

REINCARNATION

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AMERICA'S OPPORTUNITY

For nations as for men the great seed opportunities of life are often laid in hand by Fate in the growing years of youth. It is in the formative period of body and mind-growth and keen soul-expression that the choices of the way are given.

A nation may choose to follow the customs and the acts of other nations; or it may break new paths for itself and for other similar bodies by brooding over the principles of national life and trying to put them into applications that are in advance of the times.

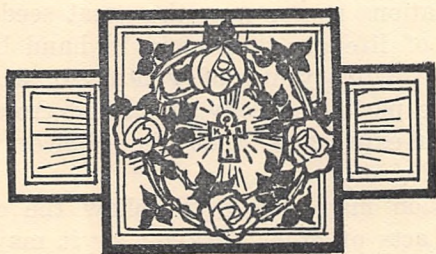
When was ever a more glorious opportunity for a nation to step into the forefront of progress than that which the youthful America now has before her? To stand firm for the rights of

man; to resist the bold efforts of an imperialism glossed with a socialistic glamour; to invade the guarded precincts of idealism and to push forward the bounds of fraternalism among nations—these are our tasks to-day.

We may look with sympathy towards the American president who finds himself, thus far, hampered by a Congress but half aroused and by a woeful lack of national preparation to play a manly rôle beyond our own boundaries.

Let us view with longing eyes the activities of our national leaders, hoping that they may see their actions great and as having a bearing at this hour upon the plans of God.

W. V-H.



SOUL WISDOM IN COLERIDGE

One of the best known and best loved poems in the English language is Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Just why it should be so popular has long been a mystery. Critics agree that its imagery and word-painting are marvelous, that its rhythm delights the ear that is sensitive to harmony, and that we cannot escape the spell of its enchantment, even though there is little sense in the poem.

But Coleridge was not the kind of man to write foolishness. He was a graduate of Cambridge University and a deep metaphysician. He was regarded by his contemporaries as a man who had great spiritual insight, as one who could see deeper than any man of his generation. The poet Wordsworth said that he was the most wonderful man he had ever known. Coleridge studied philosophy at the German universities, and was strongly drawn to the writings of Jacob Boehme, the German mystic and seer, to whom he pays a tribute of gratitude (*Biographia Literaria*, page 73) for preventing his mind from being imprisoned within the outline of any single dogmatic system, for keeping alive the heart in the head, for being a pillar of fire throughout the night of his wanderings in the wilderness of doubt, enabling him to skirt without crossing the sandy desert of utter unbelief.

Coleridge must have learned from Boehme and other mystics something about the long cycle of evolution of the soul, something of the reality of the invisible life surrounding this physical

world. He must have learned from the same source the occult principle clearly expressed in the poem, namely, that unity of life and consciousness is necessary for happiness, and that the feeling of separateness is the cause of all selfishness and sorrow. Originally there was a long Latin motto prefixed to the poem, the gist of which is that there are more invisible realms of nature than visible ones, peopled with evolving beings not ordinarily visible to our limited perceptions. Coleridge chose as his field the super-physical realm of nature, not the super-natural, as it is often erroneously called.

The *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* tells a double story—the story of the mariner's voyage, and at the same time the story of the soul's voyage upon the ocean of life. The story is in two parts,—the outgoing voyage and the return voyage. In the outgoing the mariner sets gaily off. His crew of two hundred men are very active. The vessel is moved from without, by the force of the winds. At first it is moved gently onward by a moderate breeze, which in time increases to a raging hurricane, driving the ship far out of its course.

And so, in the first half of the great cycle of evolution, the soul is led by desire,—it is the only motive power he has. It seems to be the divine plan at this stage that man shall be gently borne along by the attraction of normal desires, that he shall grow by grasping for self,—a selfish but necessary stage. If desires become immoderate and uncontrolled they sweep the storm-tossed soul far out of his course. On the second

half of the voyage desires must die, and the soul must be led by spiritual aspiration and will. The distinction between desire and will is that desire is moved from without and will is moved from within.

When the turning point is reached, the divine spirit which is man's inner nature, begins to send forth spiritual aspirations—the white albatross. Man often kills this aspiration by his materialistic thought, just as truly as the mariner killed the bird of good omen with his cross-bow—the bird that caused the breeze to blow.

And then comes the great calm! A weary time! A weary time! The man is surfeited with all earthly pleasures. Desires and ambitions die, one by one. About his neck is hung the symbol of a dead faith and a dead aspiration. He is as completely alone in his feeling of separateness as if he were the only living being in the universe. He can not pray. There is no motive to prompt to activity if all desires die before the awakening of the spiritual will.

But nearer and nearer comes the touch of the Great White Spirit, which has really been very close all of the time. He touches the keel and the ship moves on without wind or tide, self-moved from within. A wave of love gushes from the mariner's heart, and he blesses and loves all life and feels its oneness.

He takes up life's activities once more, but with a different motive. There are no selfish desires now. Each lifeless corpse of desire is animated by a celestial virtue in such harmonious accord with the great divine plan, that celestial

harmonies seem to vibrate from them and fill the sky.

