

The Christian Watchman

G. W. DAY, Printer.

BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.—ST. PAUL.

REV. E. B. DEMILL, A. M., Editor

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NO. 50

Original Contributions

For the Christian Watchman.

HEBREW POETRY.

BY G. W. DAY.

THE HEAVENLY MIND.

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great deliverances, all the religious comforts, and all the lofty promises of future good to the nation which belonged to the past history of Israel, and which have been shown to contribute to the people's present and future happiness.

Now, when the 99th Psalm is sung, a psalm which was sung on the Sabbath day, and on the day of each Sacred morning, was probably sung in every home throughout the land—beginning at the Temple in Jerusalem.

There were also songs consecrated to the Temple service, and seldom or never used elsewhere. Among these may be particularly pointed out the 67th, 99th, 100th, 115th, 136th, and the last five Psalms commencing with "Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord."

As a specimen, the 136th can be pointed out. This was sung by the Levites when their night guard in the Temple was relieved.

THE RELIEVING GUARD.
"Babyl! Bless ye the Lord!"
"All ye servants of the Lord."

Which by night stand in the house of the Lord.
Lift up your hands in the sanctuary
And bless the Lord.

Response—
"The Lord that made heaven and earth
Bless thee out of Zion!"

The Hebrew Poetry differs from that of most other nations in one remarkable respect. It has neither rhyme nor rhythm. No possible measure can be discovered in its structure. That which is considered the chief characteristic of poetry is entirely wanting, yet it is true Poetry nevertheless.

The Hebrew consists of similar thoughts arranged in successive sentences. These are technically termed parallelisms. A thought is started in one line. The next repeats the same thought somewhat modified.

In our language we have similarity of ending in successive lines and this is called rhyme. The Hebrew Poetry has this similarity not in terminating words but in thoughts. These parallelisms may therefore be called a rhyme of ideas.

In our rhymed translation of the 19th Psalm we read thus:
"The spacious firmament on high
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens a shining train
Their great original proclaim."

Here we notice a similarity in the terminating words.

The Hebrew reads thus:
"The Heavens declare the glory of God,
The firmament sheweth his handy-work,
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night sheweth knowledge."

Here we see the second line repeats the idea expressed by the first; the fourth the idea of the third.

This is the simplest form of parallelism. They undergo many changes and intricate arrangements. Just as our rhymes are alternate or in triplets, or interwoven in elaborate or regular order, so are these Hebrew parallels or rhymes of ideas. We find them arranged in alternates, or triplets, or quadruples. We find them arranged in the falling and ascending climaxes, and in some of the most artistic productions we find not only parallel of lines, but even of paragraphs. To explain or even to illustrate a subject so extensive as this would of course be impossible in the narrow limits of a single essay.

And yet the parallelism will be found on inspection to possess the highest qualities of poetic arrangement. All metre, all rhyme, all alliteration, every other variety of Poetic structure is ruined by a passage into another language. The parallelism alone will pass unharmed. The poetry passes through the furnace, and too pure already to be further purified, it comes forth unharmed—the true gold; while other poetry like base metal yields up its virtue in the fiery trial.

There is no other nation which has the parallelism excepted indeed the Chinese, who have almost everything in their confused heap of inventions, but they, Chinese like, have done but little with this valuable possession, and it remains with them only in its simplest form. Do we not recognize here the wise design of Providence, in thus placing these precious gems in a setting, which neither the moth nor rust of time, nor the fire of the unnumbered translation which await them, can ever deface or destroy?

He who reads the psalms attentively, and the other parts of the Bible also, will find that a large portion of the religious services of the Hebrews, was taken up with instrumental music.

Among them there was never a discussion whether their Great Creator should be praised on this instrument or that, or whether this instrument were idolatrous or not. They sounded in his praise everything that gave forth a worthy sound, and not content with this called upon everything that had breath to praise the Lord.

From the other books of the Bible we have the names of the chief instruments in use, and from the paintings and sculptures on the monuments of Egypt and other lands, we know their shape and form. We find mention made of cymbals, harps, lutes, and flutes. These were the chief accompaniments to vocal music. The Hebrews had a ten stringed harp, and a three stringed instrument like the guitar, besides others of fewer strings. They had also the trumpet and bass tambourine, which were used in processions,

With these, though they could not equal the most infinite compass of modern music, they could yet produce strains which were as sweet to the Pagans of distant Babylon delighted in their sound, and of an asked of the captive Jews, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

These services of music and song took place at the morning and evening sacrifices every day. On Sabbaths and festivals they were more frequently and elaborately repeated. There was the solemn gathering of the priests, the solemn recital of the sacrifices, then at the call of the trumpet the Levites commenced to praise the Lord with music and song.

