

The Planets and Our Weather

by

J. Michael Bracewell

Only a year or two ago any suggestion of connections between planetary positions and the changes in our weather would have been met with incredulity in the scientific community. Already, however, there exists a well established connection between the phases of the Moon and the mean rainfall figures, and this research has been repeated by meteorological departments in many countries. Meteorologists therefore should be well prepared for the recently discovered connection between the climate and planetary conjunctions. The facts leading to this interesting conclusion were first assembled by Dr. John Gribbin, the cosmology correspondent of the scientific journal Nature, whose articles have been largely drawn on for this account. In them he has put together pieces of research from widely different fields and so reached these surprising new conclusions.

Climatic change is a field currently receiving increasing attention, thanks to improved systems of measurement, the availability of computers, and the urgency of some of the problems facing us. For instance the whole pattern of climatic zones in the northern hemisphere is shifting southwards making the northern Sahara less arid as the desert advances in the south Britain, for the same reason, may be in for drier summers in coming years as the westerly 'troughs' drift further southwards.

Links between fluctuations of the Earth's magnetism and climate have been shown and the suggestion made that the Sun is responsible as the common cause. Other evidence points to the effects of solar activity on our atmosphere. When bursts of solar cosmic and X-rays arrive there is an injection of stratospheric air downwards into the lower atmosphere and also an increase in the size of low pressure systems. Professor H.H.Lamb has summarized previous attempts to correlate the more long term climatic changes with solar activity, and some remarkable evidence has now been added by Dr. J. W. King of the Radio and Space Research Station at Slough. He shows for example how the length of the growing season at Eskdalemuir in Scotland varies between 190 and 240 days with an 11-year cyclic variation of sunspot numbers. Furthermore those solar cycles with the largest sunspot numbers correspond to the largest effect.

Sunspots are rather unpredictable phenomena and it would not be possible to estimate for instance if the next peak in sunspot numbers, due shortly after 1980, will be as great as those observed in 1947 and 1958. Now however Professor K. D. Wood of the Department of Aerospace Engineering Sciences at Colorado University has discovered a connection with the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Jupiter. These planets are able to raise a tide on the Sun's surface, much as our own Moon raises the tides of our oceans, because the first three are near to the Sun whilst Jupiter, though further distant, is so massive. It was found that there was a close link between the time of greatest tide, i.e. when two or more of these planets were in conjunction or opposition as seen from the Sun, and the time of greatest sunspots. Also the height of the tide roughly parallel the actual number of sunspots. The mechanism is unknown but the effect is well defined and leaves little or no room for other explanations.

We now have a chain linking the planetary alignments, via the sunspots, to our own climatic changes. Professor Wood has predicted from the planets that the next two sunspot cycles will peak in 1982 and 1993 and will be less intense than the large 1947 and 1958 cycles and slightly less than the last (1969) cycle. He has noted a 170-180 year repeating pattern in the intensity of these 11-year cycles. Could this mean a return to the climatic conditions experienced earlier this century? Dr. Winstanley also suggests that longer term cycles of solar activity may cause long term climatic variations and suggests again an approximately 200-year cycle which peaked about 1930. Is it co-incidence that the outer planets have a period between their alignments of 179 years? In any case it looks as if the southerly drift of climatic belts should continue until about the year 2030. Dr. Gribbin suggests that such predictions should at least be attempted, especially if there is a chance that they may help to save lives.

Students of Anthropology will not find the idea of planetary influences on the Sun and the weather at all startling. The etheric formative forces act strongly with the Earth's atmosphere, the 'airy regions', and a material-physical based approach such as that of meteorology is consequently not able to achieve the status of an exact science. It must rest content with a charting of the atmospheric motions and properties based on extensive observation and sophisticated data handling, but lacks insight into more fundamental causes. Etheric forces constantly stream inwards from the solar system to turn to it at St.

John's-tide also Dr. Steiner referred his listeners to the chapter in his book Christianity as Mystical Fact on the miracle of the Raising of Lazarus, where he dwelt on the mysteries concerning Lazarus and the Beloved Disciple. In the Last Address he opens up to us yet wider connections into the past, taking us to Elias and St. John the Baptist, gradually bringing us, through Raphael, into our present time, showing us the true significance of the being, Novalis. He said on this occasions:

When we read the Fragments of Novalis, and give ourselves up to the life that flows so abundantly in them, we can discover the secret of the deep impression they make on us. Whatever the eye can see and recognize as beautiful, whatever we have before us in immediate sense-reality-all this, through the magic idealism that lives in the soul of Novalis, appears in his poetry with a well-night heavenly splendour. The meanest and simplest material thing with the magic idealism of his poetry he can make it live again in all its spiritual light and glory.

And so we can see in Novalis a radiant and splendid forerunner of the Michael stream which is now to lead all, while you live; and then, after you have gone through the gate of death, you will find in the spiritual supersensible worlds all those others among them also the being of whom I have been speaking to you to-day-all those with whom you are to prepare the work that shall be accomplished at the end of the century, and that shall lead mankind past the great crisis in which it is involved.