

Arminianism, nevertheless, wrought no deliverance any more than Pelagianism. It had no basis for religion. Religion is entire, not partial dependence upon God. We do not do something first and depend on Him for the rest, but He is the strength of all our doing. To make His doing depend on ours, introduces the self-regarding considerations which it is the business of all faith to set aside. Religion does not rely upon God and man, but upon God alone.

And, on the other hand, Arminianism does not succour morality. Morality, as a doing to win God's alliance or as an effort to win God's backing, is not morality. It has a corrupt personal motive of selfish good, and a corrupt personal hesitation through considering other things than duty. Morality is not partly dependent and partly independent. To be morality at all it must be independent—our own immediate, unhesitating obedience to our own discernment of what is right.

JOHN OMAN.

### THE PROLOGUE OF ECCLESIASTES

It is generally recognised that the treatise called by the Greek translator "Ecclesiastes" is one of several attempts at introducing Greek philosophy to Hebrew readers in such a form as would give it a chance of obtaining popularity. The author of this treatise is bolder than the others in some respects; the propositions which he takes over from Greece were specially calculated to give offence. On the other hand he is specially careful to conceal his traces from the uninitiated.

Like many ancient texts, this was probably intended to be taught rather than to be published, whence it abounds in enigmas of which the solution was intended for private ears. Those who have come across authoritative solutions to such puzzles will not be over-confident as to the possibility of

solving them by divination ; the true solution is often something which cannot be guessed. Of this character are the historical allusions in Ecclesiastes, which call loudly for the commentator who is not forthcoming. In some other cases the prospect of a solution seems less hopeless, and with a few of these we shall endeavour to deal.

The first enigma which confronts the reader is the name of the author, *Koheleth* or *the Koheleth*. The material collected by Gesenius in his *Thesaurus* on this subject justifies the admission of Rödiger that all in this treasury was not gold. The Greek, the Syriac, the Arabic in his article are all "made in Germany." The one observation which comes near being correct is that the similar forms *Sofereth* and *the Sofereth* occur in a genealogical table quoted by Ezra (ii. 55) and Nehemiah (vii. 57); but even this is marred by the assertion that *Sofereth* is the name of a man, when it is equally likely to be the name of a place or of an object ; and the vocalisation of the LXX is *Sapharat* in one place, and *Sepheira* in the other.

The verb whence *Koheleth* appears to be derived occurs in the Old Testament only in secondary forms ; the primary form, of which it should be the feminine participle active, is sometimes found in Syriac writers in the sense "to come together." *Koheleth* according to this should mean "she that comes together," which could only be applied to some collective like "community" or "nation." Even however if it could be applied to an individual, as a name for or description of a son of David, it would be enigmatical ; for though the feminine can be used in Arabic as an intensive of the masculine (e.g. *rāwī*, "reciter," *rāwīyah*, "professional reciter"), there appears to be no vestige of such an idiom in Hebrew.

If the word were found only in the title of the book, there would be no doubt that it should be read *Kehilloth*, "lectures"

or "sermons." This word (though not apparently registered in the dictionaries in this sense) occurs in Nehemiah (v. 7),<sup>1</sup> where the revised version makes him say, "I was very angry, then I consulted with myself, and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said unto them, etc., and I held a great assembly against them, and I said unto them," etc. It is clear that Nehemiah did not *hold an indignation meeting against them*, but delivered a severe lecture to them; and the word rendered "held" is in the original "gave." It is also clear that his "consulting with himself" was quite useless; for when people are very angry they begin to quarrel immediately without such consultation. For "I consulted with myself" we should render "my feelings overcame me." The word *kehillah*, "lecture," also occurs in the Oral Tradition, where a certain Rabbi is said to have delivered lectures at a time when the study of the Law was forbidden.<sup>2</sup>

The use of the word "Assembly" for "Discourse" can be paralleled from many languages; the Arabic preachers usually call their sermons "Séances" (*majālis*).

Confusion between an author and the title of his book is not uncommon; according to E. Deutsch there were people who spoke of *Ce Monsieur Talmud*, and writers of eminence on Arabic literature have spoken of "the Fakhri" as a historian, when it is the name of a history. Such confusion cannot however be committed by an author himself; and one who gave a son of David such a name as "Sermons" must have had some authority for doing so. Such an authority is to be found in Psalm cix. 4, where the author, assumed in ancient times to be David, says, "I am prayer."<sup>3</sup> If David can call himself "Prayer," his son can call himself "Sermons." The title therefore which the author takes is modelled on that which David adopts in Psalm cix.

