THE TEN LUCAN HYMNS OF THE NATIVITY IN THEIR ORIGINAL LANGUAGE.

PROFESSOR C. C. TORREY of Yale has recently produced good evidence to shew that St Luke made use of material couched in Palestinian Aramaic in the earliest chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.[1] I propose now to attempt to shew good reason for believing that in considerable sections at least of the Nativity chapters of his Gospel St Luke made use of material in the Hebrew and not in the Aramaic language.

In the *International Commentary on St Luke's Gospel* (Plummer) p. 7, in the section on the first two chapters, we find the following somewhat remarkable statement, that 'the form of the narrative is strongly *Hebraistic*, so much so that one may be confident that he [St Luke] is translating from an *Aramaic* [*sic*] document'.[2] It is hardly necessary to put in a *caveat* to the effect that Hebrew and Aramaic are two perfectly distinct, even if cognate, languages, and that, though they have much in common, they frequently differ in idiom as well as in vocabulary.

It should be emphasized that traces of *Aramaic* idiom are desirable and necessary before one can be quite confident that one is dealing with a translation from *Aramaic*, and that likewise *Hebraistic* peculiarities of diction in a document may possibly point, not to an Aramaic, but to a *Hebrew* original.

It must be granted, however, that it is not always easy to tell, in a good Greek translation, whether the original was in Hebrew or in Aramaic, as the phraseology of these two languages, which would most naturally be preserved in a translation, is very frequently common to both of them.

There are nevertheless many more distinctively Aramaic usages in the New Testament than have as yet been adequately and properly recognized; and, on the other hand, there are certain neglected tests for Hebrew as distinct from Aramaic originals, which, in some cases, produce interesting and, I venture to hope, convincing results. The application of such tests as these latter I shall proceed to demonstrate in the case of Luke i and ii.

[1] The Composition and Date of Acts (*Harvard Theological Studies*).

[2] This might be thought to be a slip, but it was still unaltered in the reprint of the 4th edition 1905.

Let us first examine the *Nunc Dimittis* (Lc. ii 29–32). It has always been recognized that these words, spoken by the aged Simeon, were of the nature of a poem. It is also familiar to most students that portions of the first two chapters of Luke form easy exercises in Hebrew composition. What has, I believe, not hitherto been appreciated is the fact that the *Nunc Dimittis*, when translated into Hebrew with the closest regard for the order of the words as they are in Greek, and with as much literalness as is legitimate in rendering the peculiar idiom of one language into another, is found to be in *regular Hebrew metre*. The song in fact is made up of three trimeter couplets.

עַתָּה תְשַׁלַּח עַבְדֶּךָ	Νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δοῦλόν σου,
כְּדָבָרְךָ אֲדֹנָי בְּשָׁלֹם׃	Δέσποτα, κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου, ἐν εἰρήνῃ·
כִּי־רָאוּ עֵינַי יְשׁוּעָתֶךָ	Ὅτι εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί μου τὸ σωτήριόν σου
הֲכִינוֹתָ לִפְנֵי כָּל־הָעַמִּים׃	Ὃ ἡτοίμασας κατὰ πρόσωπον πάντων τῶν λαῶν,
אוֹר לְגִלּוֹת הַגּוֹיִם	Φῶς εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν ἐθνῶν
וְתִפְאֶרֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמֶּךָ׃	Καὶ δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραήλ.

In this translation (as frequently elsewhere in this article) I have followed Franz Delitzsch's Hebrew New Testament fairly closely, mainly because he can hardly be suspected of letting a bias in favour of the particular metrical theory, which is here accepted, affect his translation in these chapters. There is, moreover, quite clear internal evidence, patent to those who care to examine his Hebrew New Testament, that he was writing without regard to metre, and merely translating with great fidelity.

I have in the above poem merely changed Delitzsch's תִּפְטַר to תְּשַׁלַּח in the first line; omitted his את's in lines 1 and 3 as being inelegant; omitted the relative in line 4 as being unnecessary in poetry and not often found in the Psalms; and omitted עֵינַי in the fifth line as not being required by the Greek.

The result, as has been shewn, is three trimeter couplets.

It would seem quite impossible that such a result should be accidental. Something in the way of Hebrew parallels might be achieved in Greek, which would be still parallelism of a kind when translated into Hebrew, but perfectly regular Hebrew metre for six consecutive lines grouped in couplets, as a result of a literal translation from the Greek, can mean but one thing, and that is, a metrical Hebrew original for the Greek. I would, therefore, submit this result as good evidence that the *Nunc Dimittis* was originally written in Hebrew in accordance with

the canons of Hebrew metre[1] followed in the majority if not in all of the ancient Hebrew Psalms and Poems.[2]

(i) The discovery of the regular metre is interesting as shewing that the knowledge of the rules of ancient Hebrew prosody had not been lost in the first century A. D., in spite of Josephus's statement regarding the metre of the Song of Moses at the Red Sea, which statement is so glaringly erroneous[3] that it suggests that though the fact that the Hebrew Old Testament Psalms and Poems were metrical was still remembered in his days, yet the knowledge of the actual old Hebrew metres had been entirely lost.

