How A Philosopher Thinks

The word "philosophy" is one that an advertising man will steer clear of; one of them said to me not long ago, "Never use it if you are trying to sell anything; philosophy is too ponderous a word. It makes people think of a college campus and a professor wandering about in clouds of abstract reflection. Or, it conveys the idea of ponderous implications and a battle of notions."

If many people are afraid of the word it is because they do not really understand what it means; it has been too broadly applied to their own system of thinking, or the thinking of some friend or popular writer. The word originated with Pythagoras, about 550 B. C., and is derived from two ancient Greek words, phil and sophia, meaning the "love of Truth," or "friendship with Truth." Pythagoras, a modest man, did not like the prevailing term for the learned, which was Sophist. The word implies "knowledge;" sophist means "the wise"; and Pythagoras, called a Sophist, knew within himself he was not truly sufficiently learned to be actually termed wise, or possessing Wisdom; so he devised the new term, "philosophy," as a designation for a lover of Truth, or Truth searcher. In the course of centuries philosophy has been the term applied to numerous complicated systems of thinking, to the pondering of Goethe, Kant, Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and so on; and in its present accepted meaning, the term applies, for in its old Greek meaning the word philosophy simply signified any system of human thinking which is attempting to solve something and to come nearer to the truth of things. It is not a dogmatic term to indicate that Truth has been achieved, but that Truth is being sought after.

Up to the present time no complete system of knowledge, true in all its aspects, has been discovered. The systems are not perfect, but in them is a sincerity in the searching after Realities by the best we know about the substance of that which we desire to know. We can define thus the philosophical systems of our time.

The world is filled with groups of people, each particularly interested in some specialized line of personal endeavor. If you get up very early in the morning in the proper season and go off into the mountains somewhere, you
world leader would feel over the delin­uencies of Adolph Hitler. In medicine we have the curious circumstance that it is very unfortunate for a doctor to get sick; the average physician has had suf­ficient experience in his world of medi­cine to be afraid of his own kind. And, unfortunately, he has studied the ail­ment he now has, which is a great de­triment to his recovery; against the ref­erence frame of his own knowledge he becomes very unhappy.

As Plato observed in the distant past, the average person never gets out of his own reference frame, for the reason he cannot live long enough in one life. Because of economic considerations he cannot sufficiently depart from that ref­erence frame. Very often your reference frame and mine is closely related to our business or profession. To make a liv­ing we have to stay within it. This ref­erence frame thus becomes the basis of an effort to interpret the world and everyone in it through a series of per­sonal experiences within our particular reference frame. These experiences could furnish an adequate viewpoint if scattered over a variety of conditions; if for example, our business ex­perience had been in China, India, Per­sia, Greece, France, Russia, and the United States; our experience then might be tremendously significant; but our business experience is usually entirely limited to waiting on the folks in a corner store in Peculiar, Missouri.

Politically, this country believed it to be a virtue to have nothing to do with the policies of other people. We got into this present war with no reference frame outside our own boundaries. If the average individual is utterly incapable of an adequate international viewpoint—and he is—it is because he has never tried to develop one. Plato real­ized this great limitation as the result of the conspiracy of civilization. Thus today's average person would travel around the world if he could, but he cannot; he would be a historianalist if he could, but he cannot; he would like to study a dozen arts and sciences and master them; but he must stay with his job of bookkeeping or he does not eat. In consequence, necessity binds him to the reference frame of his own experience.

Regardless of the level of that experi­ence, it is not sufficient, is not enough to assure the security of the individual, or the progress of his common collec­tive kind. In this international crisis to­day we are trying desperately to de­velop internationalism. This international­ism urge is to policy, is to the theory of government, exactly what philosophy is to the theory of thinking. Philosophy is a kind of international method of thinking about the world of ideas. It is the international viewpoint as op­posed to the peculiarly local viewpoint, a viewpoint that is built up by a series of personal experiences within a narrow reference frame.

We now have the answer in large measure to the problem of philosophy, but in practice philosophy has fallen into difficulty; it is because any system of ideas engenders a conflict between the idea and the physical limitation of the individual who is trying to work with that idea. That is why in many cases philosophical systems have been built up without philosophical procedure. A good example of that is instanced in what we call the Patristic school of the early church. The patristic philosophy, the great school of post-Nicene Fathers, which came to its highest form of flowering in the person of St. Thomas Aquinas, was built up entirely within the Christian church. And so in simple substance it was no more than a doctrine for all men based upon the experience of a few men within a notably limited field of action. It was philosophy built up as a world system by men who knew absolu­tely nothing about four-fifths of the world. Furthermore, they did not even regard it important to find out about it, having been completely paralyzed by the common error expressed in the problem of the neighbor—it is wrong logic, but we all indulge in it—the idea that col­lectives are represented adequately by individuals. We proceed upon the as­sumption there are groups of human from a very narrow, limited personal perspective, and so it became a very high-flown system from the standpoint of theology, and various theologians hav­ing created it, they revised it and am­plified it, they put their own schisms into it, and these broke up into other schisms, and when it was still narrower than was originally intended, to them even this narrow idea was too broad—and the Patristic philosophers presented the world with the phenomenon of the Dark Ages, when nobody thought.

The great curse of the intellectual pro­cesses of mankind has been the pheno­menon of trying to build a pattern of all things from the viewpoint of one thing. We find it so often. My neigh­bor is of certain racial stock. My neigh­bor steals my newspaper; now, not only is my neighbor a thief and crook, but all his race and kind to eternity are thieves and crooks; because of my ex­perience with him, and he is no good. That is the inevitable consequence of a narrow reference frame.

Unless we have traveled far mentally, and possibly physically, unless we have some­what examined deeply into many widely dif­ferent problems, we suffer also from the common error expressed in the problem of the neighbor—it is wrong logic, but we all indulge in it—the idea that collec­tives are represented adequately by individuals. We proceed upon the as­
There are several great departments of behaviorism, and in certain broad, general values groups of people are alike in their basic reflexes and reactions; but before we include the sphere of mind we should be reminded that the Greeks, the Hindus, and the Chinese all agree that in mental nature no two human beings are alike. Men will compromise their individuality, economically, into a dozen different patterns; a dozen men all thinking differently will work at the same job and come into a superficial accord; but they do not think the same, regardless of surface indications that their thoughts appear in one simple classification. There is no way by which we can judge any block of human beings by any one human being.

Our modern viewpoint is peculiarly that of Aristotle, but we also know through Plato that the human structure is so complicated in its internal function that it is impossible to classify man as we classify animals, for the reason man has certain extra-physical perceptions and can at any instant depart entirely from a pattern. The usual reason that he does not depart from pattern is that he has no experience beyond the pattern. Plato, realizing the usual reference frame was inadequate, took the basic philosophic tenets of Pythagoras, combined them with the great structure of the Orphic philosophy, and gave to the world its greatest esthetic philosophy, Platonism, a school which is based upon the world of beliefs; and it attempts to break down the great fallacy of thinking, the effort to explain all of anything by the analysis of one of its parts. This you can not do, said Plato; you must become internally aware of all, and in the light of all explain the parts. False philosophy teaches that all are like any one; true philosophy teaches that each one is part of a larger collective, and that you must think in terms of the relationship of things to the rest, rather than in isolating everything and trying to understand it by itself. It is the difference between studying a tree and studying the forest.

So the philosopher, approaching the problem of life, does so with certain basic categories of values. He also has a reference frame, and he will be limited by it; because even the most enlightened and liberal thinker is not entirely emancipated from his reference frame; but if he is a true thinker, his is larger and more inclusive than the reference frame of the uninformed person.

The difficulties that arise in philosophy are numerous. Here is one of them. Philosophy is based upon natural law. Human civilization is based upon man-made institutions. Most of the institutions that we are now addicted to were created in times when men had a comparatively inadequate knowledge of natural law; warriors and conquerors, rather than scholars, tended to the job of formulating nations, states, policies, and laws. And the question arises, through how many generations does an error have to be perpetuated to become a fact? The answer is, you can perpetuate it from now until doomsday and it will never become a fact.

