

**Studies in  
Comparative Religion:**

**Salvation in Plain English**

**Linguistic Progress the Root of Theology**

**Linguistic Disguises of Universal Religion**

**Culmination of Biblical Values  
through Comparative Religion**

**Henry Howard Linton**

**Modern Interpretations Press**

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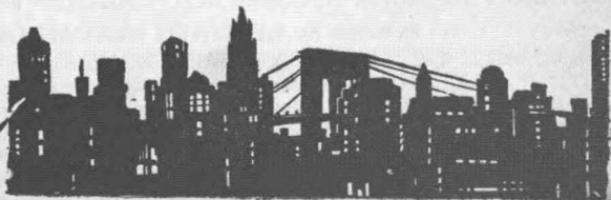
by

KENNETH  
SYLVAN  
LAUNFAL  
GUTHRIE



Then let The prophetic

These our present rambling  
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on the FUTURE? NEVER!



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## SPICY SITUATIONS, and Dr Kenneth Guthrie's REMEDIES

The Board of Education's Examiner had just turned down the blushing Miss Teacher Candidate. Weeping, she wailed. *Is there no hope at all for me?* Oh yes, purred he. Try again next year! *What could I study in the meanwhile?* Dr Guthrie's **TEACHERS' PROBLEMS & HOW TO SOLVE THEM**, \$1.25; *Value and Limits of the History of Education*, and *The Mother-Tongue Method of Teaching Modern Languages*, each 30 cents. *Will that pass me?* Really, Miss, you are too pretty to teach school. Get his *Progressive Complete Education*, or *Marriage as the Supreme School of Life*, \$1.25. *And if I pass examination on it? Then I will marry you.* Thanks, kind sir!

**How a Pessimist Became an Optimist.** The theological student had just been preparing a thesis by cribbing the wittiest passages from *Discoveries & Insights, Essays Theological, Literary, and of Character-Study*, \$1. Nettled at the undeserved praise, he blushed at the second-handedness of his religion. So at midnight he went to the Bishop's study, and said that he would leave the Church because he was honest. "Ignorant, you mean!" corrected the adviser. "Do a little first-hand reading yourself! *That's where the trouble lies.*" beloveth the martyr. *I can't hunt the manuscripts!* "Unnecessary nowadays!" soothed the Bishop. "I know of a wizard who can summon to your room for conference all the greatest but neglected philosophers of antiquity. Shall I have him send them to you? *Oh yes, please! saved the theologian.* *All my life I have dreamed of those sublime leaders of the race, but who were inaccessible.* *Very well, the wizard shall send you Zoroaster, teacher of purity and angels, \$3; Pythagoras, the Sage, & Philosopher, \$3; Numenius, Comparative Religionist, \$2; Plotinus, Greek Combiner, \$12 cl, \$9 pp; Proclus, Universal Hierophant, \$3; Zoroaster Translation only, \$1.25; Apollonius of Tyana, Life, \$1; Plotinus, Outline \$2; Philo Judaeus, Outline, \$2. Stop! If they came all at once, it would be tragic. Is there no guide to all this?* "Write for a free copy of Names to Conjure With, which will open the whole subject."

**This is what occurred at the Masonic Club after last night's Lodge-Meeting** The Master was entertaining the just initiated Candidate who asked him, *Where could I read up on the meaning and historic origins of initiations such as ours?* Well, said the Master, the best book is *The Pagan Bible* an Anthology of the Soul and its Helpers, Gathered from Ethnic Sources \$1. *That sounds good,* said the novice. *But I would like to see the original rituals.* You can, explained the Master, by reading *The Modernized Mithraic Mysteries, Dramatic Sketches of Historic Initiation, \$3. But are the Christians entirely excluded?* No, not I assured the Master; whatever exclusion there is, is of their own making. *Good; but are any Christian Mysteries accessible?* Certainly, and good ones! Get the *Angelic Mysteries of the Nine Heavens, a Drama of Interior Initiation, \$3. But how do you advise all this, when you yourself are a Rosicrucian?* retorted the persistent Candidate. "I was only trying to please you!" winked the Master. "I myself prefer the Rosicrucian Mysteries, \$1, a dramatization of the original documents." *But I am a modern man!* sobbed the querulous Candidate. "Nothing is easier," comforted the suave Master. "You need only set the *Modern Mysteries, \$1, stirring and thrilling Mystical Playlets of Experiential Religion; also the glorious Shakespearean Mysteries, \$1. Thanks!*

**Savanarola's Ghost met Giordano Bruno's,** still reeling from the fire's agony -*Cheer up, friend,* consoled he: *you are now safe from persecution! Perhaps; but I am homeless. 'Oh no, friend: look! As he waved his hand, there appeared a glittering Temple. What's that building?* asked Bruno. "Your home!" comforted Savanarola. *But the door is locked, and I want to get a look in!* "It's your own fault," rebuked the Florentine: *didn't you while on earth read Temple-Gates Ajar, \$1? But a look-in is not enough; I would want my whole body in.* -*Very well; I shall send for a copy of Temple-Gates Opened, \$1. But in the meanwhile?* whined Bruno. "I'll lend you Prayers, Visions & Aspirations, \$2." *Please, I don't want merely to aspire, I want to DO something!* "Then I will lend you Regeneration the Gate, Applied, and Special Methods, \$2 each, \$5 all three." *Oh thank you! Then I won't lose any time.*

**A Fundamentalist-Fundamentalist Fracas,** in a recent rail-road wreck near Albany the Modernist Rev. I. Catchem, of St Shark's-in-the-Mill-pond for hours lay waiting for rescue, cheek by jowl with the renowned Fundamentalist Rev. U. Cheatem. Fellow-misery broke down the barriers of orthodoxy, and I Catchem said, *My injuries are due to over-fascination while reading occult stories entitled Hurrah for God, \$1. 'My fatuous friend,' in shocked tones retorted self-righteous U. Cheatem, 'you better sober up by exchanging books, for the faith-strengthening What Happened to Kitchener, \$1, whose hypnotic charm immobilized me during the accident.'* Conversation revealed they were both about to be ousted, and a flash of genius bade them exchange: but this flop implied two reductions, betraying secret tricks of the craft. So U. Cheatem babbled, "To be a Fundamentalist all you need to do is to keep people distracted by anything absorbing, such as *Romance of Two Centuries, \$2. Reuniting Pilgrimage, \$1, Stories for Young People, \$1.25, serie Votive Garlands, \$3; and then you can fulminate from Why You Really Want to be a Churchman, \$1.25."* -"Thanks," chorried I. Catchem. "Now I will tell you how to succeed as a Modernist. Shed tears while haranguing over your honesty, and inability to be convinced by any reasonable arguments. In the meanwhile cribbing from *The Ladder of God, & Other Sermons, \$1. The Message of the Master, \$1.25, & How the Master Saved the World, \$1.25. Then you can make a reputation as a pundit by judiciously using The Spiritual Message of Literature, \$2.50, it's convenient. But shouldn't I seem somewhat saintly?* "Transcribe of Communion With God, 50 cts, and Of the Presence of God, \$1.25." Pray? That was the only point where Fundamentalist and Modernist agreed: Let us pray on the

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Christianity

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of Jesus,

who as Mediator

of a new Covenant

bought

and ransomed

his Elect,

so that by Justification

through Faith,

forgiving

their sins,

eternal

Salvation.

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*teaches*

the Good News that

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must as Agent

of a new Administration

gather,

and liberate, defend and educate

his Neighbors,

so that by Moralization

through Enthusiasm

they themselves preventing

their own possible future Errors,

*they may attain unto*

an Era of

Wholeness.

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SALVATION IN PLAIN ENGLISH  
A MISSIONARY INTERPRETATION

THE AGE'S DESIRE FOR FAITH

Is our age an era of scepticism and unbelief, of cynicism and agnosticism? Hardly, for never before have so many and so great ventures of faith been planned and consummated. Municipalities have planned public works costing an empire's ransom; corporations are increasing their obligations by the billions; individuals engage in gigantic ventures of chance. It is not too much to say that the age is approaching when faith, or confidence, can remove mountains. The destroyer of dogmas is left to preach to empty pews; the iconoclast is starved into a builder or architect.

If, then, there be any devout who deplore scepticism, incredulity, agnosticism, let them take comfort; if there be any sceptics, it is only because their minds misunderstand the longing of their hearts; if there be any incredulous souls, it is only because they have misapprehended and misunderstood; if there be any agnostics, it is because they have confused dialects. Our age is the long heralded Era of Faith; and it would kneel before him who would enable its mind to assent to that for

which its heart is yearning. We no more need to search, to persuade, to convert; all that is needed is to translate theological dialects into plain English, that the world-weary travelers following the Star of Truth may find the new-born Babe of Bethlehem in their own hearts, and worship their own true Christ.

Surely, little of faith must we be, if we do not sufficiently believe in the salvation of our own Christianity, to know it is the truth; and that if there be any difficulty with the truth, this difficulty must be one of mistranslation! Instead, then, of sending missionaries, of writing commentaries, or of holding camp meetings, let us open the dictionary and render the Word Divine of life and immortality into modern idiom.

Are there any, then, who fail to believe that Jesus, as mediator of a new Covenant, bought and ransomed his elect, so that through justification by faith our sins are forgiven us unto the attainment of eternal salvation? For their benefit, then, let us translate this medieval dialect into plain English, and it will not be a question of inviting the unbelievers into the empty church, but we will have to keep them from overcrowding it. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come unto the river of life!

## II. LIMITATIONS OF TREATMENT

Absurd, say you? Fanciful? A joke? On the contrary, this is the result of the most searching accuracy, the closest following of the text. Surely, a rational meaning should not be objected to by those who believe the medieval formulation is the truth! What, afraid of common sense? Or is it too good to believe? Is it impossible that such good news be true?

Unfortunately, the detailed proof of the exact correspondence of what we have given above to the medieval formulation would be too wearisome for the general reader; he would close the book, and forsake it for something more interesting. Here can be given only such general observations as may tempt "him who runs" to read, in hopes that, being interested, he may at length stop for a little while, and meditate thereon.

Let us, besides, begin at the last point, which attracts us most, and work our way backwards unto the first, that we may best understand the conception closest at hand and be induced once more to double on our tracks and practically follow the only road that leads from Growth to Wholeness.

## I. SALVATION IS WHOLENESS

Is there a single scholarly dictionary which would not translate "soteria" into "safety" or "wholeness"? Is it likely that this is an exclusively sectarian term, when every Greek meal was begun by a libation to "Zeus Soter"? When the most common lodge name among Greek secret societies was "Salvationists"? Or will any deny that the message of Jesus is "the good news of your wholeness"? "This day is wholeness come to this house." "Neither is there wholeness in any other name." "To you is the Word of this wholeness sent." Are we not, like the sick damsel, possessed by the spirit of divination, which cried, "These men show unto us the way of wholeness." What else would be the opposite of death? "Godly sorrow worked repentance to wholeness not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." "I know this shall work to my wholeness," cries the suffering apostle. "Receiving the end of your enthusiasm, even the wholeness of your souls." "Beloved," writes Jude, "when I gave all diligence to write to you of the common wholeness." Well may we close with the toast or acclamation of the Revealer, almost an accurate translation of the French "Vive" or the Italian "Viva," "Wholeness, or long life, to our God which sitteth on the throne." What else could it mean? Surely not that even God needed salvation!

## II. ETERNITY IS AN AGE OR ERA

The Greek word "aion" cannot very well mean more than age, period, or era, inasmuch as it is frequently used to denote "this" age, or world. Again, the frequent New Testament statements to the effect that during this physical life or existence "eternal life" can be acquired or lost, suggests that it can mean no more than so many modern writers interpret it to mean: namely, a spiritual state, or aspirational condition or period. No man in his senses will let the metaphysician spin around him his bewildering web of sophistries about unending time, or ages continuing with endless recurrence. True, there is many a mathematical fraction which we can even prove would never come to its last figure, like the square root of seven, or the decimal expression for one-third. But evidently an expression referring to the health of our physical and mental natures can mean nothing but a temporary condition; or it may mean a state of existence or intellection that is incommensurable with our objective weights and measures. That is all it can possibly mean; and, indeed, that is all our word did mean to the average Greek mind, as the Dictionary reveals it.

## III. SINS ARE ERRORS

Like most cherished delusions, the word "sin" is an English conception and expression, about which it is perfectly possible to recriminate to the point of mutual excommunication, but which no more than represents a different Greek thought. So we have "hamartia," the missing of the mark by an arrow, or "paraptoma," a false step. Evidently, it is not a positive crime; it is no more than a negative error, failure to hit, incompetence, mis-take. It is a misfortune, rather than a wicked deed. It is something to be pitied, to be overlooked, to be corrected, rather than to be punished, to be atoned for, to be weighed and paid for. It is a wrong course of hygiene, a mistaken diet, a wandering from the goal; it is not an object, an actual material, aggressive entity to be weighed, to be given an equivalent for, to be balanced with good deeds. No doubt, errors may entail positive sicknesses, morbid creations, and demand stern correction; but the greatest criminal deserves the most pity, the most redemption, the most healing, the most far-reaching and inspiring instruction. God, who knows all, forgives all; and, no doubt, in his sight the grief-stricken publican is worthy of more than the self-complacent Pharisee.

## IV. FORGIVENESS IS PREVENTION

If sins are errors, it is evidently impossible to do more than forget past errors, and prevent future ones. Forgiveness is not found in the Greek. We have "apoluo," to remit a claim or memory; "charizomai," to be gracious to; but most "aphiemi," which has four meanings in English: 1. to emit, as, a cry, Mk. xv. 37; Mt. xxvii. 50. 2. to omit, let alone, Mt. xxiii. 23. 3. permit, let, suffer, as Mt. vii. 4; xix. 14, etc. Last, 4. dismiss, reject—to send away, to drive from the mind—Mt. xiii. 36; Mk. iv. 36. In Rom. iii. 25, we have a passing by; in Rom. iv. 7, from Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, to "cover over" temporarily, till it can at proper time be disposed of. Evidently, if sins are errors, they can be only forgotten, or prevented for the future. Had we the time, we might enumerate primitive Hebrew ideas; but they would not alter the possibility or impossibility of one person or mind altering the moral consciousness of another's. True, to the Jew sin and sickness were identical; so when Jesus heals the palsied man (Matt. ix. 2-8), it is understood he forgives sins. The Greek, however, has the perfect passive tense, meaning, "thy errors results have already been worked out"—a declaration of encouragement for the future. Or are pious wishes sinful? May we not wish for a man that his possible future errors may be prevented by a "change of mind"—that is, repentance?

