

# THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

VOL. 44, No. 4

TORONTO, SEPT.-OCT., 1963

Price 35 Cents

The Theosophical Society is not responsible for any statement in this Magazine, unless made in an official document

## ON REINCARNATION

Reincarnation is examined in this issue from a number of aspects. No apology is offered that our limited space has been given over to this single theme: sufficient justification lies in its permanent interest to Theosophists, to say nothing of its increasing recognition by thinkers everywhere.

The theory of the soul's evolution and its periodic necessity for rebirth in human bodies has long been considered by the majority of Theosophical students as the most logical of any dealing with immortality. Their studies might range from the intuitive to the clinical, their conclusions vary from reserved to complete acceptance, but their interest has helped keep the idea before the public, and it has lately become respectable in the west, where many prominent leaders in thought have accepted it as the only reasonable hypothesis.

Most of the subscribers to *The Canadian Theosophist* are familiar with the doctrine of transmigration of souls, and if this issue contains little that is new to them we trust they will nevertheless welcome the opportunity of reviewing their comprehension of the subject. In her 3rd Message to American Theosophists, H.P.B. advised them to "Learn, then, well the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation . . . and teach, practice, promulgate that system of life and thought which alone can save the coming race".

Today, a new generation—still materialistic for the most part—is being introduced to the old ideas in different ways, and we should be prepared and able to discuss their

beliefs (or lack of them) in terms they will understand. Only then will we be entitled to ask their consideration of our teachings.

### Growing Popular Interest

Latterly reincarnation has been investigated by a larger public, and, to say the least, from a Theosophical standpoint the present state of affairs seems encouraging. To advocate the theory of transmigration is no longer to be labelled "crank" or "heretic"; the doctrine may now be discussed in circles where the very mention of the word twenty or thirty years ago would have engendered hostility.

In recent months the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Canada, Mr. Dudley Barr, has been interviewed on radio and television, and on both occasions his questioners emphasized reincarnation, evidently with the feeling that this would be of most interest to their listeners and viewers. Here is a sign and a challenge: we must ourselves individually and collectively attend to this interest—indeed, under the right conditions, stimulate it. Many students, it should be remembered, have received their introduction to Theosophy via an initial encounter with the problem of immortality.

The public regard has also been caught by some excellent literature published in the past few years. The magnificent *Reincarnation, An East-West Anthology* has been deservedly popular, and the booklet *You Will Come Back* (which originally appeared in these pages in 1958) has had to be

reprinted several times. Nor to be overlooked is the influence of such scriptures as the *Bhagavad Gita*, of which there are so many fine English translations, and which attracts a perennial readership; of Christmas Humphrey's *Buddhism* and other books on eastern religions which have also been so well received. By these means many are being introduced to (or reminded of) the age-old truth of reincarnation.

Perhaps one of the most significant indications of the change in western feeling is contained in a social report, *Exploring English Character*, by the British anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer. On analysing his extensive survey of religious beliefs he found that "the relative presence of the belief in reincarnation . . . is perhaps the most surprising single piece of information to be derived from this research"; and, "by and large the believers in reincarnation are very evenly distributed throughout the population". Professor Gorer acknowledged that "the Theosophists imported it (reincarnation) into Europe at the end of the last century, but they comprise a minute portion of my sample; and, apart from the Presbyterians, some members of every denomination subscribe to this belief . . ."

An interesting sidelight to the survey is that although the idea of reincarnation was generally not taught to these people, most had quite definite opinions as to the reason and nature of their successive embodiments, and one would assume a high intuitional content in their belief.

A British theologian, Mr. Ninian Smart, in a B.B.C. talk last year opined: "It would appear that if ever belief in rebirth fades, or if ever it waxes and spreads, this will have a revolutionary effect upon the great religions". The above evidence suggests that the belief is spreading, and we agree that great improvements are likely to follow.

#### Quackery vs. Science

Evidently that which "Theosophists imported" has over the years become a popular even though unconventional belief. Our

initial reaction to this trend is naturally favourable. Let us temper our satisfaction, however, with the realization that popularity breeds its own potential decay, and we must ever be on the alert to keep reincarnation on the plane of wisdom.

Recalling the dangers of pseudo-occultism, we must beware the psychic quacks who will waste no time in taking advantage of a situation like this. Already they may be observed attempting to attract the unwary with the bait of unusual powers with which to unveil the characters of their past lives (seldom common folk!)—to say nothing of offering the gullible the choice of their next personality!

This is a hazard which will only be overcome by proper teaching. It may be prevented, to a large extent, by scientific knowledge should this be forthcoming. All the more welcome, therefore, is the work of interested researchers such as Dr. Ian Stevenson, a Canadian, who was graduated from McGill University, and is now Chairman of the Department of Neurology and Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Virginia. His original study has attracted wide attention in the past few years, and we are very pleased to publish herein one of his papers which discusses the requirements and methods of investigating *scientifically* memories of past lives.

The importance of such scrupulous research cannot be over-emphasized, particularly at this time. We Theosophical students should take an active interest in the scientific aspect of rebirth, keep ourselves informed and up-to-date on major research work such as Dr. Stevenson's, and where possible, to draw attention to the relationship between empirical and Theosophical knowledge. "Science is our best ally".

As more people learn that Theosophists seriously study man's evolution, and also those scriptures which unequivocally state the doctrines of karma and reincarnation, they are likely to want to question us about them. It then behooves us to understand every phase of our teachings, and to be

able to give simple, intelligent answers when called upon. All too often the occult student attaches no importance to what to him has become self-evident, forgetting the problems he himself had to overcome in order to fit all the pieces together.

The new general interest might well be indicative that *now* is the time when our least attempts to disseminate the theory of

reincarnation will bring the most return. It is imperative therefore that we do not allow our optimism to dull our zeal; rather should we be stimulated to further effort, inspired by the probability that some, albeit a minority of enquirers into reincarnation will go on to examine the larger background of Theosophical doctrines of which karma and reincarnation form a part.

## CRITERIA FOR THE IDEAL CASE BEARING ON REINCARNATION

BY IAN STEVENSON

### Introduction

Although the idea of reincarnation has a long history, no serious attempt to study systematically the evidence for reincarnation occurred until this century. Gabriel Delanne seems to have made the first such effort. In 1924 he published accounts of all the cases of persons apparently remembering previous lives that he could study himself or learn about<sup>1</sup>. Some years later, Shirley published another review of outstanding cases of apparent past life memories<sup>2</sup>. His collection included many cited by Delanne and a few additional cases Shirley had himself studied. A few other smaller collections of cases have been published. In the 1890's, Fielding Hall<sup>3</sup> published accounts of half a dozen cases he had studied in Burma, and in the 1920's, K. N. Sahay reported seven cases which he had investigated in India<sup>4</sup>. Mr. S. C. Bose has recently published an account of his personal investigation of some cases in India<sup>5</sup>. Sahay's pamphlet or other publications had previously reported a few of the cases described by Mr. Bose, but he has also described a number of later cases, including some of great value for the investigation of this subject.

For the past five years, I have conducted a census of all cases bearing on reincarnation, including both past and contemporary

cases\*. In 1960, I published a summary and an analysis of 44 such cases of which I had been able to study accounts<sup>6-7</sup>. The cases I summarized had all with one exception been previously published elsewhere, most of them in one or other of the references I have cited. I included one case which I had investigated myself, the Weisz-Roos case. The number of cases summarized in my articles is, in my opinion, quite sufficient to establish reincarnation as a plausible theory deserving further investigation. Moreover, it seems possible that the evidence for reincarnation may prove to be among the best evidence we can obtain for survival.

---

\*Note—In the international census of cases bearing on reincarnation which I have been conducting, two persons have been particularly helpful to me in exchanging information about cases. These are Mr. H. N. Banerjee of Ganganagar, India, and Dr. K. Mueller, of Zurich, Switzerland. Since my first articles on this subject, a number of other persons have sent me accounts of cases or contributed helpfully to the analysis of the cases and to the development of the criteria for the ideal case which I have outlined in this article. For this assistance I wish to thank: Dr. Karlis Osis, Mr. W. G. Roll, Mrs. J. E. Nester, Colonel A. E. Powell, Professor F. L. Atraya, Mr. A. W. Osborn, Mr. S. C. Bose, Mr. Francis Story, Swami Akhilananda, and Mr. Henry Tate.

Since I wrote the articles referred to, a considerable number of additional cases have come to my attention. More cases have occurred in Europe and in India, one has been reported from Brazil, and several weak, but nevertheless suggestive cases have occurred in the United States. The number of cases for which, assuming the *bona fides* of the reporters, reincarnation is at least a possible explanation, now number more than seventy-five. This is plenty of smoke and now we need to find where the fire is. We need to continue collecting all the additional cases we can. But in addition, we must do something more. First, we must try to improve our methods of investigating these cases so that we can either exclude more completely hypotheses other than reincarnation, or show how a person who seemed to remember a previous life actually obtained his information by normal means. Secondly, we must study the cases we have now collected with a view to discovering what common features or patterns the data of these cases show. And thirdly, we need attempts under experimental conditions to elicit memories or apparent memories of previous lives similar to the material we have studied in the spontaneous cases. In this article, I shall discuss only the first of these tasks. I shall outline my suggestions for the ideal investigation of the ideal case of an apparent memory of a previous life.

