ANIMISM

THE SEED OF RELIGION

By

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"THE STORY OF CREATION," "PIONEERS OF EVOLUTION," ETC., ETC

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS little book contains more fact than comment, because the departure from the ordinary handling of the subject of Primitive Religion which it makes demands that the presentment of evidence shall precede theories of Origins.

The interconnection between subordinate parts and the main theme has rendered it impossible to avoid here and there crossing the margins of areas which will come under survey in other volumes of this series.

E. C.

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ANIMISM

1. Pre-human Elements in Religion.

In an article on "Democracy and Reaction," in the *Nineteenth Century* of April, 1905, Mr. John Morley remarks that "if we want a platitude, there is nothing like a definition. Perhaps most definitions hang between platitude and paradox. There are said to be ten thousand definitions of Religion." One of these is supplied by Parson Thwackum in *Tom Jones*. "When I mention religion, I mean the Christian religion, and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion, and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England." That easy-going cleric expressed what is in the minds of the majority of people when the word "religion" is used. He lived before the birth of the science of comparative theology; those who have applied its methods and profited

by its results can pass in larger sympathy from specific creeds to partake of the universal spirit which every creed strives to embody.

To have done this is to have grasped the distinction between Religion and Theology, between what is fundamental and what is accidental, between that which is one in essence and abiding, and that which is manifold and fleeting. For religion was before all theologies, which are but concrete and partial aspects of it. It is before them all, being born of the emotions; and unaffected by them all, being independent of readjustments of creeds and dogmas. In that storehouse of fact and suggestion, *Primitive Culture*, Dr. Tylor remarks that "no religion lies in utter isolation from the rest, and the thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even of human existence."[1] One object of the present brief treatise is to pursue those clues still farther back, even beyond the human to the pre-human in the life-history of our globe. For nearly every book on the Origin of Religion assumes a non-religious stage

[1] Vol. i. p. 421.

as preceding a religious stage in man's development, while many of them assume what are now known to be secondary stages as sole and primary. All in vain, so far as approach to solution of the problem goes, because the writers have not travelled beyond the historic period, and have looked for consistency of ideas where only confusion was possible. "I believe," says Mr. Hopkins in his *Religions of India*, "that all interpretations of religion which start from the assumption that fetishism, animal-worship, nature-worship, or ancestor-worship was a primitive form from which all other forms were derived, are destined to be overthrown. The earliest beliefs were a jumble of ideas, and it was long before the elements of the different kinds of religions were discriminated."

2. Brain in Animal and Man. The inquiry will take us along the lines of continuous organic development, bringing into view the unbroken connection between animal and human psychology The descent of man and his fellow-mammals, as of all living things below these, from a common ancestry, is demonstrated to the satisfaction of every competent authority. But in many minds there lingers the old Adam of bias which would

limit that descent to man's bodily structure, and which refuses to admit that the mental differences between him and other animals are differences only of degree, and not of kind. This reluctance will vanish only when preconceived notions of the soul or spirit as a special human endowment are dispelled. And this will follow when knowledge of the fundamentally identical nature of the apparatus of the mind in man and brute is acquired. Let us summarize the facts about that apparatus, with which alone we are here concerned. For we know nothing of mind apart from matter, or of matter apart from mind; and how the passage is effected from the nerve-cells to consciousness in animals and in man remains a mystery. But we know that advance in intelligence proceeds *pari passu* with increasing complexity of brain-structure. This is traceable along the whole series of animals. In the Invertebrates the brain is a mass of nerve ganglia near the head end of the body ("the brain of an ant is one of the most marvellous atoms of matter in the world, perhaps more so than the brain of a man"[2]); in the lowest Vertebrate, the fish, it is

[2] Darwin's *Descent of Man*, p. 54.

very small compared with the spinal cord; in reptiles its mass increases, and in birds it is still more marked. In all the lower and smaller forms the surface of the brain is either smooth or evenly rounded, or exhibits a few grooves known as "sulci," which separate the ridges or convolutions of the substance of the brain. "But in the larger mammals these grooves become extremely numerous, and the intermediate convolutions proportionately more complicated, until in the elephant, the porpoise, the higher apes, and man, the cerebral surface appears a perfect labyrinth of tortuous foldings. . . . The surface of the brain of a monkey exhibits a sort of skeleton map of man's, and in the man-like apes the details become more and more filled in until it is only in minor characters that the chimpanzee's or the orang's brain can be structurally distinguished from man's."[3] It follows from this that if any part of the mental apparatus is injured or thrown out of gear, the result is the same in each case—funotional upset or suspense. The dog and the horse behave as we behave, nor can this be otherwise, because their sense-organs report, of course

[3] Huxley's *Man's Place in Nature*, p. 96.

with vast differences in result, to their central nervous systems, the messages which are transmitted by the vibrations of the ethereal medium and the air, and, within the limits of their consciousness, they are affected as we are affected, and their actions ruled accordingly. "If there is no ground for believing that a dog thinks, neither is there any for believing that he feels."

Therefore the doctrine of Evolution has no "favoured-nation clause" for man. It admits no break in the psychical chain which links him to the lowest life forms, be these plant or animal. It finds no arrest of continuity between the bark of the dog and the orations of Demosthenes, or between the pulsations of an amoeba and the ecstasies of a saint. "Great is the mystery of heredity"; of the origin and transmission, through numberless generations, of tendencies traceable to remote prehuman ancestors, tendencies which, potent against fundamental changes, are a key to constant elements in human nature. Before such mystery, one among many, the stories of miracles wrought by gods and holy men, of which sacred books and traditions tell, are but travesties of hidden wonders. The verdict of modern psychology is that "the mind of

the animal exhibits substantially the same phenomena which the human mind exhibits in its early stages in the child. This means that the animal has as good a right to recognition as a mind-bearing creature, so to speak, as the child; and if we exclude him we should also exclude the child. Further, this also means that the development of the mind in its early stages, and in certain of its directions of progress, is revealed most adequately in the animals."[4] Therefore, to study man apart is to misconceive him; it is to refuse to apply the only key to interpretation of the story of his intellectual and spiritual history. There should be, nowadays, little need to labour this point. The artificial lines drawn between instinct in the animal and reason, as the prerogative of man, have vanished. As Darwin puts it in the *Descent of Man*: "It is a significant fact that the more the habits of any particular animal are studied by a naturalist, the more he attributes to reason, and the less to unlearned instincts."[5] And the various stages of the reasoning faculty pass into one another by imperceptible gradations. It is only within recent

[4] Prof. Baldwin's *Story of the Mind*, p. 35. [5] p. 75.

years that we have realized how complex are our mental faculites; what a vast number of sense-conveyed impressions pass unnoted by us to storage in our brains; impressions which explain abnormal workings attributed by spiritualists to external, even supernatural, agencies. We have yet to learn that mind is far wider than consciousness.

What is explicit in man is implicit in the animal. Putting the matter in his usual incisive way, Hobbes says that "the thoughts of man are every one a representation or appearance of some quality or other accident of a body without us which is commonly called an object. The original of them all is that which we call Sense, for there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first totally or by part been begotten upon the organs of sense." [6] And the like applies to the animal. Every one who has kept a dog will agree with Hume that "beasts are endowed with thought and reason as well as man." We have the same warrant for this as in the case of our fellows; we cannot get inside the mind of either; but we infer from their actions that like mental processes go on within

[6] *Leviathan*, chap. 1, part 1.

them. The animal remembers, storing-up sensations in definite areas of the brain; it learns from experience that certain results follow certain events; in a rough sort of way, it puts two and two together, and adapts means to ends. It distinguishes differences in things, seeking the one and avoiding the other, a faculty which is the product of experience, as shown in the stupidity of colts and puppies compared with the sagacity of horses and dogs. If, as there seems no reason to doubt, animals dream, then, as Huxley says: "It must be admitted that ideation goes on in them while they are asleep, and, in that case, there is no reason to doubt that they are conscious of trains of ideas in their waking state."[7] They make approach to the highest mental operations in forming generic ideas of things. "One of the most curious peculiarities of the dog mind is its inherent snobbishness, shown by the regard paid to external respectability. The dog who barks furiously at a beggar will let a well-dressed man pass him without opposition. Has he not then a 'generic idea' of rags and dirt associated with the idea of aversion, and that of sleek broadcloth associated with the idea of liking?" In

[7] *Collected Essays*, vol. vi. p. 124.

this matter, so feeble is his conceptual faculty, the lowest savage of to-day is not on a much higher plane than the most intelligent animals. Upon the slow development of this faculty, Pfleiderer remarks in his *Philosophy of Religion*: "If we require whole years to develop abstract ideas in the minds of our children, though they have the benefit of all their inheritance from the past, which thought for them, it must have needed centuries, and even millenniums, for primitive man to arrive at the same results."[8] Skirting, and never penetrating, the deep mysteries of consciousness, all that may be said is that "the animals probably do not have a highly organized sense of Self as man does, and the reason doubtless is that such a Self-consciousness is the outcome of life and experience in the very complex social relations in which the human child is brought up, and which he alone is fitted by his inherited gifts to sustain."[9] And these relations could never have become what they are but for those structural changes in man which made articulate speech possible, and, with this, the transmission of ideas and experiences to which the art of writing secured permanence.

[8] Vol. iii. p. 4. [9] Baldwin, p. 55.

3. Man in the Making.

Unbroken mental development along the whole organic line being admitted, let us inquire whether there be any point in the series where it can be said: "Here the higher mammals and man show faculties in common wherein the primal elements of religion are present." The word "man" can here have only a vague significance, since the stage of his evolution, which is assumed, lies far behind that which yields the earliest known traces of his presence. At the back of the comparatively recent Neolithic or polished stone-using age there are the prehistoric Palæolithic or Old Stone Age, with its relics of rudely-fashioned tools and weapons, and of primitive art in scratchings of mammoth and reindeer on bone and slate; and the vastly older Eolithic age, whose artificially-chipped flints have been found in large numbers in the plateau gravel of South-East England. More remote, in a dateless past, must be placed the proto-human, perhaps represented by the calvaria or portion of skull, two molar teeth and thigh-bone, found in an Upper Pliocene deposit in Java in 1892 by Dr. Dubois, to which the name *Pithecanthropus erectus*, or "upright ape-man," has been given. In these fragments

experts in anthropology see "the nearest likeness yet found of the human ancestor at a stage immediately antecedent to the definitely human stage, and yet at the same time in advance of the simian or ape-like stage."[10] We are, therefore, yet an immeasurable distance from *Homo sapiens*, and in near touch with *Homo alalus*, semi-erect, big-brained, deft-handed, because of his opposable thumb, communicating with other *homines alali* by various grunts and groans, supplemented by grimaces, gestures and postures. This is no fancy sketch; there are to this day tribes extant, like the Veddahs of Ceylon, who depend on signs, grimaces and guttural sounds which bear little or no resemblance to articulate speech. Darwin, in citing Captain Cook's comparison of the language of the Fuegians to a man clearing his throat, says that "certainly no Englishman ever cleared his throat with so many hoarse, guttural, and clicking sounds," while he adds that the difference between such races and civilized man is "greater than that between a wild and domesticated animal." Between creatures not fully human and their nearest congeners, the mental

[10] Duckworth's *Anthropology and Morphology*, p. 520.

resemblances must have been greater than the differences, and, therefore, the impressions made upon them by the outer world similar in character. That outer world, full of movements and sights and sounds, was the sole exciting cause of sensations among which affright had largest play. Hobbes, whose shrewd insight anticipated much that has been written on this matter, says that "the feare of things invisible is the naturall Seed of Religion."[11] If in "invisible" we include the sense of mystery investing the nature of things, the old philosopher's theory holds the field. For in the degree that anything is unknown, it remains a source of dread, and, therefore, of evil, since from "feare of the invisible" spring the feelings of inferiority, helplessness and dependence which man's surroundings quicken, and which are the raw material of theologies and rituals. It is a far cry from the quasi-human stage even to the remote civilization of Mesopotamia, yet it is not inopportune to remark that among the early Chaldeans, "the spiritual, the *Zi*, was that which manifested life, and the test of the manifestation of life was movement."[12]

[11] *Leviathan*, chap. 11, p. 1.
[12] Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 328.

