Coleridge as Philosopher of Missions

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> In Coleridge's case his own ardent missionary spirit combined with his straitened circumstances was a constant temptation to dissipate his powers in practical applications instead of in the systematic development of his ideas.
> ~John Muirhead[1]

> What is Christianity at any one period?—The Ideal of the Human Soul at that period.
> ~Samuel Taylor Coleridge[2]

> THOUGHT. He who begins with loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his Church (or Sect) better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all three.
> ~Samuel Taylor Coleridge[3]

Abstract

Coleridge directed his *Aids to Reflection* (1825, 1831) to young men preparing for Christian vocations, missionaries in particular, and planned, but did not write, a seventh supplementary essay, which may be reconstructed from Coleridge's œuvres,

[1] John Muirhead, *Coleridge as Philosopher* (The Muirhead Library of Philosophy; New York, NY: The Humanities Press, 1930) 16. I am obliged to the late Maurice S. Elliott for underscoring "Missionaries" (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* [*AR*] [ed. John Beer; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993] 6); Robert L. Fisher, Indo-European linguist for reading drafts; Noël Ramsey, student of metaphorical theology for checking references; Jamie S. Scott, cultural historian, Steve Mason, historian of Roman Judaea, and Christopher H. Ford, musician and health information technology strategist, for conversation; and the reviewers and editors for their inspiring counsel.

[2] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (*CL*) (ed. Earl Leslie Griggs; 6 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956–1971) 6:552.

[3] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (*CN*) (ed. Kathleen Coburn, Morton Christensen, and Anthony John Harding; 5 vols.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957–2002) 4:5026, 5:5724.

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to correct what he thought was inadequate preparation. Missionaries are educators whose preparation must include scientific biblical criticism: Christianity evolves with culture generally. Anthropography is required in order to foster inter-cultural exchange, including insight into a tradition's metaphors. Missionaries engage in proselytism, insists Coleridge, in the strictly limited sense of conversion through the exemplary conduct of the missionary as a fully realized human being.

Introduction

Samuel Taylor Coleridge addressed *Aids to Reflection in the Formation of a Manly Character on the Several Grounds of Prudence, Morality, and Religion* (1825, 1831) to students preparing to be missionaries: "Pastors, Preachers, Missionaries, or Instructors of Youth."[4] Coleridge proposed six and then seven supplementary essays, but did not write the seventh essay on missions and missionaries.[5] From Coleridge's works, Christopher Stokes "reconstituted" Coleridge's unwritten essay, "philosophy of prayer," as an additional supplementary essay for *Aids to Reflection* (1825). Stokes notes: "Although he did not make good on the promise, the essays can to some extent be reconstituted from scattered material such as marginalia and notebooks."[6]

I propose to reconstitute Coleridge's essay on "missions and missionaries" to show that Coleridge articulates a philosophy, not a theology, of missions before Gustav Warneck (1834–1910), whom contemporary missiologists consider their founder. Coleridge addresses the same issues: the rationale for missions and engagement with other religious traditions. Coleridge argues for a philosophical rather than a biblical-theological rationale, favoring dialogue with some religious traditions (Zoroastrianism, for example), and conversion through civilizing, exemplary conduct on the part of missionaries, in other cases (African traditions, for example); he calls for the elimination of superstition wherever it occurs, including in Christianity. He is aware that religions, including Christianity, originate in particular physical and cultural environments. Coleridge considers the problem of inter-cultural engagement between Christianity and other traditions. The recognition that the Indian tradition, for example, shares with Christianity the idea of salvation ("life"), but, metaphorically, "drapes" that idea in the language of the nervous system, not in the metaphorical language of blood ("Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" in John 6:53 KJV) in Christianity, makes dialogue possible. Coleridge does not resolve his question of whether Christianity is the one true religion for the entire world. Religion for Coleridge is fundamentally a philosophy of education that aims at self-realization,

[4] *AR* 6.

[5] *CL* 5:434 (7 May 1825); the seventh was added by 17 May 1825 (*CL* 5:459).

[6] Christopher Stokes, "Coleridge's Philosophy of Prayer: Responsibility, Parergon, and Catachresis," *JR* 89 (2009) 541–563, at 541.

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expressed by his aphorism, "Be!"[7] "Christianity," as Coleridge wrote to his son, is "The Ideal of the Human Soul" in any period, but so are other religions.

Coleridge's missiology is a part of his "system," which is philosophical in the sense stated by John Muirhead: "For the purposes of this Study Coleridge's relation to Christianity is secondary. What we are concerned with is primarily his general interpretation of the meaning of religion, what beliefs it seemed to him to involve, as to the nature of God and the destiny of the human soul."[8] Mary Ann Perkins argues

> that he developed on the ground of the Logos principle and in his 'logosophic' system, a framework for the reconciliation of thought, faith, and experience which is potentially as generative of critical thought in the areas of psychology, philosophy, and religion as, for example, the systems of F. W. J. Schelling and G. W. F. Hegel.[9]

Coleridge's philosophy of missions is situated in his philosophical system. This essay considers that he is a pioneer for contemporary missiology; a reformer of religion, allowing that superstition is positive when it leads to knowledge and negative when it inhibits knowledge; an educator, emphasizing that missions fosters self-knowledge; and a critic of the superstitious, literalist dictation theory of biblical inspiration because it blocks engagement with other religious traditions in not recognizing the role of metaphor. However, he contradicts his ethical principle (and his missiology) that persons are not things, insisting that African slaves be forcibly reminded of the providence that brought them Christianity. In reconstituting Coleridge's essay on "Missions and Missionaries," note Kathleen Coburn's point that Coleridge's thought is provisional: "His is the kind of not-rigidly-compartmentalized mind that asks questions that are more important than the answers."[10] Coleridge notes: "If any Stranger should light on this or the preceding Numbers of the 'Fly-catcher,' let him read them not as asserted truths but as processes of a mind working toward truth": here is a work in progress.[11]

Missiology

Coleridge's pioneering philosophy of missions has a contemporary ring in Jan A. B. Jongeneel's philosophy of missions: "The philosophy of mission, defined as 'the logical study of missionary and missiological concepts, arguments and language', is not at all identical with . . . 'the theology of mission.'"[12] Much current missiology is formulated as theology of missions, based on biblical texts,

[7] *CN* 4:4830.

[8] Muirhead, *Coleridge as Philosopher*, 218.

[9] Mary Ann Perkins, *Coleridge's Philosophy: The Logos as Unifying Principle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) xiii.

[10] Kathleen Coburn, *Inquiring Spirit* (rev. ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979) 20.

[11] *CN* 5:6450.

[12] Jan A. B. Jongeneel, "Is Missiology an Academic Discipline?" *Transformation* 15 (1998) 27–32, at 30.

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often Matt 28:16–20, commonly called "The Great Commission," read literally or non-literally.[13] Andreas J. Köstenberger interprets it literally as a command: "it is a commission to be obeyed: 'Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.'"[14] There is no salvation (escape from hell) apart from an explicit faith in Christ: "Theologies of 'wider hope,' 'universal accessible salvation,' and 'salvation through general revelation,' while engaging, are not biblically acceptable."[15] Coleridge is unhappy with both prospects: "I can as little talk the language of the universalists with satisfaction to my Judgement as I can the language of the Calvinists without ~~an~~ outraging my feelings."[16] David J. Bosch rejects this view: "We cannot deduce a universally valid missionary theory from Matthew's gospel; we are, however, challenged to look in the same direction Matthew does."[17] Fundamentalism tends "to turn the Bible into a fetish and apply it mechanically to every context, particularly as regards the 'Great Commission.'"[18] Missions is not in "competition with other religions," and conversion is possible only if it is "conducted in a different manner in the new, emerging paradigm."[19] Köstenberger and Bosch, despite the difference in their interpretation of the "Great Commission," are engaged in formulating a theology, not a philosophy, of missions (Jongeneel), to which Coleridge made the earliest contribution.

The problem with a theology of missions in these contemporary missiologists appears in the acknowledged founder of missiology, Gustav Warneck (1834–1910),[20] who sees the sciences as a means to missions: "Geographical, ethnological, or linguistic investigation is the end of science but only means towards the end of the mission," namely, bringing salvation.[21] Coleridge disagrees, and he uses the metaphor of a building to claim that the sciences are the foundation of Christianity: "knowledge and civilization must, in the first instance, form the foundation, not the superstructure, of Christianity."[22] Science is an integral part of, not a means to, Christianity:

[13] Three texts are David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (American Society of Missiology Series 16; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991, 2011); John Mark Terry, ed., *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2015); Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (American Society of Missiology Series 30; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004): they find their "model" in Luke-Acts.

[14] Andreas J. Köstenberger, "Mission in the Gospels" in Terry, *Missiology* 53–67, at 67.