The *Nunc Dimittis* proves on the contrary that the old metres were understood and were moreover still practised in some circles.

(ii) Further, we are now able to correct Westcott and Hort in their arrangement of the first two lines of this song. It should be divided as shewn above, with Δέσποτα at the beginning of the second line instead of at the end of the first.

(iii) But what is perhaps most important is, that the fact of a Hebrew original for this poem throws light on the much disputed problem of the original language of Luke i and ii. It is a definite piece of evidence, so far as it goes, in favour of Hebrew, as against Aramaic. For if the poem be translated into Aramaic it shews no sign of any kind of recognized metre, nor of any poetic form, save a certain balance and parallelism, which is retained in some degree into whatsoever language it is rendered.

As for Professor Burkitt's dictum 'that in the story of the Nativity (Lk. i and ii) . . . the LXX and *not any Hebrew or Aramaic document* has perceptibly coloured the style and language of the whole narrative',[4]

[1] The metrical theory presupposed here is that based on the *tonic* as opposed to the *syllabic* system, which latter has now but few advocates. The former is the principle of measurement adopted by Julius Ley, Francis Brown, Harper, Cheyne, Duhm, Kittel, and Briggs, and seems to be destined to hold the field, although its application may perhaps be modified in detail.

[2] It is important to note that it is the presence of *metre*, not of *parallelism*, that this investigation brings to light. Parallelism is by no means absent from the poems and hymns in these chapters of Luke, but it is for the most part incidental rather than an essential and predominating principle. On the other hand exactly the same kind of balance as takes the place of pure parallelism in the first two couplets of the *Nunc Dimittis* may be found in many places in the Psalter. They are particularly frequent in late Psalms. Apparently by N. T. times metre came to be the predominating principle of poetic form, while parallelism was relegated to quite a subordinate position.

[3] Josephus (*Ant.* ii 16. 4) states that it was in hexameter verse! The song, however, is clearly in tetrameter. It should, however, be observed that Josephus rightly describes the Song of Moses in Deut. xxxii as hexameter (*Ant.* iv 8. 40).

[4] *Gospel History and its Transmission*, p. 124.

it would seem to go by the board, in this particular instance, and as will presently be shewn in many other very considerable and important sections. It would require an exceedingly ingenious use of the LXX to produce a style and language which would result in a regular Hebrew metre when rendered practically literally into that language.

Following up the clue which we have found, we are led to test the rest of the first two chapters for further signs of a metrical original when they are translated, or, as would really appear to be the case, retranslated in Hebrew.

When this test is applied it becomes apparent that while none of the narrative matter resolves itself naturally into metre, though here and there it is sufficiently poetic as to take on a certain parallelism of expression (e. g. ii 8), yet with comparatively few and slight exceptions *practically everything which is spoken is in verse and in regular metre.*

As the demonstration of this fact is of much importance with regard to the original language and source of the chapters in question (for the case of the *Nunc Dimittis* might be held by some to be exceptional), I propose to set it forth in some detail.

In so doing we shall (*a*) discover the presence of several sections of verse not hitherto recognized as such. (*b*) We shall also confirm certain important cases hitherto in doubt or, at least, insufficiently recognized. Altogether it will appear that there are in all no fewer than ten distinct hymns or poems in these two chapters. (*c*) Further, we shall find new light thrown on the literary structure of the recognized songs, which will help us to modify the present arrangement of one or two of them at least in Westcott and Hort, &c. (*d*) And in general we shall find ourselves in possession of a new instrument for the literary criticism of the text.

A. Luke i 14–17, *The Proclamation of the Angel to Zachariah.* This is not treated as a poem in either the Revised Version or in Westcott and Hort. Prof. Moffatt has, however, very rightly printed it as verse, probably in accordance with his plan of printing all parallelisms in the New Testament as verse, a plan which is in general most illuminating, though it has occasionally led him into the error of exhibiting the balance and apparent parallelisms of legal statements and logical arguments as poetry.[1]

Rendered into Hebrew almost slavishly (again following Delitzsch fairly closely in the main) the passage runs as follows:—

וְהָיָה־לְךָ לְשִׂמְחָה וָגִיל } Καὶ ἔσται χαρά σοι καὶ ἀγαλλίασις,
וְרַבִּים יִשְׂמְחוּ בְהִוָּלְדוֹ׃ } Καὶ πολλοὶ ἐπὶ τῇ γενέσει αὐτοῦ χαρήσονται·
כִּי גָדוֹל יִהְיֶה לִפְנֵי יהוה׃ Ἔσται γὰρ μέγας ἐνώπιον Κυρίου.

[1] e. g. Rom. vi 18, 19; 1 Cor. vii 12, 13, 18; 1 Cor. xv 47–49.

