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## On the Poetry of the Hebrews

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## CHAPTER X.

## ON THE POETRY OF THE HEBREWS.

- I. *A large portion of the Old Testament proved to be poetical; — Cultivation of Poetry by the Hebrews. — II. The Sententious Parallelism, the Grand Characteristic of Hebrew Poetry. — Its origin and varieties. — 1. Parallel Lines gradational; — 2. Parallel Lines antithetic; — 3. Parallel Lines constructive; — 4. Parallel Lines introverted. — III. The Poetical Dialect not confined to the Old Testament. — Reasons for expecting to find it in the New Testament. — Proofs of the existence of the poetical dialect there; — 1. From simple and direct quotations of single passages from the poetical parts of the Old Testament; — 2. From quotations of different passages, combined into one connected whole; — 3. And from quotations mingled with original matter. — IV. Original Parallelisms occurring in the New Testament, — 1. Parallel Couplets; — 2. Parallel Triplets; — 3. Quatrains; — 4, 5. Stanzas of five and six lines; — 6. Stanzas of more than six parallel lines. — V. Other examples of the poetical parallelism in the New Testament; — 1. Parallel Lines Gradational; — 2. The Epanodos. — VI. Different kinds of Hebrew Poetry. — 1. Prophetic Poetry; — 2. Elegiac Poetry; — 3. Didactic Poetry; — 4. Lyric Poetry; — 5. The Idyl; — 6. Dramatic Poetry; — 7. Acrostic or Alphabetical Poetry. — VII. General Observations for the better understanding the compositions of the sacred poets.*

I. **IT** is obvious to the most cursory reader of the Holy Scriptures, that among the books of the Old Testament there is such an apparent diversity in style, as sufficiently discovers which of them are to be considered as poetical, and which are to be regarded as prose compositions. While the historical books and legislative writings of Moses are evidently prosaic in their composition, the book of Job, the Psalms of David, the Song of Solomon, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, a great part of the prophetic writings, and several passages occasionally scattered through the historical books, bear the most plain and distinguishing marks of poetical writing.<sup>1</sup> We can have no reason to doubt that these were originally written in verse, or in some kind of measured numbers; though, as the antient pronunciation of the Hebrew language is now lost, we can only very imperfectly ascertain the nature of the Hebrew verse.

From the manner, however, in which Josephus, Origen, and Jerome have spoken of the Hebrew poetry, it should seem that in their time its beauty and rules were well known. Josephus repeatedly affirms<sup>2</sup> that the songs composed by Moses are in heroic verse, and

<sup>1</sup> In illustration of this remark, we may mention the song of Moses at the Red Sea, (Exod. xv.) ; the prophecy of Balaam, (Num. xxiv. 18—24.) : the song of Deborah, and Barak, (Jud. v.) Nor is it improbable that the *Book of the Wars of the Lord*, (Numb. xxi. 14.) and the *Book of Jasher*, (Joah. x. 13. 2 Sam. i. 18.) were written in poetic measures.

<sup>2</sup> Antiq. Jud. lib. ii. c. 16. § 4. lib. iv. c. 8. § 44. and lib. vii. c. 12. § 3.

that David composed several sorts of verses and songs, odes and hymns, in honour of God: some of which were in trimeters or verses of three feet, and others in pentameters or verses of five feet. Origen and Eusebius are said to have espoused the same notion: and Jerome, probably influenced by the manner in which he found the poetical parts of the Old Testament exhibited in the manuscripts of the Septuagint version, fancied that he perceived iambic, alcaic, and sapphic verses in the psalms, similar to those occurring in the works of Pindar and Horace: hexameters and pentameters in the songs of Deuteronomy and Isaiah, the book of Job, and those of Solomon; and sapphic verses in the Lamentations of Jeremiah.<sup>1</sup> Among modern writers, the nature and genius of Hebrew poetry have been warmly contested;<sup>2</sup> but by no one have these subjects been illustrated with more elegance and ability than by the late eminently learned Bishop of London, Dr. Robert Lowth. In the third of his justly admired Lectures on Hebrew Poetry,<sup>3</sup> he has collected much and very valuable information concerning the much litigated question, respecting the nature of Hebrew metre; but many of his arguments are successfully controverted by Bishop Jebb, in his Sacred Literature;<sup>4</sup> to which work, and to Bishop Lowth's Lectures, the reader is necessarily referred, as the discussion of this very difficult question would extend this chapter to an inordinate length. The construction, characteristics, and different kinds of Hebrew Poetry, including also the poetical style of the New Testament, are the subjects now to be con-

<sup>1</sup> Hieronymi. Præfat. in Chronic. Epist. 135. ad Paul. Urb. et Epist. ad Paulin Comment. in Ezek. c. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Carpzov (Intro. ad Libros Canonicos Vet. Test. pars ii. pp. 28, 29.) has given a list of ancient and modern writers who have treated on Hebrew poetry; and in pp. 2—27. he has noticed the various discordant opinions on this topic. The hypothesis of Bishop Hare on Hebrew metre was refuted by Bishop Lowth at the end of his lectures, and also in his "Larger Confutation," published in 1766, in 8vo., in answer to Dr. Edwards's Latin Letter in defence of Hare's system, published in the preceding year. The general opinion of the learned world has coincided with the arguments of Lowth.

<sup>3</sup> The first edition of these lectures appeared in 1753, in 4to., under the title of "De Sacra Poesi Hebræorum Prælectiones Academicæ;" a second edition was printed by Bishop Lowth in 1763, in two volumes octavo; the second volume, consisting of additions made by the celebrated Professor Michaelis, who had reprinted the Prælectiones at Göttingen. Several subsequent editions have issued from the Clarendon press; particularly a beautiful one in 1821, including (besides the additions of Michaelis) the further observations of Rosenmüller, (whose edition appeared at Leipsic in 1815,) Richter and Weiss. In 1787, the late Dr. George Gregory printed his excellent English translation of Bishop Lowth's Lectures, in two octavo volumes, with some very important additional notes; which was reprinted in 1816. In 1787 M. Herder published at Leipsic two octavo volumes *On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*; from which a selection was translated and published in 1801, under the title of *Oriental Dialogues*. Both these publications are distinguished by that bold criticism, which for the last fifty or sixty years has characterised too many of those German divines, to whose researches in other respects, biblical literature is so largely indebted. Sir William Jones has a few observations on Hebrew metres in his *Poesis Asiaticæ* Comment. cap. ii. (Works, vi. pp. 22—59.)

<sup>4</sup> pp. 4—22. The title at length of this beautifully and correctly printed work is as follows:—"Sacred Literature: comprising a Review of the Principles of Composition, laid down by the late Robert Lowth, D. D. Lord Bishop of London, in his Prælectiones and Isaiah, and an application of the principles so reviewed to the illustration of the New Testament. By John Jebb, A. M. [now D. D. and Bishop of Limerick.] London, 1820." 8vo.

sidered : and our account of them is chiefly abridged from the Lectures of Bishop Lowth, and from his preliminary dissertation prefixed to his version of the prophet Isaiah, together with Bishop Jebb's elegant and instructive volume above cited.

The peculiar excellence of the Hebrew poetry will appear, when we consider that its origin and earliest application have been clearly traced to the service of religion. To celebrate in hymns and songs the praises of Jehovah — to decorate the worship of the Most High with all the charms and graces of harmony — to give force and energy to the devout affections — was the sublime employment of the sacred muses : and it is more than probable, that the very early use of sacred music in the public worship of the Hebrews, contributed not a little to the peculiar character of their poetry, and might impart to it that appropriate form, which, though chiefly adapted to this particular purpose, it nevertheless preserves on every other occasion. In the Old Testament we have ample evidence that music and poetry were cultivated from the earliest ages among the Hebrews. In the days of the judges, mention is made of the schools or colleges of the prophets ; in which the candidates for the prophetic office, under the direction of some superior prophet, being altogether removed from intercourse with the world, devoted themselves entirely to the exercises and study of religion : and though the sacred history affords us but little information concerning their institutes and discipline, yet it is manifest from 1 Sam. x. 5—10. and xix. 20—24., that a principal part of their occupation consisted in celebrating the praises of Jehovah in hymns and poetry, with choral chants accompanied with various musical instruments. But it was during the reign of David, that music and poetry were carried to the greatest perfection. For the service of the tabernacle he appointed four thousand Levites, divided into twenty-four courses, and marshalled under several leaders, whose sole business it was to sing hymns, and to perform instrumental music in the public worship. Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun were the chief directors of the music, and, from the titles of some of the psalms, we may infer that they also were excellent composers of hymns or sacred poems. In the first book of Chronicles (ch. xxv.) we have an account of the institutions of David : which were more costly, splendid, and magnificent than any that ever obtained in the public service of other nations.

II. According to Bishop Lowth there are four principal characteristics of Hebrew poetry, viz. — 1. The acrostical or alphabetical commencement of lines or stanzas ; — 2. The admission of foreign words and certain particles, which seldom occur in prose composition, and which thus form a distinct poetical dialect ; — 3. Its sententious, figurative, and sublime expressions ; and, 4. Parallelism, the nature of which is fully illustrated in a subsequent page. But the existence of the three first of these characteristics has been disproved by Bishop Jebb, who observes that the grand characteristic of Hebrew poetry does *not* appear to belong peculiarly to the original language of the Old Testament as *contra-distinguished* from that

of the New. "It is not the acrostical, or regularly alphabetical commencement of lines or stanzas; for this occurs but in twelve poems of the Old Testament: it is not the introduction of foreign words, and of what grammarians call the paragogic, or redundant particles; for these licenses, though frequent, are by no means universal, in the poetical books of Scripture; and they are occasionally admitted in passages merely historical and prosaic: it is not the rhyming termination of lines; for no trace of this artifice is discoverable in the alphabetical poems, the lines or stanzas of which are defined with infallible precision; and every attempt to force it on the text, has been accompanied by the most licentious mutilation of Scripture: and finally, this grand characteristic is not the adoption of metre, properly so called, and analagous to the metre of the heathen classics; for the efforts of the learned, to discover such metre in any one poem of the Hebrews, have universally failed; and while we are morally certain, that, even though it were known and employed by the Jews, while their language was a living one, it is quite beyond recovery in the dead and unpronounceable state of that language, there are also strong reasons for believing, that, even in the most flourishing state of their literature, the Hebrew poets never used this decoration.

