

THE
LITERARY STUDY OF THE BIBLE

AN ACCOUNT OF THE
LEADING FORMS OF LITERATURE REPRESENTED
IN THE SACRED WRITINGS

INTENDED FOR ENGLISH READERS

BY

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CHAPTER I

VERSIFICATION AND RHYTHMIC PARALLELISM

THE Bible is the worst-printed book in the world. No other monument of ancient or modern literature suffers the fate of being put before us in a form that makes it impossible, without strong effort and considerable training, to take in elements of literary structure which in all other books are conveyed directly to the eye in a manner impossible to mistake.

Literary form of
Scripture ob-
scured by ordi-
nary modes of
printing

By universal consent the authors of the Sacred Scriptures included men who, over and above qualifications of a more sacred nature, possessed literary power of the highest order. But between their time and ours the Bible has passed through what may be called an Age of Commentary, extending over fifteen centuries and more. During this long period form, which should be the handmaid of matter, was more and more overlooked; reverent, keen, minute analysis and exegesis, with interminable verbal discussion, gradually swallowed up the sense of literary beauty. When the Bible emerged from this Age of Commentary, its artistic form was lost; rabbinical commentators had divided it into 'chapters,' and mediæval translators into 'verses,' which not only did not agree with, but often ran counter to, the original structure. The force of this unliterary tradition proved too strong even for the literary instincts of King James's translators. Accordingly, one who reads only the 'Authorized Version' incurs a double danger: if he reads his Bible by chapters he will, without knowing it, be often commencing in the middle of one com-

position and leaving off in the middle of another; while, in
in particular: whatever way he may read it, he will know no dis-
verse printed as tinction between prose and verse. It is only in
prose our own day that a better state of things has
 arisen. The Church of England led the way by issuing its 'New
 Lectionary'; the new lessons will be found to differ from the old
 chiefly in the fact that the passages marked out for public reading
 are no longer limited by the beginnings and endings of chapters.
 Later still the 'Revised Version' of the Bible, whatever it may
 have left undone, has at all events made an attempt to rescue
 Biblical poetry from the reproach of being printed as prose.

It is to the latter of these two points — the distinction between
 verse and prose — that I address myself in the present chapter.

Biblical Versifi- No doubt the confusion of the two would have
cation based on been impossible, were it not that the versification
parallelism of of the Bible is of a kind totally unlike that which
clauses prevails in English literature. Biblical verse is
 made neither by rhyme nor by numbering of syllables; its long-
 lost secret was discovered by Bishop Lowth more than a cen-
 tury after King James's time. Its underlying principle is found
 to be the symmetry of clauses in a verse, which has come to be
 called 'Parallelism.'

Hast thou given the horse his might?
 Hast thou clothed his neck with the quivering mane?
 Hast thou made him to leap as a locust?
 The glory of his snorting is terrible.
 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength:
 He goeth out to meet the armed men.
 He mocketh at fear, and is not dismayed;
 Neither turneth he back from the sword.
 The quiver rattleth against him,
 The flashing spear and the javelin.
 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage;
 Neither standeth he still at the voice of the trumpet.
 As oft as the trumpet soundeth he saith, Aha!
 And he smelleth the battle afar off,
 The thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

It is abundantly clear, first, that this is a passage of the highest rhythmic beauty; secondly, that the effect depends neither on rhyme nor metre. Like the swing of a pendulum to and fro, like the tramp of an army marching in step, the versification of the Bible moves with a rhythm of parallel lines.

How closely the effect of this versification is bound up with the parallelism of the clauses, the reader may satisfy himself by a simple experiment. Let him take such a psalm as the one hundred and fifth; and, commencing (say) with the eighth verse, let him read on, omitting the second line of each couplet: what he reads will then make excellent historic prose.

He hath remembered his covenant for ever: the covenant which he made with Abraham, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute, saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan," when they were but a few men in number, and they went about from nation to nation. He suffered no man to do them wrong, saying, "Touch not mine anointed ones."

Let him now read again, putting in the lines omitted: the prose becomes transformed into verse full of the rhythm and lilt of a march.

He hath remembered his covenant for ever,
 The word which he commanded to a thousand generations;
 The covenant which he made with Abraham,
 And his oath unto Isaac;
 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute,
 To Israel for an everlasting covenant:
 Saying, "Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan,
 The lot of your inheritance":
 When they were but a few men in number;
 Yea, very few, and sojourners in it;
 And they went about from nation to nation,
 From one kingdom to another people
 He suffered no man to do them wrong;
 Yea, he reprov'd kings for their sakes;
 Saying, "Touch not mine anointed ones,
 And do my prophets no harm."

The alphabet, then, of Scriptural versification will be the figures of Parallelism. Of these figures the simplest and most fundamental are the Couplet and Triplet. A Couplet consists of two parallel clauses, a Triplet of three.

The LORD of Hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariots in the fire.

It is remarkable that the musical rendering of the psalms by chants, which in some points is carried to such a degree of nicety, entirely ignores this foundation difference of Couplet and Triplet, the same chant being sung to both. To take a typical case.

The LORD of Hosts is with us

The musical notation shows a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of a long note for 'The LORD of', followed by a triplet of notes for 'Hosts is with us'.

The GOD of Ja - cob is our refuge.

The musical notation shows a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of a long note for 'The GOD of', followed by a triplet of notes for 'Ja - cob is our refuge.'

This is correct, because a piece of music which is two-fold in its structure is sung to a couplet verse. But presently the same music will be sung to the triplet verse.

He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth: }
He breaketh the bow and CUTTETH the } spear in sunder.

The musical notation shows a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of a long note for the first part, followed by a triplet of notes for the second part.

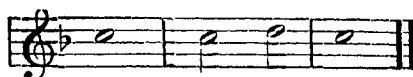
He BURNeth the char - iots in the fire.

