MOTION IS THE MIRROR

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Prologue

All men are vain, in whom there is not the knowledge of God: and by those things that are seen could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman.

Wisdom, 13, 1.

The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

St. Paul, Romans, 1, 20.

Argument: The world is charged with the grandeur of God.

Gerard Manley Hopkins

There once lived a poet in an ancient city
Whose mind and heart waged a daily battle,
First one tasting victory, then the other.
His mind, through his very senses' liveliness,
Looked out upon the beauty of its environs:
Forests, streams, earth and waterfall,
Marble casements, columns, music,
Poetry, daily living, man's power withal.
Whispered his thoughts to him in sensitive wanderings:
There must be designer, artist infinite,
Creating all that man knows of his encompassings.
Chance did not bring all that is here;
There must be Cause full worthier.
As it is with such seers
Satisfaction was not his wont
Until he might probe more deeply
Into the depth of things that are.
Always there was reason to be calmed
With a surer knowledge, cause yet untold.
So, he set himself a greater task,
A greater knowing to unfold.
. . . . . . . . the streets I trod,
The lit straight streets shot out and met
The starry streets that point to God.

Chesterton to Belloc

First about his city he looked
For answer to his unknowing... Nor did he suffer the catalogued, the booked
The seeds of other men's sowing... Answers were not here.
How could the Infinite be caged
Within the narrows that man had paged?
Little figures prone between papers' edge
Surely would not fill the wonderment
Firing his soul with every manner
Of life stirring torment.
But, even these same small signs of learning
Did move man's mind to greater yearning,
Despite their lying dormant,
Impressed page on page with secret burning.

But, here was movement,
Moving in daily life and waterfall,
In living poetry, beyond printed page,
Figures of movement:— movement,
Something common to all.
Marble casement, columns, cities of men,
Here was movement again.
In building, in sustenance,
Here was movement
Thick, fast and extremely dense.
Change giving way to change
Jailing man in common range—
This was movement... Manpower not withstanding;
Life but changing to death
With all its dreary demanding,
Stealing from man his vast
Leanings, lofty in breadth:—
This was movement commanding.
Music, too, had its moving,
In moving and being moved:
Dominicana

Swelling, lulling movement
In organ loft, on battlement.

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Soon, the poet fell to revery
In a field of living things,
Over which clouds swept high
And life's breath bent low.
Hour on hour he spent
In meditated wonderment.
I see motion (he thought)
In the winds that blow
And the birds that fend
Their way through the sun's
soft glow.
In things there is motion
An ever changing,
From what can be to is,
That is motion.
What moves, being transient,
Is passing, towards being spent,
Propelled by another.
Is it possible that there be
Movement to infinity
In all the bounded things of earth?

* * * *

His thought hummed. . . .
Limits binding all around,
Binding presence, force profound;
Chained is the earth and sea and sky. . .
That is the way with things, but why?

His thoughts kept ringing. . . .
Movement in generation
Force of man's elation,
Dependence in attraction
Leaning upon an action,
All have need compelling,
Source of all impelling,
Of First Mover unmoved,
Primal Source approved
By reason's blundering
Wandering in wondering.
Argument: She (Wisdom) reacheth therefore from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly. Wisdom, 8, 1

Wisdom therefore spoke to him:
The greatest perfection
Must there be in the Mover
Of all that moves
Throughout the universe.
Who is there so adverse
To suppose
That a single bit of poetry
Is greater than its notary?
And, who the fool so rash
Not to see the Maker of Time
Smiling upon each bit of rhyme?

Argument: I set about finding a way to gain the strength that was necessary for enjoying You. And, I could not find it until I embraced the Mediator between God and man, the Man Jesus Christ, Who is over all things, God blessed forever . . . the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

St. Augustine, Confessions, Bk. XVIII.

In his odyssey, the poet learned
Of Christ, the Son of God,
Who kept a tryst
With man upon a Cross
To save him from fallen reason's
Oft too boasted dross.
He learned, too, of a spouse
Ghostly keeper of the House
That Christ had built.
It was she who taught,
Being wedded to Him,
That He had been the Price
Set for orphan reason's
One great Whim . . .
So that the wayward
Became a faithful child,
No longer orphan running wild,
But a faithful child
In the House
That Christ had built.
For, did not this spouse say:
I profess
That reason can know
For certain, but
Not without duress,
That God is, was,
And ever will be.
I am Who am . . .
That is the token of Him.
I profess
That reason can know Him
In the things that are.
Come, see and taste
Of Him:—
The poet bowed his head,
His mind, heart and will,
A living hymn
To the God of all:
Poet and peasant,
Bird and tree, firmament,
All giving evidence
Of the wonderment
Of Him Who is, was,
And ever will be.

Epilogue

Among themselves all things have order
And from hence the form which makes
The Universe resemble God:
In this the higher creatures
See the printed steps
Of that eternal worth, which is the end
Whither the line is drawn.
All natures lean in this their order
Diversely, some more
Some less approaching to this
Primal Source.

Dante, Divine Comedy
Motion Is The Mirror

This order is in the hierarchy
Which reaches from the lowest
Creature to the only Creator,
Who made the Universe.
This order is in the relation
Of things that are,
As they are.
God said: Let there be!
And things were made
And so it has been
From the beginning,
And so it will be,
Until the end.

Our hope is to see
“A world
In a grain of sand
And heaven in a wild flower,
Hold infinity
In the palm of the hand,
And eternity in an hour.”*
To “see” with reason
And be guided by faith
At times
In realms where
Reason falters,
The higher climes,
Where she still claims
Her right to be.

* William Blake.