

## MEMOIRS

Looking back over the years, I realize that many details have dropped out of memory. Thus it is that our own minds censor our ~~own~~ recollections. That which has slight meaning is not worth recalling. There are certain other occurrences which have left an indelible mark and a few of these I would like to share with you. It is against my principles to write an autobiography, but it may be useful to tell something of the circumstances which have impelled me to continue for half a century in a chosen field of activity.

*During my youth*  
~~During my youth~~ it was considered advisable for me to prepare for a business career. Through family connections I had the good fortune to find employment with a fire insurance company of the highest reputation. My starting salary was \$30.00 a month, and it was assumed that I <sup>sh</sup> would live respectably ~~and~~ within my means. It was a career company. Young men starting out were not supposed to worry about things like salary. It was wiser to remember that if you served faithfully you would rise in the business, and after fifty years retire with a modest pension and a handsome testimonial, - usually a large standing clock with chimes.

It was traditional that young men associating themselves with so distinguished an organization should be properly indoctrinated by one of the executives. The head office of the company was in London and an atmosphere of English gentility was notable in the American office. One of the Vice Presidents bestowed upon me ~~the~~ fatherly advice, that was to guide me through the years.

When a young man became associated with an old and reputable company, it was his duty to live an exemplary life. His associates should be chosen for their respectability. He should attend regularly the church of his choice, and even in the earliest years of his employment he should have a savings account. When he married, he should select a girl of good character, raise his children with affection and discipline and avoid debt. The company frowned on salary advances, except in a genuine emergency, but was ready to assist in every way possible if serious need arose. Intelligent young men did not change jobs, and those who went from one office to another in search of better pay or

more rapid advancement, showed lack of integrity and soon became unemployable. Loyalty to the company established a bond that would endure throughout a business career. Special ability was recognized and rewarded, but there was no place for the clock-watcher and the shirker. By giving a little more than was required, the faithful employee was secure against all the <sup>c</sup>vississitudes of fortune, and the company had never failed to keep its retirement responsibilities to those who had served it well.

Although the advice I received was honorably given and the company was thoroughly reliable, it soon became obvious that I was not cut out for the insurance business. I am grateful, however, for the <sup>time</sup>~~years~~ spent in the financial district of lower Manhattan. Something seemed to tell me that man was not intended to become completely absorbed in the problems of the economic world. <sup>I remember the</sup> ~~One day the~~ head-bookkeeper, <sup>who had</sup> with a spotless record of forty-six years of faithful service, was found dead at his desk. <sup>Although</sup> I knew him slightly, ~~and~~ there was something <sup>small</sup> ~~deeply~~ pathetic about the ~~narrow~~ world in which he lived. When a faithful employee retired we were all expected to participate in the observances. A white haired man, obviously frail, said goodbye to his companions with genuine regret. The whole affair was a moment of sentimentality. The standing clock <sup>i</sup> was delivered to his home, but we never saw him again, and after the first few weeks his name was no longer mentioned. <sup>During this period</sup> (A)

~~Shortly~~ <sup>After</sup> ~~the end of World War I~~, I came West and settled in Southern California. In those days the contrast between New York City and Los Angeles was almost bewildering. This was a country of orange groves and motion picture studios. The Spanish atmosphere still lingered. There was no smog to blight the region and life was a leisurely experience in <sup>a</sup> the semi-tropical environment. ~~I should mention that During World War I,~~ ~~the business with which I was associated decided to adopt the five day week. This gave me considerable time on Saturdays, part of which I spent in the Public Library. Through~~ <sup>study developed</sup> ~~reading I contacted~~ <sup>much of my spare time</sup> ~~ideas that were later to become major factors in my choice of a~~ <sup>useful</sup> ~~future.~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~About a year after I arrived in California,~~ <sup>later</sup> it was my privilege to <sup>meet</sup> ~~contact~~ a most remarkable old gentleman. His name was Dr. Sydney Bronson, and I have often wished that I had asked him more about his personal background. All I ever knew was from

