

## *Notes and News*

### *The Sect of the Second Adam on the Gold Coast.*

IT was at the Jerusalem Conference of the International Missionary Council that the representatives of the young Churches of Eastern Asia, after making certain claims, were reminded of the fact that so far they had not produced any real heresy which might be regarded as a sign of a certain spiritual independence. The young Churches of West Africa are in a position to claim the existence of such a heresy. Though the numerical strength of the sect is small, yet its existence shows that ideas have sprung up here which have not grown in the soil of a Mission Church.

The sect referred to is that of the Second Adam on the Gold Coast, near the village Nkwakubio, at the fork of the main highways coming from the ferry across the Volta near Sendji; the northern branch leads to the town of Anum, at a distance of 5 km., where the Basel Mission has been working for seventy years; the north-eastern branch leads into the valley of Peki, where in 1847 the first messengers of the North German Mission arrived in Blengo. The exact location is at 6° 27' northern latitude and 0° 9' eastern longitude, close to the boundary between the Ewe and the Twi languages. In the village, however, Ewe is predominant.

At the side of the road the traveller will notice a village surrounded by a low wall. There are about twenty houses in the midst of a large open space with trees and flower-beds. To the right and left of the entrance are wooden sign-boards on poles bearing Bible verses and brief notices in English, probably for the information of Europeans and educated natives. On the left sign are the following words given as originally spelt:

‘ The Second Adam  
I. Cor. 15, 45, 58  
Rom. 1, 18-32 ’

To the right:

‘ Estab. 1911  
Jota Mission  
Kaisarea Sabat  
Mat. 5, 17, 20  
GOD IS LOVE  
I. Cor. 3, 10, 15 ’

On entering the enclosure you are received very cordially by a little group of men, women, and children, all of whom are without any clothes, except the women who wear little aprons of raffia. The people are somewhat hesitant about answering the questions of a stranger and will conduct the visitor to their leader Filipino, an Ewe man with the name of Tse. This man, also naked, shows an asthenic constitution and has the piercing look

and the emphatic way of speaking of a typical schizoid, the born founder of a religious sect. The first questions, like: how many are you? where do you come from? are answered evasively—‘We do not count our people, God alone knows who belongs to him’, and ‘Our home is in heaven’. After repeated visits, the following information was obtained.

The founder, Filipo Tse, a man of about forty years of age, comes from Agu-Kebu, a village situated on the slope of the Agu mountain in the French Mandate of Togoland, where the North German Mission had begun its work in 1904. He and his followers are therefore called in the neighbourhood the Agu people. Filipo is said to have been formerly the cook of a Basel missionary. In addition I saw twenty-seven persons, among whom were six women and seven children; three were epileptics. Director Hartenstein of the Basel Mission counted about forty-two persons late in 1931 (Hartenstein, *Anibue*, Stuttgart 1932). The houses, open squares, and flowerbeds are absolutely clean and better kept than is usual in Africa. The chapel is located a little distance away from the houses, built of clay like the houses, with a thatched roof and the upper half of one side-wall left open. Strangers are not allowed to enter, but from without coloured prints of biblical scenes may be seen hanging on the walls. In the open square in the midst of the establishment there is a sort of shrine containing a coloured picture of a scene in paradise together with a corresponding page from the biblical history book of the Ewe schools.

The people who live in this community eat only vegetable food. They do not, however, cultivate their own fields; they work in the neighbourhood and take as payment vegetables and food; they do not accept any money, nor do they use it at all. They have no private property in their community. Sexual abstinence is imposed upon them all. Three times a day they come together for prayer; on Sundays they hold divine service in the chapel.

Their health is apparently not bad. Their founder Filipo, who started the establishment in 1911 according to the inscription on the sign-board, considers himself divinely inspired. The same spirit that lived in Adam, so long as he was in Paradise, lives also in him. He expounds his teachings with great willingness whilst constantly looking up the proof texts in his Ewe Bible which is worn with use. He will also hand to the interested visitor written expositions of his teaching which he composes as speeches to the pastors, teachers, and elders of the neighbouring congregations. Similarly he claims to have written to the Governor of the Gold Coast, to the Pope, and the ruling heads of Europe. The expositions are somewhat lengthy; in places they lack clearness of thought, but they give a sufficient insight into the teachings of the sect. No systematic missionary work is apparently being conducted by them, but their strange ways give occasion for discussion and thereby for propaganda.