For thousands of years people believed the earth was flat. Irrespective of social patterns, social traditions, social beliefs, social acceptances, there is no way in which that which is basically untrue is ever going to be made true by weight of numbers or pressure of authority.

We thus have to divide the world into two distinct groups of people. The larger group believes the collective viewpoint and the minority group believes the basically sound empirical, that only that is true which is true—regardless of beliefs or unbeliefs. You can easily see that a thinker from that basis will think straight through something at a time when no one else is thinking straight through, and that makes him a very unpopular person. Furthermore, according to practically all standards of our living and thinking, that person is going to be a failure. The last words of Confucius were, "I have failed." The basic belief of the world when opposed by the integrity of an individual results in a terrific conflict, with the individual inevitably the sufferer. The only consolation remaining to the philosopher is such as was expressed by the late Woodrow Wilson in regard to the League of Nations Treaty. He said, "I would rather fail in a cause that must ultimately succeed, than succeed in a cause that must ultimately fail." The philosopher knows that in the end his thinking will win, but for Bruno it was the stake, for Socrates it was the hemlock, and for Jesus it was the cross, because the world is not going to accept something it does not understand.
A man who had studied philosophy rather carefully and thoughtfully came to me one day and said, "I am in a tough spot. Ever since I began my study of philosophy I have had a hard time. I want to give it all up. But I am stuck, I cannot give it up. If I am determined not to believe it any more, still I cannot forget it. I know I will always believe it; and that is the toughest of spots to be in." This was his difficulty: he could never be less than himself, no matter how hard he tried. Once you have created a larger framework you cannot again go back to the smaller one. Your problem is that of trying to steer a course in the presence of your own integrity, against the matter of adjustment to the world situation as it is.

It will be well now to come to a few of the problems of philosophic thinking, how the philosopher does think. You may have noticed that outstanding materialistic world personalities in majority have been comparatively uninformed persons. A man like Adolph Hitler, of extremely limited education, is a natural dictator, why? Because the less we know, the more certain we are; and if we know nothing, we have not a doubt in the world. Corporal Schicklebruger is certain of everything. When you read Napoleon's letters you know he was a militarist, well schooled in that field, but comparatively ignorant of everything else. Ignorance is a very comfortable state of affairs. If you have enough of it, you do not even know you have it. You therefore do not suffer, and if people around you suffer terribly, you do not even know that. If Adolph Hitler had ever taken a worldwide Cook's Tour he would not have become dictator of Germany. It was because he had no world experience that he became convinced of the superiority of the German superman. Germany looked like the only country on the earth only because it was the one country he knew anything about.

With that type of reference frame (so limited as to be almost no frame at all), you have absolute objective certainty—and the aggressiveness of certainty. An individual has this kind of objective power because of no complication with himself. If you have it, you never doubt yourself, you never question yourself, you never wonder about yourself. You move upon the assumption of the absolute sufficiency of yourself. Wonderful!—unless or until you take a flight around the world, mentally or literally, or begin to study Buddhism. And should you try personally study art, you are not so sure poetry has in it all there is. Study Spinoza, and you are not so sure of Immanuel Kant. If your study is solely of the writings of Kant, you are sure there is not an error in his philosophy; but study someone else and you begin to wonder. Wisdom, as it begins to increase, creates a peculiar phenomenon. It begins to destroy your certainty. You go eventually into a kind of middle distance where you are not sure of anything. Finally you realize (let's hope) that this is the middle distance which you must inevitably pass through between ignorance, which is certain of everything, and wisdom, which is real knowledge.

The middle distance experience is quite embarrassing, because now you cannot be dogmatic, you cannot be sure; you have come to know enough to wonder how much you do know! The world says that is stupidity, that you must be sure. But you cannot be— if you think. The only way you can be absolutely sure is to become a Schicklebruger. When you begin to question, the world should consider it a good sign. But the world does not know that. The world does not like it.

It is inevitable that when you begin to understand things, when you begin to realize the consequences of action, you will not be so ready to act quickly. When you realize the essential integrity in others, you will not cast them aside so quickly. When you realize the tremendous potentiality in half developed ideas, you will not turn away from them merely because they are not complete. Your position becomes one where you say to your clergyman, "Dr. Jones, I love your church, but I also love to go downtown the street and see Dr. Bronner's Environmental Idealism. Dr. Jones might possibly think you are a heretic. Then, tell Dr. Brown you like his music, and also Dr. Jones, and it is possible that he will say, "Make up your mind which one you want to hear." They do not realize that the man you want to hear is the one who has the most to say. Nor will they share your conviction that they are both saying something, but neither one is saying it all.

Among other complicated problems is the one where someone in trouble goes to another person for advice. The average confidant will listen to one side of the story, be overwhelmed, melted down to a sympathetically sentimental state. But when the intelligent thinker is presented with a problem he says, "Can you tell me less of what the other person did to you, and more of what you did to him?" This is not of course a bad way to keep friends. It is the accepted idea that in order to prove we are devoted to our friends we have to agree with them. But if we are thoughtful we want to know what they have done that is wrong. To assume that the other person is all wrong is not being thoughtful. The problem of life calls upon you as you become more thoughtful to be less dogmatic about things, involuntarily you like to look at several sides of one problem at one time. Instinctively doing this you suddenly realize the good in a number of different things that are apparently contradictory to each other; the process forces you to believe in one thing because you believe in all of them. Imagine what would happen in politics if the Republicans began seeing the good side of the Democrats, and the Democrats said, "Well, you know the Republicans are human, too." It would be the ruination of politics, but it would be the beginning of an intelligent government.

It comes hard to us to think in cooperative terms under the competitive philosophy of life we have built up in our material world. Our philosophy of a material world is built up almost entirely upon our environment, tradition, and experience. This is the framework in which we learned it is wrong, the tradition which taught us is wrong, and our experience has been conditioned by the types of people whom we contact, who in themselves are functioning upon wrong foundations. So, just exactly what do we find? A grouping of patterns of things as they are. Not the grouping of things as they should be. The philosopher is in the rather difficult position of a man who holds the tiger's tail—he cannot let go and it is unsafe to hang on. We are living in an unphilosophic era, one of terrific materialistic emphasis on economic exploitation. It is not easy for the individual to adjust an idealistic system to a materialistic era.

Luther Burbank, to cite an instance, was one of the most complete idealists I have ever known; his greatest basic and life love of plants. Burbank never made any effort, actually, to fit into the world of which he was a part. It is no doubt because of that the world is recognizing him as one of its great men. Oddly enough, he has been honored all over the world because he did not care, really. It was not because he was indifferent, he was busy. He stayed within a world that had its own reference frame, not an enormous one, but a very gentle one. He saw the whole world in the terms of his garden. His little book, Training the Human Plant, takes the ground that the human being is a kind of flower, and if you spend as much love and care on it as with your pet dahlias, your life will be considerably better. Burbank's hands were always black with the earth; loving his plants and loving his world, he still had to make a living, and he was not particularly successful; because when you sell plants and seeds it is a one-time
The philosopher, in trying to think out the daily problems of his life, is at a great disadvantage in some respects, because he will not, can not, and does not take the attitude of dogmatism with which the average person approaches his affairs. He is inclined to suspend his decision because he is not sure, and it is not always so easy for him to see clearly that has been badly done. The philosopher who sits down patiently with a slow minded man is almost certain to be accused by a third person of being as dumb as the other one. It seems to be stupidity to be wasting his time listening to a stupid man. But, because thinkers do not do the things the thoughtless expect them to do, what is to be done about it? Nothing. The reference frame changes too fast. With its change you begin to think inclusively.

The philosopher approaching the problem of this war is not going to be satisfied merely with a victory. He wants to know how war can be cured in its substance and root. His thinking is nationalistic only in the international sense. They are the very Laws the philosopher who sits down patiently with his great Laws of Life which he pared with the integrity of ideas. And so it goes, through all the different lines of decision; for then follows a demand to be comfortable or not. It probably will not be entirely comfortable if it is a good decision; for then follows a demand to do something better.

