

lestest Thou Thy servant retire from his guard.' And the whole life of the Archbishop for these last few months in his inward soul has been saying the 'Nunc Dimitis' of an old soldier. . . . As I know from my talks with him spiritually, he was a man looking in the face of his Commander, recognizing that the word had been spoken, that his guard might now be left, the charge handed back to Him who gave it, and it was with simplicity of faith, with the directness and dignity of a gentleman, a soldier to the last, that he has gone into the quiet of his resting days.—From the tribute of Archbishop LANG to his predecessor, reported in *The Guardian*, January 27, 1909.

'He appeared in glory.'—That Divine hand, which locked up this treasure, and kept the key of it, brought it forth afterwards glorious. In the Transfiguration, this body, which was hid in the valley of Moab, appeared in the hill of Tabor; that we may know these bodies of ours are not lost but laid up, and shall as sure be raised in glory as they are laid down in corruption.—Bishop HALL, *Contemplations*, vii. 5.

Here,—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,  
Lightnings are loosened,  
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,  
Peace let the dew send!

Lofty designs must close in like effects;  
Loftily lying,  
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,  
Living and dying.

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## The Development of the Religious Consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

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MANY views are held regarding the origin of religion: it is not the intention of this paper to discuss any of these theories in detail; but, after a brief statement of some of the opinions held, to discover, if possible, the method of inquiry to be pursued, and by application of this method, when found, to fix as accurately as can be what may, with some degree of probability, be regarded as the beginnings of religious thought.

### I.

Comte derived all religion from *fetishism*, which, however, he used in a wider sense than is now current, the belief of man that all phenomena were caused by material objects, which evoked his interest, curiosity, fear, or hope. Tylor seeks to explain all religious belief and worship by *animism*, the attribution of life to the phenomena of nature. Tiele further defines this as 'the belief in the existence of souls or spirits, of which only the

powerful acquire the rank of divine beings, and become objects of worship,' and distinguishes two forms of it—*spiritism*, in which the spirits are conceived as moving about freely, and *fetishism*, in which they are localized in an object. Herbert Spencer 'traces religion back to the worship of ancestors under the guise of ghosts as its sole factor.' Pfeiderer agrees with A. Réville in distinguishing between 'the worship of animated nature (*Naturism*)—which,' he holds, 'must certainly be placed first as the earliest in time—and the belief in spirits (animism, spiritism) developed out of the former,' and reckons 'as a subdivision of the latter the worship of the spirits of ancestors' (*The Philosophy of Religion*, iii. p. 11). In his Gifford Lectures, however, he modifies this view, and regards the belief in God as 'formed out of the prehistorical belief in spirits,' to which he now assigns 'two sources—external nature, and the soul of man,' for he regards the belief in ancestral spirits as being as primitive as the belief in nature spirits (i. 103–104). Jevons declines to

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the Congress of the History of Religions in Oxford on September 17th, 1908.

admit the common assumption that the religions of savages represent the primitive religion, and denies that evolution must necessarily be progressive, and that therefore the lowest forms of belief and worship must be the earliest. He represents primitive man as investing natural objects with a personality like his own, and even with supernatural powers. He speaks of *totemism*, the alliance of a human tribe with a class of animals or plants as its god, as primitive. He thus credits primitive man with the distinction of the natural and the supernatural, the consciousness of self as spirit separable from the body, the conception of classes in natural objects, the sense of tribal unity. It is evident that when such differences of opinion in explaining the origin of religion exist, it is necessary for us not so much to discuss whether this or that theory is the more plausible, but whether the method of inquiry has been determined with sufficient care, in the hope that the right method may not only put an end to this confusion, but assign to each of these forms of the religious consciousness, regarded as primitive, its proper place in the development.

## II.

In criticizing these opposed views it is important that we should define the method of inquiry as rigidly as possible. How can we see with the eyes, hear with the ears, think with the mind, or feel with the heart of the primitive man? One method of recapturing the distant past has already been under our notice. Tiele assumes that the savage may represent him: this Jevons denies. This is the method of comparative ethnology and prehistoric anthropology. But John Stuart Mill has pointed out that savage life shows indications of degeneration rather than primitiveness, the vices of moral depravity rather than the qualities of immaturity. Where the life of the uncivilized races shows less moral corruption, contact with Europeans so quickly brings about changes, that it is difficult to fix the native beliefs and customs by accurate observation and exact description before they have disappeared. These peoples have many centuries of life behind them, and there is no guarantee that there has not been an evolution, though not progressive, as of the civilized races. The primitive man was the ancestor of the civilized man as of the savage; in him then were the possibilities of progress or of deteriora-

