

(November 24, 1985)

This week I received a book called The Beauties of Nature Beyond the Earth. It contains a series of striking photographs taken from satellites--views of the rings of Saturn, of the Martian landscape, and of the earth, moist and green, rising over the forbidding horizon of our own moon. There are also wonderful photographs of distant galaxies, seen far clearer than they could ever be viewed from the earth, with their millions upon millions of stars ordered in wheel-like formations, the dimensions of which are beyond human comprehension.

It is natural when seeing these pictures for the mind very quickly to frame the question: "Where did all this come from? Why does it exist?" And as this question arose there also came into memory my days as a student of Physics. In particular, I remembered what is known as the Second Law of Thermodynamics. According to this Law, which, as far as I know, has never been disproven or superceded by more recent developments such as quantum physics of the Theory of Relativity, the universe is constantly and inevitably running downhill. That is, every change which occurs, every chemical reaction, every man-made and every natural phenomenon, increases the general disorder, increases the evolution towards a state of diffuse gaseousness. Even a process which apparently creates order, such as the carving of rough stone into blocks and the erection of a fine building, once you analyze all the fuel used, the energy expended, the portions of lives given to the project, the trees destroyed, and the water vaporized, actually contributes to the net disorder, or, as it is stated in physics, increases the entropy, or the randomness, of the universe.

This leaves the question of why there is any universe at all? What caused the gases to precipitate themselves into planets, into galaxies, and finally into conscious living creatures which can somehow replicate their own organic orderliness? The answer, of course, is that science does not know. It cannot explain the Creation. It is a mystery and a miracle.

This summoning of all things up from the formless dust is a mystery and a miracle of love. The orderliness we see expresses the very love that moves the universe. It is divine love. In the Second Letter of John we read that God is love, and that one who dwells in love dwells in God, and God dwells in her, or him. Thus, we, as human beings, are part of this great miracle, and we demonstrate this again and again in every act of service or of witness where this divine order is affirmed or extended. But we must be aware that the origins of our capacity to do this is as mysterious and as awesome as the generation of the universe itself--it is part and parcel of the same miracle. As soon as we claim this miracle as our own doing and our own creation, we have lost the track, we are increasing the entropy. Our personal egos are not miracle workers.

Even Jesus recognized this, and claimed nothing for his own creatureliness. Once, when someone seeking advice, addressed Jesus as "Good Master," before answering the question, Jesus said: "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God." (Matthew 19:16; King James Version). Again, on another occasion, Jesus said: "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30; King James Version).

It is through the practice of silence that we release the agitations of our own hearts and minds and prepare ourselves to become instruments of the divine creative order. Those who render such authentic service are aligned with the creative principle of the universe itself, and swimming against the relentless, downhill current leading to disorder. Perhaps this is why it is said that those who serve out of the purest motivation are at once absurdly happy and always in trouble!