



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XIX
Issue 471

Studies in Ecclesiastes

The Words and Work of God and Man

Part 5 of 5

by — Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921)

Accordingly, in what follows, Ecclesiastes endeavors to find a partial solution by answering the practical ends of life.



writer's thought is necessarily obscured when a Hebrew term is represented by such different words in English. When attention is given to the usage of these terms and their adjective and verbal forms, it becomes clear that the sense of "device" or "scheme" is in view.

- 25 I turned about that my heart *may* know and explore,
That *it may* seek out wisdom and design
And *may* know the wickedness of stupidity
and the frivolity *in* raving.
- 26 I found *more* bitter than death:
That *kind of* woman whose heart is
like weir traps and seine nets,
And her hands like bonds;
The man doing well before the One, Elohim, he
shall escape from her,
And the sinner, he shall be seized by her.
- 27 See, this is what I found, said the Assembler: -
Adding one thing to another to find a design,
- 28 Which my soul still sought, but I *could* not find,
I found one man *out of* a thousand,
Yet I *could* not find a woman among all these -
- 29 See, I found this alone:
That the One, Elohim, made humanity upright,
Yet they seek many devisings.

This whole paragraph, more especially :26-28, has occasioned many gratuitous remarks. Regarding :27 the difficulty lies in determining to what the phrase "one to one" may refer. Since the topic consistently discussed throughout the section is the relation between good and evil, the likely point is that, to arrive at an intelligent understanding of the universe, good and evil must be considered together as parts of the divine plan. This fits with the special scope of this "book," and throws light on many otherwise obscure passages.

Relating the words of :28 to :26, the idea develops that one God-pleasing man among a thousand succumbing to feminine temptation can be found; a God-pleasing woman among courtesans is not yet found.

In the progress of his quest concerning all that is done under the sun, Ecclesiastes has arrived at the truth that God is universally supreme. This conclusion is reached not by a process of consequence-making resting on presumed premises, but it is forced upon our thinker by the existing order of things. When his inquiring mind turned

(see STUDIES, page 4171)

In seeking to understand this portion of Ecclesiastes, the student is confronted with a formidable obstacle. The AV translates the noun *cheshbon* in three different ways: "reason" (7:25), "account" (7:27) and, later on, "device" (9:10). In addition, the feminine form of this noun is rendered "invention" in 7:29. It must be evident to the least critical reader that the

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Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
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STUDIES (continued from front page)

from the consideration of the problems of individual experience to the larger problems of the universe, the world seemed a house hopelessly divided into two irreconcilable rival factions scrambling for the mastery. Chaos and anarchy seemed to reign. Then flashes the idea that good and evil are integral parts of one great plan, and therefore must be taken together and considered as a whole. The thought is firmly grasped that God is absolutely the first great cause; absolutely all things are of Him; all things are His servants working out His will. With the dawning of this truth a mighty change steals over Ecclesiastes. He breaks away from his gloomy thoughts, to apostrophize in a tone of rapture the man who has found wisdom:

- 8:1 Who *is* like the wise *man*?
 And who knows *the* interpretation of *a* matter?
 Wisdom *for* a man lightens *up* his countenance,
 And *the* harsh strength of his face is altered.
- 2 Observe *the* king's bidding,
 And *that* on account of *the* oath of Elohim.
- 3 Do not be rash *in* going from his presence;
 Do not stand in *an* evil matter,
 For all that he desires he does.
- 4 Since *a* king's word *has* authority,
 Who *can* say to him, What are you doing?
- 5 *He* who observes instruction shall know no
 evil matter,
 And *the* wise heart shall know season and
 judgment.
- 6 For *there* is season and judgment for every
 event,
 Since the evil *for* a man *is* abundant *upon* him.
- 7 For no one knows what shall come,
 For just as it shall be, who *can* tell him?
- 8 No man *has* authority over *the* spirit to detain
 the spirit,
 And no *one* *has* authority over the day of death;
There is no dismissal in war,
 And wickedness shall make no *way*
of escape for its possessor.
- 9 All this I have seen and *have* applied my heart
 to all work that is done under the sun,
 At *a* season when *a* man *has* authority
 over *another* man to his peril;
- 10 In such *a* case I saw *the* wicked entombed,
Those who used to come and go from *the* holy
 place
 And were lauded in *the* city where they had
 done such *things*.

This too *is* vanity.