וְיַיִן וְשֵׁכָר לֹא־יִשְׁתֶּה	Καὶ οἶνον καὶ σίκερα οὐ μὴ πίῃ,
וְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ יִמָּלֵא	Καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου πλησθήσεται,
בְּעֹדֶנּוּ בְּבֶטֶן אִמּוֹ׃	ἔτι ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ.
וְרַבִּים מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	Καὶ πολλοὺς τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ
יָשִׁיב אֶל־יהוה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם׃	Ἐπιστρέψει ἐπὶ Κύριον τὸν θεὸν αὐτῶν·
וְהוּא יֵלֵךְ לְפָנָיו	Καὶ αὐτὸς προελεύσεται ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ
בְּרוּחַ אֵלִיָּהוּ וּבְנֶבוּרָתוֹ	Ἐν πνεύματι καὶ δυνάμει Ἠλεία,
לְהָשִׁיב לֵב־אָבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים	Ἐπιστρέψαι καρδίας πατέρων ἐπὶ τέκνα
וְהַפּוֹרְרִים לְתָבוּנַת הַצַּדִּיקִים	Καὶ ἀπειθεῖς ἐν φρονήσει δικαίων,
לְהָעֲמִיד לַיהוה עַם מְתֻקָּן׃	Ἑτοιμάσαι Κυρίῳ λαὸν κατεσκευασμένον.

As can readily be seen it falls naturally into trimeters with the doubtful exceptions of the third and last lines, which go more easily and literally into tetrameters of a kind, but might possibly be respectively rendered as trimeters, thus :—

line 3	כי־ינדל לפני יהוה
and line 13	להעמיד ליהוה עם־מתקן

It is to be observed, moreover, that neither of these lines belongs to a couplet. They are solitary lines in a collection of couplets, which makes one suspect that they may be glosses or later additions.

Line 3 might easily be a correct explanatory gloss on the first couplet.

Line 13, if it was originally trimeter and not tetrameter, might on the other hand have been the first line of a couplet, the second of which has now been lost.

Line 6 is trimeter, but is also solitary. It is most probably a gloss, unless indeed, perchance, it is misplaced and originally made a couplet with line 3, thus :—

'For He shall be great before Jehovah
While He is yet in His mother's womb.'

If line 6 in disregard of metre be taken as part of line 5 it spoils the sense, not to speak of the balance, of an excellent antithetic couplet,

'No wine nor strong drink shall He drink,
But with the spirit of wisdom shall He be filled.'

in which we have the same antithesis as in Eph. v 18 'Be not drunk with wine (wherein is excess), *but* be filled with the Spirit'. Apart from these three lines we have in the poem *five trimeter couplets.* In accordance with this finding verse 16 in Moffatt's translation, which

at present is represented as a single long and very clumsy line, should be represented as a couplet. Similarly with verse 17.

B. i 30–33. *Gabriel's first address to Mary.* This can, without much difficulty, be literally construed into five hexameter lines as follows :—

אַל־תִּירְאִי מִרְיָם כִּי־חֵן מָצָאת	לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים	Μὴ φοβοῦ, Μαριάμ, εὗρες γὰρ χάριν | παρὰ τῷ θεῷ·
וְהִנָּךְ הָרָה וְיֹלַדְתְּ־בֵּן | וְקָרָאת שְׁמוֹ יֵשׁוּעַ	Καὶ ἰδοὺ συλλήμψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν, | καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν.
הוּא גָּדוֹל יִהְיֶה | וּבֶן עֶלְיוֹן יִקָּרֵא	Οὗτος ἔσται μέγας | καὶ υἱὸς Ὑψίστου κληθήσεται,
וַיהוה אֱלֹהִים יִתֶּן־לוֹ | כִּסֵּא דָּוִד אָבִיו	Καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ Κύριος ὁ θεὸς | τὸν θρόνον Δαυεὶδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ,
וְעַל בֵּית־יַעֲקֹב יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם | וּמַלְכוּתוֹ אֵין־קֵץ :	Καὶ βασιλεύσει ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον Ἰακὼβ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, | καὶ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔσται τέλος.

The lines, as is so often the case with hexameters, are rather clumsy. It should be noted that the caesuras[1] fall in their right places. It may he held however that the pause in the fourth line is too slight for a caesura, in which case the whole line might have to be rejected. The evidential value of this section is possibly not so strong as that of the two previous examples.

W. H., R. V., &c. have failed to recognize these lines as constituting a poem.

Moffatt rightly prints verses 32 and 33 as poetry, though verse 32, as he has it, should be broken up into four parts, not into two. Verses 30–31, which Moffatt treats as prose, ought likewise to be printed as part of the poem by him and other New Testament editors.

C. *Gabriel's second address to Mary* (i 35–37). This presents more difficulties.

(*a*) It begins with a beautiful tetrameter synonymous couplet in

[1] The reader may be reminded that caesuras occur in the several metres as follows :—

tetrameter, after the 2nd beat.
pentameter, ,, 3rd beat (there are a certain number of doubtful cases after the 2nd beat, which Briggs accepts).
hexameter, ,, 4th beat (also frequently, but less elegantly, after the 3rd beat).

