

THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

APRIL, 1865.

No. II.

ART. I.—*The Structure of the Old Testament.*

WE propose in this article to inquire into the structure of the Old Testament. This inquiry is of course a purely elementary one, and belongs at the very threshold of Old Testament studies. It is not, however, on that account without its importance; and it is hoped that even the present imperfect attempt at its presentation may not be altogether devoid of interest.

Two extreme and opposite errors must be avoided at the outset, either of which tends to the denial of the existence of any such structure as our inquiry presupposes, and so to make all investigation in this direction unmeaning and superfluous.

The first springs from too exclusive a view of the divinity and inspiration of the sacred writings, hastily concluding thence that all must possess a uniform character, and present an even and unvaried surface; that since the Bible is everywhere the revelation of God, there must be an equal amount of disclosure everywhere. The Scriptures thus viewed become simply a capacious reservoir of heavenly truth, into which successive communications from above were poured, with no other effect than that of raising the general level; the separate value of each new revelation consisting merely in the absolute addition thereby made to the sum of the whole. Anything like a nice articulation or careful arrangement and adjustment of its

several parts is not to be thought of. All separate particulars are fused together and lost in the general mass. A certain amount of saving doctrine and instruction in religious duty has been communicated to men by God in his word. When and how it was communicated is esteemed of little account. It had to be done at some time and in some way. The method selected was as good probably as any other; but the sole question that concerns us, after all, is not when or how it became known, but what it is that is made known. And hence the question, why God spake unto the fathers at precisely those sundry times, and just in those divers manners, in which he revealed his will, is barred as irrelevant; as though he could do anything in vain, or anything without a worthy reason which it would be our wisdom to endeavour if possible to discover.

Such a mode of viewing the Scriptures overlooks the fact, that while their divine authorship warrants us in expecting unity and harmony, it cannot lead us to anticipate a tame uniformity. This nowhere characterizes the works of God, and why should it be found in his word? The diversified aspect of nature not only adds to its charm and attractiveness, but by the divine method which reigns throughout, is essential to the perfection and life of the whole, and to the accomplishment of some of its highest and most important ends. The untutored eye sees, for example, in the continents and oceans of the globe on which we live, mere masses of land and water; the aggregate amount of each, with their respective capacities for production and the support of life, is the only thing regarded. And yet what vast consequences to nature and to man, to the life of the globe and to human history, follow from the simple arrangement and distribution of these materials, their nice articulation and their relative proportions and positions. And to understand in any satisfactory measure the functions of this globe, the arrangements of its parts must be studied, as well as the mass of the whole.

Now, how if something analogous to this be found to exist in the word of God? If, besides containing a given aggregate of revealed truth, this should be so disposed, articulated, and arranged, as to illustrate the wisdom and knowledge of God,

and to accomplish beneficent and important ends? It is surely worthy of inquiry; and the divine origin of the Bible certainly affords no presumption against it.

The opposite extreme, which has already been referred to as conducting to the same erroneous conclusion of the absence of any structure in the word of God, pays too exclusive heed to the human instruments concerned in its production. The Bible contains a series of books or separate treatises, prepared at intervals during a long course of ages, adapted more or less to the particular emergencies or occasions upon which they were composed, differing greatly in style and character; written without concert, by men from every grade in society, and varying in natural talents, in education, disposition, and habits of life. Now it is confessed by all believers in the divinity of the Scriptures, and it is perpetually produced as a striking evidence of their divinity, that with all this diversity in form and occasion, there is no disharmony in their teachings; there is no contradiction and no disagreement, but the same system of truth and duty is inculcated everywhere. Nevertheless they seem to be regarded by many as, after all, an aggregate of detached productions, without order or method; the idea of regular and consistent structure being precluded by their casual and contingent origin.

But such a conclusion is unwarranted, even upon that one-sided and partial view of the matter which ignores the divine element in the Scriptures altogether. Art, philosophy, and literature have each their development and history. They are wrought out by the successive labours of individuals, operating without plan or concert, through a course of ages, and in various lands. And yet, when they are viewed in their entirety, what to a superficial observer appears a mere congeries of unrelated facts, comes to assume shape and order and system; and it becomes apparent that all has been controlled by fixed and general laws. And however dependent everything may have seemed to be upon individual caprice or accidental causes, there are great principles lying back of all this, and deeply imbedded in the nature of man, in his mental and physical constitution, which determine in the main the direction and flow of the current.

Accordingly, if the Scriptures were nothing more than the body of extant Hebrew literature, if they were just an expression of the activity of the Hebrew mind in relation to the matters therein presented, we would have reason to expect in the whole a measure of symmetry corresponding to that of the intellectual and moral forces employed in their production. And, in spite of all that might be contingent or casual about them, they would unfold by their own peculiar laws, just as surely as any other form of life would do. There would, in other words, be a regular structure in them, which careful study might discover.

But if the partial conceptions of the Scriptures, which have now been referred to, taken singly, both that which dwells exclusively upon their divine origin and that which emphasizes unduly the contingencies connected with their human origin, so far from compelling the conclusion that no well ordered plan or consistent structure exists, awaken the opposite expectation, how much more will this be the case if we combine these partial ideas, and thus obtain a juster notion of the constitution and character of the word of God? This is a product of the Spirit of God, and yet wrought out through the instrumentality of many human agents, who were all inspired by him, directed by him, and adapted by him to the accomplishment of his own fixed end.

