup>68</sup> But if one is content to know whether he was influenced by current philosophies of life or not, this can be answered without difficulty. It is obvious that Qohælæth was an open-minded and inquiring nature, and that he lived in Hellenistic time. It stands to reason that he must have been acquainted with current Greek popular philosophy. It cannot very well be denied that his injunction of detachment from the stream of events bears a certain similarity with the ἀταραξία, that his thought of the impossibility

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<sup>68</sup> The best résumé of the history of exposition in regard to theories of Greek-Hellenistic influence on Qohælæth is given by PODECHARD.

of knowing 'before and after', of man and beast being on the same level, his »lamentations over the frailty and shortness of man's life« etc. resemble thoughts that were common coin in the Greek popular philosophy. His position, it may be submitted, may be defined simply as follows: he was an independent nature; his desire after knowledge of things was genuine; his piety and adherence to God were ineradicable elements of his being; he was a student of men and of life; but his interest was religious. He arrived for his own part at a practical solution of life's difficulties and he tried to make this solution clear to and imitable by others. Then he would use such thoughts and expressions as were current at the time and which he had assimilated. But he was not trying, consciously, to teach a definite, imported, philosophy of life. It might be accounted as safely established that he made use of the general trend of Greek wisdom-utterances attributed *e. g.* to Theognis and Hesiod, which were common property of the writer's Hellenistic environment. (RANSTON p. 150.) Whether the ideas current included such coming from India (Buddhism, DILLON, pp. 122-129) it is impossible either to deny or affirm. When it was possible to use the Indian *karma* as an equivalent for *ma'ase* (8. 14, above) this of course does not imply that the notion of *karma* was present to the writer.

#### **§ 4. Doctrinal and philosophical standpoint.**

The central doctrine of Qohælæth is that which forms the aim of his book, *i. e.* the doctrine of the peculiar attitude to life which to such a degree is his own that he has invented technical terms by which to express it.

As has been stated already, his primary intent is religious. The book is concerned with the relation God-man-the world.

His doctrine being quite original in its expression, it is best

not to try to translate his technical terms into philosophical or dogmatical equivalents. It is better to attempt retaining as far as possible the actual terms used by him, and, where this cannot be done, to use equivalents that move within the author's own sphere of ideas. It can of course not be avoided that in this way the terminology becomes rather clumsy.

It serves no purpose repeating here the various pronouncements in the book of the specific doctrine in question. A survey of the pronouncements and their probable significance may be gathered from a perusal of the relevant passages in the commentary with the assistance of the paradigm given in § 1 (above).

It remains, however, to summarize the consequences of the adoption of the thesis on the problem of the supposed standpoint of Qohælæth.

1. *Scepticism.* The scepticism of Qohælæth has been excellently analyzed and vindicated by JOHANNES PEDERSEN. It is true that Qohælæth expressly denies that man can know anything of the Divine plan with the world, of the future, or of the past of the sublunar world. God has created man with a *limited* knowledge. But in spite of this, the present writer ventures to stress the fact that, according to Qohælæth, in the last instance, knowledge is only limited with regard to actual facts, the process in time and the subsistence in place, of the *sublunar* world. He states, also expressly, that God intends the man who adopts the 'better' life, to have real *wisdom*, to know even some general principles of a theoretical character *e. g.* the law of appointed times. Further, knowledge of moral values is throughout presupposed. Man is able to know what is good and bad, — that is treated as selfevident —, he is also able to know 'what to do' in every moment of his life. One might conclude, hence, that it is misleading to call Qohælæth's stand-

point — with regard to the *positive* part of his teaching — sceptical.

2. *Hedonism*. A superficial perusal of the passages of the book which treat of the 'better' life would find support for labelling Qohælæth a hedonist from injunctions to find life's happiness in eating, drinking, rejoicing in a beloved woman *et sim*. It should not be necessary, however, to go into details in order to demonstrate that Qohælæth by no means adopts a hedonistic view of life. An analysis of the passages easily shows the enjoyment of sensual pleasures by no stretch of argument can be said to have been put forth as the end and aim of life. It is, acc. to him, an evident token of the futility of the sublunar pursuits, that, when examined closely, they are shown to be mere strivings for food and drink (6. 7). When Qohælæth admonishes his hearers to 'eat and drink' he obviously does not intend the eating and drinking as a means of obtaining sensual pleasure. Instead, the 'eating and drinking' forms the simplest illustrative instance of the detached life, taking the moment as it is given by God. Obviously, with the man leading the higher life the experience of the moment is not *filled* with the sensual pleasure in question, but has its primary value in its attachment to God in real joy.

3. *Eudemonism*. Still less the weight of Qohælæth's argument is anchored in the idea of happiness. Although *simcha* (joy) plays a central part in the doctrine, one easily recognizes that eudemonism, the idea of a desired end to be obtained, is one of the main ideas the futility of which he emphasizes strongly. And the real joy of the better life is not put up as an object to be pursued *because* it is joy or happiness, but because it is a gift from God. The author's real interest does not centre in the obtainment of happiness but in finding the meaning of life (practically, not theoretically), and the meaning of life to

him self-evidently centres in God.

4. *Pessimism.* Qohælæth is a pessimist to the same extent as he is a sceptic, that is to say, with regard to his positive teaching he may not be termed a pessimist. When this is done, the stress is laid either on his (1) *theoretical* or on his (2) *affective* attitude. In neither cases he may be characterized by that term. (1) Certainly, he takes a pessimistic view of the *tachath hash-shæmæsh* life, but *not*, and this is decisive, of the world nor of man *per se*. How can a thinker who states that God has made everything appropriate in its time, be termed a pessimist? Seen in the light of Wisdom the world is well-ordered and man is able, in that world, to lead a life to be characterized as a life in the constant accompaniment of intrinsic peace and joy, a life in which God occupies man's heart with joy every day. (2) Qohælæth's affective attitude is not pessimistic. He is not irritated, nor despondent and unhappy.<sup>69</sup> The reason why Qohælæth is so commonly supposed to be a pessimist, is of course to be seen in his lengthy descriptions of the many futilities, injustices, and sufferings, of the *tachath hash-shæmæsh* existence. But these are to be explained from the aim of the book.

5. *Had Qohælæth partly, or wholly, lost his faith in the Jewish religion?* He is a Jew and feels himself a Jew. Of his belief in a God there is no problem. God is the centre of his life. But, on the other hand, the references to peculiar points of Jewish religious life are strangely wanting. No word of the *Tora*, or of the precepts. The proper Divine names of God, *viz.* Yhwh and Adhonai, are not used. No effusions of piety.

