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ANIMISM IN AFRICA

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Systematic Theology

In Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by

John Louis Konz

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Approved by:


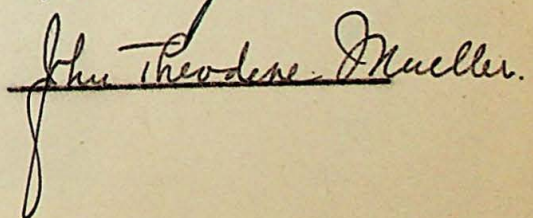



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ANIMISM IN AFRICA

Introduction

If by religion we mean a system of faith in and worship of some being, whether natural or supernatural, then we must say that the primitive peoples of the innermost regions of the continent of Africa are religious. Many enlightened readers in our day are apt to think and believe the opposite. The pagan races of foreign lands are devoid of all religion, they say. But this is simply not true. We can safely assert that there is not one single primitive tribe which is not religious.

All missionaries who have served for any length of time on a foreign mission field, among backward nations, will bear witness to Joh. Warneck's assertion of this truth: "Their habits and customs, their laws and their morals, their social and family life, have all a religious foundation. Religion seems to be the determining power both of the national and individual life, and it is in their religion that we must seek the roots of their thoughts and the motives of their action."¹

1. Joh. Warneck, Living Forces of the Gospel, p. 27

Furthermore, the African, or any pagan, for that matter, daily practices his religion. "He practices it not only as a personal cult, but as effecting his whole tribe; and in the practice of it, he immolates himself for the common good. He believes that there is an indissoluble union between the supernatural and everyday life, and he seeks to harmonize these elements in his own life."²

There are many different expressions and forms of worship in the various areas of heathenism. But the foundation and basis of them all is the one religious belief which has been given the name "animism." In the following pages, we aim to analyse this strange and fascinating religion of the pagan. However, we shall try to limit ourselves to a description of the religion of the black-skinned peoples of the "Dark Continent," though we may draw on the study of those who have reported on other primitive tribes in their various spheres of labor among them. From them we may learn the principles of this religion, for the religion of the animist is similar the world over. The examples will be taken from African soil.

In our study, we shall endeavor to trace the origin and development of animism as a theory of the origin of religion, view it in action and consider its effect on the lives and souls of the heathen.

2. Joan Kenyon MacKenzie, Friends of Africa, p. 59

PART ONE

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ANTHISM

Definition

"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 adays the opinion that rude people have of Fayries, Ghosts and Goblins, and of the power of Witches."¹

Thus wrote Thomas Hobbes, in his book Leviathan, chapter ii, pt. 1, in describing the beginnings of religion. The English philosopher, who lived from 1588 to 1679, in this way became probably the first one to set forth the basic conception of the doctrine of animism.

However, it was not until the days of Georg Ernst Stahl, the court physician to the King of Prussia in Berlin, who died in 1734, that the word "animism" was first heard. It was he who coined the word early in the 18th century to describe his philosophy of a world-soul. Later, Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, an English scientist, gave it its present prominent place when he set forth animism as the origin of religion. Others since then have used the word in different ways, some in a philo-

1. Edward Clodd, Animism, The Seed of Religion, p. 30

sophical sense, others, ethnologically.

The word itself is derived from "anima, meaning 'breath' which in Latin came to have the secondary sense of 'soul,' very much as did the equivalent word spiritus, whence our 'spirit.' Hence animism might stand for any doctrine having to do with soul or spirit, and, later, with souls or spirits."² We may define animism briefly then as a "belief in spirits," which is Tylor's famous "minimum definition of religion."

There are others who seek to divide and define more fully and carefully this term "animism." The Catholic Encyclopedia, for example, classifies animism in this way: "Philosophical—the doctrine that the soul is the principle of life in man and in other living things. . . . II. Ethnological—a theory proposed in recent years to account for the origin and development of religion."³

Still another, Carveth Read, speaks of a Hyperphysical animism and a psychological animism. By the first he means "the proneness of savages and barbarians, . . . to explain natural occurrences, at least the more remarkable or interesting, . . . as due to the action of spirits: (1) ghosts . . . (2) dream-spirits, . . . (3) invisible, living, conscious beings that have never been incarnate."⁴ The psychological animism he explains in this way: ". . . a supposed attitude of savages and children toward all things, animate and inanimate, such that they spontaneously and necessarily attribute to everything

2. R. R. Marett, "Animism," Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed., Vol. I, p. 974.

3. J. T. Driscoll, "Animism," The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. I, pp. 526-530.

4. Carveth Read, The Origin of Man and of His Superstitions, p. 145.

a consciousness like our own, and regard all the actions and reactions of natural objects as voluntary and purposive."⁵

In studying the religion of the primitive, however, we may take the word "animism, in its widest sense, as it is used by modern science of religion, as indicating that view of the world which, on the basis of primitive notions of the soul, leads partly to animalism, partly to anthropism (worship of the dead, ancestor worship, spiritism), and belief in demons. . . . Animism is in some sort the philosophy of the uncivilized man, in virtue of which he constructs for himself a picture of the world so far as he has an interest in it. It is occupied with the soul of the living man as well as with the souls of all living creatures, organisms, and even lifeless objects, to which it likewise ascribes a soul, or to speak more correctly soul-stuff. This soul-stuff then becomes the object of worship."⁶

It is this understanding of animism that we shall follow in the study of the primitive religion of the heathen.

5. Ibid, p. 145.

6. Joh. Warneck, Living Forces of the Gospel, p. 40.

II

Development as Origin of Religion

The one man who did most to make animism a by-word among ethnologists and students of religion and races in general was a man who had a great gift for systematizing facts. His name was Edward Burnett Tylor. The idea of animism, even the term, had been made known long before his day, as even Tylor himself admits. "Animism is not a new technical term, though now seldom used."¹ But it was he who gathered the great mass of facts relating to animism and then, patiently and diligently inquiring into its origin found it to be the origin of religion. "Thus with its crushing weight of facts, its smooth and unbroken series of stages of development, and the concise, dispassionate style of its exposition left no room for opposition. As a matter of fact, for the next three decades it remained the 'classical theory,' as Andrew Lang called it. . . ."² In considering the development of animism, we must therefore give considerable attention to Sir Edward Burnett Tylor's theory of it as an origin of religion.

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1. Edward Burnett Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. I, p. 425.
 2. Wilhelm Schmidt, The Origin and Growth of Religion, p. 74.

In the beginning of history, when man had only begun to use his brain for thinking, he began to form an idea about his own body. Then as time went on primitive man formed an idea of something outside of his body, something which might be called a soul. Two groups of phenomena made him come to this realization. "The first group of phenomena was sleep, ecstasy, illness, and death. The second group, those of dreams and visions. In the former class of conditions, primitive man beheld the body more or less abandoned by the principle of life, and therefore isolated and by itself; in the second, on the other hand, the figures in dreams and the appearances in visions seemed to present this incorporeal principle, the soul, in isolation."³ This conception of the soul was first applied to the soul of man. Soon, there arose the belief in the continued existence of the soul after death, and in transmigration. From this man began to give heed to the desires of the dead. The idea of retribution in another life, however, did not arise till later.

Man at this point in his development looked upon his soul as making long journeys in his dreams. From this also came the idea that the soul was a shadow, or a breath, a shade, something long and ethereal. "My own view is 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."⁴

A corollary of this is the idea of funereal human sacrifices, the releasing of the soul so that it may accompany its master, and

3. Ibid., p. 74.

4. Edward Burnett Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. I, p. 450.

other kindred practices.

From this basic thought then, that man has a soul, he soon logically passed on to the thought that animals and things, also have a soul. "As, however, to primitive thought, man's own existence was the measure of all other and as he conceived of the nature of other things by analogy with his own, . . . he came to think of all other things whatsoever, . . . as consisting of a body and a soul. . . . It did not occur to him that there was any difference of nature between man and other things, and consequently man thought of the rest of the world as related to himself."⁵ The cries of animals, sounding like human language, and their actions impressed the savage. "The lower psychology cannot but recognize in beasts the very characteristics which it attributes to the human soul, namely, the phenomena of life and death, will and judgment, and the phantom seen in vision or in dream."⁶

A soul was also attributed to inanimate things, on the basis of like phenomena of life and death.

Next came a conception of pure spirits. These pure spirits were the souls of dead men who had no longer an earthly body. The cult of ancestor-worship thus developed. "Souls of dead men are in fact considered as actually forming one of the most important classes of demons and deities."⁷

They also served as an explanation of 'possession,' for they

5. Wilhelm Schmidt, The Origin and Growth of Religion, p. 75.

6. Edward Burnett Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. I, p. 469.

7. Edward Burnett Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. II, p. 111.

were thought capable of entering bodies not their own, even if only for a short time. "On the one hand it provides an explanation of the phenomena of morbid exaltation and derangement, . . . and . . . an almost general doctrine of disease. On the other hand, it enables the savage either to 'lay' a hurtful spirit in some foreign body, and so get rid of it, or to carry about a useful spirit for his service in a material object, to set it up as a deity for worship in the body of an animal, or . . . other thing; . . . this is the key to strict fetishism, and in no small measure to idolatry."⁸ In this manner, the practice of fetishism and idolatry are explained.

Having established the principle of separate or "pure" spirits, the animist logically applied it again to nature, and the spirits animated nature. Hence arose the worship of nature in its special forms (worship of rivers, trees, etc.), culminating in the deification of a whole species, not alone an individual object. "For as the human body was held to live and act by virtue of its own inhabiting spirit-soul, so the operations of the world seemed to be carried on by the influence of other spirits. And thus Animism, starting as a philosophy of human life, extended and expanded itself till it became a philosophy of nature at large."⁹

The next step was a development of the higher polytheism of the civilized and half-civilized races. So are "human souls . . . held to pass into the characters of good and evil demons, and to ascend to the rank of deities. . . . these mighty deities are modelled on

8. Ibid., p. 123.

9. Ibid., pp. 184, 185.

human souls, . . . their feeling and sympathy, their character and habit, their will and action, even their material and form, display throughout their adaptations, exaggerations and distortions, characteristics shaped upon those of the human spirit. . . . They differ from the souls and minor spiritual beings which we have as yet chiefly considered, but the difference is rather of rank than of nature."¹⁰

The sky-god, the rain-god, the thunder-god, the wind-god, the earth-gods, the gods of water, fire and the sun and moon also came into being. Likewise gods who preside over particular stages and functions of human life, the deities of birth, and of agriculture, the god of war and of death, connected with whom is the deified father of the race were introduced into man's religion. "The great Nature-gods are huge in strength and far-reaching in influence, . . . because the natural objects they belong to are immense in size or range of action, pre-eminent and predominant among lesser fetishes, though still fetishes themselves."¹¹

Dr. Tylor admits that there are traces of a dualistic system found at the lower stages of development, but no ethical significance is attached to the notion of good and bad. Certain natural forces, such as light and darkness, help in the production of this idea. This principle is found in the Zoroastrian type of religious system. "The leading thought of the Zarathustrian faith was the contest of Good and Evil in the world, a contrast typified and involved in that of Day and Night, Light and Darkness, and brought to personal shape

10. Ibid., pp. 247, 248.

11. Ibid., p. 255.

in the warfare of Ahura-Mazda and Anra-Mainyu, the Good and Evil Deity, Ormuzd and Ahriman."¹²

In reaching the higher levels of religious development, Tylor would like to reconsider the definition of a monotheistic religion. He would like a wider definition, which when granted, places the religion of the more civilized races in that form of worship known as henotheism. "If the monotheistic criterion be simply made to consist in the Supreme Deity being held as creator of the universe and chief of the spiritual hierarchy, then its application to savage and barbaric theology will lead to perplexing consequences. . . . To mark off the doctrines of monotheism, closer definition is required, assigning the distinctive attributes of deity to none save the Almighty Creator. It may be declared that, in this strict sense, no savage tribe of monotheists has been ever known. Nor are any fair representatives of the lower culture in a strict sense pantheists. The doctrine which they do widely hold, and which opens to them a course tending in one or other of these directions, is polytheism culminating in the rule of one supreme divinity."¹³

This type of monotheism, or henotheism, according to Tylor, arises "(a) 'by the simple process of raising to divine primacy one of the gods of polytheism itself,' . . . (b) a sort of pantheon may be formed 'arranged on the model of an earthly political constitution, where the commonalty are crowds of human souls and other tribes of world-pervading spirits, the aristocracy are great polytheistic

12. Ibid, p. 328.

13. Ibid, p. 332.

gods, and the King is the Supreme Deity.' Or (c) a doctrine is arrived at which conceives of 'the universe as animated by one greatest, all-pervading divinity,' an anima mundi, in short."¹⁴

Finally, Tylor sums up his theory of the origin and development of religion as found in the animistic form of worship. "Thus, then, it appears that the theology of the lower races already reaches its climax in conceptions of Supreme Deity, and that these conceptions in the savage and barbaric world are no copies stamped from one common type, but outlines widely varying among mankind. . . . Looked upon as products of natural religion, such doctrines of divine supremacy seem in no way to transcend the powers of the low-cultured mind to reason out, nor of the low-cultured imagination to deck with mythic fancy. . . . Among these races, Animism has its distinct and consistent outcome, and Polytheism its distinct and consistent completion, in the doctrine of a Supreme Deity."¹⁵

For a generation and more this theory held a pre-eminent place in the science of religion. As more facts became known and as the hypothesis of Darwin's evolutionary theory as applied to religion began to weaken, so, too, did animism begin to lose its position in the thinking of anthropologists and ethnologists. Many arose to challenge the position Tylor had taken, among them some of his own followers and pupils.