4. Animal and Human Psychology.

Man and brute alike tremble before the unusual; they fear, but know not why, or what, they fear. As yet man has no conception of body as home of an indwelling spirit, and no conception of surroundings as natural and supernatural; therefore, no ideas of an after life, no hope of heaven, and no dread of hell. Things are not regarded as living because they are the abode of spirits, "but as living because of their own proper powers, or because they are self-power." This, to all intents and purposes, is NATURALISM; or, as Professor Flint calls it, Naturism: a stage antecedent to ANIMISM, or the belief in spirits everywhere, in the non-living as well as in the living. In Naturalism man and animal meet together. Among his many experiments, the late Mr. Romanes tells of one upon a Skye terrier, which "used to play with dry bones by tossing them in the air, throwing them to a distance, and generally giving them the appearance of animation, in order to give himself the ideal pleasure of worrying them. On one occasion I tied a long and fine thread to a dry bone and gave him the latter to play with. After he had tossed it about for a short time, I took the opportunity, when it had

fallen at a distance from him and while he was following it up, of gently drawing it away from him by means of the long, invisible thread. Instantly his whole demeanour changed. The bone, which he had previously pretended to be alive, began to look as if it were really alive, and his astonishment knew no bounds. He first approached it with nervous caution, but, as the slow receding movement continued and he became quite certain that the movement could not be accounted for by any residuum of force which he had himself communicated, his astonishment developed into dread, and he ran to conceal himself under some articles of furniture, there to behold at a distance the 'uncanny' spectacle of a dry bone coming to life." Here, as Mr. E. P. Evans remarks by way of comment, "we have the exercise of close observation, judgment, reason, and imagination culminating in the exhibition of superstitious fear—all the elements, in short, which constitute religious sentiment in its crudest form." [13]

[13] *Evolutional Ethics and Animal Psychology*, p. 355.

5. Naturalism; or Conception of Power Everywhere.

Turning to man himself, we have the evidence of Mr. Risley, an expert in anthropology, gathered from extant peoples on a very low plane, and therefore of supreme value in any attempt to assume what was the attitude of man at his lowest. In trying to find out what "the jungle dwellers in Chota Nagpur really believe," Mr. Risley tells[14] us that he was led "to the negative conclusion that in most cases the indefinite something which they fear and attempt to propitiate is not a person at all in any sense of the word. If one must state the case in positive terms, I should say that the idea which lies at the root of their religion is that of power, or rather of many powers. What the Animist worships and seeks by all means to influence and conciliate is the shifting and shadowy company of unknown powers or influences making for evil rather than for good, which resides in the primeval forest, in the crumbling hills, in the rushing river, in the spreading tree; which gives its spring to the tiger, its venom to the snake, which generates

[14] *Census of India* (1901), vol. i. part 1, pp. 352*ff* (Calcutta, 1903).

jungle fever, and walks abroad in the terrible guise of cholera, smallpox, or murrain. Closer than this he does not seek to define the object to which he offers his victim, or whose symbol he daubs with vermilion at the appointed season. Some sort of power is there, and that is enough for him. . . . All over Chota Nagpur we find sacred groves, the abode of equally indeterminate things, who are represented by no symbols and of whose form and function no one can give an intelligible account. They have not yet been clothed with individual attributes; they linger on as survivals of the impersonal stage of religion."

If we assume for the moment the possibility that some such conception, essentially impersonal in its character, or less definite than the idea of a spirit, may have formed the germ of primitive religion, we can see how easily it may have escaped observation. The languages of wild people are usually ill-equipped with abstract terms, and even if they had a name for so vague and inchoate a notion, it would certainly have to be translated into the religious vocabulary of their anthropomorphic neighbours. "Melanesian 'plenty devil' is the standard formula for de-

scribing a sacred place, and when we find these people putting off the inquisitive foreigner with the comprehensive word 'devil,' still retaining the belief in incorporeal beings with neither name nor shape, round whom no myths have gathered, who are not and never have been human, who control rain and sunshine, and are kindly disposed towards men, one is tempted to conjecture that the same sort of belief would be found in India by any one who could adequately probe the inner consciousness of the Animistic races."

This extract from statements buried in the details of a Census Report is of the highest value as helping us to realize a stage when man had not reached to conceptions, more or less vague, of his own personality, and to transfer of these conceptions to his surroundings, investing these with a life and will kindred to his own. In this reflection of himself there were the implicit elements of anthropomorphism which have survived in every religion.

6. Animism; or Conception of Spirit Everywhere.

It is at this point that the advance was made from NATURALISM to ANIMISM. How slow was the process none can tell. But we know that there

were hazy, intermediate stages during which man had no clear ideas of what psychologists call the objective and subjective, that is, of himself as a being apart from his surroundings. For this is the condition of large groups of modern savages in their inability to conceive what is outside their minds and what is inside them, a condition which will now have illustration.

Anthropologists are agreed that the impulse to man's conception of his personality and to that of a general doctrine of spirits comes from dreams, the inference from these having support in the phenomena of shadows, reflections and echoes, and in the abnormal mental states of hysteria, swooning, epilepsy and allied disorders. Hobbes acutely anticipated modern theories of Animism in the twelfth chapter of *Leviathan*: "And for the matter, or substance of the Invisible Agents, so fancyed, they could not by naturall cogitation, fall upon any other concept, but that it was the same as that of the Soule of man, and that the Soule of man was of the same substance, with that which appeareth in a Dream, to one that sleepeth; or in a Looking-glasse, to one that is awake; which, men not knowing that such apparitions are nothing else but creatures of the

Fancy, think to be reall and externall Substances, and therefore call them Ghosts, as the Latines call them *Imagines* and *Umbræ*, and thought them Spirits, that is, thin aëreall bodies, and those Invisible Agents, which they feared, to bee like them, save that appear, and vanish when they please. . . . And in these foure things, Opinion of Ghosts, Ignorance of second causes, Devotion towards what men fear, and Taking of things Casuall for Prognostiques, consisteth the Naturall seed of *Religion*." To the savage, dreams are not only "true while they last," but for ever afterwards. Few among us can shake off the influence of phantasies which have defiled through the brain in a certain order, or danced in mazy whirl through the myriad-celled brain when complete sleep is lacking. In the striking words of Lucretius: "When sleep has chained down our limbs in sweet slumber, and the whole body is sunk in profound repose, yet then we seem to ourselves to be awake and to be moving our limbs, and amid the thick darkness of night we think we see the sun and the daylight; and though in a confined room, we seem to be passing to new climates, seas, rivers, mountains, and to be crossing plains on foot, and to hear voices,

though the austere silence of night prevails all round, and to be uttering speech, though quite silent. Many are the other things of this marvellous sort we see, which all seek to shake, as it were, the credit of the senses; quite in vain, since the greatest part of these cases cheat us on account of the mental suppositions which we add of ourselves, taking those things as seen which have not been seen by the senses. For nothing is harder than to separate manifest facts from doubtful, which the mind without hesitation adds on of itself."[15]

All which applies *a fortiori* to the barbaric intelligence. A Zulu well expressed its limitations to one of the most sympathetic and discerning of missionaries, the late Bishop Callaway, in these words: "Our knowledge does not urge us to search out the roots of it, we do not try to see them; if any one thinks ever so little, he soon gives it up, and passes on to what he sees with his eyes, and he does not understand the real state of even what he sees." The dead relatives and friends who appear in dreams and live their old life, with whom he joins in the battle, the

[15] *De Rerum Natura*, Book IV., pp. 453–468.

hunting and the feasting; the foes with whom he struggles; the wild beast from whom he flees, or in whose clutches he feels himself, and, shrieking, awakens his squaw; the long distances he travels to sunnier climes; are all real, and no "baseless fabric of a vision." Waking intervals confirmed the seeming reality; still more so would the aggravated form of dreaming called "nightmare,"[16] when hideous spectres press upon the breast, stopping breath and paralyzing motion, spectres that have played no small part in the creation of the vast army of nocturnal demons which, under infinite variety of repellent form, have appalled and darkened countless lives. This is only to echo Hobbes when he says: "From this ignorance of how to distinguish Dreams and other strong Fancies from Vision and Sense did arise the greater part of the Religion of the Gentiles in times past that worshipped Satyres, Faunes, Nymphs, and the like; and now adayes the opinion that rude people have of Fayries, Ghosts and Goblins, and of the power of Witches."[17]

The obvious explanation which the savage gives

[16] Literally "night-crusher," from Aryan root, *Mar*, to crush.