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<sup>69</sup>That he had passed through a pessimistic crisis is evident. But, as STAVE points out, »the crisis was no longer acute... He had accustomed himself so well to his position that this no longer causes him any anxiety or wailing» (p. 265).

Nothing of the peculiar position of Israel as the chosen people of God. »He is a remarkable instance of how far some Jews could desist their old faith and yet what a power the Israelitish religion was in their life» (STAVE p. 264). »Although he gave up the dogmas of his religion he strongly opposed giving up the ethical principles therein» (STAVE p. 265). 'Practical reason' has proved stronger than 'theoretical reason'. (STAVE p. 265, 266.)

### § 5. Time, place and aim of the book.

It is generally admitted that, since the Book of Sirach written about 190 B. C. is dependent on Qohælæth, the *terminus ante quem* must be about 200 B. C. There is, however, no certain *terminus post quem*. Only the general indication of the language, representing an admittedly late stage of development, requires a date not too far back in time. The historical indications of the book would seem to point to the time of Greek dominion, e. g. the pictures and allusions to the 'king', who seems not to be far away. Although 'war' is mentioned (8. 8, 9. 11) it forms so remarkably unimportant a part of the writer's descriptions of the sufferings of the sublunar life that it would be near at hand to think that the Jews themselves, among whom the author was living, had for some time, at least for about a generation, been enjoying peace. This applies only to the time of the Egyptian dominion about 300-205. This would give about 250 as a probable *terminus post quem*.

The place of composition is either Alexandria or Jerusalem. The indication pointing to the former place are vague and uncertain: 11. 1 as referring to the trade with grain (KLEINERT<sup>70</sup>) or »to scattering the seed upon lands inundated by the

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<sup>70</sup>T. *Stud. u. Krit.* 1883 p. 779.

Nile» (KNIGHT<sup>71</sup>), 11. 5 to the school of anatomy and medicine at Alexandria, 12. 5 the phrase »the house of eternity as belonging to the recognized Egyptian phraseology for the lower world of shades» (KNIGHT<sup>71</sup>). The indications for Jerusalem are stronger. Expressions as »the city», »the holy place», specially passages as 4. 17; 5. 5; 8. 10, with tolerable safety presuppose Jerusalem as the place of writing.

Concerning the author's personality and social position not much may be safely deduced from the book. It is not admissible to deduce from his descriptions of various modes of living that he himself had been living in the circumstances described. But traits which may with some certainty be discerned are: (1) he was comparatively advanced in years at the time of writing the book, (2) he was a man devoted to wisdom, *i. e.* a learned man.

The object of the book is to lead man into the enjoyment of the better life. In order to focus the reader's attention on this life, Qoh. endeavours, first to show the futility of the usual life by pointing out such truths of this life which were immediately acceptable by everybody (or rather, which they were forced to admit: Socratic method), and then, when he has evolved so dark a picture as possible of the ordinary life, to point, by way of contrast, to the life in attachment to God, freedom from harassing anxieties, and enjoyment of real joy and wisdom. One should notice that the author does not arrive at his descriptions of the better life with a sigh of resignation (as would be the case, if he were really a pessimist or sceptic) but by way of a triumphant climax. One notices, further, that the passages within the book treating of the better life themselves gather momentum at each new instance and finish with a climax.

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<sup>71</sup> *Nile and Jordan* 1921 pp. 445 ff.



## § 6. Text and versions.

The Hebrew text preserved is on the whole in a good condition. There are certainly some passages where the text is corrupt beyond any possibility of reconstruction, but the passages are not very numerous.

As a rule, where there is a difference between *Qere* and *Kethibh*, the latter is preferable (ctr. 9. 4). The Massoretic punctuation has been influenced by side-issues, viz. (1) dogmatic considerations (cf. *e. g.* 3. 21), (2) mystical speculations, the real import of which cannot be clearly distinguished. It should be a rule of textual criticism to disregard the Massoretic punctuation and accentuation in all places where the natural reading of the consonantal text points to a sense different from the Massoretic. This rule has been observed throughout in the commentary. For various readings EURINGER is to be adduced.

Of the versions (1) the *Greek* translation included in the LXX has early been the subject of discussion. The point round which the discussion turns is the relation between LXX and Aquila. LXX is shown to base at least to a great extent on the principles of Aquila. A striking example *e. g.* is the rendering of the accusative particle *eth* by the Greek σὺν (in 32 cases of 72). The LXX is, however, different from the version of Aquila preserved in fragments in the Hexapla, but Hieronymus several times speaks of two editions of Aquila's version. It may be, then, that LXX represents either (1) one of these editions, or (2) an independent version by a translator closely related to Aquila. The LXX does not often help in restoring the Hebrew text.

(2) For *Aquila's* fragments FIELD's Hexapla may be used.

(3) *Symmachus* (ab. A. D. 200.) As Symmachus tries to render the logical, not the literal, sense of the text, he is often

of great use for the knowledge at least of the early traditions of interpretation. The value of Symmachus was emphasized already by J. E. CHR. SCHMIDT<sup>72</sup>

(4) *Theodotion* (ab. A. D. 190) revised the LXX. The value of Teodotion does not lie in any light thrown directly upon the Hebrew text, but in the fact that he based upon a better text of the LXX than that preserved to us.

Other versions are: (5) the *old Latin* (ab. A. D. 200), preserved in fragments in Cyprian's writings, (6) the *translation made by Hieronymus in his Commentary* (A. D. 388), (7) the *Vulgate* (A. D. 394), (8) the *Sahidic* version, from the LXX, of textual value for the criticism of the latter, (9) the *Peshitto*, a very literal translation, (10) *Charclensis* (ab. A. D. 620) from the LXX, with marginal notes on readings of the Greek versions found in the Hexapla; hence it is a source for the readings of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, (11) *Targum*: not a version proper and very late, but showing Jewish traditions of interpretation.

## § 7. Language of the book.

The characteristics of the language of Qohælæth may be summed up under the following headings *viz.*

(1) The close resemblance to early Rabbinic New Hebrew.

(2) The Aramaisms.

(3) The use of technical terms, probably designed by the author.

(4) Peculiarities of grammar and syntax (apart from those falling under (1) or (2)).

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<sup>72</sup> P. 334 »Unter den alten Uebersetzungen muss ich die von Symmachus geretteten Fragmente zuerst nennen. Nach meinem Urtheil war Symmachus mit dem Geiste seines Originals vertraut. Ihm dank' ich manche Erklärungen dunkler Stellen...»

