

and Tylor have paved the way to a true theory of the Origin of Religion : Max Müller, Lang, and the other mythologists have thrown out hints of varying value towards a true theory of the Origin of Mythology, or of its more modern equivalent and successor, Theology.

A brief outline of facts will serve to bring into clearer relief this view of religion as essentially practical—a set of observances, rendered inevitable by the primitive data of human psychology. It will then be seen that what is fundamental and essential in religion is the body of practices, remaining throughout all stages of human development the same, or nearly the same, in spite of changes of mythological or theological theory ; and that what is accidental and variable is the particular verbal explanation or philosophical reason assigned for the diverse rites and ceremonies.

In its simplest surviving savage type, religion consists wholly and solely in certain acts of deference paid by the living to the persons of the dead. I shall try to show in the sequel that down to its most highly evolved modern type in the most cultivated societies, precisely similar acts of deference, either directly to corpses or ghosts as such, or indirectly to gods who were once ghosts, or were developed from ghosts, form its essence still. But to begin with I will try to bring a few simple instances of the precise nature of religion in its lowest existing savage mode.

I might if I chose take my little collection of illustrative facts from some theoretical writer, like Mr. Herbert Spencer, who has collected enough instances in all conscience to prove this point ; but I prefer to go straight to an original observer of savage life and habit, a Presbyterian missionary in Central Africa—the Rev. Duff Macdonald, author of *Africana*—who had abundant opportunities at the Blantyre Mission for learning the ideas and practice of the Soudanese natives, and who certainly had no theoretic predisposition towards resolving all religious notions