#### Method Of Investigating Cases

In the first place, the rememberer should recall at least six or ten, and preferably more items of information about the life and times of the person he claims to remember having been. Moreover, the items he remembers should be uncommon, and preferably unique for that previous person. The items recalled should preferably include the supposed previous name, the address where he lived and the names of important friends and relatives. Special features of identification, e.g., Prabhu Khairti's recollection that his wife had been nicknamed Ganjo or "bald-headed" because she was slightly bald<sup>s</sup> add to the satisfaction of this criterion which is

simply to assure that person A (the rememberer) is actually talking about person B (the remembered person) and no one else. Some statements, e.g., "my uncle was kind to me" might refer to almost anyone and clearly we must avoid wasting time on the mere chance matching of a few points of similarity between the statements and someone to whom they might happen to apply.

When a person claims to remember a life as someone else and can state a fair number of specific items of information, then immediately and before anyone attempts verification, someone should make a written record of what the rememberer has stated. If the person subsequently remembers additional details, so much the better and we can add these to the record, but we should not delay the written record in the expectation that a fuller story will emerge later. We make written records in advance of fulfillment or verification a requirement for other kinds of spontaneous cases in parapsychology, e.g., precognitive dreams, and should require this also for the cases bearing on reincarnation. This rule seems the best and perhaps the only reliable way of eliminating a retrospective distortion of the report of the cognized material. Moreover, such distortions may reduce and eliminate important material as much as they may exaggerate or import items. It is additionally helpful to have the written record witnessed by others to whom the memories are told before verification.

The verification of the alleged memories should be undertaken by persons unconnected with either of the two families involved. Second best only would be attempts at verification through correspondence between the two families and even less satisfactory would be visits between the families for verification unless these are carefully planned in advance. Proper planning and conduct of trips from one town to another for the purpose of verification can make these additionally helpful. For such visits, we should observe two precautions. First,

the person who is, say, trying to lead the way through a strange town to his former house, should not be surrounded by a crowd of people whose murmurs might give him cues of the correct direction to take. Secondly, the tests of recognition should always present the rememberer with several alternatives from which he should choose. Thus, if a photograph of a person he might remember is presented to him, it should be offered in a group of several photographs of different persons from which he should select the correct one and name the relevant person.

The investigators need to make copious notes of everything told them by the members of the families or communicated between the two families when they become acquainted. Once the two families have come in contact through normal means, no further memories can be allowed on the record of these. The possibility of contamination of the memories by contact with the family of the remembered person provides another reason both for making written records and for keeping the families separate for as long as possible.

#### Criteria For The Ideal Case

Now, supposing that we have an opportunity to investigate a case of someone who claims to remember specific details of a previous life and suppose that we can achieve the rather ideal conditions of investigations I have outlined. What features would we then like to find in the case in order to reduce and perhaps exclude entirely the possibilities that the rememberer had acquired the information he seemed to remember either by entirely normal means or through some kind of extrasensory perception not requiring survival or reincarnation?

We would naturally want to satisfy ourselves about the good faith and intelligence of our informants. Here we must often fall back upon their general reputation for integrity, their manner in telling their stories and the coherence and consistency of the stories. We should consider the existence of motives for deception such as the hope of publicity or financial gain.

Investigators in the past have tended to discard immediately all cases in which fraud is suspected or discovered. Dr. Nandor Fodor provides a valuable exception to this habit and has gone some distance in understanding the motives of fraudulent mediums<sup>9</sup>. I believe we can learn much of value by continuing investigations of instances where fraud seems to enter. It is even more important for us to investigate thoroughly those cases in which we can trace the information allegedly remembered to some published source like a newspaper. In such instances, the "rememberer" may forget that he acquired the information and may even never have known he did so.

Having satisfied ourselves about the reliability of our informants, we should next consider the ease with which information about the person remembered might have reached the rememberer. With regard to the person remembered, it is better if he was an obscure person of whose life and death there was no published record or broadcast (or televised) announcement. And it is better if he lived in a remote part of the country or another country altogether. He should, I think, have lived at least a hundred miles away, but the actual distance is not so important (in these days of improved transportation) as the accessibility of one town to the inhabitants of the other. If a mountain range separates the towns and makes travel between them extremely difficult, the distance between them might be safely much less than a hundred miles. And if there is much traffic between the two towns, even a great distance separating them might give by itself little reassurances on this point.

As for the rememberer, it is better if he is a child under the age of six or seven when he first tells his memories. A young child has obviously fewer ways of becoming acquainted with people in distant towns and his parents are much more likely to know what sort of people he has met than is the case with older children or adults. These may have picked up all kinds of information in many places without anyone, including themselves, realizing they have done

so. Again, the actual age of the child matters less than the accessibility to him of sources of possible knowledge about the person remembered. The rememberer should never have visited the town where the remembered person lived nor have known intimately anyone who had lived there.

The parents of the child should testify that he has never been to the place of the previous life and that they themselves have never heard of the person remembered or his family. They should testify that the child has never had any close contact with persons living in the other town or its area. The child should testify independently to this also.

The foregoing criteria will help us to eliminate the possibility that the rememberer learned about the other person through normal sources of information. But we want also, so far as we can, to find evidence that will reduce the likelihood that the rememberer could have acquired this information through extrasensory perception. We do not know the limits of extrasensory perception and the criteria I shall suggest may not eliminate it as a factor at all. However, I think we should regard it as less likely if the rememberer shows no other evidence of mediumistic capacities or of capacity for extrasensory perception sufficiently marked to account for the correspondences between his apparent memories and the verified facts. Then I think the possibility of his using extrasensory perception becomes reduced if the facts he cognizes have to be verified by different people or in different places. The information verified should not be found all printed in one book, letter, diary, or newspaper. Nor should it all be found in the contents of one person's mind. When this happens, we cannot be as sure as we want to be that the rememberer had not extracted the information from this one source. Of course, mediums can extract and assemble material from more than one source, but this seems to be a more difficult task than obtaining it from only one place or person. Along the same line, it is

helpful if the rememberer recalls buildings, trees, or people as they were when he claimed to live and not as they are at the time of the investigation. A small number of the cases in my collection show this feature. I believe that this kind of memory puts a severe strain on the telepathy hypothesis as an explanation for the memories since it has to account for how the rememberer could extract from the minds of the persons having the information the characteristics of the buildings, for example, as they once were, while not extracting information about how they are now. This kind of memory, when verified, also helps us exclude ESP projection as an explanation for cases in which paranormal familiarity with a particular place is shown in advance of visiting it.

It remains to mention several features of the ideal case which, while perhaps not counting as primary evidence, would add greatly to the plausibility of reincarnation as explanatory of the alleged memories. I have in mind first the occurrence in the rememberer of similar physical markings, e.g., deformities or scars, identical with those in the remembered person. A little harder to evaluate, but not less valuable would be the occurrence in the rememberer of certain talents, e.g., the capacity to speak a foreign language, play a musical instrument, or perform difficult dances, which the remembered person also possessed. Still more difficult to measure but nevertheless of great potential importance, would be the occurrence of similar attitudes, interests, fears, and illnesses in the two persons, or the occurrence of similar situations and relationships in their two lives.

Do we have any cases which meet the criteria I have proposed? I think we do have a few and I propose to publish a review of these better cases in the future. I plan also a comparison of these better cases with those which do not meet all our rather rigid standards. If the same common features and patterns appear in the weaker cases and in the stronger cases, our con-

fidence in the weaker cases will grow and also our interest in the patterns we find in both types of cases.

As the international census of cases bearing on reincarnation proceeds, I earnestly hope that parapsychologists who learn of such cases will either inform those of us who study such cases about them, or themselves undertake a comprehensive study of the cases along the lines I have indicated in this article. We need also the application of critical minds to the problems posed by these cases so that we may improve our methods of investigating and analyzing them. I will therefore welcome suggestions for the improvement of our criteria for the ideal case of this type or for any other aspect of our study of such cases.

---

1. Delanne, G., *Documents pour Servir à l'Étude de la Reincarnation*. Editions de la B.P.S. Paris, 1924.

2. Shirley, R., *The Problem of Rebirth*. Rider & Co., London, n.d.

3. Hall, F., *The Soul of a People*, Macmillan Co., London, 1902 (4th ed.)

4. Sahay, K.K.N., *Reincarnation: Verified Cases of Rebirth After Death*. Bareilly, India. ca. 1927.

5. Bose, S. C., *Jatismar Katha—A Book on Reincarnation*. Ghat Sila Co., Calcutta, 1959. (Translated into English by E. J. Spencer. Unpublished Ms.)

