

Early Beginning of Science and Religion.

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Introduction

This paper is an exploration into the various factors and persons that were responsible for the establishment of the department of *Science and Religion* with special reference to the contributions of Max Müller who was called the Father of comparative religion. First part of the paper is focused on the factors. Second part considers the early founders. And the third part concentrates on the contribution of Max Müller.

1. Science and Religion

Although humanity and religion are coeval there had been attempts, perhaps amateur or ostensible, to acquire knowledge about religions other than one's own,¹ from the first century of Christian era. The culmination of this process was the germination of a new discipline for the systematic or scientific study of religions in the later part of the 19th century.

1.1. Factors responsible for the Emergence of Science and Religion

Several factors were responsible for the dawn of this new discipline, science of religion. They were: reformation, geographical discoveries, deism, scientific and intellectual developments, travel accounts, decipherment of ancient texts, the enlightenment philosophies, romantic idealism and studies in myth and folklore.

1.1.1. Reformation

Although the years between 14th century and 17th century² are called as reformation period, E.O. James³ and Waardenburg⁴ limit this period to 16th and 17th centuries in perceiving the impact of reformation upon the study of religions. Their perception can be justified because till the emergence of reformation the scripture of Christianity was far beyond the reach of the ordinary people. Religious practices were carried out irrespective of their validity. It was only because of the effects of reformation, scripture and rituals or church practices were questioned, consequently

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scripture was studied with the aid of all the critical methods of learning available then.

The spirit of critical study continued in the subsequent centuries. For example, Julius Welhausean (1844-1918) an Old Testament scholar asserted that 'Torah cannot actually have been given by Moses' and also a specific date cannot be assigned to it.⁵ Similarly, from the New Testament point of view "A Scholar like David F. Strauss (1808-1874) had concluded that the whole life of Jesus was a myth: that, as a historical person, he never existed."⁶ There emerged an intense quest for historical truth about the life of Jesus. The application of Historical critical method for the study of scripture itself was, in fact, a courageous act, well ahead of time.

1.1.2. Geographical Discoveries

Along with reformation, another factor that contributed to the zeal for the study of religion was the geographical discoveries of the 16th and 17th centuries. These discoveries enabled the west to come in contact with other ways of behaviour, thought, and belief, and demanded broadening of their view of human nature, culture and religion.⁷ As a result, there arose a serious interest to learn about the life and practices of the new people. This new interest encouraged further explorations into the so far unknown people and their practices including religions.

1.1.3. Deists

During the 17th and 18th centuries deists also contributed to the systematic study of religions.⁸ They were of the opinion that, original religion was good and pure, it was only later the priest's corrupted it. They also popularized the natural religious quality of humanity against the prevalent idea of revealed religions.⁹ The Deists' idea of natural religion was struggling to sail through because of the dominance of the church and less acceptance among the people. Nevertheless, Deistic thoughts survived, and contributed the fundamental insight the ideal of natural religion, to the yet to be established new discipline for the scientific study of religion.

1.1.4. Scientific and Intellectual Developments

Thomas L. Benson writes that, "Scientific and intellectual developments of the 17th and 18th centuries provided the model for new approaches to the study of religion."¹⁰ Scientific developments, particularly Darwin's theory of evolution had greater impact upon the development of religion as an independent discipline of study.¹¹ It influenced the thoughts of many great scholars essentially those who advocated anthropological perspective. They developed their insights in the light of 'linear development of things'. It was commonly assumed that everything, including religion, was moving towards perfection. This notion is very vivid in the works of many later day scholars of religion. Added to this assumption was the critical reasoning prevalent in the academic circles.

1.1.5. Travel Accounts

After the geographical discoveries, 18th century witnessed the descriptions of religion by several travellers. These accounts are not yet systematic in their presentation. Only few such works were published. One among them was the work of Charles de Brosses (1709-1777)¹². For him, Fetishism was the earliest form of religion.¹³ Commenting on his theory, F. Max Müller writes in his *Origin and Growth of Religion* "all nations, he holds, had to begin with fetishism to be followed afterwards by polytheism and monotheism."¹⁴ After explaining Brosses's idea of fetish¹⁵ Müller argued "there is no fetish without its antecedents, and it is in these antecedents alone that its true and scientific interest consists."¹⁶

Another such work was that of Meiners (1747-1810). He accepted the theory of fetishism but went beyond it and 'stressed the role of human imagination in the development of religious worship'.¹⁷ Similar account was given by Benjamin Constanty de Rebeque (1769-1830). "For Constanty, religion is essentially a feeling which is the very foundation of man's nature."¹⁸ The traces for a later psychological approach to the study of religion could be found in his work.

