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Parallelism in Romans

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Paul M. Biays

Parallelism In Romans

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Biographical Sketch of the Author

Paul M. Biays attended York College, York, Nebraska, University of San Francisco, and San Francisco State College. After five years in the United States Air Force, Mr. Biays returned to Kansas and completed work for the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and the Master of Arts in English at Fort Hays Kansas State College. After receiving these degrees he entered the Cincinnati Bible Seminary as a candidate for the Bachelor of Divinity degree. Presently this work is almost completed and he is now serving on the faculty of the Seminary and is the minister of the Bellevue Christian Church, Bellevue, Kentucky. He is married to the former Charlotte Bizek.

Parallelism In Romans

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Preface

This work concerns a study of the epistle to the Romans in light of the ancient Jewish poetical trait of parallelism. The intent is to show the influence of this poetical trait in Paul's most systematic prose writing. No consideration of theological issues is taken up, for the study is conducted on a strict literary basis. Examples of parallelism are quoted from the American Standard Version of the Bible and are written in such a way as to show the coextension of ideas.

In the eighteenth century, Bishop Lowth saw through the strict prose printing of the 1611 King James Version of the Bible. This discovery is discussed as it pertains to the intent of the study. His lectures in Hebrew poetry are indeed epoch-making and have an important place in any consideration of Hebrew parallelism. John Forbes, who recognized the presence of parallelism in New Testament writers is also given a great deal of consideration.

The entire epistle to the Romans has not been exhausted. Dispersed examples of parallelisms from the various chapters are called to the reader's attention and commented on. The fourth chapter of Romans is treated in great detail to show that the Hebrew influence on Paul was pronounced enough to make parallelism the characteristic trait of this letter. Any of the sixteen chapters could have been used to illustrate the same point.

Types of parallelism are unfamiliar to most students of literature, therefore great care is devoted to an explanation of synonymous, synthetic and antithetic parallelism. These three major types are often used in a specific form called "inversion." Paul's use of inverted parallelism is profuse and an extended explanation utilizing examples from both the Old and New Testament is given.

The metaphoric element of the Hebrew language is important in understanding their use of parallelism. This element is discussed in relation to the correspondence of ideas. To simplify understanding and explanation of the various strophes, tristich (three clauses), tetrastich (four clauses), pentastich (five clauses), and hexastich (six clauses) are used to define certain parts of long passages. For instance, eleven lines may be quoted from the Old Testament; the explanation of these lines may first of all involve the first pentastich (the first five lines) and later, the concluding hexastich (six lines).

The reader will notice the strong element of antithetical paral-

lelism. Often, diatribes are the mode used to express antithetical ideas; at other times, Paul will begin a long discourse and write strophe after strophe of antithesis.

Certainly, Paul can be understood, admired and enjoyed to a greater degree, if one is familiar with this very definite characteristic of his writings: that of parallelism.

Chapter I

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the incidence of Hebrew poetical parallelism in the epistle to the Romans. In order to accomplish this, a preliminary study of Hebrew poetic forms will be made.

The book of Romans has been chosen for specific reasons. Romans is the most systematic and inclusive statement of Paul's faith.¹ Hayes commented that ". . . in writing his theological treatise for the Romans, Paul has chosen to give it a legal, logical, forensic framework throughout."² The very nature of the epistle is unique for a study such as this because its concise and argumentative nature would imply essentially prose writing.

Theological aspects of the epistle will not be considered in this thesis. The work will be conducted as an empirical study of the incidence of parallelism involved in the epistle. The relationship of Paul's style in Romans with Biblical poetry will be the significant subject of discussion. This analysis is not exhaustive. One chapter of Romans will be examined in verse-by-verse detail in order to indicate the extent of the influence of poetical patterns on Paul's literary style. The three primary types of parallelism established by Lowth³ and the one important form of poetical parallelism named by Jebb,⁴ will be explained in reasonable detail so that they may be easily understood by the reader as the work proceeds.

It may be objected at the outset, that a study of this nature is invalid without a knowledge of the original languages. This question is pertinent and requires consideration at this time. The basis of Hebrew poetry is parallelism of ideas. The idea in one clause of poetry repeats, supplements, or runs counter to an idea already stated in a previous clause. This unusual poetic form is called "parallelism." Some have preferred the term "thought-rhythm" to "parallelism."⁵

1. George Arthur Buttrick *et al.* *The Interpreter's Bible*. Vol. 9, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1954, p. 355.

2. D. A. Hayes. *Paul and His Epistles*. New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1915, p. 312.

3. Charles Augustus Briggs. *The International Critical Commentary*. Vol. 1, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906, p. xxxv.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Samuel Fallows, ed. *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, Chicago: Howard-Severance Company, 1908, p. 1357.

It is well known that much of the ancient poetry of other nations loses a very great part of its beauty in passing into another tongue; so that some of the productions most highly prized in the original are flatter than ordinary prose when rendered faithfully in a translation, just because the features on which the charm of the original depends are peculiar to the original language and form. On the other hand, the distinguishing feature of the Hebrew poetry is not rhyme or assonance—which disappear in a translation or can only be preserved by art and effort—but the rhythmical balancing of parts, or parallelism of the thought, a feature that only becomes the more striking the more faithfully the words are translated . . . This feature of the poetry, whereby one member of a verse stands over against another by resemblance or by contrast, the parallelism being balanced often in minutest details, is so outstanding that even the reader of a translation can scarcely fail to notice it, and to conform his reading to it, for it is the natural expression of the sense.⁶

One of the great authorities in the field of Biblical literature states that “Parallelism of clauses is independent of particular languages and appears in any adequate translation.”⁷ The poetry of the *Bible* loses so little by translation and therefore easily lends itself to all languages.⁸ “The metaphorical element . . . is as striking in a translation as in the original, so that the Hebrew poetry is in its essence poetical in any tongue.”⁹

All quotations from the *Bible* are taken from the American Standard Version. The only exception is in the case of direct quotes. The American Standard Version is known to be highly literal and is based upon the major manuscript discoveries in the history of Biblical scholarship. These manuscripts, the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, were not available when the King James Version was translated. While the periphrastic element is held to a minimum, the American Standard Version translators have attempted to maintain the musical aspect of the King James Version. Old Testament quotations from the poetical books have been printed in such a manner that the parallelism of ideas is quite apparent to the reader. Undoubtedly the poetic character of the quotation and the force and pertinence are more fully felt in the American Standard Version. Even punctuation is utilized in such a way that a clear and intelligent setting forth of the true meaning of the words is insured. This of course has rendered necessary, especially in the Epistles, a larger use of colons and semicolons than is customary in modern English printing.

6. James Robertson. *The Poetry and the Religion of the Psalms*. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1893, p. 159.

7. Richard C. Moulton. *The Modern Reader's Bible*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1935, p. 1518.

8. Louise Seymour Houghton. *Hebrew Life and Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907, p. 73.

9. Robertson, *loc. cit.*

Chapter II

Hebrew Language and Poetry

Throughout the history of literature, diverse methods have been used by people to express themselves poetically. Macarthur, professor emeritus of languages at California Institute of Technology, claims the Greeks and Romans utilized the quantity of syllables contained in a restricted line as the determining factor of their poetry. The Anglo-Saxons employed combined rhyme with alliteration of stressed syllables, while the English until comparatively recent times, used either rhyme or blank verse and a recurrence of stressed or unstressed syllables.¹

Hebrew poetry does not depend on any of the above factors. In any consideration of the poetry of the Hebrew nation, it is well that we look at the language of the Jew in order that we may better understand the characteristics of their poetry. Types and forms of poetry are related to the peculiarities of a given language.

Ancient Jews used a vocabulary derived from the immediate world in which they lived. "Jewish vocabulary had no words except for the concrete objects of the external world."² This explains why they expressed themselves in the picturesque concrete, instead of in the abstract³ and also why the principle of analogy is a more integral unit of reasoning than premise and conclusion as with the Greeks.⁴

In conjunction with these ideas, the people of Israel were in a favorable location for the cultivation of poetry. No country in the world presents the variety of scenery and productions to be seen in Palestine: snows of Lebanon, tropical heat of the Jordan Valley, gushing streams in winter, parched plains in summer.

