

pend on the higher for its very form and vital energy. In minute things we see depicted images of greater things. In the microcosm we see the nature of the macrocosm.

Likewise in the degrees of ascent in nature we see, as in a mirror, a picture of those great universal degrees of ascent from nature,

through spirit, to the Divine Itself. These great universal steps of ascent are beautifully portrayed in Jacob's dream, when "He dreamed, and behold a ladder (or steps) set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending upon it, and Jehovah stood above it."

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## The Influence of Science on Theological Thought.

Delivered at the meeting of the Michigan Association, held in Detroit, October 1st, 1898, by Rev. John Whitehead, President of Urbana University, Urbana, Ohio.

Theology and science deal with two great classes of human knowledge which are separated from each other by a discrete degree; but which are intimately connected and interrelated. Theology deals with spiritual and divine things, with the soul and interior principles of life and action, which are learned through revelation. Science, on the other hand, deals with nature in its various departments, with facts that are known and acquired by or through the senses. Science is the arrangement in systematic form of the knowledge of outward nature; theology is the arrangement in systematic form of the knowledge of God, and the spiritual things from God. God, spirit and matter are a trine following in order, God, the origin and source of the other two, is the inmost, the highest, from which all other things derive their being. Spirit is the soul and essence of all finite forms, and matter is the foundation, basis and resting place on which all higher things rest. Perfect harmony exists between the Creator and creation. It cannot be otherwise. The creation responds to every governing and controlling impulse of the Divine. This is true of God in his relation to spirit and matter; but is this the case between the various departments of human knowledge that deal with these things? To this question we must certainly answer "no." Throughout human history, what men have known and taught concerning nature has frequently been in direct opposition to that which they have taught in the domain of theology. In this address it is my purpose to try and present some principles which may give some reasons why these differences have arisen, why they still exist, and finally to present those principles which will harmonize the two.

All the departments of knowledge, in theology, philosophy and science, are necessary to the understanding of the nature of the universe in which we exist. As God, the spiritual world, and the natural world are intimately connected and interrelated, so likewise, are the corresponding knowledges of these subjects. As harmony reigns between God and the universe, so likewise in reality harmony reigns between the various knowledges of them in the mind

that comprehends them all aright, which is in the divine mind. So far as men approximate to this true conception, so far will they perceive this harmony; but so far as they see things only partially, or one-sidedly, or refuse to see things as they are, so far will opposition appear where harmony really exists. We will then first of all examine the conditions which existed in the successive ages of man tending to produce opposition between science and religion.

The different ages of mankind on this earth are like the different ages of the individual. The individual passes through the ages of infancy, childhood, youth and manhood. Each age possesses its peculiar quality. The first is the foundation and preparation for the second, etc. So, the individual, like the human race as a whole, passes through similar stages of development, and human progress in general may be better comprehended by the study of the development of the individual.

In infancy two states exist, one from the internal association with angels, which is exhibited in the innocence and peace of the infant; and the other from the reception of a knowledge of the outward world through the medium of the five senses. The states of innocence and peace are the result of spiritual association and are of a spiritual origin; but the knowledges acquired through the senses are the result of contact with the world and are of a natural origin; yet the sense impressions and knowledges are the resting place of the interior states; and the delights of the senses are means by which the interior states of innocence and peace may be cherished and cultivated. There is nothing inharmonious between the two states, the one derived from heaven, and the other derived from the world, the one the basis of all future religious feelings and activities, the other the foundation and basis of all science and reasoning.

So likewise the early stages of human development in the formation of the Most Ancient Church, represented by the ancients as the Golden Age, and described in the Word by the Garden of Eden, was a period of peace and innocence, of interior association with the Lord and heaven, and of delight in the per-

ception of the things of the world; especially the perception of the interior things signified by such objects as were perceived by the senses.