In pentameters and hexameters the caesura is *de rigueur*. In the tetrameter it is optional. Practically all the caesuras shewn in the course of this article are preserved in the order of the Greek—an extraordinary piece of strong evidence in favour of my thesis.

which the parallelism is as perfect as the metre. It is strange that Moffatt has overlooked it.

רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ תָּבוֹא עָלַיִךְ	Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ,
וּגְבוּרַת עֶלְיוֹן תָּצֵל עָלַיִךְ	Καὶ δύναμις Ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι·

The next line (the exact meaning of which is doubtful) is prose, not poetry, whether it be rendered:

עַל־כֵּן גַּם־הַיִּלּוֹד קָדוֹשׁ יִקָּרֵא בֶּן־אֱלֹהִים — διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον κληθήσεται, υἱὸς θεοῦ.

or with Delitzsch:

עַל־כֵּן גַּם־לַקָּדֹשׁ הַיִּלּוֹד יִקָּרֵא בֶּן־אֱלֹהִים — διὸ καὶ τὸ γεννώμενον ἅγιον, κληθήσεται υἱὸς θεοῦ.

Although it has five accents it is not pentameter, as there is no caesura, which is *de rigueur* in that metre. Moreover, it stands by itself, being grouped, neither in parallelism nor metre, with either what precedes or what follows.

If the Hebrew be taken as a reliable criterion, this line would appear to be a later addition—an explanatory theological gloss.

(*b*) The next lines resolve into two trimeter couplets as follows (or perhaps a trimeter quadruplet):—

וְהִנֵּה אֱלִישָׁבַע קְרוֹבָתֵךְ	Καὶ ἰδοὺ Ἐλεισάβετ ἡ συγγενίς σου
גַּם־הִיא הָרָתָה־בֵּן בְּזִקְנָתָהּ	Καὶ αὐτὴ συνείληφεν υἱὸν ἐν γήρει αὐτῆς.
וְזֶה־לָּהּ הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשִּׁשִּׁי	Καὶ οὗτος μὴν ἕκτος ἐστὶν αὐτῇ
אֲשֶׁר קֹרְאוּ־לָהּ עֲקָרָה	Τῇ καλουμένῃ στείρᾳ.

The change in metre is suitable, as the nature of the communication now made to Mary is of quite a different quality from that made in the tetrameter couplet.

Gabriel's address closes with another line (*v.* 37), which has no fellow, and is of the nature of prose. It is almost an exact quotation from Gen. xviii 14, and shews signs of possible derivation from the LXX and not from the Massoretic text.

Delitzsch renders it	כִּי לֹא־יִפָּלֵא מֵאֱלֹהִים כָּל־דָּבָר
Gk. N. T.	ὅτι οὐκ ἀδυνατήσει παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ πᾶν ῥῆμα.
LXX	μὴ ἀδυνατεῖ παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ ῥῆμα;
M.T.	הֲיִפָּלֵא מֵיהוה דָּבָר

It would thus appear to be an illustrative quotation appended to the angel's speech after its translation into Greek.

D. *Elizabeth's speech of welcome to Mary* (i 42–45). This is treated as prose by R.V. and W. & H.

Plummer in his St Luke (Int. Crit.) comments on it thus: 'It seems to have the characteristics of Hebrew poetry in a marked degree. . . . It consists of two strophes of four lines each.' He prints it in the Greek accordingly.

(*a*) In Hebrew the first of these strophes runs as follows:—

בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ בַּנָּשִׁים	Εὐλογημένη σὺ ἐν γυναιξίν,
וּבָרוּךְ פְּרִי בִטְנֵךְ׃	Καὶ εὐλογημένος ὁ καρπὸς τῆς κοιλίας σου.
וּמַאַיִן לִי זֹאת	Καὶ πόθεν μοι τοῦτο
שֶׁתָּבֹא אֵם־אֲדֹנָי אֵלָי׃	Ἵνα ἔλθῃ ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Κυρίου μου πρὸς ἐμέ;

As may be seen the strophe consists of two trimeter couplets. Moffatt has recognized the first of these couplets, but not the second. He has not recognized the second strophe at all. At first sight the third line appears to be weak, as לי in poetry is almost always treated as enclitic. Here, however, it correctly takes an accent, as it is the most emphatic word in the line.

(*b*) The second strophe appears thus in Hebrew:—

כִּי־קוֹל בִּרְכָתֵךְ בָּא בְאָזְנָי	[Ἰδοὺ γὰρ] Ὡς ἐγένετο ἡ φωνὴ τοῦ ἀσπασμοῦ σου εἰς τὰ ὦτά μου,
וַיִּרְקֹד בְּשִׂמְחָה הַיֶּלֶד בְּמֵעָי׃	Ἐσκίρτησεν ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει τὸ βρέφος ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ μου.
וְאַשְׁרֵי הַמַּאֲמִינָה כִּי־תִהְיֶה תִּפָּלֵא	Καὶ μακαρία ἡ πιστεύσασα ὅτι ἔσται τελείωσις
אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּר־לָהּ מֵאֵת יהוה׃	Τοῖς λελαλημένοις αὐτῇ παρὰ Κυρίου.