[17] *Leviathan*, chap ii. pt. 1.

is that there is within himself something which quits the body during sleep, and does the things of which he dreams. Innumerable proofs of this mental attitude are supplied by authorities who have spent years among the lower races, and it must here suffice to cite what one of the most competent of these has to say. In his book on the *Indians of Guiana*, Sir Everard im Thurn tells us that the dreams which come to these people are to them as real as any of the events of their waking lives. Dream acts and waking acts differ only in one respect: the former are done only by the spirit, while the latter are done by the spirit in its body. Seeing other men asleep, the Indian has no difficulty in reconciling that which he hears with the fact that the bodies of the sleepers were in his sight and motionless throughout the times of supposed action, because he never questions that the spirits, leaving the sleepers, played their parts in dream adventures. As example of this, Sir Everard im Thurn gives the following personal experience:—

"One morning when it was important to me to get away from a camp on the Essequibo River, at which I had been detained for some days by the illness of some of my Indian companions, I

found that one of the invalids, a young Macusi, though better in health, was so enraged against me that he refused to stir, for he declared that, with great want of consideration for his weak health, I had taken him out during the night and had made him haul the canoe up a series of difficult cataracts. Nothing could persuade him that this was but a dream, and it was some time before he was so far pacified as to throw himself sulkily into the bottom of the canoe. At that time we were all suffering from a great scarcity of food, and, hunger having its usual effect in producing vivid dreams, similar events frequently occurred. More than once the men declared in the morning that some absent man, whom they named, had come during the night, and had beaten or otherwise maltreated them; and they insisted on much rubbing of the bruised parts of their bodies. Another instance was amusing. In the middle of one night I was awakened by an Arawak named Sam, the captain or head-man of the Indians who were with me, only to be told the bewildering words, 'George speak me very bad, boss; you cut his bits!' It was some time before I could collect my senses sufficiently to remember that 'bits,' or fourpenny-pieces, are the units in which,

among Creoles and semi-civilized Indians, calculation of money, and consequently of wages, is made; that to cut bits means to reduce the number of bits or wages given; and to understand that Captain Sam, having dreamed that his subordinate George had spoken insolently to him, the former, with a fine sense of the dignity of his office, now insisted that the culprit should be punished in real life. One more incident, of which the same Sam was the hero, may be told for the sake of the humour, though it did not happen within my personal experience, but was told me by a friend. This friend, in whose employ Sam was at the time, told his man, as they sat round the fire one night, of the Zulu or some other African war which was then in progress, and in so doing inadvertently made frequent use of the expression, 'to punish the niggers.' That night, after all in camp had been asleep for some time, they were roused by loud cries for help. Sam, who was one of the most powerful Indians I ever saw, was 'punishing a nigger' who happened to be one of the party; with one hand he had firmly grasped the back of the breeches-band of the black man, and had twisted this round so tightly that the poor wretch was almost cut in

two. Sam sturdily maintained that he had received orders from his master for this outrageous conduct, and on inquiry it turned out that he had dreamed this." [18]

It is outside the scope of this booklet to refer in detail to the rites and ceremonies arising out of barbaric belief in the realities of dreams. Obviously, that belief has far-reaching consequences in the origination of numerous devices for safeguarding the volatile and errant soul. Danger attends the sudden waking of a sleeping man, lest the spirit should not return; precautions must be taken in illness to avert the permanent departure of the spirit, as among the Congo natives, when cases of wasting sickness occur, "a search party is led by a charm doctor, and branches, land-shells, or stones are collected. The doctor will then perform a series of passes between these articles and the sick man. The ceremony is called *vutulanga moyo*, or 'the returning of the spirit.'" [19] "In Ambon and the Uliase Islands the medicine-man flaps a branch about, calling out the sick man's name until he has caught the wandering soul in the branch;

[18] pp. 344–346.

[19] *Jour. Anthropol. Institute*, vol. xxiv. p. 267.

he then strikes the patient's head and body with the branch, and thus restores his soul to him." [20]

7. Theories of the Nature of Spirit.

Theories of the nature, shape, and, later on, the destiny, of the spirit followed upon conceptions of it, and here, perhaps more than in any other department of speculation, the lower and higher culture meet together. For the notions about spirit among the most advanced peoples are as vague as those found among the least civilized. Wherein, asks the latter, wonder-prompted and curiosity-driven, lies the difference between a waking and a sleeping man; between a living and a dead one? The Melanesians give terse answer when they say that "the soul goes out of the body in some dreams, and if for some reason it does not come back, the man is found dead in the morning." And the thing which behaves thus comes to be conceived of as a sort of vapour, compounded of breath and shadow and reflection, "a certain soul and semblance, though substance there be none," as Achilles says when he clasps the shade of Patroclus in Hades. And in every language, from that of the barbaric Ainu to our

[20] Jevons's *Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 45.

English tongue, the word for "spirit" and "breath" is the same.

In Nicaragua *julio*, the "breath," makes men live, and at death "goes up above"; in Dakota *niya* is "breath" and "life"; the Western Australians use the same word, *wang*, for "breath" and "spirit"; in Java the word *nawa* means "health, life, soul"; in the Yakama tongue of Oregon *wkrisha* means "mind," and *wkrishuit* "life"; with the Aztecs *ehecatl* expressed "air" and "soul," and, personified in their myths, was said to have been born of the breath of Tezcatlipoca, their highest god, who himself was called Yoalliehecatl, the Wind of Night. This identity of wind with breath, of breath with spirit, and thence of spirit with the Great Spirit of barbaric religions, has further illustration in the legends of the Quiches, in which the creative power is Hurakan, whence the word *hurricane*; and in the New Testament, where the advent of the Holy Ghost is described "as of a rushing mighty wind." In the Mohawk language *atonritz*, "the soul," is from *atonrion*, "to breathe"; while "spirit" comes from *spiro*, "to breathe." *Animus*, "the mind," is cognate with *anima*, "air" or "breath"; and in Irish

which belongs to the same family of speech as Latin, we have *anal*, "breath," and *anam*, "life" or "soul." In Sanskrit, an elder branch of the same Aryan root, we find *an*, "to blow" or "breathe," whence *anila*, "wind"; and in Greek *anemos* has the same meaning. *Psyche*, *pneuma*, and *thymos*, each meaning "soul" or "spirit," are also from roots expressing "wind" or "breath." In Slavonic the root *du* has developed the meaning of "breath" into that of "spirit," and the Gypsy dialect has *duk*, which is "breath" or "ghost." *Ghost*, the German *geist*, and the Dutch *geest*, are each derived from a root seen in Icelandic *geisa*, meaning "to rage," as fire or wind, whence also come *gust*, *gas*, and *geyser*. In the non-Aryan Finnish, *far* means "soul" and "breath"; the Hebrew *nephesh* *ruach* and *neshamah* (in Arabic *ruh* and *nefs*) pass from meaning "breath" to "spirit." The like applies to the Egyptian *kneph*.

These names cover the world-wide conception of spirit as ethereal. The natives of Nicaragua and neighbouring countries speak of it as air or breeze which passes in and out through the mouth and nostrils; the Tongans conceived it as the aëriform part of the body, related to it as the

perfume to the flower. The Greenlanders describe it as pale and soft, fleshless and boneless, so that he who tries to seize it grasps a phantom. The Lapps say that the ghosts are invisible to all but the shamans or wizards. The Congo negroes leave the house of the dead unswept for a year, lest the dust should injure the delicate substance of the ghost; the German peasants have a saying that a door should not be slammed lest a soul gets pinched in it; while among rustics both here and in France doors or windows are opened at a death so that the soul may depart unhindered. Dr. Tylor quotes a passage from Hampole's *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, i.e.: "Prick of Conscience," a poem of the fourteenth century, in which the author speaks of the more intense suffering which the soul undergoes by reason of its delicate organization:—

> The soul is more tendre and nesche (*soft*)
> Than the bodi that hath bones and fleysche;
> Thanne the soul that is so tendere of kinde,
> More nedis hure penaunce hardere-y-finde,
> Than eni bodi that evere on live was.

When Rossetti, in his *Blessed Damozel*, depicts the souls mounting up to God as "like thin flames," he may have had in mind the description

of the Holy Ghost in the *Acts of the Apostles*, descending cloven tongue-like "as of fire." The Greeks and Romans conceived of the soul as of thin, impalpable nature; and in the Arabian romance of *Yokdhan*, the hero, seeking the source of life and thought, discovers in one of the cavities of the heart a bluish vapour, which was the soul. Among the Hebrews it was of shadowy nature, with echoless motion, haunting a ghostly realm:

> It is a land of shadows: yea, the land
> Itself is but a shadow, and the race
> That dwell therein are voices, forms of forms.

That modern defenders of the theory of the soul as an entity have made no advance upon barbaric and classic psychology is shewn in a recent work by the Rev. Professor Henslow, entitled *Present-day Rationalism Critically Examined*, wherein he suggests that "ether is the basis of the soul." In the *Occult Review* of April, 1905, Mr. Andrew Lang makes a suggestion, not, however, as adopting it, that phantasms of the dead may be due to "filmy" emanations. Still more unsubstantial was the theory of a Broad Church divine, who, in answer to Mr. Frederic Harrison's question as to what he understood by the third

Person in the Trinity, said that he fancied there was "a sort of a something!"[21]

But even so vague and amorphous a conception of spirit must be credited with the property of extension, that is, it must have length, breadth and thickness, involving some kind of shape. Dr. Tylor says that "nothing but dreams and visions could have ever put into men's minds such an idea as that of souls being ethereal images of bodies," and it is as a replica of the body that the semi-substantial spirit is represented to the imagination and depicted in art. The Macusi Indians, when they point out that the small human figure has disappeared from the pupil of a dead man's eye, say that "his *emmawarri*, or spirit, has gone." In the matter of art, we need not travel outside Christendom. In a fresco on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa the soul is portrayed as a sexless child emerging from the mouth of a corpse, and in an elaborately sculptured monument over the tomb of Bishop Giles de Bridport, in the east transept of Salisbury Cathedral, the soul is represented as a naked figure being carried by an angel to heaven. The

[21] *Nineteenth Century* (1877), p. 833.

photographs of spirits which find place in the albums of the credulous are, of course, in human shape, but the apparent bulk of these diaphanous anæmics does not confirm the modern spiritualist's computation of the weight of the soul at from three to four ounces!

Herein, then, are to be found the sufficing materials for belief in an entity *in* the body, but not *of* it, which can depart and return at will, and which man everywhere has more or less vaguely envisaged as his "double," or "other self," extending this idea to every object around him. Herein we are at the birth of all the psychologies that he has formulated; we watch his passage from dim, vague notions of impersonal *powers* to theories of personal indwelling *spirits*. The distinction between soul and body, which explained to man his own actions, was the key to the actions of both animate and inanimate things. A personal life and will controlled them. This was obviously brought home to him more forcibly in the actions of living things, since these so closely resembled his own that he saw no difference between themselves and him. Not in this matter alone have the intuitions of the savage found their confirmation in the discoveries of

science. Of the Indians of Guiana, Sir Everard im Thurn says that in their view "other animals differ from men only in bodily form and in their various degrees of strength. And they differ in spirit not at all, for just as the Indian sees in the separation which takes place at death or in dreams proof of the existence of a spirit—all other qualities being in his view much the same in men and other animals—he sees proof of the existence in each other animal of a spirit similar to that of man."[22] That they would sometimes overpower him by their strength or outwit him by their cunning, confirmed his belief in their fundamental identity.

8. Spirits in Inanimate Things. The accrediting of a spirit to animals and also to plants was extended to inanimate things, these being also the subjects of dreams, and manifesting properties common to all tangible objects. While such among these as had motion would more nearly warrant this, it would be applied to any object which manifested power. To quote Sir Everard im Thurn once more: "It might be thought that motionlessness would prevent conception of the possession of spirits by inanimate things.

[22] p. 352.

