

ROBERT LOWTH

Isaiah: a new translation;  
with a preliminary dissertation,  
and notes, critical, philological, and explanatory,  
W. Tegg, London 1868

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THE  
PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION.

THE design of the following Translation of Isaiah, is not only to give an exact and faithful representation of the words and of the sense of the Prophet, by adhering closely to the letter of the text, and treading as nearly as may be in his footsteps; but, moreover, to imitate the air and manner of the author, to express the form and fashion of the composition, and to give the English reader some notion of the peculiar turn and cast of the original. The latter part of this design coincides perfectly well with the former: it is indeed impossible to give a just idea of the Prophet's manner of writing, otherwise than by a close literal version. And yet, though so many literal versions of this Prophet have been given, as well of old as in later times, a just representation of his manner, and of the form of his composition, has never been attempted, or even thought of, by any translator, in any language, whether ancient or modern. Whatever of that kind has appeared in former translations, (and much indeed must appear in every literal translation,) has been rather the effect of chance than of design, of necessity than of study: for what room could there be for study or design in this case, or at least for success in it, when the translators themselves had but a very imperfect notion, an inadequate or even false idea, of the real character of the author as a writer; of the general nature, and of the peculiar form, of the composition ?

It has, I think, been universally understood, that the Prophecies of Isaiah are written in prose. The style, the thoughts, the images, the expressions, have been allowed to be poetical, and that in the highest degree; but that they are written in verse, in measure, or rhythm, or whatever it is that distinguishes, as poetry, the composition of those books of the Old Testament which are allowed to be poetical, such as Job, the Psalms, and the Proverbs, from the historical books, as mere prose; this has never been supposed, at least has not been at any time the prevailing opinion. The opinions of the learned concerning Hebrew verse have been various; their ideas of the nature of it vague, obscure, and [p. ii] imperfect; yet still there has been a general persuasion, that some books of the Old Testament are written in verse, but that the writings of the Prophets are not of that number.

The learned Vitringa says,<sup>1</sup> that Isaiah's composition has a sort of numbers, or measure; "esse orationem suis adstrictam numeris:" he means, that it has a kind of oratorical number, or measure, as he afterwards explains it; and he quotes Scaliger as being of the same opinion, and as adding, that "however upon this account it could not rightly be called poetry."<sup>2</sup> About the beginning of this century, Herman Von der Hardt,<sup>3</sup> the Hardouin of Germany, attempted to reduce Joel's Elegies, as he called them, to iambic verse; and, consistently with his hypothesis, he affirmed, that the Prophets wrote in verse. This is the only exception I meet with to the universality of the contrary opinion. It was looked upon as one of his paradoxes, and little attention was paid to it. But what was his success in making out Joel's iambics, and in helping his readers to form, in consequence, a more just idea of the character of the prophetic style, I cannot say, having never seen his treatise on that subject.

The Jews of early times were of the same opinion, that the books of the Prophets are written in prose, as far as we have any evidence of their judgment on this subject. Jerome<sup>4</sup> certainly speaks the sense of his Jewish preceptors as to this matter. Having written his translation of Isaiah from the Hebrew Verity in *stichi*, or lines divided according to the *cola*

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<sup>1</sup> Prolegom. in lesaiam, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Scaliger, Animadvers. in Chron. Eusebii, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> See Wolfii Biblioth. Hebr. Tom. ii. p. 169.

<sup>4</sup> Praef. in Transl. Esaiiae ex Heb. Veritate.

and *commata*, after the manner of verse, which was<sup>5</sup> often done in the prophetic writings for the sake of perspicuity, he cautions his reader “not to mistake it for metre, as if it were any thing like the Psalms, or the writings of Solomon; for it was nothing more than what was usual in the copies of the prose works of Demosthenes and Cicero.” The later Jews have been uniformly of the same opinion; and the rest of the learned world seem to have taken it up on their authority, and have generally maintained it.

But if there should appear a manifest conformity between the prophetic style and that of the books supposed to be metrical—a conformity in every known part of the poetical character, which equally discriminates the prophetic and the metrical books from those acknowledged to be prose—it will be of use to trace out and to mark this conformity with all possible accuracy; to observe how far the peculiar characteristics of each style coincide; and to see whether the agreement between them be such as [p. iii] to induce us to conclude, that the poetical and the prophetic character of style and composition, though generally supposed to be different, yet are really one and the same.

This I purpose to do in the following Dissertation; and I the more readily embrace the present opportunity of resuming this subject, as what I have formerly written<sup>6</sup> upon it seems to have met with the approbation of the learned. And here I shall endeavour to treat it more at large; to pursue it further, and to a greater degree of minuteness; and to present it to the English reader in the easiest and most intelligible form that I am able to give it. The examples with which I shall illustrate it shall be more numerous, and all (a very few excepted) different from those already given; that they may serve by way of supplement to that part of the former work, as well as of themselves to place the subject in the fullest and clearest light.

Now, in order to make this comparison between the prophetic and the poetical books, it will be necessary, in the first place, to state the true character of the poetical or metrical style; to trace out carefully whatever plain signs or indications yet remain of metre, or rhythm, or whatever else it was that constituted Hebrew verse; to separate the true, or at least the probable, from the manifestly false; and to give as clear and satisfactory an explanation of the matter as can now reasonably be expected in the present imperfect state of the Hebrew language, and on a subject which for near two thousand years has been involved in great obscurity, and only rendered still more obscure by the discordant opinions of the learned, and the various hypotheses which they have formed concerning it.

The first and most manifest indication of verse in the Hebrew poetical books, presents itself in the acrostic or alphabetical poems;—of which there happily remain many examples, and those of various kinds—so that we could not have hoped, or even wished, for more light of this sort to lead us on in the very entrance of our inquiry. The nature, or rather the form, of these poems is this: The 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, the second with ב, 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 [p. iv] delivered their instructions,) the inconvenience arising from the subject, the want of connexion 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>7</sup> of these poems; (for I reckon the four first chapters of the

<sup>5</sup> See Grabe, Proleg. in LXX. Int. tom. i. cap. 1. § 6.

<sup>6</sup> De Sacra Poesi Hebræorum Prælect, xviii. xix.

<sup>7</sup> Psal. xxv. xxxiv. xxxvii. cxi. cxii. cxix. cxlv. Prov. xxxi. 10—31. Lam. i. ii, iii. iv.

Lamentations of Jeremiah as so many distinct poems;) three of them perfectly<sup>8</sup> alphabetical, 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>9</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>10</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 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>11</sup> consist of stanzas of two lines, two<sup>12</sup> of stanzas of three lines, and one<sup>13</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>14</sup> of them the lines are shorter than [p. v] those of the third<sup>15</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>16</sup> consist of the longer lines, and the six others of the shorter.

Now, from these examples, which are not only curious, but of real use, and of great importance in the present inquiry, we may draw some conclusions, which plainly follow from the premises, and must be admitted in regard to the alphabetical poems themselves; which also may by analogy be applied with great probability to other poems, where the lines and stanzas are not so determined by initial letters, yet which appear in other respects to be of the same kind.

In the first place, we may safely conclude, that the poems perfectly alphabetical consist of verses properly so called; of verses regulated by some observation of harmony or cadence; of measure, numbers, or rhythm. For it is not at all probable in the nature of the thing, or from examples of the like kind in other languages, that a portion of mere prose, in which numbers and harmony are totally disregarded, should be laid out according to a scale of division, which carries with it such evident marks of study and labour, of art in the contrivance, and exactness in the execution. And I presume it will be easily granted in regard to the other poems which are divided into stanzas by the initial letters, which stanzas are subdivided by the pauses of the

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<sup>8</sup> Psal. cxi. cxii. Lam. iii.

<sup>9</sup> Psal. cxi. cxii.

<sup>10</sup> Lam. iii.

<sup>11</sup> Psal. xxv. xxxiv. cxix. cxlv. Prov. xxxi. Lam. iv.

<sup>12</sup> Lam. i. ii.

<sup>13</sup> Psal. xxxvii.

<sup>14</sup> Psal. cxi. cxii.

<sup>15</sup> Lam. iii.

<sup>16</sup> Lam. i. ii. v.

sentence into lines easily distinguished one from another, commonly the same number of lines to a stanza in the same poem, that these are of the same kind of composition with the former, and that they equally consist of verses: and, in general, in regard to the rest of the poems of the Hebrews, bearing evidently the same marks and characteristics of composition with the alphabetical poems in other respects, and falling into regular lines, often into regular stanzas, according to the pauses of the sentences; which stanzas and lines have a certain parity or proportion to one another; that these likewise consist of verse—of verse distinguished from prose, not only by the style, the figures, the diction, by a loftiness of thought and richness of imagery, but by being divided into lines, and sometimes into systems of lines; which lines, having an apparent equality, similitude, or proportion one to another, were in some sort measured by the ear, and regulated according to some general laws of metre, rhythm, harmony, or cadence.

Further, we may conclude, from the example of the perfectly alphabetical poems, that whatever it might be that constituted Hebrew verse, it certainly did not consist in rhyme, or similar and correspondent sounds at the ends of the verses; for, as the [p. vi] ends of the verses in those poems are infallibly marked, and it plainly appears that the final syllables of the correspondent verses, whether in distichs or triplets, are not similar in sound to one another, it is manifest that rhymes, or similar endings, are not an essential part of Hebrew verse. The grammatical forms of the Hebrew language in the verbs, and pronouns, and the plurals of nouns, are so simple and uniform, and bear so great a share in the termination of words, that similar endings must sometimes happen, and cannot well be avoided; but, so far from constituting an essential or principal part of the art of Hebrew versification, they seem to have been no object of attention and study, nor to have been industriously sought after as a favourite accessory ornament.

That the verses had something regular in their form and composition, seems probable from their apparent parity and uniformity, and the relation which they manifestly bear to the distribution of the sentence into its members. But as to the harmony and cadence, the metre or rhythm, of what kind they were, and by what laws regulated, these examples give us no light, nor afford us sufficient principles on which to build any theory, or to form any hypothesis. For harmony arises from the proportion, relation, and correspondence of different combined sounds; and verse, from the arrangement of words, and the disposition of syllables, according to number, quantity, and accent;—therefore, the harmony and true modulation of verse depends upon a perfect pronunciation of the language, and a knowledge of the principles and rules of versification; and metre supposes an exact knowledge of the number and quantity of syllables, and, in some languages, of the accent. But the true pronunciation of Hebrew is lost—lost to a degree far beyond what can ever be the case of any European language preserved only in writing; for the Hebrew language, like most of the other Oriental languages, expressing only the consonants, and being destitute of its vowels, has lain now for two thousand years in a manner mute and incapable of utterance: the number of syllables is in a great many words uncertain; the quantity and accent wholly unknown. We are ignorant of all these particulars, and incapable of acquiring any certain knowledge concerning them; how, then, is it possible for us to attain to the knowledge of Hebrew verse? That we know nothing of the quantity of the syllables in Hebrew, and of the number of them in many words, and of the accent, will hardly now be denied by any man; but if any should still maintain the authority of the Masoretical punctuation, (though discordant in many instances from the imperfect remains of a pronunciation of much earlier date, and of better authority, that of the Seventy, of Origen, and other writers,) yet it must be allowed [p. vii] that no one, according to

that system, hath been able to reduce the Hebrew poems to any sort of harmony.<sup>17</sup> And indeed it is not to be wondered, that rules of pronunciation, formed, as it is now generally admitted, above a thousand years after the language ceased to be spoken, should fail of giving us the true sound of Hebrew verse. But if it was impossible for the Masoretes, assisted in some measure by a traditionary pronunciation delivered down from their ancestors, to attain to a true expression of the sounds of the language, how is it possible for us at this time, so much further removed from the only source of knowledge in this case, the audible voice, to improve or to amend their system, or to supply a more genuine system in its place, which may answer our purpose better, and lay open to us the laws of Hebrew versification? The pursuit is vain; the object of it lies beyond our reach; it is not within the compass of human reason or invention. The question concerning Hebrew metre is now pretty much upon the same footing with that concerning the Greek accents. That there were certain laws of ancient Hebrew metre is very probable; and that the living Greek language was modulated by certain rules of accent is beyond dispute: but a man born deaf may as reasonably pretend to acquire an idea of sound, as the critic of these days to attain to the true modulation of Greek by accent, and of Hebrew by metre.<sup>18</sup>

Thus much, then, I think, we may be allowed to infer from the alphabetical poems; namely, that the Hebrew poems are written in verse, properly so called; that the harmony of the verses does not arise from rhyme, that is, from similar corresponding sounds terminating the verses, but from some sort of rhythm, probably from some sort of metre, the laws of which are now altogether unknown, and wholly undiscoverable;—yet that there are evident marks of a certain correspondence of the verses with one another, and of a certain relation between the composition of the verses and the composition of the sentences—the formation of the former depending in some degree upon the distribution of the latter—so that generally periods coincide with stanzas, members with verses, and pauses of the one with pauses of the other; which peculiar form of composition is so observable, as plainly to discriminate in general the parts of the Hebrew Scriptures which are written in verse, from those which are written in prose. This will require a larger and more minute explication, not only as a matter necessary to our present purpose, that is, to ascertain the character of the prophetic style in general, and of that of the prophet Isaiah in particular, but as a principle of considerable [p. viii] use, and of no small importance, in the interpretation of the poetical parts of the Old Testament.

The correspondence of one verse or line with another, I call parallelism. When a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it in sense, or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction, these I call parallel lines; and the words or phrases, answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms.

