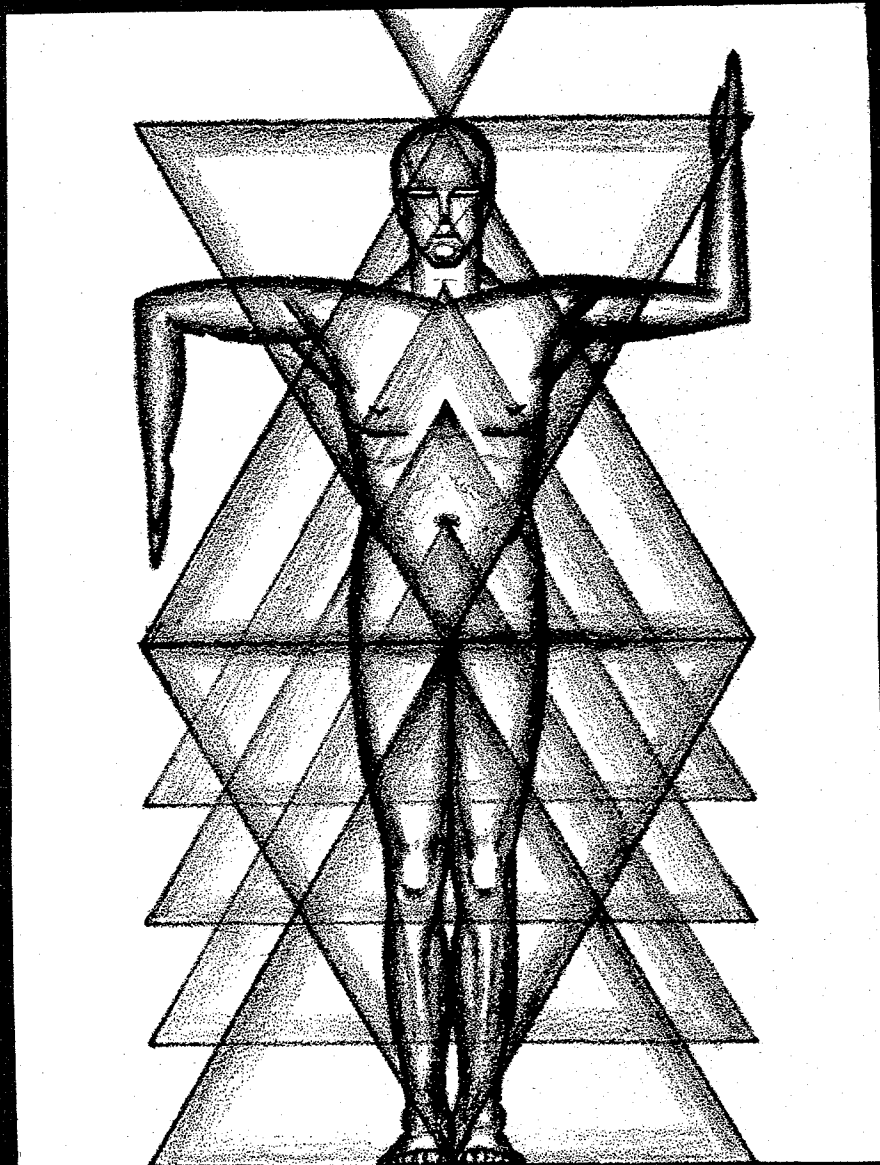


LIVING



Devoted to man and his transcendental nature

VOLUME 2 1938 DECEMBER 1938 NUMBER 17

EDITORIAL

The days continue to shorten as the solar year comes to a close. Millions sheltered in the mass life of cities, miss the significance of the sun's sinking in the South. Nevertheless they cannot but sense the immemorial pulse of the Solstice.

But how do they react to the long night? What is their consciousness of this drama? There is still the trace of a mystical element, although we pride ourselves on our practical genius, and repudiate all influence not visible to the three-dimensional world. The reaction of the ancients to the Solstice festival was avowedly mystical.