But the Indian, always reasoning in the first place from what he knows of himself, remembers that as, for example, in dreams, his own spirit moves with complete activity even when his body lies motionless, so there is no reason to doubt that the spirit within the motionless rock has the power of activity also. He is occasionally hurt either by falling on a rock, or by the rock falling upon him, and, in either case, he attributes the blame, by a line of argument still not uncommon in civilized life, to the rock. In fact, he attributes any calamity which may happen to him to the intention of the immediate instrument of its infliction, and he not unnaturally sees in the action of this instrument evidence of its possession of a spirit." [23] A well-known example is that of the chief of the Koussa Kaffirs. Having died soon after he had broken off a piece of the anchor of a stranded ship, all his subjects made a point of saluting the anchor as an injured and vindictive being. Among some Indo-Chinese tribes, the relatives of a man killed by a fall from a tree take their revenge by cutting it down and scattering the chips. The same idea is manifest in the higher culture. In the court held in ancient

[23] p. 354.

times in the Prytaneum at Athens to try any object, such as an axe or a piece of wood or stone which, independent of any human agency, had caused death, the offending thing was condemned and cast in solemn form beyond the border. Dr. Frazer cites the amusing instance of a cock which was tried at Basle in 1474 for having laid an egg, and which, being found guilty, was burnt as a sorcerer. "The recorded pleadings in the case are said to be very voluminous."[24] And only as recently as 1846 there was abolished in England the law of deodand, whereby not only a beast that kills a man, but a cart-wheel that runs over him, or a tree that crushes him, were *deo dandus*, or "given to God," being forfeited and sold for the poor. The adult who, in momentary rage, kicks over the chair against which he has stumbled, is one with the child who beats the door against which he knocks his head, or who whips the "naughty" rocking-horse that throws him.

9. Fear a Constant Element in Animism.

Turn where, or do what, man would, everything fell into his personifying line of thought. The greater and lesser lights that travelled across the

[24] *Pausanias*, vol. ii. pp. 371, 2.

sky; the lightning flash, and the thunder clap; the clouds that rolled along majestically, or that broke into ragged clusters; the wind that moaned among the swaying branches or bending trunks; the earthquake that swallowed man and beast; the volcano belching fire; the mysterious fire itself that dissolved things into smoke and left but a handful of ashes; the tumbling, treacherous seas and the swift, engulfing rivers; these, and a thousand other sights and sounds and movements, man interpreted in terms which had their correspondence in himself. Ignorant of the law of reflection of sound, how else could he account for the echoes flung back from the hillside? Ignorant of the law of the interception of light, how else could he explain the advancing and retreating shadows? In some sense they must be alive; an inference supported by modern physics, which, in the words of Herbert Spencer, allows "the thought that consciousness in some rudimentary form is omnipresent." In many phenomena man would note a certain recurrence; but the slowly emerging sense of security, begotten by the unvarying succession of day and night, and of sunrise and sunset, would be shaken by the unexpected and the un-

usual, as the fitful hurricane, the destroying flood, the fatal thunderstorm, and like baleful agencies. Through what vast ages man remained the victim of fear and unrest can be guessed at only by the relatively very recent period in his history during which reason has controlled and disciplined feeling. It has been truly said that "nervous instability must have been a normal characteristic of primitive man," and it may be added that it remains a characteristic of the vast majority of mankind to this day. We have not altered so much as, taking too hasty glances over narrow areas, we are apt to think. In structure and inherited tendencies each of us is hundreds of thousands of years old, but the civilized part of us is recent. The influences of a few generations, acting from without, are superficial contrasted with the heritage of chiliads which explains our mental as well as our bodily rudimentary structures. "It is," says Hobbes, "peculiar to the Nature of man to be inquisitive into the Causes of Events they see, some more, some less." [25] Inquisitiveness he shares with the animal, with the same result of

[25] *Leviathan*. "Of Religion," chap. xii. pt. 1.

discrimination as to the nature of things; but the conception that things proceed from other things without which they would not exist, was late in his mental development. Until, with gradual perception of a constant relation between certain phenomena and their recurrence in some order, there arose inquisitiveness as to the how and the why these things could be, the emotions had well-nigh unfettered play. And among the larger part of mankind they remain unchecked: the lower the race, the more is it the slave of unrestrained impulse and feeling. Despite advance in knowledge, which is advance in explanation of the causes of things, whereby they are stripped of the pseudo-mysterious, and confidence is begotten, "there is," as Professor Davenport remarks in his admirable treatise on *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, "in the average man a great slumbering mass of fear that he cannot shake off, made up of instincts and feelings inherited from a long human and animal past." Even the strongest of nerve among us are not entirely free from this on occasions of deep moment and under acute crises; still more is it so when contact with a crowd affects the emotions, giving rise by contagious suggestion to collective hallu-

cinations.[26] This is specially noticeable in times of "religious revivals," when the feelings of numbers (in which there is not always "safety") are screwed to the highest pitch by fanatical, if well-meaning, preachers, who know little of the mischief done thereby to sensitive souls, with rare result of permanent change of character. Then there is the tendency in many minds, classed as intelligent, to fly to supernatural explanations of unusual events. Pan, the terror-inspiring god, is not dead.

The "feare of things invisible," which is the "naturall Seed of Religion," has derived its germinating force from Animism. For the essence of religion is in the doctrine of spirits, beings of unknown, and, therefore, of dreaded potency, the force of which has declined as knowledge has advanced. We are beset behind and before with the impossibility of putting ourselves in man's place at the period when, of necessity, he looked on nature with other eyes than ours. We have weighed and measured the stars; we have captured their light in our prisms and extracted therefrom the secret of their structure;

[26] For remarkable examples of these, see Gustave Le Bon's *The Crowd*, chap. ii. sect. 2.

we have computed how many years elapse before the light emitted by the nearest stars reaches our system; we have displaced the earth from its old position in primitive thought as the centre of the universe; we have dethroned the sun as an orb of the first magnitude, and made some approach to knowledge of the distribution in space of his millions of fellow suns. Our telescopes have swept the skies, and found no ascending or descending angels there. But we have given to the feeling of wonder legitimate and larger play.

To the countless generations who could not know into what heritage we, their remote descendants, should enter, all was as vague as it was vast. Having once conceived of objects as informed by something corresponding to man's life and will, realizing therein that there was a distinction between the thing moved and the something that moved it, the idea of a twofold, a seen and unseen, must arise. And in that idea was the germ of the SUPERNATURAL, which itself had impetus in the fact borne in upon man that he was at the mercy of powers stronger than himself, that crossed his path, that thwarted his schemes, and played havoc with anything to which he clung. For so long as affairs ran

smoothly with him and his, little heed need be paid to what the spirits did; it was when he was worsted in the struggle that he felt himself in the clutches and at the mercy of powers which were *other than, and above, nature.* He would of course locate them wherever he found them active; whether in animal, tree, cloud, or stone; and would seek for ways of entering into some sort of relations with them, whereby they might be squared, and he might be advantaged. The invisible ones, long the objects of fear, as many remain to this day, became, in some cases, objects of reverence, but there persisted the sense of dependence which is expressed in the highest as in the lowest faiths. In the instinctive cry for help, there was the primitive prayer; in the magic and spell, a body of practices by which man sought to outwit, or compel to furtherance of his own ends, the dreaded powers; and in the sacrifice the bribe to appease, or the offering to flatter them, or the attempt to enter into commensal relations with them. Sometimes man would use physical force, as did the Guaycurus of Paraguay, who believed that unusually heavy storms were attacks on them by the evil spirits, and who sallied forth brandishing their clubs and

shouting the war-cry for the purpose of repelling them.

10. Absence of Sequence in the Objects of Worship. The spirits worshipped, or placated, or, as the foregoing example shows, even defied, cannot be set down in any sequence denoting corresponding order of place in the primitive mind. We know, from savages extant, that they are the subjects of varying, and often conflicting, sensations, and, therefore, to assume any logical succession of ideas at still lower stages of development is to construct misleading theories. The well-nigh uniform behaviour of the mind in the presence of similar phenomena has become a canon of anthropology, strengthened by the fact that, at the same level of civilization, man everywhere devises and makes shifts with the same kind of tools and weapons. But phenomena vary, and different physical and local conditions determine the prominence given to this or that power or spirit. An inland people, far from the sound and sight of sea, could not conceive an Oceanus or Poseidon; nor could the dwellers on an unbroken flat imagine a god-inhabited Horeb, Meru, Olympus, Asgard, or Nurang Buru.

Besides the habitat, the civilization attained rules the cult. Sun-worship and moon-worship have flourished side by side among many races and during long periods. But there is a large body of evidence which proves the precedence of moon-worship before man had reached the agricultural stage when the more potent influences of the sun, and consequently his high place in the savage pantheon, were recognized. The explanation, as cogently given by Mr. Payne in his valuable *History of the New World*, is that "a connection is traced between the lunar phenomena and the food-supply in an earlier stage than that in which a connection is traced between the food-supply and the solar phenomena." . . . The approach and duration of the periods of supplies of uncultivated foods are measured by the successive reappearances and gradual changes of the moon, to which the savage attribute the supplies; hence "he assigns a prominent place to the moon-spirit, which he considers to be in the highest degree a benevolent one." He regards her as the source of the moisture, greater at night than in the day, without which vegetation would perish; in this, and other ways, she "becomes regarded as the efficient cause of

growth in animals and plants." Of what festivals her varying phases were the occasion there is no need to tell; the religions of the Semitic and other races afford plentiful illustration.

Whilst it is at the agricultural stage that impetus was given to sun and earth worship, no period can be even roughly assigned to the choice of more abstract phenomena, such as the sky, air, light, and thunder, as separate objects of worship. Through the mists, which can never be dispelled, there loom, huge and amorphous, impressive in their power and immanence, the great gods of the everlasting spaces, paired, in many a savage cosmogony, with the Earth-goddess as father and mother of all. In Polynesian myth we find the "begetter of gods and man, half man, half fish, to typify land and water, and it was said of him that his right eye was the sun, his left the moon. So far removed was he that no worship was ever paid him, and no image made of him." Akin in this last-named feature, the significance of which will appear presently, is the Samoyed sky-god Num, who is too far away to be worshipped. The name of the supreme god among the Australian natives, Baiame, means "the 'maker' or 'cutter out,'

as one cuts out patterns from a skin." The Andaman Islanders tell of Puluga, creator of all things, "who was never born and will never die," but who "is omniscient only by day, when he can see." The Hottentot Tsuni-Goab is the "red light of the Dawn," and the Finnish Ukko is the "Navel of the sky." The Polynesian Tangaloa, the bright daylight, has as his brother "Rongo, the god of darkness and night."[27] Tangaloa is beneficent and peaceful; Rongo is the war-god and fomenter of strife, as, in the old Mazdeism, Ahriman and Ormuzd represent, but with an ethical meaning which had superseded the primitive nature myth, the conflict between light and darkness.

