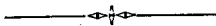


ing has encountered ever since it began, there is inexhaustible refreshment in the sure promise which the great Commander annexed to "the marching orders" of His advancing army, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the age."

DAVID DALE STEWART.

COULSDON RECTORY, NEAR CATERHAM,  
January, 1887.



### ART. III.—DEAN BRADLEY'S "LECTURES ON ECCLESIASTES."

*Lectures on Ecclesiastes.* Delivered in Westminster Abbey by the Very Reverend GEORGE GRANVILLE BRADLEY, D.D., Dean of Westminster. Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1885.

IT is needless to say that this is an extremely able book. Let me add, that it is by no means an easy one to review. The object of the lectures was edification rather than criticism. And yet they raise, or at least touch, nearly every question, critical or exegetical, that can be found in "the Preacher." Some such treatment as Dean Bradley's appears absolutely necessary, as a first step to the solution of these questions, and to determine the origin and purpose of Ecclesiastes. Another observation I cannot withhold. Dean Bradley is, above all things, a scholar. Yet in these pages he avows himself to be "no Hebraist," and takes his textual and critical comments from other authorities, by such principles of selection as an English reader must perforce adopt. I cannot but regret that

assigns to it), in order that Christ, by our testifying, may accomplish the number of His "peculiar people;" although General Haig, one of the most energetic and self-denying among the supporters of foreign Missions, has stated, in his address entitled "The Claims of India": "Every ten years a census is taken by the missionaries of the Church in India, and so the exact number of Christians, men, women, and children, is known. Taking the last three decades, the *annual increase* was 10,000 in the first, 10,000 in the second, and in the ten years ending 1881, 20,000. . . . And yet, while it is very encouraging to see the Church increasing at that rate, the outlook is not so encouraging when the actual increase of the total population is considered. For centuries before we took India under our charge, the population was probably nearly stationary; but now that they are under a strong and just and beneficent Government, the increase of the population is very rapid. The actual increase appears to be now at the rate of two or two and a half millions a year; but, supposing we only say one million, allowing for the epidemics that sweep away such large numbers from time to time, we have still these two facts confronting us—of the Christian Church increasing at the rate of 10,000 to 20,000, and the heathen population increasing at the rate of *one million* a year."

the Dean has felt compelled to attack a difficult text with one hand—may I venture to say his right hand?—thus tied behind his back.

The reviewer's task is not facilitated. Where Dean Bradley pleads that he is "no scholar," it should require a fool, or an angel, to intrude.

And yet I cannot yield the whole question of authorship to German criticism, and allow, without demur, even on grounds of language, that Solomon was not the author of the book. The Dean of Westminster has, in fact, convinced me that Solomon was the author, and that on grounds of internal evidence, derived from the subject-matter, as distinct from the Hebrew in which the work of Koheleth has been given to us. The difficulty of the position I had felt very strongly before reading these lectures. I think I see my way to its solution now. I owe this acknowledgment to the Lecturer, that he has presented the question in such a way as seems to me to force the answer, although it is not that answer which he has felt himself bound to give.

Dean Bradley treats the Book of Ecclesiastes, very forcibly, as an expression of the strongest pessimism that is compatible with any real religion at all. He will not allow that the direct gospel in any shape can be found there. And in this treatment of the subject it seems impossible to deny that he is right. Further, he loses no opportunity of pointing out that the circumstances upon which the Preacher founds his observations are not, except in one or two passages (notably ch. ii.), the obvious surroundings of Solomon's throne. Here, also, it is impossible to deny that there is a good deal to be said for the Dean's view. The repeated allusions to oppression and injustice are not a fair description of the general condition of Israel under Solomon's reign. Yet some personal experience of the writer seems to be behind them all.

No true theory of any of the books of Holy Scripture can be founded on the denial or avoidance of plain facts. The pessimism of Ecclesiastes is undeniable. It is not only personal, it is general—"All is vanity." Not only has Koheleth himself been disappointed with a depth of disappointment only equal to the heights of the Solomon atmosphere which he describes, but measured downwards instead of heavenward. Disappointed with Solomon and all his environment, he is even more disappointed with all else. Injustice, oppression, self-seeking, purposeless labour, ground gained only to be lost, little or no general advancement among mankind, all things ebbing and flowing, or travelling an endless round. This is the prospect before the Preacher's eyes.