According to his teaching, ‘God and the Son and the Holy Ghost created

Adam' (in whom Filipo sees Christ) 'and Eve naked'. After the Fall they were driven out of Paradise and had to die. Further evil and sinful consequences resulting from the Fall were sexual intercourse and clothing. Cain and Abel sacrificed animals, by doing this the hunger for meat was awakened and from then on men began to eat animal food. These three evil consequences of the Fall led to the invention of money. God tried in vain to save fallen mankind through prophets, finally he sent his son who was born of a virgin. Thus it was again confirmed that God desires only spiritual children.

Thereby the new covenant was made which, however, men again forsook, since they retained their former practices. At last God reinstated paradise on earth through Filipo. Now the end of the world is near. Before it appears there will be another war of the British and Germans against the French, the latter being led by Napoleon come back to life, as is prophesied in Rev. xiii. Meanwhile the congregation of the elect live strictly according to the Bible, in which not an iota may be changed (Matt. v. 18). It must therefore be studied diligently. As the main doctrinal passages the following are mentioned, besides those cited on the sign-boards, dealing with the second Adam and the judgement of sin: Job xxiv. 7 and 10, where the nakedness of the poor is described, not however as an injunction but as one of the perplexing facts of this world; Matt. vi. 25 ff., where Christ warns against anxiety, whereby money is also deprived of value; Matt. xix. 10 and 11 where celibacy is recommended; Rom. viii. 5-10, where all carnal desires are condemned, including the eating of meat according to Filipo; 1 Cor. iv. 8-13 and 1 Cor. vi. 12-20, showing the apostle Paul as a model to the congregations both in their work and in their suffering. Besides these passages Filipo can quote many more in favour of his opinions and regulations; if their literal sense does not quite agree, it is made to fit without difficulty by allegorical interpretation.

The worship of this congregation is also peculiar. At 6 a.m., 12 noon, and 7 p.m. seven men take their place in front of the chapel holding big tubas which are tuned to harmonize. With several blasts of their trumpets they call the people to prayer; then the entire congregation goes to the place of prayer where they stand in three rows, the girls to the left, the men in the middle, and the women to the right. After the singing of the hymn, 'Jehova, Jehova', from the hymn-book of the Ewe Church they all kneel down, touching the ground with their foreheads, and say in unison the Lord's Prayer in Ewe. The influence of Islam in this mode of prayer is quite apparent. If any one has become ritually unclean, in the sense of Lev. xv. 16, he may not take part in the prayers, nor may he touch anybody, including strangers. The evening prayer is held under the tall trees of the square, possibly in allusion to Gen. iii. 8. There they pray for forgiveness of sins, committed during the day. Hartenstein (*loc. cit.* p. 84) says that the people are convinced of their own sinlessness, but such changes of doctrinal conceptions are not

uncommon in the flexible structure of the sect. Nevertheless the Lord's Supper is celebrated three times a year, very likely not without reference to the forgiveness of sins.

This sect is noteworthy in spite of its small size, because here without any apparent foreign, i.e. European, influence ideas have originated independently, which in the history of the Christian and non-Christian religions frequently appear in the same combination: communism under the control of an inspired leader, rejection of private property and of the use of money, sexual abstinence, and vegetarian diet. Although we see clearly in this combination original power and logical coherence, we cannot on the other hand disregard in it a reaction against European civilization. Clothes are rejected in keeping with ancient African custom, and work is paid for by natural products.

The missionary may criticize the teaching and practice of Filipo and his followers. Any considerable expansion of the sect is extremely improbable as long as it adheres to its present forms, yet this community is a welcome sign of the spiritual independence of the African and of his ability to find original forms for Christian worship. This strengthens the hope so frequently expressed, that the young Christian Churches of Africa will create forms adapted to their own character, preserving at the same time the traditions of the Church.

*(Communicated by the late PASTOR G. STOEVE SANDT, Bremen.)*

### *Translation into Vernaculars.*

At a meeting of the informal Linguistic Group which meets under the Chairmanship of Professor Westermann, Major H. A. Harman introduced a discussion on the following points: (a) How scientific terms can be represented in the vernacular, and how far it is possible to deal with scientific subjects in African languages; and (b) Whether vernacular languages are so far developed that they can be used for this purpose.

Major Harman said that he spoke as one asking for information and not as one giving it. He had tried to make his remarks provocative of discussion and therefore inclusive of the varying points of view on the subject. There is, he said, a large body of workers who are giving attention to the production of vernacular literature—a necessity stressed by every authority controlling or connected with African education—who find themselves in difficulties because of the lack of suitable vernacular words in which to express their meaning. The more timid give up the task, and excuse themselves by saying that the subject with which they are dealing is best postponed until it can be studied in English.

There is a strong, and probably unassailable, case so far as British West Africa is concerned for anything of the nature of advanced science being