Again, it is most certain, that the proper characteristic of Hebrew poetry is not elation, grandeur, or sublimity, either of thought or diction. In these qualities, indeed, a large portion of the poetical Scriptures, is not only distinguished, but unrivalled: but there are also many compositions in the Old Testament, indisputably poetical, which, in thought and expression, do not rise above the ordinary tone of just and clear conceptions, calmly, yet pointedly delivered."<sup>1</sup>

The grand, and indeed, the sole characteristic of Hebrew Poetry, is what Bishop Lowth entitles *Parallelism*, that is, a certain equality, resemblance, or relationship, between the members of each period; so that in two lines, or members of the same period, things shall answer to things, and words to words, as if fitted to each other by a kind of rule or measure. This is the general strain of the Hebrew poetry; instances of which occur in almost every part of the Old Testament, particularly in the ninety-sixth psalm.

It is in a great measure owing to this form of composition that our admirable authorised version, though executed in prose, retains so much of a poetical cast; for, that version being strictly word for word after the original, the form and order of the original sentences are preserved; which, by this artificial structure, this regular alternation and correspondence of parts, makes the ear sensible of a departure from the common style and tone of prose.

The origin of this form of poetical composition among the Hebrews, Bishop Lowth has satisfactorily deduced from the manner in which they were accustomed to sing or chant their sacred hymns. They were accompanied with music, and were alternately sung by opposite choirs: sometimes one choir performed the hymn itself, while the other sang a particular distich, which was regularly in-

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Jebb's Sacred Literature, pp. 4, 5.

terposed at stated intervals. In this manner we learn that Moses with the Israelites chanted the ode at the Red Sea (Exod. xv. 20, 21.); and the same order is observable in some of the psalms which are composed in this form. On some occasions, however, the musical performance was differently conducted, one of the choirs singing a single verse to the other, while the other constantly added a verse in some respect correspondent. Of this the following distich is an example: —

Sing praises to Jehovah, for he is good,  
Because his mercy endureth for ever. (Psal. cxxxvi. 1.)

Which Ezra informs us (iii. 10, 11.) was sung by the priests and Levites in alternate choirs, “after the ordinance of David, king of Israel;” as indeed may be collected from the hundred and thirty-sixth psalm itself, in which the latter verse sung by the latter choir forms a perpetual epode. Of the same nature is the song of the women concerning Saul and David (2 Sam. xviii. 7.); and in the very same manner does Isaiah describe the seraphim as chanting the praises of Jehovah — “they cried one to another,” that is, alternately,

Holy, holy, holy, Jehovah God of hosts!  
The whole earth is filled with his glory. (Isa. vi. 3.)

But the fullest example perhaps of this style of composition is to be found in the twenty-fourth psalm, composed on occasion of the induction of the ark to mount Sion; the mode of performing which is particularly illustrated by Bishop Lowth,<sup>1</sup> and must have had a most noble and impressive effect.

In determining the length of his lines, Bishop Lowth considers only that relation and proportion of one verse to another which arises from the correspondence of terms, and from the form of construction, whence results a rhythmus of propositions, and a harmony of sentences. From this correspondence of the verses one with another, arises a certain relation also between the composition of the verses, and the composition of the sentences, so that generally periods coincide with stanzas, members with verses, and pauses of the one with pauses of the other. This correspondence is called parallelism, the corresponding lines are called parallel lines, and the words or phrases answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms.

A single example will illustrate the above definition of parallelism: — In Luke i. 52, 53. we read, *He (God) hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away.* In this passage the same *thing* is expressed, viz. that God changes the conditions of men: and this same *thing* is also expressed, in corresponding members that represent it in various points of view. Thus the Almighty changes adversity into prosperity, and prosperity into adversity. The *words answer to each other, the*

<sup>1</sup> Lecture xxvii. Bishop Horaley, in his translation of the Book of Psalms, has divided them so as to exhibit the construction of those divine compositions to the best possible advantage.

mighty — those of low degree ; put down — exalted ; the hungry (or poor) — the rich ; filled with good things — sent empty away. Lastly, the *things or subjects stated answer to each other* by a contrast sufficiently obvious : the former (the powerful and rich) are depressed ; the latter (the humble and poor) are exalted.

The nature of parallelism, thus defined and illustrated, is sometimes so evident as to strike even a careless reader, and sometimes so subtle and obscure as to require considerable practice, and some familiarity with the system, in order to distribute the pauses, and develop the different members of the sentences in probable order and connection. Thus, much doubt has arisen not only as to what books, but as to what parts of books, are to be accounted poetical. Sometimes, according to Dr. Jebb, it is continuous and unmixed, as in the Psalms, Proverbs and Canticles ; sometimes it characterises the main body of a work with a prosaic introduction and conclusion, as in the book of Job, — sometimes it predominates throughout a whole book with an occasional mixture of prose, as in most of the prophets ; sometimes the general texture is prose, with an occasional mixture of verses, as in the historical books, and the book of Ecclesiastes.

This parallelism has hitherto been confined principally to the poetical books of the Old Testament ; and to them chiefly in the former edition of this work, the author has restricted it. Bishop Jebb, however, has demonstrated that this grand characteristic of Hebrew poetry pervades the New Testament as well as the Old.

The poetical parallelism has much variety and many gradations, being sometimes more accurate and manifest, sometimes more vague and obscure : it may, however, on the whole, be said to consist of four species, viz. *Parallel Lines*, *Gradational*,<sup>1</sup> *Parallel Lines Antithetic*, *Parallel Lines Synthetic*, and *Parallel Lines Introverted*.

1. *Parallel Lines Gradational* are those, in which the second or responsive clause so diversifies the preceding clauses, as generally to rise above it, sometimes by a descending scale in the value of the related terms and periods, but in all cases with a marked distinction of meaning. This species of parallelism is the most frequent of all : it prevails chiefly in the shorter poems, in many of the psalms, and

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lowth has ranged the different kinds of parallelism under *three classes* only, viz. *parallels synonymous*, *parallels antithetic*, and *parallels synthetic*. The two last terms, it will be perceived, we have retained, and in lieu of *parallels synonymous* we have adopted the term *parallel lines gradational*. Bishop Jebb has assigned satisfactory reasons for changing the bishop's phraseology. According to Lowth, parallel lines synonymous are those which correspond one to another by expressing the same sentiment in different but nearly equivalent terms. But Bp. Jebb proves, from an examination of the bishop's examples, that this definition does not hold good : he therefore proposes that of *cognate parallels*, as preferably applicable to this kind of parallels. (*Sacred Literature*, pp. 34—50.) A learned critic, however, has suggested the term *gradational parallelism*, as being most expressive, and also most applicable to the examples adduced by these eminent prelates. (*British Critic* for 1820, vol. xiv. pp. 585, 586.) We have therefore adopted this term in the present chapter. Bp. Jebb had further considered the *introverted parallel* as a variety of the Hebrew parallelism ; but as the same critic has assigned good reasons for constituting it a *distinct class*, we have availed ourselves of his authority, and have accordingly adopted it.

very frequently in the prophecies of Isaiah. Three or four instances will suffice to show the nature of parallel lines gradational. The first example shall be taken from the first psalm.

O the happiness of that man,  
Who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly ;  
And hath not stood in the way of sinners ;  
And hath not sat in the seat of the scornful. (Psalm i. 1.)

"The exclamation with which the psalm opens, belongs equally to each line of the succeeding triplet. In the triplet itself, each line consists of three members ; and the lines gradually rise, one above the other, not merely in their general sense, but specially, throughout their correspondent members. To *walk*, implies no more than casual intercourse ; to *stand*, closer intimacy ; to *sit*, fixed and permanent connection ; the *counsel*, the ordinary place of meeting, or public resort ; the *way*, the select and chosen foot-path ; the *seat*, the habitual and final resting place ; the *ungodly*, negatively wicked ; *sinners*, positively wicked ; the *scornful*, scoffers at the very name or notion of piety and goodness."<sup>1</sup>

The following passages will supply additional examples : —

Who shall ascend the mountain of Jehovah ?  
And who shall stand within his holy place ?  
The clean of hands, and the pure in heart. (Psalm xxiv. 3, 4.)

"To *ascend* marks progress ; to *stand*, stability and confirmation : the *mountain of Jehovah*, the site of the divine sanctuary ; *his holy place*, the sanctuary itself ; and in correspondence with the advance of the two lines which form the first couplet, there is an advance in the members of the third line : *the clean of hands ; and the pure in heart : the clean of hands, shall ascend the mountain of Jehovah - the pure in heart, shall stand within his holy place.*"<sup>2</sup>

O Jehovah, in thy strength the king shall rejoice ;  
And in thy salvation, how greatly shall he exult :  
The desire of his heart, thou hast granted him ;  
And the request of his lips, thou hast not denied. (Psalm xxi. 1, 2)

"The gradation of member above member, and line above line, in each couplet of this stanza, is undeniable : "salvation" is an advance upon "strength ;" and "how greatly shall he exult," an advance upon "he shall rejoice ;" again, "the request of the lips," is something beyond "the desire of the heart," — it is desire brought into act. The gradation in the last members of the last two lines may not be equally obvious ; but it is by no means less certain : "thou hast granted : — thou hast not denied : " the negative form is here much stronger than the positive ; for it is a received canon of biblical philology, that verbs of negation, or, what amounts to the same thing, adverbs of negation prefixed to verbs, have, in such cases, the force of expressing the opposite affirmative with peculiar emphasis : — for example ; "the Lord *will not hold him guiltless*, who taketh his name in vain : that is, **WILL ASSUREDLY HOLD HIM GUILTY**. Exod. xx. 7."

The prophetic muse is no less elegant and correct. Isaiah especially abounds in beautiful instances of this mode of gradation. Thus he says :

Seek ye Jehovah, while he may be found ;  
Call ye upon him, while he is near ;  
Let the wicked forsake his way ;  
And the unrighteous man his thoughts :  
And let him return to Jehovah, and he will compassionate him ;  
And unto our God, for he aboundeth in forgiveness. Isaiah lv. 6, 7.