The musical notation shows a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody consists of a long note for 'He BURNeth the', followed by a triplet of notes for 'char - iots in the fire.'

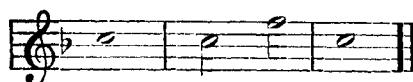
Every ear must detect that this is a clumsy makeshift: it runs counter to a rhythmic distinction as fundamental as the distinction of common time and triple time in music. The remedy is very simple. Chants of this nature are made up of two parts.



As such they are only fitted to couplet verses. For the triplet verse a *variant* is needed to the first part, sufficiently like it to be recognised, yet differing in a note or two. For



a simple variant would be



The couplet verse would be sung as before; for the triplet the variant would be inserted between the first and second parts.

(first part)

He maketh wars to CEASE unto the end of the earth.

(variant)

He breaketh the bow and CUTTETH the spear in sunder.

(second part)

He BURNeth the char - iots in the fire.

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I am loth to delay the reader with what may seem to be merely technical matters. But attention to just a few of the elementary forms of Hebrew verse will richly repay itself in increased susceptibility to the rhythmic cadence of Biblical poetry. Passing then to other figures, it is natural to mention first the Quatrain, which has four lines. The four lines may be related to one another in various ways, of which the commonest is Alternation, the first line being parallel with the third, and the second with the fourth.

Quatrains and
Double Triplets

With the merciful
Thou wilt show thyself merciful:
With the perfect man
Thou wilt show thyself perfect.¹

In the Quatrain Reversed, or Introverted, the first line corresponds with the fourth, and the two middle lines with one another.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to thy loving kindness:
According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies
Blot out my transgressions.²

Usually such introversion is merely a matter of form; but sometimes it is found to be closely bound up with the sense.

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,
Neither cast your pearls before the swine:
Lest haply they [*the swine*] trample them under their feet,
And [*the dogs*] turn and rend you.³

¹ *Psalm* xviii. 25. The following verse is another example, and this figure is very common.

² *Psalm* li. 1. Compare the metre of *In Memoriam*. Other examples are *Psalm* ciii. 1; ix. 15.

³ *Matthew* vii. 6. It will be observed that Hebrew parallelism strongly influences the language of the New Testament, and of Apocryphal books originally Greek. It is therefore technically correct to treat 'Biblical' literature as a department by itself.

Very rarely the couplets of a Quatrain are not only parallel but interwoven, so that the sense of the first line is carried on by the third, and the sense of the second by the fourth.

I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,
 And my sword shall devour flesh :
 With the blood of the slain and the captives,
 [*Flesh*] From the head of the leaders of the enemy.¹

As we have Quatrain and Quatrain Reversed, so we have the Double Triplet and the Triplet Reversed.

Ask, and it shall be given you;
 Seek, and ye shall find;
 Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.
 For every one that asketh receiveth,
 And he that seeketh findeth,
 And to him that knocketh it shall be opened.²

The eye catches what the ear confirms in this arrangement : how the first line of the second triplet balances the first line of the first triplet, the second the second, and the third the third. But in what follows the order of the second triplet is reversed, so that the beginning of the whole corresponds with the end, and the middle lines with one another :

No servant can serve two masters :
 For either he will hate the one,
 And love the other;
 Or else he will hold to one,
 And despise the other.
 Ye cannot serve God and mammon.³

It is to be observed that such figures occur either **Recitative additions to Figures** pure or intermixed with a sequence of words that

¹ *Deut.* xxxii. 42.

² *Matthew* vii. 7, 8. Other examples are *Matthew* xii. 35; *Isaiah* xxxv. 5.

³ *Luke* xvi. 13. Other examples are *Proverbs* xxx. 8, 9; *Ezekiel* i. 27.

remains outside the rhythm, like the 'recitative' of a chant. Such a recitative may occur at the beginning :

And in that day thou shalt say

I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord,
For though thou wast angry with me,
Thine anger is turned away,
And thou comfortest me.

or at the end :

Make the heart of this people fat,
And make their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes :
Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart :
and turn again and be healed.

Or the recitative may even occur by interruption in the middle of the figure : a passage in *St. Matthew* has two Reversed Quatrains in succession thus interrupted.

Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing,
But whosoever shall swear by the Gold of the Temple, he is a debtor :
(*Ye fools and blind*)
For whether is greater, the Gold?
Or the Temple that hath sanctified the Gold?

And, Whosoever shall swear by the Altar, it is nothing,
But whosoever shall swear by the Gift that is upon it, he is a debtor :
(*Ye fools and blind*)
For whether is greater, the Gift?
Or the Altar that sanctifieth the Gift?

There is no limit to the length or variety of such figures in Biblical versification. Of the more elaborate it **The Chain Figure** will be enough to instance two. The Chain Figure is made up of a succession of clauses so linked that the goal of one clause becomes the starting-point of the next.

That which the palmerworm hath left
 hath the locust eaten;
 and that which the locust hath left
 hath the cankerworm eaten;
 and that which the cankerworm hath left
 hath the caterpillar eaten.¹

The figure is all the more impressive when an additional line comes to complete the chain of ideas by connecting the end with the beginning.

For her true beginning is
 desire of discipline;
 And the care for discipline is
 love of her;
 And love of her is
 observance of her laws;
 And to give heed to her laws
 confirmeth incorruption;
 And incorruption bringeth near unto God;
 So then desire of wisdom promoteth to a kingdom.

But perhaps the most important figure, and the one most attractive to the genius of Hebrew poetry, is the Envelope Figure, by which a series of parallel lines running to any length are enclosed between an identical (or equivalent) opening and close.

