

Mr. Bowne applies the *reductio ad absurdum* to these "Laws of the Unknowable," and reasserts the ancient doctrine, old as the human soul, of a personal, real, living, loving God.

"But while insisting upon a real knowledge of God," says Mr. Bowne, "I am very far from claiming a complete one. 'Who can search out the Almighty to perfection?' has been the language of the best religious thinkers from the time of Job until now. All our science and all our theology are but the slightest surface play on the bosom of fathomless mystery; but this is a very different thing from saying that what we know is untrustworthy. Measureless mystery wraps us round, and gulfs of nescience yawn on every side, but what we know is sure. The little island of knowledge, though washed on every side by the boundless ocean of the unknown, is still anchored in reality, and is not a cloud-bank which may at any moment disappear into the void." (P. 72.)

"Out of this blank abyss of total darkness, (*i.e.* philosophical pure idealism,) neutral alike to good and evil, no inspiration of the soul can come. Religion cannot live on nescience, and reverence is impossible toward a blank. Though, to be sure, we now see through a glass darkly, yet the image there discerned must not be wholly distorted. In contemplating Him, (the Infinite One), we shall ever be as men watching in the darkness of early dawn, with a deep sense of awe and mystery pressing upon us; still there must be a glow on the hill-tops, and a flush in the upper air. There must indeed be the solemn silence, that reverence may bow low and worship; but there must also be the voice which we can trust, bidding us be not afraid." (Pp. 77, 78.)

The second part of Mr. Spencer's System treats of "The Laws of the Knowable." Its scope is very ambitious. "It is," our author remarks, "an attempt to rewrite the book of Genesis on the *a priori* plan, and from a scientific stand-point; to exhibit the method by which the primal cloud-bank, without any directing mind, has spun and woven itself into a universe which seems a miracle of design"—how cosmos emerged, self-evolved, out of chaos, and how the original fire-mist condensed into a myriad of worlds teeming with sentient and intellectual