. . . Hebrew poets frequently make use of imagery borrowed from common life, and from objects well known and familiar . . . The metaphor was employed to a great extent, as if inspired by nature and the surrounding country . . .⁵

1. John Robertson Macarthur, *Biblical Literature and its Backgrounds*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936, p. 81.

2. John H. Gardiner, *The Bible as English Literature*. New York: Charles Scribners, 1907, p. 113.

3. Edyth Armstrong Hoyt, *Studies in the Bible for the Modern Reader* Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1959, p. 20.

4. John F. Genung, *A Guidebook to the Biblical Literature*. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1919, p. 65.

5. Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*. London: S. Chadwick and Company, 1847, pp. 70, 74.

Mount Lebanon, known for its height, age and adorning cedar trees, and Mount Carmel for its delightful appearance of fertility, beauty and grace, provided the principal ornaments and imagery for sacred poetical writing.⁶

In addition to the predominance of the metaphor, the importance of the verb is also stressed by Gordon who quotes the German scholar Herder in *Geist der hebraischen Poesie*, Supan's edition XI, 227.

Since action and delineation are the very essence of poetry, and since the verb is the part of speech that depicts action, or rather sets the action itself directly before us, the language that is rich in expressive, pictorial verbs is a poetical language; and the more fully it can convert its nouns into verbs, the more poetical it is . . . now in Hebrew the verb is almost everything—that is, all is life of action . . . The language of which we are speaking is a very abyss of verbs, a sea of waves, where action ever rolls singing into action.⁷

For centuries, the genius of Hebrew poetry remained obscure to the public and to Biblical scholars. “. . . Hebrew poetry has proved itself great, for even when largely hidden under a prose form and not understood in the technical sense as poetry, it was really recognized as such . . .”⁸ There is probably no other great literature of the world which has such an intermingling of prose and poetry as the *Bible*. “The Hebrew mind is matter of fact and practical; this made the prose vehicle fully as natural a form of expression as the poetic. Much of the poetry . . . is hardly distinguishable in feeling from prose.”⁹ Some scholars have called Hebrew literature “prose poetry”¹⁰ and others “poetical prose”¹¹ because of the difficulty in distinguishing between the two forms.

It is not difficult to understand why verse and prose appear the same¹² when one considers the ancient Biblical manuscripts. The original manuscripts do not reflect the differences of literary form. When our modern day versions of the *Bible* are written out in verse we tend to assume the original manuscripts from which they were translated were also written as such. This is not the case. “. . . in prose they (the Hebrews) made no distinction of sentences, still less of paragraphs; in verse they have no distinction

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 75, 77.

7. Alex R. Gordon. *The Poets of the Old Testament*. New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1912, p. 4.

8. Laura H. Wild. *A Literary Guide to the Bible*. New York: George H. Doran, 1922, p. 137.

9. Genung, *loc. cit.*

10. Wild, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

11. Edith Hamilton. *The Greek Way to Western Civilization*. New York: The New American Library, 1930, p. 8.

12. Richard G. Moulton. *The Modern Reader's Bible*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1935, p. 1530.

of metre, nor can they discriminate speeches in drama or suggest the names of speakers.”¹³ Indeed, they are as “barren of form as a stenographer’s note book.”¹⁴

The following illustration takes into account the lack of differentiating literary form. If the ensuing passage from Hosea 14:5, 6 were assumed to be English, the ancient manuscript would appear thus:

I WILL BE AS THE DEW UNTO ISRAEL HE SHALL
BLOSSOM AS THE LILY AND CAST FORTH HIS
ROOTS AS LEBANON HIS BRANCHES SHALL
SPREAD AND HIS BEAUTY SHALL BE AS THE
OLIVE TREE AND HIS SMELL AS LEBANON¹⁵

Ancient Hebrew and Greek had no commas, periods, or any type of punctuation. There was no division in words, sentences or paragraphs. All letters were in the uppercase and were run together as shown.

Even when Greek and Hebrew scholars translated the manuscripts, justice was not done to the literature from an artistic nor literary point of view. The following passage from Hosea 14:5-8 is written as a dialogue. It is evident how this passage is improved in understanding and readability when it appears in this form. If it is read in the *Bible*, one is not sure whether the Lord or Ephraim is speaking.

The Lord

I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

Ephraim

What have I to do anymore with idols?

The Lord

I have answered, and will regard him.

Ephraim

I am like a green fir tree—

The Lord

From me is thy fruit found.¹⁶

However, accurate the translations of words may be, ordinary versions of scripture give inadequate indication of the varieties of literary form. Forbes, Lowth, Robinson and many other scholars

13. *Ibid.*, p. v.

14. *Ibid.*, p. v.

15. *Ibid.*, p. vi.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. vi, vii.

attribute more of the *Bible* to poetry than even the Revised Standard Version reveals.

Moulton states that the *Bible* is the worst-printed book in the world. No other literature, ancient or modern, has been placed before the public in such a form that the principles of literary structure are missed. Only if one has had considerable training, are such elements detected. Other books convey to the eye in such a way that the literary traits are impossible to mistake.¹⁷

The following comments indicate some of the oppressions that the scriptures have been subjected to in the centuries following its conception.

. . . 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 hundred 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 mediaeval translators into 'verses,' which not only did not agree with, but often ran counter to, the original structure. The force of this unlitrary 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 chapter he will, without knowing it, be often commencing in the middle of one composition and leaving off in the middle of another; while in whatever way he may read it, he will know no distinction between prose and verse . . .¹⁸

"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."¹⁹ Houghton has less sympathy for the translators of the Revised Standard Version. ". . . for with all their scholarship they are manifestly not poets."²⁰ In spite of the fact that the purpose of the compilers of the Old Testament "was religious, not secular or even artistic,"²¹ it is still incredible that the Bible has been so grossly neglected from a literary point of view.

In 1753, Robert Lowth, Bishop of London and Praelector of Poetry at Oxford, delivered a course of lectures which won Euro-

17. Richard G. Moulton. *The Literary Study of the Bible*. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1899, p. 45.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. Louise Seymour Houghton. *Hebrew Life and Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907, p. 84.

21. Theodore H. Robinson. *The Poetry of the Old Testament*. London. Gerald Duckworth & Co., Ltd., 1947, p. 123.

pean fame. Bishop Lowth saw beyond the strict prose form of the 1611 King James Version. He was the first to establish the principle of parallelism in Hebrew Poetry; however, he based his conclusion on Rabbi Asarias and Schottgen who were older writers. In Lowth's epoch-making lectures he observed that the poetry of the Hebrews showed a peculiar conformity of sentences.

The Hebrew poets frequently express a sentiment with the utmost brevity and simplicity, illustrated by no circumstances, adorned with no epithets which, in truth, they seldom use; they afterwards call in the aid of ornament, they repeat, they vary, they amplify the same sentiment; and adding one or more sentences which run parallel to each other, they express the same or a similar, and often a contrary sentiment, in nearly the same form of words. Of these three modes of ornament, at least, they make the most frequent use, namely, the amplification of the same ideas, the accumulation of others, and the opposite or antithesis of such as are contrary to each other²²

The basic unit of Hebrew verse is a recurrence of parallel clauses. Unlike English, French or German where the number of syllables and rhyme is predominant, the early Hebrew poets stressed a parallelism of ideas. Lowth showed that the essential characteristic of Hebrew poetry consists in a correspondence of the lines, not as in modern languages which depend on the quantity or length of syllables, but on the agreement of ideas.

In classical and in most modern poetry the units are sounds; In older forms (Accadian or Chinese) the unit is *idea*. It is the speakers thought which arouses an expectation, and this can be satisfied only by a repetition or by a balancing conception. It is to this general type of thought-rhythm that the forms of classical Hebrew poetry belong When a statement is made in poetry, the expectation that has been roused in our minds must be satisfied as a poem; a series of ideas has been put before us, and we instinctively require that it shall be repeated. So the poet goes back to the beginning again, and says the same thing once more, though he may partly or completely change the actual words in order to avoid monotony. He is then, following a line of thought parallel to that which has been already laid down. The fundamental principle of Hebrew verse form: Every verse must consist of at least two "members," the second of which must, more or less completely satisfy the expectation raised by the first.²³

This principle cannot be too highly exaggerated when considering Hebrew verse forms for the term "parallel" is meaningless when applied to a single line of poetry. The highest aim of Hebrew poetry then, is "not to gratify the ear, but to satisfy the reason."²⁴

Attempts have been made in the past to stress rhyme and a systematic meter in Hebrew poetry. Such attempts have generally

22. Lowth, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

23. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

24. John Forbes. *The Symmetrical Structure of Scripture*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1854, p. 1.

gone astray. Rhyme is rarely present, although there are a few exceptions in the Old Testament. Hebrew poetry has rhythm, but not in the sense of the established meter as in English poetry. Jastrow²⁵ stated that efforts have been made to find feet in Hebrew poetry, but have met with no success.

