

*THE OUTER AND THE INNER GLORY.*

PSALM XIX. 7-9.

THERE is one respect in which the Jewish mind may be regarded as an union of the Eastern and Western intellect : it joins the depth of reflective thought with the enthusiasm of outward vision. The intelligence of the East is naturally introvertive ; it is more impressed with the problems of life than with the glories of the visible universe. The intelligence of the West is naturally perceptive ; where it is not affected by Orientalism it is more impressed with the glories of the visible universe than with the problems of human life. In Judaism we see the rare phenomenon of a well-adjusted balance between the external and the internal. On the one side, we behold an admiration of outward nature equalling in its intense enthusiasm the most ardent raptures of the Grecian mind ; on the other side, we are confronted by an intensity of moral scrutiny which even the Buddhist never attained. In Psalm xix. we have one of the most striking examples of this union of Eastern and Western proclivities. The Psalmist feels himself to be in the presence of two revelations—a glory of God coming from without and a glory of God radiating from within. He is first attracted by the external glory. He opens his eyes upon the world of Nature, and beholds it with a gaze of childlike joy. To him it is, at a first glance, the

personification of gladness. All things are messengers of the Divine glory. The heavens are telling the glory of the Lord; day communicates the message to day, and night to night. The sun is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man rejoices to run his course. The message of joy is widespread and catholic, presenting a striking contrast to the limited scope of Judaism; its voice has gone forth unto all the earth, and its words unto the end of the world. And yet, with all its catholicity and with all its widespread power, the eloquence of Nature is a silent eloquence: "There is no speech, and there is no language; their voice is not heard." The aspect of the outer universe, as it appears to the eye of the Psalmist, is that of an all-pervading, joyous, yet silently working power, uniting the lives of men in a common brotherhood; and, as we read his opening expressions of enthusiasm, we are fully prepared to find the keynote of his strain prolonged through the entire meditation.

But suddenly there is a hiatus in the song. The Singer seems to interrupt himself in the midst of his enthusiastic melody, as if a string of the harp were broken. At the very moment when he seems lost in the admiration of the world of Nature, he all at once breaks out into a strain which sounds like a revolt from the external: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." Can we account for this seeming break in the harmony? Can we explain

the apparent abruptness in the transition of thought, and restore unity to the Psalmist's theme? If we call in the aid of something more than the canons of criticism, if we fall back upon the standpoint of intellectual sympathy, we shall find no difficulty in seeing that the unity has never been broken. For is it not evident that the seeming abruptness of the transition is in reality the result of a close continuity of thought? The Psalmist has been expatiating on the wonders of Nature; he has been revelling in the declaration of God's visible glory and in the traces of his creative power. Yet in the very midst of his exultation he feels that his mind is not filled. This calm beautiful Nature, where is "no speech and no language," is too silent to satisfy his soul. He feels somehow that its voice is not for him, that its sympathy is not for him, that he is receiving no answer to the communings of his heart. In the momentary reaction he turns his eye inward, and there opens to his sight a new world—the world of Conscience. He finds himself in the presence of another glory of God, another manifestation of the Infinite. All at once there breaks upon his mind the conviction that the second glory is strong just where the first glory seemed weak; that the world of Conscience supplies to a human soul the very elements which it lacks in the world of Nature, and that in supplying these elements it becomes the other side of the Divine revelation, the second half of the twofold Majesty. In the Divine revelation of Conscience he recognizes six points which he had failed to perceive in the Divine revelation of Nature; it is complete, definite, moral, unmixed, unchangeable, and ethically discriminative. Let us glance at each of these.

