

all their unfading richness: let the apostolic faithfulness of Lattimer and Ridley arise from the dead, and, if not in its pristine familiarity, at least in its simplicity of instruction and power of rebuke, address itself again to the consciences of legislators and rulers, as well as to the masses of the people; let the same voice that expounds the nature and extent of 'the fear' due to God, inseparably unite with it the nature and extent of 'the honour' due to the king. Leave not the world to 'the spirit of the age' but lift up before it the 'standard' of the Spirit of God; leave it not to the reckless impulses of 'the pressure from without,' but labour faithfully to establish sound principles within; nor let us think that we have done our duty, till 'every thought,'—whether of spiritual men, or of secular men,—is brought into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ."

HORÆ BIBLICÆ.

NO. XII.

ON THE POETRY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

CONCLUDING ESSAY.

Having presented my readers with a specimen of cognate parallelism, I proceed to the consideration of the variety called antithetic parallelism: Poetic lines are said to be antithetically parallel when any two such lines correspond one with another, not by the use of equivalent, but of opposite terms; when there is a contrast either in sense or in expression, between the first and second lines of the couplet. Examples of this kind of poetry are most frequent in the book of Proverbs. And there is a point and terseness in this antithetical versification which is peculiarly suitable to the general character of that book. Thus—

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow,
For thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

Here to *boast* stands in antithesis to that ignorance which is described by *thou knowest not*; and to *to-morrow*, as the future, is opposed to *a day*, as describing the present time.

"The full soul loatheth the honey-comb,
But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

The *full* is opposed to the *hungry soul*; *loathing* to *accounting sweet*; the *honey comb* to *every bitter thing*.

"The memory of the just is blessed,
But the name of the wicked shall rot."

The contra-position of terms in this passage is very fine and impressive. The *memory* of a just man—not the mere name, but the recollection of his whole character—his benevolence, his disinterestedness, his integrity—shall all live, and not only live, but live with perpetual benedictions in the hearts of those who have known him: but the *very name*, the *shadow*, the mere outline of a wicked man shall rot; shall first, gradually, and then finally and for ever perish. No trace of him shall be left to remind posterity that ever he had a being; or if he still exist in their memory, shall remain merely as a nuisance or object of disgust.

These examples will enable the attentive reader of his Bible to find many passages of a similar character, which he will perceive to be more beautiful than he had before considered them, by knowing that there is the design and artifice of poetry in their construction; when, possibly, he had previously regarded them as mere accidental antitheses.

The third kind of parallelism is called *constructive*; which term implies considerably greater latitude in the disposition of the members of a poetic sentence than either of the former. The parallelism here is nothing but *similarity of construction*. It is not necessary that word should agree with word, and sentence with sentence, but that there should be some correspondence, more or less obvious, between the terms used. This class is made to comprehend all that do not come under the two former.—

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

This is called a bi-membral parallel, in which each line consists of two members. Sometimes the preceding line supplies the following with a clause, for the purpose of producing impression and giving poetical cadence.—

"The waters saw thee, O God,
The waters saw thee and were afraid."

A very beautiful variety of parallelism is found in stanzas of four lines, of which the first corresponds with the third, and the second with the fourth. Thus—

"O come let us sing unto the Lord,
Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation;
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms."
(Psalm xcv. 1, 2.)

The stanza is sometimes so artfully constructed as that the third line continues the sense of the first, and the fourth line continues the sense of the second.

Thus, according to the translation given by Parkhurst, and adopted by Jebb—

"I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
And my sword shall devour flesh;
With the blood of the slain and of the captive,
From the hairy head of the enemy."
(Deuteronomy xxxii. 1, 2.)

The meaning of which is plain when you transpose the lines.—

"I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
With the blood of the slain and of the captive;
And my sword shall devour flesh
From the hairy head of the enemy."

Again—

"The sword of the Lord is filled with blood,
It is made fat with fatness;
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of kidneys of rams."
(Isaiah xlv. 6.)

When transposed, it reads thus—

"The sword of the Lord is filled with blood,
With the blood of lambs and goats;
It is made fat with fatness,
With the fat of kidneys of rams."

It is remarked by Bishop Jebb, that there are stanzas so constructed that, whatever be the number of lines, the first shall be parallel with the last, the second with the penultimate, and so throughout, in an order that looks inward, or, to borrow a military phrase, from flanks to centre. This may be called the *inverted parallelism*.—

"My son, if thy heart be wise,
My heart also shall rejoice;
Yea my reins shall rejoice,
When thy lips speak right things."
(Proverbs xxiii. 15, 16.)