Houghton states that about the most interesting thing about parallelism of Hebrew poetry, is that, like all other characteristics of poetry, it grew directly out of the movements of the dance. "The dance is the symmetry and harmony of motion and parallelism . . . is the simplest form of symmetry in words. In all languages, parallelism is the natural expression of feeling."²⁶

The rhythm of the Hebrew is a natural rhythm; unlike the Greek and the French, . . . the emphatic syllables coincides with the natural stress of the voice, and the length of the clause is closely related to the pulse of the blood, the beat of the heart, the expiation of the breath.²⁷

Hebrew poetry, a literary style so much a part of the very life and history of the Jews, has had a unique influence on the New Testament literature, as this study will indicate.

25. Morris Jastrow. *The Song of Songs*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1921, p. 151.

26. Houghton, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

Chapter III

Synonymous Parallelism

Of all the common types of parallelism in the literature of the Old Testament, the synonymous probably occurs most frequently. Houghton states that this type of parallelism is the simplest to distinguish;¹ however, the casual reader may easily confuse the synthetic with the synonymous variety of parallelism.

As the term “synonymous parallelism” implies, in this form there is a repetition of clauses or statements, each having essentially the same meaning. These parallel clauses or statements constitute a couplet, the basic unit of parallelism. In the following example, thought repetition is illustrated in three couplets.

Yet he commanded the skies above,
And opened the doors of heaven;
And he rained down manna upon them to eat,
And gave them food from heaven.
Man did not eat the bread of the mighty:
He sent them food to the full.²

The clause “And opened the doors of heaven;” is essentially a repetition of what was said in the preceding clause—“Yet he commanded the skies above.” Thought repetition occurs in the second and third couplets also. The second member repeats the essential idea contained in first member of the couplet by different or by equivalent terms.

Old Testament literature exhibits a great variety of this poetic form. In the following example, the clauses that are parallel in thought have a stronger bond than that which unites them all in a sequence.

If thou hast sinned,
What effectest thou against him?
And if thy transgressions be multiplied,
What doest thou unto him?³

In this instance, the first and third clauses exhibit a clear example

1. Louise Seymour Houghton. *Hebrew Life and Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907, p. 73.

2. Psalms 78:23-25.

3. Job 35:6.

of synonymous parallelism; likewise the second and fourth do also.⁴
Many examples of synonymous parallelism are found in Isaiah.

For the moth shall eat them up like a garment,
And the worm shall eat them like wool;
But my righteousness shall be for ever,
And my salvation unto all generations.⁵

Matthew's account of the words of Christ form an interesting triplet.

But I say unto you,
Love your enemies,
And pray for them that persecute you;
That ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven:⁵ . . .

In the book of Joshua there is an example whereby the second line expresses a thought not identical with that of the first, but parallel and similar to it.

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon;
And thou, moon, upon the valley of Aijalon.⁶
Joshua 10:12.

Laura H. Wild, professor of biblical history and literature at Mount Holyoke College during the early part of this century, points out a synonymous parallelism in Psalms 19:7.⁷ Verse seven is indeed an excellent example of this type of parallelism; however, verses eight, nine and ten are even more interesting as they relate to verse seven.

The law of Jehovah is perfect,
Restoring the soul:
The testimony of Jehovah is sure,
Making the wise the simple.
The precepts of Jehovah are right;
Rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of Jehovah is pure,
Enlightening the eyes.
The fear of Jehovah is clean,
Enduring for ever:

4. Moulton calls this type "Dissimilar Parallelism," however, for the purpose of this thesis, the several minor modifications and names of the three major forms of parallelism will not be treated. In any study of parallelism, it is important to note that this term includes a wide variety of structure and different scholars have different names for each structure. Wild calls the repetition of words in the clauses "Stair-like" parallelism; Brewer labels it "tautological"; Gordon calls it "climactic" or "ascending"; Houghton labels it "graduated rhythm." Buchanan Grey renamed Lowth's synthetic parallelism as "formal," while Driver calls it "constructive." The purpose of this thesis is to describe clearly and give examples of the three most common forms of parallelism. They will be called by the most common and fitting names, so that the reader will easily recognize and classify them in the epistle to the Romans.

5. Isaiah 51:8.

6. Matthew 5:44.

7. S. R. Driver. *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922, p. 363.

8. Laura H. Wild. *A Literary Guide to the Bible*. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922, p. 129.

The ordinances of Jehovah are true,
And righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey
And the droppings of the honeycomb.⁸

The law, testimony, precepts, commandments and ordinances generally impart the same idea to a reader. If one closely analyzes the above example, the question may be asked "How does the fear of Jehovah" parallel in idea with the law, testimony, precepts, commandments and ordinances? The "fear" of Jehovah is another expression for the "law" of the Lord.⁹ It also denotes "word," hence, it is parallel with the other clauses. Additional comment on this scriptural passage will be in order when we study the chapter on synthetic parallelism.

In order to impart to the reader various aspects of form, it is well that examples other than couplets be illustrated.

The triplet or tristich is not as common as the couplet or distich.

The floods have lifted up, O Jehovah,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.¹⁰

The tetrastich, which is composed of four lines, and is usually a combination of two distichs.

His mouth was smooth as butter,
But his heart was war:
His words were softer than oil,
Yet they were drawn swords.¹¹

A combination of distichs and tristichs form a pentastich.

I am weary with my groaning;
Every night I make my bed to swim;
I water my couch with my tears.
Mine eye wasteth away because of grief;
It waxeth old because of all mine adversaries.¹²

An accumulation of three distichs or two tristichs is called a hexastich.

8. Psalms 19:7-10.

9. Samuel Fallows. *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. II, Chicago: Howard Severance Co., 1908, p. 653.

10. Psalms 93:3.

11. Psalms 55:21.

12. Psalms 6:6, 7.

Jehovah reigneth; let the peoples tremble:
 He sitteth above the cherubim; let the earth be moved.
 Jehovah is great in Zion;
 And he is high above all the peoples.
 Let them praise thy great and terrible name.
 Holy is he.¹³

The familiar one-hundredth Psalm is an example of both a hexastich and a pentastich:

Make a joyful noise unto Jehovah, all ye lands.
 Serve Jehovah with gladness:
 Come before his presence with singing.
 Know ye that Jehovah, he is God:
 It is he that hath made us, and we are his:
 We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
 And into his courts with praise:
 Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.
 For Jehovah is good; his loving kindness endureth for ever,
 And his faithfulness unto all generations.¹⁴

The first six lines are composed of two triplets to form a hexastich. A pentastich proceeds this hexastich; it is made up of a tristich and a couplet.

There are instances where scripture can be misinterpreted, if one has no knowledge of parallelism. One example is the "Song of Lamech" in Genesis.

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
 Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech:
 For I have slain a man for wounding me,
 And a young man for bruising me: . . .¹⁵

How many people are being addressed in the first two lines? One acquainted with Hebrew parallelism readily knows the second line of the couplet is a repetition of the thought expressed in the first. The same thing occurs again in the third and fourth lines. How many men has he killed? One could be easily disposed to say he had killed two; however, the fourth line, being a repetition of the idea expressed in the third, clearly signifies one man was killed.

Forbes mentions synonymous triplets in the words of Christ and the apostle Paul.

13. Psalms 99:1-3.

14. Psalms 100.

15. Genesis 4:23.

Ye are the salt of the earth:
But if the salt have lost its savor,
Wherewith shall it be salted?
It is thenceforth good for nothing,
But to be cast out
And trodden under foot of men.

Matthew 5:13.

In the same context, Christ says again:

Even so
Let your light shine before man;
That they may see your good works,
And glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Matthews 5:16.

