

BIBLE AUTHORS AND THE IMAGINATION

FRANCIS B. DENIO, D.D., BANGOR, MAINE

IN the volume "Value of the Classics," recently published by the Princeton University, the following statement occurs: "The Bible and Shakespeare apart, there is no more potent means of mental culture and spiritual uplift than is furnished by Greek literature." It is to be desired that the primacy of the Bible as a literature thus recognized be also recognized in our institutions of learning, and that it be studied as a literature. There is no fear that its religious value will not take care of itself when a free chance is given to it.

The whole Bible is one body of literature. The New Testament is not a part of the Greek literature. It is not treated as such in histories of Greek literature. They do not always mention it. The words of the New Testament are derived from the Greek language, but its thought is a continuation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Both parts of the Bible arose in the same race. They both are the expression of one spirit and of one philosophy of life. They both came out of a life molded by the Redemptive Spirit of God. The Bible as a whole is the classical literature of Israel. It exhibits the more important marks of a great literature in the highest degree. It is a literature full of life and of power, personal power. This power is universal and permanent. It survives the shock of translation more fully than other literatures. It kindles intellectual activity. It calls forth a dignity of thought, a sobriety of taste, and a sanity of judgment to a degree unsurpassed by other literatures. It has power to create literatures.

In the divine economy the production of this literature was by means of the same mental functions by which other literatures have been produced. As in other literatures the matter centered around human experience and included the philosophy of that experience. The form and

expression of the literature were due, as in other literatures, to the mental activities that we group under the word "imagination." The words of Lowell are as true of the Bible as of any literature: "Imagination, as we have said, has more virtue to keep a book alive than any other single faculty. Burke is rescued from the usual doom of authors, because his learning, his experience, his sagacity are rimmed with a halo by this bewitching light behind the intellectual eye from the highest heaven of the brain. Shakespeare has impregnated his common sense with the steady glow of it, and answers the mood of youth and age, of high and low, immortal as the dateless substance of the soul he wrought in."

The imagination has a twofold function: the inner activities of imaging to the self, and that of uttering in words what has been imaged. Before Amos expressed the insignificance of Israel after the coming disaster, he had already pictured it in his mind: iii. 12, "As the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be rescued that sit in Samaria in the corner of a couch." The simile is drawn from the experiences of a shepherd such as still occur in the Lebanon. So also Hosea v. 12 pictures and expresses the unseen and unsuspected processes of the divine judgment: "Therefore am I unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness."

These expressions are vivid. But first of all the image was vivid. Such vividness comes to pass in consequence of the intensity of the author's feelings. In the case of Amos there was an intense desire that Israel should forsake its sin and return to Jehovah. His emotion which found most full expression was detestation of evil doing. This is expressed in no more striking manner than when he images the animalism of the upperclass women of Samaria by addressing them as cows of Bashan (iv. 1). Rarely does an author unveil his feelings so fully as did Hosea. His chief emotion is over the waywardness of Israel. He

enters into the divine grief as he represents Jehovah as saying:—

“How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?
How shall I cast thee off, Israel?
How shall I make thee as Admah?
How shall I set thee as Zeboim?
My heart is turned within me,
My compassions are kindled together” (Hos. xi. 8).

Out of these intense emotions came intensity of moral conviction and power of imagination. In each case the emotion rested in a mighty conviction of certain spiritual facts of surpassing importance. With Amos it was God's righteous claims upon Israel for its obedience. Hosea had the same conviction suffused with a sense of the divine love and human ingratitude.

Another function, called that of imagination, is the entrance into the experience of others without actually having the experience. It is apt to be coupled with a broad sympathy with all that is human, as in Shakespeare; so that he is able to represent an Iago with understanding, and so that the reader also understands him. This function of the imagination made the Book of Job possible. It is the condition of all that is dramatic in that book. If the Book of Canticles is a drama, this activity of the imagination made it possible. These are the nearest to dramas found in the Old Testament. There are dramatic touches in the prophets where they quote the words of opponents, as in the colloquy between Amaziah and Amos in Amos vii. 10–17, and in the quotations and retorts in Mal. i. and ii. These are dramas in fact, and not as literary creation. So also is the narrative in the Old Testament often presented dramatically, and is thus more vivid than the mere recounting of facts. Selection is made from facts and they are presented in a dramatic way.

