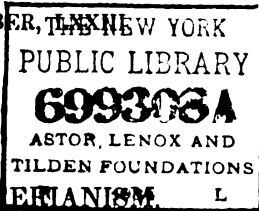


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ARTICLE I.

OLD AND NEW SCHOOL PRESBYTERIANISM. L

By REV. SAMUEL T. SPEAR, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Differences between Old and New School Presbyterians. By
REV. LEWIS CHEESEMAN, Rochester. Published by Erastus
Darrow.

IN the following Article it is proposed to make some comments on the Book, designated by the above title. The book carries with it the name of John C. Lord, D.D., of Buffalo, for a voucher; besides which, it has already received a favorable notice from the Biblical Repertory, as well as from several religious journals of the day.

It may perhaps be well to inform the reader in the outset, that, although the reviewer is conscious of no special love for the work of criticism, still he need not expect to find many commendations in this article. The book has many faults, and but few virtues; and to review it with justice is to criticise it with pointed severity. In the above opinion we may not agree with Dr. Lord, and some others, who think the work a valuable performance, an important addendum to the religious literature of the age. If so, then this will be an illustration of *subjective* "differences," not *objective*, surely, since the printer has given us but *one* book to read, though the readers be many.

We should be quite willing at once to submit the "doctrinal" points, and join the issue of orthodoxy and truth with the author in regard to them; and this would be our course, were there not some important preliminary matter, whose inspection is requisite to a just understanding of this strange assault upon "New School Presbyterians," and virtually also upon the entire body of orthodox Congregationalists in New England. Some attention to this branch of the subject will be no loss to the reader.

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opportunities of doing good, many will be thereby found which would be otherwise overlooked.

Go, and endeavor to deserve the appellation which Christ gave His disciples when he said, "Ye are the light of the world." Reflect how much is comprehended in this metaphor, and feel how great a responsibility resteth upon thee. Go, and "be faithful unto death," that thou mayest receive "a crown of life."

pp. 85, 90.

Kind and wise counsel to one, brought up by Divine grace from a bed of sickness. And did our limits permit, we would gladly make other quotations from a book, whose contents are the natural gushings of a smitten heart.

ARTICLE VIII.

AN ANALYSIS OF ECCLESIASTES.

By REV. JAMES M. MACDONALD, Jamaica, L. I.

Subject.

THE vanity, on the supposition that there is no hereafter, of life and the present world; or the insufficiency of the world to afford happiness, if men are without religion. The Preacher proposes this subject at the outset, as a sort of text, repeats it and refers to it, in every part, and formally re-announces it at the close.

Management of the Discourse.

As to the management of the discourse, there are two things worthy of distinct notice as giving it its peculiar character. 1. The Preacher constantly refers to his own *experience*. Solomon was not a misanthrope, disappointed in his attempts to obtain worldly happiness, but a rich and powerful king, who had made trial of the most costly pleasures. The Book was undoubtedly written late in life, after he had been drawn from his allegiance to God, by idolatrous women (I. Kings 11: 1-14 and 23-40), and may be regarded, like the fifty-first Psalm of David, as his standing confession, which, in consideration of his eminent position and grievous fall, it is the will of God should be read in the church over the whole world and to the latest ages. Let those who would find some license or apology for their sins in the sad defections of Solomon, and his more illustrious father, behold these royal transgressors, as they stand daily in the church, penitently confessing and deploring their folly. 2. It is in the main what

may be styled a *hypothetical* discourse; i. e., he seems to admit the monstrous doctrine of the infidel, or the implied position of the thoughtless worldling, whose conduct is an emphatic disavowal of belief in a future state, and then employs the *argumentum ex absurdo* with overwhelming effect: "all is vanity," or all would, indeed, be vanity if there be no hereafter, if life has no higher end than sensual and worldly pleasure. When Solomon says, "vanity of vanities, all is vanity," it is not his object to disparage temporal blessings, or to advance a doctrine different from that of another inspired writer, that "every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, being sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (I. Tim. 4: 4, 5); but he means to answer the question, "Hast thou made all men in vain?" (Ps. 89: 47) affirmatively—he means that even the creation of the world itself was a signal blunder, if there be no state of retribution to succeed the present. But let us proceed with our proposed analysis.

The subject announced.—Ch. 1: 1, 2.

¹ The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem. ² Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities! all is vanity.

As Solomon was the only son of David who was king of Jerusalem, he is here as distinctly pointed out as the author of this sermon, as if his name had been given. We have a king for a preacher, and his discourse is worthy of his reputation for wisdom. HENRY shrewdly suggests, that while he conceals his name, because of the reproach which his sins had brought on himself, his kingdom and the cause of his God, he refers to his parentage and his office, as greatly aggravating his wicked conduct. The second verse is the text; it contains the proposition which the royal preacher proceeds to establish, illustrate, and apply, in this discourse, viz.:

THAT ON THE SUPPOSITION OF THERE BEING NO FUTURE STATE, TO WHICH THIS IS TO BE REGARDED AS BUT PRELIMINARY, THE WHOLE SCENE OF HUMAN AFFAIRS IS NOTHING MORE THAN A VAIN AND EMPTY SHOW, AND THE CREATION OF THE WORLD, AND OF MAN, MUST BE PRONOUNCED A BLIND MISCARRIAGE.

Introduction.—Ch. 1: 4–11.

⁴ One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. ⁵ The sun also, riseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. ⁶ The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. ⁷ All the rivers run into the sea: yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. ⁸ All things are full of labour; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. ⁹ The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. ¹⁰ Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new?

it hath been already of old time, which was before us. "There is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after.

We have here a graceful and exceedingly appropriate introduction—appropriate, because it bears directly upon the main position laid down as the basis of this discourse. If the principles of Rhetoric require that unity should be preserved throughout, in the introduction as well as in other parts of a discourse, we have them exemplified here. From the full soul of the Preacher there comes, at the first opening of his lips, a burst of eloquence, not for display, or merely to arrest attention, but which agrees admirably with the argument; nay, which seems to suggest the method by which it is conducted, in the body of the discourse. In this respect, it is one of the happiest models which modern preachers can study.

He looks upon the stage of human action, and sees generation follow generation,

"Like shadows o'er the plain,"

and asks, what purpose, if this be the only stage on which these beings are to appear, worthy of their creation, or of the toil and suffering to which they are subjected, is answered? The earth which abideth for ever is but a great theatre, where this empty pageant—this mock tragedy—is to be enacted without end. He glances at the vast machinery of the universe; the sun making his daily and annual course through the heavens; the wind veering from point to point of the compass; the rivers coursing through almost every valley of the earth; the ocean ebbing and flowing, and sending up its exhalations to supply the rills and mighty streams which feed, but never fill it: "All things are full of labor; man cannot utter it." And age after age the same thing is enacted over and over again;—nothing new. If it be but a theatrical show, got up and maintained at so vast an expense, why not, like players, change the scene? why this dull uniformity? But who can believe that God created this great universe; lighted up that mighty sun to rise and set, to go from tropic to tropic; bespangled the heavens with stars; channelled out the rivers; set to the heaving ocean its bounds; and gave ordinances to the shifting wind, only to build and embellish a splendid stage, on which poor, short-lived men, generation after generation, might labor, and struggle, and die? or only to erect a stately mausoleum for entombed and annihilated nations? Is this universe such an aimless thing, and its Maker so blind a trifler?

Arg. 1. The vanity of great learning if man be not immortal.—

Ch. 1: 12–18.

