

Paper 87 — The Ghost Cults

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This chart is a revision of the August 20, 2011 version.

Endnotes and most Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

Sources for Paper 87, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) William Graham **Sumner** and Albert Galloway **Keller**, *The Science of Society, Volume II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927)
- (2) William Graham **Sumner**, Albert Galloway **Keller**, and Maurice Rea Davie, *The Science of Society, Volume IV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927)
- (3) E. Washburn **Hopkins**, Ph.D., LL.D., *Origin and Evolution of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923)
- (4) Henry Nelson Wieman and Regina **Westcott-Wieman**, *Normative Psychology of Religion* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1935)

Note: The Paper 87 parallels come from Chapter V, which was written by Regina Westcott-Wieman.

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable; the highlights are tentative.)

(f) **Light green** indicates Bible passages or fragments thereof, which are not paralleled in the source text.

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PAPER 87 — THE GHOST CULTS

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§221. **Forms of the Ghost-Cult.** (Sumner & Keller 851)

[contd] The common conviction that the ghost is a source of danger reflects preoccupation with the negative aspect of the aleatory element, that is, with **bad luck**. And since the primitive mode was not speculation but action, men are found anxiously endeavoring to do concrete things by way of meeting a threatening situation. They are developing a set of acts and observances of a religious nature or, in short, a cult, which is in the main a calculus of ill fortune.

It is from **anxiety** and **fear** that the cult of the dead derives its reason for existence;

the phenomena of the ghost-cult could hardly have resulted from the conception of beneficent superhuman powers (S&K 851).

The cult itself witnesses to concern over bad luck and hostile spirits; for its simplest forms are all **negative**, that is, they contemplate **avoidance, expulsion, and coercion** of the ghosts rather than propitiation, conciliation, and attraction; and where the latter methods do appear they are employed with the idea of avoiding ill rather than of getting good (S&K 851).

87:0.1 The ghost cult evolved as an offset to the hazards of **bad luck**;

its primitive religious observances were the outgrowth of **anxiety** about bad luck and of the inordinate **fear** of the dead.

None of these early religions had much to do with the recognition of Deity or with reverence for the superhuman;

their rites were mostly **negative**, designed to **avoid, expel, or coerce** ghosts.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

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The ghost-cult represents **insurance against disaster** rather than **investment in view of a higher return** (S&K 851).

The ghost cult was nothing more nor less than **insurance against disaster**; it had nothing to do with **investment for higher and future returns**.

XXVII: DAIMONISM (Sumner & Keller 931)

§235. The Extension of the Ghost-Theory.
(Sumner & Keller 931)

87:0.2 Man has had a long and bitter struggle with the ghost cult.

Nothing in history is more calculated to excite pity for the human race than the existence of the set of beliefs about spirits.

Nothing in human history is designed to excite more pity than this picture of man's abject slavery to ghost-spirit fear.

With the birth of this very fear mankind started on the upgrade of

The immediate effect of such convictions upon human life is obviously lamentable. It requires considerable study and reflection to apprehend the remoter, impersonal, **evolutionary** consequences (S&K 932).

religious **evolution**.

Human imagination cast off from the shores of self and will not again find anchor until it arrives at the concept of a true Deity, a real God.

1. GHOST FEAR

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

§220.* **Life in the Other World.** (Sumner & Keller 843)

[contd] The ghost is the soul that has been freed by death from the body (S&K 843).

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§222.* **Avoidance.** (Sumner & Keller 853)

[contd] The first effort is, then, toward the evasion or warding off of ill; and perhaps the simplest act of avoidance is the endeavor to prevent the soul from becoming a ghost at all (S&K 853).

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

§219.* **Disposition of the Ghost.** (Sumner & Keller 840)

[contd] It can be seen from the cases reviewed that peoples who believe in the ghost-theory were very anxious to bring the period of the ghost's sojourn near the body to a happy conclusion; while they wished to meet all the needs and desires of the sojourner up to the time of his departure, they did not want leave-taking to be delayed (S&K 840).

87:1.1 Death was feared because death meant

the liberation of another ghost from its physical body.

The ancients did their best to prevent death, to avoid the trouble of having to contend with a new ghost.

They were always anxious to induce the ghost to leave the scene of death, to embark on the journey to deadland.

§220.* **Life in the Other World.** (Sumner & Keller 843)

More exactly, [the ghost] is that soul during its existence subsequent to death and prior to its departure to the spirit-world (S&K 843).

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§223.* **Precautions against Return.** (Sumner & Keller 861)

To mislead and deceive the ghost, primitive people practise various devices which witness to a naïve confidence in the ghost's stupidity; like the usage of making doors for the dead, such precautions reveal the savage as careless of consistency (S&K 867).

§222.* **Avoidance.** (Sumner & Keller 853)

[Compare S&K 856.]

The ghost was feared most of all during the supposed transition period

between its emergence at the time of death and its later departure for the ghost homeland, a vague and primitive concept of pseudo heaven.

87:1.2 Though the savage credited ghosts with supernatural powers, he hardly conceived of them as having supernatural intelligence.

Many tricks and stratagems were practiced in an effort to hoodwink and deceive the ghosts;

civilized man still pins much faith on the hope that an outward manifestation of piety will in some manner deceive even an omniscient Deity.

87:1.3 The primitives feared sickness because they observed it was often a harbinger of death.

As a rule the Matabele “get the dying person out of his house into a **small hut** to die there.” [Etc.] (S&K 857)

“... Now the custom [among the Zulus] is ameliorated through European influence but yet they always avoid letting anyone die within the hut, and carry him, before his last breath has escaped, out in front of it so that he may give up his spirit **in the open air...**” (S&K 857).

The **house in which** [a Melanesian] died is **usually** deserted or **destroyed**, not so much as a sign of sorrow as through fear of the ghost of the deceased and the conviction that if this were not done evil spirits would come back again and other members of the family would be affected (S&K IV 354).

“... This perpetual fleeing before death, of course, prevents the [Sakalaya] population from becoming settled in its habits, and produces a most **unsubstantial style of house-building**” (S&K IV 355).

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§234.* **Antagonism of Dead and Living** (S&K 924)

In South Africa, trees, garden, and huts may be abandoned after a death; this practice, says Livingstone, renders any **permanent village** impossible (S&K IV 407).

If the tribal medicine man failed to cure an afflicted individual,

the sick man was usually removed from the family **hut**, being taken to a **smaller** one

or left **in the open air** to die alone.

A **house in which** death had occurred was **usually destroyed**; if not, it was always avoided,

and this fear prevented early man from building **substantial dwellings**.

It also militated against the establishment of **permanent villages** and cities.

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§222.* **Avoidance.** (Sumner & Keller 853)

“On the night of the death [in Algiers], if the corpse is in the house, all the family and friends **sit round it and talk all night**, for anyone going to sleep would die...” (S&K IV 357).

A common belief is that the corpse, as such, is unclean; that contact with it is perilous.... Harm can indeed come from the human body in process of dissolution and from the persons of the sick as well; and uninformed people, chancing to think of that fact, have at once accredited cases of avoidance to an understanding of **contagion** (S&K 854).

[See S&K 854-56.]

§227.* **Expulsion.** (Sumner & Keller 885)

In Alaska, “from the moment of death until the body is disposed of, some one must remain with the corpse day and night and a **light** must burn every night. This is to guard against the intrusion of spirits.

The Greek church custom of burning **candles** about the dead appeals strongly to this phase of their superstition and conforms to their practice” (S&K IV 387).

87:1.4 The savages **sat up all night and talked** when a member of the clan died; they feared they too would die if they fell asleep in the vicinity of a corpse.

Contagion from the corpse substantiated the fear of the dead,

and all peoples, at one time or another, have employed elaborate purification ceremonies designed to cleanse an individual after contact with the dead.

The ancients believed that **light** must be provided for a corpse; a dead body was never permitted to remain in the dark.

In the twentieth century, **candles** are still burned in death chambers,

and men still sit up with the dead.

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

§218.* **Mortuary Practices.** (Sumner & Keller 836)

The idea of the presence of the dead in the vicinity of the body has taken such hold upon mankind that it is only with the greatest difficulty shaken off. It persists, even in enlightened minds, in the form of vague fears, uneasiness, and distress; few persons, however emancipated, would care to pass a dark and stormy night in the receiving-vault of a cemetery (S&K 839-40).

