

## IDOLS AND FETICHES.

BY JAMES B. SMILEY.

[CONCLUSION.]

The worship of stones has existed in various parts of the world. It was common in ancient America. Thus it is stated that among the Indians "stones are sometimes revered on account of their similarity to the human figure, or the figure of some animal. Such stones are called *shingabawassius* by the Ojibways. They have all the essential character of idols, and are supposed to be the locality [habitation] of some god. . . . At the mouth of the Walla Walla two stones, human shaped, were thought to be two Kiuse girls metamorphosed by a jealous husband, and were worshiped. . . . Many stones of the shape of men and women, found in Peru, are according to tradition [human] beings metamorphosed. Arriago mentions the metamorphosis of men to stones, and the worship of those stones. . . . The Laches worshiped every stone as a god, and said they had all been men, and all men were converted into stones after death, and the day was coming when all stones would be raised as men [resurrection]. The shadows of stones were the manifestations of the gods in them.<sup>60</sup>. . . . The Dacotahs claimed descent from a stone, and offered sacrifices to it, calling it grandfather. They thought the spirit of their ancestor was present in this stone, which is their altar for national sacrifice. The Ojibways had such stones, which they called grandfather. . . . Spirits [they believed] transmigrated into stones, and this made them objects of worship. . . . In Central America when a lord died a stone was put into his mouth to receive his soul. . . . Among the Brazilians, the most popular charms worn by the Indians are stones called *Muira-kitana*, which appear to be stones cut from rocks at the bottom of lakes. There are traditions that they were alive in the

<sup>60</sup> This refers to the wide-spread belief among savages that shadows were the spirits of the objects casting them.

lake, and the women by giving them a drop of their blood could catch them. . . . Among the natives of the West Indies food was regularly offered to certain stones that were objects of worship, and they supposed the food was eaten when it disappeared,"<sup>61</sup> i. e., eaten by the spirit dwelling in the stone.

In some regions the belief developed that spirits inhabited everything, and in New Zealand men said that "anything cooked sends the spirit into the stones on which they are cooked."<sup>62</sup> Sacred stones were worshiped by the Fijians, the Australians, the Karens, and the Bowditch Islanders.<sup>63</sup>

They were also worshiped in ancient times in Phenicia, Syria, Babylonia, Arabia, and "the worship was common to all the branches of the Semitic family. The famous black stone of the Kaaba at Mecca is a standing witness to the fact. So firmly rooted was the belief in its divine character among the Arabs of Mohammed's day that he was unable to eradicate it, but was forced to make a compromise with the old faith by attaching to the stone the traditions of the Old Testament. . . . All around Mecca there were similar stones, termed Anzab."<sup>64</sup> Among the Arabs a sacred stone was sometimes called *ghariy*, "blood-bedaubed," the name evidently growing out of the world-wide custom of daubing blood on such stones. "When the Arab daubed blood on the *nosb* [sacred stone] his object was to bring the blood offering into direct contact with the deity"<sup>65</sup> inhabiting it.

In their early days the Greeks believed that "ghosts dwelt in stones; and stones were the shrines of their gods. Pausanias gives several instances; and shows that these inhabited stones, anointed with oil in propitiation, continued even in late days to be regarded as sacred and to be occasionally honored."<sup>66</sup> The Turanian tribes of North Asia worshiped stones, "especially curious ones and such as were like men and animals. . . . but we learn that they were venerated because mighty spirits dwelt in them." The Samoyeds worshiped a black stone which they "smeared with sacrificial blood."<sup>67</sup>

The worship of sacred stones was common in India. In Behar

<sup>61</sup> Dorman, *Primitive Superstitions*, pp. 130-134. Many other examples are there given.

<sup>62</sup> Spencer, *Sociology*, Vol. I, sec. 159.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 789-791.

<sup>64</sup> Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures for 1887*, pp. 408-410.

<sup>65</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 184, 188.

<sup>66</sup> Spencer, *Sociology*, Vol. I, pp. 790, 791.

<sup>67</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, p. 163.

a stone under a tree "will represent the deified soul of some dead personage" and receive worship. The Bakada and Betadara keep a sacred stone in every house "which represents their god Buta," and they sacrifice to it.<sup>68</sup> The Hindu term *deva*, or deity, is often applied to the spirits worshiped in stones.<sup>69</sup> In Southern India "four or five stones may often be seen in the ryot's field, placed in a row and daubed with red paint, which they consider as guardians of the field, and call the five Pandus."<sup>70</sup> The red paint is a substitute for blood in the offering.

Stone worship was also common in ancient Europe, and "it is remarkable to what late times full and genuine stone-worship has survived" there.<sup>71</sup> It is stated that "the Chinese still retain many of the customs associated with the remotest antiquity, among which may be cited the adoration of stones as objects of worship."<sup>72</sup>

At times we find the belief that the spirits that entered stones could speak through them, so that they became oracles. Thus it is stated that in Central America "the blood of birds and deer was poured by the hunters on the stone of Tohil and Avilix [gods], and when the gods had drunk the blood the stone spoke." So, too, the offering of blood gave the stones worshiped by the Scandinavians the power of prophecy.<sup>73</sup> The exact manner in which the god was believed to speak through the stone is not stated.

It has often been the custom to go to sacred stones and offer sacrifices and prayers for help, as was done to idols. Thus we are told that among the Bulloms in Africa certain women "make occasional sacrifices and offerings of rice to the stones which are preserved in memory of the dead. They prostrate themselves before them."<sup>74</sup> Numerous examples could be given if needed.

It will be seen that the wide-spread worship of sacred stones was closely allied to idolatry, and that, like idolatry, it was based on the belief that spirits entered and dwelt in the objects worshiped.

Animal worship has been common in various parts of the world. In ancient Egypt it long flourished. "Egyptian animal worship seems to show, in a double line, traces of a savage ancestry extending into ages lying far behind even the remote antiquity of

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167. See other examples there given.

<sup>72</sup> Ball, *Things Chinese*, p. 586.

<sup>73</sup> Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 134.

<sup>74</sup> Spencer, *Sociology*, Vol. I, sec. 159.

the Pyramids. Deities patronizing special sacred animals, incarnate in their bodies or represented in their figures, have nowhere better examples than the bull-dynasty of Apis, Horus wearing the head of his sacred hawk, Bubastis and her cat, Thoth and his cynocephalus and ibis, the cow-headed Hather, or the hippopotamus Typhon." In India "the sacred cow is not merely to be spared, she is as a deity worshiped in annual ceremony, duly perambulated and bowed to by the pious Hindu, who offers her fresh grass and flowers; Hanuman the monkey-god has his temples and idols, and in him Siva is incarnate, as Durga is in the jackal; the wise Ganesa wears the elephant's head; the divine king of birds, Garuda, is Vishnu's vehicle."<sup>75</sup> We are told that the animals worshiped by



THE BABYLONIAN GODDESS ISTAR.

(Bas-relief in the British Museum, Lenormant, V, p. 259).  
Her idol in the form of a dove being carried in procession.

the Egyptians "were not, however, venerated in dynastic times as animals, but as *the abodes of gods*,"<sup>76</sup> and this is equally true of India and other places where animals were worshiped. It was the indwelling spirit, not the animal, that men worshiped.

We have seen how the bodies of men were mummified in order to preserve them as homes for the spirit to reside in, and in Egypt the bodies of sacred animals appear to have been preserved and mummified for the same purpose. So also idols of animals were made, in which spirits were believed to dwell, and which were worshiped. The chief difference between the idols of animals and of men was in their form. Both were worshiped because they were believed to be inhabited by gods.

<sup>75</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, pp. 238, 239.

<sup>76</sup> Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, p. 2.