occasional remarks which he made to emphasize his philosophical interests. Dr. Bronson had started life as a volunteer in the Civil War. / On the field of Gettysburg he resolved to ~~dedicate~~ <sup>devote</sup> his life to the enlightenment of his fellowmen. <sup>Because</sup> Was had deeply idealistic and scared his soul, ~~and~~ he wished to dedicate his career to some practical ~~and useful~~ profession. He studied medicine, earned his doctorate and selected a country practice. He was a horse and buggy doctor and those who needed his help hung red lanterns at the entrances to their farms. Again the kindly doctor was dissatisfied. More people were sick in the soul than in the body. So he went to ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> Seminary and took a degree in Divinity. His first call was to a small church, but when he tried to preach the Christianity of Jesus Christ, he had nothing but trouble with the Bishop. In due course he retired from the / ministry and decided to enter politics. He associated himself with the Populist Movement, <sup>h</sup> then a strong liberal group seeking to improve the living conditions of the underprivileged. When this organization disintegrated, Dr. Bronson drifted into Oriental Philosophy. Here his seeking mind came to rest and he built his complete concept of life around the doctrine of reincarnation and karma.

At the time I knew him, Dr. Bronson had a small group of students that met over a bank in Santa Monica, California. One afternoon, when he could not be present, I acted as substitute. This was my first public lecture and the audience consisted of five persons. The Doctor encouraged me to continue and after the talks <sup>we</sup> he divided the free-will offering. We were a striking couple. The doctor was about five feet tall and probably never weighed over 120 pounds. He had a very sweet smiling face, white hair, and luxuriant white chin whiskers. I was six feet four inches, somewhat on the heavy side //. After the meeting was over, we went to the corner drugstore and spent the entire fifty cents on appropriate refreshments.

Doctor Bronson used to take the big red <sup>street</sup> cars <sup>that</sup> and come into Los Angeles, where he also spoke occasionally. He encouraged me to go with him and I made contact with a kind of Forum of religious liberals, that met in the Black Building on the corner of Fourth and Hill Streets. Diagonally across the street was the old Blanchard Hall, named for one of the most respected citizens of his community. This was the headquarters of the

Church of the People, which had been founded some years before by a liberal evangelist, Rev. Benjamin Fay Mills. It was an influential church, with a large and progressive membership. Nearly all who attended were conscientious objectors to orthodox theology. The guiding lights of the group were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry James, Edward Bellemey(?), and Elbert Hubbard. In addition to the regular service, they had a Forum that met about ten o'clock, and I became a more or less regular speaker at this Forum, which was open to questions and debates from the floor.

It was a bad moment for the Church of the People when Rev. Mills retired and returned to the orthodox denomination ~~to~~ to which he had originally belonged. In the emergency, the Church was fortunate in securing as its second minister, Mr. Reynold E. Blight, a prominent C.P.A., who was also very active in Masonic educational programs. Mr. Blight held the Church together very well, until some complicated situations developed in his personal affairs. He asked for a leave of absence and I was installed as temporary pastor in 1922. Things went along for over a year, at the end of which time Mr. Blight formally resigned, and I accepted the full responsibility for a highly individualistic and eccentric congregation.

These events are outstanding to me because I inherited a pastoral responsibility which the preceding ministers had ignored. I had a small office, and my advice was sought on almost every problem that could arise in human relationships. Having had no training of any kind for such a career, I could only apply the principles which I had come to consider valid to the countless emergencies I was expected to solve. At an early age, I received a comprehensive insight into the thoughts and emotions, attitudes and opinions, prejudices and conceits, fears and hopes, of my parishioners. The things I learned never disillusioned me, but I could no longer live on a level of religious platitudes. Philosophy had to be an enlightened and informed kind of common sense. If you expected too much of people, you were disappointed. If you expected too little, you did them a misservice.