This function of the imagination is exercised to the height of its capacity in entering into the mind of God. With the sense of the surpassing height of the ways of God and of his thoughts, the prophet must ever strive with his

power of sympathetic imagination to apprehend the thought and meaning of that which was wholly outside the experience of men (Isa. lv. 8, 9). The experience (Isa. l. 4, 5) attributed to the Servant of Jehovah, the prophet understood in part from his own life, but only in part. It was the reaching out of the soul so as to "exceed its grasp." It was not to the purpose of the prophet to dramatize the life of the sinner. He understood it partly indeed by experience, and partly by this power of imagination. By means of this the prophet was able to see the course and result of sin in human life without the actual experience of all its details of any particular type of sin, or all the varieties of sin. Some men must sin and go to the bitter end before they can take in its nature and power. Not so with Amos, Hosea, and their successors among the literary prophets. They saw that unbridled self-indulgence, disregard of justice and of the rights of the defenseless, were so inconsistent with a well-ordered society that they were powerless to avert disaster (Amos vi. 1-11; Hosea vii.; Isa. x., and many other passages). This is the fact both as to the normal processes of history and as to the mind of God.

Somewhat akin to the discriminating and sympathetic imagination which enters into the experience and mind of others is the imagination of insight. It is insight into the meaning of facts, of character, and of events. In narrative it appears as the dramatic sense which perceives the revelation of character in the deeds of men which are narrated. It divines the motives, and discerns which words are significant utterances as revealing character and purposes. It perceives that in conduct which explains the result of the career of a man, or of a people. This is one of the reasons why the narratives of the Old Testament have their perennial power to interest the reader. This insight into the meaning of things is more than the dramatic sense of the narrator. It is the endowment of the prophet for the interpretation of history. The intimacy into which Jehovah had taken Israel at Sinai required him

to punish Israel when it failed to live according to the covenant. Amos iii. 2: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities." On the other hand, Hosea sees that because of Jehovah's own character he will not manifest the full measure of his reaction against sin as it deserves:-

"I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger,
I will not return to destroy Ephraim:
For I am God, and not man;
The Holy One in the midst of thee;
And I will not come in wrath" (Hos. xi. 9).

Mere logical reasoning does not take in these complementary truths. It is by the activity of the imagination that the mind absorbs these truths so as to make them a fruitful part of the philosophy of life. These two principles went deeply into the philosophy of life held by the prophets. Further, these principles as seen by the prophets were not abstract truths. Rather they were visioned in concrete illustrations of the truth or fact. The Old Testament prophets did the most of their thinking in percepts, not in concepts. This is the work of the imagination, not of the strictly logical functions. Amos iv. 1 pictures the heartless oppression of the poor instead of declaring the merciless disposition of the oppressors: ye "that oppress the poor, that crush the needy." Hosea xi. 8 images the yearning love of Jehovah as quoted above.

All the inner functions of the imagination which found outer expression as quoted above have a common characteristic which is called brooding, i. e. contemplating with interest. The mind has before it for contemplation all it knows of human life—its experiences, questions, faiths, hopes, doubts, fears, and despairs, as well as other feelings of diverse natures—and also the theories of life which are subject to constant modification. These all have personal values. They are not seen in the "dry light" of the intellect seeking knowledge merely of objective fact. Their contemplation is accompanied by emotion; indeed, it was emotion which aroused the mind to contemplation,

while in turn contemplation quickened emotion. In this brooding the mind is stirred to utterance. Here is the beginning of an impulse which arouses the action of the imagination which is called creative. Thus the term brooding is a fitting one, for it quickens to the production of something living. Under its influence the mind begins to see an ideal of something to be expressed. These mental processes were the ones normally to be employed in bringing a vision before the mind of a Hebrew prophet, whether it came in the ordinary state of consciousness or in the prophetic ecstasy as to Peter on the housetop of Simon the tanner.