In the first line, men are invited to seek Jehovah, not knowing where he is, and on the bare intelligence that he *may be found* ; in the second line, having found Jehovah, they are encouraged to call upon him, by the assurance that he *is near*. In the third line, the wicked, the positive, and presumptuous sinner, is warned to forsake *his way*, his habitual course of iniquity ; in the fourth line, the unrighteous, the negatively wicked, is called to renounce *the very thought of sinning*. While in the last line, the appropriative and encouraging title *our God*, is substituted for the awful name of *JEHOVAH* ; and simple *compassion* is heightened into *overflowing mercy and forgiveness*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Jebb's Sacred Literature, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, pp. 37—38.



In Isa. li. 1. 4. 7. there is another singularly fine example of moral gradation, which is admirably illustrated by Bishop Jebb,<sup>1</sup> to whose 'Sacred Literature' the reader is referred. But excellent as Isaiah confessedly is, he is not unrivalled in this kind of composition: the other prophets contain abundant examples; we shall however only adduce two instances. The first, which is from Hosea, is exquisitely pathetic, and will speak for itself:—

How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?  
 Abandon thee, O Israel?  
 How shall I make thee as Admah,  
 Place thee in the condition of Zeboim?  
 My heart is turned upon me;  
 My bowels yearn altogether.  
 I will not execute the fury of mine anger:  
 I will not return to make destruction of Ephraim.  
 For God I am, and not man;  
 The Holy One in the midst of thee, although I am no frequenter of cities.  
 Hosea xi. 8, 9. (Bp. Horsley's Translation.)

The other passage is from Joel, and is highly animated.

Like mighty men shall they rush on;  
 Like warriors shall they mount upon the wall;  
 And, every one in his way, shall they march;  
 And they shall not turn aside from their paths. Joel ii. 7.

The prophet is denouncing a terrible judgment on the land of Judah, by the devastation of locusts: and all naturalists and travellers, who have witnessed the desolation caused by those destructive insects, attest and confirm the fidelity of Joel's description of their progress and ravages.

2. *Parallel Lines Antithetic* are, when two lines correspond one with another, by an opposition of terms and sentiments; when the second is contrasted with the first, sometimes in expressions, sometimes in sense only. This is not confined to any particular form. Accordingly the degrees of antithesis are various, from an exact contraposition of word to word, sentiment to sentiment, singulars to singulars, plurals to plurals, down to a general disparity, with something of a contrariety in the two propositions.

This species of parallelism is of less frequent occurrence in the prophetic poems of the Old Testament, especially those which are elevated in the style, and more connected in the parts; but it is admirably adapted to adages, aphorisms, proverbs, and detached sentences. Much, indeed, of the elegance, acuteness, and force, of a great number of the proverbs of Solomon, arises from the antithetic form, the opposition of diction and sentiment, as in the following examples:

A wise son rejoiceth his father:  
 But a foolish son is the grief of his mother. Prov. x. i.

Here every word has its opposite, the terms *father* and *mother* being relatively opposite:

The memory of the just is a blessing.  
 But the name of the wicked shall rot. Prov. x. 7.

In this instance there are only two antithetic terms, for *memory* and *name* are synonymous. See also Prov. xi. 24. xvi. 33. and xxix. 26.

But, though the antithetic parallel be of comparatively rare occurrence in the superior kinds of Hebrew poetry, it is not inconsistent with them. Thus, we have a beautiful instance of it in the thanks-

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Jebb's Sacred Literature, pp. 46—49.

giving ode of Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 4—7., and in some of the Psalms, as in Psal. xx. 7, 8. xxx. 5. and xxxvii. 10, 11. Isaiah, also, by means of it, without departing from his usual dignity, greatly increases the beauty of his composition.

For the mountains shall be removed ;  
And the hills shall be overthrown ;  
But my kindness from thee shall not be removed ;  
And the covenant of my peace shall not be overthrown.  
Isa. liv. 10.

See likewise Isa. liv. 7, 8. ix. 10. and lxx. 13, 14.

3. *Parallel Lines Constructive* are, when the parallelism consists only in the similar form of construction ; in which word does not answer to word, and sentence to sentence, as equivalent or opposite ; but there is a correspondence and equality, between the different propositions, in respect of the shape and turn of the whole sentence, and of the constructive parts ; such as noun answering to noun, verb to verb, member to member, negative to negative, interrogative to interrogative. This species of parallel includes all such as do not come within the two former classes. Accordingly, Bishop Lowth remarks, that the variety of this form is very great : sometimes the parallelism is more, sometimes less exact, and sometimes hardly at all apparent. The nineteenth psalm will furnish a beautiful instance of parallel lines constructive :

The law of JEHOVAH is perfect, restoring the soul ;  
The testimony of JEHOVAH is sure, making wise the simple ;  
The precepts of JEHOVAH are right, rejoicing the heart :  
The commandment of JEHOVAH is clear, enlightening the eyes :  
The fear of JEHOVAH is pure, enduring for ever ;  
The judgments of JEHOVAH are truth, they are just altogether ;  
More desirable than gold, or than much fine gold,  
And sweeter than honey, or the dropping of honey-combs.  
Psal. xix. 8—11

Additional instances of the constructive parallelism occur in Psalm cxlviii. 7—13. Job xii. 13—16. Isa. xiv. 4—9. and lviii. 5—8.

Respecting the three preceding species of parallelism, Bishop Jebb remarks that, separately, “ each kind admits many subordinate varieties, and that, in combinations of verses, the several kinds are perpetually intermingled ; circumstances which at once enliven and beautify the composition, and frequently give peculiar distinctness and precision to the train of thought.” He has illustrated this observation by some instances of such subordinate varieties. The six following are taken partly from his volume, and partly from the nineteenth of Bishop Lowth’s Lectures on Hebrew Poetry. Thus :

(1.) Sometimes the lines are *bi-membral* ; that is, they consist each of double members, or two propositions (or sentiments, as Lowth terms them). — For example,

The nations raged ; the kingdoms were moved ;  
He uttered a voice ; the earth was dissolved :  
Be still, and know that I am God ;  
I will be exalted in the nations ; I will be exalted in the earth.  
Psal. xlvi. 6. 10.

Bow thy heavens, O JEHOVAH, and descend ;  
Touch the mountains and they shall smoke .

Dart forth thy lightning, and scatter them ;  
Shoot out thine arrows and destroy them.

Psal. cxliv. 5, 6.

Isaiah has two striking instances of these bi-membral lines.

When thou passest through waters, I am with thee ;  
And through rivers, they shall not overwhelm thee :  
When thou walkest in the fire, thou shalt not be scorched ;  
And the flame shall not cleave to thee.

Isa. xliii. 2.

And they shall build houses, and shall inhabit them ;  
And they shall plant vineyards, and shall eat the fruit thereof .  
They shall not build, and another inhabit ;  
They shall not plant, and another eat.

Isa. lxxv. 21, 22.

(2.) "Parallels are sometimes formed by a repetition of part of the first sentence : —

My voice is unto God, and I cry aloud ;  
My voice unto God, and he will hearken unto me :  
I will remember the works of Jehovah ;  
Yea, I will remember thy works of old : —  
The waters saw thee, O God ;  
The waters saw thee ; they were seized with anguish.

Psal. lxxviii. 1, 2, 17.

(3.) "Sometimes, in the latter line, a part is to be supplied from the former, to complete the sentence : —

The mighty dead tremble from beneath :  
The waters, and they that dwell therein.

Job xxvi. 5.

4.) "There are parallel triplets ; where three lines correspond together, and form a kind of stanza ; of which, however, only two lines are commonly synonymous : —

The wicked shall see it, and it shall grieve him ;  
He shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away ;  
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

Psal. cxii. 10."<sup>1</sup>

Another instance of parallel triplets occurs in Job iii. 4., and Micah vi. 15.

(5.) "There are parallels consisting of four lines : two distiches being so connected together by sound and construction, as to make one stanza :

The ox knoweth his owner ;  
And the ass the crib of his lord :  
But Israel doth not know ;  
My people doth not consider.

Isa. i. 3. See also Psal. xxvii. 1, 2.

In stanzas of four lines, sometimes the parallel lines answer to one another, alternately ; the first to the third, and the second to the fourth : —

As the heavens are high above the earth ;  
So high is his goodness over them that fear him :  
As remote as the east is from the west ;  
So far hath he removed from us our transgressions.

Psal. ciii. 11, 12."<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes however, the alternate quatrain, by a peculiar artifice in the distribution of the sentences, the third line forms a continuous sense with the first, and the fourth with the second : —

<sup>1</sup> Bp. Jebb's Sacred Literature, pp. 27, 28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

From the heavens JEHOVAH looketh down ;  
 He seeth all the children of men ;  
 From the seat of his rest he contemplateth  
 All the inhabitants of the earth.

Psal. xxxiii. 13, 14.

Isaiah with great elegance uses this form of composition :—

For thy husband is thy maker ;  
 JEHOVAH God of hosts is his name :  
 And thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel ;  
 The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

Isa. liv. 5.

(6.) Some periods also may be considered as forming stanzas of five lines ; in which the odd line or member usually either comes in between two distiches ; or the line that is not parallel is generally placed between the two distiches ; or, after two distiches, makes a full close :

Who is wise, and will understand these things ?  
 Prudent, and will know them ?  
 For right are the ways of JEHOVAH :  
 And the just shall walk in them :  
 And the disobedient shall fall therein.

Hos. xiv. 9.

Like as a lion growleth,  
 Even the young lion over his prey ;  
 Though the whole company of shepherds be called together against  
 him :  
 At their voice he will not be terrified,  
 Nor at their tumult will he be humbled.

Isa. xxxi. 4.

Who establisheth the word of his servant :  
 And accomplisheth the counsel of his messenger ;  
 Who sayeth to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited,  
 And to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built ;  
 And her desolate places I will restore.

Isa. xlv. 26.

