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Reincarnation and Mental Science

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REINCARNATION

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BY PAUL TYNER.

An article by the present author, on Reincarnation, under the head of "One Man in Many Bodies," appeared in the Cincinnati "Commercial Gazette" in July, 1891. Although parts of that article are again used here in a new connection, the article has been entirely rewritten and in its present form is virtually a new presentation of the subject.



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REINCARNATION AND MENTAL SCIENCE.

Immense have been the preparations for me . . .
All forces have been steadily employed to complete and delight me.

Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

—*Walt Whitman.*

IF REINCARNATION means anything, it means realization. The time has come when the esoteric doctrine of re-birth shall be made exoteric. This means that it must be firmly grasped and brought down from the clouds into concrete and practical shape. Reincarnation has been dreamed about, speculated about and argued about long enough. It is time that the truth should be declared. If reincarnation means that he who believeth shall live, even though he be dead—that is, that he shall be made to see

how and in what manner the immortal principle of his being shall be expressed,—it certainly means that he who *liveth* and believeth shall never die.

It is, of course, some satisfaction to know that man can have, and is sure to have, as many bodies as he may need in which to develop and unfold. This is a little better than the old idea of continued existence without bodies, or with some intangible sort of body, in some far off heaven or hell. What we need, however, in this practical age, is that the endless life and its power, the vision splendid and its inspiration, shall be rightly related to the life that now is,—to the body that is ever changing, and to the time that is passing,—as well as to the indestructible and immortal soul, and to the eternity which ever was and ever shall be, *because* it now is.

We have, many of us, gained sweet assurance regarding continuous life through the realization that, having lived and died many times in the past,

we shall go on dying and living many times in the future. Let us take the next step—the step which, with the facts brought to light by modern science before us, we are forced to take. The emphasis has been placed on reincarnation *after* death. Perhaps it has been necessary to approach the fuller truth in this way. But does it not seem, on nearer and clearer view, that if a man can become reincarnated after death, he can certainly become reincarnated before death? If he can rebuild a new body after the old one has been totally destroyed, can he not rebuild the body before it has been destroyed?

The ego reincarnates in successive bodies, not because of death, but in spite of it. In spite, that is to say, of man's belief in death, for in reality there is no death. It is entirely unnecessary to sicken and die, cast off the physical body, the astral body, and kama-rupa, and then sleep a thousand years in Devachan, in order to reincar-

nate in a new body. We may take that method, if we please, and must, if we make it necessary; but is it the best way?

As a matter of fact, every human being does reincarnate, or is reincarnated, yearly, daily, hourly, without dying. The body in which you are now functioning, as you read these lines, is not the same as that in which you were born, nor is it the body you enjoyed as a child or a youth, if it be that you are a person grown to maturity; it is not the same body you had last year, nor yesterday, nor an hour ago. All that is the same in the body now clothing you and the body of yesterday, or the body you will have to-morrow, is the One Life; and this much sameness not only exists in regard to all the bodies you have ever had, or will have, but also in regard to all the bodies of all the people now living, or who have ever lived. The one life is in many lives. This is true, not merely in reference to successive reincarnations, as the term is ordinarily understood, but also in regard to each

single incarnation. There is no dead matter anywhere in the universe, least of all in the human body. What we call flesh and bones, blood and muscle, nerve tissue and brain tissue, are living entities, aggregated and organized in groups of millions and thousands of millions. We all know that the human body is constantly undergoing a process of decay and reconstruction, as to its form and composition. With every moment, tiny molecules are passing away from it; with every moment tiny molecules are streaming into it. The outgoing stream is scattered broadcast, and helps to rebuild other bodies of all kinds, in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms,—the physical basis of all these being, as Professor Huxley has so beautifully told us, one and the same.

A clear putting of what these molecules really are, is found in this passage from the first volume of "The Secret Doctrine," (pages 260-261), in which the author predicted in 1886 certain

discoveries in regard to the universality of life, and of consciousness in all forms of life, which were actually brought forward by men of science within the last two years, and which are cited at some length in another place by the present author.¹

The idea that the human tabernacle is built by countless *lives*, just in the same way as the rocky crust of our earth was, has nothing repulsive in it for the true mystic . . . Science teaches us that the living as well as the dead organisms of both man and animal are swarming with bacteria of a hundred various kinds; that from without we are threatened with the invasion of microbes with every breath we draw, and from within by leucomaines, ærobes, anærobes, and what not. But science never yet went so far as to assert with the Occult Doctrine that our bodies, as well as those of animals, plants and stones, are themselves altogether built up of such beings which, except larger species, no microscope can detect. So far as regards the purely animal and material portion of man, science is on its way to discoveries that will go far towards corroborating this theory. Chemistry and physiology are the two great magicians of the future, who are destined to open the eyes of mankind to the great physical truths. With every day, the identity between the animal and physical man, between the,