By their fruits ye shall know them.
 Do men gather grapes of thorns?
 Or figs of thistles?
 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit,
 But the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit:
 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,
 Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.
 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit
 Is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
 Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them.²

¹ *Joel* i. 4. Other examples are in *Hosea* ii. 21, 22; *Romans* x. 14, 15; *II Peter* i. 5-7. The passage next cited is from *Wisdom* vi. 17-20.

² Compare *Psalm* viii: or, in English poetry, the opening stanza of Southey's *Thalaba*.

The same artistic effect of envelopment is produced when in such a figure the close is not a repetition of the opening, but completes it, so that the opening and the close make a unity which the parallel clauses develop.

Consider the ravens:
 that they sow not,
 neither reap:
 which have no store-chamber nor barn;
 and God feedeth them:
 Of how much more value are ye than the birds!¹

The general subject of versification includes not only these Figures of Parallelism, the ultimate form by which Biblical verse separates itself from prose, but also those larger aggregations of lines and verses making integral parts of a poem, which may be called 'Stanzas.' Four points may be noted in regard to the position of the stanzas in the structure of Hebrew verse.

First, a poem may be composed of similar figures throughout: this is the treatment most familiar to the reader of English literature. The hundred and twenty-first psalm is made up of four similar quatrains.

Psalm cxxi I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains:
 From whence shall my help come?
 My help cometh from the LORD,
 Which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
 He that keepeth thee will not slumber;
 Behold, he that keepeth Israel
 Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The LORD is thy keeper:
 The LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand;
 The sun shall not smite thee by day,
 Nor the moon by night.

¹ *Luke* xii. 24. — The figure made by a Question and its Answer comes under this head; e.g. *Psalms* xv, or *Psalms* xxiv. 3-6.

The LORD shall keep thee from all evil :
 He shall keep thy soul ;
 The LORD shall keep thy going out and thy coming in,
 From this time forth and for evermore.

Here may be mentioned a device of versification which applies to this as to all varieties of structure. It is the Refrain : the recurrence of a verse (or part of a verse) the repetition of which, besides being an artistic effect in itself, assists also in marking off such divisions as stanzas. A refrain in stanzas of this first kind will be given by the familiar hundred and thirty-sixth psalm ; the poem is wholly composed of couplets, and the second line of each couplet is the refrain,

For his mercy endureth for ever.

A second treatment of stanzas is seen where a psalm is found to be composed of different figures. The analysis of the first psalm yields a result of this nature. First we have a triple triplet preceded by a recitative.

2. Stanzas of
 Varying Figures

Blessed is the man

Psalm i

that walketh not
 in the counsel
 of the wicked,
 Nor standeth
 in the way
 of sinners,
 Nor sitteth
 in the seat
 of the scornful.

This is followed by a quatrain reversed.

But his delight
 is in the law of the LORD :
 And in his law
 Doth he meditate day and night.

The next verse is a good example of the closeness with which form reflects matter. Its form is found to be a double quatrain with an introduction. On examination this recitative introduction will be seen to put forward the general thought — the comparison of the devout life to a tree ; while the figure works this thought out into particulars, on the plan of the left-hand members of the figure suggesting elements of vegetable life — the planting, the fruitage, the foliage — and the right-hand members predicating perfection of each.

And he shall be like a Tree
Planted
by the streams of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit
in its season ;
Whose leaf also
doth not wither,
And whatsoever he doeth
shall prosper.

Next, we have a single couplet, sharply contrasting with what has gone before the mere worldly life.

The wicked are not so,
But are like the Chaff which the wind driveth away.

A simple quatrain and a quatrain reversed bring the poem to a conclusion.

Therefore the wicked shall not stand
in the judgement,
Nor sinners
in the congregation of the righteous.

For the LORD knoweth
the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked
shall perish.

As much lyric beauty is here produced by the avoidance of similar figures in successive verses as in the former case by the repetition of them.

Where lyrics are constructed on this second plan the refrain may still come to emphasise the divisions. The forty-sixth psalm is arranged in the Revised Version in two stanzas of six lines and one of seven: the refrain — a shout of triumph — brings each to a climax. It has, however, dropped out by accident from the first stanza in the received text, and must be restored.¹

God is our refuge and strength, Psalm xlvii
 A very present help in trouble.
 Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
 And though the mountains be moved in the heart of the seas;
 Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
 Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.
 THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US;
 THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE!

There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God,
 The holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.
 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved:
 God shall help her, and that right early.
 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:
 He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
 THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US;
 THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE!

Come, behold the works of the LORD,
 What desolations he hath made in the earth.
 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
 He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
 He burneth the chariots in the fire.
 "Be still, and know that I am God:
 I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."
 THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US;
 THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE!

¹ On the general subject of textual emendation, I would lay down the principle that, where the sense is affected by a proposed change, it is prudent to be conservative and chary of admitting it. But where (as with a repetition) it is only a question of form, the long period of tradition mentioned above, during which the literary form of Scripture was overlooked, justifies us in expecting many omissions and misplacements.

We have a more elaborate symmetry of parallelism when we come to *Antistrophic* stanzas. The word is Greek, and the spirit of this beautiful form of structure is best caught from the complete realisation of it in Greek lyrics.

3. **Antistrophic structure of stanzas** A Greek ode was performed by a body of singers whose evolutions as they sang a stanza carried them from the altar towards the right: then turning round they performed an answering stanza, repeating their movements, until its close brought them to the altar from which they had started. Then a stanza would take them to the left of the altar, and its answering stanza would bring them back to the starting-point: and of such pairs of stanzas an ode was normally made up. From a Greek word meaning 'a turning' the first stanza of a pair was called a *strophé*, its answering stanza an *antistrophé*: and the metrical rhythms of the antistrophe reproduced those of the corresponding strophe line by line, though the rhythm might be wholly changed between one pair of stanzas and another. Hebrew lyrics contain examples of this disposition of stanzas in pairs; and the two stanzas of a pair agree, not of course in metre, but in number of parallel lines. Though somewhat rare in the Bible, this structure is worthy of close study wherever it occurs. The simplest case is where each antistrophe immediately follows its strophe, and of this the thirtieth psalm is an example.

