

**A CRITICAL AND
EXEGETICAL
COMMENTARY ON THE
BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES**

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A critical and exegetical commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes by George Aaron Barton

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GEORGE AARON BARTON

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THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY

A

CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL
COMMENTARY

ON

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

BY

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1908

To

MY BROTHER

JOSHUA LINDLEY BARTON, M.D.

WHOSE GENEROUS ENCOURAGEMENT
AND SELF-SACRIFICE OPENED TO ME
A STUDENT'S CAREER
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

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PREFACE

THE following pages are a plain commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes. Those who expect to find here the advocacy of new and startling theories of this fascinatingly perplexing book will be disappointed. In the judgment of the writer there has been something too much of these things in the recent literature on Qoheleth. An endeavor is made in the following pages to examine the important theories concerning the book, both ancient and modern, in an impartial spirit, and to go in the formation of judgments, whither the evidence points. Obviously, in treating a work which has been studied so many centuries, there is little opportunity for novel discovery. Occasionally the writer has found himself differing from all his predecessors, but much more often the evidence has pointed to a conclusion already anticipated by some previous worker. He cannot hope that his conclusions will commend themselves to all his colleagues, but if this commentary shall have a part, however humble, in recalling criticism to regions in which the evidence is sufficiently objective to give some ultimate promise of a consensus of judgment on the part of scholars concerning the problems involved, the labor expended upon it will be more than rewarded.

In conclusion, I desire to express my thanks to Dr. Hans H. Spoer, of Jerusalem, for placing at my disposal his collation of some MSS. of the Greek Version of Ecclesiastes in the Library of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher; to Professor Paul Haupt, for permitting me, in spite of my disbelief in his metrical theory, to use, while reading my proofs, advance

sheets of his *Hebrew Text of Ecclesiastes*; to the Editor, Professor Charles A. Briggs, for his helpful criticisms and many kindnesses while the book has been passing through the press; and to my wife, for her valuable aid in reading the proofs.

GEORGE A. BARTON.

BRYN MAWR, PA.,
April 2nd, 1908.



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ABBREVIATIONS.

I. TEXTS AND VERSIONS.

<p>A = The Arabic Version.</p> <p>'A = Version of Aquila.</p> <p>Ald. = Aldine text of Ⓔ.</p> <p>AV. = Authorized Version.</p> <p>BD. = Baer & Delitzsch, Heb. text.</p> <p>Chr. = The Chronicler, author of Ch. Ezr. Ne.</p> <p>D. = The Deuteronomist in Dt., in other books Deuteronomic author of Redactor.</p> <p>E. = Ephraemitic sources of Hexateuch.</p> <p>EV^s = English Versions.</p> <p>Ⓔ = Greek Septuagint Version, Vatican text of Swete.</p> <p>Ⓔ^A = The Alexandrine text.</p> <p>Ⓔ^B = The Vatican text.</p> <p>Ⓔ^C = Codex Ephraemi.</p> <p>Ⓔ^N = The Sinaitic text.</p> <p>Ⓔ^V = Codex Venetus.</p> <p>Ⓔ = Hebrew consonantal text.</p> <p>H. = Code of Holiness of the Hexateuch.</p> <p>Hex. = The Hexateuch.</p> <p>J. = Judaic sources of the Hexateuch.</p> <p>J.C. = Jerome, Commentary.</p>	<p>Ⓔ = The Coptic Version.</p> <p>Kt. = K^cthib, the Hebrew text as written.</p> <p>Ⓔ = Old Latin Version.</p> <p>Mas. = Massora.</p> <p>MT. = The Massoretic pointed text.</p> <p>NT. = The New Testament.</p> <p>OT. = The Old Testament.</p> <p>P. = The priestly sources of the Hexateuch.</p> <p>Qr. = Q^rê, the Hebrew text as read.</p> <p>R. = The Redactor, or editor.</p> <p>RV. = The Revised Version.</p> <p>RV.^m = The margin of the Revised Version.</p> <p>Ⓔ = The Syriac Peshitto Version.</p> <p>Ⓔ^H = Syriac-Hexaplar Version.</p> <p>Σ = The Version of Symmachus.</p> <p>Ⓔ = The Targum or Aramaic Version.</p> <p>Ⓔ = The Vulgate Version.</p> <p>Vrss. = Versions, usually ancient.</p> <p>WL. = The Wisdom Literature of the OT.</p> <p>Ⓔ = The Version of Theodotian.</p>
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