

# THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

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CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN

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Dear Friends,



We frequently receive letters asking our advice on such subjects as genuine metaphysical organizations or recent publications expounding esoteric teachings and disciplines. The present social pressures are causing more people to seek religious consolation and support. As a nonaligned organization, we have no memberships and prescribe no metaphysical disciplines. We are therefore seeking to

equip thoughtful persons with the means of estimating the claims of contemporary groups and sects. In order to determine the relative merits of various religious societies, each individual needs a solid foundation in religious and philosophical principles.

We know a number of cases in which the truth seeker has no way of evaluating the beliefs which he is invited to accept. There is no area of human thought which is strengthened by ignorance. Judgment must be disciplined in some way or wrong decisions are inevitable. While our organization does not and cannot endorse any religious movement, it holds in respect and esteem all sincere systems of instruction. All we can hope to do is to discipline discrimination.

In the last five thousand years, many great spiritual revelations have been bestowed upon mankind. The founders of the world religions are recognized and revered among all civilized people. Honored philosophers and mystics have helped to preserve the basic values of mankind. Art, music, literature, and science have their codes and convictions; and long ago the oral teachings have been preserved in written and, later, printed form. Today, we are the beneficiaries of a vast heritage of wisdom and insight.

Only a small minority is now taking advantage of the accumulated experience which has descended to us from the past. Young people are not inclined to ponder the ethical and moral teachings of the ancients. It seems more exciting to become involved in the confusion and conflict of mundane living. As Lord Bacon pointed out, the tendency is to bow down and worship the idols of the marketplace. These include wealthy neighbors, prosperous careers, and at least a moderate amount of dissipation. Later in life when the mature person experiences the need for the consolations of faith, he has

very few inner resources which bestow inspiration or insight. Many of the most important decisions of advancing years are based upon nothing more substantial than urgency of need.

Some highly contemporary thinkers have accused us of simply perpetuating opinions of antiquity. We should forget the past and cultivate a lifeway of purposeless activity. What we really want to do, if possible, is to build a solid foundation under the ideals of the human race. Comparative religion helps us to know the sources of knowledge and learning. It gradually becomes apparent that all the world religions have taught the importance of personal integrity. The good life accepts the Golden Rule, or what Immanuel Kant calls "the categorical imperative." Kant asks the simple question, "If everyone in the world acted exactly as you do, would we all be happy?"

The PRS has assembled an adequate research library by which those alive today can profit with the essential learning of the past. Those honestly seeking self-improvement will find useful ideas by which they can ennoble any art, trade, or profession to which they belong, and correct such points of view as may block the natural unfoldment of the inner life. All legitimate faiths require that their followers practice the simple daily virtues before they can advance to higher teaching. If the improvement of conduct is not stressed as the first requirement of membership, the thoughtful person should be on his guard.

No legitimate teaching of the past or present should promise that it can bypass any divine or natural law. Each person must work out his own salvation with diligence according to the last teaching given by Buddha. There is no place for ambition in the way of heaven. We do not escape burdens, but we learn to carry them with courage, dignity, and understanding. We reduce, so far as we can, such worldly goods as requires constant attention or prevents the enlargement of the spiritual graces. Anyone who becomes proud of his spiritual accomplishments is already in deep trouble.

As we study the lives of truly dedicated men and women, we know it to be an eternal truth that the greatest among us are the servants of all. To the degree that organizations are free of inner conflicts and set examples of kindly and gentle relationships, they prove the qualities of their leaderships and memberships.

Thus, if we truly protect ourselves from our own negative psychological involvements, we can estimate the teachings of various religious groups. If we are really honest, we cannot be deceived, and if we are deceived there are ulterior motives lurking somewhere within ourselves.

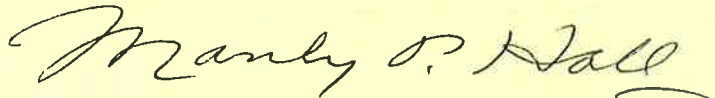
In the Egyptian ritual of the weighing of the soul, the character of the deceased was weighed against the feather of truth which was the symbol of the goddess Maat. The jurors of the dead listened attentively to the negative confession of faith. Each clause began with the words, "I have not." One scholar who had given much

time to the Egyptian ritual noted that it would be almost impossible for any modern person to pass this examination. In the Egyptian rites there was no emphasis upon intellectual attainments or worldly prominence.

A school worthy of public confidence should be free of all intolerances. It should recognize the universality of truth. If it is critical of other organizations in its own field and lacks charity and patience, such symptoms should be carefully considered before any religious commitments are made. Do not be afraid to ask questions which you think are important. If the questions are direct and sincere, they should be answered in the same way. Be especially cautious in the matter of taking mystical vows or obligations. The first obligation must be to God and truth and not to the leader of an organization or the code which it promulgates. No obligation should be taken in any way until the student has had a reasonable acquaintance with the workings of the organization and the qualities of its leadership. Common sense is our first line of defense. A sect may be useful to one person and not to another, and it is far wiser and safer to journey alone than to become involved in conflicts of belief.

Younger persons will do well to take a course on comparative religion at some qualified college or university. While it is necessary to prepare for a career in the modern world, it would also be good to have some concept of the sacred teachings that are still respected and practiced by two-thirds of the population of the earth. Quiet reading in your own home can help you to understand the major unities and minor diversities of human believing. In any event, make no hasty decisions and always listen to the small quiet voice within yourself. If something does not seem to be right, do not neglect such warnings. While thinking things through, you may use spare time for labors of benevolence. Many organizations serving the common needs of the community depend upon voluntary assistance. Such activities may give you a more intimate knowledge of human needs. The wiser course is always to join an organization for what you can give to it and not for what it can give to you. Religion is not an escape but an acceptance of responsibility. If you can find some school of belief which you can honestly accept, this is a good time to proclaim allegiance to the Divine Plan--stand and be counted. If you do make a mistake, recognize it as soon as possible and step out without regret.

Most sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Manly P. Hall". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

MANLY P. HALL



PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

## PRS LIBRARY BOOK SALE

March 10, Saturday / 9:30 A.M.-4:00 P.M.  
March 11, Sunday / 9:30 A.M.-2:00 P.M.

This sale presents an opportunity to dispose of surplus books which could be helpful to others.

Manly P. Hall personally goes through all the books that come in for the Book Sale. Some are saved for the PRS Library, some will be sold, and some interesting duplications will be put up for auction. We have a copy of *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* from the original printings of 1928 in excellent condition. Mail order bids may be submitted. The retail price on this volume, when available, is approximately \$750.

This is our one sale of the year and every cent is used for the Philosophical Research Society-- in the library, the auditorium, or for helping to defray expenses in the landscaping of the premises.

We are asking for your help. At the same time, you may very well be helping yourself to clear space for other things--like more books from the March Book Sale.

Bring books at any time. Contact Pearl Thomas for further information at 663-2167.