1. See "The Living Christ," by Paul Tyner, Chapters XI-XIII; The Temple Publishing Company, Denver, Colo.

plant and man, and even between the reptile and its nest, the rock and man, is more and more clearly shown. The physical and chemical constituents of all being found to be identical, chemical science may well say that there is no difference between the matter which composes the ox and that which forms the man. But the Occult Doctrine is far more explicit. It says: Not only the chemical compounds are the same, but the same infinitesimal invisible lives compose the atoms of the bodies of the mountain and the daisy, of man and the ant, of the elephant, and of the tree which shelters him from the sun. Each particle—whether you call it organic or inorganic—is *a life*

The form assumed results from the organization of these myriad lives, and is therefore determined by the degree of consciousness. In the body of man we have millions of conscious living entities marshalled in trained and ready obedience to the Will, to the Thought, consciously or unconsciously dominant and in command. The real individual is in all the lives that make up his body, but he is more than they. He is their captain, their general; they are the troops, gathered in such force and order as he desires, and subject always to his command. His conscious control is the condition of their orderly coördination.

When that is relaxed, they fall into disorder, disease and discord; when it is surrendered they revolt and fall apart; the organism is disintegrated, death ensues.

These thoughts of Mme. Blavatsky, therefore, are very close to the discovery of the missing link between Reincarnation and Mental Science. Again, it is almost touched, only to be quickly passed over, however, by Mrs. Annie Besant in the following statement:

What is man in the light of theosophic truth? He is a spiritual intelligence, eternal and uncreate, treading a vast cycle of human experiences, born and reborn on earth, millennium after millennium, evolving slowly into the Ideal Man. He is not the product of matter, but is incased in matter, and the forms of matter with which he clothes himself are of his own making, for the intelligence and the will of man are creative forces (not creative *ex nihilo*, but creative as is the brain of the painter), and these forces are exercised by man in every act and thought.¹

If Mrs. Besant had grasped the completeness of this statement as it stands

1. "Theosophy and the Law of Population," by Annie Besant; Lucifer, July, 1891.

and stopped there, her readers and followers could hardly fail to find in her words a very clear declaration of the basic principle of Mental Science. The grand truths the "new thought" is bringing home to humanity are just these: that "man is a spiritual intelligence"; that "the forms of matter with which he clothes himself are of his own making"; that the intelligence and the will of man "*are* creative forces," and that "these forces are exercised by man in every act and thought."

Mrs. Besant does not stop with the assertion just quoted, but goes on to say that the forms created by man's thought are forms visible only to the clairvoyant. Forms, that is to say, that are not physical, not material, in the ordinary sense of the word. And yet, these thought-forms created in the astral are stated to condition the ego's re-incarnation. They have reference not to his present every-day life in the world of matter and of men; but to his life after death and in re-birth fifteen

hundred years or so hence,—although, in the interval, he is said to work off in “Kama-loka” the earthy tendencies he had acquired in the physical life, and with them the “kama-rupa,” or body of desires, preparatory to a thousand-year slumber in Devachan.

One has only to analyze this view of the matter to see that it is incomplete. If man's thoughts and acts during his physical life are creative forces, they create on the physical plane, just as much, at least, as on any other plane. If the forms of matter with which man clothes himself are of his own making from rebirth to rebirth, they are of his own making from hour to hour, from moment to moment. It needs no clairvoyant to find the proof of this in men's faces and forms as we walk the streets of our great cities, and note the changes wrought by every passing thought and emotion. As the old church catechism has it, man shall give an account, on the judgment day, for every idle thought or deed. Every day is a judgment day,

and the account is written in man's face and form, in his atmosphere and environment, in his condition of power or weakness, of health or disease, joy or sorrow.

