

often finds people more closely related and consequently more acceptable to the old gods of the land."

The African pantheon is thus widely peopled. Elimination and natural selection next give one the transition from the ghost to the god, properly so called.

"The gods of the natives then are nearly as numerous as their dead. It is impossible to worship all ; a selection must be made, and, as we have indicated, each worshipper turns most naturally to the spirits of his own departed relatives ; but his gods are too many still, and in farther selecting he turns to those that have lived nearest his own time. Thus the chief of a village will not trouble himself about his great-great-grandfather : he will present his offering to his own immediate predecessor, and say, 'O father, I do not know all your relatives, you know them all, invite them to feast with you.' The offering is not simply for himself, but for himself and all his relatives."

Ordinary ghosts are soon forgotten with the generation that knew them. Not so a few select spirits, the Cæsars and Napoleons, the Charlemagnes and Timurs of savage empires.

"A great chief that has been successful in his wars does not pass out of memory so soon. He may become the god of a mountain or a lake, and may receive homage as a local deity long after his own descendants have been driven from the spot. When there is a supplication for rain the inhabitants of the country pray not so much to their own forefathers as to the god of yonder mountain on whose shoulders the great rain-clouds repose. (Smaller hills are seldom honoured with a deity.)"

Well, in all this we get, it seems to me, the very essentials and universals of religion generally,—the things without which no religion could exist—the vital part, without the ever-varying and changeable additions of mere gossiping mythology. In the presents brought to the dead man's grave to appease the ghost, we have the central element of all worship, the practical key of all cults, past or present.