On entering the harbor the old hulk is sunk and the mariner is taken ashore in the pilot's boat. This would seem to indicate that the old vessel is the temporary personality which must be transcended. The desires, instincts and passions, symbolized by the crew, are transmuted into an angelic band of virtues, so that everything of worth is conserved when the voyage is over and the earthly evolution completed.

From now on the mariner lives only to teach others. The moment that he sees his face, he knows if the man is ready to listen to the story of life, to turn from the impermanent to the permanent, from the unreal to the real.

The *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* contains within itself the germ of immortality, as do likewise such poems as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and other great poems that have survived while thousands of other productions, having equal literary merit, have passed into oblivion. It seems that in the course of ages only those works are preserved to the race that contain a fragment of the divine wisdom.

Laura Slavens Wood.

SOME QUESTIONS OF TO-DAY

It is only when we consider human life and the history of nations from a large point of view that we can at all understand the meaning of conditions in our own time. If we believe with millions and millions of people in the conception or misconception of God, given by many theologians, then where is He to-day? Do we believe in no God, or in no Being superior to man, as is the case with many? If so, why fight, why live, why love? If we believe that the solar system and all in it is mere machinery, perfected, as many think, by natural selection, then why should we care to remain a part of that machinery which is grinding and oppressing so large a part of (in fact, one might suppose, the most important machine) the human race? If we believe that chaos, not order, holds supreme in the world, why not rid the world of this particular bit of chaos—ourselves?

Well, some people do not, and some do these things, but in spite of all the seeming, in the inmost heart of nearly all who are endowed with the use of a brain, there is a knowing, one almost says, an intuition, that there is something or someone greater than man, call it what you will, and that in the end there *is* beneficence underlying all the cruelties, horrors and barbarities. For such a decision to be tenable, however, we will have to take a large view of the meaning of life, which will be arrived at through a knowledge of karma and reincarnation. If we narrow ourselves to a consideration of our present-day sufferings, we would probably say that we cannot

endure them, but if we *can* think a little behind us and before us, we may say I *will* endure that which comes to me, but I will endeavor to free myself from this necessity, and help others in doing the same.

Now, how can this be done? By putting aside as fast as possible inhibiting factors, so that we may release our potentialities; for man is a god potentially, and consequently he may learn to do god-like things.

And these inhibiting factors, what are some of them? First of all, there is our own selfishness, or regarding ourselves as separate beings. *We are individuals*, but we are inextricably bound up with all individuals in the scheme of things.

Then another of the most apparent inhibiting factors is the identifying of one's self with one's physical body. Man is *not* a body, man *has* a body to use, and he has used many bodies, both male and female, and he will have many more to use in the ages yet to come, in which he will live on earth, until he has learned his lessons.

What of to-day's lessons, with the war in Europe, with a hazardous place for the United States of America, with threatened war on the one hand, insurrection and bandit raiding on the other,—what of it?

This, for one thing, is true: that the old *forms* must be broken down and cast aside, the mediæval usages of Prussianism must be done away with. The United States must stand for the upholding of International Law. The Monroe Doctrine and the ideas of Washington that we should not enter into entangling alliances with European nations, may not be in order now in all respects, every-

thing which is in the way of the coming forth of the new era must be set aside.

This is *one* world, made up of many nations, in which each should be allowed to live according to its own particular genius; but as the human race is still in its childhood, we must have international force to insure peace for all.

Ella L. Cutler.

A KARMIC LESSON

In the *New York Evening Journal* of January 25th, appeared an item of which the following is an extract:

"Jesse Pomeroy was sentenced to solitary confinement in the Massachusetts State Prison at Charlestown on September 7, 1876, for crimes culminating in the murder of two children. He was fourteen years old. To-day the 'solitary' clause was stricken from his sentence—after forty-one years as America's most notorious 'lifer.'

"Pomeroy entered his solitary cell a black-haired, blue-eyed, plump-cheeked boy. To-day he is a broken, sallow, bald-headed old man.

"Before his imprisonment his reading was confined to ten cent 'thrillers.' During his forty-one years of solitude he has read the 8,000 books in the prison library. He has mastered eight languages and now is studying Arabic. He has made a dozen ingenious attempts to escape, the last four years ago.

"For many years Pomeroy refused to work, although he was sentenced to be confined at hard labor. In late years he has been physically unable to perform much labor. It was in these later years that he taught himself to read Spanish, French, German, Latin, Italian, Greek and English. He also had mastered algebra, book-keeping and several other studies, and his knowledge of natural science is wide."

What is the lesson to be derived from this news item by our brethren in Karma? The spirit that dwells in the body of Pomeroy was very low down the scale of development when reincarnated in this body, as is evidenced by its murderous actions at so tender an age as fourteen years. Had the death penalty been inflicted upon him at that time, his spirit would have been sent back to nature's store-house in the same crude condition, possibly to break out again in its next incarnation in similar cruelties as before.

