

Optimism " THE

I

PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE.

BY

ANNA BLACKWELL.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE AGES.

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ERRATA.

- Page 16, line 33, for "*formula*" read "*formule.*"
.. 19, .. 6, for "*from*" read "*from the.*"
.. 20, .. 13, tenth word, for "*of*" read "*to.*"
.. 22, .. 9, for "*says Christ*" read "*Christ says.*"
.. 28, .. 43, for "*as of*" read "*with.*"
.. 45, last line, insert "*to.*"
.. 77, line 40, for "*in*" read "*on.*"

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THE TESTIMONY OF THE AGES.

THE WAY WE ARE GOING.

MANY of the readers of *Human Nature* are probably acquainted with the writings of a noble religious thinker, the late Revd. Frederick William Robertson; some of them may, perhaps, have seen his translation of a short but suggestive essay, by Gotthold Lessing, on "The Education of the Human Race." In that essay Lessing shows that the education of the Human Race can only be accomplished gradually, *because* each successive generation can only acquire the modicum of new truth for whose reception it has been prepared by the progress of preceding generations; so that the new gain of each generation is not only the *result* of the earlier lessons, doubts, investigations, and slowly-acquired convictions of the generations that have gone before it, but becomes, in its turn, the *necessary stepping-stone* to yet higher acquirement for the generation that follows it. He illustrates the gradual and progressive nature of the education of the Human Race by a reference to the changes that take place in human ideas, in the course of ages, in regard to every object of thought; as, for instance, in our ideas of Right and Wrong:—the Mosaic dispensation inculcating Right-doing as a means to the obtaining of earthly rewards; the first form of Christianity substituting the idea of heavenly rewards in the place of earthly ones; and the progress of human thought gradually leading us, through a more enlightened understanding of the teachings of Christ and of our relations to the Divine Being and to one another, to the nobler idea of Right as something to be loved and followed for its own sake, irrespective of any lower ideas of Rewards and Penalties. Alluding to the slowness with which this gradual education of the Human Race is accomplished, and the unreasonableness of those who are sometimes inclined to despond because "the progress for which Nature takes thousands of years does not mature itself in the brief space of their single lifetime," the eminent Philosopher then gives utterance to the following profound and eloquent sentences:—

"Go Thine inscrutable way, Eternal Providence! Only let me not despair of Thee because of this inscrutableness! Let

me not despair of Thee, even if Thy steps sometimes appear to me to be going backwards! It is not true that the shortest line is always straight. Thou hast, on Thine eternal way, so much to carry on together; so much to do; so many side steps to take! And what if it were as good as proved that the vast slow wheel, which is bringing mankind nearer and nearer to its future perfection, is only put in motion by smaller, swifter wheels, each of which contributes its own individual unit to the sum of that greater movement? . . . And so it is! The very same Way, by which the Human Race is travelling on to its perfection, must every individual of that Race—one sooner, another later—have travelled over. *Have travelled over in one and the same life-time?* Can he have been, in one and the self-same life, a sensual Jew and a spiritual Christian? Can he, in the self-same life, have overtaken both? . . . Surely not that! But why may not every individual man have existed more than once upon this earth? Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest? Because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the Schools had perverted and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once? Why may not *I* have already performed those steps of my education which the prospect of merely temporal Penalties and Rewards can bring man to? And why may I not also have performed all those other steps which the prospect of Eternal Rewards has so powerfully assisted us to accomplish? And why should I not come back again as often as I am able to acquire fresh knowledge, fresh expertness, from the experiences of this world? Do I take away so much from one life here that there is nothing to repay me for the trouble of coming back? Is this a reason against it? Or because I forget that I have been here already? *Happy is it for me that I do forget!* The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad use of the present. And even that which I forget *now*, is it necessarily forgotten for ever? Or is it a reason against this hypothesis that so much time would have been lost to me? (*But can that time be said to be 'lost' to me whose results have made me what I am?*) 'Lost?' 'Time lost?' And how much, then, should I miss? *Is not a whole Eternity mine?*"

This extract from the reasoning of the eminent German Philosopher may serve as a fitting introduction to the subject of the present paper, because it suggests four principal points, or aspects of the question, which, mutually supporting and completing one another, may be regarded as constituting the strong, four-sided "corner-stone" of evidence on which the advocates of the doctrine of Re-incarnation may be well content to rest their cause. These four points are as follows:—

First,—The antiquity and universality of the doctrine of Re-

incarnation; that is to say, of the doctrine which teaches that the Soul not only survives the material body, but that it lived before the material body, and that it is gradually educated out of ignorance and impurity, and into wisdom and purity, by the discipline of its successive and progressive lives.

Secondly,—The evidence afforded, by observation of the world around us, in support of the assertion that the Soul lives many such progressive lives *upon this earth*, until, having exhausted the educational possibilities of this planet, it has become fitted for admission into a higher one.

Thirdly,—The beneficial effects* of the suspension of our remembrance of past existences which is usually undergone by us during our earthly lives, and during the period of our return into the spirit-zone of this planet† that completes each of those lives, and which suspension is both an indispensable condition of our attainment of the educational and social ends of each new incarnation, and the guarantee of our happiness in the higher states of being to which we progressively attain, and in which we recover the memory of our past.

Fourthly,—The admirable consequences of this doctrine which as the tree is known by its fruit, conclusively prove the superiority of this theory of human existence to all others, because *it affords the only possible demonstration of the Justice of the Divine Government and of the brotherhood of the Human Race*, the only complete and coherent explanation of human progress, and consequently the only clear and certain guide in the path of reformation and improvement, and the only rational consolation under the difficulties, inequalities, and sorrows of earthly life, by showing that these, whether in the experience of the individual or of the race, are only conditions of the earlier steps of the "Way" by which (to recur to the eloquent words of Lessing) each human being, as well as the whole human race, is travelling on towards its future "Perfection."

It is mainly to the establishment of the first of the four points just specified (*viz.*, the antiquity and universality of the doctrine of our successive existences in this earth, and in other planets) that the present paper will be devoted; but, before entering on the special argument which we shall thus have to consider, it is necessary to ask attention to a few preliminary remarks.

In the first place, it may be well to state, distinctly, that Reincarnationists do not adopt the doctrine in question from any desire to come back into the life of this earth. On the contrary, they regard this return, as it has been regarded by thinkers in all ages

* *Vide Human Nature* for February, 1871, p. 54.

† *Vide Human Nature* for March, 1870, p. 108. October, p. 442. December, p. 547. January, 1871, p. 18.

of the world, as a painful necessity, a regrettable consequence of our ignorance, sins, and imperfections. But, while so regarding it, they nevertheless consider that, if we have a certain amount of punishment or of discipline to undergo, or a certain amount of lessons to learn, before we *can* "go up higher," it does not much matter whether we accomplish our task here, or in some other world of the same degree of advancement. Even those persons who have suffered most severely in this life usually endeavour to prolong, to the utmost, their present existence; while most people seem to consider that, on the whole, the satisfactions of even our present admittedly low phase of life outweigh its sorrows. Re-incarnationists, therefore, do not admit that there is any valid reason for regarding a return to this earth, with the benefit of greater experience on our own part, and of the improved moral, social, and physical states which our earth is evidently approaching, as constituting a prospect in any way degrading, derogatory, or lamentable, as so many seem to imagine. Fully convinced that the Divine Overruling will ensure to us, at all times, the conditions best calculated to aid us in the work of self-education, they consider that we ought to be willing to come back to this imperfect but already-improving planet, as often as, by so doing, we can most effectually advance our own amelioration, help forward the persons and interests most intimately connected with us, or hasten the ascensional development of the planet itself. But, while thus willing to accept as best for us whatever the higher Ordering may have appointed as the next step of our discipline, they none the less look forward to the attainment of progressively higher *realms*, as well as *states*, as the great aim of the preparatory education we are now undergoing; and they, therefore, insist on the importance of our making the best possible use of each of our earthly lives, in order to diminish, as far as may be, the number of our penitential, expiatory, and educational sojourns in what has always been regarded, by those who have held this doctrine, as the "*prison of flesh*." In regard to re-incarnation, they take exactly the same ground as that taken by their brother in conviction, Massimo d'Azeglio, in regard to the modern spiritual phenomena. In replying to a friend, who had written to him on the subject, the illustrious Italian statesman thus expresses himself:—"To answer your queries would require a volume of philosophical dissertation, and I have only time to make a few observations. For a long time, the world had adopted the old Aristotelian or Scholastic system of reasoning, and was accustomed to say, in regard to any novel statement or fact, 'I don't believe it; therefore, it is not so.' Bacon, Galileo, and others," continues d'Azeglio, "have inverted the phrase, and say, 'The thing is so; therefore I believe it.'" So say

the re-incarnationists. The question is not whether we *like* the doctrine of re-incarnation, nor whether we *believe* it; the question is simply whether that doctrine is *true* or *not*. To which brief statement of the nature of the question under consideration may be added the consoling comment that, if re-incarnation be, indeed, the law of human life, it must necessarily, as part of the Divine arrangements, be the best thing for us.

It is frequently urged, as an objection to this doctrine, that it has not been proclaimed by the majority of the spirits in communication with English and American media, and is, on the contrary, usually denied by them. To this objection I reply that the doctrine in question is proclaimed, with almost entire unanimity, through the media of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Russia, Turkey, India, China, in fact, of all the rest of the world; so that, if a question of this nature could be decided by a majority of votes, the question of re-incarnation would probably be decided in the affirmative. And it is to be farther remarked that the discrepancy between the tenour of the spirit-communications in the two former countries, and those received everywhere else, is by no means so entire as is commonly supposed. Just as, both in this country and in the United States, persons are occasionally met with who have preserved a more or less distinct remembrance of the scenes and events of their former lives, so, many English and American media have received partial announcements tending in the direction of the doctrine in question, even in centres in which it had not previously been heard of; while one English medium (authoress of that very clever book, "*Spiritualism versus Scepticism*,") received, from the spirit of her husband, a series of communications giving nearly all the leading ideas of the Kardec books, long before she had heard of their existence. But the fact of this discrepancy, be it more or less, is, from the spiritist point of view, very easily accounted for.

As Carlyle says, "The eye sees what the eye brings the means of seeing;" in other words, we only perceive, in regard to any matter, what the course of our previous experience has enabled us to perceive: a *dictum* whose literal and absolute truth, in regard to our present life, is proved by the experience of every day and of every century; while our increasing acquaintance with the life of the spirit-zone* of the planet shows us that it is equally true in regard to the people of that zone. It is, in our individual lives, as in a school. Some of the scholars learn more quickly and others more slowly; but, just as each scholar must master the lessons of his present class before he can become fitted, by the resulting education of his

* *Vide Human Nature* for March, 1870, p. 108.

intellectual "eye," to enter the class next above it, so he must always master the lesson he has in hand, as the sole condition of his understanding the lesson that follows it. And as it is only by the diligent learning of all the various lessons afforded by the planet in which we find ourselves that we can become fitted for living in a higher one, so we can only learn, in each new earthly incarnation, the lesson for whose comprehension we have been prepared by the experience of our preceding lives.

The new light that is beginning to be thrown, from "beyond the Veil," on the order of our earthly life, explains and confirms, in regard to that order, the statement of the Apostle Paul that "the natural is first, and then the spiritual;" and thus explains also the discrepancy between the communications of media in different countries.

"Invisible things," says the same Apostle, "are understood by the things that are seen;" and accordingly we are now assured that, just as each of our human lives consists of an alternation of sleeping and waking, of nights and days, so the course of our educational career in any given planet consists of a corresponding alternation of sojourns in the two spheres of existence furnished by its "natural" and "spirit" zones; that is to say, by our living *first* in the "natural" or surface-sphere of a planet, clothed in an outer garment, or "body" composed of the material elements of that sphere, and, next, after the death of the earthly body, by living in the spirit-zone, or sphere, of the same planet, clothed in an outer garment, or "body," of a different order, composed of the material elements proper to that other sphere: the short phase of our life in flesh, and the longer phase of spirit-life that follows and completes it, constituting "the evening and the morning" which, together, make up each successive "day," or step, of our educational career.

The Biblical declaration that "the Almighty instructs men in dreams, in visions upon their beds" is thus seen to be an allusion, not merely to the intercourse which habitually takes place, during sleep, between souls in flesh and souls in the spirit-world,* but also to the Providential order of human life, which restricts our acquisition of new ideas to the period of our sojourn in the "natural" or evening-life of planetary existence; the special benefit accruing to us from our returns to the spirit-zone of the planet being the correction and farther development of the ideas already acquired by us, and the power of operating a better and more fruitful incarnation as the result of this farther development. For each of these spheres (realms, or modes) of life is appropriated to the carrying on of a special branch of our education. In the

* Vide *Human Nature* for November, 1870, p. 501.

“natural” or earthly life we acquire new ideas;* in the spirit-life we apply those ideas in modes not now imaginable by us, but which enable us to make an advance towards the substitution of a higher order of *incorporation*, in place of *incarnation*, which is the aim of our subjection to the discipline of fleshy bodies. We cannot acquire new ideas in the spirit-world; because that acquisition is only possible, for humanised spirits, through conjunction with a new set of material organs.† On the other hand, we cannot give their true development and application to our ideas in this lower life, because this life is not the normal life of the spirit, whose activities, though requiring the action of compact Matter for their development and education, are being educated—not for conjunction with Matter in the ‘compact’ state in which it exists at the surface of our globe, but—for conjunction with Matter in the higher state which, for want of a better name, we call the ‘Fluidic’ or ‘Etherealised’ state. As the life of the earth is, for us, only the field of *rudiments*, so the life of the spirit-zone is only the field of *applications*, and therefore, in that zone, it is only “unto him that hath” already, “that more is given,” through the expansion of the knowledge already obtained in the life of flesh; the gain to “him that hath not” being “the taking away from him of that which he hath,” *i.e.* of the false notions and false aims which he has brought with him from the illusions of the lower life. Thus, in the Providential order of Human existence, the rudiment of every new truth must be arrived at by us in the “evening-life” of this lower sphere; but we apply and develop the truths thus acquired by us on our return to the “morning-life” of the spirit-zone of the planet, and the amount of intellectual and moral progress thus accomplished by us, as the result of each new educational “day,” determines the quality and scope of the new bodily organisation—the intellectual and moral “eye”—that we shall fashion for ourselves, and bring back with us, on our next return to the “evening-life” of the human sphere. For the soul does not *enter into* or *take possession of*, the bodies it successively animates; but constructs for itself, at each period of its career, the new body which corresponds to its state at that particular period, and which will be the organ of its activity, and its instrument of progress, in its next phase of existence. And the soul constructs these various bodies by the same natural action—*unconscious* but none the less *real*—by which we, in our human life, unconsciously build up for ourselves, in the course of every month, *an entirely new body*.‡

* Vide *Human Nature* for October, 1870, pp. 437-8.

† Vide *Human Nature* for December, 1870, p. 537.

‡ Vide *Human Nature* for November, 1870.

As I am about to show, the doctrine of re-incarnation has been taught from the very earliest ages of the world. But, although the Divine Overruling has caused this testimony to be prepared, in the past, for the enlightenment of future generations, the open promulgation of that doctrine has been, for many important reasons, purposely delayed.* And therefore, as, in the Divinely-appointed order of human development, new ideas can only be arrived at, by each spirit, through a new sojourn in the surface-sphere of planetary life, it follows that this law, must still be unknown to an immense number of the souls who are now in the spirit-zone of our earth, and who—not having become aware of it during their past incarnations—will only be able to acquire a knowledge of its reality as they come back to the surface-life of this globe.

But while, on the one hand, so large a portion of the people of the spirit-zone of our earth are ignorant of the law in question, and consequently of the real nature of the “changes of sphere” they so frequently announce themselves as about to undergo, it is evident, on the other hand, that this law must be known to a great number of spirits who have already had the opportunity of learning it in the earthly life. And as the time is now declared to have come for the general promulgation of this law throughout our planet, the spirits who were best prepared to serve, in this generation, as media for its announcement, have naturally been caused to re-incarnate themselves in the countries whose people are best prepared, by their former experiences, to accept that announcement, and to spread abroad the knowledge thus brought to them. Those who are already prepared to accept the statement thus made, will do so; those who are not yet prepared will, nevertheless, take the idea back with them into the spirit-world, will judge it by the clearer light of that “morning-life,” and will come back, on their next return to earth, with a mental organization that will enable them to accept it.

With these preliminary observations, I now pass on to the special subject of this paper.

Cicero, in speaking of the belief in the Immortality of the Soul as “an opinion supported by the concurrent testimony of all the most learned and eminent men of antiquity,” remarks that “such a support, which gives great weight to any cause, is entitled to all the more respect because, that opinion having been arrived at long before the formation of the body of reasoning to which we give the name of Philosophy, the prevalence of such an opinion, at that earlier period, can only be accounted for as being the result of natural inspiration.”†

* Vide *Human Nature* for February, 1871, p. 53.

† *Tuscul. quaest. L. 1. N. 12.*

It is this "concurrent testimony" to the existence of the great Law of Re-incarnation and to the soundness of the explanation of the Universe of which this law is an integral and necessary element, that we have now to examine; a testimony furnished by the various religious teachings of the world, by its "Bibles" or "Sacred Writings," by the insights of its greatest thinkers, by the prudentially-veiled yet explicit declarations of Christ, and forming a continuous chain of evidence reaching down from the remotest antiquity to the present day. Imperfect and superficial as so rapid a survey must necessarily be, its purpose will be sufficiently answered if it should succeed in arresting attention, and in stimulating enquiry in regard to the indications of our Future that may be derivable from the records of our Past.

It can hardly be necessary to point out, in this place, that, "as *all* the families of the earth" are equally (though only metaphorically*) the "children" of the same Divine Creator, so the inscrutable BEING alluded to in the Book of Job as "the Judge of *all* the earth" and proclaimed by Christ as the Universal "Father" is really, as the Apostle Paul emphatically declares, the very same GOD who, in all ages, and under various forms, has been more or less "ignorantly worshipped" by all ITS human children;—that, as it is always and everywhere "the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding," so all the religious beliefs of the world must be admitted to have emanated from the same Source, although the truths contained in them will necessarily have been more or less clouded and perverted by the ignorance and prejudices of the various eras in which they took their rise; and that, therefore, while the insights of the world's best thinkers, and all those specially mediumistic writings which the world has spontaneously accepted as constituting, in an especial sense, its "inspired Scriptures," or "Sacred Books," will inevitably abound in misconceptions and imperfect or erroneous statements, they may all be expected to agree in certain fundamental teachings, whose substantial identity, indicating their common origin, must be admitted to constitute a strong presumption in favour of their truth. For while, on the one hand, the teachings of the Overruling Wisdom can only be received according to the receptivity of those to whom they are addressed, we cannot suppose, on the other hand, that the Divine Overruling would permit the inculcation of unmingled falsehood. And therefore, while expecting to find the Creeds of the Ages overlaid with heaps of accumulated rubbish, we may also confidently expect that the sifting of these will yield, at least, some few grains of sound and living seed that will justify the Great Teacher's injunction to

* Vide *Human Nature* for December, 1869, p. 600.

"search the Scriptures." For to what may Christ be considered as having referred in this injunction? As the later Jewish writings to which we have given the name of "the New Testament" were not written until long afterwards, it is evident that he could not have alluded to *them*; and as it is equally evident that he, the whole tenor of whose teachings pointed to the brotherhood of all mankind, could not have intended to restrict the term "Scriptures" to the earlier Jewish writings to which we have given the name of "the Old Testament," ~~may we not~~ we may surely say, in interpreting the term "Scripture," as the eminent philosopher, Ballanche, says in regard to "Faith"—"I understand Inspiration in a larger sense, as shining above all creeds; and I employ the word 'Scripture' to express the generality of human traditions, the universal religion of the human race"? That Christ intended to direct our attention to *all* the writings that could enlighten us in regard to the nature of "immortality" is, indeed, indicated by the very form of his injunction. For in telling us to "search" the medianimic writings referred to, he distinctly implies that what we are to seek in them is something which, though really there, is nevertheless *hidden*, and can only be discovered by us—not through a blind and wholesale swallowing of those writings that is fully as unwise as their blind and wholesale rejection, but—through a careful, open-eyed ascertainment of their convergent indications; a "proving" of all the various ideas contained in them, as a condition of the "holding fast" of that which, after this broad examination and comparison, shall commend itself to our best judgment as "good." Moreover, the Apostle Paul, in exalting the teaching of Christ, claims, as the special glory of that teaching, that it is a later wave of the *same* world-wide stream of spiritual influx through which the *same* Divine Wisdom had previously conveyed its instructions, "at sundry times, and in divers manners" appropriated to the needs and degrees of receptivity of those various times, to the earlier generations of our common humanity; *i.e.* according to the spiritist view of that humanity, to *ourselves*, in the earlier periods of our educational and re-generative career; and Christ himself expressly declares that "the Kingdom of Heaven," whose establishment upon this earth we all believe, in one way or other, is being ushered in by the generalization of conscious communication between the surface and the spirit-zone of the planet, is a bringing out, from the "treasures" of the "householder," of "things *new and old*;" *i.e.* of old truths, hitherto misapprehended or neglected, but which are now to be presented afresh to the children of the House, cleared of the obscuring deposits of the Past, and re-vivified by a new and living interpretation, in harmony with the advancing Science of the age.

Let us now see what the "treasures" of Ancient Thought may contain in support of the general Theory of Derived Existence alluded to above, and especially of the great law of our progress through successive existences; the "Open Secret" of all History as of all Biography, "the Mystery" which, though always proclaimed, has yet—in the order of Providential Development, and for the accomplishment of various Providential ends—been hitherto, as regards its general perception by the people of this planet, "kept secret from the foundation of the world."

THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES.

It is well known that all the old religions hid their profoundest doctrines behind a veil of initiation, intended to keep them from the knowledge of the masses, who were supposed to be, and probably were, incapable of worthily understanding them; so that the innermost articles of the world's most ancient Beliefs were only imparted, under solemn vows of secrecy, to the select few who, after due preparation, were considered fit to be entrusted with them, and to transmit them, in their turn, to new recipients. It is admitted by scholars that the principal of the "Ancient Mysteries," or Secret Teachings of Antiquity, viz., the Hermetic, the Orphic, the Eleusinian, and the Kabbalistic, taught, substantially, the same three great doctrines. According to Dr. Dollinger, the eminent Catholic church-historian of Germany, in his treatise on the Eleusinian Mysteries, those three doctrines, thus made known to the initiated from the earliest ages of the world were *First*, The Unity of the Supreme Being, and the fact that the pretended 'Gods' of the temples were only representations of the Divine attributes, symbolised for the use of the unlearned, who were considered to be incapable of appreciating abstract ideas;—*Secondly*, The Plurality of Inhabited Worlds, and the true motion of the planets round the sun, as subsequently demonstrated by Copernicus and Galileo;*—*Thirdly*, The anteriority of the Soul to the body, and its gradual education and purification through the trials and discipline of a succession of earthly lives in this globe and in other planets, until freed from the need of any farther contact with planetary Matter. Delormel, in his great work on the Ancient Mysteries, thus expresses himself:—"From the earliest times the initiated have known the Unity, Infinity, and Perfection of God; the infinity of inhabited worlds; and our successive lives in them;" and, in arguing in support of the latter point, he says, "As it is absurd to suppose that blessings and sorrows are the result of Chance, we must believe them to be a consequence of our right-doing or wrong-doing in previous lives." The Mysteries also taught the

* DOLLINGER. *Judaism and Faganism*. Vol. i., p. 164.

fact of communication between souls in the flesh and souls in the spirit-world; and the grand doctrine of Orpheus in regard to the more advanced spirits whom he called the 'Rector-Gods,' or 'Ruling Gods' of planets—the 'Viswadevas,' of the Rig-Veda, (therein spoken of as "the universal Gods who are exempt from decay," *i.e.* from perishable Matter, from flesh, "who have obtained knowledge universally," *i.e.* by universal experiences), the 'Anohver' of the Zend-Avesta, the 'Elohim' of Genesis, the 'Thrones, Principalities, and Powers' of the Apostle Paul, the 'Christs'* of the New Revelation—of which doctrine, styled by Proclus 'God-given,' Kircher says that "it has appeared worthy of this beautiful name to more than one Father of the Church."

In the Book of Hermes it is said that "The Source and Principle of all things is GOD. Darkness was boundless in the abyss; but water, and a subtle spirit, existed in Chaos. Over all this the Holy Light broke forth; and the elements were produced among the sand of a watery essence." It would be difficult to draw up so concise and yet so close a *résumé* of the theory of Evolution set forth by the writer in preceding papers. GOD, the Self-existent Cause and Source of Derived Existence; the unorganised Cosmic Matter (the "rolling blackness" of certain recent and interesting experiments, which, if it were not *something*, could not "roll,") existing in Space before the utterance of the formative FIAT that initiated its condensation into a Nebula;† the co-existence, in that primitive "Chaos," of the two distinct but eternally-united modes of Substantiality that will ultimate, respectively, in what we call "Soul" and in what we call "Matter;" and the supervening action of the Third factor of the Universe, *viz.*, the Dynamic, Magnetic, or Force-element, whose vibratory power is indicated by the breaking forth of the "Light" which is, to our perception, the earliest product of vibration, and which, as the sole agent in the production of material forms,‡ is represented as producing the constituent "elements" of the Material Universe from "the sand" (*i.e.* the separate, mutually-repellant material atoms) of "a watery essence," *i.e.* from the latent possibilities of the Cosmic Matter, always symbolised, in the old cosmogonies, as "water," which was regarded by them as the source of material substance. The similarity of this statement to that contained in the Book of Genesis is too obvious to call for comment.

Cicero and Plutarch exalt the teachings of the Mysteries. Aristophanes says, "Their adepts lead an innocent, tranquil, and holy life; they die counting upon the light of the Elysian Fields,

* Vide *Human Nature* for August, 1870.

