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F R O M

The Court of *Heaven*

T O T H E

N O R T H E R N N A T I O N S,

B Y T H E

Streaming Lights that have appeared
of late Years in the Air;

O R

Mathematical Reasons,

S H E W I N G,

That the said LIGHTS, &c. are no less than
S U P E R N A T U R A L.

Presented to the ROYAL SOCIETY and Others.

Luke xxi. 11. *And great Earthquakes shall be in divers
Places, and Famines, and Pestilences, and fearful Sights,
and GREAT SIGNS shall there be from Heaven.*

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T O T H E

Royal Society in London.

THERE are great Secrets in NATURE that the *Reason* of Man is capable of discerning ; and those who have employ'd themselves in *Natural Science*, can admire at some Things extraordinary, which pass the Notice of the Ignorant.

YOU have made such Improvements this way, that I conceive there are few *Natural Mysteries* that have come under Your Notice, requiring Your Penetration, but what have been so pryed into by Your well improv'd Judgments, that the Doubts attending them have been quite dissolv'd. Therefore, as the *Streaming Lights*, and *Motions*, &c. in the Air, have appeared, at Times, upwards

wards of Twenty Years, I cannot doubt but Some of You have made divers Observations and Remarks thereon.

I present the following REASONS more particularly to You, because I think You the properest Judges of my Arguments; and I take the greater Freedom to do it, being assured, that if my *Reasons* be not worth Your Notice, yet the Subject deserves Your Consideration.

Now, that the ALMIGHTY may increase and sanctify Your Knowledge, is the Prayer of

Your Christian Friend,

J. W.

THE PREFACE

AS Infidelity abounds, and some Men are so far from believing Revelation, and the Miracles GOD hath shewed in former Ages, that they question whether the visible World was purposely formed by the ALMIGHTY; or, at least, whether His particular Providence does attend the Inhabitants of the Earth, and so live in Defiance of His revealed Laws: And as in these Days it hath pleased GOD to shew extraordinary Tokens in the Firmament, and repeated them several Times, to the Astonishment of Thousands, which might be sufficient to awake these filthy Dreamers, were they not almost in a dead Sleep; I think it my place, for want of its being done by a better Hand, to publish such Arguments as to me appear demonstrable, that these Signs in our Hemisphere are beyond the ordinary Power of Nature.

And because these Unbelievers are so unhappy as to think, they have stronger Understandings, and better Ways of Thinking, than those that fear GOD and keep His Commandments, I think this Subject the fittest of any I know to treat of, as an outward Means, to convince them of their Infidelity; seeing they don't believe the Scriptures, but require Arguments evident to themselves by a plain Demonstration.

But

But now, if some religious People think I take too much pains in observing and reasoning about these Signs, because the LORD says to the House of Israel, Jer. x. 21. Be not dismayed, like the Heathen, at the Signs of Heaven: I answer, 'Tis not the Remarkings of wonderful Signs that is here forbidden, but to be dismayed at them, as the Heathen were, who worshipped false gods: For the Signs of a superior Power declared the Insufficiency of the gods in whom they trusted, and therefore must needs terrify or dismay them: Wherefore the Israelites were forbidden to learn their Ways, that they might have no Cause to be dismayed at the Manifestations of a DIVINE POWER. But it is highly rational to think, that all such Things are sent to be seen, observed, and considered, otherwise our LORD JESUS CHRIST would hardly have foretold us that they should come, as he has done in Luke xxi.

I don't meddle with the particular Interpretation of these Signs, only esteem them a Warning to these Parts of the World, to excite all to fear GOD, and give Glory to His Name, and consider that He holds the Balance of Power for all Nations.

If any one should object, That if these Signs were for a Warning to the World, GOD would cause us to know their Signification.

