

**LEAVES OF THE GREATER BIBLE:  
BEING AN ANTHOLOGY OF  
REPRINTS AND PARAPHRASES  
FROM ETHNIC SCRIPTURES AND  
KINDRED LITERATURE**

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Leaves of the Greater Bible: Being an Anthology of Reprints and Paraphrases from Ethnic Scriptures and Kindred Literature by William Norman Guthrie

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**WILLIAM NORMAN GUTHRIE**

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**LEAVES**

**OF THE GREATER BIBLE**

Being an Anthology of  
Reprints and Paraphrases  
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Selected and Edited by  
**WILLIAM NORMAN GUTHRIE**



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**This Reprint of the First Year's issues of  
The Leaves of the Greater Bible  
is gratefully dedicated to  
Anna Blakely Bliss  
whose sympathetic interest in so realizing  
a long cherished dream  
is here acknowledged**





## FOREWORD TO LEAVES OF THE GREATER BIBLE

### Leaves of the Greater Bible: An Anthology of Reprints and Paraphrases from Ethnic Scriptures and Kindred Literature

Looking back over the course of our first year, it seems as if the plan announced in the initial circular had been carried out with reasonable fidelity. Inevitable changes in programme, due to the inability to obtain recondit information for the "Notes," or a satisfactory paraphrase, seem to have turned out, on the whole, to the advantage of the plan, as may appear by comparing the present table of contents, classified by theme, with the former announcements.

The title of our anthology has naturally seemed to not a few too challenging. Let us pass, however, certain important considerations in brief review. A good God must needs everywhere and in all times have answered His children's prayer for guidance and comfort. There cannot have been any exclusive monopoly granted to any race. Peculiar experience, social, political, economic, conditions of climate and of race heredity, must necessarily have produced susceptibility or genius in some particular direction, with reference to special spiritual stimuli.

Naturally every people, every period, every transient phase of the social order, must make out as best it can with what it has; and so long as Chinese walls of prejudice or geographical distance isolate, what each has, must seem to him, not only good, but all there needs to be. Intercourse and comparison at first give scope to racial and national egotism. Ultimately each people, each nation, each localized temperament, comes to feel that if it has something to teach, it has also something to learn.

Even as exclusive a people as the Hebrews did not fail to profit by foreign influences. The native peoples of Canaan, Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Phoenicia, Persia, Hellas, all made their acknowledged or unacknowledged contributions to the genius of the "peculiar" people. The old arrogant claim of monopoly cannot to-day impress the student of comparative religion.

It would seem as if, after all, there could be for the human race but One Religion, with as many phases, varieties of expression, stages of definition and practice, as there are varieties of race, civilization, climate, and stages of political development. For not only do the anthropologist and the antiquarian give us ample evidence of the essential unity of human nature in the history of religion, but we possess many biblia, sacred books, ethnic Scriptures, cherished classics which convey inspiration because they were the product of inspired writers, or rather because in them some measure of literary gift was put naively at the service of a socially operative conviction, an established religious custom, a nascent mass enthusiasm.

When the great body of literature, canonically sacred or not, which gives expression to man's religious nature, is examined even superficially, the witness to the One Religion, more or less realized here, there and everywhere, is almost overwhelming.

It would seem as if the point of view for even a mere amateur student in comparative religion must be quite different from that hitherto assumed by devotees and propagandists, Christian, Buddhist, Mahometan, Parsee, Hebrew, or of almost any bygone cult or faith. The order of our affirmations and devotions may be somewhat like the following: First, a burning interest in the highest individual and social life of man; second, therefore, an interest in religion as maintaining or furthering the same; third, therefore, a peculiar personal interest in some special religion as ministering most readily to our self, our own people, our own times; fourth, an interest only less intense in other religions, past and present or to come, as doubtless emphasizing somewhat, too lightly passed over by us, or perhaps entirely ignored, and the lack of which may possibly distort or at least diminish the effective value of what we have; fifth, an interest in some denomination, some social organization, which mediates religion in the form most congenial; and for that very reason, lastly, an abiding generous interest in all denominations whatsoever, with their rival claims to ours, as helping each in some way to supplement the good work of our own, an interest which nowise invalidates the claims of our own personal loyalty and service.