

# **REINCARNATION**

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## *GOOD KARMA AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS*

When the sick were miraculously healed by the Great Teacher of two thousand years ago the deeds of marvel could only be performed when karma permitted—that is when the interference could be effected without unduly disturbing the balance sheet of forces properly and improperly used by the sick man during all his preceding lives.

Now, so-called “bad” karma represents karmic force that will react on some personality of the ego in ways that are painful or unhappy for the personality—ways that seem unfortunate to the man of personality. “Good” karma is, of course, of the reverse character.

When spiritual emergencies of action occur, the Great Watchers over humanity may utilize favorable karma in such ways as the Great Teacher applied long ago in Palestine. So it is well to have done good deeds, to have earned a great balance of good or positive karma.

Good karma may be discharged for men who are under the observation of Those Who have the power and the authority to interfere in such exalted affairs as are those of the Deva Lords of Karma. The drive of human life has its ebb and flow. There are periods of manifold stress in the life of every man—periods when many influences are acting simultaneously, periods of storm when the Wise Guide must see shipwreck occur and be content to care for and comfort those who have suffered or, perhaps, have lost physical bodies. But there are happier moments when, the stars shining more favorably, an intervention may be made and with the expenditure of some good karma, the emergency may be turned and life be made to run on smoothly again.

W. V-H.



*AMERICA'S OPPORTUNITY*

To the man who studies the life of the world in the largest possible ways, there seems to be now going on a very real trial by fire of the various leading nations. The world war was a trial of strength in all possible ways,—physical, moral, mental and spiritual. The greater ideals of justice and humanity were victorious. But now that the war has come to an end, there is a testing of national character, of national intuition, for the various nations. They are forced to choose courses which will probably be of tremendous significance for all the future ages. It is truly a parting of many ways.

Those who love America and would want her to rise to her true greatness are wondering whether she will be able to seize the full measure of the opportunity that is wide open before her. The selfish interests are everywhere making great din and clamor, and the voices that speak for altruism are hardly heard.

What could not America accomplish for the world if she were free to follow her highest light and guidance! With all Europe in pain, distress and starvation it should be her joyful privilege to relieve and carry comfort to ravaged lands and weakened peoples. She should extend her protecting arm to the smaller and helpless nations, such as Armenia, Serbia, the Baltic countries and even to unfortunate Turkey. For a time a strong and paternal supervision of the shattered and scattered peoples of Asia Minor, of the Balkans, of Austria and of other countries is sorely needed.

But more than all the material help that America can so easily afford, more so than any other nation, is there need for a strong leadership for international peace and order. There must be renewed and increasing confidence in the authority of justice and fair-dealing among nations. Without America's strong aid the world must for many years remain in turmoil and insecurity. With her help as a strong member of the League of Nations it is hard to conceive a limit to the great influence for good and for progress that could soon be felt throughout the whole world.

C. S.

#### ORPHIC VERSES

He who desires in pomp of sacred dress  
The sun's resplendent body to express,  
Should first a veil assume of purple bright,  
Like fair white beams combin'd with fiery light:  
On his right shoulder, next, a mule's broad hide  
Widely diversified with spotted pride  
Should hang, an image of the pole divine,  
And dædal stars, whose orbs eternal shine.  
A golden splendid zone, then, o'er the vest  
He next should throw, and bind it round his breast;  
In mighty token, how with golden light,  
The rising sun, from earth's last bounds and night  
Sudden emerges, and, with matchless force,  
Darts through old Ocean's billows in his course.  
A boundless splendor hence, enshrined in dew,  
Plays on his whirlpools, glorious to the view;  
While his circumfluent waters spread abroad,  
Full in the presence of the radiant god:  
But Ocean's circle, like a zone of light,  
The sun's wide bosom girds, and charms the wond'ring  
sight.

*From Macrobius, tr. by Thos. Taylor.*

## ASTROLOGY AND REINCARNATION

In modern times astrology has been classed among what Oliver Wendell Holmes calls "the pseudo-sciences" by nearly all educated people. It has been relegated to the realm of fortune-tellers and charlatans and treated accordingly. Now and then we find a man of the university type who takes sufficient interest to give it respectful attention and study, and from him we receive a higher estimate of its value and reliability. Such a man was Mr. Richard Garnett, late incumbent of the British Museum; and it is instructive to review his opinion, coming as it does from one who would not have put into print any ideas to which he had not given serious regard and investigation. This opinion may be found in a pamphlet entitled *The Soul and the Stars*, and is as follows:

"The fact remains that astrology, with the single exception of astronomy, is as regards the certainty of its data, the most exact of all the exact sciences. The astrologer takes his data from observations which the interests of astronomy and navigation require to be absolutely faultless . . . and cannot falsify his data without instant detection. The principles of his art have come down to him from the most remote antiquity; they have been published in a thousand books and are open to the examination of all the world. There is nothing occult about it, unless occult means that which is not generally admitted. . . It is the peculiar boast of the system, in its application to human things, to enthrone law where law would

be otherwise unrecognised, to leave no opening for anything preternatural.”