As the age of infancy progresses, the states of innocence and peace are indrawn and appear less and less in the external. The sense impressions and knowledges gain greater influence, and the impressions of the world, the delights of the world, the desires and allurements flowing from worldly things, gain power and dominion. In the early development of mankind a similar stage of life existed, which is described by the persuasion of the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The serpent represents the sensual and the allurements and influences of the sensual over the higher and purer nature. In this stage of human development there did not exist the sciences and philosophy such as we possess at this day. The knowledge of the world had not been put into scientific and rational form. The time had not yet come for this work to be done. That which was acquired by or through the senses was taken as it appeared, not as it really was. The appearance was taken for the reality. The delights and pleasures of the senses became predominant, and thence arose a conflict between these tendencies in human nature, and the higher things of human life previously implanted through revelation and spiritual association. The race was yet in an infantile state, and therefore knowledge was given to it in a form that was adapted to the state. As impressions from the world were not received in a rational form, so likewise revelation and impressions from heaven could not take a rational form either. That which was revealed from heaven was given in a form to produce delight and pleasure, its literal or outward expression was in the form of beautiful fable and story, as well as in the beauties of nature, through which profound spiritual impressions and conceptions were produced; but they were deep impressions and expressions rather than in the form of clear and rational conceptions of the relationship of truths and goods with each other. The form, both of science and of theology was infantile, and as the impressions of the sense prevailed, the spiritual and celestial side of human nature was overpowered by the sensual. Of this state Swedenborg says:

In ancient times those were called serpents who had more confidence in sensual things than in revealed truth. But it is still worse at the present day, for now there are persons who not only disbelieve everything which they cannot see and feel, but also confirm themselves in such incredulity by facts of science unknown to the ancients, and occasion in themselves a far greater degree of blindness. That it may be known how those who form their opinions on heavenly subjects from sensual, scientific and philosophical considerations blind themselves, so as afterwards to see and hear nothing, being not only deaf serpents, but also the flying serpents frequently spoken of in the Word, which are much more pernicious, we will take for example what they believe about the spirit. The sensual man, or he who only believes on the

evidence of his senses, denies the existence of spirit because he cannot see it, saying there is nothing which I cannot feel; what I see and touch that I know to exist. The mere man of science, or he who forms his conclusions from the sciences, says, What is spirit, unless, perhaps, a vapor or heat, or some other existence recognized by science, which will vanish when the fire which gave rise to it is extinguished? Have not animals a body, and something analogous to reason? And yet it is asserted that although these must all perish the spirit of man is immortal; thus they deny the existence of spirit. Philosophers also, who wish to have the credit of possessing more discernment than the rest of mankind, speak of the spirit in terms which they do not themselves understand, for they dispute about them, contending that not a single expression is applicable to spirit which is derived from what is material, organic, or has extension. Thus by abstracting from spirit every conceivable quality, it vanishes from their ideas and becomes to them a nothing. The wiser philosophers, however, assert that the spirit is thought; but in their reasoning about thought, in consequence of separating from it all substantiality, they conclude that it must necessarily cease to exist when the body dies. Thus all who reason merely from the senses, science and philosophy deny the existence of spirit, and in so doing cease to believe what is asserted of spirit and spiritual things. Not so the simple in heart; if these are questioned about the existence of the spirit, they declare their unfeigned belief therein, because the Lord has said that they shall continue to live after death; thus instead of extinguishing their rational faculty, they verify it by the Word of the Lord. A. C. 196.

Thus we may see that the senses when exclusively followed lead to blindness in spiritual things. We know that even on the natural plane they give rise to fallacies and appearances of truth, which, if accepted as the reality, and are confirmed, produce falsities which are opposite to the genuine truth. It is ever so with the senses and the sensual faculty; as a servant, it is the foundation, the gateway to the rational and spiritual; as a master it is destructive of the rational and the spiritual. In the most ancient times these fallacies and appearances gave rise to numerous false ideas which invalidated revealed truth, producing many falsities in the plane of theological thought. and also, when followed, led to evils of life.

Again when men became devoted to the senses and were willing to accept only the evidences of the senses, whenever any theological or religious feeling or principle still remained, it was affected and influenced by the general state, and it became sensual also. Thence they desired the belief in God to be represented in a material form, at first as a means of impressing the conception of the idea of God on the mind, but at length it became the grossest idolatry. Thus sensual science drew down theology and religion from its high estate, and made it sensual also, and it continued to descend until the Lord's advent into the world.

