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978-1-107-69685-3 - An Introduction to Ecclesiastes: With Notes and Appendices

A. H. McNeile

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TO
ECCLESIASTES

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החוט המשלש לא במהרה ינתק

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AN INTRODUCTION
TO
ECCLESIASTES

WITH NOTES AND APPENDICES

BY

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PREFACE.

THE literature on the book of Ecclesiastes is very large, as may be seen by reference to Ginsburg's commentary, and to Aug. Palm *Die Qohelet-Litteratur* (Mannheim). But of late years it has received comparatively little attention. Palm's list was compiled in 1886, and since that time the following works may be noticed: 1. The commentaries of Cox (*Expositor's Bible*), 1890, Siegfried (in Nowack's *Handkomm. z. A. T.*), 1898, Wildeboer (in Marti's *Kurz. Handkomm. z. A. T.*), 1898. 2. Other studies of the book from various points of view: Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 1887, Euringer, *Der Masorahstext des Kohelet*, 1890, Leimdorfer, *Kohelet im Lichte der Geschichte*, 1892, Dillon, *Sceptics of the Old Testament*, 1895, Tyler, *Ecclesiastes* (2nd edit.), 1899. 3. To these must be added articles in periodicals—mostly German—on particular points. These are referred to where use is made of them.

The difficulty of the interpretation of the book has been an unending fascination to all who have dwelt upon it. But very few students have analysed it by the critical methods which have opened up a new world of study in the Hexateuch, the historical books and the prophets. The following pages have been written with two chief aims: firstly, to disentangle the strands which go to form the "three-fold cord" of the writing; and secondly, to estimate the position which Koheleth occupied with regard to the religious and philosophical thought of his

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day. On these two subjects, treated in §§ 4, 5 and 8, hang the chief interest and value of the book which is called by his name. But neither of these can be accurately studied unless the writing be placed in its historical and literary perspective; and an attempt is made to do this in the rest of the Introduction.

It was thought unnecessary to write a complete commentary on the Hebrew text; but it is hoped that in the Notes on select passages, and in Appendix II., all the principal points of interest or difficulty have been discussed.

The purpose of the Appendices is to re-open the problem of the Greek text. Even to those who may not accept the conclusions reached, they may prove useful in supplying textual matter for further study.

A. H. McNEILE.

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