Here we have that unity in multiplicity, that singleness of aim with diversity of operations, that binding together of separate activities under one superior and controlling influence, guiding all to the accomplishment of its predetermined purpose, and allotting to each its particular function in reference to it, which is the very conception we have of a well arranged organism. The combination of the divine and the human, as these are linked in the Scriptures, naturally leads us to look for a well ordered, well contrived scheme, directed by divine wisdom to an aim foreordained of God, and in which each part has its own proper place and function, each particular having its definite purpose bearing on the common end of all, and fulfilling its own special task, for which in fact it exists and is what it is. We may be sure that the oracles of God will not possess the unconnected and random character of the

heathen oracles. He who has arranged all things else by number, weight, and measure, will not neglect to do so in his holy word. We are authorized to believe that there is a divine reason why each separate portion of divine revelation is what it is, and stands where it does; that nothing is superfluous and nothing lacking, and that all is concatenated together by a masterly arrangement. It is at least worth our while reverently to approach the sacred volume to discover whether these anticipations are not realized in actual fact.

In looking for the evidences of an organic structure in the Scriptures, according to which all its parts are disposed in harmonious unity, and each part stands in a definite and intelligible relation to every other as well as to the grand design of the whole, we shall be obliged to group and classify the particulars before us, or we shall lose ourselves in the multiplicity of details, and never rise to any clear conception of the whole.

- Every fact, every institution, every person, every doctrine, every statement of the Bible, has its place and its function in the general plan. And the evidence of the correctness of any scheme proposed as the plan of the Scriptures will lie mainly in its harmonizing throughout with all these details, giving a rational and satisfactory account of the purpose and design of each, and assigning to all their just place and relations. But if we occupy ourselves with these details in the first instance, we shall be distracted and confused by their multitude, without the possibility of arriving thus at any clear or satisfactory result.

The first important aid in the process of grouping a classification is afforded by the separate books of which the Scriptures are composed. These are not arbitrary or fortuitous divisions of the sacred text; but their form, dimensions, and contents have been divinely determined. Each represents the special task allotted to one particular organ of the Holy Spirit, either the entire function assigned to him in the general plan, or in the case where the same inspired penman wrote more than one book of different characters and belonging to different classes, his function in one given sphere or direction. Each book may have its own internal structure and subdivisions, and require to be studied in its several parts

and their mutual relations, in order to arrive at a thorough understanding of its particular plan and purpose. But it forms a unit in the structure of the Scriptures considered as a whole. The books of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Malachi, exhibit to us what part in the plan of divine revelation each of those distinguished servants of God was commissioned to perform. Each is the record of a distinct ministry, and must form a separate portion of the whole, possessing its own distinctive character and worth. The book of Psalms exhibits that portion of divine revelation which the sacred singers were employed to communicate. The three books of Solomon show us what the wisest of men was the instrument of doing in each of the three different directions which they severally represent. The books of Scripture thus having each an individual character, and this stamped with divine authority as an element of fitness for their particular place and function in the scheme of God's revelation, must be regarded as organic parts of the whole.

The next step in our inquiry is to classify and arrange the books themselves. Every distribution is not a true classification, as a mechanical division of an animal body is not a dissection. It is not enough to arrange the particulars we seek to classify under certain heads or formulæ, which may embrace them as a mere mnemonical device. If the student obtrudes upon his subject a principle foreign to its real nature, instead of simply uncovering the principle which actually underlies it; if he attempt to reduce it under formulæ arbitrarily imposed instead of such as spontaneously offer themselves as inherent in it, he is forcing a plan of his own upon it, instead of discovering one actually there.

The books of the Bible may be variously divided in respect of matters merely extraneous and contingent, and which stand in no relation to its real internal structure. Its externals and the accidents of its outward form cannot be the proper basis of its classification, inasmuch as whatever may be their importance and value in the scheme of the whole, they are no certain indexes of its organic structure. Thus it is obvious to divide them according to the accidents of language, the place or

time of their composition, their style, or the personality of their writers.

The New Testament, which is written in Greek, is distinguished in point of language from the Old. And this sole ground of the diversity of language has led some critics to sunder them unduly, as though the Hebrew and the Hellenistic Scriptures were as distinct as Greek and Roman literature. It is true that this superficial diversity is in this instance the criterion of a real and important distinction, grounded deeply in the nature of each portion respectively. The broad and clear division recognized in all ages between the Scriptures prior to the coming of Christ and those subsequent to the advent; between the Old Testament, which was a preparatory dispensation, and the New Testament, which was the dispensation of the fulness of times, was outwardly indicated by the one being recorded in the language of Palestine, inasmuch as it was to be restricted to a single people, and the other being recorded in the language of the civilized and educated world, inasmuch as it was to be carried everywhere and preached to every creature.

But that the accident of language affords no certain test of scriptural divisions is plain from the result of applying it to the Old Testament. This is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Chaldee; but the few chapters and verses, which are written in the latter language, have no such peculiarity of character as to entitle them to rank as a separate class, nor would a division made on this basis be of any service to us in studying the Old Testament. And so, if those traditional statements of the fathers had been true, which assigned to the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews a Hebrew original, the true character or proper classification of the books of the New Testament would not have been in the slightest degree affected.

So again, if regard be had to locality, we might divide the books of the Old Testament, to which our attention shall henceforth be confined, into those whose scene lay outside of Palestine, as the Pentateuch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jonah, Job, and Esther, and the rest which belonged within the limits of Palestine. And these latter might again be subdivided into those

which belonged to the entire country, and the whole people, as Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Kings, and the writings of David and Solomon; and those which belonged exclusively to one or other of the rival divisions of Israel, viz., Hosea, and Amos, to the kingdom of the ten tribes; Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and all the prophets not previously named, to Judah.

