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THE FORMS OF HEBREW POETRY.

I. Introductory.

Failure to perceive what are the formal elements in Hebrew poetry has, in the past, frequently led to misinterpretation of Scripture. The existence of formal elements is now generally recognised; but there are still great differences of opinion as to the exact nature of some of these, and as to their relation to one another; and large questions or numerous important details of both the lower and higher criticism and of the interpretation of the Old Testament are involved in these differences. An examination of the forms of Hebrew poetry thus becomes a valuable, if not indeed a necessary, means to the correct appreciation of its substance, to an understanding of the thought expressed in it, in so far as that may still be understood, and, where that is at present no longer possible, to a perception of the cause and extent of the uncertainty and obscurity.

More especially do the questions relating to the two most important forms of Hebrew poetry—parallelism and metre—require to be studied in close connexion with one another, and indeed in closer connexion than has been customary of late. I deliberately speak at this point of the *question* of parallelism and metre; for, on the one hand, it has been and may be contended that parallelism, though it is a characteristic of much, is never a form of any, Hebrew poetry, and, on the other hand, it has been and still is sometimes contended that metre is not a form of Hebrew poetry, for the simple reason that in Hebrew poetry it did not exist. Over a question of nomenclature, whether parallelism should be termed a form or a characteristic, no words need be wasted; the really important question to be considered later on is how far the phenomena

covered by the term parallelism can be classified, and how far they conform to laws that can be defined. A third form of some Hebrew poetry is the strophe. This is of less, but still of considerable importance, and will be briefly considered in its place; but rhyme, which is not a regular feature of Hebrew poetry, and poetical diction need not for the purposes of the present survey be more than quite briefly and incidentally referred to.

The first systematic treatment of any of the formal elements of Hebrew poetry came from Oxford. There have been few more distinguished occupants of the chair of Poetry in that university than Robert Lowth, afterwards Bishop of London, and few lectures delivered from that chair have been more influential than his *De Sacra Poesi Hebraeorum Praelectiones Academicae*. These lectures were published in the same year (1753) as another famous volume, to wit, Jean Astruc's *Conjectures sur les mémoires originaux dont il paroît que Moyse s'est servi pour composer le livre de la Genèse*. It is as true of Astruc as of Lowth that "in theology he clung to the traditional orthodoxy"; [1] yet Astruc was the first to apply a stylistic argument in a systematic attempt to recover the original sources of a portion of the Pentateuch, and Lowth, by his entire treatment of his subject, marks the transition from the then prevailing dogmatic treatment of the Old Testament to that treatment of it which rests on the recognition that, whatever else it may be, and however sharply distinguished in its worth or by its peculiarities from other literatures, the Old Testament is primarily literature, demanding the same critical examination and appreciation, alike of form and substance, as other literature. Owing to certain actual characteristics of what survives of ancient Hebrew literature, documentary analysis has necessarily played an important part in modern

[1] T. K. Cheyne, *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, p. 3.

criticism of the Old Testament; and if, narrowing unduly the conception of Old Testament criticism, we think in connexion with it mainly or exclusively of documentary analysis and questions of origin, Astruc may seem a more important founder of Modern Criticism than Lowth. But in reality the general implications of Lowth's discussion of Hebrew poetry, apart from certain special conclusions reached by him to which we shall pass immediately, make his lectures of wider significance than even Astruc's acute conjectures; and we may fairly claim that, through Lowth and his two principal works, both of which were translated into German, the *Lectures* by Michaelis, the *Isaiah* by Koppe, Oxford, in the middle of the eighteenth century contributed to the critical study of the Old Testament, and the appreciation of Hebrew literature in a degree that was scarcely equalled till the nineteenth century was drawing to its close.

It is a relatively small part of Lowth's lectures that is devoted to those forms or formal characteristics of Hebrew poetry with which we are here concerned: of the thirty-four lectures one only, the nineteenth, is primarily devoted to that form with which Lowth's name will always be associated, though the subject of parallelism was already raised in the third lecture. The maturer and fuller discussion of this and kindred topics was first published in 1778 as a preliminary dissertation to the translation of Isaiah. Briefly summed up, Lowth's contribution to the subject was twofold: he for the first time clearly analysed and expounded the parallelistic structure of Hebrew poetry, and he drew attention to the fact that the extent of poetry in the Old Testament was much larger than had generally been recognised, that in particular it included the greater part of the prophetic writings.

