tends to the 10th chapter. This contains general cau­tions and exhortations for a teacher to his pupil, expreſſed in elegant language, duly connected in its parts, illuſtrated with beautiful deſcription, and well contrived to engage and intereſt the attention.

2. The ſecond part extends from the beginning of chap. X. to chap, xxii. 17. and conſiſts of what may ſtrictly and properly be called proverbs, viz. unconnect­ed ſentences, expreſſed with much neatneſs and ſimplicity. They are truly, to uſe the language of their ſage author, “apples of gold in pictures of ſilver.”

3. In the third part, which is included between chap­ter xxii. 16. and chapter xxv. the tutor drops the ſententious ſtyle, addreſſes his pupil as preſent, and delivers his advices in a connected manner.

4. The proverbs which are included between chapter xχv. and chapter xxx. are ſuppoſed to have been ſelected by *the men oſ Hezekiah* from ſome larger collection of Solomon, that is, by the prophets whom he em­ployed to reſtore the ſervice and writings of the church. Some of the proverbs which Solomon had introduced into the former part of the book are here repeated.

5. The prudent admonitions which Agur delivered to his pupils Ithiel and Ucal are contained in the 30th chapter, and in the 31ſt are recorded the precepts which the mother of Lemuel delivered to her ſon.

Several references are evidently made to the book of Proverbs by the writers of the New Teſtament@@\*.

The Proverbs of Solomon afford ſpecimens of the didactic poetry of the Hebrews. They abound with antithetic parallels; for this form is peculiarly adapted to that kind of writing, to adages, aphoriſms, and de­tached ſentences. Indeed, the elegance, acuteneſs, and force of a great number of Solomon’s wiſe ſayings ariſe in a great meaſure from the antithetic form, the oppoſition of diction and ſentiment. Take the following examples:

The blows of a friend are faithful;

But the kiſſes of an enemy are treacherous.

The cloyed will trample upon an honeycomb;

But to the hungry every bitter thing is ſweet.

There is who maketh himſelf rich, and wanteth all

things;

Who maketh himſelf poor, yet hath much wealth.

The rich man is wiſe in his own eyes,

But the poor man that hath diſcernment to trace him

out will deſpiſe him@@\*.

The Hebrew title of the book which we call Eccleſiaſtes is *Keleth,* that is, the *Gatherer* or *Collector;* and it is ſo called, either becauſe the work itſelf is a *colle3ioη* of maxims, or becauſe it was delivered to an aſſembly *gathered* together to hear them. The Greek term *Ecclefiaſles* is of the ſame import, ſignifying one who *gathers* together a congregation, or who *diſcourses* or *preaches* to an aſſembly convened. That Solomon was the author of this book is beyond all doubt; the beautiful deſcription of the phenomena in the natural world, and their cauſes; of the circulation of the blood, as ſome think @@\*, and the economy of the hu­man frame, ſhews it to be the work of a philoſopher. At what period of his life it was written may be eaſily found out. The affecting account of the infirmities of old age which it contains, is a ſtrong indication that the author knew by experience what they were; and his complete conviction of the vanity of all earthly enjoy­ments proves it to have been the work of a penitent. Some paſſages in it ſeem, indeed, to expreſs an Epicu­rean notion of Providence. But it is to be obſerved, that the author, in an academic way, diſputes on both ſides of the queſtion; and at laſt concludes properly, that to “fear God and keep his commandments is the whole duty of man; for God (ſays he) will bring every work to judgment, and every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

The general tenor and ſtyle of Eccleſiaſtes is very dif­ferent from the book of Proverbs, though there are many detached ſentiments and proverbs interſperſed. For the whole work is uniform, and confined to one ſubject, namely, the vanity of the world exemplified by the experience of Solomon, who is introduced in the cha­racter of a perſon inveſtigating a very difficult queſtion, examining the arguments on either ſide, and at length diſengaging himſelf from an anxious and doubtful diſputation. It would be very difficult to diſtinguiſh the parts and arrangement of this production; the order of the ſubject, and the connection of the arguments, are involved in ſo much obſcurity, that ſcarcely any two commentators have agreed concerning the plan of the work, and the accurate diviſion of it into parts or ſections. The truth is, the laws of methodical compoſition and arrangement were neither known by the He­brews nor regarded in their didactic writings. They uniformly retained the old ſententious manner, nor did they ſubmit to method, even where the occaſion appear­ed to demand it. The ſtyle of this work is, however, ſingular; the language is generally low; it is frequently looſe, unconnected, approaching to the incorrectneſs of converſation; and poſſeſſes very little of the poetical character, even in the compoſition and ſtructure of the periods: which peculiarity may poſſibly be accounted for from the nature of the ſubject. Contrary to the opi­nion of the Rabbies, Eccleſiaſtes has been claſſed among the poetical books; though, if their authority and opi­nions were of any weight or importance, they might perhaps on this occaſion deſerve ſome attention.

The Song of Solomon, in the opinion of Dr Lowth, is an *epithalamium* or nuptial dialogue, in which the principal characters are Solomon, his bride, and a cho­rus of virgins. Some are of opinion that it is to be taken altogether in a literal ſenſe; but the generality of Jews and Chriſtians have eſteemed it wholly allego­rical, expreſſing the union of Jeſus Chriſt and the church. Dr Lowth has ſupported the common opi­nion, by ſhowing that the ſacred writers often apply metaphors to God and his people derived from the conjugal ſtate. Our Saviour is ſtyled a *bridegroom* by John the Baptiſt (John iii.), and is repreſented in the ſame character in the parable of the ten virgins. Mi­chaelis, on the other hand, rejects the argument drawn from analogy as inconcluſive, and the opinion of Jews and Chriſtians as of no greater authority than the opi­nion of the moderns.

The ſecond of thoſe great diviſions under which the Jews claffed the books of the Old Teſtament was that of the Prophets, which formerly comprehended 16 books.

The Prophets were 16 in number: Iſaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hoſea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Ze-

@@@[m]\* Rom. xii. 16, 20. I Pet. iv. 8. v. 5. James iv. 6.

@@@[m]\* Proverbs xxvii. 6, 7. xiii. 7. xxvii. II.

@@@[m]\* See *Horsley's Sermon before the Humane Society.*