It will be found that the metre has changed to tetrameter, and that the strophe consists of two synthetic couplets. Ἰδοὺ γάρ, as Plummer has not realized, is not properly part of the strophe, but is merely the connecting link, probably editorial, with the preceding strophe. In the Greek and the various versions it should be printed accordingly.

E. *The Magnificat* (i 46–55) appears in Hebrew as follows:—

(*a*)	רוֹמֵמָה נַפְשִׁי יהוה [אֱלֹהָי]	Μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχή μου τὸν Κύριον[ ],
	וַתָּגֶל רוּחִי | בֵּאלֹהֵי יִשְׁעִי׃	Καὶ ἠγαλλίασεν τὸ πνεῦμά μου | ἐπὶ τῷ Θεῷ τῷ σωτῆρί μου.
	כִּי רָאָה רָאָה בָּעֳנִי אֲמָתוֹ	Ὅτι ἐπέβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὴν ταπείνωσιν τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ,
	וְהִנֵּה מֵעַתָּה | כָּל־הָרוֹת יְאַשְּׁרוּנִי׃	Ἰδοὺ γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν | μακαριοῦσίν με πᾶσαι αἱ γενεαί·

(*b*) כִּי גְדוֹלוֹת עָשָׂה־לִי שַׁדַּי | וְקָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ :	Ὅτι ἐποίησέν μοι μεγάλα ὁ δυνατός, καὶ ἅγιον τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ,
וְחַסְדּוֹ לְדוֹר וָדוֹר | עֲלֵי יְרֵאָיו :	Καὶ τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ εἰς γενεὰς καὶ γενεὰς τοῖς φοβουμένοις αὐτόν.
גִּבּוֹרוֹת עָשָׂה בִּזְרֹעוֹ | פִּזַּר גֵּאִים : (בִּמְזִמּוֹת לִבָּם)	Ἐποίησεν κράτος ἐν βραχίονι αὐτοῦ, διεσκόρπισεν ὑπερηφάνους (διανοίᾳ καρδίας αὐτῶν)·
הָרַס נְדִיבִים מִכִּסְאוֹתָם | וַיָּרֶם שְׁפָלִים :	Καθεῖλεν δυνάστας ἀπὸ θρόνων καὶ ὕψωσεν ταπεινούς,
רְעֵבִים מִלֵּא־טוֹב | וַעֲשִׁירִים שִׁלַּח רֵיקָם :	Πεινῶντας ἐνέπλησεν ἀγαθῶν καὶ πλουτοῦντας ἐξαπέστειλεν κενούς.
תָּמַךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדּוֹ | לִזְכֹּר רַחֲמָיו :	Ἀντελάβετο Ἰσραὴλ παιδὸς αὐτοῦ, μνησθῆναι ἐλέους,
כְּדַבְּרוֹ אֶל־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ | לְאַבְרָהָם וְזַרְעוֹ לְעֹלָם :	Καθὼς ἐλάλησεν πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν, τῷ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

(*a*) The first four lines form a stanza made up of two tetrameter couplets. אֱלֹהֵי has had to be supplied to the first line, as some such word appears to have fallen out. The Infinite Absolute רָאֹה in the third line is not represented in the Greek text, although it appears in both the Hebrew and LXX of the passage from which the line is derived (1 Sam. i 11). As it is the same as the finite verb following, when unpointed, it might very easily have dropped out. Delitzsch renders אֲשֶׁר רָאָה, which would still make the line tetrameter without רָאֹה.

(*b*) The prevailing metre of the next seven lines is pentameter. The third line, then, has two words in excess; if they are removed as a gloss they leave an excellent pentameter with the caesura in the right place after the third beat.

The stanza would seem to have been composed of three pentameter couplets, which leaves one line over.

If the right of any of the lines to a place in the original stanza has to be queried, it must either be line 3 or line 5; the former because, as has been pointed out, it requires docking of two words, the latter, because it has a weak caesura, the break coming after the second instead of after the third beat, a rare and unpleasant phenomenon in pentameters.

Both of these lines, however, make excellent parallels to line 4, and

neither could be well spared. Perhaps the stanza should be broken up into three short sections, consisting respectively of a couplet, a triplet, and a final couplet. This, however, would be unusual and irregular.

Another way out of the difficulty would be to group line 3 with 4, and line 5 with 6, and to excise the last line, which has a weak caesura, and is somewhat prosaic and might well be a gloss.

Altogether, though the evidence of a metrical original is very strong, there are more irregularities of metre and structure in this poem, in its present form, than in those we have previously examined.

