

# The revival of personality

BY ERNEST HIRAM LINDLEY

I WISH to take for my text a quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson who about seventy five years ago said, "Things are in the saddle, and they ride mankind." And yet, within a very little while following that utterance he declared, "But the lightning which explodes and fashions planets is in him. On the one side elemental order, sandstone and granite (and he might have added, machines), and on the other part, thought, the spirit which composes and recompenses and decomposes nature. Here they are, side by side, God and Devil, king and conspirator . . . riding peacefully together in the eye and brain of every man."

A little while ago I rescued from the attic a book bearing a magical title. It happened to be a holiday edition. It was bound in silk and when I saw it again after the lapse of years I mourned the decadence and dilapidation of that silk binding. And then when I recalled the title and the author of a book who dominated the thought of men and women like yourselves thirty five or forty years ago, I said, "The binding is in better condition than the book and the author." The title of the book was *Heroes and Hero Worship*, and the author was Thomas Carlyle.

Do you know of any undergraduates nowadays making pious pilgrimages to Craigenputtock, that lonely farm in Scotland, the scene of some of the most creative activities of one of the greatest spirits of his time?

Do you know of anybody except specialists in the study of English Literature of that particular period who now as we used to, go down to Chelsea, to sit by the old fireplace where Carlyle and Tennyson smoked and talked.

The author of a great biography of a great poet said, "I am no hero worshipper." Today Carlyle and his poet, prophet, priest and king—what of them?—their mouths are stopped with dust. And in the opinion of some philosophers, the machines have overtaken us and ground us into paste. And yet, the yearning for the freedom of the individual is inextinguishable.

Even prior to the war, men were mak-

ing the machine the scapegoat. Our industrial civilization was to blame for the "lost individual" and for "submerged personality." And when the machine was not blamed, our philosophy of nature was the culprit. There was and is a philosophy of nature, of mechanism, based on the rigid old atomistic physics that held if you cannot divide an atom, then you have got something pretty rigid, all the way through, even including the composition of men's minds.

According to this view, laws of nature are rigid and immutable and man is merely a part of nature. And so the mechanistic physics dominated our thought and finally broke through into the realm of the mental and social sciences. And as a result, in psychology we have behaviorism—the reduction of everything that happens in a man, and to a man, and by a man, in terms of the secretion of his salivary glands, and the like. And a very important contribution to the objective study of human life it is.

Mechanism everywhere. A little while ago a friend remarked, "I have just read Jeans' new book on *The Universe About Us*. Our universe is now discovered to be so vast that it takes 200,000,000 years for the light traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles a second, to pass from one extremity of this universe to the other. In a universe like that, what does an individual amount to?"

A man standing near said, "That is a very interesting calculation of Mr Jeans'. But I would like to inquire, who invented the yardstick?"

Is there any evidence that men, in the cosmic drift just float into some sort of ether that gives them calculus? and the power to measure and to create machines that multiply their powers? Yet Bertrand Russell, a somewhat gloomy philosopher has said that there is a conceivable, a perfectly valid system of measurement that would prove that a man, a given man, was as large as the earth.

One man's brain—Einstein's for instance—does not bulk very large in terms of the earth—indeed it is some billions of times smaller than the earth—and yet,

men like Einstein across the centuries, have modified the character of this old earth considerably.

Napoleon, you remember, when the general returned with a defeat instead of a victory asked, "Why this defeat?" And the general answered, "The circumstances were against us." You remember what Napoleon said. "Circumstances? Napoleon creates circumstances."

And in these utterances of Emerson, and of Napoleon, and of this yearning of men for something else than a mere sharing in the life of animate and inanimate nature we have the most significant factor in our day, the revival of faith in the importance of individuals.

When the Great War came, this irresistible, this instinctive, wishful thinking of our race again asserted itself. You know how we all turned to the great man to lead us out of the wilderness, the man on horseback in that particular case, and he, failing to appear promptly, we turned to the great inventor, Edison. We would have him invent some way by which he could wipe out the enemy over night. And across the years, those terrible years of war, when the great man did not come, and the visualization of these huge masses of men, millions and millions, came to the consciousness, there was a hopelessness that any human mind could span and master and direct those armies to victory.