Strophe 1

Psalm xxx I will extol thee, O LORD; for thou hast raised me up,
 And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.
 O LORD my God,
 I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.
 O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol:
 Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.

Antistrophe

Sing praise unto the LORD, O ye saints of his,
 And give thanks to his holy name.
 For his anger is but for a moment;
 In his favour is life:
 Weeping may tarry for the night,
 But joy cometh in the morning.

Strophe 2

As for me, I said in my prosperity,
I shall never be moved.
Thou, LORD, of thy favour hadst made my mountain to stand strong:

Antistrophe

Thou didst hide thy face; I was troubled.
I cried to thee, O LORD;
And unto the LORD I made supplication:

Strophe 3

“What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit?
Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?
Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me:
LORD, be thou my helper.”

Antistrophe

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;
Thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness:
To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

But in the parallelism of stanzas, as well as the parallelism of lines in a figure, the device of introversion is found, by which, it will be recollected, beginning corresponds with end, and middle part with middle part. An example of such antistrophic introversion is found in the hundred and fourteenth psalm, which thought and form combine to make one of the most striking of Hebrew lyrics. It is a song inspired, not only by the deliverance from Egypt, but also by the new conception of Deity which that deliverance exhibited to the world. In the age of the exodus the prevailing conception of a god was that of a being sacred to a particular territory, out of the bounds of which territory the god's power did not extend. But the Israelites in the wilderness presented to the world the spectacle of a nation moving from country to country and carrying the presence of their God with them; it was no

**Antistrophic
Introversion**

Psalm cxiv

longer the land of Goshen, but the nation of Israel itself that constituted the sanctuary and dominion of Jehovah. The wonder of this conception the psalm expresses by the favourite Hebrew image of nature in convulsion; and the effect of introversion in giving shape (so to speak) to the whole thought of the poem may be conveyed to the eye by the following scheme :

A new conception of Deity!
Nature convulsed!
Why Nature convulsed?
At the new conception of Deity.

Those phrases sum up the thought of the successive stanzas, which are so related to one another that the first strophe is followed by a second, and the antistrophe to the second strophe precedes the antistrophe to the first.

Strophe 1

When Israel went forth out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
Judah became his sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.

Strophe 2

The sea saw it and fled;
Jordan was driven back.
The mountains skipped like rams,
The little hills like young sheep.

Antistrophe 2

What aileth thee, O sea, that thou fleest?
Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams?
Ye little hills, like young sheep?

Antistrophe 1

Tremble, thou earth, at THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD,
At the presence of the God of Jacob;
Which turned the rock into a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters!

Again, we find as a rare effect in Hebrew poetry what is common in Greek, an interweaving of stanzas similar to the interweaving of couplets in a quatrain noted above; the first strophe is followed by a second of different length, then succeed the antistrophe to the first and the antistrophe to the second. The ninety-ninth psalm has this structure; and the effect is assisted by a double refrain: the longer strophe of five lines has a short refrain, while the shorter strophe of three lines has a longer refrain.¹

Strophe 1

The LORD reigneth: let the peoples tremble: **Psalm xcix**
 He sitteth upon the cherubim; let the earth be moved.
 The LORD is great in Zion;
 And he is high above all the peoples.
 Let them praise thy great and terrible name.
Holy is He!

Strophe 2

The king's strength also loveth judgement;
 Thou dost establish equity,
 Thou executest judgement and righteousness in Jacob.
 EXALT YE THE LORD OUR GOD
 AND WORSHIP AT HIS FOOTSTOOL.
 HOLY IS HE!

Antistrophe 1

Moses and Aaron among his priests,
 And Samuel among them that call upon his name;
 They called upon the LORD, and he answered them.
 He spake unto them in the pillar of cloud:
 They kept his testimonies and the statute that he gave them.
Holy is He!

Antistrophe 2

Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God,
 Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
 Though thou tookest vengeance of their doings.
 EXALT YE THE LORD OUR GOD,
 AND WORSHIP AT HIS HOLY HILL;
 FOR THE LORD OUR GOD IS HOLY!

¹ The short refrain has dropped out of Antistrophe 1, and must be restored (at the end of verse 7).

But the commonest treatment of stanzas in Biblical poetry is that which is also the freest: where a poem is allowed to fall into well-marked divisions, which have, however, no distinct relations with one another as regards length or parallelism. By an awkwardness of nomenclature, such irregular divisions have come to be called 'strophes': it is too late to change the usage, but the reader must be on the watch to distinguish the 'strophic structure,' where the stanzas may be unequal, from the 'antistrophic structure,' in which the two stanzas of a pair are exact counterparts. A simple example of such division by natural cleavage only will be afforded by the twentieth psalm.

4. **Strophic structure of stanzas**

Strophe 1—The People

Psalm xx The LORD answer thee in the day of trouble;
 The name of the God of Jacob set thee up on high;
 Send thee help from the sanctuary,
 And strengthen thee out of Zion;
 Remember all thy offerings,
 And accept thy burnt sacrifice;
 Grant thee thy heart's desire,
 And fulfil all thy counsel.
 We will triumph in thy salvation,
 And in the name of our God we will set up our banners:
 The LORD fulfil all thy petitions.

Strophe 2—The King

Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed;
 He will answer him from his holy heaven
 With the saving strength of his right hand.

Strophe 3—The People

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses:
 But we will make mention of the name of the LORD our God.
 They are bowed down and fallen:
 But we are risen, and stand upright.
 O LORD, save the king;
 And answer us when we call.