[15] Millard J. Erickson, "The State of the Unevangelized and Its Missionary Implications," in Terry, *Missiology* 121–137, at 137.

[16] *CN* 5:5962.

[17] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 84.

[18] Ibid., 350.

[19] Ibid., 531.

[20] Ibid., 4; Jongeneel, "Is Missiology an Academic Discipline?," 29.

[21] Gustav Warneck, *Modern Missions and Culture: Their Mutual Relations* (trans. Thomas Smith; Edinburgh: James Gemmell, George IV Bridge, 1883) 118.

[22] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Review of Thomas Clarkson's *Abolition of the Slave-Trade*" (1808),

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> Necessity if Christianity, a s *world*-religion, be of God, that universal Physics but Zoology especially must form a part of the magnificent System of Redemption/& so S[t] Paul indeed asserts— —But if so, then must the Insight into the Faith increase—with the growth & extension of Science & Philosophy. Proof—the Demons of the Gospels—the ascension thro' the Clouds *up* to Heaven /[23]

Without science, Christianity regresses into superstition, for which Coleridge proposes his "science of superstition" as its solution.

Superstition

Coleridge is a reformer in exposing enthusiasm, fanaticism, and superstition. Reading widely in travel literature, he commends a representative of the Russian Bible Society for avoiding "Missionary enthusiasm": "A very interesting little Volume. . . . The perfect freedom from all sectarian bigotry, Missionary enthusiasm and *bibliolatry* is as exemplary as it is remarkable."[24] Christianity and Christian missions need to be purged of superstition ("*bibliolatry*"), enthusiasm, and fanaticism, for Coleridge is impartial in exposing superstition. He pleads for the reforming of religious traditions through the removal of superstitions. Enthusiasm focuses on the senses, rather than on faith and knowledge:

> Nor has the contrary Doctrine, according to which the Baptized are yet, each individually, to be called, converted, and chosen, with all the corollaries from this assumption, the watching for signs and sensible assurances, "the frames," and "the states," and "the feelings," and "the sudden conversions," the contagious Fever-boils of the (most unfitly, so called) Evangelicals, and Arminian Methodists of the day, been in any age taught or countenanced by any known and accredited Christian Church, or by any body and Succession of learned Divines.[25]

There is a feverish and individual preoccupation with "sensible assurances" ("Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine" [Fanny Crosby, 1873]) instead of participation in the community of the church. Coleridge clusters superstition, enthusiasm, and fanaticism (expressed in a medical metaphor) against knowledge: "it is a spiritual Working, of which I speak, and a spiritual Knowlege—not thro' the medium of *Image*, the seeking after which is *Superstition*; nor yet by any *Sensation*, the Watching for which is *Enthusiasm*, and the Conceit of its presence Fanatical

in *Shorter Works and Fragments* (*SW&F*) (ed. H. J. Jackson and J. R. de J. Jackson; 2 vols.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995) 1:216–243, at 241. Note Coleridge's distinction: "Civilization is but the Matrix—*cultivation* being the Gem" (*CN* 4:5302, [italics in original]).

[23] *CN* 5:5629 (italics in original).

[24] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Coleridge Marginalia* (*CM*) (ed. George Whalley and H. J. Jackson; 6 vols.; NJ: Princeton University Press,1980–2001) 6:246; "The Narratives of Travellers and Voyagers," *CN* 5:6731 (italics in original).

[25] *AR* 311.

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Distemperature."[26] Superstition, however, plays a positive, though limited, role in acquiring knowledge.

In his philosophy of superstition,[27] Coleridge characterizes superstition as a "mistaking,"[28] either positive or negative.[29] In developing visual perception, one corrects the necessary mistake of taking square objects for round, thereby acquiring the concept of distance—knowledge arises from error:

> Observe, how graciously Nature instructs her human children. She cannot give us the knowledge derived from sight without occasioning us at first to mistake images of reflection for substances. But the very consequences of the delusion lead inevitably to its detection; and out of the ashes of the error rises a new flower of knowledge. We not only see, but are enabled to discover by what means we see. So too we are under the necessity, in given circumstances, of mistaking a square for a round object: but ere the mistake can have any practical consequences, it is not only removed, but in its removal gives us the symbol of a new fact, that of distance.[30]

He uses a metaphor from botany: cotyledons have a positive role in the early stages of the development of a plant, and then drop off, and are not part of the mature plant, otherwise the early superstition becomes "faithless."[31] Superstitions are a product of fancy at an early stage only ("and haply, for a time") of the formation of knowledge: "these Bodings will set the fancy at work, and haply, for a time, transform the mists of dim and imperfect knowledge into determinate superstitions."[32] Genuine religious feeling may arise through the fancy, grasping

[26] *CM* 6:300; "The sad results of religious Dogmatism, superstitious or enthusiastic, on the peace, & happiness and progression of Families and of Nations" (*CN* 4:4931 [italics in original]).

[27] "The commencement of the Annals and Philosophy of Superstition, for the completion of which I am waiting only for a very curious folio" (*SW&F* 2:916).

[28] Here are characterizations of superstition: "the prostration of the Mind before an unanalyzed Anomaly" (*SW&F* 1:126); "assertion of appearances derived from sense" (*CM* 3:216 n. 44[1]); "External objects naturally produce sensation; but here sensation, as it were, produces the object" (*Table Talk* [*TT*] [ed. Carl Woodring; 2 vols.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press,1990] 1:55); "Are not the Images clearly the Products of Sensations explained by the Fancy as in ordinary Dreams?" (*CN* 4:4908); and, "Thus the assigning of the ~~name~~ character and being of the Soul to a phantom or shape visually abstracted from the Body, under the name of Ghost, Spirit or Apparition, is a Superstition" (*SW&F* 2:903–4).

[29] The worship of a cow is not necessarily a "contravention of the first commandment," for there are "positive and negative forces in the science of superstition" (*SW&F* 2:1261).

[30] *The Friend* (*F*) (ed. Barbara Rooke; 2 vols.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969) 1:47. Superstition is implied in *Logic* (ed. J. R. de J. Jackson; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981): "This is the happy delirium, the healthful fever, of the physical, moral, and intellectual being, Nature's kind and providential gift to childhood" (8); "~~healthy fancy~~" (*CN* 4:4766); "A lovely Child contemplates his form in the Mirror & believes it another" (*CN* 4:5280).

[31] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *On the Constitution of the Church and State* (*C&S*) (ed. John Colmer; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976) 144 and n. 7.

[32] *AR*, 36; on fancy and superstition: "When the Invisible is sought for by means of the Fancy to the World *without*, and the Awe <is> is transferred to imaginary Powers . . . or to sensible objects

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divine attributes as really existing in the natural world ("forbidden symbols"), and is preferable to skepticism:

> For surely the poor Heathen who represents to himself the divine attributes of wisdom, justice, and mercy, under multiplied and forbidden symbols in the powers of Nature or the souls of extraordinary men, practices a superstition which (though at once the cause and effect of blindness and sensuality) is less incompatible with inward piety and true religious feeling, than the creed of that man, who in the spirit of his practice, though not in direct words, loses sight of all these attributes.[33]

Superstition, comments the editor, Anthony John Harding, is "misdirected":

> There is a right use of the Egyptian Superstition, that would convert it into true Religion—No thing that God has created in the Microcosm but what may be united with ~~the~~ some Idea as to become it's Symbol—and the very Beetle and Serpent, with the Hawk and the Ibis may have a place in the Temple & be honored with due worship as so sanctified.[34]

The superstition about the dung beetle may be redirected ("right use") from idolatry to symbolize an Idea of religion (creation, rebirth). Any mythology, then, can have a "right use" as symbols of religious Ideas, a view that Coleridge would impart to missionaries.

Superstition is negative when it persists into the later stages of cognitive development. Coleridge regards bibliolatry as a superstition, where the Bible is regarded as divinely dictated and therefore inerrant and infallible throughout, thereby blocking a mature view of the Bible as inspired in spirit: he aims "to do away the servile superstition, which makes men *Bibliolaters* & yet hides from them the proper excellencies, the one continued revelation, of the Bible-documents which they idolize."[35]

. . . the Man becomes a Phantast in the one case and superstitious in the other" (*AR* 104–105 n. 9 [italics in original]).

[33] *F* 1:279–280; "the language of a tender superstition is the voice of nature itself" (*F* 1:546), see Wystan Hugh Auden, from "Moon Landing": "Irreverence / is a greater oaf than Superstition" (https://allpoetry.com/Moon-Landing); *CL* 5:94–95. The persecution of the Covenanters made them look for hope "by supernatural channels, and in interferences unsanctioned by Reason" (*CN* 4:5035): "unsanctioned by Reason" implies superstition; Covenanters are called "Fanatics" in *CN* 4:5039. On "stove-like Heat" (for Saint Teresa) vs. "idea" see *CN* 5:6121.

