

REINCARNATION

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THE KEYS OF FATE

When the stream of life flows in quiet routine the choices of action are minor and men may school themselves to full familiarity with the narrow way in little things. They may make strong their convictions as to the principles of action. But when storms come—storms of emotion, of thought and of action—and when the guidance of stars and harbor lights and headlands is but feeble, then do they have before them the moment for great choosings. It is so with nations as with individuals.

At such times Fate dangles her keys of fortune above the eyes of men. If they are seen and used,—the gates may be opened that lead the way to fair progress.

What are these keys? They are those crucial bits of knowledge that denote and define, as with a finger of fire, the lesson which The Law would teach for the very hour that is upon us.

What is the lesson of this moment—the one that The Great War is teaching and will enforce? It is that *the world of nations is one*. The nations must combine to limit wars, to enforce agreements by treaty and to prevent the destruction of the little nations, the small bits of races and languages that lend color and variety to our world.

This recognition must be theoretical, but, far more, it must be practical. Too bad that America did not protest the despoiling of Belgium! Grievous that the *Lusitania* outrage was glossed over by a timorous administration that sought to avoid trouble.

Now are at hand many opportunities for men and organizations among the Teutonic nations to descry the dangling keys, to seize and use them. They have the opportunity to see where crucial wrongs were done, to see beyond the agony of their country's warfare and to recognize the major truth. It is the violation of the *great* truth of the Law that will determine the worst of karmic debts upon the Teutons.

If but a small minority, or such a body as the socialists, of those nations will protest and, if need be, suffer, the future fate of their countries will be far less sad, in this and in their subsequent national incarnations, than would be the case if but one crushing, ruinous purpose continues to drive on the unfortunate nations that are so sadly misreading the signs of the times and running counter to The Great Leading.

W. V-H.

THE STRUGGLE

"Oh, little seed, quite lost in the dark and sullen mould, why do you struggle so, and throw your fragile rootlets forth to twist and twine, tortured and pinched, the resisting earth to split and squeeze aside? Cold and daunting are the depths you seek to pierce. And even though your young sprout shall break the crust above, softened by the sweetening rains of spring, and your strong and ambitious trunk and flowering leaves shall grace the landscape's side,—what use?

"For every greening Spring, that fills your expanding branches, lush with fat sap, the heated winds of Summer yet shall scorch and burn, and browning Autumn nip and chill; then shall the frost-begotten pains drive your life back straight to the heart of yourself again, tortured by the increasing coldness of the air until the death trance of the Winter's numbness, stiff and leaf-bestripped, shall hold your crackling limbs,—a blackened-looking skeleton against a frozen sky,—dead till the growing pains of Spring begin again. And round and round the ceaseless change to do, with little pleasure and much pain, conscious meanwhile, that steadily an ever growing rot or failure of the roots, surely and stealthily is weakening your proved and high flung strength—till at the last, you fall. And to the rich mould that bore and enriched your life, you add enrichment. Or else, struck down by man-borne axe, mangled and mutilated, your limbs left carelessly about, your strong trunk ripped and torn, is scattered among the haunts of Nature-spoiling man, perchance to be painted with foul oils and

crude colors, or smeared with burning lime, split with fierce nails to make an humble and obscure part of some evil-smelling human habitation in which the breezes of the forest never blow sweetly. Why, little seed, these driving energies displayed? Why not in peace and still quiet await the inevitable end without these struggles?"

From out the forest came a still whispering, clear and clean, a thousand little seed voices, talking from the trees they hung upon, or from the grassy coverts where, hidden, others lay, even from underneath the ground. A thousand seed-lets strung upon the Soul Cord of one, and speaking with one voice:

"It is the Law, the Law by which we win our way from separated state to Union. For we our Master recognize. Do you, oh Man?"

Maud G. McDonald.

FROM A LETTER

The printed letter sent you embodies what appeared to me a suitable ground-work for an enquirer. I had in my mind particularly the cases of those who, like yourself, are "hungry for some spiritual anchor which the church does not afford."

The two great clarifiers of human problems are Reincarnation and Karma, or, as I should prefer to call the latter, the Law of Consequence—the idea being that everything is the consequence of what has preceded it, and that whatever happens to us, living or "dead," will be the consequence of our own actions. The idea that

a dying, wicked man's soul may be 'saved' just because he believes something and happens to be in a certain frame of mind at the time, is grotesque.

When one gets the idea that a man has really got to "work out his own salvation" on a scientific and reasonable basis, as it were, and that he has a great number of recurring lives to do it in—to get better and better in—and that in the end he cannot fail, one begins to get a real basis of reason and common sense to rest upon, backed up by a conviction of the ultimate justice of the Great Source of all things and beings.

The divine Wisdom has its heart side and its side of pure reason. It has the knowledge side, and the mystic side, in which the witness comes, not from books, or priests, or assertions, but from within,—when a man knows that things are true, not because they are proved to his physical reason, but because they are proved to a higher reason which operates from within, and is independent of the physical brain. A man gets spiritual anchorage when he gets this spiritual witness, but, failing that, he can get an intellectual anchorage, which sets doubts at rest, and makes his way plain,—not easy to travel, perhaps, but still with a definite, accepted goal.