Let us inquire into the quality of the present-day behavior patterns in response to the Solstice. The great majority is not oblivious to the deeper meaning of these rhythms. Although the positive reaction may lie for the present hidden beneath a veneer of self-conscious modernism, it makes itself poignantly felt in our folk-ways.

If man were really so materialistic, whence could spring the impulse to sing carols of joy, to attend religious services, and plays and concerts of a mystical quality? This whole trend is much more marked at this one season of the year. Why the increase in festivity, the numerous family gatherings, the need for a higher fellowship than the usual? Why the generous though usually misguided impulse to gift-giving, the welling up of something from the deep emotional nature that leaps out especially at this particular time of the year?

Why do these find at this time a very special response?

It seems impossible to evade the conclusion that even in this age of outward interests, something of the innate glory and splendor of the Solstice is dimly realized. Man knows the way is yet open, however opaquely visioned, to a vista of higher life. The rhythms of our world at this time reveal a pattern which is one of the great motifs of THINGS AS THEY ARE - the key to immortal life, the sacred mystery of BIRTH AND DEATH.

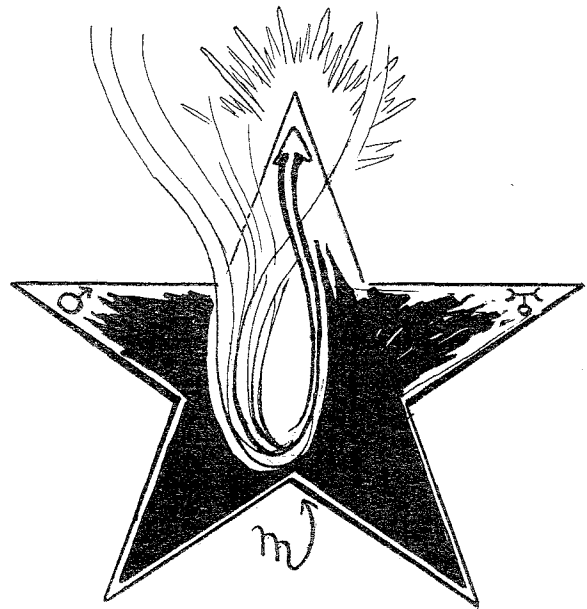
The solstice of the Winter season, when the sun is at its furthest South, is a recurrent glyph of Death. Death of the old, of the year, of the body - and Rebirth of the new life. In it we can read the death of old thoughts and civilizations as well as personal death; deaths of worlds and of aeons - but also their arising to life in new and other forms.

Defeated by his intellectualisms and his limited concept of science, modern man knows these ancient facts in some corner of his being. The eternal verities of birth and death are but partially hidden. A clearer perspective is emerging to view. Through the New Physics, in

the growing knowledge of psychic phenomena, through interest in telepathy and other avenues, the twentieth century moves to freedom from barriers and comes closer to harmony with that ancient mystery which emerges from the mists as part of the immemorial framework of the Universe.

In the pages of this issue we present a few aspects of this motif of Birth and Death. The topic is vast as life itself. Let each reader venture to seek for himself some part of the treasure of this process by which man freed climbs from earthly to spiritual stature, by which he frees himself from earlier forms to continually emerge in greater strength, and beauty, bound upward in the splendid Journey of mystical evolution.

WORKSHOP IN SYMBOLISM



DEATH AND BIRTH IN ASTROLOGY

The diffused undifferentiated stream of life (soul-seeds) moves downward into the darkness of matter which is a form of death.

As the experiences of earth shape, develop, and intensify it, that soul-life rises differentiated and purposive, emerging into the realm of Light as a mature soul. This is a great birth, and the highest span in the astrological symbolism of Scorpio transformed into Aquila. Astrology knows many deaths and births - but this grand mystical metamorphosis is the climax of them all.

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REBIRTH — A PROCESS

by G. Burchard

Doubtless you are one of those who have a yearning toward reaching the spirit within yourself. And you know that spirit is far beyond psyche — even beyond soul. You appreciate that it is Nous, the peak of intelligent mind.

Or you may be a long distance from this yearning and realization. You may be bringing up the rear in the army of the Quest — almost sure that the world of matter is all there is; that you have no concerns other than those of ordinary waking consciousness.