The development in the primitive mind of the idea that spirits teemed everywhere and could enter various objects seems to have led to fetichism. The word "fetich" is "of Portuguese origin, and is a corruption of *feitico*, an amulet or charm. At the time of the Portuguese discoveries in West Africa, that is to say, from about 1441 to 1500, Catholic Europe abounded in relics of saints, charmed rosaries, images, and crosses, which were, in the majority of cases, regarded by their wearers as amulets or charms. Such articles were termed by the Portuguese *feiticos*. . . . When, therefore, during their voyages along the West African coast, the Portuguese found the natives reverencing or worshipping certain objects, such as those tenanted by tutelary deities, . . . they naturally spoke of them as the *feiticos* of the natives, having, in fact, no other word commonly in use with which to describe" them. . . . "From the origin of the word, and its application in Europe in that age, it appears clear that the Portuguese could only have applied the term *feitico* to tangible and inanimate objects, to the wooden figures, stones or cones of earth believed by the natives to be the abiding places of indwelling gods, or to the charms obtained from a *suhman*. . . . Hence, since a *feitico* is, properly speaking, a tangible and inanimate object alone, fetichism can properly only mean the worship of such objects. The practice of propitiating by offerings beings who are believed to dwell in the woods or mountains, the rivers or the sea, is not fetichism; nor is the worship paid to certain animals by particular tribes fetichism. Neither can the worship of idols be so termed."<sup>77</sup>

De Brosses, a French writer who published a book entitled *Du culte des dieux fétiches*, in 1760, termed "all terrestrial and natural objects apparently worshiped by the negroes 'fetiches,' and this cult he denominated 'fetichism.' His theory was, that as it was impossible to conceive a lower form of religion than fetichism, it might therefore be assumed to be the beginning of all religion."<sup>78</sup> This misconception was adopted by other writers, and it became current in much of the discussion regarding the origin of religion.

The Rev. R. H. Nassau, who lived in Africa for forty years and who made a careful study of the customs and beliefs of the natives, says regarding their fetichism: "A spirit could live anywhere and in any thing. . . . The thing itself, the material itself, is not worshiped. The fetich worshiper makes a clear distinction between the reverence with which he regards a certain material

<sup>77</sup> Ellis, *Tshi-Speaking People*, pp. 177, 178.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

object, and the worship he renders to the spirit for the time being inhabiting it. For this reason nothing is too mean or too small or too ridiculous to be considered fit for a spirit's *locum tenens*; for when, for any reason, the spirit is supposed to have gone out of that thing and definitely abandoned it, the thing itself is no longer revered, and is thrown away as useless. . . . It is not true, as is asserted by some in regard to these African tribes and their degraded form of religion, that they worship the actual material objects in which the spirits are supposed to be confined."<sup>79</sup>

The *oganga*, or magic doctor, often prepares fetiches for the use of the natives, "with a variety of ceremonies and processes, by virtue of which some spirit becomes localized in that object, and subject to the will of the person. . . . In preparing a fetich the *oganga* selects substances such as he deems appropriate to the end in view, —the ashes of certain medicinal plants, pieces of calcined bones, gums, spices, resins, and even filth, portions of the organs of the bodies of animals, and especially of human beings. . . . Human eye-balls (particularly of a white person) are a great prize. New-made graves have been rifled for them."<sup>80</sup>

Sometimes the word "dead" is used of a fetich amulet that has been abandoned by the spirit conjured into it by a native doctor. "The phrase does not mean that the spirit is actually dead, but that it has fled from inside the fetich, and still lives elsewhere. Then the native doctor, to explain to his patient or client the efficiency of the charm, says that the cause of the spirit's escape and flight is that the wearer has failed to observe all of the directions which had been given, and the spirit was displeased."<sup>81</sup>

It is not certain that a fetich will possess extraordinary powers. They must be tested and tried before they can be relied on, and one man may have a fetich inhabited by a stronger spirit than that dwelling in another. In case of failure a man may go to the *oganga* and complain, and in reply he will be told, "Yes, I know. You have an enemy who possesses a fetich containing a spirit more powerful than yours, which made your bullet miss its mark, which caused your opponent's spear to wound you. Yours is no longer of use; it's dead. Come, pay me, and I will make you a charm containing a spirit still more powerful."<sup>82</sup>

The fetichism practiced by savages may continue to flourish

<sup>79</sup> Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa*, p. 75, 76.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 81, 82.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

among more civilized nations. Thus of the Japanese peasant it is said that "before he will strike mattock or spade in the soil, lay ax to a tree, collect or burn underbrush, he will select a stone, a slab of rock, or a stick of wood, set it upon hill-side or mud field boundary, and to this he will bow, prostrate himself and pray. To him this stone or stick is consecrated. It has power to placate the spirits and ward off their evil. . . . His fetich is erected to 'the honorable spirits.' . . . Were this not attended to, some known or unknown bad luck, sinister fortune, or calamity would befall him. . . . Of the 7,817,570 houses in the empire enumerated in the census of 1892, it is probable that seven million of them are subject to insurance by fetich. They are thus guaranteed against fire, thieves, lightning, plague and pestilence. It is because of the money paid to the priests that the wooden policies are duly nailed to the walls."<sup>83</sup>

We are told that in China people believe that "every plant, even every object which we are wont to call a dead object, has received from the universe the souls which constitute its life, and which may confer blessing on man or may harm him." And the same author says that China is "the principal country in the world for fetichism."<sup>84</sup> In India it is stated that "in Bengal the carpenters worship their adze, chisel and saw; the barbers their razors, scissors and mirror. . . . the writer class worship their books, pens and inkstand. . . . In Bombay, jewelers worship their pincers and blowpipe; carriers worship an axe, and market gardeners a pair of scales."<sup>85</sup> In fact, fetichism seems to be common in India, surviving from early times.

Even in modern Europe the ancient belief survives among many of the peasantry, for it is said that "modern peasant folklore knows that spirits must have some animal body or other object to dwell in, a feather, a bag, a bush for instance. The Tyrolese object to using grass for toothpicks, because of the demons that may have taken up their abode in the straws."<sup>86</sup>

From our study of the subject we reach the conclusion that instead of fetichism being the earliest and lowest form of religion out of which later and higher forms developed, it is more probable that the belief in spirits was first evolved, and then came the belief that they could enter various objects, even such things as sticks, twigs, etc., and this gave rise to fetichism. And so it would be a later, instead of the primary or original, form of religion.

<sup>83</sup> Griffin, *Religion of Japan*, pp. 23-25.

<sup>84</sup> De Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese*, pp. 4, 162.

<sup>85</sup> Crooke, *Folk-Lore of North India*, p. 305.

<sup>86</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, p. 159.

While men have feared and worshiped the spirits believed to reside in idols and fetiches, they have at times sought to coerce or control them. Thus we are told about the negro "who feeds ancestral images and brings them a share of his trade profits, but will beat an idol or fling it into the fire if it cannot give him good luck or preserve him from sickness;" of the Ostyak, "who clothes his puppet, and feeds it with broth, but if it brings him no sport will try the effect of a good thrashing on it, after which he will clothe and feed it again." We read stories of worshipers in China abusing some idol that has failed in its duty. "'How now,' they say, 'you dog of a spirit; we have given you an abode in a splendid temple, we gild you, and feed you and fumigate you with incense, and yet you are so ungrateful that you won't listen to our prayers!' So they drag him in the dirt, and then, if they get what they want, it is but to clean him and set him up again, with apologies and promises of a new coat of gilding."<sup>87</sup>

The Indians on the banks of the Orinoco deify the toad "and attribute to him the power of sending rain; and they beat him when he does not grant their request."<sup>88</sup> In Mexico two battle-gods "gave oracles and were supposed to join the people in their dances . . . It is related that when a prediction of the oracle was not fulfilled the priest without hesitation castigated the idol."<sup>89</sup> We are told about the Italian peasant, "who beats or scolds his bambino when his prayers are not answered or his wishes gratified," and so in Japan "the fetich is punished or not allowed to know what is going on by being covered up or hidden away."<sup>90</sup>

Among the Yucatanese, "Villagutierre describes the beating of an idol said to have predicted the arrival of the Spaniards, but who had deceived them respecting the result."<sup>91</sup> In several villages of Navarre in France, "prayers for rain used to be offered to St. Peter, and by way of enforcing them the villagers carried the image of the saint in procession to the river, where they thrice invited him to reconsider his resolution and to grant their prayers; then, if he was still obdurate, they plunged him in the river, despite the remonstrances of the clergy."<sup>92</sup>

This custom seems to have been common in ancient as well as

<sup>87</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, pp. 170, 171.

<sup>88</sup> Letourneau, *Sociology*, p. 288.

<sup>89</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. III, p. 483.