Naturally, when a man has been in intellectual and spiritual darkness for half a century and his eyes are opened, he sees things "as trees walking": the things will be strange to him because unaccustomed and unexpected; but his vision will get steadier presently, and he will be able to investigate the things he sees, and get them in their true proportion and value.

As you will gather from my printed letter, I was, like yourself, in the wilderness till I met the Wisdom teachings. These teachings have made the rough places smooth for me, and have provided a key for the great puzzles of life and death and destiny.

John Hawkes.

LEARNING LIFE'S LESSONS

Many are the theories that have been expounded in answer to the ever recurring question of humanity, "To what end is life?" Philosophers and scientists have used it as their basis for exhaustive research and study. Thinkers of all ages have delved deep for the solution of the elusive mystery of life. To the less serious and unthinking masses of men the same query comes in a simpler form. It is a vague wonder that would know what lies beyond. Theories have differed widely and the majority of men feel that on this question there is no certain information available. That there must be a purpose is recognised by nearly all men. Life is too great a thing not to have a motive.

The materialist demands that nothing be wasted. He can definitely see the use of all tangible things and adapt himself so as to gain the benefits to be derived. But in the problem of life the body is the only tangible thing to him and he cannot conceive of the existence of the soul apart from the body. He is blind to the use of his life because the knowledge and wisdom gained is, according to his idea, of no further use to him when his body is dead.

Some others, and doubtless the majority in the Christian churches, are willing to believe and trust in divine wisdom with childlike simplicity. That they were put here for some purpose they are dimly believing, but their idea of the wide separation between earthly and heavenly things prevents them from even attempting to comprehend that purpose. It is known to God, but not revealed to them. God, "Who doeth all things well," has placed them in the particular position and environment, and given them all necessary equipment and ability to consummate His purpose. Consequently they are borne helplessly but safely along in an order of things apparently beyond their control. They do not dare to question the "Will of the Almighty" as they see it. The inner curiosity concerning the use of life is stifled as being something that cannot be known until some miraculous power of heaven enables them to see things face to face. There are lessons to be learned from an earthly life in which they are created but in no way creators. Such is the belief of these masses of trusting religionists.

A step further in reasoning are those people who have learned something of karma and who recognize the immutable law of cause and effect, and of compensation. Those, however, with only a little knowledge of this truth often fail to understand the underlying principle and do not fashion their lives by its correct application. They imagine all their karma is piled up ahead of them now to be overcome. The fact that all present effects in their turn become causes is easily overlooked. While the results of their past thoughts and actions are being worked out, new

karma, both good and bad, is accumulating. These people lie unresisting under their karmic burdens and readily accept the afflictions, joys and sorrows and the limitations of the conditions in which they find themselves. For them their lessons are only how to overcome the pain and misfortune coming to them because of their past evil deeds.

The failure is in that the whole of the plan of God is not grasped. They see in part only and do not realize that humanity, individually and collectively, is evolving. There is no standing still at any point, present or future. Even though from an earthly standpoint we shall attain perfection, the law of evolution will still apply. So long as time shall be, there shall stretch before us new vistas for attainment, new avenues for service and new lessons to learn.

We are here not only to learn, but to grow. It is in the very nature of the plant to grow, and to accomplish this it pushes up through the dark soil which is necessary to its life and grows to the sunlight where is its joy and perfection in life.

We can realize and know our powers. Although there may come upon us as a result of our past actions, difficulties which we consider obstacles, we can always make these serve as stepping stones to the freer and more complete life.

Whether we learn these lessons quickly or slowly is in our own hands. They must be learned and the way to learn them is to realize that man, because of his divinity, is above conditions and things. He is not shackled. He can create his own capacities and limitations. He can strengthen

or weaken his capabilities. He can enlarge or contract his limitations. All circumstances surrounding man are intended to help and not hinder. Power to rule will eventually be in the hands of the man who can reap the benefit of lessons.

Marion G. Grant.

WHY?

There is a great black frog which dwells in the slimy waters of the jungle swamps of South America, which, in a deep and guttural tone, continually asks the eternal question, "Why?"

C. Wm. Beebe, in an article in the January *Atlantic Monthly*, which he calls "A Yard of Jungle," says of this frog; "Suddenly a voice came out of the heart of this mystery (the jungle) and fittingly enough the voice seemed something a little more or less than human, and also fittingly it uttered but a single word and that word a question. And the listener realized that the answer to the question was the only thing which made life and work worth while."

Mr. Beebe describes in his article his work in the jungle, his patient sitting for hours daily, with straining eyes and cramping muscles, in order to study the bird life in a certain berry-laden tree growing deep in the heart of the South American jungle. And when he had finished, he gathered up a "yard of jungle" and boarded the steamer for home. All during the homeward journey he studied the myriad forms of life which he found in his carefully transported "yard of

jungle." And always the question of the black frog seems to echo in his mind, "Wh-y?"