[34] *CN* 5:6851; "Clearly, though, even superstitious worship can be read as worship misdirected towards the outward appearance rather than the ideal meaning" (6851 n).

[35] *CL* 5:37 (italics in original); "indiscriminate Bibliolatry" (*SW&F* 2:1142; 1165). Negatively, superstition is "baleful" (*CM* 1:330); "remorseless" (*CM* 1:517); "debasing and demoralizing" (*CM* 5:135); diseased: "shaking Palsy" (*CM* 5:188); "A Disease" (*SW&F* 1:434). Coleridge fell into "Self-centering Superstitions" when he practiced "Sortes Biblicæ" (*CN* 4:5419 and n). An alimentary metaphor: the exorcisms of the Synoptic gospels (none in John) are superstitious explanations of demons causing disease: "No! there can but one rational solution of these & similar passages—that we have the fact at third or fourth hand, ~~without~~ with the modifications & excrementitious adherences acquired during it's passage thro' the intestinal canal of vulgar Superstitions" (*CN* 5:5561).

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Superstition occurs when one does not formulate an educational plan in accord with developmental psychology. Christianity comes first, and then the Bible:

> O the gathering storm of sense, the sense of the *exceeding* importance of the Position, that the Belief and the Study of the Bible ought to be *consequent* on the <knowledge and> Belief of Christianity—and not the ordinary means of acquiring that Knowledge, or of grounding that Belief!—much less ~~imposing on~~ made an essential part of Christianity and imposed on the Conscience, as a distinct Article of Faith.[36]

Putting the Bible first is "an instance of Superstition and tyrannidos patriæ."[37] Coleridge's view accords with twentieth-century developmental psychology:

> To formalize religious education in terms of religious instruction at this stage [ages 5–9] is to force the child to formulate his ideas too much in words which too easily crystallise into inflexible concepts. Activities, on the other hand, help fantasised ideas to be expressed and explored and then discarded for the next stage of thinking to occur.[38]

Crystallization marks the negative sense of superstition, where God's presence is thought of literally as "the popping in, as Hartley [Coleridge's eldest son] says, of the old man with a beard."[39] Superstition, an exercise of the fancy, is positive when confined to the early stage of cognitive development; negative and "improgressive" when fancy and the understanding block knowledge, as stated in his title, "On the limitations of a philosophy of the understanding and on its tendency to foster superstition."[40] Coleridge's project of purging religious traditions of superstition, bibliolatry or any form of idolatry, is his program of remedial education, the core of his philosophy of missions, intended for the preparation of missionaries.[41]

[36] *CN* 5:5496.

[37] *CM* 4:307.

[38] Ronald Goldman, *Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964) 233.

[39] *CL* 5: 95.

[40] *SW&F* 1:902.

[41] *CN* has no subject index—"superstition": *CN* 1 [1794–1804] 243, 312, 1541,1637; *CN* 2 [1804–1808] 2045, 2048, 2060, 2355, 2561, 2830; *CN* 3 [1808–1819] 3473, 3505, 3808, 3824, 3830, 3847, 3868, 4015 ("The account given by Stavorinus of the Chinese *Xylo*mancer at Batavia may serve for the model for all the Children of Superstition, from the African Fetisch-worshipper or Oboe-wi~~ch~~tch to the Purchaser of D[r] Solomon's Balm of Gilead, or King George's State-Lottery Ticket"), 4210, 4308, 4378, 4491 ("Superstition the Giant Shadow of Humanity with its back to the setting Sun of true Religion"), 4497; *CN* 4 [1819–1826] 4766, 4788, 4806, 4858, 4931, 4984, 4985, 5057, 5058, 5076–5079, 5081, 5215, 5123, 5187, 5204, 5215, 5276, 5300, 5315, 5319, 5323, 5334, 5398, 5454; *CN* 5 [1827–1834] 5556, 5596, 5606, 5680, 5801, 5836, 5844, 5848, 5872, 5927, 5932, 6029, 6087, 6121, 6185, 6253, 6279, 6337, 6394, 6396, 6474, 6615, 6661, 6666, 6735, 6737, 6778, 6781.

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Educator

Coleridge is an educator[42] of missionaries and their instructors. His projected essay on "Missions and Missionaries" will aim at founding missions on education: critical biblical scholarship, developmental psychology, and an understanding of geography and culture as determinants of religion. Coleridge rejects William Carey's call (1792) for converting the heathen: "first, my utter ignorance of God's Purposes with respect of the Heathens—& second, the strong conviction, I have that the Conversion of a single Pro<v>ince of Christendom to true practical Christianity would do more toward the Conversion of Heathendom than an army of Missionaries."[43] Let Christianity begin at home! Setting an example in Christendom through education is the right way of conducting missions elsewhere. The exemplary conduct of persons who have a religious vocation as fully realized human beings—souls attuned to their culture—is the only correct method for missions: "To become a Christian the Individual must first be a *Man*: for Christianity is the Flower & Seal of ~~Chr~~ Humanity."[44] Coleridge corrects his statement to "Humanity," implying that Christianity aims at the realization of one's humanity. The rationale for missions is fostering the potential for being fully human through self-knowledge. Missions aims at educing self-knowledge in any cultural or religious tradition through example—be a better Christian, Muslim, Brahmin, or Heathen: in short, be a better human being, ethically and intellectually: "The postulate of philosophy and at the same time the test of philosophic capacity, is no other than the heaven-descended know thyself! (*E coelo descendit*, Γνῶθι σεαυτόν. And this at once practically and speculatively."[45] Coleridge's missiology is a philosophy of education leading to self-knowledge. The seven supplementary essays and *Aids to Reflection* constitute Coleridge's philosophy of religion, which includes his philosophy of missions: "as forming with the Aids a compleat System of the Philosophy of Religion."[46] That Coleridge is a philosopher of missions is shown by his distinguishing his "compleat System" from, but working for agreement with, the teaching of the Church of England: "I see the necessity of greatly expanding and clearing up the Chapter on Baptism in the Aids to Reflection—/and of proving the substantial accordance of

[42] Coleridge desynonymizes "education" and "instruction" (*CN* 5:6739).

[43] *CM* 1:304–305. Coleridge agrees with Carey on the need for conversion at home: "and the face of most Christian countries presents a dreadful scene of ignorance, hypocrisy, and profligacy" (William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens . . .* , 1792) 65–66, http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf).

[44] *CN* 5:5907 (italics in original).

[45] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate; 2 vols.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983) 1:252 (italics in original) and n. 1; "& then reflecting, as it were, on his own reflections . . . would not the knowledge thus acquired & communicated be a most valuable assistance to every man, who felt it his wish & believed it his duty, to attempt the fulfillment of the heaven-descended Precept, Know thyself—?" (*CN* 4:4931).

[46] *CL* 5:455.

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my Scheme with that of our Church."[47] Coleridge will want agreement with the Church regarding his missiology.

Coleridge proposes six supplementary essays to amplify topics in *Aids to Reflection*,[48] informing his publisher of a seventh: "[I] am inclined to think, that I shall add a 7th—by putting together some letters, I have been composing at the earnest request of Sir Alexander Johnson, the late chief Judge at Ceylon, on the Subject of Missions and Missionaries."[49] The title could be "Letters on Missions and Missionaries," following "a series of Letters on the right and the superstitious use and estimation of the Bible,"[50] a supplement to *AR*, posthumously published as *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit,* a much less trenchant title, where he exposed the superstition of biblical inerrancy.

In his last year Coleridge tells of his life-long concern for education, the "advancement of humanity . . . from Individual to Individual—in short, from the *Gospel*."[51] He had emphasized this point in reviewing Thomas Clarkson's *History of the Slave Trade*: African superstition could be countered only by education using the forts as centres of civilization for their chiefs and priests:

> by a systematic repression of all religious proselytism, except indeed that most effective instrument of conversion, the Christian conduct of our agents; . . . and by sedulous endeavours to enlighten them as *men*; . . . that knowledge and civilization must, in the first instance, form the foundation, not the superstructure, of Christianity.[52]

Method is required for the advancement of science, especially the science of education: "that most weighty and concerning of all sciences, the science of EDUCATION . . . as the nisus formativus of social man, as the appointed PROTOPLAST of true humanity."[53] Missiology is education for socializing human beings, not proselytizing to secure conversions: to be a Christian, one must first be a human being.

Coleridge expresses concern about the inadequate preparation of missionaries to his friend from Bristol days, the Rev'd Joseph Hughes, a Baptist, a founding secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804).[54] Hughes was a reliable reader of works in progress, whom Coleridge acknowledges in the preparation of

[47] *CN* 5:5845.

