

REINCARNATION

A Study of Forgotten Truth

BY

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REVISED AND EDITED BY

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Work out your own salvation. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—ST. PAUL.

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None sees the slow and upward sweep
By which the soul from life-depths deep
Ascends,—unless, mayhap, when free,
With each new death we backward see
The long perspective of our race
Our multitudinous past lives trace.

—WILLIAM SHARP.

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But what a mystery this erring mind?
It wakes within a frame of various powers
A stranger in a new and wondrous world.
It brings an instinct from some other sphere,
For its fine senses are familiar all,
And with the unconscious habit of a dream
It calls and they obey. The precious sight
Springs to its curious organ, and the ear
Learns strangely to detect the articulate air
In its unseen divisions, and the tongue
Gets its miraculous lesson with the rest,
And in the midst of an obedient throng
Of well trained ministers, the mind goes forth
To search the secrets of its new found home.

—N. P. WILLIS.

Insect and reptile, fish and bird and beast,
Cast their worn robes aside, fresh robes to don;
Tree, flower and moss put new year's raiments on;
Each natural type, the greatest as the least,
Renews its vesture when its use hath ceased.
How should man's spirit keep in unison
With the world's law of outgrowth, save it won
New robes and ampler as its girth increased?
Quit shrunken creed, and dwarfed philosophy!
Let gently die an art's decaying fire!
Work on the ancient lines, but yet be free
To leave and frame anew, if God inspire!
The planets change their surface as they roll:
The force that binds the spheres must bind the soul.

--HENRY G. HEWLETT.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

For those who are content with the usual creeds this little book will have no attraction. But for truth-seekers it may prove useful, though it claims only to be an earnest investigation of what seems an undemonstrable problem. Its doctrine was first met as the declaration of the profoundest students of the mysteries enveloping humanity—coming with authority but no proof of weight to most western thinkers. Its violent antagonism to current ideas compelled the writer to dispose of it by independent methods. If true, there must be some confirmation of it such as will impress any candid mind. If false, nothing can force it to live. This led to a careful study of the subject, which was summarized in a brief essay read and published to a small circle of Theosophists. A continuation of that study has resulted in this volume. Some readers may regard it as a waste of energy, except as a diverting curiosity, the truth or falsehood of reincarnation being to them of little consequence. But a sincere motive underlies it.

The cause of all the evils of modern society, the arch-enemy of the race—whether manifested in labor riots, arrogant greed, or the anarchist's dagger—is a faithless, hopeless, unscientific and stupid Materialism. Reincarnation combats this foe by a most subtle and deadly warfare. The noblest life is discerned to be the only sensible kind, and not abandoned to the accidental expression of impulse or sentiment.

The sincere thanks of the writer are due to a number of kind friends whose assistance has largely facilitated the collection of material for this book, and also to the authors who have kindly permitted the use of extracts from their writings.

E. D. WALKER.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

Regarding the doctrine of reincarnation as at once the most hopeful, reasonable and scientific view of, and the golden key to, the great problem of continued existence, it followed that I became acquainted with the literature of the subject, the result of which was to find in Mr. Walker's masterful and scholarly work not only a satisfactory history of metempsychosis but an impregnable line of argument in its favor that no materialistic thinker has ever overthrown, and which is at once the despair of its opponents and a rock in the path of unsound and unthinkable dogmas. Our author has not led his subject into a realm of fanciful and glittering assertion, whose rosy-hued settings would continually remind one of the "beautiful home over there," instead he has faithfully and unflinchingly followed his quest wherever it led him—to the high middle ground whereon his mentor meets and solves all the perplexing and intricate questions of human existence. It is reincarnation only which does this.

But while Walker stands at the head of writers on reincarnation we found much prosy matter in his citations, a superabundance from the poets, a tendency to repetition, a length of statement wherein sometimes he lost a collateral thought in logical deduction, and also a few things that needed correction. Desiring to present this subject in the *STAR OF THE MAGI* as correctly and exhaustively as possible we carefully and conscientiously revised and edited Mr. Walker's work for that purpose, and brought it down to date by the introduction of some new matter. We were actuated throughout solely to serve the truth, and we now issue it in response to many demands from those who desire to have it in a handy form.

NEWS E. WOOD.

REINCARNATION.

INTRODUCTION.

The interest all Christendom is at present manifesting in the deepest problems and mysteries of life, the dissatisfaction and despairing restlessness of many of the brightest minds, the prevalence of agnosticism and materialism in practical life and in philosophy, which Christianity seems powerless to resist, is an indication that we need, in the west, some new truth. Not only the wavering masses but the truth-seekers and advanced thinkers and devotees are yearning after a larger and fuller revelation.

This, we believe, will come with the investigation of the forgotten truth in the doctrine variously termed reincarnation, metempsychosis and transmigration. By this we do not mean the theories concerning the re-birth of men in brute bodies, which are attributed to Oriental religions and philosophies, because generally accepted by their followers. These are crude caricatures of the true conception. But we mean the inner kernel of that husk, which in protean forms has irrepressibly welled up in every great phase of thought, and which is an open secret lying all around us, and not simply a foreign importation, but one which we truth-seekers cannot afford to overlook.

Reincarnation illuminates the darkest passages in the way of life, dispels its haunting illusions and enigmas, and reveals cardinal principles which, if apprehended, will steady the shambling gait of mankind. Virtue, kindness and spirituality may thus be seen in their unveiled splendor as the only proper modes of thought and action.

Once the whole civilized world embraced reincarnation, and found therein a complete answer to that riddle of man's descent and destiny which the inexorable sphinx of life propounds to every traveler along her way. But the western branch of the race, in working out the material conquest of the world, has acquired the compensating discontent of a material philosophy. It has lost faith and drifted into a shadowy region where the eagerness for the "practical" things of life rejects whatever cannot be physically proven.

Even God and immortality are, for the most part, held as conjectures, believed only after demonstration, and not vitally then.

The realization of this condition is provoking a counter current of spirituality. The growing freedom of thought and the eastward look of many leading minds seems to herald a renaissance more radical, although more settled and gradual, than the reformations of Columbus, Luther and Guttenberg. As surely as the occupation and development of the western Eldorado revived Europe into unprecedented vigor, so the exploration of Palestine, and beyond into India, for treasures more precious than gold or dominion, shall revitalize the new world with an unparalleled growth of spiritual power.

Strangely enough, too, just as the "new world" proved to be geologically the oldest continent, so the "new truths" recently discovered are found to be the most ancient. They are as universal as the ocean. The latest philosophies and "isms" and cults are mostly fresh phrasings of early ideas. The most advanced conceptions of art, education and government are essentially identical with those of Greece and Rome. The newest inventions and industries are approaching the lost arts of Egypt. The modern sciences (as electricity and chemistry) are merely

ingenious applications of what the school-masters of primitive races knew better than Edison and Cooke. Geology has just dawned on us to reveal the sublime synopsis of earth's history, hidden for over three thousand years in the first chapter of the Bible. The last great thought of this era—Evolution—is as old as the hills in the far east.

Although commonly rejected through Europe and America, reincarnation is unreservedly accepted by the majority of mankind at the present day, as in all past centuries. From the dawn of history it has prevailed among the largest part of humanity with an unshaken intensity of conviction. Over all the greatest eastern nations it has held perpetual sway. The ancient civilization of Egypt, whose grandeur cannot be overestimated, was built upon this as a fundamental truth; and it was taught as a precious secret to Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Virgil and Ovid, who scattered its seeds through Greece and Italy.

It is the keynote of Plato's philosophy, being stated or implied very frequently in his dialogues. "Soul is older than body," he says, "souls are continually born over again from Hades into this life." In his view all knowledge is reminiscence. To search and learn is simply to revive the images of what the soul saw in its pre-existent state in the world of realities. It was also widely spread in the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus and Proclus.

The swarming millions of India have made this thought the foundation of their enormous achievements in government, architecture, philosophy and poetry. It was a cardinal element in the religion of the Persian Magi. Alexander the Great gazed in amazement on the self-immolation by fire to which it inspired Gymnosophists. Cæsar found its tenets propagated among the Gauls.

The Circle of Metempsychosis was an essential principle of the Druid faith, and as such was impressed on our forefathers—the Celts, the Gauls, and the Britons. It is claimed that the people held this doctrine so vitally that they wept around the newly-born infant and smiled upon death; for the beginning and end of an earthly life were to them the imprisonment and release of a soul, which must undergo repeated probation to remove its degrading impurity for final ascent into a succession of higher spheres.

The Bardic triads of the Welsh are replete with this thought of reincarnation, and a Welsh antiquary insists that an ancient emigration from Wales to India conveyed it to the Brahmans.

Among the Arab philosophers it was a favorite idea, and it may still be noted in many Mohammedan writers. In the old civilizations of Peru and Mexico it prevailed universally. The priestly rites of the Egyptian Isis, the Eleusinian mysteries of Greece, the Bacchic processions of Rome, the Druid ceremonies of Britain, and the cabalistic rituals of the Hebrews, all expressed this great truth with peculiar force for their initiates. The Jews generally adopted it after the Babylonian captivity through the Pharisees, Philo of Alexandria, and the doctors. John the Baptist was to them a second Elijah, Jesus was commonly thought a reappearance of John the Baptist or one of the old prophets.

The Talmud and Cabala are full of the same teaching. Some of the late Rabbins assert many entertaining things concerning the repeated births of the most noted persons of their nation. Christianity is not an exception to all the other great religions in promulgating the same philosophy—reincarnation played an important part in the thought of Origen and several other leaders among the early church fathers.

It was a main portion of the creed of the Gnostics and Manichaeans. In the middle ages many scholastics and "heretical" sects advocated it. It has cropped out spontaneously in many western theologians. The elder English divines do not hesitate to inculcate pre-existence in their sermons. In the seventeenth century Dr. Henry More and other Cambridge Platonists gave it wide acceptance.

The Roman Catholic purgatory seems to be a makeshift improvised to take its place.

Many philosophers of metaphysical depth, like Kant, Scotus, Schelling, Leibnitz, Schopenhauer and Fichte, have upheld reincarnation. Geniuses of noble symmetry, like Giordano Bruno, Herder, Lessing and Goethe, have fathered it. Scientists like Flammarion, Figuier and Brewster have earnestly advocated it. Theological leaders like Julius Muller, Dr. Dorner, Ernesti, Ruckert and Beecher have maintained it. In exalted intuitional natures, like Boehme and Swedenborg, its hold is apparent. Most of the Mystics bathe in it. The long line of Platonists from Socrates down to Emerson have no doubt of it. Nearly all the poets profess it. Even amid the predominance of materialistic influences in Christendom it has a considerable following.

Traces of it are found among the aborigines of North and South America, and among many barbaric tribes. At this time it reigns, without any sign of decrepitude, over the Burman, Chinese, Japanese, Tartar, Thibetan and East Indian nations, including at least seven hundred and fifty millions of mankind—nearly two-thirds of the human race.

Throughout the East it is the great central thought. It is no mere superstition of the ignorant masses. It is the chief principle of Hindu metaphysics, the basis of all their inspired books.

Such a hoary philosophy, held by the venerable authority of ages, ruling from the beginning of time the bulk of the world's thought, cherished in some form by the disciples of every great religion, is certainly worthy of the profoundest respect and study. There must be some vital reality inspiring so stupendous an existence.

But the western fondness for democracy does not hold in the domain of thought. The fact that the majority of the race has agreed upon reincarnation is no argument for it to the Occidental thinker. The conceit of modern progress has no more respect for ancient ideas than for the forgotten civilizations of old, even though in many essentials they anticipated or outstripped all that we boast of. Therefore we shall treat this subject, in the following pages, very largely from a western standpoint.

You cannot say of the soul, it shall be, or is about to be, or is to be hereafter. It is a thing without birth.—BHAGAVAD GITA.

As the inheritance of an illustrious name and pedigree quickens the sense of duty in every noble nature, a belief in pre-existence may enhance the glory of the present life and intensify the reverence with which the deathless principle is regarded.—WILLIAM KNIGHT.

The greatest things in this world are not its rivers, lakes and mountains; not its forests, plains and palaces. None of these can see, feel or love; none can think, aspire or dare. Man—who can build palaces, who can conquer the forests and plains, who can read the stars and suns, who can taste of both pain and joy—is the noblest object in this world. The raggedest child in London is greater than St. Paul's; the poorest peasant in France is nobler than the tallest peak of the Alps.

Man need not grovel or abase himself. He is older than the city of Rome, older than the Pyramids, older than the Koran or the Bible, older than any book ever written or printed; and he will survive them all.—O. J. SMITH.

I.

REINCARNATION DEFINED AND EXPLAINED.

Reincarnation is an extremely simple doctrine rooted in the assurance of the soul's indestructibility. It explains at once the descent and the destiny of the soul by so natural and forcible a method that it has not only dominated the ingenuous minds of all the primitive races, but has become the most widely spread and most permanently influential of all philosophies.

Reincarnation teaches that the soul enters this life, not as a fresh creation, but after a long course of previous existences on this earth and elsewhere, in which it acquired its present inhering peculiarities, and that it is on the way to future transformations which the soul is now shaping. It claims that infancy brings to earth, not a blank scroll for the beginning of an earthly record, nor a mere cohesion of atomic forces into a brief personality soon to dissolve again into the elements, but that it is inscribed with ancestral histories; some like the present scene, most of them unlike it and stretching back into the remotest past. These inscriptions are generally undecipherable, save as revealed in their moulding influence upon the new career; but like the invisible photographic images made by the Sun of all it sees, when they are properly developed in the laboratory of consciousness, they will be distinctly displayed. The current phase of life will also be stored away in the secret vaults of memory for its unconscious effect upon the ensuing lives. All the qualities we now possess in body, mind and soul result from our use of ancient opportunities. We are indeed "the heirs of all the ages," and are alone responsible for our inheritances. For these conditions accrue

from distant causes engendered by our older selves, and the future flows by the divine law of cause and effect from the gathered momentum of our past impetuses. There is no favoritism in the universe, but all have the same everlasting facilities for growth. Those who are now elevated in worldly station may be sunk in humble surroundings in the future. Only the inner traits of the soul are permanent companions. The wealthy sluggard may be the beggar of the next life, and the industrious worker of the present is sowing the seeds of future greatness. Suffering, bravely endured now, will produce a treasure of patience and fortitude in another life; hardships will give rise to strength, self-denial must develop the will, tastes cultivated in this existence will somehow bear fruit in coming ones, and acquired energies will assert themselves whenever they can by the *lex parsimonice* upon which the principles of physics are based. *Vice versa*, the unconscious habits, the uncontrollable impulses, the peculiar tendencies, the favorite pursuits, and the soul-stirring friendships of the present descend from far-reaching previous activities.

Science explains the idiosyncrasies of plants and animals by the environment of previous generations, and calls instinct hereditary habit. In the same way there is an evolution of individuality, by which the child opens its new era with characteristics derived from anterior lives, and adds the experience of a new personality to the sum total of his treasured traits. In its passage through earthly personalities the spiritual self, the essential Ego, accumulates a fund of individual character, which remains as the permanent thread stringing together the separate lives. The soul is therefore an eternal water globule, which sprang in the beginningless past from mother ocean, and is destined after an unreckonable course of mean-

derings in cloud and rain, snow and steam, spring and river, mud and vapor, to at last return with the garnered experience of all lonely existences into the Central Heart of all. Or, rather, it is the crystal stream running from a heavenly fountain through one continuous current that often halts in favorite corners, sunny pools and shady nooks, muddy ponds and clearest lakes, each delay shifting the direction and altering the complexion of the next tide as it issues out by the path of least resistance.

That we have forgotten the causes producing the present sequence of pleasures and pains, talents and defects, successes and failures, is no disproof of them, and does not disturb the justice of the scheme. For temporary oblivion is the anodyne by which the kindly physician is bringing us through the darker wards of sorrow into perfect health.

We do not undertake to trace the details of our earlier stoppages further than is indicated in the uncontrovertible principle, that as long as the soul is governed by material desires it must find its homes in physical realms, and when its inclination is purely spiritual it certainly will inhabit the domain of spirit. The restless wandering of all souls must at last conclude in the peace of God, but that will not be possible until they have gone through all the rounds of experience and learned that only in that Goal is satisfaction. That men ever dwell in bodies of beasts, we deny as irrational, as such a retrogression would contradict the fundamental maxims of Nature. That philosophy is a corruption of Reincarnation, in which the masses have coarsely masked the truth.

Granting the permanence of the human spirit amid every change, the doctrine of rebirth is the only one yielding a metaphysical explanation of the phenomena of life. It is already accepted in the physical plane

as evolution, and holds a firm ethical value in applying the law of justice to human experience. In confirmation of it there stands the strongest weight of evidence—argumentary, empirical and historic. It untangles the knotty problem of life simply and grandly. It meets the severest requirements of enlightened reason, and is in deepest harmony with the spirit of Christianity.

The soul is not born; it does not die; it was not produced from any one; nor was any produced from it.—EMERSON.

Nature is nothing less than the ladder of resurrection which, step by step, leads upward—or rather is carried from the abyss of eternal death up to the apex of life.—SCHLEGEL.

The soul, if immortal, existed before our birth.

What is incorruptible must be ungenerable.

Metempsychosis is the only system of immortality that Philosophy can hearken to.—HUME.

Look Nature through; 'tis revolution all,
All change; no death. Day follows night, and night
The dying day; stars rise and set, and set and rise.
Earth takes the example. All to reflourish fades.
As in a wheel—all sinks to reascend;
Emblems of man, who passes, not expires.

—YOUNG.

The experiences gained in one life may not be remembered in their details in the next, but the impressions which they produce will remain. Again and again man passes through the wheel of transformation, changing his lower energies into higher ones, until matter attracts him no longer, and he becomes—what he is destined to be—a god.—HARTMANN.

If we except the belief of a future remuneration beyond this life for suffering virtue and retribution for successful crimes, there is no system so simple, and so little repugnant to our understanding, as that of metempsychosis. The pains and pleasures of this life are by this system considered as the recompense or the punishment of our actions in another state.—D'ISRAELI.

II.

EVIDENCES OF REINCARNATION.

The religion of the churches, called Christianity, is to many earnest souls a dry husk. The germinant kernel of truth as it came from the founder of Christianity, when it is discovered under all its barren wrappings, is indeed sufficient to feed us with the bread of life. It answers all the practical needs of most people even with the husks. But it leaves some vital questions unanswered which impel us to desire something more than Jesus taught—not for mere curiosity, but as food for larger growth. The divine law which promises to fill every vacuum, and to gratify at last every aspiration, has not left us without means of grasping a portion of these grander truths.

The commonest idea of the soul throughout Christendom seems to be that it is created specially for birth on this world, and after its lifetime here it goes to a permanent spiritual realm of infinite continuance. This is a very comfortable belief derived from the appearances of things, and those holding it may very properly say, "My view agrees with the phenomena, and if you think differently the burden of proof rests upon you." We accept this responsibility. But a careful observer knows that the true explanation of facts is as a rule very different from the appearance. Ptolemy thought he could account for all the heavenly motions on his geocentric theory, and his teachings were at once received by his contemporaries. But the deeper studies of Copernicus and Galileo had to wait a century before they were accepted, although they introduced an astronomy of immeasurably nobler scale. Is it not a relic of the old confidence in appearances to

consider the physical orbits of human souls as limited to our little view of them?

The theologian seeks to explain life, with its inequalities, its miseries and injustices, by a future condition rewarding and punishing men for the deeds of earth. He concedes that benevolence and justice cannot be proven in God by what is seen of His earthly administration. The final law of creation is said to be Love, but the sin and suffering bequeathed to most of the race through no apparent fault of theirs annuls that dictum in the world's real thought, and compels men to regard life as a ceaseless struggle for existence in which the strongest wins and the weakest fails, and the devil takes the hindermost. But even if the future life will straighten out this by a just judgment, fairness demands that all shall have an even chance here, which only reincarnation assures.

The materialist takes a more plausible ground. On the basis of the soul beginning with the present existence, he regards all the developments of life as results of blind natural forces. He says that the variety of atomic qualities accounts for all the divergencies of life—physical, mental and moral. But he can give no reason why the same particles of matter should accomplish such stupendous varieties. Moreover, Science, the materialist's gospel, instead of disposing of psychic facts, is studying and classifying them as a new branch of supersensuous knowledge, as witness the publications of the Society of Psychical Research of London, Boston and New York. These investigations will ultimately initiate Science into the surety of non-physical things. Already a strong advance in that direction has been made by Isaac Taylor's "Physical Theory of a Future Life," Stewart & Tait's "Unseen Universe," and Hudson's well known "Law of Psychic Phenomena." The conception of an Infinite Per-

sonality overwhelms all the narrow groove-thinking of every mechanical school, and rises supremely in the strongest scientific philosophy of all time—that of Herbert Spencer. Strangest of all, Evolution, the corner-stone of Spencerian philosophy, is merely a paraphrase of reincarnation.

There are seven arguments for Reincarnation which seem conclusive:

1. That the idea of immortality demands it.
2. That analogy makes it the most probable.
3. That science confirms it.
4. That the nature of the soul requires it.
5. That it most completely answers the theological questions of "original sin" and "future punishment."
6. That it explains many mysterious experiences.
7. That it alone solves the problem of injustice and misery which broods over our world.

1. Immortality demands it:

Only the positivists and some allied schools of thought, comprising a very small proportion of Christendom, doubt the immortality of the soul. But a conscious existence after death has no better proof than a pre-natal existence. It is an old declaration that what begins in time must end in time. We have no right to say that the soul is eternal on one side of its earthly period without being so on the other. Far more rational is the view of certain scientists who, believing that the soul originates with this life, also declare that it ends with this life. That is the logical outcome of their premise. If the soul sprang into existence specially for this life, why should it continue afterward? It is precisely as probable from all the grounds of reason that death is the conclusion of the soul as that birth is the beginning of it. As Cudworth

points out, it was this argument which had special weight with the Greek philosophers, whose reasonings upon immortality have led all later generations. They asserted the eternity of the soul in order to vindicate its immortality. For, they held, as nothing which has being can have originated from nothingness, or can vanish into nothingness, and as they were certain of their existence, it was impossible that they could have had a temporal beginning. The present life must be only one stage of a vast number, stretching backward and forward.

Our instinctive belief in immortality implies a subconscious acceptance of this view. We are certain of a persevering life outlasting all the changes of time and death. But birth, as well as death, is one of the temporal shifts belonging to the transitory sphere which is foreign to our spirits. It is only because our backs are toward the earlier change and our faces to the latter that we refuse to reason about one on the principles used about the other. If we lived in the reversed world of Fechner's "Dr. Mises," in which old things grew new and men begin life by a reversed dying and end by a reversed birth, we would probably devise arguments for pre-existence as zealously as we do now for future existence, and that would lead to reincarnation. For all the indications of immortality point as unfailingly to an eternity preceding this existence—the love of prolonged life; the analogy of nature; the prevailing belief of the most spiritual minds; the permanence of the ego principle; the inconceivability of annihilation or of creation from nothing; the promise of an extension of the present career; the injustice of any other thought.