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§223.* **Precautions against Return.** (Sumner & Keller 861)

“A ghost can only find his way back to the house by the way by which he left it. Hence our ancestors carried the corpse out by a **hole made in the wall**, and this hole was carefully stopped up as soon as the body had passed through....” [Etc.] (S&K 861)

There are also precautions of one kind and another, which are starkly enough self-protective, to **prevent the tarrying** or the **return** of the ghost (S&K 861).

So-called civilized man has hardly yet completely eliminated the fear of dead bodies from his philosophy of life.

87:1.5 But despite all this fear, men still sought to trick the ghost.

If the death hut was not destroyed,

the corpse was removed through a **hole in the wall**, never by way of the door.

These measures were taken to confuse the ghost,

to **prevent its tarrying**, and to insure against its **return**.

“Men and women [in Melanesia] are buried alike, their feet turned inland; the return from the funeral is by another road than that along which the corpse was carried, lest the ghost should follow...” (S&K 867).

The reindeer Koryak in Siberia had a method of misleading the ghost which consisted in a relative of the deceased walking round the pyre, first from right to left and then from left to right, “in order to confuse his tracks so that the dead might not follow him.” [Etc.] (S&K IV 363)

§224.* **Disguise and other Forms of Mourning.** (Sumner & Keller 868)

Disguise is very clearly the object of the mourning-customs of some negroes of the Gold Coast, for the men go to the grave with the funeral-procession dressed as women and the women dressed as men (S&K IV 372).

[Compare S&K 868.]

Mourners also returned from a funeral by a different road, lest the ghost follow.

Backtracking and scores of other tactics were practiced to insure that the ghost would not return from the grave.

The sexes often exchanged clothes in order to deceive the ghost.

Mourning costumes were designed to disguise survivors; later on, to show respect for the dead and thus appease the ghosts.

2. GHOST PLACATION

§221. **Forms of the Ghost-Cult.** (Sumner & Keller 851)

[P]lacation is generally practised for the sake of anticipating and dodging calamity or even of simply maintaining neutrality or the existing status.... **Positive programs** of achievement come much later in evolution than **negative programs** of limitation (S&K 853).

“ ... Hence also the **first acts of worship are solely acts of defense...**” (S&K 853).

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§228. **Propitiation.** (Sumner & Keller 893)

Fire is an ill that may come despite the most scrupulous watchfulness, so that one is rightly regarded as careless, ignorant, or reckless who does not **insure against it**;

to the savage the ills that might arise from failure to **insure himself against the malicious caprice of the spirits** were infinitely greater than loss of property or even life—so much greater and more fearsome that even he, in his improvidence, could not think of remaining for any period uncovered to them (S&K 894).

87:2.1 In religion the **negative program** of ghost placation long preceded the **positive program** of spirit coercion and supplication.

The **first acts of human worship were phenomena of defense**, not reverence.

Modern man deems it wise to **insure against fire**;

so the savage thought it the better part of wisdom to **provide insurance against ghost bad luck**.

The effort to secure this protection constituted the techniques and rituals of the ghost cult.

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§226.* **Resistance.** (Sumner & Keller 879)

The purpose in such destruction as is practised is avoidance of the continuing presence of the ghost; moreover, it must not be lost to sight that the ghost itself is eager to be “laid,” to “come to rest,” that is, to proceed duly to the spirit-world; thus the destruction of the body may be a service and an honor to the dead (S&K 882).

[The ghosts demanded support and punished every neglect with calamity: pain, disease, lightning, hail (S&K 894).]

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

§218.* **Mortuary Practices.** (Sumner & Keller 836)

When a Winnebago dies, some person is invited to talk to him before he is buried. The person addressing the dead man or woman tells the deceased how to go to the spirit-land and what to do on the way there (S&K IV 336).

87:2.2 It was once thought that the great desire of a ghost was to be quickly “laid” so that it might proceed undisturbed to deadland.

Any error of commission or omission in the acts of the living in the ritual of laying the ghost was sure to delay its progress to ghostland. This was believed to be displeasing to the ghost,

and an angered ghost was supposed to be a source of calamity, misfortune, and unhappiness.

87:2.3 The funeral service originated in man’s effort to induce the ghost soul to depart for its future home, and the funeral sermon was originally designed to

instruct the new ghost how to get there.

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§231.* **Sacrifice of Property** (Sumner & Keller 912)

Among the Araucanians, “the presents brought by the mourners are buried with the corpse, together with supplies of food, clothing and arms, to provide for his long journey...” (S&K IV 398).

It was the custom to provide food and clothes for the ghost’s journey, these articles being placed in or near the grave.

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

§217.* **The Ghost-Status.** (Sumner & Keller 833)

The interval of sojourn during which the ghost is thought to remain near the corpse ranges from a common minimum of three or four days to a year or more (S&K 834).

The savage believed that it required from three days to a year to “lay the ghost”—to get it away from the vicinity of the grave.

The Eskimo believe that the souls of the deceased stay with the body three days (S&K IV 334).

The Eskimos still believe that the soul stays with the body three days.

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§223.* **Precautions against Return.** (Sumner & Keller 861)

By most peoples it has been thought safer to observe, in the presence of death, a more or less extended period of silence. The ghost will find silent survivors less readily than noisy ones and it is believed by some also that noise irritates the departed (S&K 863).

87:2.4 Silence or mourning was observed after a death so that the ghost would not be attracted back home.

§224.* **Disguise and other Forms of “Mourning.”** (Sumner & Keller 868)

Self-mutilation, smearing the face or body with pigment, special treatment of the hair, and fasting are **common forms of mourning** in Melanesia (S&K IV 371).¹

The prophets of Israel opposed the more violent expressions of mourning, **but in vain**; the shrieking of the professional mourners, the destruction of the whole domestic establishment, the tearing of clothes, blackening of walls, destruction of house-utensils, and also the blackening of the faces and the cutting of beards, went on (S&K IV 376).

§225. **Abstention.** (Sumner & Keller 873)

Fasting, like other forms of self-denial, is a sort of negative sacrifice—not a giving but a refraining from taking;

and again the ghosts are **pleased with the discomfort** entailed (S&K 874).

[See S&K 875-78.]

Self-torture—wounds—was a **common form of mourning**.

Many advanced teachers tried to stop this, **but they failed**.

Fasting and other forms of self-denial

were thought to be pleasing to the ghosts,

who **took pleasure in the discomfort** of the living during the transition period of lurking about before their actual departure for deadland.

87:2.5 Long and frequent periods of mourning inactivity were one of the great obstacles to civilization’s advancement. Weeks and even months of each year were literally wasted in this non-productive and useless mourning.

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§233.* **Miscellaneous Forms of Propitiation.** (Sumner & Keller 920)

That such “mourning” is largely ritualistic appears from most descriptions and especially from the prevalence of professional or hired mourners; mourning-customs include, in the main, devices for avoidance or exorcism of the ghost or for its propitiation (S&K 920).

The fact that professional mourners were hired for funeral occasions indicates that mourning was a ritual, not an evidence of sorrow.

Moderns may mourn the dead out of respect and because of bereavement, but the ancients did this because of *fear*.

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§223.* **Precautions against Return.** (Sumner & Keller 861)

Among the Melanesians of New Guinea the name of a dead man is banished from the language.

87:2.6 The names of the dead were never spoken.

In fact, they were often banished from the language.

These names became taboo,

Thus “many words are permanently lost, or revived with modified or new meanings” (S&K 865).

and in this way the languages were constantly impoverished.

This eventually produced a multiplication of symbolic speech and figurative expression, such as

An Egyptian denominated his death-day: “The day one does not mention.” Doubtless the use of the terms “unspeakable,” “unutterable,” “unnamable,” “nameless,” as well as various circumlocutions and euphemisms, such as “Eumenides” for “Furies,” current in language at all ages, go back to the root-idea of the name-taboo (S&K 866-67).

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§228. **Propitiation.** (Sumner & Keller 893)

In general, spirits do not call for immaterial things or states of mind in their surviving relatives but for material contributions: for meat or tobacco, for ornament, amusement, flattery, self-abasement. In short, they demand that which would have made life enjoyable to them on earth (S&K 897).