Let us not be slow to acknowledge our immense debt to the sublime philosophies and religions of the East, to Buddhism and Brahmanism, to the Vedantas and the Upanishads; but let us not forget that we, the "heirs of all the ages in the foremost files of time,"—we Americans, in whom humanity's ripest fruit is reincarnated,—have something to add to the very best the Eastern philosophy can give us. We are thankful for all its inspiration and enlightenment; thankful, most of all, because this enlightenment enables us to increase and multiply the treasures of Eastern knowledge bequeathed to us, and pass them on, enlarged and enriched, to those who shall come after us. Let us add to reincarnation, *realization*. Nor does this mean any failure to appreciate the great gift which a re-

cognition of the law of reincarnation brings to us. The lamp of experience is indeed a light to our feet in the pathway we are treading. Realization depends more than aught else on relation. To realize the meaning of life, with any approach to completeness, we must take into account the various sides of life and the various stages—all the factors of those cumulative experiences which make up life. The one, constant prayer of the old Egyptian was for memory. Through memory, past incarnations make the meaning of the present incarnation clearer, and shed a light on future incarnations. Understanding the path we have traveled, we are helped to see the path that lies before us. Edmund Burke's saying, that the man who has no regard for his ancestors is not likely to have much regard for his posterity, may be applied in this connection to emphasize the importance of recognizing the present and the future possibilities, which a recognition of the truth of reincarnation holds for all.

Memory of past lives and the *relation* of these past lives to the present cannot fail to round out and complete man's present and future unfoldment.

Let it be clearly understood, then, that in calling attention thus distinctly and emphatically to the importance of reincarnation as a present reality, we are not minimizing its scope or importance. Reincarnation from day to day, and from hour to hour, does not mean recognition any the less of reincarnation from life to life, from century to century, from æon to æon.

Mental Science, it may be said, comes not to destroy, but to fulfill the law of reincarnation. On this account, it is well for us to get the meaning of this law as taught in the ancient wisdom religion quite clearly, remembering always, that no statement should limit or bind us; that every statement will help us, as it is found stimulating and suggestive, causing us to expand it, as nearly as may be, up to present demands. Such a clear statement from

Theosophical authority may be inserted here:

"The doctrine of reincarnation is the corner-stone of the esoteric philosophy, as of all archaic religions. It is founded on the natural fact that effects must be proportionate to causes. Energy stored up during a finite period of time can never produce effects stretching over an infinity of time. The thought energy represented by the unsatisfied physical inclinations of an ego, being in its nature indestructible, *requires physical existence* to work itself out; hence the necessity of reincarnations. If any human ego is entirely devoid of physical tendencies and inclinations, it will not be under the necessity of further births and deaths on the physical plane. In the mystical language of the East, such an ego is said to burst the wheel of births and re-births (samsara), and to attain Nirvana; when humanity collectively shall be perfected, and all physical possibilities realized, our earth itself, having completed its course, will pass into Nirvana.¹

By reincarnation is meant the re-embodiment of the *human* ego, the real man, in a progressive succession of *human* bodies, "physical" bodies, if you please (for after all the physical is but the necessary envelope of the spiritual, and not something different or op-

1. "Man: Fragments of Forgotten History," by Two Chelas, London, 1885.

posed), until the distance has been traversed between primal man, or the lowest savage, and spiritual man, the Buddha or the Christ. This process is one in accordance with natural law on all planes of being. It proceeds in spite of "death" so-called, taking up and repairing death's breaks. Through its workings, death is at last overcome. This has been demonstrated by the few who have reached mastery through memory of the past, and whom we call saviours, mahatmas, or adepts. The time is near at hand when, thanks to the patient light and leading of these elder brothers of the race, unending life in the body is to be demonstrated by the many.

Reincarnation is as natural as evolution. It may be said to take up the theory of evolution where science leaves off; continuing it into the realm of spirit, explaining, rounding it out, and completing it. There is the same necessity for reincarnation as there is for evolution; the same reason for successive rebirths as there was for the first

embodiment of the soul, and for every forward effort in life, i. e., the struggle to attain the ideal. The real is the sequence of the ideal, as the abstract conception of the painter's mind is given concrete form on his canvas. In man, as in all things—only more intensely—there is felt a perpetual, inherent strain or tendency towards something which is dimly perceived to be possible in the future.

Our greatest geniuses, poets, painters, philosophers, are those who know they have but touched the border land of that in which they excel all who have gone before. Raphael died declaring that he wished to put on canvas a madonna more beautiful than any he had painted. The ideal is everywhere pressing in upon us. To grasp the ideal with so firm a hold that we can bring it down to the perception of our fellows in some concrete form is the highest service a man can render to humanity. Deeper knowledge, higher powers, grander and grander possi-

bilities await man when he shall have reached that state of consciousness which makes it possible for him to *apprehend* this knowledge, these powers and possibilities.