¹² I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem ¹³ And I gave my heart to

seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven : this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. ¹⁴ I have seen all the works that are done under the sun ; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit. ¹⁵ That which is crooked cannot be made straight ; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. ¹⁶ I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem : yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. ¹⁷ And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly : I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. ¹⁸ For in much wisdom is much grief ; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

By "wisdom" the Preacher here means knowledge. He excelled in learning all his predecessors in Jerusalem ; he excelled, too, all the literati of Egypt (I. Kings 4 : 30), a country which boasted of being the mother of the arts and sciences. In addition to the wisdom contained in his thousands of proverbs and his songs, he paid great attention to natural science ; for he "spake of the trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall ; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes" (I. Kings 4 : 33). Such was his reputation for learning, that all the kings of the earth sent their learned men to be instructed by him. In answer to Solomon's prayer, God gave him a wise and understanding heart. He gave him "wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore" (I. Kings 4 : 29). He was, moreover, a most diligent student ; he gave the closest application of mind to the investigation of difficult and curious subjects. He possessed great original talents, and he faithfully improved the advantages for mental cultivation which his station and wealth conferred upon him. "The Preacher was king." If great learning be sufficient, of itself, to make men happy, Solomon, who tried the experiment on a magnificent and royal scale, must have been the happiest of men. But what does he say ? "Behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit." He found problems, as all other philosophers still do, which set at defiance the wisdom of the wisest. His knowledge was not sufficient to enable him to correct the many political evils and social defects, even within his own dominions, which arise from the corruption of human nature. And, if we adopt the theory of the avowed skeptic, or practical atheist, then all his study only served to convince him that the whole scene of human affairs is but a paltry pageant, rendered gorgeous and imposing by the sublime works and magnificent arrangements of an almighty Architect. Well might a philosopher weep, and aver that in much wisdom is much grief, if death be the end of man ; if the result of all his studies be that the world is but a great charnel-house, and the business of scholars only to interpret its curious devices and decorations. Hence it appears that science is not only insufficient to produce happiness, but if there be no hereafter, it becomes a source of pain to those who make the greatest attainments in it.

2. *The insufficiency of luxury and worldly splendor to yield true happiness.*—Ch. 2: 1–17.

¹ I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and behold, this also is vanity. ² I said of laughter, It is mad; and of mirth, What doeth it? ³ I sought in my heart to give myself unto wine, yet acquainting my heart with wisdom; and to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. ⁴ I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; ⁵ I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kind of fruits; ⁶ I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees; ⁷ I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house: also I had great possessions of great and small cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before me; ⁸ I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces; I gat me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts. ⁹ So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. ¹⁰ And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour; and this was my portion of all my labour. ¹¹ Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun. ¹² And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly; for what can the man do that cometh after the king? even that which has been already done. ¹³ Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. ¹⁴ The wise man's eyes are in his head; but the fool walketh in darkness; and I myself perceived also that one event happeneth to them all. ¹⁵ Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity. ¹⁶ For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool. ¹⁷ Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

He leaves the study for the gay world. "He adjourns," as Henry, with great elegance observes, "out of the library, the laboratory, the council-chamber, into the park and the play-house, his garden and summer-house; exchanges the company of the philosophers and grave senators, for that of the wits and gallants, and the beaux esprits of his court, to try if he could find true satisfaction among them." v. 1, 2.

He pushes the experiment, and proceeds from the pleasures of the fancy to luxury. He tried the exhilaration of the wine-cup, still acquainting his heart with wisdom; i. e., he made use of his knowledge that he might discover whether the chief good was to be found by the sons of men in the indulgence of the lower appetites, v. 3. He next proceeded to build him palaces, to lay out gardens, orchards, and vineyards, to dig artificial lakes, and build superb reservoirs; he increased his retinue, his flocks, and herds, and amassed imperial treasures of silver and gold, and employed bands of musicians, and choirs of singers, that as he and his gay courtiers wandered through the gardens and the groves, or reclined to enjoy the delicious coolness of the fountains, or were bathing in the pools, their ears might be regaled with the choicest music. What a picture of oriental luxury! Few. if

any of our modern Epicureans, can ever hope to equal this princely style of life. Nothing was wanting that the most consummate art could furnish. "Whatever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy." But what was the result of the experiment? Listen to the sad response, wailed out from every vista of his enchanting bowers; VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT, vv. 4-11.

The Preacher is next led to compare earthly splendor and luxury with learning, as independent sources of happiness, and to give the preference to the latter. He concludes that a man who has knowledge and a cultivated intellect is better off than one who has palaces and pleasure-grounds, and all the luxuries of wealth at his command, who is at the same time destitute of knowledge. But although knowledge is better than something else, it is not the chief good; he still adheres to his former conclusion, that, if there be no future state, learning is a most vain thing. There is but little difference between a wise man and a fool, if death be the end of both; and he might well be sick of life, if its highest aim be to increase that knowledge which can only serve to strengthen the conviction that he must shortly sink into the same oblivion as the ignorant slave, or an infant which knows not its right hand from its left, vv. 12-17.

3. *The vanity of a life of activity, and successful worldly enterprises, without a revealed religion.*—Ch. 2: 18-26.

¹⁸ Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun; because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me. ¹⁹ And who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have shewed myself wise under the sun. This is also vanity. ²⁰ Therefore I went about to cause my heart to despair of all the labour which I took under the sun. ²¹ For there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, and in knowledge, and in equity, yet to a man that hath not laboured therein shall he leave it for his portion. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²² For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? ²³ For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This is also vanity. ²⁴ There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God. ²⁵ For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto more than I? ²⁶ For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

No matter how enterprising a man may be in his business, it must greatly embitter his gratification, when he reflects that he "toils for heirs he knows not who." His children, without any restraints of religion, may squander in dissipation what he lays up for them, and thus his estates soon pass into the hands of strangers, or perhaps of enemies. Some Rehoboam, who does not inherit the enterprising spirit or the sagacity of his father, may so manage affairs, that another, who has had no labor therein, shall seize the

inheritance for his portion, vv. 18–21. Besides, what a life of vexation does that man lead who is immersed in the perplexities of trade, who plans, and toils, that he may have the name of possessing great wealth! “All his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; *yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night.*” What a life-like picture! There is many a man on “Change” or the busy wharves, or in the more quiet counting-room, who needs no commentary on the meaning of these words. And is this all the happiness within the reach of mortals? this the *summum bonum*? this the only paradise known to the creed of the infidel, or the hopes of the thoughtless sensualist? What emphasis, then, have the Preacher’s words, **THIS IS ALSO VANITY**, vv. 22, 23.

Wealth has its uses. It is a blessing, when properly used, and no more to be despised than learning, the fine arts, the refined pleasures of elegant society, or the lawful gratification of our senses. “God giveth to a man that is good in his sight (a pious man), wisdom, and knowledge, and joy.” He may find good in every thing. Money is also “from the hand of God;” and the servant of God should employ it with a grateful heart, in supplying his daily wants, and those of others dependent on him, and in furnishing food and the bread of life to such as are ready to perish. But to the sinner, who makes gold his god, and lives as if there were no heavenly treasures to be secured, it is a great curse; and, in due time, God, whose are the silver and the gold, will wrest it from the hands of all such, and commit it to those who will use it for His glory, vv. 24–26.

4. *The vicissitudes of the world prove how inadequate it is as a portion, to make men truly happy.*—Ch. 3: 1–15.

¹ To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

² A time to be born, and a time to die;

A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.

³ A time to kill, and a time to heal;

A time to break down, and a time to build up.

⁴ A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

A time to mourn, and a time to dance.

⁵ A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.

⁶ A time to get, and a time to lose;

A time to keep, and a time to cast away.

⁷ A time to rend, and a time to sew;

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak.

⁸ A time to love, and a time to hate;

A time of war, and a time of peace.

⁹ What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth? ¹⁰ I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men, to be exercised in it. ¹¹ He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. ¹² I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and do good in his life. ¹³ And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour; it is the gift of God. ¹⁴ I know that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him. ¹⁵ That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.

Human history is full of sudden antitheses; nothing is fixed, nothing stable. Human society is like the ocean on whose unquiet bosom, the light glances from point to point, in ever ceaseless change. Men love and hate; they go to war and then make peace. A period of union is succeeded by one of disunion; a season of silence by one of clamor. Fortunes are amassed, and then lost; some hold their possessions with an avaricious grasp; others squander them with a prodigal hand. We weep, and then laugh; we mourn, and then rejoice. We demolish, and then build up; the friend whom we had learned to trust, proves false. What we have labored to plant with great pains, is ruthlessly plucked up. Now prosperity reigns, and then the earth is desolated with judgments. We scarcely begin to live, before we begin to die. And dost thou look for happiness, O vain man, to such an inconstant world as this? Will the fairest inheritance here, where there is so much change, if you have nothing in reversion beyond, satisfy your soul? vv. 1—8.