- 11 Because *there* is no sentence executed
 quickly *against* the evil deed,
 Therefore *the* heart of the sons of humanity
 in them is fully *given* to do evil.
- 12 Though *a* sinner does *a* hundred evils and *days*
are prolonged for him,
 Yet I know that good shall come
 to *those* fearful of the *One*, Elohim,
 Who *stand* in fear before Him.
- 13 Yet good shall not come to *the* wicked *one*,
 Nor shall he prolong *his* days *which*
are like a shadow,
 Because he has no fear before Elohim.
- 14 *There* is *another* vanity that is done on the earth:
There are righteous *men* for whom retribution
is according to *the* work of the wicked,
 And *there* are wicked *ones* for whom retribution
is according to *the* work of the righteous;
 I say that this too *is* vanity.
- 15 So I lauded rejoicing,
 Since *there* is no good for *a* man under the sun
 Save to eat and to drink and to rejoice.
 And it shall be allied *with* him in his toil *through*
the days of his life,
 Which the *One*, Elohim, gives to him under
 the sun.

The difficulty which many experience with 8:9 arises from considering the verse by itself. The passage becomes clear (though not free from all difficulty) when 8:9-13 is treated as a whole paragraph elaborating one phase of the common argument. The thought is: There is a time (season) when one individual has the power to oppress another. The wicked tyrant who brings evil to another is buried without having received quick sentence for his evil, and the sight of this transitory vanity of providence encourages sin.

“*Though a sinner does evil, and his days are prolonged, yet I know that good shall come to those who fear God.*” A paradox: In spite of appearances it is not so; or in spite of individual cases the principle of judgment on the wicked is sound. Ecclesiastes impresses the importance of maintaining moral principle side by side with our inability to perceive the justice of God's ways.

- 16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom,
 And to see the experience that is appointed ►

on earth
 (Even though by day and night, one does not see sleep with his eyes),
 17 Then I saw *in* all *the* work of the *One*, Elohim,
 That *a* man is not able to find *out* the work that is done under the sun,
 Forasmuch as *a* man may toil in seeking *it out* but shall not find *it*;
 And even if *a* wise *man* says *he* knows, he is not able to find *it out*.
 9:1 For I laid all this on my heart, and my heart saw all this:
 That the righteous and the wise and their services *are* in *the* hand of the *One*, Elohim;
 Whether *it will be* love or hate, *a* man is not *able* to know; *Everything* before them *is* vanity.
 2 Just as to all, *there is* one destiny for *the* righteous *one* and for *the* wicked *one*,
 For *the* good *one* and for *the* bad *one*,
 For *the* clean *one* and for *the* unclean *one*,
 For *the one who* sacrifices and for him who makes no sacrifice,
 So *it is* for *the* good *person* as for *the* sinner,
 For *the one who* swears just as for *one* fearful of an oath.
 3 This *is* *the* evil in all that is done under the sun:
 That one destiny *is* for all; Moreover *the* heart of the sons of humanity is full of evil,
 And ravings *are* in their heart throughout their lives,
 Yet after it, *they are* joined to the dead.
 4 Indeed for anyone who is joined with all the living *there is* trust;
 For it *is* better to *be* a living cur than a dead lion.

5 For the living know that they shall die,
 But the dead know *nothing* whatsoever; *There is* no further reward for them;
 Indeed remembrance *of* them is forgotten.
 6 Both their love and their hate as well as their jealousy have perished already,
 And *there is* no further portion for them for *the* eon
 In all that is done under the sun.
 7 Go, eat your bread with rejoicing, and drink your wine with good heart,
 For already the *One*, Elohim, has approved *of* your works.
 8 In every season, let your garments be white,
 And oil on your head, let it not be lacking.
 9 See life with *a* wife whom you love all *the* days of your transitory life,
 Which He gives to you under the sun - all your transitory days,
 For this *is* your portion in life
 And in your toil that you *are* toiling under the sun.
 10 All that your hand finds to do, do with your vigor,
 For *there is* no doing or devising or knowledge or wisdom
 In *the* unseen where you *are* going.
 11 Again I saw under the sun
 That the race *is* not to *the* fleet,
 Nor the battle to masters *of* war,
 Nor even bread for *the* wise,
 Nor even riches for *the* understanding,
 Nor even favor for *the* knowing,
 For *a* season of mischance shall happen *to* them all.
 12 For, moreover, *a* man *does* not know his season;



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by – Daniel Russino

God's Truths Recovered is a study manual which covers such topics as: The eons and their importance; eternity; Satan; evil; administrations; rightly dividing the word; the gospel of the circumcision and uncircumcision; the church; book of Acts; Paul's epistles; salvation; justification; reconciliation; maturity in Christ; human traditions; baptism of the holy spirit; born again; new creation; the body and bride; trinity; spiritual gifts; gifts for today; healing; suffering; reigning; revealed secrets; Israel's future; your future; God's unconditional love; the Deity; hell; lake of fire; death; pagan philosophy; immortality; soul; second death; resurrection; vivification; judgment; great white throne; secret of Christ and more. 8-½ x 11 format.