What is the reason for this teeming life there in the heart of the jungle, far from all human eyes or human use? Surely it must have suggested to him the thought that the life of the world was not made *for* man, but to *be* man. The great thought of the evolution of soul standing side by side with the evolution of form, answers so grandly and completely the question, "Why?"

All these tiny forms take on a new interest and meaning if they are thought of as the instruments through which the growing soul learns, much greater than when they are considered only one of the myriad shapes through which the form alone evolves. Few of us realize the millions and millions of forms through which the life passes, gathering experiences for the soul, (which at this stage of its evolution expresses itself at one time in many forms) on its way back to God.

Of the forms in his yard of jungle, Mr. Beebe says: "Some of the half decayed leaves were very beautiful. Vistas of pale bleached fungus lace trailed over the rich mahogany colored tissues, studded here and there with bits of transparent quartz. Here I had many hints of a world of life beyond the power of the unaided eye. And here too the grosser fauna scrambled, hopped or wiggled. Everywhere were tiny chrysalides and cocoons, many empty; now and then a plague of eggs almost microscopic showed veriest pin-pricks where still more minute parasites had made their escape. When one contracted the field of vision to this world where leaves were fields and fungi loomed as forests, competition, the tragedy,

the mystery, lessened not at all . . . ; the jungle floor was indeed a laboratory of vital work—where only analytic chemistry was allowed full sway and where the synthetic life was handicapped and ever a mystery.”

“And when I had corked my last vial and the steward had removed the last pile of shredded *débris*, I leaned back and thought of the thousand creatures in my scant four feet of mold . . . Then there came to mind a square mile of jungle floor with its layer of fallen leaves sheltering more than six billion creatures. Then I recalled the three thousand straight miles of jungle which had lain west of me, and the hundreds of miles of wonderful unbroken forest, north and south, and my mind became a blank. And then from the mist of unnamable numerals, from this uncharted arithmetical census, there came to my mind a voice, deep and guttural,—and this time the slow enunciation was jeering, hopeless of answer:

‘Wh-y,’ and soon afterwards, ‘Wh-y.’ ”

A hopeless question this is, indeed, to the man who sees only forms, but one can hope that a man who seems so earnestly to ask will surely find the answer—the evolving soul behind the form, through which it strives and struggles and grows until at last it reaches the human form, but in which form even here it must struggle on from life to life, through ever better and better bodies until all its lessons are learned and it can pass beyond man to God.

Maud G. McDonald.

THE PATH OF AMERICAN ACTION

They say that the karma of the men of the West is action. Why then should the men of the West not accept the fact that so obviously lies before them in outside evidence, and which is put before them also by other teachers ? For it is not well for men born to action to violate the duty of their environment and consider as ideal the practice of retreat and seclusion according to the methods of the East.

The ideals of men of action should be the ideals of action; it is a violation of strict and right thinking to pursue one path of action and another path of idealistic ambition. The intensely active life brings powers equally necessary for spiritual advancement as compared with the life of retirement and meditation.

A desire for right action brings a keen sense of what is right in action, and violation of the rules of right action is as offensive and shocking to one whose edge is sharp to rectitude in action as other acts do to one who is sensitive to other things by devotional retirement.

The understanding and appreciation of karma and reincarnation does not carry with it the idea of the necessity for American men to become Hinduized; it does carry with it a knowledge which is a self-acting guide to right American conduct, when once the principles of the philosophy of karma and reincarnation are mastered.

"Better one's own duty, though destitute of merit, than the duty of another well-discharged. Better death in the discharge of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger." *F.W.McD.*

*REINCARNATION IN CHRISTIANITY**(Concluded from page 85)*

It is a fact, fairly well established, that the light which had been held by the Gnostics was carried on in spite of all the troubles throughout the intervening centuries. We have not space to go into any details of this, although it would make an interesting consideration, perhaps, at some future time. In spite of the fact that the official Church tried to blot out this teaching through all the centuries—and to blot it out not only by persecution but by annihilation, by killing all those who held it—it was too strong for the Church inquisitors. However it changed its name and outer appearance many times, to avoid, if possible, this bitter persecution, we can find some traces of this inner teaching down through the centuries, and always these teachings were accompanied by that which made them most objectionable to the established Church: a purity of life, which was in such marked contrast to that which was set forth by the clergy and the mass of the people; and a purity of teaching, in comparison with which that of the orthodox churches was mostly fairly black.

