PAUL CARUS MEMORIAL NUMBER

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER.

VOL. XXXIII (No. 9) SEPTEMBER, 1919 NO. 760

CONTENTS:

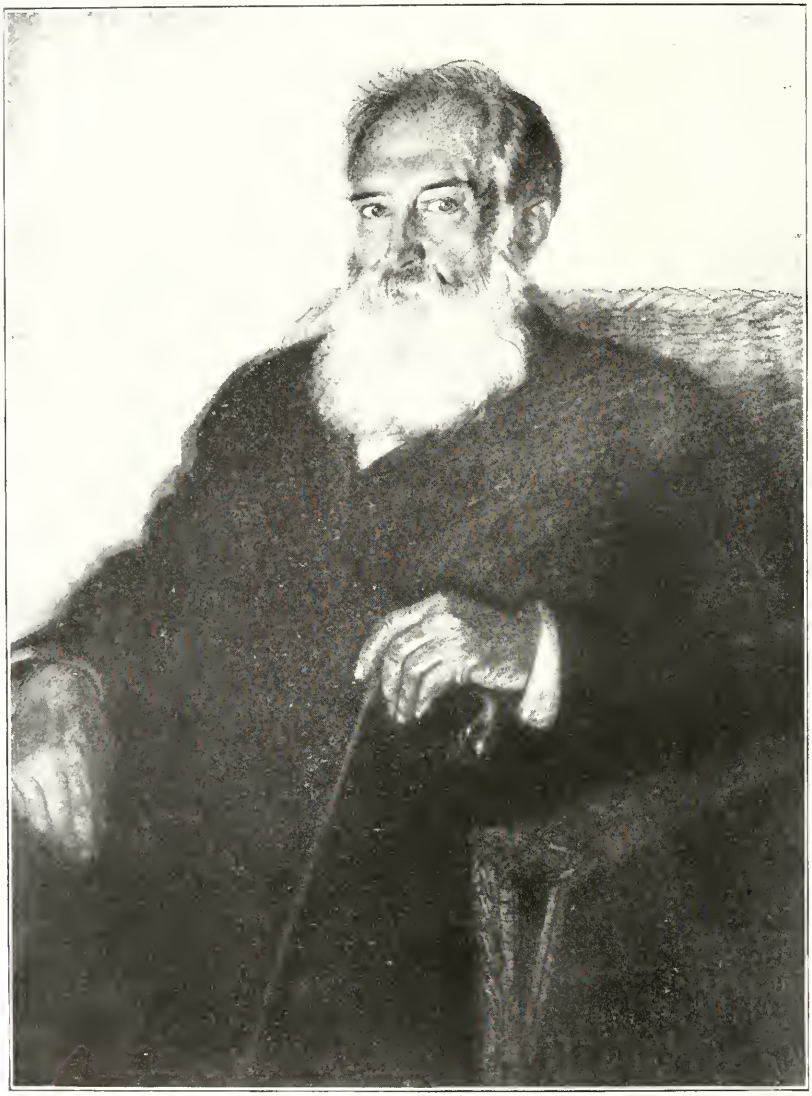
The Open Court Publishing Company

122 S. Michigan Ave. Chicago, Illinois

Per copy, 10 cents (sixpence). Yearly, $1.00 (in the U.P.U., 5s. 6d.).

Entered as Second-Class Matter March 26, 1897, at the Post Office at Chicago, Ill., under Act of March 3, 1879

Copyright by The Open Court Publishing Company, 1919.



PAUL CARUS

(From a portrait by E. Winold Reiss)

Frontispiece to The Open Court.

THE OPEN COURT

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea.

VOL. XXXIII (No. 9) SEPTEMBER 1919 NO. 760

Copyright by The Open Court Publishing Company, 1919.

PAUL CARUS.

BY JULIUS GOEBEL.

THE death of Paul Carus, which was announced in the March number of *The Open Court*, has meant not only a sad bereavement to his family and his immediate friends, but also an irretrievable loss to all those who had felt the influence of his powerful mind, his upright character, and his lovable personality. Despite the lingering illness which slowly sapped his strength, but which he bore with patience and fortitude, he continued his indefatigable work in the interest of his fellow-men almost to the last, faithful to the ideals to which he had devoted his life.