The existence and general characteristics of parallelism as claimed by Lowth have never been questioned since,

nor the importance for interpretation of recognising these; nor can it be questioned, once the nature of parallelism is admitted, that parallelism occurs in the Prophets as well as in the Psalms, and in many passages of the Prophets no less regularly than in many Psalms. If, then, *on the ground of parallelism*, the Psalms are judged to be poetry, the prophetic writings (in the main) must also be regarded as poetry; and, if, on the ground of parallelism, a translation of the Psalms is marked, as is the Revised Version, by line divisions corresponding to the parallel members of the original, a translation of the Prophets should also be so marked; and by failing so to mark the prophetic poetry, and thereby introducing an unreal distinction between the form of the Psalms and the form of the prophetic writings the Revised Version conceals from those who use it one of the most important and one of the surest conclusions which were reached by Lowth in his discussion of Hebrew poetry.

Whether after all parallelism is itself a true *differentia* between prose and poetry in Hebrew, may be and will be discussed; but it will be useful before proceeding to a closer examination either of parallelism or of other alleged *differentiæ* between prose and poetry, to recall the earlier scattered and unsystematic attempts to describe the formal elements of Hebrew poetry.

It has always been recognised that between mediaeval Jewish poetry and the poetry of the Old Testament there is, so far as form goes, no connexion; nor, indeed, any similarity beyond the use, especially by the earliest of these mediaeval poets such as Jose ibn Jose and Kaliri, of acrostic or alphabetic schemes such as occur in Lamentations i.–iv. and some other poems in the Old Testament. It was more especially from the tenth century A.D. onwards, and in the West, and more particularly in Spain, that,

under the influence of Arabic culture, and in some measure too, perhaps, of Syriac poetry, a type of Hebrew poetry flourished which was governed by metre and rhyme;[1] and the metre of this poetry was quantitative. The same period was also, and again owing to the influence of Arabic culture, an age of Jewish grammarians and philologists. These recognised the difference between the old poetry and the new, but contributed little to the knowledge of the form of the older poetry beyond a tolerably general acquiescence in the negative judgment that that older poetry was not metrical. In any case, no living tradition of the laws of the older Hebrew poetry, the poetry of the Old Testament, survived in the days of the poets Chasdai (915–970, A.D.), Solomon ibn Gabirol (1021–1058, or 1070), Judah hal-Levi (born 1085); of the grammarians and philologists, of whom some were poets also, Dunash ibn Labrat (*c.* 920–990), Menahem ibn Saruk (*c.* 910–970), Abu-l Walid, Ibn Ezra (eleventh century), and the Ḳimḥis (twelfth century). The older poetry had long been a lost art. Whatever these mediaeval scholars say of it has, therefore, merely the value of an antiquarian theory; and however interesting their theories may be, they need not detain us longer now.

But there exist a few far earlier Jewish statements on the formal elements of the poetry of the Old Testament which run back, not indeed to the time of even the latest poems within the Old Testament, but to a time when, as will be pointed out in detail later on, poetry of the ancient Hebrew type was still being written. Statements from such a period unquestionably have a higher degree of interest than those of the mediaeval Jewish scholars. Whether

[1] The introduction of rhyme into Hebrew poetry is attributed to Jannai; rhyme was also employed by Kaliri. Both Jannai (probably) and Kaliri were Palestinians, and both lived in or before the ninth century A.D.: see Graetz, *Gesch. des Judenthums*, v. 158, 159.

as a matter of fact they point to any discernment of the real principles of that poetry, and whether they do not betray at once misconceptions and lack of perception is another question. At all events, it is important to observe that while the authors of these statements were Jews, the readers with a view to whom they wrote were Greeks. So far as I am aware, there is no discussion of metre, or parallelism, or in general of the formal elements of Hebrew poetry, in the Rabbinical writings, using that term for the writings of the Jews in Hebrew or Aramaic between the beginning of the Christian era and the gradual permeation of Jewish by Arabic scholarship from the seventh or eighth century A.D. onwards. We owe the earliest statements on Hebrew poetical forms to two Jews who wrote in Greek —to Philo and to Josephus.

Philo's evidence is slight and indirect as to the poetry of the Old Testament. In the *De vita Mosis* i. 5 he asserts that Moses was taught by the Egyptians "the whole theory of rhythm, harmony and metre" (*τὴν τε ῥυθμικὴν καὶ ἁρμονικὴν καὶ μετρικὴν θεωρίαν*); but he nowhere states that the poems attributed to Moses in the Pentateuch are metrical. Of Jewish poetry of a later age he speaks more definitely, if the *De vita contemplativa* is correctly attributed to him, and if the sect therein described was a Jewish sect. It is asserted in this tract (cc. x. xi.) that the therapeutæ sang hymns "in many metres and tunes," and in particular in iambic trimeters.