§229.* **Human Sacrifice.** (Sumner & Keller 899)

In every family [in the Upper Congo] there was a slave wife, who went by a name which indicated that she was to be buried alive with her dead husband. “The number of wives buried in the grave was in proportion to the man’s wealth and importance, but he always made certain of one” (S&K IV 389).

“the name or day one never mentions.”

87:2.7 The ancients were so anxious to get rid of a ghost that they offered it

everything which might have been desired during life.

Ghosts wanted wives and servants;

a well-to-do savage expected that at least one slave wife would be buried alive at his death.

In the Unyoro regions of East Africa native custom positively required the suicide of a wife on her husband's grave (S&K 901).

In the New Hebrides they strangle the mother, aunt, or grandmother of a beloved child who has died, that it may have care in the next life (S&K 900).

Nor does acquiescence in this practice of human sacrifice have to be forced upon its victims; they too accept the theory and even wish to accompany the dead (S&K 899).

When the soul is laid or expedited to the spirit-world, it is often accompanied by a "grave-escort" of human beings ...: his wife; less often his children; generally some of his slaves, especially if he had been a man of position; not infrequently some of his subjects, if he had been a chief ... (S&K 899).

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

§220.* **Life in the Other World.** (Sumner & Keller 843)

The natives of Borneo believe implicitly in another world, some tribes having even a sort of courier-system to it.

It later became the custom for a widow to commit suicide on her husband's grave.

When a child died, the mother, aunt, or grandmother was often strangled in order that an adult ghost might accompany and care for the child ghost.

And those who thus gave up their lives usually did so willingly;

indeed, had they lived in violation of custom, their fear of ghost wrath would have denuded life of such few pleasures as the primitives enjoyed.

87:2.8 It was customary to dispatch a large number of subjects to accompany a dead chief;

slaves were killed when their master died that they might serve him in ghostland.

The Borneans still provide a courier companion;

They buy a slave, tie him up, and one after another sticks a spear an inch or so into his body, all of them pronouncing messages to deceased friends as they do (S&K IV 345-46).

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§229.* **Human Sacrifice.** (Sumner & Keller 899)

[The ghost] thirsts for vengeance upon his slayer and is pleased to have that enemy's soul accompany him as a slave (S&K 899).

[C]ertainly one of the objects aimed at [in head-hunting] is to secure an offering for the dead at the funeral, "for they believe that the souls of the slain become serviceable to the deceased in the hereafter" (S&K 903).

§230.* **Food-Offerings.** (Sumner & Keller 907)

"Out of the very widespread idea that the dead do not need material nutriment but can be satisfied with merely the soul, the ghost, or the smell alone of food arose the custom of serving the food only *pro forma* and then even of dividing it among the survivors for their enjoyment or of contributing into the grave inedible imitations of food" (S&K 909).

a slave is speared to death to make the ghost journey with his deceased master.

Ghosts of murdered persons were believed to be delighted to have the ghosts of their murderers as slaves;

this notion motivated men to head hunting.

87:2.9 Ghosts supposedly enjoyed the smell of food;

food offerings at funeral feasts were once universal.

XXXIV: SACRIFICE (Sumner & Keller 1199)

§287.* **Insurance and Investment.** (Sumner & Keller 1213)

“Before eating, an Indian took a small piece of food from the dish and threw it into the fire as an offering to the evil spirit, also mumbling a short grace” (S&K IV 654).

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§231.* **Sacrifice of Property.** (Sumner & Keller 912)

In Egypt the things placed in the tombs were damaged or broken to “kill” them, that their doubles might follow the double of the dead and render service (S&K 914).

Property-sacrifice consists in releasing the spirit of the property, by breaking or burning, to accompany that of the dead into the next world (S&K 912).

§234.* **Antagonism of the Dead and the Living.** (Sumner & Keller 924)

We, to whom [the antagonism between the interests of the dead and those of the living] is obvious, marvel at what we call “the funeral-waste,” for such, to our eyes, it is (S&K 925).

The primitive method of saying grace was,

before eating, to throw a bit of food into the fire for the purpose of appeasing the spirits, while mumbling a magic formula.

87:2.10 The dead were supposed to use the ghosts of the tools and weapons that were theirs in life.

To break an article was to “kill it,” thus releasing its ghost to pass on for service in ghostland.

Property sacrifices were also made by burning or burying.

Ancient funeral wastes were enormous.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

The Chinese thriftily use paper models of clothes, shoes, and other desirables, which they burn at the memorial ceremony (S&K 927).

“Stone axes are excepted [among the Australians], as being too valuable to be thus disposed of, and are inherited by the next of kin”; here is an attempt to evade total loss (S&K 925-26).

The Iroquois put an end to all “the preposterous funeral usages which pervaded the lives and wasted the wealth of the other nations of this stock, by a rule in the Book of Rites. A delegation waited on the mourners and told them to be comforted; then they went on with their usual life” (S&K 928).

It is hardly necessary to cite instances of modern funerary extravagance and ostentation (S&K 929).

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Later races made paper models and substituted drawings for real objects and persons in these death sacrifices.

It was a great advance in civilization when

the inheritance of kin replaced the burning and burying of property.

The Iroquois Indians made many reforms in funeral waste.

And this conservation of property enabled them to become the most powerful of the northern red men.

Modern man is not supposed to fear ghosts, but custom is strong,

and much terrestrial wealth is still consumed on funeral rituals and death ceremonies.

3. ANCESTOR WORSHIP

XXVII: DAIMONISM (Sumner & Keller 931)

§239.* **Ancestor-Worship.** (Sumner & Keller 941)

[contd] The ghost-cult, as the primordial expedient for dealing with the supernatural, persists either in its primitive form or in that of its lineal descendants. Of these latter, **ancestor-worship** appears to be the most immediate.

It constitutes the stock transition leading toward daimonism, for the ancestral spirit, as the father and founder of the tribe, forms the **connecting link between the ghost and the god** (S&K 941).

[See 85:6.3.]

VII: THE WORSHIP OF ANCESTORS
(**Hopkins** 73)

[Compare H 73-76.]

The dread of the ghost comes largely from the belief that whether well disposed or not, it needs a body and may occupy the mourner's as a new habitation. Hence the danger of eating and **yawning** before the ghost is settled.

87:3.1 The advancing ghost cult made **ancestor worship** inevitable

since it became the **connecting link between common ghosts and the higher spirits, the evolving gods.**

The early gods were simply glorified departed humans.

87:3.2 Ancestor worship was originally more of a fear than a worship, but such beliefs did definitely contribute to the further spread of ghost fear and worship.

Devotees of the early ancestor-ghost cults even feared to **yawn**

[Footnote:] Sometimes an image or a sort of cage of hair is hung up for [the ghost] to enter, thinking it has a new body; for ghosts are easily tricked. This is not due to affection, however, but to fear lest the ghost enter a human body; yet it shows that the ghost is still a kindly neighbor (H 76).

XXVII: DAIMONISM (Sumner & Keller 931)

§239.* **Ancestor-Worship.** (Sumner & Keller 941)

With ancestor-worship goes the desire for offspring and, in default of such, the custom of adoption. The principal object of the latter is to prevent the extinction of families and the consequent neglect of the spirits of the departed (S&K IV 415).

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§230.* **Food-Offerings.** (Sumner & Keller 907)

[T]here are some peoples who have even a periodic feast of the dead, a species of All-Spirits' Day (S&K 909).

Among [the Roman festival days] were three which were sacred to the spirits of the lower world, nine on which the graves of relatives were decorated and the ancestral ghosts were offered sacrifices, and another on which all the relatives met for a feast (S&K IV 395).

lest a malignant ghost enter their bodies at such a time.

87:3.3 The custom of adopting children was to make sure that some one would provide offerings after death for the peace and progress of the soul.

The savage lived in fear of the ghosts of his fellows and spent his spare time planning for the safe conduct of his own ghost after death.

87:3.4 Most tribes instituted an all-souls' feast at least once a year.

The Romans had twelve ghost feasts and accompanying ceremonies each year.

The idea underlying the death-festivals of the Romans was that the ghosts of the dead return at times to the upper world and must be conciliated by gifts, lest they harm the living; more than half the year was given over to holidays,

Half the days of the year were dedicated to some sort of ceremony associated with these ancient cults.

until Marcus Aurelius ordered that there be not over one hundred and thirty-five festival days in the year (S&K IV 395).

