

# From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

THE LORD of the SEVEN WONDERS

Text: (See Psalms, 104)

Nowhere in the Psalter can one find a hymn comparable to Psalm 104, in which the whole universe is encompassed within a single sweep of religious vision. The poet worships Yahweh, "the faithful creator" (I. Pet., 4:19), and he contemplates in turn seven realms of God's activity. The order which he follows is similar to the sequence of the creative works in the first chapter of Genesis. Some scholars therefore believe that the singing of this hymn accompanied the celebration of the New Year festival, during which the drama of creation was commemorated.

The Seven Wonders were Sky, Earth, Water, Vegetation, Moon, and Sun, Sea, and the Gift of Life.

This list of Wonders, tabulated perhaps a thousand years before the time of Christ, remains wondrous still. And yet we might make an all-encompassing list in different terms. Let us consider the following alternatives:

Today we are space-minded. Space and all it contains in stars and planets, with area and distance reaching toward infinity, is our First Wonder.

Sometimes I take a book in hand, one that I do not fully understand, but in which I delight to read. This book, because its words and meaning lie beyond my comprehension, stretches my mind. I understand only in part, but I learn a little more. The book has an author and by reading his words little by little I not only absorb something of the book's knowledge, but I learn to know the author of the book as well. In space we learn about the handiwork of God and we learn, too, about the Creator. As John Kepler, the astronomer, said, "O God, I am thinking thy thoughts after thee." Even our fleeting thoughts of apprehension as we whirl in space are the thoughts of God. He is the Lord of the First Wonder. In contemplation of the Wonder we may learn to know, not only about the Creator, but learn to know the Creator.

Our Second Wonder is Beauty. This Wonder envelops all the Wonders of the Psalmist's list. It will envelop the Wonders of any honest list. How do we account for beauty in the universe, comprehended by space? The painting comes from the brush of an artist. The symphony first sang itself in the soul of a musician. The poem was formed in the mind of a poet. So with the enveloping beauty, so with the beauty of stars and suns, of gardens and flowers. God is the Artist. God is the Lord of the Second Wonder.

Truth is our Third Wonder. Will the traveler in space find any corner where law and order has abdicated? That is no man's expectation, I think. The perplexities of men send them in search for more particular and more comprehensive truth. That this can be found belongs to our Wonder. That this truth has particular application in the world of our daily lives increases our wonder.

Again, truth requires a Truth Giver. The law requires one who orders. God is the Lord of the Third Wonder.

Goodness is the Fourth Wonder. But there is so much wickedness in the world! That is too true. Why, we ask, is there so much evil? Again, we ask, why is there so much goodness?

Our approach to goodness in understanding and in living enables us to see the problem of evil more clearly. By the dominion of goodness we are free to choose and to do. Evil registers our wrong choice, an aberration from goodness. Much that is called evil is disobedience. Then, too, it is of the infinite wonder of goodness that evil can be redeemed. The author of goodness provides a Cross of Redemption. Goodness



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triumphs! Is this not a great wonder? God is the Lord of the Fourth Wonder.

Love is the Fifth Wonder. Some have called it the greatest thing in the world. We find love compounded. The scope of love is revealed in part by the adjectives we apply to the noun: fatherly, motherly, filial, fraternal, brotherly, romantic, conjugal, patriotic, sacrificial, Christlike, eternal, immortal, infinite. God is love and God is the lover; love is God's attribute; love is God's action; love is God's Being. Grace is God's loving. God is the Lord of the Fifth Wonder.

We have not forgotten Man. He was "made a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor." Touch man at any point of his being and wonder overwhelms the perceiver. Have you ever thought of the wonder of man's physical eye? Have you ever been amazed at his physical heart? What of his mind! He can measure the distances and sizes and weights of the

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stars. He can push his perception out to a planet sixty million miles away and ask it questions!

Man is the creature of God. He is made in the image of God. God is his Father. God is Savior and Lord of the Sixth Wonder.

The Seventh Wonder is the Christ. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. . . His name shall be called Wonderful."

His greatness is full-orbed. He was complete, and in His completeness we find an explanation of His beauty. Men who stood nearest to Him were charmed and swayed by His loveliness. He was full of grace and truth. He had a charm about Him which wooed and fascinated. Children liked Him, boys sang for Him. He had the heart of a child, the tenderness of a woman, the strength of a man. The three dimensions of His life, were complete. He had eyes which looked along extended lines running into eternity; He is at every point complete. His virtues are all full-statured; His graces are all in fullest bloom. You can no more add anything to Him than you can add something to the sky. He pushed every good trait of human character to its utmost limit. His forgiveness was unbounded, His generosity was untiring, His patience was inexhaustible, His mercy was immeasurable, His courage was illimitable, His wisdom was unfathomable, His faith removed mountains, His hope had no shadow in it, His love was infinite. And so it is impossible to go beyond Him. . . He is the goal of humanity."

God is the Lord of the Seventh Wonder!