

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF
HERBERT SPENCER. BEING AN
EXAMINATION OF THE FIRST
PRINCIPLES OF HIS SYSTEM**

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The philosophy of Herbert Spencer. Being an examination of the First principles of his system
by B. P. Bowne

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Being an Examination of the First Principles of his System.

By B. P. BOWNE, A. B.



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TO
PROF. BENJAMIN N. MARTIN—

ONE OF THOSE RARE SOULS
WHO KNOW HOW TO COMBINE FAITH AND FREEDOM;
WHO, UNDETERRED BY PROSCRIPTION, SEEK TO PROVE ALL THINGS,
WHILE, UNFASCINATED BY NOVELTY,
THEY LOYALLY HOLD FAST ALL THAT IS GOOD—

I dedicate this Book.

B. P. BOWNE.

P R E F A C E.

THE following discussion is based upon several essays which lately appeared in the "New Englander." They have been extended somewhat, and, for the sake of greater unity than essays which were at first independent of each other could have, their form has also been altered. I have quoted copiously from Mr. Spencer for two reasons: First, no candid writer, whose purpose is as controversial as mine, will trust himself to represent his opponent's doctrine without the check, both of exact quotation and exact reference; and, secondly, because so contradictory and absurd are some of Mr. Spencer's positions, that my unsupported statements about them would not be believed.

Mr. Spencer claims to seek for truth. I

make the same claim; and, believing most heartily that Mr. Spencer has not found the truth, I have ventured to say so. Still the appeal is not to sentiment, much less to authority, but to the judicial reason. Let reason judge between us.

HALLE, *November, 1873.*

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REVIEW OF HERBERT SPENCER.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS EVOLUTION?



NO one longer holds with the ancient skeptic, that all things remain as they were since the beginning. All alike admit that the universe, as we know it, has had a beginning in time, and the problem which all alike propose is, to account for its origin and history. There was a time in the eternal duration when the present order did not exist, and a time when it began to be. How? This is the question which both science and religion attempt to answer.

Until within a few years Theism has been accustomed to conceive of creation as an instantaneous work. "The Creator spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast." In a moment, as the lightning flashes out of the dark night, so the worlds were "won from the void and formless infinite," and each one started on its way, perfect after its kind. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made. At his command the light kindled, and the oceans filled, and the whole earth swarmed with life. But it is claimed that the long times of