The preceding are the chief varieties of the parallel lines, gradational, antithetic, and constructive : a few others of less note are discussed both by Bishops Lowth and Jebb ; for which the reader is necessarily referred to their respective works. We now proceed to notice,

4. *Parallel Lines Introverted.*—These are stanzas so constructed, that, whatever be the number of lines, the first line shall be parallel with the last ; the second with the penultimate or last but one ; and so throughout, in an order that looks inward, or to borrow a military phrase, from flanks to centre. This may be called the *introverted parallelism*.

Bishop Jebb has illustrated this definition with several apposite examples, from which we have selected the three following.

“ My son, if thy heart be wise ;  
 My heart also shall rejoice ;  
 Yea, my reins shall rejoice ;  
 When thy lips speak right things.

Prov. xxiii. 15, 16.

“ And it shall come to pass in that day ;  
 The great trumpet shall be sounded :  
 And those shall come, who were perishing in the land of Assyria ;  
 And who were dispersed in the land of Egypt ;

And they shall bow themselves down before Jehovah ;  
In the holy mountain, in Jerusalem.      Isaiah, xxvii. 12, 13."

"In these two stanzas of Isaiah, figuratively, in the first, and literally in the second, is predicted the return of the Jews from their several dispersions. The first line of each stanza is parallel with the sixth ; the second with the fifth ; and the third with the fourth : also on comparing the stanzas one with another, it is manifest, that they are constructed with the utmost precision of mutual correspondence ; clause harmonising with clause, and line respectively with line ; the first line of the first stanza with the first line of the second, and so throughout.

"The idols of the heathen are silver and gold ;  
The work of men's hand ;  
They have mouths but they speak not ;  
They have eyes but they see not ;  
They have ears but they hear not ;  
Neither is there any breath in their mouths ;  
They who make them are like unto them ;  
So are all they who put their trust in them.

Psal. cxxxv. 15—18."

The parallelisms here marked out are very accurate. In the first line of this example we have the idolatrous heathen ; — in the eighth, those who put their trust in idols ; — in the second line the fabrication ; — in the seventh, the fabricators ; — in the third line, mouths without articulation ; — in the sixth, mouths without breath ; — in the fourth line, eyes without vision ; and, in the fifth line, ears with the sense of hearing.

The parallelism of the extreme members, Bishop Jebb proceeds to state, may be rendered yet more evident, by reducing the passage into two quatrains ; thus :

The idols of the heathen are silver and gold ;  
The work of men's hand ;  
They who make them, are like unto them ;  
So are all they who put their trust in them.  
They have mouths, but they speak not ;  
They have eyes, but they see not ;  
They have ears, but they hear not ;  
Neither is there any breath in their mouths.<sup>1</sup>

III. Such is the nature, and such are the species of the parallelisms, which are variously distributed throughout the Old Testament. With the exception of a few partial failures, it is worthy of remark, that the character and complexion of Hebrew poetry have been very competently preserved in that body of Greek translations, composed at different times, by different persons, and known under the name of the Septuagint version. Nor should it be omitted, that the Hebraic parallelism occurs also, with much variety, in the Apocrypha : the book of Ecclesiasticus, for example, is composed of pure parallelisms : the book of Wisdom, too, affords fine specimens of this manner, though it is commonly overlaid by the exuberant and vicious rhetoric of the Alexandrine Platonists ; while, not to mention other parts of the apocryphal writings, in Tobit and the books of Maccabees there are examples both of lyric and didactic poetry, clothed in parallelisms which will hardly shrink from comparison with several in the genuine Hebrew Scriptures. One other fact remains : namely, that in the sententious *formulae* of the Rabbinical writers, the manner of Hebrew poetry is frequently observed, with much accuracy, though with a manifest declension of spirit.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Literature, pp. 53, 54, 57, 58.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 76. Bp. Jebb has illustrated the remarks in the text by numerous apocryphal examples.

Such being the fact, we are authorised by analogy to expect a similar parallelism in the New Testament, particularly when the nature of that portion of the Holy Scriptures is considered. It is a work supplementary to and perfective of the Old Testament; composed under the same guidance that superintended the composition of the latter; written by native Jews, Hebrews of the Hebrews,—by men whose minds were moulded in the form of their own sacred writings, and whose sole stock of literature (with the exception of Paul, and probably also of Luke and James) was comprised in those very writings. Now, it is improbable in the extreme, that such men, when they came to write such a work, should, without any assignable motive, and in direct opposition to all other religious teachers of their nation, have estranged themselves from a manner, so pervading the noblest parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, as the sententious parallelism. But we are not left to analogical reasoning. The Greek style of the New Testament leads us to expect a construction similar to that which we find in the Old. The New Testament, as we have already shown,<sup>1</sup> is not written in what is termed strictly classical Greek, but in a style of the same degree of purity as the Greek which was spoken in Macedonia, and that in which Polybius wrote his Roman History. From the intermixture of Oriental idioms and expressions with those which are properly Greek, the language of the New Testament has been termed *Hellenistic* or *Hebraic-Greek*. The difference in style and manner which subsists between the writers of the New Testament and the Greek classic authors is most strongly marked: and this difference is not confined to single words and combinations of words, but pervades the whole structure of the composition: and in frequent instances, a poetical manner is observable, which not only is not known, but would not be tolerated in any modern production, purporting to be prose. This poetical style has been noticed briefly by Boecler, Ernesti, Michaelis, Schleusner, Dr. Campbell, and other critics, and also by the author of this work, in the first edition: but none of these writers were aware, to how great an extent it pervades the New Testament. It was reserved for Bishop Jebb, to whose ‘Sacred Literature’ this chapter is so deeply indebted, to develop the existence of the poetical parallelism in the New Testament, and to place its numerous beauties in a point of view, equally novel and delightful to the biblical student.

The proofs of the existence of the poetical dialect in the New Testament, are disposed by this critic under the four following divisions, viz. 1. Simple and direct quotations, in the New Testament, of single passages from the poetical parts of the Old Testament;—2. Quotations of a more complex kind, when fragments are combined from different parts of the poetical Scriptures, and wrought up into one connected whole; and, 3. Quotations mingled with ori-

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posite examples from the apocryphal and rabbinical writings, for which the reader is referred to his work, pp. 84—90.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 20—23. of this volume, for an account of the Greek style of the New Testament.

ginal matter. We shall give one or two examples of each of these proofs.

1. *Simple and direct quotations of single passages from the poetical parts of the Old Testament, in which the parallelism has been preserved by the writers of the New Testament.*

και συ Βηθλεεμ, γη Ιουδα,  
ουδαμεις ελαχιστη ει εν τοις ηγεμοσι Ιουδα.  
εκ σου γαρ εξελυσεται ηγουμενος,  
βσις ποιμανει τον λαον μου τον Ισραηλ.

And thou, Bethlehem, territory of Judah,  
Art by no means least among the captains of Judah  
For from thee shall come forth a leader,  
Who will guide my people Israel.

Matt. ii. 6.

ις μου, μη ελιγωρει παιδειας Κυριου,  
μηδε εκλυου, επ' αυτου ελεγχομενος :  
εν γαρ αγαπα Κυριος, παιδευει  
μαςιοι δε παντα υιον, εν παραδεχεται.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord ;  
Nor faint, when thou art rebuked by him :  
For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,  
But scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

Heb. xii. 5, 6.

This passage is taken from Proverbs iii. 11, 12. : thus rendered in our authorised translation :

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord ;  
Neither be weary of his correction :  
For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth ;  
Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

In this last line the parallelism is completely spoiled. But Bp. Jebb shows, that Saint Paul's reading is afforded without altering a letter in the Hebrew text, by a slight departure from the Masoretic punctuation. The original passage in Prov. iii. 11, 12. therefore, may be thus rendered in strict conformity with the apostle.

The chastening of **ΙΕΡΟΒΑΗ**, my son do not despise ;  
Neither be weary at his rebuking :  
For, whom **ΙΕΡΟΒΑΗ** loveth, he chasteneth,  
But scourgeth the son in whom he delighteth.

In the corrected version of this quatrain, the parallelism is not only preserved, but there is also a beautiful climax in the sense, both of which are excellently illustrated by Bp. Jebb.<sup>1</sup>

2. *Quotations of a more complex kind, in which fragments are combined from different parts of the poetical Scriptures, and wrought up into one connected or consistent whole.*

Of this class of quotations, the following is a short but a satisfactory specimen :

δ οικος μου, οικος προσευχης κληθησεται πασι τοις εθνεσιν  
βριμς δε εποιησατε αυτον σπηλαιον ληστων.

My house shall be called the house of prayer for all the nations ;  
But ye have made it a den of thieves.

Mark xi. 17.

This antithetical couplet is composed of two independent passages, very remotely connected in their subject matter ; of which the first stands in the Septuagint version of Isaiah lvi. 57. exactly as it is given above from Saint Mark's Gospel. The substance of the second line occurs in the prophet Jeremiah. (vii. 11.)

μη σπηλαιον ληστων δ οικος μου ;  
Is my house a den of thieves ?<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Literature, pp. 98. 109—113. In pp. 99—108. other examples are given, with suitable philological illustrations.

<sup>2</sup> Sacred Literature, p. 114.

ὡς βάθος πλουτου, και σοφιας, και γνωσεως Θεου  
 ὡς ανεξιρευνητα τα κριματα αυτου  
 και ανεξιχνιασαι αι ὁδοι αυτου  
 τις γαρ εγνω νουν Κυριου ;  
 η τις συμβουλος αυτου εγενετο,  
 η τις προεδωκεν αυτω ;  
 και ανταποδοθησεται αυτω ;

O the depth of the riches, and the wisdom and the knowledge of God !  
 How inscrutable are his judgments ;  
 And untraceable his ways !  
 For who hath known the mind of the Lord ?  
 Or who hath been his counsellor ?  
 Or who hath first given unto him,  
 And it shall be repaid him again ?

Rom. xi. 33—35.

On this passage Bishop Jebb remarks that, although the quotation is not always so uniformly direct as in the preceding example, yet the marks of imitation are unquestionable ; the probable sources of imitation are numerous ; the continuity of the parallelism is maintained unbroken ; and the style, both of thought and of expression, is remarkable alike for elegance, animation, and profundity. He supposes the apostle to have had the following texts (which are given at length by Dr. J.) present in his recollection, when composing this noble epiphonema ; Psal. xxxvi. 6. Job xi. 7, 8. v. 9. xxxvi. 22, 23. Jer. xxiii. 18. Isa. xl. 13. 15. Job xxiii. 18. and xli. 2.

