

ORIONS MYSTERIES

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Orion's Fascination

ONE evening, astronomer Garrett P. Serviss and a friend were watching the matchless spectacle of Orion advancing to the meridian, when his companion suddenly turned to him and remarked: "Is there not some vast mystery concealed in that part of the heavens? To me, at least, it seems so; for I can never shake off the impression that the creative power which made the universe lavished its richest gifts upon the locality in and surrounding Orion.

Mr. Serviss was in agreement with the suggestion. Here are his words "The same thought has doubtless occurred to hundreds of others while gazing upon that star filled region. The heavens are not everywhere alike any more than is the face of the earth. One of the greatest charms that draws the stargazer to his nightly entertainment is the astonishing diversity of the views in various directions.

"One Earth we do not find diamonds or rubies in all countries. They are confined to certain localities, such as the diamond fields of South Africa, and the gravel of Burma. In a similar way there are particular localities in space where not only do specially brilliant stars throng together, but where those stars possess peculiarities of their own which serve to rank them by themselves.

The region about Orion is perhaps the most wonderful of these apparently favored places. Spectroscopic analysis, as well as the general appearance of the lucid stars in that part of the sky, warrants their being thus set apart under the specific denomination of 'the Orion stars.'

"It is the part of the visible universe to which one would most willingly pay a visit if human personality could quit this little Earth, just as we are drawn to that side of the garden where the magnificence of the flowers show that the soil is richer and its products more abundant and splendid than elsewhere. It is spectacle well worth looking at, and one that requires the use of no optical instrument whatever." Lucas A Reed, *Astronomy and The Bible*, pages 231, 232.

Next to the Big Dipper, Orion is one of the best known of the constellations. It contains the largest and the brightest stars of the heavens. It would do us all good to locate and become acquainted with this outstanding luster of heavenly diamonds. Included in the group are the red star Aldebaran, the Bull's Eye and Rigel, the left gleaming white star in the left foot of Orion. Between the giant orange colored Betelgeuse located near the shoulder of Orion, and Rigel, in his ankle we find three stars from his belt and then, hanging from his belt, there is the sword of the mighty hunter, consisting of three small stars.

It is this sword grouping in which we are especially interested for it is the center star of this group that holds, for our admiration and wonderment, the so-called "open space."

There are times when a person unlearned in the sciences may make it remark that holds within its embrace a startling truth that later leads to the discovery of some of the most profound scientific revelations. Back in 1848 a woman who was not an astronomer and who, according to her own words, did not remember that she had ever looked into a book on astronomy, used an expression regarding the nebula of Orion that has required a great deal of astronomical lore to explain.

This writer was dealing with the events to take place under the pouring out of the seventh vial of God's wrath, as given in Revelation 16: 17, 21. To quote: "The sun, moon, and stars will be moved out of their places. They will not pass away, but be shaken by the voice of God. Dark, heavy clouds came up and clashed against each other. The atmosphere parted and rolled back, then we could look up through the open space in Orion, whence came the voice of God." Ellen G White, *Early Writings*, p. 41

What is the open space in Orion? Many hours of research have been spent in an effort to solve this question, and various observers have contributed to the discussion. Edgar Lucien Larkin, director of Mount Lowe Observatory, Pasadena, California, expressed his opinion in an article written some years ago, from which we quote as follows: "The reader is invited to come along with me and help to sink a sounding line into the most appalling and amazing depths of interstellar space, and to aid in the exploration of a huge cave, depth, or recess in the nebula in the constellation Orion.

"Recent photographic transparencies made on glass plates at the Mount Wilson Observatory reveal the optical property of perspective. What has all along appeared to be a flat dark surface of nebulous matter, the beautiful shimmer and sheen in the great nebula in the sword of Orion, is shown, in the central regions of these negatives, to be the mouth of a cavern, a deep opening receding into the mighty distance beyond. These large negatives, taken by means of the great concave mirror, five feet in diameter-the largest in the world actually show depths below the shining surface of the nebula, the effect being that the eye looks into the opening and along the apparent sides to the rear.