Throughout nature the purpose of the embodiment of soul in that form of spirit called "matter" is seen to be the unfoldment of consciousness by the development of the perceptive faculties and functions. From the lowest living organism up to the highly organized, complex and self-conscious structure of the human body, through an endless variety of progressive forms, the life principle pervading all nature is seen to be constantly expanding in a gradual extension of the boundaries of consciousness. Every expansion of consciousness means expansion of life. Man's powers and man's universe widen with his growth.

As consciousness transcends the material plane, science is agnostic in reference to it and regards it as inherent in our physiological functions; its in-

crease being the result simply of the development of these functions. It is held that consciousness has reached its highest perfection in man because he has the most highly organized body. In opposition to this view, which does not concede a previous existence, nor one outside of the physical organization, for that consciousness now centered in any human body, mental science teaches that the growth of consciousness is primarily the *cause* and only secondarily the *effect* of the evolution of more and more highly organized forms, and that this consciousness is the expression, or individualization in form, of that soul of man which is an emanation of the Universal Principle, or God. "Man grows as higher grow his aims."

Why are we born? Because the spirit must see itself reflected in matter, so as to attain to self-consciousness, just as the individual can only see his personality reflected in a mirror. It is often asked why the spirit, once

freed from the bonds of earth life and enjoying an existence in which, presumably, its activities are unfettered, its perceptions undimmed and its progressive development possible, should desire or be forced to seek reincarnation in material forms. As well ask why the soul of man takes on the human form for the *first* time. The soul is immortal; it existed previous to its birth on earth in the body and will live forever after leaving the body. Therefore, it must have abandoned all the attractions of existence in "heaven," or the spiritual spheres, when it was born on earth in human form the first time. Every Christian who believes this teaching of Christian theology should accept, without quibble, the logical consequence, that if man is born on earth once he may be born again any number of times. There is no escaping the conclusion that if the immortal soul "takes on mortality" for a single lifetime, it can do so again and again, and the undeniable inference is that it *will* do so.

We are born to unfold in consciousness, as has been said. We must be re-born again and again, so long as there is any further and larger consciousness to unfold. That means we are to live eternally. The lesson the West has for the East is that there is no finality, no Nirvana. What says that American of Americans, the good gray poet of Camden, who,—through the development of cosmic consciousness, surely,—understood and addressed the human soul as has no other poet of our time?

This day before dawn I ascended a hill and
looked at the crowded heaven.

And I said to my spirit—"When we become
the enfolders of those orbs and the pleasure
and knowledge of everything in them,
Shall we be filled and satisfied then?"

And my spirit said: "No; we level that lift to
pass and continue beyond."

The child holds in his nature all the elements, all the potentialities of the man. But it is necessary that he should live to and through manhood to *express* his nature, and by expressing, in a sense, create it. Just as the germ of the plant

in perfect miniature is contained in the seed, but requires life and growth in the earth to expand into the plant, so the human ego must be re-embodied to express itself. Re-incarnation is growth, just as surely as is the advance from childhood to manhood, or from shoot to tree.

Analogy, it has been well said by the author of "The Secret Doctrine," is the guiding law in nature, the only true Ariadne's thread that can lead us through the inextricable paths of her domain toward her primal and final mysteries. By its inductive methods, science shows us the unity of the cosmos, the operation of the same laws in both small and great, and the absolute unchangeableness and reliability of those laws. It is fundamental with science that not one atom in the universe exists except as an integral and necessary part of the whole, and not one form of life is manifested apart from that universal principle of life which permeates and animates all that moves and

has its being in nature. Re-incarnation is held to be a universal law of nature, strictly in accord with these teachings of science. The reincarnation in progressive forms of every organism, every atom of matter great and small in the world about us, is constantly going on and is plainly perceptible to the physical senses. It is by analogy with the physical phenomena of this process that the reason arrives at a clear comprehension of the spiritual phenomena of a re-embodiment of the human ego in a succession of human forms.

The real man, the ego, or individual monad, is not confined to the plane perceptible to the physical senses and so cannot be fully perceived by them. But there is a subtle attribute or quality of his individuality which we call "character." This trait of the real man is but imperfectly indicated, as a rule, in the physical formation of the body, the expression of the thoughts, or the outward action of that personality which represents but a passing phase in his

history. What we call a man's life is but a brief episode in his progress along the spiral path on which the spirit descends into matter only to re-ascend to the spiritual plane with added consciousness—repeating the experience until at last he has attained to that spiritual self-consciousness at one with God, when the necessity for further re-incarnations ceases. Thereafter, no break occurs in his constant consciousness of a present and unending re-incarnation, as the atoms of his body are momentarily consumed and renewed.

