

## Paper 86 — Early Evolution of Religion

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*This chart is a revision of the January 29, 2015 version.*

Most endnotes and Urantia Book cross-references have been deleted to enhance readability.

### Sources for Paper 86, 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) Lewis **Browne**, *This Believing World: A Simple Account of the Great Religions of Mankind* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926)
- (3) William Graham **Sumner**, Albert Galloway **Keller**, and Maurice Rea Davie, *The Science of Society, Volume IV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927)
- (4) E. Washburn **Hopkins**, Ph.D., LL.D., *Origin and Evolution of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923)

### Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms occurring further apart, usually not in the same row.
- (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 86 — EARLY EVOLUTION OF RELIGION

86:0.1 The evolution of religion from the preceding and primitive worship urge is not dependent on revelation. The normal functioning of the human mind under the directive influence of the sixth and seventh mind-adjutants of universal spirit bestowal is wholly sufficient to insure such development.

86:0.2 Man's earliest prereligious fear of the forces of nature gradually became religious as nature became personalized, spiritized, and eventually deified in human consciousness. Religion of a primitive type was therefore a natural biologic consequence of the psychologic inertia of evolving animal minds after such minds had once entertained concepts of the supernatural.

### 1. CHANCE: GOOD LUCK AND BAD LUCK

XXI: THE ALEATORY ELEMENT  
 (Sumner & Keller 737)

§194. Chance. (Sumner & Keller 737)

86:1.1 Aside from the natural worship urge,

In the process of adjustment to [nature and fellow-men] there emerges yet another life-condition, basic and elemental as they and equally suited, as involving a dominant interest, to form the nucleus of an accretion of mores, the core of a comprehensive institution. This added life-condition is the element of **chance** or **luck** (S&K 737).

The same energy put forth upon successive occasions in **hunting** has **resulted** now in plenty, easily obtained, and again merely in fruitless fatigue. In all ages and stages **variation** from the expected is always taking place (S&K 737).

Upon the primitive stage **mischance** is the more significant

because men live, so to speak, **on the edge** of existence where it does not take much to shove them over (S&K 738).

§195. What “Luck” Is. (Sumner & Keller 740)

Now the savage is like the child: his knowledge, beyond the **restricted sphere** of immediate experience, is small; manifestly, he is “taking a chance” on almost everything he does (S&K 741).

[The luck element] forms for him, as the facts show, one of the major conditions of life on earth; and his adaptation to it, as he sees it, works out into an important set of societal structures (S&K 741-42).

early evolutionary religion had its roots of origin in the human experiences of **chance**—so-called **luck**, commonplace happenings.

Primitive man was a food hunter.

The **results** of **hunting** must ever **vary**,

and this gives certain origin to those experiences which man interprets as *good luck* and *bad luck*.

**Mischance** was a great factor in the lives of men and women

who lived constantly **on the ragged edge** of a precarious and harassed existence.

86:1.2 The **limited intellectual horizon** of the savage so concentrates the attention upon chance

that luck becomes a constant factor in his life.

§196. **Good and Bad Luck.** (Sumner & Keller 743)

[T]he savage was really involved in a struggle for existence, whereas none of us are. We struggle for a standard of living; if we lose out utterly, still existence is assured to us by the society in which we live.

Our far-away ancestors, on the contrary, and their present-day representatives, the nature-peoples, lived and live in a direct relation to physical environment that is full of perils of a vital order (S&K 745).

“It is not too much to say that the horrible dread of unknown evil hangs like a thick cloud over savage life

and embitters every pleasure.” This is something of an exaggeration, but is much nearer the truth than statements of the opposite tenor (S&K 745).

“On the spiritual side, the Cheyenne’s life was hedged about by a multitude of barriers of ritual and custom. . . . Yet he lived in constant fear of doing some forbidden thing which would bring him bad luck” (S&K 745).

The experience of good luck never relieves people on [the primitive] stage of the present fear of ill; indeed, a run of good fortune frightens them to the last degree, for it is a sure harbinger of calamity (S&K 744).

Primitive Urantians struggled for existence, not for a standard of living;

they lived lives of peril

in which chance played an important role.

The constant dread of unknown and unseen calamity hung over these savages as a cloud of despair

which effectively eclipsed every pleasure;

they lived in constant dread of doing something that would bring bad luck.

Superstitious savages always feared a run of good luck; they viewed such good fortune as a certain harbinger of calamity.

86:1.3 This ever-present dread of bad luck was paralyzing.

The contrast between bad and good luck is so great—nothing for something *versus* something for nothing—that it has rivetted the attention of men in all ages. Why work, when bad luck may defeat you?

Why work hard and reap bad luck—

nothing for something—

Why exert yourself, when good luck may do for you in a moment more than effort could do in a lifetime? (S&K 746)

when one might drift along and encounter good luck—

something for nothing?

[T]he tendency of human nature is to take good luck to be normal and as the matter of course and to confine attention pretty largely to the ill fortune (S&K 743).

Unthinking men forget good luck—take it for granted—but they painfully remember bad luck.

86:1.4 Early man lived in uncertainty and in constant fear of chance—bad luck.

§194. **Chance.** (Sumner & Keller 737)

A good part of the race's life on earth has been spent in toying with the element of chance ... There has been a never-ending fascination in the fall of the cards, the turn of the wheel, the fortuitous in general; one even hears of the gaming or gambling “instinct” (S&K 739).

Life was an exciting game of chance; existence was a gamble.

What wonder, in view of these various considerations, that the luck element in life has occupied men's thoughts through the ages? (S&K 739)

It is no wonder that partially civilized people still believe in chance

and evince lingering predispositions to gambling.

“Interest” is the word for their attitude toward it.

Primitive man alternated between two potent interests:

The passion for getting something for nothing and the fear of getting nothing for something

the passion of getting something for nothing and the fear of getting nothing for something.

And this gamble of existence was the main interest

have always fascinated the human mind (S&K 739).

and the supreme fascination of the early savage mind.

That the efforts of man in the struggle for existence are thwarted by forces which he does not understand is true at all stages. When men set out to collect subsistence, to kill beasts, to breed domestic animals, to till the soil,

86:1.5 The later herders held the same views of chance and luck, while the still later agriculturists were increasingly conscious that crops were immediately influenced by many things over which man had little or no control.

they adapt their efforts to what they know or think they know about the right way in which to get what they want.

Drought, inundation, hail, lightning, cattle-disease, insects, heat, and cold traverse their efforts and defeat their purposes (S&K 738).

The farmer found himself the victim of drought, floods, hail, storms, pests, and plant diseases, as well as heat and cold.

This element enters into the struggle for existence as good or ill luck;

And as all of these natural influences affected individual prosperity, they were regarded as good luck or bad luck.

that struggle, indeed, seems to turn into a calculus of luck (S&K 738).

§196. Good and Bad Luck. (Sumner & Keller 743)

86:1.6 This notion of chance and luck strongly pervaded the philosophy of all ancient peoples.

The author of the book of Ecclesiastes had observed this:

Even in recent times in the Wisdom of Solomon it is said:

“I returned, and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, not yet favour to men of skill;

but time and chance happeneth to them all” (S&K 746).