But what has astrology to do with reincarnation—what relation can there be between the horoscope and the spirit returning to another life on earth? Mr. Garnett attempts to show that astrology *proves* reincarnation, though reincarnation of universal spirit, not of individual spirits. But his arguments seem too vague and his conclusions untenable. His contention that it proves our close connection with the cosmos will, I think, be agreed to by all who have studied the science. And the various examples he cites of planetary aspects found in the natal horoscopes of certain well-known historical characters, and the fulfilment of the aspects in the subsequent acts of these personages, are most illuminating. Must we not conclude with him that we are intimately related to the heavenly bodies and that their magnetism is a very potent factor in our evolution?

Astrologers who take only a materialistic view of things believe that the planetary influences operate to decide the nature of the new-born soul and the events that shall befall it during its ensuing life. But esoteric astrologers who believe in reincarnation—and there are many—hold that these influences are indicative not determinative; that the soul is born when these special aspects predominate, because it has arrived at the stage in its evolution which corresponds to these aspects. As two chemical substances are brought together at the proper instant and blend: if each substance does not contain certain definite elements in certain definite proportions the blending cannot be accomplished. So it is that the soul comes back

to earth when the stars enable it to be born, when a certain definite combination of aspects harmonises with its character and karmic status; and it is said that a birth cannot take place until this necessary combination prevails.

The practical bearing of astrology on reincarnation is well stated by Mrs. Bessie Leo in her book, *Planetary Influences*.

“What kind of personality we have brought over, as the karmic inheritance of our activities in previous lives, we may learn from a study of astrology. It is able to inform us struggling men and women what we *are*, our inherent tastes, our innate desires and capacities, our mental, psychic and physical peculiarities, our limitations and our possibilities of growth, our unfelt and latent forces, our secret aspirations, or, it may be, lack of aspiration; in a word, the materials supplied by the evolution of the past for the evolution of the future. This is our stock in trade, on which will depend our future prosperity.”

If this is true and the horoscope does thus indicate present status and possibilities of the re-embodiment entity, then the nativity of every child should be erected, and studied by those who have the education of the child in charge. Aspects for good and evil tendencies should be carefully noted; for evil recognized may be more easily eradicated before it has taken firm hold on the new vehicles, while tendencies for good may be encouraged and every advantage provided them for development. Older persons should study their own horoscopes, for “‘tis never too late to mend,” and to have the map of character put so clearly before the mind is a distinct help toward progress. But in

our study of the horoscope we should not be servilely depressed by the "bad" aspects of square and opposition, nor supinely content with trines and sextiles, for they alone cannot compass our salvation. As Max Heindel reminds us, "Though the planets show the tendencies most accurately, there is one indeterminate factor which is not shown, a veritable astrological X—the will-power of the man,—and upon that rock astrological predictions are ever liable to founder. . . . In the final analysis we are the arbiters of our destiny."

*Helen G. Crawford.*

#### ORPHIC HYMN

I shall utter to whom it is lawful; but let the doors  
 be closed,  
 Nevertheless, against all the profane. But do thou hear,  
 Oh Musæus, for I will declare what is true. . . .  
 He is the One, self-proceeding; and from Him all  
 things proceed,  
 And in them He Himself exerts His activity; no mortal  
 Beholds Him, but He beholds all.  
 There is one royal body in which all things are enwombed,  
 Fire and Water, Earth, Æther, Night and Day,  
 And Counsel, the first producer, and delightful Love,—  
 For all these are contained in the great body of Zeus.  
 Zeus, the mighty thunderer, is first; Zeus is last;  
 Zeus is the head, Zeus the middle of all things;  
 From Zeus were all things produced. He is male,  
 He is female;  
 Zeus is the depth of the earth, the height of the  
 starry heavens;  
 He is the breath of all things, the force of untamed fire;  
 The bottom of the sea; Sun, Moon, and Stars;  
 Origin of all; King of all;  
 One Power, one God, one Great Ruler.

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*THE WAVE OF INTEREST IN THE OCCULT*

The history of mankind contains many references to recurrent interest in the occult. Such oscillations correspond with the waves of action that make up the total of our life.

The spiritualists possess the advantages and the disadvantages of their extreme limitation. Their activities concern only those fields of consciousness that lie nearest to our own every-day phase of thought and feeling. But this fact has enabled them to touch the interest of the mass. At this moment the world is ready to hear of what is happening to those who have left their earthly bodies.

Many books have been written to tell of these things. The sudden snatching of thousands of young men from vigorous life by warfare has left their friends eager to know where they are and what they are doing. Sir Oliver Lodge has been studying these problems for many years and has tried to maintain the proper attitude toward the whole investigation. He has studied spiritualistic seances with especial care and has proved the actuality of the facts which spiritualism maintains.