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Like fish that *are* held in a vicious weir,
And like birds *that are* held in a snare,
So the sons of humanity *themselves are* trapped
by a season of evil,

When it falls on them suddenly.

13 I also saw this wisdom under the sun,
And it *seemed* great to me:

14 *There was* a small city with *only a* few mortals
in it,
And a great king came against it and
surrounded it,

And he built great siege *works* against it.

15 Now a man was available in it, provident and
wise,

And he would have provided escape *for* the
city by his wisdom,

Yet not *one* person remembered that provident
man.

ALL OF GOD

The tone of confidence deepens as the thinker advances toward his conclusion. From the vantage point of God's immutable, sovereign "design" he can, with perfect composure, look down upon the "many devisings" of puny men with the assurance that they work out the will of God. Can the knowledge that all

things have their origin in a divine fore-purpose – that they are under absolute divine control, and that neither wicked men nor any other evil power, nor all of them combined, can act independently of God – fail to give rest to the heart? Under the shadow of this great truth we may abide in perfect safety.

The word "mischance" is connected with the term "season" in 9:11 and refers to the season, not when things are favorable to man, but are adverse to him. It is a fresh reiteration of the dominant thought of the book that adverse and favorable seasons take place in accordance with God's pleasure and affect all men alike, irrespective of character, ability or personal accomplishments. Ecclesiastes dwells with all possible emphasis on the absolute deity of God. Herein lies the reason why his book is neglected and misrepresented. The dualistic theology of Christendom, with its Manichean idea of conflict between two rival deities and its dogma of the permanence of evil, found itself at irreconcilable variance with absolute supremacy of God postulated by the Assembler. Accordingly, theology contrived to set aside the testimony of this unique book by throwing over it the veil of false interpretation. ■

(Edited.)



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[Sufficient Deficiency, Competent Incompetency](#)

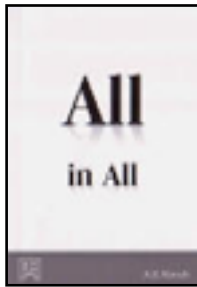
Other Responses

I wanted to let you know that I am so thankful for you and the word of truth that has gripped your own heart and mind and has been expressed through your writings. I am reading your exposition on *Sufficient Deficiency, Competent Incompetency* and reveling in this fact and truth in the Scriptures. – *WA*

I just want to thank you and say how much I appreciated your article *Sufficient Deficiency, Competent Incompetency*. It has spoken a lot to me, and I actually will spend more time meditating on it since this state of things has affected deeply my life. This is but an encouragement regarding the sovereignty of God in designing everything in our lives showing His ways with us. – *Brazil*

After reading *Sufficient Deficiency, Competent Incompetency* and *Out of this World* I wanted to say thank you for your words of relief. It's so easy to slip into the old religious performance mentality and feel terrible for not doing enough or being enough. It doesn't matter what area of life it is, I am a sinner. I miss the mark and I hate it, but your words have brought me some relief. I wish I could always remember the truth you have taught in these articles, but I keep forgetting. Thanks for the reminder. Something tells me I will need to hear your words again – many more times. – *e-Mail*



	<p><i>ALL in All: The Goal of the Universe</i> by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965) (#6269) 219 pages, Paperback <i>(See order form.)</i></p> <p>This publication is a compilation of the writings of A.E. Knoch on human destiny. The author examines three major theories on this topic current among students of Scripture. The striking phrase “All in all,” which pertains to the vivification of all mankind in I Corinthians 15:28 and relates to the reconciliation of the entire intelligent creation in Ephesians 1:23, is discussed at length. Two extensive appendices are included, exploring the usage of the terms “eon” and “eonian” in the Scriptures.</p>
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+++

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Thank you SO Much for your wonderful lessons in Vancouver, *Another Look at Bible Study*. I really wish I could've been there, but I'm SO grateful for the videos you've posted. They are such a balm to my soul. I have often felt guilty that I can't study the Bible more than I do. Working a full time job, raising a young daughter, and because of chronic migraines and being hard of hearing – I need at least 9 hours sleep a night to function well at work ... Well you can see it doesn't leave much time for thorough quality study.

Your message was just so ... graceful. I don't have to feel guilty if I'm not as studious as others. It's enough that I learn in God's time rather than trying to vacuum up every bit of knowledge in the Scripture on my own.

Thank you SO much, I'm SO thankful that God has raised you up to teach and be such a blessing to so many of us. – *Canada*

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