But with the beginning of the last century there seems to have been a breaking through of the crust, partly because it was no longer possible to maintain the same rigidity which had previously prevailed, and people were more free to express their own opinions. This took form in various ways. Perhaps the one movement which we have been most familiar with, has been the taking of these old rigid doctrines of the

Church that were set forth in the creeds, and a re-modeling of them in the light of rationalism and spirituality. Men decided that they could no longer hold doctrines which gave so small a drawing towards spirituality as came through those doctrines. For this reason we can find a gradual breaking away and a tendency to throw off the doctrine of the resurrection of the previous physical body, the doctrine of our sinful conception, and many of those other views which are a principal part of the tenets of the old church. Reason and spirituality have thus vastly modified the conceptions of the churches which previously had been held very firmly; and we can now find, if we will look for it, and will soon see, even if we do not look for it, a return to this teaching which was held not only in the days of the Jews of Christ, but also in the early Christian Church. This is the great teaching of Reincarnation, of a series of continuous re-births in human bodies. Among philosophers it has taken a great hold. David Hume, who was a great sceptic, announced that it was the only idea of immortality that he could admit to be logical, and even that idea was not being freely put forth. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the greatest philosopher of this country, and our greatest thinker, was probably a believer in reincarnation. Poets, those seers of the unseen world, have been coming more and more to this view-point. We find among those who have glimpsed it: Longfellow, Tennyson, Poe, Shelley, Coleridge, Browning and Kipling. In the same way we find it taking a fairly general hold among the authors. Scott, Dickens, Hawthorne, Bulwer-

Lytton and De Quincy have suggested or made use of the idea of reincarnation.

Of late, Christian preachers have been coming back more and more to this teaching of the early Christian Church. We have not heard so much of it as it seems we are destined to, even in the next decade. Among the many divines who have been credited with preaching this doctrine have been Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks. Several Christian teachers are also bringing this forward with many recommendations for the earnest consideration of Christian students. These men have become deeply convinced that only by this means shall we gain the greatest riches which lie before the Christian Church. The Rev. James Freeman Clarke, who has been a real contributor to the knowledge and view-point of the present Christian Church, has said: "it would be curious if we should find science and philosophy taking up again the old doctrine of metempsychosis, remodelling it to meet our present modes of scientific and philosophical thought and launching it again on the wide ocean of religious belief. However, stranger things have been in the history of human opinion."

Professor James Bowen of Harvard, a teacher of religion, said, in speaking at Princeton University: "It seems to me that a belief in Christian metempsychosis might help to regenerate the world. For it would be a faith not hedged around with many of the difficulties and objections which beset other forms of doctrine and it offers distinct and pungent reasons for trying to lead a more Christian life, and for loving and helping our brother man."

Thus we find that the teaching of the Master as to Elias who was to come may have a deeper and a different meaning than we have perhaps previously given to it, and that if we follow it in its ramifications they may have a far reaching effect, not merely in our own lives but, as they seem likely to do, in the Christian Church of the future centuries of time.

Ernest S. Suffern.

REFLECTIONS OF A REINCARNATIONIST

The careless farmer sows two crops: a poor one for the present, and a consequent necessity for a better one in the future.

It is not well to criticize the rich spendthrift. His wealth may have been given him as a reward; he has yet to pay the price of loose spending.

Pity the poor if they pity themselves, for they have yet worse before them; but pity them not if they stand strong against their poverty, for some day they may rule over even yourself.

Let the unrighteous judge look closely at the prisoner whom he injures, for one day he shall stand in his place. Look to thyself also in thine own judgments and think upon the unjust judge.

There is hope for one who loves flowers.

F. W. McD.

THE CHILD OF THE MIGHTY OCEAN

A Rain Drop was reposing by a tiny mountain rill. It lay upon a rose bush that in bending, overshadowed the bright waters, and it sparkled like a diamond in the dark green leaves, as the Sun, bursting through purple storm clouds, shone upon it, but it trembled when a gentle wind rose and rocked its cradle.

The wind sang softly to it, but it could not understand; it was still dizzy from its recent fall, and it cried out to the Wind: "Oh Wind, where have I come from; how came I here? I am so small that when you shake me I am afraid that I shall fall again and be lost forever."

"Nothing is lost forever, you silly little Drop; you have been here on Earth many times before, and you will be here many times again. I will tell you where you came from, if you really care to know.

"Once you were one with your Father, the Mighty Ocean. Then He sent you forth on a great mission. You rose from His bosom on a ray of the Sun and joined many of your brethren in the sky, and you floated about in my arms until so very many of you had gathered together that I could no longer fly with you, so I helped you on your mission again and you fell as rain on the parched Earth and in falling, separated once again, some sank deep into her bosom to refresh her and replenish her springs, others rested on the bushes and herbage. But now you have rested and you must speed on your mission and join your Father Ocean again. Before you do so, before you can regain your home, it will

be your task to refresh many dry and barren lands and learn many lessons. You cannot do this alone; you must join your brethren and become one with them, before you can rejoin your Father and become one with Him."

The Rain Drop still trembled and cried out: "Dear Wind, do not shake me so, I am so small; I know I shall fall again." But the Wind laughed, "Silly little one, if you are shaken it is for your own good." With that the Wind blew strongly and shook the rose bush, so that the little Drop rolled off from it and fell into a trickling Rill with a few of its brothers. And again it cried impatiently: "Do not crush and tumble me about so, dear brothers; you certainly will destroy me." But the others all laughed and said: "You are not 'you' any more; you are we, and we are one. Come let us find more of our brethren; let us fulfil our mission."