In one sense, it makes little difference where you may seem to be in this army. Your personality and your conscious mind are not conclusive evidence of your actual present rank or your possibilities of promotion. These are stamped down below, in subconscious areas of your being, which manifest more easily when the physical and its stimuli are silenced in sleep.

Watch these areas, for, like Snow White's mirror in the old folk legend, they will tell you truly. Their domain is large as the sea compared with the island of your waking consciousness, and their depths (or heights) reach "back to the mothers". That designation of Goethe's is pregnant with intimations of source, homeland, the worlds of Spirit, from which we came, and in which we are even now infant citizens.

When the subconscious opens up to us as the transliminal, or that which is across the threshold of our limited, everyday awareness, it talks to us in symbolic language. That is the only tongue in which realities pertaining to greater dimensions can be suggested. When we have learned to understand this language we have within us a "treasure-house of experience, resource and power", — a guide and counsellor far wiser in much that makes for our growth than our practical, reasoning mind.

How reliable is its help, once the mirror has been at least partially cleansed of objective attachments, was explained in the article "Dreams and Reality" in the October issue of LIVING.

A sea, a mirror, a guide, a challenge, a reservoir and power-house' Transliminal life is all of these and more. Sooner or later, if we advance in its processes, we experience those

dawns of higher consciousness for which the aspirant would "give his soul".

But the first vistas that open may not be roseate. Often indeed they are clothed in the vestments of death — the destruction of the old to make way for the new. Must not the seed disintegrate in the ground before the plant can unfold in air? The human plant is to grow the fruit of mind, thru which alone is admission to Nous.

There are many deaths on the way to this rebirth. Or rather, there are transformations, for there really is no death. The old self and its attachments give way to their next — and succeeding — generations. Life reappears in newer and higher forms.

Here are a few transliminal experiences, chosen mainly for their brevity from hundreds that are on file at the School, which indicate movement toward spirit — not intellectually, or wishfully, but with the courage and living quality that true progress requires:

"A dream in which I am dying. The death is by a fusion of elements, like a being consumed in fire. Another one of me dies too, and I weep bitterly."

"My belongings and what seem to be parts of myself are heaped as on a pyre. I am torn between horror and joyousness that something beautiful will be born from the ruins."

"I have been laid upon a table as a corpse, by Jesus, who stands nearby and says it is to protect him from his enemies. It seems to occur at a meal, and in Egypt...."

A series of such victories is necessary. And changes in the personality and objective life must be made, in line with the challenges of the transliminal. Otherwise the higher states will not be maintained. Then comes the danger of grasping at the pseudo. But if your yearning is genuine, — toward the star in the heaven of spirit, you will never be satisfied with its shining reflection in the waters of sentiment.





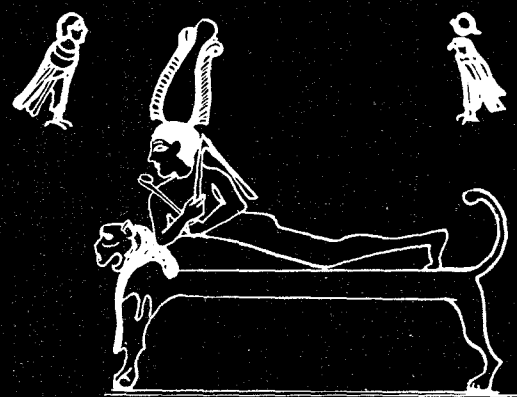
BIRTH A

Two immemorial facts of life are birth and death. Before them men have ever bowed in awe and wonder. To the average person these facts are material events, attributed on the one hand to conception, and on the other to failure of the body to function as an organism.

What few persons have realized is that birth and death are two aspects of one and the same reality. There can be no birth without a death. There can be no death without a birth. The men and women lost in battle, whether with guns or disease, are not dead. Neither are they waiting until a "Last Trumpet shall sound".