Parallel lines may be reduced to three sorts—parallels synonymous, parallels antithetic, and parallels synthetic. Of each of these I shall give a variety of examples, in order to show the various forms under which they appear; first, from the books universally acknowledged to be poetical; then, correspondent examples from the prophet Isaiah, and sometimes also from the other prophets, to show that the form and character of the composition is in all the same.

As some of the examples which follow are of many lines, the reader may perhaps note a single line or two intermixed, which do not properly belong to that class under which they are ranged. These are retained, to preserve the connexion and harmony of the whole passage; and it is to be observed, that the several sorts of parallels are perpetually mixed with one another, and this mixture gives a variety and beauty to the composition.

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<sup>17</sup> See Hare, *Prolegomena in Psalmos*, p. xl. &c.

<sup>18</sup> See *A Larger Confutation of Bishop Hare's Hebrew Metre*; London, 1766; where I have fully treated of this subject.

First, of parallel lines synonymous; that is, which correspond one to another, by expressing the same sense in different but equivalent terms; when a proposition is delivered, and is immediately repeated, in the whole or in part, the expression being varied, but the sense entirely or nearly the same: as in the following examples:—

“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 unto-him  
And-the-request of-his-lips thou-hast-not denied.”

Psal. xxi I, 2

“Because I-called, and-ye-refused;  
I-stretched-out my-hand, and-no-one regarded ;  
But-ye-have-defeated all my-counsel;  
And-would-not incline to-my-reproof:  
I also will laugh at-.your-calamity;  
I-will-mock, when-what-you-feared cometh;  
When-what-you-feared cometh like-a-devastation;  
And-your-calamity advanceth like-a-tempest;  
When-distress and-anguish come upon-you:  
Then shall-they-call-upon-me, but-I-will-not-answer:  
They-shall-seek-me-early, but-they-shall-not find-me:  
Because they-hated knowledge;  
And-did-not-choose the-fear of-Jehovah ;  
Did-not incline to-my-counsel;

[p. ix]

Contemptuously-rejected all my-reproof:  
Therefore-shall-they-eat of-the-fruit of-their-ways;  
And-shall-be-satiated with-their-own-devices.  
For the-defection of-the-simple shall-slay-them;  
And-the-security of-fools shall-destroy them.”

Prov. i. 24—32.

“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.”

Isa, lv. 6, 7.

Fear not, for thou-shalt-not be-ashamed ;  
And-blush not, for thou-shalt-not be-brought-to-reproach:  
For thou-shalt-forget the-shame of-thy-youth;  
And-the-reproach-of-thy-widowhood thou-shalt-remember no more.”

Isa. liv, 4,

“Hearken unto-me, ye-that-know righteousness;  
The-people in-whose-heart is-my-law:  
Fear not the-reproach of-wretched-man;  
Neither be-ye-borne-down by-their-revilings;  
For the-moth shall-consume-them like-a-garment  
And-the-worm shall-eat-them like wool:  
But-my-righteousness shall-endure for-ever;  
And-my-salvation to-the-age of-ages.”

Isa. li. 7, 8

- “Like-mighty-men shall-they-rush-on;  
Like-warriors shall-they-mount the-wall:  
And-every-one in-his-way-shall-they-march;  
And-they-shall-not-turn-aside from-their paths.” Joel ii. 7  
“Blessed-is the-man, that-feareth Jehovah;  
That-greatly delighteth in-his-commandments.” Psal. cxii. 1
- “Hearken unto-me, O-house of-Jacob;  
And-all the-remnant of-the-house of-Israel.” Isa. xlvi. 3
- “Honour Jehovah with-thy-riches;  
And-with-the-first-fruits of-all thine-increase.” Prov. iii. 9.
- “Incline your-ear, and-come unto-me;  
Hearken, and-your-soul shall-live.” Isa. lv. 3.

In the foregoing<sup>19</sup> examples may be observed the different degrees of synonymous parallelism. The parallel lines sometimes consist of three or more synonymous terms; sometimes of two, which is generally the case when the verb, or the nominative [p. x] case of the first sentence, is to be carried-on to the second, or understood there; sometimes of one only, as in the four last examples. There are also among the foregoing a few instances, in which the lines consist each of double members, or two propositions. I shall add one or two more of these, very perfect in their kind:—

- “Bow thy heavens, O Jehovah, and descend;  
Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke:  
Dart forth lightning, and scatter them;  
Shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them.” Psal. cxliv. 5, 6.
- “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:  
For as the days of a tree, shall be the days of my people;  
And they shall wear out the works of their own hands.” Isa. lxxv. 21, 22

Parallels are also 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 wonders of old.”  
“The waters saw thee, O God!  
The waters saw thee; they were seized-with anguish.” Psal. lxxvii. 1, 11, 16
- “For he hath humbled those that dwell on high;  
The lofty city, he hath brought her down:  
He hath brought her down to the ground,  
He hath levelled her with the dust.  
The foot shall trample upon her;  
The feet of the poor, the steps of the needy.” Isa. xxvi. 5, 6.

<sup>19</sup> The terms in English, consisting of several words, are hitherto distinguished with marks of connexion—to show, that they answer to single words in Hebrew.



“What shall I do unto thee, O Ephraim!  
 What shall I do unto thee, O Judah!  
 For your goodness is as the morning cloud,  
 And as the early dew it passeth away.” Hosea vi, 4.

Sometimes in the latter line a part is to be supplied from the former to complete the sentence:—

“And those that persecute me thou wilt make to turn their backs to me;  
 Those that hate me,<sup>20</sup> and I will cut them off.” 2 Sam. xxii. 41.

[p. xi]

“The mighty dead tremble from beneath ;  
 The waters, and they that dwell therein.” Job xxvi. 5.

“And I looked, and there was no man;  
 Even among the idols,<sup>21</sup> and there was no one that gave advice;”  
 “And I inquired of them, and [there was no one] that returned an answer.” Isa. xli. 28.

Further, there are parallel triplets—when three lines correspond together, and form a kind of stanza, of which, however, only two commonly are synonymous:—

“The wicked shall see it, and it shall grieve him;  
 He shall gnash his teeth, and pine away;  
 The desire of the wicked shall perish “ Psal. cxii. 10

“That day, let it become darkness;  
 Let not God from above inquire after it;  
 Nor let the flowing light radiate upon it.  
 That night, let utter darkness seize it;  
 Let it not be united with the days of the year;  
 Let it not come into the number of the months.  
 Let the stars of its twilight be darkened:  
 Let it look for light, and may there be none ;  
 And let it not behold the eyelids of the morning.” Job iii. 4, 6, 9

“And he shall snatch on the right, and yet be hungry;  
 And he shall devour on the left, and not be satisfied ;  
 Every man shall devour the flesh of his neighbour.”<sup>22</sup> Isa. ix. 20.

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe ;  
 Come away, get you down, for the wine-press is full ;  
 The vats overflow ; for great is their wickedness.” Joel iii 13.

There are likewise parallels consisting of four lines; two distichs being so connected together, by the sense and the construction, as to make one stanza. Such is the form of the 37th Psalm, which is evidently laid out by the initial letters in stanzas of four lines; though in regard to that disposition some irregularities are found in the present copies. From this Psalm,

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<sup>20</sup> In the parallel place, Psal. xviii. the poetical form of the sentence is much hurt, by the removing of the conjunction from the second to the first word in this line; but a MS. in that place reads as here.

<sup>21</sup> See the Note on the place.

<sup>22</sup> See the Note on the place.

which gives a sufficient warrant for considering the union of two distichs as making a stanza of four lines, I shall take the first example:—

“Be not moved with indignation against the evil-doers;  
Nor with zeal against the workers of iniquity:  
For like the grass they shall soon be cut off;  
And like the green herb they shall wither.” Psal. xxxvii. 1,2

[p. xii]

“The ox knoweth his possessor;  
And the ass the crib of his lord;  
But Israel doth not know Me;<sup>23</sup>  
Neither doth my people consider.” Isa. i. 3.

“And I said, I have laboured in vain;  
For nought and for vanity I have spent my strength:  
Nevertheless my cause is with Jehovah;  
And the reward of my work with my God.” Isa. xlix. 4.

“Jehovah shall roar from Sion;  
And shall utter his voice from Jerusalem:  
And the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn;  
And the head of Carmel shall wither.” Amos i. 2.

In like manner, some periods may be considered as making stanzas of five lines, in which the odd line or member either comes in between two distichs, or after two distichs makes a full close:—

“If thou wouldst seek early unto God;  
And make thy supplication to the Almighty;  
If thou wert pure and upright:  
Verily now would he rise up in thy defence;  
And make peaceable the dwelling of thy righteousness.” Job viii. 5, 6.

“They bear him on the shoulder; they carry him about;  
They set him down in his place, and he standeth;  
From his place he shall not remove:  
To him, that crieth unto him, he will not answer;  
Neither will he deliver him from his distress.” Isa. xlvi 7.

“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;  
But the disobedient shall fall therein.” Hos. xiv.9.

“And Jehovah shall roar out of Sion;  
And from Jerusalem shall utter his voice;  
And the heavens and the earth shall tremble:  
But Jehovah will be the refuge of his people;  
And a strong defence to the sons of Israel.” Joel iii. 16.

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<sup>23</sup> See the Note on the place.

“Who established the word of his servant;  
 And accomplisheth the counsel of his messengers:  
 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. xliv.6.

**[p. xiii]**

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<sup>24</sup> 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.

“And ye said, Nay, but on horses will we flee;  
 Therefore shall ye be put to flight: And on swift coursers will we ride;  
 Therefore shall they be swift, that pursue you.” Isa. xxx. 16.

And a stanza of five lines admits of the same elegance:—

“Who is there among you that feareth Jehovah?  
 Let him hearken unto the voice of his servant:  
 That walketh in darkness, and hath no light?  
 Let him trust in the name of Jehovah;  
 And rest himself on the support of his God.” Isa. i. 10.

The second sort of parallels are the antithetic—when two lines correspond with one another by an opposition of terms and sentiments; when the second is contrasted with the first, sometimes in expressions, sometimes in sense only. Accordingly the degrees of antithesis are various; from an exact contraposition of word to word through the whole sentence, down to a general disparity, with something of a contrariety, in the two propositions.

Thus, in the following examples:—

“A wise son rejoiceth his father:  
 But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.” Prov. x. 1.

—where every word hath its opposite; for the terms *father* and *mother* are, as the logicians say, relatively opposite.

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

Here there are only two antithetic terms; for memory and name are synonymous.

“There is that scattereth, and still increaseth;  
 And that is unreasonably sparing, yet groweth poor.” Prov. xi. 24.

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<sup>24</sup> גבה; compare the next verse; and see Isa. lv.9. and the note there.

[p. xiv] Here there is a kind of double antithesis; one between the two lines themselves, and likewise a subordinate opposition between the two parts of each.

“Many seek the face of the prince;  
But the determination concerning a man is from Jehovah.” Prov. xxix. 26.

—where the opposition is chiefly between the single terms, the Prince and Jehovah: but there is an opposition likewise in the general sentiment; which expresses, or intimates, the vanity of depending on the former, without seeking the favour of the latter. In the following, there is much the same opposition of sentiment, without any contraposition of terms at all:—

“The lot is cast into the lap;  
But the whole determination of it is from Jehovah.” Prov. xvi. 33.

That is, the event seems to be the work of chance, but is really the direction of Providence.

The foregoing examples are all taken from the Proverbs of Solomon, where they abound: for this form is peculiarly adapted to that kind of writing—to adages, aphorisms, and detached sentences. Indeed, the elegance, acuteness, and force of a great number of Solomon’s wise sayings, arise in a great measure from the antithetic form, the opposition of diction and sentiment. We are not, therefore, to expect frequent instances of it in the other poems of the Old Testament: especially those that are elevated in the style, and more connected in the parts. However, I shall add a few examples of the like kind from the higher poetry.

“These in chariots, and those in horses ;  
But we in the name of Jehovah our God will be strong.<sup>25</sup>  
They are bowed down, and fallen;  
But we are risen, and maintain ourselves firm.” Psal. xx. 7, 8.

“For his wrath is but for a moment, his favour for life;  
Sorrow may lodge for the evening, but in the morning gladness.” Psal. xxx. 5.

“Yet a little while, and the wicked shall be no more;  
Thou shalt look at his place, and he shall not be found;  
But the meek shall inherit the land;  
And delight themselves in abundant prosperity.” Psal. xxxvii. 10, 11.

[p. xv] In the last example, the opposition lies between the two parts of a stanza of four lines, the latter distich being opposed to the former. So likewise the following:—

“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

“The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone;  
The sycamores are cut down, but we will replace them with cedars.” Isa. ix. 10.

Here the lines themselves are synthetically parallel; and the opposition lies between the two members of each.

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<sup>25</sup> נג בניך, so LXX, Syr. Æthiop.

The third sort of parallels I call synthetic or constructive—where 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 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.

“Praise ye Jehovah, ye of the earth ;  
Ye sea-monsters; and all deeps:  
Fire and hail, snow and vapour;  
Stormy wind, executing his command:  
Mountains, and all hills;  
Fruit-trees, and all cedars;  
Wild beasts, and all cattle ;  
Reptiles, and birds of wing:  
Kings of the earth, and all peoples;  
Princes, and all judges of the earth:  
Youths, and also virgins;  
Old men, together with the children:  
Let them praise the name of Jehovah;  
For his name alone is exalted ;  
His majesty, above earth and heaven.”

Psal. cxlviii. 7—13,

“With him is wisdom and might;  
To him belong counsel and understanding.  
Lo! he pulleth down, and it shall not be built;  
He encloseth a man, and he shall not be set loose.  
Lo; he withholdeth the waters, and they are dried up;  
And he sendeth them forth, and they overturn the earth.  
With him is strength, and perfect existence;  
The deceived, and the deceiver, are his.”