tion; it is not likely that stagnation could continue generation after generation. Change is almost certain; and whereas in some conditions change meant progress, in others it resulted in deterioration. It is certain the savage is not the primitive man. It must be pointed out, however, that the theory of animism as an early phase of the religious consciousness does not depend on this assumption. Pfleiderer's earlier view that naturism passed into anthropomorphic polytheism without this as a stage of development is contradicted by the fact that in the religions of civilized races traces of animism can be found. Religious beliefs and customs are persistent, and the lower forms survive in the popular, when the official religion has left them behind. If the primitive man cannot be identified with the savage, still less can we think of him as capable of such advanced thought and feeling as Jevons assigns to him. The beginnings of religion must have been very simple. If we have not an instance of such simplicity in the savage, have we not got it in the child? Thus a second method is offered to us.

As the child physically recapitulates the history of the race, so it may be assumed mentally, morally, and religiously. Hence in recent years the study of the child has become one of the most important branches of psychology. An additional reason why the study of the child is so important is this, that in its purer and more gracious forms religion is so largely a childlike attitude of dependence on, confidence in, and submission to the divine. The child-life has more of the characteristics of the religious life than that of the adult. The study of the child yields certain definite results for our guidance. The child feels before he thinks or wills. He feels pleasure or pain; he wishes and hopes for the good which will make him feel happy, he shuns and dreads the evil that makes him suffer. With this emotionalism there goes the spontaneous activity of the imagination. What he has dreamed is real to him: he does not distinguish fact and fiction; he delights in personifications and exaggerations. It is very slowly that he learns to speak only the truth. He likes to pretend, and it is an accommodation to the ways of grown-up people that he calls his playing a part pretending; to himself it is much more than that. But the world around as it is, not as he would have it be, soon compels his attention, and he is driven to try and know and understand it. His intellect

begins to be active. The curiosity of children is proverbial: their habit of asking questions, and not being easily satisfied with the answers given to them, has caused many parents not a little difficulty, if not irritation. The child wants to know what a thing is, how it is, why it is; the categories of substance, causality, purpose are implicit in his thinking. Gradually the society of home or school, to which he belongs, with its prohibitions and requirements, its restraints on his wishes, and its constraints of his actions, evokes his conscience, his sense of right and wrong, of inclination as different from duty. As he becomes conscious of himself as a person, and of others as persons, faith as the evidence of things not seen becomes possible to him. And thus his mental, moral, and spiritual development begins.

The child, as the modern psychologist observes him, grows in a rational, moral, religious environment; not only is the process of development shortened by the contact of the child with the parents and teachers, but the child takes over much from his surroundings that he would not have gained for himself. He cannot then without qualification be regarded as exactly similar to the primitive man. We must, therefore, have recourse to a third method. What enables the observer and inquirer to interpret the religious consciousness of the savage or of the child, to understand it better than the subject of it does himself, to make explicit what is so largely implicit, to lay bare the process of reasoning that is involved in an intuition, instinct, impulse? Is it not his own consciousness? It must be frankly admitted that in all attempts to recover the earliest phases of the religious consciousness the personal equation is to be reckoned with. We cannot here expect the objectivity of physical science; the subjectivity of the thinker will betray itself. It is hard to understand how those to whom religion is one of the strange errors into which mankind has fallen can possibly do justice to the religious consciousness. Sympathy would seem to be a condition of intelligence. We may then admit as a legitimate method the thinker's reflexion on his own religious life, and the elements of which it is composed, his remembrance, so far as he can command it, of the stages through which he has passed, his valuation, mental and moral, of the contents of his faith. It is not a logical resolution of the contents of religious consciousness into 'bloodless categories,' such as

Hegel's Logic appears to be to the superficial observer that is here needed; it is rather a psychological divination, which will realize the living facts of religion in their sources and connexions. We can analyze the complex experience into its simpler elements; we can recognize that development is gradual, and so trace the links between the more prominent and diverse features of religion which have successively appeared. It is to be hoped that by a combination of these methods, each applied with its necessary limitations, and each supplementing, and where necessary correcting, the others, we may be able to restore the religious consciousness in its earliest phases. Before attempting to do this, the writer may be allowed to make two remarks regarding the personal equation in this inquiry so far as he is himself concerned. He assumes that religion does correspond with the reality of the world, it is the response of man to that which is in his environment, it is the fulfilment by man of a promise of his nature. He assumes, in the second place, that there has been a progress in religion, that at each stage of the development of the religious consciousness the response of man to his environment has brought his thought and life into closer correspondence with the reality of the world, and so man has been becoming more truly what he ought to be. But in such a process, the end can alone interpret the beginning, and in reconstituting the past history we may be guided by the movement towards this end.