Most of the psalms are sung by alternate singing and response. To this their parallel structure admirably adapted them. The Precursor would probably chant the first verse, and the choir respond the same idea in the second. Thus the thought uttered by the leader would be repeated and often amplified by the others. But the Psalms rose in their arrangement from the simple to the most complex forms. In the more elaborate chants the services were more artificial.

The Levites sang the introduction responsively, then the leader broke forth into general exhortative strains responded to by a chorus—after which the Levites concluded as they began. This was probably the way in which they sang the 115th Psalm.

It is a psalm composed in a time of heathen oppression, in the dark days of Israel, and often after the restoration, sung in the Temple.

The Levite singers would begin:
"Not unto us Oh Lord, not unto us,
But to thy name be all the glory."

And then responsively the chorus would enter with which the first eight verses denounce idolatry and idols.

The 9th, 10th, and 11th verses are sung by the leader and a chorus thus:
Leader—
"Oh Israel Trust thou in the Lord."

Chorus—
"He is their help and their shield."

Leader—
"Ye that fear the Lord trust in the Lord."

Chorus—
"He is their help and their shield."

Which is taken up by the Levite singers who respond:
"The Lord hath been mindful of us,
He will bless us,
He will bless the house of Israel,
He will bless the house of Aaron,
He will bless them that fear the Lord,
Both small and great."

After which the psalm ends as it began.

For the Christian Watchman.
No. 11.

THE BASILICA OF ST. PETER'S.

The Basilica of St. Peter's is the grandest structure ever erected by man, and is a splendid memorial of the genius which the pope could once command and the power which he could wield.

The Piazza of St. Peter's affords a spectacle of surpassing magnificence. In front is the portico of the Basilica, on either side, in a semicircular direction, and with the portico almost surrounding the piazza, is a row of colonnades. In the centre of the piazza is an Egyptian obelisk, and on either side of the obelisk a fountain.

He who approaches St. Peter's for the first time views three objects with some slight disappointment. They are surpassingly beautiful—not by any means so imposing as was anticipated. The perfect symmetry of the whole makes the separate objects less vast than they really are. It is only when one has repeatedly walked around the piazza, and through the colonnades, and under the pediment of the basilica that he can appreciate the spectacle, and regard it with admiration and wonder.

The distance between the extremities of the colonnades and the basilica seems to be very trivial when viewed from the further end of the piazza, in reality a distance of 250 feet separates them. The balcony of the basilica and the entablature of the colonnades are adorned by statues of 250 number, which appear to be of the natural size, in reality those over the colonnades are twelve feet in height, those over the portico 17 feet. The pillars of the colonnades seem to be closely set together, and of no extraordinary dimensions—we find on approaching them that a broad carriage road proceeds through huge columns of travertine. The ascent to the portico of the basilica is by a flight of steps, and one is surprised to find that the bases of the pillars of the portico are six feet in height. The portico is found to be as vast in its dimensions as an ordinary cathedral, the columns in front are eight and a half feet in diameter, and ninety one feet in height.

When we have thus made ourselves familiar with the objects which surround the piazza, we can admire the symmetry and beauty of all, while also impressed by their colossal dimensions. The effect of the spectacle is heightened by a stillness only broken by the murmur of the fountains.

Five open entrances lead into the magnificent vestibule, which is 439 feet long, 65 feet high

and 47 feet broad. It is adorned with statues and mosaics.

We now push aside the heavy stuffed curtain suspended from the top of one of the portico's and enter the interior of the basilica. We pause, not to be awed by the immensity of the place, but to admire its exquisite symmetry, and its unequalled splendor. The interior consists of a nave separated from two side aisles by two rows of massive piers, and a transept. In the side aisles, eight in number. The vault of the nave is richly decorated with gilding and stucco ornaments. Each pier is adorned with two Corinthian pilasters, between which are two arches, each containing the colossal image of a saint. The walls and piers of the edifice are faced with plates of marble, varied with medallions and bas-reliefs around the walls are magnificent statues, and mosaics, still more beautiful and precious.

Four huge piers, each fifty feet in diameter, support an enormous dome, the firmament of marble. No wonder that richness of material and elegance of proportion should at first attract attention rather than the vastness by which we had expected to be impressed—These splendors are most conspicuous, while the vast dimensions of the edifice are at first concealed by the perfect symmetry of every part, and the correspondence between the structure and its ornaments.

The cherubs which hold the vase of holy water by the corner of the pier nearest the entrance are six feet high, though when we enter they appear to be of the natural size. The piers, the statues, the mosaic pictures, all the ornaments of the immense basilica, all of colossal size, and harmonize with its dimensions.

But we now proceed to examine the edifice in detail. As we walk up the nave, and under the dome, the walls, the chapels, the aisles, the statues, the piers, all seem to expand in size, and we feel the immensity of the place.