F. *The Benedictus* (i 68–69), when reduced into Hebrew, is seen to have been constructed as follows :—

(*a*)	בָּרוּךְ יהוה | אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	Εὐλογητὸς Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραήλ,
	כִּי־פָקַד עַמּוֹ | וַיִּשְׁלַח־לוֹ פְּדוּת [1]	Ὅτι ἐπεσκέψατο καὶ ἐποίησεν λύτρωσιν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ,
	וַיָּקֶם לָנוּ | קֶרֶן יְשׁוּעָה	Καὶ ἤγειρεν κέρας σωτηρίας ἡμῖν . . .
	וַיֹּשִׁעֵנוּ [2] מֵאֹיְבֵינוּ | וּמִיַּד כָּל־שֹׂנְאֵינוּ :	Σωτηρίαν ἐξ ἐχθρῶν ἡμῶν καὶ ἐκ χειρὸς πάντων τῶν μισούντων ἡμᾶς,
(*b*)	לַעֲשׂוֹת חֶסֶד עִם־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ	Ποιῆσαι ἔλεος μετὰ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν
	וְלִזְכּוֹר בְּרִית קָדְשׁוֹ	Καὶ μνησθῆναι διαθήκης ἁγίας αὐτοῦ, . . .
	לָתֵת לָנוּ בְּלִי־פָחַד	Τοῦ δοῦναι ἡμῖν ἀφόβως
	לְהִנָּצֵל מִיַּד אוֹיְבֵינוּ	Ἐκ χειρὸς ἐχθρῶν ῥυσθέντας
	לְעָבְדוֹ בְיֹשֶׁר וּבְצִדְקָה	Λατρεύειν αὐτῷ ἐν ὁσιότητι καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ
	לְפָנָיו כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֵּינוּ :	Ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ πάσαις ταῖς ἡμέραις ἡμῶν.
(*c*)	וְנַם אַתָּה יֶלֶד | נְבִיא עֶלְיוֹן תִּקָּרֵא	Καὶ σὺ δέ, παιδίον, προφήτης Ὑψίστου κληθήσῃ.
	כִּי־תֵלֵךְ [כְּמַלְאֲךְ] לְפָנֵי יהוה | לְפַנּוֹת דְּרָכָיו	Προπορεύσῃ γὰρ ἐνώπιον Κυρίου ἑτοιμάσαι ὁδοὺς αὐτοῦ,
	לָתֵת דַּעַת יְשׁוּעָה לְעַמּוֹ | בִּסְלִיחַת חַטֹּאתֵיהֶם	Τοῦ δοῦναι γνῶσιν σωτηρίας τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ ἐν ἀφέσει ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν,
	שֶׁבְּרַחֲמֵי חֶסֶד אֱלֹהֵינוּ | פָּקְדָנוּ צֶמַח מְמָרוֹם : [3]	Διὰ σπλάγχνα ἐλέους Θεοῦ ἡμῶν, ἐν οἷς ἐπισκέψεται ἡμᾶς ἀνατολὴ ἐξ ὕψους.

[1] *Or* בי־פקד ויעש פדות לעמו.

[2] *Or*, more literally יְשׁוּעָה.

[3] I am inclined to think that the order of the two halves of this line may have originally been reversed, and that it then ran thus—ברחמי חסד אלהינו | שפקדנו צמח ממרום. This order may have been altered in view of the addition of (*d*).

(*d*) לְהָאִיר לְיֹשְׁבֵי חֹשֶׁךְ וְצַלְמָוֶת
לְהַכִּין רַגְלֵינוּ אֶל־דֶּרֶךְ שָׁלוֹם:

Ἐπιφᾶναι τοῖς ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου καθημένοις,
Τοῦ κατευθῦναι τοὺς πόδας ἡμῶν εἰς ὁδὸν εἰρήνης.

The poem is found to break up into four strophes each with its own metre :—

(*a*) Four Tetrameter lines.
(*b*) Three Trimeter couplets.
(*c*) Four Hexameter lines.
(*d*) One Tetrameter couplet.

As regards (*a*) it should be noticed :—

(i) that the caesuras come in their proper places,
(ii) that ἐν οἴκῳ Δαυεὶδ παιδὸς αὐτοῦ / בבית דיד ילדו } *v.* 69 (b)

has been excluded as a gloss which spoils the metre. Verse 70 (καθὼς ἐλάλησεν διὰ στόματος τῶν ἁγίων ἀπ' αἰῶνος προφητῶν αὐτοῦ) has been omitted likewise as a piece of prose which did not belong to the original poem. Nothing could make the line rhythmical except the ingenious but preposterous method employed in so-called metrical chants, which would be equally successful in dealing with a sentence out of a leading article.

As regards (*b*), as a stanza it cannot originally have stood by itself. Either the original beginning of it has been lost, or else it simply depends on the previous stanza, though in the best style of Hebrew verse each stanza is self-contained and independent of what precedes or follows, even though it may be closely related.

As in stanza (*a*) a line, *v.* 73 ὅρκον ὃν ὤμοσεν πρὸς Ἀβραὰμ τὸν πατέρα ἡμῶν (אֶת־הַשְּׁבוּעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ), is excluded as being more of the nature of prose than poetry. Its presence may be easily accounted for as a gloss on בְּרִית in line 2.

Otherwise the six lines are good and balance one another closely. The initial ל in each line should be noticed as well as also the ending ...ינו in three out of the six lines.

