

New Church Tidings

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HOW THE HEAVENS ARE TELLING THE GLORY OF GOD BY THE WONDERS OF ASTRONOMY. *

Our solar system is a perfect mechanism, or a stupendous perpetual motion machine. The vast expanse, the entire sidereal heaven, is one large sphere, all the parts of which have their movements in harmonious order, according to laws ordained by God, and which are, therefore, fixed and immutable. And these laws, which are for the regulation, the preservation, and hence for the continued creation of the physical universe, can no more cease in their operation, than the Love and Wisdom, the Mercy and Omnipotence of the Infinite Creator can cease. It is, therefore, perfectly evident that the perpetual existence of the world, and of all worlds, is assured beyond all question. People need be in no dread of a conflagration of mundane things taking place. The earth will never, literally, be burned up; and spiritually it has been burned up long ago. The words of Holy Writ are literally true, which declare that "the earth shall abide for ever."—Ecc. i. 4. For the proceeding of the Divine Love and the Divine Wisdom can never cease. The correspondences of these, namely, heat and light, shall always be maintained. Consequently, the sun and the stars shall continue to be created to eternity, that is, to endless progressions of times. And, therefore, the world, yea, all worlds, shall for ever exist, subserving those beneficent uses for which they were brought into being, namely, to be so many seminaries of angelic heavens.

As men become enlightened, they will cease to believe the absurd notion that God is a fickle Being; that He may be a Creator to-day, and a destroyer to-morrow. He is the Eternal, the Infinite, the Immortal, who is in all respects Divine. A man who should make a beautiful and a useful machine, and after having perfected and completed the same, should get into a fury and destroy the work of his hands which his mind had planned, would not be regarded as rational. How, then, can people go on ascribing to God, conduct that would be insane in a man? Let God, therefore, no more be thought of as a destroyer of the universe, but as the Wise, Loving, Merciful Creator and Preserver of the same. "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning."—James i. 17.

One of the wonders of nature brought to our knowledge by the science of Astronomy, is, the velocity of the planets. Thus, we learn that the rotary motion of the earth is at the rate of more than 1,000 miles per hour. The computation of the earth's revolutionary motion,—that is, in its orbit around the sun,—is as follows; The planet moves 1,580,000 miles per day; 65,800 miles per hour; 1,097 miles per minute; and 18 miles per second. We see at a glance, that it is a thing altogether incomprehensible, how so large and so ponderous a globe as the earth, can fly through space at such a speed—nearly 1,100 miles in a minute. And what is marvellous, is, that we are not even aware that it moves at all, unless we are taught the fact. And we are only willing to believe the fact, after it has been demonstrated to be a fact.

Another of the wonders brought to our notice by Astronomy, is that of the enormous weight of the heavenly bodies. The weight of a comparatively small planet like the earth, is something beyond the power of the human mind to conceive. Its weight has indeed been computed, and is said to

be six sextillions of tons. They give us the figures; but we can have only the most remote general idea of what they mean. Then there are the other planets, Saturn, for example, with a volume nearly 800 times that of the earth; and that mighty orb, Jupiter, whose bulk is said to exceed that of all the other planets combined. Besides these there are in our system Mercury, Venus, Mars, Uranus and Neptune; the last named being 2,800 millions of miles distant from the sun, requiring 164 years of our time to make one revolution in his orbit.

Now, what shall we say with regard to the force required to move this stupendous mechanism? to keep it in motion for centuries, yea, for thousands and myriads of years! And then add to this the innumerable other similar systems, of which the great universe is composed. How will you solve this most profound mystery of all problems? Will you contend, with the materialist, that all there is of God is in nature; and that the force which moves the macrocosm is, *per se*, in nature? If so, your logic is unsound. Matter, in itself, is dead, and cannot produce or create anything. Nature does not produce life; but life flows in and produces the forms of nature. That is, the Creator, who alone is Life in Himself, creates a universe, to the end that He may create men—human beings—and of them form a heaven, and bless its inhabitants, by conferring upon them ineffable joys to all eternity.

The Lord, the Creator of the universe, is also the Conservator of the same. The sun is the parent of all the planets. By means of the sun, all the worlds of our system are kept in being. The sun is the mediate cause of all the motions and activities of all these worlds. And the sun is momentarily sustained by the influx, or in-flowing, of the Divine Omnipotence of God, the Creator. The fire or heat of the sun is caused by, and is a correspondence of, the Divine Love. And the light of the sun is caused by, and is a correspondence of, the Divine Wisdom. Thus the Infinite, who is Divine Love Itself, and also Divine Wisdom Itself, is the First Cause of all existence; and all effects which are exhibited in, and which constitute, the finite universe, are, primarily, produced from that First Cause.

J. E. BOWERS.

WHY THE LORD CAME INTO THE WORLD, AND BECAME MAN.

"There are successive things that follow one another from the Lord through the heavens to man, and thus to ultimates. Successive order is not continuous, but is discrete; that is, one thing is from another, as is the case with everything in the world. The more remote things in successive order contain in themselves the successive things in an order of their own; which order is called simultaneous. In this order, namely, the simultaneous, all the successive things are together, so formed that you may wish to have a conception of them: the first things are there created within; and so on even to the most remote circumference; and because successive things are together in the simultaneous, therefore in things simultaneous is all strength or all power at once. And because there was no longer this ultimate with men in the world, that is, in their goods and truths in which the Lord has His abode, therefore He Himself came into the world, that He might be the Last, and that so the First might act by last things, and reduce to order the things in the heavens and in the hells; that is, from firsts by lasts: for when He acted from firsts by lasts, He acted also by all things, and

* Extract from a lecture on this subject, delivered in the Church of the New Jerusalem, Toronto, on Sunday evening, January 13th, 1889.