† Vide *Human Nature* for February, 1870, p. 63, note.

‡ Vide *Human Nature* for March, 1870, and September, pp. 400, 1, 2.

while others look only for eternal darkness." The grave and serious Sophocles, glory of the Athenian stage, styles the teachings of the Mysteries "The hopes of Death." But though these views were thus handed down from generation to generation among the learned, their public promulgation was forbidden lest they should lead the common people to throw off the yoke of the priests, to addict themselves to the practice of Magic, or even—disgusted with the ills of earthly life—to commit suicide in the hope of finding themselves in a happier state of existence, as did the pupils of Hegesias, at Cyrene, after listening to his eloquent discourse on Immortality, when, impatient to enter on the enjoyment of the felicity he had described, they all killed themselves in a body.

So much for the testimony of the traditional teaching of the Ancient World. We shall find that its "Bibles" are equally declaratory of the views in question.

THE VEDAS.

The oldest of the so-called "Sacred Writings" of this planet, and those which have unquestionably exercised the widest influence in the shaping of its theological ideas, are the Vedas of Ancient India; which are so old that Orientalists are unable to fix their date with any precision. Two of the most learned of the latter, viz., the French *savant*, Pauthier, and our English Colebrooke, in their masterly analyses of the ancient Hindu Scriptures—the Vedas, the Manava-Dharma-Shastra, the Puranas, the Laws of Manu, the Bhagavat-Gita, &c.—point them out as the source whence Pythagoras and Plato drew the elements of the philosophy which, through their writings, has exercised so vast an influence on the subsequent mental development of this planet. "If ever human thought received the inspiration of the Deity," exclaims Pauthier, "assuredly the Vedas, more than any other record, bear the stamp of that inspiration. Never," he continues, "did the religious sentiment attain to so high a pitch of conception; never did it reveal to mankind sublimer symbols."

All these most ancient of the world's writings proclaim the soul to be anterior to the bodies it successively assumes in the course of its education and purification; and assert the necessity of our repeated descents from the life of the spirit-world into the life of flesh, as the condition of our gradual attainment of the higher order of existence in which—being delivered from the need, and from the *possibility*,* of any farther conjunction with flesh, and therefore being also delivered from 'death' which is

* Vide *Human Nature* for November, 1870, p. 494, note †.

the result of that conjunction—we enter upon the true Soul-life of Immortality.

The doctrinal indications scattered through the Vedas and the other "Sacred Books" of India are exceedingly suggestive and important; but the arranging of these in an orderly and instructive sequence would demand an amplitude of development incompatible with the limits of the present paper. Leaving, therefore, the rest of the vast mass of those writings for future consideration, we must confine ourselves, for the moment, to a few of the indications afforded by the collection of Hymns called the Rig-Veda (the oldest of them all), and by the Bhagavat-Gita, itself a portion of the great sacred Hindu poem entitled the Mahābhārata.

The Sacred Books of India present us with what appears, at first sight, to be a mere confused swarm of legendary 'divinities' of various rank, and conflicting attributes. But the earliest Hindu commentators expressly declare that all the so-called 'divinities' of those books "are but parts of one Soul (*Atmā*), subservient to the diversities of his praises through the immensity and variety of his functions;" that "there is but one Deity, the "Great Soul" (*Māhan Atmā*); and quote, in confirmation of this interpretation of their Mythology, passages in which the attribution of mental and moral qualities and influences to natural objects (as the Sun, the Lightning, the Winds, &c.) conclusively proves that the names of those objects, in connection with the qualities and influences attributed to them, were only employed symbolically. The more we study these earliest utterances of human aspiration after the Divine Reality, the more evident becomes the correctness of this view of their imagery; and the more clearly do we perceive that the Divine Influx has used, as the vehicle of its teachings, the symbols furnished by the Nature-Worship which gave rise to the primitive religious formula of our race. And how, indeed could it have been otherwise? For is not Nature the visible expression of the Unseen POWER to Whose inscrutable working all the phenomena of the outer world are instinctively felt to be due? And as our perception of natural facts must necessarily precede our conception of the occult action by which they are produced, it was inevitable that those facts should shape our earliest doctrinal explanation of that action. If the theory of the Universe set forth, by the writer, in preceding papers, be correct, we should, therefore, expect to find, in the records of the earliest results of "natural inspiration," occasional traces, vague and far between, of a conception of the Unapproachable, Self-Existent, Creative Cause of all that is; evidences of a clearer perception of the personality and action of the immediate "Ruler" of the planet, who, as the instrument of the unimaginable Creator, would often be

mistaken for, and confounded with, the Supreme BEING of Whom that "Ruler"—however great and glorious, relatively to the populations of the planet confided to his care—is only the creature and the servant; and a still more distinct recognition of the host of lesser "Powers," some "unborn," some "having birth," who would naturally be included in the general idea of "divinities" or unseen Intelligences presiding over the various departments of Nature and of human life, though admittedly inferior, in rank and influence, to the Planetary Chief under whose direction they act. We should also expect to find evidences, more or less fragmentary and confused, of the fact of our education being carried on through a long series of existences, in this planet and in other planetary worlds, until—through gradual improvement, result of our continuous effort—we have succeeded in emancipating ourselves from the necessity of any farther subjection to the discipline of planetary life. And this is just what we find in the literature we are about to examine.

The Rig-Veda alludes to a Supreme, "unnameable Creator," of whom the other personages, loosely styled 'divine,' are only representatives, agents, and servants. The highest of these, celebrated under many names, but most frequently as 'Indra' (Lord of Light or Intelligence) and as 'Agni' (Lord of Heat or Love) is the Formative Ruler of the earth; "the blender of all things;" who, "to render all things visible, elevated the sun in the sky, and charged the cloud with abundant waters. . . . Mortals," says one of the Hymns, "you owe your *daily birth* to Indra, who, with the rays of the morning (Light, as the symbol of vibration*), gives sense to the senseless, gives, to the formless, form;" i.e. develops the intelligence of the soul through a succession of births and "days." As the "ever-young," "resplendent" Agni, giver of "vital heat," "vital breaths," "successive existences," the "purifier," he "pervades the association of our thoughts," and "without his aid the sacrifice of the wise is not perfected;" i.e. knowledge without love does not suffice to our perfection, for it is "Love" that, in the words of later inspiration, "is the fulfilling of the law." 'Agni' is said to be "born of attrition," because the love-principle, latent in the possibilities of soul, is only developed into activity by the experiences of our successive lives, as 'heat' or 'fire' is developed in wood by the persistent attrition of surfaces. He is also said to have 'sprung from water,' a simile probably borrowed, as has been suggested, from the flames of submarine volcanoes, but embodying the same meaning as his 'birth from attrition;' his having 'sprung from water,' the symbol of Matter, equally implying the function of the latter as the educator of Soul. This "Ruler of the

* Vide *Human Nature* for September, 1870, p. 399, *et sequitur*.

earth" is "unborn;" a statement in exact accordance with the assertion that the 'Christs' of the Universe are spirits who have never incurred the penalty of humanisation in bodies of flesh. His "paths" are declared to be "free from *dust*," (which, as we shall see, is also a symbol of *flesh*;) and "well placed in the firmament." He is "the giver of habitations" and "stations" to his worshippers; he is the "destroyer and reviver of all things." In one hymn he is thus entreated:—"Dissolve not, Agni, *our ancestral friendship*; for thou art cognisant of the past as well as of the present. In like manner as the light speeds over the sky (a life-day), so decay impairs my body. Think of me before that source of destruction prevails." In other words, "Prepare for me a new body, and a new 'day.'"

The fine hymn of which each stanza ends with the refrain, 'May our sin be repented of!' prays thus:—"May we be born successively in the persons of our descendants!" the vital importance attributed by the Hindoos to the possession of sons, (or, failing offspring, of sons by adoption,) being a traditional derivation from the doctrine of the soul's purification in the bodies of successive generations, implied in this earliest record of the primitive Aryan belief. "May Agni convey us, *as in a boat over a river*, across all wickedness." Elsewhere we find this prayer, "Extricate us from sin as a chariot from a defile;" both similes equally implying the idea of gradual purification, the first, in conjunction with *water*, as the symbol of earth and the earthly life; the second, as a journey, consisting of successive stages. "Of which of the Immortals" it is asked in another hymn, "shall we invoke the auspicious name? Who will give us to the great Aditi (the earth) that I may again behold my father and mother?" *i.e.* give us back to the earth-life, with a renewal of earthly relations. In another hymn occurs the prayer "Waters! take away whatever sin is found in me!" and in another it is said that "*Ambaya* (a word meaning equally 'Waters' and 'Mothers') take away sin;" an unmistakeable allusion to the great law of purification through the soul's repeated subjection to the life of flesh. "The Sun is the road to Heaven," says another hymn. "Those who are free from sin go by the *gate* of the Sun"; in other words, when we have attained to the "Sidereal Degree" of purification which enables us to go to the central body of our solar system, we are released from the limitations of life in planets, and enter, through admission into that body, as through a 'gate,' upon a nobler order of existence, in connection with the Universe of Suns.*

These hymns recognise, under the name of 'Maruts,' "the

* Vide *Human Nature* for April 1870, p. 155.

mind-born sons" of Brahma, the Supreme GOD; *i.e.* spirits who are being educated, through the discharge of various cosmic functions, under the authority of the "Ruler of the earth," in the realms of the Fluidic World;* and who, progressing in conjunction with the the mode of corporeality appropriate to spirits who have not lapsed from innocence of "the brilliant birth," have not been humanised. They also recognise under the name of 'Ribhus,' or 'Divinities having birth,' the purified souls of men who "by devotion won a place among the gods," *i.e.* spirits who, having incurred the penalty of humanization† have at length regained the elevation of the 'fluidic' life from which they had lapsed, and are then admitted into the ranks of the unseen powers that preside alike over the operations of Nature and the vicissitudes of human life; and who, with "the irreproachable, amiable, heavenward-tending bands of the Maruts," are celebrated as the "winds" and the "lightning" that symbolize the servants of Indra, who, like the God of the Hebrews, "maketh the winds (or spirits) his ministers, his messengers a flame of fire." They thus recognise "both kinds of birth," *i.e.* "the brilliant birth" of the soul's fluidic childhood, and its birth in flesh, as the penalty of wrong-doing in that earlier life; and also the regaining of that higher mode of existence by "the Pure (purified souls) who, having worshipped Agni (the Love-principle) . . . and being re-generated, obtain celestial bodies." These purified souls, or 'Ribhus,' as just remarked, are practically confounded with the 'Maruts,' on regaining the elevation from which they have lapsed; they too, having made their aged parents young;" (*i.e.* having, as the children of later generations, cured themselves of the imperfections of their previous incarnations,) are spoken of as "rays of the sun," "leaders of the air," and as taking part in the various forms of cosmic work. Thus Kutsa, son of Angiras, calls the Ribhus, "his kinsmen of a former period, when they were immature in wisdom," *i.e.* before they had become freed from the life of flesh; and the formative Ruler of the earth, styled indifferently 'Indra,' 'Agni,' &c., and who is constantly spoken of as "the Chief of the Maruts," is spoken of, just as frequently, as "the Chief of the Ribhus."

It is also worthy of note that throughout these Hymns, wherever 'night' and 'day' or 'dawn' are mentioned together, the latter is always spoken of as following and completing the former; a mode of expression confirmatory of the view of planetary life set forth above, and in previous papers. The sage, Vamadeva, is said to have "invoked the aid of the all-knowing Aswins while yet in his mother's womb." "Mystic rites" understood only by

* Vide *Human Nature* for April 1870, pp. 165-6.

† Vide *Human Nature* for June 1870, p. 245.

the wise, are frequently alluded to; and "bipeds and quadrupeds" are classed together as benefiting by the beneficent rule of Indra-Agni.

A remarkable passage referring to "the rite in which the housewife repeats egress from, and ingress into, the sacrificial chamber," and in which Indra is entreated to "recognise and partake of the effusions of the mortar," shows that the usual sacrificial offerings of butter and of soma-juice (both of which were prepared with the aid of a 'mortar'), indicated not only the purification of the spirit, by its separation from grosser elements, through the discipline of life—a process symbolised by the separation of the butter from the watery portion of the milk, and of the juice of the soma-plant from its fibrous portion—but also the ultimate "taking to himself" of his purified followers, as ceasing to bear "the image of the earthly," and bearing again "the image of the heavenly," they accomplish the return of the glorious elevation of the "fluidic" degree foreshadowed in the declaration of Christ, that "where he is, they shall be also." The symbolism of the Rig-Veda, utterly incomprehensible from any other point of view than that set forth in the explanation of the Phenomena of Existence referred to above, is exceedingly rich in allusions confirmatory of that explanation; but demands, as previously remarked, a much more ample treatment than can be given to it in this place.

Throughout the Hindu Mythology, we find the epithets, "black" and "blue" (probably as being the colour of the sky by night and by day), employed to represent the various beings included under the term "divinities," and, in general, as a characteristic of things "divine." Thus the word "Krishna," (literally "Black," figuratively, "the black cloud," "the rain-giver,") gradually came, by a very natural extension, to be understood as "the beneficent," "the giver of blessings"; and, in that sense, is applied in the Bhagavat-Gita, to designate an inspired teacher styled also "The Holy One," who, when speaking to a prince, Arjuna, on the eve of a battle, thus expresses himself:—"The wise grieve not for dead or living. Never, at any period, did I, or thou, or these kings of men, not exist; nor shall any of us henceforth cease to exist. As the soul, in its present body, undergoes the changes of childhood, manhood, and old age, so, hereafter, it obtains a new body. . . . Finite bodies have been declared to be the product of an eternal, indestructible, infinite spirit. He who believes that this spirit can kill, and he who believes that it can be killed, are both of them wrong in their judgment. It neither kills nor is killed. Unborn, changeless, eternal, both as to future and past time, it is not slain when the body is killed. As a man quits worn-out clothes and puts on new clothes, so the soul quits

its worn-out bodies and clothes itself with new bodies. Weapons cannot cleave it; fire cannot burn it. It is impenetrable, incombustible, and insusceptible of moisture (*i.e.* it is essentially distinct from Matter, symbolised as *Water*, which, as previously remarked, was regarded by the ancients as the matrix of the Material Universe). It is," he continues, "invisible, incomprehensible, immutable. Therefore, knowing it to be such, thou art not right to grieve for it. For, to everything that is born, death is certain; to everything dead, re-generation is certain."

"I have had many births, and thou also, Arjuna," says the heavenly Messenger; "I know them all, but thou, Hero! knowest them not." An allusion both to our usual ignorance of our past incarnations during the earlier, more painful, and more perplexing periods of our educational career, and also to our gradual recovery of the remembrance of those earlier phases as we attain to the happier states in which the past can be recalled by us without the pain, shame, manifold inconveniences, and hindrances to our improvement, that would result from such remembrances if permitted at an earlier period of our career. Of the man who strives steadfastly to do his duty, and to advance on the upward road, it is said that "He goes to the dwelling of the Pure (*i.e.*, to the spirit-world); he remains there a great number of years; and is then born again into a family of pure and happy people."

The necessity for these repeated returns to the life of flesh is thus explained:—"The recompense acquired by good or evil deeds is like the waves of the sea, whose working none can hinder; it is like a cord which binds them to their author, and which none can break. . . . For the education of our preceding life influences us in the life that follows. . . . If a man have done the works that lead to the world of the Moon (good deeds done in view of recompense), he goes to the world of the Moon. . . . If a man have done the works that lead to the world of the Sun, he goes to the world of the Sun; if a man have done the works that lead to the world of the Creator, he goes to the world of the Creator. Thus the soul goes to the world to which its works belong. What, then, is the use of giving oneself up to the gratification of sensual desires? Abandon yourself to the satisfactions of sense, and all you will have got from this indulgence will be to have forged for yourself, at death, the chains that will link you to other (material) bodies, and to other (material) worlds. There is no other source of peace, or of usefulness, than the knowledge of the Creator. . . . The soul, on returning to the earth, profits by its previous acquirements: and thus, through a long succession of gradual advances, . . . and only after many new births . . . the soul that has become pure and wise is, at length, enfranchised from the neces-

sity of coming back to this earth, and goes to the Pure;" in other words, passes into a world of a higher degree than ours. "When these great souls have attained to perfection," continues 'the Holy One,' they return no more to the perishable life of earth, sojourn of sorrows. . . . The love of virtue is the Supreme Path, those who have attained to that elevation undergo no more births, but take on luminous bodies:" *i. e.*, the purely fluidic bodies of the Sidereal Degree,* the "glorified" or "celestial" bodies of the Apostle Paul, in reference to which says, Christ that "The righteous shall shine like the sun in the firmament of Heaven." Clothed in this glorious order of corporeal envelope, we enter the happy realm "whence we never come back : in other words, we shall have attained to a state of wisdom and purity in which we no longer need to undergo the mutations of births and deaths, but become the denizens of "the Supreme Dwelling-place," which is "lighted neither by the sun nor by the moon, nor by fire, but is the sojourn of the Highest." Ignorance of this law of progress is declared by "the Holy One," to be a sign of human inferiority. It is only the "Sage," who has already accomplished a large portion of his return towards the glorious home of "the Supreme Purity," that is made aware of the fact of his having assumed a great number of bodies during the earlier and lower phases of his educational career.

In another part of the same poem, the Supreme Being is made to say, "It is I who . . . developed this universe; in me are contained all beings; but I am not contained in them. . . . In another sense, those beings are not in me; such is the Sovereign Union (*i. e.*, between God and the Universe). My soul is the sustainer of all beings; and, without being contained in them, is that which constitutes their being." A sublime summing up of the relationship between the Causal Essentiality and the Creations IT calls into existence, and perpetually sustains.

BUDDHA.

THE modification of the primitive Brahmanism of the Vedas which is called Buddhism, from Buddha (or Wisdom) its reputed founder, is equally explicit in regard to the purification of the soul through its successive existences; but, regarding the action of the body as the chain which holds the soul to the miseries of the earthly life, Buddhism aims at hastening the soul's deliverance by an extinction of all bodily appetites, and of all worldly desires, accomplished through a system of renunciations, penances, and mortifications unknown to the earlier faith. Thus we read that when Gótama (since worshipped, under the name of Sakya

* Vide *Human Nature* for April, 1870, p. 146.

Muni, as the last supposed incarnation of Buddha,) was in the act of dying, "his mouth, overflowing with the honey of wisdom" gave utterance, for the consolation of his sorrowing disciples, to the following song, expressive of his exultation at having surmounted all the imperfections that "frame" for us "houses" of flesh, and having thus completed the course of his earthly lives:—

"Through many, various, oft-repeated births,
I've run my course; still seeking, but in vain,
The Builder of the house framed by desire.
Painful and wearying are repeated births.
But now, House-Builder! thee I've found at last.
No house, henceforward, can'st thou build for me;
For, having quenched the flames of low desire,
Rafters and ridge-pole I have broken down.
My soul from earthly life has gained release,
And entered blest Nirvana's glorious peace."

And since the soul of the founder of the Buddhist faith, purified by that long succession of efforts and trials, has soared beyond the sphere of earthly life, and entered on the enjoyment of exemption from farther conflict with evil—foreshadowed, by Jewish medianimity, as "the rest that remaineth for the people of GOD," by Buddhism, as the "Nirvana," or absolute repose in the bosom of the Deity, which it holds up to its *four hundred millions of sectaries* as the Supreme Good—the Liturgic Hymns of the Buddhist ritual, in language identical with the symbolic expressions employed, by the Hebrew Psalmists, in reference to the same deliverance, celebrate his happiness in being "out of the miry pit," in being "free of the mire;" and in "standing on dry ground" (*i.e.*, in being out of the "mire" of the flesh), whence he "will now save the other animate beings that are being carried away by the mighty stream," *i.e.* by the "stream" or "river" of our successive lives in connexion with the "mire" of earthly existence, from which discipline the purified soul, through the attainment of comparative "perfection," is now released.

That the Buddhist Heaven, 'Nirvana,' as dimly foreshadowed in the conception of the founder of the Buddhist faith, was substantially *the state of being* which constitutes what, in Spiritist phraseology, is called 'The Fluidic World,' is evident from the characteristics attributed to it. 'Nirvana' is "the annihilation of all the principles of existence" as constituted to our perception, while living the life of flesh, by the bodily organs whose limitations appear to us to be necessary to our consciousness of life; an "annihilation" accomplished by the "breaking down" and clearing away of the imperfections which furnish "the rafters and ridge-pole" of the Correctional "houses" of flesh, our need of the discipline of which entails upon us the "painful and wearying" alternation of "repeated births" and deaths,

peculiar to the lower degrees of planetary life. It is "the completion and opposite shore of existence" as "existence" is carried on in the life of flesh; and is therefore "free from decay, knowing no restraint, of great blessedness." "There is no difference (contrariety) in Nirvana;" it is "unmixed satisfaction, entirely free from sorrow." "The wind cannot be squeezed in the hand, nor can its colour be told; yet the wind *is*. Even so, Nirvana *is*; but its properties cannot be told. Nirvana *is not, except to the being who attains to it;*" i.e., who has acquired the power of operating, (through its purified *périsprit*, or magnetic soul-envelope,) the higher order of vibrations which constitutes, to the perception of each soul as to that of the other souls with which it is in sympathy, the externalised concomitants of that higher state; * an earlier intimation, in regard to the nature of our future happiness (and consequently of the 'Way' by which alone we can attain to that happiness) fully confirmed, by the Great Teacher, in his subsequent declaration, "The Kingdom of Heaven is *within you*."

ZOROASTER.

The Magian religion of Persia was founded by Zardusht, or Zoroaster, who is declared by Pliny to have lived 6000 years before Plato. He is the author of the Zend-Avesta, or Zend Bible, which contains the Gnostic doctrine of the Logos, (Anohver, from *Anohe Verche*, the "I AM" or "BE IT!" the Formative Word by the pronouncing of which "Zer-uana Akherena" (Unlimited or Uncreated Time, Infinity, Essentiality, the Supreme God,) created "Ormuzd," the Spirit of Good, of Light, of Love. Ormuzd, as the agent and instrument of the Supreme Causal Power, then, by the utterance of the same "Living Word," began his work of secondary "creation." He first formed "his own bright dwelling" ("Sakhter," the sun,) and then formed the earth and all that it contains; and the "universe" thus called into existence by him will also be maintained and ruled by him, until the final consummation of all things: a cosmogonic theory in close accordance with that set forth in the last of the Canonical Gospels, and by the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews. Under Ormuzd are other classes of spirits, who preside over the various departments of Nature and of human life. The highest of these, the 'Amshaspunds,' are non-humanised spirits, corresponding to the 'Maruts' of the Rig Veda; and 'Ormuzd' is styled 'the Chief of the Amshaspunds,' as 'Indra-Agni' is styled 'the Chief of the Maruts.' The lower class of the 'Izeds'—whose designation as "male and female" implies their having been humanised—cor-

* Vide *Human Nature* for October, 1870, pp. 437-8.

respond to the Vedic 'Ribhus,' spirits who, having lapsed from the obedience of the 'Fluidic' life, have at length regained the innocence, and consequent cosmic power, of that degree.

Of the 'Anohver' or 'Logos' it is said that he is "The everlasting emanation of the Word (of the Supreme God) by virtue of which the world exists. . . . He is the Living Word. . . . He is the first-born of all things, express image of the Eternal, very Light of very Light, the Creator (creative Agent) who, by the power of the Word, which he never ceases to pronounce, *made*, in 365 days, the heavens and the earth." Bishop Marsh, in his edition of Michaelis, says—"Since John adopted several other terms used by the Gnostics, we must conclude that he derived 'The Word' (Logos) from the same source. If it be farther asked, 'Whence did the Gnostics derive the use of this expression, "The Word"?' I answer that they derived it from the Zoroastrian philosophy."

Zoroaster says that the Supreme God did not create Evil; but that the creation of Ormuzd (the Spirit of Good) necessarily produced, by an inevitable effect of contrast, the Spirit of Evil, the dark and monstrous Ahriman, whose direful appearance followed instantaneously the appearance of Ormuzd, "as Shadow follows Light." The Spirit of Evil, having thus come into the world of Ormuzd, brought with him into existence a train of "Devs" (devils) and produced, by contrast with the glorious 'Gorodman' (Heaven), the dark abode of 'Duzakh' (Hell). Ahriman and his hosts do their utmost to draw souls away from the path of rectitude and from 'Ormuzd,' but, though the struggle between 'Ormuzd' and 'Ahriman' will be long and severe, the ultimate victory of the Powers of Light is foretold in prophecies, almost identical with those of the Hebrews, of the birth—of a Virgin and heralded by a star—of the "Redeemer" (Sosiash) who is to deliver the earth from the power of evil, and to purify Ahriman himself, and all the Devs, by fire. Zoroaster's system implies the "fall" of the soul from some higher state of being, and its gradual regaining of that higher state; for it teaches that Man was not made for the earth, but the earth for Man, and that it is only the souls who have completed their purification, "by the path of time" (*i.e.*, by successive lives in the planetary worlds that are the domain of Time), that can pass over 'Chinavar' 'the Golden Bridge' (implying passage and progression, and also *water*, symbol of planetary Matter and thus of *flesh*) to Ormuzd, with whom they will thenceforth remain, "freed from the need of food" by the assumption of "luminous bodies," in the happy realm from which, being perfectly wise and pure, they return no more into the purifying pains of earthly life. The name of Zoroaster (from *Zor-Aster*, the Honoured or Worshipped

Star) would seem to be an allusion to his doctrine of the luminosity gradually acquired by the bodies of the purified soul; while the probability of his having possessed, at least, a vague idea of the pre-human stages of soul-education through the forms of the lower reigns,* implied in certain passages of the Zend-Avesta, is still farther strengthened by the legend of his birth, which tells that Ormuzd originally created the soul of Zoroaster in a shrub, that this shrub was eaten by a cow, that the milk of this cow was drunk by his mother, and that the virtue of this milk imparted superhuman excellence to the personality of the future Revealer.