[For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them (Eccles. 9:12).]

“I returned and saw that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill;

but fate and chance befall them all.

For man knows not his fate; as fishes are taken in an evil net, and as birds are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time when it falls suddenly upon them.”

## 2. THE PERSONIFICATION OF CHANCE

§197. **Adjustment to the Aleatory Element.**  
(Sumner & Keller 746)

Of the Melanesian it is said: “Anxiety in the face of real or imaginary ill is the keynote to which he is attuned. Mistrust is the immediate consequence” (S&K 750-51).

Pain is a signal of maladjustment, physical or other; it is, in many of its aspects, most salutary; all the way up through the organic scale it has been pain and death which have forced a superior adaptation (S&K 751).

86:2.1 Anxiety was a natural state of the savage mind.

When men and women fall victims to excessive anxiety, they are simply reverting to the natural estate of their far-distant ancestors;

and when anxiety becomes actually painful, it inhibits activity and unfailingly institutes evolutionary changes and biologic adaptations.

Pain and suffering are essential to progressive evolution.

When the Fuegians were heard howling and lamenting at every sunrise, the interpreter, being questioned, said: “people very sad, cry very much.” Apparently they hated to see the new day and to feel the spur to renewed struggle;

86:2.2 The struggle for life is so painful that certain backward tribes even yet howl and lament over each new sunrise.

yet after expressing their sentiments they went perforce and doggedly forward with their routine (S&K 751).

It was misery, loss, pain, disease—in short, the ills of life—that enforced attention. They have made it imperative for man to ask who is tormenting him and to hit upon some theory of escape and mode of reconciliation as a policy of welfare (S&K 751).

Primitive man constantly asked, “Who is tormenting me?”

## XXII: THE SPIRIT-ENVIRONMENT (Sumner & Keller 771)

§208. Explanation of Luck. (Sumner & Keller 787)

Not finding a material source for his miseries,

They asked: “Who inflicts these blows, and why?” The answer which they gave themselves was that spirits of dead ancestors, somehow dissatisfied with them, inflicted ill (S&K 789).

he settled upon a spirit explanation.

## XXI: THE ALEATORY ELEMENT (Sumner & Keller 737)

§197. Adjustment to the Aleatory Element. (Sumner & Keller 746)

And so was religion born of



What [man] feels is fear—fear of the mysterious and menacing Unknown (S&K 752).

the fear of the mysterious, the awe of the unseen, and the dread of the unknown.

Nature fear thus became a factor in the struggle for existence first because of chance and then because of mystery.

§198. **Mental Outfit.** (Sumner & Keller 752)

Working upon what outfit of experience it has, the primitive mind arrives at logical conclusions; and the chief reason for the difference between its conclusions and ours is that it has had comparatively little to work on (S&K 753).

86:2.3 The primitive mind was logical but contained few ideas for intelligent association;

the savage mind was uneducated,

Civilized men ... have a fuller mental outfit and tested ways of dealing with it. They are less unsophisticated (S&K 753).

wholly unsophisticated.

§199.\* **Primitive Accuracies and Fallacies.** (Sumner & Keller 758)

So far as the savage man has any notion of causation, it is all exhausted in the reasoning that if one event follows another it is caused by it (S&K 762).

If one event followed another, the savage considered them to be cause and effect.

What is encountered in the savage is plain ignorance—not superstition; he, like the child, knows no better and has had no opportunities to improve by way of learning better (S&K 765).

What civilized man regards as superstition was just plain ignorance in the savage.

§198. **Mental Outfit.** (Sumner & Keller 752)

In particular, men now know, though they often forget or ignore it under pressure of emotion, that there is no necessary relation whatever between purposes and results (S&K 753).

Mankind has been slow to learn that there is not necessarily any relationship between purposes and results.

The necessary relation is not between intentions and consequences but **between acts and consequences**; that is sure and constant (S&K 754).

“We think with less strain if we think in terms of persons. In fact, the race has always **personalized the less tangible and more abstract things**, for by such means it has been possible to tie up floating and evasive conceptions so that they can be found again and dealt with.

The vast impersonalities that control our destiny—**Nature, Chance, God**—are rendered into terms that men are more used to handle” (S&K 755).

Is the type of intellect represented in the following passage utterly without parallel at the present day? “The Ten’a have a wonderful faculty for believing or disbelieving what they choose.... The ultimate reason, which can be detected in almost every instance as the one that really determines their belief, is: **what benefit shall accrue to me from such a belief?** If they see in it their own advantage, nothing more is required...” (S&K 757).

It is contended, not that the process of selection has not elevated the quality of the human mind, but that **the difference between the primitive and the sophisticated intelligence is one much more of content than of quality**,

Human beings are only just beginning to realize that

the reactions of existence appear **between acts and their consequences**.

The savage strives to **personalize everything intangible and abstract**,

and thus both **nature** and **chance** become personalized

as ghosts—spirits—and later on as **gods**.

86:2.4 Man naturally tends to believe **that which he deems best for him**, that which is in his immediate or remote interest;

self-interest largely obscures logic.

**The difference between the minds of savage and civilized men is more one of content than of nature**,

of degree rather than of kind; and that human mental machinery in its more complicated workings goes back to the same simple elements which were present when the apparatus was still rudimentary (S&K 758).

XXII: THE SPIRIT-ENVIRONMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 771)

§208. **The Explanation of Luck.** (Sumner & Keller 787)

“To infer that because you cannot tell how an effect is produced, it is due to spirits,

is about as logical as the inference of the man who found the harness on the rack and the horse gone, and concluded that the hostler had eaten the horse...” (S&K 787-88).

XXI: THE ALEATORY ELEMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 737)

§195. **What “Luck” Is.** (Sumner & Keller 740)

Luck then is a name for that which is inexplicable on a given stage of knowledge

or in view of men’s unwillingness to take the trouble to get or to apply that knowledge (S&K 740).

[Chance] is what men are too ignorant or too unenterprising to figure out (S&K 741).

of degree rather than of quality.

86:2.5 But to continue to ascribe things difficult of comprehension to supernatural causes

is nothing less than a lazy and convenient way of avoiding all forms of intellectual hard work.

Luck is merely a term coined to cover the inexplicable in any age of human existence;

it designates those phenomena

which men are unable or unwilling to penetrate.

Chance is a word which signifies that man is too ignorant or too indolent to determine causes.

Men regard a natural occurrence as an accident or as bad luck only when they are destitute of curiosity and imagination, when the races lack initiative and adventure.

To omniscience there could be no luck; to advancing knowledge there is less luck; and as one set of **phenomena** after another is included within the range of rational explanation

Exploration of the **phenomena** of life

the conviction has grown that **throughout the universe regularity reigns** to the total exclusion of chance (S&K 740).

sooner or later destroys man's belief in chance, luck, and so-called accidents, substituting therefor a **universe of law and order**

Science, of course, recognizes no such thing as chance in the sense of a result without a **sufficient cause**; it cannot believe that anything ever "just happened," or was a "mere coincidence" or "causeless spontaneity" (S&K 740).

wherein all effects are preceded by **definite causes**.