### III.

Pfleiderer's earlier view that the belief in nature as animated preceded the belief in spirits commends itself as the more probable. The child is aware of living, and thinks of all around him as living before he has any conception of 'self' or of a soul as distinct from a body. It is only gradually that the totality of experience is resolved into its elements; that the self distinguishes itself from the world around, and from its body. We cannot begin with a simpler consciousness than the sense of being alive in a world also alive. In the distinction of objects in the environment the attention was directed by the selective interest. Objects that caused pleasure or pain would first of all attract attention. It is not unlikely that the sun with its light and warmth would be one of the early objects of closer observation. What gratified the wishes

on the one hand, or what inflicted suffering on the other, would be most considered in order to secure or to avoid. Whether fear or hope predominated would depend on whether nature was gracious or hostile. The primitive man had no conception of his personality, but slowly the sense of self would emerge, and there is not a little probability in the assumption that it was the experience in dreams while asleep that first suggested the distinction of soul and body, and even the possibility of a separation of the soul from the body, and that this idea was transferred to the dead. After death the return of the soul to the body as in sleep was expected; only reluctantly was the separation recognized as final, and yet the soul so separated from the body was regarded as still existing. When such a conception of soul or spirit had been reached, then the vague belief in nature as living, or *animatism*, as it has been suggested that this phase of thought should be called, could be more fully and clearly defined. Natural phenomena were due to the action of *spirits* similar to the human. But here two ways of looking at the relation of the spirits to the phenomena seem possible. The spirit may be conceived as taking up its abode in an object, and as necessarily confined to that object, so that its activities could not be detached therefrom. Thus the feather, the stone, or the block of wood might be supposed to possess power because of the spirit localized in it. This way of thinking may be called *fetishism*, although this is a word of ambiguous meaning. To secure the presence of the spirit in such an object among certain savage peoples, a fixed rite must be observed. The object selected is usually some trifle which has been invested casually with significance. A feather blown across the path, a stone on which the foot stumbles, a bit of wood of curious shape may thus attract attention. Fetishism is not the earliest form of religion, and it is a bypath, and not the main road of development. The other way of thinking is this. As the soul can in dreams leave the body, and is thus distinguished from it, so the spirit may be conceived as controlling the natural object without being confined to it. This may be called *spiritism*, or, as that is a term which might suggest ancestor-worship, rather *demonism*. As there is no conception of the unity of nature, but an impression of the multiplicity of things, the spirits are many, and so we have *polydæmonism*. These spirits live

and act; power is their distinctive attribute. The question thus forces itself upon us: how was that power thought of? The description which Jevons gives of the mental process by which the natural was distinguished from the supernatural seems an anachronism. We are better to avoid these terms in this connexion altogether. It may be conceded that what happened regularly, unless the selective interest already spoken of directed attention to it, did not so challenge the curiosity of the primitive man, and call for the only explanation he could offer, the activity of a spirit, as what occurred suddenly or seldom, awaking his surprise or wonder. Soon too would he learn what he could do or could not do, just as we can now see children learning the humbling lesson. As the boy thinks of his father as bigger or stronger before he thinks of him as wiser and better, so probably man thought of the spirits as more powerful than himself, and able to do what he could not. The boy tries to imitate his father without any conscious intention of rivalling him. Magic originally may be not a substitute for religion, or an attempt to get power over the spirits to compel them to do man's will, but an experiment to do what a man believed himself quite capable of doing before he found out the limits of his power. When man did recognize that he could not do many things that were done in the world around him, and done, therefore, as he believed by the spirits, he would try to get on friendly terms with them by his gifts and by his prayers. It seems unnecessary to assume, with Jevons, that the possibility of such an alliance was suggested to him by his intercourse with his dead.

Just as man only slowly distinguished himself from the world around him, and his soul from his body, so the distinction between the animal and the human was only gradually recognized. Man felt and thought himself akin to all living creatures, and he, therefore, conceived the spirits whom he acknowledged as greater, and whose help he sought, in animal as well as in human forms. Polydæmonism is not exclusively *anthropomorphic*, it may be described as *therianthropic*. Traces of this development are found in the religion of Egypt conspicuously. Some gods have animal bodies, others only animal heads. Some are entirely human, but have some animal closely associated with them. It is at this stage in the discussion that *totemism* may be most fitly con-