One of these critics of Tylor's theory is R. R. Marett. He asserted that the development of religion which begins with "thinking

14. Wilhelm Schmidt, op. cit., p. 76.

15. Edward Burnett Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. II, p. 336.

men" is based upon the fallacy of intellectualism. By that he means that primitive men "begin by conceiving an idea and thereupon proceed to mould their practice in accordance with it." According to modern psychologists, "man always thinks while acting, and in some sense after acting, since the function of thought is to be rudder, not propeller--to direct, while impulse drives."¹⁶

Marett explains this principle by citing this probable custom. For some time the savage had a custom to which he gave little thought. He would leave materials and food at the side of a dying member of his tribe, and then move on to another village site. Out of this grew an idea that in the next world, food and weapons were needed. According to this method of development, Tylor's theory was putting the cart before the horse.

At the same time, Marett set forth the theory of the origin of religion which he called "animatism." He maintained that "supernaturalism, the attitude of mind dictated by awe of the mysterious, which provides religion with its raw material, may exist apart from animism, and further, may provide a basis on which an animistic doctrine is subsequently constructed."¹⁷ The positive aspect of animatism he called mana, the negative, tabu. "... .negatively, the supernatural is tabu, not to be lightly approached, because, positively, it is mana, instinct with a power above the ordinary."¹⁸

Another critic attacks Tylor's theory from another side. W. Schmidt,

16. R. R. Marett, "Animism," Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th ed., Vol. I, p. 974.

17. R. R. Marett, The Threshold of Religion, p. 1.

18. Ibid., p. 99.

of the University of Vienna, an eminent anthropologist, points out that the theory of animism as an origin of religion is based on the theory of evolution which was then in its heyday. It assumes, he says, a priori, an upward development of mankind along a single line. It did not offer any proof that the single stages of the process have any historical connection with one another. These are the two chief criticisms offered by Schmidt.

Two theories succeeded in time in discrediting Tylor's theory. Both of these showed that it was possible for the primitive man to behold certain sets of phenomena which had no connection with the concept of spirits. These two preanimistic forms were first, the pre-animism of magic, or material pre-animism; secondly, the pre-animism of monotheism, or formally styled personal pre-animism.¹⁹

The leading exponent of magic as the origin of religion was Sir James G. Frazer, the author of the monumental work, The Golden Bough. In this work he sets forth the idea that magic, which may be classified as the ability of an individual to use or influence the supernatural, was the first condition of man, but that this failed and therefore man returned to religion.

The second form of pre-animism as listed by Schmidt, is monotheistic. This personal pre-animism is held and set forth largely by Andrew Lang, a former pupil of Tylor. Although not altogether declaring the theory of animism to be a worthless, defunct theory, he did find several places in Tylor's development which in the light of further information proved to be untenable. He was not content with

19. W. Schmidt, The Origin and Growth of Religion, p. 83.

mere criticism, however. He likewise set forth his own views. He showed that the higher, purer form of religion and the lower, irrational and debasing mythological element could have originated independently of each other. Yet we find both present in some degree in every nation.

The origin of the higher worship may be found in the nature of man. "As soon," he says, "as man had the idea of "making things," he might conjecture as to a Maker of things which he himself had not made, and could not make. He would regard this unknown Maker as a "magnified non-natural man."²⁰ As to the lower elements, he "assumes that those remarkable fables, folk tales and myths arose at a definite period in the history of human thought through which all peoples have passed, and in which the savage races to some extent still are."²¹ Lang, however, did not fully discard his evolutionistic ideas concerning the development of religion.

Major Arthur Glyn Leonard, who around 1900 studied carefully the tribes of the lower Niger Delta region, calls pre-animism by another name, Naturism. "So it was out of sheer awe and reverence of the mighty elements of Nature that man became a naturalist, and with increasing intelligence his fear and respect for Nature grew deeper and stronger."²²

Another theorist, Eli Edward Burriss, appears to identify naturalism (or naturism) with magic, when he writes, setting forth a

20. Ibid, p. 178.

21. Ibid, p. 179.

22. Major A. G. Leonard, The Lower Niger and Its Tribes, p. 94.

state of worship previous to animism: "This shift in attitude may be seen by studying the manner in which early man, in the magic period, addresses the objects directly (naturalism) and, in the animistic period, the spirits resident in these objects."²³

Herbert Spencer claimed to have antedated Tylor in setting forth the theory of animism as the origin of religion. However, he more or less maintained, according to Major Leonard, that the ghost-theory provided the raw material for religion, but that the belief is not entitled to the name of religion.

Still other theories as to the origin of religion are to be found in fetishism, which is considered the lowest religious form extant (held by August Comte); polytheism, thought by A. Revill6 to be the first of man's beliefs; and the ancestor-cult. But it remains for a certain Mr. Hopkins, quoted by Edw. Clodd, to add a final, climatic touch to all this thinking in certain circles concerning the origin of religion. "'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.'²⁴

For the most part, the above-mentioned theories and speculations

23. Eli Edward Burriess, Taboo, Magic, Spirits, p. 22.

24. Edward Clodd, ANIMISM, The Seed of Religion, pp. 10. 11.

have as their basic idea the thought that man arose from a lower stage to a higher level of religious beliefs. In this development, animism has been given the first, or lowest level by a few; many have considered it rather as a phase, but not the originating, phase of religion. There are some, however, who do not agree with the general, fundamental idea of a development of religion upwards. These men believe and with reason that animism is a part of a degenerative and degrading religious practice. It is these voices that we will listen to in the next chapter.

III

A Degeneration of Religion

Evolution dies slowly. Though the theory of animism as an origin of religion is not as acceptable today as it was at the turn of the twentieth century, yet there are many scholars who still cling to the supposition that religion is a development from the lowest form of worship to a higher form of belief in a Supreme Being. About that they do not argue. Their arguments center around the origin of religion.

Fortunately, however, there are some, a few, perhaps, who gladly and willingly raise their voices in protest against this hypothesis. One of these voices belongs to Father Wilhelm Schmidt, one of the great living scholars in this field. This German anthropologist formerly belonged to San Gabriel Monastery and the University of Vienna. In his Ursprung der Gottesidee, a five-volume work, he tried to prove scientifically that monotheism is the earliest form of religion. From the conclusion of another of his books, in translation, The Origin and Growth of Religion, we gather this comment: "Thereafter, as external civilization increased in splendour and wealth, so religion came to be expressed in forms of ever-increasing magnificence and opulence.

Images of gods and daimones multiplied to an extent which defies all classification. . . . But all this cannot blind us to the fact that . . . The results of this, both moral and social, were anything but desirable, leading to extreme degradation and even to the deification of the immoral and antisocial."¹

Dr. Samuel Zwemer, in his Origin of Religion, agrees with Fr. Schmidt, when he maintains that "Not evolution, but degeneration or deterioration, is found in the history of religion among primitive tribes and the higher cultures that followed after their migration."²

A missionary who spent some time in the Indonesian islands and wrote quite extensively on the primitive religions of that area also comes to the same conclusion that animism is a degenerative phase of religion. Joh. Warneck asks: "how could these religions, which represent the initial stage of development, derive any nourishment, in that initial stage, from the idea of a supreme God, who, ex hypothesi, should be the last member of a long series of acquisitions laboriously won. Why does the Indonesian, when in great distress, flee to God, of whom, according to that hypothesis, he should have no knowledge whatever? . . . The Animism of to-day gives us the impression of a religion that carries the marks of a fall, or a worship no longer understood and become an empty ceremony."³

Even the language of the heathen testifies to the degenerative effects of animism. "The result to which Bittner was led by the study

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1. Wilhelm Schmidt, The Origin and Growth of Religion, p. 269.
 2. Samuel Zwemer, The Origin of Religion, p. 63.
 3. Joh. Warneck, Living Forces of the Gospel, p. 99.

of the languages of Africa is that everything which can be regarded as traditional custom proves that these people are still going down, and that their former condition was relatively more perfect.⁴

From a personal contact with animistic people, the writer also receives the impression that their religion is a degrading and demoralising form of worship. Keeping in mind the ideal of worship and belief which we find in the Holy Scriptures and comparing that ideal with the beliefs and practices of the primitive, pagan population of Africa and other regions, we must likewise add our voice to those which proclaim animism as the downfall of man's spirit.

But we have not yet given proof that this position is the correct one. We have considered opinions and theories only. We have not presented evidence. In the following chapters, we shall cite examples of animistic beliefs and practices and let the reader draw his own conclusions as he views animism in action.

4. Ibid, p. 102.

PART TWO

ANIMISM IN ACTION

IV

Belief in God and gods

In a lively discussion early one morning at Ikot Obio Odongo, one of the members of our Lutheran Church in Nigeria, an Ibibio, declared that he was taught that God is someone who is far off. He is a good God, a kindly God. But he is not everywhere and does not do every thing. In another village class some old people confirmed this view. There is a god who created them and their ancestors. In fact, they said, there is one god who is far above the earth, i.e., in heaven and another one who is on earth, an earth-god.

That there is a Supreme Being in African theology is evident. Others, too, have learned that the African believes in an all-powerful supreme deity. "Whether God made man in his own image or it is the other way around, the African has always believed that there is a God, the Being to whom he attributes all creation." This from the pen of an Ibo writer, an African. He continues: "In my state, He is Chineke, God the Creator."¹

Ojike goes on to describe this God. "Broadly speaking, there are two related concepts of God: Chineke, and Chi. The first idea is

1. Iboru Ojike, My Africa, p. 180.

the Supreme Being, God, the Creator, the universal God. He is the same for all persons and races and nations. He has no angels or holy messengers because he needs none. He can do every thing. He created the whole cosmos alone and without fatigue. He is not human and does not possess an animal nature that would need food and drink; our sacrifices are symbolic. No one has ever seen Him physically and no artist dare portray Him in wood, bronze, or painting. He is a spirit and communicates to man not in body but in spirit."²

In Ibesikpo, also, there is a great God who set the world in motion and kept it going. He is given the name Abasi. Other tribes and nations likewise have special names for their god, and all recognize a supreme deity. The Senufo of the Ivory Coast call him Kuluikieri. "High above, far along, and deep below went the great Kuluikieri, God and Creator. His every step created stars; his anxieties, the sun; his gladness, the moon; his tears, the sea; his thought, the insects, birds, animals and--men. When Kuluikieri had done all this he threw over his creations the blue cloak of heaven, hid himself behind it for ever, and rested. He does not see the world he created: he does not hear the sound of the thunders, the roar of the waves . . . or our prayers. . . . That last sentence, and the cry of the Kagora people, 'Gwazi is very busy, he sometimes forgets man,' gives the reason why the African teaches that there are other gods besides the supreme ones."³

Most of these views of God picture him as a great male deity.

2. Ibid, p. 183.

3. F. W. Butt-Thompson, West African Secret Societies, p. 182.

However, there are some who view the deity as a woman, or more particularly, as his wife. For instance, the people of the Eket District in Calabar Province, where our church carries on its work, speak of an Eka Abasi, the mother-god. She is the goddess of women and children, the goddess of fertility. "My grandmother once told me," said the old woman, 'that Isu Idem (the Face of the Juju) was the mouthpiece of Eka Abassi. So great is this goddess that no husband was needed for the birth of her babes. By her own might alone did the first of these, Obumo, spring forth; but to none of her daughters was this power transmitted.'"⁴

The Ibos, a neighboring tribe also have a feminine god. "Chi is our chief God. We regard her as feminine gender, because everything was created by her. For the same reason Ale, the Earth Mother, is also looked upon as a woman, since she bears our crops and that which gives birth cannot be other than feminine.""⁵

But besides these two great gods, the Creator and Creatrix, there are lesser gods, which some have termed messenger gods. Some have been credited with as many as fifty serving sons. "The Yoruba Aranfô has for firstborn Oduwa, to whom he gave 'the five-clawed bird' and the 'sand of power,' and for a favourite Orisha, to whom was given the 'bag of wisdom's guarded lore and arts, for man's well-being and advancement.' . . . Mawu, one of the messenger gods of the Ewe-speaking peoples, is said to be the giver of all good, to be very patient and never angry, and to be the righteous punisher of the brother who

4. P. Anoury Talbot, Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 11.

5. P. Anoury Talbot, Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 19.

deceives, the king who is false to his people, and the man who burns down his neighbour's house without offence."⁶ Feminine deities are likewise included in this group.