The three statements of Josephus on the subject are much more specific and definite. Of Moses he says, in reference to Exodus xv. 2 ff., that "he composed a song to God . . . in hexameter verse" (*ἐν ἑξαμέτρῳ τόνῳ*);[1] and again, in reference to Deut. xxxii., that Moses read to the Israelites "a hexametrical poem" (*ποίησιν ἑξάμετρον*),

[1] *Ant.* ii. 16. 4.

and left it to them in the holy book.[1] Of David he says that "he composed songs and hymns in various metres (*μέτρου ποικίλου*), making some trimetrical, others pentametrical."[2]

These exhaust the direct testimony of Jews, who lived while poetry similar to that in the O.T. was still being written, to the metrical character of that poetry. It is possible that we have an indirect testimony to more specific Jewish statements or theories in certain of the patristic writers. It will be sufficient here to refer to what is said by Origen and Eusebius and Jerome[3]; all these scholars belong to a period before the new style of poetry adopted by the mediaeval Jews had begun to be written, though perhaps none of them belong quite to the age when the older poetry was still practised as a living art.

Origen's reference to the subject of Hebrew metre is to be found in a scholion on Psalm cxviii. 1 (LXX.). He agrees with Josephus that Deuteronomy xxxii. is hexametrical, and that some of the Psalms are trimetrical; but as an alternative metre used in the Psalter, he gives not the pentameter, as Josephus had done, but the tetrameter. At the same time he clearly recognises that Hebrew verses are different in character (*ἕτεροι*) from Greek verses. Ley finds two further statements in Origen's somewhat obscure words; (1) that the metrical unit (*den vollen Vers*) in Hebrew consists of two stichoi, not of a single stichos; (2) that Hebrew metre was measured by the number of accented syllables.[4]

Eusebius refers to metre in Hebrew poems as follows:

[1] *Ant.* iv. 8. 44. [2] *Ant.* vii. 12. 3.

[3] The passages from these and other patristic writers have been brought together and discussed by J. Döller (*Rhythmus, Metrik und Strophik in der bibl.-hebr. Poesie*, Paderborn, 1899; see pp. 18–35).

[4] The scholion in question was published by Cardinal Pitra in *Analecta Sacra*, ii. 341, and reprinted thence by Preuschen in the *Zeitschrift für die AT. Wissenschaft*, 1891, pp. 316, 317; in the same *Zeitschrift* for 1892 (pp. 212–217) Julius Ley translated and commented on the Scholion.

"There would also be found among them poems in metre, like the great song of Moses and David's 118th Psalm, composed in what the Greeks call heroic metre. At least it is said (*φασὶ γοῦν*) that these are hexameters, consisting of sixteen syllables; also their other compositions in verse are said to consist of trimeter and tetrameter lines according to the sound of their own language."[1] The reference to Deuteronomy xxxii. and Psalm cxviii. and the specific metres mentioned are as in Origen; but whether or not Origen suspected or asserted measurement by accented syllables, Eusebius clearly refers to a measurement by syllables, and thereby produces the impression that the Hebrew hexameter was of the same nature as the Greek; whereas Origen distinctly asserts that Hebrew metres are as compared with the Greek *ἕτεροι*. At the same time, the final words in Eusebius have something of the character of a saving clause.

Scattered over Jerome's writings are a larger number of specific statements, which may be summarised as follows:

1. Job iii. 2–xl. 6 consists of hexameters; but the verses are varied and irregular.[2]

2. Job, Proverbs, the songs in Deuteronomy (i.e. Deut.

The text being still none too well known or accessible, it may be well to reproduce it here. The words commented on are *Μακάριοι οἱ ἄμωμοι ἐν ὁδῷ, οἱ πορευόμενοι ἐν νόμῳ κυρίου*, and the scholion runs as follows:—*οὕτω γε στίχος ἐστίν· οἱ γὰρ παρ' Ἑβραίοις στίχοι, ὡς ἔλεγέ τις, ἑμμετροί εἰσιν· ἐν ἑξαμέτρῳ μὲν ἡ ἐν τῷ Δευτερονομίῳ ᾠδή· ἐν τριμέτρῳ δὲ καὶ τετραμέτρῳ οἱ ψαλμοί. οἱ στίχοι οὖν, οἱ παρ' Ἑβραίοις, ἕτεροί εἰσιν παρὰ τοὺς παρ' ἡμῖν. Ἐὰν θέλωμεν ἐνθάδε τηρῆσαι, τοὺς στίχους ποιοῦμεν. "Μακάριοι οἱ ἄμωμοι ἐν ὁδῷ, οἱ πορευόμενοι ἐν νόμῳ κυρίου." Καὶ οὕτως ἀρχόμεθα δευτέρου τοῦ ἕξης· ἱστέον τοίνυν ὅτι οἱ Ἕλληνες οἱ ἑρμηνεύσαντες πεποιήκασι τὸν παρ' Ἑβραίοις στίχον ἐν τούτοις δύο (ὡς [ὁ] τοῦτο ἀντίγραφον γράψας οἰονεὶ πεποίηκε τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ στίχου μετ' ἐκθέσεως· τὸν δὲ δοκοῦντες δεύτερον, μὴ ὄντα δεύτερον, ἀλλὰ λεῖμμα τοῦ προτέρου μετ' αἰσθήσεως· καὶ τοῦτο πεποίηκεν ἐπὶ ὅλου τοῦ ῥητοῦ.*