(5) Græcisms.

(1) New Hebrew words and expressions (excellently collected by PODECHARD) are: 'i (4. 10; 10. 16) = 'oy; *chus min*, except (2. 25); *chæsrôn*, lack (1. 15); *chæshbon*, cogitation, computation (7. 25, 27; 9. 10); *mele'a*, mulier plena (11. 5); *chefæš*, in the sense of: thing, affair, matter (3. 1, 17; 5. 7; 8. 6). Further 'adhænna (4. 2) and 'adhæn (4. 3) = 'adhain (hitherto, yet),  $\text{ׁוׁוׁ}$  = NH  $\text{ׁוׁ}$ , *mashshæ* = that which. To this list the present writer wants to add: *lamma* in Eccl. equalling the earliest meaning of *shæmma* (occasionally *lema*) in NH, *ke-shæ* (5. 14 = NH *kemo-shæ*, *lawa* (8. 15), *yaša 'eth* (7. 18), *næ'æsa* = *happen*; *yother* used as an adverb (2. 15). Cf. further the Commentary and WRIGHT, pp 490 seqq. (*Glossary*).

(2) Aramaisms are so frequent that BURKITT was lead to put the question whether Eccl. is a translation of an Aramaic original. There is not enough to support such a theory. But it may certainly be true that the author knew and, in all probability, spoke Aramaic.

The best list of the Aramaisms is that prepared by KAUTZSCH<sup>73</sup> to which reference must be made here.

(3) Technical terms are pointed out in the course of the commentary. They are: *chélæq*, *darash*, *hæbhæel*, *hæ'æna libbo be-simcha* (5. 19), *hémma lahæm* (3. 18), 'inyan, *kaš-šæl* (7. 12, 8. 12), *kål yeme chayyaw*, *mattana me-'ælohim*, *mattath*

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<sup>73</sup> *Die Aramaïsmen im Alten Testament*, Halle 1902 p. 93 ff. Cf also the commentary of SIEGFRIED (not quite satisfactory) and WRIGHT's *Glossary*. The list contains the following usages: 'illu, *bešhæl 'ashaer* (8. 17), *gummaš*, *zeman*, *chorim*, *ke'æchadh* (11. 6), *kebhar*, *kasher* (Qal and Hif'il), *kishron*, *medhina*, *madda'*, *makhakh*, *nekhassim*, *niskan* (10. 9), *sof*, 'abhādth, 'inyan, 'ana (Qal and Hif'il, in the sense of 'occupy', 'be occupied with'), *pæshær*, *qerabh*, *re'uth*, *ra'yon*, *shabhach* (Pi'el), *shuq*, *shalat* (Qal and Hif'il), *shallit*, *shilton*, *taqan* (Qal and Pi'el), *taqaf* (transitive as in NH), *taqqif*.

*'ælohim, nachath* (4. 5), *nathan 'ælohim, nathan libbo, ra'yon ruach, re'uth ruach, simcha, tachath hash-shamayim, tachath hash-shæmæsh, tobh, tur, yafæ be'itto, yithron* etc.

(4) Peculiarities of grammar and syntax: (a) tendency of confusing verba *tertiæ he* and *'aleph* (7. 26, 10. 5, 2. 26, 8. 12, 9. 2, 18, 9. 26 b, 8. 1); (b) the frequent use of infinitives (absol. and constr.), generally; (c) the particle *le* seems to be the necessary complement to the infinitive; (d) the infinitives are used instead of finite verbs and in the place of gerunds.

(6) Whether Græcisms occur is not sure. They would be: *tur* = σκέπτεσθαι, *la'asoth tobh* = εὖ πράττειν, *tobh 'ashær yafæ* = καλὸν ἀγαθόν, *ya'asem* in 6. 12 = ποιεῖν χρόνον. Other instances adduced in earlier commentaries (for references see PODECHARD p. 50) have long since been shown not to apply.

### III. Translation corresponding to the Commentary.

#### Chapter 1.

1. The words of Qohælæth, David's son, king in Jerusalem. 2. »Emptiness and Inanity,« is Qohælæth's motto, »All is Emptiness.«<sup>1</sup> 3. What profit is there for man in all his labour which he labours under the sun? 4. A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth lasts indefinitely. 5. And the sun rises and the sun sets and to the very place from where it rises does it proceed. 6. To the south and again to the north, back and forth, goes the wind, and to its turnings the wind returns. 7. All the rivers are going to the sea, and (yet) the sea is not full; to the place whither the rivers are going, thither they continue going. 8. All things are labouring indescribably, eye is not satisfied in seeing nor ear filled in learning. 9. What has been, that is what shall be, and what has been done, that is

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<sup>1</sup> The writer has been unable himself to find a modern rendering of the phrase of Eccl. 1. 1. On asking Professor G. H. Box of the University of London for a translation, the writer obtained the following answer: »I rather agree with you that you cannot improve on the old rendering '*Vanity of Vanities All is Vanity*'. I cannot think of anything better myself: A paraphrase has occurred to me '*Emptiness and Inanity, All is Emptiness*', but this is no real improvement.« Professor Box's excellent suggestion has been adopted in the above translation. Cf. BURKITT (above Commentary note 1).

what shall be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. 10. Is there a thing of which one says, Look here! This is (something) new! (then in reality) it was already in the ages which were before us. 11. There is no remembrance (now) of the former (generations), and even with those who shall live at the (very) end (of times) there will be no remembrance of the generations which (to us) lie in the future.

12. I, Qohælæth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13. And I devoted myself to inquire and investigate by means of Wisdom about everything that has been done under the heavens: that is a sore travail which God has given to the sons of men to occupy themselves therewith. 14. I have seen all the works that have been done under the sun, and, behold, the whole is <sup>2</sup>a futile clutching at empty air.<sup>2</sup> 15. What is crooked cannot become straight and what is lacking cannot be counted. 16. I said to myself, *I*, behold, I have acquired great wisdom more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem, and my heart has seen much wisdom and knowledge (And yet all is futile). 17. And (then) I set myself to *discern* between wisdom, and folly and stupidity: I perceived that this also is pursuit of empty air. 18. For in much wisdom is much grief and if one increases knowledge he increases sorrow.