This great scientist is now lecturing in America, stirring great crowds to enthusiasm for the study of those realities that lie just beyond the range of our easiest contacts of consciousness. His attitude toward pre-existence is favorable but he has no knowledge of life in antecedent or subsequent bodies.

May blessings attend Sir Oliver's efforts!

W. V-H.

*THE RHYTHM OF THE COSMOS*

In Basil King's third and fourth articles, "The Abolishing of Death," in the September and October *Cosmopolitan*, there is again much that is of interest to reincarnationists, and he rounds out his story by presenting the medium through which thought-exchange takes place on this plane, and between this plane and the next.

King says, "In the case of Jennifer, through whom I receive my messages, the 'loved and loving transmitter,' as Henry Talbot calls her, there is nothing but sweetness, light and simplicity. 'He is fond of Jennifer,' Ernest, the young Harvard professor, says of Henry Talbot, 'and spends most of his time with her.' Not all the time; for there are moments when she knows he is not there. They are only moments, however—ten minutes, fifteen perhaps—and then she will say, 'He is here.' It will doubtless be ascribed to sheer sentimentality on my part when I say that his coming brings us all a sense of happiness, and I am willing to accept the imputation."

According to this the affinitive attraction between Talbot and Jennifer is perfect; not alone is Talbot fond enough of Jennifer to spend most of his time with her, but his presence gives her a sense of happiness. What, therefore, is more natural than that Jennifer's first child will be a re-embodiment of Talbot, if her conjugal mate be also affinitive, and not repellent to him?

Speaking of the old theory of judgment, according to which we are to be rewarded or punished for past deeds, King says, "The worst of us knows that there is something to be said on

his behalf. Admitting the culpability of the race, the individual is guilty of only a part of it. Of the rest, he is the victim. . . Whatever a man brings over with him *is good*. As Talbot says, 'no evil endures, because it has not life.' . . Here, then, is a system that takes every man at his best, however much or however little that best may include, making his own achievement the measure of his reward. It is not too much to say that this vision of a New Heaven almost necessitates that of a New Earth."

Reasoning from the false premise that we have *come into the world*, will not help us into vital knowledge. We, that is to say, our souls, have always existed; and what we call *coming into the world*, is simply our start in one of our incarnations. What evil we may have lived during an incarnation is not carried over when the particular incarnation terminates, but only the good; however, the capacity for evil which we had upon termination of that incarnation, remains (dormant), and must be overcome in the succeeding incarnation, for the experience necessary to overcome any trend to evil can only be lived in the flesh and never in the discarnate state, for there is no evil in that state, and therefore none of the reaction to cause experience.

King says, "I must say here that this paper will differ from those that have preceded it in that it will give chiefly my own inferences from what we have been told. The old method of deduction reasoned to a certain kind of heaven because there was a certain kind of earth; I beg, on the contrary, to plead for the existence of a certain kind of earth because there is a certain kind of heaven."

Reincarnationists can not fully agree with this, and would rather say that, because of the prohibitive trend of thought fastened upon us by the persistent endeavor to instil the belief that we are new creations that *came into the world*, our conception of the heavenly plane is wrong. Once we all realize that *there was no beginning*, and that *all that is, always was, and always will be*, the New Heaven as presented through the mediumship of Jennifer will be a perfectly logical one; not, however, as a permanent spiritual abode, but as a plane of rest between incarnations.

After the recital of more communications with the spirit world through Jennifer, King writes, "Enough has now been said, I think, to show that, according to Henry Talbot's teaching, thought-exchange is the natural means of intercommunication among people of all spheres, and that it takes place through the medium of that rhythmic life of the universe which may be considered the basic expression of God's mind. He says very plainly, that the world into which we look every hour of the day is full of this thought-communication and we do not perceive it. A flock of sparrows rising from one tree and settling on another is an instance. Two dogs galloping off on an escapade which each of them understands is another. What we call blind instinct is nothing but intelligent comprehension of a force with which man has got out of touch. That we can get into touch with it again is the burden of his message.

"Men and women as expressions of God are immortally endowed with life, love, and intelligence, rendering them potentially victorious over all im-

pediments, including death. They have made themselves deaf, blind, and impotent only by the wilful shutting of their perceptions against the forces that sweep the universe. Birds, fishes, and insects, which are unable to control their minds as man is able to control his, are alive to much that we have ceased to see, and babies are born to a harmony with God which we speedily teach them to quench. Those who have preceded us to another sphere we kill in fact, while in words declaring we believe them to be alive. Into the imaginary universe of man's creation, as distinct from the true universe which is of God, we have induced ignorance, limitation, darkness, poverty, inequality, injustice, sickness, death, grief, and a sense of a world amiss and awry, unhappy, hateful, and futile."