Job xii. 18—16.

“is such, then, the fast which I choose?  
That a man should afflict his soul for a day ?

[p. xvi]

Is it, that he should bow down his head like a bulrush;  
And spread sackcloth and ashes for his couch?  
Shall this be called a fast ;  
And a day acceptable to Jehovah ?  
Is not this the fast that I choose—  
To dissolve the bands of wickedness ;  
To loosen the oppressive burthens;  
To deliver those that are crushed by violence:  
And that ye should break asunder every yoke ?  
Is it not to distribute thy bread to the hungry ;  
And to bring the wandering poor into thy house?  
When thou seest the naked, that thou clothe him ;  
And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?  
Then shall thy light break forth like the morning ;  
And thy wounds shall speedily be healed over:  
And thy righteousness, shall go before thee ;  
And the glory of Jehovah shall bring up thy rear.”

Isa. Iviii. 5—8.

Of the constructive kind is most commonly the parallelism of stanzas of three lines; though they are sometimes synonymous throughout, and often have two lines synonymous; examples of both which are above given. The following are constructively parallel:—

“Whatsoever Jehovah pleaseth,  
That doeth he in the heavens, and in the earth ;  
In the sea, and in all the deeps:  
Causing the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth ;  
Making the lightnings with the rain ;  
Bringing forth the wind out of his treasures.” Psal. cxxxv. 6, 7.

The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear,  
And I was not rebellious;  
Neither did I withdraw myself backward:  
I gave my back to the smiters,  
And my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair;  
My face I hid not from shame and spitting.” Isa, 1. 5, 6.

Thou shalt sow, but shalt not reap ;  
Thou shalt tread the olive, but shalt not anoint thee with oil ;  
And the grape, but shalt not drink wine.” Micah vi. 15.

Of the same sort of parallelism are those passages, frequent in the poetic books, where a definite number is twice put for an indefinite: this being followed by an enumeration of particulars, naturally throws the sentences into a parallelism, which cannot be, of any other than the synthetic kind. This seems to have been a favourite ornament. There are many elegant examples of it in the 30th chapter of Proverbs, to which I refer the reader; and shall here give one or two from other places.

**[p. xvii]**

“These six things Jehovah hateth;  
And seven are the abomination of his soul:—  
Lofty eyes, and a lying tongue;  
And hands shedding innocent Wood:  
A heart fabricating wicked thoughts;  
Feet hastily running to mischief:  
A false witness breathing out lies;  
And the-sower-of strife between brethren.” Prov. vi. 16—19.

“Give a portion to seven, and also to eight;  
For thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.” Eccl. xi. 2.

“These two things have befallen thee; who shall bemoan thee?  
Desolation and destruction, the famine and the sword; who shall comfort thee ?” Isa. li. 19.

that is, taken alternately, desolation by famine, and destruction by the sword. Of which alternate construction I shall add a remarkable example or two, where the parallelism arises from the alternation of the members of the sentences:—

“I am black, but yet beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem;  
Like the tents of Kedar; like the pavilions of Solomon.” Cant. i. 5.

that is, black as the tents of Kedar, (made of dark-coloured goats' hair;) beautiful as the pavilions of Solomon.

“On her house-tops, and to her open streets,  
Every one howleth, descendeth with weeping.” Isa. xv. 3.

that is, every one howleth on her house-tops, and descendeth with weeping to her open streets.

The reader will observe in the foregoing examples, that though there are perhaps no two lines corresponding one with another as equivalent or opposite in terms; yet there is a parallelism equally apparent, and almost as striking, which arises from the similar form and equality of the lines, from the correspondence of the members and the construction; the consequence of which is a harmony and rhythm little inferior in effect to that of the two kinds preceding.

The degrees of the correspondence of the lines in this last sort of parallels must, from the nature of it, be various. Sometimes the parallelism is more, sometimes less exact; sometimes hardly at all apparent. It requires, indeed, particular attention, much study of the genius of the language, much habitude in the analysis of the construction, to be able in all cases to see and to distinguish the nice rests and pauses which ought to be made, in [p. xviii] order to give the period or the sentence its intended turn and cadence, and to each part its due time and proportion. The Jewish critics, called the Masorettes, were exceedingly attentive to their language in this part, even to a scrupulous exactness and subtile refinement; as it appears from that extremely complicated system of grammatical punctuation, more embarrassing than useful, which they have invented. It is therefore not improbable, that they might have had some insight into this matter; and, in distinguishing the parts of the sentence by accents, might have had regard to the harmony of the period and the proportion of the members, as well as to the strict grammatical disposition of the constructive parts. Of this, I think, I perceive evident tokens; for they sometimes seem to have more regard in distributing the sentence to the poetical or rhetorical harmony of the period, and the proportion of the members, than to the grammatical construction. To explain what I mean, I shall here give some examples, in which the Masorettes, in distinguishing the sentence into its parts, have given marks of pauses perfectly agreeable to the poetical rhythm, but such as the grammatical construction does not require, and scarcely admits. Though it is a difficult matter to know the precise quantity of time which they allot to every distinctive point; for it depends on the relation and proportion which it bears to the whole arrangement of points throughout the sentence; and though it is impossible to express the great variety of them by our scanty system of punctuation, yet I shall endeavour to mark them out to the English reader, in a rude manner, so as to give him some notion of what I imagine it to have been their design to express. Thus, then, they distinguish the following sentences:—

“And they that recompense evil for good;<sup>26</sup>  
Are mine adversaries, because I follow what is good.” Psal. xxxviii. 20.

“Upon Jehovah, in my distress;<sup>27</sup>  
I called, and he heard me.”  
“Long hath my soul had her dwelling;<sup>28</sup>  
With him that hateth peace.” Psal. cxx. 1, 6.

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<sup>26</sup> Athnac—in the three metrical books, as the Jews account them, is .but the third in order of power among the distinctive points; but, however, always takes place when the period is of two members only; in all the other books he is second: in the latter, therefore, *Rebiah* and *Zakeph-katon*, which come next to Athnac, have nearly the same distinctive power as Athnac has in the former. They will scarce be thought over-rated at a comma.

<sup>27</sup> Id.

<sup>28</sup> Id.

“I love Jehovah, for he hath heard;<sup>29</sup>  
The voice of my supplication,

[p. xix]

I will walk, before Jehovah,<sup>30</sup>  
In the land of the living.  
What shall I return unto Jehovah;  
For all the benefits which he hath bestowed on me?  
My vows I will pay to Jehovah,<sup>31</sup>  
Now in the presence of all his people.  
Precious in the eyes of Jehovah;<sup>32</sup>  
Is the death of his saints.”

Psal. cxvi. 1, 9, 12, 14, 15.

“Yea the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof,<sup>33</sup>  
Shall not send forth their light.”

Isa. xiii. 10.

“ In that day shall his strongly-fenced cities become,<sup>34</sup>  
Like the desertion of the Hivites and the Amorites.”

Isa. xvii. 9.

“For the glorious name of Jehovah shall be unto us,<sup>35</sup>  
A place of confluent streams, of broad rivers.”

Isa. xxxiii. 21.

“That she hath received at the hand of Jehovah,<sup>36</sup>  
Double of the punishment of all her sins.”

Isia. xl. 2.

Of the three different sorts of parallels, as above explained, every one hath its peculiar character and proper effect; and therefore they are differently employed on different occasions; and that sort of parallelism is chiefly made use of which is best adapted to the nature of the subject and of the poem. Synonymous parallels have the appearance of art and concinnity, and a studied elegance: they prevail chiefly in shorter poems; in many of the Psalms; in Balaam’s prophecies; frequently in those of Isaiah, which are most of them distinct poems of no great length. The antithetic parallelism gives an acuteness and force to adages and moral sentences; and therefore, as I observed before, abounds in Solomon’s Proverbs, and elsewhere is not often to be met with. The poem of Job being on a large plan, and in a high tragic style, though very exact in the division of the lines, and in the parallelism, and affording many fine examples of the synonymous kind, yet consists chiefly of the constructive. A happy mixture of the several sorts gives an agreeable variety; and they serve mutually to recommend and set off one another.

I mentioned above, that there appeared to be two sorts of Hebrew verses, differing from one another in regard to their length; the examples hitherto given are all, except one, of the shorter kind of verse. The longer, though they admit of every sort of parallelism, yet belonging for the most part to the last class, that of constructive parallels, I shall treat of them in this place, and [p. xx] endeavour to explain the nature, and to point out the marks of them, as fully and exactly as I can.

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<sup>29</sup> Id.

<sup>30</sup> Athnac.

<sup>31</sup> Athnac.

<sup>32</sup> Athnac.

<sup>33</sup> Zakeph-katon.

<sup>34</sup> Rebiah.

<sup>35</sup> Zakeph-katon.

<sup>36</sup> Zakeph-katon.



This distinction of Hebrew verses into longer and shorter, is founded on the authority of the alphabetical poems; one-third of the whole number of which are manifestly of the longer sort of verse, the rest of the shorter. I do not presume exactly to define by the number of syllables, supposing we could with some probability determine it, the limit that separates one sort of verse from the other, so that every verse exceeding or falling short of that number should be always accounted a long or a short verse; all that I affirm is this,—that one of the three poems perfectly alphabetical, and therefore infallibly divided into its verses; and three of the nine other alphabetical poems, divided into their verses, after the manner of the perfectly alphabetical, with the greatest degree of probability; that these four poems, being the four first Lamentations of Jeremiah, fall into verses about one-third longer, taking them one with another, than those of the other eight alphabetical poems. I shall first give an example of these long verses from a poem perfectly alphabetical, in which therefore the limits of the verses are unerringly defined:—

“I am the man that hath seen affliction, by the rod of his anger:  
He hath led me, and made me walk, in darkness, not in light:  
Even again turneth he his hand against me, all the day long.  
He hath made old my flesh and my skin, he hath broken my bones:  
He hath built against me, and hath compassed me, with gall and travail:  
He hath made me dwell in dark places, as the dead of old.” Lam. iii. 1—6

The following is from the first Lamentation, in which the stanzas are defined by initial letters, and are, like the former, of three lines:—

“How doth the city solitary sit, she that was full of people!  
How is she become a widow, that was great among the nations!  
Princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!  
She weepeth sore in the night, and her tear is upon her cheek:  
She hath none to comfort her, among all her lovers:  
All her friends have betrayed her, they became her enemies.” Lam. i. 1,2.

I shall now give examples of the same sort of verse, where the limits of the verses are to be collected only from the poetical construction of the sentences: and first from the books acknowledged on all hands to be poetical; and of these we must have recourse to the Psalms only, for I believe there is not a single instance of this sort of verse to be found in the poem of Job, and scarce any in the Proverbs of Solomon.

**[p. xxi]**

“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 altogether righteous ;  
More desirable than gold, and than much fine gold;  
And sweeter than honey, and the dropping of honey-combs.” Psal. xix. 7—10.

“That our sons may be like plants, growing up in their youth;  
Our daughters like the corner-pillars, carved-for the structure of a palace:  
Our store-houses full, producing all kinds of provision:  
Our flocks bringing forth thousands, ten thousands in our fields:  
Our oxen strong to labour; no irruption, no captivity;  
And no outcry in our streets.” Psal. cxliv. 12—14.

“Oh! how great is thy goodness which thou hast treasured up, for them that fear thee;  
Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!  
Thou wilt hide them in the secret place of thy presence, from the vexations of man;  
Thou wilt keep them safe in the tabernacle, from “the strife of tongues.”

Psal. xxxi. 19, 20.

“A sound of a multitude in the mountains, as of many people;  
A sound of the tumult of kingdoms, of nations gathered together:  
Jehovah God of Hosts mustereth the host for the battle.  
They come from a distant land, from the end of heaven;  
Jehovah and the instruments of his wrath, to destroy the whole land.”

Isa. xiii. 4, 5.

“They are turned backward, they are utterly confounded, who trust in the graven image;  
Who say unto the molten image, ye are our gods!”

Isa. xlii. 17.

“They are ashamed, they are even confounded, his adversaries,<sup>37</sup> all of them;  
Together they retire in confusion, the fabricators of images;  
But Israel shall be saved in Jehovah, with eternal salvation;  
Ye shall not be ashamed, neither shall ye be confounded, to the-ages of eternity.”

Isa. xlv. 16, 17.

These examples, all except the two first, are of long verses thrown in irregularly, but with design, between verses of another sort; among which they stand out, as it were, somewhat distinguished in regard to their matter as well as their form.

I think I perceive some peculiarities in the cast and structure of these verses, which mark them, and distinguish them from [p. xxii] those of the other sort. The closing pause of each line is generally very full and strong; and in each line commonly, towards the end, at least beyond the middle of it, there is a small rest or interval, depending on the sense and grammatical construction, which I would call a half-pause.

The conjunction ׀, the common particle of connexion, which abounds in the Hebrew language, and is very often used without any necessity at all, seems to be frequently and studiously omitted at the half-pause; the remaining clause being added, to use a grammatical term, by apposition to some word preceding; or coming in as an adjunct, or circumstance depending on the former part, and completing the sentence. This gives a certain air to these verses, which may be esteemed in some sort as characteristic of the kind.

The first four Lamentations are four distinct poems, consisting uniformly and entirely of<sup>38</sup> the long verse, which may therefore be properly called the elegiac verse—from those elegies which give the plainest and the most undoubted examples of it. There may perhaps be found many other very probable examples in the same kind; but this is what I cannot pretend to determine with any certainty. Such, I think, are the 42d and 43d Psalms; which I imagine

<sup>37</sup> See the note on the place.