In this strophic structure the refrain has a special value for marking out the stanzas which have no other rhythmic distinction. A splendid example of such treatment is given by the poem which opens the second book of Psalms. *Psalms xlii-xliii* The allusion of one of its verses seems to associate it with some high ground — mountains of Hermon, or hill Mizar — which was the last point from which the Holy Land could be seen by an exile carried eastwards; in any case, it is appropriately named 'The Exile's Lament.' The spirit of the whole lyric is summed up in its refrain, which is a struggle between despair and hope.

*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Hope thou in God:
For I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance
And my God!*

This refrain is found to unify into a single poem the psalms numbered forty-two and forty-three; and the whole falls into three strophes. Though the refrain does not change, yet its repetition is made to suggest advance. The first strophe has nothing but longing memories: how the poet was wont to mingle with the throng, or perhaps lead them in procession to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday. Its struggle towards hopefulness is so unsuccessful that, after the refrain, the second strophe opens with the deepest note of dependency. A single ray of light, however, is cast into the future, and there is just a mention of loving-kindness by day and songs in the night, after which thoughts of mourning and oppression resume their sway. But the third stanza begins with a more resolute appeal to God as the judge, or righter of the oppressed; the turn has been taken, and we advance through ideas of light and truth to joy and praise of harp, until the third repetition of the refrain makes us feel that its summons to hope has proved successful.

Strophe 1

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
 So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
 My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
 When shall I come and appear before God?
 My tears have been my meat day and night,
 While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
 These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,
 How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,
 With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

And why art thou disquieted within me?

Hope thou in God:

For I shall yet praise him,

Who is the health of my countenance

And my God!

Strophe 2

My soul is cast down within me!
 Therefore do I remember thee from the land of Jordan,
 And the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.
 Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts:
 All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me!
 Yet the LORD will command his loving-kindness in the day-time,
 And in the night his song shall be with me,
 Even a prayer unto the God of my life.
 I will say unto God my rock, "Why hast thou forgotten me?
 Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
 As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries reproach me;
 While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?"

Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

And why art thou disquieted within me?

Hope thou in God:

For I shall yet praise him,

Who is the health of my countenance

And my God!

Strophe 3

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation:
 O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
 For thou art the God of my strength; why hast thou cast me off?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
 O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me:
 Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles.
 Then will I go unto the altar of God,
 Unto God my exceeding joy:
 And upon the harp will I praise thee, O God, my God.
 WHY ART THOU CAST DOWN, O MY SOUL?
 AND WHY ART THOU DISQUIETED WITHIN ME?
 HOPE THOU IN GOD:
 FOR I SHALL YET PRAISE HIM,
 WHO IS THE HEALTH OF MY COUNTENANCE
 AND MY GOD!

But the maximum of lyric effect drawn from this combination of the strophic structure and the refrain is found in a portion of the hundred and seventh psalm. Here there is a double refrain: one puts in each stanza a cry for help, the other the outburst of praise after the help has come; each refrain has a sequel verse which appropriately changes with the subject of each stanza. Thus the form of the strophes is that which the eye catches in the subjoined mode of printing it; the body of each stanza consists of short lines putting various forms of distress; then the stanza lengthens its lines into the first refrain with its sequel verse, and enlarges again into the second refrain with its sequel.

Strophe 1

They wandered in the wilderness
 In a desert way;
 They found no city of habitation.
 Hungry and thirsty,
 Their soul fainted in them.
*Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
 And he delivered them out of their distresses.*
 He led them also by a straight way,
 That they might go to a city of habitation.
 OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
 AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
 For he satisfieth the longing soul,
 And the hungry soul he filleth with good.

Strophe 2

Such as sat in darkness
 And in the shadow of death,
 Being bound in affliction and iron;
 Because they rebelled against the words of God,
 And contemned the counsel of the Most High:
 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour,
 They fell down, and there was none to help.

*Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
 And he saved them out of their distresses.*

He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
 And brake their bands in sunder.

OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
 AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
 For he hath broken the gates of brass,
 And cut the bars of iron in sunder.

Strophe 3

Fools because of their transgression,
 And because of their iniquities, are afflicted.
 Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat;
 And they draw near unto the gates of death.

*Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
 And he saveth them out of their distresses.*

He sendeth his word, and healeth them,
 And delivereth them from their destructions.

OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
 AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
 And let them offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
 And declare his works with singing.

Strophe 4

They that go down to the sea in ships,
 That do business in great waters,
 These see the works of the LORD,
 And his wonders in the deep.
 For he commandeth,
 And raiseth the stormy wind,
 Which lifteth up the waves thereof:
 They mount up to the heaven,

They go down again to the depths;
 Their soul melteth away because of trouble :
 They reel to and fro,
 And stagger like a drunken man;
 And are at their wits' end.

*Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
 And he bringeth them out of their distresses.*

He maketh the storm a calm,
 So that the waves thereof are still.

Then are they glad because they be quiet :

So he bringeth them unto the haven where they would be.

OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS,
 AND FOR HIS WONDERFUL WORKS TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN!
 Let them exalt him also in the assembly of the people,
 And praise him in the seat of the elders.

It is just such structural variations as these that it is the special mission of a musical rendering to express.¹ In the psalm just cited the melancholy monotony of men's voices in unison might be used to bring out the various phases of distress which make the subjects of successive strophes. Children's voices in harmony and unaccompanied would fitly express the cry for help (refrain and sequel verse), while full choir and organ would give out the thanksgiving. In the more extended final stanza a monotone of men's voices in unison would leave more scope for organ accompaniment to bring out the changes of the sea. Then as before the whole would resolve into the silvery harmony of children's voices heard alone ; while all that full choir and instrument could do would be needed for the final climax.

