

Objection 67

Seventh day Adventists declare that the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833, was a fulfillment of the prophecy that the stars shall fall from heaven as one of the signs of the nearness of Christ's coming. But we need not seek some supernatural, miraculous explanation of this starry event. Astronomers inform us that whirling in space is a great swarm of meteorites, known as the Leonids, which are probably the shattered remains of a comet. These Leonids come within the orbit of our earth about every thirty-three years. There were showers in 1866 and 1899, though very small, because, as the astronomers explain, the planet Jupiter deflected the meteoritic group from the direct path of the earth. Probably this or a similar reason explains the absence of a star shower in 1933.

The prime fallacy underlying this reasoning is the assumption that because a phenomenon has been explained, it has been explained away. Is a stupendous act of God in the operation of His universe any the less so because poor finite men have been able to discover something of the plan that the Infinite has employed?

A devout astronomer once exclaimed, as he charted the course of the stars, that he was thinking God's thoughts after Him. But did that make those thoughts any the less divine?

We describe as egotistical the man who, after examining the product of some inventive wizard, declares that he could have invented such a device, and that there is really nothing to it. But what shall we say of the man who, after discovering a little of the plan that God has used in the performance of some marvelous act, scoffingly declares that there is nothing remarkable about it, that it is merely a "natural phenomenon"! We do not discount an inventor's production because he has called to his aid some simple, natural law, as has been the case in most inventions. On the contrary, we consider it a mark of the superior mind to be able to see the possibilities of such a simple law and to harness it to such wonderful ends. And shall we not as reasonably conclude that a phenomenon in the heavens, in which "natural" laws have been called into service, proves eloquently the superiority of the Mind that produced it?

If God has seen fit to permit His divinely appointed laws of motion to operate so that a comet should be shattered and some of its parts scattered like flaming stars over our earth, what is man that he should impiously contend that some other method should have been employed. Or that inasmuch as he can explain something of the laws that operated in producing the starry sign, he will reject it as being no sign? And if God, once having produced that phenomenon should allow the wreckage of the comet to remain in our path, so that at recurring intervals until the final end we should be reminded of the great sign that earlier occurred, why should a man perversely declare he will therefore see in it no sign at all?

But let us look at the matter from another angle. When Christ gave that wonderful prophecy marking out the high points along the centuries between His first and second advents, He foreknew just what would take place in the earth and in the heavens. He foresaw, for example, that as the centuries wore along, the world would be filled with war, but that at the same time there would be great plans for peace. Foreknowing that this would be the state just before His return, He declared that when we see such conditions we may know that the end is near. The contention that this paradoxical war-and-peace condition is the "natural" result of forces that have played upon human nature in recent times does riot in any way invalidate the paradox as a sign. Only God could foreknow that these particular forces would be working upon men's hearts in a certain particular way two thousand years later. And the taking place of such war-and-peace scenes at the very time when other prophecies declare that the "time of the end" is at hand, provides the proof that He who foretold it was divine and that His promise to return will be fulfilled.

Likewise, Christ foresaw that in the time shortly before His return a great cluster of meteoric fragments would cross the earth's path, thus producing what would be described as a shower of falling stars. Foreknowing this, why should He not declare that when we see this sight we may know the end is near? What could be more easily understood by mankind than such a sight as this?

If a foreknowledge of conditions upon the earth is a proof of Christ's divinity, how much more so a foreknowledge of events in the heavens? The fact is that after counseling His followers to "understand" the book of Daniel, which made specific predictions as to the time of the end, Christ declared calmly that when that "time" arrived there would be a great falling of stars. Almost exactly eighteen hundred years before its occurrence the Son of man foretold an event that the wisest of the sons of men could not foretell by a single day.

And He foretold this striking heavenly event in relation to a great group of signs that would take place in the earth and in the heavens, for when we read His prophecy in connection with those He

inspired Daniel and John to give, we discover a whole galaxy of signs that were to take place within a very limited and clearly marked period. The spectacular star shower of November 13, 1833, stands securely as a sign, for only the God who orders the courses of the stars could have caused that mighty shower to descend at exactly the right hour to blend with the other parts of a multicolored divinely predicted picture.