Apollonius's famous lines (quoted elsewhere in this issue) unfold the reasons. Gently persuasive and keenly logical they were written to a friend on the death of his son. The withdrawing from physical life is the entry into etheric life, - death here, birth there. It actually depends on your location whether you call the event death or birth. If this demonstrable fact were generally known it would do more for the comfort and security of men than crops, relief, or religious teachings. Curious that humanity is stubborn and fearful of looking in the direction of its most practical help!

But these immediate and sensorily palpable facts of death-birth are only the outer husk of a potent spiritual Principle, and it is the application of this Principle to man's development which has produced some of the world's richest symbolism. The enlightened and the wise see a stupendous scale of interlocked series of deaths and births giving a clue to the nature of the universe. The mystic and the seer know that it is not only the physical body which dies, but that this foreshadows the progressive dissolving and regeneration of the ascending soul of man, - the death of the first Adam, the material man, and the birth of Seth as the forerunner of the noetic man, the Christ.



Twelve thousand years ago the death of Osiris as a Master in earth, made him the first-fruits of the dead-alive, and the Osirian religion was born. This religion is basically identical with Christianity. Innumerable symbols portray their deep understanding of spiritual facts. Osiris arises in his double (1) his soul, the Ba-bird, and his spirit, the hawk are there with him in that birth. Death on the whole played but a small part in the perspective of the average Egyptian, for he had no doubt of the continuity of life. He was taught many practical facts, such as those illustrated by the symbol of the scarab. (2) He is planted in a body in the earth, just as the beetle plants its egg in the dung. Etheric man and the beetle both are born out of the earth. So the scarab has become the symbol of deathlessness, while another symbol, the Ankh cross (3) has long indicated the sacred way of ever higher rebirth.

In ancient Brittany the Druidic Mysteries instructed in the death of the earthly man (while still in the flesh) and the birth of the higher man. His sacred talisman was the Golden Bough, (4) the mistletoe (which becomes golden). It grew on the Tree of Life, the hallowed Oak, and by its means (Wisdom) he made his way to the greater birth by the death of the old self. Today the mistletoe is still put up at Christmas, but people have forgotten why, - and they certainly do not dream that this is a fragment of Druidic Mystery-Lore.

In that magnificent Gnostic tradition of Jesus on the cross, John who has been called up on the mystic mountain, learns that his beloved Master Jesus is alive in a radiant world, even tho the physical body is on Golgotha, surrounded by a bewildered, teeming crowd. Death is birth. When John leaves that mount of illumination he utters these wonderful words, - (and they ought to be one of the first lessons taught in Christian churches:..)

"And when I descended I laughed at them all, when they told me what they did concerning him, - firmly possessed in myself of this truth only, - that the Lord contrived all things symbolically, and according to His dispensation for the conversion and salvation of man."

Acts of John.

His death-birth on the cross was a symbol, one of the most stirring ever dramatized by a Teacher.

The skull and cross bones is a crude and popular symbol of death, but in compensating irony it is also a symbol of rebirth. (5) No one asks where the cross bones originated! It is forgotten that they form the letter X, the ancient cross of Light, Lux (now deteriorated to a soap and washing powder!) This same X is used as an abbreviation for Christmas: Xmas: Light Mass.

DEATH

by The Interpreter

For a moment we peer into Chinese Lore. In the Tao Teh King are these words, proving that they too knew and taught that death and birth are one.

"We come into life, we enter death.

.....

What a Master is he, therefore,
who into the place of death,
can bring his inner life!"

This is the death-birth process of ascent.

The winter solstice, the period of the shortest day, is the genuine death-birth of the year, not December 31st. Christianity foreshadows the spiritual Principle when the birth of its great

Leader is arbitrarily set for this date. With the coming of Jesus a new light began to dawn in the world, even as the light of the new year perennially dawns at the Winter solstice. The physical fact symbolizes the mystical fact.

In India it is said that the soul of Gautama descended upon his human mother Maya as a white elephant. He died to the higher worlds to be born among men. The God of Wisdom, Ganesa, is represented as elephant-headed, - thus thru the symbol we read Gautama had already stored up great wisdom. Nevertheless it was under the Bo-tree (6) that he put his lower self finally to death and was reborn or illuminated. Thus he won the title Buddha: illumined.