¹ Bishop Westcott's *Paragraph Psalter* (Macmillan) is a step in the direction of such structural chanting. A musical setting of *Psalms lxxviii and civ* in illustration of it has been published by Dr. Naylor, Organist of York Minster (Novello).

CHAPTER II

THE HIGHER PARALLELISM, OR PARALLELISM OF INTER- PRETATION

THE preceding chapter has sufficiently exhibited Biblical Versification in its leading forms and devices of structure. In the present chapter I consider further the general spirit of parallelism which underlies it. I wish to show that the study of such parallelism is not a mere matter of technicalities, but that it connects itself directly with the higher interests of literature.

In interpreting the meaning of Scripture parallelism plays no unimportant part. I will commence with a very simple example. The Song of the Sword,¹ which gives expression to the excitement attending the first invention of deadly weapons, contains the following couplet :

I have slain a man to my wounding,
And a young man to my hurt.

Does this passage imply the slaying of one person or two persons? This question cannot be called a mere matter of technicalities. Commentators of the period when the secret of parallelism was lost understood the words to mean that two men were slain ; and connecting the passage with the succeeding couplet—

If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold—

they found an interpretation for the whole by supposing that when

¹ Otherwise called Song of Lamech (*Gen. iv. 23-24*).

Lamech became advanced in years he carried with him a youth to show him where to point his arrows ; that this youth directing him to shoot into a certain bush Lamech thereby slew Cain, and made himself liable to the curse invoked on the slayer of that out-cast. In his rage Lamech shot a second arrow at his youthful attendant ; and thus two slayings are accounted for. But to an ear accustomed to parallelism it is clear enough that no such violence of interpretation is required. The second line of a couplet need not be a separate statement from that of the first line, but may be, in the spirit of parallelism, a saying over again of what has been said. Thus the couplet need only imply the death of a single person, or better, slaying as a general idea. And the second couplet merely gives expression to the enlarged possibilities of destruction that come with the invention of the sword : even the vengeance for Cain — a thing that had perhaps passed into a proverbial expression — becomes a small matter in comparison with the power of vengeance the armed warrior will possess. Thus the whole meaning of the passage has been changed by attention to a detail of versification.

The intrinsic importance of this first example is not great. But no one will consider the 'Lord's Prayer' unimportant : and yet it would seem that the great majority of those who repeat the Lord's Prayer in public fail to bring out the full thought that underlies it. This prayer is almost always rendered as a succession of isolated clauses which may be represented thus :

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

But the true significance of these words is only seen when they are arranged so as to make an envelope figure.

Our Father which art in heaven :
 Hallowed be thy Name,
 Thy Kingdom come,
 Thy Will be done,
 In earth as it is in heaven.

In the former version the words, "In earth as it is in heaven" are attached only to the petition, "Thy will be done." But it belongs to the envelope structure that all the parallel clauses are to be connected with the common opening and close. The meaning thus becomes: "Hallowed be thy name in earth as it is in heaven, Thy kingdom come in earth as it is in heaven, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." It is something more than literary beauty that is gained by the change.

One more illustration of the close connection between parallelism of structure and interpretation will be afforded by the eighth psalm. The whole of this poem makes a single envelope figure.

O LORD, our Lord,
 How excellent is thy name in all the earth!
 Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens,
 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength,
 Because of thine adversaries,
 That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
 When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers,
 The moon and the stars which thou hast ordained;
 What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
 And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
 For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
 And crownest him with glory and honour.
 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
 Thou hast put all things under his feet:
 All sheep and oxen,
 Yea, and the beasts of the field;
 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
 Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
 O LORD, our Lord,
 How excellent is thy name in all the earth!

By neglect of the true structure, three lines instead of two have been taken into the opening verse:

1. O LORD, our Lord,
 How excellent is thy name in all the earth!
 Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens.

Accordingly, the verse which follows this, and presumably opens the regular thought of the poem, is made to read :

- 2. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength, etc.

So arranged this verse becomes obscure, and the ingenuity of commentators has been much exercised to determine what is the allusion its words contain. But the envelope structure conveys at once to the eye that the first two lines must be isolated as the enveloping refrain, and then the opening verse becomes this :

Who hast set thy glory upon the heavens,
Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou established strength, etc.

That the Artificer of the mighty heavens should have chosen man — a mere babe and suckling in comparison — to be the representative of his might to the rest of the universe : this is the wonder with which the poem really opens, and the thought of feeble man as God's Viceroy over the creation is precisely the idea which is found to bind the whole psalm into a unity.

These are particular examples : it is possible to generalise. In Biblical interpretation the question will repeatedly arise, whether a particular passage is to be understood as a simple narrative of facts or an idealised description : in such a case parallelism of clauses will undoubtedly be one factor in the interpretation. I have already suggested that the extreme symmetry of the clauses which describe Job's misfortunes descending upon him tells in favour of the view that the narrative is not a history so much as an incident worked up into a parable. In a more important matter the same principle has been applied to the opening chapter of *Genesis*. The account of the Creation which this passage contains is found, upon examination, to be arranged with the most minute parallelism of matter and form. Not only are the six days furnished with opening and closing formulæ which correspond, but

Parallelism a
criterion for
idealisation

Genesis i

the whole divides into two symmetrical halves of three days and three days, and each day of the first three is exactly parallel with the corresponding day of the second half. A table will illustrate the structure.