While I was involved in the complications of a church, which was being gradually shifted toward comparative religion, classical philosophy and psychology of the type taught by

William James of Harvard, one of the most memorable events of my life took place. Through the kindness and generosity of a very dear friend, it was possible for me to make a trip around the world. Of course in those days such an adventure required considerable time and the whole trip had to be made by boat and train. I left San Francisco in the Fall of 1923 and returned in the Spring of 1924. Trips in those days were more leisurely than the present form of travel, and being naturally observant, I learned a great deal. By good fortune I spared myself the common mistake of comparing the high standards of American living with the lower standards of many other nations. I was seeking information and had no desire to play the critic. It was a good time to travel. The world was still in an orderly condition. Of course, I reached Japan soon after the great earthquake, and in a way the wonderful courage of these people under adversity helped me to understand their religions and their philosophy of life. Arriving in Korea, we took the train up to Mukden in what is now Manchuria,/. It was a bitterly cold trip and trouble was beginning to disturb the quietude of the centuries. Guards with machine guns rode on the train with us, because of reports of a bandit uprising. Peking was a strange and magnificent city and I had the opportunity of exploring many of its now legendary attractions. From China it was India, with a brief pause on the way for Burma and the great golden spires of the Buddhist Temples. We crossed central India from Calcutta to Bombay, with detours into the Northern mountain country and several of the more progressive Indian States, including Baroda. From there we went on to Egypt, crossed the Suez Canal and reached Jerusalem with its ancient Christian and Jewish landmarks. After that came Naples with Pompei, and the glories of Central Italy, and then Gibraltar and home.

I often feel that this trip with its remarkable timeliness, coming at the very beginning of a career to be devoted almost completely to the needs of people, was the most important single episode of my life. I learned that wonderful human beings lived useful and happy lives without any of the beliefs and attitudes that Western man would consider indispensable. To visit a region which does not share your religion, your

language, ~~with~~ your customs or your ambitions, is especially meaningful to a teacher of philosophy or religion. You suddenly realize that sincerity is the important thing, and that from integrity comes indestructible hope. The details are inconsequential.

On my trip I took a great many photographs, with a large and clumsy 4 x 5 inch box Graflex camera. After returning home, I had ~~the~~ old-fashioned stereoptican slides made from these pictures. The slides were all hand colored and ~~is~~ very beautifully done. So a word of appreciation goes to the Pacific Stereoptican Company, which has been out of business these many years, one of the casualties resulting from color film.

In the early days of my association with The Church of the People, I lived in a small room on the side of a hill, in an alley back of Hill Street. About this time I met Mr. and Mrs. Walter Young. These grand people had a large house and after the untimely death of their son, I moved in with them. It was here that I wrote what we call The Big Book. I dictated four hours a day, and after the manuscript was about two-thirds finished, began the search for a publisher. It is hardly necessary to go into details here, as this story will be found in the present magazine, carefully recorded by my good friend Mr. Voorhis. One point, however, is worth mentioning. I was actually writing the closing sections of the book, while the first sections were on the press. One of the problems that John Henry Nash brought up was the importance of the well-~~printed~~ printed page. Observant readers may have noticed therefore that every chapter ends exactly at the base of the page. Some cutting was necessary to accomplish this and I still have the small extracts that were removed.

I had a remarkable editor in Dr. Rawlinson. He was completely bedridden with a disease of the spine, which permitted only the use of his arms and his head. Even with this handicap, he did a remarkable job. After the book was finished, William Randolph Hurst discovered a typographical error in the index.

By this time The Church of the People had more or less retired into the background. The emphasis was now upon idealistic philosophy and those several schools of mysticism which had gained rapidly in public interest. The Church however still exists as a corporate body. Our public meetings were held in the Trinity Auditorium, adjacent to

what is now the Embassy Hotel. It was a large and suitable building, but the management was not very discriminating and we sought for more congenial atmosphere elsewhere.

between

In that period from 1920 and 1929, when my career was in its formative stages, the country was passing through a prologue to the present confusion. The field of religion was especially upset, but the discordant factors were mostly made up of persons in middle life. European psychology became an <sup>n</sup>obsessing force in the popular mind. Many liberal religious groups gained huge followings by teaching peace, power and plenty. The situation was further <sup>pl</sup>complicated by a sudden influx of Oriental philosophy with which Western students had little or no acquaintance. Exaggerations of all kinds caught the popular fancy and fortunes changed hands very quickly. It was obvious from the beginning that material selfishness and economic ambitions were exploiting every phase of Western idealism. It was a hard time in which to try to protect the deluded from their own delusions and it was also a thankless business. It seemed as though the situation would <sup>ow</sup>grow progressively worse until public morality was completely <sup>e</sup>undermined. But at the critical moment, the Great Depression hit. Most of the exploiters quietly disappeared or retired to enjoy their ill-gotten gains. Many who had drifted away from our activities, returned sadder, wiser and considerably poorer.

