bol for deſtruction by war. The *aſcent of ſmoke* from any thing burning for ever, denotes the continuance of **a** people under ſlavery. *Riding in the clouds,* ſignifies reigning over many ſubjects. *Tempestuous winds,* or *motion of the clouds,* denote wars. *Thunder* denotes the noiſe of multitudes. *Fountains oſ waters* expreſs cities, *Mountains and islands,* cities with the territories belong­ing to them. *Houſes and ſhips* ſtand for families, aſſemblies, and towns. A *forest* is put for a kingdom. **A** *wilderneſs* for a nation much diminiſhed in its num­bers.

Animals, as a *lion, bear, leopard, goat,* are put for kingdoms or political communities correſponding to their reſpective characters. When a man or beaſt is put for a kingdom, the head repreſents thoſe who go­vern; the tail thoſe who are governed; the *horns* de­note the number of military powers or ſtates that riſe from the head. *Seeing* ſignifies underſtanding; *eyes* men of underſtanding; the *mouth* denotes a lawgiver; the *arm oſ a man* is put for power, or for the people by whoſe ſtrength his power is exerciſed; fe*et* repreſent the loweſt of the people.

Such is the preciſion and regularity of the prophetic language, which we learn to interpret by comparing prophecies which are accompliſhed with the facts to which they correſpond. So far is the ſtudy of it carried already, that a dictionary has been compoſed to explain it; and it is probable, that in a ſhort time it may be ſo fully underſtood, that we ſhall find little dif­ficulty in explaining any prophecy. But let us not from this expect, that the prophecies will enable us to penetrate the dark clouds of futurity: No! The diffi­culty of applying prophecies to their correſponding events, before completion, will ſtill remain unſurmountable. Thoſe men, therefore, however pious and well- meaning they may be, who attempt to explain and ap­ply prophecies which are not yet accompliſhed, and who delude the credulous multitude by their own ro­mantic conjectures, cannot be acquitted of raſhneſs and preſumption.

The predictions of the prophets, according to the opinion of Dr Lowth, are written in a poetic ſtyle. They poſſeſs indeed all the characteriſtics of Hebrew poetry, with the ſingle exception, that none of them are alphabetical or acroſtic, which is an artificial ar

rangement utterly repugnant to the nature of pro­phecy.

The other arguments, however, ought to be parti­cularly adverted to upon this ſubject: the poetic dia­lect, for inſtance, the diction ſo totally different from the language oſ common life, and other ſimilar circumſtances, which an attentive reader will eaſily diſcover, but which cannot be explained by a few examples; for circumſtances which, taken ſeparately, appear but of ſmall account, are in a united view frequently of the greateſt importance. To theſe we may add the artifi­cial conformation of the ſentences; which are a neceſſary concomitant of metrical compoſition, the only one indeed which is now apparent, as it has always appear­ed to us.

The order in which the books of the minor prophets are placed is not the fame in the Septuagint as in the Hebrew @@\*. According to the latter, they ſtand as in our tranſlation; but in the Greek, the ſeries is altered as to the ſix firſt, to the following arrangement: Hoſea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah. This change, however, is of no conſequence, ſince neither in the ori­ginal, nor in the Septuagint, are they placed with ex­act regard to the time in which their ſacred authors reſpectively flouriſhed.

The order in which they ſhould ſtand, if chronologi­cally arranged, is by Blair and others ſuppoſed to be as follows: Jonah, Amos, Hoſea, Micah, Nahum, Joel, Zephaniah, Habbakuk, Obadiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. And this order will he found to be generally conſiſtent with the periods to which the Prophets will be reſpectively aſſigned in the following pages, except in the inſtance of Joel, who probably flouriſhed ra­ther earlier than he is placed by theſe chronologers. The preciſe period of this prophet, however, cannot be aſcertained; and ſome diſputes might be maintained concerning the priority of others alſo, when they were nearly contemporaries, as Amos and Hoſea; and when the firſt prophecies of a later prophet were delivered at the ſame time with, or previous to, thoſe of a prophet who was called earlier to the ſacred office. The following ſcheme, however, in which alſo the greater pro­phets will be introduced, may enable the reader more accurately to comprehend the actual and relative periods in which they ſeverally propheſied.

The Prophets in their ſuppoſed Order of Time, arranged according to Blair’s Tables@@\* with but little Variation.

@@@[m]\* Chronology of the Prophets.

@@@[m]\* Bishop Newcomb's Version of Minor Prophets, Preface, p. 43.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Before Chriſt. | Kings of Judah. | Kings of Iſrael. |
| Jonah, | Between 856 and 784. |  | Jehu, and Jehoahaz, accord­ing to Lloyd; but Joaſh and Jeroboam the Second according to Blair. |
| Amos, | Between 810 and 785, | Uzziah, ch. i. 1. | Jeroboam the Second, chap. i. 1. |
| Hoſea, | Between 810 and 725. | Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, the third year of Hezekiah. | Jeroboam the Second, chap. i. 1. |