"The wintry months are here. Orion rises early in the evening, displaying splendid and regal robes of night, garments of cloth of pearl and glittering diamonds. The nebula can be faintly seen by the unaided eye, and better in an opera glass. Go look in the silent hours, and summon all your mental powers imagining that the central region of the nebula is really the gigantic opening of a cavern leading into inconceivable depths."

Professor Larkin next proceeds to tell us something of the size of this yawning abyss. "The nebula of Orion is wider in angular diameter than the moon whose diameter is thirty-two minutes of arc. Cut off all outlying streamers, and treat mathematically a

diameter of thirty-two minutes, and the distance and dimensions of the nebula at once submerge human thought as by a flood from infinitude.

“The opening of this recess is at least fifteen minutes of arc in diameter, and with this value let the mathematical results obtain.”

Professor Larkin continues “If we look at any shining point in this nebula in a powerful telescope and measure its position with exceeding accuracy by means of a micrometer, today, and repeat the process six months later, a most astonishing discovery will be made. Namely, the two positions are exactly the same. But the earth, during the six months, has moved to a distance from where it was at first of 186,000,000 miles. See what this means. Take the same telescope to the nebula, turn and look this way. Then the diameter of the earth’s mighty orbit, a line 186,000,000 miles long, would appear to be so short that it could not be measured with the micrometer, an instrument able to measure the diameter of a fine hair.

“But the opening of the cave is at least fifteen minutes wide. How can we find its width in miles? This is impossible by measuring any shining portion of the nebula, so we must measure near-by stars, and then assume that the adjacent nebula is at their distance from the earth. Some of these neighboring stars are binaries, these being cases where two stars, giant suns really revolve around their common center of gravity. By high and abstruse mathematical processes, fair determinations of their distance from the earth can be made.

“The result of a number of measures of the Orion binaries is that their mean parallax is one two-hundredth of one second of arc. Parallax means, go to a star, look back this way, and measure the angular distance of the earth from our sun. The linear distance is 93,000,000 miles, and the angular measurement from these stars in Orion is one two-hundredth of one second. Then two hundred lines, each 93,000,000 miles long, end to end, would fill out one second of arc, or 18,600,000,000 miles. There are sixty seconds in one minute, or 1,116,000,000,000 miles, which, multiplied by fifteen (the opening in Orion being fifteen minutes of an arc wide), equals 16,740,000,000,000 miles. And this is the enormous width of the colossal opening which leads into the cavern.

“Then 90,000 little rings of the dimensions of the earth’s orbit, each with a sun in the center, could enter this abyss side by side and be engulfed. And all these dimensions are less than the reality, without doubt.

“The distance of the rear of the chasm from the opening cannot be measured; but it must be at least three times greater in depth than width, or fifty-one trillion miles. But this is also the distance of the giant sun Sirius from the earth. It and Alpha Centauri following would find ample room within this cosmic deep. Torn, twisted, and distorted masses of shining gaseous matter, adorned with millions of glittering points, starry suns, no doubt form the gigantic walls; and the whole forms a scene of indescribable magnificence.

“These negatives reveal the opening and interior of a cavern so stupendous that our entire solar system, including the orbit of Neptune, would be lost therein. In all ordinary telescopes, the nebula looks like a flat surface. I have watched it since the days of youth, in many telescopes of many powers, but never dreamed that the central region is the mouth of a colossal cave.”

Professor Larkin concluded by saying that human speech is impotent. Pen of writer, brush of artist, alike are lifeless and inert in any attempt even to describe this interior. Mammoth Cave glories in Kentucky, illumined by electric lights, are so beautiful that words cannot be used in their description. What, then, should be said of the mighty cavern in the depths of Orion’s nebula? Torn, twisted, and riven masses of shining gas, irregular pillars, columns, and stalactites in glittering splendor, and stalagmites rising from the mighty floor! The appearance is that of light shining and glowing behind Herculean walls of ivory or pearl, and these studded with millions of diamond points, shining stars.”

As we have followed Larkin’s description of the magnificence and glory of Orion, can it be possible that any rational being could imagine that such a display could possibly be brought into existence simply by unreasoning chance?