Science, or the knowledge of the things of the world, previous to the Lord's coming, did not exist in a rational form. Much knowledge of the world ex-

isted in the form of isolated facts which obtained a place in the memory, but these facts were not arranged in systematic form as rational systems of science. Before the Lord's coming the world was in its states of infancy and childhood, its science was infantile and childlike, therefore not rational. Its theology was also influenced by the general state, and thence whilst it contained many truths which had been revealed to it, the general prevailing influences from the world through the senses gradually either destroyed a belief in them, or perverted them to favor sensual and worldly states. Thus science when governed by the senses made theology sensual also.

The coming of the Lord, however, restored to the Church new principles of theology and a new life. The injurious states induced by sensual appearances were rejected, and the Lord's followers were freed from the baneful influences of idolatry and the sensual rites and ceremonies connected with it. But even in the Christian Church the theology was not given in a rational form, because the people who were to receive it were not rational; and at that time they would have been incapable of perceiving and receiving a rational form of theology and religion. Nevertheless it entered into conflict not only with the old forms of religion, and destroyed them in great measure; but also with the sensual states of life prevailing, and for a time it gained power and influence in the world for good and advanced mankind in many ways. Unfortunately, in the third and fourth centuries, attempts were made to give rational explanations of many Christian doctrines and teachings, but instead of gaining a clearer view of them, false explanations in the form of the doctrines of the trinity of persons in God, faith alone, the atonement and others, produced a state of intellectual darkness, and for over a thousand years theological thought was in midnight darkness. Science, also, at this period, was in a similar condition. In the Christian world there seemed a total eclipse of reason in all planes; the commonest natural phenomena being explained on magical grounds. In Mohammedan countries a truer conception of God was retained than in Christian countries, and at the same time the sciences of mathematics, astronomy and medicine flourished.

In the course of time an awakening of the reason took place in Europe. This was aided by the philosophy of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, which were brought out from places where they had lain hidden for centuries. Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler and others gained rational conception of nature and the causes of various natural phenomena, which aided still more in the formation and development of the natural rational powers; and the next few centuries saw the dawn of the rational age of the human race. This new rational state did not agree with the perverted forms of theological thought, which had been produced to protect and favor the pretensions of the theologians of the dark ages. Hence a conflict arose. The

Church condemned the new ideas; science and religion entered again into conflict. Science was gaining some insight into natural laws and operations, and the Church met them with sensual conceptions and false theology, but these had no power against the new science, and eventually were overcome and acknowledged the truth of science.

As science advanced it formed conceptions of nature and the development of nature that brought it into the border-land between theology and science. The teachings, concerning the origin of matter, of force, of life, of living forms, have at length been ascribed to mere material origins, and thence science has almost totally excluded God, and the power and influence of God from the universe. Man is by these theories deprived of his soul, and all phenomena both human, animal, vegetable and material are ascribed to nature alone. Such, indeed, is the science of the present day. Let us see the influence which it is exercising on modern theological thought.

Science now, as ever, wishes to judge of all things from the material side alone. It wishes to test all things by the laws governing matter; thence has arisen those theories concerning the origin of the universe which exclude the Divine Being as the cause, and make force and matter eternal on the material plane. Thence, also, comes the theory, which ascribes the production of all living things, vegetable, animal and human, to merely natural laws operating in the plane of nature, by which the Divine is excluded from any creative work. Thus God is no longer regarded by science as the Creator or as the preserver of the universe. Man is regarded as a mere material product of nature devoid of a soul, and nature itself is regarded as existing alone without any relation to God or to the spiritual world.

This spirit and tendency of modern science operating in the plane of nature, and discussing those broad questions intermediate between pure theology and pure science have also had a profound effect on modern theological thought. Theology began by contesting every step of progress in geology, astronomy and other sciences, because it had given a sensual interpretation to the letter of the Word, and because its theology could not be harmonized with the natural reason which science was cultivating. Theology has at last almost abandoned the contest, and has in a great measure embraced the views propounded by science. The effect on modern theology is still further manifested in the strong tendency to apply these materialistic theories, as, for instance, that of evolution, to the development of theology to the exclusion of divine revelation and divine government.