It is to be recognized that ten thousand men our civilization would be twenty-five thousand years behind where we are now. Now that they are gone, history has caught up with them. The first civilized man we know, the great Egyptian Pharaoh Akkaton, was ridiculed by his own people and finally died of a broken heart in his early thirties because he said, "I believe in the brotherhood of man, therefore, I will not do war against my own brother." Egypt said he was a fool, and he died, and his dynasty died. Everything that could be heaped upon a man in the forms of ignominy was heaped upon him, and to-day, 3,400 years later, the world knows Akkaton was the greatest Egyptian who ever lived, and one of the greatest forces in our civilization.

Buddha, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, and Moses drank at the fountain of the wisdom of Akkaton; and if it had not been for him a large part of the New Testament would not have been written. If it had not been for Akkaton I question whether the Magna Charta would ever have been signed, and without the Magna Charta it is a question whether the Declaration of Independence would have been signed. In the Magna Charta are words almost identical with the words of this ancient Pharaoh, the man who said "The greatest power in the world is Humanity. God is not a God of nations, but of the World. Democracy, Freedom of Religion, and Freedom of Speech, these are worth dying for." In every conceivable form of print we are saying that today; Akkaton said it 3,400 years ago, and died for it. He was especially great because he lived three thousand years before his time.

It is said of Mozart, no one knew where his body was buried, even his wife did not walk behind him to his grave. Schubert, dying of starvation, left five hundred songs that made the world beautiful. These men belonged to a world of dreamers, and because of that we call them impractical, but because of the ideals of dreamers we have been given everything we call practical. They are the reason we have written books; it is out of the dreams of men like Parmelas and Leonardo da Vinci that we have better medicine, religion, science, art, and literature. They were not great in our sense of what is practical. We have to strain to see them as people who had some strange department within themselves that lived their dreams. Homer enriched all of Greece by his poems; Aesop enriched the world with his fables; a little hunchback man, Milton, blind, has left a great pageantry of drama which has enriched the world for more than a century.

All these belong in the philosophic reference frame because they had ideals. They were searching for Truth—not only searching for it for themselves, but to give it to others. These men tried to live by divine universal laws in a man-made world, and they all suffered, suffered greatly.

There are millions of people who want to go and hear religious promises of peace, power, and plenty; but few there are in the wide expanse of the world who want to undertake the apparently thankless task of trying to live true to what they believe—in a world that will never leave them alone in peace after they do it. And yet, from the beginning of time there have been people with just those convictions. Prometheus brought the fire from heaven and the gods rewarded him by binding him to a rock and setting the vultures to gnawing at his liver forever. He is
the symbol of punishment for bringing light to men. The Prometheus souls who have similarly tried, because of something within themselves, to bring light to problems of living, have always been persecuted, destroyed, and have paid for what they have attempted to do. But they know within themselves it is the only thing they can do. With what is within their hearts they must go on.

Such pressures within the consciousness present a problem. Life is more difficult when you know you think about others, and not just about yourself. It becomes more difficult to live under full realization of how easy it is to hurt someone else, how easy it is to become more difficult to live.

Another thing you cannot figure is, "Even if you do things badly it will not be noticed." Aknaton unsupported in Egypt changed the course of history. Each individual in his own little sphere can change the course of history by being true to what he believes; otherwise he will not change anything. As you think things through to consequences, you of course realize in this world you cannot do everything; but you can live by the Socratic theory of doing that which is beautiful and good.

This is a reference frame. How we work from it is determined by what we think is beautiful and good. That we have no absolute pattern to work from is evidenced by our "good" people being adherents to two hundred and fifty jarring sects in our society. The absolute pattern exists, but we have not the capacity to see it. And so our idea of what is good and what is bad is something developed from our reference frame. The idea will have flaws in it, because we are bound to be influenced by the traditional background that gave us that reference frame. The old systems of philosophy provided for these; neophytes were told: When you are ready to enter the Temple of Mysteries and learn, you must leave behind everything that you have previously known.

When you erect a new structure of thinking you cannot use the old framework. The beginning of all spiritual education is the recognition that previous experience is not going to help you, unless that previous experience is in the same plane of your new action.

The man who has been a successful banker will find that what he has gained in the reference frame of banking is not going to solve his philosophical problems. It may bring to philosophy a life already organized by discipline, accustomed to doing things in an orderly, sequential frame; but the attitudes of banking will not be helpful. Intending to become a philosopher, if he tries to work out great problems of the universe on the basis of banking practice he is going to trip himself up; it is the wrong reference frame. When he comes to philosophy he must leave behind him all he thought he knew, bringing with him only the aspiration to learn anew, to do something more.

Life does that to most of us; it brings us finally to the place where we say, "If I knew more I could do better." Life is ever reminding us of our own inadequacies. Philosophy presents a viewpoint, a new reference frame, and all that can be brought within it are those things out of our lives that have been philosophical. Entrance to the Temple of the Mysteries requires the conviction that we know absolutely nothing, that we are willing to learn again. Plato said, "In the presence of the hierophants of Egypt I was a child and in ignorance."

To bring to philosophy a new mind and a new beginning is difficult, for we have to get out of our consciousness whatever philosophy of life we have built up for ourselves. It is sure to be largely a defense mechanism philosophy, developed out of our experiences, and from our contacts, and from our dreams; sometimes we are pretty proud of it. But, unless we are really happy, it is not good enough. If it was good enough it would make us happy.

Pythagoras and Plato, and the Egyptians, stated basic requirements: Living a universal existence in a mundane world, you begin by realizing that you can get the Laws of Nature flowing with you. This is possible when you are harmonized with them. Behind your little dream can be the whole weight of the cosmos, if your dream is in line with the cosmos. In that motion of Space you have more behind you than all humanity together acclaiming you to the world. The support of Space is more than the mere support of men. Moving in harmony with the Law, you have a strength and security that nothing can touch.

In Space is a place which each of us must occupy. It is strange that we should regard this Truth as abstract because it does not relate intimately to the sixty-five or seventy years we live here; that our thinking does not encompass the hundreds of millions of years we are likely to have to live in Space. We call 'practical' that which will make a man survive more comfortably in something that will not en-
dure. We regard as impractical and abstract the end to security in that which does endure.

The average adult who takes up the subject of philosophy has a life expectancy of thirty-five years from the time he takes it up. Those thirty-five years will be filled with dissonance, problems, change and adjustment. Which is most abstract then, that which relates to the thirty-five years, or that which relates to all time? From a qualitative standpoint if you understand the Universe you can live anywhere in Space; but if you only understand the small problems you'll be terribly ignorant when you leave the environment of little problems. The average person going to live in a country where Spanish is spoken will spend months studying Spanish, but he will face the infinitudes of his Self without a thought.

The philosophic thinker tries to establish himself as an eternal value. He tries to think thoughts that neither health nor death, nor age, nor youth, can change. His thoughts of those about him and of the values that are within him are in terms of eternal values. Philosophic thinking thus has a quality of consciousness which will not collapse emotionally in the presence of wars, depressions, crime, pestilences—or anything else. It establishes an eternal existence now, by thinking eternal thoughts in a non-eternal world.

The world is forever changing; generations of men and women are forever coming and going; yet through it all the eternal values are known to some people. Why, is explained in the assumption of reincarnation and karma and natural law. Some in every generation, are born into this strange empire of dreamers and belong to Space, Destiny and Time; and to them it is very real. In time it must be everyone’s world. Everyone will be happy when it is their world. We will be happy as people and individuals when we all can settle down quietly on this earth and love the Beautiful, venerate the One, and serve the Good. These are the simple, eternal values that are true in Time, Space, and Eternity. If you can put these fragments together with a little psychological skill of your own you will know what is meant by philosophic thinking. It differs from other kinds; some just have it, and others find it difficult. But it is simply thinking better, kindlier, and thinking things through; thinking in terms of eternal life.

While this may seem very abstract, it is something that is very real when we need it. The strange thing is, we never know when we are going to need it. We surely need it now in wartime.

(Condensed from a Public Lecture. Suggested reading: First Principles of Philosophy; Purposeful Living; Lectures on Ancient Philosophy)

Idle Dreams Come True

Some Americans during the War of the Revolution sneered at the very principles of the Declaration of Independence. It was impractical, they said—it was "idealistic"—to claim that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights."