Descending from a family of distinguished scholars, Dr. Carus was born in 1852 at Ilsenburg am Harz where his father, who later rose to the high ecclesiastical office of First Superintendent General of the Church of Eastern and Western Prussia, was then pastor. He received his early and thorough training in the classics and in mathematics at the Gymnasia of Posen and Stettin and afterward studied philosophy, classical philology, and the natural sciences at the universities of Greifswald, Strassburg, and Tübingen where in 1876 he received the degree of Ph. D. Having successfully passed the examination for state service, he was appointed teacher in the military academy of Dresden, but his liberal views soon brought him into conflict with the autocratic authorities. He tendered his resignation and turned to America where in the atmosphere of freedom he hoped to find the opportunity for the development and realization of the ideals which filled his mind and heart. His expectations were more than fulfilled when in 1887 he was called to the editorship of *The Open Court* and afterward to that of *The Monist*, the two periodicals which owe their existence to the pro-

found scientific and religious interests and to the generosity of Edward C. Hegeler. In this position and as author of numerous scientific and literary works he generously repaid the hospitality of the country that had received him as one of its future citizens.

In a remarkable address on "Some Practical Influences of German Thought Upon the United States," delivered before the German Society of New York on the occasion of its centennial thirty-five years ago, Andrew D. White made the statement that "every one who has given even superficial attention to the history of the United States must acknowledge that the Germans have taken the most honorable part in our national development so far." At present the unprejudiced student of history will admit that the influence of German thought emanating from the leaders of each successive generation of German newcomers constituted one of the important factors in the shaping of our intellectual, social, and political life. The rise of the transcendentalism in which the American mind found its first self-expression, is closely connected with Karl Follen, the first interpreter of Kant's philosophy in this country, the advocate of religious freedom, and the early champion of the anti-slavery cause. Again in the great struggle for freedom against slavery such men as Franz Lieber, Carl Schurz, Karl Heinzen, and numerous less distinguished leaders of political thought rendered invaluable service to the preservation of our national unity.

Among the scholars of German descent who during recent decades, the period of greatest intellectual growth and achievement in our history, contributed the best of their intellect, their character, and their training to the development of higher American civilization, Paul Carus takes one of the foremost places. That it was in the realm of philosophy, ethics, and religion where his exceptional talents were to leave their permanent mark seemed predetermined by his early development and preparation. Several collections of poems published before he came to this country show us the young truthseeker who had lost the faith of childhood days in the traditional dogmatism of the Church, in the violent struggles of religious doubts and anxiously looking for guidance to the light of reason. The philosophical treatises which he published at that time and which finally cost him his official position, give evidence not only of the profundity and penetration of his mind but also of the seriousness with which he strove toward the attainment of a philosophy which would be not a mere system or theory of knowledge but which would embrace ethics and religion as well.

The period in which Paul Carus received his university training marks the lowest ebb of philosophical thought and interest in Germany during the nineteenth century. It is the period of reaction against the idealistic systems of previous decades, the time of the early triumphs of the natural sciences which seemed to leave room only for the pessimistic or the materialistic view in matters philosophical. It is significant that Carus was not affected by either of these views but rather felt drawn to a movement which then began gradually to gain ground with the slogan "back to Kant." While this movement in its early stages resulted in the attitude of agnosticism or in hairsplitting disquisitions on the theory of cognition, Carus seems to have been one of the first to recognize that to go back to Kant meant to go beyond him. Not, of course, in the way of the new realists who, for obvious reasons, pursue the policy of the ostrich by dodging the inevitable critical problem, or according to the puerile method of those who think that the disparagement of Kant means his refutation.

At the time of Paul Carus's arrival in America the interest in philosophy as a domain independent of the guardianship of the Church was little developed in this country. The study of Kant, which had inaugurated the transcendental movement, had more or less ceased with the passing of this movement. Its place was taken by the Scotch realism of Reid and W. Hamilton which Witherspoon and McCosh, its chief interpreters, skilfully employed to fortify the doctrines of Presbyterian orthodoxy. There were in the seventies and early eighties a number of men who, while studying in Germany, had come in contact with the Kantian revival; but their influence, confined to isolated and small academic circles, was of little consequence. Few American universities had at that time philosophical departments worthy of the name.

It is without question due in a large measure to the enthusiasm and indefatigable zeal of Paul Carus that gradually, during the last twenty-five years, an understanding for the deeper questions of philosophy and religious thought has been awakened in wider circles of the nation. And it is both fascinating and instructive to follow the growth of the ideas which constitute the message of his educational mission.

The careful reader will discover even in Carus's first philosophical essays his earnest attempt to solve two of the most troublesome problems of modern thought: the dualism contained in Kant's philosophy, and the resulting conflict between knowledge and belief. It is, however, chiefly in two books written in the full vigor of his

early manhood that Carus boldly attacked these problems and laid the foundation of his philosophy which he subsequently expanded in numerous works. The titles of these books are: *Fundamental Problems, the Method of Philosophy as a Systematic Arrangement of Knowledge*, 1889; and *The Soul of Man, an Investigation of the Facts of Physiological and Experimental Psychology*, 1891.

Carus himself has repeatedly emphasized the fact that his conception of "form" constitutes the central idea of his philosophy. By a new and more precise formulation of this conception he hopes to approach Kant's unknowable "thing in itself," to bridge the chasm between object and subject, and to arrive at a monistic contemplation of the world which would exclude the traditional dualism of most philosophies and produce a union of philosophy and religion.