11. Absentee Gods.

These examples, drawn from savage mythology, to which the reader's knowledge concerning the great gods of the higher races will suggest additions, enable us to trace, if dimly, the lines along which man advanced from conceptions of Powers to conception of Spirits "made in his own image," in whose activities he explained the creation of the heavens and the earth. The examples which follow bring

[27] Gill's *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, p. 11.

out the curious fact that these High nature-gods maintain no permanently prominent place in religions. They reign, but they do not govern. "Savage theology, expressing doubtless the experience of primitive man as to the distribution of good and evil in the world, teaches that the good gods abide in their own place and take no heed of mankind, while the malevolent deities are in a constant state of jealous and mischievous activity. Hence the former drop out of notice, fall into the background, while the others survive changes of religion." [28]

The Hindu supreme god Parameshwar is responsible for the existence of everybody and everything, but is too exalted to be troubled about everyday affairs. On the other hand, the tutelary godlings should be appealed to for help in worldly concerns, and the demons must be propitiated to prevent things going wrong. In Southern India the natives render nominal allegiance to one or more of the great gods of Brahmanism, but the ordinary villager thinks that these august deities concern themselves but little with his affairs, and his real worship is paid to Máriamman, the dread goddess of smallpox and

[28] Risley, *Census of India* (1901), p. 410.

cholera, and to the special goddess of his village.[29]

Among the Musquakie Indians "Geechee Manito-ah, who dwells in the sun, is not very active in mischief himself, though he was in the old, old time. But he is the father and author of all mischievous beings. He consorted with witches, and they became the mothers of immortal demons. He seldom meddles with men. He lives in the caves with the wicked dead, and rules over them."[30] Miss Mary Kingsley says that "the god in the sense we use the word is in essence the same in all of the Bantu tribes I have met with on the Coast; a non-interfering and therefore a negligible quantity. He varies his name; Anzambi, Nyambi, Ukuku, Suku, and Azan, but a better investigation shows that Nyam of the Fans is practically identical with Suku of the Congo. They regard their god as the creator of man, plants, animals, and the earth, and they hold that having done this, he takes no further interest in the affair. But not so the crowd of spirits with which the universe is peopled; they take only too much interest,

[29] Risley, *Census of India* (1901), p. 364.

[30] M. A. Owen, *Folklore of the Musquakie Indians* (1902), p. 35.

and the Bantu wishes they would not, and is perpetually saying so in his prayers, a large percentage whereof amount to 'Go away; we don't want you. Come not into this house, this village, or its plantation.' He knows from experience that the spirits pay little heed to these objurgations, and as they are the people who must be attended to, he develops a cult whereby they may be managed, used, and understood. This cult is what we call witchcraft." [31] The Battas of Sumatra say that their chief god, Debati Hasi Asi, has done nothing since he created the world, having committed its government to his three sons, who rule by vakeels or proxies. Of the Greek peasant of to-day, Sir Rennell Rodd says that "much as he would shudder at the accusation of any taint of paganism, the ruling of the Fates is more immediately real to him than any divine omnipotence." [32] *Mutatis mutandis*, the remark has equal application to the Roman Catholic peasant at the shrine of his local saint, and to the rustic who consults a wise woman. Mr. Tozer, in his *Highlands of Turkey*, says that "it is rather the minor deities and those asso-

[31] *Travels in West Africa*, p. 442.
[32] *Folklore of Modern Greece*, p. 140.

ciated with man's ordinary life that have escaped the brunt of the storm, and returned to live in a dim twilight of popular belief." [33] Returning for a moment to India, where, in Sir Alfred Lyall's words, "we seem to step suddenly out of the modern world of formal definite creeds, back into the disorderly supernaturalism of præ-Christian ages," we find that the great gods of Hindooism, the supreme triad, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, and other deities of the higher class which collectively constitute the Hindoo official pantheon, are the deities of the richer or higher classes, but to the ordinary peasant of Northern India they are little more than a name. Indra, the old Vedic weather-god, has been completely elbowed out as an object of worship by special rain-gods. "The once mighty Varuna has also become a degraded weather-godling, and sailors worship their boat as his fetish when they start on a voyage." The reverses of fortune among these hierarchies have illustration in Harda, or Hardaur, the cholera-god of Northern India. Originally a deification of a notable man who lived in the reign of Akbar, and worshipped in nearly every village in Upper India, he has become neglected,

[33] Vol. ii. p. 307.

because "the repeated recurrence of cholera has shaken the belief in the potency of his influence."

12. Maleficent Spirits.

Until late-born experience of an unvarying order of nature modified, not, even to this day, banishing, notions of chance and caprice, belief in the activity of countless swarms of spirits remained dominant. If peril lurked in the little that was known, still more did it lurk in the much that was unknown. Invested by a great company of the invisible, man was on guard by day and night. Everything he planned was in danger of being thwarted, and his wits were ceaselessly at work to counteract the baleful spirits which possessed him or obsessed him. They were all one to him; not till a later period was distinction made between demons and ghosts. In the tree or stone that crushed him; in the water that drowned him; in the diseases that smote him, especially those of nervous type, when he was thrown to the ground in fit of apoplexy, or epilepsy, or fixed, statue-like, as in catalepsy, or terrorized, as in nightmare; still more, in death itself; he saw the foul work of spirits. Some of the words just used witness to the persistence of animistic ideas. *Catalepsy* is,

literally, "a seizing" of the body by some demon; *nightmare* is the *mara*, the incubus or phantom which has correspondence in the Peruvian *hapi-nunu* or "bosom-clutching spirit," while *ecstasy* is "to put out of place," that is, to remove the soul from the body; lines of thought which survive in the phrases "out of oneself"; "transported," and so forth. The Australian natives who, despite striking elaboration of social arrangements, remain low down in the scale, believe that "not only are the heavens peopled with supernatural beings, but that the whole face of the country swarms with them, every thicket, and all rocky places abounding with evil spirits." In like manner, "every natural phenomenon is believed to be the work of demons, none of which seem of a benign nature, one and all apparently striving to do all imaginable mischief to the poor black fellow." In India, from the earliest times to the present day, the real religion of the common folk appears always to have been a belief in a vast multitude of spirits, of whom many, if not most, are mischievous and harmful. "As in Europe, beneath a superficial layer of Christianity, a faith in magic and witchcraft, in ghosts and goblins, has always survived and even flourished among

the weak and ignorant, so it has been, and so it is, in the East." [34] Equally persistent, all the world over, is the survival, not only "among the weak and ignorant," of animism in this gross form. Everywhere the "seed of Religion" has found receptive soil in "feare of the invisible," hence its successful transplanting from zone to zone. The demonology of the New Testament may certainly be traced through Jewish to Chaldean sources, themselves lost in savage origins. Cuneiform texts show the ancient Chaldean beliefs falling into two divisions, one in which the old nature-gods of storm and thunder survive, and the other in which armies of demons and ghosts of the unburied dead harass mankind. To the seven devas or arch-demons of the old Persian faith and the seven chief evil spirits of Babylonian mythology, there may correspond the "seven spirits more wicked than himself" with which the unclean spirit re-entered the heart of man, spoken of by Jesus, who shared the belief of his time in such agents.[35] The Exile gave great impetus to that belief, and it took the wildest flights in Rabbinical teaching. Accord-

[34] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, vol. iii. p. 49.
[35] Luke xi. 26.

ing to the Talmud, demons had their home in the middle air, and were invisible, because "the Holy One, blessed is He, had created their souls, and was about to create their bodies, when the Sabbath set in." Every one has ten thousand at his right hand, and one thousand at his left hand, and since they rule chiefly at night, no man should greet another lest he salute a demon. They haunt lonely spots, often assume the shape of beasts, and it is their presence in the bodies of men and women which is the cause of madness and other diseases. In Moslem belief the Jinn, whose chief is made of smokeless fire, consist of forty companies, each numbering six hundred thousand.

In Christendom such beliefs, based on the authority of the Bible, and therefore upheld by divines, who found support in legal enactments, remained unchallenged until relatively modern times. The seventy-second canon (1603) of the Church of England forbids any minister attempting to expel a devil or devils without first obtaining the licence of his bishop, and in the Roman Catholic Church exorcism is a function of one of the "lesser orders." The belief supplied an easy explanation of disasters and diseases, especially diseases of the mental sort, and of the

activity of an arch-fiend and his countless myrmidons, to whose service sorcerers, wizards and witches had bound themselves, bartering their souls as payment for power to work black magic on their fellow-creatures. So it sufficed that ignorant and frightened victims accused some poor, humpbacked, squinting old woman of casting on them the evil eye, and damaging their person or property, to secure her trial by torture, and her condemnation to a cruel, unpitied death. Among the delusions which have wrought havoc on mankind, making life one long nightmare, and adding to mental anguish the infliction of death in horrible form upon a multitude whose vast total can never be known, there is probably none comparable, for its bitter fruits, with this belief in the activity of evil spirits.

13. Evolution of Idea of Benevolent Gods.—Earth-Mother. Although the "feare of things invisible" has never left the heart of man, there came a time, far back in his history, when the burden was lightened by the feeling that there were "kind gods who perfect what man vainly tries." Was it then, or when was it, that laughter was born, that "sudden glory," as Hobbes de-

fines it, illumining human life? For not till trust supplanted terror, and sunshine chased the gloom, can we say with Rabelais, "Le rire c'est le propre de l'homme." But this is only a hint, in passing, for the psychologists. What can be known from ancient cults as to the origin of more cheerful conceptions of spirits supports Professor Robertson Smith's suggestion that "the triumph of the gods over the demons, like the triumph of man over wild beasts, must have been effected very gradually, and may be regarded as finally sealed and secured only in the agricultural stage, when the god of the community became also the supreme lord of the land and the author of all the good things therein." [36]

The first attempts to produce food by cultivation of the soil made man keenly observant of all that helped or hindered him. And while he or his women folk (since among barbaric races agriculture is usually left to them) would see in the sun-spirit and the rain-spirit beneficent aids; the earth, great and kindly, in whose very self the seed was embedded, stood forth above all. With or without the co-operation of the sky or heaven

[36] *Religion of the Semites*, p. 122.

spirit, she was the supplier of man's needs. Whether as Tonantzi, among the Aztecs; or Mama Cocha, among the Peruvians; or Dêmêtêr among the Greeks; or, with other names, Bona Dea among the Romans; or Men's Mother among the Anglo-Saxons; she is, in the language of one and all, the Earth-Mother. "It could probably be shown that in Western Europe the worship of the Bona Dea generally prepared the way for that of the Virgin: this hardly admits of doubt in such cases as 'La Bonne Dame,' the celebrated Black Virgin of Le Puy, and Notre Dame la Major of Arles, whose churches have actually replaced temples of the Earth-Mother." [37] And in earth-worship is to be found the explanation of the mass of rites and ceremonies to ensure fertility in crops, and cattle, and in woman herself; rites and ceremonies notably multiplied at seasons of sowing and planting, the several phases of agriculture giving rise to belief in a number of minor deities and spirits to whom were offered sacrifices, often of ghastly nature. As in Mexico, when a woman, dressed to represent the Earth-