The skeptics, the cynics of Washington's day, did not believe that ordinary men and women have the capacity for freedom and self-government.

They said that liberty and equality were idle dreams which could not come true—just as today there are many Americans who sneer at the determination to attain freedom from want and freedom of fear on the grounds that these are ideals which can never be realized. They say that it is ordained that we must always have poverty and that we must always have war.

They are like the people who crab at the Ten Commandments because some people are in the habit of breaking one or more of them.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The Decline Of The West

One of the most thought provoking books in print is Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West. It conveys the constant sense of danger, it is written in a ponderous manner, it is heavy, and complicated. Spengler, with a new idea worrying him, strives through many pages trying to express it. He scatters bombshells in the ranks of accepted learning.

Spengler is a layman in the field of science, and for a layman to have an idea is the beginning of scientific heresy. So Oswald Spengler had to proceed step by step slowly, and often in a clumsy manner; but nevertheless we find in the book a number of important ideas. To have expressed these ideas directly, wouldn't have done; science will not take to an idea in its naked state; it must be dressed up in proofs, likenesses, and verisimilarities before it can be seen. "History repeats itself" is the basic idea that occurred to Spengler. It has of course occurred to hundreds of other people, but he has handled it as though no one else had ever heard of it. It is his premise that there is a certain consistency about action: Men are born, and, barring accidents, reach maturity and die in old age, establishing a material cycle. In the same way, history—which records the development and culture of nations, art, science, literature, all of these things—passes through cycles of recurrences and repetition. Each civilization rises and passes through the identical cycle of experience, falls at the end.
Consistent throughout all nature.

The Chinese are exampled; they of inward reflexes; therefore, people can.

Refinement means inward sensitiveness, an internal chemistry, pointing to how the racial development of mankind passes.

Culture is ages of accumulated wisdom, and anything that is cultured is refined. He distinguishes definitely between them. Culture is ages of accumulated wisdom, and anything that is cultured is refined.

Refinement means inward sensitiveness, an internal chemistry, pointing to how the racial development of mankind passes.

Western civilization has very little innate culture, because culture is the fineness in things. It is the capacity to enjoy the finest of human experience. It is something that makes men musicians, artists, it produces great systems like the Greek and the classical philosophers of Greece.

Under culture the external life is lived at a minimum of material efficiency. Under culture men are perfectly willing to walk. They do not need great buildings, all they need is a tree to sit under, a musical instrument and a book of poems. Culture is inward sufficiency. It makes the individual inwardly self-sustaining. He does not have to read. He does not have to dash off to the movies; he does not have to go here and there. His own inward wealth makes it perfectly possible for him to sit quietly alone under a tree and enjoy himself.

It makes him interested in fineness, delight in beauty. It destroys, or has a tendency to destroy, most of the major objectives in action. The cultured man is not interested so much in money, wealth, power or authority; he is intensely interested in fineness. He can enjoy the sunset, or the trees reflected in a lake. And he can have a great inward enjoyment which does not involve outward things. He has within himself resourcefulness, the capacity to build his own world and his own life, and live it according to his own purposes.

Culture is a very innate thing. Strangely enough, it usually precedes civilization, and follows it; and so there are alternations in society. Civilization, culture, civilization, culture; they alternate throughout the ages. There is the dominance of one for a time, and then the dominance of the other.

Civilization, distinguished from culture, represents an entirely externalized existence. Civilization is closely aligned with the sense of seeing, as the basis of objectivity. When we see, we are subjects. The principle in man is one of externals. Therefore, to see with the eyes closed—the East Indian method of seeing—is subjective. The individual seeing inwardly, or living inwardly, is cultured. The individual who sees outwardly is imprisoned to the functions of civilization, as we hear him say, "This house will have to have a new coat of paint," or, "I will build a bigger building so it will stand way above the rest." Seeing results in objectivity leads to competition. Competition leads to industry. Industry leads to economics. And economics leads to collapse. Civilization as the development of things seen is a worship of objectified perception.

Our religions, our beliefs, our arts, our sciences, our esthetics, come either from a cultural consciousness, or from an intellectual consciousness. Wherever it is neither possible or logical for man to perceive, civilization resorts to symbols, symbols derived from things seen to represent the unseen. In symbolism we thus have forms resembling ideas and consistent with ideas.

The purpose of civilization is to improve the outward condition of all things, inclusive of the outward existence of man, the outward condition of the individual. Humanitarian efforts, such as hygiene, sewerage, foodstuffs, clothing, research in science to find cure for diseases, and all the social services, are toward the improvement of the outward condition, toward the perfecting of the outward life.

As civilization represents external values, culture has within it the innate intrinsic values. When outward things increase, inward things decrease, and vice versa, in the ebb and flow of objectivity and subjectivity, which in The Secret Doctrine is called the ebb and flow of life. A hundred statements in The Decline of the West seem to be taken almost verbatim out of The Secret Doctrine. Wherever Spengler's viewpoint parallels the philosophic, he falls into acceptance that as men look more and more outward, civilization becomes hypnotic. "The biggest thing ever made," Spengler points out, "is something that has the smallest possible motive, because nothing is smaller than gain. When a man says, "I made it to make money," that is the least reason he could have for making it. It is the farthest from value. The motive is wrong and the end is wrong. Some individuals live through all their years devoting their lives to profit; they make things for profit, they live for profit. With others, the outer fixations steadily increase until profits eclipse everything else. The crash is certain, with things going to pieces, because profit cannot hold the world together.

Up to the present time in the alternations of cycles between civilization and culture there have been only a few years when there has been maintained any equilibrium between the two principles. Spengler considers ideas; he says they are closely related to environments and heredity. He does not mean heredity in the biological sense, but heredity in the sense of transmission from generation to generation of cultured beliefs. In other words, people are influenced by their own beliefs. They sense a certain relationship between what has been and what is. The abstractions of mankind assume the relationship between what has been and what is. And so Spengler explains how everyone in the world is wrong.

He points out that all opinions which have come down to us have been based upon partial evidence. For example, the Chinese wrote Chinese philosophy as though China was the whole world; and if in our history we have forgotten to mention the Chinese, they have forgotten to mention us in theirs. And our western philosophy has been ignored. To China, China is the world.
pattern; to the Greeks, Greece was the world pattern; to the Abrahams, Arabia was the world pattern; and to Islam, Islam is the world pattern. Accordingly, all world philosophies and cultures have arisen in comparatively small groups, out of a special premise, and then have been transmitted to the world. The idea is, the premise behind nearly all our so-called beliefs is provincial. Accordingly, our religious spiritual ideals, our so-called beliefs is provincial. Our mod­ern religions and philosophies thus are not universal truths, but particular opinions. In speaking philosophically of summer and winter, the grasp of facts-and perception of the whole, we pass through cycles of similarity. Spengler sees us as all passing gradu­ally through the seasons of development. He divides the existence of all culture into seasons; spring, summer, fall, and winter. He shows how we pass through the seasons of the year of the world, and then shows us we are in the winter of the world. This corresponds with the 5000 years of Kali Yuga, or the last of the Yugas, the Iron Age; Spengler’s view of the picture is the same. He calls it the Four Seasons—the Hindus call it the Four Yugas, or Periods of the World, Birth, Growth, Maturity, and Decay. Decay he calls Winter, but he shows there is consistent decadence, and that this must precede the final destruc­tion of civilization. This is interesting. Spengler gives a list of philosophers, all German. I do not know whether or not this detracts from his universal view­point, but we are not all universal, and he is writing in the winter of the world. The moment we begin to lose our culture and perception of the whole, Points are subject to unbalance, includ­ing his own. In the winter of the race we are approach­ing a series of circumstances which are strangely enough consistent with the present time. Considering that this book was written years ago, he has been remarkably prophetic. He says the 20th Century, and the 21st, will bring back to the world at the time of the conquests which re­sulted in the collapse of the Roman Em­pire. He shows this cycle in the history of the world as always having produced dictatorship, conquests, and the reawak­ening of the thirst for world power. He calls the period between 1800 and 2000 the period of war, the period of conquest. According to Spengler, and his opinion is based upon the parallel of the 5th Century, we were at the time he wrote approaching a process of de­struction which parallels the fall of the Roman Empire. This does not mean America or Germany. He applies it to the western civilization, in the same way we have termed the Roman the Latin civilization.