CONFUCIUS.

Three religions divide between them the teeming millions of China; that of Kong-fu-tze, or Confucius, that of Tao-tze, and that of Fuh or Buddha. The extreme difficulty of the Chinese language has hitherto rendered the study of the first two of these almost impossible; but recent translations of the Chung-Yung, or Confucian Bible, shows that Confucius was fully convinced of the soul's immortality, and of the fact of communication between the "natural" and the "spirit" worlds, and that he was probably aware of the great law of human purification through successive lives upon this earth. In the Chung-Yung it is said that "the *Shing*," or very highest class of men, "those who combine the rarest qualities of heart and mind, and *pleasurably* discharge all the duties of life, act like spirits, as it were invisibly." "How admirable," says Confucius, in the 16th Chapter, "are the virtues of genii and spirits! They are diffused above us, like waves of the ocean, on our right hand and on our left." One day, his favourite disciple, Tze-Kung, tells him that he has scrupulously rendered the prescribed homage to his ancestors, but is assailed by doubts as to whether they are conscious of his pious devotion.

"Do they see me? Do they hear me? Do they know what I do?" anxiously inquires Tze-Kung. "I have often wished to learn your opinion on the subject; a word from you will remove my doubts."

"It is not necessary," replies Confucius, "that I should speak explicitly on this point. If I were to say that our ancestors are conscious of the honours we pay to them, that they see, hear, and know what passes on the earth, it is to be feared that they who cherish a deep sense of filial piety would neglect their own lives for the sake of rejoining those whom they have loved; and, on the contrary, were I to say that all knowledge of the living ceases with life, it would encourage a neglect of filial duties, and dissolve those sacred ties that bind mankind in social happiness. Con-

* Vide *Human Nature* for April, 1870.

tinue, therefore, my dear Tze-Kung, to fulfil, as you have hitherto done, your duties to your progenitors; conduct yourself as though you knew them to be the witnesses of your actions, and seek to know no more. *The time will come when you will know all.*"

When the Emperor asks Confucius, "Are we not, then, *entirely* derived from our parents?" Confucius replies, "A part of us is derived from our parents; but the intellectual part which completes the human being is imparted by Heaven. So long as *this* part remains in the bodily form, the latter goes through its phases, and possesses life. But when the intellectual principle goes back into Heaven (or, as we should say, into the spirit-world), the breath of life (or, as it is expressed in the Rig Veda and in Genesis, "the breath of *lives*") mixes with the aërial fluid; and the body, being thus left to itself, is resolved again into *water and dust*." That is to say, into the constituents of *mud*, or *mire*, the fitting emblem of our earthly bodies.

In the 22nd chapter of the Chung-Yung we read: "Throughout the Universe, he alone who has attained to the height of perfection can fathom the depths of his own nature; he who has fathomed his own nature can fathom that of other men; he can fathom the nature of things; he can, with Heaven and Earth, contribute to permutation and production. *He might form a third term, worthy of Heaven and of Earth.*" A very close approximation to the doctrine set forth in the remarkable explanation of the books of the New Testament, now being given by spirits who declare themselves to have been their original writers,* and which asserts that the "Christs" of the Universe are spirits precisely like ourselves, but of earlier creations, and consequently more advanced than we are; that they are our "Elder Brothers," who have risen, from the common origin of *all* spirits, and by the same inevitable road of effort and trial, to the state of wisdom and and purity which enables them to become the immediate recipients and distributors of the Divine Efflux which is the sole, incessantly-renewed, life of all beings; the "many who" according to St. Paul "are *called* Gods" because they are the direct representatives of the Deity, the executors of the Divine Volitions, and, as such, are entrusted by the Almighty with the formation and government of planets, each of which, throughout the universe, has its own formative and presiding "Christ," charged to bring its humanity to perfection.† In the 20th chapter of the Chung-Yung—after setting forth "the various virtues we have to acquire," and which some acquire so quickly, and others so slowly—Confucius says, in relation to the latter, "Let

* *The Four Gospels explained in Spirit and in Truth.* By J. B. ROUSTAING, Bordeaux.

† Vide *Human Nature* for August, 1870.

them not despair. What some accomplish through one effort, they accomplish through a hundred; what another might do in ten times of trying, they do in a thousand. He who shall follow this rule, however small his knowledge, will certainly acquire understanding: however weak, he will acquire strength." May we not infer, from the terms in which this assurance is given, that the profound philosopher, the sagacious analyst of human life, if he had been pressed to explain himself more clearly in regard to these gradual and consecutive acquisitions, would have said, with Lessing, "*In one and the same life-time?* Surely, not *that*."

LAO-TZE.

We are all the more warranted in inferring a knowledge of the Law of Re-incarnation on the part of Confucius, because the writings of his friend and teacher, Lao-Tze, founder of the Tao-Tze religion, the second of the three great creeds of China, abound in passages which not only imply (in the compressed, elliptical, enigmatical style habitual to him,) the doctrine of Re-incarnation, but are utterly incomprehensible without the help of this key to their meaning.

This profound and original thinker, whose speculations have been brought within reach of Western students by the labours of various eminent Orientalists, attributes the origin and development of all things to TAO, a term signifying the Way, the Order, the Primal Reason, the Absolute, the Eternal, Immutable, All-containing, Intelligent, Beneficent First Cause. By '*Tao*,' considered as what we should call 'the Divine Operation' carried out through the agency of the Planetary Rulers recognised, under different names, by all the religious philosophies of the world, both 'Heaven' and earth, "and all that in them is," have been evolved from the Incommensurable 'Abyss,' the 'Primal Mass, prolific 'Mother' of all finite existences. Everything being thus attributable to *Tao*, 'the Old Philosopher' (as his name imports) employs that same elastic term to designate not only the Producer of the Universe, but also the Power or Virtue by which it produces, the aggregate of existences thus produced, the state of felicity to which those existences will ultimately attain, and the steps of the 'Way' by which we reach that consummation of our being.

As the 'Primeval Chaos,' the diffused 'Cosmic Matter,' "*Tao* is impalpable, undefined, and yet therein are *forms*; it is ProFOUND! Dark! yet therein is essentiality; this essentiality is most true, and in it is *faith*" (a distinct recognition of the co-existence, in the Cosmic 'Chaos' of the elements of soul, as of those of Matter, and of their joint development, through corresponding processes of evolution, into the 'souls' and 'bodies' of the Universe). As the orderly process by which "*the spirit*

in being becomes externalised, and gives issue to all beings," "*Tao* tempers its splendour; it assimilates itself to *dust*. It passes into, and gives vision to (or inspects) all things that have beginning."

In regard to our individual progress, we are told that "What is incomplete becomes entire. What is bent becomes straight. What is empty becomes full. What is *worn out* becomes *renewed*. He who grows in wisdom *becomes again a babe* (an assertion frequently repeated by Lao-tze). . . . When one has done things and obtained reputation, he must *go aside* (or *out of view*); such is the way to Heaven." (A very trite remark unless implying the completion of the life in flesh by the complementary life in the spirit-world) . . . "He who is between Heaven and the earth (*i.e.* still subjected to the discipline of the earthly life), resembles the bellows of a forge, which is empty, and yet is not exhausted; which is set in movement, and produces more and more;" the alternate phases of our earthly life being implied in the inspirations and expirations of the bellows, and our educational gain therefrom, in the increased production resulting from the continued working of the bellows.

Inveighing against the error of attaching our affections to our present bodies, and to the order of relations and satisfactions which we obtain through them, and which, so far from being really desirable, he shows to be "the source of all our calamities," he says, "Doors and windows are pierced in order to make a house. It is on their non-existence (as the absence of wall, matter, obstacle, permitting *ingress* and *egress*) that the usefulness of the house depends." Having thus warned us against sensuality, he proceeds to warn us against the opposite error, *viz.*, a short-sighted refusal to accept the inevitable sufferings of human life. Continuing to employ the same significant metaphor, he says, "Take care not to regard your *dwelling* (*i.e.* the conditions of your earthly lot, the 'habitations' and 'stations' which 'Agni' appoints to the people of the earth) as too narrow; take care not to feel disgust against your fate. Among all the things of the world," he continues, still farther amplifying the same thought, but employing another and equally significant metaphor, "there is nothing softer and weaker than *water*; and, nevertheless, *nothing can excel it for breaking what is hard and strong*." In other words, the fleshly body, which the Apostle Paul speaks of as "the earthly house of my tabernacle," is merely a temporary residence, appropriated to the carrying out of a process of education and amendment, and consequently nothing more than a place of passage, furnished with "doors" for ingress and egress, and "windows" through which we are to see and to learn, and therefore, as our subjection to the action of fleshly organisms is simply disciplinary, and destined to come to

an end, we should neither identify ourselves with our present life as though it constituted for us a permanent home, nor should we rebel against the discipline of incarnation which, like the slow but certain action of the "water" that is its symbol, is destined, in course of time, to wear away the asperities due to our various imperfections. Wisely using this discipline, "little by little" man must "let the turbidity of his heart grow pure. . . . Little by little he must get himself born into the spiritual life."

Many other passages, only comprehensible as allusions to the 'fluidic world,' might be quoted; while several entire chapters, equally incomprehensible from any other point of view, are seen, with the aid of the explanation now offered, to be a sublime shadowing forth of the "fall" of the soul, its gradual rehabilitation, and its virtual identification with the Creator through the enlightenment and purification of its intellect and will. The following utterance, attributed to Lao-tze by one of his score of native commentators, may fitly conclude this brief and imperfect outline of the doctrine of the Tao-te-King:—"I was born before the manifestation of any corporal form. Before the supreme beginning, I appeared. I acted at the origin of simple and unorganised matter. I was present at the development of the great first mass, and moved in the midst of the abyss. I entered and departed by the doors of the mysterious immensity of Space." A magnificent recognition of the distinction between Spirit and Matter, and of the anteriority of the soul to the material forms it successively constructs, and quits; of the fact of nebular evolution from the primal mass of Cosmic Matter; and of the entrances and departures of Spirit through the "doors" of planetary development, *i.e.*, through successive births and deaths in progressively higher and higher phases of planetary existence.

THE EGYPTIANS.

That the religion of the ancient Egyptians was an offshoot of the primitive Hindu Brahminism, which, through them, was largely infused into the speculative faiths of Greece and Rome, and, as we shall see, into the secret teaching of the Jews, is now generally admitted by the learned. But, whether drawing its doctrines from India or from other sources, it inculcated the same three grand ideas of the Unity of GOD, the true motions and inhabitedness of the heavenly bodies, and our successive lives in this planet and in the other worlds of the Universe. Herodotus, who first introduced the Egyptian theology to the knowledge of the Greeks, says that they-taught the immortality of the soul, and its return, at the fanciful interval of 3000 years, "into a human body on the point of being born."

The Egyptian creed recognised a Supreme, Incomprehensible,

Self-existent, Intelligent First Cause, whose name 'I AM' was held in such veneration that it was never pronounced, but only indicated by a gesture; and a 'divine' Ruler of the earth, whose dual nature as Intelligence and Affection was symbolised as the god Osiris and his sister-wife Isis, to whom the sacred name of 'I AM' was also attributed, and who formed, together, the central object of Egyptian worship. As in most of the 'faiths' of the world, there were also a host of lesser 'divinities,' honoured under various forms. The legend of Osiris sets forth that he was killed by Typhon, who gradually came to be defined into the impersonation of Evil. But Osiris was still declared to be as really alive as ever; he had only gone back to his supernal home above the earth, whence he watched over and protected his worshippers; and there was the promise of a "Redeemer" who would eventually put an end to the reign of Evil. The Egyptians were acquainted with the fact of communication between men and spirits; and their religious ceremonies were, in their most important particulars, the same as those subsequently adopted by the Jews.

THE MEXICANS.

The Mexicans, whose strong resemblance to the Egyptians renders it probable that they derived their theology from them, had, at least, some vague idea of the anteriority of the soul, and the plurality of our human lives; for, in their baptismal service, which was performed in presence of the relatives and friends of the infant, the priest, while sprinkling its lips and bosom with water, prayed that the Deity "would permit the holy drops to wash away the sin *acquired by it before the foundation of the world*, so that it may be born anew." An interesting testimony to the doctrine of the "fall" of the soul from some earlier and higher state of being, prior to its being sent down, into a world of lower degree, for expiation and reformation, and to the use, in baptism, of *water*, as the synonym of Matter, signifying the purification of the soul through its incarnation in a new earth-body; a signification still farther indicated by the *giving of a name* in connexion with the administering of that rite, thus indicating the change of character that is to be accomplished, by the newly-incarnated spirit, through its new conjunction with planetary Matter.

THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

It is well known that Moses was a student of the priestly school of Heliopolis, and that he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians;" the influence of his Egyptian education and training being abundantly shown by his application of the favourite name of Osiris, the Egyptian Deity, "I AM," to the

God of the Hebrews; by his adoption of circumcision, the Passover, "burnt-offerings," the scape-goat, and the use of the Urim and Thummin (from *Re*, Truth, and *Thimei*, Justice), all of which had formed part of the ecclesiastical economy of the Osirian worship for ages; and by his ostracising of the pig, an animal held in abomination, from time immemorial, by the Egyptians.

It is fully admitted by Hebrew scholars that the book of Genesis consists of two perfectly distinct portions; and that the first of these is very much older than the time of Moses, and is, in fact, an exceedingly ancient composition, adopted by him. We shall see that this most ancient portion of the Jewish Scriptures, while asserting the triple nature of the human being, implies also the plurality of the soul's existences in flesh. The 7th verse of the 2nd Chapter of Genesis which, misled by an incorrect translation, we are in the habit of supposing to be an account of the 'creation' of Man by the Almighty, does not treat either of GOD or of a 'Creation.' For it speaks only of the Formative Rulers of our solar system—whose plurality is affirmed by the use of the plural noun 'Elohim,' while their identity of function and of action is indicated by the use of the singular pronoun—and of their *formation* of Man out of *elements already existing*; a statement equally applicable to that of the first verse of the first chapter, in which the same group of god-like Intelligences are spoken of—not as "creating the Heavens and the earth" out of nothing, but—as *forming* them out of elements already existing. The verse in question, literally rendered, according to the best Hebrew scholars, runs thus:—"And He who was, is, and shall be, the Gods, conceived in His thought, and modelled, as does a potter, the terrestrial body which is *dust*, taken from the *humus*, or vegetable earth, and breathed into its material organs the *Nichema* (principle of intelligence, of conscious personality, the *me*), to which was adjoined the *Rouach*, the divine breath, the celestial spirit, the principle of love, the principle (not "of *life*," as it is erroneously translated in our English version, but) of *lives*, of existences, of all the modes to be successively assumed by the soul; and the terrestrial body was tied to the *Nichema* by the *Nephesch* (principle of animal or astral life) derived from the planet, and which is indispensable to the soul's life upon the earth." The analysis of the complex nature of man, given by this very ancient writer, is, therefore, identical with that given by the modern Spiritist school; for it distinguishes, 1st, The terrestrial body; 2nd, The soul in its two essential modes as Intelligence and Affection, called, respectively, the *Nichema* and the *Rouach*; 3rd, The soul's immediate and permanent envelope, the *Nephesch*, which is stated to consist of the "*principle of terrestrial life*," and to be the link between

the soul and its terrestrial body, thus answering exactly to what is called, in the Spiritist Philosophy, the *périsprit*, or permanent magnetic envelope of the soul. The fact of re-incarnation implied in the function assigned to the *Rouach*, as the principle of 'love' and thus of the "lives" whose nature is decided, for each soul, by the quality of its ruling 'love,' is also implied in the Mosaic declaration, that the sins of the "fathers" are visited "on the children, to the third and fourth generations;" a mode of punishment utterly inconsistent with justice unless the same spirits who have sinned as the 'fathers' of a former generation come back as the 'children' of a later one, so that the retribution of any wrong-doing falls on the spirit who did the wrong.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

In this very ancient poem, considered by critics to be an Arabian production of a date far anterior to the time of Moses, the same analysis of the human being, and a still stronger assertion of our successive lives, are found in the 2nd and 3rd verses of the 27th chapter, which, literally translated, are as follows:—"And the living God has caused the judgment of the guilty to be deferred, and the all-powerful Ruler has filled with bitterness the *Nephesh* (soul's envelope, spirit-body, *périsprit*), afflicting it during many days; because, through all future times, my *Nichema* (my intelligent principle, my *me*) is, and shall always be, in me; and my *Rouach* (my celestial breath, my love-principle, that which determines my successive lives and existences) is, and shall always be, eternally united with it (with my *Nichema*) in my brain (or mental organs), and in my thought." In other words, this deferring of the punishment of the guilty, which is declared to be a filling of his magnetic soul-envelope with 'bitterness,' implies that this punishment takes place *after* the guilty soul has quitted its earthly body; because it is not in its earthly body that it is to be afflicted, but in its *Nephesh*, or magnetic soul-envelope. This statement, therefore, not only implies the immortality of the soul, but also implies the existence of another state of being, distinct from this life, but forming the complement of it, and thus corresponds exactly with the spiritist doctrine of the period of punishment undergone, by guilty souls, on returning to the spirit-world. The reason assigned for this Providential delaying of the punishment of the guilty, viz., that the soul's intelligence and affection will always remain united in its consciousness of suffering, is equally confirmative of the doctrine of re-incarnation; because, as Providential retribution is always reformatory, this punishment necessarily implies, as its consequence and complement, the possibility, for the soul, of new and regenerative experiences in the course of the "many days" of its future existence, in other words, of reformatory *returns to the*

sphere of earthly life, for it is only of the earthly life, and not of life in the spirit-world, that "days," that is to say, the *conditions of time*, are predicable. This ancient poet makes other affirmations equally confirmatory of the fact of our successive existences; as, for instance, the famous passage in which he declares his conviction that, although worms would destroy the terrestrial body with which he was *then* clothed—as worms had already disintegrated the innumerable other bodies into whose composition its particles had previously entered since the formation of the planet—"yet, in his *flesh* he would see God." A conviction based on his knowledge of the special property and function of the *Nephesh*, or *perispit*, as the magnetic agent by which the *formative* principle, the soul, agglomerates the material particles of which it constructs its *body*, or external envelope; and implying that he used the word "*flesh*" for "*body*," or external envelope of soul, and that he admitted, as did subsequently the Apostle Paul, that, as there are, even in this planet, different kinds of "*flesh*," so there are, for the progressing soul, in the planets it successively inhabits, different orders of "*bodies*."

THE ZOHAR.

The *Zohar*, which constituted the Kabbala (or Secret Teaching of the Jews), consists of two parts. One of these, called "The History of the Creation," was never imparted to more than one person at a time; the other part, called "The Holy Mercaba, or Celestial Chariot," was also confided to but one person at a time, and that person could only be a very old man of exceptional virtue. Some ancient authorities attribute to Abraham this wonderful collection of old-world wisdom, long neglected, but becoming every day the object of more careful study among the learned. Others assert that it was written by Moses, and committed by him to the guardianship of seventy "Ancients," as the true explanation of the teachings which he had been compelled to veil, under the symbols of Sinai, for the rude and childish understanding of the vulgar. The *Zohar* teaches the true motion of the bodies of our solar system; affirms the unity of GOD, the triple nature of man, and the immortality of the soul, to which the body, with "its skin, flesh, bones, and veins, is only a robe, a shell, an integument that is thrown off at death;" asserts the persistence of the *Nephesh* or *perispit*; and expressly teaches that the soul lived before its conjunction with the body, and that it will animate a succession of terrestrial bodies for its discipline and purification. "All souls," says the *Zohar*, "are subjected to the trials of transmigration; and men know not what are, in regard to them, the ways of the Most High. They know not how they are judged at all periods, both before they come into this world, and after they have quitted it. They know not by how

many transformations and mysterious trials they are obliged to pass."

The Ancients, as we know, supposed that the soul entered into a body already prepared for its reception ; hence their belief that the soul *migrated* from one body into another. But, with the light that has recently been thrown, by more advanced intelligences, on the obscure subject of the formation of organised bodies,* we now see that, in throwing off an old body and assuming a new one, we no more "transmigrate" than does the crab when he throws off his old shell and makes for himself a new one.

GREECE.

The Theology of the Ancient Greeks was strongly tintured with the old Brahminic ideas imported into Greece, as already remarked, by Herodotus, after his sojourn in Egypt. The learned Hellenist, Dr. Louis Mesnard, thus sums up the Greek idea of the changes of existence undergone by the human spirit:—"The souls of the dead seek out a new destiny, and re-enter, through Lethe, into the movement of universal life, from which they come down again upon the earth; some to repair the faults of an anterior life, and to purify themselves by new struggles; others, to win back to virtue those who are going wrong, and thus still farther to advance their own improvement. When all whom they love have come after them (through Lethe, into Hades, or the spirit-world), they go off together, to higher, unknown spheres, by the path of the Milky Way, which is styled 'The Path of Souls.'" They restricted the action of the unitary memory, which constitutes our conscious individuality, to "the periods of our absence from the life of earth;" that is to say, to the soul's life in "Hades," the state to which it returned after death, and from which it operated its descents into the human sphere. The passing of the soul through *Lethe* (the "*river*," or "*water*," of "*forgetfulness*") symbolised both the continuance of our connexion with Matter, and the temporary loss of memory attendant on our earlier changes of corporeal envelope; the power of remembering such past changes as we may wish to re-call being only gradually regained by us, even in the spirit-world, as we surmount the lower phases of our re-ascensional career, which, being usually painful, and often humiliating, are better forgotten, both by ourselves and our neighbours, so that the memory of even those who are most advanced, in the spirit-zone of this planet, is, as yet, only of limited extent.

Pythagoras, Jamblichus, Socrates, Plato, Timæus of Locris, Plotinus, Archytas of Tarentum, Solon, Thales, Anaxagoras,

* Vide *Human Nature* for November, 1870.

Archimedes, Aristotle, Aristarchus of Samos, Philolaus, Hierocles, Hipparchus, all taught that the soul is anterior to its body, and that it animates a succession of material forms. In his treatise on the Egyptian Mysteries, (Section vi. Chapter 4,) Jamblichus says, "The justice of God is not the justice of men. Man bases his idea of justice on the relations of his present life; God's justice is based on our successive existences, and the great total of our lives. Thus the troubles that afflict us are often the chastisement of sins of which the soul has been guilty in a preceding life. Sometimes God hides from us the reason of our earthly afflictions; but we ought, none the less, to attribute them to his justice." In Sec. iii. Chap. 9, he says, "Before being exiled in a body, the soul had heard the harmonies of the celestial regions. If accents analogous to those divine concerts, of which it always preserves the reminiscence, strike its consciousness, it is thrilled by them, and thrown into rapture."

The whole teaching of Plato, like that of his illustrious Master, is based on the double idea of the immortality of the soul, and of the happiness or unhappiness of its successive existences, as the result of its moral and intellectual acquisitions. In his Book of Laws he says:—"In one word, in the lives and deaths that we successively undergo, we receive from our similars just the treatment that we may naturally expect from them. . . . Thou wilt never escape this doom wert thou small enough to penetrate the depths of the earth, wert thou great enough to rise into the sky. But thou wilt undergo the penalty appointed to thee, either upon this earth, or in Hades, or in some worse place (a Spiritist would say, *in some lower planet*). Thus shall it be with those who have gained power and fortune by impious means, whom thou hast imagined to have passed from infamy to happiness, and from whose success thou hast inferred that the Gods do not trouble themselves about the things that go on here, because thou wast not aware of the tribute which those men, in appearance so fortunate, must one day pay to the general order. *And how, presumptuous youth, canst thou imagine that the knowledge of this order is not necessary, seeing that, for lack of this knowledge, it is impossible to form to oneself a true plan of life, or to conceive a true idea as to what constitutes our happiness or our misfortune?*" Plotinus says, "It is a dogma admitted by all antiquity that the soul, if it have committed faults, is condemned to expiate them by undergoing punishment in the dark regions of Hades; and is then permitted to pass into new bodies, and to begin anew the course of its trials. . . . For our sufferings here, no blame attaches to the Gods, for their providence is incessant. They ensure to each man the earthly lot which is suitable for him, and which is in harmony with his antecedents, according to his successive existences." He expa-

tiates on the doctrine of Heraclitus and Empedocles on "the fall of the soul," and the necessity of our undergoing a succession of lives for purification and education; and, after speculating on the higher and happier state from which, according to Plato, the soul has fallen,* and on its return to that higher state through progressive existences, Plotinus continues:—"Souls have thus a double life, since they live alternately in the world of intelligence, and in the world of sense. . . . There are two possible faults for the soul. The first consists in the motive which determines its descent; the second, in the evil it commits when it has come down into this world.† The first fault is expiated by the very state in which the soul finds itself on descending hither. The punishment of the second fault, when it is slight, is to pass into other bodies, and more or less promptly according to the judgment pronounced on its deserts (we say "judgment," adds Plotinus, "to show that it is the consequence of a Divine Law); but, when the soul has a perversity that oversteps all measure, it is subjected, under the spirits appointed to carry out its chastisements, to the severe punishments which it has incurred."

Porphiry, the Neo-Platonist, endeavouring to unite the ideas of his master with the so-called "Christian" creed, admits, as demonstrated, the Platonic hypothesis of reminiscence, and teaches that we have already existed in an anterior life, that we have committed faults in that life, and that it is in order to expiate those faults that we are clothed upon with a material body. He explains that, according as our past conduct has been more or less guilty, the envelope that covers our soul is more or less gross in its nature. Thus, some souls are united to an "aerial body;" others to a "human body;" and, if they undergo their trial with resignation, and scrupulously fulfil the duties it imposes on them, they gradually rise again to the condition from which they have fallen. All the Pythagoreans and Platonists have inculcated, substantially, the same idea.