Another class of lesser gods has been called Tribal gods. These gods are not given human attributes, but are dispensers of tribal law, punishers of the errant and the guardians of the bridge of death. They may be good or bad. But not as bad as another group. They receive sacrifices in many different places for they may be dwelling in the sea, the sky, in the earth or on the mountain. "The Abosom, the gods of this group commemorated in the ritual practices of Katchwira and Katchwiriba, are most manifested in lightning and fire, storm and deluge, and the dangers connected therewith. The Ilcita of the Bakongo, . . . employ their strength to cripple unsuspecting persons."⁷

Still another class of lesser spirits includes the family guardians. Their special duty seems to be to protect, heal, strengthen and grant ease and gladness, and they are expected to inculcate esteem and love between the members of the family. They likewise serve as interpreters, informing the household what the greater gods are doing or are intending to do. They appear to know all that is going on in the household and are able to advise on family matters.

Going farther on the scale of deities we run across the companion spirits, or the very personal gods of each individual. This is apparently what Ojike meant when he said there are two related concepts of God.

6. F. W. Butt-Thompson, op. cit., p. 183.

7. Ibid, p. 184.

"We believe that man is different from lower animals only in one primary sense: God left in every man a portion of His breath . . . From this belief we derive our idea of personal gods, called Chi in the Ibo language. There are as many such Chi as there are personalities. No one Chi is like another, because no two persons are identical. A rich man's Chi is rich and a poor man's Chi is poor. A man's Chi is masculine while a woman's is feminine. A man's Chi is equal to that man. This personal god does not leave its master until death. It is a personal guard to which God entrusted every human being."⁸ These personal gods, are, therefore, considered as an additional emanation from the one great goddess, which Chief Anakiri Yellow explained. An Ibo chief, who had made repeated pilgrimages to Aro Chuku, explained the matter: "Chi-Uko means "goddess, the great one;" so Chuku and Chi are the same. Everyone has his own Chi; but the Aro made a huge juju at Aro Chuku which they called by this name, because in that place is to be found the greatest of all the many manifestations of Chi upon earth. . . . At Aro Chuku there is a gathering together of all the Chi forces, so at this common shrine anyone can sacrifice.'

"The Aro Chuku oracle holds first place for most people of this region, as formerly throughout the whole country between the Niger and Cross Rivers."⁹ Thus the tribal gods and the personal spirits are united in a common cause.

These personal gods are not evil, but will punish any person who breaks their laws. The indication of such punishment is usually found

8. Mbonu Ojike, op. cit., p.183.

9. P. Anaury Talbot, Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 23.

in a sore sickness. This Chi has almost complete control over her people, determining how long they should live, when they should die and whether they should return again and again in some other body.

This gives us a glimpse into the worship of the animist. He recognizes a supreme being, a creator of the earth and heaven and all things. But he does not worship, or sacrifice to this Great God. The lesser gods are the ones to be feared more. It is to them that sacrifices are made and prayers addressed. As to the classification of these gods, we cannot all agree. Some distinguish four, some five, others only two groups. But all agree that it is to the gods of this second group that the heathen sacrifices and offers his prayers. Here, again, we cannot be too dogmatic, for there are scattered instances of prayers and sacrifices offered to other beings, as we shall see in the succeeding chapters.

Before going on to the next chapter, a description of a sacrifice offered to the Eka Abasi (Mother-God) will serve to show the attitude of the pagan people over against the lesser god. When someone is sick the people of the Eket District may take a young chicken, fish and a powder obtained from a mahogany tree and some water. They will mix the water with mud. After killing the fowl and mixing its blood with the moistened mud, they will add the fish. They will then address the goddess at a particular place in the bush: "Eat this, drink this, let the spirit of the sick man go." After more ritual, the head of the fowl is put on a stick and left in the middle of the compound, or at someone's grave. The water-mud-blood-fish mixture now is used to wash the forehead and chest of the sick man. Recovery is then sup-

posed to follow immediately.

At the beginning of the yam harvest, Dr. Henry Nau paid a visit to the home of a big chief of Ikot Obio Ofong. "We see, in front of his house, a small place fenced in with a row of short sticks. Garlands of the fiber of the palm tree hang about. In the fenced enclosure is, perhaps, a bottle or a pan filled with blood, water, yam, or any other kind of food. When you ask the chief what it is, he will tell you that it is his Abasi. To Abasi he has sacrificed for having protected the harvest and given him bountiful fruit."¹⁰ In this way, the pagan peoples show their thanks and also their fear of the gods whom they cannot see.

10. Henry Nau, We Move Into Africa, p. 163.

Worship of Spirits

Besides the Great God and the numerous lesser gods which the animist worships, there is a host of other spiritual beings which he fears and to which he bows down. There is some confusion, it appears, in naming these groups of spiritual beings. They are called gods, spirits, demons, jujus and sometimes even fetishes. However, despite the confusion, there is a little bit of system in naming them, depending on whom we follow. In general, we can speak of two great groups of spirits, the good and the bad. Then under the good, we may speak of the water spirits and the land spirits. Under the bad, we may speak of imps, demons and devils, if we wish. Then, to make the list complete, there are the spirits of the ancestors which are also revered and worshipped.

The Ibo tribe numbers about four million people. And since there are numerous sub-tribes, or clans, among them, it stands to reason that we may find different classifications of gods and spirits and demons and ancestors. For instance, in reading Ojike's description of his people's religion, we find Chi and Chineke. The first are considered personal gods. Chineke is the great God. On the other hand,

when we view reports given by other authors, we find a greater distinction in the Chi, so that we call them not only personal gods, but also, as was done in the previous chapter, family guardians and tribal gods. We shall record the reports as they are given. In the main, we can be fairly certain that there are groups of spirits included in the designation Chi.

"Next to the gods come, both for Kalabari and Ibo, those minor deities, or godlings, known throughout the West Coast of Africa as *jujus*.¹ Among Kalabari these are clearly divided into two categories, 'Owu Anapo' or water spirits and 'Oru' or land spirits. A somewhat similar belief is held by Ibo, though with them the first named are only worshipped in connection with special sacred waters such as the Otamini River, or the dwelling-place of the terrible water wife Wainya, Mala-Dala, . . . For Kalabari, on the contrary, almost every creek and stream is peopled by water spirits."²

The Ibibio people give these nature spirits the general name of *Ndem* and include the water and land spirits under it. The water spirits are powerful, beneficent, generally, but sometimes they may become malignant and resemble the evil spirits, for the which the Ibibios have the name 'Mbiam. The *Ndem*, according to Talbot, "are male and female, their bodies built somewhat on the human model, but of more ethereal texture, varying in height from about six inches to four feet. Each race has its own particular work; they are principal-

1. The author comments in a footnote: "Some of the beings or forces included here under this name would now be classified by me as 'medicines' or charms. For a fuller definition and description see The People of Southern Nigeria, Vol. II, p. 153 et seq."

2. P. Amoury Talbot, Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 32.

ly concerned with the growth of vegetation, while some—especially the Anandun among the Anang, like the Animu of the Ekoi—are regarded as the givers of babes and all young things, since it is they who, under the guidance of Eka Abasi, at conception place the body of the child in the mother's womb and superintend its development."³

Chief Daniel Henshaw, a prominent chief of Calabar province, describes these Ndenn: "Ndenn is uncreated, eternal, dwelling in springs, pools, or rivers, within the boles of great trees, in rocks, and places where our ancestors have offered sacrifices for centuries beyond centuries: where tall many-sided stones stand, or copper rods are to be seen pushing forth from the earth. Such spots are to be found in the depths of the bush, and are very holy on account of the indwelling spirit. Ndenn cannot be materialised, and very rarely is an attempt ever made to represent him. Mats of plaited palm leaf are often hung round his dwelling-place, but only as an intimation that the ground is holy. He is the giver of fertility, one of the beneficent forces of nature."⁴

Of the water spirits, Ibo Chief Quaker Bob Manuel of Abonnema said: "The Owa were made by Tamuno (Chi) in the beginning of all things, before men were made. Some people indeed believe that we are descended from them; but, for my part, I think that Chi made each separately—the first to live in the water and the others on land."⁵

The name of water-spirits is given to all strange creatures which

3. P. Amaury Talbot, Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 20.

4. Ibid., p. 22.

5. P. Amaury Talbot, Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 33.

inhabit the sea, whence they are reported to originate. The foremost creature, sacred to the people, it appears, is the python, or a large water-snake. These snakes are not molested, because the water-spirit sometimes takes this form. Even if they crawl into bed with one and curl up alongside, they are not disturbed. They are looked upon as the children of Adun', the father and chief of the Owa, names given by the Kalabari. Shrines are built for him, and priestesses serve him. Prayers and gifts are brought in order to soften the heart of the water-spirit so that a woman may bear children. Sacrifices of thanksgiving are made to the spirit when children do come. In certain areas women are forbidden to visit a particular sacred spot. Also, these water-spirits may assume other forms and visit the people. They may even marry mortal beings and bear children who then grow up to be wise and prosperous. From this arises the legend of mermaids and mermen.

Even today these water spirits are worshipped and feared. There is a small island about a quarter of a mile upstream from Eket on the Qua Ibo River, a river in southeastern Nigeria. It is said that a spirit dwells there and that a priest, a chief, is in charge of the island. The story goes that when men were diving in the river, searching for a life-boat which had been lost in a great storm on the river, about two years ago, they came across a huge pile of manillas and other native currency. These were gifts which had been offered to this particular water-spirit. The native diver, having discovered this treasure, decided to return and share in it with the spirit. Therefore, he returned to the spot with the intent of lifting the loot.

Instead, he was accosted by a huge snake who warned him that he was not to touch the money and other gifts. This snake is regarded as the guardian of the island. The diver heeded the warning.

Wherever there is water, there water-spirits are to be found. The Kalabari people who live on the coast east of the Niger Delta have many such *Uwu*, as they say. There is the *juju* of the fish-traps, the spirit of the *juju* rocks at another place, the spirit that upsets canoes near Bakana, the spirit of dysentery and diarrhoea and others, male and female.

Around these spirits cults have arisen with their attendant tabus, rituals, sacrifices, prayers, priests and priestesses. To mention one of the regulations governing these cults, here is what happens in the case of the *juju* in Odoni, called *Benni-Kuru-Kuru*. "Odoni, one of the neighbouring Ijaw towns, is the home of the *juju* *Benni-Kuru-Kuru*. This is apparently a male water spirit, and it is said that, when this *juju* 'enters into a woman'—i.e. calls her to his special service—she may not be taken in marriage by any but one of her own townsmen. Should a stranger disregard this law and marry her, one of the offending pair would die."⁶

The other branch of good spirits is composed of the land spirits. "According to most Ijaw, the land *jujus* originally came out of the water and are still inferior in power to the water spirits."⁷ Talbot quotes the story of their beginning as told to him by Mrs. A. K. B. Manuel, wife of the Native Court clerk at Degama. It seems that in

6. *Ibid*, p. 55.

7. *Ibid*, p. 63.

the beginning there were no jujus, only the goddess Tamuno, who is called Chi by the Ibo people. This goddess, wanted a farm for herself so she called Tortoise and several other people. She told Tortoise in particular to send a he-goat to guard the vegetables already planted and specified that this goat should be quick and should bear plenty of kids for her. But Tortoise became impertinent, claiming that he could not make a he-goat bear kids. Tamuno was annoyed and punished Tortoise by refusing to give him food. He in turn became angry with her for this and for forcing him to return to work without eating, so he took some sticks, fancy ones with carvings on them, and planted them in a cleared section of the bush. Soon a woman came passing by the sticks. At this Tortoise cried: "You have done the forbidden thing! No woman may pass by these jujus." . . . Tortoise told her to bring such and such things and offer them in sacrifice for purification.

"Then the girl ran to Tamuno and told what had happened; but even the goddess could not stop juju, now it had come. . . . That is how jujus first came to earth—because Tortoise was angry with Tamuno and wished to set up another power beside her."³

Talbot continues his comment on this story. "On the hypothesis—as stated by more than one responsible informant—that Tortoise is the feminine, as the phallic serpent is the male, symbol, it is not without significance (a) that the original quarrel with the virgin creatrix is supposed to have arisen, to a certain extent at least, over a question touching the subject of sex—in that she enacted the birth

8. Ibid., pp. 63-65.

of kids from a he-goat; while (b) the origin of all jujus is ascribed to Tortoise. This is the more significant when one bears in mind that the chief function of protective jujus, called by Ibo Ibudu, is the increase of fertility."⁹

The Kalabari also have a woman spirit, Awona-Ka-So, who proved to be very kind to them, setting forth laws for the protection of women and the fair treatment of enemies and slaves. She was the forbiddener of bloodshed, avenger of crime and a preacher of peace. These kind, however, are few in number. Other land spirits do not forbid the eating of flesh, despoiling of women and the killing of men. Some other land spirits of the Kalabari are Erise, the spirit of the tornado wind; So-Alagba, the thunder and lightning juju; Orumu, the fire spirit; Laga-Ba, a modern juju called "needle kill" invoked against tailors; Hell-Fenni, "hell-fire"---invoked by so-called Christians against those who displease them.