These changes are not the result of mere accident, or because the Governor of the universe has left the world to itself. They constitute the travail, which God has given to the sons of men to be exercised therein. This is the moral discipline which he has instituted. So religion teaches. But if we despise its light, whither shall we look for comfort, tossed to and fro, as we are, upon this unquiet and often tempestuous sea? What madness there is in skepticism and irreligion! O tell me not that we are adrift like floating sea-weed, or sailors on the splintered spars of a wreck, without helm, compass, or chart. God reigns. His hand is in our very reverses; "He hath made everything beautiful in his time." Trials do not mar the divine picture; they constitute its darker shades, and are not only essential to its perfection, but to the picture itself. The painter must make as much use of shadow, as of light, in his wonderful art; it is the shadow by which he brings out the light, and gives outline and proportion to the objects on which his pencil is employed. If every part of some admired painting were concealed from our view, but certain dark clouds belonging to it, we should certainly discover nothing to awaken our admiration; and so if we see not the complete beauty of Providence, by reason of the vicissitudes and sorrows to which we are at present subject, it is because "we see but parts of one extended whole." Events must be contemplated in their tendencies, relations, and seasons, and by the light of Divine Revelation, in order to understand how God hath made everything beautiful in its time. This the rejecters of revelation, and all who live without God in the world, fail to do; and hence the course of Providence is an enigma to them. They cannot find out the work of God. And even of the believer it may be true, that he cannot "find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end;" but he has never-

theless learned to refer all to His hand, to acquiesce in His will, and to wait until the mystery is cleared up in the light of eternity. He has learned not only to be satisfied with his lot, but to rejoice in it, whatever it may be; amidst this scene of uncertainty to maintain his cheerfulness, to "eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor;" assured that all the allotments of Divine Providence, have reference to a future and immortal state, where, to all who have learned in the present, to fear the Lord, all enigmas will be solved, and all knots untied. To murmur against Providence will not alter the course of God's government. The changes to which we are exposed are no new thing; they are the means in part which He of old hath used to wean His creatures from earth, and fit them for heaven. vv. 9—15.

5. *Civil Government and Jurisprudence cannot, independently of revealed religion, heal the disorders of the world, or divest it of its vanity, as the portion of the soul.*—Ch. 3: 16, 17.

¹⁶ And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. ¹⁷ I said in my heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.

It was very natural for Solomon, who was a king and judge, to glance at this subject. Some might be ready to contend that when the science of laws and government was better understood, and more faithfully applied, those social evils which render an earthly portion so vain, would be corrected. But he avers that without the influence of a Divine religion, there will be corruption in the seat of judgment, and iniquity will coil itself up in the very place of righteousness. Men who betake themselves to magistrates and courts of justice, for redress, shall only receive greater wrong. Judges must be made to feel, that they must give account in the day of judgment to the great Judge of all men. It is a sense of their responsibility to God alone, which can make them faithful to their obligations to men. They are mere dreamers who expect that Literature, the Fine Arts, Polite Manners, or the more stringent arm of Courts, and Parliaments, will so mend this crazy fabric, shattered and scathed by sin, as to take off the reproach of vanity that now rests upon it.

6. *Men who discard religion, and live in utter disregard of their immortality, have no pre-eminence above the beasts that perish.*—Ch. 3: 18—22.

¹⁸ I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and they might see that they themselves are beasts. ¹⁹ For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity. ²⁰ All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. ²¹ Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth? ²² Where-

fore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion; for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

The Preacher wished that it might be made manifest to the sons of men, that in living as if there were no hereafter, they reduced themselves to a level with the brute creation. If there be no immortality, and men are justified in living as if their only portion were here below, then the life of a man is of hardly more value than that of a beast, and his death hardly more to be considered. They both go to one place; they return to dust and that is the end of them. If we admit no knowledge but that which the boasted reason of man discovers; if we give the lie to God's Word, then who knows, and who can tell us whither the spirit takes its mysterious flight, when it forsakes this earthly tabernacle? Solomon proves, by implication, that unbelievers, and sensual and worldly-minded men, who love this world supremely, have not so good a claim to happiness, as the very beasts who are destitute of reason, and therefore exempt from the forebodings of evil, and the vexations of life, and are not amenable to that account to which God will hold all intelligent creatures. He gives the great doctrine of Immortality its proper place. It is this more than Reason which gives to man his pre-eminence above a beast. Life is of no value, nay it becomes a curse, if there be no hereafter, for which we may become prepared by the fear of God.

Τί μοι τὸ ὄφελος; εἰ νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται.—I. Cor. 15; 32.

It is religion which puts us in possession of future and everlasting happiness, and thus solves the enigma of our being; which teaches us to fill up life with such works as we can rejoice in now, and in the day of the Lord; and divests us of all undue anxiety respecting those events which are concealed by the curtain of Futurity.

7. The vanity of the world as a source of true happiness, by reason of the imperfections in men themselves.—Ch. 4: 1—8.

¹ So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun; and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of the oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. ² Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. ³ Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun. ⁴ Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbor. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit. ⁵ The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. ⁶ Better is a handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit. ⁷ Then I returned and I saw vanity under the sun. ⁸ There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end to his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.

Mark the oppression that fills the world! The bitter cup of slavery has been pressed to the lips of millions, by those on whose

side was power. Behold the tears which have moistened the soil in which they have digged, or the pillow where they have sought a momentary forgetfulness of their woes. Poor wretches! they have had no comforter. In many countries the mass of the people have been held in a state of servile dependence, bought and sold, like sheep and oxen, with the very soil which their own labor had purchased. See the injustice which is often perpetrated in the most civilized communities, where the government is administered by rulers as wise, and as just as Solomon; the strong taking advantage of the necessities of the weak; widows and orphans despoiled of their homes, and of the very bread they were about to put into their mouths. Such is the selfishness, such the cruelty of man. Now, if there be no God, who is the Patron of the oppressed, the Husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless—no hereafter—well might the Preacher of Jerusalem, and the preachers of Europe, and America, too, praise the dead, because he has not seen what they have seen, the evil work that is done under the sun. If death be an eternal sleep, happy are those who are done with life's "few pleasures and its many pains." They no longer drag that chain of which every minute of their lives was but a heavy link. But death is not an eternal sleep; and, therefore, to the believer, life wears not so gloomy an aspect. The light which is reflected on it from eternity dissipates its gloom.—vv. 1—3.

But look farther; not only are the weak and the oppressed examples of that vanity which is stamped on everything below, but those whom, (to speak after the manner of men) fortune favors, find the happiness, which they have so zealously sought in a worldly portion, greatly impaired by the imperfection which exists in men themselves. So that if the good which they seek were really to be found, where they seek it, this imperfection would hinder its enjoyment. Let a man be enterprising and shrewd in a legitimate business, or right work, as Solomon styles it; let him be successful and amass a princely estate, he will be envied by his neighbors; he will be disliked, hated even, because of his success. So that whether a man be classed among those who are stripped of liberty and property, or those who have the power and luxuries of wealth at command, in either condition, he will be constrained to bewail the vanity and vexation of spirit to which he is exposed.—v. 4.

The Preacher gives us another portrait. It is that of an idle man, who foldeth his hands together, and, because he sees his industrious and thrifty neighbor envied, refuses to work; languidly exclaiming, "Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full, with travail and vexation of spirit." He will doubtless escape the vexation of being envied, but will he escape a worse sorrow, when he has reduced himself to such poverty that he has nothing to eat save his own flesh,—vv. 5, 6.