THE DRUIDS.

The Druids divided the Universe into two regions, viz., the region of Cause, and the region of Effects. The former, which they called *Ceugant* (the Cave, or Hollow), was Infinity, the dwelling-place of God, the region of Cause, enclosing, containing, encircling, the region of Effects, but for ever inaccessible to the creatures called into existence by the Creative Power. The other region, viz., the World of Effects, or of Perception, was composed of three concentric circles or zones, containing the

* Vide *Human Nature* for July, 1870, p. 300.

† Vide *Human Nature* for July, 1870, p. 302.

sum of created things, and called respectively *Annwfn* (the Abyss), *Abred* (realm of Passage and of Trial), and *Gwynfyd* (Abode of Felicity). The lowest, or innermost of these, *Annwfn*, is the substance or thickness of the earth, the realm of beginnings, in which all created things have their commencement, including Man, who begins life as an earth-worm, and passes through a long series of transformations that bring him at length into the human form, in which he enters the second, or middle zone, *Abred*, which is the surface of the globe, the theatre of human life, the scene of purification through trial. (The student of the Jewish Scriptures may remember how David exclaims, "I will say of the worm, 'Thou art my mother;'" and speaks of the time "when I was curiously fashioned in the lowest parts of the earth"). He now passes through a long succession of human existences that bring him up, at last, to the third, or outermost zone, *Gwynfyd* (Abode of Felicity), situated outside of, and therefore above, the earth. In proportion as, through continued efforts, he improves in wisdom and in purity, he rises to higher and higher realms of this zone; and when he has reached its highest elevation, being now "perfect" both in his intellect and in his affection, he has no farther need to undergo deaths or mutations, but enters upon the life of Immortality, and the enjoyment of all the blessedness that can be experienced by created beings. The Roman poet, Lucan, who had studied the Druidic philosophy in Gaul, alluding, in his First Song, to the unity of our successive lives, exclaims, "The same influx rules our organization in another world; and Death (if your songs, O Bards! are correctly understood) is only the middle of a long life." Julius Cæsar, Pomponius-Mella, Ammianus-Marcellinus, Valerius-Maximus, and Diodorus-Siculus, in tracing the connexion between the Druidic philosophy and that of Pythagoras, assert that it taught that souls are eternal, and that they animate a succession of bodies, through the experiences of which existences they are gradually educated up to a state of perfect felicity, in which they are freed from all farther contact with flesh. It will be remembered that both Julius Cæsar and Julian the Apostate claimed to have been Alexander the Great; judging from the spiritist point of view, they may have been two re-incarnations of the spirit of Alexander. It is worthy of note, as confirming the explanation now given of the Elohistie nature and function, that the Druids of Aven employ the word *eloha* to designate the soul who, having surmounted the need of probation through 'births and deaths,' has at length attained to 'Gwynfyd;' i.e. to the definitive life of 'Felicity,' corresponding to the state of purity, wisdom, power, and happiness that constitutes the 'Sidereal Degree.'

THE EDDA.

This wonderful group of ancient poems, owing its name of "*Edda*" (Grandmother) to its great age, is declared by Schimmelmans, who translated it into German, to be "the very word of God, and the oldest book that exists in the world." Geeranson says that these poems were written in the time of Moses, and were found in Sweden, engraved on tablets of brass, three hundred years before the Siege of Troy. Resenius, Guddmundus, Andræ, Runolfus, Jonas, and other Northern *savants*, all consider the Edda to be the utterances of a Sybil who lived long before the Trojan war. Marmier, who translated the Edda into French, says that "it may be affirmed, without fear of contradiction, that many of the transactions recounted in the songs of the Edda go back to the very earliest times, to that remote period, lost in the night of ages, when the Scandinavian tribes came into the North;" and points to the analogies between these songs and the mythologies of India and Persia as a proof of close kinship between the Northern and Eastern races, and of a consequent kinship of their creeds.

The existence of these poems was first made known to European scholars, in 1603, by Svendsen, Bishop of Skaholt, who translated and published, under the quaint but expressive title by which we know them, the poems in question, from the original text of the Icelandic priest, Sæmund Sigfussen (surnamed "*Fröda*," or The Wise), by whom they were first collected and arranged, in the sixteenth century, about fifty years after the introduction of Christianity into Iceland. Among the many suggestive legends that have overlaid the biography of "Sæmund The Wise," is one which tells that he went to the South of Europe to study under a famous Master; "became so filled with new lore that he forgot everything he had previously known" even to his own name and that of his birthland; and subsequently, through the companionship of a relative who came to visit him, recovered the memory of all that he had previously forgotten.

Wild, stormy, fitful, like the scene and the clime with which they are traditionally associated—a region of icy peaks, huge boulders, and boiling springs, a winter lit up with the weird splendours of the northern night, a summer blossoming amid snow and fire—these poems (especially the 'Voluspa,' or 'Vala's prophecy,' the oldest, grandest, and most distinctly mediumistic of them all) are utterly unlike, in form and colour, all the other 'Sacred Writings' of our planet. And yet, unlike as they are, in outward seeming, to those other writings, their cosmogonic and theosophic indications are substantially the same; a proof that they, too, are an outgrowth from the same complex root

that has produced all the other religious formulæ of the world, which formulæ, the more carefully and dispassionately we analyse and compare them, the more clearly do we see to have been formed by the same process, viz., by an infusion of fabulised historic traditions into speculative theologic symbols previously furnished by the suggestions of the primitive Nature-Worship, and the employment of those symbols, by the Providential Overruling, as continents for the reception and safe-keeping of certain pregnant inspirational hints, whose subsequent discovery (like that of coins hidden under seals or deposited in the foundations of edifices,) was intended to subserve (when the time for that discovery should have arrived,) two equally important ends. For this discovery is intended, first, by rendering yet more evident the reality of that Overruling, to help us in our search after the laws of Existence, at a knowledge of which we only arrive through the persistent effort of succeeding generations; and, next—by showing us that the fact of our successive existences upon this globe has thus been taught, though not rightly apprehended, from the earliest times—to bring a flood of living sunlight into the ‘dark places’ of the Past and of the Present: the human beings to whom, in the course of ages, the sense of the allegory gradually becomes clear, being seen to be later incarnations of the same spirits whose efforts, in their earlier incarnations, worked out the rude letters through which that allegory was first expressed; and the invariable justice of the Divine Government being thus vindicated by the certainty that, for good as for evil, it is always the spirit who *sows the seed that reaps the harvest*.

Tacitus, in his account of the Ancient Religion of the German race (*De Moribus Germanorum*, chapters 9 and 35), says that it recognised “a Supreme GOD, Master of the Universe, to Whom all things are submissive and obedient.” The old Icelandic Mythology proclaimed this SUPREME DEITY to be the ‘Author of everything that exists,’ the ‘Eternal,’ the ‘Ancient,’ the ‘Living and Awful Being,’ the ‘Searcher into concealed things,’ the ‘Being that never changes,’ attributed to that BEING “infinite power, boundless knowledge, and an incorruptible justice;” and forbade its followers to represent IT by any form.

Below the SUPREME BEING were various orders of Intelligences superior to mankind. The highest of these are ‘Odin’—whose functions show him to be, like his synonyms of the Oriental theogonies, the Planetary Ruler of this Earth, and, as such, in regard to this earth and its people, the immediate agent of the CREATOR, with WHOM he is often practically confounded—and certain other beings, of equal rank and power, vaguely called ‘the all-holy gods’ (Rulers of the other planets of our solar system), who confer together respecting the Cosmic interests over

which they preside. After these 'Rulers,' and spoken of under various names and aspects, are the 'Æsir,' or non-humanised spirits, who, as the tutelary 'deities' of a later age, will "teach the arts of life to men." They are said to have "constructed altars and temples, worked metals, and invented arts," because the avocations of the 'fluidic World' can only be represented to our minds by similes borrowed from the life of this lower sphere; and also because the spirits who are being educated in that 'world' take an active share in every department of human life and interest, under the superintendence of spirits of a more advanced degree, who assist the 'all-holy' Planetary Rulers in the performance of their cosmic labours; for which reason, Odin, like 'Indra-Agni' and 'Ormuzd' in regard to their 'kinsmen of lower degree,' is styled "The Chief of the Æsir." The class of spirits who have lost, and regained, the 'fluidic' degree, are symbolised by "*Njord and his wife*, not of the lineage of the Æsir, but *born and bred* in Vanaheim," where they have *lived alternately* in "rocky, mountainous Thrymheim and happier Noatun," *i.e.*, in the two spheres of planetary life, their subjection to which is still farther indicated by the attribution to them of *sex* (a condition peculiar to humanised existence), and their exclusion from the nobler 'lineage' of the 'unfallen' Æsir, *i.e.*, from the higher mode of development proper to the 'fluidic world.'

Like his Oriental correspondents, Odin (as the Intellectual principle) is declared to have "formed the heavens, the earth, the air, and all things belonging to them;" the Love-principle being symbolised (as in the Osirian myth) by his sister-wife, Frigga, and also by his 'son' Baldur, darling of the Universe, "*so fair and dazzling* that rays of light seem to issue from him, and who dwells in a heavenly mansion that nothing unclean can enter." Odin's various attributes are personified as his 'brothers;' he is called 'The Way,' but "has many names, in order that each people may supplicate and worship him." His wisdom is universal. The 'Christs of the Universe' being the immediate recipients of the Divine Thought, he possesses "the Supreme God's ancient lore." Like Indra and Osiris, "he knows where the missing *cattle* are concealed;" he knows "the secret of the golden tablets *hidden in the grass*;" he knows, and teaches, all things, 'in magic runes,' by whose power 'earth, stones, hills, and *burial-mounds*, were opened to him,' and he 'bound those who dwell in them by his *word*, and went in, and took what he pleased,' *i.e.*, that he presides alike over the development of the various 'natural reigns,' and over the two realms of our humanized life. But all-powerful as he is in regard to the work confided to him. Odin is only the 'elder Brother' of those who are placed under his guardianship. Before he "formed the earth" was "a time of old," when there were "neither land, nor sea, nor cooling waters.

Earth existed not, nor place above. It was a *chaotic abyss*, and *grass* nowhere (symbol of vegetation, as the first stage of vitalised development). Sun (feminine), Moon (masculine) knew not their dwelling; the stars knew not whether they had a station." In that remote "time of old," Odin was "with the *Hrimthursar*," or Frost-Giants (the Primeval Chaos); *i.e.*, the elements of his future personality were latent in the dormant potentialities of an earlier abysmal 'Mass' of unorganised and unvitalised Cosmic Matter, whose negative existence is appropriately symbolised by the cold of 'frost,' as contradistinguished from the 'heat' (*love*, love,) of organised, vitalised, conscious, active life.

It is from the limbs, bones, blood, &c., of the ancient, solitary Giant, 'Ymir' (the Giant 'Kaioners' of the Zend Avesta, the Chaotic Nebula whose disruption produced the Sidereal Universe to which our solar system belongs), that Odin, with the aid of 'Bur's sons' (the Cosmic Forces), "raised up the vault of heaven, and shaped the noble mid-earth" (the surface of the globe, the Druidic 'Abred'), and encircled it with the great fortress of Midgard (the spirit-zone of the earth), in order to protect it "from the attacks of the Giants;" *i.e.*, from the disorganisation, and consequent return to the state of Chaotic diffusion out of which the constituent elements of the earth have been condensed into a globe by the formative skill of its Presiding Ruler. For, as the persistence of what we call 'bodies' is entirely due to the persistence of the magnetic soul-action by which their constituent atoms are grouped into form, so the persistence of the globe itself is due to the persistence of the same formative action that evolved the bodies of our solar system out of the state of nebulous diffusion in which their elements originally existed. And as this action is perpetually maintained, for the planet and for all classes of its inhabitants, by the perpetual transmission (through the spirit-hierarchy above us,) of the Divine Efflux which is the incessantly-renewed life of all the modes and forms of Derived Existence, the encircling of the earth by the 'fortress of Midgard,' as a protection against the 'Giants,' symbolises the establishment of its 'fluidic' or 'spirit' zone through which the Influent Life is transmitted to the planet and its inhabitants.

Having 'formed the earth,' Odin, in conjunction with the other 'all-holy gods,' "to the night and to the waning moon gave names, to morn, mid-day, and eve, *to reckon years*," a preparation for the advent of the human race, whose appearance upon the globe is a consequence of the irruption, into the 'fluidic world' (symbolised by 'Ida's plain, where dwell the *Æsir*') of "three maidens from Jötunland, realm of the first-born" (*i.e.*, the early, the ignorant, the imperfect, and, as such, symbolical of the fluidic realm of spirit-education, in which "the children of life," inno-

cent, but ignorant, are learning the arduous lesson of voluntary choice between Good and Evil which will decide the mode of existence through which the subsequent phases of their educational career will be carried on.* These 'three maidens' symbolise the unenlightened will, misjudging intellect, and erroneous action, of the spirits who, allured by the seductive whispers of self-love, 'fall' from the negative 'innocence' of the normal world of souls, and thus incur the painful but salutary discipline of planetary life, in conjunction with fleshly bodies.

"Then the Vala (Seeress) knew *the fatal bonds were twisting, most rigid, bonds from entrails made;*" i.e., she foresees the correspondential result of spirit-disobedience imposing its 'most rigid' bondage on those who must now be made, through conjunction with *entrails*, i.e. with fleshly-organisations, to learn, to expiate, and to amend. Accordingly, the 'all-holy gods' again confer together, and make '*the race of Dwarfs*' (human beings) "*in man's likeness.*" This new race is formed "from the earth, from the world's rock, earth's foundation;" it is "bred in the mould of the earth, just as *worms* are bred in a dead body." "At first they were only maggots; but, by the will of the gods (i.e., by the Ordering of Natural Law, under spirit-guidance), they at length partook of human shape and understanding, although they always dwell in *rocks* and *caverns*." The imagery of Plato, of the Druids, of the Hebrew Psalmist, seems to be foreshadowed in this more ancient parable; the latter even amplifying the thought here expressed, for he speaks of our "calling on the rocks to cover us," i.e., to give us an earthly body as the sole re-former of the spirit who, misusing its free-will, has taken the wrong road, and brought itself down to the earthly life.

The gradual attainment of the distinctively human form by the bodies of the founders of human races† (stated to be at first, almost amorphous), is symbolised by the action of the Æsirs on the man and woman (Aske and Embla,) who had been formed, by Odin and his brothers, out of the *stems* of two 'trees' which they had found on the sea-shore, because, as all spirits have reached individuality through the pre-personal development of the lower reigns, they may be said to proceed from the same '*stem*,' or path of development, that, at a lower point, produced 'trees,' i.e., the vegetable world. (Krishna says, in the Bhagavat-Gita, "Kinsmen, beasts, stones, vegetables, are all one; *what they are, a man has been.*" The Koran, as we shall see, implies the same idea.) As 'formed' by Odin and his brothers, the new denizens of the earth remained "nearly powerless, void of destiny." "Spirit they possessed not, sense they had not, nor

* Vide *Human Nature* for July, 1869.

† Vide *Human Nature* for July, p. 304; December, 1870, p. 542.

blood (symbol of affectional life), nor motive powers, nor goodly colour . . . until the mighty and benevolent Æsirs came to the world from their assembly. . . . Spirit gave Odin, sense gave Hœnir, blood gave Lodur and goodly colour." Their descendants "dwell within Misgard" (*i.e.*, on the surface of the earth, encircled by its spirit-zone), where they will, by their own wrong-doing, work out the curative punishment they have brought upon themselves. Accordingly, the horrors of the earth-life in its early stages are now pourtrayed by the Vala as "blood-thirsty and perjured sinners wading through sluggish *streams* . . . a *river falling* through venom dales, with *mire* and *clods* . . . a *flood* that thunders down, mingling with *tides of blood below*;" and the 'sad chariot of the Norna (Fates), dispensers to *all that are born*," conveys away the souls of the dead "for punishment in Fregiarn's Hall" ("place of torment" in Hades, the spirit-world).

Dark is the doom of the unhappy "Dwarfs," who "groan before the sages of the rocky walls" (the spirit-guides and overseers of the two spheres of humanised existence). But, though dark, it is not hopeless. For "man has a soul that shall live, and never perish, though his body shall have smouldered away, or been burned to ashes;" and although "each from each is parted, yet they are reserved to meet again in the glad day of life," and "everyone shall continue to exist in some world or other throughout eternity." Odin, as 'Alfadir' (All-father), has the whole human race under his protecting sway; and as 'Valfadir' (Choosing-father), 'chooses' for his 'sons' all 'the heroes' who fall in battle; *i.e.*, "takes to himself" all who go to him through the *deaths* by which, as leading to new *births*, we obtain the final victory in the long combat with our imperfections. For their abode, during this process, he has prepared 'Valhalla,' with its 'many doors' (symbolising human life considered under its double aspect, as consisting of the two spheres of existence, which are symbolised, respectively, as 'Mid-earth' and 'Midgard'), where each day, they *fight*, are *slain*, and *come to life again*, and celebrate their victories by 'drinking' from the 'skulls' of their enemies; a symbol denoting the gain we acquire from each of our incarnations, in which our *skulls* (as the shaping continent of the brain) decide the organic tendencies, limitations, and possibilities that bring out, successively, the latent evils of our nature, which we are thus enabled to combat and to overcome. Odin needs no food but *wine*, of which (as the *purified* juice of the grape, itself "well *refined from its lees*," and thus symbolising the spirit perfected through discipline and trial) Christ says he "will drink no more until he drink it anew in the Kingdom of God," an allusion to the higher degrees of virtue and excellence which, as the 'fruit' of the 'vine' he

came to plant by his example, are to be produced, by the people of this planet, in the nobler phase of development which we are approaching under his auspices.

The heroes of Valhalla are fed with the flesh of a boar that is killed every evening (the life of earth), but comes to life again every morning (the life of the spirit-zone). *Feeding on flesh* is a distinct implication of a renewal of the earthly life, a re-building of the human body with the constituents of animality, as indicated by the saying of Christ, "*that which is born (or produced) of flesh is flesh.*" "Gallœig, pierced with lances, and burned, *thrice* burned in Odin's hall, yet *thrice* brought forth ('*thrice*,' as the symbol of completedness, perfection), oft, not seldom, yet still she lives," is another presentation of the same fundamental idea, viz., the slow, painful, but *thorough* purification of the spirit, "*saved as by fire*," through the stern but beneficent discipline of planetary life. This "fire prepared for the Devil and his angels" (*i.e.*, for the destruction of Selfishness and its derivatives), is 'everlasting,' 'unquenchable,' because 'evil,' as the antithesis of 'good,' is inherent in the nature of things; and consequently, there will always be, somewhere in the constantly expanding Universe, moral dross to be smelted out, moral 'chaff' to be burned up. But the magnificent metaphor of 'Hell-fire'—which, misunderstood, has given rise to the monstrous fiction of 'eternal damnation'—is really a glorious foreshowing of the rehabilitation of *all* the spirits who, by wrong-doing in the higher mode of being, have brought themselves into the refining furnace of human life.

The Eddas speaks of various worlds. There is 'Niffhel,' which—symbolising planetary life in general, as the realm of discipline and reformation, and, as such, having always existed in the economy of the Universe—is declared to have been "before the earth was framed;" there is 'Hel,' the realm of punishment in the spirit-zone of this planet; and there is also the implication of a 'deeper hell,' in the bearing away of "a corpse," on "the wings of the dark flying dragon, flying from *beneath*," *i.e.*, the 'casting out' from this planet of the souls who, persisting in evil, when this earth shall have reached a higher degree of development, will no longer be permitted, or be able, to re-incarnate themselves in this planet, but will be sent away, and made to recommence the course of their purification in a planet of a lower degree of advancement.

The attainment of that higher state by our planet is foretold in the 'Voluspa,' as a second 'arising out of the ocean,' when—after a series of symbolic cataclysms, in which "the sun darkens, earth in ocean sinks, fall from heaven the bright stars, and towering fire plays against heaven itself"—"the fields unsown bring forth; all evils are amended; the mighty one comes to

judgment, dooms pronounces, strife allays, and establishes holy peace forever." Its ceasing to subserve the purgatorial ends to which it is now appropriated, is also symbolised in the 'Lay of Grimnir,' by the 'boiling' of the 'holy (sanctifying) waters,' *i.e.*, the substitution of 'etherealised' in place of the 'compact' matter of the planet, represented by the implied conversion of those 'waters,' through *heat* (the love-principle) into vapour; a modification of the elements of its materiality which will render them insusceptible of being agglomerated into *flesh*.^{*} The same idea is implied in the *burning* of 'the As-bridge,' the 'Rainbow bridge,' that leads "*from Jotunland to the gods*;" and which, as symbolising the passage from the rudimental to the relatively 'perfect,' will be "broken" when "the sons of Muspell, having traversed the three great rivers "(the 'three steps of Vishnu,' cycles of elaboration), *shall ride over it*," and shall thus have attained to the true Soul-life of Immortality, in the glorious Fluidic World of which *all* spirits, whether 'unfallen' or 'fallen' are natives, and therefore 'sons.'

"In heaven," says the Edda, "there are *many goodly homesteads, and none without its Celestial ward*," *i.e.* its Ruling Christ. There are "heavens above heavens," implying eternal progression. Odin's home, "Gimill, than the sun brighter" (the fluidic sphere of the sun) where (on reaching the Sidereal degree,) "the righteous dwell, and happiness enjoy for evermore;" and the glorious southern sphere 'Muspell' (the Fluidic Universe), "guarded by Surtur, with his flaming sword" (symbolising intrinsicity, fitness, judgment), "too luminous and glowing to be entered by those who are not indigenous to it" (*i.e.*, who have not retained or regained the power of operating the vibrations by which that 'world' is constituted to the perceptions of its inhabitants).

To explain the symbolic imagery, personages, and incidents of the Edda would require a volume. Enough has here been brought forward to show the profoundly spiritualistic nature of this ancient production, and its substantial affinity with the other medianimic writings of the world, and with the theory of derived existence set forth by the writer, of which still further confirmation is afforded by the records of Odinism, preserved in the Prose Edda. Thus, at the three principal Odinic festivals, cattle were killed and *feasted on*, and their blood was sprinkled with a brush not only on the people, but also on the *doors* and *floor* of the temple; a ceremony symbolic of the *renewal* of the *earthly life*, of *flesh*, of *ingress* and *egress*, and of *passage*, and showing both the origin and the meaning of the Egyptian and the Jewish 'Passover,' of the use of 'holy water' in the Buddhist and Romanist Churches, and of baptism; all of which, as we have seen, imply the purification of

* Vide *Human Nature* for November, 1870, p. 494-8, note †

the soul through successive incarnations. For the 'Destroying Angel' that brings *death* home to the experience of the soul is the selfishness which has caused its declension from the fluidic to the planetary mode of incorporation; and this declension *can only be arrested by incarnation* ("the shedding" or sprinkling "of blood, without which there is no remission"), whose reformatory action, restoring it to the deathless existence of that higher life, is aptly symbolised as the *staying of the hand of the Destroyer*. The rite of baptism, also, appears to have been practised among the followers of the Odinic faith; for Harold Haarfager is stated, in his 'Saga,' to have had water poured over him, and a name given to him; and a similar statement is made concerning his son Hakon.

THE SABÆANS.

The Arabs, before Mahomet, acknowledged one sole, supreme GOD; but worshipped also the Intelligences whom they called the 'Angels' or 'Rulers' of Stars and Planets; and each country, tribe, and family, was supposed to have its own 'Star,' or Tutelary 'genius' (or spirit). They worshipped 'Wadd' (heaven) *as existing in the form of a man*; a perversion, probably, of some intuitive perception, or half-forgotten teaching, of the correspondence between the quality of the Soul, and its perception of the sphere of externalisation around it; they recognised a class of "deified men;" had a vague idea of some sort of metempsychosis as the destiny of mankind; and used the rite of baptism, which, as we have seen, implies the purification of the soul through a succession of earthly lives, and also its external manifestation, or embodiment, through conjunction with the material element.

THE KORAN.

Accepted as the inspired and authoritative expositor of religious truth by a hundred millions of our fellow-men, it is impossible to deny to the Koran a place among the 'Bibles' of the planet; although, being borrowed, for the most part, from the "fabulised" portions of the 'Sacred Writings' of Persia and Judea, the Koran offers but few traces of original inspiration. But, notwithstanding the marked inferiority of the Koran, in point of medianimic insight, to the other 'Sacred Books' of the world, it contains various traces, confused but unmistakeable, of the great doctrines of the Fluidic Life, of the plurality and progressiveness of inhabited worlds, of the progressive development of the planetary reigns (implied in the statement that "all animals are created out of water"), and of re-incarnation, which traces, as testimonies to the universality of spirit-teaching in regard to those doctrines, are all the more important from the fact that they could not have been, in any degree, understood

by Mahomet, whose system, in its general bearings, is so widely removed from the philosophical conceptions of which those doctrines form an integral part, that, in embodying them in his writings, he must evidently, in so far, like all the other writers of 'Bibles,' have "buildd better than he knew."