There are, on the other hand, groups of spirits who have definite evil intentions regarding the lives of mortal beings. These have been called by various names: imps, sprites, 'Mbiam, the Ibibio name for them. They range in strength from those strong enough to be devils to those which might be likened to sprites and fairies. One author describes these spirits: "They have nothing like the power of those majestic but malignant deities. (The Christian Satan and the Moslem Iblis.) Their inferiority is not through lack of initiative but through lack of freedom. They are the servants of other and greater gods. The utmost they can do is to torment, although that can be hard to bear,

9. Ibid, p. 65.

as is illustrated by the cry of a sorely troubled Congolese, who, not being able to explain why fate was so unkind to him, declared his life was nkadi ampamba, as bitter, as nasty, as distasteful, as objectionable, as if ruled by the white man's devil!

"They may be distinguished by colours, as the black god the Mende people who brings disease, and by ugliness of shape, as are the Ya Ch'a of the Chinese and the Yakshas of the Hindoos. The Ibo know them as mmoatia, tiny, distorted things, lumped and without necks, with limbs far too long for their bodies, feet turned backward, and animal body between human head and extremities. The Ashanti call them sasbonsam, creatures of fearsome aspect, with long, bristly hair and bloodshot eyes with feet pointing both ways, that inhabit the densest forests and that are the most hostile of all the minor deities. They are also the Ibo obunikes, the servants of the evil Ekwensu."¹⁰

While the imps, as Butt-Thompson calls them, are deceivers and at the same time able to be deceived, the sprites are mischief-makers of a more irresponsible nature. They contribute the petty annoyances of life.

The Ibibio 'Mbiam' is represented sometimes as a strange monster, half human, half bestial, moulded in terra-cotta; sometimes under the form of gnarled roots or branches of fantastic shape; sometimes, again, as a rudely carved fetish. The 'medicine' proper to his cult is made of water drawn from one of his sacred springs, or the place where he

10. F. W. Butt-Thompson, West African Secret Societies, p. 191. While the author prefers to refer to them as gods, we would rather place the imps under the classification of spirits.

dwells by riverside or seashore, mixed with palm-wine, eggs, and occasionally blood."¹¹ In fact, this medicine is very powerful and water from the spring, which is sacred to the powers of hate and death, need only be sprinkled on a door-post or on the path to achieve the result of vengeance desired.

A man by name of Antikka Antikka testified against his wife in court stating that she had invoked the powerful Ita Brinyan 'Mbian against him. "Since my wife, Owo Ama Esie, invoked Ita Brinyan against me, my canoe has capsized twice, though such a thing never happened to me before. This is in accordance with what we know about the Juju, for should any one invoke it against a man and refuse to revoke it, he will lose his life upon the water."

"To this one of the members of court objected, in all seriousness, that the statement told in the woman's favour; since Ita Brinyan was well known to be so powerful a Juju that had he really been invoked against any one, the man thus cursed would certainly not have returned to tell the tale. To this the other members agreed."¹²

There is yet one other group of spirits which we ought to mention-- the spirits of the dead. This spirit-group is revered and worshipped and feared perhaps more than any other group. "Even more to be feared are the spirits of the dead, which flutter all about the African, peering out from the forest and seeking to kill those who do not make them happy by gifts and frequent offerings."¹³ They are to be distinguished,

11. P. Amaury Talbot, Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 46.

12. Ibid, p. 53.

13. Helen E. Baker, More About Africa, p. 53.

too, from the other spirits in that the ancestral spirits are disembodied souls, whereas the other spirits of which we have been speaking never had a body.

These ancestors are usually not the ones who died very long ago, but rather those who can still be remembered by the living. Only the great ones of the past are honored by the embodied souls of the present. The more recent souls, known to the living, are held in respect and fear by those who have yet to die. "The worship of the dead is brief, and their deification never. 'Ask the negro,' says Paul du Chailly, '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."¹⁴

For a while after death, the spirits may remain near their former home, or near the grave where their body is buried. After some time, they go to their appointed place, either into a higher place in the spirit-world as some believe, or into a human being or an animal. While still roaming about, they may behave themselves by helping their families, or they may cause them much trouble. Some may be good, and some bad. On the other hand, they may act differently on various occasions.

As a result, the people, not knowing what to expect, will fear the souls of their parents. "A man who has loved his mother devotedly during her lifetime becomes filled with fear as he thinks of her after her death."¹⁵ In order to appease the wrath of his deceased parent,

14. Edward Clodd, Animism, The Seed of Religion, p. 92.

15. Helen E. Baker, op. cit., p. 53.

a man will therefore offer sacrifices at the grave. He will offer up his prayers beseeching the ancestors to be good to them, to take evil from their lives.

On the other hand, if the ancestor does not behave just as the people think they ought; if they have done what they should, and the ancestors still do not respond properly, then the behavior of the living will alter. They will then not be afraid to neglect the parents' grave, to refuse to offer sacrifice and will not even be afraid to command the ancestor what to do. This is a result of the belief of the people that there is a code of living for the dead, too.

Since the place of the soul in life and in death will be considered in the next chapter, this brief sketch of the worship of the ancestor will suffice to round out a study of the worship of spirits in general. To sum up, we learn that the African has a system of spirits whom he worships. Close to him is the ancestral spirit, a little farther away the spirits of water and land, good and bad spirits who have no body whatsoever, and finally far, far away, dimly perceived are the lesser gods and godlings, and at last, the Supreme Being, the Lord and Creator, the kind and merciful, but more or less indifferent Great One.

VI

Worship of the Soul

The question was once asked by an old, faithful Negro woman in the Deep South: "What is the soul?" The answer seemed simple on the basis of Genesis 2, 7: "And the Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." The difficulty comes in describing its nature. The heathen also ask the same question. And their efforts to answer that question leads us right into the heart of their religion. The animist wants to and makes attempts at describing the soul and its activities and its relationship with life in general. "The vital question for the animist now is how to place his own soul in relation to the souls surrounding him and to their powers, which are partly injurious and partly useful. 'What must I do to protect and to strengthen my own soul?' That is the great question to which the animist wants an answer."¹

To the African, the soul is more than mere breath, though the various tribes may speak of it as breath. "To the Animist the 'soul' is something entirely different from what we understand it to be. It

1. Dr. Henry Nau, We Move Into Africa, p. 164.

is an elixir of life, a life stuff, which is found everywhere in nature. Man has two souls, one of which the bodily soul, pertains to him during his life-time. It is a power outside himself conditioning his earthly wellbeing, but does not essentially belong to his person; at death it returns to the animistic storehouse. The other soul, the shadow soul, emerges only when the man dies. It is the shadowy continuation of his person, the part of his individuality that continues to live."²

This reference to soul-stuff helps us to understand why the animist looks upon practically all objects as possessing some kind of soul. It also explains some of the many practices which we shall shortly consider.

This soul-stuff pervades the whole body, from the head to the toes. It is especially abundant in the head, but may also be concentrated in the liver, or the heart or in the blood. For that reason, when a leopard is killed in Africa, the police are sent to the scene in order to take out the liver and the bile, and also the whiskers, of the leopard for these are potent with soul-stuff. When the so-called man-leopard killings were at their height, it was reported by a European policeman that the witch-doctors considered the heart of a human being to have more power than that of a leopard, therefore, men and women and children were killed in order to obtain their hearts. This was one reason advanced for the killing of so many people by the "Man-Leopard" Society.

Not only is this soul-stuff found in men and animals, it may also

2. Joh. Warneck, The Living Forces of the Gospel, p. 41.

be found in plants, trees and inanimate objects. According to the theorists, this developed from the observation of the savage that plants and trees also lived, grew, decayed and perished. Likewise, any particular inanimate object which may have an unusual shape, or appear to be moving, or speaking (as when the wind blows through the trees) is considered as possessing soul-stuff. However, not all in-material objects possess soul stuff, but as we shall see, they may be given soul-power.

Aside from this soul-stuff, the animist also looks upon himself as having a quite distinct being within himself. This soul-power may divide itself into a number of spirits, or individual souls. The usual number is two, but that may vary. "The Tshi-speaking tribes say that there is a superior spirit, the Kra, or life-power, and an inferior one, the Srahman, ghost or shadow. Their Ga-speaking neighbours divide the Kra into two Kla, one male and one female, one good and one bad. The superior spirit, say the Yoruba, is the one that leaves the body at death, the inferior the one that wanders away during sleep. During sleep, say the Tanne, the lower spirit has adventures, and these we call dreams."³

The Kalabari and the Ibo are likewise thought to have two souls, roughly corresponding to the Egyptian Khu and Ka--i.e., the higher spirit or Ego, which is eternal and the vital spirit or life force, which perishes with the body. The Ibibio, on the other hand, believe that each man has three souls, two of them similar to the two Egyptian spirits and a third one, the ethereal or astral. "They believe that every man possesses three souls or spiritual bodies, viz., (1) the

3. F. W. Butt-Thompson, op. cit., p. 195.

ethereal or astral, which roughly corresponds to the Egyptian Ka and perishes after death, (2) the soul or individuality, which resembles the Egyptian Ba, survives the body and inhabits the world of ghosts between incarnations, and (3) the immortal spirit or true Ego, somewhat like the Egyptian Khu, which always stays with God. The first two, along with the physical body, would appear to be emanations of the last."⁴

It also seems that these souls are assigned from a storehouse, each person being given his particular soul, or souls. Not only are these souls assigned to different individuals, but they are also given so much time to inhabit the earth. Hence, there arises a strong feeling of fatalism in the African. When his time comes, he realizes that it was so decided before his souls were assigned to him. One reason for hatred of the witch-doctor is due to the belief that he cuts short one's allotted time in this life.

The notion of a soul may very well have arisen from the dreams and visions which the African experiences. It is commonly believed that a man's soul leaves his body during dreams, and that the soul may be caught in that dream. For that reason, "when in a dream a man sees another offering him 'fine chop' he should make a great effort to induce his dream-self to refuse it, lest peril lurk therein, saying to himself: 'I have all that I want in my house, loving wives and children in plenty, delicate food and comfortable furnishings. I will not therefore leave these and go forth in a dream to enjoy the goods of another, lest an enemy snare my soul and prevent it from returning

4. P. Amaury Talbot, Life in Southern Nigeria, pp. 67-68.

to me."⁵

This indicates that the soul is active, very active, And that is true. The soul may leave the body at almost anytime, but especially does it leave, as we have seen, during sleep. Therefore, an African is usually not awakened out of a sound sleep, lest his soul is caught while it is away somewhere. Where it may be depends on the dream. This practice is not universal today since the Africans also have alarm clocks.

Once, while discussing the soul in a class at Ikot Obio Odongo, in Ibesikpo, a man related this incident which he declares to be true. In one village, a number of people were trying to kill a python. A few minutes later a boy came running up, very much agitated. He told them to stop beating that snake, because when they started to beat on it, he began to feel ill, though he was a comparatively great distance away. He maintained that his soul, one of them at least, was in that snake and their beating of it caused him to feel the blows. Dr. H. Nau, pioneer missionary of the Lutheran Church in Nigeria, likewise reports a fear of the natives to kill pythons because someone's soul may be in it.⁶ Missionary R. C. Stade had a bit of difficulty with the heathen in his district for the same reason. He, too, tried to get his house-boy to kill some snakes, but the boy refused, not because he believed a person's soul was in them, but because he feared the heathen chiefs. So Missionary Stade killed the snakes. He heard from the chiefs.

5. Ibid, p. 120.

6. Dr. H. Nau, We Move Into Africa, p. 165.

Dr. Nau, in his book We Move Into Africa⁷ ventures the opinion that this may be the origin of a practice which is known as totemism, the association of a man's soul, even a tribal soul, with an animal. This form of religious practice is, however, not very common in Africa.

It seems that the soul may leave of its own volition. But that is not the only time it will leave. It may also be enticed. Especially is this true of children. Hence arises the practice of being lenient with children. Their sensitive souls may not wish to stand such treatment, so they will leave and the child will die. It is likewise part of the power of the magician to be able to draw souls away from the body.

"A case in which a man was accused of seeking to bring about the death of his own mother by snaring her 'dream soul' came before the Idua Native Court. In this the accused, named Tomkpata, stated: 'About six months ago my half-brother, Ofuo Afaha Eke, came to my house and said, "You want to kill my mother." That evening he beat a drum round the town, crying that I had taken his mother's soul and imprisoned it in the Egbo-house. Next morning our mother herself came and said that I must give her back her soul.'

