

Chapter 7

How to Appraise Spiritual Values

FROM any event of life it is possible to extract spiritual values. Whatever occurs, by taking the proper mental attitude toward it the character may be improved and the dominant vibration raised. And if the vibrations are sufficiently high they may affect substance of greater velocity than the astral and contribute to building a form on the spiritual plane. Course 3, *Spiritual Alchemy*, fully explains the technique employed in this, and indicates that all experiences are the ores of life from which soul values may be extracted. Yet it also points out that some of these ores are easily handled, that some yield precious metal only with difficulty, and that still others are so refractory that only the skilled spiritual alchemist can, with great effort, obtain anything of worth from them. It seems desirable, therefore, not merely to have a measure of spiritual values such as is afforded by the amount an experience contributes toward raising the dominant vibratory rate, but also to list a number of things from which spiritual values can be acquired with ease, and to indicate how these values may be obtained.

The cosmic alchemist is interested in all three dimensions of life. He is interested in them not merely as they affect himself, but as also affecting all mankind. It is his desire, in every way he can, to aid the rest of humanity to attain that superior development which is his own great aim. But what he can do to influence others to take the proper highway toward such development, as well as what he can do properly to direct his own progress, depends upon him having a clear idea of just what it is he seeks. As we shall presently see, life's values often are sadly muddled in the popular mind.

These values, as we have already discovered, have to do with length of life, with the breadth of its experiences, and with the height, or spirituality, of its experiences. Length and breadth are valuable in that both afford opportunity to make spiritual gains. From the standpoint of mankind, therefore, the individual who contributes to providing the necessities of life performs a spiritual service. But whether or not this activity contributes to his own spirituality depends entirely upon his motives and feelings in rendering the services. If he cares only for the physical reward derived from the service, and dislikes those he serves and perhaps has an inward enmity toward them, he has gained nothing spiritual. But if he has an actual desire to benefit others, and feels some glow of satisfaction in the thought of being a useful member of society, he has raised his vibratory rate at least a little, and thus has made spiritual gain.

In addition to these things which are merely useful in the maintenance of existence, there are other things which may or may not contribute to length of life, but which do contribute to its breadth. Religious exercises, poetry, music, dancing, moving pictures, radio programs, lecture courses, paintings, sculptures, fiction, architecture, decorative effects, politeness and many other things are not considered necessities of life; but they each and all add something to existence that makes life broader, and which may be utilized also to lift life to a higher spiritual level than that occupied by brute creation. Anyone, therefore, who contributes through these or other channels to the breadth of life is rendering a valuable service. But the effect on his own spirituality depends on whether, in performing the service, his motives and emotions are such as to increase or decrease his dominant vibratory rate.

Greatness is not synonymous with spirituality. It is measured not by the effect of the individual's actions on himself, but by their effect on others. We know very little about the private life and motives of Kepler, who formulated laws by which the movements of the bodies of the solar system can be measured, or of Einstein who in the velocity of light found a yard-stick for measuring the universe. Both of these men are great because each contributed something by which human life can be greatly broadened, and properly used can also be made to yield spiritual values. The measure of any individual's greatness is the degree to which he contributes to the length of life, breadth of life or height of life of other people.

Yet how often do we find even those who assume to be thinkers either attributing greatness to the acts of a man whose influence is devastating to others, or magnifying some small and inconsequential trait that to them seems repugnant, into a mountain that dwarfs some real and valuable accomplishment.

There are those even yet who look upon Napoleon with admiration. A man whose abilities, however great, were not devoted to benefiting his fellow man, but toward turning Europe into a human slaughterhouse for the gratification of his own personal vanity. Others there are who think of J. Gould, the wrecker of railroads, as a man worthy of emulation. And the financial giant of Wall Street who is able to corner some commodity, and thus make living harder for millions of his fellow men, is not without attractiveness in certain quarters.

Yet so long as selfish men are idealized, so long will people strive to be like them, to the detriment of the race. It becomes the duty of the cosmic alchemists, therefore, to set them forth in their true lack of worth; or better still, because the cosmic alchemist believes whenever feasible to work on the side of construction, it becomes his pleasure to set forth in the clear light of their great value the acts of those who are truly noble and great among mankind.

Men exercise their talents under the social conditions by which they find themselves surrounded. However much we may deplore the concentration of the wealth of the world in a few hands, we cannot but admire those individuals who acquire wealth in ways that add to the richness of others, lives, and then with their accumulated wealth perform vast services for the advancement of the race.

If the youth of our land must worship at the feet of material power, is it better that it make heroes of George Eastman and Henry Ford than do homage to, and strive to emulate, Al Capone or some other racketeer who impressed his will upon the public and long remained immune from punishment?

