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1921.

## 629TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,  
WESTMINSTER, ON MONDAY, APRIL 4TH, 1921,

AT 4.30 P.M.

DAVID ANDERSON-BERRY, Esq., M.D., LL.D., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the ACTING SECRETARY, Lieut.-Colonel Hope Biddulph, announced the Election of Colonel C. W. R. St. John as a Member, and of Mr. W. G. Walters as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then introduced Mr. W. Hoste to read his paper on "Fetichism—in Central Africa and Elsewhere."

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### *FETICHISM—IN CENTRAL AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE.*

By W. HOSTE, B.A.

**M**OST people one meets nowadays have at one time or another touched Africa, either at the Cape or on the Mediterranean littoral, through wintering in Algiers or Cairo, or at least on their way to the Far East by landing for a few hours at Port Said, during coaling by those super coal-heavers, the Sudanese.

Such adventures may open the doors of the Great Geographical Societies, but leave closed the Great Heart of Africa, which could embrace Australia, India, China and the greater part of Europe, and still have unfilled corners.

This is the classical home of fetichism.

But even that landing at Port Said is not without significance, for he who has trod Egyptian soil has touched the ancient birthplace of Magic. This has spread its tentacles in every part of the world under the varied guises of the black art, witchcraft, necromancy, spiritism, and, particularly in Africa, of fetichism.

Some may demur at the inclusion of spiritism in such a list. Has not spiritism been hailed as an ally of Christianity? Did not a Church dignitary at the Church Congress of 1919 warn

us against confounding modern spiritism with the spiritism condemned in the Holy Scriptures, which he asserted to be more akin to African fetichism? It would have been of interest to hear some proof of such a distinction. I believe had the speaker more first-hand knowledge of African fetichism he would be impressed rather with the many curious points of contact between it and modern spiritism, than with their differences.

All these forms of occultism are probably included in the Holy Scriptures under the term "Sorcery," the *φαρμακεία* of the Septuagint, the equivalent for *קְשָׁפִים* in Isaiah xlvi, 9, and also of the words used for the "enchantments" of the Egyptian magicians in Exodus vii. In verse 11 it is *לְהַטִּיב* flames, dazzlings, delusions, and in verse 22 *לְהַטִּיב* from *לְהַטִּיב* to conceal.

All are equally condemned in the Scriptures. For instance— "There shall not be found among you anyone that . . . useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer, for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord" (Deut. xviii, 10-12). This list covers a wide area, and to assert that modern spiritism finds no place in it is as unjustifiable as hazardous. It was for the practice of these and other nameless abominations that the people of Canaan, those "honest peasants," as some sentimentalists describe them, were destroyed before the children of Israel. It was well for the world that such a moral cesspool should be thoroughly cleansed.

There were, as we have been reminded, sorcerers in Egypt in the time of Moses, the two leaders of whom, Jannes and Jambres, withstood him by copying the miracles of the serpents, and the plagues of the blood and frogs. It was opposition by imitation. They did by Satanic energy what Moses did by Divine power, and so confused the issue. It is foretold that this very kind of opposition will characterize the last days, and we see it around us to-day in this year of Grace.

To remind you of a little mythology, the real author of the magical art was believed by the Egyptians to be Isis, the daughter of Seb and Nut, earth and sky. The wise Thoth gave the goddess power to raise the dead. This power she exercised, according to the well-known legend, by joining together the fourteen bits

into which her husband, Osiris, had been cut up by Seb, and raising him to life in a new form. Isis could, of course, also cure human ailments and became the mother of incantations, exorcism and quackery in general, and no doubt of many patent medicines much advertised in our day.

To exorcise an evil spirit you must get hold of the right name. The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* consists in great part of mystical words and names by which to break the power of evil spirits in the Kingdom of the Dead. This makes the book a veritable crux for translators. The following incantation from a papyrus in the Museum of Leyden is an example :

“ I am MENABI CHETETHONI CHABACHEL. Let me invoke thee, thou son of the ARCHITHETAPIRA PIRAASA KNURIPHARISA, great one IRISSA PSISCHI IRISSA KIMITHROPHOSSA OKUNATSISA OREOBOZAGRA PERTAOMECH PERACHOMECH SAKMEPH. Come to me ! Answer me that which I ask correctly and truly.”

If a man can learn this off, he certainly deserves some answer ! But lest some silly person (of course outside our Institute and this meeting) might get hold of this and try and use it, I would hasten to add that it will not work unless recited under right conditions. It must, for one thing, be carried out in the dark by the light of a lamp, reminding us of the darkened rooms of modern séances, with their dull red lamps, “ making darkness visible.” I will not say what lamp should be used with this formula, nor what the wick must be made of, but I do not mind telling you the peg you hang your lamp on must be of laurel wood, the daphne, sacred to Apollo. It may be noted in passing that the divining séances of African fetichism are also frequently carried out in the dark by the light of a log fire.

Egypt, the mother of the occult, gave her rules of magic and necromancy to the surrounding countries, and it is quite probable the Witch of Endor used some such incantation as the above, in calling up the prophet Samuel.

There can be little doubt that fetichism is in the direct line of descent from this magic. Here is a question for the student of comparative religions. Is fetichism to be regarded as part of a great corruption invading some purer faith, or is it the primary stage in the development of the religious idea in man, the first dim feeling after God in the vast evolutionary process, which it is the fashion to believe is going on all around us ?

Evolution, at any rate in the moral domain, like that "blessed word Mesopotamia," has lost caste since the war. It is understood that men who made the campaign in those inter-fluvial regions have little difficulty in restraining their tears when they hear the locality pronounced.

So with "that comfortable word" Evolution, which some people utter with so much emotion. The experiences of the war have raised serious doubts whether evolutionary progress in the moral sphere has been quite so intensive since the days of primitive Christianity, as was formerly supposed.

Some have even dared to suggest that the breaking down from the complex to the simple, the disintegration, which the radioactive discoveries and the latest theories of the molecule, indicate in the material world, have their counterpart on the moral plane.

Men have learnt to make themselves more comfortable and to kill one another more scientifically, but are they more moral, religious or happy? A reverend-scientist lately at Cardiff has, as we know, gone sponsor for Evolution in all the domains. His address was a mixture of doubtful science and more than doubtful religion, and was based on the speculations of the thread-bare hypothesis of Darwin and on the prophetic forecasts of his own inner consciousness, with which he was convinced all "thoughtful persons" must agree. It was the pathetic bid of ecclesiastical opportunism for the suffrages of a scientific association. But Mr. E. W. Maunder,\* of the Greenwich Observatory, a distinguished member of this Institute, has pointed out—"It is upon facts that have been definitely recognized, not upon unsubstantiated speculations, that the structure of science has been founded." However, Brutus is content with "unsubstantiated speculations," and "Brutus is an honourable man."