Space does not permit quoting more, and I will only add what Mr. King writes on the question of the genuineness of the spirit communications:

"As for proof of the presumed speaker's identity, or that there is a speaker outside Jennifer or myself, I have sought for none. The internal evidence of high and beautiful thought has been enough for such purposes as I have in mind."

Now, whether the messages that came to King are genuine or not, one thing that we get out of them looms strong and clear, and rings true; and that is, that thought-exchange, taking place through that rhythmic life of the universe among life forms that have uncontrolled minds, is the natural means of intercommunications among such forms, which include the animal world, birds, fishes, and insects, whose herds, flocks, schools, and swarms, act in concert through rhythmic universal life impulses.

Man in his primitive days, with mind uncontrolled, undoubtedly had similar means of communication, but because the awakening of his superior mentality enabled an advanced few to sophisticate the thinking of their fellows, and thereby to gain for the few the advantage of control over the many, both, the few and the many, have become somewhat sophisticated and thereby lost the power to sense truth, and have gotten out of harmony with universal mind and lost the ability of communicating by means of thought-exchange, except in the case of a few exceptional individuals.

It should therefore be plain to us that, in order to be in harmony with universal mind, we must have minds free from false beliefs and capable of sensing truth, for truth is harmony, health, happiness, and love; positive essentials to that poise we must have to be in touch with rhythmic universal life.

Regardless of the fact that we are not in possession of positive proof that any of his communications are genuine, what we have gained from Mr. King's articles should be wonderfully helpful to us as reincarnationists. It should show us that the unsophisticated minds are the ones in touch with cosmic rhythm, and should teach us the necessity for persistent effort to free our minds from fallacy and error for the evolutionary advantage it gives us. We should begin with the child and cease teaching it to quench the cosmic harmony to which it is born.

What is it that we teach the child that, more than anything else, limits its mentality and erects a barrier which forever presents itself to every free and independent thought that it may have

throughout its entire adult life? It is the inculcation of the belief that man and the universe are creations and had a beginning.

The greatest handicap to thought development is the belief in "*In the beginning.*" Teach the child the truth: That *all that is, always was, and always will be*; that the illimitable universe has always existed and will always continue to exist; that nothing in it is ever destroyed or lost and what seems to be destruction is only change of form. Thus, the mind of man will be freed for thought and expansion, and will develop that quality that will keep it in touch with the rhythm of the cosmos.

*William W. Weitling.*



Man's body is the chariot that sweeps  
 With flashing spokes life's dusty road along;  
 The soul, the driver that, among the steeps  
 And hills of life, with steady hand and strong,  
 Directs with subtle skill and nicest tact  
 The senses six, that as the horses act.

Great is the driver that can calmly rein  
 The horses to the pace and carriage just;  
 But woe to him that lacketh to restrain  
 One single sense, that in its fleshly lust  
 Disdains the curb. Behold, upon the plain,  
 The chariot wrecked, the hapless driver slain.

*From the Mahabharata, by H. G. Wilson.*

## REINCARNATION AMONG CUBANS

In Cuba are several strong centers of spiritualism, publishing several magazines in Havana. The following letter was received by the *Legion* in answer to questions sent to the editor of *Redención*, the official organ of Group "Juan":

Before explaining to you the conception which we have of the "persistence" of spirits, permit me to give you our view of their constitution, progress and evolution.

These begin by giving life to the mineral when the fluid masses concentrate, before they are finished entities; afterward, advancing a little, we see them animating plant forms, and now they commence detaching themselves, showing their own characteristics as living entities, only as yet in a very rudimentary state. Later on we see them continuing their evolutionary progress in the lower animals, and then they gradually unfold the instinct of intelligence which will be accentuated according to the progress made by the spirit and is noticeable in the animals living close to man, until, arriving at the state of animating human bodies they are now striving to make progress in the intellectual field, although with extreme slowness, as they must strip themselves of the instincts acquired during their experience in the irrational animal kingdom, and substitute those instincts which are almost always confounded with the passions, by the reasoning. Starting then to educate their intelligence, making their intelligence progress, they advance in their knowledge, while at the same time the spirits are tempered through the struggle in the field of moral

evolution by means of the severe blows which shake them in their intercourse with other spirits, some more highly evolved, who encourage and comfort them, and others less evolved who fight and enrage them. In this way they unfold themselves until they succeed in dominating themselves and in tracing out a plan to advance in moral and intellectual progress, advancing finally rapidly by the force of their own will, in which they are aided, though without their knowledge, by their own guides and by beings of greater evolution.

Having made this digression we say that the pre-existence of the spirit proves its existence before it attains to animate bodies of rational beings—denying, in fact, its creation at birth, but holding that through its evolution it has attained to the stage of animating human beings. The “persistence” shows to us communication in the distinct phases which it undergoes, and we believe that this continues without end, as it would not be of service to the spirit to attain its progress, if it brought about as an inevitable consequence the loss of its personality upon reaching the sum of perfection.