Or a division might be made in respect to time. The books of the Old Testament might be arranged chronologically, and then a distribution made into as many classes as there were centuries, or as any one might choose to find periods.

Or a division might be based upon the differences of style, and the several books of the Old Testament might be classified as legal, historical, poetical, and prophetic. There is, we apprehend, a real ground for a distinction here, as will be stated more fully hereafter; and there are elements of value likewise in the territorial and chronological divisions, which are entitled to their just weight, and which must find their place in any correct exhibition of the plan of the Old Testament. The sense of this has shown itself in the current arrangement of the canon, which in its essential features is at least as old as the LXX translation, and was thence adopted with slight modifications in all subsequent versions, and is universal in the Christian church. But in order to justify this arrangement of the books, and to discover its true ground and meaning, the idea which underlies it, and the light which it sheds upon the plan and structure of the Old Testament, we must penetrate deeper than those superficial and external criteria already considered, into the heart of the matter, and lay bare the governing, controlling principle by which the accidents of outward form have been determined, or at least to which they have been made subservient.

Before attempting to do this, however, it is incumbent upon us to inquire whether there is any authoritative arrangement of the books, which may obviate the necessity of seeking for any other, and which, from the sanction it has received, has a superior claim to be regarded as the true one; which, therefore, will most perfectly reveal the real structure of the Old Testament, and which cannot be set aside without the danger of obscuring or perverting that which we now seek to ascertain.

The canon is in the Hebrew Bible divided into three parts: the Law, the Prophets, and the K'thubbim or Hagiographa. This distribution appears to rest upon the personality of the sacred writers. The writings of Moses, who occupied a unique position as the mediator of the old economy, the great lawgiver with whom God spake face to face, stand first as the foundation of the whole. Then follow the writings of the prophets, *i. e.*, of those invested with the prophetic office. Some of these writings are historical in their character, and others prophetic; but their position in this second division of the canon is due not to the nature of the books, but to the official standing of their writers. They were prophets in the strict and official sense. Last of all those books occupy the third place, which were written by inspired men who were not in the technical or official sense prophets. They wrote as truly under the guidance of the Spirit of God as the preceding; and their writings are of course as authoritative both in respect to doctrine and duty. The distinction concerns merely their theocratic position. David, for example, had the gift of prophecy; and clear and undoubted predictions of the Messiah are repeatedly found in his writings. But officially he was a king and not a prophet. So Daniel possessed the gift of prophecy in as remarkable a degree as any of the holy seers under the Old Testament. But he did not fulfil the office of a prophet among the people in the same way as his contemporary Ezekiel, or as Isaiah or Jeremiah. Officially he was not a prophet, but prime minister at the court of Babylon. And hence his writings, like those of David, are placed in the third portion of the canon among the Hagiographa.

The threefold partition current among the Jews, therefore, represents respectively the function assigned in communicating the revelation of God to the great lawgiver, to the prophets, and to inspired men who were not prophets. This is a clear and intelligible division of the sacred penmen, based upon the varieties of their public official standing in the theocracy. And it is certainly quite conceivable that to each of these classes severally might be committed a distinct and definite task in making known the Divine will and purposes; that in this work each might be appointed to discharge their

own peculiar function; and that this distribution might, therefore, lie at the basis of the structure of the Old Testament.

This apparently not improbable conjecture would be entitled to additional consideration, if this triple arrangement of the canon could be traced to one who was under the guidance of inspiration. Now the unanimous voice of antiquity imputes the collection of the Old Testament canon to Ezra, and this is confirmed by such considerations of intrinsic probability as to have commanded general assent to its truth. If then he collected the canon and fixed it definitely in its present extent and compass, it seems but a small step in addition, to assume that he is likewise the author of the existing arrangement, especially as the triple distribution of the canon is referred to in the prologue to the book of Ecclesiasticus or Sirach, B. C. 130, which speaks of "the law, the prophets, and the rest of the books," and also in the New Testament, where our Lord (Luke xxiv. 44) refers to "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms." Hence able scholars have judged that the Hebrew arrangement and division of the canon should be laid at the foundation of the study of the Old Testament, and valuable critical introductions have been prepared upon this plan.

Now we confess, if there were evidence that Ezra arranged the Old Testament as we now find it in our Hebrew Bibles, and distributed its books into three classes as they are there, we would feel constrained to believe that some important reason lay at the basis of this arrangement, and should be disposed to claim for it the authoritative sanction of his inspiration. But the facts appear to us to be inconsistent with such a hypothesis.

It is certain from testimonies already adduced, as well as from others, that a triple division of some kind existed in the Old Testament canon from a very early period, and that this triplicity was persistently held fast by the Jews. But it is also certain that there was no fixed order of the books belonging to the second and third classes, nor was it even fixed which books should be referred to one or to the other of those classes. Thus Josephus reckons five books of Moses, thirteen of the prophets, and four containing hymns to God and precepts of human life. Evidently his third division embraced only the

Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. And it has with some plausibility been suggested that the title given by our Lord to the third division of the canon, viz., the Psalms, might more naturally be applied to these four strictly poetical books, than to the heterogeneous collection of poetical, prophetic, and historical books, which now passes under the name of the *Hagiographa*. A further evidence of vacillation and the absence of any authoritative settlement and fixed dimensions of these classes is afforded by Jerome, who remarks that Ruth and Lamentations were sometimes included among the prophets and sometimes classed with the *Hagiographa*. The Talmud in the tract *Baba Bathra* arranges the books of the *Hagiographa* in chronological order, like the rest of the canon; our ordinary Hebrew Bibles have the same books, but in a different order, and rabbins and manuscripts and editions vary indefinitely in their arrangement, particularly of this portion of the canon. To these facts must be added the circumstance that the LXX ventured to adopt an entirely different order, based upon a quadruple instead of a triple division, and in this they were followed by the entire body of the Christian church, with unimportant modifications, which were however freely made. Archdeacon Hody, who has devoted a particular chapter* to this subject, and who has treated it in fuller detail than we have seen elsewhere, employs no less than one hundred and thirty-five columns in exhibiting the various order of the books of Scripture, as furnished by different Hebrew, Greek, and Latin authorities. All this appears to us to be utterly at variance with the idea of an authoritative and divinely ordained arrangement. We are disposed, therefore, to accord to the Masoretic order and distribution of the books only such weight as may seem to be due to its intrinsic merit. If it shall aid us in finding out the true structure of the Old Testament, we shall thankfully accept it; otherwise we shall discard it.

There are two methods, and as it seems to us but two, by which we can proceed in investigating the organic structure of the Old Testament. We must take our departure either from

* *De Bibliorum Textibus Originalibus*, lib. iv. cap. iv.

the beginning or the end. These are the two points, in which all the lines of progress must meet in every development or growth. Every thing which strictly belongs to it throughout its entire course is unfolded from the one and is gathered up in the other. We may accordingly take the seed in which the whole plant is already involved in its undeveloped state, and we may trace its growth from this its initial point, observing how roots, and stem, and leaves, and flowers, and fruit, proceed from it by regular progression. Or we may reverse the process, and survey the whole from its consummation. The plant is for the sake of the fruit: every part has its special function to perform toward its production. And the organic structure is understood when the office of each particular portion in relation to the end of the whole becomes known.

In making trial of the first of the methods just suggested, we shall contemplate the Old Testament under its most obvious aspect of a course of training to which Israel was subjected for a series of ages. So regarding it, we shall have little difficulty in fixing upon the law of Moses as the starting point of this grand development. God chose Israel from among the nations of the earth to be his own peculiar people, to train them up for himself by immediate communications of his will, and by manifestations of his presence and power in the midst of them. And as the first step in this process, first not only in the order of time, but of rational arrangement, and the foundation of the whole, he entered into special and formal covenant with them at Sinai, and gave them a divine constitution and laws containing the undeveloped seeds and germs of all that he designed to accomplish in them and for them.

That the Mosaic law, taken together as one united and indivisible whole, is the true beginning of the Old Testament, and that there is nothing prior to the time of Moses which is entitled to be recognized as a separate member of the Old Testament organism appears to be obvious, because we find nothing antecedent to this period to which we can attribute organic completeness. It is true that the transactions at Sinai were not the first of God's immediate revelations, nor of his supernatural dealings with our race. These reach back in a continuous series to the very origin of mankind, to the creation

and the fall. Revelations were made to man in his estate of innocence; a promise of mercy was given to our first parents immediately following their original transgression; and stated religious institutions and observances were established. But the scanty record, which we possess, of this primeval period supplies only the most inadequate and fragmentary notions respecting it. There is no attempt on the part of the sacred writers to furnish us with any full or complete information on the subject. No distinct and connected exhibition is made of the primeval theology or the primeval religion; none in fact of a primeval or antediluvian dispensation, which could be laid at the basis of the Divine scheme of training recorded in the Old Testament.

The same thing may be said of the postdiluvian period from Noah onward, and the patriarchal period embracing the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here, again, we find revelations and promises, new covenants, new institutions, fresh manifestations of God's power and grace. But the same incompleteness still remains. It is evident that what is told us of these periods is not with the view of making them known in their proper character, of setting forth *ex professo* the circle of truth which had up to that time been revealed, the institutions established among them, or the dealings of God with respect to them.

It would argue a very defective notion of the primeval postdiluvian and patriarchal periods indeed, besides being contrary to the express teachings of later Scriptures, particularly of the New Testament, to insist that they must be estimated solely by the record given of them in the book of Genesis; and that all religious knowledge must be denied to them which is not expressly assigned to them there. The fact is that they are treated as purely preliminary to the Mosaic period. Just that is stated of them which may serve to explain the condition of things when the covenant of God with Israel came to be formed. Neither the whole of the book of Genesis, nor any particular part of it, can be regarded as so far complete in itself as to form a distinct division of the Old Testament. It is purely preparatory to the rest of the Pentateuch. It is devoted simply to the preparation of the soil into which the seed of the Mosaic

laws and institutions was to be cast, to the creation, in other words, of the people of Israel. This is traced first in the way of elimination, and secondly, in that of expansion. In the family of Adam, Cain and his ungodly descendants are banished from the presence of the Lord, while Seth and his pious seed are known as the sons of God, in distinction from the rest of mankind, the sons and daughters of men. When wickedness overspread the earth, Noah was singled out as the head of a new race; and from amongst his sons Shem was selected as the one whose God the Lord would especially be. From the descendants of Shem, Abraham was called to be the one in whose seed all families of the earth should be blessed. From his family the sons of Hagar and Keturah were excluded, and in Isaac alone his seed was called. In the family of Isaac, Esau sold his birthright and lost his blessing, which was bestowed upon Jacob. The elimination has now reached its last term, and the expansion begins. Jacob's family was taken down into Egypt and there became a great nation. The requisite soil has thus been prepared, and at the proper time the seed of the Mosaic institutions was cast into it.