The ordinary Christian idea of special creation at birth involves the correlative of annihilation at death. What the origin of the soul may have been does not

affect this subject, further than that it long antedates the present life. Whether it be a spark from God himself, or a divine emanation, or a cluster of independent energies, its eternal destiny compels the inference that it is uncreated and indestructible. Moreover, it is unthinkable that from an infinite history it enters this world for its first and only physical experience and then shoots off to an endless spiritual existence. The deduction is rather that it assumed many forms before it appeared as we now see it, and is bound to pass through many coming lives before it will be rounded into the full orb of perfection and reach its ultimate goal.

2. Analogy is strongly in favor of reincarnation. Were Bishop Butler to work out the problem of the career of the human soul in the light of modern science, we doubt not that his masterpiece would advocate this "pagan" thought. For many centuries the literature of nations has discerned a standard simile of the soul's deathlessness in the transformation of the caterpillar into the butterfly. But it is known now that once all the caterpillars and butterflies were alike, and that by repeated incarnations they have reached their bewildering differences. When they started off from the procession of life on their own road from one or a few similar species, the progeny scattered into various circumstances, and the struggles and devices which they went through for their own purposes, being repeated for thousands of years in millions of lives, has developed the surprising heterogeneity of feather-winged insects. And as each undergoes his rapid changes in rehearsal of his long pedigree, we may trace the succession of his earlier lives.

The violent energy of the present condition argues

a previous stage leading up to it. It is contended, with great force of analogy, that death is but another and higher birth. This life is a groping embryo plane implying a more exalted one. Mysterious intimations reach us from a diviner sphere—

“Like hints and echoes of the world
To spirits folded in the womb.”

But subtle indications rearward argue that birth is the death of an earlier existence. Even the embryo life necessitates a preparatory one preceding it. So complete a structure must have a foundation. So swift a momentum must have traveled far. As Emerson observes: “We wake and find ourselves on a stair. There are other stairs below us which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us—many a one—which go upward and out of sight.”

The grand order of creation is everywhere proclaiming, as the universal word, “change.” Nothing is destroyed, but all is passing from one existence to another. Not an atom but is dancing in lively march from its present condition to a different form, running a ceaseless cycle through mineral, vegetable, and animal existence, though never losing its individuality, however diverse its apparent alterations. Not a creature but is constantly progressing to something else. The tadpole becomes a fish, the fish a frog, and some of the frogs have turned to birds. It was the keen perception of this principle in Nature which gave their vital force to the Greek mythologies and other ancient stories embodying the idea of transmutation of personality through many guises. It was this which animated the metamorphoses of Ovid, whose philosophy is contained in these lines from his poem on Pythagoras, which we quote from Dryden’s excellent translation:

"Death, so called, is but old matter dressed
In some new form. And in a varied vest
From tenement to tenement, though tossed,
The soul is still the same, the figure only lost—
And, as the softened wax new seals receives,
This face assumes, and that impression leaves,
Now called by one, now by another name,
The form is only changed, the wax is still the same.
Then, to be born is to begin to be
Some other thing we were not formerly.
That forms are changed, I grant; that nothing can
Continue in the figure it began."

Evolution has remoulded the thought of Christendom, expanding our conception of physiology, astronomy and history. The more it is studied the more universal is found its application. It seems to be the secret of God's life. Now that we know the evolution of the body, it is time that we learned the evolution of the soul. The biologist shows that each of us physically before birth runs through all the phases of animal life—polyp, fish, reptile, dog, ape, and man—as a brief synopsis of how the ages have prepared our tenements. The preponderance of special animal traits in us is due, he says, to the emphasis of those particular stages of our physical growth. So in infancy does the soul move through an unconscious series of existences, recapitulating its long line of descent, until it is fastened in maturity. And why is it not true that our soul traits are the relics of former activities? Evolution proves that the physical part of man is the product of a long series of changes, in which each stage is both the effect of past influences and the cause of succeeding issues. Does not the immaterial part of man require a development equally vast? The fact of an intellectual and moral evolution proceeding hand in hand with the physical can only be explained under the economy of Nature by a series of reincarnations.

3. Furthermore, the idea that the soul is specially created for introduction into this world combats all the principles of science. All Nature proceeds on the strictest economic methods. Nothing is either lost or added. There is no creation or destruction. Whatever appears to spring suddenly into existence is derived from some sufficient cause—although as unseen as the vapor currents which feed the clouds. There is a growing consensus of opinion among spiritualists and materialists alike, that the quantity both of force and of matter remains constant. The law of conservation of energy holds in the spiritual realm as in physics. The uniform stock of energy in the universe neither declines nor increases, but incessantly changes. The marvelous developments shown in the protean organisms continually entering the procession of life indicate that the new manifestations descend from some patriarchal line, uncreated and immortal, coming through the hidden regions of previous existences. Science allows no such miracle as the theological special resurrection, which is contrary to all experience. But it recognizes the universality of resurrection throughout all Nature, which is a matter of common observation. The idea of the soul as a phoenix, eternally continuing through myriad embodiments, is adapted to the whole spirit of modern science.

Especially significant is the axiomatic law of cause and effect. There is no other adequate explanation of the phenomena of life than the purely scientific one—that causes similar to those now operating before our eyes have produced the results we witness. The impelling characteristics of each personality require some earlier experiences of physical life to have generated them. All the sensuous proclivities of human nature point to long earthly experience as their only origin. And the unsatisfied physical inclinations of

the soul necessitate a series of material existences to work themselves out. The irrepressible eagerness for all the range of experience seems to be a sufficient reason for a course of incarnations which shall accomplish that result.

Physiologists contend that the wondrous human organism could not have grown up out of mere matter, but implies a pre-existent personal Ego idea, which grouped around itself the organic conditions of physical existence and constrained the material elements to follow its plan. This dynamic agent—or the soul—must have existed independent of the body before the receptacle was prepared. Bouiller and the German scientists Muller, Hartmann, and Stahl, have especially demonstrated in physiology this idea of a pre-existent soul monad, whose plastic power unconsciously constructs its own corporeal organism. The Greeks coiled this idea into a single word, and the younger Fichte and Lotze have developed it. The doctrine of modern physiology, as presented by the animists, is precisely the ground taken by upholders of reincarnation—that as the lower animals fashion ingenious nests with incredible skill, so the unwitting soul blindly frames the fabric of its body in keeping with the laws of its own adaptation. The unconscious agency of the mind or instinct in repairing the body, healing its hurts and guiding its growth, is recognized by most scientists. Plato but expresses the same idea when he says: “The soul always weaves her garment anew.” This thought is well worded by Giordano Bruno when he says: “The soul is not in the body locally, but as its intrinsic form and extrinsic mould, as that which makes the members and shapes the whole within and without. The body, then, is in the soul, the soul in the mind (spirit). The Intellect (Spirit) is God.”

This conception gives the lie to the materialism

which limits the forces of the individual to the complications of a mechanism. A corollary of this moulding power of the independent soul is Plato's proposition that "the soul has a natural strength which will hold out and be born many times." Since the ego is older than the body, the resident who builds its dwelling according to its tastes and materials, and since the purpose of its corporeal habitation cannot possibly be accomplished in a single brief lifetime, it is necessary that it should repeat that experience, always framing its receptacle to suit its growing character, like the epochs of a lobster's enlargement, until it has done with physical life. The new apparitions of men upon the earth thus hail from older scenes.

Evolution may fairly be claimed as a spiritual truth applying to all the methods of life. The gradual development of the soul, by the school of experience, demands a vaster arena of action than one earthly life affords. If it takes ages of time and thousands of lives to form one kind of an animal from another, the expansion of human souls from lower to higher natures surely needs many and many a life for that growth.

Evolutionary science explains the instinctive acts of young animals as inherited tendencies—as past experiences transmitted into fresh forms. Psychic science is learning that the earliest acts of human beings are also derived from remote habits formed in anterior activities, and stored away in the unconscious memory. Herbert Spencer, the philosopher of evolution, speaks of a constant energy manifesting itself through all transformations. This is the one life which runs eternally in protean shapes.

The measure of our acquisition of conceptions from the outer universe resides in the senses. There is no evidence that these have always been five. Nature, never taking a leap, must have put us through all the

lower stages before she placed us at our present position. And since Nature contains many substances and powers which are partially or wholly beyond these senses, some of which powers are known to other animals, we must assume that our present ascending development will introduce us to higher levels in which the soul shall have as many senses as correspond with the powers of Nature.

4. A much more weighty argument is that the nature of the soul requires reincarnation. The conscious soul cannot feel itself to have had any beginning, any more than it can conceive of annihilation. The sense of persistence overwhelms all the interruptions of forgetfulness and sleep, and all the obstacles of matter. This incessant self-assurance suggests the idea of the soul being independent of the changing body, its temporary prison. Then follows the conception that, as the soul has once appeared in human form, so it may reappear in many others. The eternity of the soul, past and present, leads directly to an innumerable succession of births and deaths, disembodiments and re-embodiments.

The identity of the soul surely does not consist in a remembrance of all its past. We are always forgetting ourselves and waking again to recognition. But the sense of individuality bridges all the gaps. In the same way it seems as if our present existence were a somnambulant condition into which we have drowsed from an earlier life, being sleepily oblivious of that former activity, and from which we may after a while be roused into wakefulness. A lack of memory of previous existences does not disprove reincarnation.

The study of infant psychology confirms this. The nature and extent of the mental furniture with which we begin life, apart from all experience of this world,

has obliged many thinkers to resort to pre-existence as the necessary explanation.

A careful examination of the rarer facts of life, noticeably those found in dreams, trances and analogous phenomena, demonstrates that our complete life is largely independent of the body, and consists in a perpetual transfer of the sensuous experiences of self-consciousness into a supersensuous unconsciousness. But this higher storehouse of character might more truly be called our real consciousness, although we are not ordinarily cognizant of it, for it comprises our habits, instincts and tendencies. This is the essential character of the soul and must persist after death. Now, unless all our earthly possibilities are exhausted in one life, these inherent material qualities of our spiritual nature will find expression in a plurality of earthly existences. And if the purpose of life be the acquisition of experience, it would be unreasonable to suppose a final transfer elsewhere before a full knowledge of earth has been gained. It is apparent that one life cannot accomplish this, even in the longest and most diverse career; to say nothing of the short average, and the curtailed allowance given to the majority. If one earth life answers for all, what a tiny experience suffices for the immense masses who prematurely die as children! Men are willing enough to believe in an eternity of spiritual development after this world; but is it consistent with the thought of Omnipotence to consider that the Divine Plan is achieved in preparing for that by a few swift years in one body? In devoting eternity to our education, the Infinite Teacher surely will not put us into the highest grade of all until we have well mastered the lessons of all the lower classes.

The philosophy of "innate ideas" is an admission of earlier lives than the present. The intuitionists

emphatically regard the concepts of cause, substance, time and space as existing in the mind independent of experience. The sensationalists consider them entirely due to our sensations. The Spencerian evolutionists occupy a middle ground and call them a mental heredity resulting from the experience of the race. It has been well shown, as Edgar Fawcett says, by two impartial critics, that this controversy cannot be solved by any agreement of Western psychologists. Buckle, in his "History of Civilization," inveighs against these discordant systems as having "thrown the study of the mind into a confusion only to be compared to that in which the study of religion has been thrown by the controversies of the theologians." (Vol. I, page 166.) And George Henry Lewes, in his "History of Philosophy," deplores this perplexing condition of metaphysics. The solution of the problem comes, along with reincarnation, from the Eastern students, who assert that a true conception of the soul is discovered only by the culture of supersensuous faculties. They concede a portion of truth to both extreme schools, declaring that the *primary* acquisition of such ideas was gained by sensation, but that at present they are innate in the infant mind. They are now the generalized experience of former existences rising again into consciousness.

The restlessness of our spirits points to ancient habits of varied action. And a still more forcible indication is the diversity of character in the same person. These wavering uncertainties and contraries in each one of us, which strive for the mastery and are never crushed even by the sternest fixity of habit—rendering the best of us amenable to temptations, and making the strongest vacillate—may well result from meanderings in numerous characters. The main trend of our natures is still often distracted into old forgot-

ten ways, and we often feel ourselves to be that which is at variance with our environments.

5. Reincarnation provides a complete answer to the most perplexing problem of theology—original sin. Properly this point belongs to the preceding section, but its importance justifies a separate mention. The endless controversies centering upon this question show how Christian metaphysics have vainly wrestled with a Gordian knot which cannot possibly be untied from the standpoint considering this life the initial and only earthly one—a knot which reincarnation not simply cuts, but reveals how it was made. Between the extreme dogmas of Pelagius, who maintained that all men are born in a state of innocence and may therefore live without sin, and of Augustine, who held the total depravity of mankind, arising from their transgression in Adam and their absolute bondage to the devil, there has raged a continual warfare, which has divided Christendom into many sects of thought on this leading doctrine. The modern church creeds still range themselves in conflicting battalions, following the discussions during the Reformation between Erasmus, who denied the power of hereditary sin over free will, and Luther, who insisted that the race is completely in the devil's power by nature. By far the largest part of the Christian world professedly adheres to the latter faith—that men are born entirely corrupt. Even the Arminians, Quakers and liberal denominations who admit only a germ of sin in humanity are at a loss to account for it. The ordinary theological explanation which derives our sin from the transgression of Adam, as apparently taught by St. Paul, although tacitly held by most of the churches and expressed in the majority of creeds, grates so severely on the inner consciousness and common sense

that it does not answer the real difficulty. There is a general agreement among mankind, upon which the codes of practical life are based, that Adam's responsibility for our sin is only a makeshift of the theologians—for every sensible man knows that no one but the individual himself can be blamed for his wrongdoing. Adam is accepted as a fable for our older selves. Dismissing all the interminable arguments of theology, which only obscure truth in a cloud of intellectual wranglings, the broad foundation of ethics, grounded in our best instincts, attached sin somehow, though inexplicably, to the sinner; and the only sufficient explanation traces its beginning to earlier lives.

The moral character of children, especially the occurrence of evil in them long before it could have been implanted by this existence, has forced acute observers to assume that the human spirit has made choice of evil in a pre-natal sphere similar to this. Every one who knows children rejects the Pelagian theory of their immaculate innocence. As soon as they have the power to do wrong, without any teaching, the wrong is done as a natural proceeding.

The germ of sin springs up from some old sowing. But the Augustinian doctrine is equally untrue to human nature. The most incorrigible tendency to evil in an uninfluenced child cannot conceal the good within it, but merely indicates that former ill habits are working themselves out. The depraved criminal at last sees his own folly, when his course of sin is run, and becomes so weary of it that the next lease of life must be on a better plan. So evil is discovered to be good in the making, and vice is virtue in the strengthening.

Every person at some stage of growth awakens to the recognition of sin within him, and is certain that it is so radical as to reach back of all his present life, although it is surely foreign to his true nature. We

all feel ourselves to have bounded into life like a stag carrying a panther which must be shaken off. Theology attempts to account for this by Adam's sin entailing a hereditary depravity. But our inmost consciousness agrees with the common sense of mankind in holding us alone responsible for our tendency to wrong. Remorse seizes us for the inexplicable evil in us. The only solution is that of the parasite in the butterfly. The insect allowed the pest to enter when it was a worm. This blighted condition cannot be the original state of man. It must be the result of the human will resisting the divine, and choosing wrong in old existences beyond recollection.

A masterly expression of this thought nourished the childhood of Christianity in the teaching of Origen, and flourished with wholesome influence until it was forcibly crushed out of popularity by the Council of Constantinople, to make room for the harsh dogmas which have since darkened the rationale of Christianity. It never was intelligently met and conquered, but was summarily ousted as incompatible with the weight of prejudice. The same treatment of it appears in Dr. Hodge's "Systematic Theology" (under the section on Pre-existence). That it is in harmony with Scripture has been shown by Henry More, Soame Jenyns, Chevalier Ramsay, Professor Bowen and other writers. Julius Muller, Lessing, Edward Beecher, Coleridge and Kant also sustain it from a religious-philosophical ground. It is the only rational explanation of the theological idea of sin.

The same is true regarding the church's dogma of future punishments and rewards. A reasonable consideration fails to understand how the jump can be made from this condition of things to an eternity of either suffering or bliss, as ordinary theology demands. The Roman Catholics recognized this difficulty suffi-

ciently to provide Purgatory, and in that tenet they meet the sense of humanity. Reincarnation simply says that there are many purgatories, and one is earth. The more rational Protestants get around the incongruity by permitting many grades of existence in heaven and hell, which approaches the same solution. Reincarnation says also, there are infinite degrees of heaven and hell, and many of them slope down through this life. It is inconceivable how earthly natures (and most of human souls are such) can find their penalties and their rewards elsewhere than on some kind of earth. The scheme of the universe presents everywhere a simple and sublime habit of keeping affinities together, and it certainly seems as if the same economy could apply to souls as to atoms. This idea meets better than any other the principles that punishment for sin cannot continue longer than the sin continues, and that the everlasting mercy of the Supreme will provide some final release for his erring children.

6. Reincarnation explains many curious experiences. Most of us have known the touches of feeling and thought that seem to be reminders of forgotten things. Sometimes as dim dreams of old scenes, sometimes as vivid lightning flashes in the darkness recalling distant occurrences, sometimes with unutterable depth of meaning. It appears as if Nature's opiate which ushered us here had been so diluted that it did not quite efface the old memories, and reason struggles to decipher the vestiges of a former state. Almost every one has felt the sense of great age. Thinking of some unwonted subject often an impression seizes us that somewhere, long ago, we have had these reflections before. Learning a fact, meeting a face for the first time, we are puzzled with an obscure sense that it is familiar. Traveling newly in strange places we are

sometimes haunted with a consciousness of having been there already. Music is specially apt to guide us into mystic depths, where we are startled with the flashing reminiscences of unspeakable verities which we have felt or seen ages since. Efforts of thought reveal the half-obliterated inscriptions on the tablets of memory, passing before the vision in a weird procession. Every one has some such experiences. Most of them are blurred and obscure. But some are so remarkably distinct that those who undergo them are convinced that their sensations are actual recollections of events and places in former lives. It is even possible for certain persons to trace thus quite fully and clearly a part of their bygone history prior to this life.

Sir Walter Scott was so impressed by these experiences that they led him to a belief in pre-existence. In his diary was entered this circumstance, February 17, 1828, as given in Lockhart's "Life of Scott" (first edition, Vol. VII, page 114):

"I cannot, I am sure, tell if it is worth marking down, that yesterday, at dinner time, I was strangely haunted by what I would call the sense of pre-existence, viz., a confused idea that nothing that passed was said for the first time; that the same topics had been discussed and the same persons had stated the same opinions on them. . . . The sensation was so strong as to resemble what is called a *mirage* in the desert and a *calenture* on board ship. . . . It was very distressing yesterday, and brought to my mind the fancies of Bishop Berkeley about an ideal world. There was a vile sense of unreality in all I said or did."

That this was not due to the strain upon his later years is evident from the fact that the same experience is referred to in one of his earliest novels, where this "sentiment of pre-existence" was first described. In "Guy Mannering," Henry Bertram says: "Why is

it that some scenes awaken thoughts which belong, as it were, to dreams of early and shadowy recollections, such as old Brahmin ideas would have ascribed to a state of previous existence? How often do we find ourselves in society which we have never before met, and yet feel impressed with a mysterious and ill-defined consciousness that neither the scene nor the speakers nor the subject are entirely new; nay, feel as if we could anticipate that part of the conversation which has not yet taken place."

Bulwer Lytton describes it as "that strange kind of inner and spiritual memory which often recalls to us places and persons we have never seen before, and which Platonists would resolve to be the unquenched and struggling consciousness of a former life."

Again, in "Godolphin" (chapter xv), he writes:

"How strange is it that at times a feeling comes over us as we gaze upon certain places, which associates the scene either with some dim remembered and dreamlike images of the Past, or with a prophetic and fearful omen of the Future. . . . Every one has known a similar strange and indistinct feeling at certain times and places, and with a similar inability to trace the cause."

Edgar A. Poe writes (in "Eureka"): "We walk about, amid the destinies of our world existence, accompanied by dim but ever present memories of a Destiny more vast—very distant in the bygone time and infinitely awful. . . . We live out a youth peculiarly haunted by such dreams, yet never mistaking them for dreams. As *memories* we know them. During our youth the distinctness is too clear to deceive us even for a moment. But the doubt of manhood dispels these feelings as illusions."

Explicit occurrences of this class are found in the narratives of Hawthorne, Willis, De Quincey, Cole-

ridge and many other writers. A striking instance appears in a little memoir of the late William Hone, the parodist, upon whom the experience made such a profound effect that it roused him from thirty years of materialistic atheism to a conviction of the soul's independence of matter. Being called in business to a house in a part of London entirely new to him, he kept noticing that he had never been that way before. "I was shown," he says, "into a room to wait. On looking around, to my astonishment everything appeared perfectly familiar to me—I seemed to *recognize* every object. I said to myself, what is this? I was never here before and yet I have seen all this, and if so, there is a very peculiar knot in the shutter." He opened the shutter and there was the knot.

The experience of many persons supports this truth. The sacred Hindu books contain many detailed histories of transmigration. Kapila is said to have written out the Vedas from his recollection of them in a former life. The Vishnu Purana furnishes some entertaining instances of memory retained through successive lives. Pythagoras is related to have remembered his former existences in the persons of a herald named Æthalides, Euphorbus the Trojan, Hermotimus of Clazomenæ, and others. It is stated that he pointed out in the temple of Juno, at Argos, the shield with which, as Euphorbus, he attacked Patroclus in the Trojan war. The life of Apollonius of Tyana gives some extraordinary examples of his recognitions of persons he had known in preceding lives. All these cases are considered fictions by most people, because they trespass the limits of historical accuracy. But there are many facts in our own time that point in the same direction. The Druses have no doubt that this life follows many others. A Druse boy explained his terror at the discharge of a gun by saying, "I was

born murdered;" that is, the soul of a man who had been shot entered into his body. A scholarly friend of the writer is satisfied that he once lived among the mountains before his present life, for, though born in a flat country destitute of pines, his first young entrance to a wild pine-grown mountain district roused the deepest sense of familiarity and home-likeness. And his last life, he thinks, was as a woman, because of certain commanding feminine traits which continually assert themselves. And this in spite of an apparently strong masculine nature, which never excites a suspicion of effeminacy.