Paul introduces a synonymous triplet in his letter to the church at Ephesus:

Wherefore he saith,
Awake, thou that sleepest,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ shall shine upon thee.¹⁶

Ephesians 5:14.

The method utilized throughout this thesis of taking examples from the Old and New Testament may possibly give the reader the impression that these are unique and isolated examples of parallelism. This is not the case. Many of the passages quoted are extracted from the context of great Hebrew poetry. Some quotations are small portions taken from an entire book of poetry.

16. John Forbes. *The Symmetrical Structure of Scripture*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1854, p. 18.

Chapter IV

Synthetic Parallelism

In the foregoing chapter we have seen the influence of synonymous thought on Hebrew poetry.

Rather than 'echoing' or repeating the idea as is the case of synonymous parallelism, synthetic parallelism is characterized by the second line supplementing or augmenting a thought set forth in the first line. The term "epithetic," may be more appropriate in some examples, because the second clause often subjoins something new to the first clause.

The following quotation is an example of comparative thought:

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, Oh God.¹

The writer of the Psalm is using the realm of nature to visualize the idea that his soul yearns for the sustaining and soul-strengthening power of his Creator, just as the stag yearns for the life-giving water of the brooks. Neither line can stand alone and contain a complete thought without the content of the other clause.

Synthetic parallelism requires a consensus of several different ideas which are combined into a whole to form a syntax.

Answer not a fool according to his folly,
Lest thou also be like unto him.²

The consequence of answering a fool according to his folly is that, in doing so, one might become a fool also. The second line is a practical application of what might happen by disobeying the injunction of the first line.

Often, synthetic parallelism is shown by use of analogy, or elaboration:

As a bird wandereth from her nest,
So is a man that wandereth from his place.³
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;⁴

1. Psalms 42:1.

2. Proverbs 26:4.

3. Proverbs 27:8.

4. Proverbs 1:3.

The danger of confusing synonymous and synthetic parallelism lies mainly in augmentation and/or supplementation. These are the critical criteria to be applied in determining whether a given case is synonymous or synthetic.

Fallows,⁵ in his *Bible Encyclopaedia* claims that Psalms 29:1 is an example of synonymous parallelism.

Give to Jehovah, ye sons of God,
Give to Jehovah glory and praise.

One can readily see the possibility of classifying this as synthetic parallelism because in a sense, the second line supplements the first; however, the initial thought of "Giving to Jehovah" is augmented by what is contained in the second clause, namely giving "glory and praise." It seems better, therefore, to classify this example as synthetic rather than synonymous parallelism, although both elements are present.

Synthetic parallelism is often found in forms other than the basic couplet. One of the minor prophets of the Old Testament has given a clear example of a hexastich.

His branches shall spread,
And his beauty shall be as the olive-tree,
And his smell as Lebanon.
They that dwell under his shadow shall return;
They shall revive as the grain and blossom as the vine:
The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.⁶

In four verses of the Psalms, the writer utilizes couplets, triplets, pentastichs, and hexastichs; also synonymous and synthetic parallelism in the space of fifteen short lines.

The waters saw thee, O God;
The waters saw thee,
They were afraid:
The depths also trembled,
The clouds poured out water;
The skies sent out a sound:
Thine arrows also went abroad.
The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind;
The lightnings lightened the world:
The earth trembled and shook.
Thy way was in the sea,
And thy paths in the great waters,
And thy footsteps were not known.
Thou leddest thy people like a flock,
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.⁷

5. Samuel Fallows, ed. *The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. iii, Chicago: Howard Severance Company, 1908, p. 1358.

6. Hosea 14:6-7.

7. Psalms 77:16-20.

Frequently, numbers are used in parallelism.

He will deliver thee in six troubles;
Yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.⁸

Thus saith Jehovah:

For three transgressions of Damascus,
Yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof;⁹.

Once again, from the Gospel of Matthew the following words of Christ are of the synthetic type of parallelism:

Even so

Let your light shine before men;
That they may see your good works,
And glorify your Father who is in heaven.¹⁰

The Hebrew genius of writing in parallel ideas became more and more profound as the author's study progressed. Let us look once again at the nineteenth Psalm:

The law of Jehovah is perfect,
Restoring the soul:
The testimony of Jehovah is sure,
Making wise the simple.
The precepts of Jehovah are right,
Rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of Jehovah is pure,
Enlightening the eyes.
The fear of Jehovah is clean,
Enduring for ever:
The ordinances of Jehovah are true,
And righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey
And the droppings of the honeycomb.¹¹

In the previous chapter, this was considered an example of synonymous parallelism, and rightly so. Bishop Lowth¹² is of the opinion that it is synthetic because the “. . . sentences answer to each other, not by the iteration of the same image or sentiment, or the opposition of their contraries, but merely by the form of construction.” Instead of considering the first line of the couplets (which classifies it as synonymous parallelism) let us look at the second. “Restoring the soul,” “Making wise the simple,” “Rejoicing the heart,” “Enlightening the eyes,” etc., are excellent examples of synthetic parallelism.

8. Job 5:19.

9. Amos 1:3a.

10. Matthew 5:16.

11. Psalm 19:7-10.

12. Lowth, Robert. *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*. London: S. Chadwick and Company, 1847, p. 216.

“Restoring the soul” and “Making wise the simple” is a progression of thought, rather than a repetition of the same idea. Rather than take issue with Lowth’s opinion that it is synthetic parallelism or Wild’s opinion that it is synonymous, we may conclude that the first line of each couplet is synonymous because of the elaboration on one idea, and the second line of each couplet is synthetic parallelism because there is an extension or progression of thought. Mixing several kinds of parallelism together is a common practice in sacred scripture.

In the next chapter, a type of parallelism, entirely different from what we have thus far studied, will be introduced.

Chapter V

Antithetic Parallelism and Diatribes

In the Epistle to the Romans, the writer makes great use of antithetic couplets. In this third type of parallelism the thought of the first line is emphasized or confirmed by a contrasted thought expressed in the second line. Sometimes, opposition of ideas are emphasized by the position of contrasting words, as in the following example from the Psalms.

For his anger is but for a moment;
His favor is for a life time:
Weeping may tarry for the night,
But joy cometh in the morning.¹
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night showeth knowledge.²

Antithetic parallelism is frequently found in the book of Proverbs where the second line is introduced most often by “but” and “than.”

A wise son heareth his father’s instruction;
But a scoffer heareth not rebuke.³
Better is a dinner of herbs where love is
Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.⁴
A wise son maketh a glad father,
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.⁵

In these illustrations, antithetic truth is contrast-emphasized in two pairs of words: love-hate; wise son-foolish son; father-mother.

An antithetic truth is contrasted at the end of the first Psalm.

For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous;
But the way of the wicked shall perish.⁶

John Forbes⁷ claims antithetic parallelism can have an opposition of terms and sentiments sometimes by expressions and sometimes by sense only.

-
1. Psalms 30:5.
 2. Psalms 19:2.
 3. Proverbs 13:1.
 4. Proverbs 15:17.
 5. Proverbs 10:1.
 6. Psalms 1:6.
 7. Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 12-13.

Many seek the ruler's favour;
But every man's judgment cometh from the Lord.⁸

In this example, there is an opposition of terms, "the ruler" as opposed to "the Lord." There is also an opposition of sentiment because of the vanity in depending on the rulers, without seeking the favor of God Almighty, on whom depend the issues of all things.⁹

Lund¹⁰ suggests a parallelism¹¹ of Jesus' words recorded by Mark; they are of the antithetic variety.

The sabbath was made for man,
And not man for the sabbath:¹²

When Moses descended from Mount Sinai with the tablets of stone, he was accompanied with Joshua. As they approached the Israeli camp, the sounds of people reviling fell on their ears. Joshua's comment to Moses was that there was the sound of war in the camp. Moses' reply was in an antithetical triplet:

It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery,
Neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome;
But the noise of them that sing do I hear.¹³

This is an interesting and unique example. The first and second clauses are antithetical with each other; in addition, the third is antithetical with the idea set forth in the first two clauses. Clause one and clause two are an opposition of terms. The first speaks of the "shout" of those who have mastered. The second concerns the "cry" of those that have been mastered (overcome). One thought pertains to victory; the contrasting thought pertains to defeat. The third member of the triplet claims it is neither victory nor defeat, but the sound of mirthful song. It is the sound of people dancing and singing around the golden calf.