The first of the great silences which the Psalmist experiences in the world of Nature is its absence of all provision for *the conversion of the soul*. Its imperfection consists in the very majesty of its perfection; it is so perfect that it makes no provision for deficiency. In the rhythmic music of the starry firmament he hears no voice for man, no voice for any creature who is *outside* the rhythmic music. The possibility of an apostate world, the possibility of a disturbance in the order of things, seems to have found no expression in the plan of the physical creation. Everything is order, regularity, law—everything except the soul of the beholder. But the soul of the beholder is conscious in its profoundest depths of disorder; irregularity, lawlessness. It wants from the world of Nature a recognition of itself as a fallen being; and it would accept such a recognition in any form. It would hail even a rebuke, an expression of displeasure, a demonstration of physical anger; for it knows by experience that in the expression of anger there is at least an indication of interest. If the cloud would gather at the moment of moral delinquency, if the thunderstorm would burst above the head of the offender, if wind and tempest and hurricane would shake the spot where the evil deed was done, the soul would feel that there was a certain adaptation between its fallen self and the unfallen universe; it would experience in the roughness of rebuke a greater sense of sympathy than in the cold apathy of silent indifference. But for such recognition the soul looks in vain to the world of Nature: "There is no speech and there is no language; its voice is not heard." It neither praises nor blames; it neither weeps nor laughs; it neither applauds nor condemns the acts of struggling

humanity ; and, amidst all the speech which day utters unto day and night to night, there is no evidence that one word is spoken of interest in a fallen spirit.

But when the Psalmist turns his eye inward, he finds in the revelation of Conscience that which in Nature he sought in vain : " The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." The perfection which he sees is the adaptation to a world of imperfection. He hears a voice speaking to his humility, to his nothingness, to his abasement. He is in communion with a revelation which recognizes him in his ruin, which speaks to him in his fallen majesty. True it is a rough voice uttering a stern command, speaking in an accent of strong rebuke ; but it is precisely this which endears it to his soul. It is not the placid tone of the indifferent universe, which seems to pass him by on the other side ; it is the stern speech of a wounded parent who, in the depth of offended love, cannot pass him by. We know that even while we write these words we are breathing into the passage before us something of a Christian atmosphere. We are conscious that we are reading the meditation of the Psalmist by a stronger light than he himself possessed—the light of the Son of Man. Yet if the Psalmist was not in a position to know the intense truth of his own words, he was under the influence of that Schoolmaster whose stern and rigorous training was the preparation for such knowledge. The law of Mount Sinai thundered in the ear of his conscience, " Thou shalt ; Thou shalt not ; This do and live ; The soul that sinneth it shall die ;" but the thunder was as dear to him as a still small voice. It was dear to him because it said to him in miniature what Christianity said in full—that the human soul is an object of interest

to the Life at the heart of the universe ; that the sin of the human soul is a wound to the heart of God ; that the redemption of a human soul is precious to the infinite Heart. Nature had no voice for imperfection ; the voice of Conscience was expressly designed for the fallen : “ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”

2. The second great silence of Nature is that which arises out of its boundlessness ; it has no testimony for “ the simple.” There is a certain class of minds to whom the thought of an infinite universe is itself a source of Divine communion ; but these are not *simple* minds ; they belong for the most part to the speculative or mystical type. To the unlettered peasant the religion of Nature centres very much in the belief that it exists for the sake of man ; that the sun has no other object than to light him by day, and the moon no other mission than to guide him by night. And when Science breaks the spell, and shews him the incalculable periods of the past, he falls back in dismay. Such knowledge is too great for him, he cannot understand it. He wanders in the contemplation of infinite space and worlds without end. He trembles at the insignificance of his child-life, at the darkness of his own ignorance ; and his cry goes forth into the limitless expanse, “ Is there no testimony for the simple ? ” Judaism had reached a consciousness of Nature which might be called religiously scientific—the consciousness of a force whose manifestation was everywhere, but whose presence was everywhere inscrutable ; and the space which served as a veil to the Infinite Presence contributed powerfully to suggest the question : “ What is man that thou art mindful of him ? ”

