

**ON MR. SPENCER'S FORMULA
OF EVOLUTION AS AN
EXHAUSTIVE STATEMENT OF
THE CHANGES OF THE UNIVERSE**

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On Mr. Spencer's Formula of Evolution as an Exhaustive Statement of the Changes of the Universe by Malcolm Guthrie

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MALCOLM GUTHRIE

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ON MR. SPENCER'S
FORMULA OF EVOLUTION

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CHANGES OF THE UNIVERSE.

BY
MALCOLM GUTHRIE.

FOLLOWED BY A RESUMÉ OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITICISMS
OF SPENCER'S "FIRST PRINCIPLES."

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1879.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS criticism is not written in a spirit hostile to the doctrine of Evolution, considered as a development according to natural orders of sequence from the more simple to the more complex, nor to the theory of the development of the higher organisms from the lower.

Free from all bias, it is simply intended to be a logical examination of an important theory which has been placed before the thinking world for its acceptance.

This criticism I present in the following manner:—

First, I ask what Mr. Spencer means by Philosophy, and what is the problem it involves. I find, according to him, that Philosophy is completely unified knowledge, and that

THE PROBLEM OF PHILOSOPHY

IS

To state an intelligible formula, which, by its application to the Homogeneous, will explain, and enable us to construct, ideally, all the changes of the universe.

I then enter upon an inquiry into Mr. Spencer's Formula of Philosophy, which, though intelligible, appears

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to me insufficient, inasmuch as its two factors, Matter and Motion, do not afford an explanation of the facts of life and mind.

I then attempt to amend the formula by the introduction of the term *Force*, which Mr. Spencer largely employs in his preliminary exposition, but which he has afterwards allowed to drop out of the formula, and I then find that the amended formula, though sufficient, is unintelligible.

I next endeavour, from a study of Mr. Spencer's exposition, to frame a formula which shall be a true representation of it, but which, at the best, I am only able to make a sufficient formula by making it vague, and to that extent unintelligible.

From which it results, that although the changes of the universe, in all its departments, conform to certain general processes of development or Evolution, and thus present a general similarity in the order of their changes, yet we cannot state an intelligible formula, which, by its application to the Homogeneous, will enable us to account for and construct, ideally, the changes of the universe.

From this it follows, that however much I may admire, and however much our thinkers may value, some of Mr. Spencer's great generalisations, we must come to the conclusion that he has not succeeded in solving the main problem which he submits and sets down as the aim of his work.

The implication is that no such problem of Philosophy

can ever be solved, and that there is in the universe a factor which is more than Matter and Motion, and more than Force considered as the sum total of them.

This factor, and its import as a matter of science and of individual personal value, is reserved for consideration in the fifth and concluding portion of this criticism.

As a matter of interest to the student of Mr. Spencer's Philosophy, I append the results of a task which I lately undertook for my own instruction. This consists of a statement of the principal criticisms affecting the essential theories involved in the work, so far as they have come under my notice.

This work is an elaboration of papers read before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, Sessions 1877-78 and 1878-79. The references are to "First Principles," third edition, October 1875.

2 PARKFIELD ROAD,
LIVERPOOL, June 1879.



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