

The New Philosophy.

A Journal devoted to the exposition of the philosophy presented in the scientific, philosophical and theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg.

Vol. II.

URBANA, OHIO, MARCH, 1899.

No. 3.

An Illustration of Discrete Degrees From Le Conte.

WE have frequently treated of Discrete Degrees, on account of the importance of this subject in understanding Creation and all the deeper subjects of philosophy. In Le Conte's "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought," we find a very clear and rational presentation of the distinct nature of two degrees, the natural and spiritual, or what is the same of the difference between mind and matter, and we here give extracts from the chapter on the "Relation of Man to Nature," that our readers may have before them this author's views of the essential difference between mind and matter. He says :

"From the psychical point of view it is simply impossible to exaggerate the wideness of the gap that separates man from even the highest animals.

"In recent times, physiology has made great and, to many, startling advances in the direction of connecting mental phenomena with brain-changes. Now suppose all this, and even much more, be done in the way of associating, both in degrees and in kind, mental changes with brain changes. What then? 'Why,' say the materialists, 'we thereby identify *mind* with *matter*, mental forces with material forces. Thought, emotion, consciousness and will become products of the brain, in the same sense as bile is the product of the liver, or urea a product of the kidneys.'"

"Such is, in brief, the argument. Now the answer. We may do all we have and much more. We may push our knowledge in this direction as far as the boldest imagination can reach, and even then we are no nearer the solution of this mystery of the relation of brain changes and mental changes than we are now. Even then it would be impossible for us to conceive *how* brain changes produce mental changes or *vice versa*. Physical changes in sense organs, transmitted along nerve fibres, determine changes in brain substance. So much is intelligible. *But now there appear—how, it is impossible to imagine—consciousness, thought, emotion, etc.—phenomena of an entirely different order, belonging to an entirely different world.* So different, that it is impossible to imagine the na-

ture of the nexus between, or to construe the one in terms of the other. Brain-cells are agitated and thought appears; Aladdin's lamp is rubbed, and the genie appears. There is just as much intelligible casual relation between the two sets of phenomena in the one case as in the other."

"Now, this mystery is not in the nature of those which disappear under the light of knowledge. . . Even to a perfect science, the relation of brain-changes to mental states would be as great a mystery as now. It would even come out in stronger relief, because so many other apparent mysteries would disappear. *Like the essential nature of matter or the ultimate cause of force, this relation lies evidently beyond the domain of science. It requires some other kind of knowledge than human to understand it.*"

"But the materialists insist so much on the identity of brain-physiology with psychology, that even at the risk of tediousness we will multiply illustrations in order, if possible, to make this point still clearer. Suppose, then, we exposed the brain of a living man in a state of intense activity. Suppose, further, that our senses were absolutely perfect, so that we could see every change, of whatever sort, taking place in the brain substance. What would we see? Obviously nothing but molecular changes, physical and chemical; for to the outside observer there is absolutely nothing else to see. But the subject sees nothing of all this. His experiences are of a different order, viz: consciousness, thought, emotions, etc. Viewed from the *outside* there is—there can be—nothing but motions; viewed from the *inside*, nothing but thought, etc.—from the one side, only *physical* phenomena; from the other side, only *psychical* phenomena. Is it not plain that, from the very nature of the case, it must ever be so? Certain vibrations of brain molecules, certain oxidations with the formation of carbonic acid, water, and urea on the one side, and there appear on the other sensations, consciousness, thoughts, desires, volitions."

"But some will object. There is nothing specially strange and unique in all this, for the same mystery underlies the essential nature of all kinds

of force and matter, and therefore all phenomena. True enough, but with this difference: Physical and chemical forces and phenomena are indeed incomprehensible in their essential nature; but once accept their existence, and all their different forms are mutually convertible, construable in terms of each other and all in terms of motion. But it is impossible by any stretch of the imagination to thus construe mental forces and mental phenomena. It may, indeed, be impossible to conceive *how came* the plane of material existence, but, standing on that plane, all phenomena fall into intelligible order. But there is another plane above this one, having no intelligible relation with it. We must climb up and stand on this before its phenomena fall into intelligible order. In a word, material

forces and phenomena are, indeed, a mystery; but only of the *first order*. But mental and moral forces and phenomena are a mystery even from the standpoint of the other, and are therefore a mystery of the *second order*—a mystery within a mystery." p. 286-292.