We find no paintings here, but the most celebrated paintings copied in mosaic around the walls. These are so admirably executed that a close inspection is necessary to perceive the difference between them and their more perishable originals.

In the aisle on the left and near the entrance is the tomb of the last of the Stuarts, a beautiful bas-relief by Canova, representing two genii with torches reversed, and peniveal lock, guarding the portal of a tomb, marks the last resting place of the unfortunate pretender. Opposite is the tomb of the wife of Charles Edward. She has here given to her the title of Queen of Great Britain, France and Ireland. In the opposite nave we pause to examine a picture by Michael Angelo. We pass up this aisle, by monuments of popes, and by superbly ornamented chapels, and turn into the right transept, here we find the magnificent tomb of Clement XIII by Canova. The monument is surmounted by a kneeling statue of the pope. Beneath him are two lions, one awake, the other asleep. Beside the latter is a statue, the genius of death, with his torch reversed. This statue is the best in St. Peter's, and one of the finest in the world.

We linger near this masterpiece of art, and then move on towards the tribune. Here is the celebrated chair of St. Peter, the identical chair in which Peter officiated (?). It is enclosed in a throne of bronze which is supported by four bronze statues representing the evangelists.

We cannot particularize at length the ornaments of the Basilica. We seem to be in a museum of art, where statues, piers, e, mosaics, and elaborate carvings meet the eye every where, all beautiful in themselves and serving to set off to greater advantage the vast expanse of glittering white marble which covers the whole interior. We have noticed above the statues which chiefly attract our attention.

Of the spacious chapels which line the walls on either hand the most superb is the Chapel, S. S. Sacramento. This is an ornament even to St. Peter's. It is adorned with precious marbles, mosaics and frescoes. In front of the altar is a tabernacle of lapis lazuli and bronze gilt, very splendid. This chapel contains the tombs of several of the most eminent of the popes, and here lies the dust of Gregory Nazianzen.

Beside one of the piers which support the dome is the celebrated iron statue of St. Peter; as a work of art it is very ordinary, but as an object of worship held in reverence extraordinary. Some say that it is an old statue of Jupiter consecrated into a St. Peter, others say that it is a work of the dark ages. However, it is an image at which Protestants wonder, and which Catholics adore. The big toe of the right foot has been worn away by the lips and sleeves of its votaries. The process of kissing the big toe of the iron idol is this, you approach the image, you rub the toe, or the place where the toe ought to be, with your right sleeve, you then kiss the afore mentioned place, then rub it again and retire. We can describe the process thus at length for not only did we see this wise and profitable ceremony performed, but we also went through the operation and succeeded in doing so with edifying gravity. Should the editor of the Freeman ever feel inclined to assail the Watchman let him remember that one of its contributors has been sprinkled with holy water many times, came very near seeing the pope's toe kissed and enjoyed the reception of a blessing from that holy man, and is now entitled to all the indulgence which the church provides for those who salute the toe of the above mentioned iron image.

Immediately beneath the centre of the dome is the tomb of St. Peter. A double flight of steps leads down to the sacred spot. Before it is a circular balustrade of marble from which are suspended 112 lamps which are kept burning night and day. Within the area is a kneeling statue of Pius VI. It is impossible not to feel awed before the spot which tradition has pointed out as the last resting place of the great apostle, more especially when that spot is in the centre of St. Peter's, and beneath its sublime dome. Over the tomb of St. Peter is the high altar, which is enshrined by the celebrated Baldacchino. This is a vast canopy of bronze, 94 feet in height, and supported by four spiral columns, which are covered with the richest ornaments. The bronze for this structure was taken from the Pantheon.

We look up into the vast dome overhead and at every instant it grows upon us. No language can adequately describe the effect produced by this sublime spectacle. Four piers each fifty feet in diameter support this stupendous structure. On the spandrels of the enormous arches which arise from these piers are the four evangelists in mosaic. Some idea of the immensity of the dome may be formed when we state that the pier which St. Mark holds in his hand is over six feet in length.

On the tiers which run around the circumference of the dome at its base is the following inscription: The letters of which are six feet in length. TV. ES. PAVVS. ET. SUPER. HANC. PETRAM. AEDIFICABO. ECCLESIAM. MEAM. ET. TIBI. DABO. CLAVES. REGNI. COELO. Above numerous mosaics and stuccoes which represent the Saviour, the Virgin, and Saints—and adorn the concave of the dome is a fresco of the Almighty. This representation of the Deity fills the ceiling of the lantern which surmounts the dome. The best notice of this dome with which we have met is by Forsyth. "The Cupola" says he, "is glorious viewed in its design, its attitude or even its decorations—viewed as a whole or as a part it enchants the eye, it satisfies the taste, it expands the soul. The very air seems to ent up all that is harsh or colossal, and leaves us nothing but the sublime to feast on—a sublime peculiar as the genius of the immortal architect and comprehensible only on the spot."