Then, is there no religion in the book? Yes, there is; but,

as the Dean shows, it is not the gospel. Koheleth does not "hear the footsteps of the Messiah in the unseen future," or, if he does, he makes no sign.

"Fear thou God." "Fear God and keep His commandments." With these solemn words, he who has spoken by turns in the character of the sick and disillusioned searcher after knowledge and after pleasure; of the pessimistic and life-weary sigher after annihilation; of the despairing fatalist; of the sad Agnostic, who sees no knowledge possible of the unknowable world beyond the grave; of the hopeless Materialist, who sees in man nothing beyond his animal organization; of the more cheerful commender of such brief enjoyment as life permits—rises at last to the full stature of the Preacher, if not of full trust and faith, yet of reverence and awe. *Fear thou God.* He holds firm at all events, though all around invites to a hopeless scepticism, to the belief in God, Who, even though we are to pass away and be forgotten, yet has claims on some deeper feeling than earthly objects can inspire. It is not Christian faith; it is not the soul "athirst for God, even the living God," but it is something beyond the reach of those whom in many ways he so resembles, with whom he has in many points such sympathy, those who say, aloud or in their hearts, "there is no God."

The preceding passage is as good a summary of Dean Bradley's view of Ecclesiastes as anything in the entire volume. The following sentences add something on the positive side:

The Book of Ecclesiastes bears the stamp, from first to last, of dejection, if not of despair. Yet its still unrelinquished, pervading sense of the fear of God as the end of life; its firm hold of the inherent distinction between right and wrong; its refusal, in spite of all that seems to cloud the hope, to part with the conviction of a judgment, a righteous judgment, yet to come; its counsels of activity, patience, cheerfulness, prudence, calmness, sympathy with suffering, stand out amidst the wreck and decay of all around. They stand out often in sharp contrast with what seems at times the prevailing tone of the book itself.

I feel very grateful to Dean Bradley for having insisted so strongly on the pessimism of Ecclesiastes; but I cannot accept his theory of the authorship. Indeed, he has no positive theory. The only answer he gives to the question "Who was Koheleth?" is of this kind: whoever he was, it is quite certain that he was not Solomon. Apart from the linguistic difficulty (which courtesy requires that I should keep in the background), the Dean attacks the received doctrine of the Solomon authorship in the most insidious way. His method is this. He fastens upon some "marvellous perverting of judgment and justice" under Oriental despotism, depicts it in the Preacher's words, and draws out the sense as forcibly as he can. Then he groans like some enlightened inhabitant of modern Pontus—a very Apollos, for example (pardon the anachronism)—under Turkish misrule; and then he turns suddenly round in the blackness with which he has enveloped himself, and stabs the orthodox Bible-reader with a text describing Solomon's justice and prosperity out of the first Book of Kings.

An attack of this kind cannot be met by any impromptu defence. The whole position must be carefully examined; and I believe we must look farther and wider for our explanation of Ecclesiastes than to the personal trials and disappointments of Solomon's old age. In examining this question, I have been led into a train of thought which has interested me greatly. I am disposed to attempt an answer—I hope with all becoming modesty, as befits a *quondam* scholar in the presence of the ex-master of the oldest college in Oxford—to the learned and terrible Dean. Reserving the question of language for the place which it occupies in these lectures, let me join issue on the subject-matter. It seems to me that if an expression of pessimism was to find place in Holy Scripture as the theme of a distinct treatise, Solomon is the very person on whom the preparation of the treatise in question must devolve. The experience must be his; and no one could describe it better. The reason for this opinion I will state as best I can. In Solomon the humanity of fallen Adam reached its highest consummation under direct Divine training, and from the standpoint of sacred history—the only history, be it remembered, which is strictly and entirely true. And for all this, despite the greatness of "Solomon in all his glory," the sentence upon fallen Adam, fallen Abraham, fallen Israel, was—to die. That type of humanity could not reform the world. Adam's destiny from the beginning was a kingdom. "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet." "Let us make man *in* our image (structure), *after* our likeness (character), and let them have dominion (final destiny)." The extent of this dominion has no limit; only "it is manifest that He is excepted" Who is to put all things under the Adam that He has made. Is it a matter of indifference *what kind of Adam* is to have this dominion? Shall it be the first Adam in his primeval innocence, without the fixity of character to which we know no road but moral training—*temptation*, with all the terrible possibilities that this implies? Or shall it be the same Adam in his fallen nature, with so much of his first estate as he can save out of the wreck of his being, aided by Divine guidance, and so much the better as Abraham, David, Solomon, were in advance of other patriarchs and kings of men? Or shall it be, not the first Adam at all, whether flesh unimproved or man at his highest (son of Adam, or son of Ish, as the old Hebrew puts it), but a "Second Man, the Lord from heaven," glorified in all His members, the "firstborn among many brethren," "according to the spirit of holiness," and "after resurrection from the dead"? Everyone who knows the Apostles' Creed