That disappointment was acute. But note—there would not be disappointment unless there was hope. Hope never springs out of what has already happened. A machine may treasure in itself the shocks and stresses and strains. Steel has a molecular memory like that, but no hope, no picture of anything better.

And here was this inextinguishable hope of men that the great man would come; that some dominant personality would lead us out. And when the great military leader came, leading our forces to victory there was a revival of faith in men. But this was followed by the Versailles Conference, and the Treaty. In view of the nature of that Treaty some men became despondent.

Men like Philip Gibbs said, "The idealism of the world is dead. We are crushed by materialism on masses of men." Mr Chase said, referring to machines, "We have a billion wild horses. Nobody has lassoed them; nobody has trained them."

Then a marvelous thing happened. A young man flew alone across the Atlantic and arrived in Paris, and all over the world men threw back their shoulders and looked at the sky as though they had done it themselves.

What was the miracle of the response to Lindbergh's flight? Not mere satis-

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joy Him forever! Oh, that the unexplored, unclaimed, arid lands of my soul might be conserved and utilized, and given back to Him who made them!"

There is the instinctive thirst of humanity. And it is the thirst that can be adequately quenched in Christ, and Christ alone.



## THE REVIVAL OF PERSONALITY

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faction in the achievement of youth, but a victory of a human spirit, of human personality and daring, over Nature. It was celebrated around the world as a victory for personality.

And there is Mussolini. Italy, desolated by the war, poverty-stricken, drifting, responded to the call of a man who knew where he was going. David Starr Jordan once said, "The world gets out of the way of a man who knows where he is going." And I am informed that Italy is a new Italy. Clean, industrious, wealthy, proud of itself and of what they call their manifest destiny. Because one masterful personality stepped into the breach.

And over in Czechoslovakia a little while ago they celebrated the birthday of their president, Marsaryk. And they think in Czechoslovakia that their new life as a nation today is due to one person, under the fire of whose inspiration their souls, conflicting and warring, have melted and flowed together into a new unity of national life.

Then just at this period came the flood of new biographies. Why be interested in biography if man does not count? Strachey led the way with his *Queen Victoria*, a critical realistic picture of a woman who ruled Britain for sixty years. Critical! He painted in the wrinkles where they were.

Then came the flood of less significant biographies, less critical, some of them sensational, many fictional, many of them frankly debunking, and they had a curious effect. First of all, people read them. And as a result, we have a new hero worship. We have rediscovered our great men.

George Washington can stand scrutiny, but the trouble with the Washington that you and I knew was that he was a steel engraving. Pastor Weems, and the early biographers had embedded the hatchet story so thoroughly into the tradition of Washington that every little boy who wished to be like Washington read that story of the paragon who could not tell a lie—this little modern wholesome boy, who wanted to be as good as he could under all the circumstances, to whom a lie might be "an abomination in the sight of the Lord,

but a very present help in trouble,"—this little boy was in despair at Weems' counsel of perfection. He could not worship a steel engraving, an impossibly perfect boy. But here come the biographers, stripping away all these encrustations of legend and letting us know what sort of man Washington actually was. And somehow he was flesh and blood and no harm done to his essential greatness. Mr Coolidge said, you remember, when a certain critical biography of Washington was called to his attention, as he looked out of his window at the White House, toward the Washington Monument, "I see the monument still stands."

Great men can stand scrutiny, and there is a contagion through contact with them if we can see them in the flesh. And therefore one of the great services of these fictional biographies, some designed to belittle the great man, had precisely the effect of magnifying the leaders of our race. So today there is a revival of personality and a new hope.

Some personalities indeed are in Hollywood: twelve million people a day go to see certain of these so-called personalities on the film, on the level of a certain kind of appeal which probably has not guaranteed any valuable kind of immortality. But it is "it."

There is today in business a tremendous emphasis on all of those background qualities, personal qualities, a great premium now paid for distinction not merely of intellect, not merely of executive ability, but distinction of individual excellence saturated with these magnetic qualities which make the individual's personality effective.

There never was a time in human history when so large a premium, perhaps, is being offered for personality in the workaday world as now.