During this unhappy decade, I had been using all available funds to build a substantial working library. In the process, I suddenly came to realize that I was essentially a hobbyist. With limited time and means, I had to restrict my interests to material that was not too expensive. At that time there was very little interest in obscure subjects, such as Astrology, Alchemy, Cabalism, Rosicrucianism and the Hermetic Arts. It was in 1920 that I purchased my first alchemical manuscript. It was a beautiful volume, with many hand-painted illustrations, and while there were some defects, I bought it for fifteen dollars. Later I restored the title page, and the volume is still a cherished item in the Library of our Society. About the same time I was presented with the four volume edition of the Writings of Jacob Boehme, translated into English by the Rev. William Law. This <sup>was</sup> the rare edition with manikin plates

showing the spiritual centers in the human body. By degrees the collection of books grew and to estimate what I accumulated, interested persons should examine the bibliography at the end of my large book on Symbolical philosophy. About ninety percent of the reference material was in my collection at the time this work went to press. I have added much to the original collection and in recent years there has been considerable emphasis upon religious works dealing with Oriental religions and philosophy.

Another short-lived avocational interest led me to study sculpturing. Unfortunately, at that time pressures of public activity made it practically impossible to secure the necessary time. I did finish three portrait heads, the originals of which are in our collection here. One of the portraits was that of the distinguished American Freemason and scholar, Gen. Albert Pike. It is reproduced here as an example of an interest that could never reach fulfillment.

Another major step in my education resulted from travel here in the United States. My first lectures outside of the Los Angeles area <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ given in San Francisco, and I have continued to visit there as frequently as possible until now. I remember that I was introduced to my first audience by the Superintendent of the building, who wore a Prince Albert coat, striped pants, spats and a four-in-hand tie. It was a festive occasion and everyone was deeply impressed. Since then I have lectured in nearly one hundred cities from coast ~~to~~ coast, appeared on many radio stations and television programs. I have also addressed nearly all the Service Clubs, many public schools and colleges, and several fraternal orders. Not long ago I was stopped on the street in San Francisco by an elderly lady, who introduced me to her married daughter and her two children. The older woman said "You spoke at our Assembly at the Galileo High School when I was a girl. Your subject was 'The Myths and Legends of Scandinavia,' and it is the only incident in my High School education that I have remembered."

After 1929, America entered a period of austerity, which continued until the beginning of World War II. During this world-wide recession, many lines of business suffered greatly. Our activities, however, were not seriously affected. We had a slender



Some indication of our activities in the early 1930s/ may be of interest.

On February 4, 1931, I opened a series of lectures in New York City, at the Pythian Temple, and this program continued three times a week until the end of March. At this time my activities included a talk for the New History Society in the Ballroom of the Ritz Carlton Hotel, and also a lecture for the American Society of Psychical Research in the historic old <sup>Y</sup>Hyslop House. I was also speaking regularly on Radio Station WOR, and preparing for a trip to Central America.

In the late Spring of the same year we left New York by boat for the entry port of Progreso on the Peninsula of Yucatan, with a brief stop at Havana enroute. The harbor of Progreso is too shallow to permit large vessels to dock and we were taken ashore <sup>i</sup>on small boats. We proceeded immediately by car to Merida, from which trips to the various ruins of the Maya and Toltec periods <sup>were</sup> ~~are~~ arranged. I spent some time wandering through the ruined cities of Uxmal and Chi-Chen Itza/. In the latter city I met Mr. Willard, who had spent many years exploring the region and graciously shared with me many of his choice ~~of~~ observations.