## V. FAITH IS ENTHUSIASM

Enthusiasm was the only meaning which presented itself to the Greek mind at hearing of "pistis"—so Plato, Polybius, Josephus, Plutarch, Diodorus (i. 86). Imagine then how ingenuous is Thayer, the editor of the standard "New Testament Dictionary," who assigns no New Testament occurrences to this acknowledged primary meaning, while he assigns all New Testament occurrences of the word to a "special New Testament meaning" of "conviction or belief respecting man's relationship to God, and divine things; together with trust, and holy fervor born of faith (itself!) and conjoined with it." Notice, on the contrary, that in the Synoptics and St. Paul we are not told that men are justified by "faith" in anything; but by faith, by itself. So it is not faith in any doctrine which will move mountains—it is just faith alone, just enthusiasm—such a fervor as supports a man in a practice of right conduct, so that through enthusiasm one becomes (justified) moralized, not "whitewashed." The best commentators understand "faith in Christ" as meaning faith in God, of which Jesus Christ is the author, or exciter; or, as in Jas. ii. 1, the faith which Jesus exercised. This enthusiasm we nowadays call "suggestion," the power exercised in hypnotism, which has appeared in all ages and races—an "entheasm."

## VI. JUSTIFICATION IS MORALIZATION

Thayer acknowledges that, "according to the analogy of the verbs in 'oo,' it means to make, cause to be righteous"—by education, exhortation or punishment. Then, just as he did with "faith," in spite of many classic examples, he refers all New Testament occurrences of the word "dikaioo" to the figurative meaning to acquit, to "white-wash," to exhibit, declare, pronounce one to be righteous. The illogical nature of this, to "pronounce" or "declare" a person to be a "condition" of good conscience, never appeals to his risibility. No doubt the word was at times used to mean "acquit"—but why should it mean that in every instance? Notice, on the contrary, the good sense this "practice of right conduct" makes in many passages: Mt. xii. 37; Lk. xviii. 14; Acts xiii. 39; Rom. ii. 13, iii. 24, iii. 30, iv. 2, v. 1, 9; viii. 30; I. Cor. vi. 11; Gal. ii. 16, 17; iii. 8, 11, 24; v. 4, 6; I. Tim. iii. 16, Titus iii. 7. For instance (Rom. iii. 28): "We reckon for ourselves therefore that a human being is caused to practice right conduct by enthusiasm, apart from the rites of a ritual law."

We must acknowledge that in Rom. viii. 33 Paul uses the verb in both senses: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that whitewashes (because he causes men to practise right conduct)."

The best proof we are right is that it harmonizes James and Paul. James says, Without loving deeds, enthusiasm does not whitewash; Paul says, "The rites of a ritual law will never make you practice morality; for that you need enthusiasm (faith)."

## VII. RANSOMING IS PROTECTION, LIBERATION AND EDUCATION

No dictionary will deny that "lutroo," variously rendered "ransom," "redeem," "redemption," "deliver," meant to classic writers protection, liberation and education; and this we find in Lk. i. 68, Acts vii. 25; Lk. xxiv. 21, as protection; and in Titus ii. 14 as education, in "purifying to himself a people." As to the remaining passages:

1. It is not used exclusively of Jesus's redemption, but also of Moses's, Acts vii. 25.

2. We compare Mk. x. 45, Mt. xx. 28 with I. Tim. ii. 6, and find they disagree as to the number of the redeemed; and are vague, not explaining redemption's price, or from or to what. According to Acts x. 35, 44 human righteousness and God-fear alone insure acceptation of God without any mediation.

3. We have mutual contradiction, hence destruction of I. Cor. i. 30 and Eph. i. 14.

4. Titus ii. 14, and I. Pet. i. 18 are taken from Old Testament symbology which Hebrews says was worthless in itself, and only a stop-gap, a representation, which effected no actual change, and whose repetition proved they were worthless except as a rite (x. 1-6; ix. 9, 10). A lamb, and Jesus the man were different things, anyway.

5. Rom. viii. 23 makes of redemption an "adoption," a needless act as God is already father of all things.

6. Heb. ix. 12, 15; Eph. i. 7, 11 make of redemption a resurrection of the flesh. There will be few, in our modern day, to defend this.

## VIII. THE ELECT ARE OUR NEIGHBORS

The "Elect" are evidently those whom Providence has chosen to be or come in contact with us. Jesus taught the young Jewish rabbi that our "neighbor" was he who needed our assistance, whoever he was. So the modern formulations of Christianity make of the elect all those who hear and heed the call. None who does the latter would be told by any of our modern sects that he was not one of the elect. There was a time when men believed that before the creation of the world God had elected a certain undiminishable and unincreasable number of elect from among a greater number preordained to eternal damnation for the glory of God. At present men believe this—and more than this, namely that all are elect who receive and heed the call. In other words, to us the elect are they whom God has elected to come into any contract with us, namely, our neighbors.

Mistranslation is at the bottom of much. In Rom. ix. 18, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will," what is the opposite to this? "And in respect of whomsoever he wills, he hardeneth 'himself'." Surely not, that man hardens himself, as opposite to God's mercy to some man.

## IX. BUYING IS GATHERING

Another instance in which Thayer's dictionary assigns no New Testament references to the primary classical meaning, is "agorazo," to gather to the "agora" or town-hall square; while to the secondary meaning of marketing therein, buying, purchasing, Thayer attributes all New Testament passages. Or, take the word "peripoieomai," by Thayer ever translated "buy" or "purchase," while Liddell and Scott give only "to make to remain over and above; to keep safe, preserve; of money, to save up, lay by; to put round upon, to procure, in middle, to keep or save for oneself; to compass, acquire, gain possession of." Even the Revisers changed it to "acquire" in the margin (I. Tim. iii. 13).

So "peripoieomai" does not mean purchase in Acts xx. 28; I. Tim. iii. 13 (see Acts viii. 20); II. Pet. ii. 1, Heb. viii. 1; by the Old Version itself translated "honor" in relation to man and God.

"Agorazo" then means "gather" in Mt. xiv. 15; Lk. ix. 15; Jno. iv. 8, vi. 5; I. Cor. vi. 20, vii. 23, 30; Eph. v. 16; Col. iv. 5; Gal. iii. 13, iv. 5; II. Pet. ii. 1.

This is supported by the plight of Anselm of Canterbury and the other Fathers who did not want either to acknowledge the existence and power of another being outside of God, who could have owned men, and so legally (and therefore justly) that God would have had to "purchase" man of him for "money" (imagine God or the devil passing "money" to each other!). The Fathers then disagreed on the subject leaving it uncertain; some paying the money to God, others to the devil! The Mahometan "slave of God" shows the origin of the error. The strongest proof of the sense to "gather" is in Rev. v. 9 (xiv. 3, 4), the blood, being "in the bloody robe" of Rev. xix. 13.

## X. COVENANT IS ADMINISTRATION

The word "diatheke" meant:

1. Last will, or testament, Heb. vii. 22; ix. 16, 17, 20.
2. Agreement, contract, Mt. xxvi. 28; Mk. xiv. 24; Lk. xxii. 20; I. Cor. xi. 25; Heb. ix. 15, 20; Rev. xi. 19; ratified by oath, Lk. i. 72, 73, or promise Eph. ii. 12; Acts iii. 25, vii. 8; Rev. ix. 4, xi. 27.
3. Scriptures about either above senses, II. Cor. iii. 14.
4. A church institution, II. Cor. iii. 6.
5. A Greek mystery-term, the dregs of a divining cup.

This term then appeared to Jews as Contract, and to Greeks, as Last Will.

Evidently, it was easy to pun with such a word, and difficult to argue about it without punning. So we may excuse the argument in Heb. ix. 15-17, which perpetrates a pun as follows:

1. A death is necessary to enforce a Diatheke-last-will.
2. Even the old Diatheke-Contract was executed by a death, even if only of bulls, ix. 18-22.
3. Hence the real Diatheke-last-will-and-Contract had to have a death, executor and sacrifice, though a better one.
4. Hence the connection between the crucified Jesus and the new Diatheke-agreement of justification by faith
  - (a) as mediator (Diatheke-agreement-maker, Heb. ix. 15),
  - (b) and surety (Diatheke-last-will executor, Heb. vii. 22).

"Diatheke" merely meant administration of last-will or agreement.

## XI. MEDIATOR IS AGENT

Going back to "Covenant," we find that the allegoric movement represented by Philo had developed the angel-idea of the prophets into that of the patron-angel of Israel, Michael; who was high-priest, Logos, or Word, and Mediator, arbitrator, middleman, Agent, "mesites," of a Diatheke-Contract, Heb. viii. 6, xii. 24; used as executor of a Diatheke-last-will, Heb. ix. 15. This Michael-mediator, "ordained by angels," Gal. iii. 19, 20, is ordained in the hands of One, the man Jesus, Heb. xii. 24; I. Tim. ii. 5—possibly by being "called" to be high-priest by the adoptive voice heard at Baptism, Heb. v. 5.

The word "mesites" evidently means no more than agent who executes the Contract or administers the will; it is needless to add that in the secular Greek literature this was the meaning thereof.

## XII. JESUS IS A HELPER

The word "Jesus" means "helper," "savior," "rescuer." It was a common Jewish name, and we are told it was given to the infant by his mother because of this very meaning. It comes from the word meaning to rescue, to help; and to the Jew it sounded precisely as if we were to baptize a child Rescuer, or Helper, or Aider. In the degree, therefore, that anybody helped or aided or rescued, he was a Joshua, even as the servant of Moses was. Any helper or rescuer is therefore a Jesus to those he helps and rescues.

## XIII. GOSPEL IS GOOD NEWS

The "Gospel" means in the Old English "God-spell," "good news;" precisely as in Greek "Evangel" means that. All good news is therefore a Gospel, an Evangel.

## XIV. CHRISTIANITY IS GROWTH

And what does Christianity mean in Plain English? It means the religion of a Christ—there have been many, false as well as true: “Christs Many.” And “Christ” is the Greek for the Hebrew “Messiah,” anointed. In the Old Testament, in the Major Prophets, we read “Touch not my Messiahs,” Christs—the prophets. It is therefore not unscriptural to call Christs all men anointed by the holy Spirit of prophecy with a mission. The religion of mission and prophecy is a development, and progress and growth. Are we far wrong then when we suggest the religion of growth as the attainment of an era of health? What “holier” (healthier or wholier) Gospel could there be? Will it be that of the ascetics? Will it be that of these who have succeeded in remaining devout at the expense of the suicide of their reason? Will it be that of enthusiasts who remain immoral, or continuing in errors? Will it be that of those who refuse education in order to be more spiritual? Will it be that of those who seek their own health, or give health to others for money? No: it will be the religion of “Growth, enforcing the Good News that Anybody who would be a Helper must, as agent of a new administration gather, protect, liberate and educate his neighbors; so that through the moralization of enthusiasm they themselves preventing their possible future errors they may attain unto an era of health.”

# Linguistic Progress the Root of Theology

Petrified Terms become Fetishes  
and are Interpreted like Puns by Later Ages

Henry Howard Linton

Modern Interpretations Press

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# LINGUISTIC PROGRESS THE ROOT OF THEOLOGY

## I. THE HUMOR OF RELIGION

If you were asked to lay your finger on the representative examples of the source of religious progress, would not the very last be the comic papers? Yet, their chief element is the use of language in new and unforeseen senses. Indeed, we might have to turn even to Humour's still less favored sister, Slang, for the ultimate source of Linguistic progress; and as language changes, alter the ideas expressed thereby. Then, when the language has changed sufficiently to form a new idiom, the more ancient terms of sacred objects, their meaning becoming obsolete, and little understood, surviving through devotion, become names; and proper names lead to personification. Thus, by a process of humor is created a theology.

Further again, these surviving, meaningless names are interpreted in terms of the more modern and civilized idiom; whereby the old name comes to have a new and more spiritual meaning. Thus the rain-worshipping Arabs trembled before the Thunderer, 'He who causes to fall,' *Jahweh*; but the more advanced Rabbi understood it as 'I am that I am,' the motto of Eternity. This religious progress was accomplished by the means of a racial pun, a linguistic humor, a literary vision, a spiritual interpretation,—what the average modern man would take to be a 'profounder view,' of 'real' worship of *Jahweh*.

But the average man is mistaken; his prophecy is only a survival; he has seen himself in a mirror; he has looked at the world with colored glasses; he has put the brake of antiquated survival on progress; he has advanced on a treadmill; he has deceived himself; his revelation is a pun; his mission is, and to Futurity will appear, a joke.

Let us then first consider the facts of the Humor of Religious Progress; we will then be ready for their significance, and remedy: namely, to understand nature; and their equally inevitable solution in the destiny of human perfectibility; in short, their facts, their significance and remedy.

## A. THE FACTS OF THE HUMOR OF RELIGIOUS PROGRESS

### I. EXAMPLES OF UNCONSCIOUS HUMOR

If this seems impossible, let us listen to a tangible example of this—from J. Hood Wright, who, in an article 'Was Israel ever in Egypt' gave an English parallel to what Genesis must have seemed to Hebrews:

"B. C. Now King Celtus took unto him to wife, and she bare him three daughters, Hibernia, Caledonia, and Britannia; and the Sons of Hibernia were these: Ulster, Munster, Leinster and Connaught; and Leinster was the father of Dublin.

"A. D. 400. Now the Sons of Teuton were these: Anglus, Saxo, Juta, Danus, and Horsa. And to Saxo were born four sons, Essex, Middlesex, Wessex and Sussex. And the son of Juta, Kent. Now Kent sat by the seashore, and ordered the waves back from his chair, but lo! they surrounded him altogether; then said he unto his servants, 'Call me no more a God, for God ruleth the winds and the waves.' Therefore was the place called *God-win*, for there strove he with God, and could not prevail. And to Danus were born four sons, Northumber, Durham and York. Now, York was a great man; and had three sons, riding upon horses; to each of them he gave a province; therefore is the name of that province called *Riding* unto this day. And his servants conspired against him, and smote off his head, and set it upon the walls of his city that he had built for himself withal; so he died: therefore they that speak in proverbs say, 'Alas, poor Yorick.'

"A. D. 1066. And the high-priest said unto him, 'Thus hath the Lord said, Get thee up and take the land, for to thee have I given it; and he said, Good is the word of the Lord: I am willing to go up;' therefore was his name called *Will-I-Am*. Now the chief city of that land was great exceedingly, and much business was wrought there, and many a loan done; therefore they called the name of that city *London*.

“A. D. 1314. And Bruce fled from the face of his enemies, and a woman said to him, ‘Turn in, my Lord;’ and she was baking cakes, and the woman said to him, ‘See that those cakes burn not.’ And it came to pass that as his heart was heavy because the enemies of the Lord possessed the land, lo! the cakes did burn. Therefore was that place called *Bannockburn*, and there did God give him great deliverance.”

Just as fantastic as this is, for instance, the derivation of *babel* the tower of God from *bala* confusion of speech. So we have *Beersheba* as a name derived from an oath being sworn there (Gen. 21.13) and in another place (26.33) derived from water being found there. Also Beer-lahai-roi (Gen. 25.11) is so named by Abraham (16.14) because “God sees” man; while Isaac (24.62) names it so because he comes up from the South country. But these Genesis puns are so well known as to make further exposition unnecessary.