What puzzles some "thoughtful men" is that though so many scientists are agreed that evolution must have taken place, there should be no agreement as to what it exactly means or how it works. As *The Times* of June 9th, 1905, said when reviewing a great controversy among scientists on evolution—"The plain truth is that though some agree in this or that, there is not a single point on which they all agree."†

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\* *Tracts for New Times*. No. 3, p. 4. Published by the Victoria Institute.

† See also *Evolution Criticized*, by the late T. B. Bishop, Member of Council.

However, it is the fashion to suppose that the religious idea was slowly evolved. Fetichism would be the first dawning in the soul of man of the idea of God. This was followed by animism, that by polytheistic idolatry, which finally emerged triumphantly into monotheism. All this is beautifully simple, but, to quote again Mr. Maunder\*—"This last step is not in the order of evolution; the natural heir and successor of polytheism is, not monotheism, but pantheism." I may add that without a certain animistic belief it is hard to conceive how fetichism could exist. Besides, fetichism bears traces of truths far above and beyond itself. How did these find their way in? The answer is difficult on the evolutionary hypothesis.

Fetichism is one of those words whose character has suffered from the company they keep. It has an aroma of the Dark Continent. It flatters our self-righteousness to paint in most lurid tints the depravity of distant lands, like the school-boy who was set an essay on the morals of the South Sea Islanders. His essay contained the soul of wit, if nothing else, for it consisted of six words—"The South-Sea Islanders have no morals." Just so, and of course the African has no morals; it makes us feel very virtuous to believe it. He certainly lacks the veneration of European civilization, but from my experience I would consider at the present time an African village greatly preferable as an abode, in many respects both moral and material, to a European slum.

The word fetich came from the Roman Catholic Portuguese discoverers of the fifteenth century. They intended no opprobrium by the term. It was a sacred word to them. They called their own relics, rosaries and amulets, possessing in their eyes magical virtues, "feitições" or "feticos," meaning "magically active." The Portuguese saw the negro paying religious reverence, akin to their own, to his wooden figures and stones, and dubbed them "feticos" too. So the term was not indigenous to Africa, but was imported. This prepares us to learn that fetichism is not confined to Africa, but exists not only in heathen countries, such as India, but in other quarters nearer home.

The fetich of the West African is *umbanda*—a charm, and generally means some object with occult properties, because indwelt by a spirit. It has been asserted that the negro is not

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\* *Tracts for New Times.* No. 3, p. 5.

sufficiently evolved to have any idea of carrying a thing for luck, but this is only one of the many dicta of the Evolutionary School which it is safe to accept with caution. A negro will put a small shell into his woolly hair at night as a charm against dreams, of which there is a common dread, and I doubt if he thinks much more of a spirit dwelling in the shell than the man who nails a horseshoe over his door for luck.

A fetich may be anything—a roughly carved doll, a model of a travelling load, a bit of serpent's skin. Most raw natives of any standing carry round the neck like an amulet a small deer's horn or tiny bag containing some protective fetich.

If you buy a leopard skin, you had better keep an eye on the claws, or they will be stolen for fetiches, the popular idea being that discarnate spirits have a predilection for beasts of prey. The tip of the nose or tail of such animals are also much in vogue.

There are public fetiches at the entrances of villages consisting of poles stuck in the ground surmounted with the bleached skulls of animals sacrificed to the spirits. Each pole represents a spirit of some dead person, which has been appeased in the fashion to be described later.

The most potent fetich of all in Western Angola is called a *kandundu*. It is a sort of shrine large enough to hold a man, and there is a special class of persons who tend it, and in it certain rites of great potency are enacted. I never saw one, to my knowledge, but I have heard of it on good authority. I suppose the man who gets inside becomes indwelt by the spirit for the time being.

The native dreads the consequences of breaking the laws imposed by the diviners. Sometimes certain food is forbidden, and such is rigidly avoided. Sometimes a certain stream is put out of bounds, but if somebody will hold the native's hand as he goes over, the spell is broken.

When we come to inquire what fetichism is we get some bewildering definitions. Auguste Comte is on the side of the evolutionists and uses the term as describing "a necessary stage in the development of all religion, in which all material bodies are supposed to be animated by souls essentially analogous to our own." Certainly this would not be a difficult conception for the simple negro. Our children up to the age of four or five easily imagine their playthings alive, like the little girl who was accused of beating the hens, because her favourite stick was found in the hen-yard and the hens were in an evident state

of perturbation. "Oh, yes," she said, "Maurice (her name for the stick) may have done it. I know he often walks out that way!"

But would not this go to prove that the negro is religiously in the child stage? Not necessarily—he may be in his second childhood, for old age has its hallucinations, as childhood its imaginations. In any case Comte's definition is animism, not fetichism.

The French writer de Brosses in his work, *Du culte des Dieux fétiches*, 1760, understood by fetichism "le culte de certains objets terrestres et matériels," but this is idolatry, which is *ex hypothesi* a higher stage again in the evolutionary process. So this, too, is rather confusing.

De Brosses excludes the worship of the heavenly bodies, and I am sure he is right. But Comte joins issue with him, for he gives prominence to the sun and moon as "grands fétiches." To him and his followers fetichism is practically "Nature Worship," but another writer retorts that "Nature Worship is pure and noble compared with something 'irrationally revered.'" Herbert Spencer's view is radically different from that of Comte. He maintains in his *Sociology* that a fetich is "something unusual and inexplicable in appearance, in which the spirit of a dead man has come to dwell." This is quite distinct from Nature Worship.

Goblet d'Alviella in his Hibbert lecture, p. 82, defines fetichism as "the belief that the appropriation of a thing may secure the services of the spirit lodged within it."

This harmonizes strangely with a custom practised by the native spiritists of the Dutch Indies. I heard of it first hand from a Dutch gentleman, who had resided years in those parts and had been himself a long time a spiritist medium. The Dutch possessions are, he told me, honeycombed with spiritism. The natives will take up some old man as a *pensionnaire* and feed and lodge him gratis, on condition that he undertakes to become their familiar spirit after death. At death a circular piece of bone is cut out of the dead man's forehead, and when this is spun on a piece of string, as schoolboys do buttons, the familiar spirit is on its honour to respond to the call. Here we may say the button or bone is the link between the living and the dead, really a kind of fetich.

I must not trouble you with many more definitions; an ounce of experience is worth a pound of definition—I will give you only those of Webster and Littré.

The former's is: "One of the lowest and grossest forms of superstition, consisting in the worship of some material object, as a stone, a tree or animal often casually selected, practised among tribes of lowest mental endowment, as certain races of negroes." But some of these very races have given Bishops to the English Church, as the late Samuel Crowther, Bishop of the Niger Territory, and Dr. I. Oluwole, Assistant Bishop of Lagos, who was lately over here attending the Lambeth Conference; so we must not press this inferiority too far.