<sup>90</sup> Griffin, *Religion of Japan*, p. 27.

<sup>91</sup> Spencer, *Sociology*, Vol. I, sec. 158.

<sup>92</sup> Frazer, *Golden Bough*, Vol. I, p. 111.



in modern times. In Rome, "Augustus punished the Neptune in effigy because he had behaved badly. The ancient Arcadians used to beat their god Pan if they came back from the chase empty handed. On the day of the death of Germanicus all the idols in Rome were broken."<sup>93</sup>

For thousands of years, in various parts of the world, human beings were killed in order to send their souls to the other world to serve as wives, servants and slaves for spirits and gods. In an article on "Religious Sacrifices"<sup>94</sup> I have discussed this subject. We also find in various places attempts to supply spirits with idols. Thus among the Miztecs in Oajaca, Mexico, when a chief died, male and female slaves were killed and buried in the grave with his body to accompany his spirit to the other world "together with idols to serve as guides;"<sup>95</sup> i. e., that the god dwelling in the idol might act as guide for the soul of the chief in the spirit world, or as Bancroft explains a similar custom elsewhere, "to serve as a guide and fellow traveler to the departed on the long journey"<sup>96</sup> to the spirit realm.

Occasional allusions are made to jealous gods. Thus in America Uxmal was "said to have been destroyed through the anger of their idols, who were outraged because a new clay god was made by a usurper and worshiped by the people."<sup>97</sup> In other parts of the world the belief has prevailed that gods were jealous.

In some cases priests have found it convenient to use idols for purposes of deception. Thus it is said that "the Haytian idols were hollow, and so large that the priests could speak through them and delude the people, who thought the idol spoke. The priests would often get inside of these idols in order to practice this imposition." Many such idols were found in Mexico, Yucatan and the West Indies. "In Hispaniola the Spaniards found a conspiracy between the cacique and priesthood to deceive the people. Hearing that a certain idol spoke to the people, the Spaniards were present at one of these performances, and they found that the statue was hollow, with a hollow tube connecting with it through which the priest spoke. The cacique begged the Spaniards not to disclose this to the Indians, because by that artifice he kept them in subjection."<sup>98</sup> In Madagascar they had idols which spoke to the

<sup>93</sup> Letourneau, *Sociology*, p. 313.

<sup>94</sup> In *The Open Court* for February, 1911.

<sup>95</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. II, p. 622.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 590.

<sup>97</sup> Dorman, *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 125.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-125.

people—"at least they did this until they were ignominiously found out a few years ago."<sup>99</sup>

In order to cure a Semitic princess the idol of Khonsu was sent to Asia by a Pharaoh of the twenty-first dynasty,<sup>100</sup> thus showing his belief that the resident spirit could cure her disease, and he seems to have loaned her the idol for that purpose.

In ancient times individuals, families, cities and nations were believed to have guardian spirits, or gods, who had a local habitation and only local power. The growth of this belief among the Greeks and Romans has been admirably described by Coulanges, and I cannot do better than to follow and quote from his excellent work. Although tracing the development of the belief in those countries, it would apply equally to other parts of the world.

In ancient Greece and Rome "every city had gods who belonged to it alone. . . . They were called Lares, Penates, Genii, Demons, Heroes; under all these names were human souls deified." After death "the bodies were buried either in the city itself or upon its territory; and as, according to [ancient] belief. . . . the soul did not quit the body, it followed that these divine dead were attached to the soil where their bodies were buried. From their graves they watched over the city; they protected the country, and were, in some sort, its chiefs and masters. . . . These notions came from the very great power which the ancient generations attributed to the human soul after death. Every man who had rendered a great service to the city. . . . became a god to that city."<sup>101</sup> After death the *power* of a spirit was believed to be greatly increased, but otherwise it remained unchanged.

Thus an oracle addressed by the Pythia to Solon expressed the belief of the time, saying, "Honor with a worship the chiefs of the country, the dead who live under the earth. . . . Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, was a god at Delphi only because he died and was buried there. . . . And so Euripides makes Eurystheus say to the Athenians when about to die, 'Bury me in Attica. I will be propitious to you, and in the bosom of the ground I will be for your country a protecting guest.' The entire tragedy of *Œdipus Colonus* rests upon this belief. Athens and Thebes contend over the body of a man who is about to die, and who will become a god."<sup>102</sup>

Pindar relates an instance of a Greek who died in a foreign

<sup>99</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, p. 170.

<sup>100</sup> Saussaye, *Science of Religion*, p. 82.

<sup>101</sup> Coulanges, *The Ancient City*, pp. 195, 196.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196, 197.

country; his spirit was said to appear to Pelias and order him to bring back the body, for the soul, being bound to the body, could not return to dwell in the land of its forefathers without it. As the spirit was believed to be connected with the body it would reside underground, where that body was buried; but it was thought to have the power to leave the corpse, flit about, and act as a protecting god, for the individual, tribe or city, as the case might be.

It was a great piece of good fortune for a city to possess the dead bodies of noted men. "Mantineia spoke with pride of the bones of Arcas, Thebes of those of Geryon, Mesene of those of Aristomenes. To procure these precious relics, ruse was sometimes resorted to. Herodotus relates by what unfair means the Spartans carried off the bones of Orestes. These bones...to which the soul of a hero attached, gave the Spartans a victory immediately. As soon as Athens had acquired power, the first use she made of it was to seize upon the bones of Theseus, who had been buried in the isle of Scyrus, and to build a temple for them in the city, in order to increase the number of her protecting deities."<sup>103</sup> The spirit, being attached to the body or bones would be transferred with them. When idols were developed their possession was sought for the same reason that these bones were desired.

But while the gods were believed to watch over and protect the individual, or the family, or the city, or the state, as the case might be, the benefit was believed to be mutual, for in return they received the offerings and sacrifices on which, as we have elsewhere explained, their welfare and even their existence was believed to depend. The "gods were eager for offerings, and they received victims only from their own city. If they wished the continuation of the sacrifices and hecatombs, it was necessary that they should watch over the city's safety."<sup>104</sup> Every family, or city, or state, offered sacrifices to its protecting deities. The same may be said of China and Japan, for we find evidences of their family, clan or tribal, and national gods, and to them they offer sacrifices in the same way. This has been the custom in various parts of the world.

On the assistance of these spirits and gods men relied for success. When they went to war, or engaged in battle, they often carried with them the idols in which they believed the gods resided. Thus it is said that "the gods had the same interests as the citizens themselves, and in times of war marched to battle with them. In Euripides we see a personage who says on the eve of battle, "The

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

gods who fight with us are more powerful than those who are on the side of the enemy.' The Æginetans never commenced a campaign without carrying with them the statues [idols] of their national heroes, the Æacidæ. The Spartans in all their expeditions carried with them the Tyndaridæ. In the combat the gods and the citizens mutually sustained each other."<sup>105</sup>

In some parts of ancient America men "were so devoted to idolatry that wherever they went they carried an idol. In battle they would hold an idol with one arm and fight with the other,"<sup>106</sup> thus, they believed, securing the assistance of the god. In the Sandwich Islands the hideous image [idol] of the war-god of king Kamehameha "was carried into battle by his special priest,"<sup>107</sup> and in Arabia the idol of the god Yaghuth was "carried into the fray," to secure his help.<sup>108</sup> The Phenicians carried "images of gods in the prows of their ships, to which sacrifices were made, and figure-heads similar to idols were carried in Polynesian war canoes,"<sup>109</sup> evidently to secure their protecting care. Other instances are found of a similar custom, for it has been world-wide.

In some instances men believed that a city could never be taken so long as its gods remained in it, or were true to it. "When Æneas sees the Greeks the masters of Troy, he cries that the gods [of Troy] have departed, deserting their temples and their altars. In Æschylus, the chorus of Thebans expresses the same belief when at the approach of the enemy it implores the gods not to desert the city. . . . Even in the time of Thucydides, when the Greeks besieged a city, they never failed to address an invocation to its gods, that they might permit it to be taken."<sup>110</sup> When Solon wished to capture the Isle of Salamis he consulted an oracle, which said, "'If you wish to conquer the isle you must first gain the favor of the heroes [gods] who protect it and who inhabit it.' Solon obeyed; in the name of Athens he offered sacrifices to the two principal heroes of Salamis. These heroes did not resist the gifts that were offered them, but went over to the Athenian side, and the isle, deprived of protectors, was conquered."<sup>111</sup>

The Romans had a regular form of prayer, preserved by Macrobius, which, before attacking a city, they addressed to its protecting

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 201, 202.