6. Stevenson, I., *The Evidence for Survival from Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations*. Part I. J. Am. Soc. Psychical Res. 54 : 51, April, 1960.

7. Stevenson, I., *The Evidence for Survival from Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations*. Part II. J. Am. Soc. Psychical Res. 54 : 95, July, 1960.

8. Sunderlal, R. B. S., *Cas apparentes de reminiscences de vies antérieures*. *Revue Méta-psychique*. July-August, 1924. P. 302.

9. Fodor, N., *The Hunted Mind*. Garrett Publications, N.Y., 1959.

Reprinted from *The Indian Journal of Parapsychology* by permission of the Director, Seth Sohan Lal, Memorial Institute of Parapsychology.

## REINCARNATION - THE HOPE OF HUMANITY

BY R. MACHELL

If one dares to *face* life today, and tries to grasp the meaning of the picture, one is staggered by a sense of the grotesque horror of the drama, and by a fear that the whole thing is a monstrous blunder, which we are trying to persuade ourselves has some deep reason to justify it. It is so hard to accept the other solution, that the whole thing is a nightmare, or that the earth is a vast lunatic asylum. I need hardly point out that there have been highly intelligent philosophers who have upheld both these latter views.

The human mind is constantly busy providing itself with veils to blind its own sight, with theories to account elaborately for things that are unpleasantly clear and simple. The art of mental camouflage is as old as the mind of man, I imagine. So we

have high-sounding phrases to disguise the meanness of our motives, and complex theories wherewith to explain humiliating experiences.

In fact, the mind, while extremely inquisitive, is also very unwilling to face facts. So it takes some courage to make one's own mind face the situation in which we find ourselves today; and, putting aside the plausible and lofty camouflage of our orators, to think for ourselves, "What does it all mean? What is the sense of it all? Why all this misery and horror? Why all the meanness and rottenness that form so large a part of social and national life? Where does it lead? Is there any purpose in it all?"

It requires courage to carry out these inquiries, for a failure to find an answer means despair. If these questions are un-

answerable, then there is no hope for humanity. Its future is simply to sink back into mere animalism without aim or purpose, and without Hope in Life.

It is bad to lack health, or intelligence, or money, or friends; but it is awful to have no hope. It is scarcely possible for a man to live without hope of some kind: and indeed it is probable that hopelessness is the most efficient cause of death, for it implies complete negativity, in which condition no resistance to disease or death is possible. Fortunately, few people are intelligent enough to know that they have no hope, for the mind will always supply some kind of a substitute that is just good enough to blind a person to the fact that hope is dead.

Hope is not born in the brain-mind, but it is nourished there, or it is killed. It comes from the spiritual self and is like a ray of light in the darkness. When this ray of spiritual starlight is lacking, the brain lights tapers and lamps of various kinds and makes a great show of illumination, but it is all a substitute for spiritual light or Hope. Hope is self-luminous and not, like the substitutes, a product of combustion. The false lights burn much fuel and need constant feeding, whereas the true light seems to be itself a source of life and energy as well as light.

It is because of this spiritual origin of hope, that so many who have it not are ignorant of their loss. They live in their lower mind by the light of the substitute fires of desire and ambition, and such things as seem to offer a goal for attainment. And what of humanity? What is its hope? Has it any? When we speak of humanity, we generally go no farther in thought than the white races, though on second thoughts we may admit the claim of some other branches of the human family, and for the time being it is enough.

Is it not evident that our civilization is in reality hopeless in the higher sense? There are religious bodies that hold up ideals, and call them hope. But on examination these all resolve themselves into gratified desires, or substitutes for hope. All the heavens and

paradises are just more or less elevated ideals of personal gratification. Some are more comprehensive as to the number of persons involved, while others are frankly egotistical and exclusive. But in all, there is the absence of that spiritual light which is in the Soul of Humanity. Humanity seems to have lost its way, and to be groping in the dark, in spite of all its intellectual lamps: for it is without Hope.

Hope is an illumination of the mind by the soul. It is a revelation of the direction if not of the goal of life. It points the way of evolution, which is the path of true Brotherhood: for the Soul of Humanity is one; and human beings are its manifestation on earth; so that in a sense they are born of one parent, but in a purely mystical sense. Mentally they are all separate, and selfish, and so must always be at war with one another, because they all are moved by the same impulse of desire for self-gratification, and thus are naturally in conflict with one another; for the very reason that they are so nearly united by their inherent desires. One result of this confusion is ignorance, which in its turn produces more confusion of ideals.

When I say that ignorance is a result of the confusion among men as to the really desirable objects of human attainment, I mean, naturally, ignorance in its wider aspect, as ignorance of the real nature of man, and of the real purpose of existence. It is more usual to speak of ignorance as a *cause* of human errors, and of course that is a reasonable way of putting it; but it is also true that there is a *cause* of ignorance as well as a consequence.

Knowledge is so often looked upon as a mass of information merely, that we may easily overlook the fact that real knowledge demands the exercise of the understanding. Without this the mass of collected information is not converted into actual knowledge. So we may and do find a great number of people who have acquired great store of learning, and who yet remain profoundly ignorant; because they have not been able



to digest or assimilate the mental food they have so greedily devoured.

It is evident that education, generally speaking, has long been confined to the imparting of information, and it has consequently produced a mass of educated people whose knowledge is no better than ignorance, for lack of understanding.

In order to understand facts we must have some clear idea of our own relation to the world in which the facts occur. And the bearing of the facts on life can only be felt by one who knows or feels the purpose of life. This kind of knowledge is not to be gained by information, but by actual experience. The gaining of experience is discipline: and discipline is education in the true sense; for it is by discipline that we draw out of our unknown inner nature the power to grow, to understand and to discriminate. Without true education we are hardly able to formulate our hopes, or to distinguish them from desires—for such discrimination demands the exercise of a consciousness higher than that of the brain-mind, and this higher consciousness is itself the goal of human evolution, individual or racial.

When the ordinary person is forced to face his own life, and when he or she endeavors to answer the questions, What am I living for? What do I really hope for, beyond personal comfort? Why am I living at all?—or any such problem, a sense of utter bewilderment generally comes over the mind, followed by a desire for some distraction that shall make thought impossible! But for those who persist in the attempt to solve the riddle there comes inevitably the realization of an appalling fact, namely, that they *have* no aim or purpose in life, and no understanding of their place in Nature and of their relation to other creatures and things. This realization of one's own ignorance comes upon one as an awakening in the dark; and it may be the entrance to a state of horrible despair, or to a struggle for freedom and a search for light that in itself constitutes a big step in

evolution. And evolution is an answer to the problem.

We can see for ourselves that all life is an endeavor to give expression on the material plane to spiritual forces that in themselves are not manifest on earth, except as they can find expression in material things. This is what we call life, and it may seem to go on spontaneously, without knowledge of reasons or purposes. Why then can man not go on in the same way? Why should he trouble to think about such things at all? Why not evolve unconsciously as the lower kingdoms do? Why not? Simply because we have come, as human beings, to the stage at which individual consciousness has reached its awakening, and at which man becomes *Man*, the thinker and knower. It is no longer a question for him as to whether he would like to be a plant or an animal; he has become a *man*: and for some millions of years on this earth he has been acting as a thinker, and creating causes stamped with individual characteristics, as well as racial and national causes which must be worked out into useful experience, or simply recast in the same mold as causes for future experience. We are like children in school, and if our lessons are not learned we shall remain ignorant.

But how can men learn all things by experience unless either they all share in a common consciousness, and are not individualized; or unless each individual has endless opportunities of gaining experience, that can so imperfectly and in such a limited way be accomplished in one earth-life? Whole human beings undoubtedly do have a common consciousness as human beings, they do also have a very clear sense of individuality; and they know that one lifetime teaches them but an infinitesimal part of what life *can* teach. It is evident that one life can only be but a small part of the process of evolution, and it is inconceivable that individuality should have been evolved so far to go no farther.

We all know that we exist individually, and it is about the surest thing we do know.

Can anyone think of himself as either beginning or ending? One can easily imagine an awakening, and we are all aware that we go to sleep, though we can never catch ourselves in the act: we cannot consciously go to sleep, and yet we do carry the sense of individuality through that mysterious gateway of sleep into a region or a state where all else is changed except the conviction of one's own individuality. One is always *I*. Yet we often pretend to doubt the continuity of consciousness, and sometimes persuade ourselves that death is the end of life. But that is mere camouflage to conceal the subconscious conviction that we all have of responsibility for our acts and words and thoughts.

The usual system of education leaves the student utterly in the dark as to his place in the scheme of evolution. It gives him a doubt as to the existence of any scheme in life, and fails to endow him with faith in the justice of natural law, or to convince him of the reality of Divine Law and Order. He is left with a substitute, which he calls *chance*. Everything happens by chance, to the majority, even to the mass of religious people, for their God is a conception of Divinity such that his will is as inscrutable as the decrees of Chance. They do not dare to know themselves, and to realize their own inherent right to know what they are living for. Without some such knowledge, man can have no hope; and it is not too much to say that today humanity as a whole is without hope. Hence the chaos. Hope is only possible to those who believe in the reality of a purpose and system in life. And the great bar to the achievement of hope is the belief that death is the end of life.

