

THE  
LITERARY STUDY OF THE BIBLE

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

*INTENDED FOR ENGLISH READERS*

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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.

No doubt the confusion of the two would have  
 been impossible, were it not that the versification  
 of the Bible is of a kind totally unlike that which  
 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.

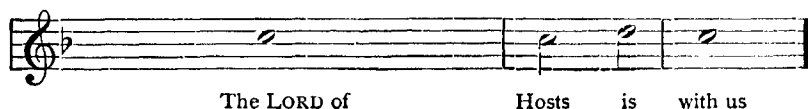
He hath remembered his covenant for ever,  
 The word which he commanded to a thousand generations;  
 The covenant which he made with Abraham,  
 And his oath unto Isaac;  
 And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a statute,  
 To Israel for an everlasting covenant:  
 Saying, "Unto thee will I give the 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.

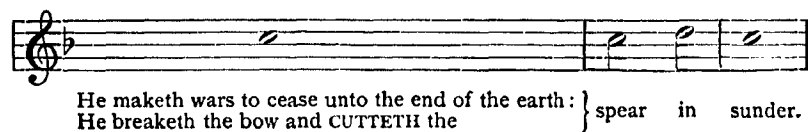
The LORD of Hosts is with us;  
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

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.



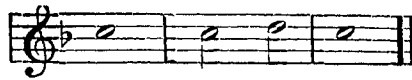
This is correct, because a piece of music which is two-fold in its structure is sung to a couplet verse. But presently the same music will be sung to the triplet verse.



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.

D

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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Psalms* xviii. 25. The following verse is another example, and this figure is very common.

<sup>2</sup> *Psalms* li. 1. Compare the metre of *In Memoriam*. Other examples are *Psalms* ciii. 1; ix. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> *Deut.* xxxii. 42.

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

<sup>3</sup> *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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *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.

<sup>2</sup> Compare *Psalms* 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!<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> *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.

**The Refrain as a structural device**  
**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.<sup>1</sup>

God is our refuge and strength, Psalm xlii  
 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!

<sup>1</sup> 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 has 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.<sup>1</sup>

*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!

<sup>1</sup> 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 despondency. 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.

Psalm cvii. 4-32

*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.

E

*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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

Musical expres-  
 sion of structure

<sup>1</sup> 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,<sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Psalm viii

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 the Firmament  
     dividing waters from waters]  
*And there was evening and there*  
*was morning, a second day.*

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

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

*And God said—*  
     [Creation of Life in the Firma-  
     ment and in the Waters]  
*And there was evening and there*  
*was morning, a fifth 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.<sup>1</sup>

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**

<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress,	<b>Arranged for Higher Parallelism</b>
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.	

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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

<sup>1</sup> 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 thoughts<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

Interest of character abounds in the poem. I must confess I cannot follow the subtle differences which some commentators see between the characters of the three Friends. *of Character* It is easy to recognise in Eliphaz a stately personage with a wider range of thought than his colleagues. But Bildad and Zophar leave different impressions on different readers. To me Bildad seems a touch more blunt in his manner than the rest. Of Zophar I would only say that the speeches assigned him fit well with the suggestion of his being a generation older than the other personages of the poem; though of course the *xv. 10* words of Eliphaz which claim such a personage as on his side need not necessarily refer to anyone present. But whatever may be thought about the individualities of the Friends, no one can miss the contrast between the whole group and Job; between the interest of static character in various modifications of conformity to current ideals, and the interest of a dynamic personality like that of Job, which can look back to a realisation of the perfection his friends describe, and can yet at the call of circumstances fling his former beliefs to the winds, and probe passionately among the mysteries of providence for new conceptions of divine rule. And the welcome addition to the poem of Elihu adds the ever fresh interest of youth in contrast with age. In the impetuous self-confidence of this personage, his flowing yet jejune eloquence, and in the chilling reception it meets alike from Job and Job's adversaries, we have youth presented from the one side. But, on the other hand, youth has dramatic justice done to it when we find Elihu's heart beating responsive to every change of the changing heavens, and eagerly drinking in the accumulating terrors of the storm, until his wild speech stops only before the voice of God.