By commuting the sentence to solitary life imprisonment, however, the opportunity of educating itself was given to that undeveloped soul in large measure, and through the hardship of a life of solitude the companionship of books was forced upon it, with the result that great enlightenment has come to that spirit, which will be a valuable asset to bring into its next incarnation. By reason of its linguistic ability and its wide knowledge of natural science, a most useful man to society may be expected when, after the passing away of its present broken body, this spirit shall be reborn anew.

Thus it will be seen that what is considered by society as a severe punishment, was really a blessing in disguise, for it has enabled that spirit to attain in one incarnation, a height in its evolution, that might under ordinary conditions have taken the experience of many reincarnations to attain, and this should show us the advantage that is ours if we devote our spare time to enlighten ourselves, instead of wasting it in useless pastimes, as we often do.

William W. Weitling.

THE SONG OF LIFE

Our homely Hoosier Poet, James Whitcomb Riley, has assured us that "There is ever a song somewhere, my dear," but just now the music is so faint that it is like the music of a distant waterfall to which we have missed the way. This, then, is the time when with great intentness we should sit still and listen, banish the jarring and discordant present noises, keep the heart still, and some wayward little breeze will bring to us a more distinct note, then a strain and finally the whole beautiful melody will once more sing for us and we will know that God is God.

In these present times, more than ever before, we should strain our ears to hear, above the din of battle, the everlasting song of life, which holds the harmony of the spheres. This minor aria which at the present time, wails throughout the world, to the accompaniment of warring cannon and falling civilizations, is but an interlude; the song itself, the triumphant major harmony, will again assert itself and there will be added to it a new note brought by a Great Teacher, a Master Musician, who will give to the world a fuller harmony.

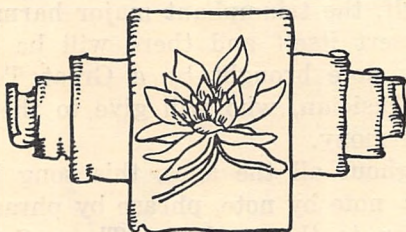
Throughout all the ages, this song has been building; note by note, phrase by phrase, it has been given to the world by Those Great Ones who have been the Teachers of the World.

They are the Composers of it and we are the Singers. To us is given the rendering of this Song. Faithful must we be, with our attention ever on our scores, so that no discord will arise which we can prevent. When the harmony is

close, when a shade's difference only, lies between it and discord, then is our task most difficult.

Just now, when the harmony is close, dangerously near to discord and the rendering is difficult, is a time for earnest effort and close attention. We must not stop to say, "It is difficult," nor allow ourselves even to think "too difficult," for if we do, our attention will wander and the close harmony will become discord. But with our eyes ever on the score let us go forward and soon we will turn the page and find the song once more leading into more normal measures, and finally we will find the phrase which leads to the new harmony of love and peace, added to the Song of Life by the New Teacher. And it will still the troubled waters as it did when He gave its first notes to the world long ago in Galilee.

Maud G. McDonald.



RELATIONS BETWEEN NATIONS

Those who study the lives and activities of nations cannot but realise the close analogies that hold true between the evolution of nations and the evolution of individual men. Nor is this surprising, for a nation is simply an aggregation of individuals welded together in a higher, spiritual unity of life and purpose. Therefore the evolution of a nation depends in large measure upon the progress made by its leaders of thought and of feeling and follows similar general laws as does the evolution of an individual ego.

The young human ego, with but few earth-lives already completed, is very inexperienced and correspondingly irresponsible for his actions. But as time goes by he gains, through pain and suffering, a growing knowledge of the common applications of the law of karma, and he is thereby enabled to construct, either for himself or with the help of spiritual teachers, a rough code of morals which will serve him as a guide in his conduct toward other human beings. The more he learns, the more responsible he becomes for his actions. In fact, the measure of progress for an ego is very nearly indicated by the amount of responsibility which the ego can assume in his physical incarnation.

Although the law of the land is no respecter of personalities, and in this respect seems to be able to change for the better, yet people of some culture and wide experience in life do not expect a man of low class to come up to the standards of life which are commonly accepted among the higher classes. In other words, people consciously

make allowances for the shortcomings of other men if they belong to the lower strata of civilisation. But it is the students of the laws of life who are able most clearly to see the different degrees of human duties and responsibilities, because they know that human beings vary greatly in their egoic development, or the number of earth-lives which they have completed.

Thus it is quite true that what may be an heinous crime for a highly developed ego to commit, may be only a pardonable misdemeanor for a primitive ego of but small growth. And what is tolerated in ordinary civilised society, may be quite wrong for an advanced ego to stoop to.

Now, the evolution of nations resembles the evolution of men. They have had existence on earth at various times long before their present origin, and, though they may decay and perish, they will have a time of re-birth and renewed life in the centuries of the future. And each nation has, through its successive appearances on earth, a definite law of growth, showing, for instance, a tendency to develop along certain special lines rather than along others. If we make use of the term "soul of a nation" to identify its permanent and continuous life, we may readily see that the souls of present-day nations are of various ages and numbers of national incarnations. And with the idea of national soul age, there is naturally closely associated the further idea of national dharma and national responsibility.