Jesus too said "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God". The second birth is dependent on a death. The "man (mind) who is virgin, conceived and brings forth a son which is neither psychic, animal, nor fleshly, but a blessed aeon of aeons." As these go to the death the aeon is born.

Another familiar symbol of death-birth is the phoenix or fire-bird. (7) It rises again out of its own ashes, a token of the nature of the resplendent Fire, which first consumed, and then gave it birth.

From India this indicative fragment:

"Light was prisoned in the gloom,

Indra freed her from its womb."

Death to the soul, birth in earth; death to earth, birth in higher planes.

In astrology the 8th House is known as the House of death, Scorpio. (8) But those who look further in the ancient science, find that the 8th House is also the place of rebirth, the birth of the noetic nature, illustrated by the



sign Equila, the eagle. This because the eagle nests and flies higher than any other bird except the Hawk (which was the ancient form of the eagle). So the spiritual or noetic nature rises higher than any other nature known to earth. Thus John in the Christian scriptures was symbolized by the eagle.

Virtually all the symbols associated with the Solstice and Christmas imply both death and birth. The Feast of the Boar's Head which the carols describe, is death-birth. (9) The boar is the symbol of the material man who, like the animal, continually turns his snout downward to eat of things in the earth. Now this lower man is slain, - hence rejoicing indeed. But who remembers this when they sing the carol?

Gifts at this season were originally reverent offerings made to the spiritual man, as symbolized by Jesus, - not presents sent and exchanged with Tom, Dick, and Harry! How humanity has burlesqued this noble season and how few have the courage or determination to reclaim a little of what they have lost!

But shall we not try this year? Shall we not try to grasp and follow what the great symbols of death-birth still try to teach us? And is it not true that it is only as the old man in us dies that we can help to build a new world? Must we not put to death selfish desires and narrow conceptions before we can give birth to a better order? What if it does cost our flesh, the boar in us? Have we not evidence in Wisdom of the Ages that with death comes birth? What if it does cost our comfort, our immediate material security? Can we not meet the tests? understanding something of the Feast that is unending? seeing that death-birth are two aspects of one reality? Who is ready?

Blessed be your Solstice-Christmas!



LIVING

THE HERMETIC IDEA

of BIRTH AND DEATH

In this tradition of the unchristianised Gnosis, there are many sayings scattered through the texts conveying ideas similar to that written by Apollonius of Tyana (see other lines in this issue)*. These ideas were not new to these early centuries of Greek recording and synthesizing, but were obviously handed down from a much older Egyptian tradition whose roots reach back to before recorded history. One discourse (Corpus Hermeticum VIII) compresses the essence into the title itself: "That not one of existing things doth perish, but men in error speak of their changes as destructions and as deaths."

Now if this is true of inanimate things, as indeed our modern science confirms, how much more true is it of the soul of man which, in the tradition of Hermes, is seen to be in perpetual pilgrimage, revolving on the wheel of transformation.

This is set forth clearly in "The Key" (Corpus Herm., X) where these changes of state are seen to be but chapters in an eternal story. Hermes is explaining to his disciple Tat how, in so-called "birth" the soul is not yet drawn down into the babe's body. But presently when the little body grows in bulk and draws down the soul, "then doth the soul cut itself off. (from the higher state) and bring upon itself forgetfulness, and no more shareth in the Beautiful and the Good."

Similarly with those who go out from the body in so-called "death":--

"For when the soul withdraws into itself, the spiritous (i.e. etheric) doth contract itself within the blood, and the soul within the spiritous. And then the Mind, stripped of its wrappings, and naturally divine, taking unto itself a fiery body, doth traverse every space, after abandoning the soul unto its judgment and whatever chastisement it hath deserved."

There are many other births and deaths spoken of. great ones as well as little ones, but always, what is death to one state is birth into, or the beginning of, the next state or condition in an almost endless series of progressions upward.

E.G.541f

*

There is no death of anyone, but only in appearance, even as there is no birth of any, save only in seeming. The change from being to becoming seems to be birth, and the change from becoming to being seems to be death, but in reality no one is ever born, nor does one ever die. It is simply being a visible and then invisible; the former thru density of matter, and the latter because of subtlety of being..."

from a letter written by Apollonius of Tyana, about 70 A.D., a wisdom-teacher of notable significance in esoteric history.