By “reincarnation” we understand that it is effected to complete the work of the laws of progress in order that in the diverse bodies which it animates, the spirit may acquire knowledge which will permit it to form the fund which is treasured up within itself, that it may advance in the intellectual field and understand, later on, the laws of love and fraternity, that from the comprehension of these laws may result the firm determination to advance in the field of moral laws, and for the spirit in each incarnation to

acquire the debts for the errors which its passions committed and which will be liquidated in other successive incarnations, after having tempered itself to resist sorrow and suffering. This matter constitutes that which we understand as "karma," which we may call the forced liquidation of one's debts and errors as the means inevitably necessary for stripping one's self of passions and vices, in order to store up virtue and goodness."

### EAST AND WEST

Men look to the East for the dawning things,  
For the light of a rising sun,  
But they look to the West, the crimson West,  
For the things that are done.

For out of the East they have always come—  
The cradle that saw the birth  
Of all the heart-warm hopes of men,  
And all the hopes of earth.

There in the East arose a Christ,  
There in the East there gleamed  
The dearest dream, the clearest dream,  
That ever a prophet dreamed.

And into the waiting West they go  
With the dream-child of the East,  
And find the hopes we hoped of old  
A hundredfold increased.

For there in the East we dreamed the dream  
Of the things we hoped to do,  
And here in the West, the crimson West,  
The dreams of the East come true.

*Masonic News.*

*LONGEVITY AND KARMA*

It is not well that we should cling to the life of bodies with selfish greed. The karma of such desire must be difficult to resolve and painful. And some Eastern philosophers have thought that the chief cause of our Western agony lies in our uncurbed love for physical embodiment, a sort of passion for experience in dense matter. When our life of higher planes can be remembered by more of our Western people much of this error of judgment may disappear.

On the other hand this longing for fulness of our most typical human life is not only excusable but praiseworthy, since it must be the intent of the Sustainer of our lives that we shall live for normal and happy periods in each of our incarnations.

The civilization of the western world has had for one of its great purposes the prolongation of life in a general way. And, by the elimination of famines, the reduction of infantile mortality, the conquering of plagues and the study of injury and disease in their multiplicitous forms, men have raised the average duration of life by many years. This praiseworthy work must mean that the common karma of humanity has been lifted sufficiently to permit this success. Furthermore, man's struggle to preserve his body for usefulness must make good karma that can be of utmost value in the future.

*W. V-H.*

*LEGION ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH AMERICA*

Our great neighbors of the south to whom we of the United States long so fervently to be united with ever more potent bonds, are bestirring themselves in matters pertaining to *Legion* work. Starting strongly with good and active groups in Chile the good work is spreading to other lands of the same continent. Quick to apprehend, warm in sympathy and good-will, our confrères have caught the spirit of the purpose given and have manifested a gratifying readiness to join with us in our work. And what a great, free field for enthusiastic action lies waiting for the touch of genius needed to make it all alive with the new thought and interest which a knowledge of reincarnation can at once supply!

If for each one of us the illumination which knowledge gives has brightened all existence, may not that change come to all who are yet to inherit the wisdom. We anticipate in all lands where the leaven is at work, a number of fundamental changes in the very character of the nations. Philosophies shape nations, mould them to the will that holds the future in its appointed forms. The philosophy that a knowledge of reincarnation and karma engenders is full and rounded. Its acceptance at first by a few and then by many in a nation has a broadening and liberalizing action upon the nation.

We long to see great and peaceful enthusiasm among our southern neighbors, with a strong determination to cling to great and altruistic activities for the dissemination of the wisdom.

W. V-H.

*REINCARNATION HASTENED*

The length of time during which the ego remains away from attachment to the physical body depends on some, thus far, unknown factors of soul life that determines the soul's type. So some advanced souls remain away from incarnation for twelve hundred years while others of approximately equal age return after six hundred years.

But, apart from this matter of type of soul as related to time of return, there is the possibility of making a great difference in the time of advance by regulation of the rapidity with which the soul's store of force is expended. This force must be of a definite amount and kind. And it is known that this force can be expended by the great and authoritative adepts in a relatively rapid or slow manner to suit the major purposes which They are working for in evolution. In other words, if a certain ego can better aid the world's progress by taking incarnation a decade or a century earlier than would ordinarily be the case, then the Great Personage may take the responsibility of causing the man to pass through his astral and devachanic experiences with that acceleration of activity needed to complete the cycle at the required time. The facts of reincarnation in their simplest form gear in with innumerable complicated possibilities of aiding humanity if only one has the power to take the great responsibilities involved.

The young occultist just learning the A, B, C of the great work may take part, apparently, in this work in a small way. It would seem that the longing and the affection of such of us as

have friends among the so-called dead might affect them in such a way as to hasten their return to the embodied condition in which they might be helpful in favored ways.