But when the Psalmist turns his eye inward, he finds again in Conscience the desideratum of the physical universe. He hears a voice expressly addressed to that child-life which the scientific knowledge of the universe repels, and he indicates his newly found treasure in the joyful utterance: "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." It is a definite voice, a voice addressed to the child in the man, and therefore capable of being understood by all men. It speaks to the conscience in the prohibitory form in which law speaks to the child: "Thou shalt; Thou shalt not." It gives no reason for its command beyond the fact that it has commanded; it is what Kant grandly calls "the categorical imperative;" it speaks as the ultimate authority from which there can be no appeal. It is this which makes its testimony so sure, and which renders it so powerful in "making wise the simple." It realizes the fine image of the poet Cowper when he says that the words "Believe and live" are legible only by the light which radiates from them. The child-life is not perplexed by an effort to find the reason of the thing; this thing is itself the reason; it shines by its own light. And here, again, Christianity has simply intensified the Judaic sense of the child-like character of Conscience. It demands as a preliminary requisite that the soul shall go back to its primitive instinct of obedience. It declares that the very essence of conversion is the regress towards spiritual childhood, that the very entrance to the kingdom of heaven is the door of childlike faith. It points us back to the earliest testimonies of our nature, to the authority of those primitive intuitions whose voice was ever clear, whose arguments were ever unanswerable;

and it maintains that the only road to a certain knowledge of God is to follow the guidance of those Divine precepts which constituted the first revelation to the conscience of the child. The latest voice of Christianity prolongs the early voice of Judaism : " The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."

3. The third silence of Nature which meets the ear of the Psalmist is the absence of the command, " You ought." If the physical universe stood alone, it would not constitute a *moral* revelation. Let a moral revelation once be given and it will find suggestions of itself in everything ; but if it be not already in the soul, physical nature will not put it there. Nature is a revelation of many things which are very nearly allied to morality : it is a revelation of the beautiful ; it is a revelation of the useful ; it is, in some sense, a revelation of the true. But while beauty, utility, and truth are all included in the conception of the moral consciousness, neither any of them singly nor all of them united would suffice to give that consciousness. A moral action is more than beautiful, more than useful, more than intellectually true ; it is *right*. The difference between right and wrong is fundamentally distinct from the difference between beauty and deformity, expediency and in expediency, intellectual truth and intellectual error. It cannot be described to any other sense than the moral consciousness, just as light cannot be described to any other sense than the eye. The physical universe cannot implant the moral idea in one who is not already in possession of that idea. Therefore it is that, according to the implication of the Psalmist, the physical universe cannot " rejoice the heart." If a heart is already joyful it can minister



to that joy; but it cannot put joy into a sad heart; it has no power to *make* glad. And it has no power for this reason, that it cannot say to the soul of its own sadness, "It is right;" it cannot tell a man in the season of his calamity that his calamity is a moral ordinance designed to make him spiritually strong. It can tell him that the calamities of life are forces of Nature; it may even promise him that they will be found to be in harmony with the symmetry of the universe: but it cannot say to him the one thing which alone can give him peace, that they are the will of God for his salvation.

But here, again, when the Psalmist turns his eye inwards, he finds the very object he desiderated in the physical universe—the sense of a moral Lawgiver who does all things wisely and well; and he expresses his discovery in the words, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." He finds in the voice of Conscience that personal comfort in calamity which he lacked in the voice of Nature—something which tells him to be still and know that the Judge of all the earth is right. It is not the mere testimony to a future symmetry of all things; it is not the mere prophecy of a completed harmony which shall vindicate the minor chords of the universe: such testimonies speak beautifully in favour of the universe, but they say little in favour of man. If my individual life is to be begun, continued, and ended in sorrow, it is small comfort to me that the completed harmony of creation will make use of my discord. But when in the hour of my calamity I hear a voice saying, "This is right for *you*; this is good for you as an individual man," I hear something which can *rejoice the heart*. I am no longer

forced to come out of my private sorrow to contemplate the eternal harmonies to which my groans are an unconscious and an unwilling contribution. I am allowed to look into my private sorrow itself and to see in it a Divine statute given to my soul, a species of sacramental bread administered to my spiritual being which is bitter in its appropriation, but certain in its promise of nourishment; and I am able with some appreciation to echo the Psalmist's words, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart."