The creative function of the imagination is the highest, to which all the others are auxiliary. In the brooding the attention to a subject begins to become fruitful. There is a constant imaging of the object before the mind, and attention to particular features of it, and new perceptions of relations actual or possible. New combinations, then new images, come before the mind. These new possibilities become more definite, more vivid, interest increases, the percept imaging action of the imagination is heightened. The ideal for expression is forming and, when the decision is made to utter the ideal, the creative process becomes active.

As has been seen, back of all these processes of the mind are emotions and convictions. The emotions may be described, or they may be expressed, or the convictions, the facts and truths causing the emotions, may be expressed and left to kindle in the minds of hearers the emotions which they had kindled in the mind of the author. In the Psalms we find emotions described; as, in vi. 6:—

“I am weary with my groaning;
Every night make I my bed to swim;
I water my couch with my tears.”

See also xxx. 6, 9, 10. It is easy to find similar expressions in the Psalms and in Job. Outside these books this feature is not common. In fact, there is comparatively little such description of emotion. Perhaps no author, even Jer-

emiah, is so apt to give his emotions direct expression as is Hosea. He more than any other Old Testament author makes known the fathomless love of God. For the most part the prophets presented to the minds of their hearers the facts or truths, the convictions which caused their own emotions. The ideal which they had seen and wished to present to the hearers could not have its value for the hearer until the creative imagination should accomplish for the hearer what the brooding imagination had done for the speaker.

In order to accomplish this result, the ideal must become definite in the mind of the speaker as some clearly remembered fact, the product of a vivid memory, the reproductive imagination. For some minds this result is easily attained. Oftener it is otherwise. It may be necessary to attempt again and again to express it before it will stand before the brooding mind as it needs to stand, in order properly to convey it to another mind. One can never make it clearer to another mind than it is to one's self. It is possible that a mind more alert, more truly creative, will leap from a suggestion of another to a creation after which that other is vainly striving. When the idea before the mind has become clear, one must then decide how much of it to express and also which part of it. If it were possible to express all, the multitude of details would so weary the mind that the desired effect could not be produced. The mind would be distracted by the multitude of details. The various details are of unequal importance. Properly selected details properly arranged and properly expressed will produce the desired result. This selection is the task of the imagination, which has the insight to discern those details which most contribute to the production of the feelings of the speaker and which should produce like feelings in the hearer. Selective processes come at this point. In the speeches of Amos the chief elements are statements of the sins of the nation, chiefly of the rulers, and the disasters which were surely coming as punishment. The sins selected for statement were not identical in each speech,

e.g. ii. 6-8; iii. 9-10; iv. 1, l.c.; v. 7, 10-12; vi. 1, 3-6; viii. 4-6. Isaiah in chap. i., "The Great Arraignment," mentioned practically all the sins named by Amos, but in far less detail. When one examines all the speeches of Isaiah he sees that an effective address could not possibly include all the wrongdoing of the people or of the rulers in one speech.

These considerations begin to show the justice of the statement of Lowell: "Imagination where it is truly creative, is a faculty and not a quality; it looks before and after; it gives the form that makes all the parts work together harmoniously toward a given end; its seat is in the higher reason, and it is efficient only as a servant of the will." Again, "It is a faculty that shapes, gives unity of design and balanced gravitation of parts." This is indeed the work of the creative imagination. Notable illustrations are found in Greek literature. The "Oedipus Tyrannus" and the "Speech on the Crown" are among the most perfect products of the creative imagination. King Lear, Othello, some of Burke's and of Webster's orations are other illustrations. In these works, and in works of like structure, each part contributes to the perfection of the whole, is placed in due subordination to the whole and in proper coördination with the other parts. The earlier parts prepare for those which come after, the later parts complete and crown those which came before. Thus the whole is a literary unit. As the selection and arrangement of the parts, the organization of the whole, are the highest function of the imagination, so also these processes are liable to be most incomplete. If a writing or a speech can be called a literary unit, it is due to this organizing function of the imagination. The productions mentioned above in Greek or English literature are illustrations of major literary units.