can answer the question. Could Solomon have framed the answer? Certainly not, in Dean Bradley's opinion. We add, certainly not. But Solomon was himself a part of the answer—perhaps the largest part that any individual child of Adam (before One) supplied. Solomon's failure eliminated the chief factor from the problem, and enforced the necessity of its solution by the way of the Cross.

In this view the throne of Solomon was no ordinary position. It cannot be estimated by the extent of his dominions, or his place in common history among the kings of this present world. The planet Earth is not particularly conspicuous among the stars of heaven. But on earth He Who made the heavens was made man and died. And Solomon, as the son of David, was His especial prototype among the kings of men. Solomon and his throne represent the *maximum* attainable by "the kingdom of the Lord over Israel," "His son, His firstborn" nation, taken out of other nations to be trained by Himself. From Abraham to David was one long process of education. And of all David's sons, He chose Solomon to inherit the kingdom promised to Abraham, in the fullest measure that could be granted until the Son of MAN should come. THE SON OF DAVID was to be the Christ. But what kind of Christ? If the cross of JESUS was to supersede the throne of Solomon, might it not fairly be expected that God should tell us why? And in Ecclesiastes He has partly told us why. The experiment of a Solomon was needed in order to justify the Cross of Christ. If Solomon had not found, on solid and sufficient experience, that "all is vanity;" or if, when seated on the highest pinnacle of earthly greatness attainable by the Anointed of the God of Israel, he had pronounced his position anything but a gigantic failure, what reason was there why the Creator should reject, instead of completing, that type of humanity of which Solomon was the Crown? If perfection was by the throne of Solomon, what further need was there that another king should arise after the order of Nazareth, and wear the crown of thorns? If the first Adam was not really a failure, what was it but waste of manhood to destroy and cast him aside? Is he "a vessel wherein is no pleasure"? If not, if "the vessel that He made out of the clay" has not been "marred in the hand of the Potter," why make it again another vessel, instead of finishing the first? "If any man be in Christ, it is new creation (*καινή κτίσις*)." But fresh creation is not justifiable—not for the glory of the Creator—if anything less will avail to repair the first.

And was not Solomon's experience, historically, an experience of failure at the best? Closely examined, I think everyone must admit that it was. The mere fact that his

dominions were, upon the whole, in peace and safety during his reign; that "judges and officers" were "in all the gates," and judgment and justice was executed in Israel, so far as it can be dispensed anywhere by mortal, fallible men—all this may be admitted. We have seen a good deal of it in other countries at other periods of the history of our fallen race. But Solomon's wisdom must have been contemptible by contrast with many a lesser light, if he could not see beneath the surface that there were many abuses which even he could not rectify, and that the basis of the whole fabric was unstable to the last degree. His own many marriages, and his single son Rehoboam, and the uncertainty of Rehoboam's future, were items in the case. The second Psalm of Solomon (cxxvii.), "Except the Lord build the house,"<sup>1</sup> touches more than one aspect of it. It expresses the uncertain duration of Solomon's kingdom for want of a successor. And, striking the very next note in the Psalter, after the thanksgiving of the captives returned from Babylon, it reminds us that their ecclesiastical polity was itself transitory, and not less dependent upon the divine dispensations than the kingdom which had already been removed.