"Ekanen, witness for prosecutor, stated on oath: 'I remember Ofuo Afaha Eke telling me that Tomkpata had come to his mother in a dream and cut off some of her hair. So next day she went to him and said that he must restore her soul.'⁸

7. Ibid, p. 165.

8. P. Amaury Talbot, Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 122.

It is also true that the natives, some of them anyway, believe that when a person is unconscious for a certain length of time, as in a coma, his soul is on a journey and must be found and brought back. Therefore the soul is sought and enticed to return. "Frequently there is a formal hunt for the escaped soul, when it is captured and carried in handkerchiefs to the sick man."⁹

But in all this going in and out, how does the spirit make its exit and entrance? "Throughout the whole region it is a matter of common belief that the soul leaves the body by the mouth on the last breath at death, as also at times in dreams. Some very powerful wizards are said to be able to bring the dead to life again after the soul has gone forth by placing 'medicine' in the eyes, nose and mouth of the corpse, in order to draw back the spirit into its forsaken tenement."¹⁰

The soul is likewise active in influencing the souls of others. The stronger souls exert a greater influence than a weaker one. "The soul of a chief exercises a dreaded influence on his subjects. . . . His power proves that he has much and strong soul stuff, and therefore can be dangerous. . . . In a law court it is not so much the judicial authority as the soul of the judge, that is feared."¹¹ Therefore, since there are so many forces trying to overpower his soul, the animist begins to think of how and where and when he can obtain more soul-power, more soul-stuff in order to overcome his superiors, or at least protect himself from them when they want to do him harm.

9. Joh. Warneck, op. cit., p. 56.

10. P. Amaury Talbot, Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 261.

11. Joh. Warneck, op. cit., p. 53.

One of the methods by which the animist seeks to protect his soul and even strengthen it is magic, which "is the means used to secure the good and to avoid or ward off the evil."¹²

According to Sir James G. Frazer, there are two "principles of thought on which magic is based: . . . first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause, and second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed. The former principle may be called the Law of Similarity, the latter the Law of Contact or Contagion."¹³

In keeping with the Law of Similarity, which may also be called homeopathic magic, the animist believes, for instance, that if an image of a person is made to suffer, the person will suffer the same injury. It may be used for a twofold purpose: a benevolent use, as in aiding in childbirth, or a malevolent use, as in harming someone.

There is also the belief that if one eats the flesh of animals, he will acquire the outstanding abilities of that animal. "When a Wagogo man of German East Africa kills a lion, he eats the heart in order to become brave like a lion; but he thinks that to eat the heart of a hen would make him timid."¹⁴ "When a Zulu army assembles to go forth to battle, the warriors eat slices of meat which is smeared with a powder made of the dried flesh of various animals, such as the leopard, lion, elephant, snakes, and so on; for thus it is

12. Eli Edward Burriss, Taboo, Magic, Spirits, p. 26.

13. James George Frazer, The Golden Bough, Abridged Ed., p. 11.

14. James George Frazer, The Golden Bough, Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild, Vol. II, p. 142.

thought that the soldiers will acquire the bravery and other warlike qualities of these animals."¹⁵

The same attitude prevails in the eating of human flesh and is the religious basis for cannibalism. "Cannibalism . . . is not, at least originally, an act of foaming revenge and does not even spring from a perversion of taste. On the contrary, it is supposed that in eating a man's flesh the eater appropriates the other's soul, his vital power, and this is most effectively done while the victim is alive, for if the body be cold the soul has fled. The liver, the palms of the hands, the sinews and the flesh of the head are eaten by preference, for these are the parts of the body in which the soul-stuff is supposed to be specially concentrated."¹⁶ For that reason it was, and perhaps, still is, that the Basutos of the mountains, and the Ovambo warriors would tear out the heart of their slain foe and eat it. The Wagogo of German East Africa do the same thing for the same purpose.

The principle of homeopathic magic is also applied in the healing arts. When jaundice is to be cured, they make an effort to have the spirit of the sickness go into the sun, which is yellow, or into a yellow feathered bird. One of the odd activities of this kind of healing is the practice of the medicine man treating himself in order to heal a sick man. In other words, the doctor would take the castor oil and the patient would reap the benefit.

The second phase of magic as outlined by Frazer is known as con-

¹⁵. *Ibid*, p. 142.

¹⁶. Joh. Warneck, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

tagious magic, or the Law of Contact. By this is meant that any object which belongs to man, his clothing, shoes, or more particularly, finger-nails, hair, sweat and the like, retain part of his soul-power once it has come into contact with him and even after it has been discarded. It then follows that whatever is done to the one must similarly affect the other.

"The Basutos are careful to conceal their extracted teeth, lest these should fall into the hands of certain mythical beings called baloi, who haunt graves, and could harm the owner of the tooth by working magic on it."¹⁷ "Among the Gallas of East Africa the navel-string is carefully kept, sewn up in leather, and serves as an amulet for female camels, which then become the child's property, together with all the young they give birth to."¹⁸ A curious application of the doctrine of contagious magic, is the relation commonly believed to exist between a wounded man and the agent of the wound, so that whatever is subsequently done by or to the agent must correspondingly affect the patient either for good or evil.¹⁹ This practice is "probably founded on the notion that the blood on the weapon continues to feel with the blood in the body."²⁰

There remains a magic sympathy also between a man and his clothes, the sweat from his body and even the impressions left by his body in sand or earth. "The Herero of South Africa take earth from the foot-prints of a lion and throw it on the track of an enemy, with the wish,

17. J. G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, "The Magic Art," Vol. I, p. 177.

18. Ibid, p. 195.

19. Ibid, p. 201.

20. Ibid, p. 205.

'May the lion kill you.'²¹ "The Ewe-speaking people of West Africa fancy they can drive an enemy mad by throwing a magic powder on his foot-prints. . . . In North Africa the magic of the footprints is sometimes used for a more amiable purpose. A woman who wishes to attach her husband or lover to herself will take earth from the print of his right foot, tie it up with some of his hairs in a packet, and wear the packet next her skin."²²

This practice is put to dubious advantage by the hunters and warriors. "Ewe hunters of West Africa stab the footprints of game with a sharp-pointed stick in order to main the quarry and allow them to come up with it. . . . In order to recover strayed cattle, the Zulus take the animals' dung and earth from their footprints and place both in the chief's vessel, round which a magic circle is drawn. Then the chief says: 'I have now conquered them. Those cattle are now here; I am now sitting upon them. I do not know in what way they will escape.'²³

The practice of magic is not merely limited to some things that should be done as has been described in the above illustrations. Just as a certain action will provide a desired result, so another action might produce an undesired end. When an accident befalls the hunter, or the warrior, he might reasonably, according to his point of view, look for the cause of the evil. Therefore, the next time he goes out, he will take measures to insure against any such accident. He will set forth a list of prohibitions, or tabus, which may be called negative magic.

21. Ibid., p. 209.

22. Ibid., p. 210.

23. Ibid., p. 212.

We could list a great number of tabus to which the heathen have subjected themselves. There are tabus, for instance, against the eating of certain foods, or performing certain acts. "In Madagascar . . . no soldier should eat an ox's knee, lest like an ox he should become weak in the knees and unable to march. Further, the warrior should be careful to avoid partaking of a cock that has died fighting . . . for it seems obvious that if he were to eat a cock that had died fighting, he would himself be slain on the field of battle."²⁴ "There is among the black men," they (the Zulus) say, "the custom of abstaining from certain foods. If a cow has the calf taken from her dead, and the mother too dies before the calf is taken away, young people who have never had a child abstain from the flesh of that cow. . . . Further, pig's flesh is not eaten by girls on any account; for it is an ugly animal; its mouth is ugly, its snout is long; therefore girls do not eat it, thinking if they eat it, a resemblance to the pig will appear among their children."²⁵

This magical influence is exerted at a great distance, so that we may speak of a form of telepathy. For instance tabus are imposed upon the wives of those who go to war. "A Hottentot woman whose husband is out hunting must do one of two things all the time he is away. Either she must light a fire and keep it burning till he comes back; or if she does not choose to do that, she must go to the water and continue to splash it about on the ground. . . . To cease splashing the water or to let the fire out would be equally fatal to the husband's prospect

24. Ibid, p. 117.

25. Ibid, p. 118.

of a successful bag."²⁶ "When a Nuba of north-eastern Africa goes to El Obeid for the first time, he tells his wife not to wash or oil herself and not wear pearls round her neck during his absence, because by doing so she would draw down on him the most terrible misfortunes."²⁷

There are many other tabus relating to certain beasts, birds and fish, tabus against using certain fields or rivers, roads, villages or houses; tabus against particular actions and desires.

"Old women may not touch soup made in deep pots, lest they receive too much nourishment therefrom, which will cause them to live beyond the allotted span."²⁸ There are other special tabus for old men, young men and girls, for wives and husbands, hunters and warriors. All these tabus, of course, might be said to be promulgated in order to protect one's soul against the loss of soul-power.

Another use of appropriating soul-power for one's self is the use of certain objects known as charms, amulets, talismans or fetishes. These objects are in themselves worthless and have no power whatsoever. However, power may be put into them through magical rites and ceremonies, and then they are made to serve the users. This particular practice is given the name of fetishism and may also be put under the general heading of magic, it being a branch of magic used to gain power for the individual.

The word "fetish" goes back to the time of Chaucer and was used by the Portuguese during the fifteenth century to describe a form of

26. *Ibid.*, pp. 120. 121.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 122.

28. P. Amaury Talbot, *Life in Southern Nigeria*, p. 224.

worship of the West African negroes with whom they came into contact during their course of exploratory travels. Tylor gives us a history of the word: "Centuries ago, the Portuguese, in West Africa, noticing the veneration paid by the negroes to certain objects, such as trees, fish, plants, idols, pebbles, claws of beasts, sticks and so forth, very fairly compared these objects to the amulets or talismans with which they were themselves familiar, and called them feitico or 'cham,' a word derived from Latin factitius, in the sense of 'magically artful,' Modern French and English adopted this word from the Portuguese as fetiche, fetish, although curiously enough both languages had already possessed the word for ages in a different sense, Old French faitis, 'well made, beautiful,' which Old English adopted as fetys, 'well made, neat.' It occurs in the commonest of all quotations from Chaucer:

'And Frensch sche spak ful faire and fetysly,
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
 For Frensch of Parys was to hire unknowe.'²⁹

The fetish may consist of any object whatsoever, but particularly those with a peculiar shape, or history, or if they belong to parts of animals which manifests outstanding qualities. "It is credited with mysterious power, owing to its being, temporarily or permanently, the vessel or habitation, vehicle for communication, or instrument of some unseen power or spirit, which is conceived to possess personality and will, and ability to see, hear, understand and act. It may act by the will or force of its own power or spirit, or by force of a foreign power entering it or acting on it from without, and the material object and the power or spirit may be dissociated. It is worshipped, prayed to,

29. E. B. Tylor, Primitive Culture, Vol. II, p. 143.

sacrificed to, talked with, and petted or ill-treated with regard to its past or future behaviour. In its most characteristic form a fetish must be consecrated by a priest."³⁰

Every once in a while, the missionary, in examining a candidate for confirmation or a member for communion, must remove some fetish, or charm from around the neck of the Christian. As one travels through the bush of Africa, these objects can be seen on a fence, or near a grave, or on the door-post of a house. However, it must be remembered that these objects are not worshipped for themselves, but are worshipped because of the power which is within them. In that sense, we can say that the African never bows down to wood and stone.

All these attempts which have just been described, magic, negative and positive, charms, amulets, talismans, fetishes, are all attempts to acquire or protect the animist's soul-stuff. It is the heart of his religion. His chief concern is to increase his soul-power, his spirit, which he views as a separate being within himself. It is little wonder, therefore, that the animist practically worships his soul, addressing his prayers, sometimes, to it, doing all in his power to keep it with him.

Warneck sums this up well in these words: "When we remember that the Animist regards the soul as a separate entity in man, independent of him, capricious and often in conflict with him, and at all times a danger to him, we can easily understand, that though it is matter, it is an object of worship. In point of fact more careful worship is offered to the soul than to the heavenly gods. . . . The soul is also directly addressed in prayer. Such a prayer runs: 'Here, O my soul,

30. A. C. Haddon, Magic and Fetishism, p. 72.

thou hast betel, I confess that I have failed in duty towards thee.'
 . . . Nevertheless, when things go against a man he often curses his
 soul, calls it the soul of a dog, for upon it he lays the blame of his
 misfortune."³¹

We should remember that this relationship is not a moral connection. "The soul is not the better self in, nor the spiritual side of him. . . . the soul is not an organ of morality."³²

Whatever the animist may think of his soul, there is one fact which he cannot deny, and that is the certainty of death. He knows for sure, as all men must, that death will come to him. What then happens to his soul? Where does he think it will go? Will it live forever? What kind of life will it experience?