Another portrait, sketched too by a master-hand; it is that of a

miser. He is alone in the world. He is as completely bound up in himself as if he were the solitary inhabitant of the earth. Although he may not be able to boast that not a drop of his blood flows in another's veins, he acknowledges no kindred; he has neither child nor brother. All the finer sensibilities of his soul have been blunted; the love of gold has produced a complete apathy in regard to the wants and sufferings of others. "The tale of woe, the houseless wanderer shivering in rags amidst the blasts of winter, the wants and distresses of the surrounding poor, and the claims of indigent friends and relatives, make no impressions on that heart, which is encircled, as by a wall of adamant, with the immoderate love of gain. On such a heart the tears of the unfortunate, and of the widow and orphan, will drop in vain." Yet there is no end of his labor to gain that which does him or others so little good: and his eye is never satisfied with counting over his hoarded gold; he never asks, for whom do I labor and deprive myself of the comforts, and even the necessaries of life. Just so far as this fell spirit of avarice prevails, it tends to the utter destruction of society. Well then might Solomon exclaim, in view of it, "Vanity," and add, "*Yea it is a sore travail.*"

8. *The pleasures of friendship and society are not sufficient to compensate for the imperfection that marks all things here, if there be no better inheritance beyond.*—Ch. 4 : 9–16.

⁹ Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. ¹⁰ For if they fall the one will lift up his fellow: but wo to him who is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. ¹¹ Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? ¹² And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. ¹³ Better is a poor and a wise child, than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. ¹⁴ For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor. ¹⁵ I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead. ¹⁶ There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.

From considering the dreadful tendency of the covetous principle, as carried out to its full consequences in the miser, which would be nothing less than to disband society, and even depopulate the earth, the transition with the Preacher was easy to this topic. Friendship and society are blessings which no wise man will despise; but what are they without religion, among creatures characterized by so much selfishness and inconstancy? But even on the supposition that human friendship were a more perfect thing, among those unenlightened or uninfluenced by Divine revelation, it is not sufficient to make amends for the vanity of the fairest portion earth can yield, if there be no hereafter. We readily admit that if anything that at all deserves to bear the name of friendship, is to be found among the heathen, or is known among infidels, it is a good thing so far as it goes. Viewing life in the

light of its miseries and accidents alone, "two are better than one." One unhappy mortal may help another unhappy mortal, and by thus sharing, they may do something to alleviate each other's woes. But we would not give much for this world's friendship, where the gospel has not exerted its softening and refining influence. This influence is felt, indirectly, in Christian lands, by multitudes who are strangers to the life and power of godliness. Those who have had the largest experience in the world, the most extended acquaintance and intercourse with men, have been most painfully impressed with human selfishness. Even those fraternities and associations, professedly based on benevolence, are bound together by self-interest, and whenever this fails they inevitably languish and die. The church of God is the only home of love, where all the best and most sacred affections of the soul are clustered and cherished. Send love forth from this ark, and like Noah's dove, she will not find a place to rest the sole of her foot; nor so much as an olive leaf to bring back to invite to another voyage over the gloomy waste. A worldly poet doubtless expressed the sentiments of his own heart, and of thousands of others, who, from trusting, have learned to despise this world's friendship, when he sung,

" And what is friendship but a name,
 A charm that lulls to sleep,
 A shade that follows wealth or fame,
 And leaves the wretch to weep."—GOLDSMITH.

And when we revert to the hypothesis of their being no hereafter, we may say, with added emphasis, what is it but a name? and may well question whether we can attribute to it so much as "a charm that lulls to sleep." The more refined and exquisite the pleasures of society, the more fearful must seem the silence, loneliness, and eternal oblivion of the grave.—vv. 9-12. Society, in the palaces of kings, or that regard which their subjects profess for them, has no exemption from the imperfection which mars friendship in the cottages of the poor. The wisest rulers, and the most righteous administration of the laws of a land, will not prevent subjects from welcoming a change of governors; as they hope that their burdens will be less, and their prosperity advanced by the change. A youthful Rehoboam will have more favor than an old king who is judged to have become superannuated, however prosperous may have been his reign. Solomon has been supposed to be making here a pathetic allusion to that propensity, which has been said to prevail in monarchical countries, to "prefer the heir-apparent to the reigning prince." He foresaw, that after his death his reign would be bitterly complained of, (I. Kings, 12: 4), and that the same voices which had often shouted, "Long live the king," would be heard giving vent to most unjustifiable reproaches. He foresaw also, that his successor, however popular he might be

at the start, would be a victim of the same fickleness; "they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. (I. Kings, 12: 16-18.—vv. 13-16.

9. *Such is the vanity of mankind that even that religion, by which heaven has revealed a future state, and given rules to teach us how to rise superior to the imperfection of our present condition, is liable to be turned into a mere round of ceremonies, leaving men strangers to vital godliness.*—Ch. 5: 1-8.

¹ Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil. ² Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few. ³ For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice is known by a multitude of words. ⁴ When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. ⁵ Better is it that thou shouldst not vow than that thou shouldst vow and not pay. ⁶ Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error; wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands? ⁷ For in the multitude of dreams and many words there are also divers vanities; but fear thou God. ⁸ If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth; and there be higher than they.

Such is the imperfection of man, that the best things are liable to abuse in his hands. Hence, we infer, that with all the imperfections of the natural world, it would be a far happier abode if the character of its inhabitants were less imperfect. The Preacher proceeds to give several admonitions to prevent mistakes in regard to that religion which, it is his object to show, has been expressly revealed to redeem the creation from the charge of being formed in vain. They are all founded on the truth that God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and truth. Public worship, prayer, and the making of vows, when they become mere ceremonies with men, will defeat the great design of religion, by degrading it, and identifying it with imperfect human things, so that we shall be constrained to say, even of it, "vanity and vexation of spirit." In other words, religion, where it ceases to be spiritual, loses its Divine character, and becomes part and parcel of that on which is inscribed, "VANITY AND VEXATION OF SPIRIT." A ceremonial religion does not meet the great wants of human nature. Its imposing displays and appeals to the senses, are no better than dreams—vain dreams. We must fear God,—this is the substance of true religion,—and trust in Heaven to rectify all oppression of the poor, and perversion of judgment. This attempt of the inspired Preacher to impart to men some correct ideas of that religion which is the only remedy for the vanity, of which all are so ready to complain, and to guard them against so perverting it that it shall become just as vain as everything else, comes in very naturally and with great force, at this point in his discourse, before he proceeds to a new stage in the argument. In all that goes before, his design

is simply to show the insufficiency of the world to make men truly happy; he now advances to higher ground, and shows that the good things of this life are not merely insufficient, but, without religion, are real obstacles to our tranquility of mind. He particularly shows that this is true of great riches. The argument may be formally expressed thus:

10. *Great wealth, without religion, is not only insufficient to make men happy, but it is a real obstacle to their happiness.*—Ch. 5: 9–20. Ch. 6.

⁹ Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all; the king himself is served by the field. ¹⁰ He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase; this is also vanity. ¹¹ When goods increase, they are increased that eat them; and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? ¹² The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep. ¹³ There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. ¹⁴ But those riches perish by evil travail; and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. ¹⁵ As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. ¹⁶ And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go; and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind? ¹⁷ All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness. ¹⁸ Behold that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him; for it is his portion. ¹⁹ Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labour; this is the gift of God. ²⁰ For he shall not much remember the days of his life; because God answereth him in the joy of his heart. Ch. VI. ¹ There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men; ² A man to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it: this is vanity and it is an evil disease. ³ If a man beget an hundred children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, and his soul be not filled with good, and also that he have no burial; I say that an untimely birth is better than he. ⁴ For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness. ⁵ Moreover he hath not seen the sun, nor known any thing; this hath more rest than the other. ⁶ Yea, though he live a thousand years twice told, yet hath he seen no good; do not all go to one place? ⁷ All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled. ⁸ For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living? ⁹ Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire: this is also vanity and vexation of spirit. ¹⁰ That which hath been is named already, and it is known that it is a man; neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he. ¹¹ Seeing there be many things that increase vanity, what is man the better? ¹² For who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?