W. V-H.

### COMFORT AS REINCARNATIONIST

Mr. Will Levington Comfort is a writer whose works should command the interest and attention of the readers of REINCARNATION. They are of rare literary value and fine spiritual quality. Those who prefer to get knowledge through constructive fiction would do well to read any or all of his novels. Those who would get at the heart of the man's life and teaching would better read his non-fictional trio: *Midstream*, (1914); *Child and Country*, (1915); and *The Hive*, (1918). The busy person with time to read only one new book should take up *Midstream*, for there he will find a big true story of a soul's struggle and final turning from darkness to follow the light, and to help others to find it.

Some have sharply criticised the intimate revelation Mr. Comfort has made in his book. From the old-fashioned viewpoint there may be some grounds for objection. From the impersonal standard of judgment of one interested in life as an evolutionary battle-ground of the soul, he who reads this story will draw strength and inspiration and real soul-quality from every page. To one able to separate in some small degree the false from the true there cannot be a single offensive word in the book. Mr. Comfort speaks plainly,

never grossly. This story of his life up to the age of thirty-five years is unique, virile and true. Truth is the undertone of all his later works. It sounds and resounds through the chapters of *Midstream*. The sympathetic reader must and will rejoice with him on his coming into soul-mastery.

Mr. Comfort disclaims being a theosophist; but it is plain that he is on good terms with reincarnation and karma. In *Midstream* he speaks of being asked by the editor of a Detroit newspaper, where he studied theosophy.

"I didn't," he answered.

"You write it," countered the editor; "you preach reincarnation in every line."

Mr. Comfort adds: "He promised to bring me a book on theosophy. . . . As for reincarnation it seemed to me beyond discussion. I had only to intensify the word in order to realise that it meant something which was already a conviction. . . . I have never undertaken to explain the process of our various rebirths along one cohering line of spiritual identity; but with me something of the sort is settled, and forms the basis for all thinking; so completely established that I often forget to explain." He goes on to speak highly of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the work of Vivekananda, etc., and then he says, "H. P. B. needs no sanction of mine, nor am I yet ready to furnish one; but red, or yellow or white, there is certainly a solar quality and dimension to that woman. She is yet far from culmination—hardly lifted above the horizon mists."

*Midstream* takes us episodically through the first half of Mr. Comfort's life, leading out of

the sloughs of earthly desire and animal appetite through the cleansing waters to the higher ground and the far sight ahead up the Valley of Vision. He dissects himself and his emotions and weakness as calmly as a surgeon would carve up one of the lower order of cold-blooded animals. Always he tells that which was important to his evolution, whether it is conventional to tell it, and distasteful in the telling, or not. He does not speak of the shocking with a desire to shock: he simply gets outside of himself and reports what went on in the mind of the man that was Comfort. For this reason any possible shock is forestalled in the mind of a right thinking reader.

*Child and Country* is a charming book. Many paragraphs lift one above the sordid and give a gleam of that which its writer clearly perceives. One follows on through the pleasanter days of Mr. Comfort's literary grounding in success; and one is much relieved to find his head is not in the least turned by public favor. There are glimpses of life on the shores of Lake Erie—not complete pictures, but fascinating flashes—of study hours, and house building and the instruction of children—his own and others, older and younger, who feel the teaching quality of him. There is much worth in this book for fathers and mothers who would develop their own children along natural lines. There is much for the teacher of the children of others to learn. And all through the book there is an under-current of real affection for books, horses, dogs, flowers and trees, which will find echo in many hearts.

*The Hive* is the latest of the three books. It is a sort of continuation of *Child and Country*; only

it has more to do with the original work of those studying under Mr. Comfort's leadership,—if one may rightly call such gladly performed, free-hearted constructive work "study." Many have said kind things about this book. Others have termed it "visionary and unpractical." These good people, no matter how clever their wit or how profound their worldly wisdom, judge the book by the old standards which must inevitably go. This is a time when the 'vision splendid' may have its way, and the younger generation and the listeners among the older generation are fortunate in finding opportunity to follow such "visionaries" as Mr. Comfort. He has run the scale in all its fulness; he has found the words of the poet—"It's wiser being good than bad,"—more than a fancy. He has set his face to the future and his pen is ever busy putting down his findings. "Plain and true"—that is a favorite phrase of his, and one feels it sums up the man himself as he is to-day. "To be plain and true and good!" he cries, "these are the qualities for which we must strive." He disapproves of premature spiritual development. He holds that we must become good before we may bear the strain of illumination without giving way.

These things have been said before; but Mr. Comfort says them in a new way, much more likely to get a hearing from modern truth-seekers. Every reader of REINCARNATION should not rest until he or she has read all of these three books. It would be well for every Group to have them to make use of in "spreading the knowledge."

