

**ORGANIC SCIENTIFIC
PHILOSOPHY.
SCIENTIFIC THEISM**

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Organic Scientific Philosophy. Scientific Theism by Francis Ellingwood Abbot

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FRANCIS ELLINGWOOD ABBOT

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SCIENTIFIC THEISM

SCIENCE.

E se 'l mondo laggiù ponesse mente
Al fondamento che Natura pone,
Seguendo lui, avria buona la gente.

DANTE: PARADISO, VIII. 140-142.

And if the world below would fix its mind
On the foundation which is laid by Nature,
Pursuing that, 't would have the people good.

LONGFELLOW'S TRANSLATION.

THEISM.

La gloria di Colui che tutto muove
Per l' universo penetra, e risplende
In una parte più, e meno altrove.

DANTE: PARADISO, I. 1-3.

The glory of Him who moveth everything
Doth penetrate the universe, and shine
In one part more and in another less.

LONGFELLOW'S TRANSLATION.

ORGANIC SCIENTIFIC PHILOSOPHY

SCIENTIFIC THEISM

BY

FRANCIS ELLINGWOOD ABBOT, Ph.D.

London:

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1885.

20.727. C. 21.

To
The Hallowed Memory
of
My Mother.

Tender and true, with love's deep wisdom wise,
Thou taught'st the Child the sure, pure Truth to prize,
More than earth's gold the gold of God to prize;
And now the Man, who only learned to hate
Thy joy for his reward, with blinded eyes
Lays the won gold, unheeded, on thy grave.

PREFACE.

THE foundation and immediate occasion of this little book, whose size, I trust, is no necessary measure of its usefulness, was a lecture given before the Concord Summer School of Philosophy, July 30, 1885, in a "symposium" on the question: "Is Pantheism the Legitimate Outcome of Modern Science?" The other lecturers on this subject were Mr. John Fiske, Prof. William T. Harris, Rev. Dr. Andrew P. Peabody, Prof. George H. Howison, and Dr. Edward Montgomery, — the lectures of the last two gentlemen being read by Mr. Thomas Davidson. The contents of my own lecture, entirely re-written from the first page, constitute less than one third of what is here printed.

The real origin of the book, however, was two articles published in 1864 in the *North American Review*, while it was still under the scholarly care and joint editorial management of Professors James Russell Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton, — one in the July number on "The Philosophy of Space

and Time," and the other in the October number on "The Conditioned and the Unconditioned."

Some of the criticisms here made on Mr. Herbert Spencer's philosophy, for much of which I have the highest admiration, were embodied in a general article on his *First Principles*, entitled "Positivism in Theology," and published in the now discontinued *Christian Examiner* in Boston, March, 1866; and in a special and elaborate review of his *Principles of Biology*, published in the *North American Review* for October, 1868, under the caption "Philosophical Biology." To both of these articles Mr. Spencer made replies, which to my mind were eminently inadequate and unsuccessful, — to the former, through Prof. E. L. Youmans, in a subsequent issue of the *Christian Examiner*, and to the latter in a special pamphlet, entitled *Spontaneous Generation*, and published by D. Appleton and Company in 1870. I make these references in fairness to Mr. Spencer, that those who wish may investigate the subject more fully.

The theory of Phenomenism *versus* the theory of Noumenism; the theory of Idealistic Evolution *versus* the theory of Realistic Evolution; and the Mechanical theory of Realistic Evolution *versus* the Organic theory of Realistic Evolution, — these are the vital philosophical problems of our century, and their solution must determine and decide that of the vital religious problem of Theism, Atheism, and Pantheism. The discussion of these problems con-

stitutes the substance of this book; and I must express my belief (not, I trust, without becoming modesty, for I submit my own belief unreservedly to the final verdict of the universal reason of mankind) that it formulates a philosophical revolution, since it substitutes the philosophized scientific method for the now accepted phenomenistic method, in the settlement of all philosophical questions. In the opening lecture of the "symposium" above mentioned, Mr. Fiske referred to the "revolution effected by the influence of modern science upon modern philosophy" (I quote from memory only), but did not show what this revolution is. To show what it is, and to what it leads in the sphere of religious belief, is the special object of my book.

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 For a quarter of a century it has been my growing conviction that the solution of all the problems named can only be accomplished by the principle of the OBJECTIVITY OF RELATIONS, together with its correlative and derivative principle of the PERCEPTIVE UNDERSTANDING. In my article on "The Philosophy of Space and Time," published (as already stated) in the *North American Review* for July, 1864, occurs the following passage, which not obscurely hints at these two fundamental principles of a reformed modern philosophy:—

"Now the five modifications of extension above described [magnitude, form, position, distance, and direction] are all *relations* among the limits of extension; and, inasmuch as relations cannot possibly