One more definition will suffice, that of Littré: "Objet naturel, animal divinisé, bois, pierre, idole grossière, qu'adorent les nègres des côtés occidentales de l'Afrique." No wonder the great philologist Max-Müller exclaimed in something like despair, "Fetichism! whatever that may mean."

Not being an armchair philosopher or evolutionary theorist, but only a simple traveller, I do not ask to be believed on my *ipse dixit*. But I am encouraged, amid the wide divergences of "the authorities," by the fact of having travelled in Central Africa for the best part of two years in the last decade, and of having been in contact with experienced men living on the spot, to give you a few of my impressions for what they are worth.

The Ovimbundu, the great slavers in the past, inhabit the west of Angola; then you get the Va Luimbe, across the "Hungry Country"; the Va Chokwe, who have a reputation for lying and stealing beyond their contemporaries, the Va Luena, Va Lunda, now North-West Rhodesia; the Lubans of the East Congo State, ruled so long by the notorious Mushidi; the Va Vemba, now North-East Rhodesia; and then lower south, the Zulus; and further still, the Pondos. These are all Bantu tribes and all practise fetichism, with considerable local differences.

In my travels among these tribes, personally I never saw negroes *worshipping* fetiches, and my inquiries on the spot have confirmed my experience.

The nearest approach to this is the deposing before the public *umbunda* temporary offerings of corn or meal; or a hunter, on the eve of an expedition, may lay his gun before the fetich as a mute appeal that he may shoot straight. But though the native does not worship, he does ask for help from the spirits. Offerings are made by natives when going to pray to the spirits of their forefathers under a tree or hut. Their size depends on the size of the request. If the offering be beer, they pour it on the

ground. We may, therefore, dismiss the definitions of Webster and Littré, which really confuse fetichism and idolatry.

Nor do the negroes worship the sun, nor regard them as "grands fétiches" as Conte affirms; they believe the Great Spirit made them. Among the Bantus there seems to be a general belief in the existence of a Great Creator, and in fact, from what I have learned, you would hardly meet, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, an unsophisticated native, that is uncontaminated by contact with godless whites, who would not readily admit the existence of a Supreme Being, who made the sun, moon, trees, etc. They believe in Him as Maker and Father: Ngambi is the native name in the Gaboon, according to the Rev. R. H. Nassau, whose book, *Fetichism in West Africa*, the fruit of forty years in the Gaboon, should be read by those anxious to study this subject further. He also speaks of some tradition, among the natives, of a deluge, also of a fable about a woman bringing to her village the fruit of a forbidden tree and, in order to hide it, swallowing it.

Unfortunately these beliefs do not influence their conduct much more than that of the ordinary European. Fetichism is not taken up with conduct or with preparation for the Great Beyond, but with warding off the machinations of evil spirits in the great "Now."

Some spiritists have tried to impress on us our indebtedness to spiritism for the great discovery of a life beyond the grave; they might as well boast that spiritism had invented printing or gunpowder. A negro would smile if you told him his communications with the spirit-world had proved to you an existence beyond this world. He would regard you as an ignoramus of a dangerous kind not to have known that before.

Like our spiritists, the witch-doctors profess to communicate with spirits and hold that such are not superhuman agencies, but discarnate spirits. In fact, their world beyond is peopled exclusively with such, if we except the Supreme Spirit and a power of evil analogous to Satan, though of course their beliefs are vague and they do seem to believe in certain second-class deities, such as the god of hunting, etc.

They seem to have no conception of angelic spirits, good or bad. One does not read much of angels either, in descriptions of that dreary worldly place, the spiritist heaven. It is much more likely, for reasons we need not detail here, that if spirits are communicated with, they are not discarnate human spirits

but spirits of a superhuman order, as Dr. A. T. Schofield, member of the Council of this Institute, well says in his work *Modern Spiritism*.\* “We cannot believe . . . that any human beings, however depraved, can in their spirit-form after death descend to the horrors that accompany so many cases of ‘possession,’ the secrets of so many séances or the dreadful experiences of so many spiritists. Surely to call these denizens of the pit ‘discarnate spirits,’ is not to honour the dead but to dishonour them and to reach the incredible. Humanity may descend to the bestial; but not to the devilish without actual ‘possession!’” Yet though such things are concomitant of spiritism, we are asked to accept it as the ally of Christianity. I think we may well shrink from such an alliance.

Fetichism has two distinct sides: for the lay negro it is exoteric—a kind of protective superstition, akin to the use of charms, mascots, etc., in Europe; and for the professional witch-doctor on its esoteric side it corresponds fairly closely, as we have seen, with modern spiritism.

Fetiches serve many ends. They are (1) protective against evil spirits and so prophylactic against disease and death; (2) detective of evil spirits and of witches, their human confederates; (3) curative of disease; (4) incentive to affection, and (5) predictive (*i.e.*, of auspicious days for ceremonies, journeys, etc.).

The cult of the African for the departed is professedly not based on filial piety as in China, nor on faith in the Supreme Spirit, but on fear. As Henry Drummond has said, “Fear of Spirits is the National religion of the negro. Spirits have good memories—a nasty way of wiping off old scores against surviving relatives or enemies. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ!*”

These spirits are supposed to be of two kinds—bad, called *ovilulu* (in Umbundu), and a rarer variety, *ahamba*, or good spirits, who do no harm and can be safely ignored. A native who dies becomes *ipso facto* an *ochilulu*† or evil spirit, and goes to a place of suffering to make amends for his sins, but still retains his power for mischief. When accident or sickness or death occurs in a village, it is the work of some evil spirit either seeking to attract attention to itself and enlist the interest of sorrowing relatives or avenging itself for past injuries.

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\* Page 98.

† *Ovilulu*, plural; *ochilulu*, singular.

When the war broke out I happened to be travelling in West Africa. At a place I visited called Kapango in West Angola, they told me two young men from the place, who had gone into the interior in search of rubber, had been murdered shortly before by the Chokwes. One would suppose every effort would be made to trace the murderers, but no, the great effort was to find out what spirit had caused the murder. A witch-doctor alone is competent for this. Messengers were despatched to fetch one. These messengers often become the confederates of the diviner, who learns from them the details of the village. Collusion explains a good deal of African spiritism, as of the home variety, but not everything, and those who know best believe there is some spiritual power behind it, manifesting itself in a desultory, unaccountable, freakish way as in the séances around us to-day.