And God said—
 [Creation of Light]
And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

And God said—
 [Creation of Lights]
And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

And God said—
 [Creation of the Firmament dividing waters from waters]
And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

And God said—
 [Creation of Life in the Firmament and in the Waters]
And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

{ *And God said—*
 [Creation of Land]
And God said—
 [Creation of Vegetation, climax of inanimate nature]
And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

{ *And God said—*
 [Creation of Life on Land]
And God said—
 [Creation of Man, climax of animate nature]
And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

When this structure and the fulness of its parallelism is grasped, it will appear reasonable that it should be urged as one argument in favour of understanding the chapter to be, not a narration of incidents in their order of succession, but a logical classification of the elements of the universe, with the emphatic assertion of Divine creation in reference to each.

The reader will understand that it is not essential to my argument that such interpretations as I have been advancing should seem to him correct. Parallelism is only one factor amongst many in exegesis. I am merely concerned to show that those who address themselves to determining the matter and meaning of Scripture nevertheless appeal to its form and structure. Indeed, the reader unaccustomed to this subject will be greatly astonished at the extent and minuteness

**Recognition of
Parallelism in
exegesis**

to which symmetry of form in Scripture is made to obtain in the exegesis of competent theologians; when, for example, not a paragraph but a long poem, or the whole of an epistolary treatise, is represented as being constructed on a single intricate system. Such elaborations of parallelism must be considered each on its own merits; but there is in them nothing inherently improbable. When the genius of a language rests the whole system of its versification upon symmetry of clauses, it becomes a safe presumption that parallelism will penetrate very deeply into its logical processes of thought.¹

We have been led to see then that there are two points of view from which parallelism may be considered: that of Rhythm and that of Interpretation. The musical element of Biblical language rests on parallels and recurrences, and an ear for rhythm is as essential for the appreciation of Scriptural style as an ear for time is essential for the appreciation of music. But thought may be rhythmic as well as language, and the full meaning and force of Scripture is not grasped by one who does not feel how thoughts can be emphasised by being differently re-stated, as in the simplest couplet; or how a general thought may reiterate itself to enclose its particulars, as in the envelope figure, or, in such cases as the Lord's Prayer, hold its conclusion in suspense until all to which it applies has been set forth; or again, as in the opening of *Genesis*, how a passage can suggest logical symmetries while in form it is only narrating. Accordingly the structural analysis of Biblical language must distinguish a Lower Parallelism of Rhythm and a Higher Parallelism of Interpretation. The two can never clash, since in Hebrew rhythm largely depends on recurrence of clauses corresponding in thought; but one or other parallelism will preponderate in accordance with the nature of a particular passage or the purpose of a citation. Sometimes the musical form will be felt to preponderate, and in this case the

The Lower Parallelism of Rhythm and the Higher Parallelism of Interpretation

¹ Dr. Forbes's *Symmetrical Structure of Scripture* (Clark, Edinburgh) may be regarded as a text-book of the general subject.

structural arrangement of the passage will be such as will make prominent the recurrence of fixed figures. In other cases the arrangement will bring out how distant sequences of words from all over a lengthy passage co-ordinate together, and this effect will throw into the background the parallelisms of couplets and triplets, which nevertheless are to be found when looked for.¹

The matter is best treated by illustrations; and I proceed to give two arrangements of the same passage, based respectively on the Lower and the Higher Parallelism.

Job x. 3-13 arranged for Lower Parallelism Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress,
That thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands,
And shine upon the counsel of the wicked?

Hast thou eyes of flesh,
Or seest thou as man seeth?

Are thy days as the days of man,
Or thy years as man's days,

That thou inquirest after mine iniquity,
And searchest after my sin,

Although thou knowest that I am not wicked;
And there is none that can deliver out of thine hand?

Thine hands have framed me and fashioned me
Together round about; yet thou dost destroy me.

Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast fashioned me as
clay;
And wilt thou bring me into dust again?

Hast thou not poured me out as milk,
And curdled me like cheese?

Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together with bones and sinews.

¹ On the whole subject compare Appendix III: On the Structural Printing of Scripture.

Thou hast granted me life and favour,
And thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

Yet these things thou didst hide in thine heart;
I know that this is with thee.

In the above citation I have followed the Revised Version of the Bible in conveying nothing to the eye beyond the elementary rhythm of couplets and triplets. Such an arrangement involves the minimum of interpretation, and therefore the minimum difference of opinion. Where the higher symmetry is expressed individual interpretations will of course differ. In my second arrangement of the passage figures of mere rhythm are suppressed in order that parallelisms of thought may stand out.

<p>Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, That thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, And shine upon the counsel of the wicked? Hast thou eyes of flesh, Or seest thou as man seeth? Are thy days as the days of man, Or thy years as man's days, That thou inquirest after mine iniquity, And searchest after my sin, Although thou knowest that I am not wicked; And there is none that can deliver out of thine hand? Thine hands have framed me, And fashioned me together round about; Yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast fashioned me as clay; And wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, And curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, And knit me together with bones and sinews; Thou hast granted me life and favour, And thy visitation hath preserved my spirit: Yet these things thou didst hide in thine heart; I know that this is with thee.</p>	<p>Arranged for Higher Parallelism</p>
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Two distinct trains of thought are interwoven in this passage : in one Job makes appeal to God as being God's own handiwork ; in the other he protests against the righteous Lord following the oppressive ways of unjust judges. In this second arrangement the two elements of the thought are separated : lines belonging to the first are indented to the left, lines belonging to the second are indented to the right. Thus the whole play of thought in the passage is reflected to the eye, or, in other words, the structural arrangement has brought out the Parallelism of Interpretation.¹

One more observation must be made on Biblical parallelism considered as an element in literary style. It is that such symmetry of clauses is closely bound up with a literary effect of an opposite kind — that of surprise. **Parallelism implies its opposite effect of surprise** It is just when the ear is being led by the general form of a passage to expect what is coming that the disappointment of this expectation, and the substitution of something new, strikes with most telling force. Here, again, illustrations will make the best exposition.