“ The first line proposes the subject :

O the depth of the riches, and the wisdom and the knowledge of God !

“ The notion of depth, as a quality attributed alike to God’s riches, and wisdom, and knowledge, is first expanded in the next couplet :

How inscrutable are his judgments ;  
 And untraceable his ways !

Riches, wisdom, and knowledge are then, in a fine epanodos, enlarged upon in the inverted order ; first, knowledge :

For who hath known the mind of the Lord ?

secondly, wisdom :

Or who hath been his counsellor ?

thirdly, riches :

Or who hath first given unto him,  
 And it shall be repaid him again ?

“ Let, now, the most skilfully executed *canto* from the heathen classics, be compared with this finished scriptural Mosaic of St. Paul : the former, however imposing at the first view, will, on closer inspection, infallibly betray its patch-work jointing, and incongruous materials : while the latter, like the beauties of creation, not only bears the microscopic glance, but, the more minutely it is examined, the more fully its exquisite organization is disclosed. The Fathers also, often quote and *combine* Scripture : let their complex quotations be contrasted with those of the apostle ; the result may be readily anticipated.”<sup>1</sup>

3. *Quotations, mingled with original matter, in which one or more passages derived from the Hebrew Scriptures, are so connected and blended with original writing, that the compound forms one homogeneous whole ; the sententious parallelism equally pervading all the component members, whether original or derived.*

πως γαρ δε αν επικαλεσηται το ονομα Κυριου σωθησεται :  
 πως ουν επικαλεσονται εις δε ουκ επιζητησαν ;  
 πως δε πιστευουσιν, δε ουκ ηκουσαν ;  
 πως δε ακουσουσι χωρις κηρυσσοντας ;  
 πως δε κηρυξουσιν εαν μη αποσταλωσι ;  
 ὡς γεγραπται :

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Literature, pp. 114. 117. 120. Other examples of complex quotations are given in pp. 121—123.



ὡς ὄφρατοι δι ποδες των ευαγγελιζομενων ειρηνην ;  
των ευαγγελιζομενων τα αγαθα ;

For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved :  
But how shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed ?  
And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard ?  
And how shall they hear without a preacher ?  
And how shall they preach, if they be not sent ?  
As it is written ;

How beautiful the feet of those who bring good tidings of peace !  
Who bring good tidings, of good things ! (Rom. x. 13—18.)

The first line of this passage is literally taken from the Septuagint version of Joel ii. 32., the next quotation is original, and affords an exact, though somewhat peculiar, specimen of parallelism, its composition nearly resembling that of the logical *sortes*, in which the predicate of each preceding line becomes the subject of the line next in order. Similar instances of this logical construction occur in the prophetic writings, and abound in the epistles of St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> The last couplet is from Isa. lii. 7., the Septuagint rendering of which is both confused and inaccurate. Saint Paul, however, has quoted so much as it answered his purpose to quote, but has carefully maintained the parallelism uninjured.

λιθον ον αποδοκισαν δι οικοδομουντες,  
ουτος εγενηθε εις κεφαλην γωνιαις  
παρα κυριου εγενετο αυτη,  
και εσι θυμαση εν οφθαλμοις ημων :  
δια τουτο λεγω υμιν  
οτι αρθησεται αφ' υμων η βασιλεια του Θεου,  
και δοθησεται εθνη ποιουντι τους καρπους αυτης :  
και ο πεσων επι τον λιθον τουτον, συναδλησεται,  
εφ' ον δ' αν πεση, λικμησει αυτον.

The stone which the builders rejected ;  
The same is become the head of the corner :  
From the Lord hath this proceeded ;  
And it is marvellous in our eyes ;  
Wherefore I say unto you :  
That from you shall be taken away the kingdom of God ;  
And it shall be given to a nation producing the fruits thereof ;  
And he who falleth upon this stone, shall be sorely bruised ;  
But upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Matt. xxi. 42—44.

The first four lines are literally taken from the Septuagint version of Psalm cxviii. 22, 23. The last four are original ; and Bp. Jebb asks, with great reason, whether the parallelism is not more striking in the latter portion, than in the former.<sup>2</sup>

IV. The preceding examples will sufficiently exemplify the *manner* in which the inspired writers of the New Testament were accustomed to cite, abridge, amplify, and combine passages from the poetical parts of the Old Testament : and also to annex to, or intermingle with, their citations, parallelisms by no means less perfect, of their own original composition. These examples further corroborate the argument from analogy for the existence of the grand characteristic of Hebrew poesy, — the sententious parallelism, — in the New Testament. We shall, therefore, now proceed to give a few examples of the *original parallelisms*, which pervade that portion of the Holy

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 124. In p. 125. and also in his nineteenth section, (pp. 388—390.) Bp. Jebb has given several of the instances above referred to.

<sup>2</sup> Sacred Literature, p. 127. In pp. 125—142. Bp. Jebb has given additional examples of this class of mingled quotations ; one of which (Acts iv. 24—30.) is particularly worthy of the reader's attention, on account of the very striking evidence which it affords (on the principles of sententious parallelism), of the supreme Deity of Jesus Christ.

Scriptures. They are divided by Bishop Jebb into 1. Parallel couplets;—2. Parallel Triplets;—3. Quatrains of which the lines are either directly, alternately, or inversely parallel;—4, 5. Stanzas of five and six lines;—Stanzas of more than six parallel lines.

1. *Of Parallel Couplets* the two following examples will give the reader an adequate idea :

τω αιτουντι δε, διδου·  
και τον θειλοντα απο σου δανεισθαι, με αποσραφης.  
To him that asketh thee, give ;  
And him that would borrow from thee, turn not away.  
Matt. v. 42.

μεγαλυνει η ψυχη μου τον Κυριον·  
Και ηγαλλιασε το πνευμα μου επι τω Θεω τω σωτηρι μου·  
My soul doth magnify the Lord ;  
And my spirit hath exulted in God my Saviour.  
Luke i. 46, 47.<sup>1</sup>

"The second line of the latter couplet, it is well observed, clearly rises above the first in all its terms; *μεγαλυνω* is simply to *magnify*, to praise; *αγαλλιαω* denotes *exultation* or *extacy*; *ψυχη* is the *animal soul*; *πνευμα* the *immortal spirit*; *τον Κυριον* is the simplest and most general expression of the Godhead; the *Lord* of all men; *τω Θεω τω σωτηρι μου* is a considerable amplification in terms, and personally appropriative in meaning, *the God who is my Saviour*."<sup>2</sup>

2. *Parallel Triplets* consist of three connected and correspondent lines, which are constructively parallel with each other, and form within themselves a distinct sentence or significant part of a sentence.

αι αλωπεκες φωλεους εχουσι·  
και τα πετεινα του ουρανου κατασκηνωσισ·  
δ δε βιος του ανθρωπου ουκ εχει που την κεφαλην κλειη.  
The foxes have dens ;  
And the birds of the air have nests ;  
But the son of man hath not where to lay his head.  
Matt. viii. 20.

δ πιστευων εις τον βιον. εχει ζωην αιωνιον·  
δ δε απειθων τω υιω, ουκ οφεται ζωην.  
αλλ' η οργη του Θεου μενει επ' αυτον.  
He who believeth in the Son, hath life eternal ;  
But he who disobeyeth the Son, shall not see life :  
But the wrath of God abideth on him.  
John iii. 36.

In this passage, Bishop Jebb justly remarks, the translators of our authorised version "have not preserved the variation of the terms. *δ πιστευων*, *δ απειθων*: rendering the former, "he that believeth;" the latter, "he that believeth not." The variation, however, is most significant; and should, on no account, be overlooked: as Dr. Doddridge well observes, "the latter phrase explains the former; and shows, that the *faith* to which the promise of eternal life is annexed, is an effectual *principle* of sincere and unreserved *obedience*." The descending series is magnificently awful: he who, with his heart, *believeth in the Son*, is *already* in possession of eternal life: he, whatever may be his outward profession, whatever his theoretic or historical belief, who *obeyeth not the Son*, not only does not possess eternal life, he does not possess any thing worthy to be called *life at all*; nor, so persisting, ever can *possess*, for he shall not even *see* it: but this is not the whole; for, as eternal life is the *present possession* of the faithful, so the wrath of God is the *present and permanent lot* of the disobedient; it *abideth on him*."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 143. In pp. 144—148. are given numerous other instances of parallel couplets.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> Sacred Literature, pp. 149, 150. In pp. 151—167. are given numerous other

3. In *Quatrains*, two parallel couplets are so connected as to form one continued and distinct sentence ; the pairs of lines being either directly, alternately, or inversely parallel :

εαν τας εντολας μου τηρησητε,  
μενειτε εν τη αγαπη μου  
καθως εγω τας εντολας του πατρος μου τηρηκα,  
και μενω αυτου εν τη αγαπη.

If ye keep my commandments,  
Ye shall abide in my love ;  
Even as I have kept my Father's commandments,  
And abide in his love.

John xv. 10.

τις γαρ οιδεν ανθρωπων, τα του ανθρωπου,  
ει μη το πνευμα του ανθρωπου το εν αυτω ;  
ουτω και τα του Θεου ουδεις οιδεν,  
ει μη το πνευμα του Θεου.

For who of men, knoweth the depths of any man,  
Save only the spirit of that man which is in him ?  
Even so, the depths of God knoweth no person ;  
Save only the spirit of God.<sup>1</sup>

1 Cor. ii. 11.

In this last cited passage, our authorised version reads *the things of a man . the things of the spirit of God* ; an awkward mode of supplying the ellipsis, which ought to be filled up from the τα βιδη of the preceding verso. This ellipsis is supplied by Bishop Jebb from Dr. Macknight.

4. *Five lined stanzas* admit of considerable varieties of structure, which it would exceed the limits of this work to specify. One or two instances must suffice to exemplify them.