[48] *CL* 5:434–436.

[49] *CL* 5:459.

[50] *AR* 388; *CL* 5:434; and *SW& F* 2:1111–71.

[51] *CL* 6:965 (italics in original).

[52] "Review of Thomas Clarkson's *Abolition of the Slave-Trade*" (1808) in *SW&F* 1:241. Coleridge reverses William Carey's "Would not the spread of the gospel be the most effectual means of their civilization?" (*Enquiry* 70).

[53] *F* 1:493–494.

[54] *CL* 6:1048–50; 1048–1049 n. 1: Griggs's note is based on John Leifchild's *Memoir of the Late Joseph Hughes, A.M. One of the Secretaries of the British and Foreign Bible Society* (London: Thomas Ward, 1835).

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AR: "But the former I *must* have looked thro' before I dare publish my Life—well aware of the immense importance of the Advice given me in the inclosed Note from that worthy & enlightened man, the Revd. Joseph Hughes, the Secretary of the Brit. & For. Bible Society."[55] Coleridge writes to Hughes regarding candidates and their instructors: "I have long regretted the too general unfitness of the men chosen as missionaries . . . that the instructors of the missionaries had not previously convinced them that civilization and Christian faith ought to move *pari passu*, mutually aiding each other."[56] Coleridge adds the metaphor, foundation ("knowledge and civilization must . . . form the foundation, not the superstructure") to interdependence ("mutually aiding each other"). Coleridge gives constructive criticism because he deplores unwarranted attacks on missionaries. He concludes by expressing the "strong desire" to "converse with you, and with some sincere Christians interested in and acquainted with the Missionary proceedings, on the subject generally." Coleridge would have invited Joseph Hughes, Alexander Johnston, Edward Irving, Thomas Clarkson, and young clergy (his son Derwent, nephew Edward, and James Gillman, Jr.), his nephew, William Hart Coleridge, Bishop of Barbados, his friends, Joseph H. Green, and, perhaps, Hyman Hurwitz, to his "*One*versazioni."[57]

Coleridge corresponds with young clergy to advance their preparation. He writes to his son Derwent: "It does seem to me a very mean & false view of Christianity to suppose that even the Apostles themselves had the degree of clearness & enlargement which a philosophic Believer of the present day may enjoy—. . . . What is Christianity at any one period?—The Ideal of the Human Soul at that period."[58]

Here is the central theme of education, the realization of human potential: Christianity is not fixed in a single period, but changes with the sciences: it is "the Ideal of the Human Soul at that period." Coleridge recommends that Derwent reflect philosophically on the early Christian texts in order to understand that Christianity changes over time; that John and Paul are superior to the other apostles; and that Jesus's *parousia* is to be understood in the light of current science, not in terms of the three-decker universe of the ancient world: "*Could* Paul with *our* knowledge of the Solar System, have believed that going up to the Clouds was the way to Heaven!"[59] The "Ideal of the Human Soul," at whatever time this question is raised, is not fixed for all time, not even by Paul, who changed his own mind:

[55] *CL* 5:300 (italics in original). Leifchild writes: "His known habits of correctness and refinement caused many authors to commit their manuscripts to him for revision" (*Memoir* 388). Coleridge requested Hughes: "if you should have at any time half an hour's leisure" to look for anything objectionable in content or style in *Friend* and *Lay Sermons* (*CL* 6:1049).

[56] *CL* 6:1056; *CN* 5:6472 (italics in original). He dismissed Edward Irving's idea of a "Missionary College": persons who have the call to be missionaries cannot be supervised (*CM* 3:8).

[57] *CL* 6:790: "on our former Thursday Evening *Conver-* or to mint a more appropriate term, *One*versazioni" (italics in original).

[58] *CL* 6:552.

[59] *CN* 5:5989 (italics in original).

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> The unhappy effect which St Paul's incautious language respecting Christ's Return produced on the Thessalonians, led him to reflect on the subject—and he instantly (II Ep. to the Thess.) *qualified* the doctrine/ and never afterwards resumed it; but on the contrary in the 15th of Corinthians substitutes the doctrine of immortality in a celestial state & spiritual Body.[60]

It is evident to Coleridge that Paul's thinking changed.

Coleridge proposes a curriculum for Oxford and Cambridge for a critical study of the entire Bible independent of theology: "a compleat Commentary, excluding all dogmatic theology, and purely grammatical, logical, geographical, historical, phyto-& zoo-logical elucidation, might exist for the Candidates for Holy Orders."[61] It is based on the principle that Christianity and science must proceed hand in hand. Critical biblical analysis, not dogmatic theology, is needed to prepare missionaries, whose education lies in both the National Church (the clerisy or learned class) and the Christian Church.[62] Lay members of the Christian Church may also participate in the National Church: "To the Students in Theology, the future Teachers, and to the better educated & riper Members of the Flock, the truths of the Mystery of the Tri-unity often & explicitly—to the flock some~~what~~times . . . ."[63] One may add "Missionaries." Coleridge presents the relationship between the Christian and National churches in the metaphor of a circle: the Christian Church should be the "inmost concentric circle" of the National Church.[64]

The rationale for missions is Coleridge's philosophy of education, not early Christian texts, as William Carey had argued in his *Enquiry* (1792):

> Our Lord Jesus Christ, a little before his departure, commissioned his apostles to Go, and teach all nations; or, as another evangelist expresses it, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. This commission was as extensive as possible, and laid them under obligation to disperse themselves into every country of the habitable globe, and preach to all the inhabitants, without exception, or limitation.[65]

[60] *CM* 3:732 (italics in original).

[61] *CN* 5:6371.

[62] *CN* 5:6139: "Is it not permitted to suppose, as a probable hypothesis, that in the earliest times there was a Society of enlightened Men, a Sacred Brotherhood/*Sethians*, Astronomonic Kings, 'Sons of God'—whose Missionaries were αγγελοι?" (italics in original). Rather than the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), Coleridge wishes for "A British and Foreign HUMAN Society of Science and Literature—whose Duty it would be to watch over, record, and make known Works and Discoveries, wherever published, and as soon as published—to ~~maint~~ form a center of Correspondence ~~with~~ for the Men of Genius & Science in all countries & . . ." (*CN* 5:6579)—a global "clerisy" engaged in dialogue.

[63] *CN* 4:4761.

[64] *CN* 5:5703.

[65] Carey, *An Enquiry*, 7. See Köstenberger, "Mission in the Gospels" in Terry, *Missiology,* n. 14.

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Carey cites Matt 28:19 and Mark 16:15. Coleridge read Carey's journals.[66] Coleridge's literary-historical criticism, or the Higher Criticism,[67] of early Christian documents, which he learned from Johann Gottfried Eichhorn at Göttingen in the late 1790s, undercuts Carey's argument: the texts to which Carey had appealed are of doubtful authenticity: "and tho' the inference from the Baptismal Institution in Matthew is very strong, & indeed decisive as to a third Distinctity in the Godhead, yet there is a heavy doubt among the Learned respecting the *apostolical* age of this Text" because a Trinitarian formula for baptism must belong to a later period.[68] The long ending of Mark (16:9–20) is not authentic because, contrary to Eichhorn's conclusion (but not Eichhorn's method) he thinks the short ending, 16:1–8, is authentic: "But says E.—did any Book ever end in a sentence like εφοβουντο γαρ?—I really cannot feel this—it seems to me a very natural conclusion of an inartificial Narrator."[69] Coleridge, therefore, rejects the longer ending of Mark on which Carey's argument rests.

Coleridge challenges the interpretation of the command in Matthew 28. He expresses the point that interpreters do not consider the circumstances of composition: "One great Error of Textual Divines is their inadvertence to the dates, occasion, object, and circumstances, at & under which the words were written or spoken."[70] Steve Mason and Tom Robinson say it neatly:

> Rather than trying to understand the distinctive situation and context of each real life author, Christians have usually devoted their energies to uncovering the timeless divine revelation in the NT. Their task was, in large measure, to arrange by subject what the NT had somewhat inconveniently filed under author.[71]

Coleridge's reading of "the Great Commission" in Matthew 28 goes against reading it as a charter for missions. Coleridge comments on "teach all nations":

> —and offer my Gospel to *all* Nations"—i.e. without respect to the Individual's birth & locality, not as our fanatics interpret the words—as if our Lord had been sending his disciples off, like so many Mungo Parks, this to the

[66] *CN* 3:3505.

[67] *CN* 5:6241: "O the difference, the unspeakable difference, between an historico-critical *intellective* Study of the Old Testament, and the *praying* of the same" (italics in original).

[68] *CN* 4:5078*; CN* 5:6033 (italics in original).