With General Mitchel we are led to say. “If there be anything which can lead the mind upward to the omnipotent Ruler of the universe, and give to it approximate knowledge of His incomprehensible attributes, it is to be found in the grandeur and beauty of His works.”

No wonder the prophet Isaiah admonishes us, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that brings out their host by number.” Isaiah 40:26

The Immensity of God's Starry Heavens

| Galaxy | Type | Diameter | Distance | Suns |
|------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Milky Way | Spiral | 120,000 | 0 | 150,000,000,000 |
| NGC 147 | Dwarf | 7,800 | 2,220,000 | 1,000,000,000 |
| NGC 185 | Dwarf | 9,500 | 2,220,000 | 1,000,000,000 |
| NGC 205 | Elliptical | 14,000 | 2,220,000 | 10,000,000,000 |
| Andromeda | Spiral | 170,000 | 2,220,000 | 300,000,000,000 |
| M 32 | Elliptical | 6,800 | 2,220,000 | 1,000,000,000 |
| SMC | Irregular | 16,000 | 196,000 | 2,000,000,000 |
| Sculptor | Elliptical | 7,500 | 280,000 | 3,000,000 |
| IC 1613 | Irregular | 13,000 | 2,220,000 | 300,000,000 |
| Triangulum | Spiral | 59,000 | 2,720,000 | 10,000,000,000 |
| Fornax | Elliptical | 20,000 | 612,000 | 20,000,000 |
| LMC | Irregular | 26,000 | 173,000 | 10,000,000,000 |
| Leo I | Elliptical | 5,800 | 750,000 | 3,000,000 |
| Leo II | Elliptical | 4,200 | 750,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Ursa Major | Elliptical | 7,800 | 222,000 | 100,000 |
| Draco | Elliptical | 3,300 | 250,000 | 100,000 |
| NGC 6822 | Irregular | 5,500 | 2,150,000 | 400,000,000 |

[Diameter = Light Years, Distance from Earth = Light Years]

The Number of Stars in the Universe. Hipparchus, the originator of Greek astronomy, catalogued a total of 1,081 stars in the years 161 to 126 BC. This count of the stars was believed to be accurate three hundred years later, when Ptolemy put forth his famous planetary theory. Not until Galileo's invention of the celestial telescope in the seventeenth century did anyone suspect how far short of the truth was Hipparchus' count. Countless millions were found scattered through out space, their number absolutely beyond calculation. The Milky Way was seen to be a carpet of stars flung across the heavens.

Recent textbooks on astronomy are cautious about stating the number of stars. How many stars are there? Astronomers tell us that there are an average of 100 thousand billion stars in a galaxy. There are about ten billion galaxies within range of the great 200-inch Hale telescope. And, if Einstein was correct, the total space is at least 100,000 times greater than observable space.

This means that there must be at least 100 septillion (10 to the power of 26) stars in all space. Numbers like this are beyond comprehension. But Sir James Jeans helps us out a little. He says that there are about as many stars as there are grains of sand on all the beaches of the whole world. Such estimates stagger the imagination. Jeremiah was right when he wrote, "The host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured" (Jeremiah 33:22)