George Eastman contributed markedly to the education of the public. He

made it possible for almost everyone to take photographs. These photographs are informative, arouse interest and develop skill in their taking, and lead gradually toward a discrimination of artistic composition. Artistic effects obtained often arouse refined emotions in those who look at them, and thus tend to increase the dominant vibratory rate. The popularity of the camera has contributed to breadth of life and the spiritual progress of the world.

The development, perfection, and cost reduction in the production of movie film has given impetus to the motion picture industry. And the motion picture industry has markedly increased the power of education. It enables twenty million in the United States alone each day to see and hear the important happenings in all parts of the world, to see and hear artistic and dramatic presentations, and to have explained to them visually as well as audibly facts and their relations that otherwise would remain to them obscure. In slow motion they are able to see just how mechanical contrivances perform their work and just how growing things unfold. The moving sound picture is a tremendous force in practical and aesthetic education. By showing the people in one land just how the peoples of other lands live it assists in developing a spirit of cooperation among nations, as well as giving greater breadth to the lives of those who see and hear it. It lengthens lives through disseminating information on hygienic measures. And it is a medium through which people are led by gradual steps to an appreciation of beauty and refinement. It thus can readily be used as an agent through which spiritual values may be acquired.

Out of the productive activity which has so markedly advanced both still and moving picture photography, and thus benefited the world, George Eastman made a vast fortune. And having been keen enough to acquire it, he was also keen enough to spend it wisely; giving it away to establish educational centers, and to beautify and otherwise improve the community where live those whose labors, under his direction, were responsible for his success.

Henry Ford also was the product of the economic system under which he lived; one of its finest products. The popularity of the automobile has advanced the world mechanically, and through facilitating travel has greatly broadened life. Whether the numerous accidents it has brought are offset where length of life is concerned by otherwise improved health due to the facilities it has afforded for recreation is a moot question. But it has been an educational agent of great value, increased the enjoyment of many, and has led to a higher appreciation of the beauties and grandeur of nature. Those who otherwise would have had little contact with the out-of-doors, now, on their vacations, take to the open road and visit lakes and mountains and seashore, and fill themselves for the time being with the spiritual richness stimulated by majestic settings and glorious vistas.

Contact with nature of itself does not increase the spirituality. The individual, regardless of glorious out-of-door surroundings, may keep his mind filled with envious or lewd thoughts, or his desires may be so centered on killing some wild creature that he is oblivious of the beauties around him. His vibratory rates, and hence his spirituality, may thus be lowered. But there is more than usual opportunity for feelings to be stimulated that add to the spirituality. And there is reason to believe that the majority do make spiritual gain when their recreation takes them closer to nature.

Henry Ford accumulated vast wealth in supplying the world with something beneficial. But this wealth was not hoarded in idleness. It was used to increase production and lower the price of the product so that more people

could possess and enjoy it. It was used to shorten the hours and increase the wages of employees. It was used to give the Ford employee time in which, if he so desired, he could broaden and heighten his life, and to give others more opportunity also, through possession of means of travel, to both broaden and heighten their lives.

I have here mentioned two men who became very wealthy; not because they were wealthy, but because they used their wealth largely for the benefit of society. These are not isolated examples, as many others come to mind. But there are far more at the present day probably, who being very wealthy, are making no marked contribution to human betterment with their affluence. And in the popular mind the mark of distinction is all too faintly drawn between these two classes of influential men.

But when the people become energetic in their approval of those of wealth who contribute strikingly to human progress and happiness, and vigorous and loud-voiced in their disapproval of those who contribute nothing of value to society while accumulating money, and then use it solely for their selfish ends, we shall be on the road toward improvement.

Public opinion is a vast force, and so long as it tolerates and admires ruthless individuals who have no consideration for the welfare of others there will be a new crop of such monsters with every generation. But when society becomes thoroughly saturated with the idea that such individuals are ignoble as well as pernicious, and that the only real greatness is attained through contributing to the common welfare, the youth of the world will have a different ideal toward which to work. To express his Drive For Significance he will no longer wish to be a racketeer, or even one who oppresses others while remaining within the law. Instead, he will aspire to become a hero after the fashion of those illustrious men who are recognized to have made the world a better place in which to live.

Stressing the Inconsequential

Yet now, often, how slight and inconsequential a flaw is made to overshadow some truly great accomplishment!

George Washington, to the people of the United States, is a great patriot. Although opposed by almost insuperable obstacles he had the faith and vision to push on toward the founding of a nation that has contributed, in its ideals of freedom and its industrial developments, to world welfare. Not perceiving he had accomplished as much as he really had, toward the end he became somewhat bitter. But he was a man of true character.