Under the third argument, it was shown, that the happiness to be found in activity, or the diligent and successful pursuit of wealth, as an occupation, is greatly impaired, because it can be possessed for so short a time, and must become the inheritance of those who make an indiscreet use of it. The preacher here leaves the active, bustling man of the world, and contemplates one whose most sanguine hopes, as to the acquisition of property, have been realized;

so that he can retire from the crowded walks of commerce, to enjoy a dignified repose. Such a man, without a sense of religion, he argues, instead of finding his possessions a source of enjoyment, will learn from sad experience that they are an obstacle to repose. So long accustomed to see his estates enlarged, by successful speculations, although he has thousands, or perhaps millions, he will not be satisfied. He must have an expensive establishment, and a great number of dependents; and when he discovers the only good of his overgrown estates to be the beholding of them with his eyes, he will learn that if he had been satisfied with less, he would have had less perplexity, and therefore been more happy. High living, and the want of active employment, robs him of that sleep, on his bed of down, which the laboring man finds sweet on his pallet of straw.—vv. 9–12.

But great riches often inflict a more direct injury still on their possessors. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I. Tim. 6: 9, 10.) And again, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10: 23). They that trust in riches, or love their money supremely, cannot be the friends of God. Their hearts are drawn away from God; they are tempted to be vain, overbearing, and oppressive towards the poor, and to be so satisfied with their portion in this world, as to neglect to lay up treasures in heaven. And what a curse is their wealth very apt to be to their children! They grow up with very grand ideas of the riches that await them, to disdain labor or any useful and honorable calling in life; "but those riches perish by evil travail," and then what is the condition of these pampered children? They have nothing; they know not how to get anything or to keep it, if they happen to be successful. They see those who have been trained up in habits of industry and economy, rising to respectability and influence in life, while they, at every step, are taking a lower place. All their days, they eat in darkness, and when their last sickness comes, poverty spreads their bed, if bed it may be called, in its forsaken hovel. They brought nothing into this world, they carry nothing out; they enter into the presence of God to give an account of their stewardship; to answer to the Lord of the talents for having squandered them in vices, or in prodigal living.—vv. 13–17.

Solomon does not mean to speak disparagingly of riches, when used, with a pious heart for pious ends; but to declare that riches, without religion, are a real obstacle to true happiness. It is the fear of God which makes poverty endurable, and it is the same which must prevent riches from being a curse, and enable their

possessors to eat and drink, and enjoy them in a rational, grateful, and humble manner.—vv. 18, 19.

The Preacher continues this course of reasoning throughout the sixth chapter. He supposes the rich man to have honor, and to want nothing for his soul that he desireth; he supposes him to have a prosperous family, long life, nay, if he were to live a thousand years twice told, in uninterrupted worldly prosperity, yet if his soul were not filled with the good, or the blessedness which arises from religion, he would still possess nothing deserving the name of happiness. The longest life must end. If a man were to outlive the antediluvians, still the time must come when his centuries would expire; and he would be found only the more wretched for having lived so long in wickedness. If there be nothing beyond this life, and religion nothing but priestcraft, or a cunningly devised fable, it would be better to perish like a still-born child than to live thousands of years in this world, with all its riches and honors upon us, if we must take also their perplexities and sorrows; for we should only drag through this prolonged existence without seeing any good, and come to the grave at last, with the sickening and withering thought that we were to sink into everlasting oblivion. “Better the fruit,” says Henry, “that drops from the tree ere it is ripe, than that left to hang till it is rotten.”—vv. 1-6. The Preacher further alludes to the vanity of wealth viewed as the means of gratifying the fleshly appetites. The rich man, for all his toil and pains, has no advantage over his poorer neighbor. The food as well as the sleep of the laboring man is rendered all the sweeter for his toil; his humble fare is eaten with as high a relish as the more costly viands which load the tables of the rich. Thus is the point fully established, that riches, without religion, are an obstacle to genuine happiness; their increase, unless coupled with the fear of God, is an increase of vanity and vexation.—vv. 7-12.

Nature and Importance of True Religion.—Ch. 7 : 12.

The Preacher now proceeds to what may be considered as the Second Part of his discourse; answers the question which he propounds in the last verse of the chapter, which has just been considered, “Who knoweth what is good for man in this life, which he spendeth as a shadow?” He holds up religion more distinctly as the chief good; and in its light clears up many of those mysteries by which we are sadly perplexed without it. He lays down certain great truths which would be paradoxical, or clearly absurd, if there were no hereafter. Particularly

He shows that it is only as men estimate things in the light of eternity that they can discover what is for their real good. Having proved, by the foregoing arguments, the utter vanity of the world and the life of man, on the presumption that he is not immortal,

he now proceeds to hold up religion as the sovereign antidote which a merciful God has provided for our relief in the present state of vanity and vexation.

¹ A good name is better than precious ointment ;
And the day of death than the day of one's birth.

A good name, i. e. virtue or religion, is more desirable than the choicest of earthly blessings, and the death of those who are prepared, as it brings their temptations, imperfections, and afflictions to an end, is better than the day of their birth, which introduced them into a world of so much sin and sorrow.

² It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting,
For that is the end of all men ;
And the living will lay it to his heart.

³ Sorrow is better than laughter ;
For by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.

⁴ The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning ;
But the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.

⁵ It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise,
Than for a man to hear the song of fools ;

⁶ For as the crackling of thorns under a pot,
So is the laughter of the fool : this also is vanity.

Religion makes a visit to the house of mourning, which the unbeliever, or lover of worldly pleasure would shun as pervaded with unmitigated gloom, most profitable. The Christian will prefer such a house to one that echoes to the song and laughter of fools. He is reminded of that immortality which is forgotten in the house of mirth.

⁷ Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad :
And a gift destroyeth the heart.

⁸ Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof :
And the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

⁹ Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry :
For anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

¹⁰ Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than
For thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this. [these ?

It is true that oppression may cause a good man to become greatly excited, and the prospect of some temporary advantage may tempt him to swerve from the right, but his religion teaches him to look to the end, where he will discover that it is better to be patient in spirit than to indulge in anger, or to depart in any respect from the path of the strictest rectitude. And piety, too, teaches the believer when he becomes old, not to indulge in a fault-finding spirit, as though the world were degenerating, and nothing were as good as in former years, and all believers never to reflect sinfully on the wisdom and goodness of God, in the government of the world.

¹¹ Wisdom is good with an inheritance :
And by it there is profit to them that see the sun.

¹² For wisdom is a defence, and money is a defence ;
But the excellency of knowledge is,
That wisdom giveth life to them that have it.

¹³ Consider the work of God:

For who can make that straight which he hath made crooked ?

¹⁴ In the day of prosperity be joyful;

But in the day of adversity consider;

God also hath set the one over against the other,

To the end that man should find nothing after him.

That "fear of the Lord," which is wisdom, is better than an inheritance, as the margin renders it. It teaches us to submit to the dispensations of Divine Providence, as beyond our control, and to feel our dependence on God, whether we are in adversity or prosperity.

¹⁵ All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that longeth his life in his wickedness. ¹⁶ Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself? ¹⁷ Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish; why shouldest thou die before thy time? ¹⁸ It is good that thou shouldest take hold of this; yea, also from this withdraw not thy hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all. ¹⁹ Wisdom strengtheneth the wise more than ten mighty men which are in the city. ²⁰ For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. ²¹ Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee; ²² For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.

"Consider the work of God," for it is by His appointment that a good man should perish in his righteousness, and goes to an early grave, and the wicked man lives long in his wickedness. A coming world will reconcile these seeming inconsistencies. But do not abuse religion by running into extravagances, or carrying it to hurtful extremes. The path of holiness lies equally removed from fanaticism and impiety. The fear of God, is the best guide and safe-guard in this sinful and crooked world; it is the perfection of wisdom. It is strength to the weak; it is light to the blind; while it makes us acquainted with human nature in general, it imparts that highest kind of knowledge, the knowledge of our own hearts.

²³ All this have I proved by wisdom; I said I will be wise; but it was far from me. ²⁴ That which is far off and exceeding deep, who can find it out? ²⁵ I applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness; ²⁶ And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands; whose pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner shall be taken by her. ²⁷ Behold, this have I found saith, the Preacher, counting one by one, to find out the account; ²⁸ Which yet my soul seeketh, but I find not; one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found. ²⁹ Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

In this part of his confessions Solomon makes a most penitent allusion to his attachment to many strange women. "I said, I will be wise; but it was far from me;" i. e. he fell into a state of religious declension. His reminiscences were more bitter than death. He spoke from experience. He, the Preacher, not pleasing God, had been taken in the snares and nets of bad women.