By national dharma we would mean that duty which applies to the nation, that which is the right thing for it to do, its next step in its national evolution. For instance, in matters of interna-

tional law and morality we would not expect such nations as Turkey and the Balkan states to show as much development as we would in the case of England, France and Germany. Different nations have different work to do: it was for Greece to show forth glory, and for Rome to show forth grandeur. England has, so we are told on good authority, inherited from Rome, its previous incarnation as a nation, her genius for government. France has the great work of leading the modern nations in matters of artistic taste and refinement. Germany has led in science and material progress. Russia, though old in body, is not of the highest rank in spiritual development. The United States of America are young in body and show forth the inexperience of youth, but they will, we may hope, as they grow to maturity as a nation, show out a very high degree of idealism and spirituality.

Nations make many mistakes, just as men do, but their responsibilities are of different degrees. Their responsibilities correspond to their rank in evolution. We may define a nation's responsibility to be the measure of its realisation of its dharma as a nation. A young nation would be so absorbed in the joy of living that it would not be conscious of having a definite road to travel in evolution, and hence it would not feel its dharma.

It is sad to see that some nations which are leading nations, are not accepting what seems to be their national dharma. There are some nations which do not seem to accept a responsible position in the work of the whole family of nations. If a nation neglects its dharma, in which is involved its own opportunity for growth of its soul, then it makes for itself "bad national karma," which

will mean for its future a loss of opportunity for its soul growth. Nations do not have to be responsible and live up to the highest ideals of international morality, but if they reject their responsibility now, it means that in the future they will not hold leading positions among nations, positions that entail great responsibility.

At the present moment America has a wonderful opportunity to take a strong position in the work of upholding international law. If she takes the opportunity to the fullest extent, it must needs mean wonderful progress in America's evolution in the coming centuries and for all time to come. If she refuses her responsibility, she may not have many more such great opportunities to do the great things for the welfare of the world that she is capable of doing, in the future centuries.

It was well for America to break relations with Germany. This act registers once and for all time our condemnation of Germany's utter disregard for International Law. There now remains one more duty for America: to protect her citizens and her commerce from violations of clear rights.

A nation old in soul will give to younger ones its protection and helping hand. It may be in accordance with some old American party traditions that all nations should be treated as equals, but it is certainly much more in harmony with truth to treat the older, responsible nations with respect and the younger, irresponsible ones with a firm but protecting hand. For a number of centuries to come it will be a mistake to treat countries like Mexico and the Philippine Islands as mature and capable of self-government. C. S.

THE GIFT OF THE LAW

It has been said, and said truly, that "The gift of The Law is the greatest gift that can be given to man." One of the magazines devoted to one of the great Oriental religions bears on its title-page the words: "The Gift of Truth Excels All Other Gifts." Another powerful thought of a similar kind is the well-known motto: "There is no Religion Higher Than Truth."

The Law, as used in the first sentence, is the One Great Law which includes all lesser laws of the universe. It is the Law of Evolution, of Cyclic Progress, which applies to atoms and to universes as well as to human beings.

How wonderful it is that one may give something which enriches the receiver beyond measure and yet leaves the giver, not poorer, but richer! "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is peculiarly characteristic of spiritual gifts that their giving increases the wealth of both parties in the transaction. It follows that the spiritual wealth of the world is constantly increasing and there is no conceivable limit to it.

Yet there are comparatively few people in our humanity who have the priceless knowledge of The Law, so that they may give it to others. And it is by no means every one who can receive this greatest of all gifts. In order to receive it, one must first have earned the right to receive it, and secondly, one must be able to grasp it and hold it in one's inner being. The knowledge of the brain-mind is insecure; it is the property of the personality only, and can not be relied upon to be retained throughout a long series of lives.

But the knowledge of The Truth is for the ego, and, once grasped, it remains a permanent and living possession of the real man.

* * *

In one of our large cities a common tradesman was suffering terrible pain from a cancer in the throat, which made it impossible for him to speak. His body had to be fed through a silver tube, and breathing was carried on through the same tube. His case was of some eighteen months' standing and was utterly beyond the power of medical skill to cure. The man was one of very strong will and sweet disposition, but the long-continued suffering had exhausted him completely, and he longed for death to relieve him.

He knew nothing of the definite teachings of Divine Wisdom, or Soul Science, but two medical men who were attending him were students of things occult and were members of a society that devotes itself to the study of spiritual truths. However, neither one had ever spoken to the sick man about these teachings.

One day, while one of the two was in the room and alone with the patient, the latter wrote on a tablet that he wished to join the order where they had been the night before. His request was carried out as far as possible, but the man died shortly after.

This case is very remarkable, for it clearly indicates that the patient had not only received some instruction in the higher wisdom at night, when his body was asleep, but had even been able to remember something of it and to carry through into his brain consciousness his own

strong determination, made in his astral body, that he was going to apply for admittance into the society.

* * *

What sort of karma was it that brought this man to a fuller knowledge of The Law? And what will be his karma with regard to gaining more of this knowledge in his future earth-lives?