Whatever may be the limitations or criticisms leveled against these initial venture, the fact remains that, they had sown the seed for the growth of the 'Science of religion'. In these works there are allusions to the early anthropological, sociological and psychological approach to the study of religion, respectively.

1.1.6. Decipherment of Ancient Texts

According to Max Müller, "Side by side with the travel accounts of living people, it was the discovery and decipherment of ancient texts that opened a field of research on as yet largely unknown religions."¹⁹ William Jones (1746-1797) studied Sanskrit and compared it with certain European Languages. He "... discovered structural similarities between the two groups of languages and concluded that they belong to one linguistic family."²⁰ He also found similarities between the Indian Myths and Greek, Roman and Biblical. Through his studies many come in contact with Indian religions and opened up possibilities for further research in Indo-European linguistics and mythology through comparative studies. Another notable scholar in this period and field was Jean Fracois Champollion (1790-1832). He was the 'decipherer of the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic script'.²¹ Similar to the impact of the theory of evolution on the study of religion, the results of the study of languages became a reality in the life and contributions of Max Müller. In fact it was this philological research that ultimately constituted the Scientific Study of religion.

1.1.7. German Philosophers

Thomas L. Benson writes "While the philosophers of the 18th century Enlightenment in France (e.g. Voltaire) viewed religion as the invention of cunning priests to secure there fears and superstitions, German philosophers were venturing toward a broad

and deep understanding of the variety of religions and their historical development."²² Having taken into consideration the plurality of religions they viewed religions as out growth of a natural reasonable religion or as the natural outcome of the general manifestation of Divine grace.²³ They suggested that religions have a historical existence and religion cannot be studied apart from History.²⁴ Their two significant insights to the later scientific study of religion were, the common origin of religions and the concept of historical development of religions.

1.1.8. Romantic Idealism

"Another important German contribution to modern approaches to religion was Romantic idealism. As a reaction against Enlightenment thought, it emphasized individuality, feelings and imagination and it urged an openness to remote, ancient, mystical, and folk culture and religion."²⁵ One of its proponents was Friedrich Schellermacher (1768-1834), a protestant theologian who assigned religion primarily to feeling that is the feeling of absolute dependence.²⁶ Hegel's contribution is also noteworthy. "For Hegel the concrete history of religions is the realization of the abstract idea of religion."²⁷ The third scholar in this brief list is Vico. Vico (1668-1744), the Italian philosopher held that, 'fear of a superior power' was the origin of a religion. He perceived this development from polytheism to a spiritual monotheism as a gradual process ruled by divine providence.²⁸ In general, Romantic Idealism considers, religion had a common origin, whether it was fear or feeling.

1.1.9. Myth and Folklore

The early part of the 19th century witnessed several studies in mythology. Often the history of religion was compared to the study of myth and comparative religion with comparative mythology. Along with myth, studies in the folklore also influenced the scientific study of religion. Waardenburg writes, "History of religion could now use not only mythology but also folklore to its advantage, in this sense Mannhardt had much influence on a scholar like James G. Frazer."²⁹ Wilhelm Mannhardt (1931-1980) was a scholar of European Folklore.

In summary, Kuncheria Pathil states, "the contact of the west with Islam, the revival of classical antiquity in Renaissance with its aftermath of humanism, and the geographical discoveries of the 15th and 16th centuries with their subsequent colonial and missionary conquests, gave impetus to the study of religions of other lands and peoples."³⁰ S. Radhakrishnan limits the sources of influence to two: "the development of the science of comparative religion is due mainly to two factors: the publication and study of the – Sacred books of the east and the growth of anthropology."³¹

1.2. Early Founders

Max Müller, in his *Introduction to the Science of Religion* stated, "the emperor Akbar may be considered the first who ventured on a comparative study of the religions of the world."³² Nevertheless, the real vision for the establishment of an independent

discipline for the scientific study of religion was the product of later part of the 19th century.