Of course I know that the majority will protest and say that they do believe in a future life, in some other world; but it is evident by their acts and words that this belief is camouflage, designed to conceal confusion and ignorance: and even if it were true, it would not be a basis for any intelligible hope because it leaves a complete gulf between the present earth-life and

all that went before or shall come after. The vagueness of such a belief is its chief recommendation to persons who think they can avoid responsibility and escape the very purpose of their own existence. But human beings have evolved individual consciousness for some other purpose than to waste it in dreams of an eternity of selfish bliss. Individuality implies responsibility, and those who shirk responsibility retard their own progress, and thereby help to hinder the work of evolution. For the purpose of life is carried out by living beings; at the head of whom stands Humanity. Self-conscious man is the flower of evolution.

In using this word 'evolution' I am perhaps creating confusion if I do not explain that I do not mean the irrational theory of chance that has crept in under cover of pseudo-scientific materialism, but the Theosophical idea of Spirit working in matter for the creation and re-creation of the universe; a spiritually conscious and spiritually guided universe, in which Law rules as the inherent guiding principle, and in which all parts are equally united to the Spiritual Consciousness that is the Soul of the Universe.

It is a very old idea that man passes through various gateways on the path of evolution, and that each gate has its key. The keys have to be found, and then they have to be turned in the lock before the gate can be opened. Our civilization is standing outside such a gate now, and it has lost the key. That key is Reincarnation: or rather it is knowledge of the fact of Reincarnation. The fact is not altered by man's ignorance of it, but his own position is seriously affected, for man has arrived at the point of mental development at which he becomes individually able to choose his path; and to choose he must know.

The knowledge of Reincarnation seems to have been general in the remote past. And tradition has it that at some definite period man did choose and chose wrong—

(Continued on Page 88)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

*Adyar News-Bulletin* for August reports that the tests of the new micro - filming equipment donated by the American Society and to which the Society in Canada contributed, have been quite satisfactory. The material to be microfilmed is voluminous, Letters of H. P. B. and her Scrapbooks, Colonel Olcott's Diaries, together with manuscripts and rare books required by research institutions from the Adyar Library. The work has started but its continuance depends entirely on receiving a supply of films from abroad as these are not available in India owing to import restrictions. There is great need for donations of 100-foot rolls of 35 mm. Recordak Micro-File Films (Panchromatic). Such gifts should be sent as "Gift Parcels" and be addressed to The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Adyar, Madras 20, India.

\* \* \*

Reincarnation and Karma continue to be in the news. Dr. Ian Stevenson, author of *The Evidence of Survival from Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations*, is taking a sabbatical year from the University of Virginia and is spending it in Europe where he will lecture at the Jung Institute, Zurich, on survival and reincarnation. He proposes to publish a new book this year, *Twenty cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*. And the great success of *Reincarnation—An East-West Anthology* has prompted the suggestion that a new and enlarged edition be published in the near future.

\* \* \*

Alfred North Whitehead once said that "The average length of time it takes, I think, for any great discovery in the realm of ideas to pass into general currency or to receive any practical effectuation is a thousand years," but since 1875 the idea of Reincarnation and Karma has spread very rapid-

ly indeed and before the turn of this century should form part of the "general Currency" of world thought.

\* \* \*

The Theosophical Society in Mexico is organizing an Inter-American Congress of the Theosophical Society to be held in Mexico City from Nov. 27 to Nov. 30. In addition to the lectures and discussions which have been planned, there will be a tour of the Pyramids of Teotihuacan under the guidance of an archeologist who will describe the monuments. A cordial invitation has been extended to all Canadian members who may be able to attend.

\* \* \*

An announcement which will be of considerable interest to many members is that a Canadian Branch of The Lawson Tait Memorial Trust has been established through the efforts of Mrs. Viola Campbell, daughter of the late Lt.-Col. E. L. Thomson. This Trust, named in commemoration of Dr. Lawson Tait, a world famous surgeon, is for the purpose of stimulating medical research in which animals are not used for experimental purposes. The parent organization in England, formed in 1961, will make awards of up to £3000 a year for medical research of outstanding significance that has been conducted in compliance with the terms of the Trust. The chief hope of the organization is to draw younger doctors into new fields of research and encourage them to consider new methods of approach to the alleviation of human diseases, methods established without subjecting our younger brothers, the animals, to the sufferings of medical experimentation.

Colonel Thomson was deeply interested in animal welfare and his daughter, Mrs. Campbell is continuing the work. Full information concerning the Trust and its activities may be obtained by writing to The Secretary, Canadian Branch, Lawson Tait Memorial Trust, P. O. Box 674, Postal

THE ORGAN OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY  
**THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST**  
IN CANADA

PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY  
AUTHORIZED AS SECOND CLASS MAIL BY THE POST OFFICE  
DEPARTMENT, OTTAWA, AND FOR PAYMENT  
OF POSTAGE IN CASH.

SUBSCRIPTION: TWO DOLLARS A YEAR



OFFICERS OF THE T. S. IN CANADA  
GENERAL SECRETARY  
D. W. BARR  
52 ISABELLA ST., TORONTO 5, ONT.

GENERAL EXECUTIVE

CHARLES E. BUNTING, 75 Rosedale Ave.,  
Hamilton, Ont.  
T. G. DAVY, 138 Randolph Road, Toronto 17, Ont.  
GEORGE I. KINMAN, 262 Sheldrake Blvd.,  
Toronto 12, Ont.  
MRS. C. P. LAKIN, S.S. NO. 2, 102 Floresta Court,  
Ancaster, Ont.  
CEDRIC WEAVER, 30 Orchard Park Dr., West Hill  
Ont.  
WASHINGTON E. WILKS, 925 Georgia St. W.,  
Vancouver, B.C.  
EMORY P. WOOD, 9360 — 86th St., Edmonton, Alta.  
TREASURER: MR. RALPH A. WEBB

EDITORIAL BOARD, CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST  
ALL LETTERS TO THE EDITORS, ARTICLES AND REPORTS  
FOR PUBLICATION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO THE  
EDITORS, 52 ISABELLA ST., TORONTO 5.

EDITORS: MR. & MRS. T. G. DAVY  
LETTERS INTENDED FOR PUBLICATION SHOULD BE  
RESTRICTED TO NOT MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED WORDS

The editors reserve the right to shorten any letter unless the  
writer states that it must be published in full or not at all.

PRINTED BY THE BEAMSVILLE EXPRESS.  
BEAMSVILLE, ONT.

Station 'F', Toronto 5, Ontario.

\* \* \*

I have much pleasure in welcoming into  
the fellowship of the Society Mrs. F. B.  
Housser and Mr. Michel Ross, members-at-  
large; Mr. Harry Jessop and Mr. Ernst  
Stoetzer of Toronto Lodge, and Mr. and  
Mrs. Paul Moes of Montreal Lodge.

D. W. B.

**THE GNOSIS**

Four hundred copies of a new edition of  
Wm. Kingsland's important book, *The  
Gnosis or Ancient Wisdom in the Christian  
Scriptures*, have been placed in University  
and Public Libraries across Canada. This  
project was financed by The Theosophical  
Society in Canada, but the work of customs  
entry, packing, mailing, writing to Librarians  
and all other details in connection with the  
importation and distribution of the books  
was done by Miss Eurith Goold and Mrs.  
Greta Chambers of Ottawa to whom we are  
under a debt of gratitude. The total cost  
to the Society was \$570.41 and the money  
for this was taken from a bequest of \$1,000  
made to the Society last year under the will  
of the late Mr. T. B. G. Burch, a member-  
at-large, and the books were sent as gifts  
in memory of Mr. Burch.

*The Gnosis* has been reprinted five times  
since it was written and it is an invaluable  
source of material on Christian origins. The  
author shows that the fundamental teach-  
ings given out at the beginning of the Chris-  
tian era were derived from the Gnosis or  
Ancient Wisdom.

Miss Goold sent in a detailed report of  
the work together with the acknowledg-  
ments received from Librarians. 254 copies  
were sent out singly, 43 of these to Uni-  
versity and College Libraries. Three Pro-  
vincial Regional Libraries received 14 cop-  
ies each for distribution to branches: these  
were, the British Columbia Library Com-  
mission, Peace River Branch with head-  
quarters at Dawson Creek serving Libraries  
along the 1100 miles of the Alaska High-  
way; Newfoundland Provincial Libraries  
Services serving 52 Libraries in Newfound-  
land, and North Central Saskatchewan Li-  
brary serving communities in the north and  
central parts of Saskatchewan.

Additional copies, 2-5 each, were sent to  
35 Regional Libraries in Newfoundland,  
Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario.

Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Hamilton Public Library asked for three copies and these were sent, but Toronto Public Library refused to accept the two copies which were sent there for the Circulating Branches on the ground that there was already a copy in the Reference Library where, of course, it is available only to those who travel to the central Reference Library and read the book there!

Some of the comments from the Librarians are quite interesting. Scarborough Township said, "We are collecting quite a number of these mystic or background religious books — our community is a young, well educated one and I know these books will circulate in our system." The Librarian of Kingston Penitentiary acknowledged with gratitude. Flin Flon Library said, "We are gradually building up our section on religion and very much appreciate this gift." "A most interesting study," remarked the Librarian of Colchester-East Hants Regional Library in Truro, N.S. and Port Arthur Library said, "A very scholarly book."

The response has been most encouraging and indicates that there is a growing public interest in these ideas. And yet there are so many communities in Canada where there are no opportunities for studying the Ancient Wisdom. The occasional enquirer may come upon *The Gnosis*, *The Ocean of Theosophy or Reincarnation* — *An East-West Anthology*, (both latter books having been widely distributed to Canadian Libraries by Miss Goold and Mrs. Chambers), but there is no group of students with whom Theosophy may be discussed and with whom a systematic study of Theosophy can be commenced. The situation is a challenge to the Society and one which merits the earnest consideration of every member.

D.W.B.

## PRESIDENT N. SRI RAM VISITS CANADIAN LODGES

Vancouver has recently been visited by our president, Mr. Sri Ram, where he received a very enthusiastic welcome. Under the auspices of the Hermes Lodge which is extremely expert in public work, he gave two long interesting addresses, one in a large well filled hall to the public and one in Hermes Hall to members, which also was very well attended, members coming from as far as Calgary and up from the States to be present. Hermes Lodge is felicitous at present in possessing a president, Mrs. Gladys Cooper, whose gracious manner and address lent no small part to the success.

Characteristically Mr. Sri Ram in both his addresses brought the matter immediately down to the individual, and showed how theosophy can unveil his nature and point the way to his awakening from the toils he finds himself in. Indeed he ended his public address by stating that man has nothing to be saved from, he has but to awaken to the nature of things he has ignorantly accreted about himself through which he views the world, his fellows, and himself, distorted and discoloured. In masterly fashion he pictured for us how every man in his search for pleasure attaches himself to innumerable things and strives to repeat with lessening success the pleasure he desires and so has created a very real but invisible shell in which he lives as in a prison, unable to see the reality about him. He described the nature of consciousness withdrawn from these accretions with what he called 'the open mind' seeing things as they are, and finally the way by which this state of freedom can be attained, leading to the acquirement of an extreme sensitiveness, not static but dynamic, (as is the sensitiveness of the creative artist) which perceives everything as it is, and this leads to the state in which reality may be perceived.

His talk to members followed along similar lines but was directed specifically to the work of each member to strive to ac-

quire the attitude where he is not the centre of the universe which exists to serve him, but where he exists to serve it, the attitude which will enable him to help form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood—a great and noble undertaking and the first object of the Theosophical Society.

Numbers are not so important, but quality is. Striving to acquire this attitude of Brotherhood which cannot be communicated by words, but which can be shared, is the one sure way of helping the race, and theosophy.

Although it is many years since Mr. Sri Ram visited us last, it is good to see that despite the strenuous work he undertakes and the responsibilities of office, he has lost none of the marked vitality which characterises his addresses. We hope he will be able to visit us again before many more years pass.

Orpheus Lodge,  
Canadian Theosophical Society

☆ ☆ ☆

President N. Sri Ram visited Toronto on July 27 and 28. In spite of unusually hot and uncomfortable weather, large crowds attended his lectures.

His first talk was for members only, and Theosophists from Toronto Lodge welcomed to their Hall fellows from the H.P.B. Lodge of the Canadian Federation as well as from Montreal and Hamilton Lodges. Several members now living in various parts of Ontario also journeyed to Toronto for the occasion which was one of most amiable fraternization.

Discoursing on "Evolution from Within" Mr. Sri Ram reminded the assembled Theosophists that spiritual growth was not attained without individual effort and that the unfolding of finer states of consciousness was our prime responsibility.

A public talk on Sunday evening filled the Hall almost to capacity. Speaking on "The Present World Crisis" the President did not restrict his theme to international politics, but covered the multitude of prob-

lems faced by man in the wake of technological advances. These problems were too complex to be solved by conventional moral faith, and would remain with us until humanity realized its unity.

Enthusiastic audiences greeted the speaker on both evenings and plied him with questions. These he dealt with patiently and with his usual sparkling wit. Local Theosophists appreciated the opportunity of meeting their President and are looking forward to his next visit to this area.

---

### WROTE REINCARNATION THESIS TO SPEAK AT TORONTO LODGE

The President of the Philadelphia Theosophical Society, Rev. Harold Boon, will speak at Toronto Lodge on September 29, 30 and October 1. His lectures will be entitled "Life, Death and Reincarnation", "The Psychology of Aristotle Compared to the Samkhya Philosophy of India" and "The Scientific Evidence for the Soul", respectively.

Mr. Boon obtained his Master of Arts Degree from Columbia University with the thesis, "The Doctrine of the Soul and Reincarnation in the Early Christian Church of Alexandria."

---

### EASTERN LODGES ENJOY PICNIC

A good time was had by all at a joint picnic held by Hamilton and Toronto Lodges on June 22 at beautiful Webster's Falls, a few miles from Hamilton.

Nearly fifty members travelled by chartered bus from Toronto, and the hospitable Hamilton Theosophists also welcomed representatives from Buffalo, Kitchener and H.P.B. Lodges. Games were held for young and old, and there were lucky draws for several prizes.

So successful and popular was the picnic that plans are already being made for another to be held next Summer.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

*The Editors*

*The Canadian Theosophist*

Although my name is not mentioned in *Notes on Mithraism* by Geo. W. Weaver (Can. Theo. May-June 1963), I can only suppose, from some of his statements, that his article was designed to discredit the authenticated information in my book, *Mithras: The Fellow in the Cap*. Be this as it may, it was distressing to find so many inaccuracies in the pages of your excellent publication which, after long association, I hold in much esteem, feeling sure that it would never willingly mislead its readers. May I therefore point out that for Mr. Weaver to assert that Manichaeism and "not Mithraism was the real rival of Christianity" is (as far as the first four centuries are concerned) to fly in the face of all the latest historical, scholarly and archaeological evidence. Why does Mr. Weaver imagine that the Mithraic Temples and remains excavated recently in all parts of Europe occupied by the Roman legions, were originally founded if not to ensure that the troops had the benefit of their favourite and most militaristic religion which provides such good 'morale' for the establishers of the Roman Empire? Is he prepared to deny that Julian the Apostate, the last of the great Mithraists, was endeavouring to restore the worship of Mithras, so wickedly abandoned (in his view) by his hated Uncle Constantine, and was only hindered by his untimely death? If so he should read the Emperor Julianus's Hymns to King Helios and the Great Mother and the works of the Church Fathers, such as Tertullian and Justin Martyr, both of whom railed against the likeness between the rival cults, the latter declaring: "Jesus took bread, and . . . said, 'This do ye in remembrance of me, this is my body'; and, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, 'This is my blood'; and gave it to them . . . Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithra,

commanding the same thing to be done." If he prefers more modern evidence of the rivalry between Mithraism and Christianity, let him turn to Renan who wrote that had Christianity not conquered, Mithraism would have emerged victorious; or to Dr. Alvin Boyd Kuhn's *Shadow of the Third Century* where on page 272, he says of Christianity "that these lowly masses eventually did adopt it is evidence that it was not too high or profound for popular choice, as against its chief rival . . . Mithraism."

It is perfectly true that Manichaeism had the same roots as Mithraism, i.e. in the old Persian religion of Ahuramazda, or Zoroastrianism, which, in its identification of God with Light and Truth, has persisted in all the major religions to this day. But Manichaeism, a mixture of the Persian and Christian religions, only took over as an irritant to the Catholic Church after Mithraism had been defeated, when it became the chief of the long list of heresies, beginning with Marcion and ending, except for its perpetuation in small sects and secret societies such as freemasonry, with the terrible persecution of the Albigenses in the 13th century, as Mr. Weaver may find from my latest book, *The Philosophy of Compassion*. In this book—as also in *The Religion of the Occident*, by Martin A. Larson (Philosophical Library N.Y.) and in *The Essenic Christ* by Upton C. Ewing, he will find plenty of evidence to prove that Jesus taught the doctrines of the Essenes, a suggestion at which he chooses to jeer in reference to my remarks on the unsuitable wine miracle. In this book he may also learn of how the Evolved Man who taught in the hills of Galilee was transformed by the overzealous Paul (doubtless inspired by the writings of Philo) into a Jewish version of the sun-gods of paganism, a concept that coloured the greater part of the New Testament.