What weight have the words of a reformed libertine, who, as he describes the miseries of vice, and warns others, can say

quaque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui.

His harem, to which he here unquestionably refers, was "the chief monument of his folly, and the cause of his declension from true religion." No wonder that he pronounced his course of life foolish and mad, and that his mind was lacerated with the keenest anguish when he thought of it. The Preacher pleads with men by his own sad experience, not to seek for happiness in lascivious indulgences.

¹ Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing? a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine, and the boldness of his face shall be changed. ² I counsel thee to keep the king's commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God. ³ Be not hasty to go out of his sight; stand not in an evil thing; for he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. ⁴ Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say unto him, What doest thou? ⁵ Whoso keepeth the commandment shall feel no evil thing; and a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. ⁶ Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. ⁷ For he knoweth not that which shall be; for who can tell him when it shall be? ⁸ There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit: neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it. ⁹ All this have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that is done under the sun: there is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt. ¹⁰ And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done; this is also vanity. ¹¹ Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

The excellency of religion is still the Preacher's theme; it exerts so benign and heavenly an influence in the soul, that it will shine in the countenance, and impart to it a sweet and devotional expression. It makes its possessor attentive to all relative duties; it makes him a good citizen, and teaches him to be subject to the powers that are ordained of God, and to discharge all his duties, in their appropriate time and place, and thus avoid the miseries consequent on disobedience. It is thus that he is prepared for death, that final contest, from which there is no discharge, while the wicked are carried to their graves without hope, having abused the long-suffering of God, and wasted their probation.

¹² Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him; ¹³ But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God. ¹⁴ There is a vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be just men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked: again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous; I said that this also is vanity. ¹⁵ Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry; for that shall abide with him of his labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun. ¹⁶ When I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth; (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes;) ¹⁷ Then I beheld

all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further; though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it. ¹ For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God; no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. ² All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. ³ This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

Although the wicked may long go unpunished we know that it shall be ill with them, and we also know that it shall at length be well with the righteous although for the present they may have many trials. We know this from that revelation, the light of which the infidel rejects, and the sensualist despises. The present is not a state of retribution, and therefore we often see just men to whom it happens according to the work of the wicked, and wicked men to whom it happens according to the work of the righteous. Now shut up the Bible, or reject it as a fable, and this mystery is inexplicable. The deist cannot reconcile this unequal condition of men with the wisdom and goodness of the Governor of the world. He may give neither sleep to his eyes nor slumber to his eyelids—he may apply his mind most earnestly to solve the problem, yet shall he not be able to find it out. If we are to conclude that there is no state of retribution, then a life of mirth, and the indulgence of the appetites, is man's highest wisdom. And we might well say, let us be epicures,

φάγωμεν καὶ πίωμεν, αἴθριον γὰρ ἀποδνήσκομεν.

But Divine truth puts a new aspect on affairs. There may seem to be little difference now in the allotments of Providence, between the friends and enemies of God; nay, we may see the former, often in great affliction, and the latter enjoying peculiar prosperity; but Solomon understood this when he went into the "sanctuary," and there saw the end, the dreadful end of the wicked. The mystery was all cleared up. God will hereafter reconcile these inequalities, and in the light of eternity it will appear how they stood related to the most important results.

⁴ For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope; for a living dog is better than a dead lion. ⁵ For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. ⁶ Also their love and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Life is the only season of hope, "the time to ensure the great reward." This religion which the Preacher so highly commends, must be sought and obtained before the brittle thread of life is forever severed. It is a future state of probation against which he

argues. No pardon is offered, nor "acts of pardon passed" beyond the grave.

⁷ Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. ⁸ Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. ⁹ Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity; for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. ¹⁰ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

He holds up religion in a light designed to render it eminently attractive to the young, to whom he appears in this discourse particularly to address himself. It is not opposed to, but promotes true cheerfulness; it encourages genuine refinement, and the cultivation of the social affections. But if we would have our piety make us cheerful, we must be active in doing good. "We must run glittering like a brook in the open sunshine."

"An angel's wing would droop if long at rest,
And God himself inactive were no longer blest."

And we should be stimulated to activity by the reflection, that what we do for God's glory among men must be done in this short life.

¹¹ I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. ¹² For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

He warns against procrastination, and shows that, however swift a man may be in the race, or strong in the battle, if he puts off the concerns of his soul beyond the accepted time, he will be taken in an evil, and snared in an evil time. He will not know when his last opportunity is arrived. By procrastination, he may grieve the Spirit forever away. And if such doom befall thee, expect not premonitions of its approach. Look not for it to be foretokened in visions and dreams of the night. Expect not to hear whisperings in the darkness, saying, BEWARE; or that the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber, shall answer it, saying, THINE HOUR IS COME. Great and momentous as will be the event, it will take place without interrupting the ordinary course of affairs. You may cross that invisible line,

"The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath,"

while the fire of ambition still lights your eye, the rose of health still blooms on your cheek, and physical vigor still nerves you with strength for the battle, or swiftness for the race. Worldly enterprises may still prove successful; friends may caress; the flowers of love still bloom in your path; every fear be quelled; and no-

thing admonish you that the last sands of that awful hour which closed your probation, have already fallen.

¹³ This wisdom have I seen also under the sun, and it seemed great unto me. ¹⁴ There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. ¹⁵ Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. ¹⁶ Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength; nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.

That intellectual and moral excellence which religion secures, is a great blessing to a country; and it is a great blessing to men in fitting them to serve their country well. Religion may be despised—a preached gospel may be neglected—but it is that which gives value to civil institutions, by the security which it confers on them, and the purity and good morals which it tends to diffuse.

¹⁷ The words of wise men are heard in quiet,
More than the cry of him that ruleth among fools.

¹⁸ Wisdom is better than weapons of war;
But one sinner destroyeth much good.

Ch. 10. ¹ Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour;
So doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.

² A wise man's heart is at his right hand:
But a fool's heart is at his left.

³ Yea, also, when he that is a fool walketh by the way,
His wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool.

⁴ If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place;
For yielding pacifieth great offences.

⁵ There is an evil which I have seen under the sun,
As an error which proceedeth from the ruler.

⁶ Folly is set in great dignity,
And the rich sit in low place.

⁷ I have seen servants upon horses,
And princes walking as servants upon the earth.

⁸ He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it;
And whoso breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him.

⁹ Whoso removeth stones shall be hurt therewith;
And he that cleaveth wood shall be endangered thereby.

¹⁰ If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge,
Then must he put to more strength;
But wisdom is profitable to direct.

¹¹ Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment;
And a babbler is no better.

¹² The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious;
But the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.

¹³ The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness:
And the end of his talk is mischievous madness.

¹⁴ A fool also is full of words:
A man cannot tell what shall be;
And what shall be after him who can tell him.

¹⁵ The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them,
Because he knoweth not how to go to the city.

¹⁶ Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child,
And thy princes eat in the morning!

¹⁷ Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is a son of nobles,
And thy princes eat in due season,
For strength, and not for drunkenness!

¹⁸ By much slothfulness the building decayeth;
And through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.

- ¹⁹ A feast is made for laughter, and wine maketh merry ;
But money answereth all things.
- ²⁰ Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought,
And curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber ;
For a bird of the air shall carry the voice,
And that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

Here we have a collection of proverbs, which, like the book of Proverbs, by this same author, are designed to recommend religion (which he has shown is the only remedy for the vanity which is impressed on all earthly things), and to show how it is to be applied to the most common affairs of every-day life. We have almost as many distinct subjects presented as we have proverbs ; we have not space, therefore, nor is it absolutely necessary for the purposes of the present Analysis, to notice them in detail. It is only necessary to bear in mind that they are designed to recommend, and to show the eminently practical character, of that religion which is Heaven's remedy for the imperfection, which stamps all things below the sun.