## Chapter 2.

1. I said to myself: come now! I will test thee with joy; and do thou enjoy pleasure! And, behold, this also is inanity (*lit.* breath). 2. Of laughter I said, (it is) mad! and of joy, what use is this? 3. I concentrated upon pampering my flesh with wine, all the while my heart behaving itself in Wisdom, and upon

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<sup>2-2</sup> Rendering suggested by Professor Box. *Lit. breath and pursuit of wind.*

grasping folly till I could see (= with a view of ascertaining) which (of the modes of life) be good for the sons of men [that they should] (= to) practise under the heavens the whole period of their life. 4. In great enterprises did I engage. I built me houses, I planted me vineyards. 5. I made me gardens and parks, and I planted in them fruit-trees of every kind. 6. I made me reservoirs of water to irrigate from them a forest sprouting of trees. 7. I acquired men-servants and maid-servants, and I had slaves born in the house. Also possessions of herds and flocks I had many, more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. 8. I treasured up for myself also silver, and gold, and precious things of kings and provinces. I procured for myself men-singers and women-singers, and human delights, wives, yea, many wives. 9. And I exceeded in greatness all who were before me in Jerusalem — furthermore: my Wisdom remained with me. 10. And everything that my eyes coveted I did not withhold from them, and I denied myself no (so-called) joy, but my heart found (real) joy (*lit.* rejoiced) in all my labour, and that was my portion from all my labour. 11. So I turned to all my works which my hands made and to the labour which I laboured to perform, but, behold, I found the whole was inanity (*lit.* breath) and pursuit of empty air, and there is no remaining result under the sun.

12. And I turned to look at wisdom and folly and stupidity — for (I reasoned:) what (will) the man (do) who comes after the king? What they have done before! 13. But I saw that wisdom has a (certain) advantage over folly, (namely) the advantage that light has over darkness. 14. »The wise man has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness,» but this I know by myself, that the same fate will meet them all. 15. And I said to myself: like the fate of the fool will even my fate be, and why, then, have I acquired wisdom (so) excessively?

And I reasoned by myself, that this also is illusion (*lit.* breath). 16. For there is no remembrance of the wise man — just as there is no remembrance of the fool —, in the future; in the next-coming days already, the whole will be forgotten — and, oh, how does the wise man die even as the fool! 17. So I hated the life, because grievous in my eyes were the activities under the sun, for all is a futile clutching at empty air (*cf.* 1. 14). 18. And I hated all my toil which I have toiled under the sun, for I shall (have to) leave it to the man who will succeed me. 19. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a simpleton — and (yet) he shall control all (the fruits of) my labour which I have done and laboured with in wisdom, under the sun: even this is inanity (*lit.* breath). 20. So I turned away to give my heart up to despair concerning all the labour which I had laboured under the sun. 21. For if there be a man whose labour has been in wisdom and in knowledge and in efficiency: to a man who has not laboured with it, he must give it as his (= that man's) portion. This also is inanity and a great evil (*lit.* breath). 22. For what falls to a man of all his labour and of his heart's striving, which he is labouring with under the sun? 23. For all his days his business is pain and sorrow, and even in the night his heart does not take rest — this also is futility (*lit.* breath). 24. There is nothing good in (the case of) man except that he should eat and drink and let himself see good (= find real joy) in his labour — precisely this I have found to be God's gift (*lit.* seen that it is from the hand of God). 25. For who (is able to) eat and who (is able to) have enjoyment except I myself? 26. For to the man who is good in His (God's) eyes, He gives (real) wisdom and (real) knowledge and (real) joy; and to the sinner He leaves the business of gathering and heaping up (only) to give to him who is good before God. The latter also is inanity (*lit.* breath) and pursuit of empty air.



### Chapter 3.

1. To the whole there is an appointed time-order and there is a period for every thing under the sun. 2. There is a time to bear and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot what has been planted. 3. A time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build. 4. A time to weep and a time to laugh; a time of lamenting and a time of dancing. 5. There is a time to cast stones and a time to amass stones; a time to embrace and a time to abstain from embracing. 6. A time to work to obtain (*lit.* seek) and a time to destroy (what one has obtained). A time to treasure up (*lit.* keep) and a time to cast away. 7. A time to rend and a time to sew. A time to be silent and a time to speak out. 8. A time to love and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace. 9. What is the profit of the worker in that (with) which he labours? 10. I have considered the occupation that God has given to the sons of men to occupy themselves with. 11. The whole He has made appropriate (everything of it) in its time; furthermore, in *their* (= men's) hearts he has laid *all* times, save that man shall not be able to find (out) the work which God has done from the Beginning to the End. 12. And I have realized that there is no (*real*) good in their (= men's) case except to rejoice and do well during one's life. 13. And evenmore (I have found:) that a man (is able to) eat and drink and do well, in all his labour, this is a gift of God.<sup>3</sup>

14. I recognized that all which God does that will subsist for ever; to it there is not to be added, and from it there is not to be taken away; and God has done (His work) in order that men should fear him. 15. What has been, that was already and

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<sup>3</sup> or: 'whenever a man etc.' *Lit.:* 'every man who eats and drinks and sees good in all his toil, a gift of God it is'.

what is to be, that has now already been, and God seeks again that which has passed away.

16. And further I saw under the sun that (in) the place of judgement there was wickedness, and in the place of righteousness there was wickedness. 17. *I* said to myself: the righteous and the wicked, (both) shall God judge, for there is a fixed period for everything [and over the whole work there.] 18. *I* said to myself: in regard to the sons of men (it behoves) them to seek God and to realize that they are beasts, they by themselves. 19. For the lot of the sons of men and the lot of the beast: one lot there is for them: as the one's (*i. e.* man's) death is the other's (*i. e.* the beast's) death, and there is one life-breath for all (of them); and the advantage of the man before the beast is non-existent, for all (of them) are nothingness (*lit.* breath). 20. All (of them) go to the same place: all of them came (*lit.* were) from the dust and all of them return to the dust. 21. Who knows <whether> the breath of life of the sons of men goes upward and the breath of life of the beast goes downward, to the earth! 22. So I perceived that there is nothing good for man except that he rejoice in his works, for that is his portion. For who is able to lead him to see (= take and show him) what shall be after him?