One of the pioneers of "Science of Religion" was Cornelis P. Tiele (1830-1902) of Holland. According to Waardenburg "He was one of the first to offer a historical survey of a number of religions based on study of source materials."³³ In the words of Thomas L. Benson "Tiele's combined historical work in ancient near eastern religions with a systematic interest in religious phenomena and a philosophical search for the essence of religion."³⁴ The impact of evolutionary thought also reflects in his ideas: "In his general view of religion he stressed the evolution of the 'religious idea' through the historical forms of religion which represented different stages."³⁵

The reason assigned by him for the scientific study of religion was quite simple. In the *Elements of the Science of Religion* he asserted that religion is investigated in order to learn something about it, in accordance with a sound and critical method, appropriate to each department.³⁶ He advocated a kind of historical method. Still he said, "Yet I believe that the science of religion requires a broader foundation than history in the ordinary sense of the word."³⁷ Two points are clear. One is that he applied historical approach and the other is that, he felt the need for more approaches for the better understanding of religious phenomena.

Another pioneer who contributed to the development of the scientific study of religion was Pierre D. Chantepie de la Saussaye (1848-1920) of Netherlands. "Chantepie, in his classic *Manual of the Science of Religion* (1887-1889), made an elaborate classification of religious phenomena (Sacred stones, trees, animals, places, times, persons, writings, communities and the like), a forerunner of later phenomenologies of religion."³⁸ "Besides historical work in the field, he was primarily interested in systematic classification."³⁹ He is one of the first scholars to speak of phenomenology of religion as a special branch of the study of religion.⁴⁰ It is suggested that his inadequate knowledge of language⁴¹ made him inaccessible to the original sources. Hence, he concentrated less on history and more on classification of religion.

1.3. Max Müller

The most important of the founders of a separate discipline called 'Science of Religion', for the systematic study of religion was the Oxford Sanskritist Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900). He was called the father of comparative religions. R.W. Brockway says, "Max Müller's *Essay in Comparative Mythology* (1856) was the earliest significant discussion of comparative religion and it could be said that Müller was the father of *Religionswissenschaft* or religious studies."⁴² According to professor J.G. Arapura, without Müller, there could not have emerged the separate discipline for the scientific study of religion: "But for him, comparative religion, and history of religion phenomenology of religion, *Religionswissenschaft*, or whatever else it is called, as distinguished from theology, would not have found a place in the modern university."⁴³ Müller declared his commitment and vigor for the establishment of a discipline for the scientific study of religion, as the new science would change the aspect of the world.⁴⁴

Basically Müller was a philologist. In his study of languages he used comparative method. The same method was later applied to the systematic study of religion. It is said as "Müller's wide knowledge of Indo-European languages, his comparative approach to philology and extension of that method to the study of religion, and his eloquent advocacy of that study as a scientific discipline prepared the way, during his life time, for the establishment of chairs in the new field in leading European Universities."⁴⁵ He was interested on the archaic forms of religion. The reason was that, he wanted to find the origin of religions from the study of archaic forms. R.W. Brockway writes "Interested in archaic forms of religion, he suggested that contemporary primitives might preserve some very ancient mythologies, rituals, and beliefs which could be taken as survivals from prehistoric times, and that from them one could discern originals."⁴⁶

The aim of establishing the new discipline for the scientific study of religion is summed up by Eric J. Sharpe as "His ultimate aim was to elaborate a complete science of human thought: and this he chose to do in four stages, beginning with the science of language and passing through the science of mythology and the science of religion to the final goal of the science of thought."⁴⁷ In the *Natural Religion* Müller said, 'I want, if possible to show you how the road which leads from the Science of Language to the Science of Mythology and to the Science of Thought is the only safe road on which to approach the science of religion.'

1.3.1. Language

Max Müller's field of interest was philology. His linguistic studies of Indo-European languages using comparative method convinced him that similar method could be applied for the study of religions. R.W. Brockway says "Müller approached the study of religion from his knowledge of Sanskrit and other ancient languages."⁴⁸ In the words of J.G. Arapura "Max Müller considers comparative philology as both a tool and model for research in religion. Language and religion are two phenomena that have the closest similarity with each other both originating in the instinctual life of man and exhibiting a remarkable continuity of development."⁴⁹ His ever-growing interest was to find out the original forms of religions. Regarding his conviction for the commitment, it is said "He held that philological and etymological research can discover the meaning of religion for early men by restoring the original sense to the names of the Gods and the stories told about them."⁵⁰