An African gives us his answer. "Belief in the immortality of the soul raises the question of where the soul of a dead man goes. Does it return to God and reunite with that source of immortality, does it hover near the tomb of its master, or does it come back in a new person? We favor the last theory, which we call inuwa, incarnation, or coming back to earth in a new human form. When sickness or accident destroys life, the indestructible spirit self stays near the family, visiting them and helping them to obtain for it a new body; that is, a baby in whom it comes back again, bringing its total life experience. When a child is born, its father goes to the priest to determine whose incarnation it is. There must be some dead members of that family whose lives were honorable. To one of these the priests

31. Joh. Warneck, op. cit., pp. 54. 57. 57.

32. Ibid, p. 58.

must trace the baby, never to a man or woman who led an ignoble life.

"Unlike the Hindu law of Karma, the African theory of incarnation does not limit the reborn soul to its original family and class. The only limitation is sex. For there are numerous examples in modern Ibo villages when a soul has been reincarnated in a new village and family. . . . It is firmly believed that the higher the incarnation number, the more intelligent the person becomes, because the greater is the life experience he inherits."³³

This belief in the transmigration and reincarnation of souls is a rather common belief in Africa. On more than one occasion, members in my class have told me that they have heard of such reincarnation. Say, for instance, the first child of a woman dies. It probably had some little defect, such as a cut finger. Some years later, when maybe the fourth child is born, it will be discovered to have a similar defect. Immediately, the mother will say that the first child has been reborn. I never found one, however, who had seen both children, the one at death and the other at birth.

It is maintained that such a doctrine is a comfort and a stimulus to those who realize that they are reincarnated people. As to comfort, the mother is happy to know that some day her child will be born again. According to Ojike, "it acts as an incentive for doing good. Life is endless, and one who hopes his life will continue to be respected endeavors to make it worthy and honorable. The principle invokes an imperceptible idea of hero worship, and immortalizes good lives while bad ones dwindle into oblivion. Some criminals are burned publicly so

33. Mbonu Ojike, My Africa, pp. 191-192.

that their undesirable soul will not return. To the young, striving to climb higher in life, the belief brings confidence because their foundation warrants success."³⁴

Mr. Ojike, in his description of reincarnation, stated that the ghost hovers around the grave for some time. This, too, is firmly believed and likewise accounts for the period of activity between the death of one body and the birth of the next. In travelling around the country-side one sees many structures erected over the graves of chiefs and honored women. (See APPENDIX, p. 86) Even the poor man will have something left at his grave. All these houses are put there for the benefit of the spirit who hovers near the grave.

Also on these graves are placed the instruments used during the life-time of the person. They are for use in the next world. There is the mat, the water pot, baskets, ropes, snuff boxes and the like. The spirit uses the soul of the pot and other implements. Even food is placed on the grave so that the soul may not go hungry.

After a while the soul leaves this place and goes into the body of some child. This is not always the case, according to some beliefs. As we have learned from Ojike, the ignoble souls of criminals go into oblivion. Others may rise to become greater spirits in the next world. And some even reach such a high level that they are regarded as deities. In fact, some animistic peoples have three classifications for souls of the dead: souls of the dead in general, higher spirits, and the most eminent of the ancestors.

34. Ibid, p. 192.

Not every soul, therefore, is immortal. Some, especially those who died a shameful death, cease to exist. Therefore we cannot strictly speak of an immortal soul. The life and longevity of the soul of a person depends in part on the lives of his descendants. "Two things must be kept in view in ancestor worship. On the one hand, the dead are expected to bless the living. . . . they are invested with divine attributes and functions. But on the other hand, the position of the dead is, in the most melancholy way, dependent on the behavior and condition of their descendants. . . . The dead man is entirely dependent on the consideration and social position of the living."³⁵

The basis for this belief seems to be due to the fact that the world of the spirits is supposed to be very similar to the world of the living, embodied souls. In the olden days, the many wives of a chief were buried alive in the same grave with their dead spouse in order to accompany him on his journey and give him the comforts and enjoyments which he experienced here. Slaves were treated in the same way. Some were even slain a day or two previous to the death of the chief in order to serve as messengers who would announce the coming of the prominent official. A leprous person would be shunned in the next world as he is in the present one, and a criminal would be despised as much then as he is now.

This view of a similar world is also reflected in the many gifts and instruments which are left on the grave. Often one sees in Nigeria, a few ears of corn, water-pots, sleeping mats and other articles left on the grave. The soul of the dead needs these. Not that

35. Joh. Warneck, op. cit., p. 64.

they actually use the material object; instead the ancestor makes use of the soul of the rope, or eats the souls of the corn.

One morning I stopped with a group of members in front of a grave erected in honor of an old woman. The usual earthly things were strewn around in the little hut. I asked one man why they put the water-pots there. He replied that the woman needed them to carry water.

"But there are holes in the pot. She couldn't carry water in those!"

"Oh, she has better pots where she is."

"Why, then, put pots there at all?"

The fellow merely laughed and could not reply. From this encounter, it seems that the pots were put there in order to honor the woman and also because of fear of what the woman would do if the pots and other items were not so placed in front of and on her grave.

A practice which is based on the immortality of the soul is the practice of polygamy. It is one of the customs widely followed in Africa. The man is afraid that he will not leave enough descendants who will carry on his name after he has died. Jimmy tried hard to live a Christian life. He had put away his second wife and appeared to be doing the right thing in living alone with Emma, his first wife. But the absence of children year after year bothered him too much. At last he could not hold out against this superstition that a man must have children, especially sons. He took another woman and put Emma away. In fact, within a few months, Jimmy had taken three or four wives. One of the leading figures in the early days of the Lutheran

Church in Nigeria likewise confessed to lead a Christian life. But the pull of the devil was too great and he, too, went back into heathenism, taking to himself many wives.

Though the ancestors are feared and honored, they do not enjoy the leisure of a free life. They have their responsibilities and worries. For one thing, they are expected to take care of the children they left behind. As we learned, they are given divine duties to perform. One of their chief duties, it seems, is to guard the customs of the people, which is one reason why people fear them. "Anything that has become custom is regarded as right; and offenses against traditional customs are sin. The ancestors in the other world are interested in the life of their descendants and continue in some manner to live with them. They are always zealously on guard to see whether their descendants are as punctilious as they were in their day. And woe to them if they permit innovations. Through fear of his forefathers the animist is conservative to the bone. His fear makes him a worshiper of his ancestors."³⁶

Fear and honor is paid to the ancestors through the sacrifices and prayers of the living. Nothing is undertaken in life unless they are first consulted. They must keep the customs of the past. In Nigeria, sticks are placed in the corners to represent the ancestors and there the head of the family communes with the dead in his house. The rest of the family also gathers around and in the presence of the ancestral souls the disputes and sins of the family are discussed and settled. At the same time wine and food are placed before them. The

36. Henry Nau, We Move Into Africa, p. 179.

souls of the dead partake of the souls of the food and the living consume the material, outward form.

There is another way of showing worship of the ancestors. That is through certain media. "The coffin and the grave are specially adapted thereto, for the soul loves the body as long as any fragments of it exists, and likes to dwell at the grave, especially during the first days after death. Hence offerings are laid down freely on the grave. Again, objects which the dead man possessed, parts of his body also, are very effective media, for something of the soul power which once animated him still adheres to them."³⁷

In this way, the animist worships and prays to his ancestors and to the other spirits. He wants them to do as he desires. But spirits and souls of the dead do not always listen to him. In that matter, therefore, he must act a little differently. So "he develops a cult whereby they may be managed, used, and understood. This cult is what we call witchcraft."³⁸ The leader of this cult is usually called a witch-doctor, or in other areas medicine-men, sorcerers, shamans and the like.

There are some who would make a difference between sorcery on the one hand, and witchcraft on the other. By the former, they would make the practice of magic for the common good, a beneficent use of magic. By the latter, a sinister and evil use of magic is meant. We, too, understand witchcraft in the latter sense, and the witch-doctor an

37. Joh. Warneck, op. cit., p. 70.

38. Edward Clodd, Animism, The Seed of Religion, p. 57.

evil deceiver. The Africans also look upon witchcraft and those who commune with the spirits as something to be dreaded. "Chief Amakiri Yellow explained: 'Most juju priests are witch-doctors and therefore to be dreaded. Some, however, are more evil than others, according to the juju which they serve. Witchcraft is very much feared throughout our nation.'"³⁹

The witch-doctor is usually one who is trained in his magic arts and is supposed to have intercourse with the souls of the dead and the spirits through special dreams, visions, and oracles. The spirit may pick out a certain victim and take possession of him. He will then go into a trance and begin to prophesy. This possession is quite readily distinguished from epilepsy by native Christians. Being in contact now with the spirits, the witch-doctor is taught by other priests of the cult how to prepare and use certain potions and medicines. Therefore, they are called in as deliverers in cases of sickness and misfortune. And their power, mysterious as it is, frightens the people. Yet, they cannot seem to resist going to him. Even if they know he is an impostor, and most of them are deceivers, the people go to him. "The people know and admit that the witch doctor is an archknave, who deceives wherever anything is to be gained; but they are afraid of his mysterious art, and they neither desire nor deem it possible to be free from the influence of his enchantments."⁴⁰

One of the most widely known practices of the witch-doctor is the trial by ordeal. This is undertaken to determine the guilt of the

39. P. Amaury Talbot, Tribes of the Niger Delta, p. 108.

40. H. Nau, We Move Into Africa, p. 181.

person who poisoned one who is sick. Generally, the people do not think that germs cause disease. Rather, they always wonder who poisoned the sick person, who cast a spell on him. We run across this quite regularly in our work, especially among the more backward and less enlightened clans. "A favorite ordeal, in times not so long yet . . . was the eating of the Calabar bean. . . . He who swallows the bean and vomits it up again without any ill effect is cleared of the accusation. He who swallows it and dies is proved guilty and has already been executed."⁴¹ In this manner, the witch-doctor can get rid of his own enemies.

In a village in Southern Anang, where our Church only recently began work, a man suspected one of his wives of being unfaithful to him. So he called in the witch-doctor. The witch-doctor made both of the women kneel near a forked stick with a loop around it. The stick was stuck in the ground and the loop was put around the woman's head. If the loop should tighten on one of the women, that one was the guilty party.

Other duties of the witch-doctor are to prepare medicines and fetishes to protect one's property, find the killer of children, attract a lover, shut the mouth of witnesses in court and many other mysterious and supernatural things. Usually these men are members of secret societies and practice their craft for the benefit of the cult. There was one potion that was particularly strong.

A British officer in charge of the "Man-Leopard" area, as it

⁴¹. Ibid., p. 163.

is called, tells of the man who was caught trying to break into his own house by way of the roof. It seems that he received a potion from a witch-doctor which would enable him to turn into a leopard. When he returned from his wanderings, he found that his brother had locked the house very securely. The man became frantic. The antidote, the potion which would turn him back into a human being, was locked inside the house. Hence, he furiously and frantically tried to enter his house through his roof. Many people in the same area hold a similar belief, the belief that they can change themselves into leopards or into other kinds of animals.

The witch-doctor also doubles as a mid-wife, conjuring up medicines which enable a woman to bear children. One powerful sorcerer (used in an evil sense) had a number of women staying on his compound. People came from nearly forty miles away on foot to consult him.

The impostor is not always found out during this life. He may be a chief, a magician, a priest, and may live a fairly sacred life. However, he will come back to harm his relatives and tribesmen. When such a dead person is suspected, as one fellow by the name of Eyo Abassi, near Idua Oron on the Cross River was, they dig up his body and burn it. Here is the way they knew that he was a witch-doctor: "By this time it (his body) had lain over six years in the ground; yet when disinterred it was stated to have been found quite fresh. Even the blood was said to run free in the veins, and the only difference reported between this long-buried corpse and a sleeping form was that no motion of breath could be seen."⁴²

42. P. Amaury Talbot, Life in Southern Nigeria, p. 61.

This, then, is animism in action. Though there are many beliefs and many practices which of necessity we could not include, it does give us a glimpse into the thought and actions of the animist, the primitive pagan, the benighted heathen. Surely it is not a difficult task to decide, once viewing such action, whether the religious beliefs of the primitive man is a degenerative or upward developing worship of God. The actions speak louder than words. But let us go on now and consider further the effect which these beliefs and actions have on the lives of the heathen, religiously and morally.

PART THREE

EFFECTS OF ANIMISM ON THE HEATHEN

VII

Religious Ignorance and Moral Uncertainty¹

Within the past few years there has been an awakening desire and a tremendous advance on the part of the African in seeking knowledge. More and more children, boys and girls, are being sent to school. Over 6,000 pupils have enrolled in our church's 95 schools alone. Demands for higher education are incessant. Normal schools, secondary schools, seminaries are multiplying. The ignorant heathen are throwing off the shackles of bondage, and are running after new things, while fleeing the old. As the effects of animistic religion is being overcome through the spread of the Gospel of Christ, the once primitive African desires to know more of the mysteries of God and the sciences of the world. Such was not always the case, however.