#### Chapter 4.

1. And further (making my observations), I saw all the oppressions which are done under the sun, and, [behold!], the tears of the oppressed — and they have no comforter — and from the hands of their oppressors (proceeds) power, — but they have no comforter. 2. So I praised the dead that have long ago died, above the living, who now still live. 3. And better than both of them is he who has not yet come into being, who

has not seen the evil that goes on under the sun.<sup>4</sup> 4. And I observed that all labour and all skill in work is (= proceeds from) man's envy of his neighbours! This also is <sup>5</sup>vanity and futile pursuit.<sup>5</sup> 5. The fool folds his hands and (thereby) consumes his (own) flesh. 6. (And yet:) Better is fulness of one hand with quietness than fulness of both hands with labour and pursuit of the evanescent. 7. Again I noticed a futile thing under the sun: 8. There is one (alone) without a second, even without a son or a brother, and without an end to all his labour; even his eye is not satisfied with wealth — and (so, he must ask:) »for whom do I labour and deprive myself of good?» That also is emptiness (*lit.* breath) and an evil business. 9. Two (together) are better off than one, since they have a good reward for their labour. 10. For if they fall, the one raises up his fellow, but, woe to him, the one (who is alone), when he falls, there is no second one to raise him up. 11. Likewise, if the two are lying down (for the night), they will have warmth, but how shall a solitary one have warmth? 12. And if one prevail over the solitary one, two (together) withstand him. And the triple cord is not quickly snapped asunder. 13. Better is a youth, poor and wise, than a king, old and foolish, who no longer knows to accept admonition. 14. For from the prison one has gone forth to be king, even although he was born poor in his kingdom. 15. I have beheld all the (then) living men — who walked under the sun — (being) with<sup>6</sup> the second youth that stood up in his stead. 16. There was no end of all the people of all, before whom he was; yet those coming after will not rejoice in him; yea, this also is emptiness and pursuit of empty air.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ma'asæ* taken (as in NH) to mean 'happening' in general rather than 'work'.

<sup>5-5</sup> *Lit.: breath and pursuit of wind.*

<sup>6</sup> Perhaps: 'closing up round', as followers.

17. Watch thy feet when Thou goest to the house of God. [And the approaching to hear from (*or*: than) the fools' giving sacrifice for they do not know to do evil.]

## Chapter 5.

1. Do not be rash with thy mouth and let not thy heart be hasty to utter a word before God; for God is in the heavens and thou upon the earth; therefore thy words should be few. 2. For (as) the dream(s) come (*or*: are called forth) by much fussy activity, so in talkativeness (one detects) the fool's voice. 3. »When thou shalt vow a vow unto God be not slack to pay it,» for there is no favour (with God) in fools: what thou hast vowed, pay! 4. It is better that thou shouldst not vow than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. 5. Do not let thy mouth cause thy flesh to incur the penalty of sin; and do not say before the angel: » It was unintentional!», lest God be angry with thy (foolish) babbling (*lit.*: voice) and destroy the work(s) of thine hands. 6. [For in a multitude of dreams there are also futilities and many words,] hence: fear God! 7. If thou seest the oppression of the poor and the violent wresting of judgement and justice in the province, do not wonder at the matter: for high keeps watch over high and high ones over them. 8. [And the profit of (the) land, in the totality (of it) it, is a king for a field cultivated.]

9. The lover of silver is not satisfied with (*or*: never gets enough) silver, and he who loves abundance (has) no increase; this also is emptiness. 10. With the increase of prosperity its devourers increase; and what profit have its possessors save the [eyes'] sight of it. 11. Sweet is the sleep of the labourer, whether he eat little or much; but the satiety of the wealthy does not allow him to sleep. 12. There is a sickening evil that I saw under the sun: wealth kept for the owner to his (own) detriment. 13. For (suppose) that wealth is lost in (the pursuit

of) some unhappy affair and (suppose that) he has begotten a son, then there is nothing in (the latter's) hand. 14. As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked will he go again as he came; and nothing will he receive from his labour that he may carry away in his hand.<sup>7</sup> 15. And this also is a grievous evil <that, as> he came, so shall he go; and what advantage has he that he labours for the wind? 16. Furthermore, all his days <are darkness and sorrow and much pain and illness and irritation>. 17. Behold, what *I* have seen to be good and virtuous is to eat and to drink and to be happy in all one's labour which one labours under the sun the number of days of one's life which God has given him, for that is one's portion. 18. Further, whenever God has given a man wealth and possessions and he (also) makes him master (over His wealth) to eat of it and draw his tribute (from it) and to rejoice in his labour, — that is a (real) gift of God. 19. For not much will he remember (*or*: brood over) the days of his life, for God 'occupies' him with the joy of his heart.

## Chapter 6.

1. There is an evil which I have seen under the sun — and great (a weight) is it on men. 2. A man whom God gives riches and possessions and honours so that he lacks nothing for himself of all that he might desire — but God does not give him power to appropriate<sup>8</sup> it, for a stranger consumes<sup>8</sup> it; this is futility (*lit.* breath) and an evil malady. 3. If a man beget a hundred children and live many years, yet, many as may be the days of his years, he is not satisfied by 'the good' (received)

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<sup>7</sup> or perhaps: '*not so much as he may carry in his hand*', or '*nothing that he may give in heritage*' (THILO).

<sup>8-8</sup> *Lit.*: '*eat - - - eats*'.

and even (as it may happen) he may have no burial — I reflected<sup>9</sup>: better (off) than he is an untimely birth. 4. For, in a breath it comes and into the darkness it goes and by darkness its name is covered. 5. Although it (the untimely birth) has not (even) seen the sun nor known it, the latter has more rest than the former. 6. And if he lives twice thousand years without getting sight of (the real) good — do they not both<sup>10</sup> of them go to one place? 7. Man's whole labour is for his mouth and yet his desire is not satisfied. 8. For what advantage has the wise over the fool? <sup>11</sup>What (advantage) has a man that knows how to deport himself before people — if he is poor?<sup>11</sup> 9. Better is the sight of the eyes than agitating desire — this also is emptiness (*lit.* breath) and pursuit of empty air.

10. What ever thing is (now in existence) its name has been stated long ago, and it is known that man is man; and he is not able to contend with (Him) who is mightier than he; 11. since that would only be so many words increasing nothingness (*lit.* breath) — what profit would man have? 12. For who knows what is good for man in his life, all the days of his vain life, unless that he should let them be like the shadow, since nobody can tell a man <sup>12</sup>what shall be after him<sup>12</sup> under the sun.

## Chapter 7.

I. <sup>13</sup>Better is name than nard<sup>13</sup> and the day of (one's) death than the day of one's being born. 2. Better is it to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting; for that (= death)

<sup>9</sup> *Lit.*: 'said'; better, perhaps, with WILLIAMS: *I say*.

<sup>10</sup> *Lit.*: 'all'.

<sup>11-11</sup> *Lit.*: 'What has the poor man knowing to walk before the living?'

<sup>12-12</sup> or: *the future*.