Writings still more extensive than these are produced with a unifying principle, e.g. Macaulay's "History of England." The unifying principle there is the life of the nation, not the literary structure. The first five books of

the Bible have a unity of that sort. In both Macaulay and the Bible the constructive imagination adopted and used that principle of unity. In fact, the same sort of unity can be found in the narratives of the Bible from Genesis to Kings inclusive, considering the Book of Ruth as on a par with the story of Samson as regards its literary relation with the rest. The largest literary units in a proper sense which are found in the Old Testament are in the Books of Deuteronomy, of Job, and Isa. xl.-lxvi.

If we may judge from the results, comparatively few minds are able to construct a large literary unit. We may question if many of these are able to produce such a unit within the mind before beginning the expression of it. Further, however completely the ideas, leading and subordinate, are thought out, the invention of the matter is greatly stimulated by the act of expressing that which is already within the mind. The very ideas themselves may undergo some transformation, and the ideal of the whole may come to be modified. A good illustration of this may be found in the idea of the Servant of Jehovah. In Isa. xli. 8 the nation is called Jehovah's servant. This occurs early in the chapters xl.-xlviii., the leading aim of which is to break down the trust of many exiles in idols, to establish faith in Jehovah, and to convince them that he is able to bring them out of their exile and will surely do so. With chap. xlix. the aim of the writer changes. "The controversial tone, the repeated comparisons between Jehovah and the idols, with the arguments based upon them, disappear; the prophet feels that, as regards these points, he has made his position sufficiently secure. For the same reason, allusions to Cyrus and the conquest of Babylon cease also; that, likewise, is now taken for granted" (Driver). The prophet's apparent desire had been to arouse Israel to the belief that they could return from exile by the favor of Jehovah and also to decide to do so. The prophet was aware that little good can come to Israel from their deliverance unless their character should change. Therefore his leading thought passes from outer

deliverance to the inner transformation needed in order to make the deliverance a real blessing. Along with this change in the theme was a change in the idea of the Servant. In chap. xlii. the idea is based on that of xli. 8, Israel; especially must it be so in xlii. 18 ff., where it is an Israel blind and deaf to the meaning of Jehovah's dealings. In chap. xlix. the idea of the servant is separated from the nation as a whole. By the time the discourse has reached chap. lii. 13 the idea has become quite individual and sharply contrasted with Israel. Only violence in interpretation and arbitrary manipulation of the text can make the idea of the servant here the same as in chap. xli. 8.

This change in the conception is an illustration of what not infrequently occurs in the process of expressing an extended theme, even when it was supposed to be thought out with care and detail. A writer to whom form meant so much as to some of the classical Greek writers would reconstruct the whole. Reconstruction of Isa. xl.-liii. so as to make the earlier and later ideas of the Servant identical would have destroyed the lesson which the author wished to convey. Artistic unity in the structure, the form, was less important than the spiritual values of the truths uttered. This illustration shows why large literary units have no such place in the classics of Israel as they did in those of Greece. Literature was produced in Greece to minister to enjoyment. Both structure and expression needed to be perfect if a writing or oral utterance were to meet the demand of the hearer or reader. Narrative may have been produced in Israel for entertainment as were the stories of Herodotus. Lyric poetry was without doubt the expression of emotion both in Israel and in Greece. Oratory had quite a different development in the two peoples. The aim, the structure, and the expression were diverse. The prophet orator had a message from his God. He seems to have used his resources of expression to make his utterance effective, but it does not seem as though he cultivated his literary art for any other purpose. The pro-

hibition of visible representations of the Deity seems to have stunted the arts of sculpture and painting. The aversion to these arts, or at least the neglect of them, may have contributed to the neglect to develop literature as an art.

It is in the study of the shorter literary units that what is characteristic of the imagination in its creative functions is best exhibited in the Old Testament. The prophets excelled in the utterance of brief units. They would have made excellent "Four-minute speakers." Take two speeches of Amos. His book begins with a series of utterances concerning the neighbors of Israel. Those utterances name a single crime with which those peoples are charged, then the punishment is announced. When he comes to Israel the accusation names seven details. Further the guilt of the nation is aggravated by ingratitude for blessings received and the refusal rightly to use them. This speech is closed by the prediction of a catastrophe which no military power can avert. In the speech of Amos iv. the arrangement is more elaborate. The speaker begins with a pungent arraignment of the upper-class women in Samaria. He states their sin and foretells the distresses which will bring their luxurious habits to an end. He then turns to the people at large, sarcastically tells them to multiply their varied sacrifices at their great religious centers. He reminds them in five specifications of the calamities that we may believe were the cause of their abounding ritual service, and he reminds them five times that they have not returned to their God. He leaves it for them to connect this statement with the fact of their elaborate sacrificial ritual. He announces that Jehovah is to do something to them, but does not name it. He leaves it to their imagination to fill out the coming calamity, and calls upon them to prepare to meet their God. He does not say how to prepare, but repentance and turning to God is the only preparation which the prophet seems to know. He closes by a description of Jehovah's omnipotence and majesty phrased in a manner

