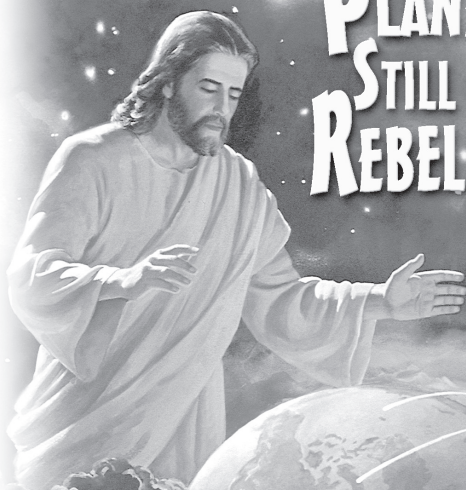


PLANET STILL IN REBELLION



✦ George E. Vandeman ✦



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Introduction

What an honor it is for me to introduce my father's classic book *Planet in Rebellion* to a new audience of readers. We have updated the title because our planet, after all, is still in rebellion. When this book was first published in 1960, it represented the culmination of years of research, personal ministry, and public evangelism. The television ministry that my father founded and led for more than thirty-five years had just been "born" in 1956, the same year that I was born. What a privilege it was for me to grow up with *It Is Written*.

My father was always fascinated with astronomy, and the titles of the chapters you are about to read reflect that great interest—"The Heavens Are Telling" and "Race to the Stars," for example. The entire gospel message is in this book, which has been condensed from its original 443 pages. ABC news commentator Paul Harvey, a close friend of my father's, said this on his radio broadcast of November 7, 2000, just four short days after my father passed away: "A handful of books have had a significant influence on my life. The Bible, of course. A book called *Key to Peace* by Notre Dame's Dean

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Clarence Manion, and one called *Planet in Rebellion* by George Vandeman.” Paul Harvey went on to talk about their friendship, which began on the campus of Campion Academy in 1961. After discussing their friendship and the fact that my father’s book, *Planet in Rebellion*, had affected his life so constructively, he ended with these words full of emotion: “When you and I next hear that gently persuasive voice . . . we’ll know we made it to the right place.” Only eternity will tell how many others have been affected for God’s kingdom by this book. In preparation for this special publication by Pacific Press, I reread *Planet in Rebellion* once again and was amazed at the timeless nature of the message. My father updated the book in 1970 for its re-release and yet, even now it reads as if he wrote it this very year. As I was reading, I could almost hear his voice “preaching” the words—gently in some places and passionate in others. He was, after all, a truly great preacher. And this book is truly a classic. It is my prayer that you will be touched by this book once again—or perhaps for the very first time—and by the message that our soon-coming Savior is preparing to rescue this planet that is still in rebellion. Only then will I get to hear my father’s gently persuasive voice one more time and know that I have eternity to worship my heavenly Father and be with the ones I love. That day cannot come soon enough for me.

Connie Vandeman Jeffery
November 2005

Before you turn the page . . .

would you like to know what this book is all about—why it was written—what it promises to do for you personally?

Planet in Rebellion is a cosmic approach to what has now become to all of us a cosmic crisis. For who of us is not aware that during a few short decades the planet that was once our universe has dwindled dizzily in comparative size, though not in importance, into a planet that can never again be completely isolated from its stellar neighbors?

You have not picked up this book by accident. It may be by divine appointment that you turn its pages. One thing is certain: You will never be the same after you have read it. It will meet *your* needs—not by any human excellence or literary uniqueness, but because it offers you a sane, sure, satisfying answer to the tightly integrated problems of mind and soul and spirit in this frightening nuclear age.

Such terrifying things are happening, in such terrifying rapidity, in such terrifying ways, that today as never before “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

—George Vandeman



The Heavens Are Telling

Immeasurable distance! Incalculable numbers! Incomparable speeds! Incomprehensible spheres! Inconceivable power! Lurid flames of hydrogen, to us reminiscent of Bikini, of the Yucca Flats, or even Cape Kennedy, leap two—three—four hundred thousand miles out into space from the rim of our giant sun.

Spectacular adventure and living faith await the reverent man who reads what God has written in eternity's most ancient book—the evening sky.

The original edition of this mighty volume still rolls in majestic splendor above us. It can be seen on any clear night. Yet it does not look old. Its pages are as delicately fair and sparkling as when our first parents admired them. And reading from the Creator's pen in this pageant of glory above us, we can turn to the world and say confidently, "It is written!"

David said of this book of the stars, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard" (Psalm 19:1–3).

The heavens declare! The heavens are telling! But someone may be asking, “*What* are the heavens telling? What do they reveal? How can I understand them? How can the stars help me?”

Have you ever been seated on a train that stood alongside the coaches of another train, when at once you felt the strange sensation that one of the trains was moving—you were not sure which one? How did you adjust to the situation? “Oh,” you say, “by looking through the window at some stationary object.” And, of course, you are right.