<sup>38</sup> In the second Lamentation, the second line of the fourth period is deficient in length; and so likewise is the 31st verse of the third Lamentation. In the former, two words are lost out of the text; in the latter, one. This will plainly appear by supplying those words from the Chaldee paraphrase, which has happily preserved them. They prove their own genuineness by making the lines of a just length, and by completely restoring the sense; which in the former is otherwise not unexceptionable, in the latter manifestly imperfect. I will add the lines, with the words supplied included in crotchets.

ויחרג [כל נער] כל מהם ׀ יעין

“And he slew [every youth,] all that were desirable to the eye.”

כי לא יגח לעולם [ענרין] אדני

“For the Lord will not cast off [his servants] for ever.”

make one entire poem,<sup>39</sup> and ought not to have been divided into two Psalms: the lines are all of the longer kind, except the third line of the intercalary stanza three times inserted; which third line, like that at the close of an example given above from the 144th Psalm, is of the shorter kind of verse, somewhat like the Paroemiatic verse of the Greeks, which commonly makes the close of a set of Anapestic verses. Such likewise may perhaps be the 101st Psalm, which seems to consist of fourteen long verses, or seven distichs, thus divided:—

[p. xxiii]

“Mercy and judgment will I celebrate; to thee, O Jehovah, will I sing.  
 I will act circumspectly in the perfect way; when wilt thou come unto me?  
 I will walk with a perfect heart, in the midst of my house  
 I will not set before mine eyes, a wicked thing:  
 Him that dealeth unfaithfully, I hate; he shall not cleave unto me:  
 A perverse heart shall remove from me; the wicked I will not know.  
 Whoso slandereth in secret his friend, him will I destroy.  
 The lofty of eyes, and the proud of heart, him I will not endure.  
 Mine eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me:  
 Whoso walketh in the perfect way, he shall minister unto me.  
 He shall not dwell within my house, who practiseth deceit.  
 He that speaketh falsehood, shall not be established in my sight.  
 Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land;  
 To cut off, from the city of Jehovah, all the workers of iniquity.”

The sublime ode of Isaiah in the 14th chapter is all of this kind of verse, except, perhaps, a verse or two towards the end; and the prophecy against Senacherib in the 37th chapter, as far as it is addressed to Senacherib himself.

I venture to submit to the judgment of the candid reader, the preceding observations upon a subject, which hardly admits of proof and certainty; which is rather a matter of opinion and of taste, than of science; especially in the latter part, which endeavours to establish, and to point out, the difference of two sorts of verse, the longer and the shorter. For though the third Lamentation of Jeremiah gives a clear and indubitable example of the elegiac or long verse, and the two Psalms perfectly alphabetical of the shorter; yet the whole art of Hebrew versification, except only what appears in the construction of the sentences, being totally lost, it is not easy to try by them other passages of verse, so as to draw any certain conclusion in all cases, whether they are of the same kind or not: And that, for this among other reasons; because what I call the half-pause, which I think prevails for the most part in the longer verses is sometimes so strong and so full in the middle of the line, that it seems naturally to resolve it into a distich of two short verses. I readily, therefore, acknowledge, that in settling the distribution of the lines or verses, in the following Translation, I have had frequent doubts, and particularly in determining the long and short verses, I am still uncertain in regard to many places, whether two lines ought not to be joined to make one, or one line divided into two. But whatever doubts may remain concerning particulars, yet upon the whole I should hope, that the method of distribution here proposed, of sentences into stanzas and verses in the poetical books of Scripture, will appear to have some foundation, and even to carry with it a considerable degree of probability. Though no [p. xxiv] complete system of rules concerning this matter can, perhaps, be formed, which will hold good in every particular; yet this way of considering the subject may have its use, in furnishing a principle of interpretation of some consequence, in giving a general idea of the style and character of the Hebrew poetry, and in

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<sup>39</sup> This conjecture, offered some years ago, has since been confirmed by twenty-two MSS., which join them together.

showing the close conformity of style and character between great part of the prophetic writings, and the other books of the Old Testament universally acknowledged to be poetical.

And that the reader may not think his pains wholly lost, in labouring through this long disquisition concerning sentences and members of sentences, in weighing words and balancing periods, I shall endeavour to show him something of the use and application of the preceding observations; and to convince him, that this branch of criticism, minute as it may appear, yet merits the attention of the translator and of the interpreter of the Holy Scriptures—so large a part of which is entirely poetical, and where occasional pieces of poetry are interspersed through the whole.

It is incumbent on every translator to study the manner of his author; to mark the peculiarities of his style, to imitate his features, his air, his gesture, and, as far as the difference of language will permit, even his voice; in a word, to give a just and expressive resemblance of the original. If he does not carefully attend to this, he will sometimes fail of entering into his meaning; he will always exhibit him unlike himself—in a dress that will appear strange and unbecoming to all that are in any degree acquainted with him. Sebastian Castellio stands in the first rank for critical abilities and theological learning among the modern translators of Scripture; but by endeavouring to give the whole composition of his translation a new cast, to throw it out of the Hebrew idiom, and to make it adopt the Latin phrase and structure in its stead, he has given us something that is neither Hebrew nor Latin: the Hebrew manner is destroyed, and the Latin manner is not perfectly acquired; we regret the loss of the Hebrew simplicity, and we are disgusted with the perpetual affectation of Latin elegance. This is in general the case, but chiefly in the poetical parts. Take the following for a specimen.

“Quum Israelite ex Ægypto, quura Jacobaea domus emigraret ex populo barbaro,  
Judæi Israelitæ Deo fuere sanctitati atque potestati.  
Quo viso, mare fugit, et Jordanis retrocessit.  
Montes arietum, colles ove natorum ritu exiliverunt.”

Surely to this even the barbarism of the Vulgate is preferable;

[p. xxv] for though it has no elegance of its own, yet it still retains the form, and gives us some idea of the force and spirit of the Hebrew. I will subjoin it here, for it needs not fear the comparison.

“In exitu Israel de Ægypto, domus Jacob de populo barbaro,  
Facta est Judæa sanctificatio ejus, Israel potestas ejus.  
Mare vidit, et fugit: Jordanis con versus est retrorsum.  
Montes exultaverunt ut arietes: et colles sicut agni ovium.”

Flatness and insipidity will generally be the consequence of a deviation from the native manner of an original which has a real merit and a peculiar force of its own; for it will be very difficult to compensate the loss of this by any adventitious ornaments. To express fully and exactly the sense of the author is, indeed, the principal, but not the whole duty of the translator. In a work of elegance and genius, he is not only to inform, he must endeavour to please; and to please by the same means, if possible, by which his author pleases. If this pleasure arises in a great measure from the shape of the composition and the form of the construction, as it does in the Hebrew poetry, perhaps, beyond any other example whatsoever, the translator's eye ought to be always intent upon this: to neglect this, is to give up all chance of success, and all pretension to it. The importance of the subject, and the consequent

necessity of keeping closely to the letter of the original, has confined the translators of Scripture within such narrow limits, that they have been forced, whether they designed it or not, and even sometimes contrary to their design, as in the case of Castellio, to retain much of the Hebrew manner. This is remarkably the case in our vulgar translation, the constant use of which has rendered this manner familiar and agreeable to us. We have adopted the Hebrew taste; and what is with judgment, and upon proper occasion, well expressed in that taste, hardly ever fails to suggest the ideas of beauty, solemnity, and elevation. To show the difference in this respect, I shall here give an example or two of a free and loose translation, yet sufficiently well expressing the sense, contrasted with another translation of the same, as strictly literal as possible.

1. "The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done his marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance." Psal. cxi. 4. Old Version.
2. "Lo! children and the fruit of the womb are an heritage and gift, that cometh from the Lord." Psal. cxxvii. 4. O. V.
3. "O put not your trust in princes, nor in any child of man; for there is no help in them. "For when the breath of man goeth forth, he shall turn again to his earth; and then all his thoughts perish.
4. "The Lord thy God, O Sion, shall be king for evermore, and through out all generations." Psal. cxlvi. 2, 3, 10. O.V.

[p. xxvi]

1. "He hath made a memorial of his wonders: gracious and of tender mercy is Jehovah.
2. "Behold an heritage from Jehovah are children; a reward, the fruit of the womb."
3. "Trust ye not in princes; in the son of man, in whom is no salvation.  
"His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his earth; in that day his thoughts perish.
4. "Jehovah shall reign for ever; thy God, O Sion, from age to age."

The former examples are mere prose; the latter retain the outlines and the features of the original Hebrew, and from that cause alone are still poetry.

But this strict attention to the form and fashion of the composition of the sacred writings of the Old Testament is not only useful, and even necessary, in the translator who is ambitious of preserving in his copy the force, and spirit, and elegance of the original; it will be of great use to him likewise merely as an interpreter, and will often lead him into the meaning of obscure words and phrases: sometimes it will suggest the true reading, where the text in our present copies is faulty; and will verify and confirm a correction offered on the authority of MSS or of the ancient versions. I shall add a few examples, as evidences of what is here advanced. One short passage of *Isaiah* will furnish a number sufficient for our purpose; and the observant reader will find several more in the version and notes subjoined.

"Wherefore hear ye the word of Jehovah, ye scoffers;  
Ye who to this people in Jerusalem utter sententious speeches:  
Who say, We have entered into a covenant with death;  
And with the grave we have made a treaty.—  
But your covenant with death shall be broken:  
And your treaty with the grave shall not stand." Isa. xxviii. 14, 15, 18.

משלי, ye that *rule* this people, says our version; and so the generality of interpreters ancient and modern. But this prophecy is not addressed to the rulers of the people, nor is it at all concerned with them in particular: but is directed to the Ephraim-ites in general; and this part to the scoffers among them, who ridiculed the denunciations of the prophets, by giving out

paraboliſal ſentences, and ſolemn ſpeeches, ſomewhat in the prophetic ſtyle, in oppoſition to their prophecies; of which ſpeeches he gives ſpecimens in the next verſe, as he had done before in the 9th and 10th verſes, אַנְשֵׁי לַעֲוֹן מְשַׁלִּי therefore is parallel and ſynonymous to *scoffers*; and is not to be translated *rulers*, but to be taken in the other ſenſe of the word, and rendered, “ thoſe that ſpeak parables.” And Iarchi in this place [p. xxvii] very properly explains it, “qui dicunt verba irriſionis parabolicè.”

The next verſe gives us an inſtance ſtill more remarkable of the influence which the parallelism has in determining the ſenſe of words;

“We have entered into a covenant with death;  
And with the grave we have made—”

what? Every one muſt answer immediately, an agreement, a bargain, a treaty, or ſomething to the ſame ſenſe; and ſo in effect ſay all the verſions, ancient and modern. But the word חֶזֶק means no ſuch thing in any part of the Bible; (except in the 18th verſe of this chapter, here quoted, where it is repeated in the ſame ſenſe, and nearly in the ſame form;) nor can the lexicographers give any ſatisfactory account of the word in this ſenſe; which, however, they are forced to admit from the neceſſity of the caſe. “ Recte verto vocem חֶזֶק, perinde ac חֶזֶק, v. 18. *transactionem*, licet neutra hac ſignificatione alibi occurrat: circumſtantia enim orationis eam neceſſario exigit;” ſays the learned Vitranga upon the place. It could not otherwiſe have been known that the word had this meaning: it is the parallelism alone that determines it to this meaning; and that ſo clearly, that no doubt at all remains concerning the ſenſe of the paſſage. Again:—

“And your covenant with death ſhall be broken.”

But חֶזֶק means to *cover*, to *cover ſin*, and ſo to *expiate*, &c. and is never uſed in the ſenſe of *breaking* or *dissolving* a covenant, though that notion ſo often occurs in the Scriptures; nor can it be forced into this ſenſe, but by a great deal of far-fetched reaſoning. Beſides, it ought to be כִּפְרָה or תִּכְפֹּר, in the feminine form, to agree with בְּרִית. So that the word, as it ſtands, makes neither grammar nor ſenſe. There is great reaſon therefore to ſuſpect ſome miſtake in our preſent copy. The true reading is probably תִּפְר, differing by one letter. So conjectured Houbigant; and ſo Archbiſhop Seeker: and I find their conjecture confirmed by the Chaldee paraphraſt, who renders it by בטל, the word which he generally uſes in rendering this common phraſe הפיר בְּרִית. And this reading is ſtill further confirmed by the parallelism; תִּפְר, ſhall be broken, in the firſt line, is parallel and ſynonymous to לֹא תִקוּם, ſhall not ſtand, in the ſecond.

The very ſame phraſes are parallel and ſynonymous, *Isa. viii, 10.*

“Take counſel together, and it ſhall come to nought, ותִּפְר  
Speak the word, and it ſhall not ſtand, וְלֹא יִקוּם.”

### [p. xxviii]

I ſhall add one example more; and that of a reading ſuggeſted by the parallelism, and deſtitute of all authority of MSS. or ancient verſions.

“But mine enemies living are numerous ;  
And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.” *Pſal. xxxviii. 19.*

The word חַיִּים, *living*, ſeems not to belong to this place; beſides that the conſtruction of it in the Hebrew is very unuſual and inelegant. The true reading in all probability is חֲנֹם, *without cauſe*; parallel and ſynonymous to שִׁקְר, *wrongfully*, in the next line, (as in *Pſal. xxxv. 19.*;) )

which completes the parallelism through both lines. Let the reader compare Psal. ixix. 5. where the very same three terms in each line are set parallel to one another, just in the same manner as I suppose they must have been originally here. Which place likewise furnishes another example in the same kind: for a fourth term being there introduced in each line, the fourth term in the last line has been corrupted by the small mistake of inserting a ם in the middle of it. It has been well restored by a conjecture of the learned and ingenious Bishop Hare.