Thus is the fear of existence replaced by the joy of living.<sup>1</sup>

BOOK ONE: HOW IT ALL BEGAN  
(**Browne** 27)

I: MAGIC (Browne 27)

1. How the savage tried to explain the evils that befell him—he imagined all objects were animate—self-preservation and magic. (Browne 27)

To the savage there was nothing absurd in the idea that everything around him bore him malice, for he had not yet discovered that some things were inanimate. In the world he saw about him, **all objects were animate**: sticks, stones, storms, and all else (B 28).

86:2.6 The savage looked upon **all nature as alive**,

as possessed by something.

Perhaps, as Professor George Foot Moore slyly reminds us, even civilized folk instinctively cling to that primitive notion. Children angrily **kick** the tables against which they **bump** their heads, as though those tables were human. Grown men **mutter oaths** at the rugs over which they stumble, for all the world as though those rugs had intentionally tried to trip them (B 28).

[Primitive man] could not give himself stoical courage with the thought that much of the evil that occurred might be **accidental**. He could not so much as conceive of the accidental.

No, so far as his poor dull pate could read the riddle, all things that occurred were full of meaning, were **intentional** (B 27-28).

XXVII: DAIMONISM (Sumner & Keller 931)

§243.\* **Fear of the Daimons.** (Sumner & Keller 960)

The world of spirits “is just as little organized as the primitive peoples themselves. All the spirits, even the highest, are but mighty magicians, mighty through their magic, sometimes beneficent, according to their fancy or caprice, but always feared” (S&K 960).

Civilized man still **kicks** and **curses** those inanimate objects which get in his way and **bump** him.

Primitive man never regarded anything as **accidental**;

always was everything **intentional**.

To primitive man the domain of fate, the function of luck,

the spirit world, was just as unorganized and haphazard as was primitive society.

XXI: THE ALEATORY ELEMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 737)

§195. What “Luck” Is. (Sumner & Keller 740)

[M]uch that was for the primitive man a part of the aleatory element ... is seen to occur in accordance with law and can even be predicted with precision or probability; whims of spirits do not come in any longer to account for it (S&K 742).

[See S&K 827 and 938.]

[Compare Hopkins pp. 1-5 and 91:1.5.]

XXII: THE SPIRIT-ENVIRONMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 771)

§202. The Shock of Death. (Sumner & Keller 772)

Apparently the first and most powerful of the excitants to reflection was that event which has represented to many generations of shrinking mortals the supreme and decisive, if not the ultimate ill of earthly existence—death. This reaction must not be confused with any idea of the “sanctity of human life,” a conception not harbored by the savage mind (S&K 774).

Luck was looked upon as the whimsical and temperamental reaction of the spirit world;

later on, as the humor of the gods.

86:2.7 But all religions did not develop from animism. Other concepts of the supernatural were contemporaneous with animism, and these beliefs also led to worship. Naturalism is not a religion—it is the offspring of religion.

3 . D E A T H — T H E  
INEXPLICABLE

86:3.1 Death was the supreme shock to evolving man, the most perplexing combination of chance and mystery.

Not the sanctity of life but the shock of death inspired fear and thus effectively fostered religion.

Death by **violence** was, among early men as among animals, a common form of life-ending;

disease came upon them as something without any antecedent at all; so that people were accustomed to the visible operation of agency and the conception of cause was not thrust upon them. In short, death being inexplicable in the exclusion of agency, it came under the widely extended range of the aleatory element, as perhaps the extreme case of it (S&K 774).

§203.\* **Death Not Inevitable.** (Sumner & Keller 775)

Primitive men see no such universal destiny of death;

they **take life as the fact** and cannot understand that it must end—or begin (S&K 775).

The conviction prevails widely, at any rate, among backward aborigines that death is not according to nature and that it cannot occur in the undisturbed course of events; it is very generally referred to magic (S&K 776).

The Bible says that Enoch and Elijah **did not die**, and other peoples beside the Hebrews have **traditions** of translation. Menelaus was not to die but was to be sent to the Elysian fields because he was the husband of the daughter of Zeus; and his case does not stand alone in Homer. [Etc.] (S&K 776)

Among savage peoples death was ordinarily due to **violence**,

so that nonviolent death became increasingly mysterious.

Death as a natural and expected end of life was not clear to the consciousness of primitive people,

and it has required age upon age for man to realize its **inevitability**.

86:3.2 Early man **accepted life as a fact**,

while he regarded death as a visitation of some sort.

All races have their legends of men who **did not die**, vestigial **traditions** of the early attitude toward death.

§208. **The Explanation of Luck.** (Sumner & Keller 787)

In Nyassaland they have a **hazy** idea of some supreme being,

“to account for **unexplained phenomena**, such as thunder, lightning, and small-pox” (S&K 789).

§203.\* **Death Not Inevitable.** (Sumner & Keller 775)

To the mind of the African Baganda there is no such thing as death from natural causes. “Both **disease** and **death** are the direct outcome of the influence of some ghost...” (S&K IV 303).

[Not long ago I met a splendid old soul, a lady of some sixty-odd years, who, in describing her affliction, said that she “had been under the power of **the enemy** for more than fifteen years” (William S. **Sadler**, M.D., *The Essentials of Healthful Living* [1925], p. 23).]

The Miltonic view assumes the original absence of death, before **sin** “brought death into the world and all our woe” (S&K 776).

Already in the human mind there existed the nebulous concept of a **hazy** and unorganized spirit world,

a domain whence came all that is inexplicable in human life, and death was added to

this long list of **unexplained phenomena**.

86:3.3 All human **disease** and natural **death** was at first believed to be due to spirit influence.

Even at the present time some civilized races regard disease as having been produced by “**the enemy**”

and depend upon religious ceremonies to effect healing.

Later and more complex systems of theology still ascribe death to the action of the spirit world, all of which has led to

such doctrines as original **sin** and the fall of man.



XXI: THE ALEATORY ELEMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 737)

§198. **Mental Outfit.** (Sumner & Keller 752)

“The Dyak feels the need of guidance from the powers around and above him in his going out and coming in, in his precarious farming, in his occupations in the sombre depths of the jungle, in his boating over the dangerous rapids, or the treacherous tides of the swift rivers. He is aware that death and destruction may suddenly confront him in many a hidden danger,

and he longs for something to hint to him when to advance and when to recede...”  
(S&K 756).

86:3.4 It was the realization of impotency before the mighty forces of nature, together with the recognition of human weakness before the visitations of sickness and death,

that impelled the savage to seek for help from the supermaterial world,

which he vaguely visualized as the source of these mysterious vicissitudes of life.

#### 4. THE DEATH-SURVIVAL CONCEPT

XXII: THE SPIRIT-ENVIRONMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 771)

§205. **Dreams about the Dead.** (Sumner & Keller 782)

86:4.1 The concept of a supermaterial phase of mortal personality was born of the unconscious and purely accidental association of the occurrences of everyday life plus the ghost dream.

Someone, dreaming in a fitful sleep, actually sees and hears the [powerful leader who died a sudden death], perhaps agonizingly feels the weight of his heavy and ready hand and rouses up with a yell of fear and pain. Very likely more than one report the same sort of experience (S&K 783).