Candidates for the profession of witch-doctor serve an apprenticeship and are then initiated, but it must be with their own consent. I was told of a girl, one of a number destined for the profession, who drew back at the last moment and nothing could be made of her. This has its parallel in home spiritism. The will must be yielded first, but then, as spiritists themselves allow, there is a real danger of obsession, and even though the adept may change his or her mind, the spirit is very unwilling to change his. As Sir William Barrett, a scientific investigator of spiritism, quoted by Dr. Schofield,\* says: "Spiritism is dangerous in proportion as it leads us to surrender our reason or our will to the dictates of an invisible and often lying being," and the author adds: "The surrender of free-will in spiritism is most dangerous and also most common."

There seems some misapprehension in our country about the African witch-doctor. He is not a witch himself, but a detector of witches, a sort of medium professing to possess occult powers which enable him to protect from sickness and death. He is not necessarily more wicked than his fellows, but he not seldom is a thorough-going scoundrel and imposter. His divining fetiches are often heirlooms, from father to son, and his position the same. In some parts of Western Africa a triangular patch of hair is the professional tonsure of the witch-doctor. He gains his livelihood by concocting protective fetiches, much as a doctor or chemist makes up prescriptions.

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\* *Modern Spiritism*, pp. 187-88.

There is a good deal of ceremony in the preparation of some of these, in which a number of persons may take part, and in very important cases a whole village or even district will gather for the occasions. Where the devilry of fetichism comes out unabashed is in the detecting of witches, supposed to be in collusion with evil spirits. The poison and boiling-water tests imposed on those accused of witchcraft involved in the past hideous cruelties and hung as a perpetual terror over the heads of the natives, who might at any moment find themselves suspected. But this was not the essential of fetichism, and though the spread of European authority and the wide influence of Christian missionaries has gone far to stamp out this side of it, the spiritist side flourishes as before.

When the witch-doctor arrives the usual preliminary revelation is that the spirits want beer, and accordingly a beer-dance is determined on. As this exactly hits off the general taste, everyone is pleased. That beer can be enjoyed beyond the veil corresponds with the revelation of "Raymond," that whisky is procurable in the spiritist heaven, as well as "spiritual cigars," of some kind of *ersatz* tobacco. So the beer is prepared and the dancing and divining begins, and as the good witch-doctor is in no hurry whatever, it may go on for weeks, as long as the patience of the villagers lasts. One hears night after night the monotonous yelling of the natives rising and falling in the stillness of the dark hours, as they dance round the log fire, before which the witch-doctor sits, divining with his basket of fetiches.

As he shakes this up and down, some one fetich more than another may seem to come to the surface, and according to the interpretation which the diviner reads into this, so is his final divination. Now comes the turn of the unhappy relatives, who find themselves held responsible for the evil deeds of their defunct relative. According to their means must be the greatness of the sacrifice. The rich must offer an ox, a poorer family a sheep or a goat. The blood is poured out to the great Spirit and the friends eat the flesh, and the spirit is set free and joins the ranks of the *ahamba*, or well-disposed spirits. In the case of an avenging spirit, it is supposed to be definitely appeased. But not in the case of chiefs or those who died rich. In their case the sacrifices go on for years, until at length their spirits, who seek to harm, become kindly-disposed and helpful. My host, who gave me these details, had sacrificed a promising career

in the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard to come to Africa as a missionary, and had been in the country nearly thirty years, so I think he may be relied on. I proposed our sallying out one night to view the ceremony. He assured me it would be perfectly useless to try, as everything would be stopped before we could get within sight of the fire. The diviners will not and confessedly cannot carry on their business in the presence of Christians. There must be, as in modern séances, a favourable atmosphere. The following incident will illustrate this.

If a witch-doctor dies, only his fellow-practitioners may bury him. None else may touch the body. All witch-doctors within reach are summoned. They divine as to where the burial should take place. My friend once happened to arrive in a village just after the death of a witch-doctor, when seven or eight of his colleagues were scouring the village, furiously divining, to find the destined grave, but the presence of the missionary seemed to paralyze them. "*Kachitava, kachitava*," was the cry raised on all sides ("It is in vain"), and it was plainly intimated to him that he was a marplot. It will be remembered, perhaps, that when the Welsh mediums Thomas gave their spiritist demonstration in London last year, which proved such a fiasco, they had previously objected to one of the Committee of Experts as unsympathetic. He had, it appeared, been very successful in exposing fraudulent manifestations, and so was *on the index*.

If the public fetiches are voluntarily burnt by the local native authorities, it is a long step towards breaking the superstition. I never saw this done, but I once witnessed the burning of the fetiches of a noted witch-doctor, and also of a native chief. The former had been for years an opponent of the missionaries. Her husband had been publicly baptized the Sunday before, and this had so impressed her that the next Saturday she came up to the Mission Station and said she wanted to "follow the Words of God," as the native expression is. On the following day a special service was held at which she, with her own hands, burnt her valued fetiches in a bonfire, in the courtyard, ending with the little bells she used for convening her adepts to her séances. I wondered how they would fare in the fire.

The chief was another case. He lived further north, at a place called Ndalla, to the west of Lake Tanganyika. He welcomed us quite warmly. I noticed he was festooned with great necklaces of blue beads (these for ornament) and had fetiches round every limb. I asked him to explain their virtues. The one round his

neck was to keep off sore throat. That one round his left arm was to make his wife love him. Another was to keep pain from his legs, another to protect his feet. I suggested, quite gravely of course, that he ought never to be ill, indeed that he ought never to die. He demurred at that. He was just getting over a bad sore throat, and half the people in the district were dying of sleeping sickness (all of whom probably wore fetiches). "Oh no, we must all die sooner or later." "Well," I said, "we have to tell you that the Great God above has sent His Son down into this world to save men from dying. In fact, those who believe on Him become immune from death. They may leave this world, but they don't die, they fall asleep." He seemed immensely struck with this. I ought to mention that, my knowledge of Luban being very limited, I had to speak by interpretation.

In the afternoon we invited the chief and the whole village to gather round in the open courtyard in front of the chief's house to hear more. In the middle of the service we noticed the old chief struggling out of his great bead necklaces, and then detaching one after the other his fetiches and making a pile of them on the ground. The friend I was with asked him what he was doing. He replied, "If it be true that the Son of God has come, and I believe it is, what good can these things do me?" He then called his wife and children to do the same, and they came forward and deposited their fetiches on the pile. We were glad he did not attempt to force the whole village to follow suit against their personal convictions. Then with his willing consent a bonfire was made and the whole collection burnt. When the match was being applied, those standing by recoiled in horror, thinking that at least the sky would fall. But when they saw no one was any the worse, they took courage and closed in again. The prime minister, a most recalcitrant looking individual, seemed anything but pleased at all this, but the next day he too decided to "follow the Words of God," being won over by the exhortations of some Christian natives among our carriers.

