

of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the minor prophets comes under the same designation; while the closing book of the New Testament is highly poetic in structure. How are we to account for this extensive employment of the poetic faculty?

Since, as we have seen, God has not spoken to us in thunder tones from Sinai, nor sent down a revelation written in the language of the third heavens, but "moved holy men" to convey his will, it follows that these inspired men must, in order to be intelligible, adopt the forms of utterance to which their fellow-men were accustomed. Still farther, we might naturally expect that God's prophets would use the most forcible, striking and impressive forms of human speech; those most likely to arouse the attention, captivate the feelings and move the heart. Now of all forms in which man can speak the thought that is heaving his own breast, none is so fitted to arrest the attention powerfully as that of poetry. How world-wide the influence of the true poet! How his sweet words re-echo for centuries through the huts and halls of millions of men, and move all hearts! He understood human nature well who said "give me the making of a nation's songs, and I care not who makes their laws." The most potent of all who bear sway over the human spirit is the genuine poet. If then the Bible was to be fitted for the great work of moving the world,—moulding men's minds and guiding their conduct, it must not neglect the use of that which struck the deepest cord in the human heart; it must sound the poet's lyre if the world is to follow after. Here again we see divine wisdom displaying itself in the selection of the best means to accomplish the end in view.

Still farther,—poetry is always the form in which strong feeling tends to embody itself. The deepest and tenderest feelings of our nature find utterance in song. Whether we are deeply moved with sorrow or joy, rage or terror; whether awestricken or passion-tost, the language of the excited imagination is highly figurative, and therefore poetic. Strong feeling must create poetry. And conceive, for a moment, what rapt emotions of awe and pity—of terror, wonder and adoration must have swept through the souls of the Hebrew prophets when the spirit of inspiration moved them, and visions of the eternal splendours broke in upon them, and they felt "the