The Mohammedan account of the 'creation' of the World and of Man is borrowed from that of Genesis; but, like the Rig-Veda, it distinguishes two kinds of 'birth,' viz., 'the first' and the 'second;' from the latter of which it declares that "the Blessed" are delivered. In the Koran, the "Angels" are said to have been "made of fire;" a notion also borrowed, apparently, from the Vedic doctrine of "the brilliant birth" of the soul in the 'Fluidic World.' It is declared that they "neither eat, nor drink, nor propagate their species;" and that "whoever shall attribute sex to them is to be accounted an unbeliever." Besides the 'Angels' (answering to the 'Maruts' 'Amshaspunds,' and 'Æsir' of the earlier faiths), the Koran, like the Talmud, asserts the existence of an order of spiritual beings called 'Jins' or 'Genii,' supposed to be intermediate between 'Angels' and men; but as the Jins are of both sexes, eat, drink, and propagate their species, and as some of them are 'saved' and others 'lost' like human beings, it is impossible not to see in them a confused representation of mankind, as distinguished, by the conditions of humanised existence, from the non-humanised populations of the 'Fluidic World.'

The souls of the dead undergo a sort of preparatory 'Judgment'; after which those of the righteous are divided into three classes. Those of the 'Prophets' go at once to Paradise; those of the Martyrs' go into the crops of green birds that feed on the fruits, and the *water* of Paradise; but about the fate of the rest of the believers there are many opinions. According to some they remain in the grave; according to others, they stay with Adam in an inferior Heaven. One opinion shuts them up in the Resurrection-Trumpet; another limits their stay in the grave to seven days, after which *they go away*, none knows whither. According to some annotators they are changed into white birds beneath the throne of God; while others declare that the souls of believers remain in the *well* of Zemzen, and those of unbelievers in the *well* of Barbut. [A well-known proverb says that 'Truth lives at the bottom of a *well*,' because 'Truth' can only be *reached* by us *through* the '*water*' which, as the synonym of Matter, is the symbol most frequently employed to denote the material embodiments which constitute our 'Way' to its attainment.] Others say that the souls of the wicked are first offered to Heaven, and refused; they are then offered to the Earth, and again refused; after which they are *sent down to a lower earth*, there to be tormented in a dungeon until the

resurrection of the body, when they will be made to alternate between hot and cold hells, in which 'believers' will remain for a time, and 'unbelievers' for ever. A confused echo of our alternate sojourns in the two spheres of planetary life; the 'hot hell' signifying punishment in the spirit-world, and the 'cold hell' the sufferings of the earthly life. As it is not stated that souls may not acquire a "true belief" while undergoing the discipline of that double realm of retribution, this doctrine does not necessarily imply that any souls will remain in hell for ever; but the belief that the greater number will do so seems to be the test of 'orthodoxy' among Mohammedans as among so-called 'Christians.'

Previously to the general reckoning of 'the Last Day' that is to be followed by the burning up of the visible universe, everything that has ever existed upon the earth is to be 'raised' out of the ground, through the virtue of a re-vivifying rain that will cover the earth with a new deluge, and cause "the indestructible germ of each form" to 'sprout' anew, and to resume its former proportions; when, at the sounding of the 'resurrection-trumpet,' *stones, plants, animals, men, jins, and angels*, will be brought to judgment. All sentient beings will be provided with an "accuser" and an "advocate," interpreted by the more spiritualistic of the Mohammedans as being respectively the 'sins' and the 'good deeds' of each, whose doom will be decided according as the balance is struck between the two accounts. According to some interpretations, the 'good jins' will also be *changed into dust*; according to others, they will be sent to 'an inferior heaven;' both destinations indicating a resumption of progress through contact with the lower modes of Materiality. The 'bad' are thrown into 'Hell,' with "the Devil and his angels." *The animals will acquire the faculty of speech before the Day of Judgment*; they will revenge upon one another the sufferings they have undergone, and will then *be changed into dust*; a double implication of the progress of development through the 'lower reigns,' and through humanisation, the latter doctrine being still farther indicated by the 'Bridge of Sirât,' spanning the 'great gulf' of 'Hell,' "finer than a hair, sharper than a sword, beset, on *each side*, with briars and crooked thorns," over which *all* must pass, whether to 'Paradise' or to 'Perdition.' The wicked stumble in going over this 'bridge,' and fall into the fiery abyss. The righteous pass over in safety; but, before entering 'Paradise' (the definitive happiness of the Sidereal Degree), they "drink the water of the pond of the Prophet, white, odoriferous, of which those who drink shall *thirst no more* for ever;" the cessation of *thirst* (*i.e.* of the *need* of the fleshly envelopes symbolised by *water*,) indicating the substitution, instead of *flesh*, of the more refined and etherealised bodies of the

higher planets (symbolised by the '*white and oderiferous water of the Prophet's pond*'), by the spirit who, through those planets, is approaching the 'purely fluidic' corporeality of the normal world of Souls. Like the Talmud, from which Mahomet has borrowed so largely, (and in which it is said that 'Behemoth and Leviathan' will be "slain daily," as 'food' for the dwellers in Paradise), the Koran states that 'Balâm and Nun' will be slaughtered each day, and each day brought to life again, to furnish the repasts of the Blessed: another allusion to the fact of our successive existences; although both the Koran and the Talmud—less immediately mediaimic than the Edda, which represents the flesh of the constantly-resuscitated 'boar' as the nourishment of spirits who are still fighting the battles of humanised existence—reduce the symbol to the rank of mere fable, by placing this supply of resuscitated 'flesh' in 'Paradise.' It, however, implies the progressive character of psychic development in the 'Fluidic' life by the "seven heavens" which are declared to "have been created by GOD;" and the equally progressive purification of humanised spirits, by the Divine creation of "as many different storeys of the earth." And the Mohammedan 'Paradise'—although in the grossness of its sensuous imagery, the antipodes of the refined ethereality of the 'Sidereal Degree'—nevertheless corresponds to that 'Degree' as being "above the seventh" (or highest,) of the progressive spheres of spirit-training; as being reached by the 'paths' with which the 'seven heavens' are said to be provided; as being inhabited only by spirits not subjected to the ordeal of 'the second (or repeated) death;' and as giving, to those who attain to it, the 'vision of GOD' which is declared to be a source of happiness immeasurably transcending all other satisfactions.

The community of origin and of indication by which the various creeds of the world, despite their apparent discrepancies, are seen to be so closely linked, is still farther evidenced in the use, by Mahomet, of the simile of '*dust*,' which figures so prominently in the earlier 'scriptures,' as a symbol of purification through the discipline of fleshly bodies. As remarked by a diligent student of ancient lore, "It is an old Northern notion that *dust* is the *appointed food* of the dead," in support of which attestation he alludes to the story of a spirit "who, having returned to earth for the purpose of being present at the marriage-feast of a friend, was regaled with *dust and water*." Using the same symbol, a passage of the Koran as originally compiled ran thus:—"The belly of a son of Adam *shall only be filled with dust*. GOD will turn to him who shall repent;" an evident implication of connection between the *feeding of a man with dust* and the gradual accomplishment of the *repentance* which—by restoring him to the innocence of the higher life from which he

has lapsed—effects *the turning of man to GOD* which appears, to the perceptions of the purified soul, to be *a turning to man* of the BEING in Whom “there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.”

The ‘belly’ as the elaborator of the vitalized materials of which we are incessantly rebuilding our present fleshly-envelope, symbolizes the *nephesh* or *perispit*; the magnetic instrument by means of which the soul agglomerates its material ‘body,’ more or less ‘compact,’ more or less ‘fluidic,’ according to its state. Having previously said (John iv. 14,) that ‘the *water*’ given by him shall be, to its recipient, “a *well* (or fountain) *springing up* into everlasting life” (*i.e.* shall enable his soul to accrete for itself a constantly ascending series of higher and higher corporeal envelopes, through the experiences of which it will at length attain to the ‘everlasting life’ of the deathless Fluidic World), Christ still farther amplifies the same indication by saying (John vii. 38.), of him who shall follow in his steps, “Out of his *belly* shall flow *rivers of living water*;” in other words, that his perispitric action will eventually cease to furnish him with ‘bodies’ of the lower degrees of materiality symbolised by ‘dust’ or ‘water,’ and will thenceforth furnish him with the endless succession of deathless, but always correspondential, ‘fluidic’ incorporations symbolised as “the *waters of life*,” as a “*river of living water*,” as “the *river* that makes glad” the souls who have attained to the ‘luminous’ and ‘glorified’ corporeality of the ‘City of GOD,’ of the ‘Supreme Dwelling-place,’ of ‘Gorodman,’ of ‘Tao,’ of ‘Gwynfyd,’ of ‘Muspell,’ of ‘Paradise;’ the ‘Sidereal Degree’ of the New Revelation.

Confirmatory of this interpretation is the sentence pronounced in Genesis, upon the Self-love (so admirably symbolised by the ‘serpent;’) whose insidious temptings have led to the ‘fall’ of its dupes (the youthful and still ignorant Intellect and Will.) from the negative ‘innocence’ of spirit-infancy in ‘Eden’ (the ‘Fluidic World’); “Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat, all the *days* of thy life,” (implying the grovelling nature of the mode of existence to which its sin brings it down, and the long course of fleshly-incarnations in successive ‘*days*’ (earthly lives,) to which it will be subjected during all *its life*, *i.e.*, until, its transformation being accomplished, its ‘life,’ as Self-love, has come to an end.

An interesting confirmation of the explanation of baptism given above is also furnished by the permission, granted to the faithful by the Koran, to substitute, in case of necessity, the use of *fine dust*, or sand, *instead of water*, in the first of the four ‘ablutions’ (1st of the Body, 2nd of Action, 3rd of Thoughts, 4th of the Heart,) which it prescribes for their purification. It is stated by Sale, the learned translator of the Koran, that this

same substitution is permitted also by the Persians and by the Jews, and has been frequently made, in the administration of Christian *baptism*, in cases in which it has been impossible to procure water.

Echoing the declaration of Ezekiel (ch. xviii. 20,) the Koran declares that "a burdened soul shall not bear the burden of another," and thus implicitly affirms the principle of our repeated lives upon this earth; for, as it is certain that succeeding generations *do* 'bear the burden' of the wrong-doing of previous ones, it is evident, as already remarked (and as we shall find Origin maintaining), this laying of ancestral 'burdens' on posterity is a practical affirmation that the souls, on whom the 'burden' of former wrong-doing is thus made by Providence to fall, are *the very same souls that did the wrong*.

THE GOSPELS.

The indications of the Gospels—so vague in their allusions to the "many other things" concerning which Christ declared that the time had not come for instructing us—are so clear and abundant in regard to the broad cosmic arrangements of which our repeated lives upon this earth and in other planets are an integral element, that the general blindness of the so-called 'Christian world' to the true purport of those indications can only be accounted for in one way; viz., as being the result of the backwardness figuratively alluded to as a Providential 'holding of eyes' from the perception of facts of which they have not hitherto been prepared to admit the reality, to which this blindness is attributed by the spirits who now declare themselves to be charged with the task of enlightening us in regard to them.

The teachings of Christ, as now being explained by his command, are seen to have consisted mainly in the inculcation, under the guise of 'parable' (Matthew xiii. 34-5), of the same great truths which, though "kept secret since the foundation of the world," have nevertheless, as we have seen, been taught by all his Messengers; truths which the human race, at the period when he "took upon himself the *likeness* (but not the *nature*) of men," could not have understood, and which it *could* only become fitted to understand through its subsequent advances in the discovery of the various branches of Natural Law, through whose operation the cosmic arrangements alluded to are carried out.

Among the most important of the subjects thus 'hidden' from the apprehension of the Past, but which, we are assured, are now to be made manifest to the minds prepared for their consideration, is that of the Elohistick rank and function of Christ. This cardinal fact of our planetary existence, shadowed forth, as

we have seen, by the great medianimic writings of the world—the ‘scriptures’ of which Christ expressly declares that they ‘testify of him’—affords the only coherent, rational, and sufficient explanation of a ‘life’ whose beauty and mystery were intended to incite the minds of succeeding generations to the efforts of critical examination, discrimination, and elimination, that should prepare us to comprehend the explanation now given of it as an *acted parable*, a manifestation of spirit-power unique in the experience of our planet, and as having been ‘human’ only in appearances that were assumed and combined in condescension to the erroneous pre-conceptions which a subsequent explanation of its true nature was destined to dissipate, and to the moral abasement out of which its example was destined to lift us; the only interpretation that can reconcile Christ’s constant assertion of his superiority to the human race (whom he nevertheless declares to be his ‘brethren,’) with his equally constant assertion of his inferiority to the DIVINE BEING, with Whom he nevertheless declares himself to be practically identified; that can explain the nature of the corporeal envelope assumed by him for his visible manifestation among us, and justify the application to his personality of the designations of ‘Son of Man’ and ‘Son of GOD,’ mutually exclusive and destructive of each other on any other hypothesis; that can explain how, having been “tempted at all points like as we are,” he can have remained “without sin;” and, by enlightening us in regard to his relationship to the SUPREME BEING, can also enlighten us as to the ‘Way’ by which we must travel on to the attainment of the elevation, equivalent to his own, which he promises to those who shall follow the ‘spirit’ of his teachings.

It is the writer’s intention to enter more fully, in another place, upon the consideration of this most important subject, and of the other momentous questions involved in the explanation of the Gospels already referred to, (as also of the indications afforded, in support of the doctrine of re-incarnation, by the long line of Jewish prophets, omitted here for want of room); the limits of the present paper restricting the examination of the Evangelic indications to the subject of our repeated lives upon this earth.

No other fact is brought forward so frequently or so prominently, by all the four Evangelists, as the asserted identity of John the Baptist with the prophet Elijah or ‘Elias.’ Not only is this identity proclaimed beforehand by the prophet Malachi (Ch. iv. 5), and re-affirmed, explicitly, emphatically, repeatedly, by Christ himself, but the importance of that re-affirmation, as a hint for the guidance of future enquirers, is still further indicated by the perpetually-recurring references to ‘Elias’ which

constitute so striking a feature of the Evangelic narratives.* Nothing can be more explicit than the declaration of the Angel to Zacharias, and the claim to identity with 'Elias' put forth, by him (Luke i. 17, 76) on behalf of his son, at the circumcision of the latter. And not only does Christ refrain from reproving the opinion, so frequently expressed by those around him, that he himself, as well as John the Baptist, might be 'Elias,' 'Jeremial' or 'one of the prophets'—as he would evidently have done had such a re-incarnation of the latter been an impossibility—but he affirms, as clearly as words can make the affirmation, in speaking of John the Baptist (Matt. xi. 10, 14, 15), "*This is he of whom it is written 'Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.'*" . . . And if ye will receive it, *this is Elias* who was to come." And he still farther emphasises this most positive affirmation by adding the suggestive comment, "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" When the messengers sent to Christ, by John, had come and departed, Christ again asserts, in the plainest and most unambiguous terms, that John "*is*" the Precursor whose coming, as a re-incarnation of Elias, had been foretold by the prophets. And so on every occasion when the subject is brought forward.

That John himself, when questioned in regard to this identity, should have denied being 'Elias' or 'that prophet' (John i. 21), proves nothing against the identity so constantly attributed to him throughout the Gospels. Even if it could be shown that he was ignorant of the fact that his soul had previously been incarnated as 'Elias,' his forgetfulness of that former incarnation would only imply the temporary suspension of the unitary memory which is usually a condition of our lives in worlds of low degree; and could not outweigh the express declarations of Christ to the contrary. The intermittance always observable in the action of the medianimic faculty at the present day fully explains the fact, twice asserted by John (*idem*, 31, 33), that there had been occasions when he "knew not" the Great Spirit whose herald he had been sent to be, although, at other times, he was able to recognise, and testify to, the exceptional rank of the Spirit whose superiority he both admits and explains in the significant words '*for he was before me;*' words that not only confirm the assertion that Christ is a spirit of an earlier 'Creation' than that to which our world and its populations belong, but also imply the progressive character of psychic development, by attributing Christ's superiority to the fact of his greater advancement, consequent on his anteriority of origin. As, on

* Vide MATTHEW iii. 3; xi. 3, 10 to 14; xiv. 2; xvi. 14; xvii. 3 to 13; xxvii. 47, 49; MARK i. 2 to 6; vi. 14 to 16; viii. 28; ix. 4, 5, 11 to 13; xv. 35, 36; LUKE i. 17, 76; iii. 4; iv. 25, 26, 27; vii. 27; ix. 8, 30, 33, 54; JOHN i. 21, 23, 25.

John's own showing, there had been moments when he 'knew not' his Master, it would not be strange if, at times, he 'knew not' himself; but there is nothing to indicate that such was the case. On the contrary, although he is represented (v. 21) as denying that he is 'that prophet,' we find him, in the following verse, expressly asserting that he *is* the 'Precursor' whom Christ constantly declares him to be, and thus admitting the identity which, in the preceding verse, he had seemed to deny; a denial, however, which is easily explained.

John the Baptist, although the re-embodiment of 'the spirit of Elias' who had been announced as to be 'sent' (therefore, as *coming from* some other realm of existence), to 'prepare the *Way*' of the 'Mightier One' who was to 'come' after him, was no longer the *man* 'Elias.' For a 'man' is neither *a soul*, nor *a body*, but a complex being resulting from the union of the two; *i.e.*, the personality which is expressed by the term 'man' consists both of a 'soul,' and of the material body with which that soul has clothed itself; and neither the *soul* thus clothed upon, nor the *body* which clothes it, can be called a 'man,' because that term does not express either the soul or its body as considered *in themselves*, but expresses the complex *human personality* which is constituted, for the time being, by their temporary union. Therefore, when the soul has thrown off the body whose conjunction with itself has constituted, at any given stage of its progress, the human personality by whose appearance and name it was *then* known to its fellows, it ceases to be the 'man,' *i.e.*, the *complex humanised being*, which had been constituted by that conjunction; and when it assumes another *body*, it becomes *another* 'man,' although it is still, and will be throughout eternity, *the same soul*. And thus—although the soul, which was *then* agglomerating and animating the body in conjunction with which it was *then* known as 'John the Baptist,' was the same soul which had agglomerated and animated the body in conjunction with which it had previously been known as 'Elias'—the human personality of that soul having been changed by its change of body, the *man* 'John the Baptist' was not the *man* 'Elias'; and therefore, as the time had not come for the open promulgation of the law of our successive lives as the 'path' of progress, the Baptist restricted his answer to a form of words which merely rejected the erroneous notion of his being the *resuscitation* of the *man* 'Elias' for which many of the Jews of that period (being unaware of the true nature of 'the resurrection from the dead') were ignorantly looking.

The statement (Luke i. 17) that the 'Precursor' of Christ would come 'in the *spirit* and *power* of Elias' was intended, for the same reason, to emphasise this condemnation of the monstrous doctrine of the *resurrection of the body*, by implying that the

'Precursor' would be—not a return to life of the *man* 'Elias,' but—a re-incarnation, in a *new body*, and therefore as a *new 'man,'* of the soul that had been known, in its former envelope of flesh, as 'the greatest of the Prophets of Israel.' When, after the 'Transfiguration,' the disciples enquire (Matt. xvii. 10, 13), "Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come?" Christ replies that, truly, *Elias will yet again return to the life of earth*, charged with a new mission; but also adds that "*Elias is come already*," and "the disciples then understood" continues the Evangelist, "that *he spoke of John the Baptist*." It is asserted by the spirits whose explanation of the Gospels has been already referred to, that both John the Baptist and Elijah were re-incarnations of the spirit of Moses; and that this identity of Moses and Elijah, as successive incarnations of the same soul, was indicated by the simultaneous appearance, on the 'Mount of Transfiguration,' of the two typical figures of the medianimity of the race which—its mental organisation enabling it to maintain, more steadfastly than any other, the fundamental truth of the Unity of God—had been 'chosen,' by the Formative Ruler of our planet, to prepare, and bring about, the various conditions and incidents destined to make up the acted parable of his seemingly human 'life' among us. As spirits of a certain degree of elevation are able to modify their corporeal envelope at pleasure, by the action of their will upon their *perisprit*,* the personality of Elijah is said to have been represented, on that occasion, by another spirit of the same rank and group, and consequently possessed of the same degree of luminosity; and they also state that the prediction of Christ will be literally fulfilled, and that this same spirit, who has played so important a part in the religious history of the Jews, and, through them, in the shaping of the first form of so-called 'Christianity,' has not yet fulfilled the whole of his mission in regard to this planet, but will again return to the life of our earth, in order to more effectually help forward the work of its approaching transformation, through the clearing away of the contradictions, misrepresentations, puerilities, and impossibilities of the 'letter' (which, having accomplished the ends for which it was designed, has now become an impediment to the religious progress of the world), and the substitution, in its place, of the larger interpretation of the mission and teachings of Christ which is destined to help us to the practical application of those teachings to the affairs of our daily life.

It is said that the similarity constituted by the element of mystery in the legends which recount the disappearance of Moses and Elijah from the life of the earth, the similarity of Elijah and the Baptist in person and clothing, and in

* Vide *Human Nature* for October, 1870, p. 438.

their solitary, ascetic life, and the similarity of all three in type and temper, was intended to put us on the track of their identity. Moses, we are told, was secretly 'buried' by GOD; Elijah was "taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire." Elijah is spoken of (2 Kings i. 8,) as "a hairy man, girt with a girdle of leather about his loins," dwelling "in the wilderness, by the brook Cherith," and fed by "the ravens." The Baptist is described (Luke i. 80, Mark i. 6,) as "waxing strong in spirit," dwelling "in the deserts," "clothed with a garment of camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins," and feeding on "locusts and wild honey." Their similarity of type is equally striking. Impersonations of the earlier idea of 'Law,' in its mathematical rigour, as a product of the Intellect, rather than of the 'Love' which is seen, as the ages ripen, to be the true 'fulfilling of the Law,' the temper of all three is stern, harsh, uncompromising. The statement that Moses was 'the meekest of men' is disproved by every incident of his life, and by the more than Draconian severity of his legislation; Elijah not only fulminates his fierce and contemptuous denunciations against the royal and sacerdotal wrong-doers he is ordered to upbraid, but slays the prophets of Baal with his own hand; a crime which the Baptist, equally granitic and unbending (notwithstanding the elevation to which he had attained in other respects), is made to expiate through the agency of the wife of Herodias, irritated against him by his condemnation of her adulterous marriage, and probably also as having been one of his former victims.

The distinction proclaimed by the 'Precursor' between his own 'baptism' and the 'baptism' attributed to Christ implies the great fact of the eternal conjunction of the soul (as the producer of forms,) with the material element from which it agglomerates, at each new stage of its endless advancement, the form which, for the time being, is its continent and its instrument of perception and manifestation;* the 'baptism of repentance,' 'preached' by John—and to which Christ submitted only as supplying one of the 'words' of the acted parable whose real nature and meaning could not then have been understood—symbolising the penitential and disciplinary flesh-bodies of the lower stages of planetary life, and Christ's "baptism of the *Spirit* (Spirit-inspiration or influence, Spirit-hierarchy, Spirit-world, improperly rendered by the absurd expression 'Holy Ghost') and of *fire*," i.e., of *purification*, and thus of *purity*, symbolising the 'glorified bodies' of the progressively higher realms of existence to which his simple and sublime instructions point the 'Way'; and it was necessary to the sequence of that

* Vide *Human Nature*, for December, 1870.

dramatic parable that the 'baptism' of John should *precede* that of Christ, because the 'repentance' of which the fleshly body is the instrument, and which is the condition of the "remission" of past wrong-doing, must necessarily *precede* the soul's attainment of the higher orders of incorporation which are the correspondential result of its purification.

John's declaration that he was "not worthy to loosen the latchet of" Christ's "shoe" was an allusion to the 'unfallen' purity of the spirits who complete all the degrees of their educational training in the 'Fluidic World,' and who have consequently never been humanised;* the 'shoe' being the *clothing* of the *foot* which is the instrument and symbol of locomotion and of progress, and the simile, as applied to Christ, being equivalent to that of the Rig-Veda which declares that the '*paths*' of 'Indra' are "free from *dust* (symbol of *flesh*) and well placed *in the firmament*;" an explanation confirmed by the repeated assertions of Christ, who, while constantly qualifying the human beings about him as 'of the earth, earthy,' as constantly declares that he is 'from above,' and 'above all,' a claim utterly subversive of the idea that his appearance on this earth *could* be, for a spirit of his elevation, anything else than an *apparent* assumption of the '*flesh*' which, being the result and livery of sin, *could not be accreted* by a sinless soul of the Sidereal Degree.

Moreover, Christ's assertion (Matt. xi. 11,) that "among them that are born of women *there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist*," is an absolute bar to the supposition (to which the 'letter' of the Evangelic records was *intended* to give a temporary currency,) that he, the Formative and Presiding Ruler of the planet, *could* have been really 'born' through the organization of a 'mother;" and this positive exclusion, from the category of fleshly-bodies, of the external envelope in which he veiled the splendour of his Sidereal corporeality from human eyes, is still farther emphasised by his adding "*notwithstanding* (*i.e.* notwithstanding this assertion of mine, which, as I, for the accomplishment of ends you will understand hereafter, *appear* to you to have been 'born of a woman,' would seem to make John my equal), he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven (alluding to himself as having '*taken upon himself the form of a servant*,') is greater than he."