I answer, It ever was the Way of GOD to appear but in part, especially by way of Warning; but if we can discover enough to know He appears, then 'tis our Duty to seek to Him for the Meaning. Thus Pharoah sought for the Interpretation of his Dreams, which made extraordinary Impression on his Mind; and they were made manifest to be from GOD. Nebuchanezar, being

being touched by the Finger of GOD in a Dream, could not rest without seeking for the Meaning, though it was so imperfect that he could not tell what the Dream was; yet by earnest Application in the Use of Means, GOD was pleased to follow the first Impression, not only with an Interpretation, but also an undoubted Evidence that it was right, seeing the Dream it self, that he had forgotten, was repeated by the Interpreter. And Belshazer, surpris'd by the Fingers of a Man's Hand writing upon the Wall, though he could not read what it was, nor his wise Men about him; yet believing it certainly to have a Signification, used all Means possible to come to the Knowledge of it, which he obtained. And what can we learn by these Records of Holy Scripture, but that GOD is to be sought to for a perfect Discovery of what He may be pleased to shew us but in part? 'Tis enough then that we know GOD calls, or that He discovers His Hand in a supernatural Way, to make us be still, and know that He is GOD, and will be sought to for the Meaning of His Tokens.

For my part, I shall be sufficiently satisfied for my Labour, if I only make it plainly appear, that the Finger of GOD is, in an extraordinary Manner, in these Ætherial Signs: That being my only Aim at this Time, to the Ends above-mentioned.

THE PREFACE

TO THE READER

OF THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON

Printed by J. Streater, at the Sign of the Gun, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, near the North Gate

1679

Mathematical Reasons,

S H E W I N G

That the *Streaming Lights*, &c.

Are S U P E R N A T U R A L.

The I N T R O D U C T I O N.

I Conceive it quite needless here, to draw any Figure or Scheme of these Lights and Streams, which, considering their Motion and Colours, would be absurd to attempt: For all People that did not shut their Eyes when they appear'd, must be better sensible of the Manner of them, than what another Person can possibly describe by any Means. And if we have not had continued Views thereof, several Times, for a long while at a Time, we might have had; and might have made many Observations about them: And, I conclude, People in general have had these Opportunities, one Time or other, seeing they have frequently appeared Two or Three and Twenty Years: Therefore I shall say no more of them than my *Reasons* produce, which are as follows.

I. Though these Streams and Motions have generally appeared when the *Moon* was near the Change, and after the Close of the Twilight; yet the Light attending their Appearance has been little in-

ferior to that of the *Moon*, when the Lustre of her Face is veil'd; which is a sufficient Reason to conclude them quite extraordinary.

But if any Body object, *That though it seems extraordinary, yet it may have a Second Cause, by way of Reflection from the Sun.*

I answer: That such a Reflection must be made upon *something*: But *something* over-spreading the Hemisphere, at such a Distance from the Earth, as to receive the Light of the Sun, must be as marvellous to the Judicious, as a supernatural Light otherways.

Or if it is objected, *That the Light may proceed from a misty Substance in the Air, that has something of the Quality of moist rotten Wood, and some other Things that shine in the Dark.*

Admitting such a Thing as a Second Cause producing Light, to attract our Eyes to the Firmament, that we might look upon the other remarkable Circumstances or Attendants; it would yet be an equal Wonder. If there were nothing but Light, this Objection might bear some weight; but as there are more remarkable Matters to behold, let the Light come by what means soever at such a Time, it is remarkable, that it seems to appear for that End. Therefore, till some rational Contradiction be plainly produced, which I believe will never be, I shall take Leave to assert, That we ought to esteem it an extraordinary Work of Him, who in the Beginning said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light.*

II. The Manner of their *Moving* is a farther Declaration of their being supernatural; for whether we suppose them a reflected Light, or a Matter shining of it self, as above-mentioned, their Motion however must be an additional Wonder.