sidered, although it cannot be regarded as nearly as primitive as Jevons seems to represent it as being. It is doubtful, too, whether it can be regarded as a stage through which all religions have passed. It involves two features which point to a later stage of human development. First of all, it is not an individual animal (or plant) that is chosen as the tribal god; but a class. This implies not only observation, but some powers of generalization. Secondly, the sense of tribal unity is strong; and we cannot assume that this involved no gradual development. Jevons derives the first feature from the second; man conceived of animals and plants as tribes, even as he himself belonged to a tribe; but even if this were so, what has been said about the mental process involved still holds good. Other spirits were still recognized, but the totem was exalted to be the tribal deity. The totem animal was regarded as so closely akin to his human worshippers, that stories were told of the descent of the tribe from the animal. As on the one hand the family became conscious of a separate unity within the tribe, and as on the other hand man distinguished himself more thoroughly from the animal, ancestor-worship may be supposed to have appeared. That there was belief in the spirits of the dead long before ancestor-worship became a definite form of religion may be assumed. Man's consciousness of himself as distinct from, superior to, all other creatures influenced his conception of the spirits he worshipped. His religion became more *anthropomorphic*. As his knowledge of nature grew, his sense of the greatness of the spirits who ruled nature also developed, and *polydæmonism* passed into *polytheism*. The god was less closely attached to the natural object with which the spirit had at an earlier stage been connected. He was conceived more distinctly as human in form and character; and as the natural object could not now represent him, art, however rude at its beginnings, sought to place before the worshipper some semblance of the deity. Thus the god and the idol seem to be related.

One other phase of the development must yet be noted. The multitude of spirits was still believed in, but a tribal deity, whether always a totem is doubtful, was given the first place. Thus there was a crude monotheism or rather monolatry. The union of tribes in a nation arrested this development. The tribal deities were com-

bined in a national pantheon. Where the resemblance between the local gods was close enough, then there was syncretism, the fusion of the two deities in one with probably various names. When in such a national movement, one city or district took a lead, the god of 'the predominant partner' enjoyed a supremacy over the other gods, as Amon-Ra in Egypt, Marduk in Babylon, and Ashur in Assyria. Besides this monarchy in the pantheon, two other instances of tendency towards monotheism may be noted. The one is *henotheism*, as Max Müller calls it, and the other is *pantheism*—the former due to piety, the latter the result of speculation. The worshipper so concentrated his attention on, and was absorbed by interest in, the one deity he was addressing that, for the time at least, he thought of no other god, and endowed the god worshipped with all the attributes and functions of deity. The Vedic hymns offer examples of this henotheism. When men began to reason about the gods, it was impossible for the mind to rest in multiplicity, and so in the speculations of priests in Egypt and Ascetics in India not only the unity of the divine, but also the identity of god and the world, became the supreme article of faith. One exception to this anthropomorphic polytheism with its modifications in henotheism or pantheism there was. The tribal deity of the Hebrews—Yahweh—came in the course of the religious development of the nation to be regarded as the sole and absolute deity, endowed with perfect moral character. This 'ethical monotheism' has been inherited by the Christian Church; it is still the possession of Judaism, and Islam with some modification of the conception has become its fervent champion. It is certain that if belief in the divine is to survive in modern times, it must be conceived as unity. The issue of the future seems to be between the monotheistic and the pantheistic representation of that unity; but it would not be proper to the purpose of this paper to advocate the one or the other.

This attempt to reconstruct, from the indications that the materials collected by the science of comparative religion in regard to men's religious thought and life afford us, the development of the religious consciousness cannot claim more than probability. But it is an attempt worth making; as the danger here is towards specialism on the one hand, or speculation on the other. Some are content with collecting the facts without seeking their bond of

union; others are ambitious to prove a thesis by the use of the facts. The writer has attempted 'to think things together' without ignoring any of the relevant facts. Although the expression of personal belief would be out of place in a gathering such as

this is, yet he cannot close without expressing his conviction that this search after God, so persistent and often so pathetic, cannot have been in vain, but that God has indeed been found wherever sincerely sought.

## Literature.

### A NEW COMMENTARY.

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May we risk a word of criticism? There were good reasons for using the Authorized Version, but why is so much space spent on printing the readings of the Revised? This is the comment on Rev 22<sup>11</sup>: Cp. Ezk 3<sup>27</sup> 20<sup>39</sup>, Dan 12<sup>10</sup>. *Unjust*] R.V. 'unrighteous.' *Be unjust*] R.V. 'do unrighteousness.' *Be filthy*] R.V. 'be made filthy.' *Be righteous*] R.V. 'do righteousness.' That is an extreme case. But there is much that is somewhat like it. Space would have been saved considerably if we had been recommended to use the commentary with a copy of the Revised Version in our hands.

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The exposition generally avoids the obvious, and it is frequently forcible. Thus, we know that at the time when the Authorized Version was made the verb to *follow* was much stronger than it is now, and often meant to 'pursue,' as in Shakespeare's 'I have ever followed thee with hate.' There is an instance in Ps 23<sup>6</sup>, 'Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.' The comment is, 'Goodness and mercy, like two angels, pursue the Psalmist, determined, as it were, to run him down.'

### THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOCIAL REFORM.

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