Mr Stuart Chase has spoken of leisure, and I don't need to remind you that foremost, the hours of leisure are the golden opportunity for the enrichment of personal life. That is true even of students. Outside the class room, what happens between five p. m. and eight o'clock the next morning, is quite as important as anything that happens in the school room.

What of the university in all this?

Twenty five years span the chief period of the attempt to measure human ability and human achievement, and methods of teaching, and the like. This movement is of incalculable value to education. But no discriminating person has for a moment believed that these measurements were mass measurements for the sake of mass judgments; rather these measurements are to enable one to better understand the individual and

deal with him more intensively and intelligently. Such studies re-emphasize the transcendent importance of individuals.

Now what of higher education? Released from a good many bondages of the old physics, mechanistic and behavioristic trends, it is turning unmistakably to the intensive cultivation of the individual as never before. The Oxford plan, the honor courses, program, a host of other devices, and included, orientation, separate housing even where the Oxford plan in its completeness cannot be carried out—all of these are responses to the democratic conception, the new conception of leadership and of individuality.

Furthermore, the old aristocratic theory of leadership was that we have a very few voices and all the rest are echoes—just a few sulphides and all the rest of us bromides. A few universal geniuses,—Caesar, Napoleon, Washington,—and all the rest of us, followers.

Today we have the conception of specialized leadership. In the intricate life, social, industrial, commercial, that with its specialization of fields of activity, with more than 13,000 ways in which men may more or less honestly earn a living, the opportunity for leadership is as multiple as, not merely these vocations, but as the kinds of excellence that men find effective within these various fields, for their own lives and for the lives of others.

In studies of leadership made years ago by Terman he found that in a group of four or six children doing a certain sort of task would be one leader, and he would find leaders in other groups. He would shuffle those leaders and in the new circumstances and with the new task you have a new leadership. Contagion of example. And out of it grew the view that everybody has influence in some respect, and that somehow everybody must find an opportunity to lead and have unique success. And the qualities of great leadership carry with them the ability to follow faithfully and loyally those who excel in other lines. A great leader is always a great follower.

The university cannot define personality completely as yet. It is as elusive as the odor of grapes and yet we know through historic practice and the like that under certain conditions individuality and personality flourish.

There is no great development of personal life without rich personal life of teachers in the teaching—no other way but in the Incarnation—personality as reflected in the schoolroom or in the extra-curricular contacts of the student.

Today another great movement, that I must mention before closing, is the comprehension, the attempt to weave in-

to organic unity with the great scheme of higher education of the so-called extra-curricular activities. Just in proportion as we see the meaning of adolescence, youth, as of great bundles of instincts, hungers and thirsts, high and low, just as we recognize the legitimacy of every one of these instincts in its place, and in due proportion, has come the attempt to weave these trends and passions of youth, and lead them into captivity by the great intellectual condition of our race, to humanize and to intellectualize this heritage of the natural man.

And our youth of yesterday and until today fed on the current literature of the cave man, are turning unmistakably, of their own choice to that other great party in literature, the party of discipline, the party that recognizes that not only lust and anger and fear reflects the voices of extinction but triumphant generations that speak through youth, but also there is within us a regulative passion, a desire to put one's life in order, which comes down from a remote past. Man is the order-making creature. And this hunger for discipline is all about us, growing in intensity every since the backwash of the Great war.

This, then, represents the countermovement to the mechanization of life, and to the philosophy that grew out of it, and I cannot close without again quoting from that great representative thinker who represented the new freedom of this new country, Mr Emerson, who said, "We call these millions, men. They are not yet men, half engaged in the soil, pawing to get free. Man needs all the music that can be brought to disengage him. If love read love with tears and joy, if war with its scourge, if war with its cannonade, if art with its portfolios, if science with her telegraphs through the deeps of space and time can by loud taps on this tough chrysalis break its wall and let this new creature emerge erect and free, make way and sing paens, the age of the quadruped is to go out, and age of the brain and of the heart is to come in."

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### WHAT IS GOOD MOTHERHOOD?