Another pun which contributed much to religious progress, and the oblivion of which has led to much and persistent misunderstanding, is the one about *Ashai* and *Therapeuo*. The Egyptian *Therapeutes* were probably primarily *servants* of Serapis; but the Greek term, no doubt fully justified by their practises, made of them healers. So in Palestine. *Ashai* (as title of John) meant no more than baptizer; and yet it was also the Aramean for medicine, healer; and the Essenes, from being Baptists, shortly became healers and exorcists, their book *Sefer Refuot* yet surviving. So the Hebrew archangel *Jeshua* from the meaning to help or save, was ‘interpreted’ by the Greek *iasomai*, and the healing of diseases became naturally a part of his work, and so appeared in the Gospels.

### III. THEOLOGICAL MISFORTUNES OF MUDDLEDNESS.

Let us draw from the text of the Authorized Version an example of the unconsciousness of muddled thought which may easily lead to theological errors. What wor-

shipper has not at some time or other been moved to unholy glee in listening to the Authorized Version of Isaiah xxxvii. 36.

“Then the Angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians 185,000; and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.”

Where, however, the humorous element is not so prominent, the muddledness may not be obvious, and confusion may lead to misapprehension; which, in matters of doctrine, leads, in the estimation of the fanatic, to eternal damnation, or, in that of theologians, to doctrinal monstrosities; while, in the mind of commentators, who are committed to reverence of the error, it leads to mental obliquity, and misinterpretation of parallel passages.

Thus in John 3.15 the pronoun *him*, *auton*, belongs grammatically to the *Son of Man*; but its whole evidential value depends on “men’s belief in Moses.”

Again, in John 2.19 Jesus begins to say, “Destroy this temple in 3 days, and I will.” Then His mind breaks off from temple, and springs to body—not, *rebuild* it, but, “I will resurrect it”—*it*, gramatically referring to *temple*. How mixed this metaphor is may be seen from 2.20, where the Jews so misunderstand it that the writer feels (2.21) forced to add an explanation.

More serious is the classic pun in Heb. 9. 10, where the writer (Apollos?) hoodwinks the reader by the word ‘*diateke*’ into accepting a last-will-and-testament for a contract. He wishes to prove that Jesus is the exclusive (mediator) agent of a new contract, which Jeremiah (31.31) had prophesied would replace the broken one. Jesus, having died (the writer argues) has thereby put in force a last-will-and-testament which is good only on the death of the testator. Consequently his death gave us an inheritance of a last-will, so that a new contract has been made (Heb. 9.15-17). Then he shows that even the OT contract was enforced by the death of animals (as if the life-blood was the inheritance from the death of the animal?) and as the victim Jesus (as a human

being) is better (than an animal), therefore the contract should be supposed stronger, surer, and more eternal, as His death can only take place once (resurrection is here not taken into account).

#### IV. QUIBBLING

Probably no book (not the Koran, nor the Zend Avesta) has had so much to suffer from punning, as the Bible. The Protestant habit of culling out single verses therefrom and preaching from them exclusively has inevitably resulted in altering their meaning by a new context, until certain verses in the Bible have come to be of world-wide reputation for ridiculousness. But the main difficulty arose from the Hebrew subtlety of intellect which, having neither facts or science to work on, nor liberty to look elsewhere for divine revelation, successfully justified their inclination and views, and in opposite schools at that, from the same scriptures.

The most famous example of this quibbling is of course Paul's argument about *seeds* in Gal. 3.16, where the crux of his argument lies in its being not in the plural, but the singular, Christ. Unfortunately the word corresponding to *seed* in the lxx. original has the same form for both singular and plural, so that the argument loses all demonstrative value, and translated a Hebrew word in plural (see Meyer's Commentary).

#### V. SOPHISTRY OF COMMENTATORS.

The evil of such errors of grammar and syntax is, however, not limited to the writer's own sincerity and sanity; when the devout are committed to reverence of the error it produces in them mental obliquity. So Paul, the master word-juggler, says (2 Cor. 3.3): "Ye are the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, written not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart." Some ungodly commentators had indeed perceived that Paul had, voluntarily or involuntarily, mixed his metaphor; but the reverential Meyer both stoutly denies this, and immediately goes on to say, as proof of this denial, that "he

carries out the figure as it corresponds to the thing figured thereby." What else is a *mixed Metaphor*?

## VI. LINGUISTIC ORTHODOXY

Is any further proof needed? If so, turn to the Roman Catholic Church which has made the Latin language the test of orthodoxy. The Vulgate Version (and heaven knows how many times it has been altered!) is the sole standard even to the exclusion of its originals, the Greek and Hebrew texts, which, in many of their seminaries, are even not taught, though the guileless theologs befuddle themselves with Assyrian and Egyptian epigraphy. Humorous as it seems to destroy one's own foundation, the Roman Church is right; every translation is a heresy; every language has a different congeries of associations for even corresponding words. No foundation was ever discovered for Orthodoxy than provincialism, reactionarism, and intellectual suicide.

## INTELLECTUAL SUICIDE THE ORTHODOXY OF LINGUISTICS

When it was by the School-men seen that the doctrine of the Trinity was irrational, the next step was to praise irrationality beyond reason, and to decry reason and its offspring Science. This is often denied by well-meaning Christian lay-men and preachers, but the evidence is clinched in Andrew White's "Conflict between Science and Religion," as in Galileo's case.

Yet it needed the monumental inconsistency of English practicality to face the problem fully in print; and Cardinal Newman's Apology and Grammar of Assent are eternal books in that they analyze to the end the problem into an unmistakable logical dilemma: the price of clear thought is rejection of orthodoxy; hence, because I love orthodoxy, I will sacrifice clear thought; and Cardinal Newman answered a friend who cast in his teeth a modern church miracle by the logical statement that if you are going to "believe," it is as easy to believe one thing as another.

Tertullian long ago had said the last word of orthodoxy: 'Credo quia impossibile,' 'I believe just because it is impossible.'

## B. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMOROUSNESS OF RELIGIOUS PROGRESS

### I. NOT DECEIT, BUT IMMATURITY

Generous, clear-thinking natures glancing at all these facts, are very likely to exclaim, with much righteous indignation, Deceit! Fraud! Evasion! Stupidity! Credulousness! Ignorance! But when we consider who the men were who were guilty of all this—the saints, the priests, the prophets of humanity, we realize that the very obviousness of such an explanation is its own condemnation. Beneath all this, there is human nature, childishness, immaturity. Indeed, we may go further, and assert that in view of the condition of human nature all these errors and deceits were unavoidable, nay indispensable. However far civilization progresses, there will always be uninstructed childhood; there will be unindividualized crowds; there will never cease to be the eternally feminine the strength and beauty of whose emotions and passions will dominate and overwhelm their mind and logic. There will ever be backward races, or some races less civilized than others; there will always be personal animosities and antagonisms, leading to opposite formulations; never will there be a cessation of misfortunes, accidents and eventualities retarding, partializing mental grasp. We may even say that if such errors had not been made in the past they would occur again in the future. The view of our present imperfections, and even of the limitations of the future, we may with the past deal gently. Nay, we may do so even reverently, and gratefully; for if we deal with it properly, we may use it to understand ourselves, and draw from it guidance and inspiration for the future; for the world is yet young.

## HEREDITARY IMMATURITY

The inevitableness of this Religious Immaturity is further emphasized by hereditary, mythological, ethnological considerations. Prehistoric customs survive without or even against conscious effort. If then by chance any accidental similarity of words would favor such a religious pun, is it not almost inevitable? For instance, in Hebrew

*Barah* to eat is the same root as *bere shith*, covenant, or contract. The connection between these two must be sought in the almost pre-historic friendship blood-covenant in which the new bond was created and ratified by drinking some of each others' blood, and, as a result of the friendship covenant, being admitted to the common tribal meal; which later, restricted to temples, became sacramental and ceremonial. Naturally the meal would then come to be called a contract or testament (Lk. 22.20), and a Paschal meal would be so explained; and the old contract would by prophecy be replaced by a new contract (Jer. 31.31) as contrast to the old yearly ceremony.

THE MAGIC OF WORDS  
ROOTED IN PSYCHOLOGY

The root of the trouble goes far back into the origins of the human race. While we may look on words as mere conventional means of expressing some defined thought, the aboriginal man, to whom words were far more wonderful than they are to us, looked on words as fetishes, possessing in themselves magic power. Even so enlightened a man as Origen (184-253 A. D.) argued against Celsus that if certain names of God were translated they would lose their exorcising value (Cels. 1.25, 25; 5.45). This magic value of some word has been recognized in most nations as the secret name of the divinity, by knowledge of which (as the Schemahamphorasch) a certain power of access to the divinity was won. Even after the dissolution of the mystery-rites this innate instinct of

the magic of words remained ingrained in human nature; and well does Goethe in his *Faust* make Mephistopheles descant on the fatal facility with which men believe in, contend about, and devote themselves to—mere words.

The psychologist will hardly smile at this, for he knows adolescents, among their love for beautiful sounds, favor certain vowels; and who has not favorite girl-names, or names of men? Who does not love some words as such? What writer does not have his idioms? What language has no onomatopœic expressions? Who has not his vituperative epithets? It is psychology then that shows us the inevitableness of linguistic magic, of the clinging to religious names; of the dangerous inclination to interpret; of the inexorable and illuctable conservative tendency to put new wine into old deceptive bottles, instead of building new temples every year, as the Druidesses of the island of Sein were fabled to have done.

#### SOCIOLOGICAL BASIS OF ORTHODOXY

The least reflection will demonstrate that human beings cannot unite in any action, movement or belief without some sort of compromise. Orthodoxy is the price of efficiency, therefore; while liberalism is doomed to failure. As the constructive, reproductive impulse of human nature drives on the mundane stream of existence, it is bound to seek and enforce efficiency. But we have seen that efficiency is only another name for orthodoxy or conservatism; so that social welfare is rooted in orthodoxy of some sort. True, the crystallizations of orthodoxy may become impeding; the growth of life drives the bud through the bark of the stem: but it is the destiny of a bud itself to become a stem protected by bark. Orthodoxy therefore is the other name of Survival.

It is also no more than logical that compromise means resignation of individual thought. If we are to have unity in essentials, it must mean liberty (inefficiency) in non-essentials. Each succeeding generation, however, will take a new view of what essentials consist; so that the

essentials of yesterday became the non-essentials of today, and the trash of tomorrow.

The chief characteristic of growth is change; and change is uncertainty; sociology therefore dooms definitions of definitions of orthodoxy; like the Scotch Sect of the Original United Seceders which consisted of a single survivor. There will always be uninstructed children; crowds composed of men less advanced than others. Confusion is socially inevitable.

### INTERPRETATIVE ALLEGORISM, AS THEOLOGY OF LINGUISTICS

Besides, language has gone through many stages, each overlapping and parallel; so confused that frequently it is impossible to tell anything except by general ebb or flow.

1. Consider the first stage of language when there were many similar sounds to denote any one object, which itself may not have been perceived clearly.

2. Consider further the restricted language of ignorant, poor, or oppressed races. In spite of themselves they were picturesquely parabolical—like the Hebrew, who said, 'In the heart of heaven' (Dt. vi. 11) when he meant 'in the midst of the sky.' Metaphor, parable and allegory was native, and preceded accurate scientific language.

3. Consider next the education of children, with their love of story-telling, and need of objective metaphorical teaching. Would not 'interpretation' be natural resultant thereof?

4. Consider further the fact that the acute intellects of the Rabbis had no sanifying facts of science, such as philology, archeology and history to grind. What else was left them but to interpret? To imagine that a dialectical distinction was an objective reality of nature? To fight about and discuss personal interpretations as creeds and doctrines? To suppose they had created an object when they had developed a word? Explanation was mere interpretation or derivation of words.

5. The next step was the doctrine of mystic interpretation, which represents the individual's fancy as a mystic secret, shared by none but himself. On this was founded all secret sects, Gnosticism, Occultism—and last, insanity.

6. The well-disposed, devout mysticists were, however, limited to interpretation of the sacred texts. Here we have Clement of Alexandria, Origen, the Mediaeval mystics. They discovered as many as four senses—the literal, mystical, the anagogical, and the spiritual.

7. The last step in this direction was Swedenborg, who, on this linguistic quicksand, built a universal Law of Correspondences, but by the imperfections of the text he chose as his ultimate standard was forced to declare aggressively that its errors and inaccuracies had been perpetrated purposely by the divine spirit for the sake of a corresponding image.

8. But this phase of linguistic development, of course, is extreme. The more practical orthodox (that is, those who were defending their own private opinions) made use of allegorism only so far as suited to their fancy, and literalism likewise.

Athanasius played battledore-and-shuttlecock with allegorism and precision of statement in constructing his monstrosity of a Trinity in which a son was as old as his Father, and in which a second was equal to a first. Of course, any doctrine whatever could be constructed by admitting the validity of symbolism as far as it suits, and wherever it does not, in insisting on precise statement; but the result is only a house of cards; no one ever raised himself by pulling on his boot-straps.

From ethnology, psychology, sociology, history, and linguistics, therefore comes the overwhelming conviction that punning as an element of religious progress was unavoidable, and that our duty is not to decry it, but to profit by it for our own future guidance.

## C. THE REMEDY FOR HUMOROUSNESS OF RELIGIOUS PROGRESS

### I. THE PREVENTIVE VALUE OF HISTORY

Full recognition of the imperfections and misfortunes of our religious linguistic religious heritage; nay, even clear realization of their unavoidable nature, should not condemn us to them; but rather put us on our mettle to improve thereby.

Here it is that we realize the supreme cultural value of history. The modern tendency to relegate it to the rubbish-room may perhaps have been dictated by a feeling that the mere deeds of ancient times are of no practical value for our daily lives. This, however, is a real error; for it is the only compass we have as to whether any particular proposed reform is not a recrudescence, or ancient mistake. Indeed, we sometimes wonder why ancient errors long since exploded and pilloried, are zealously advocated afresh. The only cause is that the well-meaning advocates are sufficiently guiltless of history sincerely to think they have made a discovery; and then the whole personal struggle and laborious demonstration has to be gone through with once more to prove it a mare's nest. These recrudescences are natural enough, but when they interfere with real progress, then it is a real crime to withdraw from children the compass of history to sanify, warn them from recrudescences and direct them to real progress. Of course, ultimately, these exploded recrudescences will by the improvement of humanity decay. But as children will ever be impressionable and be born uninstructed, and as crowds will ever more or less permit the less developed to sway the more enlightened, and as there will ever be persons less cultured and disciplined than others, it must be evident that the conditions for the recrudescence of error are practically unlimited.

Besides, the whole trend of medicine, for example, is from curative to preventive methods; 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' More emphasis, therefore, on preventive history-study is bound to be ultimately laid; and God speed that happy day.