One might think, in the light of the difficulties he surmounted, and the persistence with which he pursued worthy endeavors even when there seemed but the slightest hope of success, that trivial matters would have no power to tarnish his reputation. Yet not many years ago, when an ultra-realistic journalist revealed to a shocked public that there was no word of truth in the cherry-tree episode, and that following the custom of his contemporaries, Washington was not averse to a drink of liquor, his credit fell at least fifty per cent in the eyes of many unthinking people.

His personal habits were discussed by these as if they were the really important things about his life. Such people utterly fail to grasp the attitude of the cosmic alchemist, that a man's worth to society should be measured by what he accomplishes for the benefit of others.

What George thought and felt raised or lowered his spirituality. But whether he took a drink or did not take a drink probably neither added to nor detracted from that which he was able to accomplish. In fact, the personal

habits and mode of life that enables one individual to do his best work, due to the factors mapped in his chart of birth and their subsequent conditioning, are those that would hamper a differently constituted person. Washington probably lived according to the customs of his times, and tempered his method of life with such acts as he had found through experience enabled him to do his best work. And the really important thing is not whether he did this or that thing that had little influence over the welfare of the nation, but that he did something that markedly was to its benefit.

Still later there was a great furor because Dr. Brill, the eminent psychiatrist was going to read a paper before a meeting of his profession in which he analyzed the character of Lincoln and attempted to show that because Abe seemed to enjoy jokes which at present seem out of place in the best circles, there was a split in his personality. Some of Dr. Brill's colleagues protested the reading of the paper, and were highly indignant that he should dare suggest that there was anything not absolutely perfect in the character of America's best loved statesman.

Lincoln was a man of the people. His early life was spent among the rugged people who were carving a place to live from the wilderness. The men with whom he associated in the Blackhawk war and as a country store-keeper liked rough stories. They would have been repelled by an expurgated version. Lincoln found that ability to entertain such men was an avenue to popularity. He told the kind of stories these men liked, and he told them unusually well. They liked him because he gave them pleasure. They elected him captain.

As a store keeper, he always had a joke on tap. The people who came to his store liked rough jokes. They considered him very clever. Consequently, he was appointed postmaster, and later elected to the Illinois Legislature.

The people of that time had become suspicious of the polished individuals at Washington who properly had been accused of corruption and graft. Lincoln had earned a reputation for ability and honesty; and had become famous for the aptitude with which he could tell a story either to amuse his listeners or to illustrate a point. His roughness in speech, in dress and in general appearance, as contrasted with those of the slick individuals they wished to remove from power, gave them confidence in him. But in addition to confidence, his constituents liked him because he gave them the kind of pleasure they enjoyed. It is doubtful if Lincoln would have reached the White House had it not been for his jokes and story telling.

Coarse jokes and rough stories lower the vibratory rate and decrease the spirituality. On the other hand, the feeling of sympathy for the downtrodden, and the effort to relieve distress, for which Lincoln was noted, increase the vibratory rate and increase the spirituality. People commonly have different habit-systems, some of which tend to decrease the spirituality and some of which tend to increase the spirituality. But we here are not trying to strike a balance between the lowering and raising influences in Lincoln's life to determine the height of his spirituality. Instead, we are interested in him from the viewpoint of the cosmic alchemist.

Lincoln was an honest man, a sincere man. He was sympathetic and kind to those in distress, even to his own personal disadvantage. And he was the instrument through whom the institution of slavery in the U. S. was abolished. The thing of real importance to all thoughtful people is not whether he had several personalities, whether some of his jokes were in poor taste, or to what extent he compensated in his stories for lack of harmony in his domestic

life. The thing that really counts, in so far as others than himself are concerned, is that he contributed by greatness of character, and by his acts, in a pronounced manner to human welfare.

A lady of my acquaintance once said that she had always thought of Thomas A. Edison as a great man until she learned that he chewed tobacco. But what has chewing tobacco to do with it? At worst it contributed some small unpleasantness to his immediate associates. To paraphrase Lincoln's remark when he received the complaint that Grant drank whiskey and made the rejoinder that he wished the other generals would find out what brand of whiskey Grant used so they could have a few victories also; I am tempted to say that if it would contribute to their doing something worth while it might be well for those who criticize the unimportant habits and actions of great men to acquire these habits.

The really important thing about Edison is that he lightened the burden of labor for mankind more than any other man who has ever lived, and every civilized person on earth lives with less hardship because of him.

Nor are such remarks and viewpoints of depreciation confined to the uneducated. A few years ago I attended a meeting of scientifically inclined persons at a lecture devoted to the work of Luther Burbank. The speaker holds several scientific titles, and was personally acquainted with the plant wizard. He gave a very complete account of the important flowers, vegetables and fruits that we now enjoy that were developed by that remarkable man. But he took much pains to stress the great imperfections of Burbank's character. These great defects, according to this speaker, were two in number, and detracted seriously from what otherwise would have been really a worthy life.