This is a point where modern spiritism differs from her poor relation in Africa. In the former case the fundamental doctrines of Christianity are said to "need restatement," which is a euphemistic way of saying that they are not true, as believed by ordinary Christian folk. It must be a spurious Christianity which can hail as ally a system which denies the fall of man, the Deity of Christ, the Atonement and the Judgment to come ;

and conversion must be very rare among mediums. But in the case of witch-doctors, I have met with quite a number who have become Christians; probably quite as many, in proportion, as from any other class of the community. The native Christians unanimously hold that fetichism is of the evil one, and insist on fetiches being destroyed on conversion to Christianity. The wearing of a charm or the possession of one in the house is considered to be of the devil.

For the sake of our Church Congress speaker and of others who may be in doubt, we may here sum up the striking similarities between that which we will call esoteric fetichism and civilized spiritism.

Both profess to communicate with spirits; both hold these to be discarnate and that the beyond is peopled with such; both ignore angels, good or bad; both are frequently practised in the dark, spiritism usually, I think; both need a favourable atmosphere; both are antagonistic to revealed Christianity, as usually understood, though less so in the case of the African cult. The heaven of both is a glorified "world," where taste for drink and the minor vices may be gratified, though I never heard that negroes hope to smoke or cake-dance in heaven. Both systems seem to be a compound of trickery and demonry. Both are in the hands of professional mediums; neither exercise any ethical effect on their votaries, for both mediums and witch-doctors are often immoral, given to drink and lying; and with all their vaunted communications, real or pretended, it is exceedingly doubtful whether spiritist mediums, any more than negro witch-doctors, have contributed one item of original truth to the domain of useful human knowledge. Manifestations there have been, revelations none. No one would pretend that fetichism edifies or elevates its disciples, nor does spiritism either, from what we hear and read. As has been truly said,\* "Spiritualism vulgarizes that which is holy, while adding to our knowledge no single word of real help or worth."

When we come to the exoteric side of things, the belief in protective charms, etc., we may smile in a superior way at the superstition of the benighted African; but something very closely allied to it is rife in Christendom. In reality, fetichism is as widespread as misbelief. When faith goes out at the front door, superstition comes in at the tradesman's entrance. When

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\* *Spiritualism*, by Coulson Kernahan, p. 52.

men lose faith in big things, they begin to have faith in small : amulets, fetiches, mascots and floating tambourines. The man to whom our Lord and His Apostles are but names, will never sit down thirteen at table. In free-thinking Paris the No. 13 in a street is scarcely, if ever, known. It is replaced by No. 12 *bis*, for fear of ill-luck. The man who sturdily refuses "to bear his cross" will wear a lucky pig at his watch-chain. When in France in 1915 I learnt that mascots and charms were worn by tens of thousands of combatants. People say they do not believe in such things, but they use them ; like the man who said he did not believe in ghosts, but confessed he was afraid of them.

You pity the dark negro. "My poor black brother, how can you hope to frighten away evil spirits with those hideous fetiches at the entrance to your villages ?" But what about the six gargoyles at the north entrance to Westminster Abbey ? They are just as hideous, and were originally placed there, it is believed by many, \* for much the same purpose. The two unmistakable British bull-dogs over the central door must be there as watch-dogs, but they are too high to keep off mere mortals. I am not suggesting that the dean and chapter believe in such things, but a tourist-negro might ask, "Why leave them there, if you don't believe in them ; I burnt my fetiches when I became a Christian ?"

In closing we come back to our first question. Is fetichism a first step up or a last step down, an evolution or a degradation ? The former theory is contrary to experience. What strikes the traveller in Central Africa is the dead level of hopeless stagnation in which the raw natives exist. They vegetate on with no power or desire to rise. Where indeed were debased savages ever found emerging unaided into higher and clearer views of God ? "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods ?" † but degradation from the highest ideals is only too simple, "My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." No one denies that Divine Revelation has been progressive, but its beginnings were not petty, superstitious and debased, but demonstrative of the Eternal power and Godhead of the Creator. Evolutionists have yet to explain in a reasonable way the "robust monotheism" of that most venerable document, if viewed in the lowest light, the first chapter of Genesis. The gulf between it and the sorceries of

\* See *e.g.*, *Naology*, by Dudley of Leicester, p. 567. 8vo., 1846.

† Jeremiah ii, 10-11.

ancient and modern times is great and fixed. Here we have no tribal henotheism, but a monotheism as far removed from the cosmogonies of Babylonian and heathen polytheism as heaven from earth. As one has well said\* : "Not one of these can be read without a smile—the machinery creaks all the time. No one ever thought of smiling at the Bible accounts of the Creation and restoration of the earth." Idolatry was a departure from pure monotheism. Men, who would not see, became blind. Fetichism is a degradation from a purer faith of which it contains traces, a far-off glimpse of a Supreme Creator, a vague idea of accountability to Him, a dim reminiscence of atonement by sacrifice, misty traditions of past happenings in the cradle of the race.

Modern civilization, professing itself to be wise, has turned away from the testimony of Creation and Revelation, and with its superstitions, its mascots, its séances, is nearing the level of religious dotage where the despised negro has grovelled so long. There are signs of better things for the Dark Continent. Perhaps "the first shall be the last, and the last first."

#### DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN said :—The lecture has proved interesting, instructive, and, what is more, suggestive.

For instance, it has suggested to me the true position fetichism holds amongst the world's religions. These all can be divided up into three groups, each group corresponding to one division of man's consciousness. As I have had the honour on a former occasion to point out to you, that source of knowledge is threefold : (1) *Object or sense consciousness*, and to this corresponds the group made up of *animism, fetichism, shamanism, totemism*. (2) *Soul or self-consciousness*, and to this corresponds the group containing, among others, some forms of *Judaism, Stoicism*, and theologies based on the philosophy of *Kant*. (3) *God or spirit consciousness*, to which division correspond *deism, pantheism, theism*.

*Animism* appears amongst all low tribes, and is the belief that spiritual beings fill all nature, animate and inanimate, and their life is a continuation and not a new life. They can transmigrate into human beings, animals, plants and inanimate objects, and can avenge

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\* *The Fall—Fact or Fiction*, by C. F. Hogg.

their past and present wrongs by bringing disease and death on the offenders. From this naturally arises *ancestor worship*. Savages are in this very like their more civilized brethren. As one clubman said to another, who was boasting of the greatness of his ancestors, "Why, sir, you are like the potato plant: the best part is underground!" Thus they believe the souls of chiefs and warriors rise to divine honours. This idea of the divine ancestor may be carried far enough to reach supreme deity, as when the Zulus, working back from ancestor to ancestor, reach *Lunkulunkulu*, the Old-old-one, as creator of the world.

