

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

sight,' he says, the prophets 'appear to advocate a purely ethical and spiritual religion from which all outward forms in worship are banished as utterly irrelevant and valueless.' But 'it did not necessarily follow that if the heart and life were right even then there was no place for the outward and visible in worship; but what value these might have they did not suggest.'

Now let us hear the other side. In *Altar, Cross, and Community*, Professor W. F. LOFTHOUSE in a striking paragraph argues: 'The prophets do not say, "No rite is of use while the heart is wrong." They never imply that it will be of any use when the heart is right. What they would have said if they had been discussing pure and untainted sacrifices we do not know. But the fact that in discussing debased sacrifices they spoke of sacrifices as a whole suggests the answer.' Emeritus Principal SKINNER takes the same line. 'It is commonly held,' he remarks in *Prophecy and Religion*, 'that the prophets' repudiation of sacrifice was not absolute, but relative to the prevalent delusion that cultus apart from morality has an inherent value in the sight of God. That is to say, they did not reject sacrifice as such, but only as offered by a people that had lost the true knowledge of God. It seems clear, however, that the prophetic principle goes further than that. Not only is sacrifice of no avail as a substitute for righteous conduct, but a perfect religious relationship is possible without sacrifice at all. . . . They never demand a purified ritual, but always and ex-

clusively the fulfilment of the ethical commands of Yahwe.' Finally, let us hear Mr. C. G. MONTEFIORE. In *The Old Testament and After*, he defines 'the great prophetic achievement,' which he describes as 'of deathless importance,' thus: 'That the worship and the offerings which God asks and likes, demands and cares for, are not sheep and goats and incense and oil, but justice, confession, contrition, and the pure heart.'

Where doctors differ, what is the plain man to do? Two things he may do. He may say that the prophetic conception of religion is not exhaustive: the priest must be heard too. Or he may say that the prophets are the supreme interpreters of religion and that they mean what they say, without mitigation or modification. If it be argued that so bold a challenge of the universal ritual customs in which they had been brought up is simply inconceivable, it may be answered that with men of their insight and calibre, it is precisely the inconceivable that is possible. Isaiah and his brethren in prophecy were very bold. And it may well have been that their conception of animal sacrifice as an irrelevance and a futility—if that was indeed their conception—rested upon profound conceptions of the ultimate nature of God which they would have been prepared to defend by argument, had argument been their province. For did not even a psalmist represent the God he worshipped as saying:

Will I eat the flesh of bulls,
Or drink the blood of goats?

The Structure of St. Paul's Hymn of Love.

BY THE REVEREND F. R. MONTGOMERY HITCHCOCK, D.D., THE RECTORY, KINNITY,
KING'S COUNTY, IRELAND.

THE following is an attempt to show that this famous hymn was originally written in metre. It would seem that the apostle had before his mind in the pleasant hours of composition such lyrical passages as the choral odes in the later plays of

Euripides. He appears to have noticed the skill with which that dramatist and others blended and varied their metres. The ode seems to fall naturally into four divisions, with points of transition between each—each of the four having again three parts

resembling in some way the strophe, antistrophe, and epode of the Greek ode and chorus, on a much smaller scale and with some general, though not the same precise, correspondence. For example, the first strophe would be :

ἐὰν ταῖς γλώσσαις (Dochmiac)
 τῶν ἀνθρώπων (Dispondeus)
 λαῶν καὶ τῶν ἀγγέλων (Troch. with iambic base)
 ἀγάπην δὲ μὴ ἔχω (Troch. with anacrusis)
 γέγονα χαλκὸς ἤχων (Troch. syzygy)
 ἢ κίμβαλον ἀλαλάζων (Iam. dim. cat.).

And the last epode would run :

ννὶ δὲ μένει (spondee, anapæst)
 πίστις ἐλπὶς ἀγάπη (cretic, 4th Pæon) cf.
Electra (S.), 1384 (Jebb)
 τὰ τρία ταῦτα (Dactyl, spondee)
 μειζῶν δὲ τούτων (dochmiac)
 ἢ ἀγάπη (choriamb.)
 Διώκετε τὴν ἀγάπην (dactylic, with base) cf.
Ketides, Aisch. 526 (Paley).