[1] *Praep. Ev.* xi. 5. 5: the translation given above is Gifford's.

[2] Hexametri versus sunt, dactylo spondæoque currentes; et propter linguae idioma crebro recipientes et alios pedes non earundem syllabarum, sed eorumdem temporum. Interdum quoque rhythmus ipse dulcis et tinnulus fertur numeris lege metri solutis: *Praef. in Job* (Migne, *Patr. Lat.* xxviii. 1082).

xxxii.) and Isaiah "Deuteronomii et Isaiae Cantico" are all written in hexameters or pentameters.[1] Yet elsewhere[2] "Deuteronomii Canticum" is said to be written in iambic tetrameters.

3. Psalms cx. and cxi. are iambic trimeters.[2]

4. Psalms cxviii., cxliv. and Proverbs xxxi. 10–31 are iambic tetrameters.[2]

5. Lamentations i. ii. are in "quasi sapphico metro"; but Lamentations iii. in trimeters.[2]

6. The prophets, though the text of them is marked off by commas and colons, are *not* metrical.[3]

But these statements occur in such connexions, or are accompanied by such qualifying phrases, as to indicate that Jerome did not intend them to be taken too strictly, or as exactly assimilating Hebrew poetry in respect of its measurements to classical poetry. Thus, the hexameters in Job are said to admit other feet in addition to dactyls and spondees; the "sapphic metre" of Lamentations i. ii. iv. is qualified as "quasi"; and in forestalling incredulity, such as the Emperor Julian is said to have expressed, as to the existence of metre in Hebrew literature, Jerome speaks of the Hebrew poems as being "*in morem* nostri Flacci"—after the manner of Horace.

There is one further important observation to be made with regard to Jerome: the authorities whom he cites for his statements are not his own Hebrew teacher, but Philo, Josephus, Origen and Eusebius,[4] to the first two of whom Origen in turn may refer indefinitely in his phrase ἔλεγε τις.

[1] Quae omnia hexametris et pentametris versibus . . . apud suos composita decurrunt: *Praef. in Chron. Eusebii* (Migne xxvii. 36).

[2] Ep. xxx. (ad Paulam): Migne xxii. 442.

[3] *Praef. in Isaiam:* Migne xxviii. 771.

[4] "If it seem incredible to any one that the Hebrews really have metres, and that, whether we consider the Psalter, or the Lamentations of Jeremiah, or almost all the songs of Scripture, they bear a resemblance to our Flaccus, and the Greek Pindar, and Alcaeus, and Sappho, let him read

From this we may with some probability conclude (1) that Jerome's views of the nature of Hebrew poetry do not represent those of Jewish scholarship of his day; but (2) that they are a reproduction of the statements of Josephus, or deductions made by Jerome himself from or in the spirit of Josephus' statements. On whom Eusebius relied for the statement (*φασὶ γοῦν*) that the Hebrew hexameter contained sixteen syllables we cannot say, but his informants were scarcely Jewish contemporaries of his.

If, then, any theory or tradition of the metrical character of the old Hebrew poetry formulated by those who actually wrote it still survives, our primary source for it is Josephus. But does what Josephus says depend on a previously existing theory or tradition? In all probability it does not. Josephus, in commending Hebrew poetry to his Greek readers, followed his usual practice of describing things Jewish in terms that would make a good impression on them. And so he calls Deuteronomy xxxii. hexametrical—a term which some modern scholars would still apply to it—but he gives his readers no clue to, even if he himself had any clear idea of, the difference between these hexameters and those of Greek and Latin poetry. Neither he nor any of the Christian scholars who follow him define the nature of the feet or other units of which six, five, four and three compose