<sup>106</sup> Dorman, *Primitive Superstitions*, pp. 120, 130.

<sup>107</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, Vol. II, p. 307.

<sup>108</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 38.

<sup>109</sup> Allen, *Evolution of the Idea of God*, pp. 263, 264.

<sup>110</sup> Coulanges, *Ancient City*, pp. 202, 203.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

god, beseeching him to desert, go to Rome, and become their protecting deity. . . . offering to build him a temple there.

If a city was conquered the gods were supposed to have been conquered also. If a city was taken the gods that dwelt in and protected it were captured. Capturing an idol, with its indwelling deity, served two purposes. It showed the inferiority of the conquered to the victorious god, and often men also believed that they could secure the protecting care of the captive deity. Thus when the Roman general Camillo conquered the Veii, he carried away their idol of Juno "well persuaded that he gained possession of the goddess at the same time, and devoutly transported her to Rome. From that time Rome had two protecting Junos."<sup>112</sup> So also Ulysses carried off the Pallas [idol] of the Trojans. "At another time the Æginetans, wishing to make war upon Epidaurus, commenced by carrying off two protecting statues [idols] of that city, and transported them to their own city,"<sup>113</sup> thus weakening the enemy by holding his gods in captivity. As this custom has been common a few other examples may be given.

Of ancient Peru we are told that "as for the conquered neighboring tribes brought under the dominion of the Incas, their idols were carried, half trophies and half hostages, to Cuzco, to rank among the inferior deities of the Peruvian Pantheon."<sup>114</sup> Thus they secured the control of the conquered gods, and "the burdensome charges of their worship were defrayed by their respective provinces,"<sup>115</sup> i. e., they were required to furnish sacrifices etc. for them. In ancient Assyria the idol of the goddess Nanea was stolen from the temple at Erech, about 2280 B. C., and held captive for 1635 years, when it was recovered by Assurbanipal; and the idols of the gods Ramman and Sala, of the city of Ekallati, were held captive for 418 years, and then recovered.<sup>116</sup> This was holding gods captive for many years. The victorious Romans carried to Rome the idols of what were believed to be the principal gods of the nations they conquered, thus holding them as hostages, and also securing their protecting care. Hence the value of their Pantheon. Capturing and holding idols in order to secure the resident deities has been prevalent throughout the world.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>114</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, p. 173.

<sup>115</sup> Prescott, *Conquest of Peru*, II, p. 98.

<sup>116</sup> *Encyclopædia Biblica*, articles "Nanea" and "Assyria." So also the kings of Assyria presented to their temples "the captured gods [idols] as votive gifts pleasing to their deity." Tiglathpileser presented "twenty-five gods of the land of Sugi."—Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 675.

In some instances to prevent a god from deserting they bound his idol with chains. In other cases they hid it. Again, "they opposed to the formula by which the enemy attempted to bribe the god, another formula which had the power to retain him." The Romans often "kept secret the name of the principal and most powerful of their protecting gods. They thought that, as the enemy could never call their god by name, he would never abandon thier side, and that their city would never be taken."<sup>117</sup> Keeping secret the name of the god has been common in other parts of the world.

In some parts of Africa men never engage in a war without first consulting the gods, and after a victory a "dreadful slaughter of prisoners takes place...as a thank offering to the deity or deities to whose assistance the natives believe they owe their success."<sup>118</sup> The prisoners were killed in order to send their spirits to the other world, to become the slaves of the deity that gave victory to his worshipers, or from the cannibalistic desire to give him their flesh and blood to eat. An this is true of all similar sacrifices. In praying the gods for help men would promise them liberal sacrifices if victorious. The custom has been wide-spread of thanking, and offering sacrifices to, the god or gods to whose assistance men believed their success was due.

In the "older art of Babylonia, of which that of Assyria was but a modification, the deities of the popular faith were all represented in human shape."<sup>119</sup> So also of the Greeks it is said that "at the earliest stage of iconism of which literature or monuments have left a record, we find the form of the god darkly emerging from the inorganic block...but the features of this embryo form are human...The earliest image under which the Greek divinity proper was figured was the image of man."<sup>120</sup> Here the idols were clearly deveioped from ancestor worship, and so the early idols were in human form, and were believed to embody human spirits. In ancient Mexico, however, we are told that they "had idols of stone, and of wood, and of baked clay; they also made them of dough; some of them were shaped like men...some were like women, some like wild beasts...some like snakes of many fashions, large and coiling...of the owl and other night birds, and of others as the kite, and of every large bird, or beautiful, or fierce, or preciously feathered, they had an idol...Of many other things they had figures

<sup>117</sup> *Ancient City*, p. 204.

<sup>118</sup> Ellis, *Tshi-Speaking People*, p. 170.

<sup>119</sup> Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1887, p. 277.

<sup>120</sup> Farnell, *The Cults of the Greek States*, I, pp. 19, 20.



MIXE IDOL OF MIXISTLAN.

From a photograph. Venerated by Mexicans until very recently when the original was removed from the altar of a Christian church by the Archbishop of Antequera who now retains it in his possession.

and idols, carved or painted, even of butterflies, fleas and locusts."<sup>121</sup> This appears to be a more advanced stage, so that in addition to human figures they had idols of animals of all kinds, of birds, snakes and even of insects, and such idols have been found elsewhere. We have already seen that in China idols were erected which were believed to be inhabited by the spirits of mountains, brooks, streams, and other gods of nature.

It has not always been the custom to wait until a man was dead before the worship of his spirit began, and in various parts of the world idols have been erected for living men, and then worshiped. This custom appears to have been very ancient in China and is mentioned in a book written as early as the fourth century before our era. "Instances abound in Chinese literature" of this custom. De Groot, who visited China, says that he saw a number of images [idols] and tablets erected to a viceroy who had been "removed to another high post." Altars, temples and idols are often erected "in honor of mandarins after they have departed from the region where they gained the sympathy of a grateful people. . . . Solemnly, every year, on the birthday of such a one, the administrators of the building do reverence there, sacrificing incense, food, spirits, and tea, with bows and prostrations to his soul *residing in the image or tablet*; and they entertain it on the spot with a theatrical performance or a puppet show."<sup>122</sup>

Similarly in ancient Peru they "made statues [idols] of their chiefs during their lives, and these statues, made in the likeness of the chief, were served as if they had been alive, and villages were set apart to provide them with the necessaries,"<sup>123</sup> i. e., as sacrifices to the idol. So, also, in ancient India the Veda represents a man as saying, "'My father and mother are my highest idols; I do for them what I do for idols' . . . and he is represented as saying that he offers fruits and flowers to his parents as if they were idols."<sup>124</sup> In some parts of Africa at present the savages believe that insanity is caused by a spirit which has taken possession of the victim. "Therefore it is considered proper to make offerings and some degree of worship to the incarnated spirit. But it is not true that the lunatic himself is the object of worship. The gifts and sacrifices are made solely to and for the spirit"<sup>125</sup> believed to dwell in him.

<sup>121</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, III, p. 196.

<sup>122</sup> De Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese*, pp. 65, 66.

<sup>123</sup> Dorman, *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 119.

<sup>124</sup> Hopkins, *The Religion of India*, p. 370.

<sup>125</sup> Nassau, *Fetichism in West Africa*, p. 272.



In ancient Babylonia, after the death of kings temples were erected to them, "their images [idols] were placed in the temples and sacrifices were offered to them. One king, Gimel-Sin (about 2500 B. C.) appears to have been deified during his lifetime, and there was a temple in Lagash which was named after him,"<sup>126</sup> where he appears to have been worshiped. So also in Rome the senate decreed the divinity of Cæsar, and temples were erected to Augustus, and people began to worship him before he died. It is said that in ancient Egypt it was the "belief that the ruling king or sovereign of Egypt was the living image and viceregent of the sun-god (Ra). He was invested with the attributes of divinity, and that in the earliest times of which we possess monumental evidence,"<sup>127</sup> and in some cases the king appears to have been worshiped while alive.

