

cism of the war spirit and its debasing effects, when, in harmony and peaceful competition with the most advanced nations of the old world, we shall resume our work in the interest of the higher civilization of mankind, then Paul Carus will be remembered as one of our pathfinders. No more befitting expression of the ideal of life which he upheld and which will assure Paul Carus a lasting memory in the coming era of human progress can be found than in the closing words of his little book *Whence and Whither*, an admirable summary of his philosophy:

“Life is in itself a boon only as an opportunity to perform a task, to accomplish a certain work, to actualize an ideal. The aim of life is its significance, and it alone establishes its dignity. By having an aim that is rooted in eternity, we need not mind the transiency of life. We can impart to life a significance that is beyond the intrinsic meaning of the moment, and, being the revelation of imperishable ideals, possesses a worth everlasting. The recognition of the spiritual background which transfigures our bodily life implies a lesson which is the quintessence of all religion.”

## THE IDEALS OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF PAUL CARUS.

(1852-1919.)

BY PHILIP E. B. JOURDAIN.

THE whole of the life-work of Paul Carus was a consistent and ceaseless following out of his ideals. It is quite easy to express in general terms what these ideals were: To accept nothing as true without a thorough critical examination, and to reject nothing as altogether false unless a sympathetic and careful search has failed to reveal a way that it might indicate to some truth or other. But such maxims, which would obviously be accepted at once by both thinking and unthinking people, have that character which makes them easy to profess and teach, but hard to follow. Indeed, it is in the actual application of these maxims to particular cases of what claims to be knowledge, that lies the true test of a philosopher. In our lives we meet a variety of propositions that may or

may not serve as bases for knowledge; we may believe or disbelieve that twice two are four, that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, that Christ was of divine origin and worked miracles, that Brutus murdered Julius Cæsar, that Bacon wrote Shakespeare, that a sea-serpent was once seen off Galveston, or that Theodore Roosevelt was twice president of the United States. If we take any one of these propositions and investigate its truth or falsehood as thoroughly as we can, it is quite possible that we run up against some cherished prejudice or other; and the prejudice may prevent us from grasping some truth which this proposition may indicate, either unambiguously or—if it is not strictly true—vaguely and, as it were, with a wavering finger. We know that it is extremely rare to find such ideals consistently worked out in every action of a man's life. Some men manage to divide their lives into public and private compartments, to profess belief or disbelief in certain things and not to show their beliefs in their lives. Such a man Paul Carus was not. Of him it may be said more truly than of most other philosophers and men of science that to live was both to express and to practise his ideals. Throughout a full and busy life he sought calmly and without rest the truth that might be expressed in any or all of the domains of thought and action, science and art.

Some of the incidents of his life illustrate that sturdy independence of thought that is so essential to the carrying out of these ideals. He was born at Ilsenburg in Germany on July 18, 1852. At the Gymnasium of Stettin he came under the influence of the great mathematician Hermann Grassmann, of whom he always spoke with affectionate respect. Later he studied at the universities of Strassburg and Tübingen. Owing to the need he felt so strongly for keeping his independence of thought, he resigned a teaching post in Germany and came first to England and then to America. Thus he was one of those seekers for intellectual freedom who traveled from East to West.

Fortunately he met in the United States a man strongly imbued with the noble ideals of encouraging independence of thought: for it was this that was necessary even approximately to realize the ideals of religion on a firm basis of science, a science of philosophy, and a philosophy of science. In 1887, Edward Carl Hegeler of La Salle, Illinois, founded a company to publish books and other literature with the object of establishing ethics and religion on a scientific basis. Since the end of 1887 up to the end of his life, Paul Carus was closely associated with the management and literary work of the Open Court Publishing Company. During that time

his ideals had free expression, and now they live though he is dead. Thus, there was a rapid growth in the number of his books, emphasizing, on the one hand, that what claimed to be sources of knowledge must be, as in mathematics or natural science, critically examined, and, on the other hand, his wide eagerness to discover fragments of the truth that may be glimpsed in poetry, art, or even in the myths and symbols of religions. It is instructive to compare Comte and Carus in one respect: Comte tried explicitly to found a religion on the basis of positive science alone; Carus saw clearly that no philosophy that hopes to be permanent can neglect history or put itself into uncritical opposition to the systems which have for centuries expressed some of the dearest and highest aspirations of mankind, and that it is not a merit to allow ignorance to blind the glimpses of truth that we sometimes get from prophets, poets, and priests of other religions and other philosophies.

In his refusal to admit uncriticized would-be "sources of knowledge" and in his wide interest in all branches of science, there was something in Carus that reminds one of Kant. Broadly speaking, Carus was a Kantian; but he was by no means an uncritical follower of Kant. He recognized quite clearly, for example, the intrusion of psychology into much of Kant's work on the theory of knowledge; he went far beyond Kant by emphasizing, perhaps before anybody else, that the essence of mathematics was, as he expressed it, that it deals with *anyness*, or, as the mathematicians express it, that it consists of implications between propositional *functions*. It seems to have been from Kant, and partly perhaps from Grassmann and certainly from his own psychological tendencies in the direction of visualizing numbers, that his beliefs grew that the science of space was fundamental in mathematics. Toward his own philosophical results Carus maintained a critical attitude; and one of the most frequent and characteristic utterances of his was that he had no wish to found a philosophy of his own, but only to contribute to the philosophy of science. He was not a maker of systems, as were Hegel and Spencer; he was a wide-minded and scientific thinker, as Hegel and Spencer were not.

It seems that, in those who really live in their works and ideals, it is impossible to separate the philosopher from the man. Everything human that struck one about Paul Carus,—his humorous and lovable personality, the affection with which he inspired us all—seemed to be knit up with the great ideals which he followed. These ideals indeed were his very life, and gave him much of his charm. A brave spirit and a true friend.