But scenery and character might almost be called secondary elements of drama: its essence lies in action. The whole world of literature hardly contains a more remarkable *and of Movement* piece of dramatic movement than the changes of position taken up by Job in the course of his dialogue with the

Friends. Before it commenced Job had met his ruin with that ideal patience which has forever been associated with his name. At last we find just a shadow of resistance in his plaintive enquiry, why life should be forced upon the miserable. His friends fasten upon this, and make it a starting-point for the discussion in which they urge that the sufferer is a sinner. Almost in an instant the patient Job is transformed into an angry rebel, tearing to shreds optimist views of righteous providence, and, with the passion of a Titan, painting God as an Irresponsible Omnipotence that delights to put righteousness and wickedness on an equality of helplessness to resist Him. The Friends continue their pressure, and Job is driven to appeal to God against their misconstruction ; more and more as the action advances Job is led to rest his hopes of vindication on the Being he began by maligning. At last he is found to have traversed a circle : and the same God whom, in the ninth chapter, he had accused of exercising judgment only to show his omnipotence, he contrasts with the Friends in the twenty-third chapter as a judge who would not contend with him in the greatness of his power. When the climax of the Theophany comes, this movement of the drama is carried forward into a double surprise. Job had felt that if only he could find his way into the presence of God his cause would be secure. His prayer is strangely granted, and with what result ?

I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear;  
But now mine eye seeth thee,  
Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent  
In dust and ashes.

Yet was Job's first thought a mistake ? The answer is a second surprise. While the tempest lasts the Theophany appears wholly directed against Job. But when the storm has cleared it is found to be the adversaries who have incurred the wrath of God, and his servant Job has said of him the thing that is right. The deep moral significance of these various presentations of Deity need not make us overlook the dramatic beauty in the transition from one to another.

The dialogue in *Job* is introduced and concluded by a narrative story, and to dramatic effect must be added epic : I use this word without meaning to convey any judgment on the question whether the incidents of the book are to be regarded as imaginary or as historically true. The narrative is one of grand simplicity, like the epics of antiquity. A few touches create for us a whole picture of life and scheme of society. The first note struck is that of perfection ; and the life of which Job is declared the perfect type is that of a simple pastoral age. His substance of cattle is given in ideal figures ; and he is called the greatest of all the children of the east. It is an age in which the 'state' is not yet born, but family life is pictured on the highest scale. The great seasons which break the monotony of such patriarchal existence are rounds of festal gatherings among the seven sons of Job, each receiving on his day with a regularity never broken ; the sons moreover invite their sisters, and so women's society raises a revel into a dignified ceremonial. Such interchange of festivity would represent the highest ordinary ideals of the age. But behind this, Job, who lives in a wider world, has his high day of religious devotion, rising early in the morning to sanctify his children against possible sin.

In an instant, without any connecting link or wordy preparation, after the fashion of the old epics which have the doings of gods and men alike in their grasp, we are transported to the heavenly counterpart of such earthly festivities. Heaven too has its high day on which the sons of God gather together from their several provinces ; in the description of two such assemblies the recurrence of identical phrases conveys the notion of ritual and ceremonial observance. We reach a point in the story at which the utmost care is needed to guard against a misconception of the whole incident. Among the sons of God, it is said, comes 'The Satan.' It is best to use the article and speak of '*The Satan*,' or as the margin gives it, '*The Adversary*' : that is, the Adversary of the Saints. Elsewhere in Scripture the title of this office has become the name of

(The Satan of Job)

a personage — the Adversary of God, or 'Satan.'<sup>1</sup> But here (as in a similar passage of *Zechariah*) the Satan is an official of the Court of Heaven. There is nothing in his reception to distinguish him from the other sons of God; as they may come from sun or moon or other parts of the Universe, so the Satan is the Inspector of Earth, and describes his occupation as "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it." When once the associations with the other 'Satan' are laid aside, it is easy to see that in the dealings of this personage with Job there is no malignity; he simply questions where others accept, and in an inspector such distrust is a virtue. The Roman Church has exactly caught this conception in its 'Advocatus Diaboli': such an advocate may be in fact a pious and kindly ecclesiastic, but he has the function assigned him of searching out all possible evil that can be alleged against a candidate for canonisation, lest the honours of the Church might be given without due enquiry. In the present case the Satan merely points out possible weaknesses in Job, and a means of testing them. The Court of Heaven sanctions the 'experiment': — the word 'experiment' has only to be changed into its equivalent 'probation' for the whole proceeding to be brought within accepted notions of divine government.