To the considerations already suggested it may be added, that if the Old Testament has been correctly represented as a divine scheme of training for Israel, no integral organic part of this training can precede the covenant at Sinai; for until then the nation, as such, did not exist. Moreover, as it is the volume of the Old Testament into whose constitution we are inquiring, no organic part can precede the time when the first portion of it was committed to writing; and this we must continue to believe, in accordance with the unanimous testimony of tradition, and an abundance of internal grounds of the most convincing character, was by the hand of Moses.

The first step then in the process of training Israel was the giving of the law through Moses; and the first division of the Old Testament, consequently, is the Pentateuch, which contains this law with its historical introduction. The next step was to engage the people in the observance of the law thus given to them. The constitution which they had received was set in operation, and allowed to work out its legitimate fruits amongst them and upon them. The law of God thus shaped

the history of Israel; while the history added confirmation and enlargement to the law by the experience which it afforded of its workings, and of the providential sanctions which attended it, and by the modifications which were from time to time introduced as occasion demanded, and thus may be said to afford a providential expansion of the law. This history was conducted through three great periods, each of which conveyed its own particular lessons, important in the training of the people which God was thus conducting. To each of these, three historical books are devoted, if we reckon the double books one, which they properly are, and which they are always regarded in the early catalogues of the canon. Joshua, Judges, and Ruth record the period of the commonwealth; Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, the period of the kingdom; Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, the period of foreign domination.

A third step in this divine training was to have the law as originally given, and as providentially expanded, wrought not only into the outward practice of the people, or their national life, but into their inward individual life, and their intellectual convictions. This is the function of the six poetical books. One-half belong to the domain of feeling, and the other half to that of reflection. To this the form of the poetry corresponds, being in the one class lyrical, and in the other gnomic or aphoristic.

The three lyrical books are the Psalms, the Song of Solomon, and the Lamentations. The aim of these is devout meditation upon the law of God, his works and his providence, and the reproduction of the law in the heart and life. The quintuple division of the Psalms in the Hebrew text creates a correspondence even of outward form, which perhaps is not casual, with the five books of the law. The two small books included in the same category with the Psalms, partake of the same general character. The Song of Solomon, like the forty-fifth Psalm, dwells upon the divine institution of marriage as a symbol of the relation between God and his people. The book of Lamentations makes practical application of the lessons of God's providence in the fall of Jerusalem.

The remaining three poetical works are Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. They belong to the domain of reflection, or if the

term be properly qualified, of religious philosophy, in which they form a complete cycle. Their standpoint is suggested by a term, which is characteristic of them all, viz., wisdom. Their common theme is the identity of wisdom and the fear of the Lord, or the observance of his law. Proverbs, by means of current aphorisms embodying the practical results of observation, exhibits it as a general truth, that it is man's highest wisdom to obey the law of God, and it is folly to transgress. General rules, however, have their exceptions. To the general and obvious fact, that human happiness and welfare are promoted by obedience to the law of God, there are two apparent exceptions, forming opposite extremes, which occur too frequently in real life to be overlooked. One of these is the occurrence of piety without prosperity, and the other prosperity possessed without piety. The book of Job is devoted to the former of these seeming exceptions, and Ecclesiastes to the latter. In the former, a man without his equal for piety in the world, is suddenly stripped of his possessions, bereaved of his family, smitten by a torturing disease, forsaken by his friends, made the victim of cruel suspicions and censures, and yet the gracious design of God in all is shown, and piety is not without its reward. In the latter, the wisest of kings, having within his reach every source of gratification which wealth or power can command, sets himself deliberately to enjoy them. But the result proved that the world without God was vanity and vexation of spirit; and the conclusion to which he came after the baffling experiments of a lifetime was, that to fear God and keep his commandments was the only and the universal secret of true happiness and real welfare.

The law has thus been set to work upon the national life of Israel in the course of its history, and is, in addition, coming to be wrought more and more into their individual life and experience by devout meditation and careful reflection. But that this outward and inward development, though conducted in the one case under immediate Divine superintendence, and in the other, under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, might not fail of its appointed end, there was need that this end should be held up to view, and that the minds of the people should be constantly directed forward to it. With this view

the prophets were raised up, an order of men like unto Moses, the immediate representatives and ambassadors of God, appointed to make known his will and purposes, officially authorized to expound his law and make application of it to all cases, charged with reiterating its commands and enforcing its denunciations, and especially commissioned to direct the eye of faith and hope to Him whose blissful coming would adequately realize all that the law enjoined and promised—its end and consummation, fulfilling its precepts, bearing its penalty, ushering in of all its blessings. The prophets thus reiterate, unfold, and apply the law, and expand in glowing language to the full dimensions of the glorious future the germs and seeds of a better era which it contains. They furnish thus what may be called an objective expansion of the law, and their writings form the fourth and last division of the Old Testament.

If then we have read the structure of the Old Testament rightly as estimated from the point of its beginning and its gradual development from that onward, it consists of four parts, viz.

1. The Pentateuch or law of Moses, the basis of the whole.
2. Its providential application and expansion in the historical books.
3. Its subjective appropriation and expansion in the poetical books.
4. Its objective enforcement and expansion in the prophetic books.