Müller's option for the use of comparative philological method for the study of religion is well explained in his *Chips from a German Workshop* as "the science of language has taught us that there is order and wisdom in all languages and that even the most degraded jargons contain the ruins of former greatness and beauty."⁵¹ The same verdict, Müller gave to all religions, irrespective of their status. For him, perhaps, all religions contained same form of truth. Müller says in his *Natural Religion* "Our customs and traditions are often founded on decayed and misunderstood words."⁵²

Having understood the difficulty of explaining the ancient concept using modern languages, Müller says, "Nay, I believe it can be proved that more than half of the difficulties in the history of religion owe their origin to this constant misinterpretation of ancient language by modern language, of ancient thought, particularly whenever the word has become more sacred than the spirit."⁵³ He further, tells in very authentic tone that if we want to understand ancient religion, we must first try to understand ancient language.⁵⁴

1.3.2. Myth

Müller's philological skills necessitated him to consider myths from the same perspective. In the words of Waardenburg "Myths being in his view primarily poetry and phantasy, Müller tried to explain their substance by means of natural phenomena, and their terminology by what he called a 'disease of language.'"⁵⁵ J.G. Arapura writes, "Mythology, which was the bane of the ancient world is in truth a disease of language."⁵⁶ The concept of 'disease of language' can be explained as "His much criticized summation of myth was the result of metaphors derived from impressive experience of natural phenomena and then taking the figurative for the real."⁵⁷

Understanding myths play significant role in the understanding of religions is clearly indicated by Eric J. Sharpe: "Hence it was, and is necessary to penetrate the myths in order to reach the heart of the religion which they conceal."⁵⁸ Max Müller was the pioneer to investigate myths in order to find out the hidden meanings of the words applied.

1.3.3. Science of Religion

Max Müller, starting from science of language passed through mythology and now is in the science of religion, before reaching the final destination – origin of religion. Before going any further it is necessary that the expression "Science and Religion" is made clear. "Science and Religion" is the direct translation of the German expression 'Religionswissenschaft'. Max Müller coined this term.⁵⁹ He used this term to denote the new discipline, which he established. It only points to the scientific or systematic study of religions.

The method of Müller adopted in the science of religion was comparative and historical. Comparative because of the varieties of data found from various religions and branches of study. He recommended this method from his earlier experience of philological studies. His assumption was that if comparison of languages could facilitate a common origin, the comparison of data from religions should also yield such useful result. It is historical because, his intention was to trace the history of the origin of religions by going back, from the present data.

Today the terms, 'Science of Religion', 'comparative religion' and 'history of religions' are used without much distinction, implying just what Müller intended by

the term science of religion. Regarding 'comparative religion' J.N.D. Anderson contends, "strictly speaking, the very term is, of course, a solecism, for it is not 'religion' itself, which is 'comparative', but the method of study and approach."⁶⁰ He further says, "as such, comparative religion is simply one aspect of the study of religion."⁶¹ He was concerned with the common tendency of many to quickly be immersed in comparison of religions, without adequate knowledge of what they really mean in their specific context. In the words of Ninian Smart "Quite often what is meant by 'comparative study of religion' is typological phenomenology."⁶² For him this is against what he calls the historical phenomenology.

Max Müller himself perceived such misuse and said "generalization will come in time, but generalization without a thorough knowledge of particulars is the ruin of all sciences, and has hitherto proved the greatest danger to the science of religion."⁶³ Further danger of misunderstood and misused notion of comparative religion is clearly brought out by Frank Whaling that;

One of the reasons why the term 'comparative religion' came under suspicion was its implied connection with theology. According to this view, the motive for such work in the comparison of religions was not the 'impartial and scientific' desire to establish patterns, similarities and differences, but the theological desire to demonstrate that one's own position was superior, fuller, or more than mundane compared with that of others.⁶⁴

To use the method of comparison meaningfully as Müller intended, it is worth mentioning Michael Pye. In his *Comparative Religion* he states, "the comparative study of religion or 'comparative religion' for short is really a phrase to indicate the study of religion in so far as the student is not confining his attentions to single case-study."⁶⁵

Along with comparative method Müller also used historical method. The purpose was to find the origin of religion on the basis of available data. It is different from the strictly historical method called *Religionsgeschichte* (historical study of Religions). But later, the original intention was lost. In the words of Ninian Smart "to complicate matters, it has become usual to substitute the phrase history of religions for the comparative study of religion."⁶⁶ Müller himself said "...to my mind, the more interesting, if not the more important part of the science of religion is certainly concerned with what we call the historical development of religious thought and language."⁶⁷

Again it needs to be stressed that Müller used comparative historical method for the scientific study of religion. Later, these two methods were used as synonym for the expression 'Science of Religion'. Because of this the comparative religion is almost vanishing. Because of the ambiguities and disadvantages of the two expressions 'science of religion' and 'comparative religion', today the term 'history of religion' is used in the place of 'science of religion' for the systematic and scientific study of religion.