ουχι δωδεκα εισιν ωραι της ημερας ;  
εαν τις περιπατη τη εν ημερα, ου προσκοπτει'  
δτι το φως του κοσμου τουτου κλειπει :  
εαν δε τις περιπατη εν τη νυκτι, προσκοπτει'  
δτι το φως ουκ εστιν εν αυτω.

Are there not twelve hours in the day ?  
If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not ;  
Because he seeth the light of this world :  
But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth ;  
Because the light is not in him.

John xi. 9, 10.

In this instance, the odd line or member (which commences the stanza) lays down a truth which is illustrated in the remaining four lines. A similar disposition is observable in the *first* of the two following stanzas, in which the odd line lays down the proposition to be illustrated, viz. *By their fruits ye shall thoroughly know them*. In the *second* stanza, on the contrary, the odd line makes a full close, re-asserting with authority the same proposition, as undeniably established by the intermediate quatrains. *By their fruits, THEREFORE, ye shall thoroughly know them*.

απο των καρπων αυτων επιγνωσισθε αυτους  
μητι συλλεγουσιν απο ακανθων σφαυλην ;  
η απο τριβλων συκα ;  
ουτω παν δενδρον αγαθου καρπου καλους ποιει  
το δε σαπρον δενδρον καρπουσ πονηρουσ ποιει :  
ου δυναται δενδρον αγαθου καρπουσ πονηρουσ ποιειν'  
ουδε δενδρον σαπρον καρπουσ καλους ποιειν :  
παν δενδρον μη ποιουσ καρπον καλον,  
εκκοπτεται και εις πυρ βαλλεται :  
αραγε απο των καρπων αυτων επιγνωσισθε αυτους.

By their fruits ye shall thoroughly know them :

examples, in which are interspersed some admirable quotations from the writings of the fathers.

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 169. See also pp. 170—192. for further examples of the quatrain.

Do men gather from thorns the grape ?  
 Or from thistles the fig ?  
 Thus, every sound tree beareth good fruit ;  
 But every corrupt tree beareth evil fruit :  
 A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit ;  
 Nor a corrupt tree bear good fruit,  
 Every tree not bearing good fruit,  
 Is hewn down and cast into the fire :  
 By their fruits, therefore, ye shall thoroughly know them.<sup>1</sup>

Matt. vii. 16. 20.

5. The *Six lined stanzas* likewise admit of a great variety of structure. Sometimes they consist of a quatrain, with a distich annexed : sometimes of two parallel couplets, with a third pair of parallel lines so distributed, that one occupies the centre, and the other the close ; and occasionally, of three couplets alternately parallel ; the first, third, and fifth lines corresponding with one another ; and, in like manner, the second, fourth, and sixth. Of these six lined stanzas, Bishop Jebb has adduced numerous examples. We subjoin two.

οψιας γενομενης, λεγετε, ευδια,  
 πυρραζει γαρ ο ουρανος  
 και πρωι, σημερον χειμων,  
 πυρραζει γαρ συγναζων ο ουρανος :  
 υποκριται' το μεν προσωπον του ουρανου γινωσκετε διακρινειν'  
 τα δε σημεια των καιρων ου δυνασθε.

When it is evening, ye say, "A calm !

"For the sky is red :"

And in the morning, "To day a tempest :

"For the sky is red and lowering :"

Hypocrites ! The face of the sky ye know how to discern :

But ye cannot [discern] the signs of the times !

Matt. xvi. 2, 3.

This Stanza consists of a quatrain with a distich annexed. In the following passage, the stanza begins and ends with parallel lines, a parallel triplet intervening.

εκεινος δε ο δουλος ο γνους το θελημα του κυριου αυτου,  
 και μη ετοιμασας μηδε ποιησας προς το θελημα αυτου,  
 δαρησεται πολλας  
 ο δε μη γνους,  
 ποιησας δε αξια πληγων,  
 δαρησεται ολιγας.

And that servant who knew the will of his lord,  
 And who prepared not, neither did according to his will,  
 Shall be beaten with many stripes :

And he who did not know,  
 And did things worthy of stripes,  
 Shall be beaten with few stripes.<sup>2</sup>

Luke xii. 47, 48.

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Literature, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> Sacred Literature, pp. 201. 204. We cannot withhold from our readers Bishop Jebb's beautiful remarks on the last cited passage. "The antithesis in this passage has prodigious moral depth : he who sins *against* knowledge, though his sins were only sins of *omission*, shall be beaten with *many stripes* : but he who sins *without* knowledge, though his sins were sins of *commission*, shall be beaten only with *few stripes*. Mere negligence, against the light of conscience, shall be severely punished : while an offence, in itself comparatively heinous, if committed ignorantly, and without light, shall be mildly dealt with. This merciful discrimination, however, is full of terror : for, whatever may be the case, respecting past, forsaken, and repented sins of ignorance, no man is entitled to take comfort to himself from this passage, respecting his present, or future course of life : the very thought of doing so, proves that the person entertaining that thought, has sufficient knowledge to place him beyond its favourable operation." Ibid. p. 205. Other examples of the six lined stanza are given in pp. 204—211.

6. *Stanzas of more than six parallel lines.* — It frequently happens that more than six parallel lines are so connected by unity of subject or by mutual relationship, as to form a distinct stanza. Of the numerous examples of this kind of distribution, given by Bishop Jebb, one specimen must suffice.

πας ουν βεις ακουει μου τους λογους τούτους, και ποιει αυτους,  
 ομοιωσω αυτον ανδρι φρονιμω,  
 οστις οικοδομησει την οικιαν αυτου επι την πετραν·  
 και κατεβη η βροχη,  
 και ηλθον οι ποταμοι,  
 και επνευσαν οι ανεμοι,  
 και προσπεσον τη οικια εκεινη,  
 και ουκ επεσε· τεθειμελιωτο γαρ επι την πετραν·

και πας ο ακουων μου τους λογους τούτους, και μη ποιων αυτους,  
 ομοιωθησεται ανδρι μωρω,  
 οστις οικοδομησει την οικιαν αυτου επι την αμμον·  
 και κατεβη η βροχη,  
 και ηλθον οι ποταμοι,  
 και επνευσαν οι ανεμοι,  
 και προσκοψαν τη οικια εκεινη,  
 και επεσε· και ην η πτωσις αυτης μεγαλη.

Whosoever, therefore, heareth these my words, and doeth them,  
 I will liken him to a prudent man,  
 Who built his house upon the rock :

And the rain descended,  
 And the floods came,  
 And the winds blew,  
 And fell upon that house ;

And it fell not ; for it was founded upon the rock.

And every one hearing these my words, and doing them not,  
 Shall be likened to a foolish man,

Who built his house upon the sand :

And the rain descended,  
 And the floods came,  
 And the winds blew,

And struck upon that house ;

And it fell ; and the fall thereof was great.<sup>1</sup>

Matt. vii. 24—27.

V. Further, several stanzas are often so connected with each other as to form a paragraph or section. Luke xvi. 9—13. James iii. 1—12. iv. 6—10. and v. 1—6. and 1 John iv. 15—17. afford striking examples of this sort of distribution ; for the detail and illustration of which we must refer our readers to Bishop Jebb's elegant and instructive volume, which has been so often cited. It only remains that we notice briefly the *gradational parallelism*, and the *epanodos*, in the New Testament, which he has discovered and elucidated.

1. *Parallel lines gradational* (or, as Bishop Jebb terms them, *cognate parallelisms*;) we have already remarked, are of most frequent

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Literature, p. 211. In these two connected stanzas, the language may be justly termed *picturesque*. The marked transition in each of them from a long and measured movement, to short rapid lines, and the resumption, at the close, of a lengthened cadence, are peculiarly expressive. The continual return, too, in the shorter lines, of the copulative particle, (a return purely Hebraic, and foreign from classical usage,) has a fine effect : it gives an idea of danger, sudden, accumulated, and overwhelming. These are beauties which can be retained only in a literal translation ; and which a literal translation may exhibit very competently. Ibid. pp. 214. In pp. 215—248. the reader will find many other examples, intermingled with much just criticism and some fine quotations from the fathers.

occurrence in the poetical books of the Old Testament. The poetical parallelisms exhibited in the preceding pages, while they fully prove his position, that the poetical dialect pervades the New Testament, will prepare the reader to expect to find there similar instances of parallel lines gradational. The second example of parallel couplets, given in page 462. *supra*, affords a concise but beautiful specimen of the ascent or climax in the terms, clauses, or lines which constitute the parallelism. One or two additional instances, therefore, will suffice, to show the existence of the gradational parallelism in the New Testament.

ὃν ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς ἀναλῶσει, τῷ πνεύματι στόματος αὐτοῦ  
καὶ καταργήσει, τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ.

Whom the Lord Jesus will waste away, with the breath of his mouth  
And will utterly destroy, with the bright appearance of his coming.

2 Thoss. ii. 8.

"The first words, *ὃν ὁ Κύριος Ἰησοῦς* are common to both lines; *ἀναλῶσει* implies no more, in this place, than *gradual decay*; *καταργήσει* denotes *total extermination*: while, in terror and magnificence, no less than in the effects assigned, *the breath of his mouth*, must yield to *the bright appearance of his coming*. The first line seems to announce the ordinary diffusion, gradually to be effected, of Christian truth: the second, to foretell the extraordinary manifestation of the victorious Messiah, suddenly, and overwhelmingly, to take place in the last days."<sup>1</sup>

εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀκλιθῆτε·  
καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε·  
πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ.

To the way of the Gentiles go not off;  
And to a city of the Samaritans, go not in;  
But proceed rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matt. x. 5, 6.

"This is a gradation in the scale of national and religious proximity; the *Gentiles*, the *Samaritans*, *Israel*. In the remaining terms, there is a correspondent progress: the *way*, or *road* to foreign countries; a *city* of the Samaritans; the *house* of Israel, a phrase conveying the notion of *HOME*; *go not off*, — go not from Palestine, towards other nations; *go not in* to a city of the Samaritans; though, in your progresses between Judea and Galilee, you must pass by the walls of many Samaritan cities; but, however great your fatigue, and want of refreshment, *proceed rather* not merely to the house of Israel, but to *the lost sheep* of that house. Thus, by a beautiful gradation, the apostles are brought from the indefiniteness of a road leading to countries remote from their own, and people differing from themselves in habits, in language, and in faith, to the homefelt, individual, and endearing relationship of their own countrymen; children of the same covenant of promise, and additionally recommended to their tender compassion, as *morally lost*."