In his commentary on Romans, Grubbs¹⁴ mentions numerous times Paul's use of antithesis. Nils Wilhelm Lund states in his doctoral dissertation that Paul makes abundant use of antithesis.¹⁵ He further relates the close similarity between the literary method of using diatribes and using antithetical parallelism. In a diatribe, instead of two speakers (as in a dialogue) one speaker introduces

8. Proverbs 29:26.

9. Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 13

10. Nils Wilhelm Lund, *Chiasmus¹¹ in the New Testament*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942, p. 31.

11. A Greek word denoting parallelism.

12. Mark 2:27.

13. Exodus 32:18.

14. Isaiah Boone Grubbs. *Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans*. Cincinnati: F. L. Rowe, 1936.

15. Lund, *op. cit.*, p. 13

an imaginary character and a discussion is then carried on between the two. Long discourses were few and questions and answers were frequent. The diatribe was rhetorical in construction, rich in parallelism, especially of the antithetic variety.

Bultmann finds close parallels between Pauline style and the popular diatribe. Both Johannes Weiss and Bultmann account for the present form of Paul's epistles because they represent speech rather than writing. Weiss is of the opinion that Paul, in dictating his letters, developed a kind of spoken prose and that they were written largely for the ear.¹⁶ This would agree with Moffatt's comment that Paul's writing

. . . was often written to be read aloud, it was composed by one whose ear was sensitive to the harmony of . . . the fall of antithesis, and the music of the period. More than once in Paul it becomes an open question whether he is quoting from an early Christian hymn, or developing half-unconsciously the antithesis of his flowing thought.¹⁷

Prevailing illiteracy of the people and the absence of printed material were the primary reasons the influence of the early Christian writings were felt through hearing rather than reading.

It was the solemn and didactic recitation which brought home not only the words, but the spirit of Paul, which enabled the audience to sustain its feeling of kinship with the original. The majority of Christians only listened to them in worship or learned their contents in the catechetical institution of the church. The epistles (Paul's) were written for the most part with this end in view;¹⁸

The characteristics of antithesis and diatribes are combined to make a breezy and lively discourse which was likely to catch and hold the attention of the crowd for which it was designed.¹⁹

As the study of the epistle to the Romans develops, we will see Paul's use of antithesis and diatribes. At times he will use the two together and at other times separately.

16 Lund, *loc. cit.*

17. James Moffatt. *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament.* New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1923, p. 57.

18. Moffatt, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

19. Lund, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

Chapter VI

Inverted Parallelism

Inverted¹ parallelism is concerned with “where” the ideas (or clauses) are placed in a single strophe.² This is not another type of parallelism such as synthetic, synonymous, or antithetical; rather, it is concerned with the manner in which the three major types, already set forth, are utilized. One could consider it an “important variation”³ of the other three forms. Once again the proper placement of sentences will reveal to the eye, what the reason incorporates.

My son, if thy heart be wise,
My heart will be glad, even mine:
Yea, my heart will rejoice,
When thy lips speak right things.⁴

In this example, the first and fourth clauses are parallel in idea and the second and third are parallel. If the condition of “My son’s heart being wise” is met, then the result will be that “his lips (will) speak right things”; here the first and fourth clauses are synthetically parallel. It is obvious that the second and third clauses are synonymous after reading the chapter on synonymous parallelism.

The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
The work of men’s hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not;
Eyes have they, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not;
Neither is there any breath in their mouths.
They that make them shall be like unto them;
Yea, every one that trusteth in them.⁵

This example from the Psalms is a little more complicated than the first quotation. Notice that the strophe is eight lines long and that the first line parallels with the eighth; the second line with the

1. Some scholars call it “introverted.”

2. “Strophe” as it pertains to Hebrew poetry, differs slightly from the meaning it has in English poetry, where it stands for a verse unit or stanza of a certain number of lines of definite length. A strophe in Hebrew poetry means a division of thought. The different strophes in a single poem may vary greatly in length, however, the four-line strophe is most common.

3. Charles Augustus Briggs. *The International Critical Commentary*. Vol. 1. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906, p. xxxv.

4. Proverbs 23:15, 16.

5. Psalms 135:15-18.

seventh; the third line with the sixth, and the like. It is obvious where the name "inverted" originated.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth,
Where moth and rust consume,
And where thieves break through and steal:
But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,
Where neither moth nor rust doth consume,
And where thieves do not break through nor steal:⁶

The first two examples are what the writer has labeled "vertical inverted parallelism"; this type of structure constitutes the greatest number inverted parallelism. The third example above may be called "horizontal inverted parallelism." The formation of this horizontal hexastich is less common than the vertical.

Moulton⁷ points out what he calls Double Triplets or Triplets 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.⁸

This hexastich is another example where the first lines of both triplets parallel in thought; the second lines of both triplets and the third lines of both triplets all harmonize with their corresponding number. Christ used synonymous parallelism in all three couplets.

No man can serve two masters:
For either he will hate the one,
And love the other.
Or else he will hold to one,
And dispise the other.
Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.⁹

Once again the example of a synonymous hexastich is given; however, the use of antithetical terms is made by using love-hate, God and mammon; this adds a great deal of variety and interest when one becomes familiar with the various types of parallelism. There is a strong antithetical strain running through this hexastich because of the antithetical words love-hate and God-mammon, yet as one analyzes it, it is obvious that it is synonymous parallelism.

6. Matthew 6:19, 20.

7. Richard G. Moulton. *The Literary Study of the Bible*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1899, p. 56.

8. Matthew 7:7, 8.

9. Matthew 6:24.

It should also be noted that this hexastich is composed of three couplets rather than two triplets.

Several scholars claim that inverted parallelism takes place on a larger scale than what has been mentioned thus far.

Budde speaks of Lamatations, Chapter 3, as forming "a central peak" between Chapters 1, 2, and 4, 5. Isaiah (chapters) 49-57 form such a central peak divided from chapters 40-47 and 58-66 by the refrain "There is no peace saith Jehovah (my God) to the wicked."¹⁰

Houghton calls attention to a single strophe in Psalms 89. This is indeed a remarkable instance of inverted parallelism when we consider that no thought of this particular poetical form was in the minds of the translators, and that, ". . . far from always rendering a given word by the same English word, they made it a principle to seek for variety in rendering, it is simply amazing that the parallelism has been so well preserved."¹¹

This Psalm will be better illustrated if capital letters of the alphabet are used to denote each member of the strophe.

- A. My lovingkindness will I keep for him for evermore;
And my covenant shall stand fast with him.
- B. His seed also will I make to endure for ever,
And his throne as the days of heaven.
- C. If his children forsake my law,
And walk not in mine ordinances;
- D. If they break my statutes,
And keep not my commandments;
- E. Then will I visit their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
- E. But my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him
Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.
- D. My covenant will I not break,
Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.
- C. Once have I sworn by my holiness:
I will not lie unto David:
- B. His seed shall endure for ever,
And his throne as the sun before me.
- A. It shall be established for ever as the moon,
And as the faithful witness in the sky.¹²

This strophe of inverted parallelism is written in couplets, as the eye can readily distinguish. Notice the tetrastich at the innermost and central point of the passage.

John Forbes¹³ made an interesting conjecture concerning one of Paul's epistles. It is his idea that the entire Epistle of Philemon

10. James Hastings. *Dictionary of the Bible*. Vol. IV. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909, p. 13.

11. Houghton, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-82.

12. Psalms 89:28-37.

13. Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

is an inverted parallelism of eighteen members. The following is an illustration of Forbes' idea with the book of Philemon broken down by verses. Numbers represent verses with the subject of the verses listed; capital letters represent the eighteen different members.