Hence *animism* differs from *fetichism*, for the latter is the belief that the possession of an object can procure for its possessor the services of the spirit lodged within it.

Hence we reach the three divisions into which spiritual beings fall, according to the African. (1) *Divine*. These are to be worshipped, and this is *idolatry*. (2) *Ghosts*, by this term meaning the spirits of the dead who have not reached apotheosis. These have to be propitiated in the ways mentioned by the lecturer. Under this heading comes the doctrine of *relics* amongst us. (3) *Fetiches*, meaning thereby the beings that are lodged in the various things that are known by that name. These have to be compelled to serve, or else the objects in which they are supposed to lodge suffer punishment by being kicked, chopped, burned, etc. How child-like! And here we find a place for *mascots*, lucky pigs, billikens, crooked six-pences, etc. Now the influence which the possession of a *fetich* is thought to give to its possessor is known as *ju ju*, as we have and use the term "luck." Anything extraordinary happening is put down to *ju ju*. For instance, when he first comes in contact with white men, and sees some of the commonplace exhibitions of modern science, commonplace to us but startling to him, he puts it all down to "white man's *ju ju*." Now fetichism may be called *primitive* when the savage personifying everything around him chooses from among these an imaginary personality in an object capable of being appropriated by himself whose spirit becomes his protector or his slave. Or *secondary*, when the object is chosen as a fetich either spontaneously or through a magical operation.

At the other end of the series we have *deism*, the root principle of which is the *transcendence* of God; *pantheism*, the root principle of which is the *immanence* of God; and *theism*, which combines both

great facts in consequence of receiving the Bible as a Divine revelation. That being so, I cannot believe that polytheism develops into monotheism, still less that the polydæmonistic tribal beliefs reach monotheism by the same route. History testifies to the contrary. The polytheism of Greece did not develop into monotheism but into scepticism, and scepticism never develops into monotheistic belief. Nay verily ! Auguste Comte himself being witness ! When he founded *positivism* he said that "religiosity," as he called it, "is a mere weakness, and an avowal of want of power." But as he grew old he found that there was needed an appeal to the human heart as well as to the human head, so he constructed a religion. His gods are three : *Supreme Fetich*, the Earth ; *Supreme Medium*, space ; and *Supreme Being*, humanity. These he directed were to be worshipped daily in the temples of positivism. Surely this is, as Professor Flint calls it, a "monstrous mixture of atheism, fetichism, ultramontaniam and ritualism." Yet positivism is claimed by its author and his disciples to be the very last thing in philosophy and religion ! Is this the end of evolution ?

It is neither development nor degeneration. Man leaving God, God left man to his own devices and to his own knowledge, and the more childish he becomes so the more childlike do his beliefs become as to the unseen world. As the lecturer has shown us, a child is a creature of his senses, hence a religion based on the senses as a source of knowledge becomes that great Child—the African !

Lieut.-Colonel G. MACKINLAY said :—Mr. Hoste's account of the burning of fetiches on conversion in Africa is paralleled in Europe. The wooden household saint of many Roman Catholics corresponds in many ways to African fetiches ; both are consulted and asked to help in various difficulties, and both are liable to punishment and abuse if the requests are not granted.

I have known many Spaniards who have burnt their household saints on conversion. One woman on such an occasion took out all of them from the three-cornered cupboard in which she had carefully kept them all her life, and one after another she solemnly committed them to the flames. She kept the most sacred one to the last, but finally put that also in the fire, watching it intently, half expecting it to spring out ; but it also was soon consumed, and when all her stock of venerated relics had disappeared, she cried

out most earnestly, "And now, Lord Jesus, I have none but Thee."

At Thonon, in Savoy, an unconverted woman had a wooden St. Anthony, who is supposed to protect animals; but many of her pigs fell ill and some died. In her sorrow and indignation the woman upbraided the saint, urging that as she had grown the wood of which it was composed in her garden, and as her son had fashioned the image, that she had not been treated with due consideration after all the trouble she had taken!

In Numbers v, 11-31, we have a solemn account of the drinking of the water of bitterness by an accused woman. May not the poison and boiling-water tests in Africa, alluded to by our author on p. 160 of his paper, be a distortion of this God-given Jewish rite? An instance of degradation, as opposed to a higher upward growth, due to a supposed evolution?

The paper is a very valuable one, and the resemblances pointed out between the ancient African fetichism and the spiritism around us, which is called modern, are most striking.

MR. THEODORE ROBERTS desired to emphasize Mr. Hoste's conclusion that fetichism was to be regarded as a degradation from a purer faith and as characteristic of the dotage of the race of Ham. He referred to the fact that while black boys easily passed white boys at the age of 12, in later years the white boys surpassed black, and thought that in this there was an analogy with the fact that the race of Ham was the first to be highly civilized, as shown in Assyria (Cush) and Egypt (Mizraim), Gen. x, 6-12, whereas the races both of Shem and Japhet had long since surpassed that of Ham.

He considered that all available evidence showed that, so far from civilization having been evolved from the savage state, the opposite was the case, the wild men being really the truant children of the human race who had broken away from the restraints of civilization; there being, as was well known, no instance of a savage tribe becoming civilized apart from contact with civilization.

All this pointed to the great fact of the Fall of Man, and showed that the present cult of spiritism was, like fetichism, a concomitant of the dotage of the race that adopted it. He remembered how *The Times* remarked on Mrs. Annie Besant's adoption of theosophy

that she had accepted the Mahatmas on far slenderer evidence than that for which she had rejected Christianity, it being always the case that men who abandoned a true faith were easily disposed to accept a false one.

Prof. LANGHORNE ORCHARD cordially concurred with what had been said as to the great value of the admirable paper read that afternoon by an author who could lay claim to a first-hand acquaintance with his important and difficult subject. They would unanimously thank him for a very interesting paper—timely, practical, and marked by carefulness and sobriety of thought.

Fetichism—a protective magical superstition—is undoubtedly related to spiritism, and each comes under Divine prohibition. If we investigate the genesis of magic, we find some truth in the Egyptian theory that its mother (Isis) was the daughter of Earth and Sky. In magic we see man's projection of himself upon his environment, blended with the presence of the supernatural. In fetichism this self-projection selects some inanimate thing for its spiritual abode. In a little child is a tendency to think that "Dolly" is alive and possesses human attributes. A carpenter whose patience gives way before refractory lock and key is apt to vent his indignation by knocks, blows, exclamations, entirely dependent for efficacy upon the inanimate objects being endowed with certain human attributes.

In later developments of fetichism, the inhabiting spirit is not necessarily human, and the fetich, no longer a charm simply, may come to be worshipped. This is exemplified by the American "ockis," whose "priests" receive the not inappropriate name of "jugglers." Might they not share it with the "mediums" of present-day spiritism!