Epic power is again exhibited in the description of the mode in which this experiment is carried out. Slow history brings about results by what means are in its power, with much of makeshift, and accidents which mar the symmetry of events. But epic poetry can make its action harmonious; and it seems to be a conspiracy of heaven and earth that compasses Job's destruction. The Sabeans take his oxen, the sky rains fire upon the sheep, the

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Bickersteth in his epic poem *Yesterday, To-day, and Forever* ingeniously harmonises these two conceptions of Satan. He makes his Lucifer Guardian Spirit of Earth and Man: as part of his office he tempts Adam: then flies to Heaven to be fallen Man's accuser: gradually the spirit in which he has executed his office intensifies and makes more and more pronounced his own fall, until he at last sinks into an open Adversary of God. See the poem, books iv-vi, and the bishop's defence of this view in the *St. James's Sermons*.

Chaldeans carry away the camels, and the winds of the wilderness overwhelm Job's children: while the separate destructions are worked into a concerto of ruin by the recurrence of the messenger's wail—

I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

It is an ideally grand shock. But at this stage Job's character is epic, and the shock is met by an ideal grandeur of acceptance. One by one the customary gestures of distress are exhibited, and then slowly succeed the words which have become the world's formulary for the emotion of bereavement. They are sublime words, that first proclaim simply the essential manhood to which the whole of life is but an accessory, and then throw over pious submission a grace of oriental courtesy that would make the resumption of a gift an occasion for remembering the giver.

Naked came I out of my mother's womb,  
And naked shall I return thither!  
The Lord gave,  
And the Lord hath taken away:  
Blessed be the Name of the Lord!

Our epic plot intensifies, and when the second assembly in heaven is held, God and the Satan concur in honouring Job's constancy by severer tests. In what follows there is no realistic description; epic poetry can act by reticence, and a word or two are sufficient to convey the picture of Job shrinking away silent and unclean from among his fellows, with a patience terrible to look upon; until the silence is broken by a second of those utterances of his which are so colossal in their simplicity. The oriental nomad life has two ideals specially its own. One is the solemn giving and receiving of gifts. The other is an instinct of authority that knows no bounds to its submission: an oriental seems to feel a pride in self-prostration before his natural lord. Both ideals are united in Job's answer to his wife's murmur:

What? shall we receive good at the hands of God and  
shall we not receive evil?

The simple power of epic poetry has raised us to a high plane of thought and feeling : upon that plane the action of the poem is to move with a passionateness that is proper to drama. But there is a transition stage between the one and the other in that portion of the book entitled 'Job's Curse.' This is not narrative, and so cannot be epic ; it is clearly distinct from the dramatic poetry to which it is a starting-point. Examination of it shows at once the musical elaboration and accumulation of musings on a situation or thought which we associate with lyric poetry. The Curse is a counterpart to such English lyrics as Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality* or Gray's *Bard*. I subjoin the whole here, that it may be read in this connection as a separate lyric : — an Elegy of a Broken Heart.

The Curse a Lyric  
Poem

## I

Let the day perish wherein I was born;  
And the night which said, 'There is a man child conceived!'

Let that day be darkness;  
Let not God regard it from above,  
Neither let the light shine upon it!  
Let darkness and the shadow of death claim it for their own;  
Let a cloud dwell upon it;  
Let all that maketh black the day terrify it!

As for that night, let thick darkness seize upon it;  
Let it not rejoice among the days of the year;  
Let it not come into the number of the months!  
Lo, let that night be barren;  
Let no joyful voice come therein!  
Let them curse it that curse the day,  
Who are ready to rouse up leviathan!  
Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark!  
Let it look for light, but have none;  
Neither let it behold the eyelids of the morning:

Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb,  
Nor hid trouble from mine eyes!

## 2

Why died I not from the womb?  
 Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?<sup>6</sup>  
 Why did the knees receive me?  
 Or why the breasts, that I should suck?  
 For now should I have lain down and been quiet;  
 I should have slept; then had I been at rest,  
     With kings and counsellors of the earth,  
     Which built solitary piles for themselves;  
     Or with princes that had gold,  
     Who filled their houses with silver;  
 Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been;  
 As infants which never saw light.  
     There the wicked cease from troubling;  
     And there the weary be at rest.  
     There the prisoners are at ease together;  
     They hear not the voice of the taskmaster.  
     The small and great are there;  
     And the servant is free from his master.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery,  
 And life unto the bitter in soul?  
     Which long for death, but it cometh not;  
     And dig for it more than for hid treasures;  
     Which rejoice exceedingly,  
     And are glad when they can find the grave.  
 Why is light given to a man whose way is hid,  
 And whom God hath hedged in?  
     For my sighing cometh before I eat,  
     And my roarings are poured out like water.  
     For the thing which I fear cometh upon me,  
     And that which I am afraid of cometh unto me.  
     I am not at ease,  
     Neither am I quiet,  
     Neither have I rest;  
     But trouble cometh.