[37] Payne, *History of the New World called America*, vol. i. p. 464.

goddess, was slain, and her heart offered to the maize-mother; or in Rome, when unborn calves were torn from the womb and burnt, the ashes being scattered over the field to procure the fertility of the corn. Herein, too, lies the explanation of the numerous practices which come under the head of "sympathetic magic," or the imitating of a cause to produce a desired effect, as when an "Indian rain-maker mounts to the roof of his hut, and rattling vigorously a dry gourd containing pebbles, to represent the thunder, scatters water through a reed on the ground beneath, as he imagines up above in the clouds do the spirits of the storm."[38] But the subject of Magic will have a volume to itself. Turn where we may for illustration, we find the cult of the earth-spirit synchronous with the agricultural stage of civilization. "Until philosophers conjectured water to be the oldest among the elements, the earth was universally believed to be the most ancient object in nature; the sun, moon, and stars were considered to be comparatively recent. All living creatures proceed from the earth; all are sustained by the earth; all

[38] Brinton's *Myths of the New World*, p. 17.

are finally reduced to dust, and return to the earth. Her motherhood was in aboriginal America no mere figure of speech, but an article of positive belief." [39] In their geocentric theory the savage and the theologian were on common ground, while the old animistic belief had curious endorsement by the famous astronomer, Kepler, who, three centuries ago, imagined minds in the planets, and suggested that "the lungs and gills through which the Earth-spirit respired would one day be discovered at the bottom of the sea. He attributed to the restless activity of this spirit the daily motion of the earth; he considered that it contemplated the heavens, observed the stars, caused the globe to tremble, and to sweat volumes of cold vapour in its terror at the approach of comets." Kepler would have sympathized with the Hindoo belief that the earth becomes angry at the continual trampling of the oxen and the painful gashings of the ploughshare. The same idea lies at the root of the once widespread, and, in modified or symbolic form, not extinct, custom of burying a victim under the foundation,

[39] Payne's *History of the New World called America*, vol. i., p. 464.

or inside the wall, of a new building, so that the disturbed Earth-spirit might be appeased, and the permanence of the structure assured.

The passage from belief in the Earth-spirit, as begetter and sustainer of all things, to belief in spirits indwelling in her several products, was easy, and the more so as falling into line with primitive ideas. For thus only could man explain the mystery of generation, reproduction, sprouting and growth—a mystery whose outward and visible sign was in the worship of the phallus, the lewdness and riotousness connected with which should not blind us to its deep religious significance. Hence the conception of a series of "mothers" who became world-wide groups of deities, as in India the rice-mother and the cotton-mother; in Europe the corn-mother; and in America the maize-mother; rites and festivals in honour of whom were elaborately developed. Of these it must suffice to refer to the widespread European custom of leaving a few ears from the last sheaf, which are made up to represent a male or female doll, or some wild or tame animal, according to the locality. This image, which is known as the kern-baby, the corn-mother, the rye-sow, and so forth, is pre-

served till the next seed-time, in the belief that it is an incarnation of the spirit of the corn or other cereal, the virtues of which, passing into the newly-planted seed, protect it from evil agencies and secure the harvest. Hence, a group of ceremonies accompanying the sowing.[40] Among the ancient Peruvians the *saramama*, or maize-mother, was worshipped under the form of a puppet made of the finest new maize stalks that could be found, and renewed at each successive harvest, in order that the maize seed might preserve its vitality.[41] In Malaya the rice-soul is taken from the last heap, and, with elaborate ritual performed by the Pawang, is made up into the shape of a baby, to be rigidly guarded till the next sowing season, when the rice grains are mixed with those sacred for seed, so that the quickening spirit may fertilize them. Thus do the Old and the New World meet.

But as further showing identity of act and motive between peoples who can have had no exchange of ideas, and as further proving the like attitude of mind before like phenomena, the

[40] An exhaustive account of this custom and its significance is given in Frazer's *Golden Bough*.

[41] Payne, vol. i., p. 415.

following supplies cogent examples from Dorset and the Far East: "If you plant a tree or trees, and are very anxious that they should thrive, you must not go and look at them, or look out of a window at them, 'on an empty stomach.' There is a blasting influence in your eye then, which will make them pine away. And the story is that a man, puzzled by this withering of his newly-planted choice trees, went to a white witch to inquire who was the evil worker. The white witch, after ascertaining the facts, told him it was himself." The foregoing is from a letter from my friend Thomas Hardy, whose novels, great in so much else, are a mine of Wessex folk-lore. The parallel is from Skeats's *Malay Magic*, which cites this, among other directions: "Plant maize with a full stomach, and let your dibble be thick, as this will swell the maize ear."[42] Dr. Johnson, on his visit to the Hebrides, says that the peasants expect better crops by sowing their seed at the new moon, and quotes a precept annually given in the almanac, "to kill hogs when the moon is waning, that the bacon may prove the better in boiling." Not many years ago in Scotland maidens would not marry if the moon was not

[42] p. 217.

waxing, and some even stipulated that at the time of the ceremony the tide should be flowing.

14. Tree and Animal Worship. There are few more interesting subjects than that which treats of the intimate connection between agriculture and religion and the numerous associated magical rites; while in the great company of the gods of fertility—gods and goddesses of the field and rain and rivers, and many more besides—we can note conceptions of growing definiteness about these beings which took shape in anthropomorphism, and which, among the larger number of mankind everywhere, in that shape remain. The animistic ideas about the trees of the forest, which are older than the cultivated plants, have a strong family likeness all the world over.

Motion is to the savage a sign of life. When the Matabele first saw a locomotive engine at Bulawayo they declared that it was a large animal which fed on fire; that it hated work, else why did it scream before it moved? and that it suffered badly from malaria. Did not the white doctor pour medicine into it whenever it groaned?[3] The explorer

[3] *The Essential Kaffir.* By Dudley Kidd (1904).

Paul du Chaillu says that the natives of Ashango-land looked on his watch as a mighty spirit. "It is alive," said an Arawak to Brett the traveller, when shown a pocket compass; and the Bush-men thought that Chapman's big waggon was the mother of his smaller ones. The Esquimaux believed that the ships in Ross's Expedition were alive because they moved without oars; and Sir Joseph Hooker frightened some hill tribesmen with his spring measuring-tape, which they felt sure was a snake. Although the tree is rooted to one spot, it responds to every influence without. Swayed by the breeze, or smitten by the storm, it is never at rest. Murmurs are heard in its leaves, or its branches creak and writhe as in agony; sounds are emitted from the gaunt stem or hollow trunk; voices, the savage doubts not, of the indwelling spirit whose life seems per-manently associated with the fixed tree. While, whatever was mysterious about it added to his fears, he would honour, as the gift of the good power, the fruit-yielding tree. Where the fer-mented juices, as of the soma plant, brought on frenzy; or where the fragrant tobacco[44] was

[44] On the use of tobacco in religious rites, see Payne, vol. i., p. 387.

sacrificed to the well pleased spirits; there, and by other means, close relations between god and man and plant were set up. How intimate these became is shown in the large body of customs based on belief in vital connection between man and vegetation, and in the widespread reluctance to cut down the living tree, or, when the necessity arises so to do, the apologies and petitions addressed to tree as well as to animal. The Irish hesitate to fell the white thorn, because the crown of thorns which tortured Jesus was said to have been made from it. The West Indian negro will on no account cut down a ceiba, or silk cotton tree, lest the "duppy" or spirit avenge the act. The Ojibways would not cut down living trees, because of the pain caused them, and if a tree should emit from its trunk or branches a sound during a calm state of the atmosphere, or should any one fancy such sounds, the tree would be at once reported, and soon came to be regarded as the residence of some local god.[45] An old writer records that "when an oake is being felled it gives a kind of shriekes or groanes that may be heard a mile off, as if it were the genius of the

[45] Dorman's *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 288.

oake lamenting." He quaintly adds: "E. Wyld, Esq., hath heard it severall times."[45] "There are some thickets and clumps of trees in Berar, from which no stick is ever cut nor even the dead wood picked up, though firewood is scarce and timber valuable."[47] A recent traveller among the "primitive pagans" of Southern Nigeria reports this speech from a native: "Yes, we say, this is our life—the big tree. When any of us dies his spirit does not go to another country, but into the big tree; and this is why we will not have it cut. When a man is sick, or a woman wants a child, we sacrifice to the big tree, and unless Oso'wo wants the sick man, our request is granted. Oso'wo lives in the sky, and is the Big God. When any of us dies away from this place, his spirit returns to the big tree."

In such customs and beliefs as these are the materials of the manifold tree-cults; of the worship and propitiation of the god in the solitary tree, the Mexican Tota, the Greek Dionysus, and the Roman Jupiter Feretrius; of the gods of sacred groves and oracles; and the materials also

[46] Aubrey's *Remains of Gentilisme and Judaisme*, p. 24.

[47] Lyall's *Asiatic Studies*, p. 12.

of the legends of the world life-tree; as the Ygdrasil of Scandinavian myth; and the giant cedar of Chaldean myth, whence perhaps that of the Hebrew Tree of Knowledge was derived.

The voices which the savage hears in the trees are more audible in the animal. "Though the Indian knows that he no longer understands the language of the beasts and birds around him, yet he attaches but little weight to this, in that he is constantly meeting with other Indians of one or the other alien tribes which surround him, who speak languages at least as unintelligible to him as are those of birds and beasts."[48] The beast tales which amused our childhood record what to the barbaric mind are real incidents. What happens to the man happens to the animal; where he parts company with it is in the attribution of abnormal power; when, for example, he watches the flight of the bird or the movements of the serpent. The path of the one through the air has been the parent of a large number of superstitions, while in its brooding on the nest there is probably the source of the world-wide myth of the Creation Egg. And although much nonsense

[48] Sir Everard im Thurn, *Indians of Guiana*, p. 352.

has been written about ophiolatry or serpent worship, its prominent place in barbaric and classic religions gives it special significance. The lithe, sinuous, silent creep of the serpent, its beauty of colouring, its arresting eye, fatal venom, and other qualities, give it an exceptional place in the cults of the world as it holds in the animal kingdom, and explain why here it is worshipped as a god, and there dreaded as a demon; here a symbol of life, and there a symbol of death. "More subtil than any beast of the field," as it is shrewdly described in the Book of Genesis, it has been the origin of some of the wildest theories that the fear and imagination of man have coined. Its extensive range accounts for its well-nigh universal worship, examples of which in present times abound, while in ancient Greece the great heaven-father Zeus was himself worshipped under the form of a serpent, and in the temple of the Bona Dea snakes were kept "as the usual symbol of the medicinal art, and at the same time appropriate to her as an Earth-goddess."[49] Speaking of present day Animism, Sir Alfred Lyall says that "the most complete and absolute elevation

[49] Warde Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, p. 104.

of an animal to the higher ranks of deified beings is to be seen in the case of *Hanumàn*, who from a sacred monkey has risen, through mists of heroic fable and wild forest legends, to be the universal tutelary god of all village settlements. The setting up of his image in the midst of a hamlet is an outward and visible sign of fixed habitation so that he is found in every township. . . . His traditions and attributes illustrate curiously the process by which a mere animal fetish, dreaded for his ugliness and half-human ways, soon rises to be an elfin king of the monkey tribe, next becomes a powerful genius, and latterly emerges into the full glory of divine Avatár, surrounded by the most extravagant fables to explain away the simian head and tail which have stuck to him through all his metamorphoses." [50]

Ex uno disce omnes; all races have passed through corresponding stages of zoolatry, some remaining in the earlier stages, and the inquiry, pursued along the same lines, would bring us to the same result. Nearest to himself in some attributes, identical in many, the origin of man's belief in his descent from this or that animal, and

[50] *Asiatic Studies*, p. 14 (1884 edition).

in the migration of his soul from one body to another, be it that of bird, beast, or reptile becomes easy of explanation. But the subjects of totemism and metempsychosis require separate treatment.