<sup>13-13</sup> WILLIAMS' rendering.

is the end of every man and the living will lay it to his heart. 3. Better is sorrow than laughter, for in the sadness of the countenance the heart is glad. 4. The heart of wise men (dwells) in a house of mourning and the heart of fools in a house of amusement. 5. Better is listening to the rebuke of a wise man than that one listens to the song of fools. 6. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool. — And this also is vanity (*lit.* breath): 7. (namely) that extortion makes a wise man foolish and a bribe destroys the heart. 8. Better is the end of a thing than its beginning, better is a patient man than a proud man. 9. Be not rash in thy spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools. 10. Do not say: why is it that the former days were better than these (present)? for not out wisdom dost thou put such a question. 11. Wisdom is good like an inheritance, and (is) an advantage for those who behold the sun. 12. For in the shadow of wisdom (is as) in the shadow of money but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of its possessor. 13. Consider the work of God! For who can make straight what He has made crooked?

14. In the day of prosperity <sup>14</sup>be joyful<sup>14</sup> and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one over against the other <sup>15</sup>in such a way that man should find no occasion of complaint against Him.<sup>15</sup> 15. All this have I seen in the days of my <sup>16</sup>sublunar life<sup>16</sup>: there are righteous men perishing in their righteousness and there are wicked living long in their evil-doing. 16. Be not righteous to excess and do not overdo wisdom, lest thou lose thy senses! 17. Do not be very wicked and do not be a fool, lest thou die out of thy time! 18. Good is

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<sup>14-14</sup> Lit.: 'be in good'.

<sup>15-15</sup> Vide the Commentary *ad loc.*

<sup>16-16</sup> Lit.: 'breath', 'vanity'. WILLIAMS: *fleeting existence*'.

that thou grasp the one and yet do not keep thy hand (altogether) away from the other, for he who fears God <sup>17</sup>will preserve a worthy attitude towards all classes of men<sup>17</sup>. 19. *Wisdom is strength to the wise man more than ten rulers who are in the city.* 20. For there is no man in the land (who is perfectly) righteous doing only good and never sinning. 21. Neither do thou devote thy interest to (hearing or knowing) all the words men speak, lest thou hear thy servant cursing thee! 22. For even many times — thy heart knows! — thou also hast cursed others. 23. All this have I tested by wisdom: I said, I will <sup>18</sup>apply myself to wisdom<sup>18</sup>, but it remained out of my reach. 24. Out of reach is the past and <sup>19</sup>mysterious, mysterious beyond finding out.<sup>19</sup> 25. I started afresh<sup>20</sup> and my heart (concentrated) upon knowing and investigating and seeking wisdom and science<sup>21</sup>, and upon realizing that wickedness is foolishness and that folly is stupidity. 26. And I find something more bitter than death: woman; for she is snares and her heart is nets, her hands fetters. He who is good in God's eyes is delivered from her but the sinner is ensnared by her. 27. Behold, this I have found, said the Qohælæth — one (thing, laid) to the other in order to find out the (under-lying) law<sup>22</sup> — 28. which my soul still seeks; but I have not found: I have found one (real) man among thousand (people) but one woman among all those have I not found. Yet, behold, this I have found (= this is the final result of my

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<sup>17-17</sup> *Vide Vide* the Commentary *ad loc.*

<sup>18-18</sup> *Lit.: be wise.*

<sup>19-19</sup> *Lit.: deep, deep, who shall find it out?*

<sup>20</sup> *Lit.: I turned.*

<sup>21</sup> *Chæshbon*, perhaps: 'number and order'. WILLIAMS: *rationale* (of things).

<sup>22</sup> or perhaps: *general rule*; *chæshbon*, *vide* above on vs. 25 and the *Commentary ad loc.*



investigations): that God has made men right but they have sought out many perversions.

## Chapter 8.

1. Who is like the wise man and who (else) knows the solution of thing(s)? The wisdom in a man makes his face serene, and the hardness of his face is changed. 2. < > Keep the king's commandment; and (this having) regard to the oath of (obedience sworn before) God. 3. Do not precipitate in leaving him; do not persevere<sup>23</sup> in an evil<sup>24</sup> affair; for he will do whatever pleases him, 4. because the king's word is sovereign and none<sup>25</sup> may say to him: what doest thou? 5. He who keeps the commandment shall <sup>26</sup>know no evil thing<sup>26</sup>, and <sup>27</sup>time and judgement will the heart of the wise man know<sup>27</sup>. 6. For to every thing there is a time and a judgement — <sup>28</sup>so man's evil (= wickedness)<sup>28</sup> weighs heavily upon him. 7. For he does not know the future, for what the future will be none<sup>29</sup> can tell him. 8. Man is not master of the wind to hold in check the wind, and there is no power over the day of death and there is no furlough in war, neither can wickedness give deliverance to those addicted to it. 9. All this I have noticed in concentra-

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<sup>23</sup> *Lit.: stand.*

<sup>24</sup> *Or: unpromising, impropitious.*

<sup>25</sup> *Lit: who?*

<sup>26-26</sup> = *meet with no evil.* WILLIAMS excellently: *experience no ill.*

<sup>27-27</sup> *Vide the Commentary.*

<sup>28-28</sup> *or, possibly: yet a man's misery ...*, but cf. vs. 8 d. Expositors are fairly evenly divided on the two alternatives. 'Man' is either man in general, or the 'king' or the man having to do with the king (the subject). *Vide* PODECHARD.

<sup>29</sup> *Lit: who?*

ting my <sup>30</sup>thought and observation<sup>30</sup> upon every work done under the sun during the time in which one man lords it over the other to his hurt. 10. [And then I saw wicked ones buried and they came and from a holy place they walk and they are forgotten in the city who made so.] This also is inanity (*lit.* breath). 11. Because the sentence on the evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is filled in them with (the thought, *or* desire, of) doing evil. 12. Because the sinner commits evil a hundred (times) and prolongs his (day) — although I know that it will be good for the God-fearing who fear before him. 13. And (any real) ‘good’ there shall not be for the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days ‘like the shadow’, because he does not fear before God. 14. There is a vanity which happens upon the earth, that there are righteous <sup>31</sup>who incur a fate<sup>31</sup> corresponding to the desert<sup>32</sup> of the wicked and there are wicked <sup>31</sup>who incur a fate<sup>31</sup> corresponding to the desert of the righteous. I concluded that this also is meaningless. 15. So I praised ‘joy’, since there is no (other) ‘good’ for men under the sun, than to eat and to drink and to rejoice, and <sup>33</sup>this accompanies<sup>33</sup> him in his labour during the days of his life which God has given him under the sun.