Our result then so far is that the *Book of Job* contains specimens of epic, lyric, and dramatic composition; all the three main elements of poetry find a representation in it, and a representation

of the most impressive kind. I pass now to those departments of literature which are usually considered to be furthest removed from poetry, — philosophy and science : philosophy that seeks to find a meaning underlying life as a whole, and science that observes in detail and arranges its observations.

Interest of  
Philosophy

The whole work is a philosophical discussion dramatised. The subject discussed is the mystery of human suffering, and its bearing upon the righteous government of the world : this is one of the stock questions of philosophy. Each section of the book is the representation of a different philosophical attitude to this question.

Various Attitudes  
to the problem  
discussed

The three Friends present a cut and dried theory of suffering — that it is always penal. They are brought before us as behaving in the usual fashion of persons finally committed to a theory : they pour out stores of facts that make for their view, they ignore and refuse to examine facts that tell against it, and they hint moral obliquity as the real explanation of refusal to concur in their doctrine. Elihu introduces the same theory modified and corrected to date ; with him suffering is punishment for sin, but that special kind of punishment which is corrective in character. He accordingly stands for a philosophic school of the second generation ; and we are not surprised to find him maintaining his position with as much inflexibility as the Friends have shown, and at the same time magnifying his slight difference from them, and appearing no less an adversary to the Friends than to Job himself.

The Friends: A  
Theory

Elihu: Theory  
modified

Beware lest ye say, " We have found wisdom ;  
God may vanquish him, not man " :  
For he hath not directed his words against me ;  
Neither will I answer him with your speeches.

At the furthest remove from these is found Job, who takes a negative attitude, shattering other theories but providing none of

his own. Of course no one will understand Job really to accept what some of his words imply, as where he sees in  
**Job's Negative Attitude** God an omnipotence that judges only to display power. But these wild words are not out of place as a poetically strong representation of the perplexities that encounter one who would explain providential action. Job simply cannot solve these perplexities; he trusts in a divine vindication at some time, but meanwhile can only pronounce the problem of life insoluble. This is distinctly a philosophic attitude: it is nothing but the famous *epoché*, or suspension of mind, which from the time of Socrates has been recognised as a natural tone of mind for an enquirer. Of course there is a vast difference between the cold brightness of Plato's dialogues and the heated debate in *Job*; the Hebrew poem is not the discussion in the Porch or Garden, but represents philosophy as it is talked in the school of affliction. Job represents the *epoché* in a passion.

Yet another philosophical position is embodied in the Divine Intervention. As I have suggested above, this portion of the poem has been often misunderstood. It has been  
**Divine Intervention: Reference to a wider category** assumed, not unnaturally, that the Divine Intervention — like the *Deus ex machina* of the Greek drama — must be a final settlement of the questions in dispute. When the speeches attributed to God are examined in this light they are found to be no settlement at all, or, what were worse than any settlement, an indignant denial of man's right to question. But such interpretations overlook one important consideration: that in the epilogue Job is pronounced by the Lord to have said of him the thing that is right, while Job's Friends, who maintained the wickedness of questioning, are declared to have incurred the Divine anger. The interpretation involves a double mistake. On the one hand the Divine Intervention is not a settlement of the matter in dispute; at the end of the poem the problem of human suffering remains a mystery. But this section of the work, like others, is a distinct contribution towards a solution. In estimating what that contribution is a second mistake must be avoided.

by which form and substance have been confused. The tone of scorn which rings through the sentences of the Divine utterance must, as I have said above, be considered part of the dramatic form thrown over the discussion; the poet has conceived the thunder tone to be the proper embodiment for the Divine voice, and the explosive interrogatories of which the speeches are composed are just as much a portion of this dramatic setting as the signs of a rising tempest which are put into the mouth of Elihu. The whole is introduced with the explanation: "The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." But when we go below this outer form, and enquire what is the general drift of the Divine utterance as a whole, we find, as I have said before, that its effect is to widen the field of discussion. Job has fastened his attention simply upon Evil, and successfully maintained its inexplicableness against his friends. The Divine Intervention brings out that the Good and the Great, all that men instinctively admire in the universe, is just as inexplicable as Evil. Now this is distinctly a contribution towards the solution of the problem; in philosophic terms, it has included the matter under discussion in a wider category, and this represents a stage of philosophic advance. Moreover, it implies consolation to the human sufferer as well as progress to the discussion. Job had met loss and pain without a murmur; he broke down when long musing made him realise the isolation his ruin had brought him, and how he was an outcast from intelligible law. He recovers his self-control when he is led to feel that his burden is only part of the world-mystery of Good and Evil, for the solution of which all time is too short.