Some Large Clusters Of Galaxies

| Number | Galaxy Cluster | Diameter | Volume | Distance |
|--------|-------------------|----------|--------|----------|
| 1 | CANES VENATICII | 10 | 3,919 | 16 |
| 2 | CANES VENATICI II | 5 | 672 | 24 |
| 3 | CETUS I | 7 | 1,476 | 24 |
| 4 | CETUS II | 8 | 1,844 | 38 |
| 5 | COMA I | 6 | 894 | 26 |
| 6 | ERIDANUS | 13 | 9,289 | 27 |
| 7 | FORNAX I | 7 | 1,161 | 39 |
| 8 | GRUS | 7 | 1,161 | 35 |
| 9 | MESSIER 101 | 5 | 672 | 9 |
| 10 | MESSIER 66 | 3 | 84 | 20 |
| 11 | MESSIER 81 | 6 | 894 | 5 |
| 12 | MESSIER 96 | 5 | 672 | 21 |
| 13 | CENTAURUS | 7 | 1,476 | 8 |
| 14 | PAVO-INDUS | 12 | 8,176 | 39 |
| 15 | SCULPTOR | 3 | 145 | 3 |
| 16 | URSA MAJOR N | 7 | 1,161 | 43 |
| 17 | URSA MAJORS | 8 | 1,844 | 41 |
| 18 | URSA MAJOR X | 5 | 672 | 38 |
| 19 | URSA MAJOR Y | 7 | 1,476 | 36 |
| 20 | URSA MAJOR Z | 6 | 894 | 30 |
| 21 | VIRGO E | 8 | 2,268 | 33 |
| 22 | VIRGO III | 12 | 7,155 | 29 |
| 23 | VIRGO S | 2 | 18 | 33 |
| 24 | VIRGO V | 7 | 1,476 | 43 |
| 25 | VIRGO W | 2 | 43 | 50 |
| 26 | VIRGO X | 9 | 3,301 | 39 |
| 27 | VIRGO Y | 9 | 3,301 | 34 |
| 28 | VIRGO Z | 5 | 490 | 43 |

[Diameter and Distance = Millions of Light Years] [Volume = Billions of Cubic Light years]

Pleiades and Orion. The book of Job is probably the oldest book, in the Bible, dating from the time of Abraham, about nineteen hundred years before Christ. Let us compare one of the statements of this ancient Bible book with the evidence of modern astronomy.

Job 38:31 Speaks of stars and constellations: “Can you bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?” One recent writer says. “We speak of stars as ‘fixed,’ because the great star patterns, or constellations appear to have remained unchanged ever since the earliest recorded observations of man. We know however, that the constellations are changing even though so slowly that it will be many generations before any change will be noticeable except by the precise measurements of the astronomer. For example, the two stars at the opposite ends of the Great Dipper are moving in one direction while all the other stars of the Dipper are moving together in pretty much the opposite direction. In the course of time, there no longer will be a Great Dipper. It ‘happens’ that the Pleiades and Orion are true star groups, that is, all the stars of each group are moving together through space. They are not moving in various directions, like the stars of the Great Dipper. God knew this, of course; for it was He who had ‘bound’ the Pleiades and Orion together and it is His mighty power that keeps them so.”

In the days when the Bible was written, men thought this Earth was the only world in all God’s universe. They said it was located in the center of the universe, and that the Moon and Sun circled around it daily. They believed that the stars were merely holes in a vast dome stretching over their heads, holes through which light shone from some strange region. They imagined there was some mysterious place of glory and light far beyond the solid dome that sealed in this world of ours Test these concepts in the light of what we know today!

Almost two thousand years ago Paul wrote: “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Hebrews 11:3. Paul declared for a plurality of worlds. In the first two verses of Hebrews he said: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. By whom also he made the worlds.” Another translation says, “by whom also he made the universe of worlds.” And every modern astronomer has come to realize that the universe is full of worlds. Although our Milky Way system has 100 billion suns, undoubtedly it has far more billions of

worlds. If our sun can be taken as an average with a family of nine worlds we can multiply that 100 billion by nine to get an approximation of how many worlds there are in our Milky Way system alone.

The Bible was written in a time when men believed that this world was stationary and probably upheld by some Atlas, a sacred bull or an elephant. That it was upheld and stationary they were sure. But the Bible, three thousand years ago, declared the truth as we know it today. In Job 26:7 we read, "He stretches out the north over the empty place, and hangs the earth upon nothing." In other words, upon nothing. It frightened men when first they realized that our world is actually hanging out in space, upheld by no visible support, turning on its axis, and rushing through space at the rate of eighteen and a half miles a second. The contemplation of this phenomenon often caused Sir Isaac Newton, when a lad, to awaken from his dreams with a frightened outcry and when his parents would rush to his bedside to console him, he would explain that he had just dreamed that our world crashed into something. It was all real and vivid to him.