[69] *CN* 5:5558; "could I affix . . . the asterisk of spuriousness to the last Ch., or the latter Half of the last Chapter of S[t] Mark" (*CN* 4:5372); "The last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel ~~by~~ on internal & external evidence are by all the later School of Biblical Criticism asterisked as spurious" (*CM* 3:3); "The last 12 verses of Mark the translator gives up, and with good reason, as spurious" (*CM* 4:474).

[70] *CN* 3:3903.

[71] Steve Mason and Tom Robinson, *Early Christian Reader* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004) 3; Coleridge: "The 3 first Gospels . . . and the Epistles have all the appearance of occasional Writings, presupposing a previous communication of the Scheme, and the constituent Articles of faith, that formed it's exposition.—But when we turn to ecclesiastical History, we find nothing to confirm this so natural presumption" (*CN* 5:5997).

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> heart of Africa, another to the undiscovered, but by revelation made known, continent of America.[72]

Coleridge's humour comes into play regarding missions in the ancient world: "Orpheus <& his Disciples> finally founded Schools throughout Greece!—Whether the Missionaries travelled by Mail Coaches or Steam-boats is not ascertained!"[73]

Coleridge regards Carey's rationale for "Missions and Missionaries" as fanatical: the command "signified no more than the rescinding of his former Command which had confined the preaching of the 70 to the children of Israel."[74] Jesus had limited his mission to Israel: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not."[75] The early Christian mission was to the Roman world only:

> The (Modern) Calvinists I should offend bitterly. . . . Above all, the Missionary Society—how would they recoil from the assertion, that Go ye ~~un~~into all nations, &c means nothing more, than/ Preach the Gospel indifferently to <Jews and Gentiles—> all that will hear you, in whatever part of the Roman Empire the Hearer may have been.[76]

Coleridge argues, against Carey, that missions in the first century of Christianity took place within the Roman world only. Coleridge's rationale for missions is extra-biblical and philosophical because he rejects a theologically dogmatic reading of the Bible.

Contemporary missiologists regard evangelism as a part of missiology, the goal of which is conversion. Coleridge rejects "sudden conversion": "Our Chi~~ld~~urch most wisely and scripturally precludes all the mischievous fanaticism of *moments* of Conversion."[77] He makes the same point in *AR*: "Precautionary Remark.—We meddle not with the dispute respecting *conversion*, whether, and in what sense, necessary in all Christians" [italic in original].[78] Conversion is a process, but not instantaneous. Coleridge's rejection of "*moments* of Conversion" accords with the Church of England's teaching about salvation. Coleridge asks about the formation of religious character:

> In short, by what means can or ought a religious Character to be formed? And when should the process commence. I can distinctly remember that I had

[72] *CM* 1:528 (italics in original).

[73] *CN* 4:5206.

[74] *CM* 4:474.

[75] Matt 10:5 KJV. John 4:40: Jesus stays two days in Samaria.

[76] *CM* 3:308–309, and nn. 9–10 on Coleridge and missionary societies.

[77] *CN* 5:5845 (italics in original).

[78] *AR* 35. See *AR* 311 for "the sudden conversions," which Coleridge likens to "contagious Fever-boils." Jane Austen: "We do not much like M^r^ Cooper's new Sermons;—they are fuller of Regeneration & Conversion than ever—with the addition of his zeal in the cause of the Bible Society" (*Jane Austen's Letters,* [ed. Deirdre Le Faye; 4th ed.; Oxford University Press, 2011] 336); "Your cousin Edmund moves slowly, detained, perchance, by parish duties. There may be some old woman at Thornton Lacey to be converted" (*Mansfield Park* [New York: Penguin Classics, 2011] 366).

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> myself many deep religious impressions & feelings in my childhood: and I am inclined to think that this is common and that the most *un*religious period of life usually is from 12 or 14 to 4 or 5 & 20, or even 30.[79]

The acute observation of his own childhood belongs to his developmental psychology of religion: formation over time is usual, not John Newton's "the hour I first believed." "Formation" is explicitly included in the subtitle of *AR* as constituting its central theme, the formation of missionaries.

Dialogue

Coleridge examines world religions for the possibility of dialogue, neither conversion nor toleration. Jay Newman expresses a Coleridgean view of missiology—the promotion of civilization (and culture) rather than proselytizing: "Most religious proselytizing tends to promote resentment. Resentment promotes intolerance, which in turn promotes barbarism. But religious dialogue tends to promote understanding. Understanding promotes tolerance, which in turn promotes civilization."[80] He concludes: "Tolerating a religious belief, then, does not involve a half-hearted acceptance or endurance of the belief *in itself*, but rather it involves acceptance or endurance of *someone's holding* that belief."[81] Since Coleridge says that there is no difference between the Zoroastrian system and his own, then he is not tolerating it, but recognizing its truth.

Coleridge rejects Unitarianism, but he refuses to say that Unitarians are not Christians. He tests religious traditions in accordance with his own system of Christianity: Incarnational, Trinitarian, anti-infallibilist, and redemptionist. Each culture has its own learned class. Other religious systems may overlap with his own system, partly (Hinduism) or entirely (Zoroastrianism). A select survey of what Coleridge says about religious traditions indicates why Coleridge's philosophy of missions favors dialogue over evangelizing, and certainly not proselytizing, except by exemplifying the ideal of a fully realized human being in accordance with Coleridge's Christian system, marked by ethics, and a commitment to science and knowledge.

Coleridge ponders whether Christianity is a world religion, for it is rooted in the Roman world: "Beyond the bounds of Trajan's Empire Christianity exists only as a sickly exotic." He is not sanguine about "the success of our East Indian & China Missions."[82] He is the first writer to use "anthropography" in the sense of

[79] *CN* 5: 6073 (italics in original). See Murray J. Evans, *Sublime Coleridge: The Opus Maximum* (Nineteenth Century Lives and Letters; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) for a discussion of "psycho-spiritual development" (81).

[80] Jay Newman, *Foundations of Religious Tolerance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) 110. Coleridge applauds the Mystics' tolerance: "We have what the Many have not—God grant that their day may come—for our hearts yearn toward them" (*CN* 4: 4915).

[81] Newman, *Foundations* 8 (italics in original).

[82] *CN* 5:6505; "*utter failure* of the Japanese, Chinese, and Indian Missions" (*CM* 3:309–10) (italics in original).

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ethnography, and he uses it with respect to religious traditions: "Anthropography: or a Description of the different Races, and Varieties of Men, the effects of Climate, and Civilization."[83] In his anthropography, Coleridge raises the question whether Christianity can be a religion for all people because what an individual is depends on culture and geography ("The individualiy of Man, how wonderful. . . . the Zone, Climate, Soil, Character of Country"): "Beyond this ring-fence he cannot stray. . . . this necessity *is* himself."[84] Coleridge's "this necessity *is* himself" accords with his developmental psychology. It is unlikely that any single religion could be global.

Coleridge uses "drapery" to show that it is not always possible to eliminate all differences among religions because not all drapery is separable from the substance. Life is understood as blood in Christianity and as the nervous system in Hinduism: "Again, I would suppose the Apostle Thomas essaying to impress the same truth on the mind of a Brahmin who held the shedding of Blood in abhorrence, and placed the seat of Life exclusively in the Nervous System."[85] Christianity is rooted in the Hebrew tradition, where "Life is in the blood" is "adherent Drapery, indetachable from the Substance." This drapery may be detachable: eating Jesus's flesh and drinking his blood in John 6 is followed by, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."[86] "Life is in Jesus's flesh and blood" is construed as "Life is in Jesus's "words." John re-drapes "life" with "words" in place of "flesh and blood," implying knowing is eating. Elsewhere, Coleridge argues that the different theological theories of atonement ("Sacrifice, Vicarious Sacrifice, Debt, Satisfaction, Atonement &c"), because they are inconsistent, cannot be predicated of God, but they can be a set of metaphors: "without debasing the Idea of the Divine, I was constrained to interpret them *per metaphoram*."[87] Coleridge has dissolved that sterile debate. An anthropography of religion will look for shared ideas, and avoid interpreting

[83] *CN* 4:5254. Kathleen Coburn notes: "The earliest (16th-century) use had to do with describing the human body. In Coleridge's sense the *OED* records the first occurrence in 1834, the study of 'the geographical distribution of the races of mankind, and their local variations; ethnography.'" The *OED* has recently added, in response to this writer's submission, that Coleridge's use is now the earliest: "1825 S. T. Coleridge *Notebks*. (2002) IV. 5254 Anthropography: or a Description of the different Races, and Varieties of Men, the effects of Climate, and Civilization . . . ." http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/view/Entry/8426?redirectedFrom=anthropography#eid. In *CN* 5:5489 Coleridge says that anthropology is one of three bases of religion: "N.B. In my System— . . . Antecedent Grounds and Conditions of Religion."