There are parallels to each of these lines in the Greek dramatists. The whole poem can be written out, as I have found in this way, Dochmiacs being numerous.

It is remarkable how well the matter and form correspond all through. This shows something of the author's care. We may also see the influence of Pindar in the fourfold division of the poem. In ten of his odes Pindar has four systems of triads, based, it would seem, on the divisions of the Greek Temple, which often had three, and in some cases four compartments. *Ol.* vi. 1-3 might be rendered 'placing golden pillars under the well-built vestibule we shall build as it were a stately temple (*megaron*) of song.' *Megaron* is rendered 'palace,' but in Herodotus it is used of a shrine, and Pindar speaks of his daughters worshipping in his own chapel (*prothuron, Pyth.* iii. 78). In the temples of Athena at Athens, and of Diana at Ephesus, we have the four divisions: *prothuron* or porch, *pronaos* or vestibule, the *naos* or shrine, and the *opisthodomos*, which was the treasury. This fourfold division of the classic temple may well be reproduced in certain of Pindar's odes and in this Psalm of Love. In Pindar the divisions are connected by some word, just as in this hymn we have links between the divisions—like doors of connexion. We shall see that the four divisions of the hymn correspond in character, position, and importance to those of the

great Greek temple. The first section comprises vv.¹⁻³; the second, vv.^{4-8a}; the third, vv.^{8b-11}; the fourth, v.¹²⁻¹⁴, the link between 1 and 2 being 'that I may boast' (v.³) the second section enlarging on the absence of boastfulness in Love; the link between 2 and 3 being 'never faileth' (v.⁸), the third section describing the passing of various gifts; the link between 3 and 4 being 'child' (v.¹¹), which suggests the contrast between the puerile present and our future manhood to be developed in a sphere of glorious vision and ripest knowledge.

The opening words of this ode conjure up in our imagination a scene of life, bustle, and worship before one of those classic temples, like that of Diana or the Parthenon. We see the worshippers, Juvenal's 'raucous crowd,' walking in procession through the street, dancers and musicians among them. With clanging of cymbals and beating of tambourines they advance, rejoicing in their pagan ceremonial, whereas 'Love rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth' (v. 6). Such a procession is described by the Roman poet Catullus, who died 54 B.C. (lxxiii. 21, 28 f.). 'When the voice sings to the cymbal, when the tambourines (*tympana*) resound, the procession suddenly bursts forth into shouts (*ululat*) with quavering tongues' (*linguis*).¹ In this passage we have, as in St. Paul's hymn, the cymbal and the tambourine (χαλκὸς ἤχων, resonant bronze, i.e. the *tympanum*), the metal globes of the former and the little bells of the latter making a clashing noise. We have also the *shouts* of the people in both, *ululat* and ἀλαλάζων (L. marg.), literally, to shout *alalai* or victory. The masculine participle means shouting loudly to the accompaniment of the cymbal; the neuter refers to the triumphant clanging of the cymbal, but it is the band that shouts in Catullus, and here the same idea seems preferable, as the Greek verb is seldom used of musical instruments. We have also the *tongues* of men in both. Similar parallels are found in Propertius (iv. 7), who refers to the round bronzes (*aera*) of Cybele; in Ovid (F. iv. 213), who says, 'they beat *cymbals* for spears and tambourines (*tympana*) instead of shields,' when describing the *Deæ comites* at their services. Juvenal (vi. 515) speaks of the '*rauca cohors* with their plebeian

¹ 'Ubi cymbalum sonat vox, ubi tympana reboant, Thiasus repente linguis trepidantibus ululat.'

'Where the voice shouts to the accompaniment of cymbal.'