- A.1-3, Epistolary
- B.4-7, Prayers of Paul for Philemon—Philemon's hospitality
- C.8, Authority
- D. Supplication
- E.9-10, Onesimus, a convert of Paul's
- F.11-12, Wrong done by Onesimus, amends by Paul
- G.12 To receive Onesimus the same as receiving Paul.
- H.13-14, Paul, Philemon
- I.15, Onesimus
- I.16, Onesimus
- H.16, Paul, Philemon
- G.17, To receive Onesimus the same as receiving Paul.
- F.18-19, Wrong done by Onesimus, amends made by Paul
- E.19, Philemon a convert of Paul's
- D.20, Supplication
- C.21, Authority
- B.22, Philemon's hospitality—Prayers of Philemon for Paul.
- A'.23-25, Epistolary

A people trained, as the Hebrews thus were, to trace an orderly connexion between the different lines and members of a paragraph, must have soon come to feel the want of a similar correspondence and harmony as necessary to write together the separate paragraphs of an entire composition, so as to form one connected and consistent whole.¹⁴

Boys, who extended the limits of parallelism to entire books, had this to say:

(Parallelism) . . . is not confined merely to a correspondence of lines one with another in the same paragraph, but that the whole *paragraphs* are themselves so arranged as to present a mutual correspondence or parallelism, similar to that which single lines exhibit to each other; nay, that entire compositions, such as many of the Psalms and of the Epistles of the New Testament, are thus arranged in the most systematic form.¹⁵

In the Old Testament, inverted parallelism does not occur as frequently as other forms, for instance, tristichs and pentastichs. The complexity of the construction may possibly contribute to the fact. Paul, in the Roman letter, makes abundant use of the inverted form. His reasoning is repeatedly contained in premise to conclusion and conclusion to premise. Obviously, inverted parallelism offers a literary method of using the three types of parallelism in a unique manner.

14. Forbes, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Chapter VII

Incidence of Parallelism in Romans

Whether we approach the book of Romans from a literary standpoint or a theological, the question of authorship is likely to arise in the mind of the scholar. In order to consider seriously a thesis on the book of Romans, the author had to proceed on the assumption that Paul was the author. A full treatment of authorship is out of place at this point; however, a few words concerning this subject are quite appropriate.

Of the fourteen epistles commonly attributed to Paul in our traditional Canon of the New Testament, there are some whose authenticity is a subject of controversy. Dodd, one of the prominent Biblical scholars of our time, claims: ". . . no serious criticism admits any doubt (of Paul's authorship to) the four great epistles, those to the Romans, the Corinthians (two), and the Galatians."¹ Later, Dodds added, "The authenticity of (the authorship of) the Epistle to the Romans is a closed question."²

McGarvey, a scholar of the Holy Scriptures, is known for his painstaking care and laborious research in exegesis. He had the following to say concerning Paul's authorship of Romans.

That the Epistle is authentic is conceded even by Baur. It was quoted by Clement of Rome before the end of the first century; and in the second century by Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus; and the Mivatorian Fragment, A. D. 170, places it in the catalog of Paul's Epistles.³

With these few brief comments concerning Paul's authorship, the analysis of parallelism in the epistle to the Romans will proceed.

This chapter will deal mainly with examples of different types of parallelism taken from various chapters. Biblical passages will be cited and written in the same style as the previous chapters of this thesis. Verse form is much more advantageous to the reading and understanding of parallelism, than if it were written as prose.

Paul begins the Roman Epistle with an extended salutation. Such openings are now familiar to us from the hundreds of letters of New

1. C. H. Dodd. *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*. London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1932, p. 9.

2. *Loc. cit.*

3. J. W. McGarvey. *Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians and Romans*. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1916, p. 292.

Testament times which have been discovered in recent years in Egypt.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ,
Called to be an apostle,
Separated unto the gospel of God,
Which he promised afore
Through his prophets in the holy scriptures
Concerning his Son,
Who was born of the seed of David
According to the flesh,
Who was declared to be the Son of God with power
According to the spirit of holiness,⁴

In the first pentastich, Paul is establishing his authority to write the forthcoming letter as one with apostolic power and authority, rather than being a mere follower of Christ. In the opening couplet, Paul uses synonymous parallelism to establish this fact. Not only is he a "servant" of Jesus Christ, but he is an "apostle," that is, "one sent forth" by Christ to expound the Gospel of God. Paul uses a synonymous couplet to justify his position in writing this epistle to the Romans. The style greatly resembles that of the Old Testament writers.

As though anticipating queries in the minds of the Roman recipients about the terms of the gospel he preaches, or whether it is in accord with fundamental Christian teaching, Paul further states that "the gospel of God" was divinely promised through the Jews' own inspired prophets; this he does by filling out the couplet with a concluding tristich.

The above-mentioned pentastich is joined with a tetrastich by the connecting clause "concerning his Son." Christ is antithetically described as the "seed of David," on the one hand, and as the "Son of God," on the other; the antithetic parallel is further represented as being the former "according to the flesh," and the latter, "according to the spirit of holiness." Christ's fleshly relationship is to David, through his mother; and by contrast, he is related to God, through "the spirit of holiness." It is well to note that Paul's presentation of the Gospel in Romans suggests an antithesis between spirit of flesh, grace and legalism, and between Christianity and Judaism. Various facets of these contrasting words are developed throughout the letter.

4. Romans 1:1-4a.

I am a debtor
Both to Greeks
And to Barbarians,
Both to the wise
And to the foolish.⁵

Paul's commission as an apostle to the Gentiles is expressed in a synthetic, antithetic tetrastich. The two classes into which the Gentiles were divided were the Greeks, and their opposites, the Barbarians. Greek was a term applied at this period to anyone who was a partaker in the Hellenistic culture, which was widely diffused over the Roman Empire. Classes of people were predominant in Biblical times, and certainly the class to which one belonged was an important determining factor to his social status. The Jews felt aloof from the Gentiles (all who were not included in the Jewish class). Likewise, the Greeks thought that those outside of their group were uncultured and ignorant. Their thinking concluded that the "wise" is a predicate of the Greeks and conversely, "the foolish" is a predicate of the Barbarians. These terms supplement the thought set forth; hence, synthetic parallelism is used in conjunction with the antithetic parallelism.

In Romans there are several examples where Paul introduces an idea with two inverted parallelisms, one following immediately after the other. The second chapter of Romans contains such an illustration. Both synthetic and synonymous parallelism is used.

But if thou bearest the name of a Jew,
And resteth upon the law,
And gloriest in God.
And knowest his will,
And approvest the things that are excellent,
Being instructed out of the law,
And art confident that thou thyself
Art a guide of the blind,
A light of them that are in darkness,
A corrector of the foolish,
A teacher of babes,
Having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth,⁶

This strophe is then concluded by a couplet, which introduces another strophe. The connecting couplet is as follows:

Thou therefore that teachest another,
Teachest thou not thyself? ⁷

When scripture is quoted out of context, the meaning is generally lost. The two inverted examples quoted from the second chapter

5. Romans 1:14.

6. Romans 2:17-20.

7. Romans 2:21.

in Romans, were intended to shake the position of the complacent, self-satisfied Jew. Synthetic parallelism is used to enumerate the various particulars in which the Jew gloried: “resteth upon the law,” “gloriest in God,” “knowest his will,” “approvest the things that are excellent.” The tetrastich to which these phrases belong is introduced with a statement calling attention to those who bear “the name of a Jew.” Most Jews were convinced that the law was the embodiment of knowledge and truth and hence the concluding phrase states that these Jews were being instructed “out of the law.” Introductory and concluding clauses of the first inverted example are synthetic parallelism. Being instructed “out of the law” applies to those who bear “the name of a Jew.”

Paul living away from his home in Palestine, felt himself called to be “a guide of the blind,” and a light of “them that are in darkness.” The second and third clauses are clearly synonymous parallelism; likewise, the fourth and fifth are also. To correct the foolish is another way of saying that the Jews were skilled teachers among the babes. These two strophes come to an abrupt conclusion when Paul writes a synthetic couplet which in effect says, “What has the Jew profited in his great insight and ability to teach others, when he has failed to teach himself?” The remainder of the chapter goes to show the Jew guilty of many sins.

In the following example capital and small letters have been used to indicate parallel members. For instance, “A” and “a” are parallel. This inverted parallelism is more complex than the previous examples.