There is no passage in the Bible in which parallelism is carried further than in the peroration (if the word may be allowed) of the Sermon on the Mount, with its comparison of the two kinds of hearers to the builders on the rock and on the sand. The passage is antistrophic, and for every clause in the one picture there is a corresponding clause in the other. Yet here the effect of surprise is produced by a subtle and delicate variation which has been recovered for us by the Revised Version. The word which describes the action of the wind differs in the two strophes ; for the blasts labouring in vain to destroy the one house a word is used which is translated by the English 'beat' ; for the wind in the other case the Greek word is changed to something which the Revisers render 'smote' — the very sound of which, as well as the sense, pictures a single blow sufficing to bring the structure down.

¹ In my edition of the *Book of Job* this mode of printing that reflects the Higher Parallelism is followed throughout. [Macmillan & Co.]

Strophe

Every one therefore which heareth these words of mine,
 and doeth them,
 shall be likened unto a Wise Man,
 which built his house upon the Rock :
 And the rain descended,
 and the floods came,
 and the winds blew
 and *beat* upon that house;
 and it fell not :
 for it was founded upon the Rock.

Antistrophe

And every one that heareth these words of mine,
 and doeth them not,
 shall be likened unto a Foolish Man,
 which built his house upon the Sand :
 And the rain descended,
 and the floods came,
 and the winds blew,
 and SMOTE upon that house ;
 and it fell :
 and great was the fall thereof !

In this example the effect of surprise is produced by a verbal alteration. It is more pertinent to the subject of the present chapter to consider cases in which the variation extends to a whole clause. An admirable illustration Psalm cxxxix is afforded by the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm. This exquisite lyric is in structure a very extended form of the envelope figure. But the opening verse, when it appears at the close, has undergone an important change : for the indicative mood of the opening —

O LORD, thou hast searched me —

we have at the end the imperative mood —

Search me, O God —

and the whole movement of the poem is to lead from the one state of mind to the other. At the outset the thought of Divine

omniscience and omnipresence lies like a weight upon the poet's mind.

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me!
 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
 Thou understandest my thought afar off.
 Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
 And art acquainted with all my ways.
 For there is not a word in my tongue,
 But, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.
 Thou hast beset me behind and before,
 And laid thine hand upon me.

The burden becomes intolerable, and the poet would fain throw it off.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
 Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
 Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
 If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.
 If I take the wings of the morning,
 And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
 And thy right hand shall hold me.
 If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,
 And the light about me shall be night;
 Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
 But the night shineth as the day:
 The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

The sense of oppression can intensify yet further, and the next verse extends it backwards in time, as previous verses had made it stretch through all space.

For thou hast possessed my reins:
 Thou hast covered me in my mother's womb.

It is just here, where the effect is at its height, that the turn comes. The mysteries of the womb suggest to the poet that this Divine watchfulness from which he cannot escape is the same watchful-

ness which, in his helplessness, built him up into the being he is. The current of thought begins to flow back — for the structure of the psalm is antistrophic as well as enveloped.

I will give thanks unto thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
 Wonderful are thy works,
 And that my soul knoweth right well.
 My frame was not hidden from thee,
 When I was made in secret,
 And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
 Thine eyes did see mine unperfect substance,
 And in thy book were all my members written,
 Which day by day were fashioned,
 When as yet there was none of them.

The besetting watchfulness now becomes a precious thought to the psalmist; most precious of all, the incalculableness of its extent.

How precious also are thy thoughts¹ unto me, O God!
 How great is the sum of them!
 If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand:
 When I awake, I am still with thee.

The new thought has gained force, and takes fire in a burst of purity.

Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God:
 Depart from me therefore, ye bloodthirsty men.
 For they speak against thee wickedly,
 And thine enemies take thy name in vain.
 Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee?
 And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?
 I hate them with perfect hatred:
 I count them mine enemies.

The new train of thought has reached its goal, and, as the envelope figure completes itself, the refrain reappears changed and enlarged, so that the burden has become an aspiration.

¹ That is, the thoughts which God bestows on the psalmist.

Search me, O God, and know my heart :
Try me, and know my thoughts :
And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.

The analysis of this psalm is an excellent illustration, both of the general principle that the most deeply spiritual trains of thought are reflected in beauty of external literary structure, and also of the special observation immediately under discussion, that parallelism carries with it the literary effect of climax or surprise when the exactness of the parallelism is artistically violated.

II

Such is the *Book of Job* presented as a piece of literature. The questions of Theology or historic criticism that it suggests are outside the scope of the present work. Our immediate concern is with the various kinds of literary interest which have touched us as we have traversed this monument of ancient literature.

The dominant impression is that of a magnificent drama. No element of dramatic effect is wanting; and that which we might least have expected, the scenic effect, is especially impressive. The great ash-mound outside an ancient village or town makes a stage just suited for the single scene — and that an open-air scene — to which a Greek tragedy would be confined. And resemblance to a Greek drama is further maintained by the crowd of spectators who stand round this ash-mound like a silent Chorus; — unless, indeed, we are to consider that their sentiments are conveyed by Elihu as Chorus-Leader. When we reach the crisis of the poem we are able to see what advantage a drama addressed purely to the imagination may have over plays intended for the theatre. No stage machinery could possibly realise the changes of sky and atmosphere which in *Job* make a dramatic background for the approach of Deity. It is true that the original poem does not describe these changes, as I have done, in straightforward narrative. But every scholar is aware that the ‘stage directions’ of modern plays are wanting in the dramas of antiquity: whatever variations of movement and surroundings these involve have to be collected from the words of the personages who take part in the dialogue. And in the transformation traced above, from a day of brilliant sunshine to a thunderstorm, and yet further to a supernatural apparition, every detail of change is implied in the words of Elihu. We watch the changing scene through the eyes of those who are in the midst of it.