We can make nothing of their Motion by Reflection, without supposing it a second-hand Reflection by some Instrument, that borrows the Light from the Sun, and so cast it upon our (extraordinarily supposed) Matter above, by waving or shaking, as the Water, or a Looking-glass, being moved, cause a moving Reflection of Light. But 'tis manifest, that the Seas under our Hemisphere cannot be instrumental in it, because the Sun cannot then shine upon them: Besides, the Motion treated of is too methodical and formal to be occasioned by Water, without some supernatural Motion attending that Water; and if any other Instrument be supposed the Means, that must also be as unaccountable: So then to suppose a Supernatural means to prove it Natural, is more unreasonable than to esteem it miraculous at once.

Nor can we better account for their Motion, if they be of themselves some shining Substance, for they must have an incredible Swiftnefs, exceeding that of a Cannon-ball, or any other natural Thing that we can imagine; seeing notwithstanding their vast Distance, they have sometimes, in some Places, advanced from near the *Horizon* to the *Zenith* in a few Moments: But were the Motion otherwise ever so reasonable, yet the Cause of it must be quite extraordinary.

Therefore 'tis more rational to allow, that these Things proceed from an OMNIPOTENT Hand, on a direct purpose, than to suppose them from a natural Cause at all.

III. Again, the various Colours attending these Phœnomena is a third Argument of their being Supernatural; for were the Light and Motion of these Streams to be accounted for; yet, why in one Part of the Hemisphere there should be a large Space of a light Green Colour, and at the same Time in another Part it should be very Red, and in other Places White, like a bright Cloud, and then in a Moment's Time, where they appeared so, we should see clear Sky? I presume no Man can shew a Reason for.

That Quickness of Motion which has divers Times appeared round about a Centre, near the *Zenith* towards the *South East*, of changeable Colours, not much unlike the Colours of the Rainbow, but with a deeper Red and Purple, is very surprizing.

Now, though we take it for granted, that the Appearance of the Rainbow admits of a second Cause, being form'd by the Sun's shining upon the Particles of Water, producing those Colours; yet that is limited to the Position of the Sun, and the Eye that beholds it, being effected by ALMIGHTY God upon the moderate bedewing Rains that have been since the *Deluge*, as a visible Mark of His merciful Covenant made with our Fathers: But these, without any Limitation of that Sort, appear now here, then there, in a Way extraordinary in all Respects.

IV. Their

IV. Their great *Height* is a fourth Reason for their being quite Supernatural, and farther invalidates the Objections mentioned in the foregoing *Reasons* ; which *Height* I prove as follows,

I have beheld these Lights, Motions, and Colours, many Times, and always observed the principal Meeting-place of the Streams, or Rendezvous of the Motions, to be in one Place, *viz.* a few Degrees towards the *South-East*, from the *Zenith* of *London* ; and I have not only seen them several times from one Place, but have beheld them in Places near an Hundred Miles distance from each other, and though I have at each Place carefully observed them, I could not discern the least Parallax of the said Place of their gathering to an Head ; and allowing for the Difference of my Stations, they appeared in all Respects alike in either Place.

From which it is plain to me, that the Height of the Sphere of these Phænomena (if it be proper to suppose any Limits thereto) must be immense : which to a proper Judge of Things belonging to the Celestial Globe, affords Matter of Contemplation, which confounds every Reason given for their proceeding from any natural Cause whatsoever.

V. Another Thing as a fifth *Reason* that declares them very extraordinary is, that their *uncertain* stirring and moving doth not respect any known Point, either the Pole of the Earth, or the *Zenith* of the Place of Observation : Had they pointed to either of these, one might have had some Colour for an Imagination that they were Natural, though uncommon : But as their chief Place of Action is elsewhere

where, they appear to be significant in a particular Manner: Had they met first in one Place, and then in another, there had been more Reason to have judged them Natural, because of their Uncertainty: But the Place of greatest Agitation hath always been the same, without any Variation, every Time they have gathered to a great Head, though several Years distant as to Time, and beheld at divers Places far remote from each other; therefore, all Circumstances relating thereto being consider'd, they seem plainly to appear to be, not only *Ætherial Phœnomena* from the natural Heavens, but Signs from HEAVEN the THRONE of GOD.