Another friend of the writer says that his only child, a little girl now deceased, often referred to a younger sister of whom he knew nothing. When corrected with the assurance that she had no sister, she would reply, "Oh, yes, I have! I have a little baby sister in heaven!" The same gentleman tells this anecdote of a neighbor's family where the subject of reincarnation is never mentioned. A group of children was playing in the house at a counting game while their mother watched them. When they reached one hundred they started again at one and climbed up the numbers once more. The brightest boy commented on the proceeding: "We count ten, twenty, thirty, and so on to a hundred. Then we get through and begin all over. Mamma! That's the way people do. They go on and on till they come to the end, and then they begin over again. I hope I'll have you for a mamma again the next time I begin." Lawrence Oliphant gives in *Blackwood's Magazine* for January, 1881, a remarkable account of a child who remembered experiences of previous lives.

A writer in *Notes and Queries* (second series, Vol. IV, page 157), says: "A gentleman of high intellectual attainments, now deceased, once told me that he had dreamed of being in a strange city, so vividly that he

remembered the streets, houses and public buildings as distinctly as those of any place he ever visited. A few weeks afterward he was induced to visit a panorama in Leicester Square, when he was startled by seeing the city of which he had dreamed. The likeness was perfect except that one additional church appeared in the picture. He was so struck by the circumstance that he spoke to the exhibitor, assuming for his purpose the air of a traveler acquainted with the place. He was informed that the additional church was a recent erection." It is difficult to account for such a fact by the hypothesis of the double structure of the brain, or by clairvoyance.

In Lord Lindsay's description of the valley of Kadi-sha ("Letters," page 351, Ed. 1847), he says: "We saw the river Kadisha descending from Lebanon. The whole scene bore that strange and shadowy resemblance to the wondrous landscape in 'Kubla Khan' that one so often feels in actual life, when the whole scene around you appears to be reacting after a long interval. Your friends seated in the same juxtaposition, the subjects of conversation the same, and shifting with the same dreamlike ease, that you remember at some remote and indefinite period of pre-existence; you always know what will come next, and sit spell-bound, as it were, in a sort of calm expectancy."

Dickens, in his "Pictures from Italy," mentions this instance, on his first sight of Ferrara: "In the foreground was a group of silent peasant girls, leaning over the parapet of the little bridge, looking now up at the sky, now down into the water; in the distance a deep dell; the shadow of an approaching night on everything. If I had been murdered there in some former life I could not have seemed to remember the place more thoroughly, or with more emphatic chilling of the blood; and the real remembrance of it acquired

in that minute is so strengthened by the imaginary recollection that I hardly think I could forget it."

A passage in the story of "The Wool-gatherer" shows that James Hogg, the author, shared the same feeling and attributed it to an earlier life on earth. N. P. Willis wrote a story of himself as the reincarnation of an Austrian artist, narrating how he discovered his previous personality, in "Dashes at Life," under the title "A Revelation of a Previous Existence." D. G. Rossetti does the same in his story, "St. Agnes of Intercession."

The well known lecturer, Eugene Ashton, recently contributed to a Cincinnati paper these two anecdotes:

"At a dinner party in New York, recently, a lady, who is one of New York's most gifted singers, said to one of the guests: 'In some reincarnation I hope to perfect my voice, which I feel is now only partially developed. So long as I do not attain the highest of which my soul is capable I shall be returned to the flesh to work out what Nature intended me to do.' 'But, madam, if you expect incarnations, have you any evidence of past ones?' 'Of that I cannot speak positively. I can recall, dimly, things which seem to have happened to me when I was in the flesh before. Often I go to places which are new to the present personality, but they are not new to my soul; I am sure that I have been there before.'

"A Southern literary woman, now living in Brooklyn, speaking of her former incarnations, says: 'I am sure that I have lived in some past time; for instance, when I was at Heidelberg, Germany, attending a convention of Mystics, in company with some friends I paid my first visit to the ruined Heidelberg Castle. As I approached it I was impressed with the existence of a peculiar room in an inaccessible portion of the building. A paper and pencil were provided me and I drew

a diagram of the room, even to its peculiar floor. My diagram and description were perfect, when we afterward visited the room. In some way not yet clear to me I have been connected with that apartment. Still another impression came to me with regard to a book, which I was made to feel was in the old library of the Heidelberg University. I not only knew what the book was, but even felt that a certain name of an old German professor would be found written in it. Communicating this feeling to one of the Mystics at the convention, a search was made for the volume, but it was not found. Still the impression clung to me, and another effort was made to find the book. This time we were rewarded for our pains. Sure enough, there on the margin of one of the leaves was the very name I had been given in such a strange manner. Other things at the same time went to convince me that I was in possession of the soul of a person who had known Heidelberg two or three centuries ago."

The writer knows a gentleman who has repeatedly felt a vivid sense of some one striking his skull with an axe, although nothing in his own experience or in that of his family explains it. An extraordinary person, to whom he had never hinted the matter, once surprised him by saying that his previous life was closed by murder in that very way. Another acquaintance is sure that some time ago he was a Hindu, and recollects several remarkable incidents of that life.

Objectors ascribe these enigmas to a jumble of associations producing a blurred vision—like the drunkard's experience of seeing double, a discordant remembrance, snatches of forgotten dreams—or to the double structure of the brain. In one of the lobes, they say, the thought flashes a moment in advance of the other, and the second half of the thinking machine regards the first impression as a memory of something long

distant. But this explanation is unsatisfactory, as it fails to account for the wonderful vividness of some of these impressions in well balanced minds, or the long trains of thought which come independent of any companions, or the prophetic glimpses which anticipate actual occurrences. Far more credible is it that each soul is a palimpsest inscribed again and again with one story upon another, and whenever the all wise Author is ready to write a grander page on us He washes off the old ink and pens his latest word. But some of us can trace here and there letters of the former manuscript not yet effaced.

A contributor to the *Penn Monthly*, of September, 1875, refers to the hypothesis of double mental vision as supposed to account for most of these instances, and then concludes: "Such would be my inference as regards ordinary cases of this sort of reminiscence, especially when they are observed to accompany any impaired health of the organs of mental action. But there are more extraordinary instances of this mental phenomena, of which I can give no explanation. Three of these have fallen within my own range of observation. A friend's child of about four years old was observed by her older sister to be talking to herself about matters of which she could not be supposed to know anything. 'Why, W—,' exclaimed the older sister, 'what do you know about that? All that happened before you were born!' 'I would have you know, L—, that I grew old in heaven before I was born.' I do not quote this as if it explained what the child meant to explain, but as a curious statement from the mouth of one too young to have ever heard of pre-existence, or to have inferred it from any ambiguous mental experiences of her own. The second case is that of the presence of inexplicable reminiscences, or what seem such in dreams. As everybody knows, the

stuff which dreams are ordinarily made of is the everyday experience of life, which we cast into new and fantastic combinations, whose laws of arrangement and succession are still unknown to us. In the list of my acquaintances is a young married lady, a native of Philadelphia, who is repeatedly but not habitually carried back in her dreams to English society of the eighteenth century, seemingly of the times of George II, and to a social circle somewhat above that in which she now lives. Her acquaintance with literature is not such as to give her the least clue to the matter, and the details she furnishes are not such as would be gathered from books of any class. The dress, especially the lofty and elaborate head-dresses of the ladies, their slow and stately minuet dancing, the deference of the servants to their superiors, the details of the stiff, square brick houses, in one of which she was surprised to find a family chapel with mural paintings and a fine organ—all these she describes with the sort of detail possible to one who has actually seen them, and not in the fashion in which book-makers write about them. Yet another, a more wide-awake experience, is that of a friend, who remembers having died in youth and in India. He sees the bronzed attendants gathered about his cradle in their white dresses; they are fanning him. And as they gaze he passes into unconsciousness. Much of his description concerned points of which he knew nothing from any other source, but all was true to the life, and enabled me to fix on India as the scene which he recalled."

7. The strongest support of reincarnation is its happy solution of the problem of moral inequality and injustice and evil which otherwise overwhelms us as we survey the world. The seeming chaos is marvelously set in order by the idea of soul-wandering. Many a

sublime intellect has been so oppressed with the topsy-turviness of things here as to cry out, "There is no God. All is blind chance." An exclusive view of the miseries of mankind, the prosperity of wickedness, the struggles of the deserving, the oppression of the masses, or, on the other hand, the talents and successes and happiness of the fortunate few, compels one to call the world a sham without any moral law. But that consideration yields to a majestic satisfaction when one is assured that the present life is only one of a grand series in which every individual is gradually going the round of infinite experience for a glorious outcome—that the hedging ills of to-day are a consequence of what we did yesterday and a step toward the great things of to-morrow. Thus the tangled snarls of earthly phenomena are straightened out as a vast and beautiful scheme, and the total experience of humanity forms a magnificent tapestry of perfect poetic justice.

The crucial test of any hypothesis is whether it meets all the facts better than any other theory. No other view so admirably accounts for the diversity of conditions on earth, and refutes the charge of favoritism on the part of Providence. Hierocles said, and many a philosopher before and since has agreed with him, "Without the doctrine of metempsychosis it is not possible to justify the ways of God." Some of the theologians have found the idea of pre-existence necessary to a reasonable explanation of the world, although it is considered foreign to the Bible. Over thirty years ago, Dr. Edward Beecher published "The Conflict of Ages," in which the main argument is this thought. He demonstrates that the facts of sin and depravity compel the acceptance of this doctrine to exonerate God from the charge of maliciousness. His book caused a lively controversy, and was soon fol-

lowed by "The Concord of Ages," in which he answers the objections and strengthens his position. The same truth is taught by Dr. Julius Muller, a German theologian of prodigious influence among the clergy. Another prominent leader of theological thought, Dr. Dorner, sustains it.

We conclude, therefore, that reincarnation is necessitated by immortality, that analogy teaches it, that science upholds it, that the nature of the soul needs it, that many strange sensations support it, and that it alone grandly solves the problem of life.

The fullness of its meaning is majestic beyond appreciation, for it shows that every soul, from the lowest animal to the highest archangel, belongs to the infinite family of God and is eternal in its conscious essence, perishing only in its temporary disguises; that every act of every creature is followed by infallible reactions which constitute a perfect law of retribution; and that these souls are intricately interlaced with mutual relationships. The bewildering maze thus becomes a divine harmony.

No individual stands alone, but trails with him the unfinished sequels of an ancestral career, and is so bound up with his race that each is responsible for all and all for each. No one can be wholly saved until all are redeemed. Every suffering we endure apparently for faults not our own assumes a holy light and a sublime dignity. This thought removes the littleness of petty selfish affairs and confirms in us the vastest hopes for mankind.

III.

ASTRAL PICTURES OF SUCCESSIVE INCARNATIONS.

The following is adapted from Rama Prasad by Mr. Zeno T. Griffen. It gives the gist of the Vedanta philosophy regarding successive embodiments as affected by pictures recorded in the Astral Light:

Everything in every aspect that has been, or is in being on our planet, has a legible record in the Book of Nature, and the impulse of the life principle of the Universe and the mind are constantly bringing the outlines of these pictures back to us. It is, to a great extent, due to this that the past never leaves us, but always lives within us, although many of its most magnificent monuments have been forever effaced from the face of our planet for the ordinary gaze. These returning rays are always inclined *toward the center which originally gave them birth*. In the case of universal surroundings of terrestrial phenomena these centers are preserved intact for ages upon ages, and it is quite possible for any sensitive mind, at any time, to turn these rays toward itself by coming in contact with any material remains of historic phenomena. On a stone unearthed at Pompeii is pictured a part of the great event which destroyed the city, and the rays of that picture are naturally inclined toward that piece of stone.

The preservation and formation of visual pictures is only the work of the *luminiferous ether*. The *soniferous ether* preserves all the sounds that have ever been heard, or are being heard on earth. Glyndon in Italy, seeing and hearing the conversation of Viola and Zanoni in their distant home, is therefore not a mere dream of the poet—it is a scientific reality. The only

thing necessary is to have a sympathetic mind. This pictorial whole is only the cosmic counterpart of the individual *coil of life*, stored up in each individual and thing. The macrocosmic and microcosmic phenomena are both links in the same chain, and both will conduce to a thorough understanding of the whole.

Suppose a man stands on a mountain with the finest picture of Nature stretched out before his eyes. As he stands there, contemplating this wealth of beauty, *his* picture in this posture is at once made in the ecliptic. Not only is his external appearance pictured but the hue of his life receives the fullest representation. If the luminiferous ether prevails in him at that moment, if there is the light of satisfaction in his face, if the look in his eyes is calm, collected and pleasant, if he is so much absorbed in the scene as to forget everything else—the Sense Ethers, separately or in composition, will do their duty, and all his satisfaction, calmness, pleasure, attention or inattention, will to the finest possible shade, be represented in the sphere of the ecliptic. If he walks, runs, comes down or goes up, the Sense Rays, with the utmost fidelity, will picture the generating and generated colors in the same respective spheres.

A man stands with a weapon in his hand, with the look of cruelty in his eyes, with the glow of inhumanity in his veins, and his helpless victim before him. The whole phenomena will be instantly recorded. There stands the murderer and his victim in the truest possible colors; all are there as surely as they are in the eye of the murderer or the victim himself.

We have seen that time and space, and all the possible factors of phenomena receive there an accurate representation. All the various Sense Rays are united to the time that saw them leaving their record on the plane of our pictorial region. When, in the course of

ages, the same time throws its shade again upon the earth, the pictorial rays, stored up long since, energize man-producing matter, and shape it according to their own potential energy, which now begins to become active. It will be readily conceded that the Sun gives life to the earth, and to men as well as to vegetables and minerals. Solar life takes human shape in the womb of the mother, and this is only an infusion of some one set of our pictorial rays into sympathetic life, which already shows itself on our planet. These rays thus produce for themselves a human gross body in the womb of the mother, and then, having the now somewhat different and differing material body, start on their terrestrial journey. As time advances the pictorial representation changes its impulsive postures and with it the gross body does the same.

In the case of the rebirth of the man we saw gazing on the mountain, the calm, watchful, contented attitude of the mind which he cultivated then, has its influence upon his organism now. Once more the man enjoys the beauty of Nature and so is pleased and happy.

But now take the case of the cruel murderer. He is cruel by nature; he still yearns to murder and destroy, and he could not be restrained from his terrible practices in his former life. But now that picture of the ebbing life of his victim is a part and parcel of his constitution. The pain, the terror and the feeling of despair and helplessness are there in all their strength. He suffers pain from no apparent cause, and is subject to unaccountable fits of terror, despair and helplessness. His life is miserable, and slowly but surely ebbs away.

Let the curtain fall on this stage. Take the incarnated thief, and see his friends leave him, one by one. His doom is a lonely house. He is doomed to eternal

cowardice. And so with the whole category of crimes.

These illustrations sufficiently explain the law according to which these cosmic pictures govern our future lives. It is not difficult to understand that the picture of each individual organism in the Life Principle of the Universe, although ever changing with the varying postures of the object, remains the same in substance. Every object exists in its form of this principle, until, in the course of evolution, this principle merges into the higher atmosphere of Manas, the mind, or substratum of the third principle of the universe from below.

Every genus and species of civilization upon the face of the earth is pictured in the life principle of the universe, or ocean of the five senses, and it is these pictures which, on the highest plane of existence, correspond, probably, to the *ideas* of Plato. A very interesting question arises at this point. Are these pictures of eternal existence, or do they only come into existence after formations have taken place on the terrestrial plane? From nothing, nothing comes, is a well known axiom of philosophy. The Hindus hold that what we now call pictures of all objects in their general, specific and individual components have ever been existing in the Universal Mind. The Breath of God, or the Breath of Life, is nothing more nor less than abstract intelligence, or, if such an expression be better understood, *intelligent motion*. All formation in progress on the face of our planet is the assuming by everything, under the influence of *solar ideas*, of the shape of those *ideas*. The process is quite similar to the process of wet earth taking impressions of everything that is pressed upon it. The *idea* of anything is its soul.

Human souls exist in this sphere just like the souls of other things, and are affected in that sphere, by

terrestrial experience, in the manner above described.

These pictures have their counterparts in the mental and the higher atmospheres. As these solar pictures recur again and again there are times at which these mental pictures also recur. The ordinary deaths known to us are terrestrial deaths; that is, the influence of the solar pictures is withdrawn for some time from the earth. After a certain time—the duration of which depends upon the colors of the pictures—they throw their influence again upon the earth, and we experience terrestrial rebirth. We may die any number of terrestrial deaths, and yet our solar life might not be extinct.

But men of the present cycle might die solar deaths under certain circumstances. Then they pass out of the influence of the Sun and are born again only in the reign of the Second Cycle. Men who now die solar deaths will remain in a state of bliss all through the present cycle. Their rebirth might also be delayed for more than one cycle. All these pictures remain in the bosom of the cycle during the cycle period of rest. In the same way might men undergo higher deaths, and pass their time in a state of even higher and more enduring bliss. The mental coil may be broken, too, just as the gross, the terrestrial and the solar coils may be, and then the blessed soul remains in bliss and unborn until the dawn of the second day of Brahma.

Higher still and longer is the state which follows Brahmic death. Then the spirit is at rest for the remaining “*Kalpa* and the *Mahapralaya* that follows.”

During the night of Brahma—as, indeed, during all the minor nights—the Human Soul, and, in fact, the whole of the universe, is *hidden in the bosom of Brahma* like the tree is hidden in its seed.

Why do we not remember our past births? We shall get this answer uniformly from the ages—A good many do and always have remembered. * * * Our memory of the past is exactly measured by our foresight for the future; if we cannot see forward to our immortality, we cannot see backwards to the dark abyss of time from whence we came.—CHARLES JOHNSTON.

Might not the human memory be compared to a field of sepulture, thickly stocked with the remains of many generations? But of these thousands, whose dust heaves the surface, a few only are saved from immediate oblivion, upon tablets and urns; while the many are, at present, utterly lost to knowledge. Nevertheless, each of the dead has left in that soul an imperishable germ, and all, without distinction, shall another day start up and claim their dues.—ISAAC TAYLOR.

The absence of memory of any actions done in a previous state cannot be a conclusive argument against our having lived through it. Forgetfulness of the past may be one of the conditions of an entrance upon a new stage of existence. The body, which is the organ of sense perception, may be quite as much a hindrance as a help to remembrance. In that case casual gleams of memory, giving us sudden abrupt and momentary revelations of the past, are precisely the phenomena we would expect to meet with. If the soul has pre-existed, what we would *a priori* anticipate are only some faint traces of recollection surviving in the crypts of memory.—PROFESSOR WILLIAM KNIGHT.

The soul reposes after its day of toil in the field of earthly existence, but that rest being ended it must return to its unfinished task; it emerges again upon the psychic plane, and is reborn in the physical world. The real life of the soul is continuous, its individuality imperishable, and in the whole series of its incarnations there is an unbroken sequence of causes and effects. Every action, however small, produces its proportionate results, whether in the same or in a subsequent incarnation; these effects reacting upon the individual by whom they are originated, good for good and evil for evil. Thus each man is the maker of his own destiny, inasmuch as his character, good or bad, and his environment, favorable or unfavorable, are the direct outcome of his own thoughts and desires, deeds and misdeeds, in his past lives as well as in his present life; and, similarly, his future will be of his own making.—JAMES M. PRYCE.

IV.

OBJECTIONS TO REINCARNATION.

There are four leading objections to the idea of repeated incarnations, viz:

1. That we have no memory of past lives.
 2. That it is unjust for us to receive now the results of forgotten deeds enacted long ago.
 3. That heredity confutes it.
 4. That it is an uncongenial doctrine.
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1. Why do we not remember something of our previous lives, if we have really been through them?

The reason why there is no universal conviction from this ground seems to be that birth is so violent as to scatter all the details and leave only the net spiritual result. As Plotinus said, "Body is the true river of Lethe; for souls plunged into it forget all." The real soul life is so distinct from the material plane that we have difficulty in retaining many experiences of *this* life. Who recalls all his childhood? And has any one a memory of that most wonderful epoch—infancy?

Nature sometimes shows us what may be the initial condition of a man's next life in depriving him of his life's experience, and returning him to a second childhood, with only the character acquired during life for his inseparable fortune. The great and good prelate Frederick Christian von Oettingen of Wurtemberg (1702–1782) became in his old age a devout and innocent child, after a long life of usefulness. Gradually speech died away, until for three years he was dumb. Leaving his study, where he had written many edifying books, and his library, whose volumes were now sealed to him, he would go to the streets and join the children in their

plays, and spend all his time sharing their delights. The profound scholar was stripped of his intellect and became a venerable boy, lovable and kind as in all his busy life. He had bathed in the river of Lethe before his time. Similar cases might be produced, where the spirits of strong men have been divested of a lifetime's memory in aged infancy, seeming to be a foretaste of the next existence. They show that the loss of a life's details does not appear strange to Nature, and that the nepenthic waters of Styx, which the ancients represented as imbibed by souls about to re-enter earthly life, to dispel recollection of former experiences, are not wholly fabulous.

It has been shown that there are traces of former existences lingering in some memories. These and other exceptional departures from the general rule furnish substantial evidence that the obliteration of previous lives from our consciousness is only apparent. Sleep, somnambulism, trance, and similar conditions open up a world of super-sensuous reality to illustrate how erroneous are our common notions of memory. Experimental evidence demonstrates that we actually forget nothing, though for long lapses we are unable to recall what is stored away in the chambers of our soul; and that the Orientals are right in affirming that as a man's lives become purer he is able to look backward upon previous stages, and at last will view the long vista of the æons by which he has ascended to God. Many cases reveal that the reach and clearness of memory are greatly increased during sleep and still more greatly during somnambulant trance; so much so that the memory of some sleepings and of most trances is sufficiently distinct from the memory of the same individual in waking consciousness, to seem the faculty of a different person. And, while the memory of sensuous consciousness does not retain the facts of the

trance condition, the memory of the trance state retains and includes all the facts of the sensuous consciousness—exemplifying the superior and unsuspected powers of our subconscious selves. Instances are frequent illustrating how the higher consciousness faithfully stores away experiences which are thought to be long forgotten until some vivid touch brings them forth in accurate order. The higher recollection and the lower sometimes conduct us through a double life. Dreams that vanish during the day are resumed at night in an unbroken course. There is an interesting class of cases on record in which the memory which links our successive dual states of consciousness into a united whole is so completely wanting that in observing only the difference between the two phases of the same person we describe it as “alternating consciousness.” These go far toward an empirical proof that one individual can become two distinct persons in succession, making a practical demonstration of reincarnation. Baron Du Prel’s “Philosophie der Mystic” cites a number of such authentic instances, of which the following is one, given by Dr. Mitchell in “Archiv für thierischen Magnetismus,” iv.

“Miss R— enjoyed naturally perfect health, and reached womanhood without any serious illness. She was talented, and gifted with a remarkably good memory, and learned with great ease. Without any previous warning she fell one day into a deep sleep which lasted many hours, and on awakening she had forgotten every bit of her former knowledge, and her memory had become a complete *tabula rasa*. She again learned to spell, read, write, and reckon, and made rapid progress. Some months afterward she again fell into a similarly prolonged slumber, from which she awoke to her former consciousness, *i. e.*, in the same state as before her first long sleep, but without the faintest rec-

ollection of the existence or events of the intervening period. This double existence now continued, so that in a single subject there occurred a regular alternation of two perfectly distinct personalities, each being unconscious of the other, and possessing only the memories and knowledge acquired in previous corresponding states."