## II. THE PREVENTIVE METHOD

When, therefore, we are met by a novel proposition, or a new teaching, we are in duty bound to ask whether it is dawn or dusk, the precursor of light or darkness. Is it a survival, or a revelation? Is its glow a belated *Alpengluehen*, a farewell to the sun, or the first greeting to the coming day?

These questions can be answered only by an appeal to history. For an alleged revealed information from an actual divinity, legitimately claiming our belief, must be, in the first place, different from their contemporaneous beliefs. If it is similar to them, it is only a confirmation; and if it is a confirmation of principles that are immoral, degrading, and evidently early steps of development, then it is a mistaken divinity that would reveal it.

Second, a divine revelation should be suitable to its subject. For instance, it has frequently been pointed out that in certain religions the more extraordinary a miracle was, the more easily it seems to be introduced and received, and the less external testimony it has. Evidently, therefore, the less trustworthy it is.

Again, the more serious and far-reaching the subject, the less should the revelation be precise; yet in such subjects as death and resurrection the most stupendous claims as to reanimation and futurity of events have been made with the most assurance.

Once more such revelations should be consistent with that of others and with itself; and it is notorious that the revelation of hardly any one prophet has agreed with that of any other, or has even been self-consistent on careful scrutiny. In short, we should suspect as much over-certainty as uncertainty.

Third, a divine revelation should not—cannot—depend from mistakes in derivation, in false etymologies, in linguistic errors. After all, the dictionary is the ultimate Savior of humanity; and when its resources are, as a searchlight, applied to an alleged revelation, we may find that this strange light may be but an untranslated word, perhaps the same light we have already had in some slightly differing form.

### III. THE PROCESS OF OBLIVION

The greatest value of history lies then in its being an antidote to the world-wide stream of oblivion which, just as surely as gravitation, rules all human races and events. It is the condition of improvements. Monkeys and insane people cannot be hypnotized or improved for lack of attention and memory; and history is only a specialized, perfected form of this elementary faculty.

So history teaches us that this stream of oblivion is responsible for the growth of many religious doctrines.

1. For instance, there was a time (among the Jews for instance), when it was a common belief that all men were Sons of God. By the operation of oblivion this was gradually forgotten, but the claim was, for personal reasons, retained for a certain individual. Ultimately, this individual was looked upon as an unique personality, different from his fellow-beings, and exclusively divine.

2. There was, again, a time when resurrections were commonly accepted as worthy of belief. The Old Testament was full of them; and resurrections far more marvelous and immediate than any claimed later. Indeed, the possibility thereof was a popular belief, as evidenced by Herod's asking whether Jesus was John returned to life. Then the time came when all these were denied and ignored, except in the case of one particular individual, leaving him ultimately as the exclusive alleged teacher, champion and pathfinder thereof.

Yet history will remind us, in case we reject this Jewish belief, that Celsus objected to Christianity, that the

resurrection of Jesus was neither a novelty nor a proof of anything, seeing the pagans believed in the resurrections of Zamolxis, (Herod. 4.95) Pythagoras, Rhampsinitus (Herod. 2.22), Orpheus (Diod. iv) Protesilaos, Hercules and Theseus (Orig. c. Cels. 2.54), besides Dionysus, Osiris, Attis, Persephone, Eurydice, and many more. These had by the Christians to be denounced as fables, but their assertions about Jesus met the same accusation; and Jesus' resurrection has probative value only for the modern peoples who have dismissed all other mythological resurrections to the realm of fable. Hence it stands alone, now-a-days, and possesses a dignity and uniqueness due only to ignorance of the past contemporary beliefs, whose fate, logically, it should have shared. An instructive case in point are the OT resurrections which the Christians do not deny, but studiously ignore.

But we have yet a further proof about resurrection. It is revealed as a survival, since ethnology tells us, that in the early days of fetichism and fairy stories abounded resurrections more marvelous than Tertullian's from teeth; from drops of blood, or even from tears. Evidently, the trend of evolution is from fetichism to scientific ascertainment of death; and any claim of resurrection two milleniums ago can be little else than a belated survival. And the sooner survivals are shaken off, the faster will be the rate of progress and civilization.

3. Again, when we consider the primitive customs of cannibalism, and the drinking of blood in the sealing of friendship, none of us would wish to have our civilization return to them. We might say with some assurance that there will be none to deny that these are shameful rudiments of which humanity blushes. And yet even in our day there are teachers blatantly claiming to be ahead of the progress of times who practice and teach a ceremony or rite consisting of eating bread and wine that are said

to be the flesh and blood of an individual man. Is there need of even asking whether this is a revelation, or a survival? And if it is a survival, is it not a brutalizing one? There is perhaps no greater proof of the weakness of our modern civilization than that such survivals have not been sufficiently unmasked to end them.

4. Last, we may be sure that allegorical language, except in the field of poetry and oratory, is doomed. Of course, science, in spite of all its advances, will ever find problems so large that it will be forced to employ temporary allegorical language, or hypotheses. But no scientist will forget that it is but a crutch, a scaffold, to be torn down at the earliest possible moment.

The trouble, however, has been that fanatics have laid hold on such temporary expedients as permanent doctrine and revealed truth, and have allowed their sincerity to pass as demonstration. How often have the martyrs of early Christianity been paraded as proofs of the truth of some doctrine. But has history not taught that martyrs have existed in all religions, at different times?

And indeed, the most pathetic of all is that so many martyrs have died (and lived—for sometimes a martyr's life is more trying than a sudden death) for doctrines demonstrated grammatical mistakes a few years later. Martyrdom, apart from the questions of moral rectitude, is folly; and the great medicine for that insanity is the dictionary, the grammar, the contemporary literature, archeology; anthropology, and history.

Let us then hail as the religion of the future the religion of the dictionary and grammar: accuracy, thoroughness, logic; these three exercised in the field of knowledge by education.

THE END

# Linguistic Disguises of Universal Religion

A Plea for  
the Religion of the Dictionary

Henry Howard Linton

Modern Interpretations Press

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## CHAPTER I.

### TOLERATION. A ZOROASTRIAN PLEA.

However powerful tolerance may grow, it will never cease to be needed until there is an end of Ignorance. "To know all, is to forgive all," is the French proverb; for ignorance raises the barrier of lack of interest, of sympathy, of participation, until our neighbor becomes to us strange and competitive. But in an age of competition, a rival is an enemy; a worshipper of different gods is a follower of false gods, and if this becomes ever so little self-assertive, paganism converts our holy zeal for our own sacred things into crusading fervor for conversion, or torture, or destruction of the godless, and we shall, besides, consider we are doing them a favor, as Torquemada did, in saving their souls in spite of themselves.

Such are the fatal effects of ignorance, and it is not to be wondered at that such religious persecution could exist while the barriers of language were insuperable to the greater portion of mankind. No wonder the world witnessed the mutual struggle for Buddha, for Messiah, for Christ, for Kung-Teng,—simply because they did not know they were working for the same Anointed in four different languages. So the Christian calls the Zoroastrian, and old Arabian, a pagan, simply because he ignores that his saviour, Jesus, is Hebrew for Pahlavi saviour Sayoshant-Sraosha, or Yemen Arabian Yathaa, for the Jain Tirthankara, or the Hindu Kalki, or the Babylonian Silik-Mulu-Dug, or Phoenician Eshmun, or Greek Soter, or Jain Jina.

## 2 LINGUISTIC DISGUISES OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Christians look on the Hellenic worships as paganism simply because they do not realize their "Father in Heaven" sounded to the Greek, Zeus-pater; to the Roman, Jupiter, and to the Hindu, Dyaus-pitar, to the Buddhist loka-pita, to the Chinese, loving father, Tsing-tu-wan, to the Phrygian, Attys (Frazer). Nay, when he is in the fervor of inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he needs the sanifying guidance of a dictionary to show him that the Zoroastrian prophet was inspired by the same Spentamainyu; the Egyptian by Knef.

The greatest, nay, the only general, eternal and effective missionary is the grammar and dictionary. This is the sacred hope of the race, that will bring more peace to humanity than all combined cannon and arbitration; for where interest and love are, there is no need of rules and compulsion. Tolerance, indeed, will do as a stop-gap; but it is never more than that. Let Christian, Jew, Buddhist and Chinese tolerate each other as much as they please, there will never be an end of scorn, foreignness and disunited action till they all not merely know, but realize that though they speak in different languages, they worship the same divinity.

There is no doubt that a universal language would do more for the peace of humanity than a century of peace-conferences. The fetishes of nationality are still being kept up. But it would no doubt be a great loss to the world to be deprived of the rich modern idioms; nor need they be given up,—only each man will have to learn those of other races beside his own. A man who knows no language but his own is in the position of a troglodite, a savage,—and what is more, a fanatic. With all our boasted progress, psychology is in its infancy, as a science. Religion has just begun to compare the facts from its different phases. The time will come when a man will be compelled to know all religions, as to-day he recognizes he belongs to a federation of states. He is

none the less a good citizen for that. Indeed, no man can be an ideal citizen, free from sectional prejudice, until he recognizes as his nation the world. So in religion; not until a man shall sympathize with all human attitudes towards God, will he be able to enjoy to the utmost each benefit of his own religion.

This essay would blaze the way for what the writer believes will in future centuries be the universal rule: a clear grasp of the fact that all religions are separated by no more than their respective languages, and that a missionary enterprise is, after all is said and done, no more than the spread of a particular language. The Christian missionary has to make his Chinese convert a Jew Messiah-believer before he can present him his Christ-Messiah Jesus, and the name "Jesus" carries with it the Hebrew, as Buddha the Hindu, and Sraosha the Pahlavi. Well does Goethe in "Faust" speak of human self-deception about words—we have become such that we suppose a man (like Browning, for instance,) necessarily meant something, or had a lucid idea, when he piled up vocables into a fortress with turrets and moat. Men will die to spread words; and, alas, how many will live amidst, and for no more than, words! The time will come when education such as this paper attempts to hint at, will be so advanced that all men will feel their brotherhood in their varying religions, and when they will be able to do this without losing that color and aroma that gathers around the names of each different language. However much Messiah, Christ, Buddha and Kung-Teng mean the same, each has during thousands of years gathered such an individual crown of shining saints, that the words never will, nor ever should die.

Nevertheless, until this ideal condition arises, the words that meant something in their own language should temporarily be translated into English, so as to make on English-speaking people the same effect, (or as near it as

#### 4 LINGUISTIC DISGUISES OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

possible,) as on their own worshippers. This would be especially appropriate with Zoroastrianism which, as a protest against earlier unintelligible faiths, created a purposely intelligible Goodness of God, personified in six virtues or archangels, Holy Immortal Ones, under the leadership of the Savior (Sraosha:) 1, Truth, (Ashemvahishta;) 2, Good Sense, (vohu-mano;) 3, Power (kshathra;) 4, Piety, (armaiti;) 5, Perfection, (haurvatat;) and 6, Immortality, (ameretat.)

Doubtless such translations may be inaccurate,—indeed, must nowadays yet be inaccurate, and should ever be accompanied by a reminder of probably future revision. But, in this case at least, a religion which was created for the direct purpose of being intelligible, must be rendered in intelligible terms, and not by puzzling, terrifying fetishes, which are exactly what its mission was to destroy. If Zarathustra had lived to know of English, he would have used the English rather than the Pahlavi, which now is a dead language. Hence in this case at least, we are not merely permitted but forced to use the English terms.

While Zoroastrianism was probably the most self-consciously reasonable religion, it may be doubted whether at any time a reformer or savior purposely introduced incomprehensible fetishes. All religions, however fossilized ultimately, were once young, and arose as reforms against some pre-existing, more or less incomprehensible, and hence unresponsive, inefficient, outgrown, form of worship. Hence it is fair to presume that in their purest period at least, the religions which are now the most formalized and ritualized, sought, if unconsciously, some such intelligibility as Zarathustra purposely introduced, and which is here suggested;—namely, the using of English terms for all significant names.

However much we may dream of future conditions when all men shall clearly understand the sacred terms

of foreign religions, there are two great facts staring us in the face to-day. First, a number of well-meaning enthusiasts who use numerous Sanskrit names they neither understand or use properly. It was by just such allegorical use of misunderstood terms that Apollos (?) in Hebrews (ix, 9, 10,) by a pun, made of a contract (diatheke) a (diatheke) last will and testament, wherefrom arose much unfortunate medieval vicarious atonement. Second, the great majority of the modern public does *not* associate the meanings with these foreign terms. Hence, as a necessary evil to attain the greater good of an immediate just valuation of these foreign religions by the public generally, translations of the scriptures of the Hebrews and other nations should represent all significant and ascertained names by their English meaning. The appearance of a foreign term should ultimately cause a blush, as a confession of ignorance—however unavoidable this may be to-day, in consequence of the present imperfect state of philology.

## CHAPTER II.

## MEANING OF FOREIGN SACRED TERMS.

As a slight practical contribution to the above suggestion, we give here a number of the more common terms of (to us) foreign religions.

## EGYPTIAN.

Amun means the concealed, unseen divinity. Joined with Ra, the Sun God, it suggested, no doubt, the unseen behind the seen. Khem was the generative principle of nature, and was called Kamuft, *bull of his mother*. Knef meant *Spirit*, nef, (for Holy Spirit, see Wilkinson Anc. Eg. 4, 236). Knef was the divine spirit forming the scheme of creation; and as moving upon the face of the waters, presided over inundations, and created sun and moon. He appears as potter at wheel, as procreating ram. Pthah was the more vulgar creator, Hephaistos. Osiris was only a form of Ra, the sun, during the night and winter, king and judge of Hades, or Amenti. His was a universal worship,—he was represented with crook and whip.

Neith or Net, Truth, of Sais (Athene,) was female Khem, goddess of celestial space, kin to Hathor, of war and weaving.

There were besides Ra and Osiris many more sun gods; Shu, the solar light; Aten, the sun's disk; Atum, the setting sun; Hor-Harmachis, the rising sun; Khepra, the life-giving sun, and Mentu, a provincial sun. Athor, a kosmogenic Venus, was mother of Ra; and Isis (Uasi) was the feminine phase of Uasar-Osiris. Khnum was the divine solar breath.

Lunar gods were Khons, the full moon, and Thoth, a

lunar god of letters, bearing the crescent representing thought. Maut, wife of Ammon, was the great mother of the gods; Sati, wife of Kneph, a Juno. Sekhet, wife of Phthah, lion or cat-headed, infernal mistress; Seb, time or Saturn; Harahar (onuris,) Mars. Nebta or Nephthys, sister of Osiris and Isis, the lower firmament. Ma, goddess of Truth. Nut, the vault of heaven.

There were many other gods; and such as Ampu, Anubis, jackal-headed guardian of the dead; Hapi-Neilos, the sacred river, and Hapi-Apis, the sacred bull. Set or Sutech was Typhon, the enemy of Osiris, dark or cold. Bes, the god of death; Apepe, the great serpent slain by Horus. Osar sip was the Osiris of the underworld. Moses may have been derived from a word meaning Freer, Drawer-out. Ter meant the little idol buried with the mummy.