Bishop Jebb has given additional examples of the gradational parallelism from Matt. v. 45., vii. 1. 2., xx. 26, 27., xxiv. 17, 18., Mark iv. 24., Luke vi. 38., Rom. v. 7., James i. 17., iv. 8., and v. 5., Rev. ix. 6. and xxii. 14.

2. The nature of the *introverted parallelism*, or *parallel lines introverted*, has been stated in page 456. and confirmed by suitable examples. Closely allied to this is a peculiarity or artifice of construction, which Bishop Jebb terms an *Epanodos*, and which he defines to be literally "*a going back*, speaking first to the second of two subjects proposed; or if the subjects be more than two, resuming them precisely in the inverted order, speaking first to the last, and last to the first." The *rationale* of this artifice of composition he explains more particularly in the following words: — "Two pair of terms or propositions, containing two important, but not equally important notions, are to be so distributed, as to bring out the sense in the strongest and most impressive manner: now, this result will be

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Literature, p. 312.

best attained, by commencing, and concluding, with the notion to which prominence is to be given; and by placing in the centre the less important notion, or that which, from the scope of the argument, is to be kept subordinate."<sup>1</sup> Having established the justice of this explanation by examples of epanodos, derived from the Scriptures as well as from the best classic authors, Bishop Jebb has accumulated many examples proving its existence in the New Testament, the doctrines and precepts of which derive new force and beauty from the application of this figure. The length to which this chapter has unavoidably extended, forbids the introduction of more than one or two instances of the epanodos.

μη δωτε το αγιον τοις κυσι·  
μηδε βαλητε τους μαργαριτας υμων εμπροσθεν των χοιρων·  
μηποτε καταπατησωσιν αυτους εν τοις ποσιν αυτων.  
και γραφειντες βηξωσιν υμας.

Give not that which is holy to the dogs;  
Neither cast your pearls before the swine;  
Lest they trample them under their feet;  
And turn about and rend you.

Matt. vii. 6.

"The relation of the first line to the fourth, and that of the second to the third, have been noticed by almost all the commentators. A minor circumstance, is not altogether undeserving of attention: the equal lengths, in the original, of each related pair of lines; the first and fourth lines being short, the second and third lines long. The sense of the passage becomes perfectly clear, on thus adjusting the parallelism:

Give not that which is holy to the dogs;  
Lest they turn about and rend you:  
Neither cast your pearls before the swine,  
Lest they trample them under their feet.

"The more dangerous act of imprudence, with its fatal result, is placed first and last, so as to make, and to leave, the deepest practical impression."<sup>2</sup>

Χριστου ευωδια εσμεν τω Θεω·  
εν τοις σωζομενοις,  
και εν τοις απολλυμενοις·  
οις μεν οσμη θανατου, εις θανατον·  
οις δε οσμη ζωης, εις ζωην.

We are a sweet odour of Christ:  
To those who are saved;  
And to those who perish;  
To the one, indeed, an odour of death, unto death;  
But to the other, an odour of life, unto life;<sup>3</sup>

2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

In this specimen of the epanodos, the painful part of the subject is kept subordinate; the agreeable is placed first and last.

The preceding examples are sufficient to show the existence of the grand characteristic of Hebrew poesy, — the sententious parallelism, with all its varieties, in the New Testament. The reader, who is desirous of further investigating this interesting topic (and what student who has accompanied the author of the present work thus far, will not eagerly prosecute it?) is necessarily referred to Bishop Jebb's "Sacred Literature," to which this chapter stands so deeply indebted; — a volume, of which it is but an act of bare justice in the writer of these pages to say, that, independently of the spirit of enlightened

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Literature, pp. 60. 335.

<sup>2</sup> Sacred Literature, p. 339.

<sup>3</sup> Sacred Literature, p. 344.

piety which pervades every part, it has the highest claims to the attention of EVERY biblical student for its numerous beautiful and philological criticisms and elucidations of the New Testament; for the interpretation of which this learned prelate has opened and developed a new and most important source, of which future commentators will doubtless gladly avail themselves.

VI. The sacred writers have left us several kinds of poetical composition: they do not, however, appear to have cultivated either the *epic* or the *dramatic* species, unless we take these terms in a very wide sense, and refer to these classes those poems in which several interlocutors are introduced. Thus, M. Ilgen<sup>1</sup> and (after him) Dr. Good<sup>2</sup> conceive the book of Job to be a regular epic poem: while Messieurs Velthusen and Ammon think that the Song of Songs exhibits traces of a dramatic or melo-dramatic structure. Bishop Lowth, however, reduces the various productions of the Hebrew poets to the following classes, viz.

1. *Prophetic Poetry*. — Although some parts of the writings of the prophets are clearly in prose, of which instances occur in the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Jonah, and Daniel, yet the other books, constituting by far the larger portion of the prophetic writings, are classed by Bishop Lowth among the poetical productions of the Jews; and (with the exception of certain passages in Isaiah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel, which appear to constitute complete poems of different kinds, odes as well as elegies) form a particular species of poesy, which he distinguishes by the appellation of *Prophetic*.

The predictions of the Hebrew Prophets are pre-eminently characterised by the sententious parallelism, which has been discussed and exemplified in the preceding pages. The prophetic poesy, however, is more ornamented, more splendid, and more florid than any other. It abounds more in imagery, at least that species of imagery, which, in the parabolic style, is of common and established acceptation, and which, by means of a settled analogy always preserved, is transferred from certain and definite objects to express indefinite and general ideas. Of all the images peculiar to the parabolic style, it most frequently introduces those which are taken from natural objects and sacred history: it abounds most in metaphors, allegories, comparisons, and even in copious and diffuse descriptions. It possesses all that genuine enthusiasm which is the natural attendant on inspiration; it excels in the brightness of imagination, and in clearness and energy of diction, and consequently rises to an uncommon pitch of sublimity; hence also it is often very happy in the expression and delineation of the passions, though more commonly employed in exciting them.<sup>3</sup>

The following passage from one of Balaam's prophecies (which Bishop Lowth ranks among the most exquisite specimens of Hebrew poetry), exhibits a prophetic poem complete in all its parts. It abounds

<sup>1</sup> Jobi, antiquissimi carminis Hebraici, Natura atque Virtutes, cap. iii. pp. 40—89.

<sup>2</sup> Introductory Dissertation to his version of the book of Job, p. xx.

<sup>3</sup> Bp. Lowth's Lectures on Hebrew Poetry, Lect. xviii., xix. and xx.



in gay and splendid imagery, copied immediately from the tablet of nature ; and is chiefly conspicuous for the glowing elegance of the style, and the form and diversity of the figures. The translation is that of the Rev. Dr. Hales.<sup>1</sup>

How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob,  
 And thy tabernacles, O Israel !  
 As streams do they spread forth,  
 As gardens by the river side ;  
 As sandal-trees which THE LORD hath planted,  
 As cedar-trees beside the waters.  
 There shall come forth a man of his seed  
 And shall rule over many nations :  
 And his kingdom shall be higher than Gog,  
 And his kingdom shall be exalted.<sup>2</sup>  
 (God brought him forth out of Egypt,  
 He is to him as the strength of a unicorn.)  
 He shall devour the nations, his enemies,  
 And shall break their bones,  
 And pierce them through with his arrows.  
 He lieth down as a lion,  
 He coucheth as a lioness,  
 Who shall rouse him !  
 Blessed is he that blesseth thee,  
 And cursed is he that curseth thee.

The eighteenth chapter and the three first verses of the nineteenth chapter of the Apocalypse present a noble instance of prophetic poesy, in no respect inferior to the finest productions of any of the Hebrew bards.<sup>3</sup>

2. *Elegiac Poetry.* — Of this description are several passages in the prophetic books,<sup>4</sup> as well as in the book of Job,<sup>5</sup> and many of David's psalms that were composed on occasions of distress and mourning : the forty-second psalm in particular is in the highest degree tender and plaintive, and is one of the most beautiful specimens of the Hebrew elegy. The lamentation of David over his friend Jonathan (2 Sam. i. 17—27.) is another most beautiful elegy : but the most regular and perfect elegiac composition in the Scriptures, perhaps in the whole world, is the book entitled *The Lamentations of*

<sup>1</sup> Analysis of Chronology, vol. ii. book i. pp. 224—226.

<sup>2</sup> In the rendering of this quatrain, Dr. Hales has followed the Septuagint version, which he vindicates in a long note. In our authorised translation, made from the Masoretic text, the seventh verse of Numb. xxiv. stands thus : —

He shall pour the water out of his buckets,  
 And his seed *shall be* in many waters ;  
 And his king shall be higher than Agag,  
 And his kingdom shall be exalted.

This is confessedly obscure. — Dr. Boothroyd, in his *New Version of the Old Testament*, with a slight departure from the common rendering, translates the verse in the following manner :

Water shall flow from the urn of Jacob,  
 And his seed shall become as many waters ;  
 Their king shall be higher than Agag,  
 And his kingdom more highly exalted.

<sup>3</sup> The passages above noticed are printed in Greek and English, divided so as to exhibit their poetical structure to the greatest advantage, in Dr. Jebb's *Sacred Literature*, pp. 452—459.

<sup>4</sup> See Amos v. 1, 2. 16. ; Jer. ix. 17—22. ; Ezek. xxii. xxvii. 12—16. and xxxii.

<sup>5</sup> See Job iii. vi. vii. x. xiv. xvii. xix. xxix. xxx.

Jeremiah, of which we have given a particular analysis, *infra*, Vol. IV. Part I. Chap. VI. Sect. II.

3. *Didactic Poetry* is defined by Bishop Lowth to be that which delivers moral precepts in elegant and pointed verses, often illustrated by a comparison expressed or implied, similar to the Γνωμαί, or moral sentences, and adages, of the antient sages. Of this species of poetry the book of Proverbs is the principal instance. To this class may also be referred the book of Ecclesiastes.