These two derogatory traits of Burbank were that he believed in Spiritualism, and that he used profane language. It never occurred to the lecturer that Burbank's ability to use extra-sensory perception not only convinced him of the reality of communion with those on the inner-plane, but also made it possible for him to select from innumerable seedlings that to those who worked for him looked exactly alike, the few which when mature would have characteristics in the direction he was seeking. Instead, he looked upon him as a simple minded, superstitious, vulgar and uncultured man. Yet Burbank had warm friends in all parts of the world, and he contributed more than any other man who ever lived toward a better human food supply, and toward placing in people's hands new and more beautiful flowers to decorate their gardens.

Who are we to judge his motives? The many with whom he corresponded found him loveable. Did the profanity which he expressed to release his emotions when all did not go as he wished lower his vibratory rate more than the stored up irritation which many others feel? To what extent was the lowering of spirituality due to profanity offset by the kindness he felt when he sent seeds and other help to acquaintances in various parts of the world? We cannot accurately judge another's spirituality, because we do not know what goes on inside him. But we can judge of his greatness. That can be appraised by his contribution to human welfare.

It may be that on occasions the sensitive ears of some of Burbank's associates were shocked by his language; but such pain could have been experienced only by a few. Yet everyone who eats vegetables, and everyone who has flowers or looks at the blossoms of others, in the whole civilized world, has benefited by Burbank's labors.

I think this tendency to belittle actual accomplishment and magnify the

unimportant, but slightly disagreeable trifles needs energetically to be discouraged. I am inclined to think that youngsters who have pictured to them a character free from all blemish—an idealized George Washington or Lincoln—know in their own hearts that they could not be so perfect in all ways as these men are usually represented. They are given the impression that no one can be great unless he is a paragon in every respect. Realizing that they cannot become such examples of perfection, they become discouraged from attempting worth while accomplishment. If they were given a truer picture; that in spite of many an unimportant blemish a man often is able to perform a signal service in the onward march of humanity, they would be heartened to effort.

As a matter of record, the conditions under which men perform their highest labors are unusually varied. Astrological influences, the conditioning factors that early in life give a set to their emotional reactions, their physical responses to certain environments, and a wide range of other things often contribute in a marked manner to what men can do.

I know a writer of "best sellers" who spends a long period thinking out the plot and details of a novel. But when he feels moved to start the actual writing, he hardly stops to eat or sleep until it is finished. Unquestionably he has injured his health by this method. He has written on occasions for forty-eight hours without sleep, and with only a bite to eat now and then; has written until he fainted from exhaustion, fell from his chair unconscious, and had to be packed off to bed and a physician called. As a result of this method his health is poor his wife is worried and harried all the time he is thus writing, and his immediate associates suffer in various ways. But he turns out reading matter that not only conveys a real message to those who read it, but which sells often over a million copies. From the standpoint of society it is unimportant that he is now a millionaire, that his health has failed, or that on the occasions when he is actually writing he makes himself and several others quite miserable. The important thing is that he has given enjoyment and a fine outlook upon life to millions of those who have read his books.

Personally I believe in temperance. Having no use for tobacco, alcohol in any form, riotous living, or any kind of stimulants, I feel confident their use would cut down the volume and quality of my work and detract from the quality of my life. But in my birth-chart there is plenty of fire, and enough air to make it burn well. I have never felt the need of anything artificial to give me the impetus to work. But am I to judge all others by myself? How about the individual who has little fire in his chart, has a sluggish circulation, low blood pressure, and a general tendency toward inertia? Or how about the man who has so much fire he has to quench it to keep from burning himself out? As to these individuals I cannot say. I would counsel them to the temperate mode of life that I have found generally best for others and which I know is best for myself. But if the exceptional individual can add something of value to the world only under some mode of life that is different from mine, should I grumble if he lives in that manner, provided he injures no one but himself?

I do not know whether or not James Whitcomb Riley drank to excess. But if it so chanced that he could write only when under the influence of liquor, and that without liquor we should have been deprived of his homely verse, I, for one, am glad that he was occasionally drunk.

Such a statement, I quite realize, places me open to the criticism of the unthinking, conventional mind. But my point is that whether or not Riley imbibed spirits freely has no lasting influence on mankind; while the soul-

The Really Important Thing

stirring melodies which he left have lightened the hearts of innumerable people. Whether Riley's emotions when he wrote and read them raised his vibratory rate more than enough to offset the other influences of any dissipation in which he may have indulged relates to the spirituality of Riley. But the emotions they arouse in others measurably add to their spirituality. They are a lasting contribution to the advancement of the human race. The thing of real importance in a person's life, in so far as others are concerned, is to what extent he detracts from, or adds to, their welfare.