More singular still are cases in which one individual becomes two interchanging persons, of whom one is wholly unconnected with the known history of that individual, like that narrated in Mr. Stevenson's story of "The Adventures of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and Julian Hawthorne's story of "Archibald Malmaison." The newspapers a few years ago published an account of a Boston clergyman who strangely disappeared from his city, leaving no trace of his destination. Just before going away he drew some money from the bank, and for weeks his family and friends heard nothing of him, though he had previously been most faithful. Soon after his departure a stranger turned up in a Pennsylvania town and bought out a certain store, which he conducted very industriously for some time. At length a delirious illness seized him. One day he awoke from it and asked his nurse, "Where am I?" "You are in —," she replied. "How did I get here? I belong in Boston." "You have lived here for three months and own Mr. —'s store," said his attendant. "You are mistaken, madam; I am the Rev. —, pastor of the — church in Boston." Three months were an absolute blank. He had no memory of anything since drawing the money at his bank. Returning home, he there resumed the broken line of his ministerial life and continued it without further interruption.

Numerous similar cases are recorded in the annals of psychological medicine, and justify us in assuming, according to the law of correspondences, that some

such alternation of consciousness occurs after the great change known as death. The attempt to explain them as mental aberrations is wholly unsuccessful. Reincarnation shows them to be exceptions proving the rule—the recall of former activities supposed to be forgotten. In these examples of double identity the facts of each state disappear when the other set come forward and are resumed again in their turn. Where did they reside meanwhile? They must have been preserved in a subtler organ than the brain, which is only the medium of translation from that unconscious memory to the world of sense-perception. This must be in the super-sensuous part of the soul. This provides that, as a slow and painful training leads to subconscious habits of skill, so the experience of life is stored up in the higher memory, and becomes, when assimilated, the reflex acts of the following life—those operations which we call instinctive and hereditary.

Aside from the foregoing observations of Mr. Walker we would add that there are many persons who have flashes of soul memory extending back to incidents and experiences of their former lives. Many also are able, by a course of mental training and physical development, to develop this soul memory so completely that they can remember with marked clearness and distinction all important incidents and events of their last incarnation previous to this present one. The writer has met several such, some of whom were also able to remember and recognize other persons with whom they were acquainted in the preceding incarnation, with the names they then bore, their business, professional and domestic relations, dates, and other details, etc., as clearly, distinctly and unmistakably as any of us remember similar facts and events that occurred one or two years ago. One lady told the writer she clearly remembered every detail of a former

life, which occurred *exactly three hundred years previous to her present incarnation*, with innumerable details of her experiences in that life from childhood to the age of 44, when she died, and from which time her memory was a blank until the present life revived it. She could recall no moment of consciousness during the intervening 256 years, and did not develop this soul memory until the twenty-second year of her present life, when it came to her suddenly, like a flash of light, while she was an inmate of a Catholic convent, where she had been placed at the age of 10.

Charles Johnston, M. R. A. S., in a valuable booklet entitled "*The Memory of Past Births*" (recently issued by the Metaphysical Publishing Company, New York), says (pp. 36, 37):

"And there are to-day, as there have always been, many who remember. One need only ask, to find men and women who have a clear and definite vision of things that befell them in other lives. I have known many who could tell, and were ready to tell, the right inquirer. Let me give details of some of these. One remembered clearly a temple ceremony in a shrine hollowed out between the paws of some great beast, telling even the form of the landscape and color of the sky as he had seen them, when looking back through the door. He described, without knowing it, a scene in ancient Egypt, for the shrine is cut out between the paws of the Egyptian Sphinx—a shrine of which he knew nothing, remembering only the clear picture, but having no sense of where it was. He also had a quite clear vision of a hillside in India, a memory belonging to yet another life; and his description here was equally vivid and true.

"Yet another spoke of many lives remembered, one including a scene in a temple in inner China, where a ceremony of the Mysteries was being performed. He

had a clear sense of his own place in the temple, of the words spoken, of the ritual carried out. And he also had definite memory of two other births, with details of names and places, vivid as if they had happened yesterday.

"A third remembered places and names, down to minute and often bizarre and unexpected details, of seven consecutive births. And all of these were in a continent other than that in which the present personality was born. One birth, the place of which was remembered with especial accuracy, had been verified as to local color and circumstance by the man himself; another had fallen in a land he had never visited, but local details of which were familiar to me.

"Let these three cases stand, taken at random from many. They show that it is with the memory of past births as it was a generation ago with apparitions—it is impossible to raise the subject in a general audience without finding some one who remembers something; and whoever goes further, and asks among the students of mysticism and occult philosophy, will soon meet with quite definite and clearly-marked memories, in such abundance as to bring the matter outside the region of doubt or conjecture, altogether."

2. The question is raised, is it just that a man should suffer for what he is not conscious of having done?

As just as that he should *enjoy* the results of what he does not remember causing. It is said that justice requires that the offender be conscious of the fault for which he is punished. But the ideas of justice between man and man cannot be applied to the all-wise operations of the Infinite. In human attempts at justice that method is imperative because of our liability to mistake. God's justice is vindicated by the undisturbed sway of the law of causation. If I suffer it must be for

what *I* have done. The faith in Providence demands this, and it is because of unbelief in reincarnation that the seeming negligence on the part of Providence has obliterated the idea of a Personal God from many minds. Nature is the arena of infallible cause and effect, and there is no such absurdity in the universe as an effect without a responsible cause. A man may suffer from a disease in ignorance of the conditions under which its germs were sown in his body, but the right sequence of cause and effect is not imperiled by his ignorance. To doubt that the experiences we now enjoy and endure properly belong to us by our own choice is to abandon the idea of God. How and why they have come is explained only by reincarnation. The universal Over-Soul makes no mistakes. By veiling our memories the Mother Heart of all mercifully saves us the horror and burden of knowing all the myriad steps by which we have become what we are. We would be staggered by the sight of all our waywardness, and what we have done well is possessed more richly in the grand total than would be possible in the infinite details. We are in the hands of a generous omniscient banker, who says: "I will save you all the trouble of the accounts. Whenever you are ready to start a new folio, I will strike the balance and turn over your net proceeds with all accrued interests. The itemized records of your deposits and spendings are beyond your calculation."

3. It may be claimed that the facts of heredity bear against reincarnation. As the physical, mental and moral peculiarities of children come from the parents, how can it be possible that a man is what he makes himself—the offspring of his own previous lives?

Science is certain of the tendency of every organism to transmit its own qualities to its descendants, and

the intricate web of ancestral influences is assumed to account for all the aberrations of individual life. But the forces producing this result are beyond the ken of science. The mechanical theory of germ cells multiplying their kind is inadequate, for the germs become more complex and energetic with growth, and exceed the limitations of molecular psychics. The facts of heredity demand the existence in Nature of supersensuous forces escaping our observation and cognizable only through their effects on the plane of sensuous consciousness. These forces residing in the inaccessible regions of the soul mould all individual aptitudes and faculties and character. Reincarnation includes the facts of heredity, by showing that the tendency of every organism to reproduce its own likeness groups together similar causes producing similar effects, in the same lines of physical relation. Instead of being content with the statement that heredity causes the resemblances of child to parent, reincarnation teaches that a similarity of ante-natal development has brought about the similarity of embodied characteristics. The individual soul seeking another birth finds the path of least resistance in the channels best adapted to its qualities. The Ego selects its material body by a choice more wise than any voluntary selection, by the inherent tendencies of its nature, in fitness for its need, not only in the particular physique best suited for its purpose, but in the larger physical casements of family and nationality. The relation of child and parent is required by the similarity of organisms. This view accounts also for the differences invariably accompanying the resemblances. Identity of character is impossible, and the conditions which made it easy for an individual to be born in a certain family, because of the adaptation of circumstances there to the expression of portions of his nature, would not

prevent a strong contrast between him and his relatives in some respects. The facts observed in the life history of twins show that two individuals born under precisely identical conditions, and having exactly the same heredity, sometimes differ completely in physique, in intellect and in character. The birth of geniuses in humble and commonplace circumstances furnishes abundant evidence that the individual soul outstrips all the trammels of physical birth; and the unremarkable children of great parents exhibit the inefficiency of merely hereditary influences. These conspicuous violations of the laws of heredity confirm reincarnation.

We may add, at this place, that there is a law of heredity governing reincarnation. The natural rule is that of a return to the same family in regular rotation, resting from 150 to 300 years between embodiments. The first born child, male or female, is always in the *line* of the father, and the second child in the *line* of the mother. If more than two children are born, the third and all after are "accidentals," or "extras," providing for those of the kindred whose *lines* have become extinct through lack of issue, or for the race in general.

The knowledge of this law is new to the western world, but it would seem that something must have been known of it in England centuries ago, for the old English laws of primogeniture and entailment of estates was founded on this principle in order that a man might provide for the preservation of his property until he should come again to an earthly existence and receive his own.

4. At the first impression the idea of re-births is unwelcome, because:

a. It is interlaced with the theory of transmigration through animals;

b. It destroys the hope of recognizing friends in the coming existence;

c. It seems a cold, irreligious notion.

a. As will be fully shown in a succeeding chapter, the conceit of a transmigration of human souls through animal bodies, although it has been and is cherished by most of the believers in reincarnation, is only a gross metaphor of the germinal truth, and never was received by the enlightened advocates of plural existences.

b. The most thoughtful adherents of a future life agree that there must be there some subtler mode of recognition between friends than physical appearances, for these outer signs cannot endure in the world of spirit. The conviction that "whether there be prophecies they shall fail, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away," but "love never faileth," and only character shall remain as the means of identification, is precisely the view entertained by believers in reincarnation. The most intimate ties of this life cannot be explained otherwise than as renewals of old intimacies, drawn together by the spiritual gravitation of love, and enjoying often the sense of a previous similar experience. Further reference will be made to this point.

c. The strongest religious natures have been nourished from time immemorial with the feeling that life is a pilgrimage through which we tread our darkened way back to God. The Scriptures are full of it, and the spiritual manhood of every age has found it a source of invigoration. From Abraham, who reckoned his lifetime as "the days of the years of his pilgrimage," through all the phases of Christian thought to the mightiest book of modern Christendom, "The Pilgrim's Progress," this idea has been universally cherished. A typical expression of it may be seen in the

mediæval churchyard of St. Martin at Canterbury, upon a stone over the remains of Dean Alford bearing these words in Latin, which were inscribed by his own direction: "The inn of a traveler journeying to Jerusalem." Now this pilgrimage philosophy is only a simpler phasing of reincarnation. Our theory extends the journey in just proportion to the supernal destination, providing many a station by the way, wherein abiding a few days we may more profitably traverse the upward road, gathering so much experience that there will be no occasion to wander again. Instead of being a cold philosophic hypothesis, reincarnation is a living unfoldment of that Christian germ, enlarged to a fullness commensurate with the needs of men and the character of God. It throbs with the warmth of deepest piety combined with noblest intelligence, providing as no other supposition does, for the grandest development of mankind.

I produced the golden key of pre-existence only at a dead lift, when no other method could satisfy me touching the ways of God, that by this hypothesis I might keep my heart from sinking.—HENRY MORE.

If there be no reasons to suppose that we have existed before that period at which our existence apparently commences, then there are no grounds for supposing that we shall continue to exist after our existence has apparently ceased.—SHELLEY.

Death has no power th' immortal soul to slay,
That, when its present body turns to clay,
Seeks a fresh home, and with unlesened might
Inspires another frame with life and light.
So I myself (well I the past recall),
When the fierce Greeks begirt Troy's holy wall,
Was brave Euphorbus; and in conflict drear
Poured forth my blood beneath Atrides' spear.
The shield this arm did bear I lately saw
In Juno's shrine, a trophy of that war.

PYTHAGORAS (in Dryden's "Ovid").

V.

REINCARNATION AMONG THE ANCIENTS.

The origin of the philosophy of reincarnation is pre-historic. It antedates the remotest antiquity all over the world, and appears to be cognate with mankind, springing up spontaneously as a necessary corollary of the immortality of the soul; for its undiminished sway has been well-nigh universal outside of Christendom. In the earliest dawn of Mother India it was firmly established. The infancy of Egypt found it dominant on the Nile. It was at home in Greece long before Pythagoras. The most ancient beginnings of Mexico and Peru knew it as the faith of their fathers.

I. In sketching the course of this thought among the men of old, the first attention belongs to India. Brahmanism, the most primitive form of this faith, has gone through vast changes during the four thousand years of history. The initial form of it, dating back into the remotest mists of antiquity and descending to the first chapters of authentic chronology, was an ideally simple nature-worship. The Rig-Veda and the oldest sacred hymns display the beauty of this adoration for every phase of Nature, centering with especial fondness upon light as the supreme power, and upon the cow as the favorite animal. Professor Wilson's and Max Muller's translations have opened to the English speaking peoples the charming thought of this primordial race, whose great child-souls found objects of reverence in all things. There were no distinct gods, but everything was divine, and through all they saw the flow of ever-changing life. Gradually an ecclesiastical system climbed up around this religion, cloth-

ing, stifling, and at last burying the vital organism, until Sakya Muni's reaction started Buddhism into vigorous growth as the beautiful protest against the disfigured and decayed form. About Buddhism, too, there has arisen a heavy weight of lifeless ritual, but every breath of life with which the slumbering mother and daughter continue their existence is perfumed with the rose-attar of reincarnation.

Of the ancient Indians we learn through Plutarch, Pliny, Strabo, Megasthenes, and Herodotus, who describe the Gymnosophists and Brachmans as ascetic philosophers who made a study of spiritual things, living singly or in celibate communities much like the later Pythagoreans. Porphyry says of them: "They live without either clothes, riches or wives. They are held in so great veneration by the rest of their countrymen that the king himself often visits them to ask their advice. Such are their views of death that with reluctance they endure life as a piece of necessary bondage to Nature, and haste to set the soul at liberty from the body. Nay, often, when in good health, and no evil to disturb them, they depart life, advertising it beforehand. No man hinders them, but all reckon them happy, and send commissions along with them to their dead friends. So strong and firm is their belief of a future life for the soul, where they shall enjoy one another, after receiving all their commands, they deliver themselves to the fire, that they may separate the soul as pure as possible from the body, and expire singing hymns. Their old friends attend them to death with more ease than other men their fellow-citizens to a long journey. They deplore their own state for surviving them and deem them happy in their immortality." When Alexander the Great first penetrated their country he could not persuade them to appear before him, and had to gratify his curiosity

about their life and philosophy by proxy, though he afterward witnessed them surrender themselves to the flames.

II. Herodotus asserts that the doctrine of metempsychosis originated in Egypt. "The Egyptians are the first who propounded the theory that the human soul is imperishable, and that when the body of any one dies it enters into some other creature that may be ready to receive it, and that when it has gone the round of all created forms on land, in water and in air, then it once more enters a human body born for it; and that this cycle of existence for the soul takes place in three thousand years." He continues, "Some of the Greeks adopted this opinion, some earlier, others later, as if it were their own."

The Egyptians held that the human race began after the pure gods and spirits had left earth, when the demons who were sinfully inclined had revolted and introduced guilt. The gods then created human bodies for these demons to inhabit, as a means of expiating their sin, and these fallen spirits are the present men and women, whose earthly life is a course of purification. All the Egyptian precepts and religious codes are to this end. The judgment after death decides whether the soul has attained purity or not. If not, the soul must return to earth in renewal of its expiation either in the body of a man, or animal or plant. As the spirit was believed to maintain its connection with the material form as long as this remained, the practice of embalming was designed to arrest the passage of the soul into other forms. The custom of embalming is also connected with their opinion that after three thousand years away from the body the soul would return to its former body provided it be preserved from destruction. If it is not preserved, the

soul would enter the most convenient habitation, which might be a wretched creature. They maintained, too, that the gods frequently inhabited the bodies of animals, and therefore they worshiped animals as incarnations of special divinities. The sacred bodies of these godly visitants were also embalmed as a mark of respect to their particular class of deities. For they placed certain gods in certain animals, the Egyptian Apollo choosing the hawk, Mercury the ibis, Mars the fish, Diana the cat, Bacchus the goat, Hercules the colt, Vulcan the ox, etc. This conceit was but a specialization of their general tenet of pantheism, insisting that all life is divine, that every living thing must be venerated, and that the highest creatures should be most devoutly worshiped.

The Egyptian conception of reincarnation as shaped by the priesthood is displayed in their classic "Ritual of the Dead," which is one of their chief sacred books and describes the course of the soul after death. A copy of it was deposited in each mummy case. It opens with a sublime dialogue between the soul and the God of Hades, Osiris, to whose realm he asks admission. Finally Osiris says, "Fear nothing, but cross the threshold." As the soul enters he is dazzled with the glory of light. He sings a hymn to the Sun and goes on taking the food of knowledge. After frightful dangers are passed, rest and refreshment come. Continuing his journey he reaches at last heaven's gate, where he is instructed in profound mysteries. Within the gate he is transformed into different animals and plants. After this the soul is reunited to the body for which careful embalming was so important. A critical examination tests his right to cross the subterranean river to Elysium. He is conducted by Anubis through a labyrinth to the judgment hall of Osiris, where forty-two judges question him upon his whole

past life. If the decisive judgment approves him he enters heaven. If not, he is sentenced to pass through lower forms of existence according to his sins, or, if a reprobate, is given over to the powers of darkness for purgation. After three thousand years of this he is again consigned to a human probation.

III. Of the old Persian faith, it is difficult to obtain a trustworthy statement, except what is derived from its present form among the Parsees. The Magi, Zoroaster's followers, believed that the immortal soul descended from on high for a short period of lives in a mortal body to gain experience, and to then return again. When the soul is above it has several abodes, one luminous, another dark, and some filled with a mixture of light and darkness. Sometimes it sinks into the body from the luminous abode and after a virtuous life returns above; but if coming from the dark region, it passes an evil life and enters a worse place in proportion to her conduct until purified. The dualism of these fire-worshippers gave reincarnation a briefer period of operation than the other oriental religions.

IV. Pythagoras is mentioned by a Greek tradition as one of the Greeks who visited India before the age of Alexander. It is almost certain that he went to Egypt and received there the doctrine of transmigration which he taught in the Greek cities of lower Italy (B. C. 529). Jamblichus says: "He spent twelve years at Babylon, freely conversing with the Magi, was instructed in everything venerable among them, and learned the most perfect worship of the gods." He is said to have represented the human soul as an emanation of the world soul, partaking of the divine nature. At death it leaves one body to take another and so goes through the circle of appointed forms. Ovid's

"Metamorphoses" contains a long description of the Pythagorean idea, from which these verses are taken, as translated by Dryden:

"Souls cannot die. They leave a former home,
And in new bodies dwell, and from them roam.
Nothing can perish, all things change below,
For spirits through all forms may come and go.
Good beasts shall rise to human forms, and men,
If bad, shall backward turn to beasts again.
Thus, through a thousand shapes, the soul shall go
And thus fulfill its destiny below."

But it is very difficult to determine exactly what the views of Pythagoras were. Aristotle, Plato and Diogenes Laertius say he taught that the soul when released by death must pass through a grand circle of living forms before reaching the human again. From Pythagoras himself we have only some aphorisms of practical wisdom and symbolic sentences; from his disciples a few fragments—all devoid of the grotesque hypothesis generally ascribed to him. Although his name is synonymous with the transmigration of human souls through animal bodies, the strong probabilities are that if this doctrine came from him it was entirely exoteric, concealing the inner truth of reincarnation. Some of his later disciples, like Timæus the Locian, denied that he taught it in any literal sense, and said that by it he meant merely to emphasize the fact that men are assimilated in their vices to the beasts.

V. Plato is called by Emerson the synthesis of Europe and Asia, and a decidedly oriental element pervades his philosophy, giving it a sunrise color. He had traveled in Egypt and Asia Minor and among the Pythagoreans of Italy. As he died (B. C. 348) twenty years before Alexander's invasion of India he missed that opportunity of learning the Hindu ideas.

In the great "myth," or allegory, of Phædrus, the classic description of the relation of the soul to the material world, what he says of the judgment upon mankind and their subsequent return to human or animal bodies coincides substantially with the Egyptian and Hindu religions. But his theory of pre-existence and of absolute knowledge seems to be original. It grows out of his cardinal doctrine (and that of his master Socrates) concerning the reality and validity of truth, in opposition to the skepticism of contemporary sophists, who claimed that truth is mere subjective opinion—what each man troweth.

We penetrate into the inmost secret of Plato's thought in the super-celestial plain, the dwelling-place of substantial ideas, the essential Truth, the absolute knowledge, in which the pure Being holds the supreme place which we assign to God, the Hindu to Brahma, and the Egyptian to Osiris, but which the polytheist could not ascribe to his gods. Plato, like the initiated priests of India and Egypt, to whom the highest deity was nameless, knew the objects of common worship were but exalted men, above whom was One whose nature was undisclosed to men, and of whom it was audacious childishness to assert human attributes. The Highest was the center of those Realities dimly shadowed in earthly appearance, and Plato's pictorial representation of his thought is only a parable cloaking the essential principle that during the eternal past we have strayed from the real Truth through repeated lives into the present.

Of Plato's philosophy of pre-existence, Professor W. A. Butler says in his masterly lectures on Ancient Philosophy: "It is certain that with Plato the conviction was associated with a vast and pervading principle, which extended through every department of Nature and thought. This principle was the priority

of mind to body, both in order of dignity and in order of time; a principle which with him was not satisfied by the single admission of a *divine* pre-existence, but extended through every instance in which the natures could be compared. A very striking example of the manner in which he thus generalized the principle of priority of mind to body is to be found in the well known passage in the tenth book of his 'Laws,' in which he proves the existence of divine energy. The argument employed really applies to every case of motion and equally proves that every separate corporeal system is but a mechanism moved by a spiritual essence anterior to itself. The universe is full of gods, and the human soul is, as it were, the god or demon of the human body."

VI. The Jews had the best parallel of Plato's Phædrus in the third chapter of Genesis, describing the fall of Adam and Eve. The theological comments upon that popular summary of the origin of sin have always groped after reincarnation, by making all of Adam's descendants responsible in him for that act. Many Jewish scholars undertook to fuse Greek philosophy with their national religion. The Septuagint translation, made in the third century before Christ, gives evidence of such a purpose in suppressing the strong anthropomorphic terms by which the Old Testament mentioned God. Aristobulus, a Jewish-Greek poet of the second century, writes of Hebrew ideas in Platonic phrases. Similar passages are found in Aristeas and in the second book of the Maccabees. Pythagoreanism was blended with Judaism in the beliefs and practices of the Jewish Therapeutæ of Egypt and their brethren the Essenes of Palestine.