With that they began to run faster and more rills came running to mingle with them and together they gained strength and tore down the mountain side, playing and leaping over moss and pebbles, till they came to a steep ravine, where more of their kindred were sporting joyously. With one leap they joined forces and plunged madly downward, tearing up boulders and plants that obstructed their course. They went dancing across a grassy plateau, gathering in stray drops and singing gaily as they went. Soon they sighted a larger Stream that ran panting and foaming to meet them, dashing its icy waters over fallen trees and rocks. The waters sang that they had come from the stainless purity of the snow-clad Mountains: "We came to Earth

as fair flakes of Snow and we longed to stay on our native mountain, but now we are changed, we seek our Great Father. Brothers, let us go together." Then they experienced a great splash and the spray flew up into the air, gleaming with all the hues of the rainbow; then, rejoicing that they were one, they pursued their way.

Now it was a lovely rivulet that flowed through a dense, dark Forest and wound its way through the tangled underbrush. The wild beasts came and drank their fill and the birds bathed in its waters. Through many a drear and lonesome spot it twisted its way till at last it emerged into the Sunlight once more.

And now it sang through rich meadow lands and reflected the blue sky above and the tall trees on its banks; it was happy and untainted. Far to westward, from the high mountains, a very turgid torrent descended. It roared and boiled, tearing up the soil, displacing and sweeping along with it huge boulders, wrecking the trees that stood in its path and whirling them away on its angry bosom. As it approached the rivulet it cried out, hoarsely: "I am coming to join my brethren, for I too am seeking my Father." "No, no," the Rivulet replied; "your Father is not the same as ours. You are brown and muddy; we are clear and clean. Don't come near us; you will taint us." But the impetuous torrent heeded them not. It tore on, cutting a deep channel for itself, till it rushed down the bank and reached the bed of the Rivulet.

The Rivulet wept, saying: "Now we shall be contaminated." Then came the Wind, whispering softly: "Nay, all is well; ye are one." "How

can we be one with that foul thing?" "Because your Father is the same: He has many children, and they all, sooner or later, return to Him, their Source." Then the Wind went sighing away.

The Rivulet and the Torrent flowed side by side for many miles,—the one dark and muddy, the other clear and fair. But the mud gradually settled and the turgid stream became limpid, so that there was no difference between them. They had indeed become one beautiful River, a River that flowed ceaselessly and peacefully on.

By and by there was a change in the waters and a fresh, sweet smell blew over them. And the Wind came again, singing: "Now you are nearing your Home." Then, as the River rounded a bend, a glorious sight came into view: the Ocean, the vast Ocean, with the radiant Sun shining on its depths! But as the River broke out into rejoicing, some of the Drops separated themselves from their brethren, and leaped into the air, as their brethren made their plunge into the Ocean. And their brothers called back to them: "Why will you leave us at the threshold of our Father's glorious Home; are we not indeed one? And now we shall be One with Him."

"We know it," replied the separated Drops, "but we will return again some day. We left behind dear brothers, on the Mountains and in the Valleys, and we would fain bring them with us to Our Father's abode. If we go now, we will come again and bring them with us."

S. L. Allison.

*REINCARNATIONS OF THE CHRIST**(Continued from page 42)**In Ancient Peru*

The last time that Surya (the Christ) appears on earth simultaneously with Alcyone seems to be in the fifteenth of the "Lives of Alcyone," who was born in what is now Peru in the year 12,093 B. C. Surya was the son of Mercury and Lyra, and Andromeda was his sister. Mercury is the great ego who later appeared in Greece as the sage Pythagoras, while Lyra at about the same time incarnated in China as the philosopher Lao-Tze, who founded the religion of Taoism.

Not much is told of the Peruvian life of Surya. The religious beliefs of the ancient Peruvians, a somewhat degenerate though still magnificent offshoot of the old Atlantean civilisation, is thus described in the "Lives of Alcyone.":

"At this time no animal sacrifices of any sort were offered in Peru,—only fruit and flowers. Much praise was offered to the Sun as to the manifestation of the Deity, but no prayer, as it was supposed that the Deity knew best what was good for His creatures. They believed in a progressive existence after death, the conditions of which depended upon the man's actions during life, and it was considered wrong and ungrateful to mourn for the dead, because the Deity did not like to see His children suffer. Reincarnation was not clearly present in their teaching, though there were some texts which were probably really references to it, or at least appear to bear that as their most natural interpretation."

Alcyone became the governor of a frontier province, "but his interest in educational work was so great that when he reached the age at which it was permissible for a governor to retire, he petitioned the Inca to allow him to transfer himself to the priestly caste, and devote himself entirely to this educational work. It was more usual for governors to work on until extreme old age, or even until death, although they were at perfect liberty to give up their work on attaining the age of sixty. This petition was granted, and he at once transferred himself to the department presided over by his uncle Mercury, under whom he had the privilege of working for some years. So great was his enthusiasm and aptitude for this particular work that at the death of Mercury he was appointed as his successor in the responsible office of Director-General of Education for the empire. The natural successor of Mercury in this office would have been his son Surya, but he and his brother had been sent by the Inca on an important mission to the City of the Golden Gate, and on the invitation of the Emperor had settled in Atlantis, where they held high office."