[84] *CN* 3:4109 (italics in original).

[85] *CM* 3:21.

[86] John 6:63 KJV.

[87] *CN* 5:6785 (italics in original). *CN* 4:5421 (mistaking metaphors for "a component part of the truth itself"). Coleridge objected to Joseph Hughes's writing that salvation involved the suffering of a righteous person (*CM* 2:1187). Coleridge uses "redemption" non-metaphorically: "The Unitarian and the Calvinist equally strive to evacuate the Spiritual Mystery of our Redemption" (*CN* 5:6595; 6546); redemption may be the mesothesis between the Idea of the Trinity and the Fact of the Incarnation (*CN* 5:6762). See Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion: "Aids to Reflection" and the Mirror of the Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Chapter

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literally the draperies characteristic of another tradition even if the draperies are indetachable.

Religion is a system that advances with the developments in a culture, especially the sciences. Coleridge thinks Islam could not be a world religion because of its origin: "But thro' the whole of the Koran there is evidently an intention of legislating for a particular *time,* a particular *people,* a particular climate & country—& therein betrays the hollowness of it's pretensions to be a *mundane religion*."[88] Neither does Islam engage the whole human being, requisite for religion:

> The Object of the Wahabies was to reform Islamism into a pure Unitarianism, but with a visible Centraler of Unity in the Leader of the Reformers/ They became the Idoliclastæ of Islamism—but this too has failed—as every theological scheme must do which appeals only to some one or more of the Qualities & Faculties of Man.—The infallible Test of the Gospel Faith is that it appeals to all the Constituents of our present Humanity, & brings them all to an equilibrium—to a Beauty of Holiness.— The evolution of this idea in all the detail, commencing with an enumeration of our Powers—The Will, the I AM, the Reason, the Imagination, the Understanding, the Fancy, the Sense, the Affections, the Passions, the Impetites, the Appetites, the Life—is indeed a Desideratum.[89]

Fancy is crucial in the early stages of the developmental psychology of education (*superstition*). Christianity is, as he wrote to Derwent, the "Ideal of the Human Soul"—a fully realized human being—in any given epoch. Islam, however, is not hollower, surely, than Christianity, "the sickly exotic." That Islam has become a world religion would surprise Coleridge: "Islam is a world religion that rivals, if it does not surpass, Christianity in its ability to spread to highly diverse cultures and regions."[90]

Coleridge sees dialogue with, rather than proselytism directed to, some religious traditions; namely, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, and, to a lesser degree, the Indian tradition. Missionary activity (conversion), however, was appropriate for African traditions. He saw an affinity between his own philosophical system and the Zoroastrian *Zend-Avesta*: "I can really find *no* essential difference between my philosophy & the Zend Avesta the ~~act of the material creation~~ *Chaos* in both is an Apostasy—the potentiating creation the Spirit & the Word—the final causa

5 "The great instauration: reflection as the renewal of the soul," 229–265, where Hedley discusses a parallel (*CN* 5:6785) to *AR* 237.

[88] *CN* 5:6653 (italics in original). Many individuals, independently, may hold "the same truths, yet expressed in the greatest variety of terms and symbols, according to the presence or absence of a learned education, to the different climates, different *positive* Religions": a global perspective (*CM* 4:258 [italics in original]).

[89] *CN* 5:6550; 6743: "the successive calling into act of all the intellectual powers."

[90] Frederick M. Denny, "Islam and the Muslim Community," in *Religious Traditions of the World: A Journey through Africa, Mesoamerica, North America, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, China, and Japan* (ed. H. Byron Earhart; HarperSanFrancisco/HarperCollins, 1993) 613.

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redemptionis; & reascent to the Plenitude."[91] Coleridge finds common ground with regard to key elements: Chaos, Spirit, Word, redemption, and the final restoration of all things.[92] Christian missions would certainly not be a matter of proselytizing; rather, dialogue—Zoroastrians would be invited to The Grove, Highgate for the meeting to discuss "missions and missionaries."

Coleridge is inclusive and ecumenical with regard to salvation: "I know of no Church, Jewish, Turkish or Brahman, in which and in spite of which a man may *not* possibly be saved. Who dares limit the Spirit of God?"[93] These churches are confessional institutions that are allied to national churches, a learned class. The Spirit of God may operate independently of missionary activity, but only if a people have sufficient civilization and culture to have institutionalized learning.

That Coleridge criticizes religions for superstition and childishness, the Indian tradition, for example, means that Coleridge advocates reform, not rejection, because he attacks the superstition of bibliolatry in Christianity. He cites two passages from *The Bhagavad-Gita*. The first passage presents Krishna as a devourer: "Having beholden thy dreadful teeth, and gazed on thy countenance, emblem of Time's last fire."[94] Coleridge regards this portrayal as employing "ridiculous forms" that "distract" from the sages' articulation of "unity."[95] Coleridge misconstrues "teeth," missing "emblem of Time," which implies the metaphor, "Time is a destroyer."

Owen Barfield argues Coleridge should have been able to engage inter-culturally with the Brahmanical system:

> However it may be, he seems in this instance to have ignored the wise maxim that, if you wish to extricate a man from error, you must first do justice to his truth. Otherwise he could hardly have failed to acknowledge much in the tradition of the Gita which he himself not only approved but actively maintained: the identity in difference of subject and object, for instance, the conception of the ultimate reality as I AM and of the material world as the outward appearance of consciousness.[96]

[91] *CN* 4:4794 (italics in original). Coleridge regards John as superior to Paul: "One momentous point of superiority in John is his clear insight into the identity of the WORD and the universal Light, or the substantiality and personëity of REASON" (*CN* 5:5976).

[92] Coleridge says that "the great redemptive Process" is "the history of LIFE which begins in its detachment from Nature and is to end in its union with God" (*CM* 3:919). Note that "final restoration" (ἀποκαταστάσίς) occurs in Acts 3:21, but "Luke-Acts lacks, and actively discourages, the sense of Jesus' imminent return" (Mason and Robinson 468). *CN* 5:5780: "the illumination of the Apostles . . . was gradual and progressive" as shown by their first holding a "mistaken Notion of our Lord's all but immediate Return personally."

[93] *CM* 5:177 (italics in original).

[94] *Lectures 1818–1819: On the History of Philosophy* (*Lect 1818–1819*) (ed. J. R. de J. Jackson; 2 vols.; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000) 1:131. Coleridge comments: "all Europe has been the Dupe of Dupes in this respect" for thinking that the Brahmanical texts are equivalent to the Old Testament in its "noble conceptions of God" (*CM* 3:659): dated ca. 1816 (657).

[95] *Lect 1818–1819* 1:132; *Opus Maximum* (*OM*) (ed. Thomas McFarland; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002) 276–285.

[96] Owen Barfield in *Lect 1818–1819* 2:884.

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Coleridge makes Barfield's point:

> If an opinion attributed to an ancient philosopher, or even to a Contemporary of another Country is not at the first hearing understood and admitted by them—out flies at once the scorn—What Nonsense! how absurd! &c—Surely, the palpable absurdity, the glaring Nonsense of the words interpreted as they had interpreted them, ought to have supplied a strong presumption that such was *not* the Sense in which the Asserter of the Position meant them to be understood.[97]

Coleridge rejects a literalizing interpretation of Pythagoras, and he should have been able, as Barfield argues, to reconsider his literalizing reading of the *Bhagavad-Gita,* as he does the Bible: "If there be one sure Conclusion respecting the Bible, it is this—that it not only uniformly speaks the language of the Senses, but adopts the inferences which the Childhood of the Race drew from the appearances presented by the Senses. The Bible must be interpreted by it's known *objects* and *Ends*."[98] That the Israelite biblical texts belong to the "Childhood of the Race" is no reason to reject them, but is an indication that one must interpret them according to "the moral and spiritual Education of the Human Race"—that is, in terms of Coleridge's philosophy of early education. Coleridge does interpret another passage from the *Bhagavad-Gita* in terms of "unity" (Barfield's point) and his own system of education and missions: "I am the String of the Pearls. I, ~~*the*~~ God-man, am Center and Circle too! 'Hast thou seen me, Philip? Thou hast seen the Father?'"[99]
The editors indicate that "I, ~~*the*~~ God-man, am Center and Circle too!" is Coleridge's own text to which he adds his citation from John 14:9. That Coleridge replaces one part of the passage from *Bhagavad-Gita* with his own text, speaking of Jesus as the Word incarnate, implies that he sees an affinity between Krishna and Jesus in relation to the ideas of incarnation (Krishna is an avatar of Vishnu) and unity, which Owen Barfield thought Coleridge should have seen for himself. Coleridge recognizes the Indian sages as members of the National Church of Indian civilization and culture.