WHILE YOU SLEEP

We in our every day lives are too prone to consider Birth and Death literally with regard to the body only. But there are other experiences of daily life, - of sleep, which illustrate vividly another kind of birth and death.

The dictionary defines death as the extinction of life or feeling; and of birth as the coming to life. This gives us a broad background of contrast, and at the same time takes us out of that limited earth cycle of birth, growth, maturity and death, observable to all. It brings us out into other areas, where for instance the scientist works on birth and death in the problem of transforming energy and matter into other spheres; or in the work of the alchemist in transforming the energies of the self; or the mystic who labors for the death of the old self and the birth of the spirit.

Illustrations of such forms of death and birth are the three following records, experienced during the body's sleep when the psyche is better able to struggle toward the birth of greater stature:

Transformation through cleansing

A man had a little child about two years old. He left it with me while, from across the road, he threw a small object like a heart, upon the child. It covered the child with blood, but I bathed it and it became clean and lovely.

Experience of transition

I know I am dying and shall soon lose connection with the outside world. I am not afraid for I am certain I shall take my consciousness with me. Then I experience the swing over. My jaw becomes stiff and I can no longer speak. I sense this as the beginning of the death state and withdraw. I turn inward and upward, saying "Our Father..." in preparation for this next world..

Death and the new vision

An old man lay dying.....belonging to him was a garment which those near him feared to touch. But a wind came in and blew it away to a soul in a young body. The old man did not sense this as loss. He wore a radiant smile, and his half-closed eyes held a vision of something far distant as he murmured, half aloud.

"It is good to sit in measureless space and look down at the shadows on the awnings of earth."

"ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE"

by G. V. Hartman

Those who write for the stage these days are following the trend of science, physics, and the other Arts. They are tearing at the veil of the third dimension to see what might lie in that ever growing reality of the fourth; to express in whimsy or serious vein their ideas as to how we get into these other regions or dimensions, and what we are likely to do after we get there. The answers vary with the stature or imagination of the playwright.

A surprising number of the comparatively recent plays on the subject of death and birth deal with souls who are earthbound, and return to the scenes of their earth life, perhaps to right a wrong they have done, or to meet or help someone they have loved.

Of this company are THE RETURN OF PETER GRIMM, SMILIN' THRU, EARTHBOUND, and the recent OUR TOWN. Peter Grimm, in that poignant drama of some years ago, was finally able, with the aid of a sensitive child, to undo the harm his own self-will had wrought on the lives of those dear to him in earth. SMILIN' THROUGH tells of an affection strong enough to bridge the gap between life in the physical body and life thereafter, which unites two loves for periods, until the one in earth is freed to join the other in a more etheric existence. In OUR TOWN, a more modern treatment of the returning theme, a young wife returns from physical death to review certain events in her life.

The same idea has been effectively carried out in moving pictures, not only in SMILIN' THRU, but many others, of which there comes to mind THE SCOUNDREL, who comes back to seek for the kindness and tenderness he had never shown to others, but on which his hope of peace depends.

And TOPPER, an amusing and whimsical idea, in which the etheric nature of two of the characters and their ability to appear and disappear at will, brings about a series of interesting situations.

OUTWARD BOUND, another gripping play of recent years, seeks to convince us that each man's heaven, or next goal, is conditioned by his stature and living. And that we all sail toward it on a ship, that ancient symbol for the soul and its journeying. There is something of the same motif in DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY, where those who are blind and stupid are afraid of that which is beyond their experience to understand, and only the lovely spirit of a young girl sees the radiance and wonder of it all.

A different aspect of the tendency of the soul to revisit earth conditions, and one that has been extensively treated in other fields of literature, is the idea of reincarnation. In this connection many of us will remember THE LADDER, written and financed over a period of months by a man to whom this concept was a reality.

Another interesting venture, this time an experiment in time displacement, was BERKELEY SQUARE, which proceeded on the thesis that if past, present and future, are, why should it not be possible to get back into the condition of the past, relive its events, and change the course of the future?