We returned to Progreso and sailed to Vera Cruz and there took a train for Mexico City. This offered an opportunity to examine the magnificent monuments of the Aztec Culture and spent many fascinating hours in the Museum of Archaeology. What impressed me most was the well-substantiated realization that the civilizations of Ancient America were essentially democracies. Our heritage of freedom and social cooperation did not actually come from Europe, but from the Western world, where splendid cultural institutions flourished, while Europe was passing through the Dark Ages.

In ~~19~~ October 1933 I attended the World Fellowship of Faiths, which was held simultaneously with the Chicago World's Fair. The Fellowship of Faith was under the patronage of His Highness Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda and on this occasion I renewed acquaintance with several good friends, including Dr. Preston Bradley, Sir Francis Younghusband, Mr. Kedarnath Das Gupta and Mr. Charles Frederick Weller. All these dedicated persons were striving to advance the cause of world peace, and build bridges of understanding across <sup>s</sup> chasms of prejudice. On September 17th I addressed this

group on the subject "True Fellowship of Faith," and a digest of this talk is included in the present Journal.

April,

In 1934, Messrs. Sotheby & Co., the world famous auctioneers in London, disposed of the extensive and important library of early books and manuscripts on <sup>a</sup>Alchemy, the occult and physical sciences, which were the property of M. Lionel Hauser. It was one of the most remarkable sales of the century, and agents secured for me at that time the triangular manuscript of Comte de St.-Germain and several other valuable items.

As I was lecturing in New York in ~~1935~~ the Fall of 1934, it seemed a good opportunity to visit England and France in quest of books and manuscripts for our Library. Through the assistance of a friend, who wished to remain anonymous, a sum of money was placed at my disposal for this purpose. It had long seemed to me that a major European war could not be avoided, and I hoped to bring to this country for safer keeping unique material in our field of interest. It was a wise move, and several of the dealers from whom I secured important reference works were later bombed out. On this trip I secured in an obscure shop, on the street leading to the principal entrance of the British Museum, several choice items, including the Rosicrucian Manuscript, which I published under the title *The Codex Rosae Crucis*, and a fine manuscript on vellum, explaining the intricate diagrams of the Cabala.

Maggis & Company had purchased several items from the Hauser sale, most of which I purchased, including a handsomely illuminated alchemical manuscript. From Marks & Co. I was fortunate to secure the remarkable example of the Ripley Scroll, one of the outstanding alchemical works, which I hope to publish one of these days. My sponsor to the British Museum was Sir Francis Younghusband, a delightful little man with a military bearing, who had become a deep student of Tibetan Buddhism. Later I went over to Paris and by good fortune contacted M. Lionel Hauser. We had many discussions of the circumstances which impelled him to collect his library, and the economic difficulties in which Europe forced him to part with his beloved books. Dorbon-Aire, an antiquarian book-dealer, and the shop maintained by the Chacornac Brothers, had purchased a number of items at the Sotheby sale, the best of which included a manuscript by the French

transcendentalist Eliphas Levi and several of his advanced disciples. These were added to our collection. Having completed the book buying program, we spent the Christmas holidays with a friend who had a home in Normandy.

In 1934 ~~The~~ Philosophical Research Society was incorporated as a non-profit educational ~~philosophical~~ institution, with charitable and religious privileges. About two years later we secured the property where our headquarters now stands and built the first unit, consisting of the Library building and the administrative offices. In 1950 further construction was undertaken, and in 1959 the Auditorium was completed. To meet the need for additional space, other rooms, including the library extension, were built in 1967. The building program actually required thirty years, but through ~~the~~ depression, war and inflation, the project had been systematically advanced.

In 1940 I was the speaker for Greek Day at the World's Fair in New York City. On that occasion ~~my~~ subject was "The Contribution of Classical Greek Philosophy to the Life of Modern Man." In the talk I called special attention to the important work of the distinguished translator<sup>o</sup> of the Greek and Latin Classics, Mr. Thomas Taylor. It was my privilege ~~to~~ to share the platform with a very dear friend, the Ecumenical ~~Ecumenical~~ Patriarch Athenagoras I/, who is now head of the Greek Orthodox Church throughout the world. He attended many of our New York lectures and we still correspond occasionally. As the result of my activities at the World's Fair, I received a Special Award of Merit.