I think this point can best be illustrated by a story about a Jew. I do not select the Jew as better or worse than the members of other races, but because it is the custom to use a Jew in any story of money made by sharp practice.

This particular Jew, the story goes, was asked by a friend who came to visit him, why he looked so worried. The Jew then went on to explain that twenty years previous, when still in his youth, he had been tempted, and had fallen from the orthodox faith to such an extent that he had eaten a piece of pork. Since that day he had been haunted by the immensity of his transgression, the taste of that one piece of pork still lingering in his memory; and he could not free himself from remorse.

His friend sympathized with him, and went on to say that he had supposed the worried look arose from financial troubles. The Jew, at the mention of finances, brightened immediately, rubbed his hands together in an expression of enjoyment, and revealed to his friend that on the contrary he had recently been unusually fortunate. He had purchased a hotel at a very low price because it was infested with bedbugs; and then, by keeping the knowledge of the bedbugs from a prospective customer, he had been able to sell it at a profit to himself of fifty thousand dollars.

Many people are similar to the Jew; their conscience would harass them for years at the breaking of some trivial convention that really injured no one; but within the conventions and within the laws of the land, any injury to another, howsoever serious, would be a cause of no regret. They are trained in conventions, and in obedience to their laws, but all too often they have no training in the appraisal of true spiritual values.

Legislation is valuable in keeping the actions of certain individuals within some bounds; but no system of legislation can be devised that will prevent an unusually shrewd man from taking advantage of an unusually dull person. Legislation offers some protection, but in spite of it the strong can still prey on the weak. To obey the laws of the land is not sufficient to be spiritual. If by your actions others are injured, even though you are well within the legal requirements, the motives behind those actions lower the dominant vibratory rate and decrease the spirituality. To be spiritual you cannot be callous, but must make a sincere effort to help others.

Spirituality Implies Positive Action

Do not think, as is the widespread belief in the Orient and in some Christian circles, that spirituality is a negative quality. To retire from contact with your fellow man, except through it you are able to benefit him, is not spiritual; it is just plain selfishness. To wear a frown, to refrain from all pleasure, and to lead a narrow life, conduce neither to length nor breadth of life, nor does it increase the dominant vibratory rate and thus the spirituality.

Puritanical Christians strove for a rigid austerity here so they might escape the pain of hell and enjoy the pleasures of heaven in the hereafter. But if the escape from pain is good hereafter, why not now? And if enjoyment is good in heaven, why not good on earth? So long as no one is injured by enjoy-

ment, why should it be shunned? If it is a type which lowers the dominant vibratory rate it is unspiritual. But if it is of a kind that adds either length or breadth to life and does not lower the vibratory rates it has value, and if it tends to refinement of the emotions it is spiritual.

I have now mentioned a few men who have contributed in a marked manner to human welfare; and earlier in the course I have made some mention of those things which tend to increase, through better economic conditions, the length and breadth of human life. It is time, therefore, that we turn our attention to some details of the objects and conditions of environment that most readily tend to stimulate and cultivate the loftier, finer emotions, as distinct from those lower and coarser that we share with brute creation.

Again it must be pointed out that, in so far as the individual is concerned, a thing is spiritual or unspiritual as it evokes in him higher or lower vibratory rates. The effect of any object or situation, therefore, on one person may be entirely different than on another person. The spiritual alchemist will have thoughts and develop emotions that contribute to his spirituality under circumstances that beget only gross animal passions in the common man. Our appraisal of the value of things from the standpoint of stimulating and assisting man's spirituality, therefore, will be made on the basis of the ordinary person's reactions.

The average run of mankind experience certain sensations, certain emotions and certain thoughts when brought into contact with stimuli of a definite kind; and these common reactions determine whether or not the stimuli in question are beneficial or the reverse to man's spiritual advancement.

Let us turn, therefore, from man's vocation and his other activities through which he should do something to benefit his fellows, to the various other activities and contacts which contribute to his experiences with life. At once, because serious and concentrated application to work calls for it, we think of his recreation. The business man not only applies himself to his calling, but to find relaxation from it, frequently turns to sports. He is a golf enthusiast, attends prize fights, drives a car, or goes to races.

Because of a certain odium attached to them, due to the rough crowd, due to the gambling and carousing of some who attend them, and because some of them are conducted in a brutal manner, the unthoughtful person would quickly reply, if asked, that nothing spiritual can come from our sports. But sports may be conducted in such a manner, and some of them are, as not to arouse coarse or brutal feelings, but on the contrary, to stimulate an appreciation of graceful and effective activity, of alert intelligence, and of fair play toward even a successful rival.