But we know today that all heavenly bodies are upheld without any visible support. We can watch Jupiter, for instance, as it turns on its axis and circles in its orbit. We now accept without question that the same is true of our world. But as late as the days of Christopher Columbus, men still argued that the world was flat and stationary. He had a difficult time convincing Ferdinand and Isabella that he could go east by sailing west. And two centuries after that, in 1632, Galileo was hated before the authorities of his day and compelled to recant his teaching that the world is round, and that it is upheld by no visible support as it rushes through space. To save his body from the flames, he had to deny the scientific truths that were so evident to him. As he arose from signing his recantation however, he was heard whispering to a friend "But the earth is round and it does turn just the same."

The Bible declared that truth twenty five hundred years ago for in Isaiah 40:22 we read "It is He that sits upon the circle of the Earth." Moffatt's translation reads "He sits over the round Earth." Yes. God stated that the world is round." Men of science couldn't believe it then. Does this not prove to you that the Bible is a scientific book that it is a guide on astronomy, far in advance of the days in which it was written.

Further proof of that assertion is found in Job 38:31-33: "Can you bind the sweet influences [cluster, A.S.V.] of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Can you bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? Or can you guide Arcturus with his sons? Know you the ordinances of heaven? Can you set the dominion thereof in the Earth?" These statements from Holy Writ reveal facts known today, but unknown to men three thousand years ago. Only God knew these truths in the days of Job. He who made the starry heavens asked Job whether he could do what God was doing every day, bind the "sweet cluster" of Pleiades, thus holding them together as a unit or loose the bands of Orion." Or "guide Arcturus." the runaway

The significance of these astronomical statements made twenty-five hundred years ago is tremendous in the light of recent discoveries. Let us consider first the reference to the runaway Arcturus Here is a giant sun rushing through our densely populated Milky Way system at the speed of 257 miles a second, or almost 1,006,000 miles an hour.

Garrett P. Serviss in his book *Curiosities of the Sky* wrote: "Arcturus, one of the greatest suns in the universe is a runaway whose speed of flight is 257 miles per second. Arcturus, we have every reason to believe, possesses thousands of times the mass of our Sun." Think of it! Our sun is traveling only 12.5 miles a second, but Arcturus is traveling 157 miles a second. In speaking of its enormous mass and velocity. Serviss concludes. "Think then of the prodigious momentum this motion implies. Again he says of Arcturus "It could be turned into a new course by a close approach to a great Sun, but it could only be stopped by collision head on with a body with enormous mass. Barring accidents, it must as far as we can see keep on until it has traversed our galaxy when may escape and pass on into another island universe of which we have spoken. A projectile from a great 16 inch gun travels at 25 miles a minute but Arcturus travels at 15,420 miles per minute.

Charles Burckhalter, of the Chabot Observatory, added an interesting note regarding this great sun: "This high velocity places Arcturus in that very small class of stars that apparently are a law unto themselves. He is an outsider, a visitor, a stranger within the gates; to speak plainly, Arcturus is a runaway. Newton gives the velocity of a star under control as not more than 25 miles a second, and Arcturus is going 257 miles a second. Therefore, the combined attraction of all the stars we know cannot stop him or even turn him in his path."

When Mr. Burckhalter had his attention called to this text in the Book of Job, he studied it in the light of modern discovery and made a statement that has attracted worldwide attention. Said he, "The study of the Book of Job and its comparison with the latest scientific discoveries, has brought me to the matured conviction that the Bible is an inspired book and was written by the One who made the stars."

Let me invite you to look at Arcturus tonight. It is readily located. The two stars in the end of the handle of the Big Dipper point almost directly at Arcturus. It is the only star of first magnitude in that portion of the sky and shines with a dull red glow The distance from Arcturus to the end of the handle is about the same as from that point to Polaris, the North Star.

It is interesting to note the publicity that this star of the Scriptures received in 1933. In that Year the lights at Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition were turned on by a ray of light that left Arcturus when the gates of Chicago's previous world's fair were being locked. A ray of light leaving that day in 1893 traveled for forty years, arriving to enter the barrel of the great forty-inch telescope at Yerkes Observatory, then pass through the photoelectric cells, and set in motion energy that pulled the switch and floodlighted the 1933 world's fair. Millions listened as the radio flashed this amazing feat to the world-a fitting tribute to this great stellar wonder.