1.3.4. The Subject for the Science of Religion

Like other subjects, religion cannot be squared out from the very life of human beings. It is an integral part of humanness. It therefore, cannot be subjectively i.e. "the 'faith of the believer' can no longer be a legitimate subject of the science of religion."⁶⁸ Yet human beings have objectified religious experience to the position of studying it as a subject. "The science of religion investigates religious conception, values and behaviour."⁶⁹ Ernst Troeltsch has explained it, as "its great question is the question of the nature of religious phenomena, the question of their epistemological and cognitive import, the question of the value and the meaning of the great historical religious formations."⁷⁰ It does not focus upon the essence of religion nor does it create a new religion. In brief, the subject of the science of religion is the objectified subjective experience of human beings.

1.3.5. Data for the Science of Religion

Max Müller, from philological perspective, gives more importance to the scriptures of religion, but with caution. "To the student of religion canonical books are no doubt, of the utmost importance, but he ought never to forget that canonical books too give the reflected image only of the real doctrines of the founder of a new religion, an image always blurred and distorted by the medium through which it had to pass."⁷¹ Going behind this Ernst Troeltsch suggests that "Very important data are those one-sided or exclusively religious personalities, sects, and groups among whom the effects of scientific ways of thinking sit but loosely or are absent altogether, and who also have yet lost their religious innocence by any struggle against science."⁷² For the present student of religion apart from these two, the practical utility of religions in every day life should become a datum.

1.3.6. The Task of the Science of Religion

The task of the science of religion has been termed diversely by scholars. Though, they look different in expression all of them are legitimate from varied perspectives. For Waardenburg, the central task is 'the understanding of other religion.'⁷³ More understanding of other religions may not be of any help unless it is related to religion as a whole. Y. Masih, in his *A Comparative Study of Religions* points out that "in the opinion of the author of this book, the most important task of comparative study of religions is to find out a principle of unity which will harmonize and balance the claims and counter claims of warring religions into one unity."⁷⁴ Though he is dreaming of an unattainable task this is what the scholars of religions in general are striving for.

Another dimension of the task of scientific study of religion is highlighted by Ernst Troeltsch. For him, the purpose of scientific work on religion is entirely and necessarily to influence religion itself.⁷⁵ Perhaps, he was concerned with the reformatory work required on the part of many religions including Christianity to which he belonged. A more moderate and useful task of the scientific study of religion

is found in the work of Ninian Smart that "an important task in the building of a science of religion is to collect the various key materials which recur in differing religious environment."⁷⁶ He wanted to investigate the interaction of such materials in diverse religions. From religious point of view, it is almost clear that a simple formula of unity is out of place. What is envisaged is to see how similar materials are present in diverse religious expressions. Such an approach could promote healthy inter-religious understanding, without insisting upon unity or without causing damage to any particular religion.

1.3.7. Pattern of Study

Most of the religious studies were carried out by missionaries or missionary minded Christians. Their aim was to exhibit the view that their own religion was true and superior. The philosophers who were interested on the study of religions heed their own reservations. It is stated "the 'true believers' studied religions only to laud the superiority of their own and to depreciate those of the others, while the skeptics started with the preconception that all religions were false and entertained a simpleminded theory of the nature and origin of religion."⁷⁷

Because of the increasing amount of religious knowledge, the traditional narrow or too general perspectives of religious studies have been ignored and more charitable expectations have penetrated into the realm of scientific study of religion. Kuncheria Pathil has rightly indicated that, "today these 'one-track schemes of development' have been discarded by most of the scholars and emphasis has been placed on understanding the uniqueness of each religion and discovering the basic *structures* of the religious phenomena."⁷⁸ This view too limits itself with constraints. It looks for the basic structure of the religious phenomena. This is not a healthy demand. An open expectation is declared by Dr. Radha Krishnan that "for a scientific study of religion it is required to treat all religions in a spirit of absolute detachment and impartiality."⁷⁹ Similar view is found enhanced in the writing of E.O. James "Religious phenomena as distinct from spiritual experience must be investigated on their own merits historically and comparatively independent of any preconceived theories or accepted loyalties."⁸⁰ The author has retold the original vision of the science of religion as expected by Max Müller himself.