Rishi Maitreya in India

One of the earlier incarnations of the great ego who was the Lord Gautama Buddha, was the very important one of the sage Vyasa, who compiled the Vedas, the ancient sacred scriptures of the Aryan race, in four parts. Vyasa also wrote the greatest epic of the world, the *Mahâ-bhârata*, or Story of the Great War, in which

the divine Krishna, or Avatâr, is the friend of prince Arjuna, and gives to him the wonderful spiritual teachings found in the *Bhâgavad-Gita*. Vyasa himself was the guide of the five brothers, called the Pandavas, of whom Arjuna was the youngest, and he helped them with his counsel and encouragement. The sage Parâshara was the father, and Satyavati was the mother, of Vyasa. Maitreya seems to have been the pupil of Parâshara, and the close friend of Vyasa. His father was Kusaru, and his mother, Mitra. While Vyasa took a leading part in the great events of the time, his friend figures only in one stirring incident, where he pronounces the memorable curse on the wicked king of the Kaurava dynasty, Duryodhana. It seems that the period was that of Vyasa's activity, while Maitreya was learning and preparing for the time when he would become the Bodhisattva (the one who is to become the next Buddha, or director of the religions of the world), two thousand five hundred years later.

The Puranas are sacred writings of a date much more modern than the Vedas, yet they are themselves old and deal with very ancient stories. They are usually written in the form of a dialogue between spiritual teacher and pupil. They treat of cosmogony, spiritual evolution and ancient traditions. There are eighteen standard, or recognised, Puranas. Tradition has it that Vyasa also compiled these. However, they contain some matter belonging to a later date.

In the *Vishnu Purana* Parâshara is the teacher and Maitreya the pupil, who asks questions. This work was reputed to have had twenty-three thousand verses, originally.

The *Bhâgavata Purana*, traditionally of eighteen thousand verses, is, according to the scholar, H. H. Wilson, "a work of great celebrity in India, and exercises a more direct and powerful influence upon the opinions and feelings of the people than, perhaps, any other of the Puranas. . . It is named *Bhâgavata* from its being dedicated to the glorification of Bhagavat or Vishnu" (the God of Love, or the 'Preserver' in the Trinity). The first two books of the *Bhâgavata Purana* are communicated to the Rishis (sages) in the Naimish Forest by Suta. In the third book the dialogue is between the teacher Vidura, half-brother of the princes of the Kaurava line, and the pupil, Maitreya. Various matters of ancient world history, growth and evolution are treated of, also some old legends are recited, until the tenth book is reached. This book, says Wilson, "is the characteristic portion upon which its popularity is founded. It is appropriated entirely to the history of Krishna, which it narrates much in the same manner as the *Vishnu*, but in more detail; . It has been translated, perhaps, into all the languages of India, and is a favourite work with all classes of people."

In the *Bhâgavata Purana* is represented the Rishi Vyasa in his lovely hermitage, after his writing of the *Mahâbhârata*, haunted by the thought that his work was yet lacking in some very important element. He knew that he had put the meaning of all the Vedas into the *Mahâbhârata*, that he had graphically described the duties of all classes of men, and even women, therein. He felt that he had not dealt fully with the duties of those who worship God particularly

in His Love-aspect, as the Preserver. And the divine messenger, Nârada, came and confirmed this apprehension.

An Indian scholar writes: "And when the time came for his own assertion, Maitreya began by sounding a note different from that of Vyasa. That note is to be found in all its fulness in the *Bhâgavata Purana*. Maitreya is himself the narrator of two important skandhas (books) of the Purana, which form its philosophical portion, and the whole Purana is permeated by the spirit of his teaching." The aim of the *Bhâgavata Purana* is to direct man's devotion to the God of Love, that the spirit of Love may sweep out all impurities from the human mind and heart.

But while the *Bhâgavata Purana* deals largely with the events of the *Mahâbhârata*, which, according to tradition, took place three thousand one hundred years before the Christian era, much of its matter, and in fact that part which bears the stamp of Maitreya's own character, belongs to a time much later, and involves his own life, or incarnation, as Krishna, the man.

The following is from the *Vishnu Purana*, III.7:

Parâshara: I have thus related to you, Maitreya, the circumstances, relating to the Vedas, which you desired to hear. Of what else do you wish to be informed?

Maitreya: You have, indeed, related to me, most excellent Brahman, all that I asked of you. But I am desirous to hear one thing which you have not touched on. This universe, composed of seven zones, with its seven sub-terrestrial regions, and seven spheres, with its whole egg of Brahmâ,—is everywhere swarming with living creatures, large or small, with smaller and smallest, and larger and largest; so that there is not the eighth part of an inch in which they do not abound. Now, all these are captives in the chains of acts, and, at the

end of their existence, become slaves to the power of Yama, by whom they are sentenced to painful punishments. Released from these inflictions, they are again born in the condition of gods, men, or the like; and thus, living beings, as the Shastras (scriptures) apprise us, perpetually revolve. Now, the question I have to ask, and which you are so well able to answer, is by what acts men may free themselves from subjection to Yama.