### BABYLONIA.

The chief ancient divinity was in Assyria Asshur, the Supreme, Asaru, the upper expanse, and in Babylonia, El or Ra, more shadowy, but in close touch with the personal names of the people, (El, Allah.) The great triad is Anu, Anos, Heaven and Time, "Ancient of Days," Father; Bel, Baal, active ruler of world-power; and Hea, Aos, Or, Oannes, sun of life, lord of wisdom, mind. The next triad is Sinu, male moon-god, father of Shamash; Shamash, Shemesh, Sol, the sun, also called Dion-nisi, judge of men, Hellenic Dionysos; last, Vul, or Iva, Jav, Bin, Yem, Rahman, Rimmon, air god, warrior, Jupiter Tonans, of storms; rain god, and fertility-giver.

Anu's wife was Anatu. Bel's, Beltis, Bilat, Mylitta; the great mother of the gods, the Cybele of the Phrygians, the Rhea of the Greeks, the Magna Mater or Bona Dea of the Romans. She is also warlike. Hea's wife is Dau-Kina, queen of Hades, soother of the dying, or Ninazu; Sin's wife is the Great Lady; Shamas's is Gula or Anunit, a female sun. Jav's wife is Shala or Tala, *Sarrat*, queen.

The planets were presided over by special divinities. Saturn's was Nin or Bar, the Assyrian Hercules, warrior and hunter, represented by the cherubs, man-bulls. Jupiter's was Merodach, specially Babylonian, warrior messenger of Hea, to whom was dedicated the eighth month, Marchesvan, who fought and overcame Tiamat, Tauthe, his serpent opponent of evil or chaos. Wife, Zirpanit.

Mars's was Nergal the warrior and hunter, and overshadower even of Nin; symbolized by the human-headed winged lion. Wife, Laz.

Venus's was Ishtar, Nana of the Babylonians, Astarte of the Phoenicians, who was rejected by Izdubar, and went into hell and returned. She was Queen of Victory, the Virgo zodiacal constellation, the sixth month, Elul, was sacred to her.

Mercury's was Nebo, Nabu, intelligent, wise teacher, minister. Wife, Urmit.

Then there are Makhir, goddess of dreams; Paku, the divine messenger; Zicum, a primeval mother of Anu and the gods; or Sukku.

There was Abzu, Apason, the primeval wisdom or abyss; Kisare, the lower expanse; Lakhmu, cosmic force; wife, Lakhamu.

Last, Du-mu-zi, Tammuz, Sun of life, sun dying in winter and night.

Silik-mulu-dug was the Jesus, the helper, the Savior. Megh was the divine messenger.

### ZOROASTRIANISM.

The Zend-Avesta (interpretation of Avesta text,) is the bible of Spitama Zarathustra, or "writing whose camels are old or fierce," living in W. Iran near Lake Urumyah (Atropatem and Medici,) 660-583 B. C. He taught the doctrine of Ahura Mazda, the Lord-wisdom Sraosha the Savior, and Spentamainyu, the Holy Spirit. From him emanated the six Ameshaspentas, the Holy Immortal Ones, Asha-vahishta, truth; Vohu-mano, good

sense; Khshathra-vairya, power; Spenta-armaiti, piety, earth; Haurvatat, perfect health; Ameretat, immortality. Ahura Mazda was relegated to supremacy later, and Sraosha took his place with the Ameshaspentas. Mithras the sun-god, was sometimes identified with him, the "unconquered." With this group were the Yazatas or worshipful ones, Ashi-vamuhe, good piety; the sister of Sraosha, obedience; Rashnu, justice; and Mithra, truth. The Fravashis meant "confession of faith," embodied in the book of life, "dathra-iterus," "ishudo." The Fravashis, from being ancestor spirits came to be guardian angels; the Izeds were the angels between these and the Ameshaspentas.

Opposed to Ahura Mazda was Angramainyu, the black spirit, captain of seven *druks*, or destroyers, false ones; Aeshma-daeva, the Asmodeus of Tobit, deceiving, rapine-loving demon; Indra of storms; Saurva or Agni, fire; Naonhaitya, Taric, thirst; Zaric, penury, Druvis. Under these leaders fought the evil daevas, against the ahuras with Sraosha, the savior, at their head.

Originally sacrificing horses, (white preferably,) but also oxen, sheep and goats, later the Haoma juice was pressed by seven priests, the chief one called Nestri, by the *baresma*, or twigs, and caught in vials, Samudra, and burnt in the fire.

Purity and truth were the key-words of this religion, and their sacred prayer the "Ahuna-vairya."

Zahah was the serpent king of Baori, who expelled Adam Yuma or Jemshid from paradise and was himself overcome afterwards.

Zoroaster left three seeds whence will arise leaders who will help to usher in the millenium after both good and bad powers have each ruled 3000 years. They are Humata or Ukshyatereta, right thinking; Hukhta or Ukhshyatnema, right words; and Hvareshta or Sayoshant, astwata ereta, right deeds.

## 10 LINGUISTIC DISGUISES OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

The Gathas or Psalms, are the most ancient parts of the sacred books, and are found among the Yasna, or liturgies. Vispered, another section of the Avesta-oand-Zend (Text and Commentary) means "all the chiefs." The third section is the Vendidad, (law for) "enemies of the devil." The Kordah Avesta, the fourth, is the "little Avesta."

Darius, in Phrygian, meant wise.

### VEDIC INDIA.

The only god common to India and Iran was Mitra, the light god. The Hindus were a Turanic race between whom and the Iranians strife had arisen; so that the ahuras, Iranian angels, were Hindu asuras or demons; while Iranian demon-daevas were Hindu devas or divinities. Varuna (Greek Ouranos) meant the sky; Mitra, the sun; an Indra, the storm, from *indu*, drop; Zeus Ombroos, Jupiter Pluvius. Next is Agni, fire, (*ignis*,) with Rudra, a variant. Next is Dyaus, the heaven, Surya or Savitri, the sun; Soma, the moon; Ushas, the dawn, (*Eos*;) Prithur, the earth; Vayu, the gentle wind; Ay, the waters; Nadi, the rivers; and Martus, the storms, (*Ares*, Mars). So there are Aditi, the infinite mother of the luminous gods; Aryaman, a variant of Mithra. The Asuras are the two sons of the sun, Aswa, the Dioskouroi. Pushan is a solar variant. Tvashtri is the solar worker, Hephaistos. Vishnu, the sun as "striding" over the heavens, and Yama is the setting sun, lord of the underworld.

The Soma (*asclepias acida*) was no doubt connected with the dispossessed lunar worship. Prayer, praise and offerings of clarified butter, honey and soma-juice, were used at the sacrifice, at which priests presided, strewing the room with sacred kusa or rushes, singing Mantras or hymns, which no doubt gradually formed the Rig-Veda, meaning Collection of Knowledge. The god they addressed was the Brahmanaspati, the lord of prayer;

Dharma, truth, or Justice; the divine Messenger, Maha (Agni Matarisvan). The coming Savior was Kalki; the Brahm is variously rendered Spirit, Word, or Holy Spirit (Rucha).

The Huns derive their name from Hyun-des, snow-land, corresponding to Himalaya, Imaus, Emaus. Yama is death.

### BUDDHISM.

Like the Hebrews, the Buddhists have a divine chariot of enlightenment; Mahayana, the greater, and Hinayana, the lesser. They also use the expression treasures of Dharma, norm or truth, contained in three sacred Pitakas or baskets. The first contains the vinaya, canon law, "guidance;" the second sutra or thread contains khanda-kas or treatises; the third, abidhamma, or expansion. The Ceylon Maha Vansa, is the great chronicle. Among its treatises are the Theratheri gatha, "Song of Elders," and "udana," or ecstatic utterances.

Dhammapadam, Hymns of the Faith; Hivuthakam, Logia book; Jatakam, Birth Stories. He taught the Prashna Paramita, meaning Wisdom-tradition (from beyond the Himalayas, from Bactria, Scythia, Shakya).

Gautama seems to have been a family name; he lived 527 (?) B. C. in Kapilavastu, the capital of the Shakyas. Shakya-muni, means sage of the Shakyas; Shakya-minha, lion of the Shakyas; Buddha, anointed or enlightener; Tathagata, He who should come; Siddartha, prince, from Sarvartha-siddha, the fulfilment of every wish; he was a shramana, or ascetic for a period. Other titles were Bhagavat, the Sublime, the blessed Tathagata, the Coming One, the Perfected. Dschina, the victorious (over Mara). Sugata, the Welcome. Bodhisattva, the Aspirant to the Buddhahood.

His cousin-disciple Ananda, was his beloved one. "The Heavenly Father" is loka pita. Bodhi, wisdom; Amitabha, boundless light.

## 12 LINGUISTIC DISGUISES OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

During Gautama's desert experience he met the tempter Mara, death. Airdya, great ignorance, arupam.

### JAIN.

The Jain Coming One was Tirthankara; parpo, purity; arhat, saint. The crooked cross, among the Hindus swastika, has among the Jains many names; su (well), asti (so it is, amen. Hebrew amun, Egyptian); parpo (purity); taosse; ter; musteg.

### GREECE.

The Olympic divinities were twelve, not divided in pairs. Zeus, the sky, the father, of whom we are the offspring, Acts xvii, 28; in whom we live, move and have our being; the father of the constellation, Gen. i, 14; called Wonderful, Is. ix, 6; the First and last, Rev. i, 8, 11; Help and Shield. Ps. xviii, 2; xlvi, 1. Poseidon is the sea. Apollo, an original god later applied to the sun, poetry, music, inspiration and healing; he is striker-afar, angel of death, judge as well as god of victory,—a Son of God, declaring the will of God to man. Ares, passionate war-god. Hephaestus, god of fire, and worker, lameness, cause of ridicule, jester. Hermes, commercial, of wealth, invention, deceit, messenger, giver of comforts; learning, wisdom, invention, a busy liar, who exchanged with Apollo his lyre for a caduceus.

Hera (Era the earth,) became the female Zeus, goddess of maternity, proud, jealous, bitter. Athene, war, wisdom, polity, industrial art, the Mentor of Telemachus. Artemis, reflection of Apollo, the moon, pure, chaste, a minister of death, archer; presiding at births. At Ephesus she took the place of Mother of the Gods, Cybele, Rhea, Magna Mater Beltis, Mylitta. Aphrodite is passionate love, physical beauty, mentally childish, morally odious; at home in Cyprus. Hestia presided over the hearth, holy and virginally pure. Demeter was the earth-mother, (Maut, Beltis, Cybele,) patron of agriculture; as Thesmophorus, civilizer, law-giver. Her rites, the

Eleusinian, were the greatest, combining nature with law and order. Her daughter, Persephone, stolen from her was queen of the dead, husband of Hades, "the unseen." Dionysus, the foreign "judge of men" had five different characters and represented a Greek adaptation of an Eastern god,—passed sentence on the departed and, in Greece, became god of intoxication. Lete (Latona,) is model of motherly love and wifely purity, and silent.

The Greeks had adopted from Sanskrit gods;—Zeus-Dyaus; Ares-Maruts; Helios-Surya; and Eos (subordinate here)-Ushas. (Roman, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Aurora.) Ahana (dawn) appeared as Athene. Sanskrit epithets were Dyava Mater,—Demeter; Yavistha, Hephaistos; Duhita Divah, Aphrodite. Varouna was adopted as Ouranos. Agni as the physical Ignis in Rome; and the Mithras mysteries under the Empire spread all over Rome. Against the four Hindu gods, Greece took six Semitic divinities; Asklepios, Dionysus, Kronos, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Hephaistus; leaving as purely Greek only Apollo, Hermes, Hera, Athene, the shadowy lunar Artemis, and more shadowy Hestia and Latona. The pure Greek gods were shadowy and receded behind adoptive divinities.

The natural divinities lingered long as nymphs, the Oreads of mountains, (Hama-) dryads, of trees, Nereids, of springs and waters.

### PHOENICIA.

The Phoenicians worshipped one god under the names El the strong, Eliun, the Most High, Melek-Zadik, (Moloch,) king of righteousness; Baal-benth and -samim, lord of treaties and heaven and Melekquereth, the Hercules of the city. Adoni, meant my Lord.

Eshmun was the healer, and in Greece appeared as Asklepius. This may have been the name applied to the Babylonian Tammuz. They also worshipped Shamash, the sun, and Dagon or Hea, Oannes, the Man Fish,

the lord of the underworld.

They worshipped Melchizedek as Sibut (Sabaoth) the seven kabeirum, the Great Ones, gods of sailors; but at Samothrace they appeared as four: Axieros (Demeter, Zeus, Pothos, Divinity;) Axiokersos (Hades, Dionysus, Phaeton, Jupiter, Heaven, active life powers;) Axiokerse, (Persephone, Aphrodite, Juno, Earth, passive life-power;) and Karmilos (Hermes, Minerva, ideas or thought.) Eshmun, the healer or savior of Beirut, (Sraosha, the archangel Jeshua, Jesus,) was the name Tammuz was known by.

Baltis, originally only the female aspect of Baal, combined all the female goddesses (Beltis, Ishtar, Gula, Zibanit,) as Ashtoreth.

Prominent among their gods was the Babylonian Jau, known as Iao, the "mysterious" (Arabian moon god,) the same as Dionysus, only-begotten, the sun-god of autumn and evening, also called Aion (movers,) or eternal; evidently the judge of the underworld, like Osiris-Adonis-Adonai. He is also called the seven-fold, Sibut, the highest god, and Demiurg. He was worshipped by the Samaritans along with the Hebrew Jahve, and is noticed frequently by the church fathers.

#### HEBREW.

The word *Kabalistic* is sufficient, generally, to make one feel uncanny; yet Qabalah means only *received* tradition, the same in ordinary meaning as the Buddhist Paramita. The word *Talmud* means teaching or learning; Targum, Ezra iv, 7, an interpretation; *Mischnah*, the special instruction of some teacher; *Masorah*, Ez. xx, 37, was the orthodox standard of recognized interpretation, literally "fetter" on private, wilful, heretical exegesis. The Halacha are (Rabbinic) discussions; hagada, ethical parables.

#### NEW TESTAMENT.

So also the New Testament characters seem to us to

have distinct names; yet the Apostles' names meant to them only Supplanter, (James, Jacob;) Hearing Stone (Simon Peter;) Horse-lover (Philip;) God's gift, (Nathanael;) God is gracious, (John;) Manly, (Andrew;) Praised, (Judas;) Twin, (Thomas;) Gift of Jehovah, (Matthew, Matthias;) Son of Learning (Bartholomew).

So also we have Stone (Caiaphas;) Son of the Father, (Barabbas;) Little or Asked, (Paul or Saul).

### JESUS.

Ages of worship have made men feel a personal relation to the man Jesus; and yet that had, for years, been the name of the chief angel of God, the Metatron Jeshua, or Savior, Helper, found in Is. lxiii, 8, 9, and Rev. i, 1, and on account of which recognized uses it was given to the child, Mt. 1, 21; much as the Irish frequently give their children the name *Michael*, which indeed was at that very time partly used as a synonym to the angel-chief, Jeshua.