to alarm a sinner's conscience. It is a literary unit, addressing at the outset a group and then the whole kingdom. The arrangement is rhetorical rather than logical. The sarcastic exhortation at the beginning of the address to the people arrests attention as no other part of the address would have done if it had been put first. The close, with the undesignated calamity and the description of him who would bring the calamity, is adapted to leave the hearer with forebodings such as might well arouse the activity of a dulled conscience.

Space does not permit a more protracted study of this aspect of prophetic oratory. Another point is worthy of notice. As has been pointed out, few minds, if any, are able to construct an extended literary unit entirely within the mind itself before beginning to express it. Probably also the invention of the matter needed for the expression is never complete before the expression begins. The act of expression is a great stimulant to the invention of the matter appropriate for the subject. When, therefore, the theme as a whole has been constructed after the selection of the fitting parts, and arranged by the creative imagination, it is supposed that they shall be expressed in the chosen order, and that each part will be completed before going on to the next, and the whole so arranged that the ideal of a literary unit shall be attained.

In the expression of the parts it often occurs that some detail will be expressed out of order, either by anticipation or by delayed mental action. The latter may be the more common. It almost seems as though the mind had a subconscious sense that the part that had ended was really incomplete, and added something lacking, and thrust it into the expression of the following part. An author with a pronounced feeling for form or structure will rearrange the matter, and place such a sentence or sentences in the place where perfect form demands it. If his feeling for form is not pronounced, as is the case with many authors outside the Old Testament as well as within it, he will let them remain where they are expressed, and

thus leave them to make the impression which they may individually produce. In the Hebrew prophets, who did not cultivate form for its own sake, and who had many weighty thoughts to utter, it is not strange that this neglect of form is manifest.

Amos, again, can supply illustrations. In chap. vi. 1 he addresses the nobles of Samaria. In verse 2 he begins an exhortation which he does not complete, but in verses 3-6 he expands the phrase in verse 1, "secure in the mountain of Samaria." He does not again take up the thought of verse 2, though the influence of it is not lost in the chapter. Another illustration from the same author is seen in the preceding chapter. In Amos v. 6 two personalities are contrasted,—"ye" and "Jehovah." The next four verses are given to a description of the two. Verse 7 begins with "Ye," then verses 8 and 9 are a description of Jehovah in terms which justify the "seek" of verse 6. The author then renews his description of "ye" of verse 7, and also passes to the third person. This change of person is not so infrequent as to be surprising. In chap. vi. the second person of verse 3 passes over to the third in the next verse. These are merely illustrative of the processes of the creative imagination in its undisciplined activities which are scattered through the prophets. In the New Testament, as Romans, the particles *kai*, *gar*, *men*, and *de* occur and are of value for the search after the relations of thought. Even so the relations are not at once obvious and are sometimes subtle. The relations of the objects before the mind of a Hebrew prophet are often equally subtle, for his thought is not in logical connection. He was an intuitive thinker, and was not at trouble to relate his different intuitions. For illustration, study Isa. xl. and following chapters. The abrupt transitions of thought and the returns after several verses are a challenge to penetrate within the author's mind, and to study the processes of the creative imagination in the expression of his thought.