“They that hate me without cause are multiplied beyond the hairs of my head;  
They that are mine enemies wrongfully are more numerous than the hairs of my locks.”

For מצמיתִי, who destroy me, read מצמתי, *more than my locks*, parallel to משערוה ראשי *more than the hairs of my head*, in the first line. The Bishop’s conjecture is since confirmed by seven MSS.

Thus two inveterate mistakes, which have disgraced the text above two thousand years, (for they are prior to the version of the Seventy,) are happily corrected, and that, I think, beyond a doubt, by the parallelism supported by the example of similar passages.

Rabbi Azarias,<sup>40</sup> a learned Jew of the 16th century, has treated of the ancient Hebrew versification upon principles similar to those above proposed, and partly coincident with them: he makes the form of the verse to depend on the structure of the sentence, and the measures in every verse to be determined by the several parts of the proposition. As he is the only one of the Jewish writers, who appears to have had any just idea at all of this matter; [p. xxix] as his system seems to be well founded; and as his observations may be of use on the present occasion, both by giving some degree of authority to the hypothesis above explained, and by setting the subject in a light somewhat different,—I shall here give the reader at large his opinion upon it.

This author, in a large work entitled *Meor Enajim*, (that is, *The light of the Eyes*,) containing a great variety of matter, historical critical, and philosophical, takes occasion to treat of the Hebrew poetry in a separate chapter; of which the younger Buxtorf has given a Latin translation.<sup>41</sup>

“Azarias finding little satisfaction in what former writers had said upon the subject; whether those who make the Hebrew verse consist of a certain number of syllables and certain feet, like that of the Greeks and Latins; or those who exclude all metre, and make the harmony of their verse to arise from accents, tones, and musical modulations; which latter opinion he thinks agreeable to truth;—and having consulted the most learned of his nation without being able to obtain any solution of his difficulties; for they allowed that there was a sensible difference between the songs and the other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures when they were read; a kind of metrical sweetness in the former, which the latter had not; but whence that difference arose no one could explain;—in this state of uncertainty, he long considered the matter, endeavouring to obtain some satisfaction in his inquiries. He at last came to the following determination upon it:—That the sacred songs have undoubtedly certain measures and proportions; which, however, do not consist in the number of syllables, perfect or imperfect, according to the form of the modern verse which the Jews make use of, and which is borrowed from the Arabians; (though the Arabic prosody, he observes, is too complicated

<sup>40</sup> R. Azarias Min Haadumim, i. e. de Rubeis, or Rossi, of Ferrara, finished his treatise entitled *Meor Enajim*, A.D. 1573, and published it at Mantua, the place of his birth, 1574. Wolfii Biblioth. Hebreæa, vol. i. p. 944.

<sup>41</sup> Mantissa Dissertationum, p. 415, at the end of his edition of Cosri. Suspecting, from some obscurities, that Buxtorf’s translation was not very accurate, I procured the original edition; and, having carefully examined it, I have corrected from it this account of the author’s sentiments.

to be applied to the Hebrew language;) but in the number of things and of the parts of things—that is, the subject, and the predicate, and their adjuncts, in every sentence and proposition. Thus a phrase, containing two parts of a proposition, consists of two measures; add another containing two more, and they become four measures: another again, containing three parts of a proposition, consists of three measures; add to it another of the like, and you have six measures.

“For example; in the song of Moses, ‘Thy-right-hand, O-Jehovah,’ is a phrase consisting of two terms, or parts of a proposition ; to which is connected, ‘is-glorious in-power,’ consisting likewise of two terms: these joined together make four [p. xxx] measures, or a tetrameter: ‘Thy-right-hand, O-Jehovah,’ repeated, makes two more; ‘hath-crushed the-enemy,’ two more; which together make four measures, or a second tetrameter. So likewise,

‘The-enemy said; I-will-pursue, I-will-overtake;  
I-will-divide the-spoil; my-lust shall-be-satisfied-upon-them;  
I-will-draw my-sword; my-hand shall-destroy-them;  
Thou-didst-blow with-thy-wind; the-sea covered-them.’

“The Song of Deuteronomy consists of propositions of three parts, or three measures; which, doubled in the same manner, make six, or hexameters: thus,

‘Hearken, O-heavens, and-I-will-speak; and-let-the-earth hear the-words-of-my-mouth:<sup>42</sup>  
My-doctrine shall-drop, as-the-rain; my-word shall-distil, as-the-dew.’”

“Sometimes in the same period, much more in the same song, these two kinds meet together, according to the divine impulse moving the prophet, and as the variety suited his design, and the nature of the subject. For example,—

‘And-by-the-blast of-thy-nostrils, the-waters were-compressed:’

These are each two measures, which together make a tetrameter: it follows,—

‘The-floods stood-upright, as-in-a-heap:  
The-deeps were-congealed in-the-heart-of-the-sea:’<sup>43</sup>

These are two trimeters, which make an hexameter. So the Song of the Well begins with trimeters; to which are afterwards subjoined dimeters.<sup>44</sup> So in the prayer of Habakkuk the verses are trimeters:—

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<sup>42</sup> Two words joined together by *maccaph* are considered as a single word, according to the laws of punctuation; so אַמְרֵי־יְיָ is one word.

<sup>43</sup> בְּלִבֵּי־יָם, one word.

<sup>44</sup> The Song of the Well, Numb, xxi. 17, 18. according to our way of fixing the conclusion of it, and if we measure it by Azarias's rules, consists of three trimeters and one dimeter only. But the Targum of Onkelos continues the song to the end of the 20th verse, taking in the catalogue of stations, (as we understand it,) which immediately follows, as part of the song; and interpreting it as such, Azarias follows his authority: so Aben Tybbon, (see Cosri, p. 431.) and Iarchi upon the place. At this rate we shall have half a dozen dimeters more.



**[p. xxxi]**

‘God came from-Teman ;  
 And-the-Holy-One from-the-mount-of-Paran<sup>45</sup> Selah.  
 His-glory covered- the-heavens ;  
 And-his-splendour filled the-earth.’

“The author proceeds to observe, that in some verses certain words occur which make no part of the measures, or are not taken into the account of the verse; as in the Song of Deuteronomy:—

‘And-he-said,  
 I-will-hide my-face from-them.’

The word, ‘And-he-said,’ stands by itself,<sup>46</sup>—and the remaining words make a trimeter:—

‘I-will-see, what-is their-latter-end,’

is the trimeter answering to it. So in the prayer of Habakkuk:—

‘O-Jehovah,  
 I-have-heard thy-speech; I-was-afraid;  
 O-Jehovah,  
 Revive thy- work in-the-midst-of-the years.’<sup>47</sup>

**[p. xxxii]** The word, ‘O-Jehovah,’ is twice to be read separate; and the words added to it make a trimeter. But this verse,

‘Though the-fig-tree shall-not blossom,’

is of a different sort, consisting of the subject and predicate: ‘Though the fig-tree,’ being the subject; ‘shall not blossom,’ the predicate. So in a verse containing twelve terms, those terms may be reduced to six measures. For you are not to reckon either the syllables or the words, but only the things. And for this reason a particle is often joined to the word next to it. The verses of the Psalms observe the same order:—

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<sup>45</sup> מֵהַר־פָּאָרָן, (from-the-mount-of-Paran,) being joined by *maccaph*, and so making but one word, the author is obliged to take in *Selah* as part of the verse, to make out his third term or measure. The authority of the Masoretic *maccaph* has led him into an error. The verse without *Selah* is a trimeter; as it ought to be in conformity with the rest.

<sup>46</sup> So far the observation seems to be just; and perhaps there may be two more examples of it in the same poem, ver. 26. and 37.; where, according to Azarias’s doctrine, the words, *I said, And he shall say*, may conveniently enough be considered as making no part of the verse. So in *Isaiah*, the common forms, *Thus saith Jehovah, And it shall come to pass in that day*, and the like, probably are not always to be reckoned as making part of the measure. The period ׀ in the 4th Lamentation cannot well be divided into two lines, as it ought to be; but if the words קָרָאוּ לָמוֹ, *they cried unto them*, and בְּגוֹיִם אָמְרוּ, *they said among the heathen*, are excluded from the measure, the remainder will make two lines of just length:—

“Depart, ye are polluted, depart ; depart ye, forbear to touch:  
 Yea, they are fled, they are removed ; they shall dwell here no more.”

Or perhaps they may be two marginal interpretations, which by mistake have got into the text ; which, I think, is better without them. So likewise, Lam. ii. 15. the word שִׂיאֲמְרוּ, *of-which-they-said*, either does not reckon in the verse, which with it is too long; or, as I rather think, should be omitted as an interpolation.

<sup>47</sup> In order to make out the trimeter, it is necessary to suppose that Azarias reads בְּקִרְב־שָׁנִים as one word.

‘Have-mercy-upon-me O-God, according-to-thy-goodness;  
According-to-the-multitude-of-thy-mercies,<sup>48</sup> blot-out my-transgressions.’

These are trimeters. So likewise,

‘In-God I-will-praise his-word:  
In-Jehovah I-will-praise his-word.’

So likewise the Proverbs of Solomon,

‘Wisdom crieth without;  
In-the-streets she-uttereth her-voice.’

“I am aware, adds he, that some verses are to be found, which I cannot accommodate to these rules and forms; and perhaps a great number. But by observing these things, the intelligent may perhaps receive new light, and discover what has escaped me. However, they may be assured, that all the verses that are found in the Sacred Writings; such as the Song at the Red Sea, of the Well, of Moses, of Deborah, of David, the Book of Job, the Psalms, and the Proverbs; all of them have an established order and measure, different in different places, or even sometimes different in one and the same poem;—as we may perceive in reading them an admirable propriety and fitness, [p. xxxiii] though we cannot arrive at the true method of measuring or scanning them.

“It is not to be wondered, that the same song should consist of different measures; for the case is the same in the poetry of the Greeks and Romans: they suited their measures to the nature of the subject and the argument; and the variations which they admitted were accommodated to the motions of the body, and the affections of the soul. Every kind of measure is not proper for every subject; and an ode, a panegyric, or a prayer, should not be composed in the same measure with an elegy. Do not you observe, says he, in the Book of Lamentations of Jeremiah, that the periods of the first and second chapters each of them consist of three propositions; and every one of these of a subject, and a predicate, and of the adjuncts belonging to them? The third chapter follows the same method; and for this reason is placed next to them in order: but of this chapter every period is distributed into three initial letters. But the fourth chapter does not perfect the senses in every verse;<sup>49</sup> but consists of two and two, which make four. But the fifth chapter, which contains a prayer, you will find to be built on another plan; that is, one and one, which make two<sup>50</sup>, or a dimeter; like the verses of

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<sup>48</sup> Azarias takes the liberty of joining the two words כרב רהמך together, by a *maccaph*, which is riot to be found in our editions, in order to bring the verse within his rules. The reader will observe, that this distich, which in the Hebrew contains but seven words, cannot be rendered in English in less than one-and-twenty words. By this he will judge under what great disadvantage all the foregoing examples, whether of the parallelism, or of the metre of things, must appear in an English version, in which many words are almost always necessary to render what is expressed by one word in Hebrew.

<sup>49</sup> He said above, that in the 1st and 2d chapters each separate verse, or line, was a single proposition: he now says, that this is not the case in the 4th chapter; for it does not perfect the sense in every verse; that is, each verse does not consist of one single proposition. As, for example, the first line or verse—

“How is obscured the gold! changed the fine gold!”

“How is obscured | the gold!” makes one proposition, and two measures; “changed | the fine gold!” another proposition, and two other measures; which, according to him, make a tetrameter. This, he says, makes the difference between the three first and the fourth chapter; But there seems to be no such difference; many single lines in the three first containing two propositions, and many in the fourth containing only one.

<sup>50</sup> According to the author's own definition of his terms, *one and one which make two*, should mean, one term and one term making two measures, or a dimeter; but the fifth chapter does not at all seem to answer that

the Books of Job, Psalms, and Proverbs. So the Song of Moses, and the Song of Deborah, have a different form; consisting of three and three, which make six; that is, hexameters; like the heroic measure, which is the noblest of all measures.

“Upon the whole, the author concludes, that the poetical parts of the Hebrew Scriptures are not composed according to the rules and measures of certain feet, dissyllables, trisyllables, or the like, as the poems of the modern Jews are: but nevertheless have [p. xxxiv] undoubtedly other measures which depend on things,<sup>51</sup> as above explained. For which reason, they are more excellent than those which consist of certain feet, according to the number and quantity of syllables. Of this, says he, you may judge yourself in the Songs of the Prophets. For do you not see, if you translate some of them into another language, that they still keep and retain their measure, if not wholly, at least in part? which cannot be the case in those verses, the measures of which arise from a certain quantity and number of syllables.”