Millions of men and women today are about as uncertain morally and spiritually as you were uncertain on that train for those few moments. Uncertain because they are not quite sure whether the universe into which they have been thrust will prove friendly or unfriendly. Uncertain because they realize that back of the finger that launches the rocket is the unchanged nature of man. Uncertain because they are not quite sure where they are going—or why.

Uncertainty produces fear. And fear kills. The result: a host of perplexed people with strained lives and a vague sense of restless insecurity.

But nothing, I believe, will better help us get our bearings and settle our confusion than to look through our giant telescopes to the stars fixed in the planned precision of their unfailing orbits—and discover who is back of it all! Little wonder that God invites us, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things” (Isaiah 40:26).

Can we be satisfied with anything less?

A number of years ago an unusual news story came out of Brooklyn. A mother with more doting love for her son than patriotism decided to hide him from the army. With his cooperation a cubicle was built in the attic. For some

time the boy submitted to voluntary imprisonment in that confined space, and the mother fed him and took care of his needs through a small opening. Finally, however, the mother became ill, and the neighbors heard the boy's call for help. The police were summoned, and the secret was out. As they opened the boxlike prison, a dirty, dazed, disheveled boy stepped out. After questioning him, the police asked, "What do you want to do now?" Bewildered, the boy turned slowly and, looking toward his familiar retreat, replied, "Go back in!"

What a tragedy to become so accustomed to a wretched environment as to desire nothing better! Yet who will say that some of us are not guilty of something similar?

Could it be that God has permitted us to push back the frontiers of the universe in a last attempt to arouse us from our fatal satisfaction with this sin-tainted planet? Could it be that God is lifting the curtains of space in order to heal us of our spiritual isolationism? Could He be throwing a limitless universe across the screen of our thinking that He might lift our eyes to a Creator—and to a destiny of which we little dream?

"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things" (Isaiah 40:26).

Awaiting us are wonders that even as distant whispers of light have held men spellbound with fascination for centuries. But only today, with the aid of our powerful telescopes—telescopes that travel into space, telescopes that look out into space six thousand billion billion miles, telescopes with a light-gathering power equal to a million human eyes—only today, with these instruments of science, have men been able to turn those distant whispers of inspiration into thunder tones.

All space invites us. But where could we better begin than with our own faithfully whirling world? Rotating gracefully every twenty-four hours, suspended in space, it moves with perfect precision.

"How can it be explained?" you ask.

There is a Hand that guides it. It was Job who said of God, "He . . . hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7). Job, thirty-five centuries ago, spoke by inspiration what the revelations of science are now forcing us to acknowledge.

I stood on the rolling lawns of Greenwich Observatory, overlooking England's naval academy, with Frank Jeffries, a personal friend who for forty-six years was one of England's time determiners. I listened in respectful silence as that great mind described the mystery behind the perfect rotation of our earth. He spoke of its spinning, of its hurtling through space at unbelievable speed. And then he explained the terrific gravitational pull of passing planets as they approach and recede from us, creating considerable bounce and irregularity in the motion of our globe. Yet in spite of all this—and he spoke with the deep feeling that only an astronomer can know—our earth rides majestically in space, giving us an unerring day and night with a loss of only a fraction of a second in a millennium!

But still more spectacularly accurate than the perfect precision rotation of our earth is its movement through space, which creates our year. Our earth travels about 588,000,000 miles in its huge elliptical orbit around the sun. Yet, riding in perfect poise at 67,000 miles an hour, our earth closes its yearly voyage without the loss of a thousandth of a second in thousands of years!

Think of it. Could such a clocklike precision, balance, and harmony be the result of blind chance, chaos, or cosmic

accident? Hardly! And this marvelous balance extends into our still more complicated solar system. Here we discover that regardless of size, speed, weight, or distance, not only our nine planets but also their thirty-one moons are in perfect balance. Each obeys the laws laid down by the Creator. Each respects the Power that guides it.

What a tragedy that only a few decades ago the faith of millions was shaken by certain theories of the origin of our world and of our solar system! De Laplace, for example, had explained that our sun in its rotation threw out various pieces of matter which became the present system of orderly worlds that we have been describing. Of course few, if any, today believe in his nebular hypothesis, which once was so proudly paraded as fact.

Then came Chamberlin and Moulton, who refined the idea by suggesting that a neighboring sun, such as giant Arcturus, passing in close proximity to ours, formed great tides on our sun. Since the sun was in a gaseous state, portions of its mass supposedly flew off to form our system of worlds.

Yet daily revelations from the skies are merciless to old theories and superstitions. They are revealing a precision and balance in our universe that simply cannot be dismissed as mere blind chance.

Suppose I should tell you that a locomotive with its train of cars could blow up into thousands of pieces and that these pieces might fly off into space and come down again in the form of little trains complete with locomotive, baggage car, passenger cars, and diner—even tracks—ready for business. Would you not conclude that I was a little “off the track” myself?

