

dence, however, would seem to disprove rather than prove his position; but his ingenuity in trying to press them all into his service is exceedingly interesting. Moreover, Mr. Spencer is entitled to great credit for his industrious gathering together of interesting facts concerning the religions of the uncivilized portion of mankind; also for his strong testimony that the modern theory of evolution favors the belief of man in an "inscrutable existence everywhere manifested," even though he denies to this existence personality, and denies that it is knowable.

Notwithstanding, however, the ingenuity and interest of the ghost theory of the origin of religion, it is marked by so many fatal defects that it has to be abandoned as a scientific, a true explanation of the phenomena of religion as a whole, and as to its origin. Under and back of all its charm and plausibility we find in it the following defects:

First, the theory is not scientific in its method. To be such it should start with *all* that we have of religion at the present day, and by close and careful analysis, and painstaking historic investigation, following these facts as far back as they lead, and, standing on this *ultima thule* of facts, look still farther backward toward the primitive man, and thus get as distinct as possible a scientific view of his ideas and habits. This would be the inductive method of procedure in this matter, and not the deductive, the method of modern science and not of the middle ages. But so far from pursuing the scientific method, he assumes the point which he is to prove, namely, that primitive man had no religion at first. He *assumes* that the theory of evolution, which he says prevails in biology, prevails also in psychology and sociology, and then proceeds elaborately to bolster up his assumption by certain testimonies of travelers, archeologists, and ethnologists. To use his own language: "The doctrine of evolution will help us to delineate primitive ideas in some of their leading traits. Having inferred, *a priori*, the characters of these ideas, we shall be, as far as possible, prepared to realize them in imagination, and then to discern them as actually existing."* In other words, his method is first to conceive what primitive man must have been according to Mr. Spencer's theory of evolution, and then seek for facts in nature and the history of savages confirmatory of that conception. This method, is, of course, best adapted to the support of the theory of evolution which Mr. Spencer has adopted. But it is a striking illustration of special pleading—a remarkable example of that philosophical bias which makes the construction of a science of sociology so exceedingly difficult.

Another glaring and unpardonable defect in the ghost theory is its practical ignoring of the highest and most ancient and widespread religions which have influenced and to-day are molding to such a great degree large masses of men. Where pages are given to some crude

* Principles of Sociology, Vol. I., p. 97.