Good sportsmanship has become synonymous with giving the other fellow his just dues, even if it means the loss of what one is striving to gain. In a contest watched by others, these others identify themselves and their interests with one side as against its opposition. If their sympathies and desires are not thus intensely partisan, they get little pleasure or excitement from the contest. But to the extent they identify themselves with one side against the other, do they experience, vicariously, the thrills of the contest.

Under these circumstances they expect the contestants with whom they have merged interests to conduct themselves in the same manner they would if they had the skill and were in the contestants, place. Through attending sporting events the public has become so thoroughly conscious of good sports-

Stimulating the Spiritual

Spirituality Through Recreation

manship that it voices its disapproval of any unfair practice on the part of its favorite as quickly as if the unfair practice had been adopted by an opponent. Let us give some credit to our national sport, baseball, for educating people to a more spiritual emotional reaction.

And the emotional reactions that have been conditioned toward fair play and honorable conduct in baseball, football and golf, exert also a powerful influence toward similar fair play in all the contacts of life. The man who develops a sense of good sportsmanship during his recreational hours, is likely more and more to adopt an attitude of good sportsmanship in his domestic relations and in his business life. Not only does he scorn to take advantage unfairly of others, but he praises true ability wherever found. Instead of whining or running away when his affairs go wrong and hardships are at hand, he faces them with resolute courage, because that is the sporting thing to do.

It is a good sign, I am sure, when some opposing player through phenomenal skill and brilliance snatches the victory from the home team, to see that not only the visitors, but also those who most excitedly have been urging the home team to victory, rise in a great ovation. They are downhearted at their loss, and some of them, no doubt, have lost money as well as their pride—for sports still have an unspiritual side—but in spite of such loss and disappointment, the home people rise as a man to do homage to their opponent who has exhibited superior skill.

Superior ability should receive recognition; for the advance of mankind along every line is made possible by the exercise of unusual talent. Not only should there be, as encouraging each individual to develop and use his abilities to the utmost, an emotion of enthusiastic pleasure when such superior ability is displayed, but the emotion of joy in a contest is quite appropriate to the forward movement of mankind.

Life is a series of contests; and it becomes far more effective and enjoyable when these contests are approached as a game, a game to be played fairly according to all the spiritual rules, to be played with utmost energy to obtain the victory, and without whining and self-pity when there are temporary, or even more permanent, defeats. Every situation is a contest in ability to solve the problem of how best to conduct oneself toward it. Every difficulty and hardship is an opponent to be defeated. Good sportsmanship, which is encouraged by the right kind of recreational interests, makes for a more useful and a richer life.

Contests may be, and often are, brutal. In the measure that they engender cruel and brutal emotions in those who witness them, they are unspiritual. It certainly is unspiritual to take joy in the suffering of either man or beast. But the individual who voluntarily and joyfully undergoes some pain and temporary suffering in his effort to vanquish an opponent is seldom an object of pity. People admire his courage; and courage is a fine thing to cultivate. Mankind needs plenty of it in its conquest of the forces of nature.

Almost everything we do is a contest with something or someone. Everywhere there is competition. The cosmic alchemist competes with others in his efforts to aid human progress. This spirit of contest is not to be deplored; for competition is the method Nature has used throughout in the development of more perfect forms. It is doubtful if any other method is quite so effective. But these contests need not be struggles in which one individual destroys or punishes another. Instead, they should be contests to contribute most toward human life and happiness.

There is an aspect of witnessing contest games that is not altogether ben-

eficial. In some an attitude may be developed in which struggle is experienced, with all its emotional reactions, only vicariously. That is, experiencing hardship and contest only through sympathy with others who actually and physically engage in it may, under certain circumstances, create an attitude toward life in which the actual facing of difficulties is increasingly avoided. Such an individual may become so engrossed in his emotional reactions that he feels no need of actual events to satisfy his longings.

This, however, is not the fault of the sport; but that of any individual who lives too exclusively in his emotions. Emotions should energize appropriate actions. It is possible to cultivate a condition in which emotions are permitted to pass without stimulating to accomplishment; but this is due to the formation of inadequate habit-systems in which the energy that otherwise would drive to accomplishment is dissipated; much as an auto stalls while the engine is running if the clutch be disengaged.

Then again, in such sports as are not based upon contest, symmetry, grace, coordination and harmony of movement are factors to call forth admiration. And form, as it is called, is essential to success in all athletic pursuits. This so-called form is an expression of greater perfection; and perfection is that toward which man should strive. Such activities, therefore, cultivate a habit of striving for superiority, a habit which readily can be employed for spiritual ends.