Behind order and design there must be a mind and a designer, just as behind the orderly movement of my watch

is the mind that planned it. If man puts forty thousand delicate parts into a satellite that he sends into orbit, can anyone even suggest that the perfect, undeviating orbit of this earth—or of the stars—just happened?

Said David, “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” “For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalm 33:6, 9). Belief in words like these was never more reasonable than now. For the more thoroughly the human mind probes the mystery of the heavens and the mystery of life, the more it sees a plan, not simply chance or chaos.

In agreement with the words of David are those of Edwin Conklin, former Princeton University biologist: “The probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing factory.”

Simple but profound words!

Crossing the first frontiers of space, the edges of our own solar system, we discover clusters of giant suns—Hercules, for instance, with its one hundred thousand blazing orbs. Viewing it through a telescope is a pleasure never to be forgotten. These suns appear like sparkling diamonds arrayed against a velvet background. Moving closer, with the aid of a larger telescope, we realize that every point of light is in reality a giant sun like our own. We might hastily conclude that there is no room for planets to revolve around them. But moving closer still, and measuring with the finest of present-day instruments, we discover that the average distance between each of these suns is seven trillion miles.

Think of it this way: The lights of our cities are made up of individual lights—street lights, neon signs, the lights of buildings and homes, the headlights of moving automobiles.

But from the window of an approaching airplane these individual lights blend with thousands of others until a great city center appears to be but one mass of light.

So it is with Hercules. Being 34,000 light years away, it creates the illusion of a cluster, a mass of light scarcely suggesting the vast distances between its suns.

These clusters in the heavens, unnumbered as the sand of the sea, make up the giant constellations or island universe systems, such as our own Milky Way—or the galaxy in Andromeda—or the cluster of galaxies in Virgo, twenty million light years away—or Orion, the majesty of the heavens. The appearance of the Orion nebula is that of “light shining and glowing behind Herculean walls of ivory or pearl”—walls “studded with millions of diamond points,” every one a shining star.

And these stars are giant blazing suns, many of them dwarfing our own in size. There is Betelgeuse, for instance, whose measurements have been carefully computed. Betelgeuse is 350,000,000 miles in diameter; the diameter of our sun is only 860,000 miles. Here is a star so large that if it were as close to us as our sun, it would completely fill our horizon, making it impossible for us to see beyond its compass.

Yet Betelgeuse is only one of the stars looking down at us from the constellation of Orion. Orion! It is at this point that brilliant men stand speechless, their pens inert, helpless to describe what they see, for the giant telescopes reveal a cavern nineteen trillion miles across—a vast canyon in the skies, indescribably beautiful—a corridor fit for a King! In all the skies it is the wonder of wonders!

The vast majesty of it all staggers the human mind! Looking into God’s limitless universe, we are bewildered,

we are dazed, we are overwhelmed with what we see! Even a brief glimpse into space spotlights the utter littleness of man.

But no! The vastness of space and the “everness” of time need not terrify us, for of one thing we can be certain: We are not specks of cosmic dust in a chaotic universe without purpose or design. We are children of the infinite God, the Creator. Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best.

Wouldn't this be a good time—and a good place—to get our thinking straight? A star is big. And man is little. But man is still the astronomer. It is man who can study and compute and appreciate the divine precision of the stars. Man can do what a star cannot do. He can think.

In our little world a mountain is big. It is vast. Compared to a baby, it is gigantic. But a baby is more than a mountain. A baby can love. A man is more than a star. For a man can worship. The miracle of miracles—the wonder of wonders—is God's masterpiece of creation—you—me!

I like to think of it this way. I like to think of God with His universe about Him—the worlds hanging securely in space, the giant suns speeding in unerring pathways through the skies. Not a star disobedient! Not a sun deviating from its appointed course!

But wouldn't you think that God might be lonely? Obedient stars were not enough. Stars could not think. The heart of a loving Creator could never be satisfied with only blazing, unswerving suns that could not commune with Him. And so there were creatures made—perhaps many millions throughout the universe. And He made man! And

the heart of God and the heart of man walked together in happy, satisfying fellowship. And then man failed. And God was lonely again.

Man—out on his tiny planet—was lost. And however great the host of created beings in the skies, none could take man's place in the affection of his Creator. The Son of God offered to go out and find him, to bring him back. And the Father, in indescribable love for a lost race on a planet too insignificant, it seems, to notice, agreed to the decision of His Son. He agreed to Calvary!

Do you see? The Cross was the expression of the loneliness of God—a God who could not be satisfied until man was brought back. The Cross was to reach across the gulf of separation between God and man, across the loneliness of God and the restlessness of man—and heal it all!

The heavens are telling! What do the stars say to you? The heavens speak. They tell. They declare that the God who rules the speeding spheres will rule in every restless, willing heart!

“World, O world of muddled men,
Seek the peace of God again;
In the humble faith that kneels,
In the hallowed Word that heals;
In the hope that answers doubt,
Love that drives the darkness out.
Frantic, frightened, foolish men,
Take God by the hand again!”

—*Joseph Auslander*