Such is R. Azarias’s hypothesis of the rhythmus of things; that is, of terms and of senses; of the grammatical parts of speech and of the logical parts of propositions. The principle seems to be right; but, I think, he has not made the best use of which it was capable in the application. He acknowledges, that it will not hold in all cases. I believe, there is no such thing to be found in the Hebrew Bible, as a whole poem consisting of trimeters, tetrameters, or hexameters only, measured and scanned according to his rules. The Song of Moses, Deut. xxxii. is a very apt example for his purpose; but will not in all parts fall in with his measures. Besides, there is no sort of reason for his making it to consist of hexameters, rather than trimeter distichs; such, as he says, the Psalms and Proverbs consist of. Examine the 113th and 112th Psalms by his rules; and though they will fall into his trimeters for the most part pretty well, yet we are sure that these were not to be coupled together to make hexameters, for they are necessarily divided into twenty-two distinct short lines by the initial letters. The Hebrew poetry, consisting for the most part of short sentences, must in general naturally fall into such measures as Azarias establishes; or with some management may be easily reduced to his rules. Every proposition must consist of a subject and a predicate, joined together by a copula; and the predicate including the copula will generally consist of two terms, expressing the action, and the thing acted upon. In Hebrew, sometimes the subject is combined with the copula in one word, and sometimes the predicate; sometimes all three make but one term. In these cases, the addition of a simple adjunct (for the shortness of the style will not admit of much more) to the subject, or the [p. xxxv] predicate or both, furnishes a second, a third, and sometimes a fourth term; that is, makes the verse a dimeter, trimeter, or tetrameter. For instance, in dimeters,—

‘They-made-him-jealous, with-strange-Gods;  
They-provoked-him, with-abominations. Deut, xxxii. 16.

In trimeters,—

“I-will-bless Jehovah, at-all-time ;  
His-praise [shall be] in-my-mouth continually.

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description. Besides, he says, the verses of it are like those of Job, Psalms, and Proverbs, of two of which books he said before, that the verses were trimeters. I know not what he means, unless it be that one and one sentences make two, that is, a distich; and that this chapter consists of distichs, of two short lines, as the Books of Job, Psalms, and Proverbs, for the most part do ; which is true.

<sup>51</sup> Perhaps the harmony might depend in some degree on both: for it may be often observed, that where the words of an hemistich happen to be longer, and consequently to consist of more syllables than the words of the adjoining hemistich, there the things expressed are fewer; (see, for example, Psal. cviii. 4, 5;) which seems to prove, that the measures of the verses did not depend on the things expressed only, but on the syllables also.

My-soul shall-make-her-boast, in-Jehovah ;  
 The-meeK shall-hear-it, and-rejoice.  
 O-magnify-ye Jehovah, with-me;  
 And-let-us-praise his-name, together.” Psal. xxxiv. 1—3.

In these examples, the first part of every line makes an entire proposition, and the last is an adjunct making the second, or the third term. In the following, the subject, and the predicate, with their adjuncts, consist of two terms, each of them: that is, of two measures: and, being joined together, make a tetrameter:—

“The-counsel of-Jehovah shall-stand for-ever,”

The next line is in the same form, except that the verb is understood, and the latter adjunct divided into two terms; and makes a second tetrameter to pair with the first:—

“The-thoughts of-his-heart, from-age to-age.”

Something of this kind must necessarily be the result of this sententious way of writing: it is what comes of course, without much study. But whatever attention the Hebrew poets might give to the scanning of their verses by the number of terms, it does not appear to have been their design to confine all the verses of the same poem to any set number of terms; whereas they do plainly appear to have studied to throw the corresponding lines of the same distich into the same number of terms, into the same form of construction, and still more into an identity, or opposition, or a general conformity of sense. I agree therefore with Azarias in his general principle of a rhythmus of things: but instead of considering terms, or phrases, or senses, in single lines, as measures; determining the nature and denomination of the verse, as dimeter, trimeter, or tetrameter; I consider only that relation and proportion of one verse to another, which arises from the correspondence [**p. xxxvi**] of terms, and from the form of construction; from whence results a rhythmus of propositions, and a harmony of sentences.

This peculiar conformation of sentences; short, concise, with frequent pauses, and regular intervals, divided into pairs, for the most part, of corresponding lines; is the most evident characteristic now remaining of poetry among the Hebrews, as distinguished from prose; and this, I suppose, is what is implied in the name *Mizmor*;<sup>52</sup> which I understand to be the proper name for verse; that is, for numerous, rhythmical, or metrical language. This form made their verse peculiarly fit for music and dance; which with them were the usual concomitants of poetry, on occasions of public joy, and in the most solemn offices of religion.<sup>53</sup> Both their dance and song were on such occasions performed by two choirs<sup>54</sup> taking their parts alternately in each. The regular form of the stanzas, chiefly distichal, and the parallelism of the lines, were excellently well suited to this purpose, and fell in naturally with the movements of the body, of the voice, and of the instruments, and with the division of the parts between the two sets of performers.

But, beside the poetical structure of the sentences, there are other indications of verse in the poetical and prophetic parts of the Hebrew Scriptures: such are, peculiarities of language; unusual and foreign words; phrases, and forms of words, uncommon in prose; bold elliptical expression; frequent and abrupt change of persons, and an use of the tenses out of

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<sup>52</sup> מִזְמוֹר. זָמַר signifies to *cut*, to *prune*, to *sing*, to play on a musical instrument. Ccesura is the common idea, which prevails in all.

<sup>53</sup> See Exod. xv. 20, 21. 2 Sam. vi. 14, 16.

<sup>54</sup> See 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. Ezra iii. 11, Nehem. xii. 24. and Pliilo's Observations (Περὶ Γεωργίας) on the Song at the Red Sea.

the common order; and lastly, the poetical dialect, consisting chiefly in certain anomalies peculiar to poetry; in letters and syllables added to the ends of words; a kind of licence commonly permitted to poetry in every language. But as these cannot be explained by a few examples, nor perfectly understood without some knowledge of Hebrew; I must beg leave to refer the learned reader, who would inquire further into this subject, to what I have said upon it in another place;<sup>55</sup> or rather, to recommend it to his own observation, in reading the sacred poets in their own language.

Thus far of the genuine form and character of the Prophet's composition; which it has been the translator's endeavour closely to follow, and as exactly to express as the difference of the languages would permit; in which indeed he has had great advantage in the habit, which our language has acquired, of expressing with ease, and not without elegance, Hebrew ideas and Hebrew [p. xxxvii] forms of speaking, from our constant use of a close verbal translation of both the Old and New Testament; which has by degrees moulded our language into such a conformity with that of the original Scriptures, that it can upon occasion assume the Hebrew character without appearing altogether forced and unnatural. It remains to say something of the Translation in regard to its fidelity; and of the principles of interpretation by which the translator has been guided in the prosecution of it.

The first and principal business of a translator, is to give the plain literal and grammatical sense of his author; the obvious meaning of his words, phrases, and sentences; and to express them, in the language into which he translates, as far as may be, in equivalent words, phrases, and sentences. Whatever indulgence may be allowed him in other respects; however excusable he may be, if he fail of attaining the elegance, the spirit, the sublimity of his author—which will generally be in some degree the case, if his author excels at all in those qualities; want of fidelity admits of no excuse, and is entitled to no indulgence. This is peculiarly so in subjects of high importance, such as the Holy Scriptures, in which so much depends on the phrase and expression; and particularly in the prophetic books of Scripture; where from the letter are often deduced deep and recondite senses, which must owe all their weight and solidity to the just and accurate interpretation of the words of the prophecy. For whatever senses are supposed to be included in the Prophet's words, spiritual, mystical, allegorical, analogical, or the like, they must all entirely depend on the literal sense. This is the only foundation upon which such interpretations can be securely raised; and if this is not firmly and well established, all that is built upon it will fall to the ground.

For example; if כְּחַוּא מְכַמָּר, Isa. li. 20. does not signify ὡς σευτλιον ἡμιοφθον, *like parboiled bete*, as the LXX render it, but *like an oryx* (a large fierce wild beast) in the toils; what becomes of Theodoret's explication of this image? Καθευδοντες ὡς σευτλιον ἡμιοφθον] Εδειξεν αυτον δια μεν του ὑπνου το ραθυμον, δια δε του λαχανου το ανανδρον. According to this interpretation, the Prophet would express the drowsiness and flaccidity, the slothfulness and want of spirit, of his countrymen; whereas his idea was impotent rage, and obstinate violence, subdued by a superior power; the Jews taken in the snares of their own wickedness, struggling in vain, till, overspent and exhausted, they sink under the weight of God's judgments. And Procopius's explication of the same passage, according to the rendering of the words by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, which is probably the true one, is almost as foreign to the purpose: "He compares, saith he, the people of Jerusalem to the oryx, that is, to a *bird*; because they [p. xxxviii] are taken in the snares of the devil, and therefore are delivered over to wrath." Such strange and absurd deductions of notions and ideas, foreign to the author's drift and design, will often arise from the invention of commentators who have nothing but an inaccurate translation to work upon. This was the case of the generality of the

<sup>55</sup> De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum, Praelect, iii, xiv, xv

Fathers of the Christian Church who wrote comments on the Old Testament: and it is no wonder, that we find them of little service in leading us into the true meaning and the deep sense of the prophetic writings.

It being, then, a translator's indispensable duty faithfully and religiously to express the sense of his author, he ought to take great care that he proceed upon just principles of criticism, in a rational method of interpretation; and that the copy from which he translates be accurate and perfect in itself, or corrected as carefully as possible by the best authorities, and on the clearest result of critical inquiry.

The method of studying the Scriptures of the Old Testament has been very defective hitherto in both these respects. Beside the difficulties attending it, arising from the nature of the thing itself, from the language in which it is written, and the condition in which it is come down to us through so many ages; what we have of it being the scanty relics of a language formerly copious, and consequently the true meaning of many words and phrases, being obscure and dubious, and perhaps incapable of being clearly ascertained; beside these impediments, necessarily inherent in the subject, others have been thrown in the way of our progress in the study of these writings, from prejudice, and an ill-founded opinion of the authority of the Jews, both as interpreters and conservators, of them.

The Masoretic punctuation, by which the pronunciation of the language is given, the forms of the several parts of speech, the construction of the words, the distribution and limits of the sentences, and the connexion of the several members are fixed, is in effect an interpretation of the Hebrew text made by the Jews of late ages, probably not earlier than the eighth century; and may be considered as their translation of the Old Testament. Where the words unpointed are capable of various meanings, according as they may be variously pronounced and constructed, the Jews by their pointing have determined them to one meaning and construction; and the sense which they thus give, is their sense of the passage: just as the rendering of a translator into another language is in his sense; that is, the sense in which in his opinion the original words are to be taken; and it has no other authority than what arises from its being agreeable to the rules of just interpretation. But because in the languages of Europe the vowels are essential parts of written words, a notion was too hastily taken up [p. xxxix] by the learned, at the revival of letters, when the original Scriptures began to be more carefully examined, that the vowel points were necessary appendages of the Hebrew letters, and therefore coeval with them; at least, that they became absolutely necessary when the Hebrew was become a dead language, and must have been added by Ezra, who collected and formed the canon of the Old Testament, in regard to all the books of it in his time extant. On this supposition, the points have been considered as part of the Hebrew text, and as giving the meaning of it on no less than divine authority. Accordingly our public translations in the modern tongues for the use of the church among Protestants, and so likewise the modern Latin translations, are for the most part close copies of the Hebrew pointed text, and are in reality only versions at second hand, translations of the Jews' interpretation of the Old Testament. We do not deny the usefulness of this interpretation, nor would we be thought to detract from its merit by setting it in this light: it is, perhaps, upon the whole, preferable to any one of the ancient versions; it has probably the great advantage of having been formed upon a traditional explanation of the text, and of being generally agreeable to that sense of Scripture which passed current, and was commonly received by the Jewish nation in ancient times; and it has certainly been of great service to the moderns, in leading them into the knowledge of the Hebrew tongue. But they would have made a much better use of it, and a greater progress in the explication of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, had they consulted it, without absolutely submitting to its authority; had they considered it as an assistant, not as an infallible guide.

To what a length an opinion lightly taken up, and embraced with a full assent, without due examination, may be carried, we may see in another example of much the same kind. The learned of the Church of Rome, who have taken the liberty of giving translations of Scripture in the modern languages, have for the most part subjected and devoted themselves to a prejudice equally groundless and absurd. The Council of Trent declared the Latin translation of the Scriptures called the Vulgate, which had been for many ages in use in their church, to be authentic—a very, ambiguous term, which ought to have been more precisely defined than the Fathers of this Council chose to define it. Upon this ground many contended, that the Vulgate version was dictated by the Holy Spirit; at, least was providentially guarded against all error; was consequently of divine authority, and more to be regarded than even the original Hebrew and Greek texts. And in effect the decree of the Council, however limited and moderated by the explanation of some of their more judicious divines, has given to the Vulgate such a high degree of authority, that, in this [p. xl] instance at least, the translation has taken place of the original: for these translators, instead of the Hebrew and Greek texts, profess to translate the Vulgate. Indeed, when they find the Vulgate very notoriously deficient in expressing the sense, they do the original Scriptures the honour of consulting them, and take the liberty, by following them, of departing from their authentic guide; but in general the Vulgate is their original text, and they give us a translation of a translation; by which second transfusion of the Holy Scriptures into another tongue, still more of the original sense must be lost, and more of the genuine spirit must evaporate.

The other prejudice, which has stood in the way, and obstructed our progress in the true understanding of The Old Testament—a prejudice even more unreasonable than the former, is the notion that has prevailed of the great care and skill of the Jews in preserving the text, and transmitting it down to the present times pure, and entirely free from all mistakes, as it came from the hands of the authors. In opposition to which opinion it has been often observed, that such a perfect degree of integrity no human skill or care could warrant; it must imply no less than a constant miraculous superintendence of divine Providence, to guide the hand of the copyist, and to guard him from error, in respect to every transcript that has been made through so long a succession of ages. And it is universally acknowledged, that Almighty God has not thought such a miraculous interposition necessary in regard to the Scriptures of the New Testament, at least of equal authority and importance with those of the Old: we plainly see, that he has not exempted them from the common lot of other books; the copies of these, as well as of other ancient writings, differing in some degree from one another, so that no one of them has any just pretension to be a perfect and entire copy, truly and precisely representing in every word and letter the originals, as they came from the hands of the several authors. All writings transmitted to us, like these, from early times, the original copies of which have long ago perished, have suffered in their passage to us by the mistakes of many transcribers through whose hands we have received them; errors continually accumulating in proportion to the number of transcripts, and the stream generally becoming more impure, the more distant it is from the source. Now, the Hebrew writings of the Old Testament being for much the greater part the most ancient of any; instead of finding them absolutely perfect, we may reasonably expect to find, that they have suffered in this respect more than others of less antiquity generally have done.