Taking these dreams as actuality, as they do, it is clear enough to the members of the group that the chief still lives (S&K 783).

Indeed the vivid dream not seldom leaves behind it visible physical results such as sweating and trembling, which might well be taken by the uncritical mind as proof positive of the reality of dream-experience (S&K 782).

§206. Projectivism. (Sumner & Keller 784)

Kenyon Cox utilizes the inevitable tendency of man to construct the imaginary solely upon the basis of actual experience as follows: "As men imagine things unseen always in the terms of things seen, their wildest fancies being but the shifting and the recombination of the elements of known objects, the beings imagined by men are as much within the purview of imitative art as are the beings of the actual world" (S&K 785).

[contd] The actuality of the next life is a matter of serene and unshaken belief ... This being the case, it can be understood that death is robbed of much of the terror it may previously have inspired

The simultaneous dreaming about a departed chief by several members of his tribe

seemed to constitute convincing evidence that the old chief had really returned in some form.

It was all very real to the savage who would awaken from such dreams reeking with sweat, trembling, and screaming.

86:4.2 The dream origin of the belief in a future existence explains

the tendency always to imagine unseen things in the terms of things seen.

And presently this new dream-ghost-future-life concept began effectively to antidote the death fear

under the unchecked animal **instinct of self-preservation** (S&K 785).

§204. **Inferences from Illusion.** (Sumner & Keller 780)

But what, to the savage intelligence, was [the] **breath?** (S&K 780)

He had to figure it to his mind in some way without having seen it except, in some cases, **as vapor** (S&K 780).

Though observation extended, as will be seen, to other agencies or seats of life, the plain inference from the evidence is that the presence of “the **breath of life**” was the primordial proof of the animate state and its absence the accepted indication of death (S&K 780).

I: MAGIC (**Browne** 27)

2. Religion and faith defined—the technique of magic—the dawn of the idea of the “spirit”—animism. (Browne 29)

But at last the day did come when, like the stealthy climb of a slow dawn, that idea of the spirit crept into man’s head.... Of a morning he awoke, looked up bewilderedly at the familiar rocks of his cave, and gasped, “Hello, that’s **queer!**”—or sounds to that effect.... Very vividly he remembered fighting huge beasts during the night, or hurtling down ravines, or devouring whole mastodons, or flying. . . . And yet there he was, still lying in his smelly cave, for all the world as though he had never for a moment left it! . . . (B 30-31).

associated with the biologic **instinct of self-preservation.**

86:4.3 Early man was also much concerned about his **breath,**

especially in cold climates,

where it appeared **as a cloud** when exhaled.

The **breath of life** was regarded as the one phenomenon which differentiated the living and the dead.

He knew the breath could leave the body,

and his dreams of doing all sorts of **queer** things while asleep

XXII: THE SPIRIT-ENVIRONMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 771)

§205. **Dreams about the Dead.** (Sumner & Keller 782)

In deriving the soul-idea from the dream

rather than from confusion of personality, or “mana,” or any other of the origins for which some writers contend, we are moved in good part by the consideration that a virtually universal belief must have a virtually universal phenomenon as its source (S&K 783-84).

§208. **Explanation of Luck.** (Sumner & Keller 787)

The idea of a “double” was developed

and to this double the term “breath” was widely applied.

We may anticipate by stating that these “spirits” were thought to be of a power entirely above the human

and wholly capable of bringing to pass the otherwise inexplicable (S&K 787).

convinced him that there was something immaterial about a human being.

The most primitive idea of the human soul, the ghost, was derived from the breath-dream idea-system.

86:4.4 Eventually the savage conceived of himself as a double—

body and breath.

The breath minus the body equaled a spirit, a ghost.

While having a very definite human origin,

ghosts, or spirits, were regarded as superhuman.

And this belief in the existence of disembodied spirits seemed to explain

the occurrence of the unusual, the extraordinary, the infrequent, and the inexplicable.

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

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

This belief in a future life, which is characteristic of mankind, no matter what stage of civilization is considered, is to be sharply distinguished from convictions about “immortality” (S&K 847).

Savages who cannot reckon above ten or twenty are not very likely to have a conception of an infinity of time (S&K 848).

There is no “immortality” at all except in the sense of recurring reincarnation (S&K 849).

XXIII: ANIMISM (Sumner & Keller 791)

§211.\* **Transmigration and Reincarnation.** (Sumner & Keller 806)

Countries like India, where beliefs in transmigration and reincarnation are rife, have had a history shaped in good part by their presence (S&K 807).

Proof of reincarnation exists to [the Hurons] in the perfect resemblance which some persons bear to others who are deceased (S&K 809).

The naming of a boy after the father’s father and of a girl after the mother’s mother may be due to a belief in reincarnation, combined with the idea that the reincarnate spirit must enter the body of one of his or her own moiety or clan (S&K IV 314).

86:4.5 The primitive doctrine of survival after death was not necessarily a belief in immortality.

Beings who could not count over twenty could hardly conceive of infinity and eternity;

they rather thought of recurring incarnations.

86:4.6 The orange race was especially given to belief in transmigration and reincarnation.

This idea of reincarnation originated in the observance of hereditary and trait resemblance of offspring to ancestors.

The custom of naming children after grandparents and other ancestors was due to belief in reincarnation.

“Some Dyaks speak of a series of spirit worlds through which their souls must pass before they become finally extinct. **Some** Dyaks say they have to die **three** times; others say **seven times**; but all seem to agree in the idea that after these successive dyings they practically cease to exist, and are absorbed into air and fog...” (S&K IV 317).

**Some** later-day races believed that man died from **three to seven times**.

This belief (residual from the teachings of Adam about the mansion worlds), and many other remnants of revealed religion, can be found among the otherwise absurd doctrines of twentieth-century barbarians.

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

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

The natives of British Central Africa do not conceive of an underworld, though a “bad man” is thought not to go to quite the same place as others; there is **no idea of punishment or hell-fire**, however (S&K IV 343).

86:4.7 Early man entertained **no ideas of hell or future punishment**.

Life in the “happy hunting-grounds” is ordinary human life **minus its ill fortunes**, that is, minus the aleatory element in its unpleasant aspect.

The savage looked upon the future life as just like this one, **minus all ill luck**.

Later on, a separate destiny for good ghosts and bad ghosts—heaven and hell—was conceived.

The idea of heaven and hell, of reward and retribution, is conspicuously absent on the primitive stage; in general, **people go on in the next life where they left off in this** (S&K 844).

But since many primitive races believed that **man entered the next life just as he left this one**,

X: THE SELF AS SOUL (Hopkins 136)

Every person is remembered as a whole and remains a complete person after death. Hence the rule of the Fiji Islanders that leads them to kill their relatives and even themselves before the weakness of age shall make them permanently decrepit in the next life (H 136).

XXIII: ANIMISM (Sumner & Keller 791)

§210.\* Animistic Beliefs. (Sumner & Keller 793)

“ ... Thus [among the Homeric Greeks] there was a close bond between a man and his soul; a strong man had a strong soul, and a weak coward a contemptible one...” (S&K 795).