The gambling which is associated with many sports detracts from their usefulness. Not that taking a chance is unspiritual; for all through life when called upon by necessity to do so man should have the courage, without flinching, to take whatever hazards are required. But gambling is not just taking a necessary chance. On the contrary, it has for foundation, and tends to cultivate one of the basest, and another of the most pernicious of human traits. When successful, gambling usually takes from another without giving adequate compensation that which makes the other poorer. It therefore cultivates the ignoble trait of attempting to benefit at the expense of others. And even when no one is made poorer by it, it cultivates the tendency which, if it takes a strong hold, totally unfits the individual to fulfill his responsibilities to society. It cultivates the pernicious desire to get something for nothing.

As to drinking and coarse talk, these do not of necessity belong to sport. But wherever found they are decidedly unspiritual. Vulgar language coarsens and degrades. Liquor, on the whole, tends to the stimulation, not of spiritual tendencies, but of base propensities and animal desires. It also tends to break down that which man, throughout his evolution, has been at most pains to build, and upon which rests most of his superiority. It tends to break down self-control. In so far as liquor coarsens the thoughts, excites the animal passions rather than the nobler impulses, and in so far as it lessens self-control, it is unspiritual in its effect. There may be those who need it in small quantities to do their best work, but any tendency toward drunkenness is certainly the opposite of spiritual in its common effects.

Life differs from death in that the former implies activity and consciousness, and the latter lack of them. Do not think, consequently, that not to do this and not to do that is spiritual; for in fact it is but the absence of life. How shall there be spirituality without life to develop it? No doubt it is true, as so often complained, that some moderns rush through life at such a tremendous pace that they destroy themselves; burn themselves out, as it were. But my own

**Why Gambling
Is Unspiritual**

**Education
Should
Never Cease**

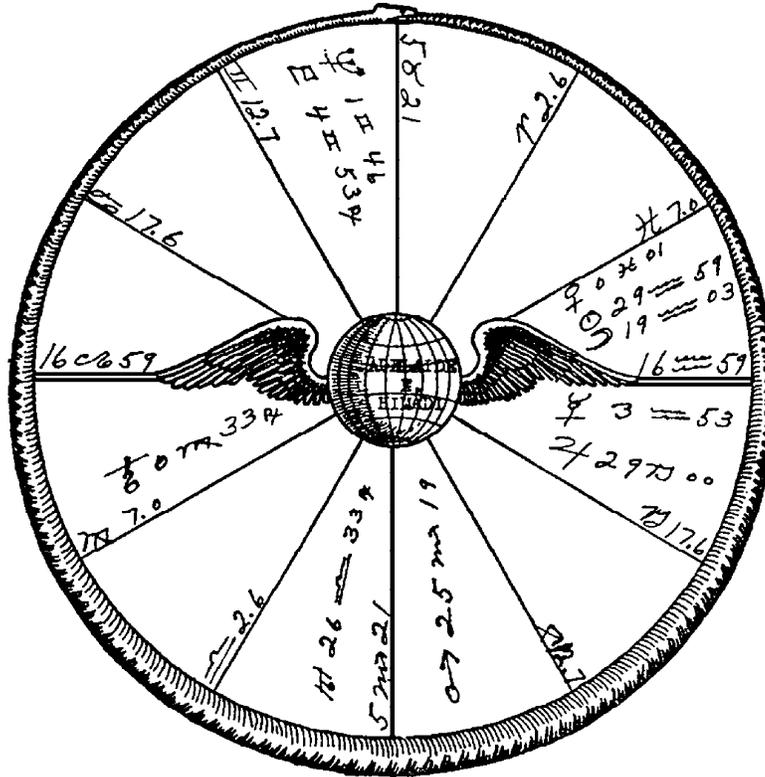
observation is that far more people placidly and passively drift through life, doing very little they are not compelled to do. They thus fail to gain breadth for their lives that comes only through varied activities and mental and emotional contacts; breadth that may be employed to acquire the spiritual treasures that so abundantly are at hand.

There is such a thing as over-work and such a thing as over-play; and dissipation quickly drains the vital forces, leaving only ashes where spirituality might have bloomed. Each one must experimentally determine just how much physical, mental and emotional activity he can stand without detriment to his health and length of life. To live below this maximum is a sad waste of opportunities. We can only be of greatest service to others, and can only attain the utmost in our own mental and spiritual advancement, when we cease to be negative and cultivate habit-systems that find joy in energetic application to every situation of life.

Just as an example, while an increasing number of people take vacations and travel, many more could do so but for their listlessness. Do you think listlessness is spiritual? It is merely a lack of interest in life; and no one can get the most out of life for himself or others who is bored with it. Nor would I mention this so emphatically were it not that usually it is the direct result of the development of pernicious habit-systems and, as explained in detail in Course 14, *Occultism Applied to Daily Life*, can be changed by the development of different habit-systems.