One Roman emperor tried to reform these practices by reducing the number of feast days to 135 a year.

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

§220.* **Life in the Other World.** (Sumner & Keller 843)

87:3.5 The ghost cult was in continuous evolution.

The cult, appearing in its simplest form in connection with the ghosts, becomes gradually more comprehensive and complicated as the ghosts develop into daimons and gods (S&K 849).

As ghosts were envisioned as passing from the incomplete to the higher phase of existence, so did the cult eventually progress to the worship of spirits, and even gods.

But regardless of varying beliefs in more advanced spirits, all tribes and races once believed in ghosts.

4. GOOD AND BAD SPIRIT GHOSTS

XXVII: DAIMONISM (Sumner & Keller 931)

§235. **The Extension of the Ghost-Theory.**
(Sumner & Keller 931)

Ghost-fear has been a perennial fountain of world-philosophy (S&K 931).

Whereas the ghost or eidolon is the disembodied soul of a particular individual, recently dead, and the ghost-cult consists characteristically of mortuary and funerary rites, the daimon is farther along the road to godhood, being a spirit of secondary intention, generally not identifiable as the soul of any deceased person; and the cult of the daimon is a more generalized one (S&K 931).

[*Compare:* The term daimon covers all varieties of spirits, from the ghost, but not including it, up to and inclusive of the divinity or god (S&K 931).]

§236. **Daimonism as a World-Philosophy.**
(Sumner & Keller 932)

87:4.1 Ghost fear was the fountainhead of all world religion;

and for ages many tribes clung to the old belief in one class of ghosts. They taught that man had good luck when the ghost was pleased, bad luck when he was angered.

87:4.2 As the cult of ghost fear expanded, there came about the recognition of

higher types of spirits, spirits not definitely identifiable with any individual human.

They were graduate or glorified ghosts who had progressed beyond the domain of ghostland to the higher realms of spiritland.

87:4.3 The notion of two kinds of spirit ghosts made slow but sure progress throughout the world.

If daimonism, along with the eidolism out of which it develops, is the most primary, universal, and persistent form of religion, it has not needed to be spread by transmission from people to people across incredible distances.

It shows a parallel origin in widely separated ranges; it is subject to variation, selection, and transmission, like the rest of the mores (S&K 936).

To recall a former quotation: "History shows us that the creative force exerted by an idea on the development of civilization does not depend upon its relation to reality. The power of a notion lies not in its certainty but in its vividness or in the number of people who believe in it" (S&K 936).

§235. The Extension of the Ghost-Theory.
(Sumner & Keller 931)

[contd from 87:4.2] Daimonism is therefore the doctrine about spirits, both good and bad; and about these as the effective agency of everything entering to human experience which is referable to luck and imaginary environment (S&K 931-32).

This new dual spiritism did not have to spread from tribe to tribe;

it sprang up independently all over the world.

In influencing the expanding evolutionary mind,

the power of an idea lies not in its reality or reasonableness but rather in its vividness and the universality of its ready and simple application.

87:4.4 Still later the imagination of man envisioned the concept of

both good and bad supernatural agencies;

some ghosts never evolved to the level of good spirits.

[Compare §244.* **The Familiar Spirit and Dualism.** (S&K 966ff & IV 432ff)]

The early monospiritism of ghost fear was gradually evolving into a dual spiritism, a new concept of the invisible control of earthly affairs. At last good luck and bad luck were pictured as having their respective controllers. And of the two classes, the group that brought bad luck were believed to be the more active and numerous.

§236. Daimonism as a World-Philosophy.
(Sumner & Keller 932)

87:4.5 When the doctrine of good and bad spirits finally matured,

Daimonism has been and now is by far the **most widespread and persistent of all religious doctrines**, for it has been and is present in all religions, as is revealed, if not otherwise, by a multitude of survivals, many of which will be met with in subsequent connections (S&K 933).

it became the **most widespread and persistent of all religious beliefs.**

This dualism represented a great religio-philosophic advance because it enabled man to account for both good luck and bad luck while at the same time believing in supermortal beings who were to some extent consistent in their behavior. The spirits could be counted on to be either good or bad; they were not thought of as being completely temperamental as the early ghosts of the monospiritism of most primitive religions had been conceived to be. Man was at last able to conceive of supermortal forces that were consistent in behavior, and this was one of the most momentous discoveries of truth in the entire history of the evolution of religion and in the expansion of human philosophy.

87:4.6 Evolutionary religion has, however, paid a terrible price for the concept of dual spiritism. Man's early philosophy was able to reconcile spirit constancy with the vicissitudes of temporal fortune only by postulating two kinds of spirits, one good and the other bad. And while this belief did enable man to reconcile the variables of chance with a concept of unchanging supermortal forces, this doctrine has ever since made it difficult for religionists to conceive of cosmic unity. The gods of evolutionary religion have generally been opposed by the forces of darkness.

87:4.7 The tragedy of all this lies in the fact that, when these ideas were taking root in the primitive mind of man, there really were no bad or disharmonious spirits in all the world. Such an unfortunate situation did not develop until after the Caligastic rebellion and only persisted until Pentecost.

[Dualism in its developed form issues not alone into complex historic religious systems but also into various categories of metaphysical speculation (S&K 970).]

The concept of good and evil as cosmic co-ordinates is, even in the twentieth century, very much alive in human philosophy; most of the world's religions still carry this cultural birthmark of the long-gone days of the emerging ghost cults.

5. THE ADVANCING GHOST CULT

XXX: DAIMONOLOGY (Sumner & Keller 1061)

§264. **Ascending Complexity.** (Sumner & Keller 1066)

Daimons have myriad rights and no duties;

men are laden with duties and have no rights.

Men are always failing in the discharge of their many and often unknown duties; and the gods are exacting (S&K 1068).

XXVI: THE GHOST-CULT (POSITIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 893)

§228. **Propitiation.** (Sumner & Keller 893)

The ghosts levy, as it were, a sort of fixed charge of propitiation to keep hands off (S&K 893).

Through connection with the notion of neglected duty, man's fear was ready to be awakened by any mischance; even nowadays people are terrified by their consciences in the presence of disaster (S&K 894).

87:5.1 Primitive man viewed the spirits and ghosts as having almost unlimited rights but no duties;

the spirits were thought to regard man as having manifold duties but no rights.

The spirits were believed to look down upon man as constantly failing in the discharge of his spiritual duties.

It was the general belief of mankind that

ghosts levied a continuous tribute of service as the price of noninterference in human affairs,

and the least mischance was laid to ghost activities.

XXX: DAIMONOLOGY (Sumner & Keller 1061)

§264. **Ascending Complexity.** (Sumner & Keller 1066)

Ill is always to be feared and to be foreseen, evaded, and insured against, if possible. Characteristic of this pre-occupation is the occasional worship of the “unknown god” (S&K 1068).

[I]t was well to be sure that some vagrant daimon, unknown and so neglected, should have no cause for dissatisfaction (S&K 1068).

§262. **Nature of Daimonology.** (Sumner & Keller 1061)

Correlative with the science and art of self-maintenance as developed in adjustment to the facts and forces resident in nature and in fellow-men are the science and art, also of self-maintenance,

Early humans were so afraid they might overlook some honor due the gods that, after they had sacrificed to all known spirits,

they did another turn to the “unknown gods,”

just to be thoroughly safe.

87:5.2 And now the simple ghost cult is followed by the practices of the more advanced and relatively complex spirit-ghost cult, the service and worship of the higher spirits as they evolved in man’s primitive imagination. Religious ceremonial must keep pace with spirit evolution and progress.

The expanded cult was but the art of self-maintenance

practiced in relation to belief in supernatural beings,

that secure adjustment to the supernatural environment of spiritual beings—a theory and practice comprehended under the term “daimonology.”

Just as the industrial and military organizations rose out of the mores as adaptations to the natural and social environments;

just as the marriage-organization developed out of the same prolific soil to meet the life-condition of bi-sexuality;

so did the religious organization evolve from the mores in response to the conviction that there existed round about mankind and human society a set of immaterial life-conditions not present in the course of evolution until that process had attained to its human phase (S&K 1061).

[contd] That daimonology represents an adjustment through a set of illusions, albeit to a very real actuality, namely chance, in no way lessens its importance to the eye either of the primitive believer or of the investigating scientist (S&K 1061-62).