Modern theological thought has already proceeded so far on these lines as to have declared that the idea and conception of God is not a revelation from God, but is a development of the ideas and conceptions of man. It arose, they say, from awe, produced by natural phenomena, because they did not understand the

natural causes which produced phenomena such as thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and the like. The conception of God was produced by man; likewise they ascribe all other religious concepts to the same source and to the operation of the same law. Theology and religion, therefore, in this view, are man-made. The Word, likewise in their estimation is the product of men. It is an aggregation of superstitions, fables, histories, and traditions, the greater part full of inaccuracies and errors, and in some places containing deliberate fabrications made to deceive men, such, for instance, as the account of the Lord's conception and birth according to this view. Thus we may see that natural science has so influenced modern theology that it has been degraded to the level of nature and of natural causes, until it also has excluded God from religion, from the Word, and from human lives and influences. Modern theology, therefore, in the true sense, is not theology, because it denies God, by excluding Him from the domain of theology and science. Do we not, in this outcome of modern theological thought, see the truth of Swedenborg's declaration when he said, speaking of the consummation of the age and of the abomination of desolation:

"There is no knowledge of God, no knowledge of the Lord, no knowledge of the Holy Supper, no knowledge of the holiness of the Word, no knowledge of redemption, no knowledge of faith, no knowledge of charity, no knowledge of free will, no knowledge of repentance, no knowledge of the remission of sins and of conversion, no knowledge of regeneration, no knowledge of imputation, no knowledge of heaven and hell, no knowledge of the state of man after death and thence of salvation, no knowledge of baptism, no knowledge of the Holy Supper. Thence it follows that there is no religion, and thence no Church." (D. IV, pt. vii, p. 141.)

This is an exact description of the spiritual condition of the modern theologian of the advanced school as manifested in the higher criticism, which condition has been brought about by the influence of modern science on modern theological thought through the exclusive regard of natural laws and phenomena.

When one Church comes to an end because it has perverted or lost all the genuine principles of religion, the Lord establishes another by revealing the genuine truths of the Word for its instruction. This the Lord has done in this age of the world by revealing through Emanuel Swedenborg the genuine truths of the Word in the form of a theology both rational and spiritual, and which, at the same time, is in harmony with all the truths of science.

We desire in the closing words of this address to give some general idea concerning Swedenborg's teachings and their relation to modern science, and also to call attention to the fact that in the truths he teaches, science and theology are united, not separated.

As in previous Churches the truth revealed by the Lord was adapted to the states which existed, and

thence theological truth was not then revealed in rational forms because no rational science existed which could serve as a foundation on which the interior things of doctrine could rest; so now on the other hand, when for several centuries a preparation had been going on in the natural plane of the human mind by which the natural rational faculty was being opened: in making a revelation of divine truths for the instruction of mankind, it was put in rational forms, and it treated of the subjects of theology and of science in a rational and philosophical manner. Yea further, in selecting an instrument for this great work, the Lord selected one whose training from infancy had been that of a scientist and a philosopher. Of his own preparation for this work Swedenborg says:

I was once asked how I, who was previously a philosopher, became a theologian? I answered, "In the same manner that fishermen became the disciples and apostles of the Lord;" and I added that I also from early youth had been a spiritual fisherman. On this my inquirer asked? "What is a spiritual fisherman?" to which I replied, "A fisherman in the spiritual sense of the Word, signifies a man who investigates and teaches natural truths, and afterward spiritual truths in a rational manner." (Influx, 20.)

This in a few words gives us a clear conception of Swedenborg's life, work and mission. He was first a man who investigated and taught natural truths in a rational manner. He was one of the great natural investigators of his time, who applied rational processes to all his investigations. He was not a mere theorist, a dreamer, a guesser of riddles who made a few happy hits and guesses. On the other hand he was a laborious collector of facts and experiments which he arranged in order, placed under law, evolved therefrom a system of truth through the application of great universal principles. He was an analytical philosopher building only on the solid foundation of the facts of nature. His works on anatomy and physiology are wonderful specimens of facts concerning the human body marshalled into order, by which the hidden functions and uses of all things of the human system are shown clearly and rationally. Here we find no guess work, no dreaming, but solid work built on a solid foundation. So, likewise, he proceeds in all his scientific and philosophical work, using his rational powers to ascertain the functions, uses and laws governing the realm of nature. As he says, he was a "philosopher who investigates and teaches natural truth in a rational manner." And those scientists who have given a careful examination to these philosophical works have testified to their value and importance; among whom we may mention the names of Langley, Holden and LeConte of our own country and our own time.