Christ's statement (JOHN viii. 14,) "I know *whence I came* and *whither I go*," and his numerous other statements to the same effect, are not more explicit in regard to his having lived *elsewhere* before he made his appearance on this earth, than are the statements (MARK i. 2. JOHN i. 6,) "Behold I *send* my messenger," &c. "There was a man *sent* from GOD," &c., in

* Vide *Human Nature*, for August, 1870.

regard to the same anteriority of existence in the case of the Baptist, and, if of him, then necessarily of all other men; an induction fully sustained by the assertion of Christ in regard to his disciples, (JOHN xvii. 18,) "*As THOU hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world,*" and, among innumerable other hints to the same effect, by his speaking of the mother's forgetting past suffering "for joy that a *man* is *born into* the world," whereas, if the soul were not anterior to the body, he should evidently have said '*a child*' instead of saying '*a man,*' and '*born in*' instead of '*born into.*' The Baptist's saying that "GOD is able to raise up out of these *stones*, children to Abraham," is an allusion to the pre-personal stages of psychic development through the accretion of the various '*bodies*' of the lower reigns; to which great '*secret*' Christ also alludes when he says that, if the men of that day refused to recognise the validity of his claims, "*the very stones would cry out,*" thus presenting, under another form, his warning that, under certain circumstances, "*the last shall be first, and the first last,*" *i.e.*, that we may, (as our progress must be voluntary,) so long delay our advancement by a wilful rejection of his teachings, that the younger mass of the psychic element, now arrived at the stone-making phase of development, may overtake us, and even reach the goal before us. Christ's emphatic declaration that the Baptist was "*much more than a prophet* (literally an *ex-pounder*) implies the exceptional grandeur and importance, both of his mission as the Herald of "*the true Light that*" as the Vicegerent of the ALMIGHTY for our planet, "*lighteth every man that cometh into the world,*" and also of the teachings wrapped up in the record of his pre-announcement of that '*Light,*' as part of the stupendous drama whose real nature and meaning—as a revelation of the action of natural law, and not of its violation—have hitherto been so little understood.

Like the hint given (JOHN ix. 4) that we must '*work while it is day*'—here employed to indicate the earthly life considered as the time for *work*, in contradistinction to "*the night that cometh,*" in which no *man* can work," *i.e.*, the life of the spirit-zone considered as the period in which the special work of '*man,*' of the *soul conjoined with a fleshly body*, is necessarily suspended with the cessation of that conjunction—Christ's exhortation (MATT. v. 25) "*Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him,*" is an expansion of the lesson conveyed under the symbol of John's '*baptism of repentance.*' For it implies, first, the importance of the earthly life, as the period Providentially appropriated to our self-deliverance from the liabilities of suffering constituted for us by the imperfections that are our real '*adversary*'—a deliverance only to be effected with the aid of the material organisation that brings us '*into the way*' with

that 'adversary' by rousing those latent imperfections into activity, and thereby giving us the opportunity of resisting and freeing ourselves from them, which neutralisation of their adverse action is figuratively represented as 'coming to an agreement' with an 'adversary'—and, next, the retributive punishment of 'Hades' (symbolised by our being 'cast into prison,') which we entail upon ourselves by our failure to make a right use of the life of earth, but which a wiser use of this life would have enabled us to avoid. The declaration 'Ye shall not come out from thence *until* ye have paid the uttermost farthing' implies that, *when we have paid our debt* to the Divine Justice, by learning the lesson of the punishment we have brought upon ourselves, we *shall* "come out from thence," and thus proclaims the terminable nature of the punishment alluded to; a doctrine implied in the whole teaching of Christ, as interpreted by the light of the great doctrine we are considering. The statement (MARK xii. 10, LUKE xx. 47) that some 'shall receive *greater* damnation,' shows that there are *degrees* in the *condemnation* referred to (improperly translated 'damnation'), which, if *proportional* must be regarded as *remedial*, and therefore as being neither *wholesale* nor *final*. To the same effect is the declaration (LUKE xii. 47, 48) that, while 'the servant who *knew* his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with *many* stripes,' the servant who, not knowing that will, has failed to do it, 'shall be beaten with *few* stripes.' For if we are not exempted from undergoing the correspondential punishment of our failures, even when those failures have been simply the result of our ignorance and void of evil intention, it is evident that the aim of Providence, in compelling us to undergo that punishment, can only be *educational*, notwithstanding the violent and revengeful appearances so frequent in the 'letter' of the Jewish 'scriptures,' and equally evident that, as the measure of our self-inflicted punishment is declared to be regulated by the measure of our wrong-doing, our *finite* errors can only bring upon us, as *finite* beings, the *finite* (and therefore *terminable*) punishment proportioned to the *finite* nature of our offence. Moreover, having declared (MATT. xix. 17) that 'there is *none* good' (a declaration that includes the entire human race in the same condemnation), Christ says (MARK ii. 17,) "I came not to call the *righteous*, but *sinners*, to repentance;" thus, with exquisite irony, reproving the supercilious blindness of the 'Scribes and Pharisees' to their own defects, and also implying that, as he *excludes the entire human race* from the category of the 'righteous' for whom he says he *did not come*, so he *includes the entire race* in the category of the 'sinners,' the 'lost,' whom he declares (Luke xix. 10) that he *came* 'to seek and to save.' And (as though entering a prospective protest against the monstrous perversions of his teachings so soon to be commenced by the

inevitable prejudices and misapprehensions of his immediate followers, and consummated by the Antichrist of Ecclesiasticism that would set itself, with its creeds, rites, ceremonies, and other 'commandments of men,' in 'the place of' those simple and sublime teachings,) he still further emphasises this implication by declaring (JOHN iii. 35) 'the Father has given *all things* into my hand,' and by adding (JOHN vi. 37) "*all that the Father has given me shall come to me;*" thus explicitly predicting the arrival of '*all*' at the common goal, no matter how long they may linger on the 'way,' and also implying *progression* on the part of all those who are thus to 'come' to him.

And this assertion, by Christ, of his ability to achieve, entirely, he glorious but arduous task confided to him, is confirmed by his pregnant statements (JOHN v. 22, viii. 18), "The Father judgeth no man. . . . I judge no man." The Apostle Paul—the fact of whose inspirational medianimity is proved by his apparent inability to perceive the diametrical opposition between the ostensible drift of his arguments (based on misconceptions due to his Jewish training, which it was necessary thus to refine from their original crudity, as a step towards the future explanations that should clear them away altogether,) and the splendid revealments (destined to assist in effecting that clearance,) of which his writings were made the vehicle—says (HEB. ix. 27) "It is appointed unto *men* once to die, but *after that the judgment;*" in other words, the conjunction of souls with fleshly bodies which constitutes 'men,' being necessarily terminated, in each case, by the *once* dying which is the 'appointed' termination of that conjunction, the soul, thus restored to the life of the spirit-world in which the deceptive seemings of the earthly life are stripped away from it, finds itself, *by the fact of that stripping*, submitted to the 'judgment' which is virtually pronounced upon it by this discovery of its moral and intellectual *quality* at the time of quitting the surface of the earth, and which decides its *state* for that next phase of its career. And this 'judgment,' which, as Christ says (JOHN v. 25), is taking place '*now*' (*i.e.*, for those who, at every moment of time, are returning from this life into the life of the spirit-zone), causes the return into that zone to be (*idem* 29) for those 'that have done good,' a 'resurrection of *life*' (as taking them on another 'step' upon the 'way of life,') for those 'that have done evil,' a 'resurrection of *damnation*,' as *condemning* them to undergo a new phase of penal and reformatory suffering. In other words, just as there is no other obstacle to our advancement than that which we make for ourselves by our persistence in wrong-doing, so there is no other arbiter of our destiny than our own moral and intellectual state, which state decides, at each successive period of our career, the quality of

our perispritic action on the material elements around us. We have nothing to fear either from GOD, the Infinite and Omnipotent Benevolence, or from Christ, ITS acting delegate; for it is neither God nor Christ that 'judges' us, but each soul is 'judged' by its own imperfections, until, through its gradual amendment, and the consequent modification of the vibratory action of its *périsprit*, it has reversed its former self-condemnation, and has thus—not *figuratively* but *really*—'passed (as Christ says *id.* 24) from *death* unto *life*.' For the souls who have done this have attained to the state in which, according to the declaration of Christ (LUKE xx. 36) they "neither *marry* (implying their deliverance from the lower orders of bodies of which *sex* is a characteristic,) neither *can* they *die any more*" (a form of expression showing that they have previously died many times, as, if they had died *only once*, it should have been 'neither can they die *again*;) because *death*, like *sex*, is a condition of planetary incorporation, indispensable to the pre-personal stages of psychic development,* but to which the individualised soul *can* only be subjected through the 'fall' which causes it to descend into the *animality* of *humanisation*; and therefore the souls who have freed themselves from the imperfections which drag us down into the sphere of humanised existence '*can*' no longer accrete the *kind* of bodies which subject them to those conditions, but which their purified *périsprit* is no longer capable of elaborating, "for they are equal to the Angels (*i.e.*, to the non-humanised spirits, as having regained the purity which restores them to the normal 'Fluidic' life), and are the *children* of GOD (a figure of speech explained by the words immediately following it), *being the children of the resurrection*." For the phrases 'child of,' or 'son of,' are metaphorical expressions, common to all tongues, but especially to Oriental ones, by which anything that is the result of, or dependent upon, or intimately connected with, some other thing, is represented as being 'the child,' or 'the son,' of that other thing; as, for instance, an inscription upon a stone is said, in ancient Eastern parlance, to be 'the son' of that stone; as we say, of the natives of a country, that they are '*sons* of the soil,' of a veteran soldier, that he is a '*son* of a gun,' of a 'self-made' man, that he is 'the *son* of his works,' as Lucifer is styled 'the *son* of the Morning,' and Judas 'the *son* of Perdition,' as Christ (LUKE x. 6) speaks of the frame of mind that can receive his doctrine as 'the *son* of peace,' and employs the expressions '*children* of the Light,' '*children* of the bride-chamber,' '*children* of the Kingdom,' '*children* of the Devil,' &c. The expression '*children of the resurrection*,' therefore, implies that the 'obtaining of that world,' by those 'who are accounted worthy' of it, is

* Vide *Human Nature* for April and December, 1870.

a *result* of the long succession of progressive existences summed up in the term 'resurrection,' the profitable employment of the discipline of which existences has brought them back to the elevation of the 'Angels;' so that their elevation, being the *result*, and thus the 'son,' of those existences, is figuratively said to constitute them '*children* of the resurrection.'

The same interpretation explains the application of the otherwise utterly unjustifiable expression, 'Son of GOD,' to the creatures who, having been called into being by the Self-existent CREATOR, are necessarily distinguished from ITS Self-existence by the radical, unchangeable, eternal difference between Effect and Cause;* for we see that, to be the 'son' or 'sons' of GOD, whether that 'sonship' be predicated of Christ or of mankind, is simply to have reached a state which, as the *result* of the *Divine Operation that has enabled us to reach it*, is metaphorically represented as placing him, or us, in regard to that Operation, in the relation of a 'son;' the terms 'only-begotten,' 'first begotten of many brethren' (therefore not 'begotten' in any exclusive or peculiar sense), so frequently applied to Christ, being merely an amplification of the metaphorical 'sonship' we are considering, indicative of his earlier origin and exceptional rank as the Representative of GOD for our race and planet, and of the exceptional nature of the corporeal envelope elaborated by him, through his perfect command of the various fluids and forces of our solar system, for the enacting of the educational 'parable' of his appearance among us: and the term 'Son of Man,' which Christ so constantly applies to that appearance, being, in like manner, an equally metaphorical representation of that appearance as a *result* of the depravity which had rendered its assumption necessary; 'the *likeness* of men' which Christ 'took upon himself' being a 'Son of Man,' only in the sense of its being a *consequence* of the *humanisation* of the souls whose faultiness had brought them down to the level of fleshly life, and had thus necessitated the assumption of that 'likeness' by the Great Spirit who came, (Phil. ii. 8) '*in fashion as a man*,' to lead them back to the higher life from which they have 'fallen.'

This explanation of the metaphor of 'sonship,' so frequently employed in the Gospels and by the Apostles, explains also Christ's declaration (MATT. v. 8) 'The meek shall *inherit* the earth,' which declaration not only shows that 'the meek' *will come back to the earth* (as otherwise they could not 'inherit' it), but implies that, in the future phase of their career thus alluded to, they will 'inherit' the *results* of their preceding existences, *i.e.*, the 'treasures' of faculty, ability, purity, intuitive insight, which they will have 'laid up for themselves' in the course of

* Vide *Human Nature* for December, 1869, p. 599; April, 1870, p. 145.

their successive conjunctions with the earthly life, thus implying also that our Present will always be, for good as for evil, the 'son,' and therefore the 'heir' of our Past; a momentous truth implied also in the assertion of the Apostle Paul, "We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," which assertion, as a moment's reflection suffices to show us, is utterly indefensible from any other point of view. For *heirship* necessarily implies the *death* of the former owner, or holder, of that to the possession or usufruct of which the *heir* succeeds; and therefore—as GOD is eternal, and as, moreover, nothing of the Divine Nature or Existence can ever be communicated to the creatures IT calls into being and perpetually sustains—it is impossible for us to be 'heirs of GOD' in any other sense than as *inheriting*, in our subsequent lives, the educational *results* of our previous lives; an *inheriting* which (as those previous lives were constituted for us by the influx of the Divine Power that is the sole source of Derived Existence) may be figuratively said to constitute us 'heirs' of the DIVINE BEING to Whose Operation we owe the ability which enabled us to effect those results. And in this sense we are, truly, 'joint-heirs with Christ,' for his existence is a *result* of the Divine Operation, precisely as ours is, and he is the 'heir' of *his* educational efforts and experiences, as really, as exclusively, and in exactly the same manner, as we are the 'heirs' of *ours*; all spirits, in the impartial ordering of the Divine Justice, being equally, and solely, the 'heirs' of the Past, which is, for *each* and for *all*, the *parent* of the Future.

Christ's statement (MATT. xii. 31, 32) that "all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men, . . . neither in *this world* (age, period, phase of existence), nor in *that which is to come*," is a presentation, under another form, of the truths enunciated in the texts we have just examined, and a confirmation of the assertion that we must *begin* each new phase of our progress in the earthly life. The Jews of Christ's day believed that the occult influence of the spirit-world ('Holy Ghost'), which has always been recognised as a fact in human experience, was due to a direct exertion of the Divine Power; and therefore to 'speak against' this influence, to deny its reality, or to dispute its importance, was regarded as 'speaking against' the very existence of GOD, and as a materialistic denial of there being any 'Divine' element, law, or action, in the ordering of human affairs. If we remember that what we represent to ourselves as GOD's *becoming reconciled to us* is really a *reconciling of ourselves to GOD* (2nd Corinthians, v. 18, 19, 20), effected through our bringing of our will into harmony with the Divine Will as manifested by the Natural Laws which are the expression of that Will, we see that the habitual denial or forgetfulness of the

Divine element in Life, the putting of ourselves and our own wills in place of the Divine Will as our rule of action, and the wilful ignoring of the existence and influence of the Spirit-hierarchy ('Midgard') through which the Divine Life is transmitted to our human sphere, must necessarily, while we persist in so doing, preclude our obtaining the 'forgiveness' which—as *a turning of ourselves to the sun*—can only be the result of our adoption of an opposite attitude. And if this change of attitude on our part be not commenced '*in this world*' (or life), it will not be accomplished '*in that which is to come*,' i.e., in the period of sojourn in the spirit-zone of the earth which completes it; for the tenor of *that* life is always decided by the tenor of the earthly life which it completes, and as, in such a case, our stay in the spirit-zone can only be one of punishment, it will only be in a new incarnation that we shall be able (if we have benefitted by that period of punishment,) to effect the change of attitude on our own part, towards the Divine Being, that will appear to us to be an obtaining of ITS forgiveness: an interpretation fully borne out by the conclusion of the passage in question, "Either make the *tree* good" by the admission of the Divinity of Natural Law, "and its *fruit* good" by the willing conformity with the prescriptions of that Law which should logically result from the admission of its Divinity, "or else make the *tree* corrupt, and its *fruit* corrupt," through the adoption, and logical carrying out, of the opposite principle of action; in which case, as '*the tree is known by its fruit*,' the wrong-doer's experience of the evil effects of denial and disobedience will scourge him back, sooner or later, into the 'path' of the enlightened 'obedience,' of the *voluntary* self-identification with the Divine Law, that insures our happiness by bringing us into harmony with the Order of the Universe.

In close accordance with this enunciation of the mode in which we advance on the path of amendment, is the announcement (MATT. xiii. 12), as one of 'the mysteries' of 'the Kingdom of Heaven,' that "to him that hath shall be given," while, "from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath;" a 'dark saying' when considered from any other point of view, but which becomes perfectly clear when understood as referring to the law in virtue of which our progress, during each of our returns to the spirit-zone, is always proportional to the amount of advancement we have made in the earth-life which it completes; the benefit we obtain from our return to that zone, if we have failed to wisely employ the preceding earth-life, being only a 'taking away' from us, through the discipline to which we are then subjected, of the false ideas and depraved desires which we have brought back with us into that other realm of planetary life.

The existence of that other realm is implied in numberless passages of the Gospels. The comparison (MARK iv. 27) of 'the Kingdom of Heaven' (which the context shows to mean, in this place, as elsewhere, the Divine Government of our humanity,) to a casting of seed into the ground by a 'man' who *sleeps* (*sleep* being frequently used in the Jewish 'scriptures' to denote the state of spiritual lethargy out of which mankind has to be roused), implies this duality and alternation of sphere in the action of the 'man,' who 'rises *night* and *day*,' the seed 'growing' meantime, '*he knows not how*;' an allusion to the gradual attainment of higher states of development by the humanized soul, through the influences brought to bear on it by '*night*' and by '*day*,' *i.e.* in the two realms of planetary discipline, of whose real nature and connexion we are so little aware in the lower phases of our career here, indicated by the recent 'casting in' of the 'seed.' Christ's assertion (JOHN x. 16), 'I have other sheep that are not of this fold,' refers to the souls in the spirit-zone of our earth; and in speaking of himself (*idem* 9) as 'the *door*' of the sheep-fold, he says that those who 'enter in' *by him* (*i.e.* into the *spirit* of the law of effort and probation that he came to announce to us) 'shall go *in* and *out* (again alluding to the two realms of our earthly-life), and *find pasture*' (impliedly in *both those realms*); thus giving us the assurance that the *practical following* of his instructions will enable us to obtain, in each of those sojourns, the special benefit which it is intended to ensure to us. Setting forth the same thought under another figure, Christ says (JOHN xii. 35,) 'Walk while ye have *light*, lest *darkness* come upon you,' the 'darkness' referred to being that which is so often declared, by spirits in 'Hades,' to be the most terrible of 'torments' to those who have misused or neglected the opportunities of amendment afforded them by the life of the earth; and the repetition of the words '*while ye have it*, that ye *may be* children of the light,' inviting attention to the implied existence of a *coming state*, the 'light' or 'darkness' of which will be a result of our having, or not having, 'walked in' (or according to the indications of) the 'light,' in 'the life that now is.'

The injunction (MATT. vii. 48,) 'Be ye *perfect* even as your Father in heaven is perfect,' is not more clearly declaratory of our being destined to attain to states of wisdom, purity, power, and happiness of which we are unable, as yet, to form the faintest conception, than of the impossibility of our ever attaining to a *state of fixity*; for, as we can never reach, nor even approach, the Divine Perfection, our emulation of that perfection, as *correspondents*, in the sphere of the Finite, of the Divine Existence in the mode of Infinity, necessarily presupposes our attainment of higher and higher states *for ever*. In regard to the stages of this progress that are to be accomplished in con-

nexion with the alternate modes of the life of our earth, the teachings of Christ, like those which he has caused to be medi-animically conveyed by his various messengers, are all indicative of the great law we are considering. In the prophetic utterance of Simeon (LUKE ii. 79) the coming of Christ is declared to be 'a *light* for them that *sit in darkness* and in the *shadow of death*' (i.e. who are making no effort to advance beyond the double realm of planetary life), and to guide our *steps* (by enlightening us in regard to the nature and aim of our subjection to the discipline of that life) into the *way of peace*.' That 'peace,' the 'unmixed happiness' of 'the incorruptible Nirvana,' being a result of the self-identification of our intellect and will with the Divine Law which rules every atom, movement, and relation of the Universe, cannot be attained by us at 'any sudden leap, any carrying of ourselves, at a single bound, from the ignorance and grossness of our present state to the wisdom and glory of that relative 'perfection;' but is to be reached only by 'patient perseverance' in the following of a pre-ordained 'way,' a continuous 'road,' with its 'steps,' its stages, its varied and instructive scenery, incidents, and experiences. Christ's declaration to the thief on the cross, 'This *day* shalt thou be *with me* in Paradise,' was an assurance that he would find, on undergoing 'the judgment' of his return to the spirit-zone, that his repentance and desire to amend—even at that last hour of the life-day of which he had made so bad a use—had taken him out of the category of Christ's 'enemies' and had placed him in that of his 'friends;' but as Christ had expressly defined his 'friends' (JOHN xv. 14,) to be—not those who honour him 'with the lips,' but—those 'who *do* whatsoever he commands them,' it is clear that, in the thought of the Master, this repentance would have to be supplemented by a practical carrying-out of his 'commands,' as the appointed 'way' by which to obtain admission to his presence. Interpreting this declaration by the spirit of all Christ's other utterances, we see that he must have used the term 'Paradise' (nowhere else employed by him) to indicate—not the definitive purification and happiness of 'heaven,' but—a preparatory state that would constitute, for the repentant thief, a 'step' upon the 'road' that leads to it. Christ could not, without contradicting the entire tenour of his teachings, have meant to say that this erring spirit, whose life had been so full of evil that, by his own admission, he 'suffered justly' the penalty of crucifixion, would be introduced at once, and without preparation, into 'his own bright dwelling,' 'into which nothing unclean can enter.' On the contrary, Christ evidently used the word 'Paradise' as a general term, implying the spheres of the other life appropriated to repenting and amending spirits; and his promise indicated that the repentant thief, instead of finding himself in the 'Tophet'

or 'Gehenna' of 'the severer punishments' prepared for the breaking down of obdurate persistence in wrong-doing, would find himself subjected to spirit-discipline of a milder character, of which he would be able to perceive the beneficent and reformatory aim, and that he would be 'with' Christ in the sense of having placed himself under the banner of the voluntary conformity with the Divine Law to which Christ came to invite us, and which brings *us* into union with *him*, as that same voluntary conformity has brought *him* into the union with GOD to which he assures us that we shall *all* eventually attain.

"Wide is the *gate*," says Christ (MATT. vii. 13), "and broad is the *way*, that leadeth to *destruction*;" i.e. to the 'painful and wearying' alternation of 'repeated births' and deaths which gradually effects the 'destruction' of the Pride and Selfishness* that caused us to take the wrong road; which 'destruction,' symbolized by the disintegration of the earthly bodies that are their result, is alluded to by Moses, in the splendid re-incarnationist canticle of the 90th Psalm, in which, after asserting that God has 'been *our* dwelling-place in *all* generations,' he says "Thou turnest *man* to destruction (the disaggregation of our earthly body that 'turns' us back into the spirit-zone), and sayest (when the time has come for making a new attempt at improvement, with the aid of a new incarnation,) 'Return (to the life of the earth) ye *children* of *men*' (ye spirits who, not *now* being conjoined with a fleshly body, are not *now* 'men,' but who—as your present state, in that other life, is a *result*, a metaphorical *sonship*, of your '*humanization*'—are appropriately termed 'children of men'); *for* a thousand years in Thy sight are but as *yesterday* when it is past, and as a *watch* in the *night*;" i.e. the apparent slowness of this divinely-appointed method of human progress is of no importance, seeing that we have ETERNITY before us, that every 'yesterday' will be followed by the teachings of the starlit 'watches' of a new 'night,' every 'night' by the experiences of a new 'day,' in the long process of our educational career, in which, through our *inheriting* of the gains of our past experiences, '*Day* unto *day* uttereth speech, *night* unto *night* showeth knowledge:' the design of Providence being not so much to make us progress *quickly* as to make us progress *thoroughly, intrinsically*, in the achievement of the voluntary association of our will with the Divine Will (as manifested in the order of the Universe) which is the sole aim of our creation and education, and the essence and condition of our future felicity; and the lapse of ages, in the accomplishment of this design, being perceived, by the medianimic vision of the Seer, as immeasurably less, in comparison with the unending dura-

* Vide *Human Nature* for May, June, July, and September, 1870.

tion of happiness that awaits us, than are the sequences of alternate sinning and suffering at the average intervals of 'the third and fourth generations' announced by him (EXODUS xx. 5, 6), as a consequence of human imperfection, in comparison with the long vista of the 'thousands of generations' of joyful advancement by which he predicts that they will be followed.

It is evidently in view of a *new* earthly life, and not of our present one, that Christ counsels us (MATT. xviii. 7, 8, 9, MARK ix. 45) to 'cut off' the offending 'hand or foot,' to 'pluck out' the offending 'eye,' because the reason he assigns for these acts of abnegation in regard to what might constitute a temptation to wrong-doing, viz., that "it is better *to enter into life* maimed, rather than" to incur the necessity of purification in 'hell-fire,' *cannot* apply to our present life, upon which we *have entered already*, and upon which, therefore, we cannot now 'enter;' so that the counsel thus given *can* only be followed by us as a preparation for some future earth-life upon which *we have yet to 'enter.'* To the same effect are the threat (MATTHEW xxvi. 52, confirmed REV. xiii. 10), 'they that take the sword *shall perish with the sword*' therefore in a fleshly body, and the promise (LUKE xviii. 30, MARK x. 30) that all who have lost relatives, friends, *lands* for conscience sake shall *not only* receive 'life everlasting' in the higher realms of future existence, but *shall also* receive a hundredfold more of '*all of these*' (therefore of *lands*) in *this present (sphere of) life*; a promise which, if we lived but once upon this earth, would be notoriously at variance with fact, and which can only be fulfilled in some future return of those who have suffered persecution to the life of this world, when this planet shall have entered upon that happier phase of its career in which 'every man' is to "sit under his own vine and fig-tree, with none to make him afraid;" a phase through which it will pass to the yet higher degree of development in which the Divine Will is to be "done on earth as it is in Heaven," *i.e.* in which it will have passed, through successive modifications of its material elements, keeping pace with the modification of the spiritual states of its humanity—into the categories first of 'spiritual,' and then of 'celestial,' worlds.*

Prefacing his warning with a significant '*Take heed what ye hear*' (more correctly rendered '*what*' or '*how*' ye '*understand*'), Christ says (MARK iv. 24) almost in the words of Plato, "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again;" a saying equally exclusive of the idea of 'eternal damnation' on the one hand, and of an immediate translation to the glories of 'the Supreme Dwelling-place' on the other, and therefore imply-

* Vide *Human Nature* for October, 1870, p. 442.

ing our gradual advancement through progressive existences to which the 'measure' of our conduct in the *earthly* life will be applicable (therefore in *this earth* and in other planets), and in which every enlargement of the 'measure with which we mete' will determine a corresponding enlargement of the 'measure' with which 'it will be meted to' us, in our next existence. Even more significant is the amplification of this promise (LUKE xvi. 38) "good measure, pressed down . . . shall *men* give into your bosom;" for this re-payment, like that promised to the victims of persecution, most certainly does *not* occur in our present life, and therefore can only occur in a future one, and, moreover, in order for '*men*' thus to 'give us back' what we, as '*men*,' have 'given,' we must be living the life of '*men*,' i.e. the life of the surface-sphere of this earth or of some other planet.

