

translate for this clause "the caper-berry (which was eaten as an appetizer) shall fail to awaken appetite." **Man goeth to his long home.** Not merely the grave but the eternal world. **Mourners go about the streets.** Seemingly a strange expression, for in our land mourners stay at home. But the reference is to hired mourners in the East, who are sent for at once after a death has taken place; and whose passing in the streets is a reminder of death, like the coming of the undertaker's waggon with us.

6. Or ever. Before. The young man is exhorted to remember God before these things occur. **The silver cord.** A figurative description of death, not to be carried out too closely into details, but illustrating it as the breaking of the **silver cord** by which the household lamp is hung; the **golden bowl** containing the oil for the lamp is shattered by the fall; the **pitcher** by which the water is borne from the well is broken; and the **wheel** by which the bucket is let down is broken and dismantled. Some regard these as indicating respectively the spinal cord, the brain, the heart, and the arterial system, but the application is doubtful.

7. Then shall the dust. The mortal, bodily part of man. **Return to the earth.** To the dust from which the first man was made. **The spirit.** The immaterial part, which makes the difference between a corpse and a living man. **Shall return unto God.** To await the judgment of the last day. There is a sense in which both good and bad are with God after death. **5.** There is something more than mere matter in man. **6.** This ethereal nature does not go down into the grave with the body.

8. Vanity of vanities. See the explanation with verse 1 of the last lesson. The meaning here is, that the earthly life of man is a breath which soon comes to naught. **7.** If a man has not lived for God his life has been vain indeed. **Saith the Preacher.** In the original Koheleth. Literally, "the one that gathers or assembles the people;" in the Greek, Ecclesiastes, the name of the book.

9. Because the Preacher was wise. This is no assumption of superior wisdom. It may be translated, "Because Koheleth was a truth-seeker, one who gives his life to the problems of thought and morals." **He still taught.** He did not conceal his acquisitions of knowledge but imparted them to others, for the world's benefit. **Many proverbs.** A reference to the Book of Proverbs, of which the main body came from Solomon. **8.** Every seeker after truth is under an obligation to God to help others by giving them the knowledge which he possesses.

10. To find out acceptable words. Literally, words of consolation. Feeling deeply for human woes, and having experienced life in all its phases, he sought for words of encouragement and help. **Written was upright.** The reference may be to this book,

or to Solomon's writings in general. In them is found no word of excuse for sin, and no standard lower than the right.

11. As goads. Like the pricking of goads, which urge the oxen onward in ploughing, so the words of the wise sometimes sting, but only that they may excite men to duty. **As nails.** Better (according to Dr. Hyde), "As stakes firmly set are those (words) of the masters of assemblies." The stakes are those which hold the tent in position. **From one shepherd.** From God, the Shepherd of Israel and of his people, the giver of all truth, by whomsoever it is delivered. **9.** All truth comes from God, and must be in harmony with his character.

12. And further, by these. By these words of the wise already given in this book, of which the aim has been to point toward the better life, by showing the vanity of earthly aims. **Be admonished.** And seek the Creator, as already counselled. **Of making many books.** The previous clause belongs with verse 11, and this clause belongs to verse 12. The word "books" means writings in general. **There is no end.** The meaning is, "There are books enough, and too many; and one may study them until he is weary, yet he will find nothing more important than the following conclusion of the whole matter." If there were so many books then, how multiplied are books now, when fifteen thousand works are published every year!

13. Hear the conclusion. The summing up of the subject, a sentence which states the aim to which the entire book has led, and which might have been taken as its text. **Fear God, and keep his commandments.** The one the internal principle, the other its result in conduct. **10.** He who rightly regards God will delight in keeping his commandments. **11.** There is but one true standard of living, and that is in God's will. **The whole duty of man.** The word duty is not in the text, and should be omitted. "This is the whole man," is the sentence. Solomon has been showing the various aims for which men live—pleasure, wealth, learning, etc.—and the vanity of them all. Here at the end he shows the true manhood, which is in the fear of God and obedience to his will, than which there is no higher ideal of humanity.

14. For. That little word is the pivot of a mighty motive. Say what we will about principles of morality, the great principle of all true morals must be found in our responsibility to God. **God shall bring every work into judgment.** The book begins with life here, it ends by pointing to a judgment hereafter, when all the wrongs of earth shall be righted, and God's dealings with men vindicated. **Every secret thing.** Unknown to others, perhaps forgotten by ourselves, all shall be open in that day. **Whether it be good, or . . . bad.** The picture of the judgment, in Matt. 25, 27-40, shows that the revelation of the good deeds of God's saints