As in Rome, he says, we have passed out of the culture into the material civil­ization. Rome began gradually the building up of a great empire under the rule of such kings and philosophers as Numa, men of a mystical and philo­sophical combination. Then, after a great period of civilization it began moving into an industrial empire; it began to colo­nize, and it became the forum for mer­chandise in the West. Rome became a great industrial-economic empire almost immediately after the beginning of the rule of the Caesars, and this rule reduced the Roman empire from one of great power to absolute corruption and destruction. The same thing happened in Greece, Egypt, India, and China. Always, as objectivity begins to manifest, corruption begins. Then, after the period when we begin to lose our culture and evolve a civilization, at that moment we die. Why? Because civilization is a compromise with fact, and nothing that compromises fact can live. Civilization is death creeping over man; civilization
Civilization is built in great crystallized geometrical forms, so if you were far above a city, you would see a spiderweb of patterns, the same pattern to be seen in snowflakes, only on a vaster scale. In other words, snowflakes are crystallizations, and civilization is crystallization. The more civilized we become, the less cultured; and the more civilized we become, the more dead we become; because as soon as we build we have to defend; and this brings wars; and as wars bring profit, war and profit is the end of empire.

The whole pattern is worked out in excellent balance, as far as the premise is concerned. But, I think, Spengler failed to take into consideration certain subjective forces. In certain places he passes over causations because he does not know them. But these causations could be filled in, to make a very important document, supplementing the one he has produced. His cyclic program could be related to the celestial movement, because there is no questioning that world cycles are based upon celestial cycles; he apparently did not think of that.

The motion of empire is around a central sun, the same way the motion of planets is around a central sun. Civilization is a group of races circling around a hypothetical sun, moving around the center of life. Civilization is really a planet moving around a central sun from which it receives its life and energy, and it is controlled by that Sun.

Spengler's picture of the Decline is based upon this motion of repetition. According to his pattern, the western world is slowly declining because it is farther along in the process of civilization and corruption. Other nations are attempting to copy it, and they will fall later also. The farther we get into civilization the more rapid the fall must be. Other nations, very old, are not so highly civilized; but civilization will be brought to them, it is inevitable—if no one else takes it to them, the Standard Oil Company will. Misery loves company. In time they will be civilized, and then they will begin to die; culture is the wise man under the tree, and civilization is the foolish man under the load. That is the way it works out in action.

Spengler brings out the example of the plant and the animal, showing the plant to be free and the animal in servitude. Inasmuch as the plant has no environmental consciousness, it does not partake of the anxiety and fear of life. The animal, because it is objective, is no longer self-sustaining. The plant lives without moving, remaining in adjustment with the universe; the animal, having broken this adjustment, must roam about for its living. What he means is, the internal life, the life turned inward and not outward, is free; while the life turned outward is in bondage. The more sense perceptions we develop, the more we are in servitude; the more we see, the more we want; and the more we externalize the more we are bound in civilization; the greater our desires and hopes, the harder we struggle for existence.

Spengler, I presume, would like to have us believe he is a scientific atheist; but he is very much of a Taoist; he is very much a part of the system he rejects as being inconsistent. His book brings out Buddhism strongly, for its whole philosophy is achieving realization or inward experience, and by inward experience overcoming the world. That is, you cannot overcome the world by fighting it. But the world is overcome by turning the focal point of energy so the world no longer fascinates you. When we no longer want the world, we have overcome it. The Lotus Blossom is the symbol of Nirvana, which means it achieves Truth, it lives, develops and perfects its existence without cognition of environment. It is not aware of the world, therefore, it lives beautifully in the world. The flower as used in philosophy is the symbol of spontaneous life, living without recognition of external things; it is living as though it were the only thing alive, and at the same time harming nothing. It is the symbol of coordinated sufficiency, rain from heaven, food from the earth, unchanging and unchangeable except by the laws of the season.

Oswald Spengler's book is based upon the very problem of these adjustments; his Decline is based upon the theory that when men love the world more than they love Truth, they inherit the earth. When they inherit the earth, they do not know what to do with it. When meninherit the earth, the earth inherits them, because they cannot survive entanglements. It is wisdom to absorb these entanglements; it is wise to become cultured and not civilized, to gather power from inward experience by escaping the limitation of the dimension program of the outer existence.

That in principle is the Spengler book. It is an effort to co-ordinate facts, many of them valuable; but I think his whole contribution to soul growth is summed up in one thought: Culture and civilization are deadly enemies. The purpose of existence is to become great inwardly, because if we try to become outwardly perfect we destroy ourselves. Culture is inward perfection, and inward perfection modifies outward existence until it is consistent. We should seek to be more within, and not to have more without. Because the more we have the sooner we die.

(Condensation from a Public Lecture. Suggested Reading: Facing the Facts, Facing the Future)
PLENTY . . .
Everywhere In The World

BY MILO PERKINS
Executive Director of the Board of Economic Warfare

OUR country is settling down to the grim business of smashing the Axis power. There is a growing sense of personal responsibility for winning this war. Total victory cannot be left to the other fellow to work out in his own backyard.

Each of us must contribute personally and with a whole heart to the utter defeat of our enemies. Our individual determination and efforts are all that stand between us and slavery. They are so important that nothing else matters for now.

This is as it must be, but there is deeper, more significant meaning to this conflict.

We are engaged in a struggle that transcends the present war. This is a long, long fight to make a mass-production economy work. The battle started when machines became important in the lives of men. It should be over within the generation following this conflict.

The battle will be won when we have built up mass-consumption to a point where markets can absorb the output of our mass-production industries running at top speed. Then, so far as our physical needs are concerned, life can become a journey to be enjoyed rather than a battle to be fought.

Our minds are now creating neat little time compartments labeled pre-war, war, and post-war; but these are like the labels of childhood, youth, and manhood to the individual who lives through them. This is a single and continuous struggle to achieve one goal.

Complete victory will not be won until there is a full and increasing use of the world’s resources to lift living standards from one end of this planet to the other. The Twentieth Century is a time set apart for the winning of this total triumph.

 Humanity is not going back to the wolf stage. Men lost their battle to avoid this war. It was lost primarily because the world was unable to distribute what it had learned how to produce.

This failure was as true of trade within countries as it was of trade between countries.

The nightmare of underconsumption was the black plague of the pre-war era. We put up with a civilization which was commodity-rich but consumption-poorest too long to avert the present catastrophe.

Today we realize we never did in peacetime as important an all-out production effort as is our national strength. We are going at it like men killing snakes. We are building the machines with which to wipe the tyrants from the face of the earth.

Our young men are fighting like tigers to keep this a free world. Their courage will bring us final military victory at the end of which we shall have the greatest production of raw materials, the greatest industrial plant, and the greatest number of skilled workers in all history. All this will exist side by side with intense want throughout every land. The bridging of that gap will present the greatest challenge any generation of young people ever faced.

Better than half of our industrial output at the end of this war will be going to one customer—our own Government. The business will exceed 70 billion dollars a year. Any attempt to stop that purchasing power abruptly would result in complete bankruptcy.

There must be a gradual and sensible unwinding.

Government must encourage business to regain its peacetime markets as fast as it can and business must encourage Government to taper off its activities slowly enough to keep production going full blast. The heavy demand for civilian goods in the immediate post-war period will make it easier to accomplish this transition.

Capital investment in heavy goods for reconstruction must replace capital investment in armaments at a rate adequate to maintain full employment. Any wavering in this course will bring on a tragedy worse than war.

We can and we should have open discussion about the various methods of using our resources to the utmost. But that is quite different from questioning the absolute necessity of their full utilization.

Failure to use those resources to the utmost would be the one sure way to lose the way of life for which our sons are now willing and ready to die. Full blast production for a gradually rising standard of living will be as necessary to win the peace as all-out production now is to win the war. It will be physically possible. Our number one post-war job will be to make it fiscally possible.

We must be of men or money or machines, will be the one unforgivable sin of the post-war world.