Four years later, in 1825, Coleridge expresses skepticism: "In short, my researches with the light of English Common Sense have rendered me a sturdy Anti-egyptian & a very skeptical Hindostanist. S.T.C."[100] He is sceptical, too, about the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke (below).

Three years on, in 1828, Coleridge has a positive view of the Indian system when it presents an analogue of the Christian doctrine of the trinity:

> According to the Brahmin Theology, the Godhead is manifested in Nature in the trinity of ~~crea~~ Production, Destruction and Reproduction: and there is in this a Hint, of which both a philosophic and a Christian use may be

[97] *CN* 4:5442, September 1826; "to deem myself ignorant of a man's understanding, (or conceptions) till I fully understand his ignorance" (*CN* 3:4248, 1815).

[98] *CL* 5:372 (italics in the original). In a discussion of poetry (*CN* 4:5433): "Children hyperbolize."

[99] *CN* 4:4832, 1821, and nn. The last verse is based on John 14:9.

[100] *CL* 5:1449, 8 May 1825.

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> made. Observe, its place corresponds to that of the Logos μονογένης in the Christian Triad.[101]

The correspondence—and Coleridge writes "corresponds"—between Logos and Vishnu (or his avatar Krishna) supports a positive reading of the passage from the *Bhagavad-Gita* where Coleridge inserts "God-Man." Coleridge has the affinity that Barfield desires. Coleridge here engages in inter-cultural dialogue with the Hindu National Church from the perspective of his Christian philosophical, trinitarian system. Coleridge, in 1822, had totally rejected the Hindu system: "so that the system so strangely eulogized and even assimilated to the mysteries of the christian faith is essentially and in fact Atheism in the form of Polytheism."[102] Six years later, Coleridge holds a positive view.[103] Criticism in other respects continued: "In Brahmanism & Buddaism I find grotesque fancy, gigantic littlenesses but no imagination."[104]

Coleridge's trinitarian theology displays a positive attitude towards neo-Platonism: "It is well for me that my Faith in the Trinity is already well grounded by the Scriptures, by Bishop Bull, and the best parts of Plotinus."[105] A common element would be "the One," the "Prothesis" of his Trinitarian Pentad.[106] With Zoroastrianism he has no quarrel at all. Coleridge recognizes that each of these traditions had a "National Church." Coleridge's philosophy of missions embraces dialogue with like-minded traditions.

Judaism holds a special place in Coleridge's philosophical system. In 1823 Coleridge objects to missions for the conversion of Jews: "The modern Conversions are in the face of God's Commands."[107] He expresses his opposition to the requirement for conversion that Jews renounce the Abrahamic covenant:

> Will my great Objections to the mode in which the conversion of the Jews has been attempted hitherto, and to the harsh conditions required of ~~all~~ every Jew in order to his being received into Christian Name—no less than that of disowning Abraham & the covenant of God with his Race before the Law, acquit

[101] *CM* 3:59 (1828) parallels *CN* 5:5868: "The Brahmanic Trinity of the ~~Productive~~ Generative, Destructive, and Regenerative" (May 1828).

[102] *OM* 283. Coleridge has Charles Wilkins's *The Bhagavat-Geeta or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon* (1785) in mind. McFarland gives the date 1822–1823 (214).

[103] Natalie Tai Harries, "'The One Life Within Us and Abroad': Coleridge and Hinduism" in *Coleridge, Romanticism and the Orient: Cultural Negotiations* (ed. David Vallins, Kaz Oishi, and Seamus Perry; London: Bloomsbury, 2013) 131–144, and Antonella Riem Natale, *The One Life: Coleridge and Hinduism* (New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2005), "Coleridge's Rejection" 74–77, who conclude that Coleridge rejected Hinduism finally. The marginalia on Dubois may date to 1828 (*CM* 2:339).

[104] *CN* 5:6615, June 1831.

[105] *CM* 6:146.

[106] J. Robert Barth, *Coleridge and Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969) 20, 85–104.

[107] *CM* 2:916.

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> me before Christ for ~~not~~ my refraining from all endeavor to bring *H. H.* to the knowlege of the truth? I profess myself his friend. Am I acting like one?[108]

Coleridge is loath to proselytize his friend and colleague, Hyman Hurwitz, because he rejects the Church of England's requirement that Jews renounce their Covenant upon conversion. Converted Jews, Coleridge thinks, should form their own Church: "if a thousand Jewish Families were converted, it would be their duty to form themselves into a Jewish Church, distinct from, tho' federally and with fraternal affection allied with, the Gentile Churches."[109] Coleridge wishes to reform Christianity by eliminating supersessionism in favor of federation, and replacing the constrictive view of the Bible, on which hostility to other religious traditions was based, with a critical and spiritual reading.

Bibliolatry

In his time, the Bible was regarded as dictated by God, infallible, and inerrant, and self-interpreting, which changed "the pen-~~n~~an into a Man-pen!"[110]:

> I ~~have~~ <come> ~~fresh from a~~ have frequently attended the <great> meetings of the <B. & F.> Bible Society, where I <have> heard Speakers of every denomination. . . . What is more, their principal arguments are grounded on ~~this~~e position, that the Bible ~~did not consist of human composition~~ *throughout* was dictated by Omniscience, and therefore in all its parts infallibly true & obligatory. . . . On this very account all notes and comments are declared superfluous, nay, presumptuous.[111]

This view of inspiration could not recognize problems, e.g., the textually suspect and inconsistent birth narratives of Jesus in Matthew and Luke, absent from Mark and John, and of the same genre as the birth narratives of folk heroes. The problem is pressing because "born of the Virgin Mary" is "The only Article of the Universal Church endangered by the higher Critique"[112]:

> My <inward> Creed, as a Christian, remains without substraction or addition as it stands in the Aids to Reflection—189–191.—My outward Creed is the Apostles' as expanded in the Nicene,—save only with regard to the former, I find a difficulty in receiving as an *essential* of Faith in the words "born of the *Virgin* Mary . . . tho' I receive it as a *point of assent* on the authority of the Church.[113]

[108] *CN* 5:5706: "harsh conditions" remains undocumented (italics in original).
[109] *CN* 5:6412.
[110] *CN* 5:5524.
[111] *SW&F* 2:1148 (italics in original).
[112] *CN* 4:5075.
[113] *CN* 4:5243 (italics in original).

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As a member of the National Church he may consider higher critical issues without regard to dogmatic theological considerations, his requirement for training missionaries.

Coleridge considers why there is no birth narrative in John. He suggests that John gave a different explanation of Jesus' origin to oppose the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke: "Is it not possible, that the last & greatest Evangelist may have *implicitly* & covertly opposed this rumour ~~to~~ in giving another and more spiritual explication of the Title—The Son of the living God."[114] John states that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,"[115] without giving any narrative explanation of it, as Luke does, when the angel Gabriel answers Mary's question, "How shall this be . . . ?," saying, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee."[116] Coleridge's view is supported by John's "the mother of Jesus" instead of a proper name.[117] Coleridge applies "the diagnostic Criterion of floating Tradition" (tradition, as distinct from "regularly authenticated History") to explain the "strange difference of the same ground-work in the 1st & 3rd Gospels."[118] Christianity is saddled with these birth narratives because "born of the Virgin Mary" is in the creeds that the clergy, members of the Christian Church, are obliged to read from the Prayer Book, not dispute from the pulpit, but may question in their book rooms as members of the National Church. Critical biblical scholarship is incompatible with the British and Foreign Bible Society's view that the Bible was inerrant and self-interpreting.[119] Note the link between "bibliolatry" and "superstition" in the view that the Bible does not need interpretation:

> What? A Book in two dead languages not need a translation to those that understand neither? And must not such a Translation either *be* or *require* an interpretation, according as it is equivalent or literal? Oh! this strange *Biblio*latry of the Protestants is a superstition scarcely less depressive of Gospel Liberty, scarcely less suffocative of Gospel Light and the Life of Faith, than the Hagiolatry and Papoduly of the Romanists.[120]

[114] *CN* 4:5075 (italics in original).

[115] John 1:1, 14 KJV.

[116] Luke 1:34–35 KJV. Only Matthew (1:23) uses Isaiah 7:14 to support "virgin."

[117] John 2:1, 3; 6:42; 19:25 KJV.

[118] *CN* 4:5240.

[119] Samples of Coleridge's sesquipedalian invective against the BFBS's position are: "Deisidaemoniac Bible-and-all-other-goody-and-inquisitional Society-mongers" (*CN* 4:4938: on the abolition of slavery); "Hagiopneumatic Dictationists, the ipsa verba S.S. Commentators" (*CN* 5:6384); "needless & impossible deifications of a *Book*" (*CM* 2:39) (italics in original); and John Milton's "ultra-protestant Solibibliofidianism" (*CN* 5: 5861).