Christ's sayings (MATT. xxviii. 20; JOHN xxi. 22; LUKE xxi. 32; MARK ix. 1) "Lo, I am with *you* alway, *unto the end of the world*;" 'What if I will that he *tarry* until I come?' '*This generation shall not pass until all be fulfilled*;' 'There be *some* standing here that *shall not taste of death* (definitively quit the sphere of this planet) until they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power,' are all declaratory of our continued connection with the life of the earth; while the parable of the Ten Virgins (MATT. xxv. 1 to 13) sets forth, in the fate of the five 'foolish' ones, the doom that awaits the spirits who, not having profited by the aids to progress afforded by the earlier phases of the development of this planet, will, when it ceases to serve as a world of expiation and of punishment, be 'shut out' from it, and be sent down ('on the wings of the dark flying dragon' of obstinate wrong-doing) to a lower one; an interpretation fully confirmed by the parables, immediately following it, of the 'Servants and the talents,' and the 'Dividing' of the 'sheep' from the 'goats,' as well as by the various other passages in which this 'shutting out' is alluded to.

Christ's assertion, in the passages quoted above, that there were, among the spirits incarnated in our earth at the time of his visible presence among us, '*some*' who will not quit it until the accomplishment of its future renovation,—the arrival of the 'time of renewing,' foregleams of whose glories have gladdened the vision of so many 'Seers'—implies that there were others who *will quit it* previously to that renovation; and thus confirms the statement of the spirits who declare themselves to be charged with the work of helping us in our endeavour to obtain a clearer idea of the 'way we are going,' and who say that the length of the connection of any given soul with any given planet is determined by circumstances, the latitude of choice, in regard to the place and conditions of our incorporations, being always proportioned to our degree of advancement. The emulation of

the Divine Perfections, which Christ holds up to us as the aim towards which we are to tend *for ever*, implying the acquisition, by each spirit, of *all* science and *all* virtues, a Plato, a Euclid, a Galileo, a Shakspeare, a Raphael, a Mozart, a Howard, a Stephenson, may profitably come back to this earth, over and over again, in order to acquire excellence in other lines than those in which they may have already exhausted its educational possibilities; the faculties which they have previously acquired being usually made to lie more or less dormant during these incarnations, for each of which their new material body will be made to furnish them with the organic aptitudes that will specially incite them to the acquisition of the special knowledge, faculty, or virtue, which each new incorporation is intended to subserve: a Providential arrangement which explains the fact that most persons are conscious of possessing aptitudes which the course of their present life has not called into activity, but which they vaguely feel might, under other circumstances, have enabled them to excel in some other pursuits, and which are always the result of the prior education of certain faculties that have either been sufficiently developed for the present needs of their education, in some past life, or, having been partially developed in the past, are left in abeyance for the present, in order to allow of the learning of some other lesson more immediately needed, and will be farther developed in some future life. As we have to learn *everything*, and evidently, as yet, know very little, one who has already advanced, in certain directions, as far as the present development of this planet can take him on, may yet be (and, in most cases, evidently is,) still backward in others, and may therefore profitably continue to re-incarnate himself in it for the carrying on of the many other branches of his moral or intellectual training for which the life of this earth may offer him the requisite facilities; or, if he have no special motive for returning to this earth—no farther expiation to undergo, no past injury for which to obtain forgiveness or to make compensation, no personal affection or general interest to subserve by coming back to it—he may quit this planet for some other one to which he may be attracted by some special aim or affection, and which, while offering him the superior physical and social conditions which his present advancement may have fitted him to share, may furnish him with equivalent advantages for taking his next upward ‘step.’ No spirit is a *native* of any planet; for all spirits attain to the individualised degree in the non-planetary, ‘Fluidic,’ realms of spirit-training. But as the spirits who come to this planet have been sent to it as the world best suited to their needs and possibilities, most of those who come to this earth are re-incarnated in it many times before leaving it for another; and ‘some’ of them from the desire to contribute to the progress of

its people, others from dilatoriness in fitting themselves for a higher one, remain connected with it for an indefinite period. Besides the spirits from higher planets who, from time to time, voluntarily incarnate themselves in a lower one for the accomplishment of some mission that may, or may not, require their subsequent return to it, the population of the planets is continually increased by the arrival of the 'many' who, in learning the lesson of choice between 'good' and 'evil,' enter, by the 'wide gate,' into the 'broad way' that brings them down from the Fluidic World into contact with planetary Matter, and who incarnate themselves in the planet to which they are attracted by the nature and degree of the faultiness which has caused their 'fall.' Thus the physical and moral condition of each planet, at any given period of its career, decides the class of spirits that will be incarnated in it, and will find in it the conditions of their punishment, reformation, or reward. During the earlier phases of its career, only spirits of very low degree are added to the population of a planet; as the average of its conditions improves, spirits of progressively less degrees of perversity come into it, until, ceasing to serve as a 'penal settlement' or 'reformatory,' and entering on the higher and happier phases of development to which all planets eventually attain, it receives only the purified spirits who are approaching the term of their exile from the higher life, to whom it furnishes the last steps of the 'way' to the portal of the Sun. The progress of each individual in science, ability, and purity, depending on the amount of effort he voluntarily puts forth for his advancement, certain individuals get on more rapidly than others, and accomplish more rapidly the successive stages of their return to the normal life; and those who are thus diligent in the 'working out of their own salvation' are able to choose the scene of their next incorporation. The perfect union of sentiment, plan, and action, existing between all spirits of the 'Sidereal Degree' makes, practically, of the 'Elohim' of the same solar system, a single and unitary Governing Power, whose over-ruling is devoted to the accomplishment of the self-same end, viz., that of bringing the populations of their solar system into their own 'image,' which, in the sphere, and according to the relations, of the Finite, is 'the express image' of the 'glory' of the ALMIGHTY in the region of Infinity; and the humanised spirits of the same solar system may therefore change their planetary abode, and yet remain under the same beneficent tutelage. But no spirit *can* go to any planet whose mode of incorporation is of a higher degree than that which its *perisprit* has acquired the power of operating: nor can any spirit of our solar system incorporate itself in a planet of any other system, because we can only pass out of our system by 'the gate of the sun,' and, in order to reach that 'gate,'

we must have attained to a degree of moral and intellectual elevation that will have lifted us above the need (or possibility) of again elaborating even the highest orders of planetary embodiment.

It is to these magnificent perspectives that Christ alludes when he says (JOHN xiv. 2), "In my Father's *house* (the Universe,) are many *mansions* (the planets of solar systems), each of which is presided over by 'its celestial ward,' in the phraseology of the Edda, by a 'Christ as a son over his own house,' in that of the Apostle Paul; and in each of which there must necessarily be (as otherwise it might be a *hut*, a *barn*, or a *hall*, but could not be a '*mansion*,') *many rooms* (incarnations or incorporations, temporary residences of the soul), all furnished with 'doors' for ingress and egress, and 'windows' to give us a new outlook on the world around us, and all being specially fitted for the learning of some lesson, the performance of some duty, through which alone we can fit ourselves for admission into a higher one; while the folly of the irreverence which not only imagines the unimaginable CREATOR to be something to be seen and approached like an earthly sovereign or an earthly 'father,' but also imagines that—blindly "rushing in, where Angels fear to tread"—we are to go at once, from the low sphere of our present attainment, to the 'Supreme Dwelling-place,' to 'heaven,' to 'the highest room,' is set forth (LUKE xiv. 17) in the parable of the man at the wedding, who, having got into a 'room' which he is not entitled to enter, is met by the rebuke 'Friend, go down lower!' and thereupon 'begins with shame to take the lowest *room*.' The admirably suggestive parables of the man who goes to the wedding-feast *without having on 'the wedding garment'*, (i.e., the spirit who attempts to get into a world, or phase of existence, for which it has not acquired the appropriate corporeal 'garment'), of him who begins to build without having counted the cost, of him who goes to war without having counted his forces, &c., all point to the impossibility of our attaining to any state which we have not acquired the power of constituting, for ourselves, to our own consciousness, by our perispiritic vibrations; the inculcation of which vital lesson may be said to be 'the Alpha and the Omega' of the teachings of Christ.

Christ speaks (MATT. ii. 21, LUKE x. 13) of '*repenting in sackcloth (garment of penitence, therefore indicating *fleshly incarnation*), and ashes*,' symbol of *death*; a transparent allusion to our accomplishment of repentance through the discipline of the earthly life. To the same effect is his saying (MARK x. 39), 'He that *believeth* (defined by Christ as the '*doing*' of his 'words,') and is *baptised*, shall be *saved*; he that believeth not shall be *damned*,' which shows, first, that it is by the combination of

'belief' and 'baptism,' i.e., by our *conforming to his teachings while undergoing* the 'baptism' of incarnation, that the soul is ultimately 'saved' from the painful necessity of 'death,' so constantly employed, throughout the 'New Testament' writings, as the synonym of the state of antagonism to the DIVINE BEING, and thus attains to the '*everlasting life*' as constantly held up, in those writings, as the aim towards which we are to tend; and, secondly, that our failure to conform to those directions in any given incarnation will entail upon us 'damnation,' in other words, will *condemn* us to a repetition of the suffering and probation of mortal life. The assertion that '*Death* came into the world by *sin*,' which, as *death* is the inevitable doom of *all* bodies composed of Matter in the compact state, can only be justified as an allusion to the fact that the *individualised soul* (that alone can '*sin*') can only experience *death* through its conjunction with fleshly bodies as 'the wages of sin,' indicated by the statements (EZEKIEL xviii. 20) 'the *soul* (not the *man*) that sinneth it shall *die*,' (GEN. ii. 17) 'in the *day* thou eatest of it thou shalt surely *die*,' i.e., shalt change the mode of incorporation of the 'fluidic' world, symbolised by 'day,' for the carnal incorporations that bring us into the Valley of the Shadow of Death; Christ's changing *water* into *wine* at the *end* of the *feast* (indicating the substitution of the *higher* for the *lower* order of bodies at the *end* of our educational career which, as each of its phases is represented by the 'eating' that re-builds the soul's corporeal envelope, is appropriately symbolised, in its totality, as a '*feast*'); his choosing 'the *last day* of the *feast*' for the utterance of his famous saying concerning the '*rivers of living water*,' his *washing* the disciples' feet at the *end* of the *supper*; his comparing of himself to '*bread*' and '*water*,' and his symbolic declaration that those who would *follow* him must '*eat*' his '*flesh*,' and '*drink*' his '*blood*' (implying that we can only *follow* him to the elevation of his degree by acquiring the power of building up for ourselves a *body* of the same nature as his own;) the '*hidden manna*' (REV. ii. 17) that is to be '*eaten*' by 'him that *overcometh*,' and who will then receive '*a new name*,' i.e., will enter into a new *category*, or *order of existence*; the assertions that 'the *last enemy* that shall be *overcome* is *death*,' that '*death*' is to be '*swallowed up in victory*,' and the scores of other passages of a similar character, familiar to students of those writings, are all declaratory, first, of the correspondence between the *moral state* of the soul and the *nature* of the *body* which it accretes as the *outward expression of that state*; and, next, of the fact that the substitution of the '*fluidic*' order of incorporation in place of the *animality of flesh*, as the *correspondential result of our moral rehabilitation*, constitutes the '*salvation*' which Christ came to assist us in '*working out*.' For that '*salvation*' (which is always declared to be the attainment of '*everlasting life*,') is

symbolically said to be effected '*through his blood*;' in other words, through our *voluntary* or *affectional* acceptance of the same *rule of action* from which, as the '*blood*' from which his *order of body* is '*built up*,' we, also, shall '*build up*' for ourselves '*a body* like unto his *glorious body*,' being '*raised*' in '*his image*,' at '*the last day*' of our respective educational career, when, having accomplished the '*return to our origin*' which Lao-tze shadows forth as the aim and end of earthly life, we are at length '*delivered* from the bondage of corruption (*'bonds of entrails made'*) into the glorious liberty of . . . the *manifestation* (corporeal externalisation) of the sons of God (ROM. viii. 21, 19), of Whose Creative Power *all* spirits are *results*, and therefore, *figuratively*, '*sons*.'

This explanation, which transforms the dark '*stumbling-blocks*' of the Jewish '*Scriptures*' into sunlit stepping-stones, is still farther confirmed by Christ's saying (LUKE xii. 50), '*I have a baptism* to be baptised with (the corporeal '*veil*' (HEB. x. 20) assumed by him for the fulfilment of his mission), and *how am I straitened* until it be accomplished!' *i.e.*, '*straitened*' by the limitations of that assumed corporeality, which was *real*, although it was neither '*of the nature of the Angels*' (which he possessed already), nor '*human*' (which could not have been assumed by a spirit of his degree), but was, as Paul says, '*of the seed of Abraham*, *i.e.*, it was an *outgrowth*, a *result*, of the '*faith*' and '*obedience*,' the practical conformity with the Divine Will, of which the name of '*Abraham*' is used as the symbol, and which is the source of the control possessed, by spirits of the higher ranks, over the material element. For the '*body*' which David medianimically announced as '*prepared for*' the coming of the '*Holy One*,' is called by the Angel '*that holy thing*;' and Christ, when clothed with it, not only, by his declaration concerning the Baptist, expressly excluded it from the category of bodies '*born of women*,' but walked upon the water, made himself invisible at pleasure (JOHN viii. 59), and says, in anticipation of the symbolic scene of the Crucifixion (JOHN x. 17, 18) '*I lay down my life of myself; no man taketh it from me. I lay it down, and I take it again*. This *commandment* (ordination, application of natural law) *have I received of my Father*,' *i.e.*, that he was able, through his self-identification with the Divine Power (symbolised as '*the Father*'), to make for himself the corporeality which, as a *result* of the action of that Power, is said to have been '*prepared*' by IT, and of which Paul says (HEB. vii. 16) that it was '*made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, (i.e., according to the 'commandment' or 'law' of fleshly generation, as the mode appointed for the production of the bodies of our planet), but after the power of an endless life;*' *i.e.*, through the '*power*' of con-

trolling what we call 'Matter,' which is the apanage of those who have attained to the 'endless life' of the Sidereal Degree. And this *reality* of the corporeal 'veil' temporarily assumed by Christ was so capital a fact in the experience of our planet, and of such transcendent import for the enlightenment of future ages, that the immediate followers of Christ—who could not *then* have explained, or even understood, its real nature—were allowed to suppose it, and to insist upon the necessity of 'confessing' it to have been, the 'veil of *flesh*' which Paul elsewhere loosely calls it, as he loosely calls Christ 'God,' in direct contradiction to his own elaborate statement to the contrary (1 COR. viii. 5, 6), and to Christ's repeated assertions of his inferiority to, and dependence upon, the SUPREME BEING, and his approval of the saying of the scribe (Mark xii. 32), '*there is one GOD, and there is none other.*' For Christ's assumption of that non-human corporeality was an example of the spirit's 'power' of *voluntarily modifying* its external envelope, or 'body,' and thus of adapting itself, *without dying*, to the requirements of the various states (or realms) upon which it may wish to enter, which constitutes the *endlessness* of Sidereal life; and it was necessary to insist on the *reality* of Christ's presence among us, because the manifestation of that presence was a sample, a specimen, a '*first-fruits*,' of the possibilities to be eventually arrived at by '*those who slept*'; i.e., by those who had fallen into the *lethargy* of spiritual declension, and of the humanised corporeality which is its result. And this explanation of the 'veil' which was destined first to *hide*, and then to '*make manifest*,' the great truth we are considering, shows us also the real meaning of Christ's example in undergoing the rite of baptism, and of his saying (MATT. xx. 23, MARK x. 39), '*Ye shall drink of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized.*' For the context, asserting that the figurative 'sitting on thrones' solicited by two of his disciples '*was not his to give*, but would be given to those for whom *it was prepared*' (i.e., by those who had 'attained to' that relative elevation), shows that, on this occasion, he alluded to his proper 'fluidic' corporeality, as 'a baptism' which they, too, would eventually 'be able' to 'accomplish.'

That the psychic element is slowly educated up to personal individuality through the forms of the lower 'reigns,' is a fact shadowed forth in numerous passages in the writings of the old Jewish 'prophets'; that our successive lives in this earth and in other planets constitute what, in 'New Testament' phraseology, is called 'the *way* of salvation,' is expressed, or implied, so constantly throughout the Gospels that, to quote all the evidence they furnish in proof of this fact would be to make a running commentary upon them from one end to the other. It is only

from this point of view that Christ's statements, like those of his various Messengers, can be rationally accepted, as, without this key to their meaning, all but his purely ethical maxims must be regarded, by thinking minds, as puerile, contradictory, or hopelessly obscure; those of his sayings which, with the aid of this interpretation, are seen to be the most luminously suggestive, being just those which, without it, most effectually baffle all attempts to reconcile them with reason and with common sense. How else, for instance, can we understand Christ's saying (MATT. xi. 16) that, although the men of his day had refused to 'dance' to his 'piping,' he would yet (JOHN xii. 32) like his mythic representatives, Orpheus and Odin, "*draw* (not compel) *everything* (therefore '*stones, trees, beasts*' and not merely '*men*' as our version has it,) unto himself?" It is only from this point of view that his saying (JOHN vi. 36) 'one soweth and another reapeth,' can be reconciled with the rest of the same saying, with justice, or with fact; for, unless the sower who 'sows' in one generation is also the reaper who 'reaps' in a subsequent generation, he would have neither cause for 'rejoicing,' nor motive for 'sowing.' The parable (MATT. xx.) of the labourers who, though some have laboured *much*, and others *little*, receive 'each a penny' at the *end* of the *day*, would inculcate the most glaring injustice if the seemingly unequal 'days' labours, thus disproportionally rewarded by an equal payment, were anything but a symbol of our diversified earthly existences, the 'days' that make up what Jamblichus calls 'the great total of our lives,' in which a longer or a shorter life, if it enable us to accomplish the special end it was intended to subserve, will equally contribute to 'the great total' of our future 'perfection,' the due employment of 'the talents' confided to us, whether 'ten' or 'five,' being *equally* a source of intellectual and moral gain in the admirable enchainment of our lives, in which a brief existence, or humble position, often enables us to acquire a gain we should have failed to secure in a longer or a more brilliant one, as a life of difficulty, disappointment, pain, is often needed to teach us some needful lesson we should have failed to learn from a more prosperous career; so that the worth of each 'day's' work, considered as a *means to an end*, does not depend on *the number of hours* we may have been at work, nor on the *nature* of the work we may have had to do, but in the *diligence and thoroughness* with which we have performed our allotted task, whatever it may have been. The parable in question is therefore only another presentation of Lao-tze's admonition, "Take care not to consider your *dwelling* too *narrow*, take care not to despise your fate," seeing that, as Plotinus expresses it, "the earthly lot most suitable to each man

(whether as expiation, discipline, or stimulus) is always provided for him" at each new incarnation "by the incessant providence of the gods," *i.e.*, by 'the sages of the *rocky walls*' whose limitations constitute the 'defile' of humanised existence, through which, as 'a chariot' making its 'way' onward by successive stages, we at length emerge upon 'the plain where dwell the *Æsir*,' and thus 'return to our origin,' by regaining the 'fluidic' home from which we have wandered, but whose welcome is always ready for the returning 'wayfarer,' the rebellious but repentant "son, who was *dead* but is *alive again*, who was *lost* but is *found*," the essentially abnormal and transitory nature and uses of human life,* as contradistinguished from the normal 'fluidic' life of the 'son' who has never quitted the paternal dwelling, being shadowed forth (LUKE xv. 11) in the beautiful parable of the Returning Prodigal, symbolising the souls who, having abandoned the plenteous home of spirit-rectitude for the sterile paths of self-love, return to that home when weary of '*filling their belly with the husks*' left by 'the swine;' a subtle indication that *planetary matter*, which constitutes the true and substantial food (source of corporeality) of the psychic element in the pre-personal stages of the lower 'reigns,' can only furnish the individualised soul with *husks*, cast-off pellicles, the 'coats of skins' (*clothing* of the psychic element in the animal degree†) which the Eloha of our planet is symbolically described as 'making' for the expelled denizens of 'Eden,' in place of the luminous order of externalisation they had lost by their fault; that *clothing* (order of embodiment) being most suggestively represented as a beneficent substitute for the yet lower degree of retrogradation towards which they were tending, symbolised by the '*aprons of fig leaves*' (*clothing* of the psychic element in the vegetable degree), which they had '*made for themselves*,' and to which, but for that substitution, *they would have been reduced*. Christ's arguments (MATT. xxiii. 29 to 36, LUKE xi. 47 to 50) would not only be entirely without point, but would teach a lesson of injustice even more glaring, (besides being utterly opposed to the declaration of EZEKIEL xviii. 20, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son," and to that of Paul, GAL. vi. 5, "Every man shall bear his own burden,") unless they were intended to put us on the track of the same great law, unless the men whom he upbraids with the crimes of former days, the 'generation' of whom he so emphatically declares that 'the blood of *all* the prophets slaughtered from Abel to Zacharias' is to be 'required,' were composed of the very same souls by whom, in their former

* Vide *Human Nature* for January and February, 1871.

† Vide *Human Nature* for April, 1870.

incarnations, that blood had been shed; Christ's words, moreover, implying what is constantly asserted by spirits, viz., that the souls of a host of former wrong-doers are frequently made to re-incarnate themselves, at the same time, in the same country, region, or place, *for the express purpose* of being made the victims of the wholesale miseries of war, pestilence, earthquake, storms, &c., the occurrence of which, as results of physical, moral, and social causes known to the 'overseers' of the planet, is foreseen by them, and utilised for effecting the general squaring-up of accounts, and teaching of lessons, by which great public catastrophes, as well as merely individual sufferings, are made to hasten the education of the humanity of a planet, and the cessation of which, as mankind advance in the knowledge and application of Natural Law, will concur with other changes in the conditions of the planet to render it unfit for the education of spirits who still need the discipline of suffering, and who, having failed to profit by the opportunities of amendment it had previously afforded, will, as set forth above, be at length expelled from it, and be sent to some world of lower degree; a doctrine taught in many of the parables, and, among others, in that of 'the barren fig-tree' (LUKE xiii. 7). For what is the teaching of that parable? "Behold," says the owner of the vineyard to his vine-dresser, "*three years* ('three' symbol of fulness, completeness,) I come seeking *fruit* (the virtues spoken of as 'fruits of righteousness') on this fig-tree, and find none. Cut it down. Why cumbereth it the *ground* (symbol of the earthly life)?" Then 'the vine-dresser' (the Guardian Angel of the obstinate wrong-doer figuratively described as the 'barren fig-tree,') intercedes for a delay of one more 'year' (an earth-life, with its four seasons, childhood, adolescence, maturity, and old age), in which he may bring to bear upon it, once again, the resources of his husbandry; 'if it bear fruit, well; *if not*, after that thou shalt cut it down.' The same warning is still farther enforced (*idem* 24-5) in the parable of the 'Master of the House,' who, 'when he has risen up, and shut-to the door,' will not open it again, but orders the 'workers of iniquity' to 'depart;' thus symbolising the 'casting-out' from this planet of the obstinately irreclaimable, whose exile to a less developed planet (in which the misery caused them by the rudeness and violence of its physical and social conditions will be intensified by their instinctive reminiscence of better things,) is aptly described as a 'weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

That human suffering is not only a general result of human ignorance and imperfection, and a means of general education, but is often a direct retribution of the sufferer's wrong-doing in this life, or in some former life, is abundantly indicated in the

teachings of Christ. When the disciples ask him (JOHN ix. 2) "Master, who did sin, *this man*, or *his parents*, that he *was born blind*?"—thus distinctly implying their belief in an anterior existence of the blind man, and assuming that his being '*born blind*' could only be a punishment of some '*sin*' committed by him in a former life, or of some '*sin*' on the part of his parents—Christ does not reprove either of these assumptions, but allows them to pass without contradiction (as he did on all the many other occasions when the subject of re-incarnation was alluded to, in his presence), as a known and admitted fact. He says not one word against the assumption that *the blind man had lived* (and had therefore '*sinned*') *previously* to his being '*born blind*;' nor against the supposition that the '*sin*' of *parents* in a former generation, might be punished, in a subsequent one, by their having consigned to them, as their child, some spirit whose own former wrong-doing had subjected it to a penalty that would be also, through their pride or their affection, a source of mortification or of sorrow to themselves. On the contrary, he allows these suppositions to pass without comment, as matters of course; and, *restricting his answer to this particular case*, he replies that the blindness of '*this man*' was not a punishment of any wrong-doing on the part of the man himself or of his parents, but had been undergone in order to furnish him with an opportunity of glorifying the DIVINE BEING by manifesting the fluidic power with which he, ITS instrument, was endowed by IT; a reply which—by declaring that the man had been *born blind* as a carrying-out of arrangements that must therefore have been made previously to his birth—is as clearly declaratory of the pre-existence of this man, and therefore of all other men, as are Christ's repeated assertions in regard to the Baptist; while the scope of his reply shows, not only that the blind man *had lived before*, but that he had *accepted* the long privation of sight as an act of devotion to the Great Spirit who had accepted his co-operation, which, as such, would be largely recompensed by the spiritual advancement that naturally results from the subordination of self-love to the general weal.

