

The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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M.P.H. - THE GOLDEN JUBILEE

The year 1970 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Manly P. Hall's public career. He was born at St. Nicholas Hospital, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, on March 18, 1901, the only child of Dr. William S. Hall and Dr. Louise P. Hall (nee Palmer). He is of Scotch-English ancestry. Mr. Hall left Canada in 1905, and a few years later visited California for the first time and lived in San Diego. In 1911 he returned to the Eastern seaboard. He resided in Washington, D. C. and New York City until 1919, and then moved permanently to California, where he has resided ever since.

His first public lectures were given in Santa Monica, California, in the fall of 1920. A few months later he began speaking and teaching in Los Angeles, and his activities have continued without interruption for fifty years. In 1921 Mr. Hall became a guest speaker for The Forum of The Church of the People, which held its regular services in Blanchard Hall, named for one of the most respected citizens of the community. The Church of the People had been founded several years before by a liberal evangelist, the Rev. Benjamin Fay Mills. It was an influential church with a large and progressive attendance. Many of those who supported this church were conscientious objectors to orthodox theology. The patron saints of the group were such men as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry James, Edward Bellamy and Elbert Hubbard. While The Church of the People was expanding its activities, the Rev. Mills suddenly retired and returned to an orthodox denomination to which he had originally belonged. In this emergency the Church was fortunate in securing as its second leader Mr. Reynold E. Blight, a prominent C.P.A., who was also very active in Masonic educational programs. Mr. Blight was well liked and things ran smoothly until some complicated situations developed in his personal affairs. He asked for a leave of absence, and Mr. Hall was installed as temporary pastor in 1922. A year later, Mr. Blight formally resigned, and Mr. Hall inherited a highly individualistic congregation. At an early age, therefore, his advice was sought on almost every problem that could arise in human relationships. Under Mr. Hall's leadership, The Church of the People gradually shifted from its emphasis upon social problems to comparative religion, classical philosophy and psychology of the type taught by William James of Harvard.



On the day before his 22nd birthday, Manly P. Hall was ordained into the ministry. At about the same time, his congregation presented him with a cross of gold, jewels and enamel, which he is shown wearing in the accompanying picture. During this period he also extended his lecturing activities to San Francisco and San Diego, published several booklets and his first book The Initiates of the Flame. He also drew the small figures that illustrate the text.

In the fall of 1923, he made a trip around the world, visiting most of the countries of Asia and Europe. He reached Japan soon after the Great Earthquake, crossed over to Korea and then stayed briefly in Mukden and Peking. He then went on to Rangoon, Burma, and arrived in Calcutta, India, at the time when Mohandas Gandhi was released from prison after one of his early hunger strikes. The synopsis of Mr. Hall's talk in the Albert Theatre, Calcutta, appears in the fall issue of the P.R.S. Journal. He returned to the United States by way of New York in the spring of 1924.

By this time the foundation upon which the career of Manly P. Hall was built had already been firmly established. In addition to his ministerial work, he had done considerable writing, had spoken on the major Los Angeles Radio Stations, and had begun the publication of a magazine. The hobbies, which played an important part in his career, were also developing rapidly. He had been a stamp collector from boyhood and later specialized upon the postal history of the philosophic empires such as Greece, India, China and Japan. He began assembling a library before his 21st birthday, into which he gathered a most discriminating collection of manuscripts and early printed works. The extent of his library in 1928 is indicated by the bibliography in his Encyclopedic Book. Ninety percent of this reference material was in his own personal collection. He took time to delve into the mysteries of Oriental art and had collected a number of fine examples of Chinese and Japanese ceramics before he was twenty years old. Some of his projects did not advance too rapidly, and the pressures and responsibilities which he carried made it difficult to continue his study of the theories of musical harmony, painting and sculpturing. Although he could not advance all these purposes, he felt that each contributed something to the meaning of a well-balanced life.

From 1921 to 1928 his principal endeavor was the publication of his large book on Symbolical Philosophy. The story of this book, as compiled by an old friend, is also in the fall issue of the Journal. The book was designed by John Henry Nash, the outstanding typographer of his time, and printer to the Vatican. The actual printing was done by one of California's most distinguished firms, the H. S. Crocker Company of San Francisco. The writing was arranged so that every chapter contained the same number of lines. The editorial revision was the work of Dr. Rawlinson. Up to the present time only one typographical error has been found, and it was discovered by William Randolph Hurst. The first edition of this book was completely

sold out before it was off the press. After the completion of this volume, Mr. Hall began a program of lecture campaigns that carried him to most of the larger cities of the United States. He has spoken in twenty-eight communities in California and in over thirty of the major cities of the nation. He visited Chicago and New York annually for a number of years, and in New York spoke to capacity audiences at both Town Hall and Carnegie Hall. These trips also enabled him to study in a number of reference libraries, where he carried on special research projects.