The problem of man's future life now, as at every critical period in our history, is stirring the thought of the world. From all sides resound the echoes of that clash of argument which, beginning in the theological conflict over the dogmas of heaven, hell and purgatory, has been taken up and carried forward in the fields of science and philosophy. As the smoke of battle clears, the doctrine of *Reincarnation* is seen to be com-

manding an attention that is strikingly significant. This is a practical age and we are learning that the chief value of any theory of the hereafter really lies in its effect upon us now. Man's present condition is always largely influenced by his conception of the future. What we are *now* is the product not only of what we have been, but also of what we expect to be.

From Professor Briggs' interpretation of the Calvinistic creed as teaching "a third state of progressive sanctification," it is but a step to the Buddhist doctrine of "progressive spiritual development" by re-birth in a successive series of personalities. So we may expect sooner or later to see this oriental idea of man's future enthroned by the advancing mind of the western world on the ruins of the demolished dogmas of foreordination and of divine election for salvation or damnation, without reference to faith or works.

No longer lightly passed over as a foolish fancy of the ancients, reincar-

nation demands serious consideration as a concept of man's nature and destiny that affords a just and reasonable explanation of a future state, and the only satisfactory solution of the problems presented by the inequalities in life observed everywhere around us.

Christians should be the last to question the truth of reincarnation, for the accepted interpretation of the text: "As in Adam all men die, so in Christ shall all be made alive," is the most extravagant kind of reincarnation. It is taught that upon conversion a man is at once really "born again," a new man. He is suddenly transformed from a sinner into a saint, without waiting for a new birth in the flesh; without working out the karma of a past life of evil; without in any way earning his salvation.

The Christian Church in America seems fair to be shaken to its foundations by the revolt of its best and brightest minds against the dogma that an all-wise and loving God has predestined

the majority of mankind to eternal flames. The protest against perverted reason and blind belief voiced by such pulpit leaders as Henry Ward Beecher, Lyman Abbott, Dr. Heber Newton, Howard MacQueary, Dr. Bridgman, Professor Swing, Myron Reed, and Professor Briggs, has long been rumbling among the millions who fill the pews, and whose minds have already rejected the teaching of an unending hell of fire and brimstone for the punishment of sinners. With a hell of fire and brimstone, the majority of Christian communicants have thrown overboard the belief in a heaven of pearly gates and golden pavements. As John Hay, our present ambassador to England, puts it in his "Little Breeches," the white winged angels now have "a darned sight better business than loafing 'round the throne."

At this point of spiritual awakening, the doctrine of reincarnation is presented to the western mind with remarkable force by the leaders of the Inner

Brotherhood. It teaches that not one chance, but as many chances as may be required, will be given to every human soul to work out its redemption—the rational redemption of progressive development. It tells every human being that he shall have opportunity to realize all his highest aspirations, to attain to the highest possibilities of goodness, of greatness, of genius, of power, of spirituality. That instead of being irrevocably judged and condemned for his sins, his errors, his weaknesses, his faults, in the few fleeting years of one earthly life, he may rub out the “mistakes” on his slate, and, with the knowledge gained by his failures, try it all over again—and keep on trying until the lesson is perfectly learned—the object of existence accomplished.

Reincarnation, at first glance, seems to be a doctrine difficult of acceptance. Two reasons for this stand out clearly: in the first place, popular opinion has been much colored and clouded by misconceptions that stand in the way of

clear comprehension. There is, in the next place, a constitutional reluctance in the human mind to adopt any new idea which clearly calls for so radical a re-adjustment of our methods of thought and action as does that of reincarnation. Thought, like other forces, follows the line of least resistance. There is need, therefore, for a simple statement of the real nature of reincarnation.

An erroneous popular notion confuses reincarnation with metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. There are, among the ignorant in the East, those who believe that men are rewarded or punished for their acts in this life by passing after death into the bodies of various animals, according to the qualities exhibited in the human career. As a consequence, the killing of animals is regarded as sinful, and indeed is prohibited by law. The streets of Constantinople, Cairo, Alexandria, Bagdad, Peking, Calcutta and Bombay are over-run with miserable dogs,

which no one will kill, for fear of killing his grandfather, perhaps, or his mother. The white elephants of Siam are stabled in palaces, fed from golden troughs, attended by slaves, and worshipped by the people, all because they are supposed to be animated by the souls of departed kings. This idea of the transmigration of souls from human to brute forms probably arose from an ignorant perversion of the doctrine of reincarnation. In the true meaning of the doctrine, the human ego can no more retrograde by reincarnating in brute form than, according to the Darwinian theory, man can degenerate into a monkey, or a monkey into a mosquito.