Carus takes his chief argument against the unknowability of the thing in itself from modern mathematics, especially from the theory of space as developed by H. Grassmann. According to this thinker the traditional axioms have no place in mathematics, instead of them the "theory of forms in general" should precede all special branches of mathematics. Accepting this "theory of forms in general" Carus says: "We can generalize the concept space and consider the line as a space of one dimension, the plane as a space of two dimensions, and actual space as a space of three dimensions. It is impossible to form any intuitive conception of a space of four and, still less, of more than four dimensions. Nevertheless we can abstract from dimensions altogether and conceive of such absolute space as 'Form, pure and simple.' In doing so, we can lay down the laws which are equally valid for all kinds of spaces, whether of three, or four, of *n* dimensions."

Grassmann's theory of "forms in general" throws a new light upon Kant's doctrine of the *a priori* in Carus's opinion, because "it exhibits a science of pure form in its most generalized abstractness. Thus the *a priori* has lost the last vestige of mystery, and we can easily understand how the cosmical order is due to the formal laws of nature. While Kant's reasoning has been correct in the main, it is apparent that real space is not quite so purely formal as he imagined. A system of form of the third degree (three dimensions) can be posited *a priori* by formal thought; but the fact that real space is such a system of the third degree can be ascertained by experience only."

The full significance of the new interpretation which Carus gives to "form" becomes apparent if we remember that in his opinion the formal laws of nature and the formal laws of thought are iden-

tical inasmuch as consistency, the primary attribute of form, applies to both. In fact, it may be said that it is form in which, according to Carus, the material and the spiritual meet and unite. One of the chief arguments for this assertion he finds in the nature of memory, which he defines as nothing more or less than the psychical aspect of the preservation of form in living substance. The impression which the sensations leave behind them could neither be preserved nor reproduced if the organs did not retain their form despite the continuous change which is going on in the nervous substance. Memory, which rests on organized substance, can therefore be described as a process going on in tridimensional space, of which form is a part and as such subject to decay in death. This decay of form, however, is of no consequence to the whole of humanity since the achievements of the memory of the individual will be utilized by those who survive, and the growth of human knowledge and of higher civilization is thus made possible.

The preservation of form as such, despite the decay of the individual form, seems to justify Carus in his assumption that form is the real essence of things and that the latter, therefore, are not mere phenomena, as in Kant's philosophy, but possess reality which we can know. Defining the soul as the *form of an organism* he holds that "the 'soul of a thing' is the formative principle which gave and still gives shape to it so as to make it the thing it is. The laws that rule the changes and formations of the world are not material things, yet they are realities nevertheless. When we call them realities we do not mean that they are entities which exist of themselves, nor are they mysterious powers outside of or behind things. They are *in* the things and are part of the things; and it is through the mental process of abstraction that we acquire an insight into them."

Having arrived at his monistic view of the soul as a knowable reality, Carus inquires into the ultimate source of the formative principle and finds it in God, "the highest reality in the world." "Taking this view," he says, "of the importance of form and using the word soul to signify the formative factors of the various forms and their relations that have been evolved and constantly are evolving; we are naturally led to the conception of a soul of the universe. The soul of the universe we call God."

To be sure his conception of God as the law that shaped and is still shaping the world, that is forming and ever re-forming, evolving and ever re-evolving the universe; as the light of mentality that flashes up in consciousness and finds its divinest expression

in the clear thought of articulate speech; as the moral law that binds human society and leads it to ever grander ideals, to always higher goals and aspirations; as the *sursum* that everywhere animates nature, the upward and forward tendency that manifests itself in the natural growth of things and in the progress of evolution—is not the God of religious dogmatists, nor of pantheists, nor of such scientists as know only "blind" Law and Force. Nevertheless, Carus feels himself entitled to speak of God in terms of traditional religious belief. In his book *God* he makes the eloquent plea that the purer conception of God which he claims to have attained "loses nothing of the definiteness and personality of the old God-conception. A surrender of the letter does not imply a surrender of the spirit that God is our Father, our Lord, our Judge, our Comforter, our Savior, the prototype of the incarnated Christ-ideal, the Way, the Truth, and the Light."