In New Zealand a Tampo chief said to a missionary, "Think not that I am a man, that my origin is of the earth. I come from the heavens; my ancestors are all there; they are gods, and I shall return to them."<sup>128</sup> This appears to be the origin of the belief in "the divine right" of kings. The ancestors of the kings had been deified and were worshiped, and so the kings claimed to be descended from the gods, and to rule by divine approval, i. e., by the approval of the spirits of their deified ancestors. After death the kings also would often be deified and worshiped as gods. So in China and Japan worship of the spirits of their emperors has flourished for centuries. The same practice has been found among other people.

When idols were in general use, and the demand for them large, their manufacture would naturally develop into an industry. Thus when America was discovered idols were found by thousands in the West Indies, and it is stated that "an island near Hayti had a population of idol-makers. . . . The spirit could be conveyed with the image, both were called *cmi*, and in the local account of sacrifices, oracles, and miracles, the deity and the idol are mixed together in a way which at least shows the extreme closeness of their connection in the native mind." "The natives carved their little images in the shapes in which they believed the spirits themselves to have appeared to them."<sup>129</sup> At Ephesus the making of idols appears to have been a business, and the craftsmen who made their living by it started

<sup>126</sup> Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 561. "The early monarchs of Babylon were worshiped as gods in their lifetime. . . . The kings of Tyre traced their descent from Baal, and apparently professed to be gods in their own person."—Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, pp. 10, 11.

<sup>127</sup> Renouf, *Religion of Ancient Egypt*, p. 161.

<sup>128</sup> Thompson, *The Story of New Zealand*, I, p. 95.

<sup>129</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, p. 172.

a riot against St. Paul, who was denouncing idolatry, because "this our craft is in danger to be set at naught" (Acts xix. 23-41). Fearing the injury to their trade they desired to kill the man who interfered with it.

Among the innumerable spirits worshiped by primitive men certain gods would in time loom up above others, much as certain men became chiefs and then kings, dominating many nobles and all their subjects. So great gods appeared such as possibly the imaginary first ancestor, faintly remembered but deified and greatly magnified, or the deified spirit of some powerful ancient king; or when nature gods appeared the greatest one might be the spirit dwelling in the sun, or sky or heaven. Various causes might work to elevate one god above another in the popular belief. And a time would come when some of the more thoughtful and intelligent men would doubt whether the exalted spirits which their conceptions imagined could dwell in idols and fetiches.

With the development of ancient philosophy we find such ideas taking shape in the minds of various writers. Thus Zeno said that neither temples nor idols were suited for gods; Empedocles and Heraclitus satirized prayers to idols; Zenophanes made an attack on all idolatry, and Varro and Maximus Tyrius wrote a treatise on the question of whether images should be erected to gods. Probably many shared their views. Similarly in ancient Peru. Nezahualcoyotl, king of Tezcuco, expressed contempt for idolatry, and recognized "a high, holy, and to a great extent, unknowable supreme power. This thoughtful monarch 'found false all the gods adored by the people of this land, saying that they were statues and demons.'"<sup>130</sup> In Peru with the development of intelligence there also appeared a tendency to trace many spirits to a larger spirit from whom they sprung.<sup>131</sup> But relatively exalted conceptions such as these, held by the few, did not stop the idolatry practiced by the masses of the people. It took centuries of development to prepare some of the nations for the abolition of idols, and even now a large proportion of the people of the world make and worship them.

Moral codes and ideals are the result of social development. They are the necessary outgrowth of social advance. But savages, unrestrained by such requirements, violate them because they lack the moral laws which civilization imposes. Hence the spirits and gods which the savages worshiped were tainted with all the barbarities of savage life. Thus we are not surprised when we find it stated that

<sup>130</sup> Bancroft, *Native Races*, Vol. III, pp. 107, 108.

<sup>131</sup> Payne, *New World*, Vol. I, pp. 507-510.

"in Greece, as early as the sixth century B. C., we are all familiar with Zenophanes's poem complaining that the gods were credited with the worst crimes of mortals—in fact, with abominations only known in the orgies of Nero and Elagabalus. We hear Pindar refusing to repeat the tale which told him the blessed were cannibals. In India we read the pious Brahmanic attempts to expound decently the myths which made Indra the slayer of a Brahman; the sinner, that is, of the unpardonable sin. In Egypt, too, we study the priestly or philosophic systems by which the clergy strove to strip the burden of absurdity and sacrilege from their own deities."<sup>132</sup> When intelligent men, owing merely to the advance in moral standards resulting from a developing civilization, thus revolt at the numerous tales of the immoralities of the ancestral gods, they either take refuge in skepticism and reject the popular religion, or else conceptions of the gods must be framed to meet the new and higher ideals.

The idolatry of the ancient Hebrews does not appear to have differed essentially in origin or character from that of other nations. Their early traditions represent their ancestors as dwelling "on the other side of the flood" (the Revised Version says "river," i. e., the Euphrates), and there "they served other gods." (Josh. xxiv. 2). When they migrated to Palestine from beyond "the river," they appear to have carried with them the worship of the idols and gods of their ancestors, which were similar to those of other branches of the Semitic race. When Rachel fled with Jacob she stole "the images<sup>133</sup> that were her father's" (Gen. xxxi. 19). Then Laban started in pursuit of Jacob, and when he overtook him he said, "Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" (Gen. xxxi. 30).

We have already seen the ancient belief that when an idol was carried away the indwelling spirit or god was believed to be carried with it. Hence Laban accuses Jacob of having "stolen his gods." So also Micah "had a house of gods. . . . and teraphim" (Judg. xvii.

<sup>132</sup> Lang, *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, Vol. I, p. 6.

<sup>133</sup> The Revised Version says *teraphim*. The Assyrian *tarpu* "is the Hebrew *teraphim*, which, as Dr. Neubauer has pointed out, must be connected with the *Rephaim* or 'shades of the dead,' and hence. . . . signify the images [idols] of dead ancestors" (A. H. Sayce in *The Hibbert Lectures for 1887*, p. 143). The Hebrew *teraphim* appear to have been household idols, which they believed to be inhabited by spirits of their ancestors or by gods. We find references to the ancestor worship of the Hebrews, and their attempts to feed (sacrifice to) spirits of the dead (Deut. xxvi. 14; Hos. ix. 4; Jer. viii. 1, 2). These ghosts were believed to be far more powerful than men, and "in all the Semitic languages they were called by the general name *il* (Hebrew *ēl*, 'god,' cf. 1 Sam. xxviii. 13) which probably originally meant 'power'; and they received the same rights of worship that were paid to other divinities" (Paton, *The Early Religion of Israel*, p. 3).

5) which some of "the children of Dan" stole. And Micah started in pursuit, and when he overtook them he said, "Ye have taken away my gods [idols] which I made, and the priest, and ye are gone away; and what have I more?" (Judg. xviii. 24). Evidently he believed that he lost his gods when their images were stolen. On conquering the city of Laish "the children of Dan" changed its name to Dan, and there they "set them up Micah's image which he made" (verse 31), and it seems to have been long worshiped.

David appears to have kept a household idol and to have been an idolater. Saul in his anger "sent messengers unto David's house, to watch and to slay him in the morning; and Michal, David's wife," who was the daughter of Saul, told him, and she "let David down through the window; and he went and fled and escaped" (1 Sam.



HEBREW TERAPHIM.



HEAD OF BAAL.  
From a Tyrian coin.

xix. 11, 12). Then, to mislead the messengers, Michal "took an image (Revised Version says *teraphim*, i. e., household idol), and laid it in the bed" (verses 13-16), and said that David was sick. Thus David's household idol (*teraphim*) appears to have been about the size and form of a man, else it would not so readily have deceived the messengers of Saul. Idols in human form are also mentioned in Ezek. xvi. 17; Is. xlv. 13. The idols which Rachel stole from her father appear, however, to have been much smaller, otherwise she could not so easily have hidden them by sitting on them (Gen. xxxi. 34). In nations where idols were common they were often made of various sizes.