<sup>1</sup> וְאָתָּן עֲלֵיהֶם קְהֵלָה גְדוֹלָה

<sup>2</sup> *Abodah Zarah*, 18a.

<sup>3</sup> וְאָנִי תְפִלָּה

When the dictionaries tell us that Ecclesiastes stands for *Solomon*, perhaps we should infer that modern scholarship has not freed itself from the Rabbinical tradition as thoroughly as is sometimes supposed. He who reads the name of "Ecclesiastes, son of David, who reigned over Israel in Jerusalem," will doubtless think over the list of the Israelitish kings, and fail to recognise the name ; but this difficulty is met in the first paragraph of the book, where the author shows how things come to be forgotten. Past generations, present generations, and future generations are all doomed to oblivion ; what wonder then if this particular king is unknown to the reader ? What is wanted for the book is *a king* ; for only one who can try unlimited experiments in the possibilities of happiness can pronounce on its true character. Nor does the authôr keep up the character of king any longer than is necessary for this purpose. When therefore Ecclesiastes is identified with Solomon, probably the author's intention is only partially fulfilled ; the uninitiated might think so, but the initiated would know better.

If the personality of the author is merged in obscurity, perhaps the enigma which he offers as to his source may be more soluble. This is in the Epilogue (xii. 11) : " the words of sages are like goads, but like planted nails are masters of gatherings, given by one herdsman." The words of sages in general stimulate the intellect ; one herdsman's "masters of gatherings " are not temporary stimulants, but permanent acquisitions. Who is this " one herdsman " ? One Rabbi thinks of the Creator Himself ; another of Moses. Either of these glosses could be defended from the Old Testament ; yet neither is probable, since the Rabbis acknowledge that Ecclesiastes contradicts the Law. " Masters of gatherings " probably means " syllogisms " ; the phrase bears some resemblance also to the *κύριαι δόξαι*, or " master maxims " of Epicurus, who to his followers was the genius who had

extinguished all others, as the sun does the stars : the first discoverer of philosophy : the one champion who had confronted superstition and overthrown it. Yet Ecclesiastes differs too seriously from Epicurus to permit of our making this identification. It might be more plausible to identify his "one herdsman" with a philosopher from whom he appears to have derived some of his matter, the "first teacher" Aristotle, the master mind who during many ages has led men to follow him like sheep ; with whom the "syllogism" is especially connected. And on the whole this is probably the best solution that we shall find. Ecclesiastes is not indeed exactly an Aristotelian ; the adherents of the schools were usually Greeks, for the foreigner probably had difficulty in gaining admission, and in any case had a tendency to be an eclectic. But the doctrine of the eternity of the world whereon Ecclesiastes bases his philosophy is such a pillar of the Aristotelian system that it is not surprising if Ecclesiastes makes some acknowledgment.

For the philosophical questions which gave rise to the systems of Epicurus and others a vocabulary had been invented in Greek which could not easily be rendered into another language. The aphorism "pleasure is the end" is intelligible to those who are accustomed to speculation on the "end of life," i.e. the "final experience" or conscious process to which other operations are the means. When Ecclesiastes expresses this (ii. 3) by the phrase "what it is good for the sons of man to do under heaven during the number of the days of their lives" he seems to be offering a cumbrous paraphrase, though on the whole an accurate one, of the simple question, "what is the end?" The discussions which underlie this paraphrase are to be found in Greek writers, no less than the question in its simple form. Why "for the sons of man"? Because "each animal has its own peculiar pleasure as it has its own peculiar func-

tion ; the pleasures of a horse, a dog and a man are all different.”<sup>1</sup> Why “under heaven ?” Because without this qualification we run the risk of making people happy only when they are dead, whereas we wish to know how they can be so when they are alive.<sup>2</sup> Why “during the number of the days of their lives ?” Because “in a complete life” forms part of the philosophical definition of “happiness.”<sup>3</sup>

That the interpretation of this text is got from Aristotle is perhaps accidental ; the meaning of “the end of life” was a commonplace with the Greek thinkers. On the other hand the influence of Aristotle on the Prologue seems undeniable. The proposition which the author there sets himself to prove is that owing to the processes of nature and of man being recurrent, not progressive, everything is forgotten ; whence the author is himself forgotten—for he speaks as a dead man. Aristotle in his *Meteorology* argues somewhat similarly that the eternity of the world which is based on its circular motion leads to oblivion ; and this might have occurred to many thinkers, but not (in the present writer’s opinion) the doctrine that the course of the wind is from North to South or South to North, because that of the sun is from East to West. For this appears to be part of Aristotle’s special theory of the nature of the wind.

