

The northern heavens are filled with the most brilliant star clusters and families. Starting with the Dipper, which we all easily recognize, we soon find the North Star: beyond Cassiopeia. Following the handle of the Dipper, we meet Arcturus, above it the Northern Crown, while around and through the space adjacent winds the Dragon, in whose midst the Comet flashes forth.

These Comets are peculiar in their shape, peculiar in their motions, and peculiar in their constitution. Usually we find a head, formed of a nucleus, surrounded with a coma, and a long sweeping tail, or two, pointing away from the sun. What the constitution is we do not know; it is likely nebulous matter acted upon by the sun in some peculiar manner. The motions are not as erratic as generally believed, as Comets are regular members of the solar system, sweeping around the sun in ellipses orbits more prolonged than those of the planets. As these moving bodies approach very near to the sun, their velocity increases; they flash past with enormous speed, curve around and return on the opposite side, hurrying away through space at a decreasing rate of speed, and approaching, it may be, sufficiently near to the earth to enable us to obtain a glance as they hurry by. It may be that, with long sweeping tails, they switch us as they go, but we may be unconscious of it, so light and tenuous is their composition.

Had we only power to arrest this messenger in its flight! what news we might evolve, what wonders disclose!

These truly are messengers from the other worlds; indeed, they are heavenly messengers, some say, sent to warn mankind of impending evils. But superstition is fast losing its charms; this blind, dark, meaningless faith is giving way to faith of a more noble, elevating and sublime nature. We no longer dread to pry into nature's secrets, but, fearlessly, are willing to scan the Comet, ask it questions, watch its movements, go with it on an imaginary flight through space, view other worlds, enlarge our ideas of creation, and return to this diminutive speck of dust more sensible of our own finiteness, more conscious of the infiniteness of the Creator. We return