1.3.8. Objections to the Study of Religion

Dr. Radha Krishnan gives at least three reasons as to why there are objections for the scientific study of Religion. These are, seemingly, the fear inherent among those religious people who claim absolutism or superiority. According to him, "One reason for this is that the scientific study of religion is imagined to be a danger to religion itself."⁸¹

"Another objection is that comparison means resemblance, and if one religion is like another, what happens to the claims of superiority and uniqueness."⁸² A third objection is given as "again, it is urged, if comparative religion tells us that higher

religions possess features in common with the low and the primitive, then the interference is legitimate that our religious beliefs are of a degrading and childish character."⁸³

Of course, these are genuine fears as long as people were not aware of what was happening around the world. As every form of knowledge is available at the doorsteps of every individual, scientific knowledge of religions too should be. It can strengthen and widen the relationship between different religious communities, which were hostile so far on account of non-availability of scientific knowledge of religions.

Max Müller had perceived this objection in advance and answered it as "I do not say that science of religion is all gain. NO, it entails losses and losses of many things which we hold dear. But this I will say, that, as far as my humble judgment goes, it does not entail the loss of anything that is essential to true religion, and that if we strike the balance honestly, the gain is immeasurably greater than the loss."⁸⁴ It is the time that the discipline of religion looks beyond the simple objections to fulfill its task of presenting useful facts in order to facilitate a peaceful co-existence among people of different faith.

1.3.9. Origin of Religion

Starting from language and passing through mythology, Müller established the science of religion. Through the science of religion, he clearly draws every one's attention to two vivid objectives. One is the origin of religion and the other is the type of religions, as he understood.

Waardenburg summarizes Müller's view of the origin of religion as "Religion proper would have started with an 'immediate perception of the infinite' through nature apart from the senses and reason."⁸⁵ This may be an inadequate way of summing up Müller's understanding of the origin of religion because for Müller, not only nature, but man and self also are the great manifestations. But the presentation of the idea of the 'immediate perception of the infinite' also finds support in Max Müller. Müller, in his *Natural Religion* says that my chief endeavour is to show that 'religion did not begin with abstract concepts and a belief in purely extra-mundane beings, but that its deepest roots can be tracked to the universal stratum of sensuous perception.'⁸⁶

According to Max Müller, there are three crucial reasons for tracing the origin of religion. The first one is found in his *Chips from a German Workshop*, as quoted by Waardenburg "Whenever we can trace back a religion to its first beginnings, we find it free from many of the blemishes that offend us in its later phases."⁸⁷ According to him it helps grasping the original nature of religions.

The second reason, is that it helps to understand humanity. It was summarized by Eric. J. Sharpe as "To Max Müller, the attempt to understand religion was an

attempt to understand men, and an attempt, to persuade men to understand one another."⁸⁸

In the words of Müller, it enables us to see the development of religions. "Religion is something which has passed, and is still passing through an historical evolution, and all we can do is to follow it up to its origin, and then try to comprehend it in its later historical developments."⁸⁹

From the scientific study of religions Max Müller found "Nature, man and self are the three great manifestations in which the infinite in some shape or other has been perceived, and every one of these perceptions has in its historical development contributed to what may be called religion."⁹⁰ He has assigned names to these three manifestations. "I shall distinguish these three divisions as *Physical Religion*, *Anthropological Religion* and *Psychological Religion*."⁹¹

He wanted to show that these three aspects are found in every religion. The amount of importance attributed to a particular manifestation may be varied. In his *Physical Religion* it is stated that "it must not be supposed that these three phases of natural religion, *the Physical, the Anthropological and the Psychological*" exist each by itself, that one race worships the powers of nature only, while another venerates the spirits of human ancestors, and a third meditate on the Divine, as discovered in the deepest depth of the human heart."⁹² As intended, Müller has reached his final destination of finding the origin of religion.

Conclusion

Various factors and persons have contributed to the establishment of the 'Science of Religion'. While science of religion has benevolent objectives, there are objections to it as well. If religions are studied as the founding parents envisaged, the end result would be harmony and fellowship among religions. Although the scientific study of religion is now well developed than originally intended, it needs to be pursued with due respect to the plurality of faith traditions and to the underlying principle of religious harmony among adherents of diverse faith orientations.

NOTES

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S. ROBERTSON

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