

of the tribal deity was such, and such his worship, that in the best and most spiritual part of the nation they passed naturally, though not without a crisis, into universal Fatherhood and a religion of Humanity.

We said that if no reality corresponded to the idea of Deity it would be difficult to account for the existence of the idea. Mr. Pringle replies that the difficulty is no greater than it is with regard to the idea of Fairies or of the Devil. Fairies are merely local creatures of the imagination, without any sort of root in our moral nature. As to the Devil with horns and hoofs, he also is a creature of the imagination, and may go with the anthropomorphic conceptions of the Deity. But moral evil and the perpetual conflict of our higher tendencies with it are ideas which have a root in our moral nature, and for which, as well as for the idea of Deity, it seems to us difficult to account without supposing some corresponding reality.

The idea of Deity lurks where Mr. Pringle would least suspect it. Mr. Spencer himself in one of the opening chapters of his "First Principles," after combating and rejecting the Theistic hypothesis in its ordinary forms, falls back upon the Unknowable as the background and basis of our existence. "By continually seeking," he says, "to know and being continually thrown back with a deepened conviction of the impossibility of knowing, we may keep alive the consciousness that it is alike our highest wisdom and our highest duty to regard that through which all things exist as the Unknowable." In this and subsequent passages he evidently looks upon the Unknowable as an object of reverence, otherwise it would hardly be our highest duty to regard it as that through which all things exist, or to maintain any particular attitude towards it. But Unknowableness in itself excites no reverence: we do not venerate an insoluble problem or a fact which is irrecoverably lost: and the same may be said of anything material, even though it be supposed infinite and eternal. Nothing excites our reverence but a Person, or at least a Moral Being. There lingers in Mr. Spencer's mind the belief that the present limit of our knowledge is the veil of Deity.