After the construction and arrangement of the parts of

an utterance, we come finally to the work of the imagination in providing the expression through words and groups of words. It is in part a phrasal power. It is in part a selection of imagery. The first object sought in the attempt to image the various parts of a structure is to represent them clearly and distinctly as they are imaged in the mind of the author. He wishes nobody to mistake what is before the mind, hence he strives against vagueness of outline, ambiguity of terms, or obscurity of reference. In these respects some parts of the Old Testament seem faulty. Our knowledge of the Hebrew vocabulary is such that many expressions in the Book of Job are not clear to us. It is quite possible that a more adequate knowledge of the vocabulary of Israel would render many expressions luminous that are not now clear. Again, idiomatic or proverbial expressions like "skin of my teeth" and that beginning "skin for skin," are obscure simply because we do not know the movement of thought in their origin. Again, often in narrative, as in Ruth iii. 16, the successive verbs are in the same person, number, and gender, and have nothing but contextual indications to show a change in the subject. In most cases like this the context is adequate.

It is difficult, however, to believe that in these instances and others like them the utterances were not much more clear to the first hearers than to us. The energetic expression of the clear vision of the Hebrew prophet was more characteristic than a clear one. An unimaginative, a literalistic mind in direct address is aroused by the imagery of a speaker even though it may be unintelligible to him. Much more a people to whom figurative speech and symbolic expressions are habitual would be moved by these modes of speech as used by the Hebrew prophets.

The simplest mode of imaging one's vision with force is by comparison. A remarkable collection of similes may be gathered from the fourteen chapters in the Book of Hosea. Things are compared with things, persons with persons, with things and with animals, actions with actions, with their results and with the results of other actions. The

simile is remarkably common in other authors. While the use of the simile is so common, imagery of greater vigor is yet more common. There is no present need to enumerate or to classify the various kinds of imagery found in great abundance in those books of the Old Testament that have a poetic character. It is worthy of note that not all figures of speech are due to the imagination. In recent years careful users of language have not used the term "imagination" of any capricious, playful, or fanciful activities of the mind. These are termed activities of the fancy. Thus the paranomasia of the Old Testament are due to fancy rather than to the imagination. They are used in order to attract or fix attention. This figure differs from imaginative imagery, as that which is accidental, and therefore unessential, differs from the essential and necessary. In this form of speech the fancy seizes on some accidental coincidence of sound, usually with a contrast in meaning, as in Isa. i. 23, *sarékha sorerim*,—"thy princes are rebellious." In recent years expositors have sought to render this play upon words into English. "Thy rulers are rebels" is merely alliterative. "Thy lawmakers are lawbreakers" is hardly correct as a translation, for the princes did not make the laws. At best they stated and enforced the laws. "Thy rulers are unruly" is perhaps as happy as any proposed translation. Yet the latter phrase, while a good play upon sound, is a weak translation.

What is genuinely imaginative can be translated more successfully than these accidents of sound. The material of the imagination belongs to the essential and universal, not to the accidental and local. Lowell well said, "Literature that loses its meaning, or the best part of it, when it gets beyond sight of the parish steeple is not what I understand by literature." The claim for the Bible that it is a great literature rests in its universality and permanence. Lowell also says of Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Goethe: "They have stood the supreme test of their being translated into all tongues, because the large humanity of their theme, and of their handling of it, needed trans-

lation into none." Judged by this standard the Bible is more cosmopolitan than any of them. Therefore, in considering the work of the imagination, the chief attention should be bestowed on those things which belong to the most essential, the universal, and the permanent aspects of literature. Without doubt the Hebrew authors thought first of making plain and impressive that which they saw to utter, but they were not so devoid of taste that they had never a thought of beauty of expression. Their standard of beauty stressed other things than those common with us. In their poetry if rhyme occurred it was probably an accident. If a poet wished for rhyme he could easily have used it in many instances. He seemed to have preferred the figure called chiasm, for he spoiled rhymes by using it. Alliteration was used somewhat, but this is fanciful rather than imaginative. The chiasm varies the emphatic elements of successive clauses, is not fanciful, and might be held to indicate the preference for imagination rather than fancy.