15. Stone Worship. In dealing with savage ideas of the inanimate, it must be kept in mind that non-living things are worshipped or feared not in any symbolical sense, which is altogether foreign to the lower intelligence, but as the supposed home of a spirit, or as in some sense a vehicle of power. Among the Melanesians the shape of a stone rules the idea as to what kind of spirit dwells within it, but in contrast to this, one of many examples that might be given, we find, among even civilized peoples, the worship of stones whose external aspect cannot have suggested a kindred idea. Pausanias speaks of thirty shapeless stones worshipped as gods at Pharæ, in Achaia, and says that amongst the Greeks such stones had in old times received divine honours.[51] But the rudeness of an object is no measure of the veneration that may be paid it, as witness the incredible daubs of virgins and saints before

[51] Vol. vii. 22, 4. (Frazer's *Commentary*.)

which the Catholic peasant prostrates himself. The sacred image of Diana was an unhewn block; the boundary stones of the god Terminus consecrated to Jupiter were also unshapen; and the image of the goddess Cybele, the Great Mother, which was brought from Phrygia to Rome B.C. 204, and there received with enthusiasm, was "a small black stone, rough and unhewn," to be equated in our own day with the granite boulder worshipped by the Basutos. The Nigerian natives told a recent traveller that stones are among their chief gods: "When men are sick in the town, we cast lots, and then give food to the stones. We also give them palm-wine or gin." The patriarch Jacob, in anointing with oil the stone set up as a memorial of his dream,[52] has his modern representatives in the Dakotahs and natives of Southern India, who paint the sacred boulders red; while the reference to India, although not quite apposite, calls to mind Sir Alfred Lyall's story of a Hindoo officer whom he knew, a man "of great shrewdness and very fair education, who devoted several hours daily to the elaborate worship of five round pebbles which

[52] Genesis xxviii. 18.

he had appointed to be his symbol of Omnipotence. Although his general belief was in one all-pervading Divinity, he must have something symbolic to handle and address."[58] Sacred pillars, which were universal among Semitic peoples, are allied to standing stones, as objects of worship, all the world over. To these, as art advances and the god takes the shape of a graven image, symbolical characters are given, while the part played by the sacred stone as a hoped-for instrument of fertilization of women in the villages of India and elsewhere is well known. Not very remote from this phallic custom may be the myths of descent of mankind from stones, found among the ancient Greeks and Peruvians, and among modern savages, as the Tahitians, Zulus, and Indians of Columbia. A Peruvian legend which tells of some great stones which were formerly men and women who defied the Creator, suggests the story of Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt for disobedience to the Almighty, and also the Cornish tradition that some standing stones of the cromlech type were once girls who offended God by dancing on a Sunday.

Perhaps one of the most striking examples of

[58] *Asiatic Studies*, p. 10.

modern animism is supplied by the Malayans in their belief in a spirit in tin.[54] They say that the metal itself is alive, that it can move from place to place, can reproduce itself, and that it has special likes and dislikes. In extracting it from the ore, the tin-soul has to be both deceived and propitiated. The Pawang, or sorcerer, uses his arts so that the spirit may not know that the metal is being sought. Name-avoidance superstitions come into play, the tin ore being called "grass-seed," as in out-of-the-way places in Scotland some other name is used for salmon when that fish is being caught. In his recently published *Lhasa and its Mysteries*,[55] Colonel Waddell says that the Tibetans are careful to leave the gold nuggets intact, under the belief that they are living, and are the parents of the spangles and gold dust, which would disappear if the lumps were removed. Allied in animistic idea is a saying of Pythagoras that "the sound which is given by striking brass is the voice of a demon contained in the brass." Professor Flinders Petrie's recent excavations in Sinai show that 6000 B.C. the turquoise seekers in the

[54] Skeats' *Malay Magic*, pp. 52, 259. [55] p. 474.

sandstone mountains there propitiated Hat-hor, the goddess of turquoise, with offerings, to secure success.

16. Water Worship. Though we may have escaped from the superstition, we remain spellbound by the poetry of nature-worship. In the oldest fragment of Hebrew song the fountain is addressed as a living being, and the high authority of the late Professor Robertson Smith may be cited for the statement that the Semitic peoples, to whom water, notably flowing water, was a deep object of reverence and worship, regarded it not merely as the dwelling-place of spirits, but as itself a living thing. That seems to have been the barbaric idea about it everywhere, and through all time. And no wonder. For, as has been shown, the primitive mind associates life with motion, and if in rolling stone and waving branch it sees not merely the home and haunt of spirit, but spirit itself, how much more so in tumbling cataract, swirling rapid, and tossing sea, swallowing or rejecting alike the victim and the offering. Birthplace of life itself, and ever life's necessity; healer and purifier, the feeling that invests it can only be refined, it can never perish.

The healing, cleansing qualities of the mysterious fluid, notably where impregnated with mineral substances, have given rise to a group of superstitions and customs whose vitality has been secured by common sympathy. Hence the tender treatment of this old phase of nature-worship by the Church in discreetly adapting what it was difficult to abolish, substituting the name of Madonna or of saint for the pagan deity of the spring. The barbaric lustrations reappear in the rite of baptism; the brush of the pagan temple sprinkles the faithful with holy water; the leprous Naaman, repairing to the Jordan, and the sick waiting their turn on the margin of Bethesda, have their correspondences in more ancient times among the Babylonians, who bathed in the Euphrates, beseeching the river to carry away their disease; and, in modern times, in the persistence of old customs in the children dipped in wells to be cured of rickets, and in the cripples who still flock to St. Winifred's Well, in Flintshire, to which every year adds its stock of crutches as votive offerings, as the rescued sailors hung their clothes as thank-offerings in the temples of the ancient sea-gods.

In this old water-worship, the old and the new

meet; the Nile, the Ganges, and the Tiber are of the company of the great river-gods. The ancient Peruvians of the coast regarded the ocean as the most powerful of the gods, calling it *mamacocha*, or "mother-sea," for it yielded the fish on which they largely depended for food.[56] If the Romans had their Neptune, and the Greeks their Poseidon, the Celts of Britain had their Nodens and their Ludd, which latter name may survive in Ludgate, while a temple to the god, it has been suggested, once stood on the ground now covered by St. Paul's Cathedral. For the sacred sites of the world have so remained from immemorial times.

Objection may here be made that, in dealing with water-worship, examples from historic, rather than from primitive, sources have been drawn upon. But these later examples are of value as proving the persistence of primitive ideas, and as illustrating the fact that in the rituals of all religions we have no inventions, but only survivals. And since what has been said regarding any one cult applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to other cults, we may pass to that department of Animism which is concerned with the rela-

[56] Payne, p. 451.

tion of the living to the spirits of the dead. The deification of men during their lifetime, of which ancient Greece and Rome furnish examples, does not fall within the present purpose.

17. Deification and Worship of Ancestors.

The belief in spirits and in their survival after death is shown to have sufficing cause of origin in dreams about them, and to be strengthened by the phenomena of shadows, reflections and echoes, and by sundry kinds of disease, all of which, like death itself, are attributed to maleficent agents, theories of natural causes being impossible to the savage mind. "Man after man dies in the same way, but it never occurs to the savage that there is one constant and explicable cause to account for all cases. Instead of this, he regards each successive death as an event wholly by itself, apparently unexpected, and only to be explained by some supernatural agency." [57] One thing is clear, that at death the spirit does not return to the body. What, then, becomes of it? Ask the Archbishop of Canterbury, as our highest representative of the

[57] Diecle's *Three Years in Savage Africa*, p. 512.

orthodox creed, what happens to the soul in the intervening period between death and the resurrection and final judgment? His answer will probably be as nebulous as that of the natives of Obubura Hill, in Nigeria, concerning whom Mr. Partridge says: "They all believe in a future life of some kind or another—that death is only the passing from one to another sphere of environment—*Mors Janua Vitæ*. The life and whereabouts of the soul after 'death' depends upon a variety of circumstances which they believe that they can more or less control. Sometimes the soul or spirit goes up to the sky to live with the Big God, sometimes it passes into the great tree that predominates over their central meeting-place, sometimes it is born again in the bodies of its own grandchildren and great-grandchildren, sometimes it goes into a wild beast and gives people a great deal of trouble, or it may wander about in the bush in some mysterious undefined form, doing nothing in particular except scare those who come across it, and so on. In short, the negro has no more definite knowledge of what happens to the spirit of man after death than we ourselves have. The science and philosophy of modern Europe have as yet found no

answer to this superlatively interesting question, and the negro of the West African bush cannot enlighten us.

> Strange, is it not ? that of the myriads who
> Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
> Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
> Which to discover we must travel too." [58]

But whatever views may prevail, there is unity of belief that the spirit retains an interest in the affairs of the living. Hence the maintenance of more or less permanent relations between the two ; or, as seems to be often the case among the lower races, the effort to avoid relations, since the action of the spirits is an unknown quantity. They can help or harm, and the belief in their ability to do either is increased by the mystery which invests them. Freed from the limitations of the body, they move in a wider sphere, and wield greater power. The large number of examples collected by Dr. Frazer, in his essay *On Certain Burial Customs as Illustrative of the Primitive Theory of the Soul*,[59] show that " the attentions bestowed on the dead

[8] *Cross River Natives.*

[59] An enlarged reprint from the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute* (August, 1885).

sprang not so much from the affections as from the fears of the survivors. For, as every one knows, ghosts of the unburied dead haunt the earth, and make themselves exceedingly disagreeable, especially to their undutiful relatives." Hence the various customs to "lay the ghost," the dread of whose return experience shows to be persistent, although history supplies many an example of cultivation of the society of the dead, and of festivals, such as the Parentalia in old Rome, when the tombs were decked with flowers, and wine, honey and oil offered; festivals surviving in the observances on All Souls' Day in Catholic countries.