"From the hand of hell I will redeem thee:
From death I will reclaim thee:
Death! I will be thy pestilence,
Hell! I will be thy burning plague."
(Hosea xiii. 14.—Horsley's Translation.)

"The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands;
They have mouths but they speak not;
They have eyes but they see not;
They have ears but they hear not;
Neither is there any breath in their mouth;
They who make them are like unto them,
So are all they that put their trust in them."
(Psalm cxxxv. 15—18.)

The parallelism of the extreme members will be more obvious by reducing the whole to two quatrains.—

"The idols of the heathen are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands;
They who make them are like unto them,
So are all they that put their trust in them.

They have mouths, but they speak not;
They have eyes, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not;
Neither is there any breath in their mouths."

There is another kind of parallelism closely allied to the inverted parallelism, which is clearly and beautifully explained in the work to which I have already alluded, to which I am almost entirely indebted for whatever information I may here give to my readers. In the choral singing employed in Jewish worship, it is very common for the second line of a distich to commence with a word or sentiment exactly parallel to the last word or sentiment in the first line. This was not only for the purpose of ornament, but probably arose from a conviction of the great force which such a form of expression gave to the principal sentiment in the passage. "Two pair of terms, or propositions, conveying two important, but not equally important notions, are to be so distributed, as to bring out the sense in the strongest and most impressive manner: now this result will be best attained, by commencing and concluding with the notions to which prominence is to be given; and by placing in the centre the less important notion, or that from which the scope of the argument is to be kept subordinate; an arrangement not only accordant with the genius of Hebrew poetry, and with the practice of alternate recitation, but sanctioned also by the best rules of criticism."*

This remark is illustrated by the following example, and the criticism upon it.—

"For he hath satisfied the craving soul;
And the famished soul he hath filled with goodness."
(Psalm cvii. 9.)

"Here are two pair of terms, conveying the two notions of complete destitution by famine, and of equally complete relief administered by the divine bounty. The notion of relief, as best fitted to excite gratitude, (which is the direct object of the whole Psalm,) was obviously that to which prominence was to be given; and this accordingly was effected by placing it *first* and *last*: the idea of destitution, on the contrary, as a painful one, and not in unison with the hilarity of grateful adoration, had the *central*, that is, the less important place assigned to it; while even there, the rapid succession and duplication of the *craving soul* and the *famished soul*, by making the extremity of past affliction, but heightens the enjoyment of the glad conclusion—*he hath filled with goodness!*"

Similar remarks may be applied to the next couplet.—

"For he hath destroyed the gates of brass,
And the bars of iron hath he smitten asunder:—"

Where it is evident that the thoughts are mainly directed to the power of God displayed on behalf of his people, as the great theme of gratitude; while the miseries of imprisonment within gates of brass and bars of iron, occupy the middle and inferior place, and are made to serve as a foil more strikingly to exhibit the glory of Him by whom the deliverance was wrought.

* Bishop Jebb.

J. K.

THE CHURCH.

COBOURG, SATURDAY, MAY 12, 1838.

In the very first number of this Journal, we announced the promise of a contribution from an esteemed correspondent, on the 'office of Deacons in the primitive church;' but from various engagements and subsequent absence from the country, his intention of enriching our columns with so useful an article was never fulfilled. This subject, however, has awakened a good deal of discussion as well amongst individual clergymen as at their associated meetings, from a persuasion that the office of Deacon, as exercised in the primitive church, has, in modern times, become considerably changed in its character. This, no doubt, has been, in a great measure, the result of necessity;—because it has, as a general rule, been found impracticable to ensure that separate provision for the diaconal office, which, in maintaining it essentially as a distinct order, would necessarily be required. Be this as it may, we are firmly of opinion that not only does an adherence to primitive usage,—to the original intention, in short, of the office itself,—require its distinction from the superior order of presbyters to be wider than it now is, but the efficiency of the ministry at large and the general welfare of the Church would be much promoted by its restoration, in a closer degree, to the functions which were specifically assigned to it in the earlier ages of Christianity:

We insert in another column an interesting extract upon this subject from a recent charge of the Right Reverend Bishop Hopkins of the Diocese of Vermont. We are not prepared to concur in all the details suggested by the learned prelate as to the means by which the practical efficiency of this grade in the ministry may be restored, but we entirely agree in the general views he advances, and in the propriety of placing that order once more upon the basis which, in the Apostolic age, had been established.

