

place in the system, as an inscrutable energy which lies back of all phenomenal sequences, and which is the ground of all changes from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous in ever recurring succession. This inscrutable power is termed the absolute and may be identified in a certain sense with God. Spencer's system is thus monistic, materialistic and agnostic. As monistic it leans to pantheism; as materialistic it leads to atheism; and as agnostic it destroys religion. Yet Spencer finds religion an abiding and universal fact among men, and he feels bound to explain it in some way. We proceed to present his explanation and then to examine it.

I. *The Explanation of the origin of Religion.* Though Spencer expounds many things after the manner of the positivists, he is utterly dissatisfied with their explanations of the origin of religion. He clearly discerns that even if present mature monotheistic forms of religion have been developed historically from some phase of fetichism, the question must still arise as to how the religious consciousness which even fetichism involves at first came to be generated. Observing this Spencer properly feels that he must go back of every form of polytheistic fetichism for an explanation of the origin of religion, for religion cannot be explained merely by that which already implies its existence. Spencer here has done good service in refuting the positivist fetichistic explanation of religion. As Muller also does, he shows that the positivists do not go to the root of the problem. It remains to be seen whether Spencer himself shall be more successful in dealing with the problem.

In explaining Spencer's views on this subject there is considerable difficulty in getting his opinions clearly and consistently before us. This difficulty arises largely from the fact that Spencer does not always present his views in the same way. Indeed the difference of view expressed in his various treatises is so great that it is hard to account for it in any other way than that Spencer's opinions have undergone substantial change upon the question of the origin of religion since he first set them forth. In his "*First Principles*" he seems inclined to connect the origin of the religious consciousness in man with the results of the principle of causation as observed in nature. The idea of the supernatural or divine arises, he says, from a mistaken application of the principle of causation to the phenomena of nature. The storm, the earthquake &c., produced a kind of awe in the mind of primitive man, and he