The Pleiades

Let us consider another amazing astronomical reference contained in the same text: “Can you bind the sweet influences [cluster] of the Pleiades. A Photographs now reveal that 250 blazing stars in this group are all traveling together in one common direction.

Concerning this cluster, Isabel Lewis of the United States Naval Observatory tells its, “Astronomers have identified 250 stars as actual members of this group, all sharing in a common motion and drifting through space in the same direction.” Elsewhere the writer speaks of them as “journeying onward together through the immensity of space.”

From Lick Observatory came this statement some few years ago, from Dr Robert J. Trumpler “Over 250 individual measures of the Pleiades stars are now available, and their study led to the important discovery that the whole cluster is moving in a southeasterly direction. The Pleiades stars may thus be compared to a swarm of birds flying together to a distant goal. This leaves no doubt that the Pleiades are not a temporary or accidental agglomeration of stars, but a system in which the stars are bound together by a close kinship.” Think of it! “Over 250 individual measures of the Pleiades stars are now available.” And Dr Trumpler might have added that it was at a cost of millions of dollars, if the cost of equipment and the time of astronomers in computing these distances and speeds were considered. He says that all this led to an important discovery. Without any reference whatsoever to the Book of Job he announced to the world that these discoveries prove that the stars in the Pleiades are all bound together and are flying together like a flock of birds as they journey to their distant goal. That is exactly what God said. “Can you bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?” In other words, Can you keep them bound together so that they remain as it family of suns?

Look up at the Pleiades tonight, to the seven visible stars of the group, and realize that they are preaching to you that the God of Job was and is the Creator of the universe. They shine there as definite proof that the Bible is an inspired book.

Orion

We come now to the Constellation of Orion, with the colossal cave. The irregular edges of the opening of the cavern are difficult to measure, but see these minimum quantities. Call the opening fifteen minutes of an arc wide and let the distance from the earth be the same as that of the near-by stars; then the diameter of this yawning abyss would be sixteen trillion, seven hundred fifty billion miles.” The latest discoveries, based on the most dependable methods of calculation, reveal that this open space is nineteen trillion miles across the face of it and fifty-one trillion miles in depth.

Again Dr. Larkin says of it: “Human speech is impotent, pen of writer, brush of artist, alike are lifeless and inert in any attempt even to describe this interior. Mammoth Cave glories in Kentucky, illumined by electric lights, are so beautiful that words cannot be used in their description. What, then, should he said of the mighty cavern in the depths of Orion’s nebula? Torn, twisted, and riven masses of shining gas, irregular pillars, columns and stalactites in glittering splendor, and stalagmites rising from the mighty floor! The appearance is that of light shining and glowing behind Herculean walls of ivory or pearl, and there studded with millions of diamond points-shining stars.”

Garrett P. Serviss said: “Is there not some vast mystery concealed in that part of the heavens? To me at least it seems so; for I can never shake off the impression that the creative power which made the universe, lavished its richest gift upon the locality in and surrounding Orion.” Is there some vast mystery concealed in that part of the heavens? Yes, there is some vast mystery.

Many believe that if we could look with instruments powerful enough, back into this abyss, this cavern in the skies, we would see the gates of gold, the city of the eternal King.

Tennyson made reference to this very same open space in Orion. He wrote: “A single mystery star, which is the second in a line of stars that seem a sword beneath a belt of three. I never gazed upon it but I dreamt of some vast charm concluded in that star to make fame nothing.”

And if through this mystery star there lies the city of the living God then that is the loadstone that pulled the minds of Garrett P Serviss and of Tennyson and of scores of others in that direction and caused them to feel there was some vast charm, some mystery not found in any other part of the universe.

Charles H Spurgeon once said. “In the heavens God flaps out His starry flag to show that the King is at home and hangs out His proof that atheists may see how He despises their denunciation of Him. He who looks up into the firmament and then writes himself an atheist brands himself as an idiot or a liar.