Whether the conception of God as the "Allhood of existence," "the superreal and superpersonal world-order and law," a conception which is the result of abstract thought, will satisfy the innermost craving of the human heart is a question to which religious experience alone can give the final answer. That Carus himself embraced his scientific and philosophical idea of God with the mystic fervor of deep religious feeling there can be no question. Being essentially a religious nature, he had no interest, as he repeatedly said, in erecting the structure of a new philosophic system, but all his efforts were directed toward ethical and religious reform. A beautiful passage in his book *God* gives us a glimpse of his religious experiences and his attitude toward religious truth: "In his personal development the author of this book has successfully passed through all the stages of belief, and can therefore appreciate the arguments proffered from all sides. He knows from his own experience and still cherishes the sacred God-ward longings of a childlike mind, and at the same time he is conscious of the truth that lies in the negations of atheism. But having regained a positive attitude through formulating in affirmative terms the truth of the negations to which his conscientious doubts led him, he can now better understand the religious aspirations of his childhood and has ceased to look upon the imperfections of creeds as absolute errors."

It is from the standpoint of the broad tolerance, the sympathetic humanity, and the profound religious spirit exhibited in these lines that we can best understand the many-sided activity of Paul Carus during the latter half of his life. The monistic view of the world to which he had attained through arduous study, incessant thinking, and

long inner struggles, had become to him a religious message which he was indefatigable in proclaiming to his fellow-men in numerous publications. His favorite idea of the interrelation of science and religion finds expression in the subtitle of this Journal: "A Magazine Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea."

His zealous attempt to mediate between knowledge and belief, science and religion, had its counterpart in his efforts to bring about an understanding between the enlightened representatives of the great religious world. As Leibniz had cherished the dream of uniting the various Christian denominations into one universal Church, so Carus entertained the hope of the ultimate triumph of one religion, the Religion of Truth. "Mankind," he says in the Preface to his book *Buddhism and Its Christian Critics*, "is destined to have one religion, as well as one moral ideal and one universal language, and the decision as to which religion will at last be universally accepted cannot come about by accident. Science will spread, may-be, slowly but unfailingly, and the universal acceptance of a scientific world conception bodes the dawn of the Religion of Truth." To hasten the coming of this day he translated and interpreted with incredible toil and industry the *Gospel of Buddha* and the *Tao Teh King* of Lao-tze, the Chinese philosopher, of which the former was again translated into many languages and is used at present in the Buddhist schools and temples of Japan and Ceylon. What attracted him in these religious documents above all seems to have been their rationalistic character so closely related to his own mental make-up.

To the end of his life Paul Carus remained faithful to his convictions of the objectivity and eternity of truth. Gratefully conscious of the debt which he owed to Kant, he valiantly defended the basic truths of Kant's philosophy,—of which, as we have seen, he was no blind follower,—against the sophistry of pragmatism as well as against the anti-moralism of Nietzsche and the sentimental intuitivism of Bergson. At the same time we may notice in his polemics, especially in his book on Nietzsche, a strain of deep despondency and disillusionment. Where he expected that with all the wonderful successes and triumphs of scientific invention this age of science would find its consummation in the adoption of a philosophy of science, he saw himself confronted at the close of his life with retrograde movements in philosophy, subjectivistic movements which questioned the very foundations of truth as he saw them.

Fortunately a kind fate spared him from witnessing the recent supreme vindication of the philosophy of the "relativity of truth" when solemn pledges were wantonly broken, the traditional conceptions of honor and conscience were thrown to the winds, and under the guise of expediency and utility, hypocrisy and deceit were sanctified, while the disillusionment following in the wake of this performance killed the last germs of idealistic hopes and aspirations in millions of young souls.

Nothing was more abhorrent to Paul Carus than the type of individual who hides his want of principle and lack of character behind professions of sublime idealism, or seeks to justify his crippled moral nature by convenient catchwords which the philosophies of subjectivism have always furnished in abundance. Paul Carus belonged to a generation which exemplified the power of German idealism to build strong and sterling characters and belied the foolish attempts of certain philosophasters to fasten the guilt of the recent world catastrophe upon the Kantian view of the world. A staunch believer in the inexorable demands of reason and of the moral law, he was far from being a moral rigorist, but a teacher of deepest insight into human nature, full of sympathy for its weaknesses and frailties. As a scholar of comprehensive knowledge in many fields he had little patience with the arrogance of academic "specialists" and their conception of science as a huge factory in which the single workman is permitted to produce but one piece of the machinery of knowledge. At the same time his humility of spirit, his kindness and helpfulness won him countless friends in many lands and in all walks of life.

Having been a victim of the autocracy of his native country, his liberty-loving soul embraced the hospitable land which had given him shelter and the opportunity to develop his talents with all the gratitude and patriotism of which it was capable, but he resented the inhuman demand to hate his kin, remembering the Biblical malediction: "And he that curseth his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death." His reverence for the founders of our Republic and its Constitution knew no bounds, hence he looked with grave patriotic misgivings upon the machinations of certain selfish politicians who were frivolously playing with the destiny of our nation as marked out by its founders.

The lifework of men like Paul Carus devoted to the service of mankind and its imperishable values will not end with the close of his career. The immortality in which he firmly believed will certainly be his. When America shall have recovered from the fanati-

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