Philo, Josephus, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, and with the aid of their testimony he will find that I speak the truth" : Preface to the translation of Job (Fremantle's translation, p. 491) : Migne xxviii. 1082. This was written about 392 A.D.; but Jerome had expressed himself to much the same effect ten years earlier in a passage, partly cited already in the original, in his Preface to the Chronicle of Eusebius : "What can be more musical than the Psalter? Like the writings of our own Flaccus and the Grecian Pindar it now trips along in iambics, now flows in sonorous alcaics, now swells into sapphics, now marches in half-foot metre. What can be more lovely than the strains of Deuteronomy and Isaiah? What more grave than Solomon's words? What more finished than Job? All these, as Josephus and Origen tell us, were composed in hexameters and pentameters, and so circulated amongst their own people."—Fremantle, p. 484 : Migne xxvii. 36.

the hexameters, pentameters, tetrameters and trimeters respectively of which they speak; and, indeed, so loosely are these terms used that Jerome describes Deuteronomy xxxii. on one occasion as hexameter, and on another as tetrameter. Some modern scholars continue to use these same terms, but define more or less precisely what they mean by them; and the Hebrew hexameters of the modern metrist have far less resemblance to a Greek or Latin hexameter than any of the numerous English hexameters with which English poets have at intervals experimented from the age of Elizabeth down to our own times. There is no reason for believing that Josephus, Origen, Jerome really detected, or even thought that they detected any greater similarity; Jerome's "quasi," Origen's ἕτεροι, cover, as a matter of fact, a very high degree of difference.

Early Jewish observations on Hebrew metre are neither numerous nor valuable; but observations on the characteristic parallelism of Hebrew poetry seem to have been entirely non-existent earlier than the times of the mediaeval Jewish grammarians. Josephus was stimulated to discover or imagine metre in Hebrew poetry by his desire to commend it to the Greeks; he had no such stimulus to draw attention to parallelism, for that corresponded to nothing in the poetry of Greece or Rome. And another cause worked against the recognition by the Jewish Rabbis of the part played by parallelism in Hebrew poetry. But before defining this cause it will be convenient to record the extent to which Lowth's analysis of parallelism was anticipated by the mediaeval Jews.

L. Dukes[1] drew attention to the fact that D. Ḳimḥi in his comment on Isaiah xix. 8 calls parallelism כפול ענין, במלות שנות and that Levi ben Gershon had called it an elegance (דרך צחות) and also noted the fact that the same

[1] *Zur Kenntnis der neuhebr. religiösen Poesie* (1842), p. 125.

style was customary with the Arabs. Schmiedl, in 1861,[1] drew attention to the still earlier use by Ibn Ezra of these same expressions as well as of some others with reference to parallelism. So far as I am aware, similar observations in writers earlier than Ibn Ezra have never yet been discovered.[2] Ibn Ezra's observations may be summarised as follows : it is an elegance of style, and in particular a characteristic of the *prophetic* style, to repeat the same thought by means of synonymous words.[3] Whether in regarding parallelism as peculiarly characteristic of the prophetic style (דרך הנבואות) Ibn Ezra anticipated Lowth's observation that Old Testament prophetic literature is, in the main, poetical in form, is doubtful : for the examples of parallelism given by Ibn Ezra are drawn, not from the prophetical books, but from the prophetic poems attributed to Jacob, Moses, and Balaam.

Far more important is Ibn Ezra's insistence that parallelism is a *form* of poetry, and that when a writer repeats his thought by means of synonymous terms he is not adding to the substance, but merely perfecting the form of what he had to say. This represents a reaction against a mode of exegesis that treated such repetition as an addition to the substance.

It was this mode of exegesis, doubtless, that militated against the discernment of the real nature of parallelism by earlier Jewish scholars. How could interpreters who attributed importance to every letter and every external peculiarity of the sacred text admit that it was customary in a large part of Scripture to express the same thought twice over by means of synonymous terms ? If the fact

[1] In *Monatschrift für Gesch. u. Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, p. 157.

[2] Cardinal Pitra was of opinion that Origen's scholion given above recognised parallelism, but this is doubtful.

[3] Ibn Ezra cites as examples Genesis xlix. 6a, b, Deuteronomy xxxii. 7c, d, Numbers xxiii. 8.

that ויצר in Genesis ii. is written with two yods, though it might have been written with one, was supposed to express the thought not only that God "formed" man, but that He formed him with two "formations," to wit, the evil inclination and the good inclination, how could two parallel lines convey no fuller meaning than one such line standing by itself? The influence of this exegetical principle lingers still; at an earlier time it was far-reaching. For example, in Lamech's song (Gen. iv. 23), "the man" and "the young man" are treated not as being, what in reality they are, synonymous terms with the same reference, but as referring to two different individuals, one old and one young, whom Lamech had slain. Again, the reduplication of the same thought is not recognised in—

> Therefore, the wicked shall not stand in the judgment,
> Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous (Ps. i. 1),