In the first place, it seems hardly likely that the man had had knowledge of occultism in his past incarnations. Nothing in his very ordinary life of the present incarnation suggests that this may have been possible. But, on the other hand, somewhere in the past he must have come into relation with the two who are students of higher knowledge. Somewhere he must have earned the good karma of having these two as his medical helpers in his long suffering of the present life.

And as to his karma in the future, we can readily see that his great determination to join the occult society, brought across the very great dividing wall between the physical and astral worlds, will make an almost inconceivable change in the whole current of his future incarnations. Instead of following the ordinary slow and almost endless evolution through many earth-lives, and gaining its slow but steady growth in his egoic nature, he will almost inevitably be swiftly drawn into renewed association with those students who helped him in this life. He will be able to receive the higher knowledge and follow the swifter path of evolving which those may choose who have received the gift of The Law and who wish to be Its servants. It may be hoped that his terrible suffering has freed him from much of his old

karma of pain and that he will be able to proceed rapidly to find his larger destiny.

This interesting case suggests another thought: How little do men realise the great blessings that may come with intense suffering and other so-called misfortunes! If we are truly to believe in the universal application of the law of karma or divine justice, we must needs realise that every supposed evil has its equivalent opposite, or good, necessarily associated with it. As we make this realisation a part of ourselves it will enable us to rise out of and above the troubles of the personality and reach the certain knowledge that "All is well," and "Whatever is, is right."

The secret of inner peace and joy is that of living in harmony with The Law. To live in harmony with The Law one must enter into The Law and become first Its obedient servant, and later one of the agents of The Law. As long as we regard ourselves as being helpless toys for the forces that we cannot control, so long will true peace be unknown to us. But if we affirm our unity with The Law and live in It, and with It, then we are rich indeed, for Its wealth is ours.

It was the great emperor Marcus Aurelius who prayed, "Oh, Universe, may Thy Will be also my will!" To attain to this union we should be careful to cultivate the constant feeling of giving our inmost assent and support to whatever The Law may bring to us. We should think deeply of the beauty and majesty of The Law, thus worshipping It in our hearts. And gradually our Will will become merged with the Great Will. The Law may be ours, if we will be one with It.

C. S.

COMPENSATION

The spell of utter separateness was upon me as I opened my eyes and from deep sleep to half-consciousness, came into an atmosphere of curious dumb despair. Utterly alone I felt, yet, looking about, I saw that I was one of a multitude, men, women and children, a mighty throng.

To the ankles of the men there were shackled heavy burdens, so heavy that if a victim paused to rest, his load sank into the soil, so that even in exhaustion he must struggle on. The burdens of the women were bound upon their hearts, and the little children staggered beneath huge urns balanced upon their heads.

I asked the tiny creatures what their urns contained, and, turning large hollow eyes to mine, they whispered: "Mother's tears! If we do not catch them in these urns and carry them, they will fall upon the earth and the burdens of our fathers will sink deeper into the soil and become too heavy for them to draw."

Then, for a moment, the air was still and out of the gray pall a voice spoke close to my ear: "Your karma is exhausted; cast off your burden, and for the rest of this life go free!" "And the others," I inquired, half startled, "will they too, like me, be free?" "No; they are not ready yet; you have earned the right to happiness; they must, for a while, toil on."

"Is there happiness for any heart," I asked, "happiness till all are free?"

The voice grew tender as it whispered: "Being free you may share their burdens if you will."

The gloom deepened; through it I still could see a yoke, suspended, ready. Tiny hands touched mine; eager eyes searched my face. "Happiness," again I cried, "is there happiness till *all* are free? Give me of their burdens; give me a share to bear!"

The yoke settled over my shoulders; it was heavy, and its weight pressed into my flesh. But the tender voice whispered once again, "Look!" I turned, and lo! the little children smiled!

Clara Jerome Kochersperger.

REINCARNATION LITERATURE

Reincarnation, A Study of the Human Soul, in its Relation to Re-Birth, Evolution, Post-Mortem States, the Compound Nature of Man, Hypnotism, Etc.; by Jerome A. Anderson, M. D., F. T. S., 192 pages. The Lotus Publishing Company, San Francisco, Cal. (Now out of print and scarce.)

This is one of the earlier books on reincarnation, having copyright of 1892, and it is a landmark in the history of the spreading of this truth in America. To-day it may appear somewhat old-fashioned, but it contains information of permanent value. The book was written by a deep student of the laws of life and death. It was a very popular book in its day and ran quickly through several editions.

It considers the subject from various angles: there are given physiological, psychological, philosophical and scientific evidences for the existence of the soul. There are considered also the evolution of the soul, its individualisation, the nature of the reincarnating ego and of the personality. On the title-page is found Aristotle's famous criterion as to the existence of the soul: "It is decisive of the question as to whether the soul exists if among the activities and emotional states of our being there are to be found such as do not belong to our bodies."

We shall give some extracts of value, in order to illustrate the subject matter of the work:

Self-consciousness implies most conclusively that man has become at least dual in his nature; that something has been added above and beyond the animal consciousness (which knows no "I") of the kingdom below him.