F. J. Y.

### HYSLOP AND THE OTHER WORLD

*Contact With The Other World*, by Hyslop. The Century Company, New York

Professor Hyslop has been engaged for some time in the study of psychical research in connection with the American Society for Psychical Research. He was formerly professor of psychology and ethics in Columbia University, so he has the right to be heard and he has expressed his views strongly and well.

We greatly regret that we have not sufficient space in which to reproduce his entire chapter on reincarnation because it is of interest in a variety of ways. The errors which he makes are due chiefly to his misconception of the scientific meaning of reincarnation as it is understood by those who take the trouble to form that conception of it which includes the varying phases of his theory of the higher self, which constantly projects its nature into lower bodies, and the personalities represented by those lower bodies which are necessarily be evanescent and recurring.

His opening sentence is as follows: "The doctrine of reincarnation is one form of belief in survival after death." This initial statement is incomplete and misleading. It is true that the doctrine of reincarnation *involves* a form of belief in survival after death but it is in fact more than mere survival.

In the third paragraph he speaks as follows:

"But reincarnation does not assume any resurrection. It assumes that the soul, without memory of its former life, comes back and occupies a body created by the union of a sexual union. This denial of memory is the fund-

characteristic of the doctrine, as held by most theosophists to-day and in the past. If faced with the disadvantages of the loss of memory, theosophists maintain that after various reincarnations this memory of all past experiences is recovered. It is lost as a consequence of the individual's mistakes and sins, and is restored when his "karma" or probationary discipline is complete; after his various transmigrations."

We maintain that the soul does not forget, but that the soul remembers; that the soul has learned those principles of life which pertained to his experience in the body which was dropped, these principles being added to those which the soul possessed before. The individual who entertains the proper knowledge of the memory of the ego is not nonplussed thereby, but understands that, for the young soul, it is perhaps an advantage not to recall the multiplicitous details pertaining to the small affairs of the antecedent lives. It is true that when karma is exhausted and when certain powers have been gained memory is restored, but the man who has attained to that power of remembering, as a rule, cares but little about recalling his past lives except as he can draw from them material with which to work in the life in which he has attained his powers.

In paragraph seven he speaks as follows:

"Reincarnation is not desirable, because it does not satisfy the only instinct that makes survival of any kind interesting, namely, the instinct to preserve the consciousness of personal identity. This is denied to the process until the end and that is never in sight! Moreover, assertions of even this return of memory is purely arbitrary. Man's only interest in survival is for the persistence of his personal identity. It is a form of the impulse towards self-preservation, which is fundamental to all the acquisitions of experience and character in

this life. A future life must be the continuity of this consciousness or it is not a life to us at all."

Professor Hyslop's deductions are hasty and incorrect when he says reincarnation is not desirable. He probably means that he does not consider the theory of reincarnation as satisfactory. He doubtless does not mean that reincarnation itself is not desirable, although his words are to that effect. His statement that this theory "does not satisfy the only instinct that makes survival of any kind interesting, namely, the instinct to preserve the consciousness of the personal identity" is an error of utmost importance. There are many other reasons why reincarnation is desirable than the preservation of the consciousness of *personal* identity. If a man lived for ten years in London and went to Paris to live and had a lapse of memory with reference to what had happened in London, the man might still enjoy life in a very satisfactory way. The survival of consciousness after death is interesting not because we can carry with us memory of the small happenings of personal life but because we ourselves know ourselves and know our inner characteristics, and rejoice in the development of improved phases of personal character in each incarnation. This can be seen in every happy life around us. People rejoice especially in the fact that they feel themselves unfolding just as the flower coming up in spring-time enjoys unfolding again the same sort of stalk, branches, leaves and flowers as it had in the preceding year. Furthermore, the man who understands reincarnation looks forward with longing and satisfaction to the time when he will remember all his past lives *in the fulness*

*of development*, exactly as the boy looks forward to the larger life which he can lead when he becomes a man.

The statement is later made that "karma without memory is retribution minus all grounds for it, abstracting everything that makes it rational." But memory does persist so far as are concerned those phases of our nature which govern karma, as it is not so much what men do that produces karma as the feeling and attitude in which the acts are performed. Consequently, the principles which the man has taken pains to store up in that part of his memory which is undying, being carried over from life to life with growing perfection, determine the karma which the man must make use of.

"How then did such a doctrine originate? What could have given rise to such a theory? Plato may be forgiven because we know his poetic and literary instincts. But there was some reason for the maintenance of the belief, and we may well ask what this reason was. Even fantastic views, when persistently and seriously held, have some reason for their existence; and the doctrine of reincarnation is too old and too insistent not to have had some reason for its origin."