Rabbi Nehemiah, a Rabbi of the second century A.D., said "'the wicked' mean the generation of the Flood, and the sinners mean the men of Sodom." [1] If no other difference of reference could be postulated between two parallel terms or lines or a statement that is otherwise repeated, it was customary to refer one to the present world and the other to the world to come.[2] "Day and night" is a sufficiently obvious expression for "continually"; and a poet naturally distributed the two terms between two parallel lines without any intention that what he speaks of in the one line should be understood to be confined to the day, and what he speaks of in the second line to the night; thus, when a Psalmist says (xcii. 1),

> It is a good thing . . .
> To declare thy kindness in the morning
> And thy faithfulness in the night,

[1] *Sanhedrin*, x. 3.

[2] See e.g. *Sanhedrin* x. 3 for several examples of second-century exegesis of this kind.

what he means is that it is good to declare both the kindness and the faithfulness of God at all times. Yet even some modern commentators still continue to squeeze substance out of form in Psalm xlii. 9 (8), by making—

> By day will Yahweh command his kindness,
> And in the night his song shall be with me—

mean more than that the Psalmist is the constant recipient of God's goodness; and herein these modern commentators follow, in misconceiving the influence of form, the early Jewish interpreter Resh Lakish (third century A.D.) who explained the verse thus: "Every one who studieth in the Law in this world which is like the night, the Holy One, blessed be He, stretches over him the thread of grace for the future world which is like the day."[1]

To sum up this part of our discussion: Jewish Rabbis in the second century A.D. misunderstood the parallelism that is characteristic of most of the poetry of the Old Testament, and, with the exception of Philo and Josephus, no Jews appear to have given any attention to any metrical laws that may also have governed that poetry; and what Josephus says on that subject is expressed in Greek terms, was written as part of his apology for all things Jewish, and appears at most to imply that Josephus had some perception of difference of rhythm in different Hebrew poems. The account he gives wears a rather more learned air, but is in reality as vague and insufficient as the account given to Dr. Dalman by some of those who supplied him with his specimens of modern Palestinian poetry.[2]

And yet, in the second century A.D. Hebrew poetry

[1] Talmud B. *Chagigah* 12b; ed. Streane, p. 64.

[2] "In modern Arabic folk-poetry the purely rhythmical has begun to drive out the quantitative principle so that a distinction may be drawn between quantitative and rhythmical poems." . . .

"I have never been able to discover how the composers of this folk-poetry go to work in the composition of these poems. To the question whether there was nothing at all in his lines that the poet numbered so as

of the type found in the Old Testament had not yet become a long obsolete type, as it had become when the new art of rhymed, metrical poems without parallelism was brought to perfection in the tenth to the twelfth centuries; contemporaries of Josephus were still employing parallelism with as much regularity and skilful variation as the best writers of the Old Testament period; and in all probability, in many cases at least, rhythmical regularity of the same kind, and as great, accompanied these parallelistic compositions, as is found in any of the Biblical poems. Later than the second century A.D. neither parallelism nor, perhaps, the same kind of rhythm can clearly or even probably be traced; and certainly, when the new Hebrew poetry was created it dispensed with parallelism—with parallelism, at all events, as any constant feature of the poems.

Without prejudging the question whether parallelism in Hebrew necessarily constitutes or implies poetical form, it will be convenient at this point to take a survey of those parts of ancient Jewish literature outside the Old Testament in which either parallelism is conspicuous, or other features are prominent which distinguish those parts of the Old Testament which are commonly regarded as poetry. Most of this literature, especially the latest of it, survives only in translation; and with regard to much of it it is disputed whether it actually runs back to a Hebrew original at all. The exact date, again, of much of it is uncertain, and I shall, therefore, attempt no rigid chronological order of mention; in general the period in question is from the third or second century B.C. to the second century A.D.

to secure regularity (*Gleichmass*), I received from several different quarters the reply, that nothing at all was numbered, that for the folk-poetry there was only one standard (*Mass*)—absolute caprice. No doubt it may be supposed that the individual poet instinctively imitates the form of some poem that is known to him."—G. H. Dalman, *Palästinischer Diwan*, pp. xxii., xxiii.

Of the apocryphal books it was clear even before the discovery of the Hebrew original that Ecclesiasticus (c. 180 B.C.) must have possessed all the characteristics of ancient Hebrew poetry; even the alphabetic structure of li. 13-30 had been inferred by Bickell. But Ecclesiasticus may well be older than some of the latest poems in the Old Testament.

