

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE

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The philosophy of literature by Condé B. Pallen

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CONDÉ B. PALLEN

**THE PHILOSOPHY
OF LITERATURE**



THE

Philosophy of Literature

BY

CONDÉ B. PALLEN, PH. D., LL. D.

Omnia per ipsum facta sunt, et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est.—ST. JOHN, EV.

Omnia in ipso constant.—ST. PAUL.

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PREFACE.

A preface written as an apology is a superfluity. No man has a right to publish unless he have a reason for it. If he have nothing new to say, or if he has not put the old truth in a new fashion to bring it to fresh consideration, he has no reason and therefore no right to utter himself in public. Silence here is an obligation. But I take it that where there may be false or foolish speech, following from great confusion of truth in men's minds, a true word has paramount right to be heard. Babel arises from a confusion of truth, and amidst the din of many voices declaring falsely or purposelessly, there need be no apology for right utterance.

The word of truth set forth in the following pages I make no claim to be new; it is an old philosophy; yet in the perennial fullness of its truth ever new. It is the philosophy of literature because it is the philosophy of all things. Philosophy is the ultimate

word of truth giving the last and sufficient reason for things. My purpose has been to co-ordinate all literary utterance with that final sufficiency. The first principle of truth is the first principle of literature. The philosophy of literature is to be found in the light of that first principle, by which and through which all things are. It is not the philosophy of this day but of all days. It is neither modern nor ancient, because it is eternal. It makes no progress, because it has always been complete. It is independent of human systems of thought, because it transcends them, and, where they are incomplete, perfects them. Where they end it begins; where they terminate in mystery it sheds superabundant light. It is in the philosophy of the Incarnation that we must look for the philosophy of literature. By the light of the Eternal Word made manifest to men in the flesh is human life solved and harmonized. As literature is but a reflex of life, it is only in that same Eternal Word that its meaning may be read aright and its final significance interpreted.

The plan herein followed is simple: in

the first section a statement of the basic principle of literary utterance, sketched in large and hasty outline—a loose historical tracery as it threads the literatures of mankind. The following sections, four in number, are simply an amplification of this thesis, not by any historical method, but by way of a philosophical analysis and synthesis of the primary principles laid down in the first section.

The lecture form in which the five papers or sections were composed, I have retained; as I conceive that the reader may, without violence to the proprieties, be regarded at the same time as auditor.

CONDÉ B. PALLEN.

ST. LOUIS, December, 1896.

CONTENTS.

THESIS :

THE CATHOLICITY OF LITERATURE.

	PAGE.
The definition of Literature.	1
How a great question of Theology is involved in all others	1
The basis of the world's greatest Art work is Man's relations to the Divine	2
This is the basis of his Literature, manifest even in ancient heathenism	3
Amongst the Aryan peoples.	4
Amongst the Persians	6
Amongst the Assyrio-Chaldeans and Egyptians	6
The Chinese an exception.	7
It stands out clearly amongst the Greeks	8
And also amongst the Romans	9
Though recognized in the heathen world, its knowledge was confused and imperfect	11
The Jews alone fully understood it and their Literature, as seen in their sacred books, excelled all other ancient Literature	13
The Catholicity of Literature begins with the first divinely spoken word in Genesis, supplemented and completed in the Gospel of St. John.	15
In the Word made flesh is the regeneration of the world and of the human word. The Incarnation the pivot of all history	16

	PAGE.
As in the ancient world all things focussed towards this great fact, so in the modern all things radiate from it	18
Out of the new life of the world sprang a new Literature, beginning with the New Testament.....	19
Continued in the Fathers of the Church.....	20
Culminating in St. Augustine.....	21
Who first writes a Philosophy of History after men had learned the solidarity and unity of the race in the new dispensation	22
After death of St. Augustine follows the parturition of the new nations.....	24
After the period of turmoil, in the eighth century Literature is re-born... ..	25
Scholastic philosophy makes its appearance, reconciling the science of St. Augustine and Aristotle..	26
Faith and reason reconciled.....	28
St. Thomas culminates the Scholastic period.....	29
Dante is the sublime link between scholasticism and modern letters	30
After Europe had achieved a stable polity, the nations had crystallized, and scholasticism had sown the seed of truth, the artistic life of Christian peoples blossomed.....	31
The Literature of the period grew out of the conception of man and the universe, which scholastic science has given to the world.....	32
This was the root of Elizabethan Literature... ..	32
The continuity of the development of this unity of truth interrupted by the Reformation	33
The effect of the principle of negation disastrous... ..	34
Beginning in the philosophical world with Des Cartes and carried forward by Protestant Germany it ushers in decline.....	35