### ARABIAN.

Ancient Arabian Yemen divinities (Lenormant,) were just as interesting; Bil-Rahman, merciful; Yathaa, Savior; Haubas, shining; Samah, elevated; Simidan, powerful; Dhamar, protector.

### MOHAMMEDAN.

The word Muhammad or Ahmad means Praised, Desired, the Quran means only reading, in Surah 95, and Jer 36. 10; 51.63, etc., as *qara*.

### CHINESE.

Confucius (Kung-fu-tseu) meant tseu, son, title of a noble who had attained majority; fu, teacher; Kung, family name. Lao-tsze meant old boy, old son, old philosopher. Kung-teng, the Coming Messiah. God, loving Father, Tsing-tu-wan; another name for "God, the perfect King." (Taoist) "Yue-Wang-Shang-Ti." Ti, is heaven or God. The Taoist divinity is that of the "Three

pure (or) holy Ones.”

Shi King, 588 B. C., means, “ancient poem book;” Yih King, book of changes. Li-King, book of rites. Lun Yu, Discourses and Dialogues. Ta-chwang-yen, the Buddhist Lala Vistara, the Great Magnificence. Confucian books are the Analects or Gatherings; the Great Learning, the Way of the Mean. There is the Taoist Shan-Hsien-Chwan, Accounts of Spirits and Immortals, Tao, the Way, Virtue, Reason, the Word; so that the Tao-teh-King means the Book of the Way and Virtue.

#### LORD.

Likewise the Christian, who addressed God as Lord, will no more scorn the Greek for worshipping Kurios, the Hebrew for worshipping Adonai, Baal (Jer. 3.14; Is. 54.5), the Phoenicians for worshipping Baal and Adonis; the Philistine for worshipping Marna; the Assyrio-Babylonian for worshipping Bel; the Arabian, for worshipping Dhu; the Parsee for worshipping Ahura; or marvel at the Siva worshipper’s Ishvara, the Indra worshipper’s Shakra.

It will not be uninteresting, in view of the prejudice against the Canaanitic baal worship, to remember that *baal* is translated in the AV by captain Jer 37, 13; chief, Lev. 21.4; dominion, Is. 26.13; given, Eccl. 8.8; great, Prov. 18.9; have, Is. 41.15; husband, Dt. 21.13; lord, Nu. 21.18; man, Gen. 20.3; married, Dt. 22.22; marry, Mal. 2.11; owner, Ex. 21.29; person, Prov. 24.8. It was only the common word by which every Jewish wife and slave addressed the husband and master.

## CHAPTER III

## URGENCY, UNAVOIDABLENESS, CONCLUSION.

## URGENCY.

Before coming to our conclusion, it may be well to mention two things: namely, that the proposed change of religion to a linguistic basis is both necessary, and unavoidable.

The necessity of linguistic religion may be illustrated by not more than two minor instances, one from the Old Testament, and one from the New.

Is it any wonder that critics and readers should be puzzled as to when a word is a name or a quality, when the Jews themselves were? Old Jewish Targums were uncertain as to whether there ever was a prophet by name of *Malachi*, or whether it meant merely *Angel-messenger*, standing for Ezra, Zerubbabel, or Nehemiah. The reader is entitled to know the uncertainty.

Twice (Acts 11.28, 21.10) does a prophet named Agabus come from Jerusalem to Antioch to meet Paul; the second time to warn him of imprisonment; the first time to warn him of famine. What a liberator the linguistic method is! There is no need of critic or commentator—the reader would draw his own conclusion as to the way the book was written when he learnt that the gentleman's name to his friends meant Mr. Famine. (Hagab., 2 Chr. 7.13 or Geb., Is 33.4, means locust, the symbol for famine Ex. 10, Joel 1.4, 2.25 So Drusius). So Simon Magus means Simon Wise-man; and Elymas Magus (Acts 13.8) means Mr. Wise-man Wise-man, the first in Arabic, the latter in Babylonian-Persian.

## UNAVOIDABLENESS.

Besides being urgent, this linguistic method is unavoidable. In their zeal for their religions the names of God have been so multiplied that they have to their own races indubitably become mere qualities. These indeed are actually translated, the Common-Sense translation being violence to their theories. So we have Buddhist, Mohammedan, and Christian-Hebrew lists of Divine names.

## CONCLUSION.

In the familiar ground that has here been traversed, it will have become evident that, however different religions may seem to be, it is the same humanity which, under the varying accidents of historic circumstances, used the simplest words available to express the unseen and the attributes of wisdom, justice, motherhood, beauty, courage, purity. It instituted endless reforms with these in view, until Zoroaster stripped off the last local linguistic, accidental element from divinity, and set it forth in its pure embodiments of virtues. It is time that learning should undo the devastating work of war, which has antiquated the Pahlavi language, and once more present the divinity (as the French Revolution did for a time,) stripped from all local and tribal associations.

It will be noticed that the writer's effort has been to avoid all controversy as to the indebtedness of one religion to another. Our data are insufficient, and can never become otherwise, in the first place; and if they were sufficient, such a contention of dependence can never be demonstrated. Again, where personal interests are concerned, impossible proof is demanded.

The writer is perfectly willing to shelter himself behind the great Church Apologists,—Clement of Alexandria and Justin Martyr, who both claimed that the Hebrew religion was the oldest in the world, from whom

all others had copied, and that what pagan similarities did exist, were invented in advance by the devil, so as to oppose, (by similarity) the truth when it should come. Both of these inconsistent contentions will be granted, (the first, unhistorical; the second, ridiculously puerile;) but it must be pointed out that priority in time and merit of invention are of no interest to the polyglot, or rather, dictionary-method here contended for, as all local, tribal and circumstantial elements disappear when the significance of words is considered and the moral value weighed. Let us grant Max Mueller's contention that unless we can tell exactly the time and place of the one individual who took over a doctrine known to thousands,—(as illogical as the above proposition,) we must call everything coincidence, even if in a later religion we find one illogical, meaningless parable which in an earlier religion appears as two different, clear, logical, useful and effective ones. Let it be all coincidence. But what does that matter, when the later as well as the earlier is judged by its value?

For instance, what is the use of elaborate arguments to debate whether Buddhist influences entered Judea, when we consider that the Jews were in the habit of anointing themselves at every meal, of anointing priests, prophets and kings,—nay, even shields. Would they not themselves have developed an *Anointed*, a Messiah, or a Christ? Do we need an external influence to name the gathered writings *Book*, as the Christians did, *Reading*, as Mohammedanism did, or *Vehicle*, as the Hebrews and Buddhists did, or *Great Learning*, as the Chinese? The titles that have been handed down to us are probably only one out of every hundred used commonly.

Among all the divine names, not a single one has occurred whose meaning was not, with tiresome regularity, so simple a child could invent it. Apparently the influence of one nation on another has been no more than linguistic,—enforcing their vocable for the same, or a kindred idea. While this process may interest a philolo-

## 20 LINGUISTIC DISGUISES OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

gist, it is of little moment to the religious, devout worshipper. When Christianity has "translated" itself into English, there will be nothing left to send missionaries about. It will express no more than every right-minded person believed, especially as in its case its names are general, and there is no external evidence.

This method will almost be as great an innovation as Kepler's: to demonstrate that man was not made for religions, but religions for man: the center must be shifted. Feverish effort in missionary work shows there is somewhere an error that may be discovered. Truth will take care of itself, though it is man's duty to build for the future with foresight. Promotion of any form of worship is never of more than secondary importance to its present effectiveness; yet both depend on each other, and should be held together.

Nevertheless it is believed there is room for a new organization,—one that shall continue to enforce this polyglot religion and point out the linguistic element in all theologies.

Future effort should surely be directed towards ascertaining the value each religion once represented to its votaries. Already contentions have begun to fade into social utilities, and it is hoped the day is not far distant when religion will have left the infantile "you're another" stage and begun to gather facts so that they will be universally accessible, that each may draw his own conclusions and employ them to his own edification, moralization and sanctification.

Then it will be seen how evolution has forced all great religions, in spite of themselves, to coexist in every part of the world. The next logical step will be when each man will *be* his own religion, but use practically that recognized one which most promotes his own.

**Culmination  
of Biblical Values  
through Comparative Religion**

**A Constructive Appreciation of the Bible  
Yielding an Assurance for its Future**

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## CULMINATION OF BIBLICAL VALUES

## CHAPTER I

THE BIBLE ITSELF DEMANDS A FRESH  
APPRAISAL.

‘Why do you not leave the Bible alone, and use up your critical activities on other things, which will not disturb the devotional needs of your most inoffensive fellow-men?’ asks the offended devotee. The answer is, ‘It is not the critic who forces the issue; were he the Bible’s enemy, he would ignore it. But he is interested in it, and would understand it; would do away with all objections to it, would make it possible for the most deserving part of the community, the honest intelligent person, to honor it as the Word of God.

‘But it is the Bible itself which forces the issue; as it stands; it commits suicide; and the devout student, miscalled critic, would rescue it for those devout people who are capable of feeling a contradiction, and who would believe in God and his Living Word, if they could help seeing its undeniable suicide.

## SCRIPTURE SUICIDE.

- 1 Allegorism and punning, as *Adam* and *diatheke*.
- 2 Contradictions, as in uses of *death* and *resurrection*.
- 3 Misquotations, as i Cor. 15.45 from Gen. 11.7, lxx.
- 4 Duplicates, as Matth. 15.38, 16.9, 14.19. See also Explanations of Beersheba, Gen. 21.31; 26.33; Beelzebul, Matt. 10.25, 12.24
- 5 Misplacement, as Sermon on Mount, scattered in Luke; and different connections of Mt. 9.15, and Jno. 3.29.
- 6 Interpolations, as interruptions from *Acts of Pilate* Mt. xxvii.3-10, 19, 24, 25, 52, 53, 62-66; xxviii.3, 4, 11-15.
- 7 Imitations, as the Syro-phoenician Woman, from 1 Kgs. 17. Entering on an ass and a colt, from Gen. 49.11.
- 8 Omissions, as in *Acts* of the trial of ii Cor. i.8.
- 9 Manufacture, as in artificiality of Johannine conversations, and in the word-meanings of the genealogies.
- 10 Tendency or purpose, as in Luke i.1-3; also i Cor. xv.31; Rom. 8.36; ii Cor. iv.16.
- 11 Contradictions, as the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, and of the Synoptic and Johannine chronologies.
- 12 Anachronisms, as the Taxing of Quirinus, 6 A.D.
- 13 Absurdities, as Jonah's whale, and Balaam's ass.
- 14 Exaggerations, patriarchs' ages, Exodus numbers.
- 15 Geographical errors, as in *Gerasa*, which is 40 miles from the lake-shore; walking all night to go three miles from Cana to Capernaum, John 4.46-52; Bethany changed to Bethabara, and Magada to Magdala.
- 16 Moral Difficulties, as choosing Judas as disciple.
- 17 Immorality, as depriving Gadarene owners of their swine.
- 18 Non-moral views of God, as the Cursing Psalms Commanding theft from the Egyptians, slaughter of whole populations, allowing bad meat to be sold to strangers, Deut. xiv.31.

## CHAPTER II

## ETHNOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE.

## THE BIBLE AS HUMAN DOCUMENT.

Who would understand the Bible must first consider its creator—man.

Unfortunately, there is as yet no ultimate psychology, because this science has just entered the experimental stage, and its data are not yet classified.

From psychology we must turn to history. But its mass of facts must be passed over, for in themselves they are of no direct assistance. History itself, however, has begun its real career of interpreting its foundations. Ultimately it will fuse with ethnology, and both of these merge into a more complete and useful anthropology.

On the threshold of the Bible, therefore, we meet once more the Delphic oracle, 'Know thyself.'

THE BIBLE AN ADUMBRATION RATHER THAN  
A RECORD.

Man, therefore, has always, and always will find his religion in himself; and as he develops, his religion becomes purer, preparing him for a step higher and upward in a spiral until he reach to heights yet unimagined.

One change of standpoint, however, has been effected by Darwin's comparison of the structures of living beings: evolution which reaches upward before us, must have come up from below. As man's form developed from the anthropoid, so, because of the inexorable progress of humanity, must any religion which places superior perfection, knowledge or attainment in the past, be doomed to be superseded by higher expressions. The

only religion that has any elements of ultimate permanency will be one which proves elastic enough to keep pace with the progress of humanity; which recognizes no goal short of the salvation of the whole of humanity; whose face is turned forwards to the Future, and not longing for and harking back to the Past. Till man, the living Bible, shall have attained his culmination, never can his perfect expression lie elsewhere than in the Future.

#### THE BIBLE'S RECORD AN EDUCATING ASCENT.

In the past, therefore, must we not expect to find greater, but less perfection. Not a degeneration, but a growth is the course of history. And the idea of a growth precludes sharp demarcations from age to age; it implies that of the coexisting elements, the best shall gradually preponderate, until the permanence of such predominance states the human problem in new terms. In other words, precise schemes of stages of development describe only the successive predominance of particular elements. The stages of such schemes must therefore not be understood as mutually exclusive.

Guarding our statement in such manner, we may enjoy George Smith's suggestions (in his 'Chaldean Genesis') that the Hebrew patriarchs in reality signify a progress of successively higher races, as follows:

1. Adam, Humanity.
2. Quain, 'Nest'-men, or Troglodites.
3. M-ahale-el, Tent-men.
4. Irad, City-men.
5. Chenoq, City-dedicator, priest, individual.
6. Methuselah, 'Weapon'-men.
7. Lamech.
8. Noah—'Ship'—men.

Let us study this evolution under more modern

### EGYPTIAN TOTEMISM.

The troglodite's main efforts were to protect himself from the attacks of animals, and to feed on them. His worship was directed towards the animal totem of his tribe. His human prisoners were eaten. Socially, the age was promiscuous. Like animals, the young soon became estranged from their parents, and not infrequently fought with them, when the family remained long enough together. Men were not yet self-conscious. This was the stone age, typified in Egyptian, long-lingering totemism among the pyramids.

What worship the troglodite felt was no doubt a fetish—worship, of trees, springs and meteorites. His life was a pure objective, unreflective experience.

### PHOENICIAN DRUIDISM.

When man became more conscious of himself, he directed his worship to more general phenomena of nature, such as fire, sex-organs, wine-intoxication, and ancestor-worship. His human prisoners were no longer eaten, but mutilated or sacrificed.

Socially, this was the matriarchal age, when only through the mother could ancestry be traced; hence was she the nucleus of the tribe. This was the bronze age, of hewn stone circles and mound-builders. The destructiveness of fire may have drawn attention to the similar fatality of serpents. Last, through love, reverence and early spiritistic phenomena, came ancestor-worship.

