

busy himself with the affairs of men, and accordingly he is not habitually worshipped. The so-called gods of the people are spirits or demons. With the worship of these, if worship it can be called, is combined a universal faith in witchcraft in various forms. This faith is made an instrument of terrible oppression by the priests and medicine men, and is a source of widespread misery. All sickness is attributed to witchcraft, and the business of the medicine men is to exorcise the evil spirit and discover the guilty person who is supposed to have caused the disease. The suspected person is tried by ordeal, and to avoid this will often confess to crimes he has not committed.

Faith in a spirit world also involves belief in a life after death. Hence the human sacrifices at the burial of kings and chiefs, common in Ashantee and Dahomey, on the Niger, and in some parts of Central Africa.

There is nothing in Africa like the elaborate image worship of India. Hideous idols are common among the West African negroes, but in Central Africa, so far as is known, none are to be found.

Fetich worship is universal. A fetich is a charm; and almost any object—a tree, a stick, a stone, a plant—anything whatever, may have power imparted to it by a medicine man to preserve the owner from sickness and danger, or to injure his enemies. A fetich may draw down rain, secure good crops, or bring success to the fisherman's net. Here we have the most abject form of spiritual bondage and consequent degradation of the people. It has been said that "fetichism is the harpy Superstition wielding a whip of scorpions."

It is the privilege of Christian people to send the good news of life and immortality to the millions of this great country who are groping in such thick darkness, and to pray for their conversion.

Almost all the missionary societies of Great Britain, Europe and America have sooner or later selected Africa as a field for