Line 7 from the bottom of p. 160 of the paper, referring to the setting "free" of the spirit, reminds me of the Romish doctrine of Purgatory, and the suggestion is emphasized by the fact that "according to their means" is "the greatness of the sacrifice" required from the unhappy relatives.

We shall concur with the author's estimate of the imaginary hypothesis called "evolution." Monotheism preceded polytheism. "When faith goes out at the front door, superstition comes in at the tradesman's entrance." "Fetichism is a degradation from a

purer faith of which it contains traces, a far-off glimpse of a supreme Creator, a vague idea of accountability to Him, a dim reminiscence of atonement by sacrifice, misty traditions of past happenings in the cradle of the race.”

Dr. A. T. SCHOFIELD, in proposing a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Hoste and to the Chairman for presiding, said he hoped that the audience that afternoon appreciated the character of what they had been hearing; for this paper touched the fringe of demonism, of that unknown evil world of which we know practically nothing outside the statements of the Bible. No Christian, and but few thoughtful men, will deny that we have many evidences of being surrounded with an invisible evil world of great power, and the recurrences in the present day of spiritism and the increasing cases of demon-possession known to the medical profession make the subject of very special interest. Prof. Flournoy says: “There are principalities and powers which we in our ignorance toy with, without knowing the frightful consequences of tampering with the unseen world.” Fetichism represents what may be termed the lighter side of the horror of darkness. For the darker side we must look back to the awful war, and around to the scarcely less appalling peace we are enjoying, and to Russia, all of which none but the very short sighted ascribe to merely human agency. The war with the “world-rulers of darkness” is active around us.

Lieut.-Colonel A. P. FORD-MOORE writes:—“Responding to the Council’s invitation to submit MS. comments, I do so with regard to Mr. W. Hoste’s lecture.

“In the first place I should like to congratulate the author on the title of his lecture. From the context of his remarks one would conclude that he had only been some two years in his travels. If so he no doubt collected many interesting anecdotes, but hardly could he claim an extensive or exhaustive study of his subject, at any rate to deal with it in the dogmatic manner he has adopted. It takes many years of careful personal study, long and intimate acquaintance with the native races, to appreciate the ideas underlying their customs and beliefs. A short general tour round, speaking through an interpreter, or gathering yarns from white settlers, hardly entitles one to say whether their beliefs are retrograde or otherwise.

“The author seems a little unfortunate in his reference to the gargoyles and British bull-dogs at Westminster Abbey and the reasons they were placed there, but this is hardly the place to enter upon a discussion of the fancies which prompted the old architects to perpetrate these ‘drip-stones.’

“I am not alone in thinking that fetichism is ‘a first step up,’ a groping for truth and light. The traces of a purer faith would surely be more apparent had fetichism really been a degradation from such a faith, and the experience of those who have really studied the subject, who have approached it with open, unbiassed minds, would seem to confirm this. A child thinks as a child, and, as the author says, can ‘easily imagine their playthings alive.’ If we are to imagine that fetichism is a degradation, are we also to imagine that the race itself has degenerated, and if so, from what rootstock, and where was it situated?”

Lieut.-Colonel F. A. MOLONY, O.B.E., writes:—“I greatly regret that I shall be unable to be present at the meetings on April 4th.

“It seems to me that Mr. Hoste has proved that there is real affinity between African fetichism and that spiritism which certain distinguished men are now pressing us to adopt.

“A magistrate in the east of Cape Colony and close to native territory remarked to me, ‘If we do not educate the natives, there will be smelling-out of witches and other abominations.’ So this official in a comparatively civilized part of Africa regarded the recrudescence of fetichism as possible and very evil. Now if it becomes known to the African that we are taking up spiritism, will he not be much encouraged to revive fetichism?”

“Further, may we not learn from what Mr. Hoste has told us about fetichism how spiritism is likely to develop here. He says, ‘Spirits have good memories—a nasty way of wiping off old scores against surviving relatives or enemies.’ In fact, it needs but little imagination to realize that, if we allow spiritism to spread, it will do an immense amount of harm here; and that its relative, fetichism, will be encouraged to do further mischief in Africa, and I therefore think that Mr. Hoste’s paper is most practical and timely.”

The Rev. Dr. J. E. H. THOMSON, of Edinburgh, writes:—“It is needless to say that I have been deeply interested in Mr. Hoste’s paper on fetichism. Though I have not had the special oppor-

tunities of studying the subject on its native soil as he has had, through relatives who were missionaries on the West Coast of Africa, and other missionaries who through them became my friends, my knowledge is more nearly first-hand than most. I may mention that one of these friends is Dr. R. Hamil Nassau, from whose book on fetichism Mr. Hoste quotes. I can say that I can corroborate most of Mr. Hoste's statements. The cases in which I am not quite in agreement with Mr. Hoste may well be due to my imperfect understanding either of what Mr. Hoste has said or of what I had heard from my friends. Like Mr. Hoste, I think the religious history of the race before Abraham was not of the evolution of higher morality and loftier thoughts of God, but of degeneration in every direction: 'God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions.' Yet it seems to me that there is a place for evolution—not as taking the place of the Divine Reason, but as expressing the method by which that Reason manifests itself.

“In confirmation of what Mr. Hoste maintains, that behind and above the fetiches and the spirits which inhabit them the negroes of the West Coast of Africa believe in a great god, I may relate what my cousin, the late Dr. W. C. Thomson, missionary in Old Calabar, told me. He had been telling an old Chief the disasters that in consequence of earthquake had befallen a district somewhat to the north. The old man, when he heard, looked out from under the verandah of his house to the blue sky, and said, 'What terrible things that great face works.' Evidently he regarded the sky as the face of the great god.

“Personally, I was not aware that the fetich spirit was regarded as having lived. My impression has been that they were elemental spirits, who took up their abode in any odd object, stick or stone, tree or rock. That might be urged as a distinction between the spirits evoked by the modern spiritualists, or, as Mr. Hoste calls them, spiritists, and the fetich worshippers. I do not think that these frequenters of séances associate the spirits with any special object. That also might be brought forward as a distinction to separate the fashionable spiritists from the fetich worshippers. A thing which seems to me to be as much akin to fetichism as modern spiritualism is the habit of having mascots. There is no worship given them, yet somehow the possession of them is supposed to secure success. The whole idea of luck is purely superstitious.

“ I am not quite sure that I am correct when I attribute to Mr. Hoste the idea that the idolaters worshipped the idols themselves and not some spiritual being whose representative they were. I think that at all events the Greeks, when they worshipped Artemis and offered sacrifices before the image that fell down from heaven, did not worship merely the shapeless aerolite, but a spiritual being who made this her symbol. The Greeks, according to my idea, were fetichists, only they glorified with their artistic genius the objects they made their fetiches. In actual fact the magnificent statue of Jupiter, though carved by Phidias, is really as much a fetich as the whale tooth, which I know once was a fetich in the neighbourhood of the Gaboon.”