Daimonology is the dominant prosperity-policy (S&K 1062).

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

§216. Beliefs about Ghosts. (Sumner & Keller 827)

To anticipate slightly, a significant conviction exists among savages that good spirits need no attention; they will go on doing good without it;

self-adjustment to spirit environment.

Industrial and military organizations were adjustments to natural and social environments.

And as marriage arose to meet the demands of bisexuality,

so did religious organization evolve in response to the belief in higher spirit forces and spiritual beings.

Religion represents man's adjustment to his illusions of the mystery of chance.

Spirit fear and subsequent worship were adopted as insurance against misfortune, as prosperity policies.

87:5.3 The savage visualizes the good spirits as going about their business, requiring little from human beings.

it is the **bad spirits** that require bribery and worship (S&K 828).

The Loango negroes, though believing in a supreme thunder-god, are far **more** concerned about ghosts and spirits; whereas the former is good and not dangerous, the latter are **malevolent** and to be feared, for they represent the reverse side of the aleatory element against which men need insurance (S&K 828).

XXX: DAIMONOLOGY (Sumner & Keller 1061)

§265.* **Avoidance: The Evil Eye.** (Sumner & Keller 1070)

Under **avoidance** must be ranged likewise a set of practices consequent upon belief in the **"evil eye"** ... (S&K 1074).

This belief is **very widespread** among the Old World peoples and appears everywhere to root in the same basic idea of daimonic **envy** of human welfare ... (S&K 1074-75).

The cloistering and **veiling** of women were due in good part to the same ideas. Beauty attracted fatal admiration; hence it was concealed.

When the usage was established for the pretty women it was sure to be **adopted** by all the rest (S&K 1081).

It is the **bad ghosts and spirits** who must be kept in good humor.

Accordingly,

primitive peoples paid **more** attention to their **malevolent** ghosts than to their benign spirits.

87:5.4 Human prosperity was supposed to be especially provocative of the **envy** of evil spirits, and their method of retaliation was to strike back through a human agency and by the technique of the *evil eye*.

That phase of the cult which had to do with spirit **avoidance** was much concerned with the machinations of the **evil eye**.

The fear of it became **almost world-wide**.

Pretty women were **veiled** to protect them from the evil eye;

subsequently many women who desired to be considered beautiful **adopted** this practice.

Certain Papuans believe in two spirits which kill male children, not out of malevolence, but because they wish to draw to themselves the little ones who become their property after death. "And so the careful Papuan mother is not willing to let her child leave the house, after the oncoming of darkness, without an escort" (S&K 1070).

Because of this fear of bad spirits, children were seldom allowed out after dark,

and the early prayers always included the petition,

"An amusing story is also told of the late Pope [Pius IX], when saying prayers at the audience at the Vatican; on coming to the passage in the Lord's Prayer, 'Lead us not into temptation,' he looked over towards a very ugly old lady, upon which the lady boldly repeated aloud, 'Deliver us from the Evil Eye,' *Libera nos a malo occhio*" (S&K 1080).

"deliver us from the evil eye."

Mohammedans recited against the evil eye the one-hundred-thirteenth chapter of the Koran, which protects against all magical spells, influences of the moon, and assaults of evil spirits (S&K 1081).

87:5.5 The Koran contains a whole chapter devoted to the evil eye and magic spells,

The belief existed among the ancient Jews: "Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats" (S&K 1081).

and the Jews fully believed in them.

The phallus is a protection against the evil eye; Wilken connects the so-called fig-gesture with this matter; also the horn (S&K 1080).

The whole phallic cult grew up as a defense against the evil eye.

[*Note*: S&K mention several other fetishes which combat the evil eye, in §265.]

The organs of reproduction were thought to be the only fetish which could render it powerless.

The evil eye gave origin to the first superstitions respecting prenatal marking of children,

People born under certain astrological conditions have the evil eye; and “sometimes the behavior of the **mother** during pregnancy is also supposed to influence the child’s character, and to make him evil-eyed” (S&K 1079).

§266.* **Disparagement; Deception.** (Sumner & Keller 1082)

That **envy is a universal and deep-rooted human trait** is evidenced by all our cases (S&K 1084).

Deception of the ghost is familiar to the reader of a preceding chapter;

and the practice of **deceiving the daimons** is hardly less unsophisticated (S&K 1085).

The **heaping of vituperation or indignities upon one who is fortunate**, in order to make him seem unfortunate and therefore no fit object of envious attention, is one of the most significant of avoidance-methods.

maternal impressions,

and the cult was at one time well-nigh universal.

87:5.6 **Envy is a deep-seated human trait;**

therefore did primitive man ascribe it to his early gods.

And since man had once practiced **deception upon the ghosts,**

he soon began to **deceive the spirits.**

Said he, “If the spirits are jealous of our beauty and prosperity, we will disfigure ourselves and speak lightly of our success.” Early humility was not, therefore, debasement of ego but rather an attempt to foil and deceive the envious spirits.

87:5.7 The **method** adopted to prevent the spirits from becoming jealous of human prosperity was to **heap vituperation upon some lucky or much loved thing or person.**

Survivals of a milder order are found in the deprecation of complimentary reference to one's self or to that which is his

and, at length, in a developed restraint, modesty, and courtesy that take the place of an erstwhile swelling self-sufficiency and boastfulness (S&K 1082-83).

[Compare S&K 1083.]

[contd] The Nile peoples regard it as very unfortunate to give a child a good or well-sounding name. "Children are therefore called by contemptuous or even disgusting appellations ('Piece of Dung' being not an unfrequent name), or are given the names of beasts, such as dog, leopard, giraffe, and so forth" (S&K 1083).

XXVII: DAIMONISM (Sumner & Keller 931)

§237. **The Art of Living.** (Sumner & Keller 938)

Life had all the hazard of constant gambling.

What one's fortune was to be was not a question of effort, industry, or talent but of the whims of daimons who, beyond the veil of the senses, were fighting or playing pranks of which the destinies of men were the resultants (S&K 938).

The custom of depreciating complimentary remarks regarding oneself or family had its origin in this way,

and it eventually evolved into civilized modesty, restraint, and courtesy.

In keeping with the same motive, it became the fashion to look ugly. Beauty aroused the envy of spirits; it betokened sinful human pride.

The savage sought for an ugly name.

This feature of the cult was a great handicap to the advancement of art, and it long kept the world somber and ugly.

87:5.8 Under the spirit cult, life was at best a gamble, the result of spirit control.

One's future was not the result of effort, industry, or talent

except as they might be utilized to influence the spirits.

The attendant practices constituted a heavy burden and made the task of living complicated and tedious; yet on account of the awful sanctions which were supposed to attend them, no one dared try the experiment of omitting them (S&K 938).

The ceremonies of spirit propitiation constituted a heavy burden, rendering life tedious and virtually unendurable.

From age to age and from generation to generation,

Daimonology, as an art, underwent a great development of deductions and corollaries. One meets with attempts to improve the theory of it and new and elaborate rules for applying it, as in the case of all other folkways which have seriously affected life-interests; but attention was turned to that which, as was thought, could control the daimons and determine the aleatory element instead of toward labor and the accumulation of capital (S&K 938-39).

race after race has sought to improve this superghost doctrine,

but no generation has ever yet dared to wholly reject it.

§236. Daimonism as a World-Philosophy.
(Sumner & Keller 932)

The acts, moods, and intentions of the daimons, of so much concern to human destiny, might, it was thought, be learned by omens, auguries, oracles, and signs offered in the incidents of the external world to those who knew how to seize upon and interpret them;

87:5.9 The intention and will of the spirits were studied by means of omens, oracles, and signs.

or they might be revealed by devices of divination, soothsaying, and magic, through which men made inquiry.

And these spirit messages were interpreted by divination, soothsaying, magic,

Ordeals, duels, necromancy, astrology, and magic in general are more elaborate means of discovering what the superior powers are about to do, that is, what is going to happen (S&K 934).

ordeals, and astrology.

[M]en subject themselves to pain, self-denial, and renunciation of satisfactions as if the daimons might be induced to accept voluntary suffering instead of what they intended to inflict; and this form of buying-off, together with more obvious forms of bribery, must be maintained all the time in order to keep the spiritual powers well-disposed or merely neutral, or in the effort to anticipate trouble by speedily atoning for some fault unwittingly committed (S&K 935).