Two sections of the work have yet to be considered in the present connection, the prologue and the epilogue. From the side of philosophy no part of *Job* is more im-  
 portant than the brief epilogue. Other sections suggest distinct solutions of the problem under  
 discussion. But when a question is so wide as to admit of no final settlement, but only of tentative treatment, philosophy can have no more important task than to discover a practical attitude

Epilogue : Prac-  
 tical bearings of  
 the question

which we may assume towards it while advancing slowly towards theoretic knowledge. This is what the epilogue does in its pronouncement that Job has been right and his friends wrong. As suggested above, this can have no other meaning than to imply that the bold faith of a Job, which could reproach his God as friend reproaches friend where the Divine dealings seemed unjust, was, though founded on ignorance, more acceptable to that God than the servile adoration which sought to twist facts in order to magnify His name. The deep significance of such a pronouncement must be welcomed by every school of thought; it for ever stamps the God of the Bible as a God on the side of enquiry.

But before this principle has been laid down in the epilogue, before Job and his friends have commenced to discuss the mystery of suffering, another explanation of that mystery has been suggested to our thoughts in the prologue. When we are made to see the Powers of Heaven discussing the character of Job as if it were an item in which the welfare of the universe was concerned, and contriving visitations of suffering as means of testing whether the character be really all that it seems to be, it is impossible for our minds not to generalise, and wonder whether large part of the visible suffering in the actual world be not a probationary visitation of this nature. Here then there is another solution presented: how is the treatment to be classified from our immediate point of view? The thinker has other weapons besides philosophic discussion. Philosophy deals with that which can be known by its own methods; but the thinker may recognise a region outside this, which therefore from the philosophic point of view is the unknowable, which may nevertheless have influences operating upon the region of what is known. In reference to such a region he will not employ the method of discussion, but rather the form of philosophic suggestion that has come to be called 'speculation.' The prologue to *Job* may be regarded as giving the authority of Holy Writ to reverent speculation upon the higher mysteries. No doubt here difference of interpretation comes in. Those who

Prologue: Speculation upon a Transcendental Explanation

consider that the first two chapters of *Job* represent an historic fact — incidents which actually happened — will not use the word ‘speculation’: to them this prologue will be the final settlement of the whole question. But the great majority of readers will take these chapters to be part of the parable into which the history of Job has been worked up; the incidents in heaven, like the incidents of the Prodigal Son, they will understand to be spiritually imagined, not historically narrated. And these will recognise that the prologue gives completeness to the *Book of Job* viewed from the standpoint of philosophy; the problem of human suffering, which has in other parts of the book been treated by theory and theory modified, by negative positions and reference to a wider category, and even by pronouncement upon its practical bearings, has a further illumination cast upon it by a speculation which refers the origin of suffering to the mysteries of the supernatural world.

I have spoken of science as well as philosophy. Science observes nature and life; observation of nature is the special work of modern science, antiquity turned its reflection chiefly on human life. It is hardly necessary to point out that proverb-like reflections on society and life form large part of the material out of which the dialogue in *Job* is constructed. I will be content with a single one of the more extended illustrations. It is remarkable that the whole course of what the most modern thought calls ‘the land question’ is sketched in a single chapter of *Job*. The patriarch is describing what seems to him the misgovernment of the world. He commences with the encroachments of private ownership upon the common land:

Interest of  
Science:  
The Land Question

There are that remove the landmarks. . . .  
They turn the needy out of the way.

2, 4

There is consequently the formation of a class of the poor, who are either driven to the barren regions, or become a mere labouring class without rights in the land of the community.

xxiv



In the dark they dig through houses :  
 They shut themselves up in the daytime.  
 They know not the light.  
 For the morning is to all of them  
 As the shadow of death;  
 For they know the terrors of the shadow of death.