The other mode above suggested of investigating the structure of the Old Testament requires us to survey it from its end, which is Christ. This brings everything into review under a somewhat different aspect. It will yield us substantially the same division that has already been arrived at by the contrary process, and thus lends it additional confirmation, since it serves to show that this is not a fanciful or arbitrary partition, but one grounded in the nature of the sacred volume. It is, however, attended with three striking and important advantages. In the first place, the historical, poetical, and prophetic books, which have hitherto been considered as separate lines of development, springing it is true from a common

source, yet pursuing each its own independent course, are by this second method exhibited in that close relationship and interdependence which really subsists between them, and in their convergence to one common centre and end. In the second place, and this is the principal consideration, which to our mind recommends this method, it makes Christ the prominent figure, and adjusts every part of the Old Testament in its true relation to him. He thus becomes in our classification and structural arrangement what he is in actual fact, the end of the whole, the controlling, forming principle of all, so that the meaning of every part is to be estimated from its relation to him, and is only then apprehended as it should be when that relation becomes known. It is, as it appears to us, an important matter that even our primary analysis of the Scriptures, our preliminary divisions of this great field of study, made before we actually begin to occupy ourselves with its details, and adopted as our guides and landmarks in our investigation of its contents, should present Christ distinctly to the eye as the goal to which all tends, the centre through which every line is drawn, and the sum in which every particular is gathered up. Thirdly, this will give unity to our study of the entire Scriptures. Everything in the Old Testament tends to Christ and is to be estimated from him. Everything in the New Testament unfolds from Christ, and is likewise to be estimated from him. In fact this method pursued in other fields will give unity and consistency to all our knowledge by making Christ the sum and centre of the whole, of whom and through whom and to whom are all things.

We have in our first method regarded the Old Testament simply as a divine scheme of training. We shall now regard it as a scheme of training directed to one definite end, the coming of Christ. The Old Testament, from first to last, and in all its parts, is designed to be preparatory unto Christ; and the amount of preparation made by each part, and the manner in which it is effected, determines its position in the general scheme.

This preparatory training is conducted by means of types and prophecies, or as they may also be called, implicit and explicit predictions. The former are predictions embedded or involved

in persons, facts, and institutions; the latter are predictions uttered in words. Every embodiment or exemplification in material and outward forms of a principle or method of the divine administration, which is afterwards, and particularly in the times of the New Testament, to be realized in a higher and spiritual form is a type. These types need not be known to be such at the time of their introduction. How far their typical character was recognized, it may not be possible for us to determine. It is not improbable that the amount of knowledge possessed upon this subject was intrinsically indeterminate and variable. Later ages in all likelihood had more insight into the nature and meaning of the types than those which preceded them; and the spiritually enlightened doubtless had more insight than the majority of their contemporaries. But an important end was answered when the types taught the principle involved in them or the religious truth which they embodied, even though their ultimate application and embodiment was not perceived. The directing of the mind consciously and specifically to New Testament objects was the function of prophecies rather than types. The sacrifices of the law taught the Israelite the doctrine of vicarious atonement, and led him to holiness and salvation, centuries before Isaiah taught that Messiah was the true sin-offering.

If the Old Testament is preparatory for Christ in every part, and this preparation is conducted by means of types and prophecies, it is merely to repeat the same idea in other language, to say that types and prophecies of Christ together complete the entire sum of the Old Testament. Every bestowment of material good and every deliverance from temporal evil is a type of the ultimate good and the ultimate salvation. Every prophecy of inferior good things is likewise indirectly a prophecy of Christ and of the benefits to be wrought by him. Everything has its lesson, and that lesson is Christ.

Types and prophecies are intermingled throughout the entire extent of the Old Testament, in varying proportions, the former as more obscure, predominating at the beginning; the latter as more explicit and plain, predominating toward the close. These may be regarded as forming two parallel and intimately related courses of instruction, the lessons conveyed

by each being closely allied at each successive period. It would be going too far to affirm that the prophecies of every individual period teach just so much and no more than is to be found in the types of that period, and *vice versâ*. This has been maintained and the attempt made to exhibit it in detail; but such a view could only arise from a preconceived theory, and it requires to be bolstered up by a forced exegesis. The freedom of the Divine communications was hampered by no such mechanical rigour or pedantic exactness. It is sufficient that the prophetic lessons of each period were precisely adapted to the circumstances of the time; and in these same circumstances lay also the types of the future. Types not infrequently suggest the theme as well as the form of prophecy; and prophecy often unfolds what is latent in types. The point of consequence to be observed at present, however, is simply that an intimate relation subsists between contemporaneous types and prophecies; and that the sum of the types and prophecies of any given period constitute the preparatory work of that period, or in other words, its proper function as a part of the Old Testament.

It is further to be noted that the Old Testament, though preparatory to Christ and predictive of him everywhere, is not predictive in equal measure throughout. Just as it is with the miraculous element in Divine revelation, which though never entirely disappearing, retreats at certain periods into the background, while at others it advances into prominence and bursts forth in a grand display of miraculous energy. So the predictive element ebbs and flows, now swelling up into manifest and conspicuous typical forms and prophetic utterances, then sinking away again until these are scarcely discernible. Types and prophecies are accumulated at particular epochs in great numbers and of a striking character. And then, as if in order that these lessons might be fully learned before the attention was diverted by the impartation of others, an interval is allowed to elapse, in which predictions, whether implicit or explicit, are comparatively few and unimportant. Then another brilliant epoch follows, succeeded by a fresh decline; periods of nutrition we might almost call them, and of digestion; periods

of instruction on the part of God, succeeded by periods of study on the part of the people.