Paráshara: This question, excellent Muni (sage), was once asked, by Nakula, of his grandfather Bhíshma; and I will repeat to you the reply made by the latter.

Bhíshma said to the prince: "There formerly came, on a visit to me, a friend of mine, a Brahman, from the Kalinga country, who told me that he had once proposed this question to a holy Muni who retained the recollection of his former births, and by whom what was and what will be was accurately told. Being importuned by me, who placed implicit faith in his words, to repeat what that pious personage had imparted to him, he, at last, communicated it to me; and what he related I have never met with elsewhere.

"Having, then, on one occasion, put to him the same question which you have asked, the Kalinga Brahman recalled the story that had been told him by the Muni, —the great mystery that had been revealed to him by the pious sage who remembered his former existences, —a dialogue that occurred between Yama and one of his ministers.

"Yama, beholding one of his servants with his noose in his hand, whispered to him, and said: 'Keep clear of the worshippers of the Lord of Love. I am the lord of all men, the Vaishnavas excepted. I was appointed, by Brahmá, who is revered by all the immortals, to restrain mankind, and regulate the consequences of good and evil in the universe. But he who obeys Hari (the God of Love), as his spiritual guide, is here independent of me; for Vishnu is of power to govern and control me. As gold is one substance, still, however diversified as bracelets, tiaras, or ear-rings, so Hari is one and the same, although modified in the forms of gods, animals, and man. As the drops of water, raised, by wind, from

the earth, sink into the earth again, when the wind subsides, so the varieties of gods, men, and animals, which have been detached by the agitation of the qualities (of matter), are re-united, when that disturbance ceases, with the eternal. He who, through holy knowledge, diligently adores the lotus-foot of that Hari, who is revered by the gods, is released from all the bonds of sin; and you must avoid him, as you would avoid fire fed with oil.'

"Having heard these injunctions of Yama, the messenger addressed the lord of righteousness (Yama), and said: 'Tell me, master, how am I to distinguish the worshippers of Hari, who is the protector of all beings?' Yama replied: 'You are to consider the worshipper of Vishnu him who never deviates from the duties prescribed for his caste; who looks with equal indifference upon friend or enemy; who takes nothing that is not his own, nor injures any living being. Know that person of unblemished mind to be a worshipper of Hari, who has placed Him in his pure mind, which has been freed from fascination, and whose soul is undefiled by the soil of the Black Age. Know that excellent man to be a worshipper of Vishnu, who, looking upon gold in secret, holds that which is another's wealth but as grass, and devotes all his thoughts to the Lord. Pure is he as a mountain of clear crystal: for how can Vishnu abide in the hearts of men with malice, and envy, and other evil passions? The glowing heat of fire abides not in a cluster of the cooling rays of the moon. He who lives pure in thought, free from malice, contented, leading a holy life, feeling tenderness for all creatures, speaking wisely and kindly, humble and sincere, has the Lord ever present in his heart. As the young Shála-tree, by its juices which it has imbibed from the earth, so, when the Eternal has taken up His abode in the bosom of any one, that man is lovely amidst the beings of this world. Depart, my servant, quickly from those men whose sins have been dispersed by moral and religious merit, whose minds are daily dedicated to the imperceptible Deity, and who are exempt from pride, uncharitableness, and malice. . . .'

C.S.

(To be continued)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1) *Do any of the other bodies than the physical body require to be fed and clothed?* D. P. H.

No; at least not in the same sense. It is true that the subtler bodies of man must grow, and that means building new material into these bodies. But this new material would be drawn from the world of matter out of which the body is composed, and it would enter into the body directly. The kind of matter drawn in is that which is capable of vibrating at the same rates as those which are habitual to the matter of the body. Thus the astral body grows by exercising the desire nature, by feeling emotions. That is why savages and young children need to experience strong sensations.

As to clothing, the higher bodies have no need of any. But the man who is living in his astral body in the more material part of the astral world, that is to say, in those regions which are the counterpart of the physical world, will usually think of himself as dressed in that particular way which he likes, just as though he were in the physical body. The denser material of the astral body is, in fact, an exact counterpart of the man's physical body, so that people in the lower astral world would recognise each other by the outline and appearance of this body. It is this part of the astral body which is thought of as clothed. The effect of this thought and desire is immediately to create out of astral matter such a garment as is desired.

The mental body of the personality has not within it this outline of the physical body and would not need to be thought of as clothed artificially. The man in the mental body might think of other people as he knew them in his physical life, and this would create thought-forms of those people as they appeared in that life. C. S.

2) *Are the bodies other than the physical subject to the variations or sensations of heat and cold?* D. P. H.

No; for the variations of heat and cold are physical events. Heat and cold do not exist in the astral world.