Then again, from the attitude of some at commencement exercises, one might be led to believe that finishing high school, or finishing college is the completion of education; when in fact, as the common expression implies, it is but the beginning, not merely of putting into practice what has been learned, but of learning. One might think also that education is comprised merely of cramming the head with facts. Facts are essential, but of quite as much importance is the education of the emotional reactions. Not only do our feelings more than our intellects determine how we behave when confronted with each situation, but they influence the fortune or misfortune the thought-cells attract into our lives and determine the dominant vibratory rate, and hence our spirituality.

Neither mental nor spiritual education should cease at any period. When we no longer serve others and no longer gain information and have emotions that broaden our lives or elevate them we have truly ceased to live. But until the fires of vitality burn so low that no strength is left and the body is on the road to disintegration there is no necessity to cease interest in things, no necessity to abandon physical and mental activity, and no necessity to refrain from joyous emotions. With advancing days the range of mental comprehension should increase. The type of physical activity, no doubt, will change from time to time, but there should still be an eagerness to do something. And because of the long years in which the emotions have been educated there should be a keener appreciation in age of the things that can be employed to raise the dominant vibratory rate and thus increase the spirituality; a keener appreciation, for instance, of all that is beautiful in literature, music, art and nature.



ADELAIDE E. HIMADI

February 18, 1890, 4:18 p.m. LMT. 9E. 45N.

Data given by her personally.

1913, registered pharmacist: Venus sextile Jupiter r

1916, married: Venus sextile Mercury r.

1936, interested in astrology: Sun semi-square Neptune r.

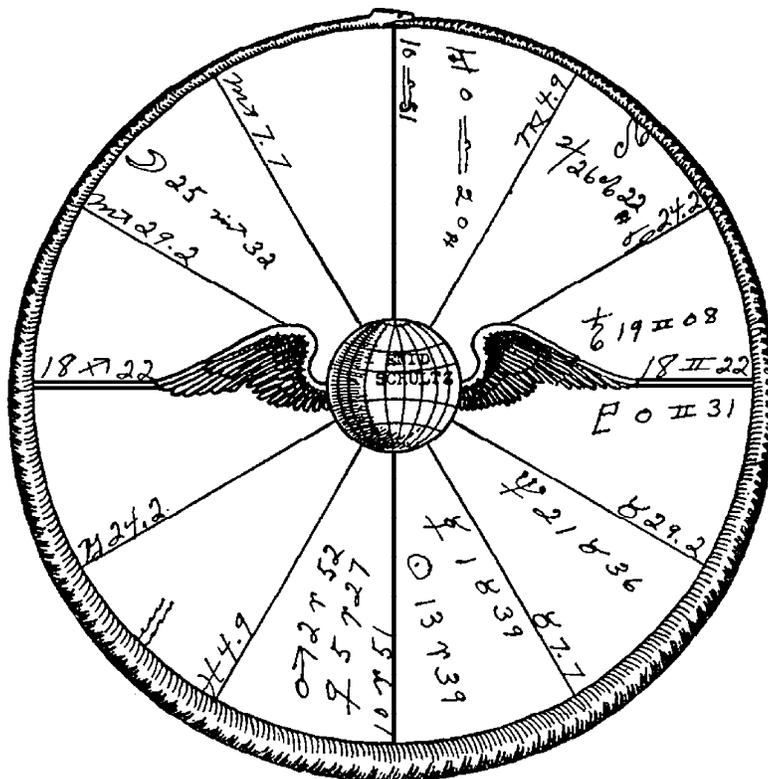
1937, studied with C. of L.: Venus sextile Sun r.

1941, ordained C. of L. teacher; opened C. of L. Center in New York: Venus semi-sextile Pluto r.

1943, ordained C. of L. minister: incorporated and became president of The Church of Light Incorporated of New York: Mercury opposition Uranus r.

1944, Hermetician: M- C. inconjunct Jupiter r.

1944, Aug. 20, eldest son killed in flight over Japan. Inner plane experiences just before and after this event confirmed belief in life after death: Sun opposition Uranus p.



ENID SCHULTZ

April 2, 1885, 12:00 p.m. 92W. 42N.

Data given by her personally.

1903, honor student, won 4-year college scholarship: Sun conjunction Mercury r.

1911, president dramatic club: Mercury conjunction Venus p.

1928, began teaching astrology: Venus trine Uranus p.

1930, for several years had seen C. of L. emblem, now saw it for first time physically and instantly recognized it as her way to truth: began studying B. of L. Lessons: Venus conjunction Pluto r.

1934, minister C. of L.: Sun conjunction Pluto p.

1936, Hermetician: Mercury semi-sextile Venus p.

1943, opened first Seattle C. of L. Center: Sun sextile Venus r.

1943, Center moved to larger quarters; elected member C. of L. Board of Directors: Sun trine M.C. r.