Finally, if my book is the one to which he is alluding, to say that I have anthropomorphized the Christ and regarded it as a tangible personage is a gross misrepres-

entation of my entire philosophy and of everything I have written, teaching, as I always do, that the Christ-Spirit, like the *Atman* of the Hindus and *Fravashi* of the Persians, is the divine nature in all men, although it was more fully developed in such spiritually evolved men as Gautama, Pythagoras, Socrates, Jesus, and Ganhihi of this century, all of whom manifested the benevolent—and *not* militaristic—nature of deity.

Esme Wynne-Tyson

☆ ☆ ☆

*The Editors*  
*The Canadian Theosophist*

In your review of *Key Words*, you remark that it attempts to fill the need of a vocabulary for theosophists. You further elaborate that the book uses HPB's writings as source material. This effort, then, appears to be quite an interesting undertaking. However, the effect of this booklet is then completely spoiled by the inclusion therein of supplemental assistance from notes and comments by ordinary students: to wit, Messrs. Barborka, Endersby and Wood. How do these *pupils* think they can interpret for all others HPB's writings and put their conceptions forward as what she means in the words she employs?

It is obvious to any intelligent person that their so-called elucidations are simply their own mental outlooks and views, governed by their own backgrounds, education and shortcomings, and are not necessarily anywhere near what she intended to convey and might, in fact be very erroneous. In any event, the explanations are only suitable for the stage of development of the aforesaid writers and cannot come in any way near Madam Blavatsky's teachings.

Here is another attempt to whittle away the ancient truths or an even more subtle conspiracy to obscure and replace the primeval wisdom with their so-called "modern amplifications." One need only glance at the thousands of conflicting sects in India to see whither Messrs. B. E. and W. are

leading. Are theosophists children that they must hearken to the "interpretations" and watered-down explanations of those who wish to tell others what they must understand in the wisdom religion? Give us water from the sparkling clean source not from some muddy nigh-exhausted streamlet running miles away from the fountainhead.

For earnest students who want to go to real first-hand material for their theosophical vocabulary, I would suggest nothing better than a purchase of HPB's *Glossary*, which you no doubt carry in the Book Concern.

Elouise Harrison

## REINCARNATION — THE HOPE OF HUMANITY

(Continued from Page 82)

for he chose the path of personal gratification and personal power; and that choice brought with it an obscuration of his higher powers which in turn resulted in ignorance of his divine origin, as well as of his divine destiny; in fact, ignorance of his inherent divinity. With this came doubt of his own immortality and of the continuity of consciousness. Materialism and belief in the supremacy of Chance followed naturally. The selfish ambition that was the guiding impulse in the traditional Sin, or Error of Judgment, persisted; and induced those who still had knowledge to keep it for themselves; by which means they insured its ultimate obscuration. The doctrine of Reincarnation was deliberately suppressed, and then forgotten; in order that self-seekers might rule over a people who were without hope of their own, and without light to guide them. As a substitute they were given promises of salvation from a Hell.

When we realize that we are Souls that do not die when our bodies die, but that gather experience in each life to build up a character for the next; then we have no fear of Hell, nor any anxiety about Heaven.



Both are within reach, and can be had for the taking. For *man is the maker of his own destiny.*

When man realizes that this present life is but one of a long series of similar lives on this earth, then he knows that no matter how serious his mistakes may have been, he will have another chance next time. His experience will not look like wasted time and effort even though it has brought him to ruin this time, for he will understand that the results of experience are built into his character; and though he may completely forget all the incidents attending that experience, yet its results are in him, and he will start life next time with that to his credit, or to his discredit, as the case may be. And the shirker, who never has dared to think for himself, will have that same cowardice built into his character and will have to meet it and get rid of it sooner or later. But the opportunity to do so will never fail; for evolution goes on all the time, and though men may spend several life-times like squirrels in revolving cages, yet at any moment it is possible for them to get out of that trap and start once more along the path of progress.

When a man knows that he himself is a soul that is born into a body, and that dies out of it, but that does not cease to live; then he can never be hopeless any more, even if he fall into very deep water, and seem to be sunk in despair. If he knows that there is a new life waiting for him after his sleep of death that ends in rebirth, then his despair is very different from that of the man who is without hope.

Reincarnation is so natural and reasonable that it would have been impossible for men to have forgotten it if they had not also been systematically robbed of it by false education. But, as the Supreme Soul is One, and as all souls have this same central source of life, so all men on earth have in them a bond of union that is expressed in the term *Universal Brotherhood*. This too has been forgotten, and the ridiculous doctrine of the 'struggle for existence' has made

life hideous, by misapplying supposed facts of material existence to the realities of the spiritual life of man.

The strife and discord of life on earth is due to temporary obscuration of knowledge of, or realization of, Truth; so that the guiding light of knowledge is lacking, and the power of the soul made ineffective by the momentary triumph of the chaotic forces inherent in matter.

The work of evolution means the gradual and continual organization of these lower forces and their control by the higher law of the Spiritual World, which operates largely through man, because man is at a point in the scale of creation in which he can act as intermediary between the extremes, between the higher forces of Law, and the lower forces of chaos. Man stands, as it were, at the pivotal point of evolution, and all these powers and forces play through him. So that in each human soul the drama of the Universe is actually being played all the time in miniature, but not in isolation. We share to some extent each others triumphs and failures, for Universal Brotherhood is a fact in Nature. If just now the failures seem to be more in evidence than the triumphs, we need not despair, for the path of progress is not up an even grade by any means, nor is it in a straight line. But if we could get more knowledge and could see a longer span of historical record than is now generally available, we might find that though history repeats itself in cycles that seem endless, yet there is progress too.

So, too, if we could look back over a number of lives, we might trace a gradual progress even where the failures seem most numerous and obvious. Even if we cannot look back, and even if we lack the imagination to trace our path of progress, yet we can never relapse into despair when once we have grasped the great fact of Reincarnation and realize that whatever our present failure may be we shall have another chance.

—*The Theosophical Path*, June 1925.

# THE RETURN

A Fantasy

BY CHARLES R. CARTER

I remember following a river . . . yes, that was perfectly clear in my consciousness. I passed over its surface, upon which little spirals of vapour curled, then disappeared in the moonlight.

On either side of the river I saw reeds standing above the raggedy sedge that was close down from the banks.

I could hear too! A moorhen called shrilly to its young, and I looked above me to see the large sweep of a barn owl's wings passing in shadow above the sedge.

Hunger drove me. There is no other word to express the all-consuming state that enveloped me, yet even it is lame. What word could ever describe the powerful feeling that engulfed me?

I know I came in from the sea, from an infinity of blue-grey water, and felt an inward thrill as I beheld the river mouth—a thrill of joy!

What propelled me I did not know and had no desire to find out. I floated a few inches above this twisting, turning river, keenly interested in *it*, but with no interest in my *self*.

I passed over locks where the soothing music from spilling water invited a stay for enjoyment, but found no response from the driving force that kept me in motion.

Strange as it may seem I had no thought of finding my way back from whence I had come, for the simple reason that that place had passed from my consciousness and was replaced by the sheer delight of following the force that had now taken control of me.

Quaint houses stood back from the river, many with thatched roofs, and windows under what seemed to be long thatched bonnets. In some of them mellow lights shone and cut wedge-shaped slits of yellow into the night.

One of the houses had a swinging panel fastened with iron braces in its gable. On the panel was painted a man with a woman

riding on his back, and from one of the woman's shoulders a monkey grimaced and from the other a parrot lifted its open beak. There were letters printed under the panel, but they meant nothing to me—I could not understand them.

There was another lock just past that house, and I remember when I passed over it my whole being throbbled with gladness. But my journey was far from finished and what seemed to be the most pleasant part of it was now before me. The moon was riding mid-heaven and gave a fullness to the whole landscape. Now I could have touched the lily pads with my lips.

My sight adjusted to near and far distances with an astounding rapidity. It seemed as if a huge lens moved before my eyes sharply focussing the surrounding landscape at the behest of an inner consciousness.

At times breezes quickened o'er the river as I moved along and raced ahead of me to agitate the waters beside tall silken tufted reeds into a filigree of molten gold of breathtaking beauty.

Time was not—had never existed during the whole journey. Elm trees floated by upon the banks of the river, stripped almost naked of their leaves, and as the wind moved through their branches there followed me a song expressed in tuneful sighing that blended with the murmuring of grey-green ribbon-like sedge and the emerald green reeds.

I had no recollection of the commencement of the journey, but I know I had started it with a feeling of intense dislike—a feeling of having been betrayed, and dispossessed of unspeakable and glorious well-being.

All along the river this feeling had been losing its intensity in almost imperceptible degrees. Now I had lost from my consciousness every part and particle of it. The odour

of the river coursed through my being now, and the sighing of the reeds formed an orchestra that preceded my floating movement with a rich harmony that was indescribable. Aeons seemed to have passed journeying down that river, aeons during which had been fastened to me an emotional body that derived the keenest enjoyment in being just where it was. All resentment and disappointment had vanished.

The river narrowed now, and along its banks were small boats motionless in the moonlight. From the moon's rays a beautiful faint mauve light attracted my gaze beyond the billowing reeds to what must have been fens.