The spirit would be supposed to haunt the spot whence it departed, but the association of it with the body would be maintained, and hence it would be transferred in thought to the resting-place of the remains. We do not know what Eolithic or Palæolithic man did with his dead; it is pretty certain that the carnivora of those times devoured many corpses, and there are Neolithic relics of funeral feasts which point to cannibalism. One of the most touching relics of the Neolithic Age is that of the skeleton of a young woman clasping a child, which was found in a round barrow on Dunstable

Downs, the grave being edged with fossil *echini* or sea-urchins, which the peasants call "fairy loaves." We have to assume a vast lapse of time before we reach the period when the cult of spirits took definite shape, with accompaniment of offerings, and of deposit of utensils and weapons, for, as the Algonquins told Father Charlevoix, "since hatchets and kettles have shadows, as well as men and women, it follows that these shadows must pass along with human shadows into the spirit-land"; or, as the Fijians say, "if an axe or a chisel is worn out or broken up, away flies its soul for the service of the gods." Logically, the savage who believes that in the other world

> The hunter still the deer pursues,
> The hunter and the deer a shade,

must put into the hands of the dead man his weapons of the chase. When an Ojibway chief, after a four days' trance, gave an account of his visit to the spirit world, he told of the hosts whom he had met travelling there laden with pipes and kettles and weapons. These primitive ideas make clear, once and for all, matters which have too often been explained by fanciful theories,

or cited as evidence of the benighted condition of those places which are painted black on missionary maps. They explain why things which were used by them in daily life are broken and deposited with the dead; why hecatombs of victims are burned on the funeral pyre, or smothered in the earth with the corpse; why, sometimes, among the ancient Mexicans, a rich man, dying, would have his priest slaughtered, so that he might not be deprived of ghostly counsel in the next world; and why, in pathetic custom, North American Indian mothers drop their milk on the lips of the dead child. In their initial stage all such offerings were made, and all such rites performed, for the supposed needs of the dead. Every one had his *manes*, which followed him into the next world, and, lacking which, he would be as poor as if in this world he had lacked it.

As man began to pay honour to his dead, whether in burying or burning them, the place where the remains were deposited became the nucleus of worship. The altar has its origin in the gifts laid upon the grave, whereon the sacred fane is raised. Thus, everywhere, the tomb is the birthplace of the temple, and whenever a Roman Catholic church, no matter how unpre-

tentious, is built, the altar is no altar unless it enshrines relics of some holy person.

Ancestor-worship, which may be said to be well-nigh universal, thus maintains intimate relations between the dead and living; between this world and a spirit-world. It falls into two groups: worship of the departed members of the family, sacrifices to whom become paramount duty, and who rank as friendly household gods, easily placated; and worship of great or holy men, culture heroes, braves, athletes, chiefs and other rulers, who in many cases rank with, and sometimes above, the powerful nature-gods of the earlier animism, with whose attributes they become credited. Of course, the importance of the dead determines their place, and their prospects of deification. In Shintoism, which affirms the existence of eight million deities recruited from the souls of heroes, rivers, mountains, waterfalls and great trees, the only gods particularly added, apart from the solar deities, are the genii of Pity, of Wealth, and of Medicine.[60] On the other hand, where ordinary folk are concerned, and where the survivors have short

[60] So reports Mrs. Bishop: *Religious Systems of the World*, pp. 98–9.

memories, the worship of the dead is brief, and their deification never. "Ask the negro," says Paul du Chaillu, "where is the spirit of his great-grandfather, he says he does not know, *it is done.* Ask him about the spirits of his father or brother who died yesterday; then he is full of fear and terror." Certain natives of Siberia pay honour to the figures of the dead for three years, after which they are buried and heard of no more; but if the deceased is a celebrated shaman, his image becomes the object of permanent worship.[61]

The interest of this development of Animism—the manufacture of gods out of men—is deepened by the fact that the process flourishes to the present day. Although the Roman Catholic Church does not apotheosize, its canonization of the dead has its roots in ancestor-worship. Concerning this it is amusing to note that by a "fluke" Buddha has a place in the Roman Martyrology, while S. Oreste or Oracte is none other than the mountain Soracte, the blunder arising from putting a full stop after the initial letter.

But it is in Asia, and prominently so in India, that the direct deification of humanity is seen in full

[61] Quoted from Erman's *Siberia* in D'Alviella's *Hibbert Lectures*, (1891), p. 130.

swing.[62] There "men are incessantly converting other men into gods, or embodiments of gods, or emanations from the Divine Spirit, and out of the deified man is visibly spun the whole myth which envelopes him as a silkworm in its cocoon." In the chapter on the "Religion of an Indian Province" in *Asiatic Studies*, Sir Alfred Lyall describes the stages, and the importance of the extract therefrom must be the warrant for its length:

"In India, whatever be the original reason for venerating a deceased man, his upward course toward deification is the same. At first we have the grave of one whose name, birthplace, and parentage are well known in the district; if he died at home, his family often set up a shrine, instal themselves in possession, and realize a handsome income out of the offerings; they became hereditary keepers of the sanctuary, if the shrine prospers and its virtues stand test. Or if the man wandered abroad, settled near some village or sacred spot, became renowned for his austerity or his afflictions, and there died,

[62] The Melanesians make a sharp distinction between spirits that never were men, and ghosts which are disembodied souls. (Codrington's *Melanesians*, pp. 120, 150.)

the neighbours think it great luck to have the tomb of a holy man within their borders, and the landholders administer the shrine by manorial right. In the course of a very few years, as the recollection of the man's personality becomes misty, his origin grows mysterious, his career takes a legendary hue, his birth and death are both supernatural; in the next generation the names of the elder gods get introduced into the story, and so the marvellous tradition works itself into a myth, until nothing but a personal incarnation can account for such a series of prodigies. The man was an Avatár of Vishnu or Siva; his supreme apotheosis is now complete, and the Brahmans feel warranted in providing for him a niche in the orthodox Pantheon. . . . Four of the most popular gods in Berar, whose images and temples are famous in the Dekhan, are Kandoba, Vittoba, Beiroba, and Bâlâji. These are now grand incarnations of the Supreme Triad; yet by examining the legends of their embodiment and appearance upon earth we obtain fair ground for surmising that all of them must have been notable living men not so very long ago."[63] The striking instance of the

[63] pp. 22, 23.

deification of the brave soldier and administrator, John Nicholson, will probably occur to the reader. Nicholson's worshippers, known as the Nikalsainis, saw in him an incarnation of the Brahmanic godhead, "and when their hero was slain in the hour of victory (he died in 1857), they either embraced the faith he resolutely held, or by their own act followed him into the hereafter."

The enormous and essential part played by ancestor-worship in the Far East is matter of common knowledge. Speaking of Japan, the late Lafcadio Hearn put the matter truly and tersely when he wrote: "The dead are rulers rather than the living," and how real are the dwellers in the invisible world to the Japanese is seen in the attitude of the soldiers in the recent war with Russia (1905) towards their fallen comrades, who, in the words of Professor Okakura, "are thought to be leading their ethereal life in the same world in much the same state as that to which they had been accustomed while on earth." Translated into Christian sentiment, it finds expression in the verse:—

> One family we dwell in Him,
> One Church above, beneath;
> Though now divided by the stream,
> The narrow stream of death.

Perhaps the foregoing meagre outline of a large subject, the manifold details of which those who care to pursue it can fill in with the help of the books named at foot, may suggest how the spiritual history of man, as a record of unbroken continuity and slow development, falls into line with the general doctrine of Evolution, which excludes nothing from its purview and province.

The fundamental identity of the animal and human psychology refutes, once and for all, the old theories which assume the religious faculty to be a special endowment of man. We trace its elements in embryo in the lower organisms, and explain why a faculty in which the emotions are dominant has undergone such little essential change that what is called Animism remains the distinctive feature of the highest religions. "Sentiment," says Gustave le Bon, "has never been vanquished in its eternal conflict with reason," and that which appeals to the hopes and passions of mankind secures a hearing denied to that which makes demand on intellectual effort, with the possible result of abandonment of cherished beliefs. We retain in our bodies vestiges of our descent from lower life-forms, some of these rudimentary structures

being perilous as well as useless. And we retain in our minds faculties inherited from our animal ancestry, which, unlike the vestiges in our bodies, are not inactive. Mental evolution, broadly speaking, has been lineal, having travelled along definite tracks of sensory and nervous modification, which we can more easily follow than the diverging lines of bodily evolution.

Animists, in the germ, were our pre-human ancestors; animists, to the core, we remain. The "feare of things Invisible," the "seed of Religion," is in the developed flower, which itself reproduces that seed. "Intellectual disbelief of a superstition is not inconsistent with an emotional half-belief of it, which half-belief shall in moments of great mental perturbation become a positive conviction."[64] The periodical reports of a ghost send crowds to watch for the apparition, as to the reality of which a large percentage will swear. Brief are the intervals in which the newspapers do not record some story of witches casting spells or the evil eye on cattle, children, and churns. People who would resent being classed as uneducated resort to palmists to tell

[64] *Shakspeare*: "Testimonied in his own Bringings forth." By Dr. Henry Maudsley, p. 22.

them their fortunes in the lines of their hands, when they might as well hope to read the future in the creases of their trousers. Season after season produces a fresh crop of dupes of mediums who pretend to hold communion with departed spirits. Time has wrought no difference between the Rome of the Cæsars and the London of Edward the Seventh in the credulity of the classes and masses; and the first medium of whom we read, Alexander of Abonoteichos,[65] could have given points to Dr. Slade and Douglas Home. Marriages in May were unlucky, indeed forbidden, in old Rome, because at the festival of the Lemuria, held in honour of the dead, the house was cleared of hostile ghosts. The superstition, under other guises, flourishes amongst us, and "in some parts of Scotland the fourteenth of May was deemed so inauspicious that even the day of the week on which it fell in any year was tabooed by bridal couples for the remainder of the year."[66] It is the same with luck in numbers. Motorists will not have

[65] *Lucian of Samosata.* Vol. II. "Alexander the Oracle-Monger." Tr. by H. W. and F. G. Fowler (1905).

[66] Murray's *Life in Scotland a Hundred Years Ago*, p. 115 (1905).

"13" on their cars; hotels avoid it on the doors of their bedrooms; and recently the owner of a house in Hornsey petitioned the borough council for permission to alter the number from "13" to "11*a*." The stalwart opponents of superstition refused his request.

As already remarked, there are in rituals no inventions, only survivals; and all the material apparatus of the religions of the world has its origin in the lower culture, from bells, whose primitive purpose was to drive away evil spirits, to sacraments, which had their beginnings in sympathetic magic. The craving after, and dependence upon, symbols, is universal; the lower the intelligence the more does it derive help from the tangible. This is not to deny its utility. Human nature being what it is, there is force in the remark that "a good dose of materialism may be necessary for religion that we may not starve the world."[67]

[67] Professor Butcher's *Harvard Lectures*, p. 67. Quoted from article by Dr. Schechter, *Jewish Quarterly*, 1904.

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