### BABYLONIAN STAR-WORSHIP.

When men began to develop their mental powers, they looked up at the fixed stars, and invented legends about them, in connection with human heroes who had disappeared from among them. Ancestor-worship developed into magic, rituals sprang up in connection with burials; purifications were undertaken; sacrifices were limited to animals; his prisoners were only enslaved and

exploited. Conditions became stable enough for the superior strength of the male to assert itself over the female, enslaving her in the patriarchal age. Animals were still worshipped, but only allegorically, as serpents denoted wisdom; the dove, Venus's love; the owl, Minerva's learning. Here belongs the origin of the Zodiac; here began the worship of Gods in anthropomorphic statues. This age was well represented by the Chaldean civilization.

### PARSEE SUN-WORSHIP.

When the moral faculty awakened, it merged planetary and lunar into sun-worship, giving rise to the numerous legends of heroes conquering dragons or serpents: Osiris overcoming Typhon; Apollo with Python; Marduk with Tiamat; Michael with the Dragon; Eros with Ophioneus; Ormuzd with Ahriman; Dionysus with the Serpent-footed Titans; Indra with Ahi; Buddha with Mara-Naga. The animal idols were, by the XVIIIth Dynasty cleared out from Egyptian temples, turning them into oracles, healing-shrines, and Sibyllic initiation-caves. Patriarchal power waned; the individual citizen became the unit of the State; women were subject, but received that domestic reverence they commanded. Slavery ceased being hopelessly permanent; education became more general. This was the Alexandrian—Roman age; the age of Messiahs, the typically Parsee age, in the Bible typified by Shem,—which may stand for *shamash*, the sun-god.

### BUDDHIST ALLEGORISM.

When the moral faculty became the predominating partner, the ancient gods came to be allegorized, as among the Stoics. It was the age of parable; seeking spiritual results from uncritical material. So overwhelming was the religious interest that men tortured and slew each other for doctrines. The brightest wits were at work; but as they had no facts to go on, their energies drove them around in circles, instead of advancing. This

was the great Gnostic age of mysteries and colossal systems of theology; also that of brotherhoods, and unworldly virtue. Slavery was lightened into serfdom, which could be thrown off by activity and merit. Hence arose political papacies, and Canossa-born vulgar reformations, none the less tyrannical. Is it any wonder that such minds as Erasmus, too cultured to associate with the reformers who sympathized with him, chose to remain in the more allegorical surroundings of his birth.

### HELLENIC MYSTERIES.

When the faculty of judgment awoke, criticism separated facts from fancy, and solid progress began. From the great sceptic common-sense of the nations arose toleration; and to insure their survival religious bodies were forced to purify themselves. Social conditions at last matured. Even serfdom disappeared, with the arrival of the universal ballot. Women became emancipated, and even attained more power than men, by claiming all their political rights, without surrendering the traditional privileges of weakness. The family diminished, and individual life was lengthened.

### MODERN SCIENTIFIC REFORMS.

Should this development continue the various religious bodies will coalesce, forming a religion of Humanity, whose law will be conscience, whose sword will be compulsory education, and whose crown will be, as it ever was, health; but besides this, a wholeness of character so comprehensive as to be yet unimagined. Impersonifications shall fade before their significance. Individual men as saviors of the race will disappear before interpreters of discipline, culture, and wisdom;—that is, virtue and attainment will become ever more fashionable; 'I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.'

## COEXISTENCE OF THESE CULTS.

While it is illuminating to distinguish these various stages of religion, nothing could be further from the truth than to suppose that in any one age all existing ages were representatives thereof. There have always been, and there probably always will be on earth, at any one time, representatives of all of these stages of culture, but the relative number of each class varies gradually in inverse ratio. While in prehistoric antiquity the overwhelming mass of humanity were troglodites, no doubt there were even then men with all the aspirations of the fifth religious stage; and to the troglodites appeared these as priests, prophets and gods. Even as late as the Roman age appeared a Pythagoras, a Socrates, a Plato, a Gautama, a Zoroaster—heralds of an age perhaps yet unrealized. Gradually, no doubt, shall the lower races die out, slowly disappearing one by one; but nevertheless as the preponderance of humanity reaches the highest levels, it must be hoped that they will never fail to find a peak of perfection still looming above them, to keep the whole trend of evolution still progressing.

## DYNAMIC CONCEPTION OF THE BIBLE.

Such a dynamic conception of humanity is it, that finds its expression in, or that represents the Bible. It contains elements of all stages of human development and religion, from the lowest to the highest: troglodytic Egyptian totemism, as in the teraphim of the patriarchs; Phoenician druidism, as in the intoxication of Noah and the slaying of prisoners; the Babylonian star-worship, as in Jacob's Fear of his father Isaac, and the Lord of Hosts of Stars; the Parsee sun-worship, as in the Sun of Righteousness, with healing in his wings; the Buddhist Allegorism, as in the parable of the Prodigal Son; the Hellenic Mystery Worship, as in the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven; last, the noblest visions of the future, the white light that shall result from the combination of all these separate spectrum-hues in an individual prayer, effort, and education.

## CHAPTER III

## THE BIBLE AS INDEX OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

## DEFINITE BIBLICAL SOURCES.

Alluring as such an analysis of the Bible into ethnological stratification may be, ethnology is not yet developed enough to offer any permanent classification; so that, however suggestive what we have advanced may be, it could easily be destroyed by different ethnological analyses. It will be wiser therefore to limit ourselves to ascertained facts, impossible of successful denial. From time to time similarities to Biblical stories have been pointed out in other religions. To such, the literalist could if he pleased, merely close his eyes; but the problem compels his attention when he finds some incidents which, in their Bible context are abrupt, meaningless, or illogical; while in their ethnic statement they are consecutive, reasonable and fully explained, as, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, from Buddhist Sources.

## BABYLONIAN SOURCES.

The creation-epic, and the flood; the sabbath, the cherubim; Nimrod, David; King Sargina exposed in ark; location of Babel-tower, and home of Abraham; Pillar of fire and smoke; Ez. 8. 16; sun-priests; Ishtar as Esther; Mordecai's dream.

## PALESTINIAN SOURCES.

Shem or Samson; Jephtha's daughters; children passing through fire to Moloch; the Lord called Baal, as in David's son Baal-jada; Noah's legend; the gods Sebaot and Jao; the brazen temple-sea; celebration of

the hanged god Marsyas; the worship of the only-begotten Adonis-Tammuz.

#### ZOROASTRIAN SOURCES.

God as fire; the devil Ahriman; resurrection, end of world, savior to come; second life; unpardonable Sin; Jeshurun; faith and works; a parable of wise and foolish; Antichrist, the Lie; the white horse of revelation; judgment, gospel, inheritance, token; apostle; Daniel, and Tobit 3.7, 8. the Revelation incidents.

#### BUDDHIST.

The presentation in the Temple, the fasting; the preexistence; the fig-tree (Jno. 1.46); 'has this one sinned'; the betrayal; parables; see Seydel, p. 298, the word; the seed; see Edmund's work.

#### EGYPTIAN.

Joseph story (Story of Dudu); circumcision; bull worship as the golden calf; passover, the trinity.

#### ARABIAN.

Jahve as rain-god; Sinai as sanctuary; secrecy of divine name; patriarchal nomadism; Hobab the Kenite father-in-law of Moses; tribe divisions; Arabian months; moon worship; horns of altar; Queen of Sheba.

#### NABATHEAN OR SABEAN.

The baptist cult.

#### GREEK SOURCES.

Sacraments of baptism and common meal; mystery terms.

#### ROMAN SOURCES.

Organization; Funerary Societies.

#### ALEXANDRIAN SOURCES.

##### WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

Messianic nature; work on earth; controversy and trial; death, resurrection and ascension; epistles' references.

## PHILO.

Distinction between 'God' and 'the God,' image of God; word of God; son of God as high-priest; milk and meat; the travelling rock of wisdom; God Swearing by himself; Messiah as man and as divine, as Christ and redeemer; as son of David, and of man; Kingdom of heaven; names of Christ; Christ as God and Savior; as mediator; as good Shepherd seeking the lost; self-sacrifice of the Logos.

## LITERARY SOURCES.

## JOSEPHUS.

Resuscitation after taking down from the cross; Vespasian's miracles; looking on Mt. of Olives; prophecy of ruin, and of army; trial of Jesus son of Ananus; derision of Carabbas in Alexandria, followed by crucifixion, as in Laureolus, or Stephen.

## HERODOTUS.

Love of the women, stealing of dead body, 2.121. 3, 4.

## OTHER SOURCES.

Crucifixion details in Maccabean psalm 22; answer to repentant sinner, 1 Sam. 28.19; cataclysm in Zech. 14.

## PRIORITY OF SOURCE UNIMPORTANT.

Experts in any one field could increase the similarities here mentioned many-fold; the present ones are adduced merely as suggestions, so as to enable us to come to an intelligent solution thereof. Some of these similarities evidently ante-date the Bible, others may be claimed to be later; but the whole question of copying, of priority, of source,—a question which arouses much ill-feeling,—is quite unimportant, for two reasons.

The first is that some persons would not believe the most circumstantial demonstration, and it is only rarely that this is possible. Besides, some would not believe an even irrefutable proof, unless the time, place and manner of copying were shown,—a condition which cannot be met

even with books of the present day. Those who have intelligence enough to see a correspondence will not wait for such a demonstration.

Evidently, therefore, a demonstration of obligation to a source is impossible, and even were it possible it would be useless. In the past it was taught that a writing was good because it was inspired; and thereby many rudimentary questionable passages in the Bible were forced on the admiration of many innocent people. But nowadays it is generally understood that writing is inspired because it is good and beautiful. Therefore, as long as what we find in the Bible is good and beautiful it matters little or nothing what its original source (if any legend or teaching ever had an original source!) may have been.

The significance of such an index to the comparative religion to be found in the Bible is therefore not a question of priority of source, but that in no country under heaven has the divine spirit left itself without a witness.

And as a matter of fact, the early Christian apologists took pains to gather as many such instances as possible to demonstrate that God had spoken to the fathers at sundry times and in divers manners.

#### THE BOGY OF ORIGINALITY.

Not only is priority immaterial, but even originality is generally questionable. Nothing new can be true, nor can anything true be new except to the ignorant. During the course of a man's education he discovers all the historic mare's nests; and only as he progresses does he realize that education consists in progressive fidelity to facts, in adaptation to surroundings, in conspiring with the trend of environment. Originality, as in all scientific discoveries, consists in yet unheard of compliance to natural laws; and only the most learned can hope to make 'original' combinations. So, higher than originality, will we prize Jewish involuntary fidelity to the surrounding religions they incorporated.

## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION

## THE SUPREME VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

If, therefore, the inspiration of an utterance is measured by its potency for good, beauty and holiness, how can the inspiration of the sublime style and elevated thought of the Bible be affected by the discovery of equally beautiful and sublime utterances elsewhere? Will the double beauty not rather enhance both?

The Bible is the most sublime book ever written, not in spite of these parallelisms, but just *because* of them. That it contains the chief beauties of all other forms of worship makes it only a compendium of all the inspiration man ever received.

Justly, therefore does the sixth Article of Religion teach that the Bible 'contains all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought a requisite necessary to salvation.'

## THE BIBLE AS TEXT-BOOK OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION.

The value of the Bible has therefore culminated when it is seen to be the most comprehensive compendium of cosmic religious history. From every stage of human devotion—fetichistic, star-worshipping, Solar, Zoroastrian, has Jewish involuntary fidelity to what was at various times forced on him providentially pointed through a text-book of comparative religion to the destined universality of religion itself, and to the ultimate importance of the spiritual life, when God shall be 'all in all.'

When, moreover, we consider how cheaply it is distributed; how universally, as the 'best seller in the book-market'; and with what dignified prestige; and by how many devoted missionaries who are thus ignorantly spreading abroad and keeping alive the legends of Babylonia, the main truths of Zoroastrianism, and the chief biographical points of Buddhism,—it is evident that the Bible is the greatest blessing that ever fell to the lot of man. Well may we believe that when men will begin to understand what a treasure they have in their hands, they will value it all the more than if it was what its mistaken advocates have thought it was, a lawyer's plea for their own form of religion.

All that it needs is therefore an efficient and thorough comparative index; and when this will be sufficiently circulated, the Bible will no doubt never die, as the most priceless heritage of the ages whose historians have perished, and have left us nothing but their religious aspirations in this divine book.

# Epitome

OF

DR. KENNETH SYLVAN GUTHRIE'S



## THE SPIRITUAL MESSAGE OF LITERATURE

### THE NECESSITY OF COMPARING LITERATURES

Comparison is the root of all learning, suggestion, insight, and improvement. The writer, though all his life he had studied music, for the first time understood how to criticise music when, at a German Saengerfest in Philadelphia, he heard the same song sung successively by a dozen different male choruses. He who knows only one language, does not understand language as such. All our social evils survive simply for lack of proper social inter-relations. The Salvation Army has established bureaus for consultation with intending suicides; no misfortune is really so great that it does not admit of relief, if we could only get into touch with well-intentioned holders of resources. Thought itself is a social product; and over-individuality is only a polite name for insanity, provincialism, obstinacy, and stupidity. Solitary confinement is the supreme punishment.

If then unification is the supreme good, all that stands in its way is of evil; namely, ignorance or personalities. Separate languages are inevitable; each has its own "bouquet" and contributes an unreplaceable element to spirituality. The evil is not preference for one's own language, but ignorance of others. To gather the significance of even our own literature, therefore, we must discover its true function in the universal organism. If we only realized it, our best thoughts are the efflorescence of civilizations we

affect to despise and ignore; and unless we understand the elements of thought with which we deal, we lose the racial aroma, the predestination which makes of our own life a note in the hymn of destiny. How quickly we would run away from a man who would be eternally twanging at a single harp-string! But when supported by a chord, even a single note may alternately plead, as a mediant; attack as a dominant, or triumph as a tonic. The differing colors, gathered, form white light, something sublimer than any of them. With all the strings of the harp, the harpist can improvise heart-moving symphonic achievement. Our modern literature, unanalyzed, is a personal pastime; appreciated in the light of its origins, it is the latest revelations of the evolving divinity.

### THE TWO KINDS OF LITERARY SOURCES

Running through every human life are the twin relations of individual and the group to which he belongs. So we have the pupil and the class; the priest and the church; the toiler and the trade. Their ideas are not always identical. There is often friction; in ancient times called heresy, nowadays it is disharmony. Therefore, if we are to listen to the different voices of literature, we shall have to listen both to racial and to individual solutions of the problems of destiny.

In the past, of course, the racial element was the most noticeable; in modern times, the individual; and yet it could easily be demonstrated that neither could exist without the other, any more than the flower without the root, or even the root without the flower.

Indeed, what we are pleased to call the more original individual messages consist really of hybridization of racial characteristics; like Matthew Arnold, who brought to the English language French pellucidity, and charm.