Now there came before me another river at a right angle, across the course of the long river I had followed. I am sure no choice was given me, or even desired, but I found myself taking the north turn and following a much narrower stream.

Its banks were higher and at times I floated under tiny bridges and past black barges loaded with turf bricks. Soon there came the odour of turf smoke, and as I floated along I noticed steps cut down to the river's edge where small boats were tied and wooden buckets stood filled with water.

The force that had brought me upon this very long journey now slowly left me.

I hovered exactly opposite some red brick steps beside the river bank. Motionless, I felt no desire to move in any direction, I seemed to be of the same stuff as the moonlight, and could remain poised in much the same way. Time mattered not. All eternity could pass whilst I rested in my present floating state, detached, non-belonging. At some very dim and distant time I must have experienced that self-same condition, for the discomfort of the never-experienced and unusual was not registered in my consciousness.

I hung over the waters looking dreamily down into their depths. The bottom of the river was silvery-grey, and ribbon-like weed rippled with the moving tide. Slowly, very

slowly there formed around my head a most delicate pink circle of light. It was not a dead light, but a living glowing vivid circle of colour that on its extreme edge deepened to a most entrancing scarlet. There could have been no better contrast to that delightful aura for the green reeds lent it a background that increased its richness, and the greyish and fine clustering sedge now became a perfect screen.

I felt "its tenderness entering my being, and slowly penetrating every fibre of my moonlike body" and knew my journeying was coming to an end. There seemed now to be a long submerged joy of acceptance that had been concealed in the body of moonlight substance.

Slowly the circle moved and glowed upon the red brick steps that led up from the river. Without hesitation I followed it and crossed a towpath beside the river and came to a large garden in which stood a modest farmhouse. Below its red tiled roof several windows sent a flood of golden light into a clump of half naked elms.

The circle of light now reached the large door of the farmhouse. The door's huge hinges stood in dark relief from the lime washed wall. The door melted out of being, and I stood suspended before a large and ancient grandfather clock. It had no hours upon its dial but in place of numbers were tiny bunches of flowers. Its large filigree hands were both upon what would have been the hour of midnight with any other clock, but with this one both hands were over a very cleverly embossed bunch of golden chrysanthemum blooms.

The circle of light led me up a flight of stairs and through an open door. Inside the room, it began to recede at its outer edge as it moved towards a bed in the far corner. Freedom of consciousness had now given place to another state of consciousness wherein was a very intense sense of belonging irrevocably to the waiting owner of the circle of vibrantly beautiful colour that had claimed me from the river.

An aged woman stood beside the bed

looking down upon the face resting upon pillows. The bedside lamp sent gleams of light in amongst the golden brown hair, now in natural wavy disorder, of the woman whose eyes were closed, and whose head was thrust deeply into the pillows by fierce onrushing waves of pain. The woman beside the bed had not noticed my presence in the room; she stood with clenched hands watching the face upon the pillows. I moved nearer to the bed. The heavy lashes flickered briefly as a shock wave of pain seized the body. Her lips had been bitten to blood, and a slight crimson stain was still upon the bottom lip. A surge of deep compassion flooded me. Those were lovely, sensitive lips, capable of much suffering. I floated towards them, pressed my own upon them in what must have been the most spiritual embrace they had ever given. The heavy lashes lifted and two beautiful jade green eyes widened as they beheld me. Pain and anguish cleared from them as quickly as a cloud passes over the midday sun. In those deep pools of green radiantly shone that mother love that all the millions of years of earth's puny selfishness and hatreds could never hope to dim.

The lips moved. "My dear little son," they said softly.

Footsteps hurried up the stairs. An elderly man very serious of face came to the bedside fingering his goatee. "Why was I not sent for long ago?" he asked the older woman. "Her agony has caused delirium. She is talking of 'my dear son' . . . get good brandy . . . and plenty of hot water . . . quick! I should have been here hours ago!"

The woman departed swiftly. The elderly man took off his coat and rolled back his shirt sleeves. The beautiful eyes that beheld me in rapture blotted out all else.

In all the great infinity there only existed those two huge reservoirs of love into which I was slowly losing my moon-like body that had entered the house unnoticed and unknown . . . unknown to all except the woman who called me her son, and who now sent vibrations of human warmth that slowly merged me into her being with an all-embracing flood of tenderness.

After one last flareup of my moon-like consciousness that all triumphant mother love claimed me. I had arrived back to earth again safely and at the very moment destiny had chosen. Arms of love had enfolded me and were about to give me a new body!

---

*The practical Theosophist will do well if he follows the advice of the Masters now many years in print, to spread, explain and illustrate the laws of Karma and Reincarnation so that they may enter into the lives of the people. Technical occultism and all the allurements of the Astral Light may be left for other times. Men's thoughts must be affected, and this can only be done now by giving them these two great laws. They not only explain many things, but they have also an inherent power due to their truth and their intimate connection with man, to compel attention. Once heard they are seldom forgotten, and even if rebelled against they have a mysterious power of keeping in the man's mind, until at last, even against his first determinaton, he is forced to accept them . . . "Teach, preach, and practice this good law for the benefit of the world, even as all the Buddhas do."—William Q. Judge, THE PATH, July, 1890.*

# SOME ANCIENT IDEAS ON THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

BY ELOUISE R. HARRISON, LLB

Marcus Tullius Cicero, the famous lawyer, orator and politician of Rome, was an intimate friend of M. Junius Brutus, known to historians the world over as the man who assassinated Julius Caesar. To this enigmatic man who was at one and the same time a Roman of extensive knowledge and a great lover of learning, a philosopher and a political schemer, Cicero dedicated a number of his writings dealing with the nature of the soul and immortality, in the year 44 B.C. Cicero had always had a penchant for exploring the philosophical ideas of earlier thinkers, assembling these propositions and drawing therefrom conclusions to which these ideas led. Finding in Brutus a congenial soul, he confided to him his findings and, naturally, as an eclectic philosopher himself, added his own reasonings about the nature of the mind.

I will translate the following from Chapter 26 of the above-stated discourse of Cicero to Brutus written at the former's country villa at Tusculan. Cicero has just been comparing and collating the various views of other thinkers on immortality and summarizes the enquiry thus:—

“Therefore the soul, as I say, is divine, and, as Euripides ventured to assert, a god; and indeed, if divinity is either a mind or a breath, the same is the soul of man. For, as that heavenly nature is free both from the earth and from the water so, in like manner, the human soul has no part in any of these elements of the earth. If, however, there is this certain fifth element first introduced by Aristotle, this element is the source both of the gods and of souls. We follow these sentences with our own words expressed in the Consolation.” (The Consolation was a treatise which Cicero had written after the death of his child. This treatise

cannot be found anywhere by scholars: therefore the only part we have today is the following paragraph quoted by Cicero in his discourse to Brutus, which runs as follows:—)

“No origin of souls can be found on earth. For there is nothing of a hardened material in souls nor does it appear that they are born or fashioned from earth; as they are something which is neither watery nor airy nor fiery. For there is nothing contained in these aforesaid elements (i.e., the elements of fire, air, water and earth) which has the power of memory, of mind and of reasoning, which retains both the past and foresees the future, and can comprehend the present; which is wholly divine; which is neither acquired at any time; from whence can this soul come to man except from divinity? Therefore, this certain divine nature and power of the soul is unique, separated as it is from the four elements and qualities of nature. Whatever that is which feels, which perceives, which lives and which is active, is heavenly and divine; and on that account, it is obvious that it is also eternal. And indeed the deity itself which is perceived by us, cannot be understood in any way unless it is universal mind, unrestrained, free and separated from all that which is perishable; it is all-perceiving and ever-moving and provided with motion perpetually. From this divine source and containing the same qualities, is the human mind.”

Some 3,000 years earlier, Krishna discoursed with Arjuna about the nature of the divine principle and the mind of man in words very similar to those used by Cicero to Brutus, thus:—

“Learn that He by whom all things were formed is incorruptible, and that no one is able to effect the destruction of IT which

is inexhaustible. These finite bodies, which envelope the souls inhabiting them, are said to belong to Him, the eternal, the indestructible, unprovable Spirit, who is in the body . . . for it is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal and is not slain when this its mortal frame is destroyed . . . As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the dweller in the body, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new. The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away; it is eternal, universal, permanent . . . it is invisible, inconceivable, and unalterable . . ." (*Bhagavad Gita*, Wm. Q. Judge Recension.)