Apparently among the Semites in quite early times the belief arose that the spirits, thought to reside in graves, could enter and reside in stones resting upon them. Then would come the belief

that they could also reside in other stones, giving rise to a belief similar to that which we have found in other parts of the world. Worship of such stones was common in Babylonia, and in fact "the worship of these sacred stones was common to all the branches of the Semitic family."<sup>134</sup> The sacred stones were regarded as "the dwelling place of deity itself."<sup>135</sup> Such stones seem to have been of various shapes and sometimes pillars. Among the Semites we find mention of the "pillar as a visible symbol or embodiment of the presence of the deity, which in process of time comes to be fashioned or carved in various ways, till ultimately it becomes a statue or anthropomorphic idol of stone, just as the sacred tree or post [grave post?] was ultimately developed into an image of wood," or wooden idol.<sup>136</sup> Among the early Semites "heaps of stones, or pillars set upon graves, were believed to be occupied by them [i. e., by spirits]. In Nabatæan, Palmyrene, and Aramaic *nefesh*, 'soul,' means also 'tombstone,'"<sup>137</sup> evidently growing out of the belief that the soul entered and dwelt in the tombstone.

In the Old Testament we find numerous allusions to the stone worship of the Israelites. Thus Jacob, as the result of a peculiar dream, set up the stone on which his head had rested, and he called it *Bêth-êl*, meaning the house of *êl*, or of the god *êl*. He seems to have believed that the god had entered and dwelt in the stone and he said, "this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house" (Gen. xxviii. 22). And he anointed the stone with oil, "just as idols were in antiquity."<sup>138</sup> Anointing sacred stones in this way was common in Babylonia and Assyria.<sup>139</sup> The Hurd Islanders had in their homes, "several stocks or small pillars, 4 or 5 feet high, as the representatives of household gods, and on these they poured oil."<sup>140</sup> In the Society Islands, logs or fragments of basalt columns, "by virtue of the *atua* or deity which had filled them,"<sup>141</sup> were anointed with oil, and this custom has been found in various parts of the world. The oil was intended as a sacrifice to the deity dwell-

<sup>134</sup> Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1887, p. 408.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 187.

<sup>137</sup> Paton, *The Early Religion of Israel*, p. 9.

<sup>138</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 187.

<sup>139</sup> Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1887, p. 410. See also Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, pp. 664-665 for comments on this custom.

<sup>140</sup> Turner, *Samoa*, p. 294.

<sup>141</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, II, p. 162.

ing inside, just as fat and blood were often daubed on idols, as we have seen.

Some of the proper names indicate the early stone worship, as Tsuriel, meaning "my rock is God"; Pedatsur, "the rock deliver"; Tsurishaddai, "Shaddai, or the mighty one is my rock"; Elitsur, "the rock is my god," etc. For allusions to stone worship see Deut. xxxii. 37; Hab. ii. 19. In some cases descent from a stone was claimed (Jer. ii. 27), which was a belief elsewhere as previously shown.

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It is uncertain just what was contained in the Ark. The word simply means a chest. The compiler of the Old Testament narratives represented it as containing the tables of stone on which the ten commandments were written. This was probably an attempt of the compiler, in the time of the prophets, to gloss over the facts. It may have contained an ancient sacred stone.<sup>142</sup> In this sacred object, whatever it was, Yahveh was believed to dwell<sup>143</sup> (Num. x. 35, 36; 2 Sam. xv. 25). It was at times carried into battle in order to have the help of the indwelling spirit (1 Sam. iv. 3, 7), much as we have already seen that idols were carried into battle among other people for this purpose. When it was captured Yahveh was thought to be carried into captivity, but the troubles of his captors were attributed to his presence (1 Sam. v. 2-8). On regaining the Ark sacrifices of food were offered to the indwelling god (1 Sam. vi. 14, 15), and there was great rejoicing because their deity had been recovered (2 Sam. vi. 12-16). Defeat in battle was sometimes attributed to the absence of the Ark (Num. xiv. 44, 45), just as among other nations defeat was often attributed to the absence of an idol or a god. The Philistines also carried their idols into battle, and when defeated by David they fled leaving them on the field, and "David and his men took them away" (2 Sam. v. 21 R. V.), thus capturing the gods of their enemy. Similarly Jeremiah writing in Egypt, where he went to live after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., predicted that the king of Babylon would conquer that country and "kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt," and "carry them away captive," i. e., he would burn their houses (temples), and carry the idols and gods into captivity (Jer. xliii. 10-13).

It was a Semitic custom in appealing to a god believed to re-

<sup>142</sup> For a discussion of the contents of the Ark see the articles on "Ark" in the *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, and the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. by Hastings.

<sup>143</sup> "By the popular mind, at least, Jehovah was conceived as actually residing in the Ark." Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Ark."

side in a sacred object to stroke, embrace or kiss it. "The practice of stroking the sacred stone with the hand is identical with the practice of touching or stroking the hand of a man in acts of supplication before him."<sup>144</sup> So also we find allusions to the Hebrew custom of kissing their idols (1 Kings xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2). We have already noticed the custom in Egypt and elsewhere of embracing and kissing mummies and idols embodying the spirits of friends.

The Hebrews also made idols of animals, in which a god was believed to reside, to whom they offered sacrifices (Exod. xxxii. 4, 6; 1 Kings xii. 28, 32, 33). The idol of a calf was really an idol of a bull, but was called a calf because of its small size. The Israelites carried idols in procession (Is. xlvi. 7; Jer. x. 5), as was the custom in Egypt and elsewhere; they were bound with chains (Is. xl. 19; Jer. x. 4) and Ezekiel speaks of a jealous idol at Jerusalem (Ezek. viii. 3, 5). We have previously mentioned jealous idols. They also put clothes on their idols (Ezek. xvi. 18), a custom found elsewhere.<sup>145</sup>

The Semitic word *ba'al* "is primarily the title of a god as inhabitant or owner of a place."<sup>146</sup> Hence we find such names as Bêl-shashi, "owner of the wild boar"; Ba'âlath-bê'êr, "proprietary of the well"; Ba'al-Carmel or B'al Lëbânôn, "owner of those mountains"; Ba'al Hammân, "owner of the pillar"; Ba'al-tâmâr, "owner of the palm." Ba'al-perazim, "owner of the cleft"; Ba'al-hamon, "owner of the torrent." In these cases the spirit believed to dwell in the wild boar, well, palm-tree, mountain, pillar, cleft or torrent, was regarded as owning or possessing them. Other similar names are found, indicating the early belief in spirit habitation of different objects.

We find allusions to the wide-spread belief that the power of the gods was local and confined to their own territory. Thus the Syrians said of the Israelites, "Their gods are gods of the hills: . . . but let us fight against them in the plains, and we shall be stronger than they" (1 Kings xx. 23). So also Naaman, the Syrian, asked that he might be given two mule-loads of the soil of Canaan in order that he might carry it home with him, and then he could worship Yahveh on the earth he dominated (2 Kings v. 17). So David lamented that if Saul drove him out of the land of Israel he would

<sup>144</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 188.

<sup>145</sup>In Babylonia "garments for the statues of the gods appear to have been favorite votive offerings at all times. . . . It would appear. . . . that for the various festive occasions of the year, the garments of the gods [idols] were changed."—Jastrow, *op. cit.* p. 670.

<sup>146</sup> Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 94.

be compelled to "serve other gods," i. e., serve the gods of the land he was forced to enter (1 Sam. xxvi. 19), and he would be prevented from "abiding in the inheritance of Yahveh," for Yahveh's rule was thought not to extend outside the land of Israel. So also the foreigners sent by the king of Assyria to settle in Samaria knew not "the manner of the God of the land," and a priest was sent to teach them (2 Kings xvii. 24-28), for the "God of the land" was regarded as a local deity whose "manners" must be observed, just as David would observe those of the Philistine god if forced to enter his territory.