Of the Essenes, Josephus writes: "The opinion obtains among them that bodies indeed are corrupted,

and the matter of them not permanent, but that souls continue exempt from death forever; and that emanating from the most subtle ether they are unfolded in bodies as prisons to which they are drawn by some natural spell. But when loosed from the bonds of flesh, as if released from a long captivity, they rejoice and are borne upward."

The most prominent Jewish writer upon this subject is Philo of Alexandria, who lived in the time of Christ, and adapted a popular version of Platonic ideas to the religion of his own people. He turned the Hebrew stories into remarkably deft Platonic allegories. His theory of pre-existence and rebirths is practically that of his master Plato, as is shown in this extract: "The company of disembodied souls is distributed in various orders. The law of some of them is to enter mortal bodies and after certain prescribed periods be again set free. But those possessed of a diviner structure are absolved from all local bonds of earth. Some of these souls choose confinement in mortal bodies because they are earthly and corporeally inclined. Others depart, being released again according to supernaturally determined times and seasons. Therefore, all such as are wise, like Moses, are living abroad from home. For the souls of such formerly chose this expatriation from heaven, and through curiosity and the desire of acquiring knowledge they came to dwell abroad in earthly nature, and while they dwell in the body they look down on things visible and mortal around them, and urge their way thitherward again whence they came originally; and call that heavenly region in which they live their citizenship, fatherland, but this earthly in which they live, foreign." In choosing between the Mosaic and the Platonic account of the Fall, as to which best expressed the essential truth, although a Jew, he decided for Plato. He considers men as fallen spirits

attracted by material desires and thus brought into the body's prison, yet of kin to God and the ideal world. The philosophic life is the means of escape, with the aid of the divine Logos, or Spirit, to the blessed fellowship from which they have fallen. Regeneration is a purification from matter. Philo's endeavor to reform the creed of his fathers was strongly felt for centuries.

The origin of the Jewish Cabala is involved in endless dispute. Jewish scholars claim that it is prehistoric. Although a portion of it is held to have been composed in the Middle Ages, it is certain that its teachings had been handed down by tradition from very early times, and that some parts come from the Jewish philosophers of Alexandria and others from the later Neo-Platonists and Gnostics. Pre-existence and reincarnation appear here, not in Philo's speculative form of it, but in a much simpler and more matter-of-fact character—affirming that human spirits are again and again born into the world, after long intervals, and in entire forgetfulness of their previous experiences. This is not a curse, as in Plato's religions, but a blessing, being the process of purification by repeated probations. "All the souls," says the Zohar, or Book of Light, "are subject to the trials of transmigration; and men do not know which are the ways of the Most High in their regard. They do not know how many transformations and mysterious trials they must undergo; how many souls and spirits come to this world without returning to the palace of the divine king. The souls must re-enter the absolute substance whence they have emerged. But to accomplish this end they must develop all the perfections, the germ of which is planted in them; and if they have not fulfilled this condition during one life, they must commence another, a third, and so forth, until they have acquired the condition which fits them for reunion with God."

VI.

REINCARNATION IN THE BIBLE.

The vitality of the doctrine of Reincarnation does not in the least depend upon a scriptural endorsement of it, but the fact that it is surprisingly conspicuous here is certainly interesting and confirmatory. Every candid Christian student must acknowledge that the revelation of truth is no more confined to the central book of Christendom than sunshine is limited to the Orient. There must be great principles of philosophy, like that of evolution, outside of the Bible; and yet the most skeptical thinker has to concede that this volume is the richest treasury of wisdom—the best of which is still unlearned.

Although most Christians are unaware of it, reincarnation is strongly present in the Bible, chiefly in the form of pre-existence. It is not inculcated as a doctrine essential to redemption. Neither is immortality. But it is taken for granted, cropping out here and there as a fundamental rock. Some scholars consider it an unimportant oriental speculation which is accidentally entangled into the texture. But the uniform strength and beauty of its hold seem to rank it with the other essential threads of the warp upon which is woven the noblest fabric of religious thought.

A sufficient evidence of the Biblical support of pre-existence, and of the consequent wide-spread belief in it among the Jews, is found in Solomon's long reference to it among his Proverbs. The wise king wrote of himself: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before the works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when

there were no foundations abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth; when he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the foundations of the deep; when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; when he appointed the foundations of the earth—then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth; and my delights were with the sons of men." (Proverbs viii, 22-31.) This passage disposes of the theory of Delitzsch that pre-existence in the Bible means simply an existence in the foreknowledge of the Creator. Such a mere foreknowledge would not place him previous to the parts of creation which preceded his earthly appearance. And the last two clauses clearly express a prior physical life. The prophets, too, are assured of their pre-natal antiquity. Jeremiah hears Jehovah tell him, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." (Jeremiah i, 5.)

Skippping passages of disputed interpretation in Job and the Psalms which suggest this idea, there is good evidence for it all through the Old Testament, which is universally conceded by commentators, and was always claimed by the Jewish rabbis. The translators have distinguished the revealed form of Deity, as successively recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures, by the word LORD, in capitals, separating this use of the word from other forms, as the pre-existent Christ. "The angel of the Lord" and "the angel of Jehovah" are other expressions for the same manifestation of

the Highest, which modern theology regards as the second person of the Trinity. Wherever God is said to have appeared as man, to Abraham at Mamre, to Jacob at Peniel, to Joshua at Gilgal, to the three captives in the Babylonian furnace as "a fourth, like to the Son of God," etc., Christian scholarship has maintained this to be the same person who afterward became the son of Mary. The Jews also consider these various appearances to be their promised Christ. After the captivity they held the same view concerning all persons. The apocryphal "Wisdom of Solomon" teaches unmistakably the pre-existence of human souls in Platonic form, although it probably is older than Philo, as when it says (ix, 15), "I was an ingenuous child, and received a good soul; nay, more, being good, I came into a body undefiled;" and "the corruptible body presseth down the soul, and the earthly tabernacle weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things." Glimpses of it appear also in the book of "Ecclesiasticus."

The assertion of Josephus that this idea was common among the Pharisees is proven in the Gospels, where members of the Sanhedrin cast the retort at Jesus, "Thou wast altogether born in sins." (John ix, 34.) The prevalence of this feeling in the judgments of daily life is seen in the question put to Jesus by his disciples, "Which did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John ix, 2) referring to the two contending popular theories—that of Moses, who taught that the sins of the fathers would descend on the children to the third and fourth generation, and that of reincarnation, subsequently adopted, by which a man's discomforts resulted from his former misconduct. Jesus' reply, "Neither," is no denial of the truth of reincarnation, for in other passages he definitely affirms it of himself, but merely an indication that he thought this

truth had better not be given those listeners then, just as he withheld other verities until the ripe time for utterance. This very expression of pre-existence used by the disciples he employed toward the man whom he healed at Bethesda's pool after thirty-eight years of paralysis: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (John v, 14.) Repeatedly he confirmed the popular impression that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of Elijah. To the throng around him he said: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." "If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." (Matt. xi, 14; xvii, 12, 13.) That John the Baptist denied his former personality as Elijah is not strange, for no one remembers distinctly his earlier life. Often Jesus refers to his descent from heaven, as when he says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John vi, 38); and what he means by heaven is shown by his words to Nicodemus, "No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man *which is in heaven*." (John iii, 13.) The inference is that the heaven in which he formerly lived was similar to the heaven of that moment, namely earth. Again, Jesus asked his disciples, "Whom say men that I am?" And his disciples state the popular thought in answering, "Some say Elijah, others Jeremiah, and others one of the old prophets." "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter, the spokesman, replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God," and so expressed another phase of the same prevailing idea, for the Christ was also an Old Testament personage. And Jesus approved this response. After Herod had decapitated John the Baptist, the appearance of Jesus, also preaching and baptizing, roused in him the apprehension that the prophet he killed had come again in a second life.

Pre-existence, the premise necessarily leading to reincarnation, is the keynote of the most spiritual of the Gospels. The initial sentence sounds it, the body of the book often repeats it, and the final climax is strengthened by it. From the proem, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God," all through the story occur frequent allusions to it: "The word was made flesh" (John i, 14); "I am the living bread which came down from heaven" (vi, 51); "Ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before" (vi, 62); "Before Abraham was, I am" (viii, 58); and finally "Glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (xvii, 5); "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (xvii, 24). It is always phrased in such a form as might be asserted by any one, though the speaker says it only of himself.

What the fourth Gospel dwells upon so fondly, and what is echoed in other New Testament books—as in Philippians ii, 7, "He took on him the form of a servant;" in 2 Cor. viii, 9, "Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor;" and in 1 John i, 2, "That eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us"—is a thought not limited to the Christ. Precisely the same occurs in the mention of the prophet-baptizer John: "There was a man sent from God" (John i, 6). The obvious sense of this verse to the Christians nearest its publication appears in the comments upon it by Origen, who says that it implies the existence of John the Baptist's soul previous to his terrestrial body, and hints at the universal belief in pre-existence by adding, "And if the *Catholic opinion* hold good concerning the soul, as not propagated with the body, but existing previously and for various reasons clothed in flesh and blood, this expression, 'sent from God,' will no longer seem extraordinary as applied to John." No words could more exactly suit the aspi-

rations of an oriental believer in reincarnation than these in the Apocalypse: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, *and he shall go no more out.*" (Rev. iii, 12.)

More important than any separate quotations is the general tone of the Scriptures, which points directly toward reincarnation. They represent the earthly life as a pilgrimage to the heavenly country of spiritual union with God. It is our conceit and ignorance alone which deems a single earthly life sufficient to accomplish that purpose. They teach the sinful nature of all men and their responsibility for their sin, which certainly demands previous lives for the acquisition of that condition, as shown well by Chevalier Ramsay, whom we shall quote later. St. Paul's idea of the Fall and of God are precisely those of Philo and Origen. The Bible also treats Paradise as the ancient abode of man and his future home, which requires a series of reincarnations as the connecting chain.

Emphasis should be placed again upon the fact that the theory of Reincarnation is nothing more or less than the doctrine of the complete immortality of the soul. It is no new doctrine, no new thought, no new revelation. It is but the completion of the old belief which nearly all men have held in nearly all times. It is evident that if the soul be immortal it must be wholly immortal, and not partly immortal; completely immortal, and not incompletely immortal. Immortality can have no beginning.

Theology—built upon the theory that all men are created, and hence without a previous existence—has decapitated the immortal life of man, leaving it a headless trunk which explains nothing, and is out of harmony with all the facts in the universe.

Reincarnation (the philosophy of the complete immortality of the soul) is something more than a mere theory—it is a scientific proposition which fits and agrees perfectly with the great theory of evolution, with all the known facts touching men's relations to one another and to the Eternal Laws and Forces, and with justice, morality and man's freedom.—ORLANDO J. SMITH.

VII.

REINCARNATION IN EARLY CHRISTENDOM.

The first centuries of Christianity found reincarnation still the prevailing creed, as in all the previous ages, but with various shades of interpretation. What these different phases of the same central thought were may be gathered from Jerome's catalogue, after the strife between Eastern and Western ideas had been working for some centuries and the present tendency of Europe had asserted itself. Jerome writes: "As to the origin of the soul, I remember the question of the whole church—whether it be fallen from heaven, as Pythagoras and the Platonists and Origen believe; or be of the proper substance of God, as the Stoics, Manichæans and Priscillian heretics of Spain believe; or whether they are kept in a repository formerly built by God, as some ecclesiastics foolishly believe; or whether they are daily made by God and sent into bodies according to that which is written in the Gospel: 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work;' or whether by traduction, as Tertullian, Apollinarius, and the greater part of the Westerns believe, *i. e.*, that as body from body so the soul is derived from the soul, subsisting by the same condition with animals."

In the form of Gnosticism it so strongly pervaded the early church that the fourth Gospel was specially directed against it; but this Gospel according to John attacked it only by advocating a broader rendering of the same faith. We have seen that Origen refers to pre-existence as the general opinion. Clemens Alexandrinus (Origen's master) taught it as a divine tradition authorized by St. Paul himself in Romans v, 12, 14, 19. Ruffinus in his letter to Anastasius says that

"This opinion was common among the primitive fathers." Later, Jerome relates that the doctrine of transmigration was taught as an esoteric one communicated to only a select few. But Nemesisius emphatically declared that all the Greeks who believed in immortality believed also in metempsychosis. Delitzsch says, "It had its advocates as well in the synagogues as in the church."

The Gnostics and Manichæans received it, with much else, from Zoroastrian predecessors. The Neo-Platonists derived it chiefly from a blending of Plato and the Orient. The Church Fathers drew it not only from these sources, but from the Jews and the pioneers of Christianity. Several of them condemn the Persian and Platonic philosophies and yet hold to reincarnation in other guises. Aside from all authority, the doctrine seems to have been rooted among the inaugurators of our era in its adaptation to their mental needs, as the best explanation of the ways of God and the nature of men.

I. The Gnostics were a school of eclectics which became conspicuous amid the chaotic vortex of all religions in Alexandria, during the first century. They sought to furnish the young Christian church with a philosophic creed, and ranked themselves as the only initiates into a mystical system of Christian truth which was too exalted for the masses. Their thought was an elaborate structure of Greek ideas built upon Parsee Dualism, maintaining that the world was created by some fallen spirit or principle, and that the spirits of men were enticed from a pre-existent higher stage by the Creator into the slavery of earthly bodies. The evils and sins of life belong only to the degraded prison-house of the spirit. The world is only an object of contempt. Virtue consists in severest asceti-

cism. To combat their theory that Jesus was one of a vast number of beings between man and God, the fourth Gospel was written.

They spread widely through the first and second centuries in many branches of belief. But most of their strength was absorbed into Manichæism, which was a more logical union of Persian with Christian and Greek ideas. In this simple faith the world is a creation, not of fallen spirit, but of the primary evil principle, while the spirit of man is the creation of God, and the conflict between flesh and spirit is that between the powers of light and darkness.

The Gnostic and Manichæan notions of pre-existence perpetuated themselves in many of the medieval sects, especially the Bogomiles, Paulicians, and Priscillians. Seven adherents of the Priscillian heresy were put to death in Spain, A. D. 385, as the first instance of the death penalty visited by a Christian magistrate for erroneous belief. Adherents to reincarnation were, therefore, the earliest victims of Christian intolerance.

The Italian Cathari were another sect holding this form of reincarnation, against whom the Albigenian Crusade of the elder De Montfort was sent, and the inquisition devised by St. Dominic. Still they thrived in secret and possessed a disguised hierarchy which long survived their violent persecution. Similar sects, descended from them, still exist among the Russian dissenters.

II. Contemporary with the Alexandrian Gnostics arose the philosophical school of the Neo-Platonists which gathered into one the doctrines of Pythagoras, Plato and Buddhism, and constructed a theology which might make headway against Christianity by satisfying in a rational way the longings which the new religion addressed. They, too, disclosed the reality and near-

ness of a spiritual world, a reconciliation with God, and the pathway for returning to Him. The distinguishing principle of Neo-Platonism is *emanation*, which took the place of creation. From the eternal Intelligence proceeds the multiplicity of souls which comprise the "*intelligible*" world, and of which the world-soul is the highest and all-embracing source. They insisted upon the distinct individuality of each soul, and earnestly combated the charge of Pantheism. Souls who have descended into the delusion of matter did so from pride and a desire of false independence. They now forget their former estate and the Father whom they have deserted. The mission of men, in the dying words of Plotinus, is "to bring the divine within them into harmony with that which is divine in the universe." The Neo-Platonists fought Gnosticism as fiercely as Christianity. Plotinus, by far the best of their writers, as well as the oldest whose works are preserved, devotes a whole book of his *Enneads* to the refutation of the doctrines of Valentinus, the brightest of the Gnostics. Contrary to the latter's thought, that men are fallen into the miry pit of matter which is wholly bad, Plotinus claims that the world of matter, although the least divine part of the universe, because remotest from the One, is still good and the best place for man's development. From its former life he insists the soul has not fallen and cannot, but has descended into the lower stage of existence through weakness of intellect in order to prepare for a higher exaltation.

The most important of this group of thinkers were Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus and Porphyry in the third century, Jamblichus in the fourth, Hierocles and Proclus in the fifth, and Damascius in the sixth. It flourished with energy for over three hundred years, and as its ideas were largely appropriated by Christian theologians and philosophers, beginning with Origen, it

has never ceased to be felt through Christendom. Giordano Bruno, the martyr of the Italian reformation, popularized it, and handed it over to later philosophers. The philosophy of Emerson is substantially a revival of Plotinus. Coleridge is also strongly influenced by him.

As Plotinus is in some respects the most interesting of all the older writers, and taught reincarnation in a form thoroughly rational and supremely helpful, meeting Western needs in this regard more directly than any other philosopher, we quote at some length from his scarce essay on "The Descent of the Soul."

"When any particular soul acts in discord from the One, flying from the whole and apostasizing from thence by a certain disagreement, no longer beholding an intelligible nature, from its partial blindness, in this case it becomes deserted and solitary, impotent and distracted with care; for it now directs its mental eye to a part, and by a separation from that which is universal, attaches itself as a slave to one particular nature . . . and becomes fettered with the bonds of body. The soul, therefore, falling from on high, suffers captivity, is loaded with fetters, and employs the energies of sense. . . . When she converts herself to intelligence she then breaks her fetters and ascends on high, receiving first of all from reminiscence the ability of contemplating real beings; at the same time possessing something supereminent and ever abiding in the intelligible world. Souls, therefore, are necessarily of an amphibious nature, and alternately experience a superior and inferior condition of being; such as are able to enjoy a more intimate converse with Intellect abiding for a longer period in the higher world, and such to whom the contrary happens, either through nature or fortune, continuing longer connected with these inferior concerns." . . .

"Thus, the soul, though of divine origin, and proceeding from the regions on high, becomes merged in the dark receptacle of the body, and being naturally a posterior god, it descends hither through a certain voluntary inclination, for the sake of power and of adorning inferior concerns. By this means it receives a knowledge of its latent powers, and exhibits a variety of operations peculiar to its nature, which by perpetually abiding in an incorporeal habit, and never proceeding into energy, would have been bestowed in vain. Besides the soul would have been ignorant of what she possessed, her powers always remaining dormant and concealed—since energy everywhere exhibits capacity, which would otherwise be entirely occult and obscure, and without existence, because not endued with one substantial and true."

"Through an abundance of desire the soul becomes profoundly merged into matter, and no longer totally abides with the universal soul. Yet our souls are able alternately to rise from hence carrying back with them an experience of what they have known and suffered in their fallen state; from whence they will learn how blessed it is to abide in the intelligible world, and by a comparison, as it were, of contraries, will more plainly perceive the excellence of a superior state. For the experience of evil produces a clearer knowledge of good. This is accomplished in our souls according to the circulations of time, in which a conversion takes place from subordinate to more exalted natures."

III. Many of the orthodox Church Fathers welcomed reincarnation as a ready explanation of the fall of man and the mystery of life, and distinctly preached it as the only means of reconciling the existence of suffering with a merciful God. It was an essential

part of the church philosophy for many centuries in the rank and file of Christian thought, being stamped with the authority of the leading thinkers of Christendom, and then gradually was opposed as the Western influences predominated until it became heresy, and at length survived only in a few scattered sects.

Justin Martyr expressly speaks of the soul inhabiting more than once the human body, and denies that on taking a second time the embodied form it can remember previous experiences; afterwards, he says, souls which have become unworthy to see God in human guise, are joined to the bodies of wild beasts. Thus he openly defends the grosser phase of metempsychosis.

Clemens Alexandrinus is declared by a contemporary to have written "wonderful stories about metempsychosis and many worlds before Adam." Arnobius, also, is known to have frankly avowed this doctrine.

Noblest of all the church advocates of this opinion was Origen. He regarded the earthly history of the human race as one epoch in an historical series of changeful decay and restoration, extending backward and forward into æons; and our temporal human body as the place of purification for our spirits exiled from a happier existence on account of sin. He taught that souls were all originally created by God as *minds* of the same kind and condition—of the same essence as the Infinite Mind—and that they exercised their freedom of will, some wisely and well, others with abuse in different degrees, producing the divergences now apparent in mankind. From that old experience some souls have retained more than others of the pristine condition. The lapsed souls God clothed with bodies and sent into this world, both to expiate their temerity and to prepare themselves for a better future. The variety of their offenses caused the diversity of their terrestrial conditions. In these bodies each enjoys

that lot which most exactly suited his previous habits. On these the whole earthly circumstances of man, internal and external, even his whole life from birth depend. In this way alone he thought the justice of God could be defended. But when men keep themselves free from contagion in bodily existence and restrain the turbulent movements of sense and imagination, being gradually purified from the body, they ascend on high and are at last changed into *minds*, of which the earthly souls are corruptions.

The Latin Fathers Nemesius, Synesius and Hilarius boldly defend pre-existence, though taking exception to Origen's form of it. Of Synesius, most familiar to English readers as the convent patriarch in "Hypatia," it is known that when the citizens of Ptolemais invited him to their bishopric, he declined that dignity for the reason that he cherished certain opinions which they might not approve. Foremost among these he mentioned the doctrine of pre-existence.

Even in Jerome and Augustine will be found certain passages indicating that they held to it in part.

Another of this group, Prudentius, entertained the same idea, nearly, as that of Origen concerning the soul's descent from higher seats to earth, as appears in one of his hymns:

O Savior, bid my soul, thy trembling spouse,
Return at last to Thee believing.
Bind, bind anew those all unearthly vows
She broke on high and wandered grieving.

Although Origen's teaching was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 551, it permanently colored the stream of Christian theology, not only in many scholastics and medieval heterodoxies, but through all the later course of religious thought, in many isolated individuals and groups.

The religious philosophy of the Orient, like everything else there, is substantially the same now as in the earliest times. History cannot say when Brahmanism did not flourish among the multitudes of India. Buddhism, the later phase of the old faith, which abolished its abuses of priesthood and caste and spread its reformation broadcast through Asia, did not alter the original teaching of re-birth, but rather confirmed and popularized the truth that has lain at the heart of India from remotest ages. Reincarnation is the sap-root of eastern religion and permeates the Veda scriptures. While it is claimed by the West that the religion of Sakya Muni is below that of Jesus, as inspiring an exalted selflessness in distinction to the generous sacrifice taught by Christianity; while it is true that the best Buddhists lead a passive, submissive life which make them easy spoil for conquering races and have not accomplished any result in civilization since the first ancient subjugation; while Buddhism with its mortification and self-centered goodness is even more distasteful to the western race than the meditative, dreamy asceticism of Brahmanism—it is equally certain that these eastern religions are far more really lived by their followers than Christianity is with us; and it is worth considering whether Christendom may not gain as much by learning the secret of Eastern superiority to materialism, as the Orient is gaining by the infusion of Western activity. Travelers agree that in many parts of inner China, Thibet, Central India and Ceylon the daily life of Buddhism is so like the realization of Christianity, as to give strong support to the theory of

REINCARNATION IN THE EAST TO-DAY.