One of the effects of animism has been an appalling religious ignorance, both of things religious and things worldly. As we have seen in the first chapters of this thesis, the pagan mind only dimly per-

1. For this and the following chapters we are indebted in great measure to Joh. Warneck, who has so ably outlined the characteristic features and effects of animism upon the heathen in his book "Living Forces of the Gospel."

ceived the Supreme Deity. He, the Creator, was cast far into the background. Little was known of him. But greater still the tragedy, little desire was manifested to know more about their Maker. The animist of olden days was steeped in a tradition which he misunderstood. His thoughts and aspirations were directed solely to earthly values, and the supernatural interested him only insofar as he must come to terms with it in the interests of his earthly well-being.

A great complexio oppositorum was characteristic of his life. That characteristic feature still remains where animistic beliefs are still strongly held. There was a search for the truth, but at the same time an indifference towards the Divine. The animist reflected on the deepest problems, but clung to the stalest externalities of life. He taught the good things in his fables, but practiced the bad in his behaviour. He sought knowledge, but when found he still clung to the traditions of the past. The only argument which a heathen steeped in animism could and can bring against any challenging doubt is an appeal to the ancestors. "Our fathers taught us thus."

To all his deeper questions, Bohner, on the Gold Coast, always got the answer, "We do not know." An old heathen of Ma-Gwamba in South Africa said, "Why does our land lie in death. It is because we are ignorant. Let us learn, and our land will live."² The daily contact with ignorance among the heathen still causes despair in the heart of the missionary. "Missionaries of the Church of England Missionary Society reported concerning the Dinka (Soudan), 'They have very indis-

2. Joh. Warneck, op. cit., p. 84.

tinct notions about the life after death, and, if questioned on the subject, some will answer (akooi), "We do not know."³ Always the same appalling condition is found.

This does not mean that the superstitious beliefs of the animists did not have a system of knowledge. Our view of animism in action certainly revealed a plan of life which, though not expressed by the heathen, surely was aimed in one direction. "The strange world of ideas confronts us as a compact philosophy of nature," says Warneck.⁴ But all the ungainly features of their system were directed to one centre, the view of the soul as the highest good. This was the knowledge of their existence, the survival and well-being, in this life and the next, of their soul. The animist surely is not a dumb beast, but is only ignorant of the ways of God.

Along with this religious ignorance comes a surprising moral uncertainty. A foundation has been laid for morality in tradition, supported by fear of the ancestors, who are the guardians of customs and in egoism, the desire to protect and strengthen one's own position and one's own soul. A custom has been laid down in the past, and as the fathers did, so do the sons. On the other hand, the animist realizes that there is to be a limit to one's evil propensities, or all would be chaos. For that reason certain rules are made in regard to wicked practices. Theft, adultery and murder are punishable on this account. But there is no moral condemnation, for example, for fornication. No moral condemnation because such acts are transgressions of a divine

3. Ibid., p. 84.

4. Ibid., p. 81.

command.

This uncertainty is shown again and again in the inconsequences of its thought and action. We have already referred to the belief in God and the failure to follow Him and trouble themselves about his laws. So also, in their regard for the ancestors. The ancestors are believed to be dependent on the gifts of the living, and yet they pray to them as the givers of earthly good.

It has been pointed out in the previous chapter that the people are aware of the witch-doctor as an impostor. They know that he deceives them, but because of their uncertainty they go to him, for he, at least, claims to have a surer knowledge of the rules of life and the regulations of their conduct. The animist seeks an authority, and finds no proper one. Such is the effect which his religious beliefs have on him--religious ignorance and moral uncertainty.

VIII

Lies and Distrust

One often gets the feeling in dealing with people who have a strong pagan background that they are guilty unless proven innocent. Nearly always the question arises in one's mind as he listens to a request or complaint: What's behind this? What is this fellow trying to get at, or do? The air is permeated with the odor of suspicion.

It is not only the missionary that feels and recognizes this attitude of distrust. The people themselves will also admit it. One missionary on the field asked the people what they thought were their pet sins. Instantly, without hesitation, came the reply; adultery and distrust of our fellow-men. Not only the missionary experiences a distrust of the heathen, but the heathen themselves distrust each other. For that reason, it is not always possible for them to go into partnership with one another. Each must have his own little shop and his own little business.

The animist has made a lie of God. He has divested Him of His omnipotence, His love, His holiness and righteousness, and has put Him out of all relation with men. In His place, the animist has put

the inferior spirits, who are of less consequence than the people themselves. They believe that they have found God, yet they have lost Him; they believe that they are hunting for life, and they find death; they believe that they are serving God and are His opponents. In place of a loving Father, they have put an indifferent Supreme Being. In place of a wise and good government of God, they have put an inexorable fate.

The lie has turned the values of man's life and soul upside down. The care of the soul is the highest good. Neglect of God is an inconsequential thing. Yet in putting man's soul first in his life, the nature of the lie binds him so that he has lost his freedom and morality and degrades him so that he becomes a will-less, thoughtless member of a tribe bound in the ties of tradition and custom. Exalting his personality, the lie yet subordinates him to the common group of tribe, or clan, or nation.

The exemplifier of this lying and deceit is the magician, or the witch-doctor, if you will call him that. Already we have seen how in the ordeal of the bean, he may try to punish one who is his enemy, regardless of whether he believes that person to be guilty or not. Many of his tricks are fakes, and if they seem to be real, we yet must call them lying wonders.

The lying power has also brought about an inconceivable perversion of moral ideas. This immorality is all the more disgusting because it is mixed with the truth. Not everything that the animist does, or says, is a lie. There are laws promulgated to curb adultery. The punishment for adultery used to be death in some areas; in others,

theft was considered a great crime. In our own particular area, a fine of \$20.00 (£5) was assessed against a man if he committed adultery with a man's wife. Proverbs and fables are transmitted from generation to generation. In these proverbs, immorality and vileness may be condemned. But the practice continues.

When we viewed the animist in action on the hunt or in war, we saw that he set up certain prohibitions, or tabus. Seemingly harmless things to us were condemned. Politeness and respect is insisted upon and if transgressed considered a very grave sin. But stealing, leaving the sick to perish in their misery, robbing widows and orphans of their goods, torturing to death the defenceless, acquiring many wives and such like, are not deemed wrong. The killing of twins is a command; head-hunting and cannibalism, human sacrifices, brutal cruelty—all are pious exercises of religion.

We are told that Ranavalona I, the anti-Christian King of Madagascar, whose inhabitants are partly of the Malay stock, among the grievances which he had against the Christians, brought forward their unintelligible truthfulness. In the Edict it is said: "The answer you give in taking an oath is, 'It is true.' When you are asked, 'Do you swear,' your answer is 'It is true'—that surprises me. What do you mean by this word true?"¹

Naturally, with so much lying on the part of everyone, there follows a standard reaction of distrust. Sebuschane has that feeling: "You must put the same value on the saying of a chief as you do on the

1. Joh. Warneck, op. cit., p. 94.

bellowing of an ox. The Betschuans are all untruthful."²

As the man so are his gods. The spirits are more dexterous liars and deceivers than the living. Even the ancestors, who in a certain sense, take a benevolent interest in the fate of their descendants are not to be trusted. Hence, and this is the climax of the habit of lying, the deities are deceived in their very worship.

Behind all this lying and hypocrisy, there is some evil force at work. Left to itself heathenism might have lost God and neglected His worship. But it could not have created such a caricature of religion for its own torment, unless some lying evil power, taking advantage of its ignorance, had painted for it a picture of God, and of the world which leads the heathen far away from all he seeks."³

Truly it can be said that one of the greatest effects of animism on the heathen is to be found in his lying tongue, deceitful manner and distrustful attitude.

2. Ibid, p. 94.

3. Ibid, p. 90.

IX

Estrangement from God

As an ambassador for Christ, the missionary goes forth to the heathen with the glorious message of reconciliation. He is to tell them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. There is a great need for that message. It must be proclaimed clearly and emphatically, for the heathen is surely and definitely estranged from God.

We have seen that the heathen believe there is a Supreme Being. More evidence can be brought to support that finding. "The Washamba are aware of a Supreme God, also the Waganda, the Congo negro, the Sudan negro, the Herero, the people of Madagascar, and the Bush negroes of Suriname. . . . Jellinghaus says, 'I have come to see more and more that all heathen know that God is, and that if a dozen heathen of most diverse kinds were to find themselves among Mohammedans or Christians, and to listen to their talk about God and God's dispensations, it would seem to them as self-evident that God is one and the same for all, as there is only one sun.'¹

1. Joh. Warneck, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

But the effect of animism on the heathen is to drive this Supreme Being far into the background. Jellinghaus concludes: "This God, Singbonga, is alone the true God, whose existence the heart of the Kol is still capable of feeling. But this inherited faith exercises little influence on life."² Andrew Lang, in his criticism of Tylor's theory of animistic development, pointed out that the evidence all indicated the existence of a Supreme Being in the theology of all nations, but that animism, in its appeal to the naughty self in man, "the old Adam," crowded out this God. Many others will confirm this effect of animism on the religious beliefs of the people.

This estrangement is further strengthened when man introduced into his worship creatures of all sorts. The soul-stuff and the spirits of the dead took God's place. Even the sub-human devils were worshipped. Fear gripped the hearts of the people, and in his blind fear, he made gods of inanimate subjects. Down and down went man, placing between himself and his Creator more and more creatures. Finally, there was no connection with God. The Congo negro expresses this estrangement in this way: "No doubt He created all things, but then He went away and asks no more about us."³

In place of a controlling higher God, we meet with a pre-determined existence of the soul. This determinism is met with among many animistic nations. The people of Nias believe in a pre-existence of souls, souls not so much in a personal state as in a kind of general stock or

2. Ibid, p. 97.

3. Ibid, p. 105.

store. From that store souls are weighed out to every man by Balia, the son of Lowalangi. Every man on entering into life is asked before his birth what weight or continuance of soul he wants, what else he wants to have on earth, what kind of death he desires, etc.⁴ This same determinism is met with among the Ewe and in the region of Honor. God is ruled out and eliminated by fate which has been decreed him by others than the Almighty God.

Thus we view another degenerating effect of animism upon the fear-filled, soul-darkened pagan.

4. Ibid, p. 107.

X

In Bondage

The African with his ready smile and seemingly happy nature is often pictured as being very content, with not a care in the world. For that reason many wonder why missionaries are sent to those who are happy in their present condition. But this happiness is a false front. It is nearer to the truth to say that the African is full of fear, he is in bondage to fear.

The African is a slave to his fear. In practically all his relations with God and man, he is afraid. He does not know what the spirits will do. His ancestors may behave well at one time and act quite the opposite at another. Even his own soul must be feared, for it is liable to run away from him at any moment, subject to every whim and enticement. He sees spirits lurking in every corner and dwelling in almost every unnatural object. If he should lie down to rest, as Dr. Nau reports one man doing, his head may be cut off.¹ The woman who is about to become a mother is afraid that her child may be slightly deformed, or worse yet, in southeastern Nigeria, that there may be two

1. Henry Nau, We Move Into Africa, p. 171.

in her womb.

Another fetter which binds the animist is demon worship. To the fear itself must be added the worship of thousands of spirits of earth, air, water, mountains and trees. It is supposed that from these demons come all kinds of diseases, madness, death of cattle, famine, bloodshed. Twins are supposed to be the result of an evil spirit consorting with a woman. To these people, therefore, demons are realities. Those who have become Christians have no doubt of the reality of demons. They explain the matter in this way. "Heathenism teaches us the power of the spirits. The devil is the personification of the power opposed to God; it was he who deceived our forefathers and persuaded them to idolatry. In worshipping the spirits we were ignorantly worshipping Satan and his servants."²

Yet another fetter which binds the animist is that of fatalism. We have spoken of this before. And again, we see the effects on the animist. It is one of his basic philosophies of life that all that has been done to and for him has been determined long before. As a result, it has killed man's nobler nature, and degraded him to a piece of mechanism. Heathenism tinged with fatalism is not a religion of free moral men, but a poisoned hereditary theory of life of burdened will-less creatures. All forms of animistic heathenism are determined by this fatalism, as if one hand had intentionally sown this tare on the different fields.

The early Christian apologists used the casting out of devils as proof to the heathen that the Christian religion is true and has power.

2. Joh. Warneck, op. cit., p. 117.

In that way, the appeal is made to the animist to forsake his heathen ways and come out from the power of darkness to One who has broken the shackles of this bondage. While enroute to Africa, one missionary to Madagascar,³ a Lutheran, told of his experience with a man possessed of the devil and the victory won through Christ. It seems that a villager had been seized by a spirit and was in a raving, raging fit. The Christians called for the missionary to come help this man. Rather reluctantly he went. Upon arriving on the scene, he went up to the man and with a firm, authoritative voice commanded the evil spirit to leave. "In the name of Christ, get out of that man." he said. Immediately, the man fell to the ground and lay in a stupor. Gradually he came to his senses. The bonds holding him had been broken. Christianity has the power to break the bonds of fear, demons and fatalism in all parts of the animistic world.

3. The Rev. S. Tverberg, veteran missionary of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, related this story in Lisbon, Portugal, while awaiting passage to Madagascar, in April, 1945.