Yet the Homeric shades, like as they were to men, were unsubstantial. As “mere *eidōla*” they flew about [in Hades] with thin cries, huddling and clinging together like bats dislodged from the roof of a cave, ... and forgetful of all unless temporarily resuscitated by a draught of blood (S&K 796).

In India the soul or spirit of a man is sometimes identified with his shadow; a man of strong individuality is said to have a powerful shadow, a weak or nervous person to have a light shadow (S&K IV 310).

they did not relish the idea of becoming old and decrepit.

The aged much preferred to be killed before becoming too infirm.

86:4.8 Almost every group had a different idea regarding the destiny of the ghost soul.

The Greeks believed that weak men must have weak souls;

so they invented Hades as a fit place for the reception of such anemic souls;

these unrobust specimens were also supposed to have shorter shadows.

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

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

The Swedes thought that Odin at his death went back to the place, by tradition northeast of the Black Sea, whence their **ancestors** had come (S&K IV 353).

XXIII: ANIMISM (Sumner & Keller 791)

§213.\* **Location of the Soul.** (Sumner & Keller 815)

In China **body and soul were supposed to go together** (S&K 818).

[Compare S&K IV 352.]

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

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

The earliest **Hebrews** held that at a man's death a kind of image or outline of his whole personality detached itself from the corpse and **descended to Sheol**.

Their abode of the dead was thought of as a subterranean space, for one "goes down" to it, while it had two other constant features: a prevailing thick darkness and an **impossibility of return** (S&K IV 353).

The early Andites thought their ghosts returned to the **ancestral homelands**.

The Chinese and Egyptians once believed that **soul and body remained together**.

Among the Egyptians this led to careful tomb construction and efforts at body preservation.

Even modern peoples seek to arrest the decay of the dead.

The **Hebrews** conceived that a phantom replica of the individual **went down to Sheol**;

it **could not return** to the land of the living.

They did make that important advance in the doctrine of the evolution of the soul.



## 5. THE GHOST-SOUL CONCEPT

XXIII: ANIMISM (Sumner & Keller 791)

§209. **Nature of the Soul.** (Sumner & Keller 791)

[contd] The vital element which is supposed to survive death and bodily dissolution is variously termed the ghost, spirit, shade, soul, wraith, specter, apparition, phantom, vision, “haunt” (S&K 791).

The word “soul,” the etymology of which is uncertain, is perhaps the most inclusive of them all (S&K 791).

The soul was like the double in the dream, always built upon the likeness of the living; like to the living where the dream-double was like, different where, and as, the dream-double was different (S&K 791-92).

The disembodied soul was like the dead man in all respects except where the consensus of the senses did not corroborate the evidence of one or two of them—where, for instance, the soul was regarded as having no substance although that fact was not betrayed to eye or ear but only to touch (S&K 791).

§214.\* **All Things Have Souls.** (Sumner & Keller 820)

If one goes back to the dream or hallucination he will readily see that it was not man alone who appeared as a dream-double; doubles of clothing, weapons, and ornaments were also in evidence, as were those of trees, animals, and other features of the dream-background.

86:5.1 The nonmaterial part of man has been variously termed ghost, spirit, shade, phantom, specter,

and latterly soul.

The soul was early man’s dream double;

it was in every way exactly like the mortal himself except that it was not responsive to touch.

The belief in dream doubles

The conclusion that all things have souls was as natural as that men had them; and this is a belief current among primitive peoples (S&K 820).

The Hudson Bay Eskimo believe that everything in the world has its attendant spirit (S&K IV 331).

§209. Nature of the Soul. (Sumner & Keller 791)

[See 86:5.1, above.]

[T]he soul, before it becomes a ghost, is conceived to abide in the living person. That is why the person is alive and not dead, “animate” and not “inanimate”; to die he has to “give up the ghost,” breathe it out when he “breathes his last,” or “expires” (S&K 792).

Absence of animistic beliefs is almost if not quite non-existent (S&K 792).

[4. *Soul*. The soul of man is an experiential acquirement. As a mortal creature chooses to “do the will of the Father in heaven,” so the indwelling spirit becomes the father of a new reality in human experience. The mortal and material mind is the mother of this same emerging reality (0:5.10).]

led directly to the notion that all things animate and inanimate had souls as well as men.

This concept tended long to perpetuate the nature-spirit beliefs;

the Eskimos still conceive that everything in nature has a spirit.

86:5.2 The ghost soul could be heard and seen, but not touched.

Gradually the dream life of the race so developed and expanded the activities of this evolving spirit world that

death was finally regarded as “giving up the ghost.”

All primitive tribes, except those little above animals, have developed some concept of the soul.

As civilization advances, this superstitious concept of the soul is destroyed, and man is wholly dependent on revelation and personal religious experience for his new idea of the soul as

the joint creation of the God-knowing mortal mind and its indwelling divine spirit, the Thought Adjuster.

§214.\* **All Things Have Souls.** (Sumner & Keller 820)

The transition from views of this sort to fetishism is not an abrupt one. In fact, there is a zone of uncertainty **as to whether** the soul in a thing is one **“native” to** it or whether it is an alien spirit **in “possession”** of it (S&K 824).

§215. **Inconsistencies.** (Sumner & Keller 824)

Students have often raised the question as to how the savage can believe in the insubstantiality of the soul and yet in its ability to inflict blows and even to suffer under them.... In this section on adjustment to the inexplicable, where the impossibility of verification is encountered at every turn, **inconsistencies** are multiplied; and we might as well have done at once with a natural **perplexity** at their occurrence (S&K 824-25).

IX: THE SOUL (**Hopkins** 109)

A savage parallel to the diffused soul may be found in the Tonga statement that “soul is to the body as **perfume to a flower**” (H 133).

XXIII: ANIMISM (**Sumner & Keller** 791)

§210.\* **Animistic Beliefs.** (Sumner & Keller 793)

“... The soul had **various ways of leaving the body:**

86:5.3 Early mortals usually failed to differentiate the concepts of an indwelling spirit and a soul of evolutionary nature.

The savage was much confused **as to whether** the ghost soul was **native to the body** or was an external agency **in possession of** the body.

The absence of reasoned thought in the presence of **perplexity** explains

the gross **inconsistencies** of the savage view of souls, ghosts, and spirits.

86:5.4 The soul was thought of as being related to the body as the **perfume to the flower.**

The ancients believed that the soul could **leave the body in various ways,** as in:

in **fainting** it was breathed out, to return apparently by the same way when recovery occurred;

[See S&K 797 and 86:5.6, below.]

in **death**, it departed regularly by way of the mouth ..." (S&K 795).

In the Congo region "there was a curious saying after one has **sneezed**, viz., 'It is not I, but someone else,' and this was accompanied by a clapping of the hands expressive of astonishment." It meant: "I am surprised that you want to call away my spirit (the spirit is supposed to escape from the nostrils), I am not the person you think I am" (S&K 797).

XXX: DAIMONOLOGY (Sumner & Keller 1061)

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

The custom of saying "**God bless you,**" or some equivalent expression, when a person sneezes, is ancient and very widely extended (S&K IV 570).