Out of the code of mores then comes

the concept of duty, as things that must be done,

of truth, as the correct world-philosophy;

and of right, as the correct conduct to satisfy interests and to win welfare (S&K 935).

The whole cult was a scheme designed to placate, satisfy,

and buy off the spirits through this disguised bribery.

87:5.10 And thus there grew up

a new and expanded world philosophy consisting in:

1. *Duty*—those things which must be done

to keep the spirits favorably disposed, at least neutral.

2. *Right*—the correct conduct and ceremonies designed to win the spirits actively to one's interests.

3. *Truth*—the correct understanding of, and attitude toward, spirits, and hence toward life and death.

XXX: DAIMONOLOGY (Sumner & Keller 1061)

§267.* **Anticipation and Interrogation.**
(Sumner & Keller 1086)

It is not out of any intellectual **curiosity** that primitive people seek to know the future, but rather for the sake of **eluding the ills** which coming days are sure to contain (S&K 1086-87).

To primitive people the **dream is ominous and prophetic**; so is sneezing, the flight of birds, and unnumbered other phenomena to which in later stages of evolution little or no importance is attached—though practices in connection with some of them persist as survivals, often disguised by rationalization (S&K 1087).

A class of portent which has always rivetted the attention of men is the prodigy—something in nature that is completely **out of the ordinary**, such as red rain or rain of blood (S&K 1090).

87:5.11 It was not merely out of **curiosity** that the ancients sought to know the future; they wanted to **dodge ill luck**.

Divination was simply an attempt to avoid trouble.

During these times, **dreams were regarded as prophetic**,

while everything **out of the ordinary** was considered an omen.

And even today the civilized races are cursed with the belief in signs, tokens, and other superstitious remnants of the advancing ghost cult of old. Slow, very slow, is man to abandon those methods whereby he so gradually and painfully ascended the evolutionary scale of life.

6. COERCION AND EXORCISM

XXX: DAIMONOLOGY (Sumner & Keller 1066)

§264. *Ascending Complexity.* (Sumner & Keller 1066)

It is typical of daimonology that the spirits of a higher potency have to be dealt with by the use of spiritual instrumentalities (S&K 1067).

[Compare S&K 1067-69.]

87:6.1 When men believed in ghosts only, religious ritual was more personal, less organized, but the recognition of

higher spirits necessitated the employment of "higher spiritual methods" in dealing with them.

This attempt to improve upon, and to elaborate, the technique of spirit propitiation led directly to the creation of defenses against the spirits. Man felt helpless indeed before the uncontrollable forces operating in terrestrial life, and his feeling of inferiority drove him to attempt to find some compensating adjustment, some technique for evening the odds in the one-sided struggle of man versus the cosmos.

87:6.2 In the early days of the cult, man's efforts to influence ghost action were confined to propitiation, attempts by bribery to buy off ill luck. As the evolution of the ghost cult progressed to the concept of good as well as bad spirits, these ceremonies turned toward attempts of a more positive nature, efforts to win good luck. Man's religion no longer was completely negativistic, nor did he stop with the effort to win good luck; he shortly began to devise schemes whereby he could compel spirit co-operation.

And it is necessary also to introduce a new element, that of **coercion**; for by means of practices known as coercitives it is possible to enforce the service of a daimon by a sort of irresistible propitiation (S&K 1069).

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§226.* **Resistance.** (Sumner & Keller 879)

[contd] Men do not confine themselves to a mere dodging of the ghostly peril. Ghosts may be entertained and then **driven off** like fleas. Frazer lists the various steps that are taken “to chase away the lingering ghost from his home” or to keep him from returning. They often consist in such procedure as might **frighten away** a small child or a half-witted person ... (S&K 879).

The Australians **tie up the remains** to keep the ghost in the grave; or they **cut off and destroy the head** (S&K 879).

In parts of Melanesia there is a sort of community-ceremony of ejection. **Stones** are thrown into the **houses** and all about and bamboos are beaten throughout the village (S&K 880).

No longer does the religionist stand defenseless before the unceasing demands of the spirit phantasms of his own devising;

the savage is beginning to invent weapons wherewith he may **coerce** spirit action and compel spirit assistance.

87:6.3 Man's first efforts at defense were directed against the ghosts. As the ages passed, the living began to devise methods of **resisting** the dead.

Many techniques were developed for **frightening** ghosts and **driving them away**,

among which may be cited the following:

1. **Cutting off the head** and **tying up the body** in the grave.
2. **Stoning** the **death** house.

Castration of the dead was practised in early Egypt (S&K 881).

“A [Zambesi] child dies, then another child comes to the same father and mother, and that dies, after giving the usual trouble and expense. A third arrives and if that dies, the worm—the father, I mean—turns, and if he is still desirous of more children, he just **breaks one of the legs of the body** before throwing it in the bush. This he thinks will act as a warning to the wanderer-soul ...” (S&K 880).

Thornbushes are thrown over the corpse at burial by the Zambesi tribes, or a **heap of stones** and thorns is raised over the grave (S&K 880).

There is only one speedy way of totally demolishing it, namely, by **cremation**,

though **casting it into the sea** means that it is disposed of, to all intents, without residue; even on the pyre, however, the bones resist the comparatively low temperatures attainable by primitive methods,

and **exposure** to the elements or to the **beasts** is equally ineffective in getting rid of the bones (S&K 882).

3. **Castration**

or **breaking the legs of the corpse.**

4. Burying under **stones**,

one origin of the modern tombstone.

5. **Cremation**,

a later-day invention to prevent ghost trouble.

6. **Casting the body into the sea.**

7. **Exposure** of the body to be eaten by wild **animals.**

§227.* **Expulsion.** (Sumner & Keller 885)

[contd] Despite the belief in the more than human power of the ghost, it is not impossible to frighten it away by plying a club or spear or by otherwise resisting it as one would resist a living being. The view appears to be widespread also that ghosts **dislike or are afraid of noise** (S&K 885).

Among the Yorubas “drinking and **shouting**, amid the firing of muskets, the jangle of native gongs, and the dull thud of the **drums**, continue all night.” [Etc.] (S&K 886)

There are several practices, such as passing-**bells**, musketry-discharge, “**wake**”-ceremonies, and the like which have descended into modern times and probably represent survivals of antique mores (S&K 887).

XXXII: SIN, EXORCISM, COERCION
(Sumner & Keller 1133)

§276.* **Exorcism.** (Sumner & Keller 1144)

The Eskimo and Aleuts keep off evil spirits with fetid and **malodorous substances**, chiefly urine; the Cambodians use the urine of a white or fetish-horse against smallpox; and elsewhere over the earth parallelisms are not uncommon (S&K IV 607).

The Chaldæans represented the demons under forms so **hideous** that it was sufficient for them to be shown their own images, to cause them to **flee** away alarmed (S&K IV 608).

87:6.4 Ghosts were supposed to be **disturbed and frightened by noise;**

shouting, bells, and drums drove them away from the living;

and these ancient methods are still in vogue

at “**wakes**” for the dead.

Foul-smelling concoctions were utilized to banish unwelcome spirits.

Hideous images of the spirits were constructed so that they would **flee** in haste when they beheld themselves.

XXV: THE GHOST-CULT (NEGATIVE ASPECTS) (Sumner & Keller 851)

§227.* **Expulsion.** (Sumner & Keller 885)

[Compare S&K 892.]

[When the dog barked, man or beast approached, but when the dog howled, spirits were near. (69:7.4).]

[Compare S&K 892.]

[Our practice of having the **cock** on **weather-vanes** (weather-cock) is a survival of the time when the bird was believed to keep watch against spirits; it figures in such a capacity in Teutonic mythology (S&K IV 506).]

The inhabitants of the Altai Mountains think they can drive the ghost into the underworld most effectively by the use of **water**.

In South India the dying man is given a bath and drinks **holy water**

in which the **priest's feet have been washed** (S&K IV 383).

[See S&K 887-89.]

During the process of cremation among the **Nairs** there is a ceremony called literally "to walk round a pot," which consists, as its name implies, in walking round the pyre with a pitcher, the bottom of which is pierced. One of the family fills this pitcher with water and **carries it three times round the burning corpse**, dashing it on the ground at the end (S&K IV 384).