One constituent of his being steps aside and critically examines other constituents. Unless his consciousness is dual and separable, it is incapable of this. No molecular motion—the materialistic source of thought and consciousness—can isolate itself and observe the mechanical details to which it owes its own existence. Such a process is inconceivable. (p. 32).

This argument is one of great power and logic. We would prefer, however, to regard consciousness always as a unit. It is when consciousness is working in and through bodies of different degrees of materiality, that consciousness *seems* to be dual, or even multiple. Careful study of these facts is of the greatest importance to man; for he can thus gain a realisation of the truth that he is not his bodies or any one of them, but a unit of consciousness above and beyond them all, even though this consciousness may and does enter into the activities of the various bodies of man and give rise to apparent separate parts.

Discussing reincarnation, the author uses the word "soul" to mean "center of consciousness":

A correct conception of Reincarnation recognizes that the body, as such, has no part in the soul's return to earth; that the connection of the body with the soul is, primarily, to furnish sense organs to relate the latter to a state so far beneath its own spiritual nature as to be reached only by this means; and, secondarily, in the matter of which the body, or bundle of sense organs, is constructed, reside certain "qualities" the nature of which it is essential to the intellectual progress of the soul that it learn. For it is only by experiencing its "opposite" that true knowledge of any "quality" in nature, whether physical, mental or spiritual, can be obtained.

Speaking of how reincarnation is regarded in our Western lands, the writer says:

To Western minds, Reincarnation is both unfamiliar and distasteful. The unfamiliarity is due, perhaps, to the materialistic tendencies of its great thinkers, especially in the domain of science. Most scientists have been, and are, unwilling to admit the existence of a soul in man, to say nothing of its reincarnating.

That the idea should be distasteful to the unphilosophic mind, especially if trained to base all concepts, whether human or divine, upon personality and separateness, is not surprising. The superstructure of modern civilization is erected upon a foundation of individualism, and this in its lowest and most material sense.

From many arguments in favor of the idea that there is justice, intelligently administered, in the universe, we quote the following good one:

No sane man can deny the evidence of intelligent design in nature. His imperfect physical senses make this plain, and the most powerful microscope or telescope only adds to the evidence already at hand. The more deeply one searches, the more abundant the proofs become. This is admittedly the law of the physical plane. Having reached the mental or spiritual plane, does nature now suddenly fly in the face of her former methods and hand the guiding reins over to blind fate or blinder chance?

Very fine, also, is the following argument:

If matter is indestructible, then the material base of the soul is indestructible; if force [energy] is always conserved, then this includes psychic or soul force; if energy is eternal in its action, then intellectual energy cannot be excluded; if evolution be a fact in nature, then it includes the larger fact that its processes are necessarily infinite in duration.

The author states that heredity is incapable of explaining fully the well-known facts of life:

The almost infinite differences in human character have a most profound bearing upon any philosophy of life, and can only be explained by admitting the fact of re-

incarnation; for the character as displayed by babes from the moment of birth, and which throughout life separates each man from all other men, is the sum of the experiences the ego, or soul, has already undergone and assimilated, and which experiences remain as indelible impressions upon and modifications of the soul's conscious area, and constitute the differences which distinguish it from other souls. Had all souls similar experiences, character would be inconceivable, for all would be alike.

Many of the desires and passions which constitute the larger portion of the soul's activities at any given time are necessarily suspended by the change called death, and therefore remain dormant or latent, until the soul is compelled by its karmic affinities to seek incarnation again, when they become active with the opportunity afforded by a new body.

An important distinction is indicated between the "personal character" of a man and the true character of the ego:

During one incarnation the thousands of thoughts, emotions and mental states included in our every-day life, and constituting that thread or consciousness which materialism insists is all there is at the base of our "I am I," constantly crystallize into habits, desires and instinctive tendencies to assume certain mental attitudes to the exclusion of others; all of which enters into the composition of our personal character. This latter, in its larger degree, is again crystallizing into our true or individual character, or that of our reincarnating ego, or soul. The memory of the myriad states of consciousness by which this permanent character is acquired is left behind at each death of the body; but the result, the sum total, is carried over at reincarnation to the new account. The statue preserves no record of the ten thousand strokes of the chisel by which it was chipped into shape, yet the result is none the less beautiful because of this. (page 76).

The chapter concludes with these statements:

Reincarnation, also, is in perfect accord with the scientific conceptions of the persistence of force and the conservation of energy; and shows how a cause, once set in motion, must have its effect; that energies generated in one life cannot be cut short by death, but must find expression in a future one; that the affinity which guides a soul into the most fitting body to express its characteristics is but an exemplification of the law of energy or force taking the direction of the least resistance.

No effort is lost; soul force, like all other forms of force, is ever conserved. The soul which has longed and struggled for a desired result, finding its efforts cut short by death when, perhaps, on the very point of realization, does not lose the fruit of its toil and self-denial. The energy so generated will accompany, guide, and control the next birth so as to continue its expression in one unbroken line. No effort, whether for good or evil, can be without its results. It is a cause, and in the eternal harmony of nature must have its corresponding effect. (p. 77).

