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10 The Forces and Tendencies of Nature. [Jan.

ARTICLE II.

THE FORCES AND TENDENCIES OF NATURE.

From the pages of History we learn that Religion after Religion has sunk into oblivion, as the advancement of knowledge prohibited a longer imposition upon the credulity of mankind. A comparison of theoretic principles with the positive phenomena of nature must be the touchstone of the truth of every system. Even the great Church which rescued Europe from the hand of the barbarians, and which has torn down some altar of idolatry in almost every nation, exhibits manifest symptoms of approaching decay. Her advocates shrink with distrust from the advancing strides of Geology, Chemistry, Physiology, and Magnetism. Every new discovery lends its aid to refute some cherished theory or to call in question the rationality of some favorite doctrine.

In every age there have been deep and bold thinkers who, acknowledging only the supremacy of reason, have plunged into the abyss of Atheism rather than wear the shackles of inexplicable dogmas. To such minds we earnestly appeal and declare that the marriage between Philosophy and Religion has at length been consummated. Systems of Religion have been founded upon the hopes, the fears, the passions, and the ambition of man. Some have allured by the grant of sensual gratifications; others have attracted by the displays of pompous ceremony. One has bewitched with venerable traditions, instinct with the poetry of romance; another has beguiled with the radiant charm of Idealism. But the massive pillars of natural science support the beautiful temple of the New Church Theology. Let gigantic minds penetrate yet more deeply into the abstruse questions of Mathematics and Astronomy; let the Chemist experiment, the Anatomist dissect, the Physiologist investigate; let the Geologist read the mountains and disembowel the earth in search of the granite records of the world's history; every earnest and successful investigator of nature is a chosen workman, unconsciously strengthening the deep and broad foundations of the New Jerusalem.

We propose to consider the system of Swedenborg as an hypothesis for the explanation of all phenomena, spiritual and natural; and to see what support is afforded it by the more recent scientific discoveries.

The Swedish philosopher lays down the following axioms as part of the fundamental principles of his system.

1. The Infinite Divine Love, which is spontaneously outflowing or self-communicative, is the end of creation, while the Infinite Divine Wisdom is its cause.
2. The object which the end contemplates, and in which it rests, is the production of a being formed to reflect the image of his Creator, and to reciprocate the Love from which he originates.

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