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ECCLESIASTES 6: 1 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is heavy on men:

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The vanity of riches without use, Ecc 6:1, Ecc 6:2. Of children and of old age without riches and enjoyment, Ecc 6:3-7. Man does not know what is good for himself, Ecc 6:8-12.

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ECCLESIASTES 6: 2 a man to whom God gives riches, wealth, and honour, so that he lacks nothing for his soul of all that he desires, yet God gives him no power to eat of it, but an alien eats it. This is vanity, and it is an evil disease.

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Verse 2

A man to whom God hath given riches - A man may possess much earthly goods, and yet enjoy nothing of them. Possession and fruition are not necessarily joined together; and this is also among the vanities of life. It is worthy of remark, that it belongs to God as much to give the power to enjoy as it does to give the earthly blessings. A wise heathen saw this: -

Di tibi divitias dederant, artemque fruendi.

Hor. Ep. lib. i., ep. 4, ver. 7. "The gods had given thee riches, and the art to enjoy them."

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ECCLESIASTES 6: 3 If a man fathers a hundred children, and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not filled with good, and moreover he has no burial; I say, that a stillborn child is better than he:

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Verse 3

If a man beget a hundred children - If he have the most numerous family and the largest possessions, and is so much attached to his riches that he grudges himself a monument; an abortion in the eye of reason is to be preferred to such a man; himself is contemptible, and his life worthless. The abortion comes in with vanity - baulks expectation, departs in darkness - never opened its eyes upon the light, and its name is covered with darkness - it has no place in the family register, or in the chronicles of Israel. This, that hath neither seen the sun, nor known any thing is preferable to the miser who has his coffers and granaries well furnished, should he have lived a thousand years, and had a hundred children. He has seen - possessed, no good; and he and the abortion go to one place, equally unknown, and wholly forgotten.

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ECCLESIASTES 6: 4 for it comes in vanity, and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness.

ECCLESIASTES 6: 5 Moreover it has not seen the sun nor known it. This has rest rather than the other.

ECCLESIASTES 6: 6 Yes, though he live a thousand years twice told, and yet fails to enjoy good, don't all go to one place?

ECCLESIASTES 6: 7 All the labour of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.

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Verse 7

All the labor of man - This is the grand primary object of all human labor; merely to provide for the support of life by procuring things necessary. And life only exists for the sake of the soul; because man puts these things in place of spiritual good, the appetite - the intense desire after the supreme good - is not satisfied. When man learns to provide as distinctly for his soul as he does for his body, then he will begin to be happy, and may soon attain his end.

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ECCLESIASTES 6: 8 For what advantage has the wise more than the fool? What has the poor man, that knows how to walk before the living?

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Verse 8

For what hath the wise more than the fool? - They must both labor for the same end. Both depend upon the labor of themselves or others for the necessaries of life. Both must eat and drink in order to live; and the rich man can no more eat two meals at a time, than he can comfortably wear two changes of raiment. The necessaries of life are the same to both, and their condition in life is nearly similar; liable to the same diseases, dissolution, and death.

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ECCLESIASTES 6: 9 Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire. This also is vanity and a chasing after wind.

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Verse 9

Better is the sight of the eyes than the wandering of the desire - This is translated by the Vulgate, as a sort of adage: *Melius est videre quod cupias, quam desiderare quod nescias*, "It is better to see what one desires than to covet what one knows not." It is better to enjoy the present than to feed one's self with vain desires of the future. What we translate the wandering of desire, *מהלך נפש* mehaloch nephesh, is the travelling of the soul. What is this? Does it simply mean desire? Or is there any reference here to the state of separate spirits! It however shows the soul to be in a restless state, and consequently to be unhappy. If Christ dwell in the heart by faith, the soul is then at rest, and this is properly the rest of the people of God.

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ECCLESIASTES 6: 10 Whatever has been, its name was given long ago; and it is known what man is; neither can he contend with him who is mightier than he.

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Verse 10

That which hath been is named already - The Hebrew of this verse might be translated, "Who is he who is? His name has been already called. And it is known that he is Adam; and that he cannot contend in judgment with him who is stronger than he." "What is more excellent than man; yet can he not, in the lawe, get the victory of him that is mightier than he." - Coverdale.

Adam is his name; and it at once points out,

1. His dignity; he was made in the image of God.
2. His fall; he sinned against his Maker and was cast out of Paradise. And
3. His recovery by Christ; the second man (Adam) was the Lord from heaven, and a quickening Spirit.

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ECCLESIASTES 6: 11 For there are many words that create vanity. What does that profit man?

ECCLESIASTES 6: 12 For who knows what is good for man in life, all the days of his vain life which he spends like a shadow? For who can tell a man what will be after him under the sun?

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Verse 12

For who knoweth what is good for man in this life - Those things which we deem good are often evil. And those which we think evil are often good. So ignorant are we, that we run the greatest hazard in making a choice. It is better to leave ourselves and our concerns in the hands of the Lord, than to keep them in our own.

For who can tell a man what shall be after him - Futurity is with God. While he lives, man wishes to know what is before him. When he is about to die, he wishes to know what will be after him. All this is vanity; God, because he is merciful, will reveal neither.