The ascent from man up to God is as sure and as gradual as the ascent of everything on this globe from the mineral and the vegetable up to man. Science estimates that millions of years were required for the evolution, upon this earth, of the human organism, even of the savage type. This measures the

first long step in the evolution of the spirit. Yet the distance between the Digger Indian and the spiritual self-consciousness of a Christ is hardly less than that between the lowest animal and the lowest man. Indeed it may be said that the one great family of humanity, much as it has in common, is marked by as infinite a variety of nature and character as are all the species of all the animal kingdom below man. Still a human soul may ascend from the South Sea Islander's plane of consciousness to that of a Plato or a Shakespeare, by the ladder of reincarnation.

But, it has been asked, how can reincarnation be in accord with that progress which is the universal law, if it teaches that the oak can go back into the acorn, the sage into the suckling?

To this the answer is that the oak *does* go back into acorns and the sage into what we call "second childhood," as stages in the progressive development of tree and man. There may be apparent retrogression, as there often

is in the history of nations or of individuals; but it is only apparent. As the fruitage of a tree, according to its condition and cultivation, contains the seed from which, *in another tree*, greater and better fruitage shall spring, so the ripening of consciousness at the end of the sage's life becomes the seed of greater progress and wisdom in the suckling. Generally speaking, the sage in one incarnation does not manifest himself in the next incarnation until the period of childhood—of physical development—is past. Sometimes the latent accumulations of former lives flash out clearly before the physical growth is attained. We can hardly think of retrogression in the reincarnation of the human soul known as Mozart playing divine symphonies at seven, of Benjamin West painting babes and angels at six, or of Macaulay writing a history of the world at four. Reincarnation, of course, does not depend for its proof on such instances of precocious genius. They are cited simply as

vivid illustrations of the law that the garnered experiences of past lives are transmitted to and taken up by the ego in his present life, and so made the basis of still further development. Fortunately, this premature manifestation of power is the exception that proves the rule. The case of the poet Chatterton shows us in a marked manner at what sacrifice it is often made.

Another question often asked by those who "do not believe in reincarnation," only because they do not understand it, is: "How can it be true that a man lived on earth before, if he does not remember his previous life?"

A few moments' examination of the peculiarities of memory will suggest the answer to this objection. That we have forgotten the *incidents*, including the names, personalities and localities of past lives, is no proof that we have not lived before. Such lapse of memory is no bar to our knowing that we did live before. The faculty of forgetting has indeed been considered by philosophers

as not less important than that of remembering. We do not remember our latest birth nor any of the incidents of the first four or five years of life in our present incarnation. Yet we *know* that we were born and that we passed through the period of childhood. We know that the record of every event, every action, every perception, every little experience—all the thousand and one details that make up the life of our first few years, would fill a big book. But they are forgotten, although their effects remain. So unimportant in themselves that we do not even care to remember or record them, all these forgotten details are recognized only in their *results*, so far as we can trace to their influence what we now are, spiritually, mentally and physically.

Memory is but a suggestion by some sequence, or similarity in events; the association of ideas in recollection. Remembering implies forgetting. We had forgotten the thing, or we would not have to remember it—to trace its rec-

ord back from effect to cause, by an exercise of the reasoning faculties. How often we remember people, places and events of our youth that we supposed we had utterly forgotten, when reminded by a chance meeting with an old friend, or the finding of an old letter or photograph? It may be said that man normally remembers important things. Importance is a relative term, and what seems important now may be unimportant ten years hence. Economies essential in the life of a poor man are useless when he acquires wealth. We forget our friends' names and faces frequently. Most men forget much of what was learned in school or college. In many cases, a man has, through severe illness or an injury to the brain, forgotten even his own name and all the events of his previous life.