We need not lay before our readers those proofs of the existence of three orders in the primitive Christian ministry which are so abundantly presented in the Scriptures themselves, as well as in ancient ecclesiastical history; nor need we remind them that these grades in the Christian priesthood were undoubtedly designed to be analogous to those which were divinely appointed in the Jewish dispensation. But certainly something more than the mere fact of a gradation must have been intended in establishing these separate orders in the ministry; there must have been some positive and practical utility associated with such a regulation of the government of the church. The superior orders of Bishop and Presbyter have their distinctive functions very clearly marked; but if the Deacon, upon ordination, becomes, as is now generally the case, invested virtually with every function that pertains to the office of Presbyter,—that of administering the Lord's Supper excepted;—if he acts in an independent character, and is entrusted with the full and uncontrolled management of a parish; the practical necessity of his office, as a distinct order, becomes questionable.

We have, however, the Apostolic—the divine—authority for its maintenance; and it is certain that the restoration of its duties to the primitive rule would ensure those practical benefits from its existence which are now, in a great degree, lost. There are duties appertaining to the ministry now, as there were then, which, while they ought to be performed by persons invested with a sacred character, do not demand the qualifications particularly requisite in those who, as a special business, are to proclaim and expound the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. There are offices of a ceremonial character, and various services demanding more of bodily labour than of mental qualification, which might be safely entrusted to an order of men of a lower standard of intellectual acquirement than is commonly required in the presbyters of the Church, while the delegation to them of such duties would leave to the latter more time and opportunity for the higher and more specific business of their calling.

In the restoration, then, of the office of deacon to its primitive state, there would be this positive advantage gained,—a more minute supervision of those temporal wants of a congregation which are expected to engage the special attention of the Christian minister,—a closer attention to the religious instruction of the young, especially of the children of the poor,—and consequently a greater freedom to the pastor of the parish to extend the range and increase the amount of his spiritual ministrations. Such aid, however, might not perhaps be generally necessary unless in towns of considerable size, where the usual large collection of the poor throws upon the parochial clergyman an incredible amount of duty; but we would submit whether in ordinary country parishes,—where a population perhaps of 2000 souls, scattered over a surface of eighty or a hundred miles, is comprised within the limits of a ministerial charge,—such an auxiliary to share at least in the itinerant portion of the duty, would not be highly desirable. To every parish, therefore, we could wish to see a deacon as well as a presbyter attached, and in those of larger size two or more of the former order, as circumstances might require; but in no case, we conceive, should a person merely in deacon's orders be invested with the sole and uncontrolled charge of a parish.

That the views we have been advancing are not merely theoretical, abundant proofs are furnished every day. The insufficiency of clerical provision for many large parishes in England has led to the formation of the 'Church Pastoral Aid Society,' the object of which is to furnish not only clerical but also lay assistants to the incumbents of extensive parishes; and at the very moment of our writing this, we have seen an account of the formation of a similar society in Montreal, in order to supply to the clergymen of the Established Church in that city the same species of lay co-operation. The employment, however, of laymen in such a capacity is an irregularity—we cannot refrain from calling it so, pardonable in the present exigency as it may be—which, we think, would soon be obviated by placing the Deacon's office upon that proper footing of subordination in which it originally stood. The same irregularity which, with every deference to the pious motives which have suggested its adoption, we feel constrained to consider as applicable to the office of a Catechist, might also be removed by admitting the holders of that office to the order of Deacon, in its primitive and legitimate sense. Their efficiency and usefulness would, by this means, be very much promoted; and while no abatement should be made in those qualifications of piety and general moral fitness required in every candidate for the sacred ministry, it might, in many instances, be allowable—as Bishop Hopkins remarks—to lower the standard of intellectual acquirement.

There is much, however, to be said upon this subject,—more than our limits will permit us to express; and to many of our readers it might be gratifying to be furnished with a detailed statement of the specific duties which, in the primitive Church, were assigned to the deacon's office. This we may take another opportunity of laying before them: in the mean time, we are anxious for the full and free discussion of so important a subject; and if the remarks we have offered should serve, in any degree, to that end, our present object will be answered.

In the 'British Colonist' of the 3d instant, we observe a communication, signed "A Scot," in which are contained some very severe reflections upon the Rev. Mr. Mayerhoffer, who holds a pastoral charge in the townships of Markham and Vaughan. We submit to the Editor of that journal whether it is quite consistent with the dignified and honourable position which the conductor of a respectable paper should assume, to admit an anonymous communication containing charges so serious against the moral character of a Christian minister. We doubt not that