[120] *CM* 2:37–38 (italics in original). On verbal inspiration see Anthony John Harding, *Coleridge and the Inspired Word* (rpt. 2003; McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Ideas; Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985) 82–94, especially the reference to *Essays and Reviews*: "The great mass of the public continued in virtual ignorance of the whole question until the publication in 1860 of *Essays and Reviews,* which created a storm in the English churches that

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Protestant Christianity is no less superstitious than the Roman Catholic worship of saints and the Pope. Translations are already interpretations, or require interpretation: the position of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a para-missionary society, is untenable.

Coleridge's use of a Bible published by the BFBS does not show that he approved of the BFBS:

> Would it, think you, justify the expence, to purchase from the Bible Society (the *Church* Bible Society), a *Quarto* Bible with the Apocrypha between the Old and New Testament—in sheets: and to have them half-bound in three or four Volumes interleaved? . . . would you make some enquiry, as to what the expence would be, Copy, interleaving and binding?[121]

Coleridge asks Joseph Green, his friend and literary executor, to obtain a Bible from the "*Church* Bible Society," with the Apocrypha, which the BFBS Bibles did not then include. Coleridge asks for the Bible "in sheets": the binding would be done elsewhere. The BFBS would not sell their Bibles in unbound sheets: Leslie Howsam explains: "But the bookbinding operation was also the Committee's way of claiming the book as their own, assuring that BFBS-stamped covers would contain only BFBS approved text . . . to ensure the circulation of 'the Bible without note or comment.'"[122] Coleridge's desire dovetails with his university curriculum for a critical, non-dogmatic study of the Bible for candidates for Holy Orders, and missionaries.

Race and Slavery

Two areas, in particular, where Coleridge's philosophy of missions is unsatisfactory, are attributable to his speculations about race: whether Christianity is the one and only religion, and the rights of African slaves. He is divided in his two views of Christianity: that Christianity is the superior and only religion for the world, embedded in its largely English cultural matrix, to be exported to the world. This view is supported by his speculations on race in 1828.[123] His "modification of Blumenbach's Scheme" makes Noah's three sons the founders of the races. Genesis 6–9 is founded "on history, at all events on an ancient and justly venerated

might well have been avoided if Coleridge's approach had at least been discussed and propagated more widely" (90). Benjamin Jowett's "On the Interpretation of Scripture" is particularly germane.

[121] *CL* 5:970 (italics in the original) (3 November 1833): Joseph Green gave it to him that December: "the now interleaved Copy of the Bible (my friend's gift)" (*CN* 5:6844); Jeffrey W. Barbeau, *Coleridge, the Bible, and Religion* (Nineteenth-Century Major Lives and Letters; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) 32.

[122] Leslie Howsam, *Cheap Bibles: Nineteenth-Century Publishing and the British and Foreign Bible Society* (Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 129.

[123] J. H. Haeger, "Coleridge's Speculations on Race," *SiR* 13 (1974) 333–57; *SW&F*, the texts are indexed under "1828."

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tradition."[124] Coleridge has to accept the Flood story as literal because the race material is embedded in it. Where did the five-mile depth of water go? "There might have been a ring like that of Saturn, composed of . . . aqueous Vapor round our planet: and the diluvial Waters have been absorbed by the Atmosphere."[125] Myth in 1824 becomes fact by1829. Race speculations trump Coleridge's "anthropography": "it ~~does~~ escapes the error of attributing to the Climate and the accidents of Circumstance a larger share of influence than either sound Philosophy or the Facts themselves will admit."[126] In July 1824 Coleridge had warned against "the Pressing of Moses & the Bible in the Service of Geological Theory," to which add Race Theory. Since the Bible "speaks the language of the Senses" and adopts the inferences made by "the Childhood of the Race," its purpose is "the moral and spiritual Education of the Human Race.—These ends served, the truths of Science follow of their own accord."[127] Coleridge had said that science was the foundation, not the superstructure, of Christianity.[128] In his speculations on race, Coleridge, reading Genesis uncritically, falls into superstition.

His second view is that Christianity, though "a sickly exotic," is engaged in dialogue with traditions outside the Roman world and is not, therefore, the one and only religion for the world, for it does not replace Zoroastrianism or supercede Judaism. Missiology in the twenty-first century displays this division, from a proselytizing missiology (Terry), to an interreligious theology, as exemplified by Perry Schmidt-Leukel:

> Moreover, what Jews develop theologically in dialogue with Buddhists and what Christians learn from their dialogue with Buddhists will also have its impact on the relation between Jews and Christian or between Jews and Christian and Muslims as far as Muslims too develop their theological understanding in Buddhist-Muslim dialogue.[129]

No one tradition is supreme. Coleridge's friendship with Hyman Hurwitz would incline him to a dialogical missiology with Judaism. Coleridge, in advocating dialogue, would limit proselytizing to uncultivated and uncultured groups, and then only by exemplifying fully realized human beings.

Coleridge contradicts his philosophy of missiology with regard to African slaves, upbraiding Thomas Pringle, secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society:

[124] *CM* 1:539–541.

[125] *CN* 5:6146, November 1829; in January 1824 it was "inconceivable" that rain was the "*principal* cause" (italics in original) of a five-mile depth of water (*CN* 4:5104); re-populating the earth could not have been invented, so it is historical, says Coleridge (*CN* 5:6619, June–August 1831).

[126] *CM* 1:541.

[127] *CL* 5:372.

[128] See note 22.

[129] Perry Schmidt-Leukel, "Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue. Observations and Suggestions from a Christian Perspective," *The Muslim World* 100 (2010) 349–363, at 360.

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> You are always talking of the *rights* of the Negros;—as a rhetorical mode of stimulating the people of England *here*, I don't object, but I utterly condemn your frantic practice of declaiming about their Rights to the Blacks. They ought to be forcibly reminded of the state in which their brethren in Africa still are, and taught to be thankful for the Providence which has placed them within means of grace. I know no right except such as flows from righteousness, and as every Christian believes his righteousness to be imputed, so his right must be an imputed right. It must flow out of a Duty, and it is under that name that the process of Humanization ought to begin and be conducted throughout.[130]

A providential means of grace, but only for the Africans who survived the Middle Passage, and a dogma of "right" requiring "humanization" of persons who had been dehumanized as things.[131] The violation of that principle explains the way in which these Africans were "placed within the means of grace." He contradicts his position taken in his review of Clarkson that an exemplary Christian life is the only allowable form of proselytizing.

Conclusion

Coleridge is a pioneering missiologist: his projected essay would have presented a philosophical missiology informed by critical biblical scholarship, developmental educational psychology, and ethnography, and reform Christianity by removing bigotry, missionary enthusiasm, and superstition, in favor of an exploratory philosophy of missions in which the rationale of missions is not proselytism but a philosophy of education that embraces science and ethics in the on-going project of self-knowledge—"Be!" The Gospel is the basis for educing self-knowledge, the realization of the ideal of humanity in any age. The Bible is indispensable: Coleridge uses familiar metaphors, the mirror, and a plant: "The Bible *is* that which it is capable of reflecting—It is the Mirror of Faith—and that it is capable of reflecting the *faith* in all it's growths and phases, age after age, of all the Faithful, constitutes it's divinity, demonstrates it's divine origin."[132] The Bible is a constant in mirroring the continual contextual changes ("growths and phases") in Christianity. In response

[130] *TT* 1:386, 8 June 1833. Contrast his outrage in July: "rapacious, needy, dishonest, and cruel Attorneys, Managers, and Overseers" (*CN* 5:6714) (italics in original).

[131] In 1831: "Slavery—i.e. the perversion of a Person into a Thing—is contrary to the Spirit of Christianity <(say I)>—& therefore it is the duty of Christians to labor (as far as it is in their power & lies within the sphere of their immediate duties) for its ultimate removal from the Christian World—/" (*CM* 6:29); an "Act of Parliament" would be a means "contrary" to that end, says Coleridge.

[132] *CN* 5:5521 (italics in the original). "When the Ideas rise up within me, as independent Growths of my Spirit, and I then turn to the Epistles of Paul & John and to the Gospel of the latter, . . . the<se> . . . seem a Looking-glass to me in which I recognize the [?indirectly] same truths ~~of~~ as reflected Images of my Ideas—and when I begin with meditative Reading of those divine Writings, then they become the Objective completing and guaranteeing the reality of the subjective Truths in myself" (*CN* 5:5624 August 1827): "guaranteeing . . . in myself" guards against superstition. See also *CM* 3:20: "contemplating the Synopsis of the whole faith in Christ in the Mirror of the Idea."

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to Jongeneel's, "Is Missiology an Academic Discipline?," *Aids to Reflection* and the supplementary projected "Letters on Missions and Missionaries" constitute Coleridge's philosophy of missions.

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