tambourines.' Horace (*Sat.* ii. 3. 223) compares the noise of the worshippers to that of thunder 'circumtonuit Bellona'; and Euripides speaks of the 'voice of the bronze' (χαλκοῦ αὐδὰ, *Hel.* 1346). These parallels make it probable that St. Paul was thinking of just such a procession moving forwards with upraised voices and bands playing to the temple of a pagan divinity, making the day or night hideous with noise. Without Love, he says, a man were no better than such shrieking votaries of raging Bellona or the Mother of the Gods. Indeed, without Love, one were no better than the instruments of bronze or the noisy cymbals the pagans played, singing to their accompaniments lewd songs. This is the first reflexion of the writer suggested by the scene he is thinking of. The worshippers preceded by their priests have ascended the steps, and reached the porch (*prothuron*) and passed between its massive columns, through the lofty doorway into the vestibule (*pronaos*). There the people must wait, for only the priests may enter the shrine (*naos*) where the image stands. Outside the others remain in the outer hall of statuary and paintings awaiting the return of the priests from the shrine of the mysteries. And the writer reflects that *without Love* the knowledge of the true mysteries of the true God (1 Co 4¹) to which he has already referred in this letter, mysteries which far transcend in importance and spirituality and purity the most guarded and sacred secrets of the esoteric religions of the pagan world, and into which only the perfect (οἱ τέλειοι) were admitted, were nothing, not even the faith that could remove mountainous obstacles to good living. No illumination of spiritual light following the darkness of the most dread mysteries of the Grecian world, not even the inner illumination of the spirit of Christian prophecy, is of any avail even when following the most complete self-surrender without Love (vv.^{3, 4}). This is another reflexion of the writer. The sight of their mysteries may mean life¹ to the votaries of pagan cults, but they are nought without Love. Even we, who have the fuller and grander vision of the great realities that are eternal, we only see, as it were, reflexions in a mirror, and these at best obscure (ἐν αἰνίγματι),² because Love is not yet

fully ours, nor are we fully His. But when the imperfections of time have given place to the perfect realization that is to be, then we shall have the full distinct vision of Love face to face. His glory and beauty shall be revealed to us as clearly as our hearts have been revealed to Him, and we shall see and understand that Love is greater than all. This is the sublimest reflexion of the writer (vv.⁹⁻¹³). And he makes it as he stands in thought in the sacred shrine (*naos*), where only the priests and the initiated may enter, and where the divinity is supposed to be. Behind the shrine is the fourth compartment of the temple (the *opisthodomos*). Here the treasures are kept. Behind the shrine of Athena in the Parthenon was the public treasury to which Aristophanes refers (*Plutus*, 1193). There he places the statue of Plutus to guard the treasury (*opisthodomos*) of the goddess. Demosthenes (*c. Timocratem*) refers to the burning of this treasury by the defaulting treasurers. Behind the *naos* or shrine in the Temple of Diana was the richest and safest bank in the East. Accordingly, we may say that the four divisions of the Hymn correspond in character, position, and importance to those of the temple. We have four systems in it, each divided into three sections. The first system comprises the three opening verses beginning with 'if with the tongues of men,' and ending with 'I am nothing benefited.' It is a recital of Christian *charismata* and characteristics. This we might call the *prothuron*, or pillared portico. For it is on such pillars as prophecy, knowledge, faith that the Christian's life is uplifted, for faith is the foundation or supporting pillar³ of things hoped for, that which establishes logically the things unseen. 'Faith essentially deals with the future and with the unseen, the regions not entered by direct physical experience.'⁴ Here we stand before the door of the Temple of Love. In the second system the nature and character of Love are set forth in terms that recall the features of the Christ—the 'Love' of St. Paul. It begins with the words 'Love suffereth long' and concludes with 'never faileth' (vv.^{4-8a}). This is the vestibule of the Temple, for

clear in the same way, not through *enigmas* (δι' αἰνιγμάτων), but clearly (ἐναργῶς). Euripides (*Rhesus*, 754), 'not in *enigmas*, for he speaks clearly' (σαφῶς).

³ ὑπόστασις, cf. Pindar, *Ol.* vi. 1. ὑποστάσαντες προθύρω κίονας—placing the pillars under the portico. Ez 43¹¹ of foundation of house. Cf. Ps 68^a.

⁴ Westcott, *Hebrews*, p. 352.

¹ Soph., *Frag.* 719 (Dind.), 'Thrice happy they go to the world below having seen these mysteries. For them alone is life there, for all others there is misery'; cf. Plato (*Phædo*, 69) on the fate of the uninitiated.