When the Hebrews conquered the land of Canaan, instead of exterminating the Canaanites they appear to have ultimately amalgamated with them (Ps. cvi. 34-38). Since both tribes were branches of the Semitic race this was comparatively easy. Many of the sanctuaries of Yahveh were "the holy places of the land of Canaan that had been appropriated by the Hebrews as a result of the conquest. Wherever Yahveh had supplanted a *ba'al*, and inhabited a sacred tree, spring, stone, or grave, there a 'high place' was established where an altar was set up and sacrifices were offered. More than a hundred of these sanctuaries are mentioned in the older writings of the Old Testament. In the case of most of them it can be shown that they were primitive shrines of the land of Canaan.<sup>147</sup> The idols and idolatry of the early Hebrews had been inherited from their ancestors, and it appears to have been similar to that of the other branches of the Semites. Hence their ready assimilation. "We have convincing proof that the use of teraphim [i. e., household idols] was common, if not universal, among the early Hebrews. . . . So thoroughly were they a part of the national tradition that they continued in use even after the captivity."<sup>148</sup> At the time of the prophets a bitter fight was made to exterminate idolatry, and to concentrate the national worship on Yahveh, who was developed from a local into a universal God. The Hebrews do not appear to have become monotheists until after the captivity. "The later prophetic polemic against images of Yahveh shows how common they were in the pre-prophetic religion of Israel."<sup>149</sup>

An attempt appears to have been made in the age of the prophets to gloss over the idolatry of the early Israelites, and to represent them as monotheists from the beginning, worshipping Yah-

<sup>147</sup> Paton, *The Early Religion of Israel*, p. 89.

<sup>148</sup> Kitto's *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature*, art. "Teraphim," written by Archdeacon F. W. Farrar.

<sup>149</sup> Paton, *The Early Religion of Israel*, p. 81.



veh alone, and their idolatry as a falling away from the early belief. But to scholars the records clearly show the early customs and the process of development. "Just as the theologians of Islam sought to destroy evidences of pre-Mohammedan heathenism in Arabia, so the prophetic historians of Israel retold the tales of the patriarchs in accordance with the religious beliefs of their own age. Yet even this process did not succeed in obliterating the traces of pre-Mosaic polytheism."<sup>150</sup>

#### SUMMARY.

When, in primitive times, the belief was developed that spirits dwelt in the human body, continuing to reside there during temporary suspensions of activity, such as sleep, fainting spells, etc., the belief would naturally spring up that when bodily activity was suspended by death, the spirit would continue to reside in the corpse. After death the ghosts were imagined to still retain their interest in the affairs of men, but with greatly increased power to help or injure them.

Primitive men, like modern savages, believed that during life the spirit could leave the body, as it appeared to do in dreams, when it engaged in the chase and other occupations, and then returned to the body before it awoke. This belief arose because of their ignorance of the true explanation for natural phenomena. And so, in early ages, men would naturally believe that after death the spirit could similarly leave the corpse and return to it. Hence, in some religions, holes were left in coffins and graves to enable spirits to pass in and out.

Spirits leaving the body and flitting about, were believed to have the power to enter various objects, such as houses and the bodies of other men. And so would naturally arise the belief that all of the diseases of men were occasioned by evil spirits which entered human bodies and caused the sickness. Among many primitive people the world over this has been the prevailing belief regarding the cause of all ill health. To cure any disease it was imagined that it was merely necessary to drive out the evil spirit. That has been the whole science of medicine for many tribes and nations.

If the spirit continued to dwell in the body after death, to destroy it would deprive the ghost of its home. It was an early belief that the corpse would ultimately awaken out of its sleep (resurrection) and then the body would be absolutely essential to

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 28.

the spirit. This led to efforts to preserve the corpse, and various devices were tried, such as dessicating or drying, and, as intelligence increased, by mummifying, as was done in ancient Egypt and Peru. In ancient Babylonia and other places additional protection was sought by building great mounds over the grave, which in Egypt grew into the pyramids.

But in spite of every precaution a mummy might be destroyed, and a ghost left homeless. To provide against such an emergency the Egyptians seem in some instances to have provided several images in human form, or artificial bodies, into which, in case the original was destroyed, the spirit might enter and dwell. This reasoning seems logical, and it appears to be a natural effort to provide against disaster.

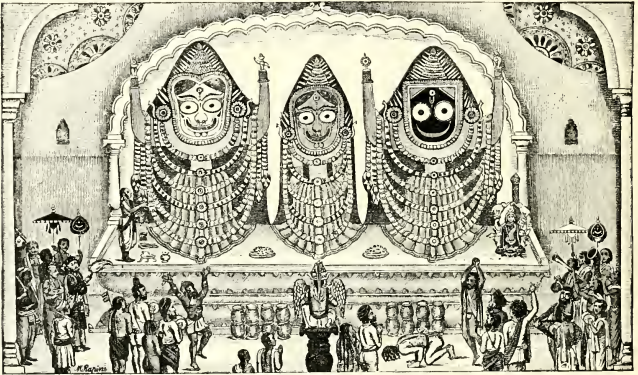
As the ghosts were believed still to retain their interest in the affairs of men after death, mummies were in some cases carried to feasts and holiday observances, in order that the resident spirit might look on and enjoy the festivities. Favorite dishes of food were presented to them, incense burnt before them, and at times they were washed, kissed and caressed by friends, and their feet bathed with tears by loved ones.

In early ages, and to modern savages, shadows have seemed strange and mysterious appearances, and the shadows which men cast were regarded as their souls, following them, and appearing and disappearing in a mysterious manner.<sup>151</sup> Men would also inevitably notice that stones and posts on graves cast shadows, and it would be a natural inference that the shadows cast by these objects were spirits also. Then it would be a short step to say that the spirit living in the grave had entered them and appeared in such shadows. But a human spirit residing in such objects should have a more natural body, and hence an effort would be made to carve the stones and posts into a resemblance to the human figure, and so they would be shaped into idols in human form. This thought is suggested tentatively as one possible reason—not the only one—for the early belief that spirits, living in graves, entered the stones and posts resting on them. But whatever the chain of reasoning in the savage mind may have been, the fact remains, and has much evidence, that the belief sprang up all over the world, that grave stones and posts became inhabited by the spirits living under them. Objects into

<sup>151</sup> "The Benin negroes regard men's shadows as their souls. . . . The Greenlanders say a man's shadow is one of his two souls—the one which goes away from his body at night. Among the Fijians, too, the shadow is called 'the dark spirit,' as distinguished from another which each man possesses."—Spencer, *Sociology*, Vol. I, sec. 56.

which spirits had entered were regarded as sacred, but their sanctity was based solely on the presence of the indwelling spirit.

Grave stones and posts have been found in various parts of the world, with a rudely carved human head at the top, or having a rude resemblance to the human body—rough stones and posts being slowly developed into human form. Savages, having little artistic or mechanical skill, could only produce crude figures. Some statues were made in grotesque form, and some were fierce and were occupied by gods of war. As civilization developed and skill increased, statues of surprising beauty were at times produced by advanced nations, as seen in some of those of ancient Greece. But whether



HINDU JAGANNATH WITH HIS TWO COMPANIONS.  
(After Schlagintweit.)

the figure was crude or artistic, large or small, frowning or smiling, it was regarded as an artificial body in which a spirit could reside. These artificial bodies, whether made of wood, or stone, or clay, or dough, or any other material—for, in time, statues were made of almost every substance—were idols. The word "idol" means literally an "image." Any "image" in which a spirit was believed to dwell, was an idol.

The power of the spirits was believed to exceed greatly that of men, and believing the spirits and gods dwelling in idols to have almost unlimited power over their destiny, men have prostrated themselves before, and done obeisance to them. To them they have prayed, often long and with the most intense and pathetic earnest-

ness, seeking to avert their anger and win their help." Men believed that all the benefits and good fortune of life came from the help of the spirits and gods, and all disasters and misfortunes were caused by their animosity. Imagining the inhabiting spirits to have human appetites and desires, sacrifices were offered to them. In many instances blood was daubed on the lips of the idol, or food thrust into its mouth. In other cases food and drink would be placed on a table or altar before the image so that the god could have ready access to it. Incense was burned before the idol so that the fumes might please the deity. As ideas became less gross, sacrifices were sometimes burnt on an altar before the idol, in the belief that the fumes and vapors would reach and be inhaled by the spirit. All sacrifices were intended to supply some desire of a spirit or god. The whole vast system of idolatry, which has prevailed all over the world for thousands of years and which so impresses every student of the past, has consisted of this worship of spirits and gods, believed to reside in idols.