16. When I concentrated upon knowing wisdom and beholding the <sup>34</sup>various works in which men are occupied<sup>34</sup> on the earth, for day and night <sup>35</sup>their eyes do not get sleep<sup>35</sup>, 17. then I recognized (concerning) all the work of God that man cannot find out that which happens under the sun, forasmuch

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<sup>30-30</sup> *Lit.: heart.*

<sup>31-31</sup> *Lit.: to whom it happens.*

<sup>32</sup> *Lit.: work.*

<sup>33-33</sup> *or: 'having this accompany him'.*

<sup>34-34</sup> *Lit.: business which is done.*

<sup>35-35</sup> *Lit.: he does not see sleep with his eyes.*

as man may labour to seek out, yet he will not find out, and also if the wise man proclaims (his intention) to know, he cannot find (the knowledge sought for).

## Chapter 9.

1. For all this have I taken to my heart and (that) in order to clarify all this, (namely) that the righteous and the wise and their doings are in the hand of God; whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth it not: [<sup>36</sup>all (of it) has been (ordained long) before them (their time). 2. All of it (is) as for all;] there is one fate<sup>36</sup> for the righteous and for the wicked and for the good and for the clean and for the unclean and for the sacrificer and for him who does not sacrifice; the good and the sinner are alike and alike are the (false-)swearing and the oath-fearing. 3. This is an evil in all that happens under the sun that all men have the same fate; and furthermore, (that) the heart of the sons of men is full of evil and folly (dwells) in their heart <sup>37</sup>while they live<sup>37</sup>, and after that: to the dead! 4. For to him who is joined with all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better off than the dead lion. 5. For the living know (at least) that they shall die but the dead do not know anything, they have no reward any more, for the memory of them is forgotten. 6. Love, hatred and envy of them have all alike vanished long ago; and never more have they any portion in anything that happens under the sun. 7. (Therefore) go! eat in joy thy bread and drink with a happy heart thy wine for already now (*in the present*) has God accepted thy work. Ever(y day) may thy garments be white and oil not be lacking on thy head. 9.

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<sup>36-36</sup> Or, with text emended (*vide the Commentary*): ‘*all of it is vanity before them; in as much as for all there is one fate:*’

<sup>37-37</sup> With WILLIAMS; *Lit.*: (*during*) *their life*.

Enjoy life with (the) wife that thou lovest all the days of thy earthly life which God has given thee under the sun all the days of thy earthly life, for that is thy portion in life and in thy labour in which thou dost labour under the sun. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no (opportunity of making good the neglected) work or deliberation or knowledge or wisdom in She'ol whither thou art going.<sup>38</sup>

11. And again I saw (concerning the conditions of life) under the sun that (the victory, *or* reward, of) running is not to the swift nor the battle to the valiant, and likewise not the<sup>39</sup> bread to the wise nor wealth to the intelligent nor favour to the learned — for time and adverse fate<sup>39</sup> happen to all of them.

12. For man does not know his time any more than the fish who have been caught in a deadly net nor than the birds who have been caught in the snare. Like these the sons of men are snared at the time of calamity, when it falls upon them suddenly. 13. <sup>40</sup>Even this wise observation have I made (concerning the condition of life) under the sun and great seemed to me its wisdom.<sup>40</sup> 14. (Suppose there is) a little city and the men in it are few, and there come to it a great king and surrounds it and builds against it great <siege-works> — and one finds (= there is) in it a poor man (who is) wise and he delivers the city by his wisdom — and (then) no man remembers that poor man. 16. So I said: Better is wisdom than force, yet the wisdom of the poor is despised and his words are not heeded.

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<sup>38</sup> Or: *bound, destined*.

<sup>39-39</sup> I notice afterwards that the terms here used exactly correspond to those adopted by PODECHARD.

<sup>40-40</sup> *Lit: 'Also this wisdom have I seen under the sun and great was it to me'.*

17. [The words of the wise in quietness heard more than a ruler among the fools.<sup>41</sup>] Better is wisdom than weapons of war but one sinner<sup>42</sup> destroys much good.

## Chapter 10.

1. Dead flies (infect the preparation of) the perfumer's oil: weightier than wisdom, than honour, is a little folly. 2. A wise man's heart is adroit, and the heart of the fool is gauche. 3. And even when walking in the road the fool's heart (understanding) is lacking and he <sup>43</sup>proclaims to everybody<sup>43</sup> that he is a fool. 4. If the anger of the ruler rise against thee, do not resign thy place, for coolness will guard against great offences.

5. There is an evil I have seen under the sun as a blunder proceeding from the ruler. 6. The stupidity is placed in <sup>44</sup>very high positions<sup>44</sup> and the great sit in lowliness. 7. I have seen slaves on horses and princes walking like slaves <sup>45</sup>on foot<sup>45</sup>. 8. He who digs a pit may fall into it and he who breaks down a wall <sup>46</sup>may be bitten by a serpent<sup>46</sup>. 9. He who removes stones may be injured by them, he who cleaves wood <sup>47</sup>exposes himself to danger<sup>47</sup> by it. 10. If the iron be blunt and he do not whet<sup>48</sup> the edge then he <sup>49</sup>must strengthen his exertion<sup>49</sup> but

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<sup>41</sup> Vide the Commentary.

<sup>42</sup> Or, emending > *chet; sin*.

<sup>43-43</sup> *I. e.: shows everybody plainly.*

<sup>44-44</sup> *Lit.: great heights.*

<sup>45-45</sup> *Lit.: on the earth.*

<sup>46-46</sup> *Lit.: a serpent may bite him.*

<sup>47-47</sup> *Lit.: is endangered.*

<sup>48</sup> Alternative: 'shake' (HAHN, ALLGEIER *e. a.*).

<sup>49-49</sup> *Lit.: will make force(s) great; WILLIAMS excellently: will put to more strength.*

(the) <sup>50</sup>superior method of putting (it) right is wisdom.<sup>50</sup> 11. If the serpent bite when not charmed, there is no advantage for the charmer. 12. The words of a wise man's mouth (win) favour, but the lips of a fool destroy<sup>51</sup> him. 13. The beginning of the words of his mouth is stupidity and the end of his mouth is mad folly. 14. And the fool multiplies words. Man does not know the future and what shall be in the time to come non<sup>52</sup> can tell him. 15. The labour <sup>53</sup>of fools wearies him<sup>53</sup>, for he does not (even) know how to go to the city.<sup>54</sup> 16. Woe to thee, o land, whose king is a youth and whose princes (f)ea(s)t in the morning. 17. Happy art thou, o land, whose king is a nobleman and whose princes take their repast at the proper time, in a manly way and not in debauchery. 18. Through slothfulness the roof sinketh in and through idleness of hands the house <sup>55</sup>grows leaky.<sup>55</sup> 19. For merrymaking do (these people) prepare food and wine cheers (their) life, and money provides all of it. 20. Even in thy mind do not curse the king, and (even) in thy bedchamber do not curse the rich, for the birds of the heaven might transmit the voice and a winged creature make the word(s) known.