- ¹ Cast thy bread upon the waters ;
For thou shalt find it after many days.
- ² Give a portion to seven, and also to eight ;
For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.
- ³ If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth,
And if the tree fall towards the south, or towards the north,
In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be.
- ⁴ He that observeth the wind shall not sow ;
And he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.
- ⁵ As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit,
Nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child ;
Even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.
- ⁶ In the morning sow thy seed,
And in the evening withhold not thy hand ;
For thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that,
Or whether they both shall be alike good.

The Bible requires us to do good with our property. In this way, it will contribute far more to our happiness than if miserly hoarded, or expended on our lusts. We must give in faith, looking forward to the harvest, when, if we have sown bountifully, we shall reap also bountifully. If the objects of charity are many, we must give to many ; we must not say, these applications come too frequently ; our duty is determined not by their frequency, but by their character ; if they are objects of charity, and God has made us stewards of the things of this life, we must give to each a portion. Our religion informs us that money thus bestowed is not thrown away. Circumstances may change with us ; we know not what evil shall be upon the earth. "Give, and it shall be given unto you ; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom" (Luke 6 : 38). Religious considerations tend to overcome those objections and excuses which selfishness suggests against making a charitable use of our possessions. The truly liberal man will sow under discouraging prospects, in the morning

and in the evening, that he may be sure of being interested in something which shall prosper under the blessing of Heaven. It is most instructive to observe how the Preacher holds up the religious life as one of active benevolence. The friends of God are the best servants of their fellow-creatures.

APPLICATION.

1. *The subject is applied very briefly to the aged.*—Ch. 11: 7, 8.

- ⁷ Truly the light is sweet,
And a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.
⁸ But if a man live many years, and rejoice in them all;
Yet let him remember the days of darkness;
For they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

Life is sweet. And it has been said to be not the less so, for being prolonged. The aged, some have maintained, cling to life more firmly than the young; and this opinion is in accordance with our observation. We sometimes see a youth of twenty, with all the bright hopes and inviting prospects of life before him, yielding to the stern decree more cheerfully and composedly than the man of three score. But let the man who has lived many years, and rejoiced in them all, and even in his old age finds life sweet, remember the days of darkness, and prepare for death. But Solomon appears rather to have had before his mind an image of the aged infidel or sensualist, who has wasted life in sinful pleasure. What a melancholy spectacle is such a man! Let him reflect on the days of darkness that are before him. As he rejects the doctrine of immortality, let him think, and be startled at the thought, of standing on the brink of annihilation. The Preacher has shown that all that is past is vanity; and according to the skeptic's cheerless creed, "All that cometh is vanity."

2. *To the Young.*—ch. 11: 9, 10. Ch. 12: 1-7.

- ⁹ Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth;
And let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,
And walk in the ways of thy heart,
And in the sight of thine eyes;
'But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.
¹⁰ Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart,
And put away evil from thy flesh;
For childhood and youth are vanity.
Ch. 12. ¹ Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,
While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh,
When thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.
² While the sun, or the light,
Or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened,
Nor the clouds return after the rain:
³ In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble,
And the strong men shall bow themselves,
And the grinders cease because they are few,
And those that look out of the windows be darkened.
⁴ And the doors shall be shut in the streets,
When the sound of the grinding is low,
And he shall rise up at the voice of the bird,
And all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

- 6 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high,
 And fears shall be in the way,
 And the almond-tree shall flourish,
 And the grasshopper shall be a burden;
 And desire shall fail; because man goeth to his long home,
 And the mourners go about the streets :
 5 Or ever the silver cord be loosed,
 Or the golden bowl be broken,
 Or the pitcher be broken at the fountain,
 Or the wheel broken at the cistern.
 7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ;
 And the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

This entire discourse appears to have been prepared with special reference to the young. And the Preacher proceeds to a most animated and moving appeal. He had presented the most weighty arguments, and had illustrated and enforced them from his own experience; and now the aged Preacher, with a pathos which is irresistible, makes a personal appeal to his youthful auditors. In imagination, he has before him a giddy youth, who says, or seems to say, "It may all be as you represent; religion may be a very good thing, and necessary to my happiness; and the world may be a very vain and unsatisfying portion without religion: but I choose to try it for myself. You tried it yourself. According to your confession, you have run the whole round of this world's pleasure. I choose to make the experiment for myself, rather than take your testimony. Just cease your melancholy bodings—let me alone—let me try it for myself." "Then try it for yourself," saith the Preacher, "rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Be a sensualist; give the reins to every lust; but hear, O hear the warning which I will not cease to cry, there is a day of awful reckoning." There is not so much irony in Solomon's words as has been sometimes supposed; or it is *irony* of that fearful kind which harmonizes well with the awful seriousness of his theme. It is one of the most startling warnings that was ever expressed in the language of men. Or perhaps we are rather to regard the youth who is so solemnly apostrophized as an avowed freethinker. His mind is poisoned with infidel sentiments; he does not believe in religion; he thinks, or tries to think, that death is the end of man; and therefore he resolves to give himself up to the unrestrained indulgence of his appetites and passions. Solomon throws himself in the path of such a young man, and beseeches him to pause and reflect; he assures him that there will be a future state, and that it will be one of retribution. God will open the books in which all the actions of life are registered, and enter into solemn judgment with all intelligent creatures. He then proceeds to urge the young to attend to religion during the season of youth, as the best means of bringing their passions under proper control; he reminds them

that it is a fleeting period, and far more favorable to our becoming truly religious than a later period of life. Especially, he takes occasion, from a consideration of the infelicities of old age, to entreat them to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. The general scope of the tropical language which he employs, is perfectly obvious, although it may not be so well understood as it was in his day. The heavenly bodies obscured, and the clouds returning after the rain, refer to the faculties, both bodily and mental, which it is the tendency of age greatly to impair. What a striking emblem of the wasted energies of the old is a cloud returning after the rain! If the body be the house (I. Cor. 5: 1.) then the intellectual faculties may be regarded as its keepers or tenants; they tremble. The blossoms of the almond-tree are white and are a striking metaphorical representation of the hoary head of an aged man. The grasshopper or locust, was poetically used among the ancients as figurative of old age. Let youth be admonished before these infirmities come upon them, to attend to their souls' concerns. Religion can make old age, with all its burdens, happy, and youth is the period to attend to religion. It is the rashest folly to postpone attention to it to that late period, when we shall have lost our interest in almost everything, and our ability properly to attend to anything, even the most trivial affairs.

⁸ Vanity of vanity, saith the Preacher; all is vanity. ⁹ And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. ¹⁰ The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words; and that which was written, was upright, even words of truth. ¹¹ The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd. ¹² And further, by these my son, be admonished; of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh. ¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

Solomon closes his sermon by a formal repetition of his text. The great subject that filled his mind when he first opened his lips, filled it now that he was about to close them. He intimates that this was not his only attempt to do something to counteract the pernicious example which he had set. He still taught the people knowledge; and he was permitted to have some evidence that his words were not altogether in vain. He appends a striking summary of religion, that religion which can alone redeem the world from the charge of being utterly worthless, and once more carries the mind forward to that awful future, in the light of which he would have us contemplate the present, and seek to understand its mysteries, but especially its duties, and amazing responsibilities: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

NOTE.—For the convenience of the reader I have taken the liberty to add "Des Voeux's Analysis," and that also of "Holden," both esteemed as among the most judicious writers on the book of Ecclesiastes.

DES VOEUX'S ANALYSIS OF ECCLESIASTES.

PROP. I. "No labor or trouble of men in this world, can ever be so profitable as to produce in them a lasting contentment, and thorough satisfaction of mind."