Probably the first idols were supposed to be inhabited by human spirits and hence they were intended to imitate the human form. As the belief in spirits developed, there came a time when they were believed to be everywhere and in everything, and idols were made in the form of animals, birds, snakes, and even insects, and in some cases idols were made for the spirits of mountains, stars, rivers, etc., to reside in. In Egypt, when animal worship developed, the bodies of the sacred animals were mummified and preserved like those of men and for the same reason—to preserve them for the spirit to inhabit.

In China and Japan "tablets" have been kept for centuries in nearly every home. They appear to have been developed from a gravestone, or slab, or post. Into these "tablets" spirits of ancestors were believed to enter. They differ from idols because they are not "images" of human or other form. In Peru a disk served in place of an idol for the spirit of the sun.

Fetiches could "be made of anything of vegetable, animal or metallic nature." Into these a spirit was believed to enter. They could be worn as charms, or kept in any convenient place. The indwelling spirit was believed to help the owner of the fetich. If the spirit left the object, which was often believed to happen, it was regarded as "dead" and of no further value, and was frequently thrown away. But while the spirit was thought to dwell in the fetich it was prayed to and worshiped. Instead of being the earliest

and lowest form of religion, fetichism was probably a subsidiary development of the general belief in spirits.

In time the belief in spirits developed to such an extent that they were supposed to teem everywhere. This belief dominated the lives of men. There were supposed to be millions of spirits. They were imagined to inhabit wells and springs, brooks, rivers, lakes and the ocean; animals of all kinds; trees and vegetables; the earth, volcanoes and mountains; the sun, moon and stars. And as all these spirits were believed to have power to control the lives of men, sending benefits and disasters upon them, they were all worshiped. But the worship of spirits not dwelling in idols was not idolatry.

It has been the popular belief that idolaters worshiped idols of wood, stone, etc. This appears to be an error. Repeatedly idolaters have asserted that they did *not* worship the image of wood, stone, or other substance, but the inhabiting spirit. Ignorant men may at times have worshiped the image alone, but this was because its object was forgotten, and such cases were probably exceptions rather than the rule.<sup>152</sup>

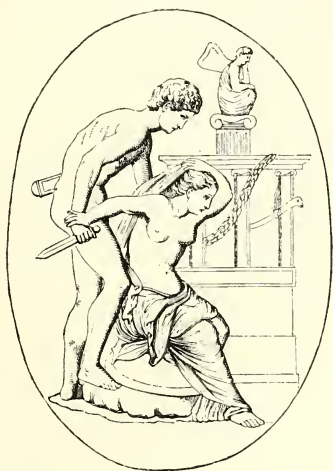
When idolatry was fully developed millions of idols were made; each man might have one or several. Their number seems surprising. There were individual, family, tribal and national idols and gods. Believing that the help of the indwelling spirits or gods was essential to their welfare, men kept idols in their homes, they wore them as charms and amulets, they placed them in the approaches to their fields to protect their crops,<sup>153</sup> and so on, and tribal and national idols were provided with temples, or houses in which to dwell, and there men went to sacrifice to and worship them.

We have seen that in ancient Greece and Rome the belief prevailed (and it has been general over the world) that the spirit was bound or attached to the corpse, and when that was carried from place to place the spirit was transported with it. And so when idols were developed the same idea adhered to them. Wherever the idol was carried the inhabiting spirit went. To gain their protection and

<sup>152</sup> "Every native with whom I have conversed on the subject has laughed at the possibility of being supposed that he could worship or offer sacrifice to some such object as a stone, which of itself it would be perfectly obvious to his senses was a stone only and nothing more." Ellis, *Tshi-speaking Peoples*, p. 192. "Nowhere in the world did man ever worship a stick or a stone as such."—Brinton, *The Religions of Primitive Peoples*, 131.

<sup>153</sup> "Some of the Dyak tribes appoint coarse wooden idols to guard over the paths leading to their habitations, placing beside the idols a basketful of betel nuts to repay them for their trouble."—Letourneau, *Sociology*, p. 300. Boundary stones placed between fields and villages seem at times to have been rudely carved to represent human features, and to have been regarded as spirit possessed. See Burdick, *Foundation Rites*, pp. 221, 222.

help images were carried into battle, and when the idol was captured the indwelling god was believed to be captured also. A captive god was believed to be a help to the victors and a loss to the conquered. To keep them from deserting idols were sometimes fastened with chains; at other times they were hidden, and at times their names were kept secret to prevent their being conjured with by an enemy. To gain their help efforts were sometimes made to bribe the gods of the enemy by sacrifices, or an attempt was made to take them by stealth.



HUMAN SACRIFICE AMONG THE GREEKS.

(After an ancient cameo in Berlin.)

Polyxena dies by the hand of Neoptolemus on the tomb of Achilles.

In fact the one great essential in war and in peace was to secure the help of these gods, and the greatest of all calamities was to lose their protecting care. So intense and sincere was this belief that men would at any time sacrifice every thing that was dear to them in obedience to it—their property, their friends, and even their children, or lay down their own lives. Men have paid a bitter price for their adherence to what now appears to have been a mistaken conclusion. It is hard to see how any adequate conception of the past can be formed, without gaining a clear understanding of the way this belief in spirits took possession of the human mind, shaped

the customs, ceremonies, and philosophies of men, and moulded their practical affairs, as well as their ideas.

Although men generally feared the spirits, at times they have tried to coerce them, beating, scolding, ducking and variously mistreating them.

Wherever idolatry and fetichism are closely examined, even in the most diverse parts of the world, they are found to be essentially the same, both in their origin and character. They are merely objects for spirits to inhabit. Men often speak about the different religions of the world, or they contrast the fetichism of one religion with the idolatry of another, and so on. As a matter of fact, there appears to have never been but one religion. It has consisted of the belief in and worship of spirits. Varying in some details in different regions, the various religions all resolve into this.

When Christianity spread among the pagan nations it was found impossible, in many cases, to eradicate the idolatry which had been practiced for ages by the ancestors of the people, and inherited with all its traditions. Therefore many of the old idols were retained, but rechristened as "images of the saints." Thus Heracles, dwelling in his idol, was represented as complaining because he was forced to become St. Luke.<sup>154</sup> And so, under a new name, the old worship of spirits went on. The "worship of the saints," was only a modified form of ancient idolatry, and the Christian "image" was often merely a revamped "idol" of a heathen god.

As civilization advanced and men outgrew the belief in idolatry, in many instances iconoclasts overthrew or smashed the idols. The worshippers of the gods believed to inhabit the images looked on with awstruck horror, expecting the spirits to wreak dire vengeance on the wicked destroyers of their habitations. When no disaster befell the iconoclasts—and none ever did—the idolaters were filled with utter surprise. History records numerous instances of this kind.

Until the belief in spirits was developed in the mind of primitive man, there were, and could be, no idols. Among some of the lower savages there now appear to be none.<sup>155</sup>

They probably developed in the middle stages of savagery, and abounded in the higher stages of savagery and on the lower levels of

<sup>154</sup> He was imagined to protest, saying: "I am Heracles, the triumphant son of Zeus; I am not Luke, but they compel me." *Anth. Pal.*, Xi, 269.

<sup>155</sup> Idols are said to have been almost or quite unknown among the lower savages, like the Bushmen, Patagonians, Australians and Anaman islanders, while they were common among the more highly developed of the Polynesian races, the Fins, the American Indians, the Mexicans and Peruvians, the ancient Egyptians, Semites, Greeks and Romans, and also among the Chinese and Japanese.

civilization. As intelligence increases they are discarded. And so idolatry appears to occupy an intermediate stage in the development of the race. Unknown to the lowest savages, it will be discarded by a high civilization.

Our investigations have failed to discover any evidence that idolatry was based on the wickedness and depravity of the human heart, as some theologians have taught and many people have believed. Instead of this it appears to have been a result of human ignorance. It seems to have originated among savages and to have been an outgrowth of their misunderstanding and misinterpretation of natural phenomena. The belief in spirit-possessed idols and fetiches, and the resulting idolatry and fetichism, has been part of the vast, wide-stretching morass of ignorance through which, with endless suffering, mankind has been floundering in its age-long struggle to master the problems of life, and learn how, through the knowledge of nature's laws, to unlock her storehouses and use her forces to his advantage. Progress can be made in no other way. Increased intelligence is the only road to advance.