VIII.

the Indian origin of our religion. There is a practical demonstration of what reincarnation will do for a race, and a hint of the grander result which would accrue from grafting that principle into the real life of the stronger Western stock. Knowing the indestructibility of the soul, the evanescence of the body, and the permanence of spiritual traits as formed by thought, word and deed, the whole energy of life is focused upon purity of self and charity to others. To love one's enemies, to abstain from even defensive warfare, to govern the soul, to obey one's superiors, to venerate age, to provide food and shelter, to tolerate all differences of opinion and religion, are guiding maxims of actual life. Honesty, modesty and simplicity prevail in these sections. Women are held in the same esteem as in the ancient Sanskrit epoch, and children are treated more beautifully than in many Christian homes. As the peasantry receive reincarnation in the simplest and extremest form of human re-births in animal bodies, every living creature is regarded by them as a possible relative. Gentleness to the animal creation abounds as nowhere else in the world. It is a sin to kill a beast. Death is no object of dread, but a welcome benefactor, transferring them forward in their progress to the goal of rest.

The Brahmans have for ages studied the problems of ontology and the soul's future, by severest introspection and acutest thought, to build their system, which is a vast elaboration of religious metaphysics, upon a theistic basis. Reincarnation is the cornerstone of this structure. Many of the higher Brahmans are believed to have penetrated the veils concealing past experiences. It is related, for instance, that when Apollonius of Tyana visited India, the Brahman Iarchus told him that "the truth concerning the soul is as Pythagoras taught you and as we taught the

Egyptians," and mentioned that he (Apollonius) in a previous incarnation was an Egyptian steersman, and had refused the inducements offered him by pirates to guide his vessel into their hands. The common people of India are sure that certain of the Brahmans and Buddhists are still able to verify by their finer senses the reality of reincarnation.

Brahmanism and Buddhism are practically agreed upon the philosophy of reincarnation, as the Buddhist revolt against priestcraft only emphasized this doctrine. Every branch of these systems aims at the means of winning escape from the necessity of repeated births. There are, however, great differences in these two faiths as to the means and the result. Both contend that all forms are the penance of Nature. They regard personal existence as an empty delusion and the exemption from it as true salvation. The Brahman seeks Nirvana, which is absorption in Brahm, as the reality at the heart of things; the Buddhist considers this as unreal, and finds no reality but in the silence and peace attained beyond Nirvana. The Buddhist's one duty of life and the means of attaining his goal is mortification, the extinction of affection and desire. But the Brahman's work is contemplation, illumination, communion with Brahm, study and asceticism.

Northern Buddhism has been defined as nearly identical with Gnosticism. It has spun a dense fabric of legend and speculation about this central thought of the soul's gradual evolution from the natural to the spiritual. The Hindus believe that human souls emanated from the Supreme Being, and became gradually immersed in matter, forgetting their divine origin and straying back to Him through many lives of partial reparation. Having become contaminated the soul must work out its release, through repeated lives, until spiritual existence is attained; and so long as the soul

is not pure enough for re-mergence into Brahm—Nirvana—it must be born again repeatedly, its degree of purity determining what each re-birth shall be.

The Hindu conception of reincarnation embraces all existence—gods, men, animals, plants, minerals. It is believed that everything migrates, from Buddha down to inert matter. One authority represents Buddha as saying: "The number of my births and deaths can only be compared to those of all the plants in the universe." Birth is the gate which opens into every state and merit determines into which it shall open. Earth and human life are an intermediary stage, resulting from many previous places and forms and introducing many more. There are multitudes of inhabited worlds upon which the same person is successively born, according to his attractions. The only escape from the penalty of birth is by the final absorption into Brahm, or the attainment of Nirvana.

While the Hindus generally hold that the same soul appears at different births, the heretical Southern Buddhists teach that the succession of existences is a succession of souls, bred from one another, like the sprouting of new generations from plants and animals. Another curious aspect of these Indian speculations is the view of certain Northern Buddhists, who divide eternity into gigantic cycles which shall at length bring around again a precise repetition of earlier events. This is similar to the grand periodic year of the Stoics and of the Epicurean Atomists, and to the continual metempsychosis of Pythagoras.

Zoroastrians and Sufi Mohamedans, with their usual antipathy to Indian thought, limit their conceptions of reincarnation to a few repeated lives on earth, which some of the Persian and Arabian mystics stretch out to a larger number, but soon disappearing either back into the original source or into darker scenes.

IX.

ESOTERIC ORIENTAL REINCARNATION.

Throughout the East to-day, as in all past time, the higher priesthood possess a spiritual science which has been accumulated by long ages of severest study, and is concealed from the vulgar world. This is no mere elaboration of fanciful philosophy, as is much of eastern metaphysics, patiently spun from secluded speculation like the mediæval scholasticism of Europe. It is a purely rational development of psychology by the aid of scientific inquiry. Through protracted investigation and crucial tests repeatedly applied to actual experience and through retrospective and prophetic insight they have probed many of the secrets of the soul. The falsity of materialism and the all-commanding power of spirit are proven beyond a cavil. How the soul is independent of the physical body, sometimes leaving and returning to it, and moulding it to suit its needs; how all Nature is but a vast family embodied in physical clothing and inextricably interlaced in living brotherhood, from lowest atom to sublimest archangel; how the gradual evolution of all races proceeds through revolving cycles in a constantly ascending order of things—these, and many other stupendous spiritual facts are to them familiarly known.

These masters of human mystery hold themselves apart from the populace and seldom appear to any but their special disciples, but they are universally believed in by the natives of India, as the miraculous evidences of their penetration into Nature's heart have been seen of many. Moreover, ocular demonstration of the existence and phenomenal capacities of the Mahatmas has frequently been given to well-known officials and

reputable travelers, whose testimony is on record and accessible to all.

Although these highest adepts keep most of their discoveries secret, preferring to enlighten mankind indirectly and by a wholesome gradual uplifting, occasional expressions have been given of the occult philosophy derived from their funds of science, and from these we abridge what they are said to teach concerning reincarnation.

These masters tell us that man is composed of seven principles intricately interwoven so as to constitute a unit and yet capable of partial separation. This septenary division is only a finer analysis of the common triple distinctions—body, soul and spirit—and runs through the entire universe. The development of man is in the order of these divisions, from body to spirit and from spirit to body, in a continual round of incarnations. The progress may be best illustrated by a seven-coiled spiral which sweeps with a wider curve at every ascent. The spiral is not a steady upward incline, but at one side sags down into materiality and at the other side rises into spirituality—the material portion of each ring being the lowest side of its curve, but always higher than the corresponding previous descent. Furthermore, each ring of the spiral is itself a seven-fold spiral, and each of these again is a seven-fold spiral, and so on indefinitely.

The evolutionary process requires for its complete unfoldment a number of planets corresponding to the seven principles. On each of these planets a long series of lives is necessary before one can advance to the next. After a full circuit is made the course must be repeated again on a higher plane, until many successive series of the planetary rotations, each involving hundreds of separate lives, has developed the individual into the perfect fullness of experience.

[In the explicit phrasing from which the foregoing paragraph is derived, says Mr. Walker, there are mentioned *seven* planets, through each of which the soul makes *seven* rounds, each round including *seven* races, and each race *seven* sub-races, and these again containing *seven* branches, multiplying the whole number of lives into a compound of seven. He regards this "sacred number," seven, as a symbol that each division "must include such components as will fit together in one indissoluble entirety."]

Since the first human souls began their career through these cycles they have moved along the entire planetary chain three times, and now, for the fourth time, we have reached the Earth. We are therefore, roughly speaking, about half developed, physically. During the previous series of earthly inhabitations we were exceedingly different from our present form, and during the later ones we shall enter upon still more marvelous stages. With each grand series (or round) a dimension is added to man's conception of space. The fourth dimension will be a common fact of consciousness before we complete the present set of earthly lives. Before reaching the perfection attainable here at each round, every soul must pass through many minor circuits. We are said to be in the middle of the fifth circuit (or race) of our fourth round, and the evolution of this fifth race began about a million years ago. Each race is subdivided, and each of these divisions again dissected, making the total number of lives allotted to each round very large. No human being can escape the earth's attraction until these are accomplished, with only rare exceptions among those who by special merit have outstripped the others—for although all began alike, the contrasted uses of the universal opportunities have produced all the variations now existing in the human race. The geomet-

rical progression of characteristics selected by each soul has resulted in vast divergences.

Long before the twilight of our birth into the present life we passed through an era of immense duration on this planet as spiritual beings, gradually descending into matter to enter the bodies which were developed up from the highest animal type for our reception. Our evolution, therefore, is a double one—on the spiritual side from ethereal races of infinite pedigree, and on the physical side from the lower animals.

In the first earthly circuit of the last great series (or round) we passed through seven ethereal sub-races. Each of these incarnations developed one astral sense, until the seventh sub-race had seven senses. What the sixth and seventh were we cannot imagine, but in time we shall know, as we are at present tracing over again that path more perfectly, and have reached only the fifth of the seven stages on this circuit. The first of these seven sub-races slowly acquired the sense of physical sight. All the other parts of the sensuous nature were in shadowy latency. They had no notion of distance, solidity, sound or smell. Even colors were hidden from the earliest men, all being white at first. Each incarnation of this race developed more of the prismatic hues in their rainbow order, beginning with red. But the one sense of sight was so spiritual that it amounted to clairvoyance. The second sub-race inherited sight and developed physical touch. Through the repeated lives in this rank the sense of feeling became wonderfully delicate and acute, possessing the psychometric quality and revealing the inner as well as the outer nature of the things to which it was applied. The third sub-race attained hearing, and its spiritual development of this sense was so keen that the most subtle sounds were clearly perceived. The fourth sub-race added smell to the other three senses, and the fifth

entered into taste. The sixth and seventh unfolded the remaining senses, which are beyond our present ken.

In the second circuit (or race) the soul began once more with a single sense and passed through another course of sub-races, rehearsing the scale of the senses with a larger control of them, though less spiritual. But even in the third circuit the repeated unfoldments of the senses toward their physical destiny had still retained a large degree of spiritual quality, as the men themselves were still ethereal.

Our first terrestrial appearance in the present circuit (the fifth race) was in spiritual form, having only astral bodies. This primitive ethereal race occupied the earth long before it was geologically prepared for the historical human races. The development of the physical senses in their present form marks the stages of our reincarnation in the present race, which is called the descent into matter. Each turn in this circuit has carried forward the evolution of the senses in a fixed order, until now we have a firmer hold than ever before upon those five which indicate the extent of our progress in the present stage. Our repeated re-births have obscured the long vista of the ages through which we have traveled, as our early spiritual forms have gradually given way to modern physical forms.

When we shall have completed the full number of rounds on this earth we shall have not only the other two senses, but shall govern all seven in a triple form as physical, astral and spiritual.

The most important fact in our evolution, the cause of the present phase of existence, is the growth of a personal will—the forbidden fruit of the Bible Paradise. It originated many cycles back and gradually stamped its impress upon all mankind. At first, as selfish desire, then as rivalry, it caused fierce contests between men. The concentration of the soul in selfish energy

clouded the inner spiritual nature, destroyed the trace of ethereal descent, and buried us deep in the material world. But this "fall into matter" is really but a necessary curve of the spiral of life, and is the dawn of a brighter day such as humanity has never seen.

Death marks the origin of the turn which human evolution is at present describing. The earlier races had no sense of age and did not die. Like Enoch, they "walked with God" into the next period of their life. At present, when a man dies his *ego* holds the impetus of his earthly desires until they are purged away from that higher self, which then passes into a spiritual state, where all the psychic and spiritual forces it has generated during the earthly life are unfolded. It progresses on these planes until the dormant physical impulses assert themselves and curve the soul around to another incarnation, whose form is the resultant of the earlier lives.

The successive appearances of the soul upon one or many earths are a series of personalities which are the various masks assumed by one individuality, the numerous parts played by one actor. In each birth the personality differs from the prior and later existence, but the one line of individual continuity runs unbroken through all the countless forms; and as the soul enters into its highest development it gradually comprehends the whole course of forgotten paths which have led to the summit.

The time spent by each soul in physical life is only a small fraction of the whole period elapsing before the next incarnation. The larger part of the time is passed in the spiritual existence following death, in which the physical desires and spiritual qualities derived from the earthly life determine the condition of being, until the impetus of unconscious character brings the individual into another earthly life.

X.

TRANSMIGRATION THROUGH ANIMALS.

The idea of reincarnation is so intimately connected and so generally identified with the notion that human souls sometimes descend into lower animals, that it is necessary for us to thoroughly understand the exoteric and gross nature of this grotesque phrasing of a solemn and beautiful truth.

All the philosophies and religions teaching reincarnation seem to teach also the wandering of human souls through brute forms. It was the common belief in Egypt and still is in Asia. All animals were sacred to the Egyptians as the masks of fallen gods, and therefore worshiped. The same reverence for all creatures still reigns in the East. The Hindu regards everything in the vast tropical jungle as a human soul in disguise. The Laws of Manu state:

“For sinful acts mostly corporeal, a man shall assume after death a vegetable or mineral form; for such acts mostly verbal, the form of a bird or beast; for acts mostly mental, the lowest of human conditions.”

“A priest who has drunk spirituous liquors shall migrate into the form of a smaller or larger worm or insect, of a moth or some ravenous animal.

“If a man steal grain in the husk he shall be born a rat; if a yellow-mixed metal, a gander; if water, a plava or diver; if honey, a great stinging gnat; if milk, a crow; if expressed juice, a dog; if clarified butter, an ichneumon weasel.

“A Brahman killer enters the body of a dog, a bear, an ass, a tiger, or a serpent.”

Not only does this conception permeate the domains of Brahmanism and Buddhism; it prevailed in Persia

before the time of Zoroaster as since. Pythagoras is said to have obtained it in Babylon, and through him it scattered widely through Greece and Italy. More closely than with any other teacher, this false doctrine is associated with the sage of Crotona, who is said to have recognized the voice of a deceased friend in the howling of a beaten dog. Plato seems to endorse it also. Plotinus says: "Those who have exercised human faculties are born again men. Those who have used only their senses go into the bodies of brutes, and especially into those of ferocious beasts, if they have yielded to bursts of anger; so that even in this case, the difference between the bodies that they animate conforms to the difference of their propensities. Those who have sought only to gratify their lust and appetite pass into the bodies of lascivious and gluttonous animals. Finally, those who have degraded their senses by disuse are compelled to vegetate in the plants. Those who have loved music to excess and yet have lived pure lives, go into the bodies of melodious birds. Those who have ruled tyrannically become eagles. Those who have spoken lightly of heavenly things, keeping their eyes always turned toward heaven, are changed into birds which always fly toward the upper air. He who has acquired civic virtues becomes a man; if he has not these virtues he is transformed into a domestic animal, like the bee."

Some of the church fathers also believed it. Proclus and Syrianus argued that the brute kept its own soul, but that the human soul which passed into the brute body was bound within the animal soul. Nearly all mythology contains this view of transmigration in some form. In the old Norse and German religions the soul is poetically represented as entering certain lower forms, as a rose, a pigeon, etc., for a short period before assuming the divine abode. The Druids of old

Gaul also taught it. The Welsh bards tell us that the souls of men transmigrate into the bodies of those animals whose habits and characters they most resemble, till, after a circuit of such penitential miseries, they are purified for the celestial presence. They mention three circles of existence—the circle of the all-inclosing circle which holds nothing alive or dead but God; the second circle, that of felicity, in which men travel after they have meritoriously passed through their terrestrial changes; the circle of evil, in which human nature passes through the varying stages of existence which it must undergo before it is qualified to inhabit the circle of felicity, and this includes the three infelicities of necessity, oblivion and death, with frequent trials of the lower animal lives. This corresponds to the Hindu triple existence given by Manu: "Souls endued with goodness attain always the state of deities; those filled with ambitious passions, the condition of men; and those immersed in darkness the nature of beasts. This is the threefold order of transmigration."

The folk-lore of all nations has various ways of telling how the soul of a man can inhabit an animal's body in stories of wehr-wolves, swan-maidens, mermaids, etc. In many parts of Europe the belief in the man-wolf still flourishes in connection with a crazy person, or a monomaniac, who is said to be transformed into the brute nature. Northern Europe receives this superstition as the man-bear. In India it is the man-tiger; in Abyssinia, the man-hyena; in South Africa, the man-lion; each country associating the depraved human nature, which sometimes runs riot as an epidemic mania, with the animal most dreaded.

But it is all a coarse symbol caricaturing the inner vital truth of reincarnation, and springing from the striking resemblance between men and animals, in feature and disposition, in voice and mien. The intel-

ligence and kindness of the beasts approaching near to human character, and the brutality of some men, would seem to indicate that both races were closely enough related to exchange souls.

The remarkable mental cleverness of the highest animals, the cunning of the fox, the tiger's fierceness, the serpent's meanness, the dog's fidelity, seem to be human traits in other forms, and the animal qualities are striking enough in many men for them to be fitly described as a fox, a hog, a snake, etc. The characteristics of animals are accurately termed in expressions first applied to mankind, and the community of disposition between the erect and the debased animal creation has furnished words for human qualities from the lower orders of life, as leonine, canine, vulpine, etc. Briefly, "the rare humanity of some animals and the notorious animality of some men" first suggested the idea of interchanging their souls among the primitive peoples, and has nourished it ever since among the oldest portion of the race as a vulgar illustration of a vital reality. As the fruits of this idea are beneficial, it was firmly held by the priests and philosophers as a moral fable, through which they popularly taught not only reincarnation, but respect for virtue and life. It wrought a poetic love of Nature in the masses such as has never been seen under any other influence. To the eastern mind life is a stream flowing through endless transformations, and everything containing it is divine, from the commonest onion to the crowned king; and as all living things are the possible casements of human souls, it is the height of impiety to abuse anything. The kindness of the Orient toward the brute creation is a beautiful comment upon the genuineness of this faith. The mercy due from man to the lower animals is a noble bequest, treasured for the world, as the wholesome lesson of transmigration.

The intelligent leaders of oriental thought were far from believing transmigration literally. The occult theory of the priests of Isis, like that of the Brahmans, Buddhists and Chaldeans, never really held that human souls inhabit animals, or that animal souls occupy men, although many orientalists have not penetrated beyond this outer court of eastern doctrine. It was simply an allegorical gospel for the masses with a double purpose—to picture the inner truth, which acute thinkers would reach and which the crowds need not know, and to instill respect for all life. The Egyptian priesthood adopted three styles of teaching all doctrine. The vulgar religion of the populace was a crude shaping of the priestly thought. The priests of the outer temple received the half-veiled tenets of initiates. But only the hierophants of the inner temple, after final initiation, were allowed to know the pure truth. The same triple shaping of the central thought, adapted to the audience, was followed by Pythagoras, Plato and all the great masters. Although the name of Pythagoras is synonymous with the idea of soul-wandering through animals, a careful perusal of the fragments of his writings, and of his disciples' books, shows that he tremendously realized the fact that souls must always, by all the forces of the universe, find an adequate expression of their strongest nature, and that it would be as impossible for a gallon to be contained in a pint measure as for a human spirit to inhabit an animal body.

Hierocles, in commenting on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras, whose disciple he was, says: "If through a shameful ignorance of the immortality annexed to our soul, a man should persuade himself that his soul dies with his body, he expects what can never happen; in like manner he who expects that after his death he shall put on the body of a beast, and become an ani-

mal without reason because of his vices, or a plant because of his dullness and stupidity—such a man, I say, acting quite contrary to those who transform the essence of man into one of the superior beings, is infinitely deceived, and absolutely ignorant of the essential form of the soul, which can never change; for being and continuing always man, it is only said to become God or beast by virtue or vice, though it cannot be either the one or the other.”

The early Neo-Platonists of Alexandria limited the range of human metempsychosis to human bodies and denied that the souls of men ever passed downwards into brutal states. Even the apparent endorsement of that conceit by Plotinus (quoted) was merely a simile. Porphyry and Jamblichus emphasized this distinction. Ebers demonstrates that the inner circle of the temple held this truth in a form wholly above the system of embalming, animal worship and transmigration.

The symbols of reincarnation which everywhere have typified the same doctrine—in Egyptian architecture by the flying globe, in Chinese pagodas and Indian temples by the intricate unfoldments of germinant designs ascending through successive stories to culminate in a gilded ball, in the Grecian friezes of religious processions, in the Druidical cromlechs and cairns of Wales and the circular stone heaps of Britain—all expressed a threefold significance—telling the masses of their transition through all living conditions, reminding the common priesthood of an exalted series of transformations, and picturing for the initiates the hidden principles of immortal progress. For all alike these emblems reiterated the solemn and vital reality of universal brotherhood throughout Nature; but the keenest students, who guided the bulk of religious thought, read in them simply the eternal law of cause and effect divinely ruling the soul through incessant changes.

XI.

DEATH, HEAVEN AND HELL.

The latest developments of science agree with the occultists and poets that there is no death, and that nothing is dead. What seems to be extinction is only a change of existence. What appears to have no vitality has only a lower order of the life principle. Everything is pulsating with energy, stones and dirt as well as animals and trees. The same force which animates the human body, the beasts, birds and reptiles in their brief periods, also vitalizes the oaks and vines in a smaller degree with longer lives, and individualizes the mineral world into crystals on a still lower plane but with lifetimes reckoned by thousands of years. And below crystal-life, in the constituent atoms of shapeless matter, is a tremendous thrill of undiminished activity. Life, the occultists say, is the eternal uncreated energy. The physicists grasp at the same thing in their Law of Continuity, and modern science concedes that "energy has as much claim to be regarded as an objective reality as matter itself." This life is the one essential energy acting under protean forms. It always inheres in every particle of matter, and makes no distinction between organic and inorganic, except one of grade, the former containing life-energy actively and the latter in dormant form. Because the scientist is unable to awaken into activity the latent life of inorganic matter, he insists, by the law of biogenesis, that life can only come from life. But that only marks the limit of his knowledge. The world's development has bridged all the gaps now yawning between the different kingdoms of Nature, though nothing remains now to show how it was done,

and science has to confess its ignorance. There is nothing to contradict and much to enforce the occult axiom that the same life animates man, plant and rock simply in different states of the one indestructible force—the Universal Soul—making all Nature what Goethe terms “the living visible garment of God.”