4. The fourth silence which the Psalmist meets in Nature is implied in the words, "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." The metaphor is perhaps that of pure water, in whose uninterrupted medium he can see himself reflected. He suggests that the revealing medium of Nature is not uninterrupted. It does not convey the impression of an unmixed revelation of love. It has its storms as well as its calms, its clouds as well as its sunshine, its thunders and earthquakes and fires as well as its still small voices. To-day it is all gentle, serene, placid; to-morrow its brow may be furrowed with wrath and its accents hoarse with anger. The Psalmist cannot see in Nature a pure reflection of his human wants. It adapts itself to his wants chiefly in those points in which he is allied to the beast of the field; meets him rather as a creature than as a human creature; fails to supply his needs the moment his needs rise above the level of the irrational creation. But when he enters the secret places of his own soul, he looks upon a pure water of life in which he sees himself reflected at full length. It is true there are

storms here also ; nay, we are not sure that Schenkel is not right when he says that the very idea of Conscience implies a disturbance in the moral nature. But here lies the difference between the storms of Nature and the storms of Conscience: in the former my destiny is obscured, in the latter it is made manifest. In the moral tempest of the heart I see myself more clearly. I recognize in the very sense of struggle an adaptation to my deepest wants as a human being ; for I find in the sense of struggle the prophetic intimation that this is not my rest, and I hear the ever-repeated command which was heard by the ancient patriarch, "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred." The struggles of Conscience are the soul's premonitions of an unfulfilled destiny ; and the human portraiture bulks larger when reflected through the troubled waters: "The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes."

5. The fifth silence of Nature is implied by the Psalmist in the words, "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever." The metaphor here is probably that of the unblemished offering. Nothing which was unclean was allowed to have part in the life of the nation ; nothing which had a blemish in it was suffered to ascend in sacrifice to the Fountain of Life. The unblemished sacrifice, whatever else it symbolized, was a symbol of immortality ; it marked, as Keil says, the transition of the soul into a higher life ; and it implied that such a transition could only be made by a soul emancipated from its uncleanness. What, then, is the bearing of this metaphor on the Psalmist's meditation ? What does he mean by the implication that the revelation of God in physical Nature is a less

*clean* manifestation than the revelation of God in Conscience? He clearly means to suggest that the revelation of Nature does not convey to the mind the notion of immortality. It is not that the eye, as it looks upon the face of Nature, is impressed with its frailty and its perishableness; its silence on the subject of immortality would be equally profound although we knew, as a matter of fact, that Nature would endure for ever. For the silence lies here: even if the universe were everlasting, it would still be a contingent universe; it does not convey the impression of something which *must* be. We can imagine that it might have been created otherwise; we can conceive a time when it was not; we can think of a state of the human soul to whose consciousness it shall cease to appeal. It is always conceivable that a time might come when other systems might circle other suns, when the facts gathered by the astronomer might require to be rolled away like useless lumber, when the laws of gravitation and cohesion might be reversed by other laws. Such a transformation would be conceivable although Nature were known to be eternal; it would always be felt that its eternity lay in some force external to its own. What the spirit of man wants is something whose death is inconceivable, which not only *will* be, but *must* be, which cannot even in thought be associated with the idea of annihilation. It seeks what the Egyptians are supposed to have sought when they built those colossal pyramids—a sign of immortality, an emblem of eternity, an image of life that cannot die.

This is what the Egyptians failed to find in the pyramids; this is what the Psalmist failed to find in Nature. We do not say he expressed the want even to

his own mind in the precise form here indicated ; but he expresses the same want after the manner of his age and nation. Nature did not convey to him the idea of *cleanness*, did not suggest to him the thought of a necessary existence, of a life whose very essence was incorruptible, of a world which must live in the very nature of things ; he missed in it the sign of immortality. But when he turned his eye inward, he was once more arrested by the very thing he wanted. In the commandment of Conscience he was confronted by the sign of immortality, and found that which even in thought he could not imagine not to be. It is impossible not to feel the force of what the Psalmist felt. The great German philosopher, at the distance of three millenniums, has not been ashamed to reproduce the same experience. We can, as we have said, imagine a time when other systems shall circle other suns, and other physical forces shall obey other laws. But we can never imagine a time, go where this spirit may, when the forces of the moral universe shall cease to be what they are. We can never conceive a period when right shall be anything but right, or wrong anything but wrong. We can never figure to ourselves a world where "malice and hatred and envy and all uncharitableness" shall be other than loathsome and repulsive, where integrity, uprightness, purity of heart, benevolence, "the love of love, the scorn of scorn, and the hate of hate" shall be other than things of beauty and joys for ever. In this world of Conscience the Psalmist finds the sign of immortality ; for he meets with that whose negation is inconceivable. Heaven and earth *might* pass away ; their existence hung upon a thread of contingency ; there was no reason in the nature

of things why they should not cease to be : but this Divine word of Conscience, this word spoken in the inner chamber of the soul, could not pass away ; once spoken, it must reverberate through all time. It was inconceivable that it should sink again into silence, impossible that it should give place to a contrary utterance ; for it carried the very stamp of an absolute morality : “ The fear of the Lord was clean, enduring for ever.”