It is gratifying to note that Professor Hyslop is willing to forgive Plato whether he assigns this or that reason for giving latitude to Plato; but in order to understand Plato's attitude we have to remember that the chief teaching as to philosophy and religion that the Greeks had was contained in their "Mysteries." Under the secrecy imposed by the Orders which taught the "Mysteries" it was not lawful to make full statements but only veiled ones as to the doctrines which the esotericists of those days, like Plato, had fully at

command for their own use. If you are willing to admit that the alchemists of the medieval period had reason in their curiously jumbled writings, that they taught, under the veil of imagery, esoteric truths such as to-day may be stated without the risk of the fagot, you will equally be willing to assume that Plato gained his knowledge of the doctrine of reincarnation from esoteric teachings.

It ought to be understood that those who recognize reincarnation as a fact maintain also that the memory of what we do in the life of the physical body persists naturally after the loss of that body, until indeed all the lower vehicles are swept away.

“It was this idea with which Professor James was playing when he tried to defend the possibility of immortality by the doctrine of *transmissive* functions of the brain. He did not call his theory reincarnation, for to do so would at once have discredited his view in the minds of scientists, if only because of associations and implications which he did not admit and which the theologians hold. Professor James, instead of using the results of psychic research to prove survival after death, confined himself to physiological and psychological arguments, maintaining the materialistic view of the nature of consciousness. He admitted, with the materialist, that consciousness is a function of the brain. But, in order to avoid the materialist's conclusion he tried to distinguish between what he called *transmissive* and *productive* functions of the brain. He did not make the distinction very clear or tenable in relation to facts, but he used the idea consistently enough. By productive functions of the brain he meant such as are so organically connected with it that they perish when the body dies. He imagined that consciousness, however, might be a function that could be transmitted from the brain to some other structure, whether the transmission be conceived as reincarnation

with or without the retention of personal identity. He said nothing about transmigration of the soul to other human bodies, and he probably would not have tolerated the idea. Neither did he say anything about the question whether any "spiritual," "astral," or ethereal organisms existed without any connection with a body. He left us to infer that they might be formed or created for the transmitted consciousness after death."

It is interesting to observe that Mr. Hyslop considers Professor James to have held the doctrine of reincarnation. James' writings can far better be understood if one assumes that he knew something of reincarnation.

The entire book of Professor Hyslop is well worthy of careful study. We must agree with him in his attack upon the medical profession on account of the fact that that body has not given scientific consideration, as it should have done, to the phenomena of spiritism.

W. V-H.

#### FIELD NOTES

Mrs. E. M. Green writes from Brooklyn, N. Y.: "Our first meeting of the *Legion* Group has just taken place this afternoon (October 13), with eleven people present. Our meeting was beautiful and there was an earnest desire to give out these great truths. For the next meeting we have each taken away a typed copy of the quotation, "Birth is not the beginning of a life, etc.," promising to think and study over them and to bring our presentation of its meaning. This should first of all familiarise us with *giving out* intelligently, and also it should create a very definite thought-form in each of our circles. We have promised to copy and pass on this thought wherever possible. In this way, too, I think we create unity better than by having one person give a talk, as it brings out active endeavor from all members."

Sir Conan Doyle, according to cablegrams from England, has just countered neatly upon the clergymen of England who have attacked spiritualism, by accusing Christianity of having failed in its great mission because of the occurrence of the great war. Sir Conan maintains that a knowledge of the actual facts which spiritualism can supply is needed by the Christian religion to give material basis for the actual study of the facts of spiritual life.

One of the members of the *Legion*, noting the appeal published in the last issue of this magazine, says: "Could you not get pledges of sustaining membership at, say, ten dollars per annum from enough well-wishers to keep the work going?"

The Leader of one of the *Legion* Groups in a large city has ordered one hundred copies of this current issue of REINCARNATION for the purpose of placing them on the news-stands for sale, giving the news company the larger part of the proceeds and taking back the unsold copies. The plan is to get all the members together, give each one a number of dealers in each section of the city, and get them to place the magazine on sale. This is good work and it would be well if many Groups could in this way familiarise many people with the name "reincarnation." The low price for magazines in one hundred lots, only three cents a copy, makes this plan very promising.

A large Group of the *Legion* in Hollywood, Cal., has been organised by Mr. John Leembruggen and a number of old members and new applicants.

The *Legion* wishes heartily to thank the following kind members and friends who have sent donations to the *Legion* Fund: Mrs. E. de García-Lugo, \$2; Miss E. C. Gray, \$3; Mrs. A. W. Williams, J. C. Ewell, Mrs. B. L. Christiansen, Mrs. Ella L. Cutler, Mrs. M. R. Dailey, Chas. A. Williams, Miss S. Lagerström, Mr. J. Buchholtz, Mr. R. Packard, and a friend in St. Louis, each \$5; members in Denver, \$6.50; Miss Laura J. Romès, \$10; Mrs. Sarah F. Gane, \$25; and Mrs. V. M. Turner, \$30. Also, Mrs. M. Hanthorn, \$5; and Mr. H. B. Cathers, \$4.20.

The *Legion* is reprinting adhesive seals in several sets of colors. Our friends are invited to make use of them.