It is impossible for a person to cease to exist. When the tenant of the body moves out, the forces binding together the dwelling scatter to the nearest uses awaiting them. The positivists would have it that the individual soul also dissolves into an impersonal fund of being, a sort of immediate chilling Nirvana, out-freezing any eastern conception of remotest destiny. This melancholy result of western materialism is boldly confronted by reincarnation with a proven hypothesis, which illuminates the mystery of death and the future, and shows the unimpeachable reality of immortality. Reincarnation demonstrates that the personal ego, which permanently maintains its identity amid the constant changes of the bodily casement and mental consciousness, must continue its individuality. In addition to the evidences already adduced for the genuineness of this truth, is the reliable part of psychic phenomena—a small core of veritable fact, but buried in a vast concretion of mischievous deception and unwarrantable hypothesis—and the life experiences of some orientals whose intense devotion to pure invisible realities has pushed them into the perception of ultra-mortal things.

It is the strong attachment to physical existence which makes death the king of terrors. Those who have learned the lesson of life find him the blessed angel who ushers them through the golden gates. There shall at length come to every ascending soul the experience of those whose departure from this life cannot be called death, as Jesus, Elijah, or Enoch, who “walked with God and he was not, for God took him.” They

became so buoyed with spiritual forces that a slight touch shifted the equipoise and translated them into the invisible. The clarified spirit welcomes death.

When death severs the soul from its mortal encasement, says Mr. Walker, the ruling tendencies of the soul carry it to its strongest affinities. If these still dwell on earth, the soul hovers affectionately among the old scenes and insensibly mingles with its heart-friends, ministering and being ministered to, with no essential difference from the former condition. Many veritable experiences, apart from all possibility of delusion, confirm this, although the darkness of matter blinds most of us to the psychic life. At length, as shifting time unties the bonds of earth, the soul moves on with its strongest allies to the realms of its choice. There the soul lives out an era of its true life, an expression of its deepest nature, as much more full and more real than the late physical life as the waking state exceeds the dreaming. For the escape from material confinement allows the freest activity, in which the dominant desires, unconsciously nourished in the spirit, have the mastery. This liberty rouses the spirit from the earthly lethargy into its permanent individuality. The startling bound of the spirit into its own sphere must transfer the self-consciousness from its terrestrial form to a far higher vividness; but, as the wakefulness of day includes the somnambulism of night and knows itself superior to that dumb life, so the burst of unconstrained spiritual existence does not annul, but transcends the material phase.

The condition of the period intervening between death and birth, like all other epochs, is framed by the individual. The inner character makes a Paradise, a Purgatory, or an Inferno of any place. As Jesus said he was in heaven while talking with his followers, as Dante found all the material for hell in what his

eyes witnessed, so in the environments beyond death, where the subjective states of the soul are supreme, the appearance of the universe and the feelings of self are created, well or ill, by the central individual. There must be as many heavens and hells as there are good and bad beings. All attempts to describe the future state are inadequate and erroneous, and must necessarily be so. Plato, in the last book of the Republic, quotes the narrative of the Pamphylian Er, who had been killed in battle but came to life again on his funeral pyre, and declared that he was returned to earth to disclose the nature of the coming life. He found things about as Plato's allegory pictures them—the good and the wicked who had just died being assigned their places in heaven or under the earth. A number of souls whose thousand years of one or the other experience had expired were made to cast lots for a choice out of a large number of human and animal lives, and to drink of the River of Indifference, and to traverse the Plain of Forgetfulness before entering the world again. As with all the visions of after-death, this simply reflected the opinions of the Platonic thinker. St. John's Revelation paints the scene by colors obtained from his Jewish training, on the canvas of his Patmos imprisonment. Bunyan's description shows a simple imagination saturated with the Apocalypse. Protestant visionaries always discover a Protestant heaven and hell. Catholic ecstasies always add purgatory. Swedenborg found the gardens of heaven laid out in the Dutch fashion of his time. English clairvoyants and mediums are properly orthodox and evangelical. American spirits talk broad theology with ridiculous details. The divergence in all these alleged liftings of the veil betrays their subjectiveness.

It is impossible in the nature of things that one should permanently leave the physical condition until

the business of that existence is accomplished in transferring the affections from material to spiritual things. While the ruling attraction to a soul remains in this world, all the forces of the universe conspire to continue the association of the two in repeated lives. On the other hand, a person dominated by spiritual proclivities finds infinite vibrations drawing him away from temporal surroundings to the inscrutable glories of the eternal. In Swedenborg's phrase, "a man's loves make his home." The residual impulses coming from the momentums of past lives determine what and when shall be the next embodiment. The time and manner of reincarnation vary with each individual according to the impetus engendered by his lives. Between these lives the spiritual effect of the earthly life is absorbed from the personal soul manifested on earth into the immortal and unmanifested ego. This process may require days, years, centuries or millenniums, depending upon the intensity of the mundane aspirations which draw the spirit to earth and hinder its liberation into pure spiritual life. But as in dreams a whole life's history is sometimes condensed into a few seconds, time has no existence to the disembodied spirit. Whether the interval be long or short, the entire spiritual effect of the last life must be assimilated and shaped into a form that will spring up in coming lives. The instances of alternate consciousness indicate that some such marked difference from the previous incarnation appears in each earthly life, losing all remembrance of the previous chapter, and working out the tendencies which embodied that particular life in a career that will achieve redemption or condemnation.

At the first thought reincarnation carries the unwelcome inference that death and re-births separate us from the dearest present ties and introduce us as strangers into new phases of activity where everything—occu-

pations, knowledge and friends—must be found afresh. This is a mistake. The unnoticed habits of thought and action derived from the alliance of cherished comrades strengthen into ungovernable steeds whose course directs the soul on every journey toward those favorite companions. Among the thousands of acquaintances made in a lifetime, the rare friends whose intimacy strikes down into the inmost depths of the soul must continue as irresistible attractions in the next life. Orpheus could not fail to discover Eurydice in the spirit realm. In this earthly existence, which is the Heaven, or Purgatory, or Hell of the last one, we go straying among unfamiliar forms, frequently mistaking them for true friends, until suddenly we meet a soul with which there comes so intense and permanent an affection that every other person is forgotten. Such a fusion of spirits must hail from the shores of long distant loves, and its new unrecognized mastery develops a mightier union than would be possible in one uninterrupted flow. The poets like to symbolize this as the blending of two hemispheres, long since separated, into their original perfect whole. The most probable explanation of such intimacies rests in the idea that they are repetitions of previous attachments. A sense of ancient familiarity grows upon these closest ties, notwithstanding the absence of memory's confirmation. The powerful attractions residing in families and kinships may well be the result of ancestral affinities which have bound together in many earlier combinations, like a turning kaleidoscope, the same individuals.

Says Professor Hedge: "The birth into the present was the death of the old—'a sleep and a forgetting.' The soul went to sleep in one body; it woke in a new. The sleep is a gulf of oblivion between the two."

XII.

KARMA—THE COMPANION TRUTH OF REINCARNATION.

Karma is the eastern word for the Law of Causation as applied to personal experience. In Christendom, says Mr. Walker, the full recognition of this great principle, like that of its mate, reincarnation, lies dormant; but it is merely an extension into the spiritual domain of the fundamental premise of all science, the substratum of common sense, the cardinal axiom of every philosophy—that each effect has an adequate cause, and each cause works infinite consequences.

Briefly, the doctrine of karma is that we have made ourselves what we are by former actions, and are building our future eternity by present actions. There is no destiny but what we ourselves determine. There is no salvation or condemnation except what we ourselves bring about. God places all the powers of the universe at our disposal, and the handle by which we use them to construct our fate has been and is and always shall be our own individual will. Action (karma) of the spirit, whether in the inner consciousness alone, or by vocal expression, or in outward act, is the secret force which directs our journeys through infinity, driving us down into the gloomy regions of evil, of matter, and of selfishness, or up toward the luminous fields of good, of spirit, and of love.

The most adamant of facts is that of an infinite all-comprehending Power, of which Nature is the pulsating body—an eternal reality shaping the shadowy appearances of time, and variously named Force, Fate, Justice, Righteousness, Love, Mind—God. The most essential attribute of this unfathomable Being is that of Almighty Equity. Confronting this fact is the puz-

zling fact of our spiritual personality enveloped in matter. The thought always associated with this is individual responsibility. "Two things fill me with wonder," says Kant, "the starry heavens and the sense of moral responsibility in man." When Daniel Webster was asked what was the greatest thought that ever stirred his soul, he replied, "The thought of my personal accountability to God." Every balanced mind agrees with these intellectual giants on this point. The inevitable outcome of grouping these two actualities—God and responsibility—is the conception that the Universal Sustainer is giving every creature the best thing for it, and that each soul is in some way accountable for its condition. Single observations seem to contradict this idea, but the long trend of life's experience verifies it. Because it offers no shelter for culpable actions and necessitates a sterling manliness, it is less welcome to weak natures than the easy religious tenets of vicarious atonement, intercession and forgiveness. But it rings through the inner soul-world as the fundamental harmonic tone, setting the key for all wholesome poetry, philosophy, religion and art, and inspiring the magnificent sweep of progress which is rationalizing modern Christendom. For it is identical with the essence of Bible truth, as these representative sentences will suggest: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Solomon); "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee" (Jesus); "Work out your own salvation. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (St. Paul).

The embryos of all animals are at the earliest stage indistinguishable from one another. The biologist who has lost his labels cannot tell which would become fish, cat or man; but Nature knows the past records and therefore the future possibility of each. So within

souls apparently similar there hide unsuspected germs of vast difference, resulting from the forgotten pasts, which may develop into corresponding divergent futures. The ancient behaviors of every soul have accumulated a grand heritage of influences from which our present bequest is derived. The kernels of remote conducts eventually have their unfoldment in the revolution of our lives, until at last, if we refuse weeds and harbor only worthy germs, we shall bear a continual harvest from the good seed sown in forgotten lives.

The "bonds of action" include the whole range of material for character—not only the recognized habits of the soul, but the more important unconscious inner thought whence the outward manifestations spring. Impulses that are secretly cherished feed the acts of life and mould all our environments to fit them. Our favorite inclinations show what we have been doing in ancient ages. Within the germ of to-day's conduct are coiled interminable consequences of good and evil.

The relentless hand which metes out our fortunes with the stern justice most vividly portrayed by the Greek dramatists in their Nemesis, Fates and Furies, takes from our own savings the gifts bestowed on us. In the domain of eternal justice, the offense and the punishment are inseparably connected as the same event, because there is no real distinction between the action and its outcome. He who injures another in fact only wrongs himself. To adopt Schopenhauer's figure, he is a wild beast who fastens his fangs in his own flesh. But linked with the awful fact of our undivided responsibility for what we now are, goes the inspiring assurance that we have in our control the remedy of evil and the increase of good. We can, and we alone can, extricate ourselves from the existing limitations, by the all-curing powers of purity, love and spirituality. In eastern phraseology, the purpose

of life is to work out our bad karma (action) and to stow away good karma. As surely as the harvest of to-day grows from the seed-time of yesterday, so shall every kernel of thought and feeling, speech and performance, bring its crop of reward or rebuke. The worthy soul now burdened with misfortune is shifting off the chains of old wrong-doing. The vicious soul enjoying comforts is reaping the benefits of old virtues. So intricately are all situations connected with untraceable lineages that only the Omnipresent can penetrate below appearances in the real natures of men.

The stupendous issues of conduct endure through all changes. After one has climbed to high summits of character the surprising reappearance of some forgotten sin may stay his progress and require all his powers to conquer the viper whose egg he long ago nested in his bosom. So in the depths, when life's environments imprison us in degrading conditions, we may find a lifting and sustaining power that preserves the soul's integrity as the fruit of past ameliorative acts, long forgotten, but treasured within the soul's secret ledger, where, in the end, debt and credit must find their equilibrium in the soul's final freedom.

It is karma, or our old acts, that draws us back into earthly life. The spirit's abode changes according to its karma, and this karma forbids any long continuance in one condition, because *it* is always changing. So long as action is governed by material and selfish motives just so long must the effect of that action be manifested in physical re-births. Only the perfectly unselfish soul can rise superior to the gravitation of material life. Few, comparatively, have attained this; but it is the goal of mankind. Some of those who have reached it have voluntarily returned as saviors of the race. Heed these messengers of the Light.

XIII.

WESTERN WRITERS ON REINCARNATION.

There is a larger indorsement of reincarnation among western thinkers than the world knows. In many of them it springs up spontaneously, while others embrace it as a luminous ray from the East which is confirmed by all the candid tests of philosophy. When Christianity first swept over Europe the inner thought of its leaders was deeply tinged with this truth. The church tried ineffectually to eradicate it, and in various sects it kept sprouting forth beyond the time of Erigena and Bonaventura, its mediæval advocates.

Every great intuitional soul, as Paracelsus, Boehme and Swedenborg, has adhered to it. The Italian luminaries, Giordano Bruno and Campanella, embraced it. The best of German philosophy is enriched by it. In Schopenhauer, Lessing, Hegel, Leibnitz, Herder and Fichte the younger, it is earnestly advocated. The anthropological systems of Kant and Schelling furnish points of contact with it. The younger Helmont, in "*De Revolutione Animarum*," adduces in two hundred problems all the arguments which may be urged in favor of the return of souls into human bodies, according to Jewish ideas.

Of English thinkers the Cambridge Platonists defended it with much learning and acuteness, most conspicuously Henry More; and in Cudworth and Hume it ranks as the most rational theory of immortality.

Glanvil's "*Lux Orientalis*" devotes a curious treatise to it. It captivated the minds of Fourier and Leroux. Andre Pezzani's book on "*The Plurality of the Soul's Lives*" works out the system on the Roman Catholic idea of expiation.

Modern astronomy has furnished material for the elaborate speculations of a reincarnation extending through many worlds, as published in Fontenelle's volume, "The Plurality of Worlds," Huygens' "Cosmotheoros," Brewster's "More Worlds than One; the Philosopher's Faith and the Christian's Hope," Jean Reynaud's "Earth and Heaven," Flammarion's "Stories of Infinity" and "The Plurality of Inhabited Worlds," and Figuiet's "The To-morrow of Death." With various degrees of fancy and probability these writers trace the soul's progress among the heavenly bodies. The astronomer Bode wrote that we start from the coldest planet of our solar system and advance from planet to planet, nearer the Sun, where the most perfect beings, he thinks, will live. Emmanuel Kant, in his "General History of Nature," says that souls start imperfect from the Sun, and travel by planet stages, farther and farther away to a paradise in the coldest and remotest star of our system. Between these opposites many savants have formulated other theories.

In theology reincarnation has retained a firm influence from the days of Origen and Porphyry, through the scholastics, to the present day. In Soame Jenyns' works, which long thrived as the best published argument for Christianity, it is noticeable. Chevalier Ramsay and William Law have also written in its defense. Julius Muller warmly upholds it in his profound work on "The Christian Doctrine of Sin," as well as Dr. Dörner. Another means of its dissemination through a good portion of the ministry is Dr. Edward Beecher's espousal of it, in the form of pre-existence, in "The Conflict of Ages" and "The Concord of Ages." English and Irish bishops have not hesitated to promulgate it. Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks have dared to preach it. James Freeman Clarke speaks

strongly in its favor. Professor William Knight, the Scotch metaphysician of St. Andrews, and Professor Francis Bowen, of Harvard University, clearly show the logical probabilities in which reincarnation compares favorably with any other philosophy.

The following extracts from some of the most interesting of these and other authors who refer to the matter, may represent the unsuspected prevalence of this thought in our midst.

Schopenhauer's powerful philosophy includes reincarnation as one of its main principles, as these extracts show, from his chapter on "Death" in "The World as Will and Idea:"

"What sleep is for the individual, death is for the will [character]. It would not endure to continue the same actions and sufferings throughout an eternity, without true gain, if memory and individuality remained to it. It flings them off, and this is *lethe*; and through this sleep of death it reappears refreshed and fitted out with another intellect, as a new being—"a new day tempts to new shores."

"Every new-born being comes fresh and blithe into the new existence, and enjoys it as a free gift; but there is, and can be, nothing freely given. Its fresh existence is paid for by the old age and death of a worn-out existence which has perished, but which contained the indestructible seed out of which the new existence has arisen—they are *one* being. To show the bridge between the two would certainly be the solution of a great riddle."

"We find the doctrine of metempsychosis, springing from the earliest and noblest known ages of the human race, always spread abroad in the earth as the belief of the great majority of mankind; nay, really as the teaching of all religions, with the exception of that of the Jews and the two which have proceeded

from it—in the most subtle form however, and coming nearest to the truth in Buddhism. Accordingly, while Christians console themselves with the thought of meeting again in another world, in which one regains one's complete personality and knows one's self at once, in those other religions the meeting again is going on now, only incognito. In the succession of births, and by virtue of metempsychosis or palingenesis, the persons who now stand in close connection or contact with us will also be born again with us at the next birth, and will have the same or analogous relations and sentiments towards us as now, whether these are of a friendly or a hostile description. Recognition is certainly here limited to an obscure intimation—a reminiscence, which cannot be brought to distinct consciousness, and refers to an infinitely distant time; with the exception, however, of Buddha himself, who has the prerogative of distinctly knowing his own earlier births and those of others—as this is described in the 'Jataka.' But, in fact, if at a favorable moment one contemplates, in a purely objective manner, the action of men in reality, the intuitive conviction is forced upon one that it not only is and remains constantly the same, according to the [Platonic] Idea, but also that the present generation, in its true inner nature, is precisely and substantially identical with every generation that has been before it."

"The belief in metempsychosis presents itself as the natural conviction of man whenever he reflects at all in an unprejudiced manner. It would really seem to be that which Kant falsely asserts of his three pretended ideas of the reason, a philosopheme natural to human reason, which proceeds from its forms; and when it is not found it must have been displaced by positive religious doctrines coming from a different source. I have also remarked that it is at once obvi-

ous to every one who hears of it for the first time. Let any one only observe how earnestly Lessing defends it in the last seven paragraphs of his 'Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts.' Lichtenberg also says in his 'Selbstcharacteristik,' 'I cannot get rid of the thought that I died before I was born.' Even the excessively empirical Hume says in his skeptical essay on immortality, 'The metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that philosophy can hearken to.' What resists this belief is Judaism, together with the two religions which have sprung from it, because they teach the creation of man out of nothing, and they have the hard task of linking on to this belief an endless existence *a parte post*. They certainly have succeeded, with fire and sword, in driving out of Europe and part of Asia that consoling primitive belief of mankind; it is still doubtful for how long. Yet how difficult this was is shown by the oldest church histories. Most of the heretics were attached to this belief."

In the remarkable little treatise on "The Divine Education of the Human Race," by Lessing, the German philosopher, a book so sublimely simple in its profound insight that it has had an enormous influence, the author outlines the gradual instruction of mankind and shows how the enlightenment is still progressing through many important lessons. His thought mounts to a climax in suggesting the stupendous programme by which God is developing the individual just as he has been educating the race:

"The very same way by which the race reaches its perfection must every individual man—one sooner, another later—have traveled over. Have traveled over in one and the same life? 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 should not every individual have existed more than once upon this world?

"Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest? Because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once?

"Why may not even I have already performed those steps of my perfecting which bring to men only temporal punishments and rewards? And once more, why not another time all those steps to perform which, the views of eternal rewards so powerfully assist us?

"Why should I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh expertness? Do I bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay 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 that which even I must forget *now*, is that necessarily forgotten forever?

"Or is it a reason against the hypothesis that so much time would have been lost to me? Lost? And how much, then, should I miss? Is not a whole eternity mine?"

"The Destiny of Man," by J. G. Fichte, whose great thoughts still heave the heart of Germany and grandly mould the world, contains these paragraphs:

"These two systems, the purely spiritual and the sensuous—which last may consist of an immeasurable series of particular lives—exist in me from the moment when my active reason is developed, and pursue their parallel course. The former alone gives to the latter meaning and purpose and value. I *am* immortal, imperishable, eternal, so soon as I form the resolution to obey the law of reason. After an existence of myriad

lives the super-sensuous world cannot be more present than at this moment. Other conditions of my sensuous existence are to come, but these are no more the true life than the present condition is.

"Man is not a product of the world of sense; and the end of his existence can never be attained in that world. His destination lies beyond time and space and all that pertains to sense.

"Mine eye discerns this eternal life and motion in all the veins of sensible and spiritual Nature, through what seems to others a dead mass. And it sees this life forever ascend and grow and transfigure itself into a more spiritual expression of its own nature. The Sun rises and sets, the stars vanish and return again, and all the spheres hold their cycle dance. But they never return precisely such as they disappeared; and in the shining fountains of life there is also life and progress.

"All death in Nature is birth; and precisely in dying, the sublimation of life appears most conspicuous. There is no death-bringing principle in Nature, for Nature is only life, throughout. Not death kills, but the more living life, which is hidden behind the old, begins and unfolds itself. Death and birth are only the struggles of life with itself to manifest itself in ever more transfigured form, more like itself.

"Even because Nature puts me to death she must quicken me anew. It can only be my higher life, unfolding itself in her, before which my present life disappears; and that which mortals call death is the visible appearing of another vivification."

Among the wealth of German geniuses there is none more lofty and broad than Herder. One of the most suggestive of his works is a series of "Dialogues on Metempsychosis," in which two friends discuss the theme together. As the outcome of their colloquy is a stanch vindication of that hypothesis, it is not unfair

to group together a few of the paragraphs on one side of the conversation:

"Do you not know great and rare men who cannot have become what they are at once, in a single human existence? who must have often existed before in order to have attained that purity of feeling, that instinctive impulse for all that is true, beautiful and good; in short, that elevation and natural supremacy over all around them?

"Do not these great characters appear, for the most part, all at once? Like a cloud of celestial spirits, descended from on high; like men risen from the dead born again, who brought back the old time?

"Have you never had remembrances of a former state, which you could find no place for in this life? In that beautiful period when the soul is yet a half-closed bud, have you not seen persons, been in places, of which you were ready to swear that you had seen those persons, or had been in those places before? And yet it could not have been in this life? The most blessed moments, the grandest thoughts, are from that source. In our more ordinary seasons, we look back with astonishment on ourselves, we do not comprehend ourselves. And such are *we*; we who, from a hundred causes, have sunk so deep and are so wedded to matter, that but few reminiscences of so pure a character remain to us. The nobler class of men who, separated from wine and meat, lived in perfect simplicity according to the order of Nature, carried it further, no doubt, than others, as we learn from the example of Pythagoras, of Iarchas, of Apollonius, and others, who remembered distinctly what and how many times they had been in the world before. If we are blind, or can see but two steps beyond our noses, ought we therefore to deny that others may see a hundred or a thousand degrees farther, even to the bottom of time, into the

deep, cool well of the fore-world, and there discern everything plain and bright and clear?"

To this last strain the listener responds: "I will freely confess to you that those sweet dreams of memory are known to me also, among the experiences of my childhood and youth. I have been in places and circumstances of which I could have sworn that I had been in them before. I have seen persons with whom I seemed to have lived before; with whom I was, as it were, on the footing of an old acquaintance." He then attempts to explain them as returned dreams, which his interlocutor answers with more wonderful impressions necessarily requiring a former life.