We quote thus fully from Le Conte to present his clear and lucid explanation of the difference between mind and matter, between Spirit and body, which is a beautiful illustration of Swedenborg's doctrine of discrete degrees. Swedenborg, however also dispels the mystery of both kinds by his doctrine of the origin of matter from a higher degree and by his doctrine of correspondences which show the relationship that exists between the higher and lower degrees.

Swedenborg's Corpuscular Philosophy in Brief.

DR. TAFEL, in "The Documents Concerning Swedenborg," gives the date of this as written in 1740. It occupies but one page folio of his MS. He says: "This is a most important summary of the corpuscular theory propounded by the author in the 'Principles of Chemistry,' and in the 'Principia.' He states here clearly the number of the atmospheres, and specifies the particles which enter into the composition of the several metals and salts. At the end he makes this memorable statement: 'Haec vera sunt quia signum habes—these things are true, because I have the sign.'" Vol. II, p. 920.

We are indebted to Mr. Goerwitz, Prof. C. Vinet, Prof. Riborg Mann, and Mr. John Swanton, for the following Latin transcription from the Photolithograph MSS. and translation. The paper is very important as presenting in a brief and clear form Swedenborg's theory of the origin of the atmospheres and substances of the earth.

Philosophia Corpuscularis in Compendio. 1. Est substantia prima mundi, cum cæteris ei similibus in ordine. 2. Est activitas ejus substantiæ, unde ignis. 3. Sunt auræ mundi, quatuor, quæ sibi succedunt. Hæ particulæ sunt determinantes rerum, et propria mundi circumflui.

Ex his per determinationem generantur fluida spirituosæ dicta. 1. Ut fluidum spirituosum humanum ex aura prima, 2. fluidum spirituosum animale ex aura secunda. 3. Ex æthere fonte, unde insecta: hæc sunt determinantes primæ regni animalis.

Terrestres particulæ: 1. particulæ omnium minimæ rotundæ ex compressione auræ primæ, unde substantia principalis auri, 2. particulæ minores rotundæ ex compressione auræ secundæ, quæ est materia reliquorum metallorum, 3. globuli rotundi inertes, qui sunt constituentes aquarum, 4. Ipsi globuli per se inertes aquæ. Hæ sunt determinantes terrestres suo ordine, et sunt inertes. [Determinantes terrestres alterius speciei sunt. 1. Minima triangula et quadrata formata inter interstitia globulorum primitivorum aquæ; unde salia volatilia. 2. Majora triangula et quadrata formata inter globula aquæ, per interpositionem primiti-

Corpuscular Philosophy in Brief. 1. There is a first substance of the universe with others similar to it in order. 2. There is an activity of this substance, whence is fire. 3. There are four auras of the universe which succeed one another. The particles [composing these] are determinants of all things and properties of the circumfluent universe.

From these by determination are generated the so-called spirituous fluids: 1. a human spirituous fluid from the first aura, 2. an animal spirituous fluid from the second aura, 3. from the ether one is formed, whence insects [derive their existence]: these are the first determinants of the animal kingdom.

Terrestrial particles: 1. the smallest round particles of all from compression of the first aura, whence is the main substance of gold, 2. smaller round particles [that is, smaller than the following] from compression of the second aura, whence is the substance of the remaining metals, 3. inert round globules which are constituents of water [globules], 4. water globules themselves inert *per se*. These are terrestrial determinants in their proper order and are inert.

Terrestrial determinants of another kind are: 1. the smallest tetrahedral and cubic forms, formed in the interstices of the primeval water globules, whence are volatile salts, 2. larger tetrahedral and