The CONCLUSION.

TH^{O'} the Eternal Power of the ALMIGHTY is set forth by the wonderful Works of the Creation, so that *Day unto Day uttereth Speech*, and *Night unto Night sheweth Knowledge*; yet the Design, in thus manifesting His Wisdom and Power, seems to be perverted through the Darkneſs of our *Reason*, and the Presumption of *humane Reasonings*. For the frequent and daily Demonstrations of His PROVIDENCE, instead of producing Adoration and Praise, cause vicious Minds to esteem them the Effects of *natural Causes*, and not as having a Voice in them which calls for Worship and Subjection to the CREATOR.

What we call *natural*, will be found, upon a serious and rational Enquiry, to be an evident and astonishing *Miracle*: For if we duly consider our Being, and how we subsist, it will appear more wonderful than raising a dead Man to Life: And
that

that we should at all have the Senses of *Seeing* and *Hearing*, is more surprizing than *Sight* restored to the *Blind*, or *Hearing* to the *Deaf*: But the common Events in *Nature* have not Force enough to remove Man's sensual Stupidity; for, while he resteth therein, the noble Faculty of *Reason* is a-sleep, his Views, at best, are but a Dream, nor can he be awaked by any Thing less than what is *miraculous* and *supernatural*; which God in His Mercy has, at different Periods, exhibited to the World. But *Infidels* will not believe; they will not be awaken'd by those Terrors of God's Spirit which affect them internally, or hearken to the *mild Reproofs* of Instruction, *which is the Way to Life*; neither will they be perswaded by the Testimony of others who have seen the Wonders of God in former Times; determin'd at all Events to deride all pretence of *Miracles*, or *Revelations* from God.

What is here treated of, every one that had his Sight, and was able to go abroad, might have seen; as the Appearance was very obvious, the Opportunities of beholding it frequent, and the Manner of it, to all that would reflect, and were unprejudiced, very surprizing; which is demonstrated by the foregoing *Reasons* to be *supernatural*, and not to be accounted for by any Knowledge or Inquiries into *Nature*: Therefore no less than miraculous Signs, not only to portend extraordinary Events in the World, but also to awaken and reform such as are so hardy as to reject all *Revelation*.

Whatever may be thought of such *Miracles* as Man has been instrumental in, or as some Men have falsely pretended to; the *Miracle* under our present Consideration can be no Falacy to deceive or impose upon Mankind, being perform'd in the open Firmament,

ment, by the Hand of God only, in the View, and for the Instruction, of many. And let the particular Signification thereof be what it will, we may safely make the foregoing Use of it, and admire the Voice and Appearance of God therein, believing that those Words of the SAVIOUR of the World were true, *There shall be great Signs from Heaven.*

Now, should we not believe so evident a *Miracle* which we our selves have seen, 'tis no wonder some should disbelieve a Relation of what they have not seen : And if we are convinced of a miraculous Sign, let us, without Difficulty or farther Hesitation, believe the many Witnesses of the *Miracles* wrought by our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that, by Believing, we may receive His Doctrine and Spirit.

If neither by the ordinary Works of God, which we call *Natural*, nor yet by the supernatural Appearances of His Power, we will be persuaded to think, that we ought to deny our selves, and to live in Subjection to Him, we cannot be said to be guided by *Reason* : And, if when we thus know God, we glorify Him not as God, no wonder we should become vain in our Imaginations, and have our Hearts darkned ; and while we profess our selves to be Masters of *Reason*, and wise Men, we should become such Fools, as to say in our Hearts, *There is no God* ; which possibly may in Time be the Case of most of those that will not subject their Thoughts to God in the Practice of *Religion*, but indulge themselves in the Liberty of what (by a plausible Appellation) they call *Free-thinking*, and reducing every Thing to *Reason* and *Demonstration*.