But beside this common source of errors, there is a circumstance very unfavourable in this respect to these writings in [p. xli] particular, which makes them peculiarly liable to mistakes in transcribing; that is, the great similitude which some letters bear to others in the Hebrew alphabet; such as כ to ב, ד to ו, ה to ו, ג to ו, ו, ז, and י, to one another; more perhaps than are to be found in any other alphabet whatsoever; and in so great a degree of likeness, that they are hardly distinguishable even in some printed copies; and not only these letters, but others

likewise beside these, are not easily distinguished from one another in many manuscripts. This must have been a perpetual cause of frequent mistakes; of which, in regard to the two first pairs of letters above noted, there are many undeniable examples; insomuch that a change of one of the similar letters for the other, when it remarkably clears up the sense, may be fairly allowed to criticism, even without any other authority than that of the context to support it.

But to these natural sources of error, as we may call them, the Jewish copyists have added others, by some absurd practices which they have adopted in transcribing:—such as their consulting more the fair appearance of their copy than the correctness of it; by wilfully leaving mistakes uncorrected, lest by erasing they should diminish the beauty and the value of the transcript; (for instance, when they had written a word, or part of a word, wrongly, and immediately saw their mistake, they left the mistake uncorrected, and wrote the word anew after it:) their scrupulous regard to the evenness and fulness of their lines; which induced them to cut off from the ends of lines a letter or letters, for which there was not sufficient room, (for they never divided a word so that the parts of it should belong to two lines,) and to add to the ends of lines letters wholly insignificant, by way of expletives, to fill up a vacant space: their custom of writing part of a word at the end of a line, where there was not room for the whole, and then giving the whole word at the beginning of the next line. These, and some other like practices, manifestly tended to multiply mistakes: they were so many traps and snares laid in the way of future transcribers, and must have given occasion to frequent errors.

These circumstances considered, it would be the most astonishing of, all miracles, if, notwithstanding the acknowledged fallibility of transcribers, and their proneness to error from the nature of the subject itself on which they were employed, the Hebrew writings of the Old Testament had come down to us through their hands absolutely pure, and free from all mistakes whatsoever.

If it be asked, what then is the real condition of the present Hebrew text; and of what sort, and in what number, are the mistakes which we must acknowledge to be found in it? it is [p. xlii] answered, That the condition of the Hebrew text is such as, from the nature of the thing, the antiquity of the writings themselves, the want of due care, or critical skill, (in which latter at least the Jews have been exceedingly deficient,) might in all reason have been expected; that the mistakes are frequent, and of various kinds; of letters, words, and sentences; by variation, omission, transposition; such as often injure the beauty and elegance, embarrass the construction, alter or obscure the sense, and sometimes render it quite unintelligible. If it be objected, that a concession so large as this is, tends to invalidate the authority of Scripture; that it gives up in effect the certainty and authenticity of the doctrines contained in it, and exposes our religion naked and defenceless to the assaults of its enemies;—this, I think, is a vain and groundless apprehension. Casual errors may blemish parts, but do not destroy, or much alter, the whole. If the *Iliad* or the *Æneid* had come down to us with more errors in all the copies than are to be found in the worst manuscript now extant of either, without doubt many particular passages would have lost much of their beauty; in many the sense would have been greatly injured; in some rendered wholly unintelligible; but the plan of the poem in the whole and in its parts, the fable, the mythology, the machinery, the characters, the great constituent parts, would still have been visible and apparent, without having suffered any essential diminution of their greatness. Of all the precious remains of antiquity, perhaps Aristotle's *Treatise on Poetry* is come down to us as much injured by time as any: As it has been greatly mutilated in the whole, some considerable members of it being lost; so the parts remaining have suffered in proportion, and many passages are rendered very obscure, probably by the imperfection and frequent mistakes of the copies now extant. Yet, notwithstanding these disadvantages, this treatise, so much injured by time, and so mutilated, still continues to be the great code of criticism; the fundamental principles of which are



plainly deducible from it: we still have recourse to it for the rules and laws of epic “and dramatic poetry, and the imperfection of the copy does not at all impeach the authority of the legislator. Important and fundamental doctrines do not wholly depend on single passages: an universal harmony runs through the Holy Scriptures; the parts mutually support each other, and supply one another’s deficiencies and obscurities. Superficial damages and partial defects may greatly diminish the beauty of the edifice, without injuring its strength, and bringing on utter ruin and destruction.<sup>56</sup> [p. xliii] The copies of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament being then subject, like all other ancient writings, to mistakes arising from the unskilfulness or inattention of transcribers—a plain matter of fact, which cannot be denied, and needs not be palliated; it is to be considered, what remedy can be applied in this case; how such mistakes can be corrected upon certain or highly probable grounds? Now the case being the same, the method which has been used with good effect in correcting the ancient Greek and Latin authors, ought in all reason to be applied to the Hebrew writings. At the revival of literature, critics and editors, finding the Greek and Latin authors full of mistakes, set about correcting them, by procuring different copies, and the best that they could meet with: these they compared together, and the mistakes not being the same in all, one copy corrected another; and thus they easily got rid of such errors as had not obtained possession in all the copies: and generally the more copies they had to compare, the more errors were corrected, and the more perfect the text was rendered. This, which common sense dictated in the first place as necessary to be done, in order to the removing of difficulties in reading ancient Greek and Latin authors, we have had recourse to in the last place in regard to the ancient Hebrew writers. Hebrew manuscripts have at length been consulted and collated, notwithstanding the unaccountable opinion [p. xliiv] which prevailed, that they all exactly agreed with one another, and formed precisely one uniform text. An infinite number of variations have been collected, from above six hundred manuscripts, and some ancient printed editions, collated or consulted in most parts of Europe; and have been in part published, and the publication of the whole will, I hope, soon be completed, by the learned Dr. Kennicott, in his edition of the Hebrew Bible with various readings—a work the greatest and most important that has been undertaken and accomplished since the revival of letters.

But the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, compared with the text of ancient Greek and Latin authors, has in one respect greatly the disadvantage. There are manuscripts of the latter,

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<sup>56</sup> “*Librarium discordiam ostendunt varia exemplaria, in quibus idem locus aliter atque aliter legitur. Sed ea discordia offenders nos non debet; primum, quia autorum non est, sed librarium quorum culpam praestare autores nec possunt nec debent. Deinde, quia plerumque ejusmodi discordia unius aut alterius verbi est, in quo nihil laeditur sententia; aut si quid forte laeditur, aliunde corrigi potest; quandoquidem autorum sententiae non semper ex singulis verbis superstitiosius observandis, sed plerumque ex orationis tenore, aut similium locorum observatione, aut mentis ratiocinatione sunt investigandae. Ac tales librarium discordiae etiam in profanis autoribus iuveniuntur; ut in Platone, in Aristotele, in Homero, in Cicerone, in Virgilio, et caeteris. Quamvis enim summo in pretio semper fuerint apud gentiles hi autores, summaque cum diligentia describi soliti, tamen caveri non potuit, quin multa Scripturae menda et discrepantiae annorum longitudine obrepserint; nec tamen ea res studiosos deterret; nec facit, ut qui libri Ciceronis habentur, ii aut non boni, aut non Ciceronis esse ducantur: sicut enim detorti aut etiam decussi ramuli agricolam non offendunt, nec arborem vitiant, quippe quae ramorum infinita multitudine sic abundet, ut tantulam jacturam alibi sine ullo detrimento resarciat; ita si in autore pauculis in locis simile quidpiam usu venit, id nec bonum lectorem offendit, nec autorem vitiat. Manet enim ipsa stirps, et, ut ita loquar, corpus auctoris, ex cujus perpetuo tenore dictorumque ubertate percipi possunt sine ullo detrimento fructus pleni.*

Ad scrupulum eorum, qui metuunt, ne, si hoc concessum fuerit, labascet sacrarum literarum autoritas, hoc respondeo; non esse scriptorum autoritatem in paucis quibusdam verbis, quae vitari detrahive potuerunt, sed in perpetuo orationis tenore, qui mansit incorruptus, positam. Itaque quemadmodum Cicero apud sui studiosos nihilo minoris est autoritatis propter pauca quaedam mutilata aut depravata, quam esset, si id non accidisset; ita debet et sacrarum literarum autoritati nihil detrahi, si quid in eis tale, quale ostendimus contigit.” Sebast. Castellio, quoted by Wetstein, *Nov. Test. tom. ii.*, p. 856.

which are much nearer in time to the age of the author; and have suffered much less in proportion to the shorter space of time intervening. For example, the Medicean manuscript of Virgil was written probably within four or five hundred years after the time of the poet; whereas the oldest of the Hebrew manuscripts now known to be extant, do not come within many centuries of the times of the several authors—not nearer than about fourteen centuries to the age of Ezra, one of the latest of them, who is supposed to have revised the books of the Old Testament then extant, and to have reduced them to a perfect and correct standard: so that we can hardly expect much more from this vast collection of variations, taken in themselves as correctors of the text, exclusively of other consequences, than to be able by their means to discharge and eliminate the errors that have been gathering and accumulating, in the copies for about a thousand years past; and to give us now as good and correct a text as was commonly current among the Jews, or might easily have been obtained, so long ago. Indeed, some of the oldest manuscripts, from which these variations have been collected, may possibly be faithful transcripts of select manuscripts at that time very ancient, and so may really carry us nearer to the age of Ezra; but this is an advantage which we cannot be assured of, and upon which we must not presume. But to get so far nearer to the source, as we plainly do by the assistance of manuscripts, though of comparatively late date, is an advantage by no means inconsiderable, or lightly to be regarded.

On the other hand, we have a great advantage in regard to the Hebrew text, which the Greek and Latin authors generally want, and which in some degree makes up for the defect of age in the present Hebrew manuscripts; that is, from the several ancient versions of the Old Testament in different languages, made in much earlier times, and from manuscripts in all probability much more correct and perfect than any now extant. These versions, for the most part, being evidently intended for exact [p. xlv] literal renderings of the Hebrew text, may be considered in some respect as representatives of the manuscripts from which they were taken: and when the version gives a sense better in itself and more agreeable to the context than the Hebrew text offers, and at the same time answerable to a word or words similar to those of the Hebrew text, and only differing from it by the change of one or more similar letters, or by the different position of the same letters, or by some other inconsiderable variation; we have good reason to believe, that the similar Hebrew words answering to the version, were indeed the very reading that stood in the manuscript from which the translation was made. To add strength to this way of reasoning, it is to be observed, that the manuscripts now extant frequently confirm such supposed reading of those manuscripts from which the ancient versions were taken, in opposition to the authority of the present printed Hebrew text; and make the collection of variations, now preparing for the public, of the highest importance; as they give a new evidence of the fidelity of the ancient versions, and set them upon a footing of authority which they never could obtain before. They were looked upon as the work of wild and licentious interpreters, who often departed from the text, which they undertook to render, without any good reason, and only followed their own fancy and caprice. The present Hebrew manuscripts so often justify the versions in such passages, that we cannot but conclude, that in many others likewise the difference of the version from the present original is not to be imputed to the licentiousness of the translator, but to the carelessness of the Hebrew copyist; and this affords a just and reasonable ground for correcting the Hebrew text on the authority of the ancient versions.

But the assistance of manuscripts and ancient versions united will be found very insufficient perfectly to correct the Hebrew text. Passages will sometimes occur, in which neither the one nor the other give any satisfactory sense; which has been occasioned probably by very ancient mistakes of the copy, antecedent to the date of the oldest of them. On these occasions, translators are put to great difficulties, through which they force their way as well

as they can; they invent new meanings for words and phrases, and put us off either with what makes no sense at all, or with a sense that apparently does not arise out of the words of the text. The renderings of such desperate places, when they carry any sense with them, are manifestly conjectural; and full as much so, as the conjectures of the critic who hazards an alteration of the text itself. The fairest way of proceeding in these cases seems to be, to confess the difficulty, and to lay it before the reader; and to leave it to his judgment to decide, whether the conjectural rendering, or the conjectural emendation, be more agreeable to [p. xlvi] the contexts to the exigence of the place, to parallel and similar passages, to the rules and genius of the language, and to the laws of sound and temperate criticism.

The condition of the present text of *Isaiah* in particular is answerable to the representation above given of the Hebrew text in general. It is, I presume, considerably injured, and stands in need of frequent emendation. Nothing is more apt to affect, and sometimes utterly to destroy, the meaning of a sentence, than the omission of a word; than which no sort of mistake is more frequent. I reckon, that in the book of *Isaiah*, the words omitted in different places amount to the number of fifty. I mean whole words, not including particles, prepositions, and pronouns affixed: and I speak of such as I am well persuaded are real omissions; much the greater part of which, I flatter myself, the reader will find supplied in the Translation and Notes, with a good degree of probability, from manuscripts and ancient versions. Beside these, there are some other places in which I suspect some omission, though there may be no evidence to prove it. If there be any truth in this account of words omitted, the reader will easily suppose, that mistakes of other kinds must be frequent in proportion, and amount altogether to a considerable, number.