But we need not explain the whole Book of Ecclesiastes by the history of Israel or of Solomon's reign. This view the Preacher himself has, by anticipation, repudiated. "I was king over Israel in Jerusalem," he says. Not, surely, "I was," in the sense of "I once was, and I am not;" but, as the Septuagint version, even without the Hebrew, reminds us, ἐγενόμην, I became, or "I was made, king. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning *all things that are done under heaven* . . . I have seen *all the works that are done under the sun*; and behold, *all is vanity and vexation of spirit*" (i. 12-14).

The Solomon horizon cannot therefore be limited to the land of Israel. Again and again we are reminded that "all the oppressions that are done under the sun" have been laid under contribution to the "vanity" of this book. If "all kings of the earth sought to Solomon to hear his wisdom," and brought him, not only presents, but questions, like the Queen of Sheba, and like her, were satisfied (and the wisdom that will satisfy queenly curiosity must be vast indeed), must he not have known something of all the governments of the world? Another expression of which Dean Bradley has made frequent use in these lectures, taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes, seems to me to bear a double sense. The Preacher refers more than

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew usage of this expression should be remembered. It is children who build the house. See Gen. xvi. 2; Ruth iv. 11. But Adam's house can only be builded for eternity by "the Son of Man."

once to "all that have been before me in Jerusalem." This expression the Dean takes to signify "all my predecessors." And then he inquires, naturally enough, who were Solomon's predecessors? Melchizedek, Adonizedek, and the Lords of Justice between them, and David; and for a few days, Absalom? Will these suffice? Hardly, for the Preacher's comparison. Then must we not seek some later king, as Uzziah, or Hezekiah? The objection is specious; but Bible sentences are strange weapons to handle. It is never safe to assume that the meaning which lies on the surface is all that the words contain. "Before me in Jerusalem" *may* mean "my predecessors" there. But it may also mean "in my presence" there (*coram me*). Which does it mean? In ch. i 16, "In Jerusalem" is "over Jerusalem" literally, and here we seem to be shut up to the chronological meaning, *before*, as opposed to *after*. But in ch. ii. 9 "in Jerusalem" is "in," and not "over." And we may fairly ask whether the king refers to everyone who has been "before" him, *i.e.*, in his presence, in that place. In 1 Kings xi. 36, "before me in Jerusalem" is used in that sense (the Hebrew being identical as well as the English). So in Ezekiel xxxvi. 17, "their way was before me" means "was in my sight." Here we have the *verb* as well as the preposition. The expression, then, will bear either meaning. If we count examples, we find that "before me" is used of *time*, in four passages of the Old Testament, for certain; of *place*, sixty times; and in five cases it is ambiguous. It is possible therefore that Koheleth intends a comparison not only between Solomon and all his predecessors, but between Solomon and all his royal visitors—"all that have come before my face in Jerusalem." And thus, like "under the sun," it widens the horizon considerably. Solomon had both opportunity and inclination for world-wide observation and research. He seems to have been gifted with the disposition that would lead him to reflect upon his researches. He was not ignorant of his destiny and that of his people. He knew himself to be the direct representative of the Messiah, the object of the divine choice. And with this knowledge, this leisure, these opportunities, if Solomon had bestowed no inquiry or investigation upon "the work that God was making from beginning to end," he must have been more or less than *man*. And is not his confessed inability to understand it another testimony to the truth, that "none of the princes of this world knew the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory"? If there had been no Solomon; if he had not attempted the solution of the great problem, and confessed his failure, would it not have destroyed much of the meaning of those words of St. Paul? The more

I reflect upon Solomon's place in sacred history, the more I feel convinced that the Book of Ecclesiastes is his own genuine production, in all its pessimism, and that it was "written for our admonition, upon whom the *ends of the world* are come." The matter of it fits Solomon in all his glory, as it fits no one else in the world.