Originality, indeed, is only grasp of better sources. What Macrobius did to Virgil, what Higher Critic has done to the Pentateuch, could be done to every great writer, who, indeed is great chiefly because he was so receptive to the influences and sources of his times that he adequately represents them. Goethe frankly acknowledged pillaging; but what a pillaging it was! And if Goethe had not studied sufficient foreign literatures, he would not have had anything to pillage. The more original therefore a genius you want to be, the wider will have to be your erudition. The sinner judgment you wish to pass, the mor-

comparative, must it be. The more individual you wish to become, more sanely must you discriminate the streams of racial inspiration, and the more judicious must be your combination thereof.

### WHAT IS LITERATURE?

Before beginning our search for the messages of races and of individuals, we must ask ourselves: What is literature? This has been defined as memorability; for which there may be many individual causes, none alone being sufficient to measure up to, or secure immortality. For instance, felicity of diction; importance of message; emotion; and first of all, beauty. We hear sometimes of the religion of literature, and the literature of religion; but after all, literature is religion of the right kind, and religion of the right kind is the right kind of literature. These miserable divisions between religion, literature, science, poetry, and art are only fetishes for the short-sighted; of course very useful to calculate with; especially useful in heresy-trials; but who would care to be a Torquemada? Besides, they are useful to earn salaries; to raise meetings to hysteric generosity. To sell books, or even to make armies kill each other with; but to satisfy each soul's desire for truth, justice, humanity, wisdom, no! The larger truth, the higher truth, these are irreducible margins, which presentiment tells us are the basis of universal brotherhood. We are all longing for a single, all-comprehending heaven, where all those distinctions will be transformed into the many-sided service of the Supreme life. Wagner's opera, a union of music, poetry and action adumbrated this yearning for unification. Someday there will be a "United States of Europe," and later an inter-continental co-operation foreshadowed by the postal system, and the Hague Palace of Peace.

So if we prefer to use a new term to indicate the unity of all these various terms, we may, as most convenient, fix on the term "prophecy," to represent the gist or significance, or spiritual message of a aspiration, of which we are especially to study the literary expressions.

### THE RACIAL MESSAGES

The message of the Hindus is manifold. In common with many undisciplined people, many of their literary expressions represent a quality of which the best interpretation is generosity. The political states support whole classes of religious devotees. It is the land of classic friendships. Here the widow burns herself on her husband's pyre, and wives seek out

additional wives for their husbands. Readiness to forgive, as shown by Rama, is not far removed from this. Moral desert, spiritual culture, and deification are in addition higher developments thereof. Compassion is the chief historic drama of Buddhism. The northern branch of their race, the Persians express its more intellectual aspect by fidelity, truth-telling, and marital faithfulness. The Arabians express its more militant aspect in their Mohammedan resignation to the will of God.

When we turn to the Chino-Japanese world, we find an entirely different category of religious conceptions. The Chinese teach us moderation, duty and righteousness, and character, as well as fidelity to the family as the social unit. The Japanese owed their superiority to the Chinese because of their imitativeness, for all that is great in their civilization is originally Chinese. But what matters that to us, as long as they artistically, gracefully, and charmingly selected the best? In Japan first did art become self-conscious, for all they are is owed to the way in which they spoiled the Chinese.

The Semitic world is an entirely different group. The Egyptians were obsessed by the idea of Judgment, as shown in their Book of the Dead, which represented the soul going towards sunset, passing through Judgment, and thereafter being "manifested to light" with the sunrise in another world. In other words; they taught the world immortality. What is represented to us by the word "intellectual culture" appears for the first time among the Assyrio-Babylonians, who wrote myths about creation, and taught what we might best call "communion with the Divinity," such as we find it later in the Hebrew Psalms. Although the Zoroastrians in a certain sense belong to the Hindu group, yet their political establishment, in this valley, and consequent influence on the Hebrews when in captivity, forces us to class them here; for the last gift to the world of this wonderful valley of the Euphrates were the Zoroastrian conceptions of purity, an angelic hierarchy, a future savior, a millennium of restoration, and the divine fire.

The Greek's world's influence upon the world has not, in the past been overrated; but, the general state of ignorance of other civilizations has caused it to eclipse our debts to other races and civilizations. We must however give this Greek civilization its due place in our "spiritual inheritance."

From Greece came the conception of heroic magnanimity, social success, and the healthy objectivity so well represent-

ed in their bible, the poetry of Homer. Last, but not least, was their worship of classic beauty.

To surviving aborigines such as the American Indians we can trace the poetic expression for love of flowers, and genial mildness.

To the Northern sources, from Iceland, Norway, and adjacent countries we may trace the bardic ideals, and the expression of Manliness, something which could not come from any of the southern civilizations, among whom slavery was an institution.

### SEMI-RACIAL VOICES

Having thus mentioned the chief racial contributions to our spiritual heritage, we may now turn to the semi-racial ones which come to us in the shape of legends. These are, not racial, for many of them wander around the globe in the supremest disregard of frontiers and nationality. They appear as epics, and in later days dramas or poems by great authors, who endeavored to interpret them spiritually.

The legend of Job, as it appears in the Bible, enforces moral trial, disinterested love, confidence in the inner light, and scientific humility, or trust in God.

The Hindu Haritschandra legend teaches the sacredness of a promise, duty as taking precedence of love, and magnanimity or generosity.

The Greek Prometheus legend teaches the contradiction between mind and passion; the supremacy of the rational over the irrational nature; the avoidance of fate by intelligent mechanical contrivances; and the divinity of Man as contrasted with dogmatic heavens and hells. Shelley's continuation thereof teaches the lesson of pain, which is forgiveness; the search of the intellect after truth; the destruction of the tyranny of custom, and the attainment of a moral character.

Plato's Republic teaches scientific government, as against the practical corruption of brute force, or, science versus custom.

Dante's Divine Comedy sets forth moral culture as salvation.

Calderon's Prodigious Magician shows that the failure of every other natural method of progress proves the veridicity of the Christian religion.

The Faust legend, in Goethe's hand, teaches divine discontent.

The Golden Legend, popularized by Longfellow, sets forth the beauty of self-sacrifice, but also the duty to refuse it.

The Holy Grail legends teach a Quest after the divine on earth, and that without purity none may find it.

pressed by Quinet, teach that the effort of life is to produce culture for our descendants.

Hardy's "Dynasts" reads into the Napoleonic legendary crises the paroxysms of an unconscious Will, of which men are but the deceived puppets.

Moody's "Masque of Judgment" serves up, in modern form, the old millennial world-crisis, in the form that passion is good while controlled, but that its evil lies in its moments of rebellion.

Wilbrandt's Master of Palmyra expresses in modern form the universal idea of re-incarnation, and its possible explanation of the injustices of life, and the ultimate achievement of perfect moral character.

Flaubert, in his "Temptation of St. Anthony" adapted that age-long legend to portray the moral progress of a soul through physical needs, sectarianism, philosophy, national ideals, and pantheism, to scientific research as the herald of a new age.

### INDIVIDUAL VOICES

Those who have attempted to invent the scaffolding on which to drape their characteristic message were able to accomplish far more purposive results, but, of course, their creations suffered in picturesque objectivity, which, after all, is the basis of literary immortality. Among them, we may listen to

Kebes, the disciple of Socrates, when he paints a Greek Pilgrim's Progress, in his "Picture" teaching intellectual culture, virtue, happiness and sobriety.

Bunyan, following in his footsteps, adapted to it the Christian religion, and its practical life.

St. Augustine, when he dreams of the cosmic progress of a newer civilization.

Spenser, when he objectifies for us the beauty of the virtues of holiness.

Byron, when in "Manfred," he exhibits the dangers of failure in moral matters, even after the substantial victory is won.

Krasinsky, in his "Internal Comedy," shows that poetic humanitarian dreams lead only to bloody revolutions, to misfortunes of those we love, and to blindness of one's own powers. Democracy is disgusting; aristocracy is effete and treacherous. Nothing remains but the Christian religion.

Madach's "Tragedy of Humanity" illustrates the tendency of religious obscurantism to ruin knowledge and culture, the suicidal results of blind credulity.

Ibsen, in pointing out the inevitable suicidal result of over-logical consecration to unearthly ideals, such as those of Brand.

Victor Hugo, who, in his "Dieu," symbolizes the stages of mind of man, and shows that only under rationalism, the proper use of reason, can man be fully himself.

Tolstoi, who in his "Power of Darkness" illustrates the power of guilt to condemn man to greater guilt; and that the only way out is open confession.

Camposamor, in his "Universal Drama," illustrates the tortuous agony of explanation of crime, that guilt clings to us in unimagined conditions until transformed into moral achievement.

### CONSENSUS OF PROPHETS

We have just studied the messages of those poets who took the trouble to incarnate their intentions into coherent, and dramatic works of art. But the first step of prophecy is mere bardism, or troubadour-effusions, or lyric poetry. So manifold, so disconnected, so transitory are these, that few if any have suspected that they could ever have a consistent significance. Still, this could be guessed from the fact that lyric effusions are after all judged by universal standards such as beauty, emotional power, imaginativeness, sincerity, and the like. We may therefore assume that it may be possible sometime, as indeed is done in the standard anthologies, to classify and systematize the lyric poetry of the world, and ultimately come to some definite significance thereof. It is admitted that its bulk, its continual accessions, its fluctuating standards of criticism, will ever make a final conclusion merely provisional, and valid only for the seeker himself; but nevertheless every intelligent man will make his own deductions, according to his lights, and to the extent of his erudition.

In Dr. Guthrie's "Spiritual Message of Literature," such an inspirational quest is conducted, with the following result:

The basic lyric aspirations consists of consecration of self to some object or another. Passion is attractive primarily for its keen appreciation of beauty. But pain inevitably arises, and teaches its lesson of law-abidingness. This constitutes a rational control of the passions, a rationalization of life, eventuating in purity of heart. This leads to impartial love, whose education results in cosmopolitanism. Idolatry is a half-way station on the way to devotion to the divine.

We have now arrived at consideration of our human potentialities, which might be summarized by the single word "conservation."

Constructivism, instead of destructivism, it at the root of this; in religious

dialect, "edification." This leads necessarily to discipline, which can be effected only by labor. Thus is developed character, which is best shown by responsibility. Only watchfulness to avoid failure permits us to achieve our ideals.

Having thus created the individual, we are ready to examine the contents of his ideals, which might be termed a "higher pantheism," or, in a single word, "attainment." God then is universally recognized as being immanent in the world, and the next higher view is his immanence in the self. This is practically objectified by the ancient maxim, "Know Thyself." This really constitutes our divine destiny, which, when carried out or achieved, appears as self-dependence. But if we are evolving, it is evident that divine discontent is the ultimate revelation of the divinity; for even the divinity must still be progressing, or he would not be perfect, one element of which conception must surely be progress.

While this is the true basis of life, poetry has loved to clothe it in a religious mysticism, whose gateway was initiation. This tells us in poetic words that the root of all gross polytheism really was a sense of the human progress towards divinity; whose highest definition has ever been some sort of love, which may well be associated with wisdom. The union of both applied to our problems, is the religious demonstrations of soul-prayers, progress, namely, salvation.

This is the spiritual message of universal literature; and, in his book of that title, Dr. Kenneth Guthrie has attempted to give the quotations justifying it, and presenting sufficient of the details of the underlying dramas, legends, and racial contributions thereto to enable the general reader to gain a very substantive appreciation thereof. It contains quotations from, and accounts of many literary works generally unknown, but which, in the future, will be better known on our side of the Atlantic.

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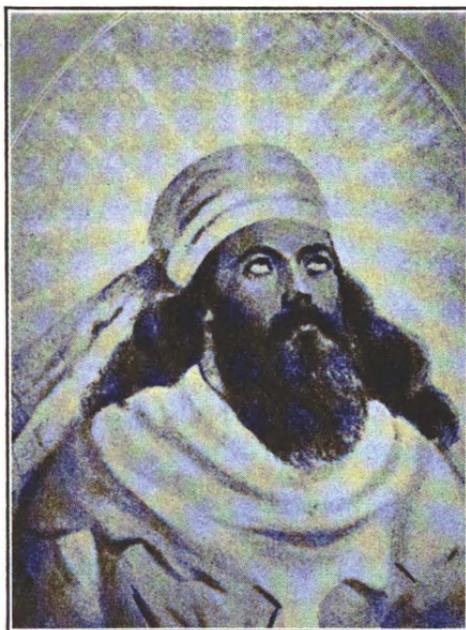
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## Harmony of the GATHAS

34.1-3	A. INTRODUCTION.	43.1,2
	B. ZARATHUSHTRA'S EDUCATION.	
33.7	I. Zarathushtra's Discontent at Home among the Magians	43.3
	II. Zarathushtra as Student with Vohumanist Cult [43.11b]	
34.4	VISION 1. Fire-glow of Retribution	43.4
33.13	VISION 2. Punishments are Undeceivable	43.5,6
34.5,6	VISION 5. The Sincere shall be Supported	43.11,12
	III. Zarathushtra as Student with Ashaist Cult	
34.7,8	VISION 4. Theophany of Asha	43.9,10
31.12,13	VISION 3. Wavering to be Ended by Support of Ashaists	43.7,8
30.8-11	VISION 6. Demand for Help to execute God's Judgments	43.13,14
31.18-22; 34.9,10	VISION 7. Armaiti Aligns the Parties	43.15,16
	IV. Zarathushtra Seeks Immortality in Vain (33.6)	
31.6,7; 33.6	He is Rejected by Spentamainyust Cult	44.17,18
31.3-5,7,8,11,14-17; 34.12-15	V. Studies with Mazdists	43.4; 44.1-16,19,20; 47.2; 50.6
	C. ZARATHUSHTRA'S ENTRANCE INTO PUBLIC LIFE	
31.9,10	I. Creation of Cattle; its Choice of a Master	51.7; 44.16
29	Capture of Ashaist Cult: Appointment as Judge	44.6,20
30.1-5	Capture of Vohumanist Cult: Dualism Proclaimed	45.1-3; 49.3
	IV. Zarathushtra is afflicted with sickness; the Metallic Fire-test	
30.6,7; 32.7; 33.10,12,14	drives him to Seek Help in a Vision	51.9
	V. Wherein he receives the long-sought Mystic Word of	
31.21; 32.5; 33.8,9; 34.1,11	Health and Immortality	45.4-11; 47.1; 48.1
	VI. Capture of Spentamainyust Cult: Coming of the Holy Ghost:	
30.1,5. 31.7; 33.5		43.8,12,16; 45.8; 46.17; 47.1-6
31.1,2; 32.1,2	VII. Zarathushtra is accepted publicly	_____
	D. ESTABLISHMENT OF MAGIAN MOVEMENT.	
32.3-16	I. Fight with the Daevas	46.1-8; 48; 49
	II. Zarathushtra is Worst-ed, and in despair drives the Magians	
33	into open agricultural country	46.9-13; 50; 51.1-15
28	Vishtaspa assumes leadership; Praise for Heroes	46.14-19; 51.16-22
	IV. Jamaspa, induced by matrimonial alliance, joins the	
_____	Magian movement	53

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