- A. And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good,
- B. Even to them that are called according to his purpose.
- C. For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained
- D. To be conformed to the image of his Son,
- d. That he might be the first-born among many brethren:
- c. And whom he foreordained, them he also called:
- b. And whom he called, them he also justified:
- a. And whom he justified, them he also glorified.⁸

“Them that love God” (*line A*) is synonymous with those God “justified” (*line a*). And to the people that “all things work together for good” (*line A*), they shall receive the final purpose of God, namely, glorification (*line a*). In *line B*, Paul calls our attention to those that are “called” according to God’s purpose. *Line b* also speaks of the “called” and synthetically adds that this group will be justified, thus *lines B* and *b* are examples of synthetic paral-

8. Romans 8:28-30.

lelism. In *line C*, those he foreknew, he also foreordained and (*line c*) those he foreordained were “also called” according to his purpose. This is also synthetic parallelism. *Line D* calls for these men (the foreordained) to bear the image and likeness of his Son. Then in *line d*, he states synthetically that the Son has the pre-eminence of being the firstborn (from the dead) among the brethren. Thus, Paul uses a structure of inverted, synthetic parallelism to substantiate the first member of the parallelism, that “all things work together for good” to them that love God.

Another example of dual inverted parallelism is shown with a tristich added to complete the idea of the strophe.

For circumcision indeed profiteth,
 If thou be a doer of the law:
 But if thou be a transgressor of the law,
 Thy circumcision is become uncircumcision.
 If therefore the uncircumcision keep the ordinances of the law,
 Shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?
 And shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature,
 If it fulfill the law, judge thee, who with the letter
 and circumcision art a transgressor of the law?
 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly;
 Neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh:
 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly;⁹

The word *Jew* may generally be considered “those of circumcision.” *Gentile* means those outside the class of Jews, or the “uncircumcised.” Law keeping is set forth conditionally. If they comply with the law, they are profited; but if they transgress the law (to keep every jot and tittle of the law was an impossibility) they may as well be a Gentile, for their circumcision has then become the very antithesis *i. e.*, uncircumcision.

A second inverted parallelism concerns the Gentile who by nature was uncircumcised. If the Gentile fulfilled the law in his uncircumcision, then he could judge the Jew. Paul antithetically states that on the day of judgement, the Gentile, by his superior conduct, may very well condemn the lawlessness of the Jew.

Paul continues in the concluding triplet: a Jew is not *bona fide* in God’s eyes, just because the world sees him as a Jew. The second clause synonymously adds that literal circumcision is not the outward compliance with the letter of the law. Antithetic to the first two is the third clause: literal circumcision is that inward spiritual compliance to the will of God.

Paul uses the marriage contract in chapter seven to elaborate a previous point.

9. Romans 2:25-28.

- For the woman that hath a husband
 Is bound by law to the husband while he liveth:
 But if the husband die,
 She is discharged from the law of the husband.
 So then if, while the husband liveth,
 A. She be joined to another man,
 B. She shall be called an adulteress:
 C. But if the husband die,
 c. She is free from the law,
 b. So that she is no adulteress,
 a. Though she be joined to another man.¹⁰

Law rules the living and not the dead. The first inverted parallel has antithetical thoughts between being bound to the husband while he lives and being free from matrimonial laws if the husband should die. The second parallel is introduced with the idea of a living husband. In this case, if she be joined with another man, then the law is broken and she is an adultress. *A* and *a* are synonymously coupled. *B* and *b* are strictly antithetical and *C* and *c* are strictly synthetic. This example clearly shows the three types of parallelism in the inverted form.

A tetrastich and a tristich are used by Paul in chapter 12, to form a strophe of seven lines.

- And be not fashioned
 According to this world:
 But be ye transformed
 By the renewing of your mind,
 That ye may prove what is the good
 And acceptable
 And perfect will of God.¹¹

In the tetrastich the first and second members are synthetically parallel with one another and the third and fourth are also. Each couplet is antithetic in regard to the other. One refers to being fashioned to the world, the other commands one to be transformed from it. The accompanying tristich is synthetic parallelism.

Considerable discussion is given to two antithetical cases in Chapter five: Man's trespasses as opposed to the free gift grace of God. The whole parallel of these two extremes are elaborated on at great length. Notice the reference to Adam and Christ. They represent trespasses and God's grace respectively.

10. Romans 7:2, 3.

11. Romans 12:1, 2.

- A. But not as the trespass,
So also is the free gift.
- B. For if by the trespass of the one the many died,
Much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of
the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many.
- C. And not as through one that sinned,
So is the gift:
- D. For the judgement came of one unto condemnation
But the free gift came of many trespasses unto justification.
- E. For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one;
Much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of
the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one,
even Jesus Christ.
- F. So then as through one trespass the judgment came unto all men
to condemnation;
Even so through one act of righteousness the free gift came
unto all men to justification of life.
- G. For as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,
Even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be
made righteous.
- H. And the law came in besides, that the trespass might abound;
But where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly:
- I. That, as sin reigned in death,
Even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal
life through Jesus Christ our Lord.¹²

This diatribe begins with a couplet which notes the difference between Adam and Christ. The "trespass" in clause one refers to Adam and the "free gift" in clause two refers to Christ. Similar antithetic terms are apparent throughout the strophe: *couplet B.* Many died—Grace of God abounded unto the many; *couplet C.* one that sinned—gift; *couplet D.* judgment came of one unto condemnation—free gift unto justification; *couplet E.* Death reigned—life begins through Jesus Christ; *couplet F.* Judgment of all men to condemnation—free gift to all men to justification; *couplet G.* One man's disobedience—one man's obedience; *couplet H.* Trespass abound—grace abound; *couplet I.* Sin reigned in death—grace reigned through righteousness.

Paul concludes the strophe with the *couplet I.* This couplet indicates that just as sin had reigned and produced death, even so, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through the ministry and sacrifice of Christ.

A number of diatribes are found in Romans: two of them are cited in part. The following steps are apparent: attention, question, answer, reason and explanation. The entire explanation will not be included because of its length. It is well to consider how Paul

12. Romans 5:15-21.

asks questions that are ridiculously in error. The answer is obvious and this gives him an opportunity to reply with great emphasis and exclamation.

(*Attention*)

What shall we say then?

(*Question*)

Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

(*Answer*)

God forbid!

(*Explanation*)

We who died to sin,

How shall we any longer live therein?

Or are ye ignorant that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus

Were baptized into his death?

We were buried therefore with him

Through baptism unto death:¹³

After what Paul has previously said, it is ridiculous to ask the question "shall we continue in sin" in order "that grace may abound?" This is precisely the opposite of what Paul is teaching. Thus the emphatic answer of "God forbid!" is given. Sinning so that grace will abound is a strictly false conclusion. There is a strong antithetical element in this diatribe.

Paul's explanation starts with a couplet, followed by a tetrastich. Synthetic parallelism constitutes the couplet—but note also the antithetical words died-live. The first and second clauses of the tetrastich are synthetic; the third and fourth phrases are also synthetic. The first and third and also the second and fourth clauses are synonymous. Both repeat the idea of being baptized into the death of Jesus Christ.

A diatribe of greater extent is the next example cited:

(*Attention and question*)

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall tribulation,

Or anguish,

Or persecution,

Or famine,

Or nakedness,

Or peril,

Or sword?

Even as it is written,

For thy sake we are killed all the day long;

We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

13. Romans 6:3-4a.

(*Answer*)

Nay,

In all these things
We are more than conquerors
Through him that loved us.

(*Explanation*)

For I am persuaded,
That neither death,
Nor life,
Nor angels,
nor principalities,
Nor things present,
nor things to come,
Nor powers,
Nor height,
nor depth,
Nor any other creature,
Shall be able to separate us
From the love of God,
Which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.¹⁴

To a great extent the attention and question step are combined and expanded. “Nay” is followed by a synthetic tristich. “For I am persuaded” is the beginning of the explanation and is followed by antithesis: death-life, angels-principalities, things present-things to come, height-depth. The diatribe (and chapter) is concluded with a synthetic tristich.

14. Romans 8:35-39.

Chapter VIII

An Exhaustive Study of Romans 4

As stated previously, the fourth chapter of Romans will be utilized for an exhaustive study of parallelism. Examples of parallelism which have been cited in the previous chapter show clearly that this Hebrew literary form was common in Paul's writing. An exhaustive treatment of a single chapter will indicate the extent of this characteristic. This study will begin with the first verse of chapter four and continue to the twenty-fifth, and last verse.

Paul illustrates and confirms his doctrine of justification in the fourth chapter of Romans. Abraham and David, who had an important part in the religious thought of Judaism, are used to exemplify how justification came about under the Gospel of Christ.

Paul asks a question to begin the chapter. The elements of diatribes are conspicuous throughout the discourse.