These periods of marked predictive character are never mere repetitions of those which preceded them. Each has its own distinctive character and quality. The reason why types and prophecies are so multiplied, is that no one is adequate to set forth the coming Redeemer and his great salvation. One is employed to represent one feature, and another another. And even when all that belong to an entire period are combined together, the aggregate result still affords but a partial representation. It emphasizes particular aspects and gives prominence to certain characteristics; but others are necessarily neglected altogether or left in comparative obscurity. And if these are to be brought distinctly to view, a new period is necessary to represent them. Thus one period serves as the complement of another, and all must be combined in order to gain a complete notion of the preparation for Christ effected by the Old Testament, or of that exhibition of Messiah and his work which it was deemed requisite to make prior to his appearing. A thorough acquaintance with the structure of the Old Testament implies a knowledge of the plan and method according to which this preparation was made; how much and what was accomplished in each particular period; and passing further into detail how much and what precise portion of the work of each period was assigned to each individual type and prophecy. Such a sifting of the whole subject, if it shall ever be effected, will reveal how all parts of this wonderful organism down to the most minute particular conspire together to work out one grand, harmonious, ever developing scheme.

Christ is predicted negatively as well as positively. As every good conferred stands in the relation of similitude to him and to the ultimate salvation, so every evil endured and every imperfection or alloy discovered in existing forms of good stand in the relation of contrast to the same, and are negatively predictive of it. These awaken a sense of wants, deficiencies and needs, which is designed to point forward to him as their supply. Their particular office in the work of preparation is to create a hunger, which shall crave the heavenly bread. In like manner every prophecy of evil is negatively prophetic of

Christ. Now, since each predictive period expresses just the resultant of the particular types and prophecies embraced within it, its character is determined by the predominant character of these types and prophecies. If these are predominantly of a negative description, the period viewed as a whole is negatively predictive. If they are prevailingly positive, they constitute a positively predictive period.

If now we consider the sacred history from the call of Abraham to the close of the Old Testament, we cannot fail to perceive that it spontaneously divides itself into a series of periods alternately negative and positive. There is first a period in which a want is developed in the experience of those whom God is thus training, and brought distinctly to their consciousness. Then follows a period devoted to its supply. Then comes a new want and a fresh supply, and so on.

In the patriarchal, for example, we find a negative period. Its characteristic is its wants, its patient, longing expectation of that, the actual bestowment of which was reserved for a future time. The burden of its promises and its hopes was a numerous seed, and the possession of the land of Canaan as a first step toward the blessing which God was to bring through them upon all nations. The positive period corresponding to this is that of Moses and Joshua, in which we see these wants supplied, a great nation organized in covenant with God, and the land of Canaan bestowed as his immediate gift.

The period of the judges again possesses a negative character. Though they were swollen to a numerous people, had received their constitution and laws from God himself, possessed the land flowing with milk and honey as his gift, were attended by his miraculous interpositions, and made victorious over their foes, the imperfections which were soon developed showed them that they had not yet reached the ultimate good. Israel was not yet ripe for a pure theocracy with no visible head, a condition only to be realized in the final consummation. In their imperfect state the bonds which knit the nation together were too feeble and too easily dissolved. Hence their weakness; their civil dissensions tending to anarchy, and their repeated subjugation by surrounding enemies, convincing them of the need of a stronger union under a visible head, a king to

go before them. Although the untimeliness and the improprieties of the popular request upon this subject were rebuked and punished by giving to the people Saul as their first monarch, the necessity was a real one, and was supplied in David and Solomon, who accordingly mark the corresponding positive period.

Then follows another negative period, embracing the schism, the decline of the kingdom, and the captivity, with its corresponding positive, the restoration.

Guided by the marked and prominent features of the history now recited, and combining each negative with the positive which forms its appropriate complement, we can scarcely be mistaken in distinguishing three great preparatory periods, viz.

1. From the call of Abraham to the death of Joshua.
2. To the death of Solomon.
3. To the close of the Old Testament.

All that precedes the call of Abraham is purely preliminary to it, and is to be classed with the first period as its introduction or explanatory antecedent.

Transferring these divisions to the Old Testament Scriptures, into whose structure we are inquiring, we shall have to distinguish the following portions, viz.

1st. The Pentateuch and Joshua.

2d. The history as far as the death of Solomon, and in addition the poetical books, with the exception of Lamentations. The book of Job, it is here assumed, belongs to this period, where the most recent and able biblical scholars are now disposed to place it. The grounds of their opinion, and the reasons which incline us to acquiesce in it, cannot here be stated.

3d. The remainder of the Old Testament history, together with the prophetic books, including the book of Lamentations, which upon this classification must be reckoned an appendix to the prophecies of Jeremiah, which it follows in our ordinary Bibles.

It will be perceived that this triple division, though based on an entirely distinct principle, and reached by a totally different route, is yet closely allied to the quadruple division previously made. The groups of books before discovered in the Old

Testament here reappear, with only divergence enough to show that the partition is not mechanical but organic, and hence no absolute severance is possible. In every true organism there is more or less overlapping of parts, and all are firmly bound together by ligaments which cannot be sundered without injury and laceration. Parts which in one respect perform distinct functions, may in another stand in intimate mutual relation. And the point of junction between separate organs is covered or cemented by what is really attached to both, and under different points of view is capable of being considered the continuation of one or the starting-point of the other.