The words of Ecclesiastes are as follows : “The sun also ariseth and the sun goeth down and hasteth to his place where he ariseth. The wind goeth towards the south and turneth about unto the north ; it turneth about continually in its course, and the wind returneth again to its circuits” (R.V.) The theory is that just as the motion of the sun is from East to West, so that of the wind is from North to South and South to North. The assertion that these are the two main directions of the wind is Aristotle’s, and is deduced from his meteorological system.<sup>4</sup> The sun’s

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Nic. Ethics*, 1176 a 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 1100 a 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 1101 a 15.

<sup>4</sup> P. 361 a.

path being from East to West, it does not *visit* the North and South but only diverges towards them : consequently it is in these regions that the vapour which constitutes the body of the winds collects. The wind itself is a mass of dry vapour rising from the earth and revolving round it ; the fact that its direction is sometimes South at other times North is due to the alternate declinations of the sun which cause the seasons. This Ecclesiastes expresses in verse 6 by the assertion that the wind goes southwards and reverts northwards, circles round [the earth] and then re-traces its steps.

The Meteorology thus explains why the sun is brought into connexion with the wind, and why the directions of the wind are given as N. and S. A Palestinian writer would not have thought the East wind a negligible quantity.

Verse 7 also comes from the Meteorology. "All the rivers go to the sea, but the sea is not full." All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is no *larger*, is what Aristotle says ;<sup>1</sup> and since the word<sup>2</sup> used by him for "larger" might by a hasty reader be rendered "full," we seem to have in Aristotle's work the actual original of the sentence in Ecclesiastes. The Greek philosopher asserts that on this subject of winds and rivers nothing had been said before him which the merest amateur might not say ;<sup>3</sup> and he refutes the opinion of Plato according to which the rivers ran *out of* as well as into the sea. The theory that the rivers ran into the sea without increasing its bulk had however been formulated before Aristotle's time ;<sup>4</sup> that all rivers did so could scarcely have been maintained in Palestine, where the most important river did not so terminate ; and Aristotle, who had heard of the Dead Sea, regarded it as a fable.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 355 b 16 ; 23.                   <sup>2</sup> πλείων.                   <sup>3</sup> 349 a 15.

<sup>4</sup> Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 1294.                   <sup>5</sup> 359 a 17.

The proposition with which Ecclesiastes ends his account of the rivers is : "unto the place whither the rivers go thither they go again." The meaning is that it is the same water which is repeatedly carried to the sea by the rivers, and not new water ; and on this fact Aristotle insists also.<sup>1</sup>

In the Aristotelian system every part is linked to every other, and the theory of the winds and rivers is part of the system which makes the universe eternal, and its circular motion unending. Ecclesiastes continues : "No man can say : All things are weary," for owing to the circular motion of the universe being "according to nature" the universe wearies not.<sup>2</sup> And for the eternity of the heavenly bodies in the case of organisms recurrence, an imitation of the circular motion, is substituted, as the next best thing.<sup>3</sup>

This last aphorism, "No one can say : All things are weary," from its form is clearly polemical, and indeed directed against the Epicurean doctrine that things *are* weary, and the earth is hurrying to its destruction : the earth is even now worn out and "effete."<sup>4</sup> The Greek for the aphorism rejected by Ecclesiastes is evidently πάντα κάμνει, and this he refutes by the observation that this supposed weariness does not show itself ; nothing is really new, but the spectator treats things as if they were new.

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### THE GENTILE INFLUENCES ON PAUL.

I AM grateful for the kind way in which Sir William Ramsay deals with the difference of opinion between us in regard to the extent to which Paul was influenced by his Tarsian environment ; and heartily welcome as an honour the friendship for me he expresses. Our purpose and method in dealing with the great apostle are so much alike that what

<sup>1</sup> 360 b.    <sup>2</sup> *Metaphysics*, 1050 a 24.    <sup>3</sup> *De Generatione, etc.*, 336 b.

<sup>4</sup> Lucretius, ii. 1151 etc.