XXIII: ANIMISM (Sumner & Keller 791)

§210.\* **Animistic Beliefs.** (Sumner & Keller 793)

"It is a well-established ethnographical fact that savage and semi-civilized men as a rule explain **sleep**, swoon, and unconsciousness as due to an **absence** of the sentient entity from the body.

86:5.5 1. Ordinary and transient **fainting**.

86:5.6 2. Sleeping, natural dreaming.

86:5.7 3. Coma and unconsciousness associated with disease and accidents.

86:5.8 4. **Death**, permanent departure.

86:5.9 The savage looked upon **sneezing** as an abortive attempt of the soul to escape from the body.

Being awake and on guard, the body was able to thwart the soul's attempted escape.

Later on, sneezing was always accompanied by some religious expression, such as "**God bless you!**"

86:5.10 Early in evolution **sleep** was regarded as proving that the ghost soul could be **absent** from the body,

The invisible duplicate thus wandering away may be made to return to the body by shouts and by calling the name.

Sometimes, as in ordinary sleep, it comes back immediately. In other instances, as when the body is in a state of lethargy or trance, the return of the other-self is postponed for hours, at times for several days.”

The dream is what happens to the soul while temporarily out of the body.

“What a savage experiences during a dream is just as real to him as what he sees when he is awake” (S&K 793).

The Papuans never awake a sleeper “in an abrupt manner but carefully and gradually, so that the soul shall get time to return to its dwelling” (S&K 793).

[See S&K 793-95.]

Familiarity with the Hebrew scriptures and knowledge of the ancients in general reveal many cases bearing upon the topic under review, and mediæval records contain others (S&K 795).

[See endnote.]

and it was believed that it could be called back by speaking or shouting the sleeper’s name.

In other forms of unconsciousness

the soul was thought to be farther away, perhaps trying to escape for good—impending death.

Dreams were looked upon as the experiences of the soul during sleep while temporarily absent from the body.

The savage believes his dreams to be just as real as any part of his waking experience.

The ancients made a practice of awaking sleepers gradually so that the soul might have time to get back into the body.

86:5.11 All down through the ages men have stood in awe of the apparitions of the night season,

and the Hebrews were no exception.

They truly believed that God spoke to them in dreams, despite the injunctions of Moses against this idea.<sup>2</sup> And Moses was right, for ordinary dreams are not the methods employed by the personalities of the spiritual world when they seek to communicate with material beings.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

URANTIA PAPER 86

From the conception of the soul wandering about in **animal** form

86:5.12 The ancients believed that souls could enter **animals** or even inanimate objects.

it is not far to the belief in **werewolves** and kindred illusions (S&K 805).

This culminated in the **werewolf** ideas of animal identification.

A person could be a law-abiding citizen by day, but when he fell asleep, his soul could enter a wolf or some other animal to prowl about on nocturnal depredations.

86:5.13 Primitive men thought that the soul was associated with the breath,

The Sioux believe in the **transfer of qualities by the breath** (S&K 797).

and that its **qualities could be imparted or transferred by the breath.**

If the child is a boy, a **brave** and good-tempered man, chosen beforehand, takes the infant in his arms and **breathes into his mouth,**

The **brave** chief would **breathe upon** the newborn child,

thereby communicating his own disposition to the child who will grow up to be a brave and good-natured man (S&K 797).

thereby imparting courage.

Among early Christians

[Then said Jesus to [the apostles] again, Peace *be* unto you: as *my* Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

And when he had said this, he **breathed on them**, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: (Jn. 20:21-22)]

the ceremony of bestowing the Holy Spirit was accompanied by **breathing on** the candidates.

[By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his **mouth** (Ps.33:6).]

Said the Psalmist: “**By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.**”

In Nias the **oldest son** assimilates the soul of his father by taking his **last breath**; if he fails to do so and another does, he must share his inherited position with him (S&K 797).

**Shadow** and **breath** are interchangeable conceptions of the soul among the Shingu Indians, as among the Eskimo (S&K 798).

The soul is likewise identified with other immaterial and shadowy things, such as the **reflection in water**

or in a **mirror** (S&K 799).

[Frazer] mentions the widespread custom of covering mirrors or **turning them to the wall** after a death in the house (S&K 800).

Many primitive peoples **refuse to allow the making of likenesses**, whether the subject is man or beast, because they fear that magic may be practised by way of this abstracted item of personality (S&K 800).

§213.\* **Location of the Soul.** (Sumner & Keller 815)

[contd] Theories as to the location of the animating principle in the body serve to fill out the conception of the soul. It resides in any bodily part or attribute the loss of which means death, swoon, or great weakness, as the **breath**,

It was long the custom of the **eldest son** to try to catch the **last breath** of his dying father.

86:5.14 The **shadow** came, later on, to be feared and revered equally with the **breath**.

The **reflection of oneself in the water** was also sometimes looked upon as proof of the double self,

and **mirrors** were regarded with superstitious awe.

Even now many civilized persons **turn the mirror to the wall** in the event of death.

Some backward tribes still believe that the **making of pictures, drawings, models, or images** removes all or a part of the soul from the body;

hence such are **forbidden**.

86:5.15 The soul was generally thought of as being identified with the **breath**,

**blood**, bodily warmth; or in those members, disturbance of which is attended by death or deathlike states, as the **head**, **heart**, pit of the stomach, kidney-**fat**; or elsewhere for various other reasons, known or otherwise. [Etc.] (S&K 815)

XXIV: EIDOLISM (Sumner & Keller 827)

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

As **Abel's blood cried out** to Jahweh, so did the murdered Arab call for revenge (IV 353).

XXIII: ANIMISM (Sumner & Keller 791)

§213.\* **Location of the Soul.** (Sumner & Keller 815)

A not less important seat of life, according to **Semitic** ideas, lay in the viscera ... or more broadly in the **fat** of the omentum (intestinal membrane) and the organs that lie in or near it.

“Now it is precisely this part of the victim, the fat of the omentum with the kidneys and the lobe of the liver, which the Hebrews were forbidden to **eat**, and, in the case of sacrifice, burned on the altar” (S&K IV 326).

**Head-hunting** is based largely upon the conviction that thereby the soul of a person, residing in his head, becomes serviceable to his slayer (S&K 816).

but it was also located by various peoples in

the **head**, hair, **heart**, liver, **blood**, and **fat**.

The “**crying out of Abel's blood** from the ground”

is expressive of the onetime belief in the presence of the ghost in the blood.

The **Semites** taught that the soul resided in the bodily **fat**,

and among many the **eating** of animal fat was taboo.

**Head hunting** was a method of capturing an enemy's soul,



A scalped warrior was supposed by the Indians to be annihilated; hence **scalping** really deprived the victim of the future life (S&K 816).

An interesting location for the soul is the **pupil** of the **eye**... This case of localization, whether the soul is identified with the spot of light in the pupil, or whether, as seems more likely, with the reflected miniature image looking out through “the **windows of the soul**,” is a significant one (S&K 817).

Some Australians distinguish **three or four**: a “soul equivalent,” a dream-spirit, and perhaps an animal-spirit (S&K 819).

The Yakuts believe a man has three souls and three shadows: the first belonging to every object, the first and second to living things only, the third solely to human beings, horned cattle, and horses. If a man loses one of these he suffers **discomfort**; if two, he is **ill**; if all three, he **dies** (S&K 819).