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<sup>50-50</sup> *Lit.*: 'advantage of making fit is wisdom'. Another interpretation of *hakhsher* is: *succeeding, success* (ALLGEIER, WILLIAMS). Cf. HAHN: *Vortheil ist Begünstigung der Weisheit*.

<sup>51</sup> *Lit.*: *swallow up*.

<sup>52</sup> *Lit.*: *who?*

<sup>53-53</sup> Perhaps better, emending *hak-kesilim* > *hak-kesil*: *of the fool exhausts him*.

<sup>54</sup> *Vide the Commentary*.

<sup>55-55</sup> *Lit.*: *drips*.

## Chapter 11.

1. Send forth thy bread upon the face of the waters, for after many days thou shalt <sup>56</sup>get it back<sup>56</sup>. 2. Give a portion to seven and even to eight, for thou dost not know what calamity may happen upon the earth. 3. If the clouds are full, they pour down rain upon the earth; and if a tree falls to the south or to the north, the tree (remains) in the place where it falls. 4. He that watches the wind, does not sow and he who takes notice of the clouds does not reap. 5. Just as thou dost not know what is the way of the breath (of life) <into> the bones of the womb of the woman with child, even so thou dost not know the works of God who worketh all (of it). 6. In the morning sow thy seed and towards night let not thy hand rest. For thou dost not know which will be right, whether the one or the other, or whether both of them will be alike good. 7. And sweet is the light and pleasant is it for the eyes to behold the sun. 8. However many days a man may live, he should rejoice <sup>57</sup>on every single one of them<sup>57</sup> *but he should remember the days of the darkness for they will be many. All that cometh is vanity.* 9. Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth and may thy heart give thee pleasure in the days of thy youth and <sup>58</sup>walk in the ways of thy heart and according to the sights of thine eyes<sup>58</sup>, *but know that for all this God will bring thee into the Judgement.* 10. And remove sorrow from thy mind<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56-56</sup> *Lit.: find it.*

<sup>57-57</sup> *Lit.: in them all.*

<sup>58-58</sup> THILO'S rendering may be worth special mention: »geh, wie dein Herz dich treibt, dem nach, was dein Auge sieht«. It would seem unnecessary to emend with *Qere*, most versions and the best expositors (like PODECHARD and WILLIAMS), *mar'e* (plur.) > *mar'e* (sing.).

<sup>59</sup> *Lit.: heart.*

and expel evil from thy body, for youth and <sup>60</sup>life's prime<sup>60</sup> are inanity (lit.: breath).

## Chapter 12.

1. And think of thy Creator in the days of thy youth, before the days of evil arrive and the years approach of which thou sayest: I have no pleasure in them. 2. Before the sun is darkened and the light and the moon and the stars and the clouds return after the rain; 3. on the day that the keepers of the house tremble and the strong men <sup>61</sup>grow bent<sup>61</sup>, and the [women-] grinders surcease because they are (but) few and they that look out of the windows grow dim; 4. and the doubled doors are shut towards the street, while the sound of the mill grows faint and <<sup>62</sup>dwindles into the hum of a bird<sup>62</sup>> and all the singers<sup>63</sup> <sup>64</sup>are hushed<sup>64</sup>; 5. (when, further,) one fears the <sup>65</sup>hilly road<sup>65</sup> and terrors are in the way, and the almond [tree] <is despised> and the grasshopper is heavy and the caperberry without effect — for man is going to his everlasting home and the mourners go about the street. 6. Before the silver cord <is snapped asunder> and the golden bowl <is broken> and the pitcher at the spring is shattered and the wheel is crushed at the cistern 7. and the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns to

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<sup>60-60</sup> The hapaxlegomenon *shacharūth*, which is perhaps most naturally derived from *shachar* (dawn). WILLIAMS, however, considers the derivation from *shāchōr* (black) more probable. WILLIAMS translates: *manly vigour*.

<sup>61-61</sup> Or: *stoop*.

<sup>62-62</sup> Accepting KUHN's emendation *yaqum* > *yimmaq* (*vide* the *Commentary*); the text has: *one rises up at the voice of a bird*.

<sup>63</sup> *Lit.*: *daughters of the song*.

<sup>64-64</sup> Or: *grow feeble* (the song growing low).

<sup>65-65</sup> *Lit.*: *that which is high*.



God who gave it.<sup>66</sup>

8. *Vanity of vanities, says Qohælæth, all of it is vanity.*

9. *And Qohælæth, besides being a wise man, furthermore taught the people knowledge and weighed and examined and arranged many proverbs. 10. Qohælæth strove to find agreeable words and <to write><sup>67</sup> with correctness, words of truth. 11. The words of the wise are as goads and as nails well fastened; stored in collections; they are given by one shepherd. 12. And of (teachings going) beyond these, my son, be wary.<sup>68</sup> Of making many books there is no end and much study is a wearing of the body. 13. (This is) the end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is (meet for) every man. 14. For every work shall God bring into judgement (and it shall be a judgement) on every hidden thing, whether it (scil. the work) be good or evil.*

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<sup>66</sup> The metaphors might be explained as follows: the house = the body; the keepers = the hands and arms; the strong men = the legs; the women-grinders = the teeth (the corresponding Hebrew word, *shen, shinnaim*, being *feminine*); they that look out of the windows = the eyes; the double-doors = the ears; the sound of the mill = the human voice; the singers = the vocal chords; the despising of the almond, the heaviness of the grasshoppers, the ineffectiveness of the (appetizing) caper-berry = the cessation of sexual activities, or the loss of appetite for (luscious) food; the everlasting home = the grave; the silver cord = that which connects the spirit with the body?; the golden bowl = the seat of the spirit or the burning lamp of life; the pitcher and the wheel = (some) organs of the body, e. g. the heart etc.

<sup>67</sup> *wekhathubh > welikhtobh (or: wekhathobh).*

<sup>68</sup> Or: *warned.*

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*Note.* The above writings are cited (1) with *name of author only*, when reference is made to interpretations *in loco*, (2) in other cases with *name of author and indication of page*.

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