² Æschines, *c. Ctesiph.*, contrasts the obscure and the

we have passed through the great door into the *pronaos*, and on the threshold of the sanctuary we listen to a rehearsal of the qualities and virtues of Love preparatory to entering the shrine itself. Now we enter the shrine (*naos*)—the third section. Here we see no image, no statue that might fall, for Love never *falls* nor fails,¹ but we stand in the presence of Reality. The shrine is empty of all the most coveted gifts—‘prophecies, tongues, knowledge’—and possessions of men. They have but temporary scope, but Love lasts for aye, invisible and eternal. Love only is here. His Presence, for we may regard Love as a portrait of Christ, is indicated in a subtle manner by the absence of all that is temporary and provisional. In the presence of Love these things appear to be but childhood’s toys or dreams (τὰ τοῦ νηπίου). They have served their purpose, we have no more use for them; but Love is eternal, and His purpose is ever to serve. ‘He that would be greatest of you will be your servant,’² as Love once said. This, the third system of the ode, begins with the words, ‘Whether there be prophecy,’³ and concludes with ‘I have put away the toys of the child’ (v.¹¹). Leaving the toys of childhood behind us we pass by a logical transition into the last of the compartments of the apostle’s muse. As in the *opisthodomos* at Ephesus and Athens the treasures were stored for safety behind the shrine; so here, in the Treasury of the Temple of Love, its *opisthodomos* are the true Treasures of Life; and we are reminded of what Love once said: ‘Treasure up for yourselves treasures in heaven’ (Mt 6²⁰). And the treasures are faith, hope, and love, which can only be won by those who have passed through the porch, vestibule, and shrine of Love, under whose sublime guardianship they dwell secure. When ‘face to face’ with Reality, Love Himself, we shall perceive at once that Love is supreme over all, even our faith and hope, which Love creates, unites, sustains. Our present view of Love is nothing when compared with the future vision. The very looking through the apartments of this vast temple is likened unto the gazing at their reflexion in the bewildering obscurity of a mirror, standing at gaze before ‘the boundless

rays of golden mirrors’⁴ We enjoy a sight, beautiful, indeed, but confused and dark when compared with the vision that is to be. The fourth and last section contains vv.¹²⁻¹³, 14¹, ‘pursue love’ and perhaps 12³¹, ‘the highest road of all.’

This analysis shows that the writer had a definite scheme before his mind. He did not compose his poem in a haphazard way, but gave much toil, study, and care so as to present it in its finished beauty and facile grace, a very triumph of the *ars celandi artem*, a veritable ‘God-built work’ as Pindar styled his ode. The metrical systems employed also show that the movement corresponds to the thought. The apostle’s evident knowledge of Plato’s description of Love (*Eros*) in the *Symposium*, 195–197, in rhythmical and balanced phrases, may explain why he chose to express himself similarly when dealing with a grander and holier theme. That St. Paul knew the passage can easily be shown. St. Paul personified *Agape*, as Plato personified *Eros*. ‘*Eros* neither injures (*adikeri*) nor is injured’; *Agape* ‘rejoiceth not in injustice’ (*adikia*). *Eros* ‘does not show violent resentment,’ while *Agape* ‘is not provoked.’ *Eros* ‘is distinguished by *good form*,’ for there is war between ‘bad form’ and ‘*Eros*,’ while *Agape* ‘does not show *bad form*.’⁵ *Eros* ‘is master of pleasures and desires, showeth gentleness, removeth harshness, loveth to give friendliness, does not show hostility, is propitious to the good, observed by the wise, envied by those who have it not . . . is our pilot in labour, *the adornment of gods and men*, best of leaders whom every singer should follow.’ St. Paul implies the self-mastery of *Agape*, its freedom from envy and selfishness, its kindly offices. He might speak ‘with the tongues of men and angels,’ but without this ‘adornment of divine beings and men’ his words would only have the ring of brass. Plato *bade the singer follow Eros*; Paul bids the Christian pursue *Agape*. This theory of the Hymn also throws light upon, and is illuminated by, the words πάντα στέγει—the central idea and the central phrase of the poem. In Tregelles’ edition the chapter has twenty-five lines, and στέγει is the middle word of the thirteenth line. It may be regarded as the key to the understanding of the poem. R.V. and A.V. render ‘beareth all things.’ The verb is used of keeping out water, guarding secrets, being proof against spears. None of these passages gives the required sense, their meaning being expressed by

¹ πῖπτει (NABC), ἐκπίπτει (Syr. and West.), cf. ‘standeth or falleth,’ πῖπτει, Ro 14⁴; ἐκπίπτει of shipwreck; hissing off stage.