§210.\* **Animistic Beliefs.** (Sumner & Keller 793)

“... In the same way a Sema who is **sick** goes to the fields to call his soul, whose desertion of the body may be the cause of the illness...” (S&K 802).

There is such a thing as getting a new soul when the original is lost; the Eskimo *angekok* (sorcerer) can provide one or can **exchange a sick soul for a well one** which he can get out of an animal or a child (S&K 803).

[Jn. 3:3-7.]

as was **scalping**.

In recent times the **eyes** have been regarded as the **windows of the soul**.

86:5.16 Those who held the doctrine of **three or four** souls

believed that the loss of one soul meant **discomfort**, two **illness**, three **death**.

One soul lived in the breath, one in the head, one in the hair, one in the heart.

The **sick** were advised to stroll about in the open air with the hope of recapturing their strayed souls.

The greatest of the medicine men were supposed to **exchange the sick soul** of a diseased person **for a new one**,

the **“new birth.”**

Cranz, in his early work on Greenland, states that the Eskimo believe in

two souls, the breath and the shadow; that the soul during sleep goes hunting or on other adventure; and he affirms that dreams led to this notion (S&K 794).

A review of the Homeric conception of the soul will cover most of the essential features of other peoples' conceptions as well....

... The *psyche* was regarded as the energizing principle of the body; yet the body it was with which the personality was identified.... "Hence it seems that the soul was a separate being for the continued possession of which a man would strive. The soul and the man were a sort of dual personality ..." (S&K 795).

§213.\* Location of the Soul. (Sumner & Keller 815)

The echo of beliefs in plurality of soul persisted in such views as those of Plato who assigned three souls to man:

the vegetative in his digestive organs, the animal in his breast, and the intelligence in his head (S&K 819).

§210.\* Animistic Beliefs. (Sumner & Keller 793)

The Greenland Eskimo think that man consists of three parts: body, soul, and name (S&K IV 313).

86:5.17 The children of Badonan developed a belief in

two souls, the breath and the shadow.

The early Nodite races regarded man as consisting of two persons, soul and body.

This philosophy of human existence was later reflected in the Greek viewpoint.

The Greeks themselves believed in three souls;

the vegetative resided in the stomach, the animal in the heart, the intellectual in the head.

The Eskimos believe that man has three parts: body, soul, and name.

## 6. THE GHOST-SPIRIT ENVIRONMENT

XXII: THE SPIRIT-ENVIRONMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 771)

§207. The **Imaginary Environment**. (Sumner & Keller 786)

86:6.1 Man inherited a natural environment, acquired a social environment, and **imagined** a ghost environment. The state is man's reaction to his natural environment, the home to his social environment, the church to his illusory ghost environment.

86:6.2 Very early in the history of mankind the realities of

[contd] The ensemble of the foregoing views, sketched within broad outlines and later to be filled in more fully, leads to the conception of a **world of ghosts and spirits** which, since it does not verify according to our tests of reality, cannot now be regarded as other than **imaginary** (S&K 786).

the **imaginary world of ghosts and spirits**

became universally believed,

It thoroughly permeates every range of society's life except the most simple and material reactions on physical environment ... Hence it is to be reckoned with as a factor of immense reach, scope, and **power in the life of human society** (S&K 786).

and this newly imagined spirit world became a **power in primitive society**.

With the development of that idea an altogether new and virgin tract is opened for the operations of the human mind ... (S&K 786-87).

The mental and moral life of all mankind was modified for all time by the appearance of this new factor in human thinking and acting.

This is the supernatural or imaginary environment; and it forms for primitive man that great **illusory major premise**

from which he deduces, with entire logic, **most** of the “**superstition**” for which he is pitied, condemned, or ridiculed (S&K 786).

[[The ghost-cult] is the form of religion by which the race has been characterized throughout by far the greater part of its history (S&K 852).]

[See 87:4.4-5.]

## XXI: THE ALEATORY ELEMENT (Sumner & Keller 737)

### §197. Adjustment to the Aleatory Element. (Sumner & Keller 746)

[contd] The aleatory element, especially in its negative phase of **ill fortune**, fills the perspective of the race’s childhood with an enduring and real menace.... Inasmuch as this element formed one of the major conditions of his life, primitive man was not slow to sense the **discomfort that enforces adaptation** (S&K 746-47).

86:6.3 Into this **major premise of illusion** and ignorance,

mortal fear has packed **all** of the subsequent **superstition** and religion of primitive peoples.

**This was man’s only religion up to the times of revelation,**

and today many of the world’s races have only this crude religion of evolution.

86:6.4 As evolution progressed, good luck became associated with good spirits and bad luck with bad spirits.

The **discomfort of enforced adaptation** to a changing environment was regarded as **ill luck**, the displeasure of the spirit ghosts.

Primitive man slowly evolved religion out of his innate worship urge and his misconception of chance.

Nowadays **civilized man** has at hand a practical adaptation to the aleatory element which is the fine fruit of some of primitive man's primæval gropings toward safety and surety in the face of mischance, namely, **insurance** (S&K 749).

In insurance-operations recourse is had to the laws of chance and **actuaries** figure out about what amount of mischance must be **reckoned** on; this then is distributed in the form of premiums paid on policies (S&K 749).

**§198. Mental Outfit.** (Sumner & Keller 752)

Some of us believe in maternal impressions, or talismans, or the infallibility of a political formula or party, or in some fantastic religious dogma; yet from the vantage-ground of modern science we are always **smiling patronizingly at the follies and superstitions** of the recent past and inferring that we ourselves are emancipated from them—

whereas the only correct inference is that future generations will look back patronizingly upon us as we have done upon our forebears (S&K 757).

**Civilized man** provides schemes of **insurance** to overcome these chance occurrences;

modern science puts an **actuary** with mathematical **reckoning**

in the place of fictitious spirits and whimsical gods.

86:6.5 Each passing generation **smiles at the foolish superstitions** of its ancestors

while it goes on entertaining those fallacies of thought and worship which will give cause for

further smiling on the part of enlightened posterity.

XXII: THE SPIRIT-ENVIRONMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 771)

§208. **The Explanation of Luck.** (Sumner & Keller 787)

Ghost-fear became the fountain of ever new streams of **thought-life**. Its immediate consequence was an **art of living based upon**

a **life-policy**, that is, a prosperity-policy.

If the spirits in anger send ill and in pleasure good fortune, what angers, what pleases them?

The one will be **wrong** conduct and the other **right**, that is, **conduct** respectively unfitted or fitted to the case, inexpedient or expedient for the result that is wanted (S&K 789-90).

86:6.6 But at last the mind of primitive man was occupied with **thoughts** which transcended all of his inherent biologic urges; at last man was about to evolve

an **art of living based on**

something more than response to material stimuli.

The beginnings of a primitive philosophic **life policy** were emerging.

A supernatural standard of living was about to appear, for,

if the spirit ghost in anger visits ill luck and in pleasure good fortune,

then must human **conduct** be regulated accordingly.

The concept of **right** and **wrong** had at last evolved;

and all of this long before the times of any revelation on earth.

