

**THE STARS AND THE
EARTH; OR,
THOUGHTS UPON SPACE,
TIME, AND ETERNITY**

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The Stars and the Earth; Or, Thoughts Upon Space, Time, and Eternity by Felix Eberty

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FELIX EBERTY

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Edited American,

FROM THE THIRD ENGLISH EDITION.

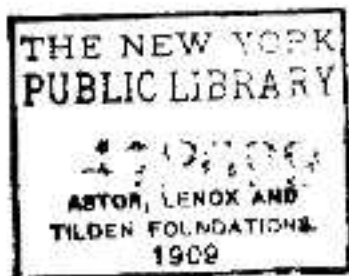
BOSTON

CROSBY, NICHOLS, AND COMPANY,

111 WASHINGTON STREET.

1854.

A. C. V.



In this American edition, the language on pages 10-12 has been slightly altered by the writer of the following letter, to correct an erroneous statement into which the author of the work had accidentally fallen. It is hardly necessary to say, that, since page 12 was written, a planet has been discovered at nearly double the distance of Uranus from the sun.

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RECOMMENDATORY LETTER

FROM THE REV. THOMAS HILL.

WALTHAM, July 24, 1849.

MESSES. CROSBY & NICHOLS : —

Many thanks, my dear Sirs, for the copy of "THE STARS AND THE EARTH," a little book which I had not before seen, but with which I have been highly delighted. It does resemble, in the nature of its topics, the *concluding* chapters of my own "Geometry and Faith," to which you allude, and which is publishing by C. S. Francis, of New York ; but the author has selected quite a different example for illustration, and developed with much more minuteness and fulness the leadings of this idea. I need not say how cordially I should welcome a reprint of "The Stars and the Earth" ; if for no other reason, for this, that it is pleasant to have fellow-laborers in any good work.

The identity of religion and philosophy, proclaimed by Erigena in the ninth century, is daily becoming more evident. In all departments of human thought, the deepest thinkers are striving more earnestly after laws; that is, after expressions of the thoughts of God. The object of science is defined by one of the most distinguished of its students to be, to unfold the harmony of creation; that is, to unfold the wisdom and unity of the Creator; and in proportion to the clearness with which the end of science is perceived, will higher attainments be made in it. No real advancement of any of the sciences can, then, henceforward be made, but by men of devout and reverent spirit. The state of human knowledge, proposed by Comte as the aim of science, when all facts shall be included in one formula or law, must be accompanied by a state of human faith which shall see this law to be a single thought of the wisdom of God, prompted by his love and expressed by his will. To this end all results of every science are leading. Not only is "the connection of the physical sciences" becoming more manifest, showing one Mind to have created heaven and earth, but the connection between history and geography; geology and the life of man; logic, mathematics,

taste, and faith; daily revealing itself, reveals also that one Mind as an infinitely kind Father of men.

This little book, "The Stars and the Earth," takes up, in its first part, the phenomenon of light, and from it shows, with great clearness, how the past may be actually present to God, and become hereafter actually present to men. As Babbage, in his "Ninth Bridgewater Treatise," demonstrates that the shores of the ocean shall, through eternity, reëcho the shriek of the drowning slave, whom his *Christian* captor may have thrown overboard to lighten the ship, when hard pressed by pursuing police-boats of the nations, so does this unknown author show that we need only be present at a sufficient distance to have at this instant the testimony of eyesight to the monstrous guilt.

In the second part, the author endeavors to show the unity of the Creator, by showing the unity of the creation; and to show the unity of the creation, by showing that it may be the embodiment of a single thought, and occupy neither Space nor Time, — these being only modes of human perception. In this last point we think he fails; but the failure is of no consequence; for it is enough to have shown, that the universe

may be the embodiment of a single thought. The equation of a geometric curve is one formula, one thought, whether fulfilled by a curve drawn in the skies or on an atom. But in his ingenious attempts to show that Space and Time are capable of indefinite contraction, therefore of annihilation, without the destruction of phenomena manifested in them, he suggests thoughts of the relation of Space and Time to Eternity and Omnipresence, which are surpassed only perhaps by those suggested in Professor Lovering's paper in the "Cambridge Miscellany."

The circulation of this book would be, I am convinced, of benefit both to science and religion. To religion, by showing, so far as it goes, that science leads to faith. To science, by pointing out to younger students the true spirit in which she should be wooed; still more, by presenting her in a lovely and attractive garb to the notice of men. It is a book of sublime poetry; and it will be a happier day for all men, when they have learned that, as poesy signifies creation, so is the creation poesy; and science causes the heart of its faithful student to sing a perpetual hymn of praise and joy.

Yours, truly,

THOMAS HILL.

THE STARS AND THE EARTH.

It is a well-known proposition, that a luminous body arising at a certain distance from an observer cannot be perceived in the very same instant of time in which it becomes luminous, but that a period of time, although infinitely short, exists whilst the light, our only medium of vision, passes through the space between the object and our eyes.

The rate at which the light travels is so exceedingly rapid, that it certainly has never been observed, nor have any attempts to measure it been made, in the insignificant distances at which objects upon the earth are visible to us. But since we see bodies at