² Mt 23¹¹, where μείζων ὑμῶν corresponds to μείζων τούτων in v.¹².

³ The singular is required by v.².

⁴ *Hecuba*, 924.

⁵ ἀσχημονεῖ—a Platonic word.

ἵπομένει, endures, and the condensed style does not admit of tautology. A messenger in Æschylus announces that the enemy are repulsed, and that the tower still *protects* the people. Antigone says, 'the battlements *protect* the city.'¹ Love can hardly be described as keeping out all things like water, or holding everything like secrets, or being proof against all things like spears, but it can be said to shelter and cover all things, in the sense of affording a universal shelter without prejudice or partiality, taking all under its protective wings, covering all with its roof (στέγη). This love that covers all things recalls Love's simile of the mother-bird gathering her chickens under her wings, and the invitation Love once gave: 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary, and I will give you rest for your souls' (Mt 11²⁸). We are reminded of a sheltering canopy, broad as the heaven above, wide stretched over all, to protect, cover, and defend. In the Father's house are many abiding-places but only one roof (στέγη), the Divine love that covers all men and things under the folds of its ample protection.

This supports the theory that the ode is constructed upon artistic and architectonic principles. Love is the royal dwelling or στέγη, like the residence of the Atreidai (Agam. 1055). Hecuba (1009) used the word of the treasure vaults of Athena which contained gold. Love is not only a royal dwelling, it is a treasure-house; it is more, 'it is a divine residence, a temple in the highest sense, a place set apart for work and worships. The abode of Love is one of the abiding-places (μοναί) of the Father's house (Jn 14²). For the halls of hope and faith and love abide (μένει) (1 Co 13¹³). Their treasure can never be stolen from those who have

¹ S. c. *Theb.* 794, στέγει δὲ πύργος. O. C. 15, πόλιν στέγουσι.

found a shelter under the *roof* of love (Mt 6^{20c}). This ode, therefore, is a God-built work (θεόδοματον χροός). It describes the Temple of Love, through whose many chambers we are permitted to pass, and of whose treasures we are admitted to a sight, which is brief or lasting in the same degree as we possess the Spirit of Love.

As we look back upon this little poem, a Greek ode in miniature, we notice the wonderful effects obtained by assonance and repetition. The changes are rung like musical chimes upon certain words and phrases² which recur at almost regular intervals, and which find echoes and resposions throughout. Professor Bury has pointed out the same phenomenon in the Pindaric odes. In the first verse the jingling effects of the words represent the sounds of the instruments. In the third verse *καυχῆσώμαι* (NAB) is manifestly right. It is required to harmonize with words before and after which have *χ. καυθήσώμαι* is wrong; it introduces an inharmonious sound and an incongruous idea. It reads like a Western correction of the other word which is the connecting link between its own and the following section, where we are told that 'Love is no braggart' (v.⁴). The burnings at Rome under Nero (A.D. 64) and the reference to Dn 3⁸ (Theod.) obscured this point. The true parallel is in Appian's history, where an orator descends from the platform and offers himself³ to any one who wished to arrest him. The apostle says in 54 (Autumn), 'Though I give up my body to imprisonment, so that the boast be mine, but if Love be not mine, no benefit is mine.' Two and a half years after (May 57) he put himself into the power of his enemies. This pathetic and prophetic note is lost by the changing of one letter.

² e.g. 'If I have not Love' (3); 'Love' (4); 'it shall be done away' (4); 'child' (5); etc.

³ παρεδίδου τὸ σῶμα, see Wetstein.

Literature.

A BASIS OF BELIEF.

CONSTANTLY the rocks are being ground down and the land gnawed away, and yet the earth persists, and this because the streams keep no less constantly building up new lands, which gradually rise above the waters and form the homes of many generations.

And so though, theologically, this age of ours seems a time of cataclysm and destruction, the faith is wholly safe. For many eager minds, working on the task of reconstruction, are fashioning new wine-skins, so that, when the old so obviously wearing away do give, the precious wine may not be spilt. Here, for example, is Dr. Percy Gardner taking a