Camille Flammarion, a noted French astronomer, speaks of Orion in these interesting words:-“The constellation of Orion is not only the richest in bright stars, but it conceals also treasures for the initiated which no other can present. We might also call it the California of the heavens. The first time that Huygens, its discoverer, admired this cosmic beauty, in 1656, he was sufficiently astonished to say that it seemed an “opening in the sky” which threw light on a more brilliant region. Since that period this nebula has been studied with a kind of predilection; it has been minutely examined, and the different regions of its cluster have been studied and described in all their details. While in early days it was asked with great uncertainty if this was only a phosphorescent cloud, a vaporous mass, astronomers, afterwards arrived at the conviction that it was formed of an immense number of heaped up suns, and then again that it was a true cosmic cloud. At the center is seen a brighter part of singular form. It occupies a large space in the sky, its apparent dimensions being equal to that of the lunar disc. But the strangest phenomena which are attached to this nebula are the changes which are observed in it. “The general impression that I have received from these observations,” said the director of the Russian Observatory,

not long ago, "Is that the central part of the nebula is in a state of continual agitation, like the surface of the sea. Orion possesses many other riches. Between ourselves, I read an astrological treatise of the Middle Ages; its title was "Flamma Orions." Since that time this name is dear to me: I love it!" - "The Wonders of the Heavens," pages 76, 77.

Proctor, another eminent astronomer, bears the following testimony concerning the character of this remarkable celestial object: "Huygens does not seem to have noticed that the space between the three stars he describes as close together, is perfectly free from nebulous light insomuch that if the nebula itself is rightly compared to a gap in the darker heavens, this spot resembles a gap within the nebula. Here is an object so brilliant as to be visible to the naked eye, and which is found on examination to cover a large region of the heavens. And yet the most powerful telescope has failed to show the slightest symptom of resolution. In 1845 Lord Ross interrogated the great nebula with his three-foot mirror. Marvelous was the complexity and splendor of the object revealed to him, but not the trace of a star could be seen. Whatever the Orion nebula may be, it is most certainly not a congeries of suns resembling our own." "Light Science for Leisure Hours," pages 83 - 93.

Still another interesting statement concerning this most wonderful of celestial pictures is made by Smith and Chambers. It reads as follows: "Its brilliancy is not equal throughout, but the glare of the brighter parts gives intensity to the darkness which they bound, and excites a sensation of looking through it into luminous regions of illimitable space, a sensation not entirely owing to any optical illusion of contrast. This is a most splendid object under any telescope, but the greater the optical power applied the more inexplicable does it become. "I know not," says Sir John Herschel, "how to describe it better than by comparing it to a curdling liquid, or a surface strewn over with flocks of wool. To attempt even at a guess, at what this light may be would be presumptuous." "A Cycle of Celestial Objects." page 150.

Here, then, we reach the light that is not of earth, nor yet of the star worlds and suns that roll in the second heavens that surround our earth. It comes from the gates ajar, from the glory round the throne.

Another extract will here be of interest to our readers. Sir Robert S. Ball writes as follows: "The most glorious constellation of stars in the firmament is undoubtedly that of Orion. After the observer's eye for a minute or so has become familiarized with the dark aspect of the heavens, there will steal across his field of view a sort of ghost like luminosity that is in marked contrast to the darkness that is in the rest of the field. As the seconds move on, this object will disclose itself until the full splendor of the great nebula comes into view; then the entire field will be filled with light, and then it will gradually advance and gradually pass away again to emphasize the contrast between the brilliance of the nebula and the darkness of the sky. And now, as to the composition of this mysterious object. Here, indeed, the terrestrial analogies seem to render us but little assistance. We cannot regard the Great nebula in Orion as originating in anything resembling flame. The light with which it glows is no reflected sunlight. The nebula is, indeed indebted to no foreign source for that weird - I had almost said ghost-like radiance which it gives forth. The light comes from the nebula itself." "In Starry Realms." Page 127.