The manuscripts and ancient versions afford the proper means of remedying these and other defects of the present copy. It is manifest, that the ancient interpreters had before them copies of the Hebrew text different in many places from that which passes current at present: and the manuscripts even now extant frequently vary from that, and from one another. Neither is there anyone manuscript or edition whatever that has the least pretension to a superior authority, so as to claim to be a standard to which the rest ought to be reduced. A true text, as far as it is possible to recover it, is to be gathered from the manuscripts now extant, and from the evidence furnished by the ancient versions of the readings of manuscripts of much earlier times. This being the case, the first care of the translator should be, especially in places obscure and difficult, to consider whether the words which he is to render be indeed the genuine words of the Prophet, and to ascertain, as far as may be, the true reading of the text.

The ancient versions above mentioned as the principal sources of emendation, and highly useful in rectifying as well as in explaining the Hebrew text, are contained in the London Polyglott.

The Greek version, commonly called the Septuagint, or of the seventy interpreters, probably made by different hands, (the number of them uncertain,) and at different times, as the exigence of the Jewish church at Alexandria and in other parts of Egypt required, is of the first authority, and of the greatest use in correcting the Hebrew text; as being the most ancient of all—and [p. xlvii] as the copy, from which it was translated, appears to have been free from many errors, which afterwards by degrees got into the text. But the version of *Isaiah* is not so old as that of the Pentateuch by a hundred years and more; having been made, in all probability, after the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the reading of the Prophets in the Jewish synagogues began to be practised; and even after the building of Onias's temple, to favour which there seems to have been some artifice employed in a certain passage of *Isaiah*<sup>57</sup> in this version. And it unfortunately happens, that *Isaiah* has had the hard fate to meet with a

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<sup>57</sup> Chap. xix. 18. See the Note there.

translator very unworthy of him, there being hardly any book of the Old Testament so ill rendered in that version as this of Isaiah. Add to this that the version of Isaiah, as well as other parts of the Greek version, is come down to us in a bad condition, incorrect, and with frequent omissions and interpolations. Yet, with all these disadvantages, with all its faults and imperfections, this version is of more use in correcting the Hebrew text than any other whatsoever.

The Arabic version is sometimes referred to as verifying the reading of the LXX, being, for the most part at least, taken from that version.

The learned Mr. Woide, to whom we are indebted for the publication of a Coptic lexicon and grammar, very useful and necessary for the promotion of that part of literature, has very kindly communicated to me his extracts from the fragments of a manuscript of a Coptic version of Isaiah, made from the LXX, with which he has collated them. They are preserved in the Library of St. Germain de Prez at Paris. He judges this Coptic version to be of the second century. The manuscript was written in the beginning of the fourteenth century. The same gentleman has had the goodness, at my request, to collate with Bos's edition of the LXX, through the book of Isaiah, two manuscripts of the King's Library, now in the British Museum, the one marked i. B. ii. the other i. D. n. The former manuscript, containing the Prophets of the version of the LXX, was written in the eleventh or twelfth century, according to Grabe; (in the tenth or eleventh century, in Mr. Woide's opinion;) and by a note on the back of the first leaf appears to have belonged to Pachomius, patriarch of Constantinople in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Grabe highly valued this manuscript: and intended to write a dissertation on the superiority of this and of the Alexandrian manuscript to that of the Vatican; but did not live to execute his design. See Prolegom. ad torn. 3tium, LXX Interp. edit. Grabe, sect iii. and v., and Grabe de Vitiis LXX Interp. p. 118 [p. **xlvi**]. I quote this manuscript by the title of MS. Pachom. for the reason above given.

The latter manuscript I. D. II. above mentioned, contains many of the historical books, beginning with Ruth, and ending with Ezra, according to the order of the books in our English Bible; and also the prophet Isaiah, of the version of the LXX. This manuscript in the book of Isaiah consists of two different parts: the first from the beginning to the word *τυφλων*, chap. xxxv. 5. written in a more ancient and better character, and upon better vellum; which Mr. Woide judges to be of the eleventh or twelfth century: the remaining part he refers to the beginning of the fourteenth century; which Grabe supposes to be the age of the whole: See Grabe de Vitiis LXX Interp. p. 104. This manuscript seems to have been taken from a good copy, as it frequently agrees with the best and most ancient manuscripts, and in particular with the manuscript of Pachomius.

The Coptic fragments above mentioned, and these manuscripts, are useful for the same purpose of authenticating the reading of the LXX; and, in consequence, of ascertaining or correcting the Hebrew text in some places.

My examination of Mr. Woide's collation of the two Greek manuscripts of Isaiah, has been confined to this single view in respect of the Hebrew text. Were these manuscripts to be applied more extensively, and to their proper use, that of correcting the text of the LXX, through all the parts of it which they contain, I am persuaded they would be found to be of very great importance, and would contribute largely to the revision and emendation of that ancient and very valuable version;—a work, which may be now considered as one of the principal desiderata of sacred criticism; and which ought to follow that arduous undertaking, which has so happily succeeded, the collation of Hebrew manuscripts; to which it stands next in order of importance and usefulness towards our attaining a more perfect knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

The Chaldee paraphrase of Jonathan Ben Uzziel, made about or before the time of our Saviour, though it often wanders from the text in a wordy allegorical explanation, yet very frequently adheres to it closely, and gives a verbal rendering of it; and accordingly is sometimes of great use in ascertaining the true reading of the Hebrew text.

The Syriac version stands next in order of time, but is superior to the Chaldee in usefulness and authority, as well in ascertaining as in explaining the Hebrew text. It is a close translation of the Hebrew into a language of near affinity to it. It is supposed to have been made as early as the first century.

The fragments of the three Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, [p. xlix] and Theodotion, all made in the second century, which are collected in the Hexapla of Montfaucon, are of considerable use for the same purpose.

The Vulgate, being for the most part the translation of Jerome, made in the fourth century, is of service in the same way, in proportion to its antiquity.

I am greatly obliged to several learned friends for their observations on particular passages;—to one great person more especially, whom I had the honour to call my friend, the late excellent Archbishop Seeker; whose marginal notes on the Bible, deposited by his order in the library at Lambeth, I had permission to consult by the favour of his most worthy successor. There are two Bibles with his notes: one a folio English Bible interleaved, containing chiefly corrections of the English translation; the other a Hebrew Bible of the edition of Michaelis, Halle 1720, in 4to.; the large margins of which are filled with critical remarks on the Hebrew text, collations of the ancient versions, and other short annotations; which stand an illustrious monument of the learning, judgment, and indefatigable industry of that excellent person: I add also, of his candour and modesty; for there is hardly a proposed emendation, however ingenious and probable, to which he has not added the objections which occurred to him against it. These valuable remains of that great and good man will be of infinite service, whenever that necessary work, a new translation, or a revision of the present translation, of the Holy Scriptures, for the use of our church, shall be undertaken. To his observations I have set his name; and to the remarks of others of my learned friends, I have likewise subjoined in the Notes their names respectively. Among these I must here particularly mention the late learned Dr. Durell, Principal of Hertford College in Oxford, who some years ago communicated to me his manuscript remarks on the Prophets. With his leave I took short memorandums of some of his corrections of the text; and had his permission to make what use I pleased of them.

I am in a more particular manner obliged to my learned friend Dr. Kennicott, for his singular favour in frequently communicating to me his collations while they were collecting, and the printed copy of the book of Isaiah itself as soon as it was finished at the press, for my private use, while the remainder of the volume is in hand and preparing for the public. These I have examined with some attention; and I hope the reader, whose expectations do not exceed the bounds of reason and moderation, will be satisfied with the assistance and benefit which he will find they have afforded me. But I must beg to have it well understood, that I do by no means pretend to have exhausted these valuable stores: many things may have escaped me, which may strike the [p. l] eye of another observer; many a variation, which appears at first sight very minute and trifling, and manifestly false and absurd, may by some side-light tend to useful discoveries. To apply these materials to all the uses which can possibly be made of them, will require much labour and consideration, much judgment and sagacity, and repeated trials by a variety of examiners, to whose different views they may show themselves in every possible light. Some critics may be very forward and hasty in pronouncing their judgments; but it must be left to time and experience to establish their real and full value.

In regard to the character and authority of the several manuscripts which have been collated, and which in the Notes are referred to, we must wait for the information which Dr. Kennicott will give us in his General Dissertation. The knowledge of Hebrew manuscripts is almost a new subject in literature: little progress has been made in it hitherto; and no wonder, when they were esteemed uniformly consonant one with another, and with the printed text; consequently useless, and not worth the trouble of examining. Dr. Kennicott, and his worthy and very able assistant Mr. Bruns, who have been more conversant with Hebrew manuscripts, and have had more experience, and more insight, into the subject, than any, or than all, of the learned of the present age, will give us the best information concerning it that can yet be obtained. It must be left to the attentive observation and mature experience of the learned of succeeding times, to perfect a part of knowledge which, like others, must in its nature wait the result of diligent inquiry, and be carried on by gradual improvements.

In referring to Dr. Kennicott's Variations, I have given the whole number of manuscripts, or editions which concur in any particular reading: what proportion that number bears to the whole number of collated copies which contain the book of Isaiah, may, I hope, soon be seen by comparing it with the catalogue of copies collated, which will be given at the end of that book. But that the reader in the meantime, till he can have more full information concerning the value and authority of the several manuscripts, may at least have some mark to direct his judgment in estimating the credit due to the manuscripts quoted, I have, from the kind communication of Dr. Kennicott concerning the dates of the manuscripts, whether certain or probable, given some general intimation of their value in this respect: for though antiquity is no certain mark of the goodness of a manuscript, yet it is one circumstance that gives it no small weight and authority, especially in this case; the Hebrew manuscripts being in general more pure and valuable in proportion to their antiquity; those of later date having been more studiously rendered conformable to the Masoretic [p. li] standard.<sup>58</sup> Among the manuscripts which have been collated, I consider those of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, as ancient, comparatively and in respect of the rest. Therefore, in quoting a number of manuscripts, where the variation is of some importance, I have added, that so many of that number are ancient, that is, are of the centuries above mentioned.

I have ventured to call this a New Translation, though much of our vulgar translation is retained in it. As the style of that translation is not only excellent in itself, but has taken possession of our ear, and of our taste, to have endeavoured to vary from it with no other design than that of giving something new instead of it, would have been to disgust the reader, and to represent the sense of the Prophet in a more unfavourable manner; besides that it is impossible for a verbal translator to follow an approved verbal translation which has gone before him, without frequently treading in the very footsteps of it. The most obvious, the properest, and perhaps the only terms which the language affords, are already occupied; and without going out of his way to find worse, he cannot avoid them. Every translator has taken this liberty with his predecessors: it is no more than the laws of translation admit, nor indeed than the necessity of the case requires. And as to the turn and modification of the sentences, the translator, in this particular province of translation, is, I think, as much confined to the author's manner as to his words: so that too great liberties taken in varying either the expression or the composition, in order to give a new air to the whole, will be apt to have a very bad effect. For these reasons, whenever it shall be thought proper to set forth the Holy Scriptures, for the public use of our church, to better advantage than as they appear in the present English translation, the expediency of which grows every day more and more evident, a revision or correction of that translation may perhaps be more advisable, than to attempt an

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<sup>58</sup> See Kennicott, State of the Printed Heb. Text, Dissert, ii. p. 470.

entirely new one: For as to the style and language, it admits but of little improvement; but in respect of the sense and the accuracy of interpretation, the improvements of which it is capable are great and numberless.

The Translation here offered will perhaps be found to be in general as close to the text, and as literal, as our English version. When it departs at all from the Hebrew text on account of some correction which I suppose to be requisite, I give notice to the reader of such correction, and offer my reasons for it: if those reasons should sometimes appear insufficient, and the translation to be merely conjectural, I desire the reader to consider the exigence of the case, and to judge, whether it is not better, in a [p. lii] very obscure and doubtful passage, to give something probable by way of supplement to the author's sense, apparently defective, than either to leave a blank in the translation, or to give a merely verbal rendering, which would be altogether unintelligible. I believe that every translator whatever of any part of the Old Testament, has taken sometimes the liberty, or rather has found himself under the necessity, of offering such renderings as, if examined, will be found to be merely conjectural. But I desire to be understood as offering this apology in behalf only of translations designed for the private use of the reader; not as extended, without proper limitations, to those that are made for the public service of the church.

The design of the Notes is to give the reasons and authorities on which the Translation is founded; to rectify or to explain the words of the text; to illustrate the ideas, the images, and the allusions of the Prophet, by referring to objects, notions, and customs, which peculiarly belong to his age and his country; and to point out the beauties of particular passages. I sometimes, indeed, endeavour to open the design of the prophecy, to show the connexion between its parts, and to point out the event which it foretells; but in general I must entreat the reader to be satisfied with my endeavours faithfully to express the literal sense, which is all that I undertake. If he would go deeper into the mystical sense, into theological, historical, and chronological disquisitions, there are many learned expositors to whom he may have recourse, who have written full commentaries on this Prophet; to which, title the present work has no pretensions. The sublime and spiritual uses to be made of this peculiarly evangelical Prophet, must, as I have observed, be all founded on a faithful representation of the literal sense which his words contain. This is what I have endeavoured closely and exactly to express. And within the limits of this humble, but necessary province, my endeavours must be confined. To proceed further, or even to execute this in the manner I could wish, were it within my abilities, yet would hardly be consistent with my present engagements; which oblige me to offer rather prematurely to the public, what further time, with more leisure, might perhaps enable me to render more worthy of their attention.

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With the help of Brian J. ZAWISKI (North American College, Roma)

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