What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather,
hath found according to the flesh?
For if Abraham was justified by works,
He hath whereof to glory;
But not toward God.

The first and second clauses of this tristich are synthetic and the third is the antithesis of the thought set forth in the first two clauses.

For what saith the scripture?
And Abraham believed God,
And it was reckoned unto him for righteousness.
Now to him that worketh,
The reward is not reckoned as of grace,
But as of debt.
But to him that worketh not,
But believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly,
His faith is reckoned for righteousness.

"For what saith the scripture" introduces an inverted parallelism of eight members. The clear antithetic parallelisms in the four inner clauses are apparent. The first member and the seventh are synonymously parallel and the second and eighth are also.

Even as David also pronounceth blessings upon the man,
Unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works.

Saying,

Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,
And whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin.

An echo of the first clause is found in the second clause of the tristich. It is synonymous with the latter part of the first, for if one's "sins are covered," then certainly his "iniquities are forgiven." A repetition of the idea is expressed in the third clause that is contained in the first. This quotation from Psalms is a vivid example of synonymous parallelism.

Is this blessing then pronounced upon the circumcision,
Or upon the uncircumcision also?

Paul's question uses antithetical words circumcision-uncircumcision; however, there is no opposition of ideas, so the couplet is of the synthetic variety. The classification hinges on the word "also." This word denotes the idea of "adding to." If it were omitted, the couplet would be antithetic.

For we say,

To Abraham his faith was reckoned for righteousness.
How then was it reckoned?

When he was in circumcision,

Or in uncircumcision?

Not in circumcision,

But in uncircumcision:

This tetrastich is antithetical in regard to its first and second clauses. Antithesis is apparent between the first and second phrase and also the third and fourth clause. The former is a question; the latter, an answer.

And he received the sign of circumcision,

A seal of the righteousness of the faith

Which he had while he was in uncircumcision:

That he might be the father of all them that believe,

Though they be in uncircumcision,

That righteousness might be reckoned unto them;

One can see the augmentation and supplementation of ideas between the first and second clauses of each couplet and therefore the strophe would be considered synthetic.

And the father of circumcision

To them who not only are of the circumcision,

But who also walk in the steps of that faith

Of our father Abraham which he had in uncircumcision.

Paul's abundant use of inverted parallelism makes his letter extremely interesting in a study of this nature. Words in the first and last clause denote the head of the Jewish race, *i. e.*, "father,"

“Abraham.” The second and third clauses are synthetically parallel, regardless of the antithetical word “but.”

For not through the law was the promise to Abraham
Or to his seed that he should be heir of the world,
But through the righteousness of faith.

Synthetic parallelism is the case between the first and second clauses; the third clause is antithetical to the general idea expounded in the first two.

For if they that are of the law are heirs,
Faith is made void,
And the promise is made of none effect:
For the law worketh wrath;
But where there is no law,
Neither is there transgression.

These two tristichs compose a hexastich of which the first tristich is synthetic in all its members. The second and third clauses of the second tristich are opposed to the first phrase in an antithetic manner. Notice the antithesis being introduced by “but.” Synthetic parallelism is the case in the second and third clauses of the last tristich.

For this cause it is of faith,
That it may be according to grace;
To the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed;
Not to that only which is of the law,
But to that also which is of the faith of Abraham,
Who is the father of us all

This construction is slightly unusual in that it is inverted parallelism with a single clause forming the first member, a couplet forming the final and opposite member. A tristich is in the innermost construction. The third clause of the tristich is antithetic with the concluding couplet.

As it is written,
A father of many nations have I made thee ¹
Before him whom he believed, even God,
Who giveth life to the dead,
And calleth the things that are not
As though they were.
Who in hope believed against hope, to the end
That he might become a father of many nations,
According to that which had been spoken,
So shall thy seed be.²

Old Testament quotations are found in the first and last members

1. Genesis 17:5.
2. Genesis 15:5.

of the inverted parallel. Construction of this strophe is similar to the one preceding it; however, this one has a synthetic triplet concluding it rather than a couplet.

And without being weakened in faith
He considered his own body now as good as dead
(He being about a hundred years old),
And the deadness of Sarah's womb;
Yet, looking unto the promise of God,
He wavered not through unbelief,
But waxed strong through faith,
Giving glory to God,
And being fully assured
That what he had promised,
He was able also to perform.

Abraham was promised a son by God. His age and the age of Sarah seemingly prohibited such an occurrence. The second and fourth members of the inverted parallel reflect Abraham's consideration that his own body was as "good as dead," as far as begetting children was concerned; also Sarah, by reason of her age, was unable to bear a child according to all laws of nature. A note of triumph ends the strophe which displays Abraham's faith that the promise of God was more potent than the laws of nature and that God was able to perform all that he had promised.

Wherefore also
It was reckoned unto him for righteousness.
Now it was not written for his sake alone,
That it was reckoned unto him;
But for our sake also,
Unto whom it shall be reckoned,
Who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.
Who was delivered up for our trespasses
And was raised for our justification.

Chapter four concludes with a strophe that concerns the faith of not only Abraham, but Paul and all the disciples of Christ. In the second clause, "it" means the act of believing in God. Paul antithetically states in clause three that the Scriptures record this not only for Abraham, but "for our sake also." Synthetic parallelism is used in the seventh clause to remind readers that we believe in "him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."

In the concluding couplet, the verbs "delivered up" and "raised" give a strong import of synonymous parallelism; however, "justification" is not synonymous with "trespasses," hence, the chapter ends with a synthetic couplet.

Chapter IX

Summary

The Christian *Bible* is divided into two parts, the Old and New Testament. Neither portion can be taken alone from a theological or literary point of view without serious misunderstanding of one or both portions. Different authorities of the sacred writings have a variety of opinions as to the extent of influence the Old Testament has on the New Testament. This variance of opinion holds true as pertains to the influence Old Testament writers may have on New Testament writers. No authority would attempt to deny that the Apostle Paul had rabbinic training. How much of this training was carried over by him to the New Testament is a point of much discussion. Certainly, his literary style was affected to some extent.

Rather than attempt to state the degree of this influence, the undeniable presence of it is clearly shown in this thesis. Parallelism of ideas is so imbedded in the very style and purpose of the Old Testament that one cannot seriously study it and not be aware of its existence. The epistle to the Romans is a reflection of the forms of Old Testament parallelisms. Parallelism of ideas are so strong, that even an argumentative and formal letter, such as the epistle to the Romans is rich in this poetical style. Inverted parallelism, a form that becomes more difficult for the reader to understand the longer the idea is elaborated is many and varied. If John Forbes'¹ conclusions are valid, inverted parallelism ranges from an entire epistle (Philemon) which includes eighteen members, to smaller two member tetrastichs, which are numerous in Romans. Indeed, the inverted form is much more abundant in Paul's writings than in the writings of the Old Testament.

Paul's treatment of subjects such as Jew-Gentile, God-man, and Spirit-flesh, certainly give a great deal of emphasis to parallelisms of the antithetic variety. These subjects are handled with great finesse in the letter to the Christian church in Rome. The ability of Paul to put opposites is handled with as great a care as any of the antithetic usages of the Hebrew poets in the Old Testament.

Whether or not Paul was conscious of the poetical form is a question that requires much consideration. Either parallelism

1. C. F. *Supra.*, p. 38.

flowed from his thinking processes spontaneously or Paul was consciously attempting to write in parallel form. When one considers the strict tradition of Judaism in which Paul was raised and that he quoted from the Old Testament by memory,² and that much of this training consisted in memorizing great lengths of passages, it is reasonable to conclude that at least some of this form is imbedded in the very thinking processes of Paul. To point out isolated instances of parallelism, as was done in Chapter VII, would not be a strong enough argument to conclude that Paul's parallelism was spontaneous. But the verse-by-verse elaboration in Chapter VIII makes it more feasible to believe in the unpremeditated use of Hebrew poetical parallelisms. In fact, it was difficult to choose a chapter in Romans to study exhaustively, because each chapter was similar in the fluency of all the types of parallelism. Certainly, parallelism is the major literary characteristic of the epistle to the Romans.

2. A. G. Herbert. *The Authority of the Old Testament*. London: Faber and Faber, 1947, p. 204. Fernand Prat. *The Theology of St. Paul*. London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1945, Vol I, p. 18.

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