- Ch. 1: 4—11. 1st proof—The course of nature.
 12, &c. 2d proof—Men's Occupations.
 16—18. 1st head—Wisdom or Philosophy.
- Ch 2: 1, 2. 2d head—Pleasure.
 3—10. Both jointly.
 11. General conclusion of the second proof. A review of the second proof, with special conclusions relating to every particular therein mentioned, viz:
 12—17. I. Wisdom.
 18—23. II. Riches.
 24—26. III. Pleasure.
- Ch. 3: 1 &c. 3d proof—Inconstancy of man's Will.
 9. Conclusion of third proof. A review of the second and third proofs considered conjointly with special observations and corollaries.
 10, 11. 1st observation—God is inculpable.
- Ch. 3: 12—15. 2d observation—God is the author of whatever befalls us in this world.
 16, 17. 1st corollary—God will redress all grievances.
 18—21. 2d corollary—God must be exalted, and man humbled.
 22. 3d corollary—God alloweth men to enjoy the present.
- Ch. 4: 1. 4th—Men's neglect of proper opportunities evidenced in several instances, viz:
 1—3. I. Oppression.
 4. II. Envy.
 5, 6. III. Idleness.
 7—12. IV. Avarice.
 13—16. V. Misapplication of esteem and regard.
- Ch. 5. N. B. Verses 1—9, is a digression containing several admonitions, in order to prevent any misconstruction of the foregoing remarks.
 10—12. VI. Expensive living.

PROP. II. "Earthly goods, and whatever we can acquire by our utmost trouble and labor in this world, are so far from making us lastingly happy, that they may even be regarded as obstacles to our ease, quiet, and tranquility."

- Ch. 5: 14—17. 1st proof—Instability of riches.
- Ch. 6: 1, 2. 2d proof—Insufficiency of riches to make one happy
 3—6. The fate of an abortive is preferable, upon the whole, to that of him who lives without enjoying life.
- Ch. 6: 7—9. 2d proof—Man's insatiableness.
 10, 11. General conclusion from the first and second proposition.

PROP. III. "Men know not what is or is not truly advantageous to them: because they are either ignorant or unmindful of that which must come to pass after they are dead."

- Ch. 7: 1—8. 1st proof—Wrong estimation of things. A digression intended (like that in verses 1—9) to prevent any misconstruction of the foregoing observation, and containing several advices, together with a strong commendation of him who gives them, in order to enforce the observation of the rules laid down by him.
- 9—12. 1st advice—Do not blame Providence.
 13. 2d advice—Do not judge of Providence.
- 14, 15. 3d advice—Submit to Providence.
 16—20. 4th advice—To avoid excesses.
 21, 22. 5th advice—Do not heed idle reports.
 23—25. Commendation of the foregoing advices, from the author's application to examine everything; and especially,
 26—29. I. Wickedness and Ignorance.
- Ch. 8: 1—8. II. Wisdom.
 2d proof—Anticipated judgments.

- 9—14. I. That sin shall not go unpunished because it is so in this world.
- Ch. 9: 1—6. II. That life is preferable to death.
- 7—9. 1st corollary—Earthly enjoyments are not criminal.
10. 2d corollary—We must make a proper use of our faculties.
- 11—15. 3d proof—Judgments that are seemingly right, yet entirely false.
- 16, &c. 4th proof—Little regard paid to wisdom.
16. I. Past services are forgotten.
- Ch. 9: 17 } II. The least fault is taken
Ch. 10: 1—4 } notice of.
- 5—19 II. Favor gets what is due to merit.
20. A caution to prevent abuse of the foregoing remarks.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES.

- Ch. 11: 1—4. I. From the first proposition: We must give unto earthly goods, that stability which they are capable of.
- 5, 6. II. From the first and second proposition: We must in our conduct, conform to the design of Providence concerning us, and leave the success to God.
- 7—10. III. From the three propositions, but especially
- Ch. 12: 1—8. from the third, we must seek for happiness beyond the grave.
- 9—12. Commendation of the work from several considerations.
- 13, 14. THE CONCLUSION of the whole:—That there must be a state of true and solid happiness for men in a future state. In other words, the fear of God, and keeping his commandments, is the whole of man, that is, his chief good, his whole interest, privilege, honor and happiness, as well as duty: for after this vain life is past, another scene will succeed, and men shall be judged, and recompensed according to their conduct, secret as well as open, and whether it may have been good or evil.

HOLDEN'S ANALYSIS.

PART I.—THE VANITY OF ALL EARTHLY CONDITIONS, OCCUPATIONS AND PLEASURES.

- SECT. I. The vanity of all earthly things. (1. 2.)
- SECT. II. The unprofitableness of human labor, and the transitoriness of human life. (1. 3—11.)
- SECT. III. The vanity of laborious inquiries into the ways and works of man. (1. 12—15.)
- SECT. IV. Luxury and pleasure are only vanity and vexation of spirit. (2. 1—11.)
- SECT. V. Though the wise excel fools, yet, as death happens to them both, human learning is but vanity. (2. 12—17.)
- SECT. VI. The vanity of human labor in leaving it they know not to whom (2. 18—23.)
- SECT. VII. The emptiness of sensual enjoyments (2. 24—26.)
- SECT. VIII. Though there is a proper time for the execution of all human purposes, yet are they useless and vain; the Divine counsels, however, are immutable. (3. 1—14.)
- SECT. IX. The vanity of human pursuits proved from the wickedness prevailing in courts of justice, contrasted with the righteous judgment of God. (3. 15—17.)
- SECT. X. Though life considered in itself, is vanity, for men die as well as beasts, yet in the end, it will be very different with the spirit of man and that of beasts. (3. 18, 22.)
- SECT. XI. Vanity is increased unto men, by oppression. (4. 1—3.)
- SECT. XII. The vanity of prosperity. (4. 4.)
- SECT. XIII. The vanity of folly, or of preferring the world to True Wisdom. (4. 5—6.)
- SECT. XIV. The vanity of covetousness. (4. 7—8.)
- SECT. XV. Though society has its advantages, yet dominion and empire are but vanity. (4. 9—16.)
- SECT. XVI. Errors in the performance of divine worship, which render it vain and unprofitable. (5. 1—7.)

- SECT. XVII. The vanity of murmuring at injustice; for though the oppression of the poor, and the perversion of judgment greatly prevail, they do not escape the notice of the Almighty. (5. 8—9.)
- SECT. XVIII. The vanity of riches; with an admonition as to the moderate enjoyment of them. (5. 10—20.)
- SECT. XIX. The vanity of avarice. (6. 1—9.)

PART II.—THE NATURE, EXCELLENCE, AND BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF WISDOM, OR RELIGION.

- SECT. XX. Since all human designs, labors, and enjoyments are vain, it is natural to inquire, What is good for man? What is his Supreme Good? (6. 10—12) The answer is contained in the remainder of the book.
- SECT. XXI. The praise of character and reputation. (7. 1.)
- SECT. XXII. Affliction improves the heart and exalts the character of the wise. (7. 2—10.)
- SECT. XXIII. The excellence of wisdom. (7. 11—14.)
- SECT. XXIV. An objection with the answer. (7. 15 : 8. 7.)
- SECT. XXV. The evil of wickedness shows the advantage of true wisdom. (8. 8—13.)
- SECT. XXVI. An objection with the answer. (8. 14 : 9. 1.)
- SECT. XXVII. An objection with the answer. (9. 2 : 10. 17.)
- SECT. XXVIII. The banefulness of sloth. (10. 18.)
- SECT. XXIX. The power of wealth. (10. 19.)
- SECT. XXX. An exhortation against speaking evil of dignities. (10. 20.)
- SECT. XXXI. Exhortation to charity and benevolence. (11. 1—10.)

ARTICLE IX.

SCHLEIERMACHER'S RELIGIOUS VIEWS.

Translated from the German, by REV. WILLIAM HALL, New York.

Introductory Remarks.

SCHLEIERMACHER is one of those peculiar writers who should be permitted, as far as possible, to speak for himself. And, therefore, as he is frequently referred to by eminent authors at the present time, and as his theological views are exerting an important influence in various quarters of the moral and Christian world, it will not be inappropriate to give the readers of the Repository a translation of some of the leading principles of his dogmatic system; as they stand in his most celebrated theological work, called, "The Christian Faith, &c." Previous to so doing, a few biographical and general observations respecting this distinguished divine and philosopher, may not be unacceptable.

Frederick Schleiermacher was born at Breslau, Silesia, Nov. 24, 1768. The earlier part of his education was received in the community of the *Unitas Fratrum*, or Moravians. And the religious instructions and impressions thence derived, had undoubtedly much to do in the formation of his Christian character, and practical tendency of thought. After completing his education at Halle, he rose through several subordinate positions to be Court