Swedenborg's use as a natural philosopher is not at an end, but is just beginning. The light of his genius has been hidden for a century and a half through prejudice and ignorance, but this prejudice

is now giving way ; men of science wish to know what he taught, and to compare it with modern attainments. The principles which he discovered and applied will in the future be more fully made use of in unlocking the secrets of nature, and his genius as a philosopher will receive the recognition due to the work of a great and learned man.

This philosopher, familiar with all the learning of his time, a great mathematician, a man having a wide and practical knowledge of mining and metallurgy, an astronomer whose genius grasped universal laws governing the universe, enabling him to anticipate the discoveries of the telescope in locating the center of our system of suns in the milky way, who first propounded the nebular hypothesis, and whose teachings concerning gravitation, electricity, magnetism and the cause of planetary motions are worthy of the profoundest study ; whose investigations and teachings in the realm of the human body surpass in rational power and insight the investigations of either earlier or later writers, this man I say was selected by the Lord on account of his capacity as a philosopher and was appointed to become an "investigator and teacher of spiritual truths in a rational manner." The rational form of his mind, the equipment for rational examination and investigation, rendered him the most suitable agent for giving to the world a rational theology. For this reason the Lord selected him for this office, and placed him in the conditions of mind and surroundings where he could investigate the nature of spiritual and divine things, not abnegating the powers of mind previously exercised, but using them to the fullest extent in investigating the nature and laws of the spiritual world, and even of the nature of the Divine Being Himself, so that he could investigate and teach spiritual truth in a rational manner.

The common opinion of Swedenborg at least as a theologian, has been, and still is with many, that he was a dreamer, a visionary, a wild, incoherent, voluminous writer of imaginary nonsense bordering on the ravings of the insane.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Swedenborg applied his genius for rational investigation to the new things and conditions in which he was placed. The spiritual world was opened to his investigation and examination. He thoroughly explored heaven, hell and the world of spirits, learned the nature of that world, the laws governing them, and after thorough investigation taught them to the world in the most exact and scientific manner. Likewise the Word of God was opened to him, and its treasures were exposed to his view ; and here again his mental powers were exercised to their fullest extent. Again in the realm of theology, ancient and modern, he thoroughly investigated and exposed with unsparing hand the falsities and fallacies into which it had fallen. In all the realm of human writing there is no keener use of the reasoning faculty than is mani-

fest in Swedenborg's works which deal with these subjects. Again he rises to the examination and investigation of the nature of God himself. Even here his natural powers are not laid aside, but receive their highest exercise, and his presentation of the nature of God, his work of creation, his relation to the world as Creator, Preserver, Sustainer, his relation to men as Instructor, Redeemer, Savior and Regenerator, brings forth a system of truth at once rational, spiritual and satisfying to the human soul. In all his work Swedenborg was called to exercise reason and intelligence in the investigation of truth on all these planes, and therefore the truth he taught is rational, and is adapted to the instruction of rational men. A work of preparation has been going on in the world for the past four centuries, which has been slowly forming men's minds in a rational form, leading them to seek for reason, law and causation in everything of nature, and to reject everything that seems arbitrary and incoherent. This preparation will eventually lead men to see a rational cause for all phenomena, one which will bring all things into a clear light, and harmonize all the conflicting views of science and theology. In each and all views there is a certain one-sided examination and application of some truth or series of truths ; but frequently when taken out of their true relationship to other things and to each other, they become fallacies and even falsities, then they darken the mind instead of enlightening it. For instance, in matter the foundation for all science exists. In the understanding of the relationship and qualities of various forms of matter, and the laws underlying them, we have the very material as it were by which the natural rational faculty is cultivated and developed ; but when material ideas and theories are assumed to cover all existences, then science transcends its limits, and falls into error and injurious falsities, which darken the mind in its consideration of all the higher problems of human existence and duties.

The system of science, philosophy and theology presented in the works of Swedenborg is the only comprehensive view of the universe in existence. It is the only system which presents in clear light the truths on all subjects and their relationship to each other. God, Spirit and Matter are shown to exist on three distinct planes of being, and each possesses its own peculiar qualities and attributes, and each has its connection with and relationship to the others.