In another chapter, on scientific evidence, the author shows that in nature repetition of her processes is universal. This indicates that a human life is simply a repetition, with endless variations in detail, of previous lives. There are no finalities in the world, both as to beginnings and as to endings, but only continuous changes of things which are eternal. Plants whose bodies die down with the coming of a severe winter, quickly rebuild them in spring-time; all during the time of inactivity there remained intact the life and consciousness of the old plant, to be re-infused or re-incarnated in the new forms. In the plant kingdom this life is preserved in roots and bulbs; but in animals and human beings there occurs an actual, but merely temporary,

separation of the life from the old organisms or forms. The processes that occur in metamorphoses in the animal kingdom, such as from the caterpillar to the butterfly and from the tadpole into the frog, are suggestive analogies to the changes from physical existence of man to his life in the higher, subjective worlds.

Now, if the individualization of a tulip, even, has proceeded so far that nature has expressly provided for subjective cycles of the same individual, by the evolution of a bulb, how much more reasonable is it that the intense individualization in man should also be conserved by subjective periods in his life history? That the conditions limiting his consciousness in each state are different is no argument against these existing. The consciousness of a butterfly differs vastly from that of a caterpillar; nor does the butterfly ever know of the caterpillar state, so far, at least, as we can judge. The two are quite separated in time. It logically follows, then, that the individualization, carried to so marked an extent as it is in man, should be provided with subjective periods in which to assimilate and make its own the experience of the last physical life. It is also reasonable that this experience, being so widely varied, should be best assimilated under conditions of entire subjectivity. If, as Plato declares, "the soul reasons best when least harassed by the bodily senses," so much the better will it garner the wisdom taught by the fleeting panorama of the past life when entirely free from physical perturbation.

Then, if everything in nature is pointing towards and preparing for distinct periods of subjective experience in the cycle of human existence, we can hardly be wrong when assuming that reincarnation is fully and completely proven by this preparation for and gradual leading up to it on her part; for again the truism meets us that *natura non saltet*, and it would be a great deal more than a leap for her to suspend processes once inaugurated. It would be like a great river, whose waters have been collected from the four quarters of a continent, suddenly

ceasing to flow and disappearing into nothingness when within sound of its aim and end, the sea. (p. 88).

Speaking of what the Buddhists call 'skandhas,' or certain dominant qualities or tendencies which have been developed in previous lives on earth, the author remarks:

Unmodified by a Higher Ego, man would represent the exact average of the sum of his parents' qualities, both physical and psychic, as is seen in the almost endless continuation of identical forms in the vegetable kingdom and in the lower animal—in mollusks, for example. Unmodified by physical heredity, the Higher Ego would have no real karmic hold upon earth. As experience is an absolute necessity for development, the struggle with this physical impress given by parents under the law of physical heredity affords the opportunity required to develop the Higher Ego's functions and potencies upon this plane of consciousness. It also satisfies the law of cause and effect, or Karma, which compels Egos with certain characteristics to seek parents having similar ones, for growth must always proceed from the present point of attainment. Did physical heredity not modify the habitation and powers of the Reincarnating Ego, there would be no reason why it should seek expression through one parent rather than another, and we would be forced back upon the unjust Christian hypothesis of the human soul having no voice in the selection of its body. Did not the Reincarnating Ego have the power to very greatly modify its material tenement, the faculties and psychic powers of the child would represent the average of the sum of those of its parents, at best; and the innumerable instances where those are very greatly transcended, as well as those where the account is on the debit side, would be wholly unaccounted for.

It is thus apparent that man's soul and body are each the exact complement of the other so far as the karmic adjustment of any one life is concerned. The relation of the one to the other becomes explicable, and is but another illustration of the absolute play of cause and effect, or of action and reaction, between the material

and spiritual poles of the One Reality. Intellectual, or Higher Ego, heredity brings over the results of man's entire conscious past; physical heredity enables him to begin further evolution or widening of consciousness at the exact point where he left off, and along just those lines where his spiritual need is greatest. Thus, a man in a body full of any of the lower, *rajasic* qualities proclaims to the world that his Higher Ego has need to further evolve their opposites, and such instances ought to arouse all our sympathies—call forth our best brotherly efforts, rather than that contempt and aversion which we are too apt to experience. It is as though we were to turn shudderingly away from a pure, saintly prisoner because the cell in which he is confined is loathsome. (102)

A Student.

FIELD NOTES

The work in New Zealand is doing well. Mr. G. J. Radford is Acting Representative for Mr. Bell, and Mrs. M. Hyams is Secretary. Groups are being organised.

The following concise and business-like report was received from Denver, Colorado:

Monthly report of the *Karma and Reincarnation Legion*: Meetings held every Monday afternoon from 2:30 to 4:00. Average attendance, fifteen. Subjects discussed: Jan. 8, "The Molding of Karma"; Jan. 15, "The Evolution of the Soul"; Jan. 22, "Suffering is Karmic Retribution"; Jan. 29, "Will the true knowledge of Karma make us Content?"