In Dean Bradley's view the experience of Koheleth is partly personal, partly personified. It is the actual experience of some later Israelite put into the mouth of Solomon the king. Without attacking this opinion on the ground that it makes the book a forgery—a view which Dean Bradley repudiates—and granting that to this extent fiction is not falsehood, we may fairly ask, Is not the reality of the experience impaired thereby? Solomon's kingly experience was personal and unique. The experience of Koheleth was personal also. But if these are two separate experiences welded into one, is the trial perfectly fair? Is not the truthfulness of the thing depicted somewhat impaired thereby? To my mind it is. Without in the least asserting that the later Koheleth intended to deceive me,—yet if I take him to be Solomon and he is some one else,—to that extent I am deceived. The fact may be consistent with current conceptions of the veracity of Scripture, but honestly I must say that it is not consistent with mine. Whether the present form of Ecclesiastes is also due to Solomon is another question. In every discussion of the authorship of books of the Old Testament, it is most desirable that three questions be kept distinct. Who *wrote* it? Who *edited* it? *When* was it brought out? I do not think it necessary to suppose that Koheleth was published, or added to the Canon of Scripture, in Solomon's reign. On any supposition it must be his latest extant work. The terrible *bouleversement* which followed his death; the division of the kingdom; the disestablishment and disendowment of the priests and Levites that were in all Israel, when His people "returned thither, and waters of a full cup were wrung out to them;" the capture of the city of David by an Egyptian army after four years—all this is not likely to have left much literary leisure in Jerusalem. Even the Book of Proverbs, as we have it, was certainly not completed before the time of Hezekiah; and why the prophecy of King Lemuel should be quoted against Koheleth's estimate of women, in relation to the question of authorship, I do not quite understand. I see no reason why we should suppose Ecclesiastes to have been added to the Old Testament Canon before the Babylonish captivity. Its place among the Hagiographa of the Hebrew Scriptures indicates that it was probably incorporated at a later date. Then comes the question, Did Solo-



mon write it as we have it now? If we say Yes, Dean Bradley threatens us with a dilemma that almost makes one shudder. "If," says a Christian Hebraist of unimpeached orthodoxy—no less than Delitzsch—"if the Book of Ecclesiastes was written in the age of Solomon, *there is no history of the Hebrew language.*" Shall I be counted a blasphemer if I accept the terrible alternative, and ask with tremulous audacity, *Who but a German critic would ever have supposed that there was?* How can there be, when the literature of the period is so exceedingly scanty? I cannot but express my regret that Dean Bradley, whose scholarship was a household word amongst us at Oxford before I took my degree, does not claim the same mastery of Hebrew as of the classics. Hebrew criticism has been left far too much in the hands of men who, whatever their industry, are *not scholars*. Listen to one *who is* (speaking in the name of *one who was*) a Hebrew scholar:

Why, the critics of the past century were but lambs as compared with that tiger Ewald, who rends and tears whatever he lays hold of, and calls this mangling process criticism. And yet one sees why this species of criticism, which he seems to have been one of the first to invent, is becoming popular. Years of study are required before one can acquire a profound knowledge of Hebrew. . . . A work, on the other hand, which, like some late productions, contains anything paradoxical and startling with regard to the books of the Bible, and *confidently affirms* that every one of these must be dismembered and assigned to different authors, attracts immediate attention, and is eagerly sought for by the public, ever greedy of excitement and novelty. The author . . . is at once exalted to the rank of a Biblical critic of the first order, and it is besides straightway inferred that he must be a profound Hebrew scholar, for how else could he possibly determine when there was a difference of style sufficient to justify his inferring a different author?—a point upon which few could pronounce, even in their own native language.

Far be it from me to impeach Delitzsch's orthodoxy. All honour to him who maintains "the faith once delivered" amidst an opposing host. But the German method is the German method; and without being a Hebrew scholar myself in any sense in which the word can be used in presence of Dean Bradley, I can see quite enough of German ways to show me that no scholar would ever reason about style as they do. What is a difference of style worth, which vanishes entirely in a translation of the merit of our English Old Testament? Even Germans allow that Solomon could write Solomon's Song. Is the style that of the Proverbs? Is there any other book in all the Old Testament written in the style of Ecclesiastes? Not one. But it "is saturated with later Hebrew." What are the facts? It partly resembles the

<sup>1</sup> From "The Book of Job," by the late Hermann Hedwig Bernard. Edited by Frank Chance.