We visit the Basilica repeatedly. One never wearies in this sublime presence. At each glance something new strikes the eye, to delight or to impress the imagination. The lofty nave with its piers and their colossal imposts—the tomb of the apostle with its lamps were burning—the high altar with its vast canopy of bronze—the glitter of gold—mosaic and marble which cover the interior of the vast structure—above all the glorious dome overhead, constitute the grandest spectacle in the world.

"But lo! the dome the vast and wondrous dome! To which Diana's marvel was a cell. Christ's mighty shrine above his martyr's tomb, I have beheld the Ephesian's miracle. Its columns strike the eye, to delight or to impress the imagination. The lofty nave with its piers and their colossal imposts—the tomb of the apostle with its lamps were burning—the high altar with its vast canopy of bronze—the glitter of gold—mosaic and marble which cover the interior of the vast structure—above all the glorious dome overhead, constitute the grandest spectacle in the world."

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go to the altar, when after bowing to each other and to the priests around, prostrating themselves before the altar, and crossing themselves, they returned to their seats. This was repeated several times. The conclusion of the ceremony is most splendid. One of the priests with incense burning in a golden censer, waves it a number of times before the altar, then to the priests, according to their rank individually, and finally a wave or two for the people collectively. All this time the music is proceeding. This part of the ceremony, the sweet smelling incense ascending on high, the splendid voices of the singers, the sweet tones of the organ, is really very entertaining to the Protestant and doubtless very edifying to the Catholic.

Upon entering the Dome we first went to the lower gallery which runs round its base, and now we could form a correct conception of the vast size of this aerial temple. Above the dome, beneath the nave of the church, in which the statues appear in their natural size, and the people walking up and down look like pigmies. The mosaics around the base of the dome which from the nave appear to be quite fine, are now found to be coarse and rough. This is quite a whispering gallery. The slightest whisper being heard across the Dome. When we have ascended to the top and look down, the sight is absolutely terrific. From the platform of the lantern there is a very extensive view. After looking around here for a short time we ascend into the ball which is nine feet in diameter, and will contain ten or twelve persons.

A.

THE JESUIT REFORMER.

A kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; a house divided against itself cannot stand. Darker dangers are gathering around the Papacy than Protestant arguments or patriot words. The kingdom is rent from within, and unless a new policy be adopted in the councils of the Vatican, a policy in harmony with the intelligent convictions of the more liberal and far-seeing members of the Roman Communion, the schism must spread, until the boasted unity of the Church is a mere name.

And there is good reason to expect that this may be the issue of the movement within the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church, which Europe is beginning to watch with keen interest; and which seems destined to bear very remarkable fruits. The obstinacy and obtuseness of the Roman clergy have become proverbial. As with the Sanhedrim in the lifetime of our Lord, it has become blind, utterly blind, to the signs of the times. There is no blindness like that of a dominant hierarchy. And it is wisely pointed out that it should be so. It is a judicial sentence on the most deadly of all tyrannies, and secures that at last it shall be broken up and cast out to perish. An essentially vicious system which just reform itself in time to escape destruction, and so far alone as is imperatively necessary, is a fearful incubus on men. Nothing so vicious as the Papacy has ever, on a grand scale, reformed itself. Men have attempted the work of reformation of such systems, but, after desperate struggles, have had to give it up in despair. Luther would have had the Pope reform himself, and came sadly, and after long struggles, to the belief that he was Antichrist; and Father Passaglia, Jesuit though he be, is embarked on a course which may conduct him, despite himself, to the same conviction ere long.

It would be a great mistake to confound Passaglia with the class of turbulent and democratic priests, who from time to time disturb, by appeals to the passions of the populace, the dream of security in which the Papacy loves to indulge. These have their mission, and there is enough in the abomination and horror of the system to lead terrible point to the denunciations and anathemas with which clever orators can excite a sympathetic audience, and keep the sentiment of hatred to the Papal tyranny alive even in Catholic Europe. But Passaglia is a man of another class entirely. He is a scholar, and a writer for scholars; he has little concern in common with Anti-Papal orators and pamphleteers. It is to the statesman and the higher clergy in Europe that he addresses himself; he seeks to touch the springs which move Governments, secular and spiritual, and to solve a perplexed problem, without disturbing the balance and order of society. And, therefore his words will have weight. It is not as an enemy still less as a friend, seeking to kindle strife, that he declares; it is as an ardent, lover of the Papacy, a firm believer in the spiritual pretensions of the Roman Church, a reformer who seeks to establish her power upon a broader and surer basis, that he claims to be heard.

He is described as a man singularly calm and meditative in deportment and habit—a man shrinking sensitively from popular ovations. (Concluded on last page.)

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