Madame Blavatsky, going deeper into these matters in the *Secret Doctrine* refers to the higher and lower soul and warns her students that unless the lower soul transmits to the higher soul (the soul spoken of by Cicero and Krishna) such ideations that can be assimilated by that divine source, nothing of the personality that was can survive in the Eternal. And it is only from this higher soul that we receive our finest thoughts because:

"No noble thought, no grand aspiration, desire or divine immortal love, can come into the brain of the man of clay and settle there, except as a direct emanation from the Higher to, and through, the lower Ego; all the rest, intellectual as it may seem, proceeds from the 'shadow', the *lower mind*, in its association and commingling with Kama, and passes away and disappears forever." (*The Secret Doctrine* 3rd Ed., P. 514)

Therefore, if mankind wants to carry over to its different re-births something permanent from the personality of each birth, said mankind must start to live in its higher soul, and cultivate the highest and most spiritual of ideals and emotions. And in doing so the progress towards absolute evil to which this civilization is heading, will be prevented.

Thus from the testimony of the highest thinkers of the past, it is seen that we have ample evidence today to support the contention that the higher soul of man is immortal. We can deduce from their reasonings that the immortality of the soul is a fundamental, ancient, and ever-existing truth, not limited by any period of history or to any religion or to any philosophical system of thought.

---

The following passages are from "The Book of Mirdad," by Mikhail Naimy. It is welcome news that this beautiful work has recently been republished.

\* \* \*

All things are incorporated into Man, and Man is in turn incorporated into them. The Universe is but a single body. Commune with the slightest particle thereof, and you commune with all.

And as you die continually when living, so do you live continually when dead; if not in this body, then in a body of another form. But you continue to live in a body until dissolved in God; which is to say, until you overcome all change.

*Micaster*: Do we return to this Earth as we journey from change to change?

*Mirdad*: The law of Time is repetition. What once occurred in Time is bound to reoccur again and again; the intervals, in the case of Man, may be long or brief depending on the intensity of each man's desire and will for repetition.

When you pass out of the cycle known as life into the cycle known as death, and carry with you thirsts unquenched for the earth and hungers unappeased for her passions, then will the magnet of the Earth draw you again to her bosom. And the Earth shall suckle you, and Time shall wean you life after life and death after death until you wean yourself, once and for all, of your own will and accord.

## RECENT BOOKS ON REINCARNATION

*Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology.* Including Quotations from the World's Religions and from over 400 Western Thinkers.

This volume, published in December, 1961, has been remarkably well received, and is now approaching its third printing. Copies have gone to almost every country in the world, from Iceland to Tasmania and New Zealand; from Russia and Syria to Alaska and the Canadian Northwest Territories. It has been reviewed in 45 newspapers, magazines, and periodicals. Seven hundred college and university libraries in the United States have received the book. Copies have been placed in nearly all public, college and university libraries in Canada. However, some 200 libraries in towns having populations of under 10,000 have never been covered, and this task remains to be done. Any one interested in such a project should contact: Miss F. E. Goold, 531 Bay St., Ottawa 4, Ont., Canada.

Here is what some of the Canadian libraries have said about *Reincarnation: An East-West Anthology*:

"A valuable compilation on a theme of perennial interest." University of British Columbia.

"A worthwhile and valuable addition to our resources." University of Manitoba.

"An amazing book, and one that will prove of great interest to our readers." Quebec Library.

Inasmuch as important new material on reincarnation is continually being received by the editors of the Anthology, it is likely that an enlarged edition will eventually be published. When Theosophists come across statements on reincarnation (both pro and con) made by prominent thinkers and authors, from modern or ancient times, it will be of the greatest assistance if the references are sent to one of the editors of

the *Reincarnation Anthology*, namely, Mr. Joseph Head, 347 E. 72nd St., New York 21, N.Y.

The Anthology has an especial appeal to westerners who might be inclined to interest themselves in the philosophy of reincarnation, but hesitate to embrace what they imagine to be purely an oriental concept. To such it is highly impressive to find that the reincarnation idea has a very real place in western heritage, and has been accepted by hundreds of well known occidental thinkers. So the *Reincarnation Anthology* is a very good book to keep in mind to give to friends and acquaintances. Copies may be ordered from the Theosophical Society in Toronto, or from the publisher, Julian Press, 80 E. 11th St., New York 3, N.Y.

☆ ☆ ☆

*You Will Come Back.* A Conversation About Reincarnation and Karma, by F. E. Goold, 531 Bay Street, Ottawa 4, Ontario. 48 pp. Price 25 cents.

Here is an ideal introduction to reincarnation, particularly for times like these when so many westerners are beginning to examine their own understanding of immortality. This booklet has enjoyed a wide distribution and significantly, though not surprisingly, has been well-received by clergymen.

Set in question and answer form, a student's replies to his enquirer show the presence of the belief in the New Testament, and go on with apt quotations from other scriptures. Modern works are cited to show the prevalence of the idea among scholars.

If any of your friends are wondering about reincarnation, this "conversation" will help answer their many queries.

---

### SOME EARLY CANADIAN LODGES

This article will be continued in the next issue of the magazine.

The Editors

---

---

**ORIGINAL AND UP-TO-DATE  
THEOSOPHY**

We lend freely by mail all the comprehensive literature of the Movement. Catalogue on request. Also to lend, or for sale at 20c each post free, our eight H. P. B. Pamphlets, including early articles from LUCIFER and Letters from the Initiates.

**THE H. P. B. LIBRARY**  
1385 TATLOW AVE., NORGate PARK  
NORTH VANCOUVER, B.C.

---

---

**BLAVATSKY INSTITUTE  
PUBLICATIONS.**

52 ISABELLA ST., TORONTO 5, ONTARIO

**ESOTERIC CHARACTER OF THE GOSPELS**  
by H. P. Blavatsky

**MODERN THEOSOPHY**  
by Claude Falls Wright.

**THE BHAGAVAD GITA**  
A Conflation by Albert E. S. Smythe.  
These three books are cloth bound, price \$1. each

**THE EXILE OF THE SOUL**  
by Roy Mitchell, a key to the understanding of occult psychology.

**THROUGH TEMPLE DOORS**  
Studies in Occult Masonry  
by Roy Mitchell, an occult interpretation of Masonic symbolism (cloth bound only).

**THEOSOPHY IN ACTION**  
by Roy Mitchell, a re-examination of Theosophical ideas, and their practical application in the work.

**THEOSOPHIC STUDY**  
by Roy Mitchell, a book of practical guidance in methods of study.

The above four books are attractively bound; paper bound \$1.00, cloth, \$1.50, each.

**COURSE IN PUBLIC SPEAKING**  
by Roy Mitchell. Especially written for Theosophical students. \$3.00.

**THEOSOPHY, AN ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE**  
by Dudley W. Barr. 50c.

**THE WISDOM OF CONFUCIUS**  
by Iverson L. Harris. 25c.

**CANADIAN LODGES**

**CALGARY LODGE:**

Address enquiries to Mr. Stanley S. Elliott,  
No. 3, 1735 College Lane, Calgary, Alta.

**EDMONTON LODGE:**

President, Mr. E. P. Wood; Sec.-Treas., Mr. B. J. Whitbread, 10953 88th Ave.; Lodge Room, Room 2, Bradbury - Thomson Block, 10160 101st Street, Edmonton, Alberta.

**HAMILTON LODGE:**

President, Mrs. Clare Lakin; Corresponding Secretary, Miss L. Baldwin, 27 Melrose Ave. S., Hamilton, Ont.

**PHOENIX LODGE HAMILTON:**

President, Mrs. Kathleen Marks; Secretary, Earle T. Bradfield. Lodge address, 49 East 7th St., Hamilton.

**KITCHENER LODGE:**

President, John Oberlerchener, 19 First Ave., Kitchener, Ont.

**MONTREAL LODGE:**

President, Mr. Fred T. A. Griffiths, 136 Clandeboye Ave., Westmount, P.Q.; Secretary, Mrs. Mary Howard.

**OTTAWA LODGE:**

Address enquiries to Mrs. J. C. R. Hanley, 1818 Haig Drive, Ottawa, Ont.

**ST. THOMAS LODGE**

President, Benj. T. Garside; Secretary, Mrs. Hazel B. Garside, 81 Hincks St., St. Thomas Ont.

**TORONTO LODGE:**

President, Mr. G. I. Kinman, 262 Sheldrake Blvd., Toronto 12 (phone HU 3-5346). Corresponding Secretary, Miss Jane Angus. Lodge Rms., 52 Isabella Street, Toronto 5, Ont.

**VANCOUVER LODGE:**

President, Mrs. Buchanan; Secretary, M. D. Buchanan, 4690 W. 8th Avenue. The Lodge rooms are at 151½ Hastings St. West.

**ORPHEUS LODGE, VANCOUVER:**

President, E. F. Wilks; Secretary L. C. Hanson; Room 708, Lumbermen's Bldg., 509 Richards St., Vancouver 3, B.C.

**CANYON LODGE, NORTH VANCOUVER:**

President, Mr. Charles R. Carter; Secretary, Mr. J. B. Jefferson, 245 St. James St. W., N. Vancouver, B.C.

**VICTORIA LODGE:**

Apply to Mrs. J. Housez, 4030 Locarno Lane, Gordon Head, Victoria B.C.

**WINNIPEG LODGE:**

Secretary, Mr. Henry Gadd, 250 Main Street South, Winnipeg 1, Man.