Mishna, or text of the Talmud—a codification of the Jewish law, with a view to the practical administration of the same. What is the first date of the Mishna? No man knows. We know what first necessitated a codification of the law of Moses. It was the decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus to Ezra that he should enforce that law in Judæa as the law of the land. For all we know to the contrary, the basis of the Mishna may be Ezra's work.

But is the language of Ecclesiastes the language of the Mishna in those points in which the two can be compared? Far from it. A list of the words and phrases of Ecclesiastes which resemble the Mishna may be found in the well-known work of Dr. Wright. But these are only resemblances. We see words and expressions in Ecclesiastes *on their way* to the usage of the Mishna. How far on their way, we have no means of knowing. There is a point whose distance from another unknown point is unknown. Therefore the distance of the first point from Solomon is considerable! That is the argument. If it were desired to re-write the Book of Ecclesiastes in the style of Solomon, no one could do it. If we had the same thoughts in writing by any Hebrew writer, whose date is known, we might reason. But we have not. And there is absolutely not one word or phrase in Ecclesiastes which any man on earth can demonstrate that Solomon did not know. Then is there "no history of the Hebrew language?" None whatever, if the word "history" implies what is intended by the Germans, and is at the same time demonstrably true.

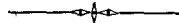
A single instance may serve to illustrate the sort of resemblance that is noted between Ecclesiastes and the Mishna. The word *'inyan* occurs in Koheleth eight times. In the Talmud it is common enough in the sense of *πράγμα*, or the ordinary English word "*thing*." It does not occur in the Old Testament except in Ecclesiastes. What does it mean there? In homely English, it means "bother." The Authorized Version renders it "travail," and "business." The Revisers by "travail" always, in text or margin. That is the word they prefer. There is no trace in Ecclesiastes of its later sense. The meaning keeps close to the derivation throughout. This is a fair sample of what is meant by the argument from style. There is nothing in the style which may not be explained by the unique character of the subject-matter of the book. It certainly points to a unique experience. Was not Solomon's experience truly unique?

It may possibly be doubted whether Solomon would have left these pages behind him in a perfectly accessible form. I do not suppose the book, as we have it, is a translation.

Dean Bradley is against that opinion, and the question is one of which he is a thoroughly competent judge. But Solomon was probably acquainted with many ways of writing. Parts of Ecclesiastes remind one strongly of the freedom of a private diary. Other portions are not quite in the same style. The structure of the book, as a whole, is not obvious. I am not aware that it has yet been explained. Can it be a selection from anything larger? In any case, I doubt greatly whether it was given to Israel as Holy Scripture before the days of the "ready scribe." But I do not find fault with other men's conjectures in order to steal their trade myself. I merely indicate what I think may fairly be conceded to those persons who do not believe that Solomon in his lifetime published this book. I do not see that such a thing is in any way impossible. Still, the book contains expressions sufficiently hostile to existing government to make its publication matter of care and discretion. The Proverbs are a very different work.

The secret history of Dean Bradley's lectures, if we did but know it, might be far more interesting than a critical discussion of the date of "the Preacher." Among the audience in Westminster Abbey, there were surely some persons no less perplexed than Solomon by the darker side of human life; and, not less than Solomon, needing the sight of its solution by the Cross. To such persons these lectures may well have ministered "edification, exhortation, consolation." May there be many who shall thus find their way past the thorns of Solomon to the Crown of that greater Son of David, Whose Cross the darkness of His human ancestor has made clear!

C. H. WALLER.



#### ART. IV.—THE WELSH BORDER.

THE borderland between England and Wales is not so well known to the intelligent tourist as it should be. Here, collected together within a comparatively small compass, may be found beautiful and magnificent scenery, and also lone ruins of great historical interest. Many a fine view in Shropshire or Herefordshire crowned by some distant mountain-peak in the heart of Wales, will well repay the artist's labour. And if the fates be favourable, the beauty of the scene may be heightened by the grand effect produced by the dark storm-cloud against the pale sky and the blue mountain.

Moreover, all along the border, there still remain the crumbling ruins of the once mighty castles of the Lords