During the years of World War II, foreign travel was almost impossible and local transportation was largely involved in the defense effort. It seemed best, therefore, to advance my writing program and remain comparatively close to home. In the early 1940s, I passed through a dangerous illness, and while recuperating from major surgery, resumed my interest in stamp collecting. This I have maintained to the present time, specializing on the postage stamps of the ~~philosophic~~ philosophic empires/, that is, those countries involved in our major religious and cultural interests. I have assembled a reasonable collection of the postage stamps of Greece, Egypt, Persia, India, China, Japan and many of the smaller countries of Asia. On his visit to the United States, some years ago,

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The Emperor Haile Selassie was gracious enough to autograph the title page of my collection of the stamps of Ethiopia. My special favorites have been the stamps of the Feudatory States of India, Tibet and the Postal History of Japan. Although I have only exhibited locally, I have won a number of awards, including the Grand Award for Research on the Early Postal History of India.

Hereagain I feel that my hobbies have been of the most practical value in maintaining a cheerful and constructive viewpoint toward the responsibilities of writing, lecturing and counselling. Unless there are varieties of interest, the mind becomes fatigued, the viewpoint is narrowed and the individual takes himself too seriously.

In 1964 I made my first major trip out of the United States in thirty years. It was a combination of a vacation and a research project dealing with Buddhism. Although we had written occasionally on Oriental subjects, from the beginning of my writing program, I had never done a major book on Eastern Wisdom. My destination was Japan and I was surprised to find so many landmarks that I remembered from my previous visit forty years before. ~~There~~ There gradually formulated in my mind the desire ~~for~~ to acquaint our friends in Los Angeles with some of the exquisite religious art and craft products of Japan. In the last four years I have made three other trips to find unusual items to improve the quality of our permanent collection and make them available in our gift shop. This had added a new area of interest which I find most captivating.

The future is also an exciting prospect. There are other books which I wish to write, lectures and classes which I believe will be helpful at the present time, and the tremendous challenge of present world conditions. My enthusiasm seemly declines to be diminished, a state of affairs which I regard as highly satisfactory.

Looking back I have wonderful memories of dedicated friends, who have helped to make possible all that has been accomplished. No one builds by himself alone, and I have been especially blessed in the kindly and generous support and encouragement from more than three generations of well-wishers. I cannot name them all and ~~if~~ it would be unkind to mention only a few. Let me therefore give all possible credit to those who have already departed from this life and those who are growing up around us through the

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The question has frequently been asked me / "If you had your life to live over again, would you live it differently?" I can only answer that I might hope to live it better, but I am certain that my dedications would be essentially the same. There is no more successful life than that dedicated to the service of those seeking spiritual and philosophical guidance. There have been difficult times and many problems, but I find that long association with human nature is in no way disillusioning. I like people better now than when I started out. I have greater faith in humanity at this moment than every/ before. So far as I know, I have no enemies, and my friends include all the people I have never met. It might be well, therefore, to summarize the present state of my convictions and beliefs. They may be useful to others, for they have developed through practical contacts with the joys and sorrows of an ever changing world.

I am still convinced that creation is governed by an all-wise, all-good and all-loving power. The authority of this creating principle is Absolute, and the world which it has fashioned is predestined and foreordained to grow and unfold into the perfection of all its powers and propensities. Man cannot fail, but through his ignorance he may delay the fulfillment of his<sup>own</sup> purpose. There is no principle of evil, but there is a principle of good. The universe operates in the immutable laws of cause and effect, reincarnation and karma. We are here to outgrow our own limitations and to dedicate our resources to the service of the power that fashioned us.

Growth is achieved by discipline. The individual who constructively directs his own life, practices his religion and demonstrates his philosophy. All life is growth under law, and those live well who discover universal laws and obey them. Happiness is the by-product of personal integrity. All things work together for good. Our doubts/<sup>and</sup> fears are merely the result of personal ignorance. Actually we have nothing to fear in a universe of divine love, except our own selfishness. The most wonderful job  
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/in the world is to help people (to learn) to help themselves.