"But," some people ask, "how are we going to do all this?" The question sounds reasonable enough at first glance. Actually, however, only the timid ask it.

The courageous ask, "Which method do you think will work best?"
In the first case, the questioners really doubt that much can be done to make the world work any better in the future than it worked in the past.

In the second case, that hurdle has already been cleared, and the concern is with the most efficient and business-like ways of getting the job done. It makes an enormous difference. The "how" people are afraid of the future. The "which" people welcome it! And make no mistake about it, the future belongs to them.

I could tell you about ways of financing housing in the post-war world.

I could tell you about an imaginative use of long-term credits to industrialize the backward areas of three continents.

I could tell you that if the peoples of Asia alone earned an extra penny a day they would open up a new market of 4 billion dollars a year for somebody.

I could tell you about what a decent diet for everybody would mean to farm income throughout every country.

We could talk for hours about these things. As soon as the political shape of things to come in this world gets clearer, workable methods and programs must be considered in great detail.

But there will be time for that. Hundreds of preliminary blueprints for economic readjustments in the post-war world already have been drawn. We are not short on blueprints.

What we are short on is faith in the future of our own country. Let's not put the cart before the horse. What we need first is a new buoyancy which comes only to those who know there is a solid basis upon which to welcome tomorrow with a sense of adventure.

Once that is reawakened in us as a whole people, a thousand and one individuals will come forward with a thousand and one businesslike projects for making a mass production economy work.

The magnificent fight of Secretary Hull for a freeer flow of goods in this world is going to be won. Every farmer, every worker, and every business man will be needed to get the job done. Personal responsibility for economic victory at the end of this conflict will be as necessary as personal responsibility for military victory is today.

That's the way we conquered the West and that's the way we built our magnificent industrial empire. That's the way we're going at the winning of this war and that's the way we're going to win the peace.

When a whole people is dedicated to a goal no obstacle on earth can stand against the singleness of purpose. These times of great crisis but we needn't be terrified by them. The Chinese write the word "crisis" with two characters, one of which means "danger" and the other "opportunity." That's worth remembering.

When the history of this period is written a couple of centuries from now, the present war may be treated as an incident of adjustment to the scientific realities of our times.

In every civilization of the past, bar none, if men took the most that it was possible to produce and divided it among all who were alive to share it, the answer was always a miserable standard of living. Within your lifetime and mine, however, men have entered an era dominated by the machine and the test tube. If we take all that can be produced at the end of this war and divide it among the people who will then be alive to share it, we shall be within reach of a very good standard of living for the first time in all history.

That will be the most important material thing that's happened to the human race since the discovery of fire and the invention of the wheel.

The job of the future will be to build up a mass consumption great enough to use this mass production. That will require a bold and daring use of long-term credits by every enlightened government of the world. Governments must enter fields where private finance cannot enter without assuming risks that are too great to take with other people's money. By that very act, however, the area of private investment will be broader and safer than it was in the last two decades.

A world at work at decent wages is a world of economic stability. Idleness is the greatest of all threats to confidence.

Of course there are changes ahead but this evolutionary progress need not destroy our system of private enterprise. On the contrary, those changes can provide an environment in which industrial capitalism can be strengthened enormously.

We have it in us to measure up to this job of maintaining full employment. The war is toughening us for the greatest conquest men have ever faced—the conquest of backwardness and unnecessary poverty. We are learning to live like men who are conquerors to the core.

What does all this mean to us as individuals? It means that our personal fortunes will be tied to what happens to groups of other men in this world as those fortunes never were in the past.

It means that what today does to us as individuals is probably not very important.

What is important is, what we do with tomorrow by way of keeping the whole world at work on all-out production for a century to come. If we can lose ourselves wholeheartedly in that job, we shall find personal completeness as men have never found it before.

If we cannot, the tides of life will leave us to one side; we shall become isolated in a world where men are growing closer to each other.

After all, the only lasting security for any of us lies in moving constantly forward.

Those who have won to this understanding welcome a changing future every morning of their lives—and love it.

Slave Labor

IN a report on Nazi slave labor the Office of War Information revealed that the best available figures indicate that one out of every seven workers in Germany is a foreigner.

Three techniques have characterized the Nazi drive for slave labor. Voluntary enlistment brings in some workers but agreements with puppet governments and associated neighbors and conscription are the main recruiting techniques. These techniques are varied from country to country. For example, in Belgium the military handles worker conscription while in France it is handled by civilian agencies.

Inasmuch as volunteers are likely to prove the most efficient and reliable workers, the Nazis have carried on an extensive campaign of propaganda and cajolery to convince foreign workers that it is to their best interests to go to work in Germany. Filling the Nazi-controlled newspapers with "work-in-Germany" ads and plastering walls with similar posters, the Nazis hold out to skilled workers extravagant promises of plenty of food in Germany, opportunities to send money home, vacations at German expense, opportunity to learn a useful trade, and so on.

These promises are never kept. Foreign workers are herded together in camps, barracks, and unused factories, and in some cases, billeted in private houses when they are working in cities. According to reports reaching United States Government agencies, the camps are crowded, the food—cooked by the workers—is bad, the heating is meager, and some of them even lack lighting and running water. No food ration or clothing cards are issued to workers living in groups, and the workers' clothes are obtained through their industrial establishment. Pay deductions for foreigners often reduce earnings 25 to 30 percent.

Desperately in need of manpower and fearful of the coming invasions of Europe, the Nazis have apparently now decided to ignore the matter of efficiency and solve their labor problem, regardless of cost, by conscripting slave labor in bulk.
St. Augustine: Structural Christian Laws

Christianity is firmly established as the religion of Europe and America, and in various forms it has extended itself into other countries with different religious backgrounds, such as China, India, Persia, and Arabia. This wide diffusion of Christianity can be attributed to one definite ingredient, simplicity. The words that Jesus spoke by the opinions and teachings of his followers. The Koran, books of the world are very complicated and involved, but the Fates had dictated that Augustine contacted divination, necromancy, astrology, and many other strange arts and sciences. It was here he received the curious cult teachings of the Gnostics and the luxuriant wealth of Oriental myth; and he evidently took to these philosophies and for a time became not only a Pagan in the terms of the church, but a heretic.

In time he went to Rome, and perhaps a year later on to Milan, by which time he had lost intellectual rapport with the teachings of Manes. He came under the influence of a great Christian speaker of that time, Ambrose, bishop of Milan. Augustine admits he was much more interested in the speech than in the subject; a master of rhetoric, he was amazed to find another more able than himself. It was words and not thoughts which fired his mind. Later, Augustine began to feel the meaning of the words. His conversion took place when he was 32 years old; he received baptism on the Easter following. About a year later he decided to quit the world and devote himself to a religious life. The opportunity came while he was visiting a friend at Hippo where the city fell. He never saw his beloved city again, but he was too sick to pray, and passional force, he evidently took to these pillaging, burning and destroying, and the years went by, personal attachments marked all his actions, he enthusiastically accepted the church dogmas and teachings as of unquestioned authority, and began the writing of his Confessions. It was about 30 years later that The City of God was published, a contribution to the philosophy of history and the full repository of his natural theological opinions.

But meanwhile in the church Augustine found only impermanent happiness. The Roman Empire was crumbling. The Goths, the Vandals and the Huns were upon the outskirts of the Empire, pillaging, burning and destroying, and the peaceful, contemplative years which should complete the life of a man who had long since given himself to God were instead years of sorrow and suffering. His mother died, happy because he had been converted to her faith. As the years went by, personal attachments fell from him, and he was, in his own words, a man alone, looking out on a world that no longer had in it anything that was his own. He lived only to preach, to write, and to establish the canon that was later to be accepted as the great dogmas of the church.

At last the city of Hippo was besieged by the Vandals, and even while the city was falling St. Augustine was dying. He passed in the seventy-fifth year of his life, and during the very last moments of his life he could hear the cries of war about him. He died mercifully just a few days before the city fell. He never saw his beloved parish destroyed by war. The people came to him and begged him to pray for them, but he was too sick to pray, and in the midst of the crash of swords on shields he gave up the ghost in the year A. D. 440.