It was believed that dogs could detect the approach of ghosts,

and that they gave warning by howling;

that cocks would crow when they were near.

The use of a **cock** as a **weather vane** is in perpetuation of this superstition.

87:6.5 **Water** was regarded as the best protection against ghosts.

Holy water was superior to all other forms,

water in which the **priests had washed their feet**.

Both fire and water were believed to constitute impassable barriers to ghosts.

The **Romans**² **carried water three times around the corpse**;

Modern **Jews**, as they leave the graveyard, **wash their hands** in a can of water placed at the gate; before they have done so they may not touch anything nor may they return to their houses (S&K IV 388).

XXXII: SIN, EXORCISM, COERCION
(Sumner & Keller 1133)

§276.* **Exorcism.** (Sumner & Keller 1144)

In particular is **baptism** a rite of wide prevalence over the earth (S&K 1148).

“With few exceptions . . . **bathing** of the new-born infant takes place among most peoples; a purification of the mother always.” The aim is not physical cleanliness, for **sanitary** conditions are a matter of concern to but few of the peoples in question. It would be difficult indeed to account for the baptism on other than **religious** grounds (S&K 1148-49).

XXX: DAIMONOLOGY (Sumner & Keller 1066)

§264. **Ascending Complexity.** (Sumner & Keller 1066)

in the twentieth century the body is sprinkled with holy water,

and **hand washing** at the cemetery is still a **Jewish** ritual.

Baptism was a feature of the later water ritual;

primitive **bathing** was a **religious** ceremony.

Only in recent times has bathing become a **sanitary** practice.

87:6.6 But man did not stop with ghost coercion; through religious ritual and other practices he was soon attempting to compel spirit action.

[D]aimonology shows a characteristic difference from the ghost-cult in that most of the art of dealing with the enlarged spirits consists in the employment of spirit against spirit—

in reality, a sort of undeveloped dualism, or pitting one daimon against another (S&K 1067).

XXXII: SIN, EXORCISM, COERCION
(Sumner & Keller 1133)

§277.* Coercitives. (Sumner & Keller 1156)

If cursing and imprecation are not coercitive upon the spiritual powers, they are hard to classify (S&K 1160).

[?]

Men act in a certain way and the daimons cannot but meet their wishes; men revert, for instance, to a cruder code of mores and thus move the spirits to favor them: they fall back on promiscuity, they revive cannibalism, they return to older or discarded forms of worship (S&K 1157-58).

Exorcism was the employment of one spirit to control or banish another,

and these tactics were also utilized for frightening ghosts and spirits.

The dual-spiritism concept of good and bad forces offered man ample opportunity to attempt to

pit one agency against another,

for, if a powerful man could vanquish a weaker one, then certainly a strong spirit could dominate an inferior ghost.

Primitive cursing was a coercive practice designed to overawe minor spirits.

Later this custom expanded into the pronouncing of curses upon enemies.

87:6.7 It was long believed that

by reverting to the usages of the more ancient mores the spirits and demigods could be forced into desirable action.

The daimons seem always to have delighted in survivals, and religion is still full of them; there is, for instance, something hardly reverent in an English **prayer** that does not use “thou” in its several cases (S&K 1158).

There are a number of highly **sensual** religious rites, whose origin is not known, that may at one time have been **reversions**; the Walpurgisnacht will occur to the reader of mediæval writers or of Goethe (S&K 1160).

[?]

Krauss describes at length a Slavic ceremony where nudity is coercive.... The author makes it clear that the ceremony is a solemn and devout one, **entirely free from** sexual license or incitement (S&K 1159).

On its religious side the curse developed into the **vow** and the prayer, on its social side into the ordinance and ultimately into the regular law ... (S&K IV 626).

Modern man is guilty of the same procedure. You address one another in common, everyday language,

but when you engage in **prayer**, you resort to the older style of another generation, the so-called solemn style.

87:6.8 This doctrine also explains

many religious-ritual **reversions** of a **sex nature**,

such as temple prostitution.

These reversions to primitive customs were considered sure guards against many calamities.

And with these simple-minded peoples all such performances were **entirely free from** what modern man would term promiscuity.

87:6.9 Next came the practice of

ritual **vows**,

soon to be followed by

The Oath. Allied to cursing in its religious aspect is the **oath**, a solemn affirmation made with an appeal to supernatural power to establish the truth of what it affirmed (S&K IV 626).

Many of the phenomena of daimonology exhibit coercitive elements or a coercitive tinge: self-immolation, **self-mutilation**, asceticism, abstinence, cleanliness or uncleanliness, and a number of others.

This set of ideas runs out at last into all ritual and magical theories of rites, sacrifices, **fasting**, **prayer**, vows, and sacraments (S&K 1165).

Certain religious acts of **self-denial** can be interpreted here as **coercitives** (S&K IV 623).

[See S&K IV 623.]

XXVII: DAIMONISM (Sumner & Keller 921)

§236. **Daimonism as a World-Philosophy.**
(Sumner & Keller 932)

religious pledges and sacred **oaths**.

Most of these oaths were accompanied by

self-torture and **self-mutilation**;

later on, by **fasting** and **prayer**.

Self-denial was subsequently looked upon as being a sure **coercive**;

this was especially true in the matter of sex suppression.

And so primitive man early developed a decided austerity in his religious practices, a belief in the efficacy of self-torture and self-denial as rituals capable of coercing the unwilling spirits to react favorably toward all such suffering and deprivation.

87:6.10 Modern man no longer attempts openly to coerce the spirits, though he still evinces a disposition to bargain with Deity.

There are current among many of us phrases and practices, regarded sometimes as profane, which are merely survivals of daimonism: forms of **swearing** illustrate this point, as do euphemisms ... that disguise cruder forms;

and the ignorant, as is fully illustrated in such stories as *Huckleberry Finn*, still **expectorate**, repeat **formulas** or execute motions, carry protective devices, "**knock on wood**," or otherwise endeavor to avoid or thwart daimonic influences (S&K 933).

And he still **swears**,

knocks on wood, crosses his fingers, and follows **expectoration** with some trite phrase; once it was a magical **formula**.

7. NATURE OF CULTISM

V: THE CULTUS AND ITS EMOTIONAL ACCOMPANIMENTS
(**Westcott-Wieman** 87)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CULTUS
(Westcott-Wieman 87)

[contd] The cultus is the **symbolism** by which **loyalties and sentiments** are stimulated, fostered and sustained (W-W 87).

It is sensed strongly in "**old families**", long-established universities and churches, and in racial groups that have remained in one territory (W-W 87).

87:7.1 The cult type of social organization persisted because

it **provided a symbolism** for the preservation and **stimulation of moral sentiments and religious loyalties**.

The cult grew out of the traditions of

"old families"

and was perpetuated as an established institution;

Each family has its cultus... Heirlooms and mementoes; the celebration of birthdays; arrangements made for particular activities such as the telling of stories, neighborhood camaraderie, family worship, or the coming of a baby; the policies of family education—all these and much more are outward evidences of that deep, compelling force, family cultus (W-W 87-88).

But even new groups soon feel the need of a cultus. They begin, blindly or deliberately, to grope their way toward those silent, powerful symbols which establish bonds to the end of supporting ideals and sentiments (W-W 87).

The chief function of a cultus is to foster the emotions with which the beliefs and ideals are charged (W-W 88).

Every long-continuing social group develops a cultus (W-W 87).

Cultus has the greatest hold upon human beings where they are not conscious of it (W-W 89).

all families have a cult of some sort.

Every inspiring ideal grasps for some perpetuating symbolism—

seeks some technique for cultural manifestation which will insure survival and augment realization—

and the cult achieves this end by fostering and gratifying emotion.

87:7.2 From the dawn of civilization

every appealing movement in social culture or religious advancement has developed a ritual, a symbolic ceremonial.

The more this ritual has been an unconscious growth, the stronger it has gripped its devotees.

The hold of an unconscious cultus may be so great that the participants cannot conceive of any other possible situation which would meet the requirements of what they have come to feel is their ideal situation for living....

When this happens, there develops one of the greatest obstacles for social reconstruction. The cultus so completely nurtures and preserves the established loyalties, sentiments and beliefs as to resist change (W-W 89-90).