In Greek, Latin, and European literatures beauty of sound, even in prose, has been sought by rhythm, and in poetry by meter also. In Greek the system of meter attained an elaborate development. If this was the case in Old Testament literature the secret of the systems is yet to be discovered. It has been forgotten, and the attempts to discover it have thus far failed. This is not to say that no rhythm of sound in Hebrew poetry is discoverable. There is not a little. But those scholars who would find orderly systems ornately elaborated, as Greek tragic choruses or Pindar, have completely failed thus far. Hebrew literature has a beauty more truly imaginative than that of rhythm of sound. It is rhythm of thought or parallelism. It is quite possible that familiarity with this thought-rhythm will bring one to regard it as more truly beautiful than rhythm of sound can be. It is so seldom used in English literature that its very existence is little known. It occurs in Tennyson's dedication of the "Idyls of the King":—

" May all love,
 His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow thee,
 The love of all thy sons encompass thee,
 The love of all thy daughters cherish thee,
 The love of all thy people comfort thee,
 Till God's love set thee at his side again."

Shakespeare gives a noble instance in "Richard the Second":—

"Now mark me how I will undo myself:—
 I give this heavy weight from off my head,
 And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand,
 The pride of kingly sway from out my heart:
 With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
 With mine own hands I give away my crown,
 With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
 With mine own breath release all duteous oaths:
 All pomp and majesty I do forswear;
 My manors, rents, revenues, I forego;
 My acts, decrees, and statutes I deny:
 God pardon all oaths that are broke to me!
 God keep all vows unbroke that swear to thee!
 Make me, that nothing have, with nothing griev'd!
 And thou with all pleas'd, that hast all achiev'd!
 Long may'st thou live in Richard's seat to sit,
 And soon lie Richard in an earthy pit!
 God save King Henry, unking'd Richard says,
 And send him many years of sunshine days!"

(Act iv. 1, 203 ff.).

There is a rhythm of sound in the words. Shakespeare could hardly do other than give it. But the charm is in the thought, which is more rhythmic than the words. Such a charm has Hebrew poetry. Read the books of Job, Psalms, and Proverbs. If the prophets were printed so as to show the thought-rhythm, the beauty of the passages would invite recognition. The prophets were orators, and, like orators in other lands, expressed themselves in a mode which was like poetry as well as like prose. In fact, there are many passages, and often extended ones, in which the address is as thought-rhythmic as any poetry.

"But now thus saith Jehovah that created thee, O Jacob,
 And he that formed thee, O Israel:

Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;
 I have called thee by my name,
 Thou art mine" (Isa. xliii. 1).

The passage has a beauty that appeals to the mind, whatever the rhythm of sound. The words are subdued to the thought and seem beautiful, even though rough and guttural. Not infrequently the poetic passages have the stateliness of the "Dies Iræ" and "Hora Novissima." The passage quoted has a winsome quality which appears yet more in the following:—

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee;
 But with great mercies will I gather thee.
 In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment;
 But with everlasting lovingkindness will I have mercy
 on thee,
 Saith Jehovah thy Redeemer."

"For the mountains may depart,
 And the hills be removed;
 But my lovingkindness shall not depart from thee,
 Neither shall my covenant of peace be removed,
 Saith Jehovah that hath mercy upon thee" (Isa. liiv. 7, 8, 10).

It is said of a classic that the words make a part of the meaning. What reader or hearer of such beautiful thought-rhythms would wish a word changed? They are a classic, as is the entire chapter in which they occur, and in fact the whole of the literary unit of which they are a part. The beauty of the thought-rhythm is peculiarly capable of reproduction into other languages. "The large humanity of their theme" and the prophets' "treatment of it needed no translation." Expression such as this is peculiarly a work of the imagination. Nothing but insight giving a vision of great things could furnish the conditions essential for such utterances. Nothing but a masterful power of imaging one's vision could produce such thought-rhythms.

These, then, are the leading features of the operations of the creative imagination as exhibited in the Old Testa-

ment: Vision, construction, and expression. Back of all is emotion, chiefly moral emotion, causing a brooding with intensity of interest, promoting a profound insight into the meaning of life and into the relative importance of details, moving to expression and construction of that which is to be expressed, and governing both the processes of construction and expression. Our commentaries recognize now and again some elements of these processes. Too often we seek in vain in the classics of Israel for studies of them as products of the creative imagination. When they shall be investigated as such consciously and systematically, the benefits will be great for the students of the Bible. In fact, justice to the contents of the classics of Israel will never be done without full recognition of the processes of the creative imagination in their production.