Another writer thus bears testimony concerning this star-cluster: "Orion, one of the ancient constellations of the Southern Hemisphere, and the most beautiful in the heavens. The name of this constellation is often mentioned by the sacred writers, as well as by most of the Greek and Latin poets and many of their historians. No constellation was more dreaded by ancient mariners than this, as they supposed that the storms which generally took place at the rising of Orion were caused by its influence. According to Greek mythology, Orion was a celebrated hunter, son of Jupiter and Euryale." "Compendium of Astronomy," page 328.

"Orion possesses many other riches. The star of the left foot, Rigel, is one of the most beautiful double stars. This double star is composed of a white and a blue sun. Two other binary systems are met with in the two stars at the extremities of the belt. The first to the right is composed of a white and a purple sun; the second, of a yellow and a blue sun. Thus here are three systems of the most dissimilar worlds united in the same constellation. In each of these systems are two suns instead of one; not only two suns like ours, but two differently colored suns. In the planets which belong to the first, a white and a blue body dispute the empire of the day with each other. In the planets which belong to the second, it is a purple sun which diversifies the white light of its compeer. In that of the third the number of colors is essentially different from ours as there is no white light, and presents an unknown series of shades, the result of the combinations of gold and sapphire. In the nebula of which I have just spoken, an extraordinary star is met with. This star, divided by the telescope, presents to our admiration six suns collected in one point of the heavens." "Wonders of the Heavens," pages 76, 77.

Thomas Dick, L.L.D., thus speaks of its position and its beauty: "Orion is the most startling and splendid of all the constellations; and as the equator runs through the middle of it, it is visible from all habitable parts of the globe." "Celestial Scenery," P. 30.

In referring to the brightness connected with the nebula in Orion the same author writes: "Were we placed as near to it as one-half the distance of the nearest star, great as that distance is, from such a point it would exhibit an effulgence approximately to that of the sun; and to beings at much nearer distances it would fill a large portion of the sky, and appear with a splendor inexpressible. Like many other objects in the distant spaces of creation, it excites in the mind a longing desire to behold the splendid and mysterious scenes of the universe a little more unfolded." "The Siderial Heavens," page 187.

Speaking of the extent of that nebula, Sir P.S. Ball, FRS, writes: "I shall not attempt to express in miles the dimensions of an object so vast. Let us employ the dimensions of our solar system for the purpose of comparison. Let us, then, take the area of the orbit described by Neptune as a unit with which to measure the size of the great nebula in Orion, We shall certainly be well within the imposing truth if we say that a million circles as if as that described by Neptune would not suffice to cover the area represented. This will give some idea of the dimensions of the great nebula in Orion." "The Earth's Beginning" page 42. Professor Hyde, of the University of Southern California, after studying the Orion Nebula said: "It seemed that I was looking through the door to infinity and that the celestial city was not far away. The Orion Nebula is indescribably beautiful, an explosion of glory in the blackness of space."

“Once you have found the great nebula in Orion you have seen without doubt, one of the most superbly beautiful and splendid objects the heavens have to show.” Draper and Lockwood.

Job 38:31 “Can you loose the bands of Orion?” “The bands of Orion were unknown until the era of the telescope. Then was revealed a giant cave of stars 20,000 million miles wide in the heart of the Nebula of Orion. The mysterious Nebula of Orion answers all the requirements of a celestial gateway.

Job 36:32, “With clouds He covers the light.”

1 Timothy 6:14,15, “The King of kings dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.” This unique light is covered by a cloud.

“Nebula” is the Latin word for cloud.

Job 26:7, “He stretches out the North over the empty place,” or opening in the sky. The Nebula of Orion is a vast cavern, or “empty place,” surrounded with beautiful different colored stars. The “North” is linked with the Throne of God.

Psalms 48:2, “The sides of the North, the City of the Great King.”

Isaiah 14:14, “I will sit upon the sides of the North.” Lucifer sought this but failed. The Saints will succeed. “The attractions of Orion Thou does open.”

Daniel 7:27, As “joint heirs with Christ” the saints of the Most High receive the Kingdom. This goes only to the saints, not to the ungodly.

After the night, eternal day. After persecution, triumph - and what a day! What a triumph! What a journey home through Orion’s glory gateway.

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