

sophic stretch of imagination to assume that they may, by atmospheric influence, be screened from undue radiation. We find such infinitely wise and manifold proofs of God's goodness and wisdom within the more immediate range of our scrutiny, that we are bound to believe that the exercise of these attributes must extend in an equal degree to the more distant theatres of the Divine operations, to which our planet stands in a more minute relation than the smallest microscopic atom to the globe of which it forms a part. That is surely an unnaturally restricted construction which certain public teachers put on the wonderfully comprehensive intimations in the first chapter of Genesis, who interpret the statement as to the creation of the stars on the fourth day, as conveying the idea that they were solely "set in the firmament of the heaven to give light on the earth, and to be for signs and for seasons, and for days and for years"—or who, from other passages, regard them as merely intended to generate profound admiration of God's glory in the heavens, coolly deducing from these acknowledged purposes the probability of their being destitute of rational beings. Such constructions appear as unreasonable as if it were asserted, when Luke affirms "that there went out a decree of Cesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed," the world, the whole world, and nothing but the world, was meant;—or as if it were argued that the manifestly figurative language of John as to the inadequacy of "the world itself" to contain all the books that should be written, if all the things our Lord said and did were recorded—ought to be regarded in a strictly literal sense. It strikes us very forcibly that the limitation of the varied and inimitably sublime language of the Bible, as to the glory of the heavens, is bereft of its depth and fulness of natural meaning, when viewed as relating exclusively to exquisitely beautiful aggregations of inanimate matter, apart from any connection with teeming intelligences enjoying the exuberance of God's beneficence, and basking in the full sunshine of His favor. When we take the scriptures' description of, and allusions to the heavens and compare them, for example, with those of Milton and Shakespeare in their

most elevated moods, we become strongly impressed with the conviction that the unapproachable superiority of the former, in any aspect of the comparison, indicates more than a human insight on the part of the writers, as the result of direct inspiration, into the extent and grandeur, and very life of the universe. Motions so deep, and loftiness of expression and sentiment so inimitable by mere human genius, and yet in such exquisite harmony with the advances of science; so suited in fact to all time, could not surely have been inspired by the comparatively unmeaning but noble picture of the heavens as viewed of old, studied with a few thousand brilliant gems, which only one or two men such as Pythagoras ever imagined being worlds or suns of enormous dimensions. Milton speaks of our island universe—the milky way, as "a road whose dust is gold, and pavement stars;" and Shakespeare of "this most excellent canopy the air, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire," but such beautiful and graphic touches do not vibrate on the human soul like the mysterious and sublime undulations emanating from the harp of David. If in short the learned and devout astronomer of our day, to whose eye the telescope has revealed congeries upon congeries of universes, would find with all his knowledge appropriate vent to the emotions of his higher nature he must adopt the language of the bible, and that language is stripped of its true glory when regarded as simply applicable to dead matter, however beautiful in form or unlimited in extent. "O Lord! how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all. Praise ye the Lord—praise ye him all his angels, praise ye him all his hosts, praise ye him sun and moon, praise ye him all ye stars of light, praise him ye heaven of heavens, for he commanded and they were created: he hath also established them for ever and ever." Ps. 104-148.

The comets will form the subject of our next paper.

California.

More money has been raised, more Missionaries have been at work, and more churches have been organized during the past year than any previous one in California.