Here as before the Old Testament resolves itself into its legal, historical, poetical, and prophetic books, only the historical, though not blended with the other classes, are partitioned relatively to them, and severally set in juxtaposition with that class with which they are most closely connected.* This shows that they not only have a separate function of their own, which it is their peculiar province to fulfil, but they serve likewise in a measure to determine or define the function of the others, or furnish at least the occasion or the theatre for its performance. Hence arises a symmetrical division of three periods of divinely guided history, and at the close of each an immediate divine revelation, for which the history furnishes the preliminary training, and in a measure the theme. The history recorded by Moses and consummated by Joshua has as its complement the law given at Sinai and in the wilderness. The further history to the death of Solomon formed a preparation for the poetical books, which crown the brilliant termination of this period. The subsequent history prepares the way for the prophets, who are in like manner gathered about its concluding stages.

And while the several groups of books are set in close mutual relation in the manner just stated, they are also knit together by overlapping edges. Joshua, according to one method of division and one mode of conceiving it, continues and completes the history of the Pentateuch; the other method sees in it the

* In the Masoretic arrangement of the canon, the historical books are partly classed with the prophetic and partly with the poetical, but upon a different principle, as before explained.

opening of a new development. The book of Lamentations is allied in style and general character to the rest of the poetical books; but it records a providential lesson which was not unfolded until the succeeding period was far advanced, and prophecies had accumulated about the dire event. The reign of Solomon is the sequel to that of David, carrying the kingdom in Israel to a still higher pitch of prosperity and renown; and yet in Kings it is put at the opening of a new book, since it may be likewise viewed under another aspect, as containing the seeds of the dissolution that followed.

It will not be possible at the close of this discussion, already sufficiently protracted, to characterize at any length these three divisions of the Old Testament, and exhibit the particular part performed by each in the general work of preparation for the coming of Christ. A few observations only may be made of a preliminary character touching their form rather than their substance.

1. A correspondence may be noted between the first and the following divisions. The Pentateuch and Joshua fulfil their course successively in two distinct though related spheres. They contain first a record of individual experience and individual training in the lives of the patriarchs; and secondly, the national experience and training of Israel under Moses and Joshua. These spheres repeat themselves, the former in the second grand division of the Old Testament, the latter in the third. The histories of the second division are predominantly the record of individual experience, and its poetry is individual in its character. Judges and Samuel are simply a series of historical biographies; Judges, of the distinguished men raised up from time to time to deliver the people out of the hands of their oppressors; Samuel, of the three leading characters by whom the affairs of the people were shaped in that important period of transition, Samuel, Saul, and David. Ruth, the only other historical book of this division, is a biographical sketch from private life. The poetical books are not only subjective in their character, unfolding the divinely guided reflections of individual minds, or the inward struggles of individual souls, but their lessons, whether devo-

tional or Messianic, are chiefly based on the personal experience of David and Solomon.

The third division of the Old Testament on the other hand resembles the closing portion of the first in being national. Its histories, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, concern the nation at large, and the same may be said to a certain extent even of Esther. The communications of the prophets are God's messages to the people, and their form and character are conditioned by the state and prospects of the nation.

2. The number of organs employed in their communication increases with each successive division. In the first there are but two inspired writers. Moses was the sole lawgiver; he too was the principal historian, one book covering a brief but important period being added by Joshua. In the second, the historians were distinct from the poets, the latter consisting of David, Solomon, and other sacred singers, together with the author of the book of Job. But in the third we find the greatest number of inspired writers together with the most elaborate articulation, and hence an advance in organic structure. Not only are the writers of history distinct from the writers of prophecy, but each of these admit of subdivision and classification. Of the historians, the author of Kings belonged to the prophetic order, the rest did not; and this difference in official character involved a difference in the style and purpose of their respective productions. There are sixteen prophetic books, and these vary in character as they relate to the kingdom of Israel or to that of Judah, and as they precede or were contemporaneous with the Assyrian captivity, precede the Babylonish exile, were written in exile, or after the restoration.

3. There is a progress in the style of instruction adopted in each successive division. The first is purely typical. The few brief and isolated though not unimportant prophecies which are scattered through it, are lost in the general mass. There is no book nor anything approaching it devoted to prophecy. Types either historical or legal occupy the whole. The second division is of a mixed character, but types predominate. We meet here not a simple record of typical facts and institutions without remark or explanation, as in the Pen-

tateuch and Joshua ; but in the poetical books types are singled out and dwelt upon, expanded in their ideal character and made the basis of predictions which delineate with marvellous minuteness and exactness the person and work of Christ. The third and last division is also of a mixed character, but prophecies predominate. These are now no longer bound to types, but take a broader scope and a bolder flight, bringing to light such rich stores of instruction respecting the coming Messiah that the types are almost lost sight of in the comparison.

4. These divisions severally render prominent the three offices of the Redeemer. The first, by its law, the central institution of which is sacrifice, and which impresses a sacerdotal organization upon the people, points to Jesus as priest. The second, which revolves about the kingdom, regards Jesus as king, though the erection of Solomon's temple and the new stability and splendour given to the ritual show that his priesthood is not forgotten. In the third, the prophets rise to prominence, and the people themselves, dispersed among the nations to be the teachers of the world, take on a prophetic character, typifying Jesus as a prophet. Whilst nevertheless the rebuilding of the temple by Zerubbabel, and the prophetic description of its ideal reconstruction by Ezekiel, point still to his priesthood, and the favour of the Persian monarch aspiring to universal empire dimly foreshadows his kingdom.

The poetical and prophetical books, when estimated from a Messianic standpoint, form a beautiful and self-contained system, but no space remains for its exhibition at present.