XI

Selfishness of the Heathen

It has been aptly put that animism is selfishness raised to a system. The first commandment of the animist is to preserve and augment his own soul-stuff against any one in heaven or on earth, and at his expense. To rob others of their soul-stuff wherewith to enrich his own is good, because profitable; to take the life of another wherewith to strengthen his own is wisdom. No one gives love; no one asks for it.

This negation of love extends into practically every sphere of the heathen's life. He does not offer sacrifices out of love to the spirits but, rather, out of fear. The selfish gods demand sacrifices and worship and will not give abundant gifts unless they have first abundantly received gifts from the worshipper.

Man's relation to his fellow-men is scarcely one of love. The polygamist doesn't marry many wives because he loves them, but because he needs them to work his farms and bear his children. The sense of love is understood only in a sexual way. The teacher asked his class

if any heathen loved his wife before he married her. Their answer was that love came after marriage, a love with a different connotation from the one we use.

The only relation in which unselfish love might be even faintly manifested is that of parents to their children. But here the true parental love which desires to secure moral benefits for the child is perverted into a weak, blind partiality. The animistic notions of the soul being easily wounded, forbid all attempts to exercise an educative influence on the child. And while there is a certain respect for one's elders during this life, the parents are not really honored until they are dead. Then the honor is based on fear of what the soul of the parent might do.

All the accounts we have read of the treatment of one's fellow-man confirms this view that man in a primitive state is a cruel and brutal creature. While driving along the road on the way back from a meeting one afternoon, we were stopped by a man. He wanted us to get a small boy out of a pit into which the boy had climbed in order to drink some stagnant rain water. It turned out that this boy was an orphan who was being taken care of, they said, by his uncle. Since it wasn't his son, the uncle neglected the boy to the extent that he was undernourished and in a very weakened condition. In fact, the boy died the next day in the hospital. It was explained that it was a common occurrence among the heathen in this area to let such children slowly starve, because when the child died, the uncle would receive his brother's property, which rightfully belonged to the child.

Even among friends there is little love lost. Neighbor love, with its practical results, pity for the suffering, compassion for the sick, consideration for the weak, will be sought in vain. The man, who at his own cost, would help another in difficulty or danger, is laughed at as a fool. The relations of men to one another are ruled by politeness, which is rooted, however, not in love but in fear.

Such is the effect of animism upon the heart of the pagan man. When love for God is lost, love for man is soon to follow the same course.

XII

Perversion of Morality

Chief Idiong was in a very sick condition. He had been taken to a prayer-house where misguided spiritualists tried to cure his rheumatism by beating him on the back and by beating their chests in countless prayers. After a month or so, the chief returned worse off than before. On our first visit to him we asked him among other things, if he were a sinner. It did not take him long to answer "No." Even after some explanation of God's commandments he still maintained that he was not a sinner. Only gradually did he come to confess his guilt. Even so, on subsequent visits, he first answered that he was sinless. He had never killed a man, or committed adultery with another man's wife. (He had four of his own.) He had no idea of what sin is.

Sin is simply what offends the customs which all must observe. It has no reference to the law of God. The determining factor is not morality but opportunism. A reference to God certainly is made in oaths and in trial by ordeal, and it seems as if there was a moral judgment demanded of Him. But even there the question is, at bottom, the maintenance of custom.

Besides distrust and suspicion, the other chief sin of the animist is adultery and fornication. Unchastity is quite common. Someone has said that the only virgin thing are the forests. It is a light matter to them to sleep with those to whom they are not married. In some tribes it is customary for the young boys and girls to live together until the girl has conceived. Then she is ready and fit for marriage. One man insisted that he should not be prohibited from going to communion, because he had not committed adultery. But he had confessed, the missionary pointed out. No, he replied, it was not adultery but fornication. Such is the perversion of morality even among many so-called Christians who are not too far removed from their pagan beliefs.

Another perverted sense of morals alluded to in another place is the killing of twins. It is the supreme desire of the animist to have many children. He will even do as one teacher did whose wife had not borne any children in six years of married life. He begot a child of a young girl in order to prove to doubting neighbors that it was not his fault that his wife was childless. Yet when God in His grace gives the animist two children at one time they will throw up their hands in horror and flee from the scene of the birth until both the children have died.

Along the same lines, in the Anang district of Calabar Province, a woman is called a pig if she bears children too frequently. For that reason, though they may want many sons and daughters, yet when the wife is with child within two years of the birth of her last one, the child in the womb is killed and sometimes the woman is ruined.

All this is done, of course, with no thought in mind that there will some day be a retribution made. The heathen, as long as he conforms to tradition, believes that he will enjoy the life in the next world as much as he did in this. He will go on living in the same fashion. God is still far off and will not pay any attention to him at all.

Furthermore, the animist will do just about as he pleases because he realizes that everything, his birth, his life, his death, his life after death, has been determined for him before he ever came into this world.

However, we must remember that not all that the heathen does is without virtue. There is still the law hidden in his heart which tells him that there are some things which he ought not do. This is reflected in the spirits which forbid him to perform certain base things, as the land spirit of the Kalabari, Awoma Ka-So, did when she dwelt among them. There is a certain amount of laughter and loyalty among them. There is some industriousness in many areas. Thus there is a point of contact with the primitive which enables the missionary to bring them out of their darkness into a marvellous light, the Light of the world.

XIII

Worldliness

It follows, from what has been said, that animistic and polytheistic heathenism, with all its religiousness, is not religion in the sense of a relation to God; it is largely worldliness. Interest in this world, in the acquisition and maintenance of its benefits, determines the nature of this religion. The largest place in it is taken by the cult of the soul. That, and not the worship of God is the common good. The soul-stuff is material, its hygienic treatment mechanical and its mediation magical. The greatest defect of animism is its assessment of the earthly life as the highest good. They are not attracted, they are repelled by the supernatural.

It is, therefore, quite surprising to a new missionary to see this materialistic spirit. The spirit of keeping up with the Joneses is not lacking in Africa. One of the attitudes of the people which the church has to fight against is that the church owes them a job when it has finished training them in their schools. One prominent chief, who, by the way, has some human skulls still hanging around on his walls, has sent five or six of his sons to our schools and in

each case, upon the graduation of every son, he has insisted that they be given jobs either in one of the schools as a teacher, or in the home of a missionary as a servant.

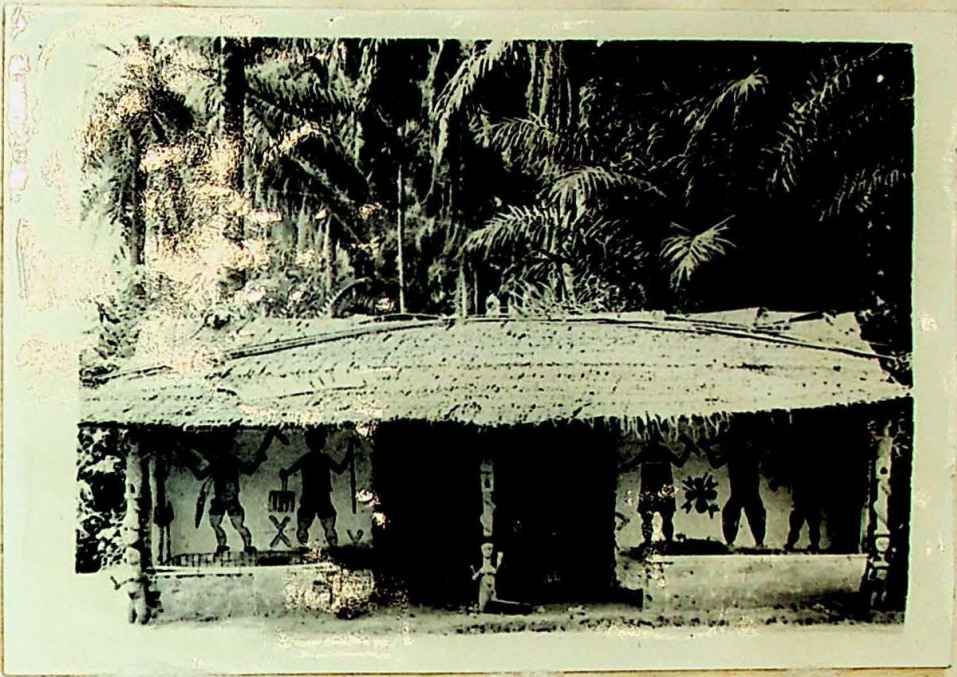
Religion is not deepened by any belief in another, different world. The prosperous are unfortunate in that they must leave their treasures and possess nought but the shadow of gifts scantily dispensed. But thrice unhappy are the poor or the sick, for a continuance and intensification of their sufferings awaits them when they die. This heathenism has no belief in immortality, for even that dream-like life in the kingdom of the dead is ultimately ended. Believing thus, they bend all their efforts toward securing happiness and material blessings in this life. The effect of animism on the people is to make them more worldly, despite their attention to things of the spirit and soul.

Conclusion

In the foregoing chapters we have tried to give a fairly accurate picture of the animistic practices of the heathen. There is much more that could be said, many more stories that could be told, for in nearly every tribe there are differences of beliefs under a general superstition. For example, the Yoruba people of western Nigeria almost worship twins, instead of killing them as the Efik-speaking people do. Even within districts the practices vary. But the ones that have been related, I hope, will tell enough to show that the African pagan is in want of something greater than he now has to take him out of his degrading, debasing bondage.

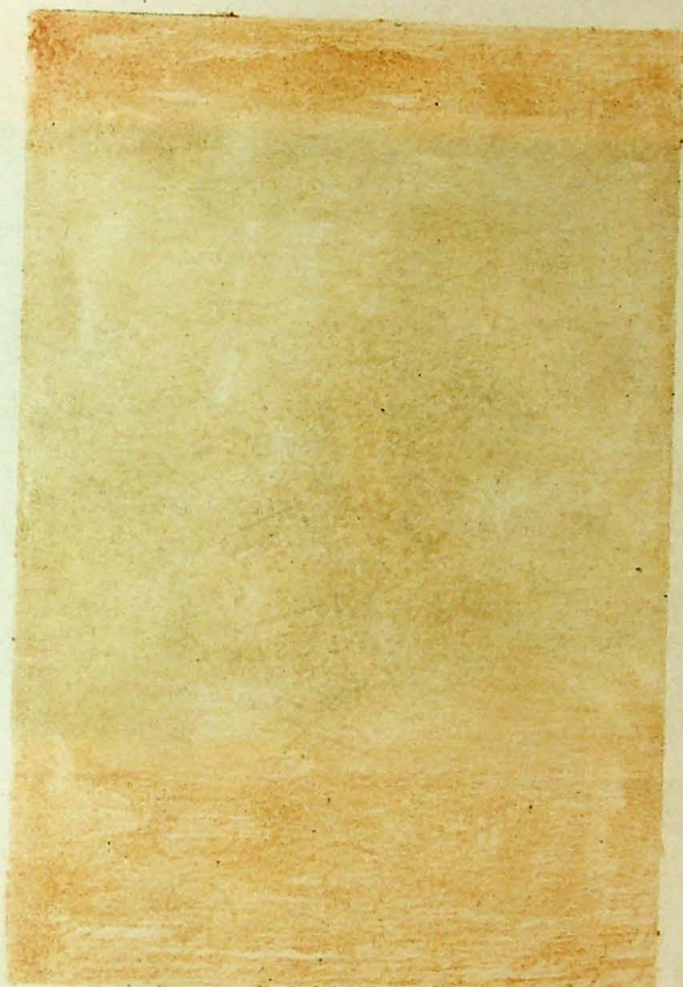
There is only one thing that can break that bondage. "It was believed then, as it is believed in heathendom to-day, that whenever Christians make their appearance the strength of the Satanic powers is broken," says Wernock. The power of Christianity, going forth in full strength, can, has and will continue to make Animism in Africa a thing of the past.

APPENDIX



This grave structure is 7 ft. high, 18 ft. wide and 10 ft. deep. It is divided into three rooms, two enclosed for the private use of the dead chief's soul. A family history (sons on the left and wives on the right) is shown on the walls. The images below (two feet high) are of the chief, his favorite wife and her child. Numerous fetishes are in the rooms. By request, the chief ordered his body to be decapitated and the head buried here, for fear of foes.





Here is another type of grave structure, which is more open to the front. It may rise to a height of 10-12 feet and slope sharply backwards. The stick holds over a dozen goat skulls, used in sacrifices. Note the water-pot, the small object (a fetish) above the stick of skulls and the two small openings below. The openings permit the soul of the deceased to enter the room in the rear for rest when it becomes tired from its wanderings.



This picture shows the interior of a sorcerer's prayer and council house. Note the chicken bones and feathers resting at the bottom of the main pole. They are evidences of a sacrifice, made on a Sunday, to the spirits of his ancestors. The room is largely bare, though many fetishes used to adorn the walls until the Government ordered all such items burned in this area. On the left wall, in English, was written the verse, "God is Love."

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