THE FAILURE OF THE RELIGIOUS CULTUS OF TODAY (Westcott-Wieman 90)

There are many stranded individuals who no longer feel that they do belong, or can belong. For them, there is no adequate living symbolism which lights the way toward the highest accessible Cause and which develops sentiments of sufficient emotional power to lead to devoted action.

Indeed, the development of an effective cultus in any religion today is a very serious problem.... A religious cultus must grow.... Modern living has been too speedy, shifting and preoccupied to give consideration to the culture of effective symbols (W-W 90-91).

The cult preserved sentiment and satisfied emotion,

but it has always been the greatest obstacle to social reconstruction and spiritual progress.

87:7.3 Notwithstanding that the cult has always retarded social progress, it is regrettable that

so many modern believers in moral standards and spiritual ideals have no adequate symbolism—

no cult of mutual support—nothing to belong to.

But a religious cult cannot be manufactured; it must grow.

WHENCE COMES AN ADEQUATE RELIGIOUS CULTUS? (Westcott-Wieman 94)

[contd] It grows up through the devotional experience of the devotees, through their adoration and service. It must be true to the nature and needs of the situations of life of these devotees.... This means that no two groups will develop an identical symbolism, though there will be some basic similarities among groups who serve the same dominant loyalty (W-W 94).

And those of no two groups will be identical

unless their rituals are arbitrarily standardized by authority.

THE FAILURE OF THE RELIGIOUS CULTUS OF TODAY (Westcott-Wieman 90)

The security of the individual, "his salvation", was the central issue in the cultus of the Christian religion.... There must be some breaking in from the outside of something supernatural to redeem the individual.... These religious events became ritualized in a "coming to the altar", baptism and other ceremonies. "The Lord's Supper" is a symbolic partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ which has its deeper rootage in this belief in ingression. All these and more made up the very rich and powerful Christian cultus. Those of us who were nurtured in it can testify as to its significance and potency in the individual life (W-W 91).

87:7.4 The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any ritual ever conceived or devised,

but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by

Why cannot such a cultus remain? Because certain events have disturbed the bases upon which much of its symbolism was developed, and hence have de-vitalized and de-powered it. A deeper and truer understanding of the processes through which persons are improved, a socialization of outlook which interprets individual salvation through considerations of social interdependence and constructiveness, critical examination of the **tenets** of the Christian religion and its sources through the instrumentality of modern scientific methods, the revelations of modern science concerning the universe, ... —

these and other forces have come as disruptive intrusions from without to disturb and **de-vitalize** the passing Christian cultus (W-W 92-93).

THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF A NEW RELIGIOUS CULTUS (Westcott-Wieman 97)

[We have come to the place where no new Messiah with a **new Revelation**, nor no new reformer with a new interpretation of the old word, can precipitate all the floating elements into the compound of a new religious doctrine around which will grow a new cultus (W-W 99).]

the destruction of so many of its original underlying **tenets**.

The Christian cult has been **devitalized** by the loss of many fundamental ideas.

87:7.5 In the past, truth has grown rapidly and expanded freely when the cult has been elastic, the symbolism expansile. Abundant truth and an adjustable cult have favored rapidity of social progression. A meaningless cult vitiates religion when it attempts to supplant philosophy and to enslave reason; a genuine cult grows.

87:7.6 Regardless of the drawbacks and handicaps,

every **new revelation** of truth has given rise to a new cult,

and even the restatement of the religion of Jesus must develop a new and appropriate symbolism.

Modern man must find some adequate symbolism for his new and expanding ideas, ideals, and loyalties.

For these and other reasons there can be no formulation or even fairly formed projection as to what this new cultus will be. It **must grow out of religious living** (W-W 99).

This enhanced symbol **must arise out of religious living**, spiritual experience.

And this higher symbolism of a higher civilization must be predicated on the concept of the Fatherhood of God and be pregnant with the mighty ideal of the brotherhood of man.

As has been said, the great issue underlying and pervading the **old Christian cultus** was the salvation of the devotee as an individual. Indeed, for some time, there has been a glorification of **individualism** in religion (W-W 99).

87:7.7 The **old cults** were too **egocentric**;

the new must be the outgrowth of applied love.

The new cult must, like the old, foster sentiment, satisfy emotion, and promote loyalty; but it must do more: It must facilitate spiritual progress, enhance cosmic meanings, augment moral values, encourage social development, and stimulate a high type of personal religious living. The new cult must provide supreme goals of living which are both temporal and eternal—social and spiritual.

SOME POSSIBLE STARTING POINTS
(Westcott-Wieman 102)

The sentiments and loyalties entering into the promotion of the *growth* of the love life of **the home** are certainly in line with the larger objectives concerned with noble social reconstruction. A rich and potent symbolism for the nourishing and nurturing of these sentiments, ideals and loyalties would be a truly great contribution to the worth of human living (W-W 103).

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN AN EFFECTIVE CULTUS? (Westcott-Wieman 95)

1. The cultus must **symbolize that which is permanent in the midst of change**. It must point ever to that which is held to be Supremely Worthful, so that this will be the great central ideal through all the changes which may take place in the immediate and concrete situations of living (W-W 95).

2. There must be continuity in the material cultus, a strong warp running through to give a sense of **unity** to the woof of variety (W-W 95).

3. **Beauty** must be there, but cannot be introduced deliberately if it is to be of greatest effectiveness (W-W 95).

87:7.8 No cult can endure and contribute to the progress of social civilization and individual spiritual attainment unless it is based on the biologic, sociologic, and religious significance of

the home.

A surviving cult must **symbolize that which is permanent in the presence of unceasing change;**

it must glorify that which **unifies** the stream of ever-changing social metamorphosis.

It must recognize true meanings, exalt **beautiful** relations, and glorify the good values of real nobility.

87:7.9 But the great difficulty of finding a new and satisfying symbolism is because modern men, as a group, adhere to the scientific attitude, eschew superstition, and abhor ignorance, while as individuals they all crave mystery and venerate the unknown.

4. Another element in the effective cultus is interpretation of the glory of the **mystery**. Beyond the Most **Worthful**, as men can at any one time apprehend it, there lie possibilities, vast, magnificent, sublime.... The mysterious Higher is a reality: it is always there, though the conceptions of it change. The cultus must bring to the devotees a vivid sense of this precious reality "on beyond" (W-W 96).

No cult can survive unless it embodies some masterful **mystery** and conceals some **worthful** unattainable.

[contd] 5. The symbolism must consist of factors, elements, signs, which have psychological association with great experiences. Some of these experiences may be **significant to the individual, some to the group**. Those which have deep meaning for the group will be the more powerful (W-W 96).

Again, the new symbolism must not only be **significant for the group but also meaningful to the individual**.

6. The cultus must include **forms which the individual can carry out significantly on his own initiative** (W-W 96).

The **forms** of any serviceable symbolism must be those **which the individual can carry out on his own initiative**,

and which he can also enjoy with his fellows.

7. The cultus must symbolize **dynamically** the increase of value. It must keep in the consciousness of the devotees a moving sense of that which functions in our midst for the reconstruction of society for the good. A religion with an outworn theology cannot do this (W-W 97).

If the new cult could only be **dynamic** instead of static,

it might really contribute something worth while to the progress of mankind, both temporal and spiritual.

87:7.10 But a cult—a symbolism of rituals, slogans, or goals—will not function if it is too complex. And there must be the demand for devotion, the response of loyalty. Every effective religion unerringly develops a worthy symbolism, and its devotees would do well to prevent the crystallization of such a ritual into cramping, deforming, and stifling stereotyped ceremonials which can only handicap and retard all social, moral, and spiritual progress. No cult can survive if it retards moral growth and fails to foster spiritual progress.

[In some families the cultus is reenforcing, glorifying, challenging, sustaining. In others it clutches, molds, retards, denatures (W-W 88).]

SOME POSSIBLE STARTING POINTS
(Westcott-Wieman 102)

The cultus is the very heart of religion (W-W 106).

The cult is the skeletal structure around which grows the living and dynamic body of personal spiritual experience—true religion.

87:7.11 [Presented by a Brilliant Evening Star of Nebadon.]

1. See also S&K 905-06.

2. The water-barrier between the living and the dead often dwindled into a mere stunted survival, especially among more advanced peoples. Thus, after a Roman funeral it was enough to carry water three times round the persons engaged and to sprinkle them (S&K IV 388).