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Mrs Ferguson's newspaper career was interrupted when the Fergusons sold the weekly and removed to Oklahoma City where Mr Ferguson assumed the vice-presidency of the city's largest bank. But during the years of enforced absence from the newspaper office which followed, she never lost her desire to write, and when G. B. Parker, now editor-in-chief of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, but then editor of the *Oklahoma News*,

invited her to write for that newspaper, she accepted.

So great was the success of her column that she was soon engaged to write for all Scripps-Howard newspapers—where it is read daily by thousands of men and women throughout the country. With the new freedom for which she used to campaign won, Mrs Ferguson has turned her attention to the manner in which woman has adapted herself to the new conditions and to the problems involved in the association of men and women.

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### STUDENT LIFE IN ZURICH

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men who are more or less serious about their work, for they come to the university to study more than to train themselves to live well; if they do both it's so much the better. But they fall down on one side as much as the Americans do on the other. My impression has been that the Europeans are better students, but poorer men. I don't think at all they are more intelligent than intelligent Americans, their book worms any wormier, or their Philistines any less Philistine. In fact it's as hard to get some one among the students to go to one of Schiller's plays here as it is to one of Shakespeare's at home. I have tried it and have had to go alone many a time.

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### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

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"I felt that the growth of the university would continue after my time. I remember certain people proposed a plan to pave the road directly back of the Administration building. I did not want to do this because I felt that some day the space there would be needed and used for beautiful buildings. Someday someone would build real buildings on the campus, not the little bungalows I had been building. Your beautiful library now stands where the paved street might have been.

"Many of the old landmarks have disappeared. Buildings which stand in their place are worthy of a fine institution. By the way, where is that old gymnasium? I always meant to tear the old thing down, but never got to it.

"During the war when the Student Army Training Corps was stationed on the campus, regulations were very strict. A student sentry refused to let me pass a certain section. I argued with him but he was determined that I was not to pass to see one of the officers. Finally he said 'who are you? Aren't you just one of the fellows helping around here?'

"That pleased me exceedingly. I always tried to be just 'one of the fellows helping around here.' I wanted first of all to preserve and build for the future. That faith I had that the university would grow into a great thing has been justified. I am happy to see old friends. Many of the faculty members on the platform with me were employed by me, or were teachers when I came to the university. I feel happy to be here."

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### OUR CHANGING VARSITY

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ment of philosophic concept concerning the nature of the human self.

The project method is based upon the principle of purposeful activity. Pragmatism, a philosophy of experience, advocating a psychology of purpose, gives support to this method. But is the assumption that the child is actually or potentially a purposive being a valid assumption?

The research of this dissertation is concerned with the discovery of the philosophical foundations of the concept of purpose.

The thesis stated above is first supported through historical evidence. Certain aspects of conflicting theories of education are examined in their relation to the concept of purpose. It is shown that philosophies have their issue in psychologies and thus become translated into educational theories. The thesis then serves as a basis for the larger problem.

Evidence for or against the validity of the purposive nature of the individual is sought in the conflicting theories of life, reality and knowledge as leading to the problem of the nature of the self. The point is reached where it seems justifiable that the individual is purposive.

In its historical approach the thread of purpose is traced from the earliest Greek philosophy to modern scientific and philosophic thought. Further investigation consists in a critical analysis of experience as a basis for determining the validity of the concept of purpose. This analysis includes both a study of epistemology as based upon the philosophy of Critical Realism, chiefly as advanced by Sellers, and of the categories as applied to the theory of Emergence. Purpose is thus discovered as an emergent quality of the self.

In the field of philosophy is discovered the foundation of the fundamentally important educational concept of purpose. The research has thus made explicit, that which was implicit in the pragmatic assumption of the purposive nature of the individual.

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### Roland Lycurgus Beck

Roland Lycurgus Beck, who obtained his A. B. degree from Oklahoma Baptist university in 1923 and his M. A. from the University of Oklahoma in 1926, was awarded a doctor of philosophy degree by the university at the June 7 Commencement. His research subject was "The Reliability and Validity of a Natural Test in English Composition for High School Seniors and College Freshmen." Dr. N. Conger of the Oklahoma state department of education, was invited to sit with the examining committee May 10. Doctor Beck was born in Thomas, Oklahoma October 4, 1900. He has served as professor of education and psy-