Analyzing the character of Augustine, it is obvious from the beginning that he was not a philosopher. He made no claim to being a philosopher. He was a man who from childhood was moved to believe to be sin. Passing from one phase of thought to another, he did not start out very promisingly; when in his youth and in the midst of his dissatisfaction, he came in contact with the teachings of Manes. Manes was a Neo-Christian thinker, a Gnostic, one who believed in some sort of pre-existence: a first member of the Manes sect that Augustine passed through a series of incidents and teaching.

The City of God — A Study of St. Augustine's Theology

Analyzing the character of Augustine, it is obvious from the beginning that he was not a philosopher. He made no claim to being a philosopher. He was a man who from childhood was moved...
principally by his feelings, a man tossed hither and yon by his own emotions. During his years as a bishop he was always fighting for something or fighting against something.

There were practically no placid years in that strange life. He lived both to found, and to tear down. He was gifted with a flow of language, so great that people came hundreds of miles to hear a sermon. He could speak and it was said his face and whole being was lit up, and he was possessed by this terrific urge within him, but never was he a truly profound thinker. He felt; and what he felt had to be true. He was moved about by the current of his feelings. In his youth his feelings had led him far into what he believed later to be sin, and in his advancing years his feelings vied toward God with complete abandonment of attachment. He stormed the Gates of Heaven.

It is not from Augustine therefore that we gain any great structure of philosophical thought. He was in no sense a gentle Plato, surrounded by his disciples, speaking and teaching in the Athenian Groves; nor even an accurate Aristotle nagging at his teachers’ heels, but a tempestuous man who was an unbeliever a short time before; no one feels more tremendously the necessity of reform. Augustine’s power is to be attributed to his change in the direction of his emotions, even though he never fundamentally controlled them.

By study of his great books we can see that Augustine barely escaped being one of the great geniuses. If he had only been able to control his feelings! In his The City of God he reveals what might be termed the first instance of historical chronology, and as you become aware that he was a reformer of power, that his dream was essentially sound, then in the midst of your accepting and acknowledging this, he says something that sweeps away all your faith in what you are reading. If he had studied philosophy instead of rhetoric he would have thought it through. But he couldn’t think it through. His intensity of purpose blinded him to the ordered procedure of thought—a very interesting man to have known, but a very hard man to have lived with.

His life was divided into three parts which he termed his three battles, his three assailing of heresy; always he was hard at work digging out unbelievers who rejected his beliefs. He had no desire to hurt them, just wanted them to have truth as he saw it. When a man believes his own truth to be the Universal Truth, it is inevitable that he should lead, even if doubt can arise as to the direction in which he is going. A great leader in the world’s acceptance of leadership is to be a Caesar, an Alexander, or Napoleon, equipped with absolute and implicit faith in what you believe, and the certainty that what you believe is better than the belief of any other man. Wishing for no interference from logic or reason, you can then go forward, and if it is a good belief your people prosper, but if it is a bad belief, they perish. One requisite of leadership is complete egotism; Napoleon once said of himself, “If I am not right I am not Napoleon.”

Augustine was not Napoleon; his purposes were definitely spiritual. He did not believe that he was right necessarily, but he believed so completely in the authority of the Church that he acquired a sort of second-hand egotism, an authority that was not his own, but a something of ideal substance by which he could see that others who disagreed with him were wrong. Having by that process eliminated everyone else, he could move forward successfully against all obstacles. Deny the reality of obstacles, and you have no conflict in the world. As long as you believe that everyone in disagreement with you is wrong, you have a viewpoint of great power. Administering that power, Augustine strengthened and contributed to that fallacy of the Faith of which he was a part.

In the course of considerable wandering among men, it has been my observation that the theologian, the Christian theologian, is always right. He is infallible. Long after Augustine, a thousand years after, a map maker made a map of the world which he divided into thirty parts. Twenty-one of these parts he made black, to indicate they were inhabited by lost souls; and the other nine parts he made white because they were Christians. Now, what more can you ask? It isn’t egotism, it is just being right! The missionary goes forward today, perhaps sincere, but seldom brilliant; and in foreign lands he comes into the presence of people who know a thousand times more than he does. But, he is always right. He is armed with the infallibility of his belief, not because he can prove it is right but because he has assumed it. He rushes in by choice, loaded with theological affirmations. If anyone talks faster than he does, it is because the devil has moved in on them. He can’t lose, because he never knows when he is beaten. If anyone else appears to have an intelligent doctrine, it is because the devil uses devious means for controlling the souls of men.

I knew a very intelligent man at one time who was much annoyed by the proselyting of certain missionaries in his part of the world, and he said, “We can’t do anything with them. We try to show them that we have a faith of our own, but that does not interest them. They think no one can have a faith but theirs. We try to show them our faith has been sufficient for ourselves, and the missionary then tells us our ancestors all went to perdition. The only way we can win is to massacre them. What else is there to do?—as long as they live they are right.”

That was the way Augustine’s mind worked, and he established some strong precedents that later flowed into the faith of Christianity. Before the 6th or 7th century Christendom was not absolutely infallible. It acknowledged it was a religion; but after the 10th century it was infallible. No one was allowed to question any dogma, any dogma was right. From this position it has slowly extended to its present magnitude. As a religion most of the parts of the world recognize it; as the religion, well, that’s something different. Christianity’s is a peculiar complex, but one that shows up in many places in the history of religious dominance.

It is worth the effort to examine into the beliefs of St. Augustine, because
each of us today has in some way run against those beliefs. Being in a Christian-dominated world we are under the domination of the psychology of at least certain Augustinian survivals, and some have led to very strange results that Augustine himself would have condemned.

The power that struck Augustine, that moved him from his foundation and made him one of the greatest organizers of the Christian church is revealed in his books, which usually start off with something like this: "Praise to God, the Father of All, I, Augustine, the least of men, a sinner by Thy Grace brought to Thy Throne." The power is often so mentioned in the writings of the early Saints. Before we read far we are informed in every case these people were sinners. That seems to be the outstanding designation, and the controlling motivation is repentance.

Sin. By use of the word a sort of vicarious flagellation is administered. Sinners. "By Adam's fall, we sinned us all"—it used to be taught to the Massachusetts school children in the 17th century. Sinners. "Conceived in sin and born in iniquity." Not a very cheerful start-off, and yet sin is the very cornerstone of the faith.

There are two kinds of sin, according to Augustine. The first is primordial sin, by which we participate in the sin of Adam—fixing in memory that little terrific dynamic power to it. It has been changed in salvation was his acceptance of this Faith. So, Augustine had faith. He placed all other things far from him and clung to that. And like nearly all who come late to a belief, he tried desperately to bring others to that faith—the faith that the salvation of man rested with God and not with man. Man by no virtuous action of his own could achieve salvation, except by the one action and that one was to be baptized, to thus accept the true faith and to perform the sacraments.

That is the very bone and sinew of the Augustinian belief. He states it in many words, in beautiful flowing paens of praise to this Eternal Mystery. Man himself is nothing, of few days and many troubles, but by the mystery of baptism he participates in the divine benefaction. And that's all that life was, man searching for God. The only reward for living was to make peace with God.

The very simplicity of this belief gave terrific dynamic power to it. It has become the credo of Christendom, and you can hear it affirmed every Sunday. It is preached today that man of himself is nothing, and is not preserved nor made whole by works, but by the Spirit of God which is within us, and that by the acceptance of that agency, the religion that was established by the Son of God, so proven by the Church Council—we come to Glory, we come in the end to a perfect at-one-ment with this Source of Good. The logic is all right if you accept it, and all wrong if you do not.

There are two kinds of people in the world—those who believe, and those who think. Those who believe accept this imperative without question, and come and make their offering. But those who think, cannot accept it. It violates certain of the most precious tenets of reason. And so Christianity has its heretics, like Bruno, and Savonarola; its protesters, who organized as the Protestants—and then in time turned to teaching the same thing. It was Martin Luther who picked up the belief of Augustine and held it again high. But always there were some who could not believe. And today an ever increasing number of people have tried sincerely, but they cannot believe; because something is moving within them. The Church says of this that the spirit of evil has found ways to tempt man away. But always there is some man who says he does not feel like a sinner, for he believes he has found some little measure of a greater Light.