86:6.7 With the emergence of these concepts, there was initiated the long and wasteful struggle to

This philosophy intensified ills; for, inasmuch as misery was due to the wrath of the ghosts, those in misery sacrificed to the **offended spirits** some part of the little they had.

appease the **ever-displeased spirits,**

the slavish bondage to evolutionary religious fear,

Ghost-fear and fear of the other world have ... proved to be not alone the most formidable obstacle to that real knowledge which alone can enable men to deal with the ills of life, but also a source of **waste of labor** and capital on unproductive structures and enterprises such as **tombs, temples,** endowments of **priests,** and pious foundations (S&K 790).

that long **waste of human effort** upon **tombs, temples,** sacrifices, and **priesthoods.**

It was a terrible and frightful price to pay, but it was worth all it cost, for man therein achieved a natural consciousness of relative right and wrong; human ethics was born!

## 7. THE FUNCTION OF PRIMITIVE RELIGION

XXI: THE ALEATORY ELEMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 737)

§197. **Adjustment to the Aleatory Element.**  
(Sumner & Keller 746)

Man on earth, having always had an eye to the avoidance of ill luck, has tried in all ages somehow to **insure** himself—to take out a **“policy”** of some sort

86:7.1 The savage felt the need of **insurance,**

on which he has paid regular premiums in some form of self-denial or sacrifice (S&K 749).

and he therefore willingly paid his burdensome premiums of fear, superstition, dread, and priest gifts toward his policy of magic insurance against ill luck.

Primitive religion was simply the payment of premiums on insurance against the perils of the forests;

[I]n the form of civilization a system of defenses is built up within which human life is passed; then “accidents” happen again on this stage, especially in the use of the apparatus of defense and achievement against nature—railroads, explosives, machinery (S&K 749-50).

civilized man pays material premiums against the accidents of industry and the exigencies of modern modes of living.

86:7.2 Modern society is removing the business of insurance from the realm of priests and religion, placing it in the domain of economics. Religion is concerning itself increasingly with the insurance of life beyond the grave. Modern men, at least those who think, no longer pay wasteful premiums to control luck. Religion is slowly ascending to higher philosophic levels in contrast with its former function as a scheme of insurance against bad luck.

XXVII: DAIMONISM (Sumner & Keller 931)

§243.\* **Fear of the Daimons.** (Sumner & Keller 960)

In some cases the belief in the powerlessness of man in the presence of the supernatural works out into pessimism and fatalism, as among the Buddhists and the later Greeks; a Scandinavian hero may deride danger by proclaiming: “On one day my fate was fashioned and all my life laid down”; but fatalism is practically not found among primitive folk (S&K 961).

86:7.3 But these ancient ideas of religion prevented men from becoming fatalistic and hopelessly pessimistic;



they believed they could at least do something to influence fate.

The religion of ghost fear impressed upon men that they must *regulate their conduct*, that there was a supermaterial world which was in control of human destiny.

XXII: THE SPIRIT-ENVIRONMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 771)

§208. The **Explanation of Luck**. (Sumner & Keller 787)

Though religious and ecclesiastical remedies for ill luck and hardship have gone to some extent out of fashion,

the problem of misfortune and misery occupies as large a part of human interest now as it ever did. The devices for meeting it which are at present proposed and credulously embraced are in part **social** but above all **political**. **Ill is attributed to the wrong "organization of society"** and it is conceived that there is some contrivable alternative system by which ill might be eliminated (S&K 790).

[Compare S&K 748.]

86:7.4 Modern civilized races are just emerging from ghost fear as an **explanation of luck** and the commonplace inequalities of existence. Mankind is achieving emancipation from the bondage of the ghost-spirit explanation of ill luck.

But while men are giving up the erroneous doctrine of a spirit cause of the vicissitudes of life,

they exhibit a surprising willingness to accept an almost equally fallacious teaching which bids them

**attribute all human inequalities to political misadaptation, social injustice, and industrial competition.**

But new legislation, increasing philanthropy, and more industrial re-organization, however good in and of themselves, will not remedy the facts of birth and the accidents of living.

If men know the facts and laws of nature

they can see before them a rational problem and can plan devices to get what they want and to evade or set aside what they do not want (S&K 790).

The only recourse which ever enables men to deal with the ills of life or “accident” is scientific knowledge (S&K 790).

XXI: THE ALEATORY ELEMENT  
(Sumner & Keller 737)

§200. Illusion. (Sumner & Keller 765)

It is evident enough, since there is in the minds of men a conviction—how implicit and unshaken a conviction will presently appear—of the existence of this third environment of ghosts and spirits, that religion, as a response to it, is a mode of self-maintenance belonging with industry, war, and regulation (S&K 769).

As a matter of fact, religion has worked; it has been powerful in securing societal self-maintenance, though not along the lines of efficiency which primitive men have thought they perceived.

Only comprehension of facts and wise manipulation within the laws of nature

will enable man to get what he wants and to avoid what he does not want.

Scientific knowledge, leading to scientific action, is the only antidote for so-called accidental ills.

86:7.5 Industry, war, slavery, and civil government arose in response to the social evolution of man in his natural environment; religion similarly arose as his response to the illusory environment of the imaginary ghost world.

Religion was an evolutionary development of self-maintenance,

and it has worked,

notwithstanding that it was originally erroneous in concept and utterly illogical.

86:7.6 Primitive religion prepared the soil of the human mind, by

In truth, the aleatory element, though unanalyzed, was felt and feared vividly enough, and when it was once identified with supernatural inmixture into the affairs of men, there was unleashed a powerful force, comparable in its compulsions to hunger and love, namely, a fear of the supernatural or, to use a brief and distinctive term, ghost-fear (S&K 769-70).

the powerful and awesome force of false fear,

for the bestowal of a bona fide spiritual force of supernatural origin, the Thought Adjuster.

And the divine Adjusters have ever since labored to transmute God-fear into God-love.<sup>3</sup>

[Evolution may be slow, but it is terribly effective (81:1.3).]

Evolution may be slow, but it is unerringly effective.

86:7.7 [Presented by an Evening Star of Neadon.]

1. See S&K 960, re the early Israelites' 'certain rude joy in life'.

2. **DREAMS.**— ... On the whole, the general trend of OT teaching is as follows:—Dreams may in some cases be genuine communications from God (Job 33:15, Jer 23:28), and as such are revered (Gn 20:3, 31:10ff.), though Nu 12:6-8 treats them as an inferior medium; but there are false dreams and lying dreamers, against whom precautions are necessary; and the idea that habitual dreaming is a sign of Divine inspiration is stoutly combated (cf. Jer 23:25,32; 27:9; 29:8; Zec 10:2; Ec 5:7), and it is definitely recognized that the interpretation of dreams belongs to God, and is not a matter of human codification (cf. Gn 40:8) (*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* [1909], pp. 195-96).

[And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood *in* the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, *I* the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, *and* will speak unto him in a dream.

My servant Moses *is* not so, who *is* faithful in all mine house.

With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?(Nu 12:5-8)]

3. Only the impersonal evolutionary forces remained unawed, and proceeded imperturbably to curb this new fellow-force into the service of society (S&K 770).