In his allusions (LUKE xiii.) to '*the Galileans*' murdered by Pilate, and to '*the eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell*,' Christ does not say that the fate of those men was not a punishment of their '*sins*,' but only says that *they were not more wicked than the rest of their fellow-townsmen*; the very point of his moral, '*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*,' distinctly implying that the men alluded to, although *not more wicked* than the others, *had*, nevertheless '*perished*' as a punishment of sins of which they had not '*repented*,' and that his hearers, being equally '*sinful*,' would '*likewise perish*' (*i.e.*, would *perish* as a

punishment of their sins), if they did not heed his warning, and 'repent' in time. To the 'impotent man,' whom he had cured of an infirmity that had lasted for thirty-eight years, Christ says (JOHN v. 14) '*Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee;*' thus plainly affirming that his infirmity (which must have dated from a very early age, if not from birth,) *was* a punishment of some anterior 'sin' (the expiation of which must have been then completed, or the punishment would not have been removed). He expressly attributes (LUKE xiii. 16) the illness of the woman who had been 'bent double' for 'eighteen years,' to her having been '*bound by Satan;*' in other words, to her having been, as Paul expresses it, 'given over to Satan (symbol of *retributive suffering*) for the destruction of the flesh,' *i.e.*, of the imperfections that bring us into conjunction with fleshly bodies; the 'bonds of iniquity,' 'bonds of entrails made,' which, 'like cords that none can break, bind the recompense of evil deeds to their author;' 'the chastisement of sins of which the soul has been guilty in its previous lives;' the 'doom which we shall never escape, were we small enough to enter the depths of the earth, were we great enough to reach the sky;' the 'finding of us out by our sin' from which neither 'heaven, hell, the wings of the morning, the uttermost parts of the sea, nor night' itself, can 'hide us;' in other words, the subjection of the soul to the penal consequences of its own wrong-doing, and its eventual deliverance from the love of evil through its experience of the painful consequences of that love.

The spirits who declare themselves to be charged with the work of explaining the riddles, and clearing away the imperfections, of 'the letter,' of the Jewish 'scriptures,' say that we have usually taken their figurative statements literally, and explained away, as figurative, those that are literally true; and a moment's reflexion suffices to show the justice of this charge of misinterpretation in regard to our explaining away, as merely figurative, Christ's frequent assertions of the necessity of our being 'born again,' of our 'becoming like little children,' which would be utterly void of point or meaning if used as metaphors, and must therefore be accepted as a direct presentation of the great doctrine which is the base and core of his parables. For what are 'children' but *little men and women*, whose 'innocence' is only apparent, and who bring with them, at birth, all the vicious propensities of humanity, which, though kept in partial and temporary abeyance by the weakness of their material organisation, will be spontaneously manifested by them as they acquire the bodily strength which enables them to bring out those propensities into action? Christ himself emphatically declares, of the whole human race, '*ye are of your father the*

devil,' the Psalmist says of us that we '*go astray as soon as we are born*.' Therefore, as neither 'strength' nor 'perfected praise' can, by any possibility, come "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" when Christ quotes (MATT. xxi. 16) the statement of the Psalmist (Ps. viii. 2), he *can* only refer to the *results* of the re-formative action exerted upon the soul by its repeated returns to the infancy which ushers it into a new earthly life; a meaning still farther indicated by the use of the terms '*strength*,' '*perfected praise*,' conveying the idea of *adolescence*, of *growth*, and of the term '*ordained*,' showing, as Plotinus remarks, in setting forth the same idea, that the process referred to, and the effects attributed to it, are "the result of a Divine Law." So, when Christ tells us that we must "receive the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child," that "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," it is simply impossible that he could have meant anything else than that our real and actual return to the state of childhood, through our being '*born again*,' in conjunction with a new earthly body, into a new earthly life, is, in very truth, the appointed '*way*' to that '*Kingdom*,' which Christ has defined to be, for each of us, *an emulation of the Divine Perfection implying our possession of all science, all purity, all power, all devotion*, and which, as such, is the antithesis of the ignorance, imperfection, weakness, and selfishness of childhood, and therefore *could not be symbolised by it*. For that which is employed as a '*symbol*' must necessarily correspond, by analogy, parity, or similarity, to that which it is employed to symbolise. But if souls were '*born*' only once, there would be no analogy, parity, or similarity between the '*birth*' of a child and the moral and spiritual amelioration of that child, because amelioration (*growing better*), being a passage from an inferior state to a superior one, necessarily implies *progression from one state to another state*; and although amelioration may and does occur *in the life-time* of the human being, and as the result of the *successive* experiences of that life-time, and although the successive stages of our amelioration may therefore be aptly symbolised (as we have seen to be the case in all the '*scriptures*' of the world) by the successive '*days*' of which a life-time is made up, yet that amelioration could not, in the nature of things, be symbolised by the figure of '*re-generation*,' of '*a new birth*,' because, in the first place, if the soul were '*created*' with its body, its birth would not be a progression from one state to another, and therefore could not symbolise the progressive stages implied in amelioration, and also because, in the second place, '*birth*' being a single event, occurring but once in a life-time, and not susceptible of being repeated in that life-time, there is nothing in the act of *being born* to suggest the idea of *being born again*, and, consequently, nothing to justify, or even

to suggest, the expressions '*re-generation*,' '*new birth*,' as metaphors implying *amelioration*. The mere fact that we have adopted those expressions, as synonyms of moral and spiritual amelioration, is therefore evidence of the fact that this amelioration is a result of our repeated subjection to the life of flesh. For, if it were not so, there *would be no such thing in human life as 're-generation' or 'new birth';* and consequently, as there would be no reason why such metaphors should ever have been invented, their invention would have been as gratuitous as their employment would be irrelevant and void of meaning.

It is, moreover, impossible to understand, in any other sense than as a literal statement of fact, Christ's declarations (JOHN iii. 3, 5) "Except a *man* be born again . . . be born of *water* (symbol of Matter) and of the *Spirit* (spirit-influence, spirit-world, spirit-zone) he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God;" for he follows up these declarations by continuing (v. 6) "that which is *born of the flesh* is flesh, and that which is *born of the spirit* is spirit," thus paraphrasing his preceding statement, and showing that he employed the antithesis of '*flesh and spirit*' as the *equivalent* and *explanation* of the antithesis of '*water and spirit*,' the two expressions completing and confirming each other, and proving that Christ employed the term '*water*' (and therefore '*baptism*' also,) as synonymous with *flesh*, and consequently as synonymous with *re-incarnation*; while his next words (v. 7) "Marvel not that I said *you must be born again*," being followed (v. 8) by his employment of a word (rendered by *pneuma*) signifying both *wind* and *soul*, constitute a plain and positive assertion that, just as *pneuma the wind* 'cometh' and 'goeth,' so *pneuma the soul* also 'comes' and 'goes,' and that, consequently, it was *not* 'created' with its material body, but *comes from* some other region than that in which it manifests its presence; and that, as it will live *after* the cessation of its conjunction with the '*flesh*' which is its *present* instrument of manifestation, so it lived *before* it operated that conjunction. Christ's argument is this: "Just as you know not '*the path of the wind*,' so, in the lower phases of your re-generative and re-formatory career, you know not whence comes your soul, nor whither it goes; yet *pneuma the soul*, like *pneuma the wind*, 'comes from far,' and will return to the far region whence it came." The doctrine of re-incarnation—which we have seen to have been shadowed forth in all the inspired '*scriptures*' of the world, and confusedly held by the Jews of Christ's day,—was distinctly taught, not only among the Essenians, but in *all* the secret teaching of the Jews, and was therefore well known to most of the Pharisees. Hence the implied reproach of Christ's words to Nicodemus, "Art thou a *master in Israel* (a student of

the secret lore), *and knowest not these things?*" and his suggestive query (v. 12), "If I have told you of *earthly things* (of the most elementary fact of your earthly existence), and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of *heavenly things?*" in other words "How could you understand me if, answering your question (v. 9) as to *how* your changes of state and of sphere are accomplished, I should try to explain to you the relations existing between the two spheres of planetary life, between the globes of your solar system, between your race and the higher order of existence from which you have wandered, between the moral state of the soul and the order of bodily envelope with which it clothes itself? if I should tell you of the processes (which your ignorance of Natural Law would render it impossible for you now to comprehend) by which you will gradually free yourself from the *garment* of humanization that, as long as you are clothed with it, will keep you out of 'heaven,' to which you can only 'ascend' by ceasing to be a '*man*' (i.e. a soul clothed upon with *flesh*), and by regaining the power of clothing yourself with the 'fluidic' incorporation of the Sidereal Degree, which I (who still belong to that Degree while seeming to belong to your earth,) am come to assist you to regain?"

If, renouncing the 'false Christs' of 'the letter'—whose surface-appearances are stated to have been combined for the purpose of fixing attention on the erroneous pre-conceptions which they were made *to seem to countenance in order the more effectually to dissipate* them—we accept the declarations of the Great Teacher in the only natural and logical sense of which they are susceptible, how admirable is seen to be what the Apostle Paul calls the 'wonderful working' of the Providential overruling, to which 'a thousand years is but as a *day*,' and by which, as Lao-tze expresses it, 'the soft' is made 'to break down the hard;' the soul being periodically stripped of its old, stiffened brain, with its false and one-sided ideas, its prejudices, its painful and irritating memories, that could only impede its farther progress, and being furnished (after a 'going aside,' a period of reflexion, of discipline or refreshment as the case may be,) with a new, soft, elastic brain, as a clean page on which to record a new set of impressions, a new and flexible organization that will enable it to make a new step towards the accomplishment of the task it has hitherto failed to accomplish; and also with the new affectional and social relations that will serve to bring out its weak points for discovery and correction, and to strengthen and develop the germs of virtues previously acquired! For the soul begins each new incarnation* at the point at which its previous

* Vide *Human Nature*, for February, 1871.

'life-day' has left it, and brings with it, at each new descent into the sphere of the earthly life, the increased *faculty* and *ability*, the increased *facility of acquisition*, the *latent knowledge* that we call 'genius,' 'intuition,' 'insight,' the improved sentiments and nobler aspirations, to which it has grown through the sufferings and efforts of its previous lives; thus realizing the wish, so often expressed by the old, *that it were possible to begin life again with the benefit of the experience which*, on any other hypothesis, *must always be felt to have been acquired too late*. It is thus, and thus only, according to the teachings of Christ, that we, as embodied souls, "renew our youth," our *seed-time*, condition of a *new harvest*; not yet "as the *Eagles*" (stated by spirits, in accordance with numerous passages of the Jewish 'scriptures,' to be the emblem of the 'Great Souls' who are nearing the Sidereal Degree), but, as yet, rather as the Phoenix, that splendid symbol of re-incarnation in the old Osirian worship.

THE MODERNS.

Tracing the doctrine of re-incarnation downwards to our own day, we find St. Jerome asserting that "The transmigration of souls is a doctrine which has been secretly taught, from ancient times, as an esoteric and traditional truth, which ought to be confided only to the selected few."

Origen says of it, that it affords the only possible explanation of certain Biblical narratives, as the fighting of Jacob and Esau before their birth, and the declaration that God had already loved the one and hated the other; the statement said to have been made by God to Jeremiah, "I knew thee before thou wert formed in the womb," and a host of similar assertions which, he argues, "would convict Providence of the iniquity of injustice, unless justified by the good or bad actions of the souls alluded to, in a previous life." Origen, moreover, not to leave any doubt as to the true character of the belief in question, says expressly that he is not alluding "to the metempsychosis of Plato, but to a doctrine far more rational and important." (The 'doctrine' of Plato, so admirable in other respects, was corrupted, as we know, like the earlier systems from which it was derived, by the introduction of the radically false notion that the human soul could retrograde into the bodies of the animal reign; and although it is tolerably certain that neither Plato nor the other eminent men of antiquity really believed in this retrogradation, they certainly taught it, as a means of restraining the passions of the vulgar by the fear of incurring so degrading a punishment.) Origen also asserts that the differences of human conditions which we see around us are caused by differences in the previous lives of the souls thus incarnated; that souls have sinned in wandering from

the Creator; that they occupy different stations according to the degree of their culpability, and go to higher or lower worlds according to the weight of the corporeal chains they have forged for themselves by their wrong-doing; and that this earth is one of the primitive and purgatorial worlds.

St. Augustine asks "Did I not, perhaps, before I entered my mother's womb, live elsewhere, in another body?" Lactantius and Gregory of Nyanzen profess the doctrine of re-incarnation; and many Catholic priests, at the present day, have come to the conclusion that, since baptism is declared to be necessary to salvation, Providential justice must necessarily send back into this world the souls of infants who die without having received baptism, in order to give them a new body in which to receive that 'sacrament.'

Ballanche, the eminent theologian and historian, already quoted, says, in regard to our successive lives on this earth and other planets, "Death ought only to be looked upon as a post-house on the road by which we are journeying. We reach the end of a stage with tired and jaded horses, and we stop there to take fresh horses, that will bring us farther on our way; but we must pay all that we owe for the stage just accomplished; and until our scot is paid, we are not allowed to set out on the next stage of our journey (*i.e.*, to return to the earthly life, or to quit this planet for a higher one). . . . The trials and annoyances to which we are exposed are torments for us as long as we remain below them; they become for us as the rungs of the ladder, and means of ascension, as soon as we have learned to dominate them. For the Wisdom that exposes us to these sufferings has no other intention than to compel us to amendment, instead of the angry and revengeful intentions that the vulgar attribute to It."

Nicolas de Cusa, Cardinal of the Roman Church, the immediate predecessor of Copernicus, openly published that the earth is not, and cannot be, the centre of the universe, that it goes round the sun, and that we have no means of knowing whether we are nobler or less noble than the inhabitants of the sun and the other planets of our system.

Dr. Ralph Cudworth (in his *Intellectual System of the Universe*) shows that all the great thinkers of antiquity believed that the Soul exists before its union with the body; and, while declining, from his point of view, to accept that belief, admits that their arguments are as conclusive in support of the doctrine of the Pre-existence of the Soul as of its Post-existence.

Descartes, and the eminent Cartesians Dr. H. More (in his *Resolution*), and Dr. J. Glanvil (in his *Lux Orientalis*), have built up, in support of the doctrine of Pre-existence, an argument whose incontrovertibility has only not been generally recognized

because it was not completed by the announcement of the law of re-incarnation, and of that of the pre-personal stages of psychic development, which are necessary to the due presentation and comprehension of the subject. Their contemporary, Cyranus de Bergerac, one of the precursors of modern spiritism, who died aged 35, in 1665, wrote a number of remarkably clever books in which he sets forth the rotation and inhabitedness of the worlds of the Universe, the Infinity of Space, the nature of spirits and their communication with men, and the great law of our successive lives in this earth and in other planets.

Dupont de Nemours, also a 'precursor,' reasons admirably on our successive existences, and on the necessity of temporary forgetfulness of our past, as a condition of the usefulness of each new earthly trial.

Delormel, in his great work on the Ancient Mysteries, states that "from the earliest time, the initiated have known the Unity, Infinity, and Perfection of GOD, the infinity of inhabited worlds, and our successive lives in them;" and argues that "as it is absurd to suppose that blessings and sorrows are the result of chance, we must believe them to be a consequence of our right or wrong doing in previous lives."

Lavater, in a series of letters to the Empress Maria of Russia, only recently made public, sets forth the doctrine of re-incarnation, and the fact of spirit-intercourse, almost as though he were writing to-day.

Among the more eminent advocates of the doctrine of re-incarnation in modern days are Fontanelle, Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno, the profound but little known thinker Saint Martin, Fichte, Schlegel, Lessing, Delormel and Ballanche, already cited, Van Helmont, Cardano, Postel, Bonnet, De Bretonne, Charles Fourier, Jean Reynaud, De Montal (Bishop of Cambrai), De Codre, Jouffroy, Savy, Chateaubriand, De Balzac, Lange, and the two great Italian statesmen, Cavour and Massimo d'Azeglio; and, of the present generation, the distinguished astronomer, Flammarion, Hoeffle, the discoverer of eleven planets, Puel, the Encyclopedist, George Sand, the poet Méry, Sardou, the brilliant playwright, Pezzani, Pelletan, and a host of other well-known writers, both of France and of other countries, of whose names I am unable to procure, at this time, the long list which I hope to give on a future occasion.

To the English advocates of Pre-existence mentioned above must be added the poet Wordsworth, whose magnificent *Ode to Immortality*, beginning:—

"Our life is but a dream and a forgetting,
Our being's star
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And comes from far,"

will doubtless be present to the memory of every reader. But of English authors who have proclaimed the doctrine of Re-incarnation I am only able to cite Sir Humphrey Davy and Charles Young. A special search will probably lead to a discovery of traces of this doctrine in the works of other English writers; but it is certain that, owing to the action of various causes, comparatively few English minds have hitherto arrived at a conviction of its truth, which fact sufficiently accounts, from the spiritist point of view, for the paucity of communications on the subject among English and American media at the present day. Indications, however, are not wanting, of a tendency, both in England and in America, to the perception of re-incarnation, as the Law of Human Progress.

Alger, in his '*Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*,' quotes, with apparent sympathy, the following passage from Lange's '*Studiren und Kritiken*':—"It may be that there is in each one a primal germ, a deathless monad, who is the organic identity of man, root of his inner and stable being, triumphant, unchanging, ruler of his flowing, perishable organisms. This spirit-germ, born into its present life, assimilates and holds the present body around it, out of the materials of this world. Born into the future life, it will assimilate and hold around it a different body, out of the materials of a future world."

The Poems of Walt Whitman, so highly lauded by "W. H." as the utterances of an "impressing spirit" through a "mediumistic poet," are fully confirmatory of the Theory of Development set forth by the writer in preceding papers; the following extracts (given in the *Spiritual Magazine* for January 1870), being equally explicit in regard to the pre-personal elaboration of the Psychic Element in the forms of the lower 'reigns,' in this planet and in the "other globes" about us (some of which are alluded to as being more backward, others as more advanced, than our earth), and to human life as being a *banishment* of the individualised 'soul' from 'the true country' to which 'every one goes in his turn,' i.e., on attaining to the individualised degree of Development, and to which all who quit that "true country" will eventually "return":—

"Take my hand, Walt Whitman!
Such gliding wonders! such sights and sounds!
Such joined unended links, each hooked to the next!
Each answering all—each sharing the earth with all!

* * * *

"Was somebody asking to see the soul?
See your own shape and countenance—persons, substances, beasts, the trees,
the running rivers, the rocks and sands.
All hold spiritual joys, and afterwards loosen them:

How can the real body ever die and be buried ? . . .
 Item for item it will . . . *pass to fitting spheres,*
Carrying what has accrued to it from the moment of birth to the moment of
death.

Watching the progress of the Japanese Ambassadors and their retinue through the streets of New York, he sees,

"In the procession . . .
 "Bringing up the rear, hovering above, or *in the ranks marching,* . . .
 "Not . . . the tanned Japanese only . . . the Past, the Dead . . .
 "The North—the sweltering South—Assyria—the Hebrews—the
 Ancient of ancients,
 "Vast, desolated cities—the gliding Present—all of these, and more,
are in the pageant procession."

A statement, from the spiritist point of view, none the less really and literally true, even should the 'mediumistic poet,' like most other mediums, have failed to understand the full purport of the hint of which his song was made the vehicle.

"Now, while the great thoughts of space and eternity fill me I will measure myself by them;
 And now, touched with *the lives of other globes, arrived as far along as those of the earth,*
Or waiting to arrive, or passed on farther than those of the earth,
 Thenceforth I no more ignore them than I ignore my own life,
Or the lives of the earth arrived as far as mine, or waiting to arrive."

* * *
 "I swear I think *there is nothing but immortality!*
 "That *the exquisite scheme* is for it, and *the nebulous float* is for it, and
 the *cohering* is for it!
 "And *all preparation* is for it! and *identity* is for it! and *life and death* are altogether for it!

* * *
 "I see Hermes, unsuspected, dying, well beloved, saying to the people, *Do not weep for me,*
This is not my true country, I have lived banished from my true country—
I now go back there;
I return to the celestial sphere, where every one goes in his turn."

Every spiritist will heartily endorse the valedictory with which "W. H." concludes his eulogium:—"True, Walt Whitman! True! Sing on, and let the whole world know it!"

Mrs. Tappan, in her recent Lectures on Reminiscence, distinctly and ably advocates the doctrine of the anteriority of the soul to the bodies it animates. The spirit of ESTELLE, in the deeply interesting account of her communications with her husband (in the *Spiritual Magazine* for Nov. 1861, p. 488) is stated to have said to him, "I have learned that we *commence to live here* before we are *born into the world;*" and, in many of the communications inserted in the Spiritualist journals of the United States, their writers allude to their prior existences, and announce their future return to the earth-life as the means by which they will accomplish the next step of their progress.

In Lord Adare's book, p. 67, a spirit, in answer to enquiries as to what had become of the soul of a favourite lap-dog, just

deceased, replied, through Mr. D. D. Home in a state of trance, that its soul was "a sort of electric spark, that might retain a likeness to the dog-form for a short time, so that a spirit, seeing it might like to catch it; but it could not be kept, as it must necessarily *be soon absorbed in a higher animal.*" Also, p. 91. Mr. Home, when entranced, being questioned as to the destiny of animals, replied, "No creature that crawls, *i.e.* that can do nothing to preserve its life, has immortality." "Do you mean that they have no future?" "Oh, yes, they have, indeed, *a very important future* before them; I mean that they differ from you *as regards their individuality.*" "Can you tell me where the line is drawn?" "*There is no exact line.*" These statements are most important as proving the tendency of spirit-teaching, since they fully concede the fact of the progressive, pre-personal elaboration of the psychic element in the ascending series of the forms of the lower reigns, and thus confirm the theory of Development previously set forth by the writer; for, if the 'soul' of the animal have 'before it *a very important future*' which is *not divided from us by any 'exact line,'* it is evident that the 'soul' of the animal is *on the same path* with ourselves; while the statement that the 'soul' of the animal 'differs' from ours only *as regards the individualization* to which we have attained but to which the animals have *not yet attained*, and to the attainment of which their next step is a *re-embodiment in a higher animal form*, is equivalent to saying, with 'Krishna,' "what they are, a man has been," and consequently implies that what we are, they will be: a doctrine equally implied in all the symbolic drawings of our English media, which are absolutely inexplicable by any other theory.

Dickens, alluding (*Oliver Twist*, ch. xxxi.) to the spontaneous waking up of what would seem to be a dormant desire for a sight of the country so often experienced by those who are about to pass away, although they may "have lived in crowded, pent-up streets, through whole lives of toil, and never wished for change," thus continues:—"The memories which peaceful country scenes call up are not of this world, or of its thoughts, or hopes. Their gentle influence may teach us to weave fresh garlands for the graves of those we loved, may purify our thoughts, and bear down before it old enmity and hatred; *but, beneath all this, there lingers, in the least reflective mind, a vague and half-formed consciousness of having held such feelings long before, in some remote and distant time, which calls up solemn thoughts of distant times to come, and sends down pride and worldliness beneath it.*"

Watters, in his recent Commentary on the *Tao-te-King*—after alluding to the wonderful similarity of thought and style between Emerson and Lao-tze, and recalling the fact that an

equally striking similarity has been remarked between Mallebranche and Plato, that Schelling, not only in mind, but even in appearance, resembled Socrates, and that Hegel is called 'the modern Proclus'—exclaims "Is it true, after all, that the spirit of deceased Philosophers returns from the Elysian Fields, forgetting, by its Lethean draught, all the thoughts and realities of the eternal, ever-the-same world, to in-form again a human body?"

The accomplished author of '*Lothair*' says of his hero:—"He was not so confident as he was, a few months ago, that he could be ushered . . . from his deathbed to the society of St. Michael and all the Angels. There might be long processes of initiation; intermediate states of higher probation and refinement . . . When millions of ages appeared to be necessary to mature the crust of a rather insignificant planet, it might be presumption in man to assume that his soul, though immortal, was to reach its final destination, regardless of all the influences of Space and Time."

I had hoped to add a few words in regard to the practical results that may be expected to follow a general recognition of the Law in question; but the unavoidable length to which this paper has already extended compels me to reserve that branch of my subject for another place. And I can therefore only commend, to the careful and dispassionate attention of all seekers after Truth, the great doctrine which is considered by those who hold it to constitute the sole explanation of the facts of suffering and of progress that can reconcile those facts with belief in the Divine Justice, and thus revive the world's fast-declining faith in the reality of the Divine Overruling of human affairs, that can satisfactorily account for all the phenomena of human life, and, by enlightening us in regard to the past, can enlighten us also in regard to the future, and enable us both to hasten our own individual progress and that of the world in general, and thus to avoid the social cataclysms towards which we are drifting; a doctrine which I have shown to be not only "supported by the concurrent testimony of all the most learned and eminent men" of every age, from the remotest antiquity to the present day, but abundantly confirmed by the teaching of Christ, and of all his various Messengers; a doctrine which runs like a shining clue through the bewildering undergrowths of the religious superstitions of our planet, and constitutes the one central affirmation common to all its creeds, the one luminous indication in which they all agree.

(Consulted for translations of foreign texts in the preparation of the preceding paper:—Wilson, Pauthier, Julien, Rémusat, Chalmers, Pezzani, Schütz, Chavée, Thorpe, Sale, and the excellent papers in "The Pathfinder," by Dr. W. P. Perfit, and J. L. Gooding.—A. B.)

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