4. *Of Lyric Poetry*, or that which is intended to be accompanied with music, the Old Testament abounds with numerous examples. Besides a great number of hymns and songs which are dispersed through the historical and prophetic books, such as the ode of Moses at the Red Sea (Exod. xv.), his prophetic ode (Deut. xxxii.), the triumphal ode of Deborah (Judg. v.), the prayer of Habakkuk (iii.), and many similar pieces, the entire book of Psalms is to be considered as a collection of sacred odes, possessing every variety of form, and supported with the highest spirit of lyric poetry;—sometimes sprightly, cheerful, and triumphant; sometimes solemn and magnificent; and sometimes tender, soft, and pathetic.

5. *Of the Idyl*, or short pastoral poem,<sup>1</sup> the historical psalms afford abundant instances. The seventy-eighth, hundred and fifth, hundred and sixth, hundred and thirty-sixth, and the hundred and thirty-ninth psalms, may be adduced as singularly beautiful specimens of the sacred idyl: to which may be added Isa. ix. 8.—x. 4.

6. *Of Dramatic Poetry* Bishop Lowth,<sup>2</sup> adduces examples in the Song of Solomon and the book of Job, understanding the term in a more extended sense than that in which it is usually received. Some critics, however, are of opinion, that the Song of Solomon is a collection of sacred idyls: and M. Bauer is disposed to consider the former book as approximating nearest to the *Mekâma*, that is, “the assemblies,” moral discourses, or conversations of the celebrated Arabian poet Hariri.<sup>3</sup>

In another part of this work, some reasons are offered in confirmation of this conjecture.

Many of the psalms, (and, according to Bishop Horsley,<sup>4</sup> by far the greater part,) are a kind of dramatic ode, consisting of dialogues between persons sustaining certain characters. “In these dialogue-psalms, the persons are frequently the psalmist himself, or the chorus of priests and Levites, or the leader of the Levitical band, opening the ode with a proëm declarative of the subject, and very often closing the whole with a solemn admonition, drawn from what the other persons say.”<sup>5</sup> The dramatic or dialogue form, which thus pervades

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Lowth defines an idyl to be a poem of moderate length, of a uniform middle style, chiefly distinguished for elegance and sweetness; regular and clear as to the plot, conduct, and arrangement.

<sup>2</sup> Lowth, *Prelect.* xviii.—xxxiv.

<sup>3</sup> Bauer, *Hermeneut. Sacr.* p. 386.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop Horsley's *Book of Psalms translated from the Hebrew*, Vol. i. Pref. p.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. IV. Part I. Chap. III. Sect. II. § II.

the book of Psalms, admits of considerable variety. Its leading characteristic, however, is an alternate succession of parts, adapted to the purpose of alternate recitation by two semi-choruses in the Jewish worship. Bishop Jebb considers the sublime hymn of Zacharias (Luke i. 67—79.) as a dramatic ode of this description; and, in confirmation of his opinion, he remarks that Zacharias must have been familiar with this character of composition, both as a pious and literate Jew, much conversant with the devotional and lyric poetry of his country, and also as an officiating priest, accustomed to bear his part in the choral service of the temple. Dr. J. has accordingly printed that hymn in Greek and English, in the form of a dramatic ode: and by this mode of distribution has satisfactorily elucidated its true meaning and grammatical construction in many passages, which have hitherto in vain exercised the acumen of critics.<sup>1</sup>

To the preceding species of Hebrew poetry, we may add

7. The *Acrostic* or *Alphabetical Poems*. Bishop Lowth considered this form of poetry as one of the leading characteristics of the productions of the Hebrew muse: but this, we have seen,<sup>2</sup> is not the fact. It may rather be viewed as a subordinate species, the form of which the bishop thus defines:—The acrostic or alphabetical poem consists of twenty-two lines, or of twenty-two systems of lines, or periods, or stanzas, according to the number of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; and every line, or every stanza, begins with each letter in its order, as it stands in the alphabet; that is, the first line, or first stanza, begins with א (*aleph*), the second with ב (*beth*), and so on. This was certainly intended for the assistance of the memory, and was chiefly employed in subjects of common use, as maxims of morality, and forms of devotion; which, being expressed in detached sentences, or aphorisms, (the form in which the sages of the most ancient times delivered their instructions,) the inconvenience arising from the subject, the want of connection in the parts, and of a regular train of thought carried through the whole, was remedied by this artificial contrivance in the form. There are still extant in the books of the Old Testament twelve<sup>3</sup> of these poems; three of them perfectly alphabetical,<sup>4</sup> in which every line is marked by its initial letter; the other nine less perfectly alphabetical, in which every stanza only is so distinguished. Of the three former it is to be remarked, that not only every single line is distinguished by its initial letter; but that the whole poem is laid out into stanzas; two<sup>5</sup> of these poems each into ten stanzas, all of two lines, except the two last stanzas in each, which are of three lines; in these the sense and the construction manifestly point out the division into stanzas, and mark the limit of every stanza. The third<sup>6</sup> of these perfectly alphabetical poems consists of twenty-two stanzas of three lines: but in this the initial letter of every stanza is also the initial letter of every line of that stanza: so that

<sup>1</sup> Sacred Literature, pp. 404—417.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 448, 449. *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> Psal. xxv. xxxiv. xxxvii. cxi. cxii. cxix. cxlv. Prov. xxxi. 10—31. Lam. i. ii. iii. iv.

<sup>4</sup> Psal. cxi. cxii. Lament. iii.

<sup>5</sup> Psal. cxi. cxii.

<sup>6</sup> Lament. iii.

both the lines and the stanzas are infallibly limited. And in all the three poems the pauses of the sentences coincide with the pauses of the lines and stanzas. It is also further to be observed of these three poems, that the lines so determined by the initial letters in the same poem, are remarkably equal to one another in length, in the number of words nearly, and probably in the number of syllables; and that the lines of the same stanza have a remarkable congruity one with another, in the matter and the form, in the sense and the construction.

Of the other nine poems less perfectly alphabetical, in which the stanzas only are marked with initial letters, six<sup>1</sup> consist of stanzas of two lines, two<sup>2</sup> of stanzas of three lines, and one<sup>3</sup> of stanzas of four lines: not taking into the account at present some irregularities, which in all probability are to be imputed to the mistakes of transcribers. And these stanzas likewise naturally divide themselves into their distinct lines, the sense and the construction plainly pointing out their limits: and the lines have the same congruity one with another in matter and form, as was above observed in regard to the poems more perfectly alphabetical.

Another thing to be observed of the three poems perfectly alphabetical is, that in two<sup>4</sup> of them the lines are shorter than those of the third<sup>5</sup> by about one third part, or almost half; and of the other nine poems, the stanzas only of which are alphabetical, that three<sup>6</sup> consist of the longer lines, and the six others of the shorter.

VII. We have already had occasion to remark, that the poetry of the Hebrews derives its chief excellence from its being dedicated to religion. Nothing can be conceived more elevated, more beautiful, or more elegant, than the composition of the Hebrew bards; in which the sublimity of the subject is fully equalled by the energy of the language and the dignity of the style. Compared with them, the most brilliant productions of the Greek and Roman muses, who often employed themselves on frivolous or very trifling themes, are infinitely inferior in the scale of excellence. The Hebrew poet, who worshipped Jehovah as the sovereign of his people — who believed all the laws, whether sacred or civil, which he was bound to obey, to be of divine enactment — and who was taught that man was dependent upon God for every thing, — meditated upon nothing but Jehovah; to Him he devoutly referred all things, and placed his supreme delight in celebrating the divine attributes and perfections. If, however, we would enter fully into the beauties of the sacred poets, there are two general observations, which it will be necessary to keep in mind whenever we analyse or examine the Songs of Sion.

1. The first is that *we carefully investigate their nature and genius.*

For, as the Hebrew poems, though various in their kinds, are each marked by a character peculiar to itself, and by which they are distinguished from each other, we shall be enabled to enter more fully into their elegance and beauty, if we have a correct view of their form and arrangement. For instance, if we wish critically to expound the Psalms, we ought to investigate the nature and proper-

<sup>1</sup> Psal. xxv. xxxiv. cxix. cxlv. Prov. xxxi. Lam. iv.

<sup>3</sup> Psal. xxxvii.

<sup>4</sup> Psal. cxi. cxii.

<sup>5</sup> Lament. iii.

<sup>2</sup> Lam. i. ii.

<sup>6</sup> Lam. i. ii. iv.

ties of the Hebrew ode, as well as the form and structure of the Hebrew elegies, &c., and ascertain in what respects they differ from the odes, elegies, &c. of the Greek poets. In like manner, when studying the Proverbs of Solomon, we should recollect that the most antient kind of instruction was by means of moral sentences, in which the first principles of antient philosophy were contained; and, from a comparison of the Hebrew, Greek, and other gnomic sentences, we should investigate the principal characters of a proverb. In the book of Job are to be observed the unity of action, delineation of manners, the external form and construction of the poem, &c.<sup>1</sup>

2. Further, in interpreting the compositions of the Hebrew bards, it ought not to be forgotten, that *the objects of our attention are the productions of poets, and of oriental poets in particular.*

It is therefore necessary that we should be acquainted with the country in which the poet lived, its situation and peculiarities, and also with the manners of the inhabitants, and the idiom of the language. Oriental poetry abounds with strong expressions, bold metaphors, glowing sentiments and animated descriptions, portrayed in the most lively colours. Hence the words of the Hebrew poets are neither to be understood in too lax a sense, nor to be interpreted too literally. In the comparisons introduced by them, the point of resemblance between the object of comparison, and the thing with which it is compared, should be examined, but not strained too far: and the force of the personifications, allegories, or other figures that may be introduced, should be fully considered. Above all, it should be recollected, that, as the sacred poets lived in the East, their ideas and manners were totally different from ours, and consequently are not to be considered according to *our* modes of thinking. From inattention to this circumstance the productions of the Hebrew muse have neither been correctly understood, nor their beauties duly felt and appreciated.

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<sup>1</sup> The reader will find some hints for the special study of the Book of Psalms, in Vol. IV. Part I. Chap. III. Sect. II. § IX., and also a copious analysis of the Book of Job, with observations for the better understanding of it, in Part I. Chap. III. Sect. I. § IX. X. of the same volume.