

Biodiversity.

Justus von Liebig's "will"

This text, considered to be Liebig's "testament", has been published in various contexts both German and Italian. Many will challenge its authenticity, perhaps rightly so. We have decided to publish it as well because it helps to shed light on the great scientist Justus von Liebig.

Unfortunately, the true beauty of agriculture, with its stimulating intellectual principles, is mostly underestimated. The art of agriculture will be lost because of ignorant, unscientific and short-sighted teachers who will convince farmers to place all their hopes in universal remedies that do not exist in nature. By following their advice, blinded by short-term results, the farmers will forget the soil and lose sight of its intrinsic value and its influence.

I willingly admit that the use of chemical fertilizers was based on assumptions that do not exist in the real world. These fertilizers were supposed to lead to a complete agricultural revolution. Manure was to be completely abandoned, and mineral fertilizers were to be used for the replacement of the minerals absorbed by crops. Fertilizers would make farming the same crops (clover, wheat, etc...) possible on the same field, continuously and unfailingly, according to the farmer's whims and needs. I have sinned against the wisdom of the Creator and I have received the proper punishment. I wanted to bring an improvement to his work. In my blindness I believed that in the wonderful succession of laws that connect Life to the Earth's surface, continually renewing it, a link had been forgotten and that I, poor helpless worm, had to provide this missing link.

My studies on soil now lead me to state that biological life will develop under the sun's influence on the outer surface of the earth. The great Master and Builder has bestowed on the earth's components the ability to attract each other and to contain all the elements necessary to nourish plants and animals, just like a magnet holds onto iron particles without losing a single one.

Our Master has added a second law to the first that states that the plants, and the soil with which they are related to, are a huge mechanism for water purification. With this particular ability, the soil removes from water all the substances that are dangerous to humans and animals, all products of decay and putrefaction, whether arising from animals or plants.

My behaviour can only be justified by the fact that man is a product of his time and only manages to break free from conventional thought when a brutal strain pushes him to muster all his strength to cut free from these manacles of incorrect conditioning. The belief that plants absorb their nourishment from a solution created with the rainwater in the ground was a popular opinion, and was carved in my mind. The source of my absurd behaviour was just this mistaken belief.

Do not be too critical when a chemist is mistaken in the appraisal of chemical fertilizers; he has based his conclusion on facts that were not learnt from experience, but rather drawn from agricultural texts considered correct and reliable. When I learned why my fertilizers were not effective as they should be, I felt like a person reborn.

Finally, all farming procedures can be explained on the basis of natural laws that govern them. Now that the principle is known and clear to all, only the surprise for not having found it much earlier remains. But the human spirit is a very strange thing. Thus what does not fit easily into the scheme of conventional wisdom simply does not exist.