Dr. C. Fox writes :—“ Being unable to be present, I do not know whether the lecturer alluded to the strange theory of the Mascot, so extremely apposite and also, I feel, important ; and wish to take the opportunity to point out—as he or others may likely do—its close analogy (one might say, really, identity) with that of the fetich. The latter is, of course, pagan and idolatry, as is necessarily the regarding of ‘ chance ’ a postulate of unbelief, though so continually named and heeded, especially in the News. I trust the essayist was desirous to sound a warning note against the entire system of which his theme gave an historic or local test, and think it probable such was his purpose. It is extremely needed. For the thus obtaining and most jealously keeping an object—no matter what or how trifling—is now most prevalent, especially at sea—where superstition appears to be most usual, and the relying upon its presence as tutelary—*i.e.* really saving—is an overlooking and contempt of God, very grievous where He is known and professed.”

#### LECTURER'S REPLY.

I am gratified to find that one main thesis of my paper—that fetichism is the last stage in the religious landslide that has been taking place in human history—is so generally accepted ; and am indebted to the Chairman, Colonel Mackinlay, Dr. Thomson, Mr. Theodore Roberts and others for confirmatory evidence and suggestions. The wonder is not that fetichism should contain so few traces of the original revelation, but that after centuries of

isolation and degradation it should contain any. Of course the negro comes originally from the same stock as ourselves, even the most unabashed evolutionist only stands for one original pair of the genus homo, and there is not the slightest proof that this pair were ignorant savages. When I wrote "threadbare hypothesis," p. 152, I referred to Darwin's explanation of evolution—natural selection. The late Lord Salisbury, in his famous address at Oxford in 1894, after tenderly "cremating" this theory, ended up the funeral oration by an appeal to Lord Kelvin, whose words, spoken in 1874, he quoted: "I have always felt that the hypothesis of natural selection does not contain the true theory of evolution, *if evolution there has been in biology*" (my italics). Lord Kelvin, who was present, found nothing to modify in this statement after twenty years of further thought and experience, and in proposing a vote of thanks to Lord Salisbury, only emphasized his words. We do well to remember that "if," and refuse to allow ourselves to be imposed upon by what is still an unproved hypothesis, with enormous difficulties to overcome and chasms to bridge, before it can be accepted as scientific fact.

I lately came across an extract from Professor Lionel Beale, of King's College, London, a sufficient authority on biology: "There is no evidence that man descended from, or is or was in any way specially related to, any other organisms in nature through evolution or by any other process. In support of all naturalistic conjectures concerning man's origin there is not at this time a shade of scientific evidence." After this it is not very convincing to hear amateurs speaking oracularly of the "latest biological discoveries." Among these discoveries\* are those of Professor F. Wood-Jones, Professor of Anatomy at the University of London, who emphatically rejects the dictum of Huxley that "man, the anthropoid apes, the monkey, the lemurs, the pronograde quadrupedal mammals represented a true evolutionary series." He says, "*No attentive student of anatomy can possibly believe this to be true.*" He is just as positive, however, as Huxley that he has found the true line of descent. The latest claimant, it appears, to the honour of fathering the human race would be the tarsius, a nocturnal squirrel-like creature, which is supposed to have inhabited the

\* See *Man's Ancestry*, by the late T. B. Bishop, p. 8.

Malayan islands millions of years ago in the Eocene Age. The apes, by the showing of this scientist, are to be regarded as *descended* from man. The professor quotes Professor Boule, of Paris, and others in support of this view, which, however, as Mr. Bishop points out, "makes utterly valueless all the scientific evidence which has hitherto been relied upon by biologists as proving the animal origin of man" (*i.e.* through the apes).

No doubt in a few years some other professor will arise and demolish Professor Wood-Jones and his *tarsius*. But while evolutionists are engaged in "biting and devouring one another" we may possess our souls in patience and continue to believe in the Creatorship of God. It is hardly a question of what God might or might not have done. In the absence of any scientific or other proof that He did create according to a certain theory, we may safely refuse to bow to the idol.

Mr. Theodore Roberts' analogy is exceedingly interesting and suggestive as an illustration of what has been going on in the religious history of the race. With reference to Dr. Thomson's remarks, I am glad of his general agreement with my conclusions. As regards his query, fetichism and animism must be distinguished. In the latter the spirits are, I believe, supposed to be elemental, indwelling trees, rocks, etc., but in fetichism they are professedly discarnate. I do not think I attempted any pronouncement on idolatry; the more ignorant and degraded idolators might worship the idol itself, those more advanced the spirit associated with the idol. In answer to Dr. Fox, I did point out the close analogy he refers to. Fetiches as mascots are for the "common herd," but it is on the esoteric side that fetichism bears so close a relation to spiritism, though, of course, I do not assert an exact correspondence in every detail. I am grateful to Dr. Schofield, Professor Orchard, and Colonel Moloney for their remarks as to the inner significance of this correspondence. As for the real spiritual power behind fetichism I have received since writing my paper the following from my brother, Mr. T. H. Hoste, who lived thirteen years on the Lower Congo: "Neither I nor the missionaries with whom I was associated thought there was anything to understand about fetiches, and in my time the whole thing was treated cavalierly. A remarkable incident, however, occurred within my knowledge shortly before I left Africa. Three important men gave themselves

up and insisted, against the will and desire of their community, on being stoned to death for having destroyed various people through the agency of fetichism. This was entirely on their own voluntary confession. . . . The strength of our attack lay in the fact that we and our converts could flout and destroy fetiches with impunity, but this was no real proof that there was nothing in fetichism."

As for the first chapter of Genesis, the Higher Critical suggestion that its source was a Babylonian myth, adapted and developed by the Israelites "in their own characteristic fashion," will not do. For the assumption that "the fashion of the Israelites" was to purify heathen myths and religions is, if we may trust their own prophets, to invert the true order of history, the tendency being exactly the opposite. The "characteristic fashion of the Israelites" was to allow their own monotheistic faith to be only too easily invaded and degraded by polytheistic beliefs and practices. But as has been well said,\* "When we find two accounts of the same event—one vague, fantastic, extravagant, and the other sober, definite and clear—experience shows that the sober narrative is nearer to the event than the fantastic one." All this is confirmatory proof that in the beginning man was created by God "very good," and started with a clear and worthy revelation of his Creator, but fell from this high estate through sin, and apart from Divine Grace has been falling ever since.

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\* *From Creation to the Flood*, by Canon Digby M. Berry, M.A., p. 29.