All other systems of truth or of science are but partial, none is complete and full, because some link in the chain of existence is lacking. They give, indeed, glimpses of truth, valuable and useful facts ; some views of truth through the senses or by imagination or reason.

Swedenborg on the other hand, gathers all things into one comprehensive system of truth. That which at first arouses prejudice against him, and which has led to the rejection of his system by many without

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examination, is in reality the glory and crown of his work, and marks its superiority to all other systems. Swedenborg claims, for all his teaching of truth on the spiritual and theological plane, that none of it was his own truth and ideas, but that it was revealed to him by the Lord for the use of mankind, and that it is divine truth from heaven. On this account many reject his teaching without examination; yet reason itself will show that if there is a spiritual world, no true knowledge of it can exist unless a revelation of its nature be made from that world; and what method of revelation could be devised better adapted to most perfectly accomplish that purpose than to introduce into that world the spirit of a man so thoroughly equipped for investigation as was the mind of Swedenborg. So likewise we may see that to make known the truths on those subjects whose domain transcends physical investigation, no method could be devised for making known those truths so well adapted to accomplish the purpose as that claimed by Swedenborg to have been adopted in his case; and the final test of rationality exists in his case in the results of the investigation, when we see that the truths he teaches are beautiful, clear, rational, and harmonious with all subjects of human knowledge. Nature and God, matter and spirit, here unite in one harmonious whole. Science, as here viewed, is the very mirror in which the divine is seen on every hand, operating not by arbitrary dictum but by orderly influx according to His own immutable law.

This reconstruction of human knowledge in its form, order and beauty on the spiritual plane and resting in its corresponding natural, is depicted in corresponding imagery in that vision of John, in which he saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. It had the glory of God, and its light was like unto a stone most precious even like a jasper stone clear as crystal, and its foundations consisted of all manner of precious stones. Such indeed science itself becomes in the light of this mar-

velous system of truth, grand and beautiful indeed in nature itself, more beautiful and glorious as we ascend through nature to the interior things thereof, and finally ascending to the inmost plane of wisdom in the perception of the Lord God Almighty as the centre and soul of all things, their Creator, Sustainer and Maker.

### NOTES.

The recent revival of interest in Swedenborg's Scientific Works among New Churchmen has resulted, in Chicago, in the organization of an Association for the purpose of studying, and promoting interest in the study of, those works. After several preliminary meetings a simple and brief constitution was adopted.

The name of the new organization is The Swedenborg Philosophy Club. The officers are: Rev. L. P. Mercer, president; Mr. Riborg Mann, vice-president; Dr. J. B. S. King, secretary and treasurer. The first regular meeting was held on November 5, 1898. Rev. L. P. Mercer, Rev. N. D. Pendleton, Rev. David Klein, Rev. John S. Saul, Rev. E. D. Daniels, Messrs. Riborg Mann, Paul Seymour, A. C. Hanna, Wm. Niles, C. T. Champion, Wm. Smith, Jesse E. Burt, Miss Lilian Beekman, Miss Emma Wallenburg, and Dr. J. B. S. King were present.

Rev. L. P. Mercer read an extremely interesting and capable paper, entitled "The Natural Point and the First Aura." Miss Lilian Beekman was called upon by Mr. Mercer, during the reading of the paper, to illustrate the orbit of the Natural Point and the formation of the First Finite. This she did most ingeniously by means of wire, coiled in spiral and vortical forms. Forms of unexpected beauty and of extreme suggestiveness were produced out of these by variously modified circumferential pressure.

A free and animated discussion followed the reading of the paper. The success of this first regular meeting has created the liveliest interest, and all the members are looking forward to future meetings with great pleasure.

DR. J. B. S. KING, Secretary.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, through its Division of Forestry, is carrying on a series of investigations in regard to forest fires, in different parts of the United States. This investigation will include matters of interest to New Churchmen, on account of its covering the ground of the renewal of vegetation in the devastated districts. Such questions as the kinds of vegetation occupying the ground before and after the fires; the origin of the seeds; whence they come, and the modes of conveyance; the existence of seeds in the burned earth, etc., will be thoroughly investigated.