An intense interest is manifested in the subjects of Karma and Reincarnation by both members and visitors, and never in the last year have the discussions been attended with so much interest as for the last month.

Liela A. Clough, Teacher.

Rosa B. Sutton, Recording Secretary.

The last Group to be organised is one for Rochester, New York. Miss Ethel W. Barbour is the Leader. There are fifteen names on the Charter. Good work is being done.

Cleveland Group has had very successful meetings in private homes, and some new students are given help.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

19) *Is it not possible that man gains perfection in heaven, after one life on earth?* (Holland).

The kind of perfection which we gain on earth could hardly be gained in heaven. We learn here to deal with hard facts of life. We learn to control our emotions, and to use our thought power in right ways. Heaven is supposed to be a condition of bliss and joy, not a place to learn lessons of material conditions. Our growth in our character depends chiefly on how we live in our lives on earth. We must develop our consciousness to the fullest measure while in earthly bodies; for if we do not, we shall find that we can not live and be wide awake in the much more subtle worlds of consciousness, such as the heaven-world. We must first gain perfection in our earth-lives and earth-bodies before we can really gain perfection in higher worlds. The child must first learn the lessons of the grammar school, before he can enter a university. So also must every man first master life in our world, before he can live and grow elsewhere.

20) *Do you know of specific cases where people have been conscious of past lives?* H. P.

Yes, there are a few cases that are trustworthy. It is more common to find people who have recalled some special incidents of past lives. The proof in all such cases is usually very difficult to establish. All of us have a certain large memory of our past lives, though not in detail, in the special talents, faculties, etc., that we have developed in our past lives. A genius is simply a man who has in other lives devoted himself very earnestly and strongly toward developing his special work.

21) *Is conscious knowledge of a future life necessary in order to attain to that life?* H. P.

No; nature works according to definite laws quite irrespective of what we think, or know, or desire, or feel. However, it is a fact that definite knowledge of the facts of after-death life gives the knower a great advantage in dealing with the conditions of that life when he "dies." It is just as though you were about to travel to some

land where you had not been before; if you are wise you will learn all you can about the land, the customs of its inhabitants, their modes of life, etc., before you start on your travels, for then you can prepare for the conditions which you must meet later on.

22) But is not conscious knowledge better?

Yes; for reasons already stated. If we could attain definite consciousness now, of the future life, while still in the physical body, it would make the future life much more advantageous for us. However, if we can gain that knowledge from reliable people who have developed this faculty of being conscious of the astral world and the mental world, this second-hand knowledge will help us almost as much. It is very difficult to attain the conscious knowledge. To make the proper beginnings one should develop himself along spiritual lines. Careful study of our night-life, as remembered in clear, orderly "dreams" is also well worth the trouble.

23) What is your attitude toward the war?

The present war was perhaps not unavoidable, but it would have been difficult to avert it. It represents the outworking, in our physical world, of a great mass of old national enmities, jealousies and hates. Nations now at war may have been at war thousands of years ago, in the former "lives" of those nations. It is not always best for a nation to keep out of war; sometimes it may be the best way to clear away some of its old hindering karma. But it is always well if a nation does go to war, that it should do so without hate and unselfishly.

24) What is Death?

Death is merely a change of consciousness, or mode of living, for the man who dies. It does not change the man in any real way. He remains just as before, except that he can no longer do physical actions. He is no better or wiser than before. The one great change is that his life is greatly modified. For some time he has to outwear his earthly passions and desires. This is sometimes done with much suffering, so that the ideas of "hell" are not wholly incorrect.

25) *How do you explain the genius, the idiot, the born criminal, the person of mediocre ability?* H. P.

These questions can be understood only if we grasp the truth that men are *essentially* immortal egos who have lived in many previous lives on earth, some having had many more than others. In general, any man who shows lack of character-development has not had as many 'lives' on earth as his brother man who is well developed in character. The genius is one who has specialised along his own line. The idiot is often one who, in his past lives, has made bad use of his personalities, sometimes through abuse of his physical body. The average man is simply one of a great number of egos of about the same soul age, or number of incarnations. He is the kind of man who remains with "the crowd" and does nothing either very "bad" or very brilliant.

26) *Did Jesus, Buddha and other prophets have past lives?* H. P.

Yes; many more than our average humanity. That gave them the opportunity to perfect themselves as men. We can make more rapid progress toward our own human perfecting if we take our evolution in our own hands and make strong efforts to attain self-mastery and wisdom. We are all builders of our own future, and the rapidity of our growth as egos lies to a very large extent in our hands. We can grow fast if we are willing to strive.

27) *Will not everybody be a genius and prophet some day?* H. P.

Well, no; these are only special types of perfected men. There are many other lines in which human perfection may be attained, such as the Ideal Ruler, the Perfect Artist, the Perfect Teacher, the Ideal Philanthropist, and others. Of course a perfect man has developed many qualities to perfection, but he may express himself more frequently along certain ones. In other words, the goal of human perfection does not lead to only one type.

We may achieve our perfection by making use of some favorite modes of our self-expression rather than through a general use of all modes. Thus we may develop into our own Ideal of a Perfect Man. C. S.