The early church fought against an idea which was involved in the teachings of the Gnostics, of the Manes, of the Essenes, in the teachings of the Apostolic Orders, and the Neo-Platonists: It was the idea that men by their works become good. The Church still says, salvation is bestowed. The philosopher still maintains, salvation is earned through virtuous actions. It was St. Paul who had said, "Words without works are dead." But he had also said, "Men are saved only by faith." And men ever since have read the Pauline doctrine and the Epistles and rubbed their chins meditatively and tried to figure out which statement is correct. The difference is between a man earning his right to be termed good, and having this right bestowed upon him; the question goes to the very core of the mystery. Which is right? Is Augustine right, biding his head waiting for God to act; or is it Plato, raising his head and searching for God? Which is correct?—that man shall be lifted up by a mystery, or that he shall struggle up through self-mastery toward the Light? A great many things that are now known were not known in the days of St. Augustine. The followers of Augustine had the benefits of the works of a man who was to follow in their faith and in their own church, another priest, Mendel. They had no way of knowing that the law of heredity would be discovered, that this law in turn would give place to another, that of growth in nature. This evolution, discovered within the last 250 years, grants into the very heart of Divine Bounty. It makes man realize that things are growing up instead of being lifted up.

Men today, like Augustine in the 4th century, do not know the Power within things that makes them grow. There are created words to represent energy, vitamins, proteins, carbohydrates, we have energy erg—we do not know what they are. We know that in some mysterious way we live, and the greatest mystery of life is that we live.

The same mysterious Godhead with which St. Augustine was confronted, is before us today, only we bring a different type of mind to bear upon it. Today's intelligent person, once he has learned to emancipate his mind from cults, finds it impossible to completely accept without proof or evidence, merely upon ecclesiastical authority, all the things that once could be easily believed. And yet, what we want today is not a disbelief. Man cannot exist without belief standing in the midst of the universe; he cannot exist without ideals, without dreams. Whatever is said about the world we live in, most people live in a dream. For they live in what the world means to them, and not what the world really is.

All people who have helped mankind have believed in the substance of things unseen. Then why should we have any trouble being Augustinians? Why should we not go along and believe as he did? Why should we not prostrate ourselves before the Throne of Majesty and admit we are poor sinners? One of the reasons is we have a new concept of God. We no longer see God as the Father of sinners, but rather as the Father of Truth, Virtue. To our mind it is inconceivable that Divine Wisdom should bless anything or create anything in a condition of relapsed faith. The God we see in our minds today—it is our
best selves mirrored back to us—cannot be conceived as Deity that rejoices in the misery of its creatures. The wool shirt and flagellation are no longer part of our belief.

Yet we can see in the writings of Augustine evidences of Truth. We know the reason he has survived is because he has said things we all believe, but he has said them in ways we do not believe. When he personalizes God we are no longer able to follow him. He did not know we would build great instruments to gaze into space. He did not know our minds would ever grow up to the place where we could conceive of a purely impersonal universe. We have simply outgrown some of his concepts just as surely as tomorrow will outgrow ours, and what to us today seems adequate will tomorrow be regarded as primitive half-beliefs. The world moves. Galileo on bended knee was forced to recant when he said the world moves, but he whispered under his breath, even as he recanted, “It still does move.” In nearly 1500 years since Augustine lived, the world has moved forward. It has moved into knowledge that he did not have, it has moved into realization that he would have no part in. The old Bishop of Hippo, dying, heard the clanking of swords and spears of war. War still exists but the spears are gone. Everything that he knew has changed.

We have a new world, a new concept, a new realization, and in this our new world a new statement of faith is demanded. This world seeks not unbelief but a more adequate belief, not a rejection of spiritual things, but a progress, an evolution in spiritual matters consistent with the realization of our times. Our age demands ensoulment, it needs a religious soul to make it alive so it is not just marching in the ranks of dead years going by. It demands and requires restatement; but what do we have? We have the largest part of Christendom still geared to the 4th century. Every Sunday morning the teachings of the 4th century are being given to 40 million people in America.

Some beliefs transcend the ages. Philosophies can transcend them because they deal with principles. Theologies have to grow. They have to grow up toward philosophy. The principle of good and evil as operative in society still remains. The desirability of human error still remains. The Golden Rule is still the noblest covenant of man. But the theo-centric world which St. Augustine knew has gone. We may admire him and honor him, as we have other men, but we cannot permit him to dominate us, so that we go backward instead of forward. Augustinian belief carries us back to a very benighted time when thinkers were few and beliefs were all too numerous and truths all too obscured.

Two things the metaphysician and mystic can do. Either say St. Augustine knew more than he was able to explain, and therefore he should be given a new interpretation; or else he will acknowledge that Augustine belonged to his time, and we belong to another time.

The substance of things we know would shock St. Augustine, but it is not likely that we will give up what we know now within reasonable certainty, that there is no such thing as the theology, that Christianity is not the religion. A truly great religion, those who ridicule it must realize that through the ages Christianity has done much good as well as some harm.

Christianity is but one of a family of faiths, and so surely as trees grow together in a forest, so the beliefs of men grow upon the earth, and who shall say which tree is the greatest? We shall have to realize what Augustine did not realize, that Truth is not in the custody of facts, but in the custody of men. There is no religion on earth that can bestow it. The only thing any faith can do is help to fit the individual to the place where we could conceive of a purely impersonal universe. We have simply outgrown some of his concepts just as surely as tomorrow will outgrow ours, and what to us today seems adequate will tomorrow be regarded as primitive half-beliefs. The world moves. Galileo on bended knee was forced to recant when he said the world moves, but he whispered under his breath, even as he recanted, “It still does move.” In nearly 1500 years since Augustine lived, the world has moved forward. It has moved into knowledge that he did not have, it has moved into realization that he would have no part in. The old Bishop of Hippo, dying, heard the clanking of swords and spears of war. War still exists but the spears are gone. Everything that he knew has changed.

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raptured his efforts should be dominated only by his desire to protect and assist, allowing neither personal or impersonal hate to enter into anything he does.

St. Augustine has rested these many years. His dust has returned to the dust from which it came. His words have gone on to dominate his church. Let us fail.

Let us strive to correct the errors that were Augustine's. We are not waiting for God. We are preparing and building toward God with Light and Truth. In this we cannot fail.

(Condensation from a public lecture suggested reading: How to Understand Your Bible.)

Plan and Purpose

Those pioneers who are groping to find a way of preventing a third World War are undergoing some of the same kind of punishment that pioneers must endure.

Billy Mitchell was courtmarlawed by the military bureaucrats but they couldn't courtmarlaw his ideas. A bullet got Lincoln but it couldn't kill what he stood for.

So when people get funny about Henry Wallace and his quart of milk a day, it is part of the game. You can bury Vice President Wallace under a pile of ridicule and prejudice, but you can't bury the common sense that says people who are willing to work should have enough out of this world's goods to feed, clothe and shelter them.

If it is worth anything to try to make another war impossible, then it is worth the effort that men like Vice President Wallace, Secretary Hull, Undersecretary Welles, and a host of private citizens like Wendell Willkie are putting into it.

These men who are talking about it are groping. They have no elaborate blueprints. They do not have all the answers. That doesn't wear me down at all in believing that they are doing an important service and that they need all possible encouragement to go ahead.

These men are all vague. Of course they are vague. Any working arrangement that comes out of this war will have to be developed among the nations on our side. Nobody can be specific about methods at this time. We can be specific about the purpose.—Raymond Clapper

It is important to remember that nearly every personality described or discussed in the Bible is primarily a symbol and not an historical individual. The Christian Bible is the greatest book in English literature. But like most other great books, it must be approached with understanding, gentleness, impersonality, and a sincere desire to find truth.

First Principles of Philosophy

The first step in the organization of thought is to reduce the complexity of knowledge to a more or less simple program. The author has taught philosophy for twenty years to thousands of students.

Purposeful Living...

The first step in the organization of thought is to reduce the complexity of knowledge to a more or less simple program. The author has taught philosophy for twenty years to thousands of students.

Cut along this line; it will not injure the editorial contents of the magazine