In the late spring of 1931, Mr. Hall visited the Mayan ruins on the Peninsula of Yucatan. Arriving at the Port of Progreso, he proceeded to Merada and spent some time in the ruins of Uxmal and Chi-Chin Itza. He then went to Mexico City and made short trips to most of the Toltec and Aztec archeological sites in that vicinity.

In October 1933 he attended the World Fellowship of Faiths, which was held simultaneously with the Chicago World's Fair. The Fellowship of Faiths was under the patronage of His Highness, The Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda, and on this occasion Mr. Hall renewed several friendships, including Dr. Preston Bradley, Sir Francis Younghusband, Mr. Kedarnath Das Gupta, and Mr. Charles Frederick Weller. All of these dedicated men were striving to advance the cause of world peace and build bridges of understanding across chasms of prejudice. On September 17th Mr. Hall addressed the World Fellowship of Faiths on the principal theme of their meetings.

In April 1934, Messrs. Sotheby & Company, the world famous auctioneers of London, disposed of the extensive and important library of early books and manuscripts on alchemy and other esoteric fields, which were the property of M. Lionel Hauser. It was through agents that Mr. Hall secured the original manuscript of Comte de St.-Germain and other valuable items, from this sale. He was lecturing in New York late in the fall of 1934, and it seemed a good opportunity to visit England and France to secure additional material from the Hauser sale. While in London, Mr. Hall's sponsor at the British Museum was Sir Francis Younghusband. Later, while visiting Paris, many other items previously in the Sotheby sale were acquired.

In 1934 The Philosophical Research Society was incorporated as a non-profit educational institution, with charitable and religious privileges. About two years later the property at Los Feliz and Griffith Park Boulevards was acquired and the first unit of the Society's Headquarters was built. In 1950 construction was continued, and in 1959 the Auditorium was completed. The Library was extended and other necessary space was provided in 1967.



MANLY P. HALL
PROGRAM

FALL 1923

In 1940 Mr. Hall was the speaker for Greek Day at the World's Fair in New York City. On that occasion his subject was "The Contribution of Classical Greek Philosophy to the Life of Modern Man." In the course of the lecture special attention was called to the important work of the distinguished translator of Greek and Latin Classics, Mr. Thomas Taylor. The Ecumenical Patriarch, Athanasios I, now the head of the Greek Orthodox Church throughout the world, took a great interest in Mr. Hall's work and attended many of his New York lectures. As a result of Mr. Hall's activities at the World's Fair, he received a Special Award of Merit. In those days also, many pleasant evenings were spent in the penthouse of the Roerich Institute on Riverside Drive. Among those who attended were the novelist, Mr. Talbert Munday, the architect Mr. Claude Bragdon, and the painter Mr. Sviatoslav Roerich.

During the years of World War II, foreign travel was almost impossible, and even local transportation was largely involved in the defense effort. During this time Mr. Hall advanced his writing program and brought the number of his published works to more than one hundred. He also wrote regularly for the Quarterly Journal of the Society. By 1960 it became obvious that major social changes were taking place in both the United States and the world. The activities of the P.R.S. expanded rapidly and the demand for literature more than doubled. To meet this growth, attention was directed largely to the accomplishment of one of Mr. Hall's earliest ambitions, the creation of a center of essential learning in the Western world. It was to be patterned after the classical concept of education, free from religious sectarian involvement, scientific academic restriction, and arbitrary philosophical allegiance, in an appropriate atmosphere of dedication to the good of all mankind, those seeking inspiration and enlightenment could assemble without formal membership of any kind.

In 1964 Mr. Hall made his first major trip out of the United States in nearly thirty years. Combining a vacation with the challenge of further growth of insight, he went to Japan to advance his knowledge of Eastern philosophy. He first wrote on Buddhism in 1922, both in his magazine and in a little booklet entitled "Buddha The Divine Wanderer." When he first visited Asia in 1923, Mr. Hall took nearly five hundred photographs, and continued this project in his recent trips. He has visited Japan four times in the last six years, and his travel program for 1970 includes a visit to Oberammergau to attend the celebrated Passion Play.

There is still much to be done and Mr. Hall still maintains the activities which he began half a century ago. He is planning new ways of increasing the influence of the P.R.S. in the present world crisis. There are more books to be written, more lectures and classes to be given, new research projects to be advanced, and much careful planning to make the best possible use of our facilities, through the years that lie ahead. We feel that it is right and proper therefore to express special congratulations and appreciation to Mr. Hall for what he has accomplished in the first fifty years.

Very sincerely yours,

THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