It is noteworthy that when Job makes his general vindication he finds a climax in disowning sins against the rights and duties of land. xxxi. 38

It appears then that both philosophy and science have their representation in this ancient book of the Bible. Yet every reader will feel that these words are an imperfect description of the matter which makes up the poem of *Job*. Philosophy is based upon reason ; but in the present case there is a section of the poem which represents God himself as entering into the discussion, and holding up a view of the truth from which no one appeals. It is clear that in the *Book of Job* yet another element of Revelation mingles side by side with Philosophy ; and the new element implies a new division of literature. The student who comes to the Bible from other literatures must be prepared to recognise a special literary type, that of Prophecy : a department which is distinguished from others not by form — for Prophecy may take any form — but by spirit, its *differentia* being that it presents itself as an authoritative Divine message. The literary study of the Bible has no more important task than that of describing Prophecy from the literary point of view.

The varieties of literary form illustrated in the work we are considering are not yet exhausted. We have called the *Book of Job* a drama and a philosophic discussion ; yet neither of these descriptions will account for the strange character of the individual speeches which strikes every reader. Their length, if nothing else, would distinguish them from the speeches of other dramas ; and their tone is equally far removed from the tone of philosophic disquisition.

They have in them plenty of dramatic force, and also clear and effective strokes of argument. But they do not stop with these ; the dramatic thrust gives place to ornate moralising which, from the dramatic point of view, seems so much waste ; and the point of the argument is again and again lost in an accumulation of beautiful irrelevancy. He would be a very perverse reader who should cry out against these characteristics of *Job* as literary faults : on the contrary, they are evidence that the character of the work is insufficiently described by the terms drama and discussion. A further element comes in of Rhetoric : not in the debased sense which the word is coming to bear to modern ears, but the Rhetoric of antiquity which was the delight in speech for its own sake. Each delivery of a speaker in the poem of *Job* is to be looked upon as a work of art in itself. If Job in the course of the discussion interjects the parenthetical thought, "What is the good of arguing?" this parenthesis is found to be a finished meditation of twenty-eight lines. The speech in which it occurs is answered by Bildad, and he meets Job's eloquence by a *tour-de-force* of imagery painting the whole universe watching to destroy the sinner, and this piece of word-beauty runs to thirty-four lines. Zophar in the same round of discussion varies the beauty by a string of wise saws on the same topic, and these extend to sixty lines. All this is over and above the portions of the speeches which are strictly argumentative. It is clear then that the personages of the poem answer one another, not only with argument and dramatic passion, but also with counterpoises of rhetoric weight. The whole becomes like a controversy carried on in sonnets, a discussion waged in perorations. Once more the many-sidedness of the Bible is apparent ; and the student who would fully appreciate it must train himself in the literary interest of Rhetoric.

One word more has yet to be said. The literary varieties mentioned so far are such as appeal chiefly to the mind. But there is one main distinction in literature that appeals to the eye and the ear also ; the distinction between the 'straight-forward' speech

called 'prose,' and that kind of speech which 'measures' itself into metres and verses. A glance at the *Book of Job* in any properly printed version shows that <sup>Interest of Versification</sup> this work, like the plays of Shakespeare or the later stories of William Morris, presents an interchange between the two fundamental forms of language, being a dialogue in verse enclosed in a frame of prose story. When however the English reader calls in his ear to supplement his eye, he finds that the verse passages of *Job* differ essentially from what he is accustomed to find in English verse. There is no rhyme, nor do the lines correspond in meters or syllables. The *Book of Job*, then, in addition to its other literary suggestiveness, raises the elementary questions of Biblical versification.

The purpose of this Introduction is now accomplished. I have engaged the reader's attention with a single book of the Bible; we have seen that, over and above what it yields to the theological faculty or the religious sense, the *Book of Job* is a piece of literature, the analysis of <sup>Plan of the whole work</sup> which brings us into contact with all the leading varieties of literary form. What the Introduction has done in reference to a single book, the work as a whole is to do in reference to the whole Bible, proceeding however by a method more regular than has been necessary so far. The work will be divided into six books. The first book will start with the point last reached — Biblical Versification — and widening from this will search out other distinctions which may serve as a basis for the Classification of Literature under such heads as Lyric, Epic, Philosophic, Prophetic, Rhetoric. The subsequent books will take up these departments one by one, illustrating each, with the subdivisions of each, from the most notable examples in the Sacred Writings. The reader who has thus given his attention to the general literary aspects of the Bible will then find, in an Appendix, Tabular arrangements into which the whole of the Bible enters, intended to assist him when he desires to read the Sacred Writings from the literary point of view.