The truth of reincarnation, therefore, in nowise depends for its proof on the memory of previous incarnations. Still it is worth while, in this connection, to note that just as suggestion and reflec-

tion may revive the consciousness (or "memory") of something belonging to an early and forgotten period of our present life, so it sometimes revives the memory of something in a past life, or even its entire personality. Plutarch has told us the story of his twenty-four lives, Appolonius of Tyana remembered and related fully the events of his life in a previous incarnation. To the thoughtful reader, it must be plain that the Iliad and the Odyssey of Homer are but recitals of heroic deeds in which the blind bard himself participated in a previous life. The story of the adventures of Ulysses, extending far beyond the confines of a single life and through realms of spirit, is incontestably the history of a series of reincarnations. And there is strong internal evidence that Homer, the poet was a later reincarnation of Ulysses the hero. Napoleon Bonaparte similarly remembered and carried forward the development of forces acquired in his previous incarnation as Julius Cæsar.

Coming down to our own time, we have positive evidence of a reincarnation in which memory of the life of over three thousand years before was revived in the person of Dr. Henry Schliemann, whose remarkable success in discovering the site of ancient Troy and resurrecting tangible archæological evidence of the historical reality of Homer's immortal epic is attributed to a recollection of his former existence as a Greek on the very scene of his explorations. Nearly forty years of his life had been passed in the prosaic occupation of a wholesale grocer, when his interest in Greek archæology was awakened and he went to Athens, where he met and married his affinity in the person of a beautiful Greek girl of great spiritual and intellectual development. In her, he recognized a reincarnation of the famous Helen of Troy, whom he had loved and lost three thousand years before. They remembered through love's recognition. Memory brought certain consciousness of the

historic reality of Homer's verse. Perhaps the most convincing proof of a revival of memory of previous lives is that afforded by the life and works of Shakespeare are. His masterly power of portraying human nature in all its phases may not have needed the memory of previous incarnations, so so much as the results. But his vivid and (as we now know) accurate pictures in detail of life and character in the Rome of the Cæsars, in the Venice of the Doges, the Egypt of Cleopatra, the Athens of Timon, the England of Richard III., the Sweden of Hamlet, and the France of Henry the Fifth's warring and wooing, are explainable only by the fact of a vivid recollection of his own existence among these scenes and peoples in previous lives.

Learned critics and commentators have for centuries disputed as to Shakespeare's real character and personality. In our own day, a Chief Justice of England has written a book to prove that Shakespeare must have been a lawyer,

because of the intimate knowledge of law and lawyers shown in his plays. The same sort of evidence is adduced to show that he was a physician, a courtier, a priest, a soldier deeply versed in the military science of his day, a sailor, an antiquarian, a philosopher. He must have been all of these, just as truly as he was a poet and a playwright. But when? Not while he lived in the England of Elizabeth as William Shakespeare. *That* person we know went up to London from Stratford, a poor country boy. He began by holding horses in front of the theater of which he subsequently became an attache and manager. But he never traveled out of England; he never studied at the universities. He had no advantages of learning, and, if he had, the knowledge he evinced of other peoples and countries could not have been gained from books.

The power of memory, however, is rarely developed to such a degree as this. We remember the song but not

the words, the words but not the air. We remember the face, but not the name; the name but not the face; the event but not the date; the picture but not the painter's name; the story but not the title, or the author. In fact, we are seldom certain of the exact details of an event a year old. We recognize this by writing down a memorandum "to make sure of it." So much for the argument that reincarnation is not true because there is generally no memory of past lives. We remember, in regard to past lives, as of this life, just as much and just when there is occasion to remember.

Another question often asked is how it can have happened that the reappearance of any of the great characters in the world's history has not been recognized. Surely, it is urged, the world could not have failed to recognize in a later reincarnation such eminent personages as Alexander the Great, Cæsar, Cicero, Plato, Aristotle, Cleopatra, Shakespeare or George Washington.

The distinction between the "individual" and the "person" once understood, most of the objections to the doctrine of reincarnation vanish into thin air. Personality, having served its purpose, perishes; or rather it is merged in the individual, which living eternally, embodies itself, until it arrives at spiritual self-consciousness, and realizes its true nature as one with the Universal Spirit.

This perfection is only reached through a union of the spiritual and physical forces. It becomes necessary to repeat this union until the mission of the spirit in first uniting itself to the body is accomplished. That is to say, until the physical nature has been so spiritualized that the spiritual consciousness may continue its development infinitely, raising the vibrations of the physical at every step, so that it becomes, at last, the readily responsive instrument for the soul's expression.