But these are only skirmishes on the borders of other-dimensional life. As the Aquarian Age advances, men's minds will penetrate more deeply into those fourth dimensional areas. From these the scientist has already drawn fragments which touch our daily living with wonders. We accept them because they are brought to us, but of their real nature we know little.

Drama must have the courage to press into new areas. That this will take us into strange ways is to be expected but we shall also discover new truth and beauty.

DEATH

He is an old, old friend of mine
Whose gray eyes, slipping between me and love
sometimes,
Or meeting mine over the heads of the throng,
Remind me of days we have walked alone.
For this, I can never be drunken of love, or
achievement, or wealth;
And if I take him not so seriously as those
Who shiver at his step, it is because
We have our little jest together, Death and I.

E. G. Salt

LIVING

THE SCHOOL OF APPLIED PHILOSOPHY

118 East 76th Street New York, N.Y.

The main public lecture series to be given by the Director during the second half of the semester is "The Pertinence of Metaphysics Today", an informal inquiry into non-material phenomena, with the aid of physics, psychology, psychic research, mysticism, and Wisdom Teachings. It will begin on December 8th at 8:30 p.m. and continue on Thursday evenings, except during the holidays, till the end of January.

The object of this course is to supply the layman with a basis for understanding phenomena he has himself contacted, such as premonitions, occasional clairvoyance, automatic writing, inspiration, "creativity". He will have heard of healings (more numerous than is generally supposed) of prophecy, guidance and many other types of metaphysical phenomena.

On the other hand, there is also a wide range of objective metaphysical developments, such as the radio wave, remote control, traveling on a beam, colloids, cosmic rays, etc. These are related to the first type of phenomena. A new world of metaphysical activity is the world in which tomorrow will live. This course will in simple language open the doors of understanding to this world.

Friday Background Courses

The School has long emphasized the value and mental romance in gaining cultural backgrounds in philosophy and wisdom-lore. But the busy American has little time for extended courses, so the School long since inaugurated the short Friday series. In two Friday evenings, at an hour which interferes neither with the afternoon nor the evening, you can get the gist of an outstandingly important background under the skillful leadership of Mrs. Mayer.

A YOUNG TRAINEE WAS ASKED TO FORMULATE A CODE OF BEHAVIOR

To live consciously, so that you may know yourself.
To take inventory of the behavior of all your selves.
To be heedful of the use of your energies.
To develop true imagination.

The code for a trainee is to live according to a purpose and a pattern and order, by labor and with endurance. To such a code of living he must bring sincerity and the quality of steadfastness. This is to be undertaken under the leadership of a teacher, and development under it can be greatly aided by following the precepts of "Conscious Living".

In anticipation of Christmas she has chosen the "The Lost Sayings of Jesus"

The dates are December 2 and 9, and the hour 6:20 p.m. A symposium in the Commons, after an interval for dinner, will follow the second lecture.

An innovation this year is a season ticket for all four of the Friday series, touching on Christian, Greek, Hindoo and Folklore wisdom. Holders of such tickets will benefit by a large reduction from the fee for single lectures or single series.

Of the new Tuesday evening course "A New Type of Equipment for Living"

an observer has written, "This class is a master-stroke. I am too much of a teacher not to get a keen exhilaration at observing it..... it is a prototype.....and its form is perfect." The combination of Subjective Exercise for the development of the invisible man and instruction in philosophical questions seems to be meeting a variety of needs.

The Christmas Holiday at the School begins December 23, and classes resume on Tuesday, January 3. The Tree Lighting Ritual will be observed by the groups eligible at the time of the Winter Solstice.

Open House on January 1st has become an established custom. The hospitality and fellowship among the trainees and those interested in the School is something not to be missed.

Both the philosopher and the trainee have the same goal.

Illustration of trainee understanding some of the difficulties of the self:

My belligerence and critical attitude, were really directed at myself, because of an inner conflict.....By working for RIGHT COMPREHENSION both of myself and of the results of my faulty behavior I have succeeded in touching the fringes of that comprehension and have willed that I show and have less critical attitudes both of myself and others in the future.