The first book of Maccabees (c. 90 B.C.) contains two poems eulogising Judas (iii. 3–9) and Simeon (xiv. 6–15) respectively. It also refers (ix. 20, 21) to an elegy on Judas, and cites the opening words—

> How hath the valiant man fallen
> That delivered Israel—

from which it is easy enough to discover the opening of a poem constructed after the same form as elegies in the Old Testament—

> איך נפל הגבור | מושיע ישראל

In ix. 41 a distich of some poem seems to be cited.

In Judith xvi. 2–17 we find a long poem of praise and thanksgiving; in part, it is a close imitation of earlier poems in the Old Testament; but its parallelistic, as was also presumably its rhythmical, regularity is by no means least where it is most independent, as, for example, in the lines—

> She anointed her face with ointment,
> And bound her hair in a tire;
> And she took a linen garment to deceive him,
> Her sandal ravished his eye,
> And her beauty took his soul prisoner,
> The scimitar passed through his neck.
> The Persians quaked at her daring,
> And the Medes at her boldness were daunted.

Not only the Apocrypha, but the Pseudepigrapha, contain much, the New Testament, perhaps, a little, that was originally written in Hebrew and was poetical in form. Among these specimens of late Hebrew poetry we may

certainly include the eighteen "Psalms of Solomon" (c. 50 B.C.) and some of the most ancient elements of the Jewish liturgy, such as the "Eighteen Blessings," and the blessings accompanying the recitation of the Sh^{e}ma$^{'}$; possibly also the Magnificat and other New Testament Canticles. Several of the apocalypses also include poems; in those which he has edited more recently, Dr. Charles has distinguished the poetry from the prose by printing the former in regular lines. Without admitting that *all* parts thus distinguished by him or others possessed poetical form in the original, I think it may be safely said that such apocalypses as the Twelve Patriarchs, the Book of Jubilees, the Apocalypse of Baruch and IV. Esdras do each contain *some* such passages.

Now of these books or passages which show the same characteristics as the poetry of the Old Testament, some at least were written by contemporaries of Josephus, and also of those who after 70 A.D. founded that Jewish school at Jamnia of whose methods of exegesis (in the second century A.D.) examples have been given above. At the very time that the Rabbis were examining scripture with eyes blind to parallelism, other Jews were still writing poems that made all the old use of parallelism. This may be proved by reference to the Apocalypse of Baruch: for with regard to this book I believe that it may be safely asserted [1] (1) that it was written in Hebrew, (2) that it was written not earlier than c. 50 A.D., and therefore (3) that its author was in all probability a contemporary, though perhaps an elder contemporary of Josephus and the founders of Jamnia. But this book contains a long passage (xlviii. 1–47) that is among the most regular and sustained examples of parallelism in the whole range of Hebrew literature; a sufficiently large portion of it may be cited here to

[1] Cf. R. H. Charles, *The Apocalypse of Baruch.*

prove this; the translation is in the main that of Dr. Charles; for the line division, which in one place involves an important change of punctuation, I am responsible.

2 O my Lord, Thou summonest the advent of the times, and they stand before Thee;
Thou causest the power of the ages to pass away, and they do not resist Thee:
Thou arrangest the method of the seasons, and they obey Thee.
3 Thou alone knowest the goal of the generations,
And Thou revealest not Thy mysteries to many.
4 Thou makest known the multitude of the fire,
And Thou weighest the lightness of the wind.
5 Thou explorest the limits of the heights,
And Thou scrutinisest the depths of the darkness.
6 Thou carest for the number which pass away that they may be preserved,
And Thou preparest an abode for those that are to be.
7 Thou rememberest the beginning which Thou hast made,
And the destruction that is to be Thou forgettest not.
8 With nods of fear and indignation Thou givest commandment to the flames,
And they change into spirits,[1]
And with a word Thou quickenest that which was not,
And with mighty power Thou holdest that which has not yet come.
9 Thou instructest created things in the understanding of Thee,
And Thou makest wise the spheres so as to minister in their orders.
10 Armies innumerable stand before Thee,
And they minister in their orders quietly at Thy nod.
11 Hear Thy servant,
And give ear to my petition.
12 For in a little time are we born,
And in a little time do we return.
13 But with Thee, hours are as a time (?),
And days as generations.
14 Be not therefore wroth with man; for he is nothing;
And take not account of our works; 15 for what are we?
For lo! by Thy gift do we come into the world,
And we depart not of our own will.
16 For we said not to our parents, "Beget us,"
And we sent not to Sheol, saying, "Receive us."

[1] I suspect corruption in *v.* 8a, b. In the original text "flames" was probably a parallel term to "spirits" (cp. Ps. civ. 4), and not, as in the present text of the versions, that which changes into spirits.