Reincarnation is progress, not repetition. We do not recognize the reincar-

nation of Alexander the Great, nor that of Cicero, because the outward personality which the name represents to our minds is *not* the thing that is reincarnated. Not Elias, but "a greater than Elias," appeared in Jesus. Elias reincarnated must be greater than he was in that personality. The child grows into the man. It would be as unreasonable to expect to see in a reincarnation of Shakespeare the *man*, simply a later edition of Shakespeare the master dramatist of his age, as to expect him to be a re-embodiment of Shakespeare the poacher. Shakespeare in his last previous incarnation will be to Shakespeare in his next embodiment as the child is to the man. "The child is often father to the man"; but, even in one life, the personality of the child is, to the outward seeming, as distinct from that of the man as it is from that of another individual.

What is more evident than that the man or woman for whom life means development and a constantly enlarging

consciousness will, even in one brief span of earthly existence, pass through many distinct personalities? Truly "One man in his life plays many parts." Lincoln the rail splitter was a very different person from Lincoln the statesman,—as was Franklin the printer from Franklin the philosopher. What had Garfield on the tow-path to do with Garfield the educator? or Garfield the general? or Garfield the president? Was Johnson the tailor not a very different personality from that of Johnson the chief magistrate? Grant's individuality was expressed only temporarily in the personality of the tanner; it found fuller expression in the personality of the successful general; sought to manifest itself further in the person of the nation's chief executive; found new spiritual unfoldment in extended travels; suffered the disappointment and humiliation of failure in the business sphere, learning its lessons; was for a time only an invalid tortured by a painful malady; and at last found the highest expression for

his individuality during his latest incarnation in the authorship of what is probably the best book of memoirs written in the present generation.

In his next incarnation Grant may not be tanner, soldier, statesman or traveler. Whatever his personality may be, it will sum up all the experiences of his last incarnation, yet possibly with no memory of the unimportant details or incidents of his last incarnation. So the personality of George Washington in his last incarnation, and his memory of it, will have as little to do with his personality in his next incarnation as have his uniform, his sword and his small clothes now on exhibition in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. Re-embodied now, or a thousand years hence, he would have no more need for his old name and fame than he would for his peruke and knee-breeches.

As examples of the reincarnation of one individual in many varying personalities during the term of one lifetime, the careers of Franklin, Lincoln, Gar-

field, Grant and Johnson are mentioned as most familiar to the minds of American readers. Even more striking illustrations will occur to students of biography in the life of Gœthe, the wild student, the romantic lover, the poet, historian, essayist, philosopher, jurist, physician, statesman, and scientist in succession. The same may be said of the evolution of Burns from ploughboy to poet; of Hogg, the Etrick Shepherd; of Gerald Massey, the errand boy. Indeed, the changes in personality from childhood to old age keep pace with those constant changes in the physical composition of the body, to which we have already referred.

As the plant attracts from the atmosphere and the earth the invisible life-germs needed for its growth, so, out of the great universal sea of spirit and matter, man attracts that grade of spirit to which his nature is attuned, and the quality and proportion of matter in harmony with his physical life. Every finer and grander thought is at once

the cause and the effect of increased spirituality in the organism. This process continues through life from birth to death, and through all lives from re-incarnation to reincarnation. Man is never really "disembodied"; he only exchanges a body of one order of density for that of another order.

The probabilities are that the period between re-births is, for the mass of mankind, comparatively short, being lengthened according to the degree of spiritual development attained. Advanced spiritualists and initiates in the Order of the Rosy Cross do not accept the theory brought forward by Mr. Sinnet in "Esoteric Buddhism," of thousand year sleeps in the spirit spheres. There as here, they say, the spirit passes the time in progressive thought, study and activity, alternating with such rest and recreation as it finds enjoyable and helpful. There is no such thing as spiritual unconsciousness. "Sleep" in the spirit world is a matter of conscious enjoyment in rest. It is the body, not

the spirit, that sleeps, even here on earth. Remembered dreams prove this. The reality of spirit return is regarded as proof that so far from being asleep, spirits, according to their natures, are deeply interested in the affairs of earth and, as in earth life, aid or oppose humanity in the eternal struggle between light and darkness.

In theosophical teaching, the doctrine of reincarnation depends upon and is interblended with the no less important doctrine of "Karma." This is simply the law of cause and effect, operating through the merit and demerit of a man's thoughts and deeds in one life so as to determine the nature and condition of his next reincarnation, if there should not be time and opportunity for a reaping of results in one incarnation. Karma is beautifully defined in Whittier's lines:

"The tissue of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown."

—PAUL TYNER.

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