(*c*) The character of the poem changes at this point, and it is quite probable that we may have here what was originally a separate poem. The second line is weak as a hexameter, and it is possible that a word may have been lost in transcription of the Hebrew. I would suggest כַּמַּלְאָךְ as having slipped out after כִּי תֵלֵךְ. All the caesuras are legitimate. The fourth line is the object of the third, thus—'To give knowledge of salvation, &c., viz. that the Branch has visited us.'

(*d*) This is a tetrameter couplet apparently dependent on the preceding stanza, much in the same way as (*b*) is dependent on (*a*). The same criticism applies to it. The beauty and perfection of its balance and parallelism should be noted.

Taking the poem as a whole, I would remark that its appearance in its Hebrew form suggests its having been originally constructed from portions of more than one poem. But even if it were originally written as one complete whole, we can see that the poet has used a certain licence and looseness with regard to his structure, and that he has not altogether adhered to the best type of Hebrew poetry as regards at once the correlation and the independence of his stanzas.

It is possible that this may be due to what Dr Plummer suggests, viz. 'that the poet has modelled himself on the Prophets rather than on the Psalmists'. The Prophets certainly took more liberties with the artificialities of structure than did the Psalmists. The style of Hebrew suggests too, even more than the Greek does, that the poem was in part at least derived from a different source from the rest of the songs and poetical addresses.

G. *The address of the angel to the shepherds* (ii 10–12). This is not printed as verse in either R.V., W. H., or Moffatt, probably because the parallelism is not particularly obvious. When translated into Hebrew, however, it is seen to be in three tetrameter couplets as follows:—

אַל־תִּירְאוּ כִּי־הִנְנִי | מְבַשֵּׂר אֶתְכֶם
שִׂמְחָה גְדוֹלָה | תִּהְיֶה לְכָל־הָעָם:

Μὴ φοβεῖσθε, ἰδοὺ γὰρ | εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν
Χαρὰν μεγάλην | ἥτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ.

כִּי־יֻלַּד לָכֶם | הַיּוֹם מוֹשִׁיעַ
מָשִׁיחַ יהוה | בְּעִיר דָּוִיד:

Ὅτι ἐτέχθη ὑμῖν | σήμερον σωτὴρ
Ὅς ἐστιν χριστὸς κύριος | ἐν πόλει Δαυείδ.

וְזֶה לָכֶם | הָאוֹת תִּמְצְאוּן
עָלֶל מָחָטָל | וּמַנָּח בְּאֵבוּס:

Καὶ τοῦτο ὑμῖν | σημεῖον εὑρήσετε
Βρέφος ἐσπαργανωμένον | καὶ κείμενον ἐν φάτνῃ.

It is to be observed that the caesuras fall naturally in the right places, the only one that might be challenged being that in the first line.

In the first couplet it will be seen that the relative supplied by the translator was probably unnecessary and erroneous, and that the Greek translation ought to have run Χαρὰ μεγάλη ἔσται κτλ. The lines should be rendered in English in accordance with the Hebrew

'Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings,
Great joy there shall be for all the people.'

In the second couplet it may be noted incidentally that a Hebrew unpointed original for the curious phrase Χριστὸς Κύριος gets rid of the difficulty at once. For משיח יהוה might be translated either as Χριστὸς Κυρίου or as Χριστὸς Κύριος. The former is obviously the right translation. The phrase, then, means the Messiah of Jahveh, in other words the Lord's Anointed'.

The third couplet shews that W. H. and the various English versions, not to mention others, have been wrongly punctuated. This is due to the fact that the translator of the Hebrew into Greek has omitted to supply a relative after τὸ σημεῖον (הָאוֹת), which relative has quite properly been left to be understood in the Hebrew original. The couplet now reads

'And this is to you the sign (which) ye shall find,
A swaddled babe, lying in a manger.'

H. *The Song of the Angelic Host* (ii 14). This can only be translated in Hebrew as a couplet. The triplet

כָּבוֹד בַּמְּרוֹמִים לֵאלֹהִים |
וּבָאָרֶץ שָׁלוֹם |
בַּאֲנָשִׁים רָצוֹן :

could be supported by none of the canons of Hebrew verse. As a couplet the present text would read as follows:—

כָּבוֹד בַּמְּרוֹמִים לֵאלֹהִים } Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις θεῷ
וּבָאָרֶץ שָׁלוֹם בַּאֲנָשִׁי רָצוֹן : } Καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας.

At a stretch the second line might be counted as a trimeter, but it is exceedingly clumsy and heavy.

If it may be taken for granted in view of what we have found elsewhere in these chapters, that we may expect to find here a regular metre, then we may suggest with some confidence that originally the song ran thus:—

כָּבוֹד בַּמְּרוֹם לֵאלֹהִים } Δόξα ἐν ὑψίστοις θεῷ
וּבָאָרֶץ שָׁלוֹם בַּאֲנָשִׁים : } Καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη ἐν ἀνθρώποις.