17 What, then, is our strength that we should bear Thy wrath,
Or what are we that we should endure Thy judgment?
18 Protect us in Thy compassions,
And in Thy mercy help us.

The Apocalypse of Esdras (IV. Esdras) was probably written shortly after 100 A.D., and though it contains nothing quite so regular and sustained as the passage just cited from the Apocalypse of Baruch, a considerable number of passages are printed both by Professor Gunkel [1] and Mr. Box [2] as poetry, and, in some (viz. viii. 20–30) at least, with good reason.

Whether much later specimens of ancient Jewish poetry than these exist seems doubtful; but in this connexion two recently recovered documents may be very briefly referred to.

Dr. Charles [3] finds a considerable element of poetry in the fragments of a Zadokite work of which the Hebrew text was first edited (with translation and introduction) by Dr. Schechter [4] in 1910. In the opinion of some this work is considerably later than IV. Esdras, but I believe Dr. Charles is right in concluding that the work was written before 70 A.D. The only other remark I need make now is that, except in quotations from the Old Testament, parallelism is not at all conspicuous; whether, therefore, the passages marked by Dr. Charles as possessing poetical form actually do so, turns on matters which have to be considered later. Happily, in this case the question can be considered, not through translations merely, but with the original text before us.

The Odes of Solomon, of which the Syriac text was first

[1] In E. Kautzsch, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des AT.*, ii. 352–401 (cp. p. 349).
[2] G. H. Box, *The Ezra-Apocalypse.*
[3] *Fragments of a Zadokite work translated . . .* 1912.
[4] In *Documents of Jewish Sectaries*, vol. i.

edited by Dr. Rendel Harris [1] in 1909, were scarcely written before 70 A.D., and may even belong to the second century A.D. and be later than IV. Esdras. The original language of these Odes is still undetermined. But some of them (e.g., v., vi., vii.) are strongly parallelistic in character, though Dr. Harris refrained from distinguishing the parallel members in his translation.

Parallelism can then be shown to have continued into the second century A.D. as a feature in Hebrew poetry, or in Hebrew literature written in a form differing from ordinary prose.

It was long ago pointed out by Lowth that parallelism can be retained almost unimpaired in a translation; easier still, therefore, was it for Jews to reproduce this feature in works written in the first instance in some other language than Hebrew; and to some extent they did so. The book of Wisdom, which rests on no Hebrew original, but was written, as it survives, in Greek, is the best proof of this. It is possible that the author of Wisdom attempted to imitate other features of ancient Hebrew poetry as well as its parallelism in his Greek work; but these are questions that cannot be pursued now.

There is no other considerable book originally written in Greek which employs parallelism throughout; but it has been held with differing degrees of conviction and consensus of opinion that Tobit's prayer (Tob. xiii.), the Prayer of Manasses, the Song of the Three Holy Children, and the latter part of Baruch were written in Greek, or at least, not in Hebrew; and a Hebrew original for the Odes of Solomon was postulated neither by their first editor, nor by many who have followed him, though more recently Dr. Abbott [2]

[1] *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon published from the Syriac Version*, 1909 (ed. 2, 1911).

[2] E. A. Abbott, *Light on the Gospel from an Ancient Poet.*

has adduced some evidence which he thinks points to such an original.

The question of the original language of each of these works might, perhaps, with advantage, be reconsidered in connexion with the general question of the extent to which parallelism was adopted in Jewish writings not written in Hebrew. We have on the one hand the clear example of the use of parallelism in Wisdom, and on the other the exceedingly slight use of parallelism, for example, in the Sibylline oracles; and we may recall again in this connexion the avoidance of parallelism in mediaeval Hebrew poetry. These avoidances or absences of parallelism are certainly worthy of attention in view of the ease with which this feature of Hebrew poetry could have been reproduced in Greek works, and even combined, if necessary, with the use of Greek metres like the hexameters of the Sibylline oracles. Was it merely due to the fact that the one was writing in Hebrew and the other in Greek, that the author of the Apocalypse of Baruch in his loftier passages employs the form of ancient Hebrew poetry, whereas his contemporary, St. Paul, even in such a passage as 1 Corinthians xiii., avoids it? Or may we detect here the influences of different schools or literary traditions?

G. BUCHANAN GRAY.

THE ROOTS OF ST. PAUL'S DOCTRINE OF SIN.

THERE are some eight sources from which it must be held that St. Paul drew his teachings on the subject before us. First and second, there are two Jewish or Old Testament dogmas; Death is caused by sin—Crucifixion is a death which implies a peculiar curse. Third, fourth, fifth and sixth, we have to look to St. Paul's personal experiences—of helplessness in sin; of sudden miraculous conversion;