However, although heat and cold are physical facts, the sensations are felt in consciousness because of the astral body and its relation to the physical stimuli. For

without the astral body a man could not feel pain or pleasure, or the sensations of heat and cold. If a man is hypnotised and his astral body has withdrawn from the physical body, then the physical body may be injured without causing pain in the man's consciousness.

People who have died and are living in their astral bodies may still experience certain sensations for which the physical body is necessary, but this is done by entering into the astral body of another person who still has the physical body and is obtaining such sensations from it.

3) *Taking into consideration karma and reincarnation, what is the truth as to the teachings of the Catholic Church about "purgatory" and "hell"?* M. A. C.

The life of the man in his astral body after his death in the physical body and before he has withdrawn his life wholly into the mental body, is a transitional one. The desires which the man has had during earth-life are again experienced, because of the return of karmic energies upon him, but the man has no longer the means (the physical sense-organs) with which to gratify those desires. The result is that he suffers more or less intensely, in proportion to the intensity of the desires. In this suffering, that material of the man's astral body which responded to those desires is gradually worn out, or "burned out" of the astral body. It is this suffering which gives a real foundation to all the ideas of "hell" and "purgatory" which are taught in various religions. The elimination of the very gross and impure matter from the astral body would correspond to "hell," while the getting rid of the less heavy material would be "purgatory," or the purging of such matter out of the man's astral body as is capable of responding to desires which are not of the more brutal and bestial kind.

Even people regarded as "good" have to pass through the life of purgatory and experience some pain or discomfort, for they have felt desires and must withdraw their consciousness from the matter of their astral bodies. Indulging in desires means that the man becomes very intimately involved with the matter of his astral body, so that it is harder to separate his life, or himself, from his astral body in the purgatorial state.

In general, the Catholic teachings of purgatory and hell are quite correct. But the man would not remain suffering in "hell" without end. And each man would experience just such pain in the lower astral, and such pleasure in the higher astral world as corresponded to his desires while in physical life. It is all a matter of karma, or the reaction upon the man of the desire energies which he had made use of during physical life.

FIELD NOTES

There is being formed a very promising Group of the *Legion* in Rockford, Illinois. The study class meets every Monday at 7:45 p.m., and for the present the complete set of distribution literature is being studied. Mrs. Mary R. Tebbetts is the Leader. The members are very earnest in their search for truth. The average attendance at these meetings has been nine students, and among them are none that are simply idly curious.

The illustrated lectures have been used to good advantage by a number of Groups. The lecture *Life and Death in Ancient Egypt* is doing service in Portland, Maine. Minneapolis has been very successful with the new lectures *Science, Evolution and Reincarnation* and *The Ancient Mariner*. The work is very promising.

In Chicago are given regular weekly stereopticon lectures on Sundays at 8 p.m., in the Fine Arts Building, Room 819. Sometimes visitors from other cities drop in for these lectures and make the acquaintance of our local workers. This means life and growth for the work.

Mrs. E. L. Cutler gave a talk on *Some Problems of Eugenics* to forty-five interested members of an organization of the unemployed. Mrs. R. C. March gave the lecture, *The Ancient Mariner* to an appreciative audience in Oak Park, Illinois.

Members are earnestly advised to make large use of the *Legion* Circulars, four pages, in order to familiarise the public with the meanings of karma and reincarnation. These circulars are convenient to carry about, and may help some to find the larger truth for which they seek.

BOOK REVIEWS

Theosophy and Modern Thought, by C. Jinarajadasa. 171 pages. T. P. H., Adyar, Madras, India.

This excellent and scholarly work is of peculiar interest to students of karma and reincarnation. It combines the the knowledge of science, art and philosophy which our modern scholars have laboriously gathered together, with the wisdom which is the result of a deep study of Life and Nature in the light of the inclusive philosophy which is founded upon the great truths of life.

The first chapter is called "Theosophy and the Problem of Heredity," and shows how modern research has now reached such peculiar results in the study of heredity that the only logical view which remains is to regard all faculties and characteristics as existing potentially in the evolving germs of life from the very beginning of living beings, to be developed into actual manifestation through ages of time. It is pointed out that each ego has a work to do in evolution, that he may grow into and realise the Archetype or Divine Ideal which exists for him in the Divine Thought. This Destiny, as it may well be called, is of great influence in the way in which the ego is led to experience his own karma, especially in his higher stages of development, when the authorities who guide karma for him are more able to do so with reference to the Archetype of the ego.

"History in the Light of Reincarnation" is the title of the second chapter. It gives us an insight into the karma of some of the leading nations, such as England, France and Germany. It also treats of the larger problems of human evolution as seen in history.

The other chapters are: "The Basis of Art Expression" and "The Search for Reality." In the latter are summarised the most important achievements of the leading philosophies and religions of historic times. C.S.

The Song of a Dawning Day, by Francis G. Hanchett. 48 pp. Price, 75 cents. T. B. C., Krotona Hollywood, Cal.

This poem reveals a strong and vigorous optimism, based on a deep understanding of the laws of life and death and the Plan of Universal Evolution. The teachings of karma and reincarnation are clearly stated,

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