It would, then, seem that εὐδοκίας had been added interpretatively to ἀνθρώποις to further define it in much the same way, e. g. as τῷ πνεύματι has apparently been added in Matthew's version to the broad general statement μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί (Matt. v 33). The fact of the variant readings in the Greek would support this theory. The omission of εὐδοκίας improves the balance, אֲנָשִׁים being a much better parallel to אֱלֹהִים than is אַנְשֵׁי רָצוֹן. It should further be noticed how euphonious

the lines now are, extraordinarily so if ἐν ὑψίστοις be translated בַּמְּרוֹם instead of בַּמְּרוֹמִים (see Del.) as it legitimately may.

I. and J. The *Nunc Dimittis* we have already examined. It will be found, further, that the prophetic words of *Simeon's address to the Virgin* (ii 34–36) although they are not exactly lyrical are yet metrical.

הִנֵּה־זֶה מוּסָד | לִנְפִילָה וְלִתְקוּמָה	Ἰδοὺ οὗτος κεῖται εἰς πτῶσιν καὶ ἀνάστασιν
לְרַבִּים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל | וּלְאוֹת מְרִיבָה׃	Πολλῶν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ καὶ εἰς σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον.
וְגַם־אַתְּ בְּנַפְשֵׁךְ תַּחְתֹּר חָרֶב	Καὶ σοῦ αὐτῆς τὴν ψυχὴν διελεύσεται ῥομφαία,
לְהִגָּלוֹת מַחְשָׁבוֹת לִבּוֹת רַבִּים׃	Ὅπως ἂν ἀποκαλυφθῶσιν ἐκ πολλῶν καρδιῶν διαλογισμοί.

As may be seen they form two tetrameter couplets, the balance of which is more apparent than the poetic parallelism. The succession of words ending in וֹת in the last line should be noted.

This practically closes our investigation. We have now dealt with all the sayings as distinct from the narrative matter, with exception of the brief sentences in the conversations of the Angel Gabriel with Zechariah and with the Virgin Mary, and in the dialogue between Mary and our Lord in the Temple, as these are for the most part too short for one confidently to pronounce them to be metrical.

In the latter case Mary's words may possibly have originally been a pentameter couplet, and our Lord's reply in the form of a trimeter triplet, but these cases are doubtful and can hardly be pressed. On the other hand they cannot safely be claimed as non-metrical prose. To sum up, I venture to suggest that I have made good my thesis, that the speeches and songs, ten in number, which are recorded in these two chapters, were originally written in the Hebrew language; and further, that in metre, balance, and structure they must have been composed in accordance with what are now generally agreed to have been the canons of ancient Hebrew prosody. They adhere, in fact, even in their present form, more closely to those canons than do many of the Psalms and Poems in the Old Testament, most of which have suffered, more or less, as regards literary form, at the hands of scribes and glossators.

What may be the significance, as regards historical criticism of the fact that, even apart from the four recognized songs, the great mass of the spoken matter was originally written in verse, I do not now propose to discuss.

Something, however, must be said as to the bearing of these facts on the original language of the narrative portions.

Had the four songs alone been found to be translations from Hebrew, it might have been urged (as on other grounds has been suggested by Spitta) that they were not an integral part of the narrative, and that, at all events, they probably had not been composed by the writer of the narrative, but had merely been included by him in his history. Certain of the spoken portions are, however, so closely bound up with the actual narrative, e. g. the Angel Gabriel's addresses to the Virgin Mary, Elizabeth's welcome to Mary, the Angelic address to the Shepherds, that it is very difficult to believe that they ever existed apart from the narrative matter; while it is, on the other hand, exceedingly unlikely that, if any of these were written by the writer of the prose narrative, he wrote his prose in Aramaic, though he wrote his verse in Hebrew.

It would be even absurd to suggest that the narrative matter was originally Greek, though the spoken words were at first written in Hebrew.

Unless, then, definite proof of distinctive Aramaic is found in the narrative portion, it may reasonably be taken for granted that it was originally in the same language as both songs and speeches. In other words the Hebrew original of the latter is strong proof presumptive of the Hebrew original of the whole.

R. A. AYTOUN.

COMPOSITION AND DICTATION IN NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS.

RECENT criticism has enabled us in some degree to see the writers or compilers of the Synoptic Gospels and of Acts at their study tables,[1] so to speak, and to visualize the processes whereby one papyrus-sheet might be attached to another, anecdote to anecdote, or whereby there might be inserted in the half-completed roll of the book some 'great interpolation' perhaps newly come to hand, written upon a τόμος[2] or 'length' of sheets, or, later on, whereby the whole might be harmonized by notes of date or time, and by other editorial touches; all these and other allied processes by which the said books took their present shapes are becoming daily more familiar to us.

When we turn to other N. T. works the problem is not quite so simple. How were they actually set down? What was the actual method?[3]

[1] Not literally; see Birt *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst* p. 2 (quoted by Sanday in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*).

[2] Birt *op. cit.* p. 35.

[3] Sanday *op. cit.* gives a partial answer, on general lines, so far as 'pens, ink,