6. We come now to the last of those silences which the Psalmist perceived in Nature ; it is implied in the words, “ The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.” He means to suggest that in the contemplation of the physical universe he misses the idea of moral discrimination, of a judgment which rewards the soul according to its virtue or its sin. It is true there is ample evidence of judgment even here ; no law of Nature can be violated without exacting retribution, or served without repaying the service. But then the retribution and the payment take no account of moral character ; they are given simply for the special work omitted, and for the special work accomplished. The missionary may be the most pious of men, but if he goes to sea in a bad ship he will probably go to the bottom. The judgment is righteous so far as it goes ; Nature exacts respect to its laws of cohesion, and if a man disregards these, she punishes him. But what of the missionary zeal, what of the fervent piety, what of the enthusiasm for humanity, which has prompted the enterprise ? Has the judgment of Nature been in congruity with that ? We feel instinctively that it has not ; we feel that the judgment is only physically true, that the violated elements in

avenging their infringement have failed to appreciate the moral grandeur of the man's character. As long as we fix our eye exclusively on the physical universe, we are perpetually confronted by the same experience: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good." Nature is morally impartial. No special sun-beam follows the upright; no special cloud tracks the course of the ungodly. The lightning does not dart from the sky to paralyze the hand of the murderer, nor does the thunder roll displeasure on the deed of crime. Yet our moral nature craves recognition; and recognition in some form it must have. It expects in its early stages to find it in the physical universe, and tries to see in life's sunshine and cloud the respective evidences of Divine favour and Divine aversion. But experience corrects the illusion, and shews that physical sunshine may illuminate the wicked at the very moment when physical clouds are hovering round the righteous. Baffled by external nature, the heart of man turns inward to seek a new source of recognition; and it finds it, with the Psalmist, in the voice of Conscience. Here it is confronted by a direct and immediate judgment upon its right and wrong—a judgment which speaks to it only as a moral being, and refuses to deal with any other sphere than that of actions. It is a judgment invisible to every eye save that of him for whom it is intended, a sentence inaudible to every ear save that of him to whom it speaks. A man basking in the outward sunshine may be under its cloud; a man wrapt in the outward cloud may be under its illumination. But however silent and however invisible is its operation, its force to him who experiences it is terribly real. The judgment of Conscience upon goodness is

the gift bequeathed by the Divine Founder of Christianity : "Peace I leave with you ; my peace I give unto you." The judgment of Conscience upon sin is the great unsatisfied longing, the perpetual unrest. Christianity alone can interpret the full meaning of the Psalmist's words : he gave utterance to a truth the deepest significance of which he did not and could not see. His peace of conscience was after all only so much less unrest ; it never attained to the positive calm. But, read in the light of Christianity, his words grow luminous with truth. Christianity has brought into the world a joy which the world knows not, a peace which, like its illustrious Giver, shines in an uncomprehending darkness. Into this invisible joy, into this uncomprehended peace, the pure soul enters and finds repose. He passes noiselessly into the paradise of God, and receives in the midst of the world that crown of which the world is unconscious. He obtains from the silent testimony of a reconciled Conscience that recognition of moral purity which the many voices of Nature fail to yield ; and in that recognition he reaches the supply of the last remaining want in the physical revelation : "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

GEORGE MATHESON.

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NEW TESTAMENT WORDS DENOTING  
"CARE."

I SHALL not, I think, be far wrong in assuming that the majority of commentators on the Sixth Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel have sought to interpret the startling command, "Take no thought for the morrow," by confining the scope of *μεριμνάω* to anxious and