"Have you never observed that children will sometimes, on a sudden, give utterance to ideas which make us wonder how they got possession of them; which presuppose a long series of other ideas and secret self-communings; which break forth like a full stream out of the earth, an infallible sign that the stream was not produced in a moment from a few raindrops, but had long been flowing concealed beneath the ground, and, it may be, had broken through many a rock, and contracted many defilements?"

"You know the law of economy which rules throughout Nature. Is it not probable that the Deity is guided by it in the propagation and progress of human souls? He who has not become ripe in one form of humanity is put into the experience again, and, some time or other, must be perfected.

"Purification of the heart, the ennobling of the soul, with all its propensities and cravings, this, it seems to me, is the true palingenesis of this life, after which, I doubt not, a happy, more exalted, but yet unknown metempsychosis awaits us."

Dr. Henry More, the learned and lovable Platonist of the seventeenth century, wrote a charming treatise

on the "Immortality of the Soul," in which he argues for pre-existence as follows:

"If it be good for the souls of men to be at all, the sooner they are, the better. But we are most certain that the wisdom and goodness of God will do that which is the best; and therefore if they can enjoy themselves before they come to these terrestrial bodies, they must be before they come into these bodies. For nothing hinders but that they may live before they come into the body, as well as they may after going out of it. Wherefore the pre-existence of souls is a necessary result of the wisdom and goodness of God.

"Again, the face of Providence in the work seems very much to suit with this opinion, there being not any so natural and easy account to be given of those things that seem the most harsh in the affairs of men, as from this hypothesis—that these souls did once subsist in some other state; where, in several manners and degrees, they forfeited the favor of their Creator, and so, according to that just Nemesis that He has interwoven in the constitution of the universe and of their own natures, they undergo several calamities and asperities of fortune and sad drudgeries of fate, as a punishment inflicted, or a disease contracted from the several obliquities of their *apostasy*. Which key is not only able to unlock that recondite mystery of some particular men's almost fatal averseness from all religion and virtue, their stupidity and dullness and even invincible slowness to these things from their very childhood, and their incorrigible propension to all manner of vice; but also of that squalid folornness and brutish barbarity that whole nations for many ages have lain under, and many do still lie under at this very day—which sad scene of things must needs exceedingly cloud and obscure the ways of Divine Providence, and make them utterly unintelligible; un-

less some light be let in from the present hypothesis.

"In Egypt, that ancient nurse of all hidden sciences, that this opinion was in vogue amongst the wisest men there, the fragments of Trismegist do sufficiently witness—of which opinion, not only the Gymnosophists, and other wise men of Egypt, were, but also the Brachmans of India, and the Magi of Babylon and Persia. To these you may add the abstruse philosophy of the Jews, which they call their Cabala, of which the soul's pre-existence makes a considerable part, as all the learned of the Jews do confess."

One of the rare volumes of the early eighteenth century is Chevalier Ramsay's remarkable book entitled "The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion," in which he elaborates the idea that "the sacred mysteries of our holy faith are not new fictions unheard of by the philosophers of all nations," but that "on the contrary Christianity is as old as the creation." In this "History of the human mind in all ages, nations, and religions, concerning the most divine truths," he shows that reincarnation is the common possession of Christianity and of all the other great systems of sacred thought:

"The holy oracles always represent Paradise as our native country, and our present life as an exile. How can we be said to have been banished from a place in which we never were? This argument alone would suffice to convince us of pre-existence, if the prejudice of infancy inspired by the schoolmen had not accustomed us to look upon these expressions as metaphorical, and to believe, contrary to Scripture and to reason, that we were exiled from a happy state, only for the fault of our first parents. Atrocious maxim that sullies all the conduct of Providence, and that shocks the understandings of the most intelligent children of all nations. The answers ordinarily made to them

throw into their tender minds the seeds of a lasting incredulity.

"In Scripture, the wise man says, speaking of the eternal Logos, and his pre-existent humanity: 'The Lord possessed me from the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the earth was!' All this can be said only of the eternal Logos. But what follows may be applied to the pre-existent humanity of the Messiah: 'When he prepared the heavens I was there, when he encircled the face of the deep, when he established the clouds above, when he appointed the foundations of the earth—then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.' It is visible that Solomon speaks here of a time soon after the creation of the world, of a time when the earth was inhabited only by a pure, innocent race. Can this be said after the fall, when the earth was cursed? It is only a profound ignorance of the ancient, primitive tradition of pre-existence that can make men mistake the true sense of this sublime text.

"Our Savior seems to approve the doctrine of pre-existence in his answer to his disciples when they interrogated him about the man born blind: 'Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' (John ix, 2.) It is clear that this question would have been ridiculous and impertinent if the disciples had not believed that the man born blind had sinned before his corporeal birth, and, consequently, that he had pre-existed in another state. Our Savior's answer is remarkable: 'Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him!' Jesus Christ could not mean that neither this man nor his parents had ever sinned,

for this can be said of no mortal; but the meaning is, that it was neither for the sins committed by this man in a state of pre-existence, nor for those of his parents, that he was born blind, but in order to manifest one day the power of God. Our Lord, therefore, far from blaming and redressing this error in his disciples, answers in a way that seems to confirm them in the doctrine of pre-existence. If he had looked upon this opinion as a capital error, would it have been compatible with his wisdom to pass it over so slightly, and taciturnly authorize it? On the contrary, does not his silence indicate that he looked upon this doctrine, which was a received maxim of the Jewish church, as the true explication of original sin?

“St. Paul says, in speaking of the origin of mortal and physical evil, ‘By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.’ (Romans v, 12.) If all have sinned, then all have voluntarily co-operated with Adam in the breach of the eternal law—for where there is no deliberate act of will, there can be no sin. The Apostle does not say that Adam’s sin was imputed to all. The doctrine of imputation, by which God attributes Adam’s sin to his innocent posterity, cannot be the meaning of St. Paul, for, besides that this doctrine is incompatible with the divine perfection, the Apostle adds: ‘For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall all be made righteous.’ (Romans v, 19.) Now it is certain that men can only be made righteous by their personal, deliberate and voluntary co-operation with the spirit of grace, or the second Adam. The Apostle assures us in the same passage that ‘all did not sin after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.’ This sin was really committed in a pre-existent state by the individuals of the present human race. The meaning is

that one pair gave the bad example, and the human race co-existent with them in Paradise soon imitated this crime of disobedience against the eternal law, by the false love of natural knowledge and sensible pleasure. St. Paul seems to confirm this when he says: 'For the children being not yet born, having neither done good nor evil, it was said unto Rebecca, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."' God's love and hatred depend upon the moral dispositions of the creature. Since God says that he loved Jacob and hated Esau ere they were born, and before they had done good or evil in this mortal life, it follows clearly that they must have pre-existed in another state. This would have appeared to be the natural sense of the text, if prejudices imbibed from our infancy, more or less, had not blinded the minds of Christian doctors to the same degree as Judaical prejudices darkened those of the ancient Pharisees.

"If it be said that these texts are obscure; that pre-existence is only drawn from them by induction, and that this opinion is not revealed in Scripture by express words, I answer, that the doctrines of the immortality of the soul are nowhere revealed expressly in the sacred oracles of the Old or New Testament, but because all their morals and doctrines are founded upon these great truths. We may say the same of pre-existence. The doctrine is nowhere expressly revealed, but it is evidently supposed, as without it original sin becomes not only inexplicable, but absurd, repugnant and impossible.

"There is nothing in the fathers nor councils that contradicts this doctrine; yea, while the fifth general council and all the fathers after the sixth century condemn a false idea of pre-existence in which the ancient tradition was adulterated by the Origenists and Priscillianists, the true doctrine of pre-existence was not

condemned by the church. This supposes that all the individuals of the human species composed of soul and body were created in Paradise, that they all co-operated in Adam's disobedience, partook of his crime, and so were justly punished. This was the constant tradition of the Jewish church, and confirmed by the Scriptures. This opinion of pre-existence was also very ancient in the Christian church, ere the Origenists spoiled it with the Pythagorean and Platonic fictions.

"It is against the impious degradation of transmigration [through animal bodies] that the fathers declaim, and not the true Scripture doctrine of degraded [human] intelligences. This the schoolmen confound with the false disguises—mixtures of the pagans. This great principle is the true key by which we can understand the meaning of several passages of Scripture, and the sense of many sublime articles of faith. Thus only can we shelter Christianity from the railleries of the incredulous."

The novelist Bulwer thus expresses his opinion of this truth: "Eternity may be but an endless series of those migrations which men call deaths, abandonments of home after home, ever to fairer scenes and loftier heights. Age after age the spirit may shift its tent, fated not to rest in the dull Elysium of the heathen, but carrying with it evermore its two elements, activity and desire."

Hume's skeptical essay on "The Immortality of the Soul" argues thus:

"Reasoning from the common course of Nature, and without supposing any new interposition of the supreme cause, which ought always to be excluded from philosophy, what is incorruptible must also be ungenerable. The soul, therefore, if immortal, existed before our birth, and if the former existence noways concerns us, neither will the latter. . . .

"The metempsychosis is, therefore, the only system of this kind that philosophy can hearken to."

One of the chapters in Joseph Glanvil's "*Lux Orientalis*," a treatise attempting to demonstrate the truth of Platonic pre-existence, and strengthened by the elaborate annotations of Dr. Henry More, is an extension of the following:

"Seven Pillars on which the Hypothesis of Pre-existence stands:

"1. All the divine designs and actions are carried on by pure and infinite goodness.

"2. There is an exact geometrical justice that runs through the universe, and is interwoven in the texture of things.

"3. Things are carried to their proper place and state by the congruity of their natures. Where this fails we may suppose some arbitrary management.

"4. The souls of men are capable of living in other bodies besides terrestrial; and never act but in some body or other.

"5. The soul in every state hath such a body as is fittest to those faculties and operations that it is most inclined to exercise.

"6. The powers and faculties of the soul are either spiritual or intellectual, or sensitive or plastic.

"7. By the same degrees that the higher powers are invigorated, the lower are abated, as to their proper exercise."

Anna Kingsford says: "True love is stronger than a thousand deaths. For though one die a thousand times, a single Love may yet perpetuate itself past every death from birth to birth, growing and culminating in intensity and might.

"Not until a man has accomplished his regeneration, and become a son of God, a Christ, can he have these memories of his past lives. Such memories as a man,

on the upward path, can have of his past incarnations, are by reflection only; and the memories are not of events usually, but of principles and truths and habits formerly acquired.

"Reincarnation pertains only to the true soul. The astral soul or fluidic envelope, does not again become incarnate; so that they are not in error who assert that a *person* is never twice incarnate. That which transmigrates is the essential germ of the individual, the seat of all his divine potencies. In some this exists as a mere dim spark, and in others as a luminous sun."

In the *Fortnightly Review* for September, 1878, Professor William Knight writes:

"It seems surprising that in the discussions of contemporary philosophy on the origin and destiny of the soul there has been no explicit revival of the doctrines of Pre-existence and Metempsychosis. Whatever may be their intrinsic worth or evidential value, their title to rank on the roll of philosophical hypotheses is undoubted. They offer quite as remarkable a solution of the mystery which all admit as the rival theories of Creation, Traduction, and Extinction."

"If we reject the doctrine of Pre-existence, we must either believe in non-existence or fall back to one or other of the two opposing theories of Creation and Traduction; and as we reject Extinction, we may find Pre-existence has fewer difficulties to face than the rival hypotheses. Creation is the theory that every moment of time multitudes of souls are simultaneously born—not sent down from a celestial source, but freshly made out of nothing and placed in bodies prepared for them by natural growth. To the Platonist the theory of Traduction seemed even worse, as it implied the derivation of the soul from at least two sources—from both parents—and a substance thus derived was apparently composite and quasi-material.

"Stripped of all extravagance and expressed in the modest terms of probability, the theory has immense speculative interest and great ethical value. It is much to have the puzzle of the origin of evil thrown back for an indefinite number of cycles of lives; to have a workable explanation of *Nemesis*, and of what we are accustomed to call the moral tragedies and the untoward birth of a multitude of men and women. It is much also to have the doctrine of immortality lightened of its difficulties; to have our immediate outlook relieved by the doctrine that in the soul's eternity its pre-existence and its future existence are one. The retrospect may assuredly help the prospect.

"Whether we make use of it or not, we ought to realize its alternatives. They are these: Either all life is extinguished and resolved through an absorption and reassumption of the vital principle everywhere, or a perpetual miracle goes on in the incessant and rapid increase in the amount of spiritual existence within the universe; and while human life survives, the intelligence and the affection of the lower animals perish everlastingly."

Pezzani, the author of "The Plurality of the Soul's Lives," writes: "The earthly sojourn is only a new probation, as was said by Dupont de Nemours, that great writer who, in the eighteenth century, outstripped all modern thought. Now, if this be so, is it not plain that the recollection of former lives would seriously hinder probations, by removing most of their difficulties, and consequently of their deserts, as well as of their spontaneity? We live in a world where free-will is all-powerful, the inviolable law of advancement and progress among men. If past lives were remembered, the soul would know the significance and import of the trials which are reserved for it here below; indolent and careless, it would harden itself against the purposes of

Providence, and become paralyzed by the hopelessness of mastering them, or even, if of a better quality and more manly, it would accept and work them out without fail. Well, neither of these suppositions is necessary; the struggle must be free, voluntary, safe from the influences of the past; the field of combat must seem new, so that the athlete may exhibit and practice his virtues upon it. The experience he has already acquired, the forces he has learned how to conquer, serve him in the new strife; but in such a manner that he does not suspect it, for the imperfect soul undergoes reincarnations in order to develop the qualities that it has already manifested, to free itself from the vices and faults which are in opposition to the ascensional law. What would happen if all men remembered their former lives? The order of the earth would be overthrown; at least, it is not now established on such conditions. Lethe, as well as free will, is a law of the actual world."

Olney H. Richmond, in his "Religion of the Stars," says: "Concealed within the bodies of thousands upon thousands of the present generation are personages that once ranked high among the sons and daughters of Atlantis, Egypt, Persia, Chaldea, Greece, Arabia, China and other mystic lands.

"They are here for a purpose that has been foreseen during more than two thousand years past. The records of the ancient times bear in their hidden symbolism many prophecies of the coming time in the far future. The world does not understand this hidden record, but these unseen ones do, and they are here to help us. And they and we are also assisted by millions of others who are waiting upon the other shore for their turn to take up the great work where we leave it; and thus will the light be spread. Thus will the grand old Religion of the Stars regain its foothold

upon the earth and re-establish the Kingdom of God, which is eternal in the heavens.

"The very idea of any future state of existence whatever, in my opinion, depends upon the facts of re-embodiment; for how can any Darwinian reasoner admit for a moment, after considering all the facts relating to human existence, that a human soul starts new—freshly made out of nothing—every time a babe is born. Why, it is as absurd as the fable of the creation of man out of the dust, and a woman out of a bone. It is just about as logical. But just suppose, for the sake of argument, that by some unheard-of process of reasoning, we do come to such a conclusion—where are we then? Why, we are only at the beginning of absurdities, for we have, as a natural sequence, the corollary, that, if a child die, as so many do every day, when but a few minutes old, it has already been able to disintegrate, differentiate, set up and to give power to a high spiritual entity, capable of sustaining an existence to all eternity.

"Think of it, my mystic friends, and let this fact sink into your souls. You must, in other words, conceive of a thing with only one end. One end is here with this little lump of humanity, who has only enough mentality to cry for his dinner; the other end is—where? Nowhere! It extends onward and onward, does this life, in an everlasting eternity as a finished soul.

"Think what this doctrine of special creation involves. A few months or a few years; a few days or a few hours; a few minutes or a few seconds of experience in the control of matter in the form of flesh, blood, bone and nerves, then a vast, never-ending eternity in the spirit or astral form.

"Why should we be born on this earth at all, or on any other earth? If immortal souls can be manufactured so easily and expeditiously, what a terrible waste

of creative and governing force do we find here. What is the use of living here, anyhow? Why not go right over to the other side at once, and gain all our experience there, where we are not obliged to fight a cold world for our bread and butter, during years and years of wear and tear of the flesh. Ah! why not?

"Because we know that our life is just as necessary now and here as it ever has been or ever will be, in any other life.

"We do not expect all to see as we do. We know all cannot see alike. We also know that some great truths are purposely withheld from men until such time as they can appreciate them. We know that certain books are 'sealed' for a time. 'But go thy way, Daniel, for thou shalt stand in thy lot when the day cometh.'

"Men must progress in light and understanding, as well as in material knowledge. It was a long step in advance when men conceived of a future state of existence of any kind.

"Step by step they have advanced ever since. Millions on millions are yet so mind-darkened, benighted and steeped in priest-ridden ignorance as to believe that this old house of flesh is saved or resurrected from its decomposed condition in the grave, and by some great hocus-pocus of divine power given back to them to occupy during an endless future of existence. But this stupendous absurdity is fast going, never to return; fairly argued out of court by the proofs furnished by modern research and advancement in the departments of biology, chemistry, philosophy and physiology. With it must soon go the other crude beliefs and ideas belonging to the childhood of races."

James Freeman Clarke, in his notable "Ten Great Religions," writes: "That man has come up to his present state of development by passing through lower forms is the popular doctrine of science to-day. What

is called evolution teaches that we have reached our present state by a very long and gradual ascent from the lowest animal organizations. It is true that the Darwinian theory takes no notice of the evolution of the soul, but only of the body. But it appears to me that a combination of the two views would remove many difficulties which still attach to the theory of natural selection and the survival of the fittest. If we are to believe in evolution, let us have the assistance of the soul itself in this development of new species. Thus science and philosophy will co-operate, nor will poetry hesitate to lend her aid."

In the *Princeton Review* for May, 1881, Professor Francis Bowen, of Harvard University, published a very interesting article on "Christian Metempsychosis," in which he urges the Christian acceptance of reincarnation. We quote a portion of it, because it is an able appeal, from both a metaphysical and Christian standpoint, for the adoption of this truth:

"Our life upon earth is rightly held to be a discipline and a preparation for a higher and eternal life hereafter. But if limited to the duration of a single mortal body, it is so brief as to seem hardly sufficient for so grand a purpose. Threescore years and ten must surely be an inadequate preparation for eternity. But what assurance have we that the probation of the soul is confined within so narrow limits? Why may it not be continued, or repeated, through a long series of successive generations, the same personality animating one after another an indefinite number of tenements of flesh, and carrying forward into each the training it has received, the character it has formed, the temper and dispositions it has indulged, in the stage of existence immediately preceding? It need not remember its past history, even while bearing the fruits and the consequences of that history deeply ingrained into its

present nature. How many long passages of any one life are now completely lost to memory, though they may have contributed largely to build up the heart and the intellect which distinguish one man from another! Our responsibility surely is not lessened by such forgetfulness. We are still accountable for the misuse of time, though we have forgotten how or on what we wasted it. We are even now reaping the bitter fruits, through enfeebled health and vitiated desires and capacities, of many forgotten acts of self-indulgence, willfulness, and sin—forgotten just because they were so numerous. Then a future life, even in another frail body upon this earth, may well be a state of just and fearful retribution.

“Why should it be thought incredible that the same soul should inhabit in succession an indefinite number of mortal bodies, and thus prolong its experience and its probation till it has become in every sense ripe for heaven or the final judgment? Even during this one life our bodies are perpetually changing, though by a process of decay and restoration which is so gradual that it escapes our notice. Every human being thus dwells successively in many bodies, even during one short life.

“If every birth were an act of absolute creation, the introduction to life of an entirely new creature, we might reasonably ask why different souls are so variously constituted at the outset. We do not all start fair in the race that is set before us, and therefore all cannot be expected, at the close of one brief mortal pilgrimage, to reach the same goal, and to be equally well fitted for the blessings or the penalties of a fixed state hereafter. The commonest observation assures us that one child is born with limited capacities and perhaps a wayward disposition, strong passions and a sullen temper; that he has tendencies to evil which

are almost sure to be soon developed. Another, on the contrary, seems happily endowed from the start; he is not only amiable, tractable and kind, but quick-witted and precocious, a child of many hopes. The one seems a perverse goblin, while the other has the early promise of a Cowley or a Pascal. The differences of external condition also are so vast and obvious that they seem to detract much from the merit of a well spent life and from the guilt of vice and crime. One is so happily nurtured in a Christian home, and under so many protecting influences, that the path of virtue lies straight and open before him—so plain, indeed, that even the blind could safely walk therein; while another seems born to a heritage of misery, exposure and crime. The birthplace of one is in Central Africa, and of another in the heart of civilized and Christian Europe. Where lingers eternal justice then? How can such frightful inequalities be made to appear consistent with the infinite wisdom and goodness of God?

“If metempsychosis is included in the scheme of the divine government of the world, this difficulty disappears altogether. Considered from this point of view, every one is born into the state which he has fairly earned by his own previous history. He carries with him from one stage of existence to another the habits or tendencies which he has formed, the dispositions which he has indulged, the passions which he has not chastised, but has voluntarily allowed to lead him into vice and crime. No active interference of retributive justice is needed, except in selecting for the place of his new birth a home with appropriate surroundings—perhaps such a home as through his evil passions he has made for others. The doctrine of inherited sin and its consequences is a hard lesson to be learned. We submit with enforced resignation to the stern decree, cor-

roborated as it is by every day's observation of the ordinary course of this world's affairs, that the iniquity of the fathers shall be visited upon the children even to the third and fourth generation. But no one can complain of the dispositions and endowments which he has inherited, so to speak, from himself; that is, from his former self in a previous stage of existence. If, for instance, he has neglected his opportunities and fostered his lower appetites in his childhood, if he was then wayward and self-indulgent, indolent, deceitful and vicious, it is right and just that in his manhood and old age he should experience the bitter consequences of his youthful follies. If he has voluntarily made himself a brute, a brute he must remain. The child is father of the man, who often inherits from him a sad patrimony. There is an awful meaning, if we will but take it to heart, in the solemn announcement of the angel in the apocalyptic vision: 'He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still!' And it matters not, so far as the justice of the sentence is concerned, whether the former self, from whom we receive this heritage, was the child who, not many years ago, bore the same name with our present self, or one who bore a different name, who was born in another age and perhaps another hemisphere, and of whose sad history we have not now the faintest remembrance. We know that our personal identity actually extends farther back, and links together more passages of our life, than what is now present to consciousness; though it is true that we have no direct evidence of this continuity and sameness of being beyond what is attested by memory. But we may have indirect evidence of it from the testimony of others in the case of our own infancy, or from revelation, or

through reasoning from analogy and from the similarity of cases and characters. The soul, say the Hindoos, is in the body like a bird in a cage, or like a pilot who steers a ship, and seeks a new vessel when the old one is worn out.

“Nothing prevents us, however, from believing that the probation of any one soul extends continuously through a long series of successive existences upon earth, each successive act in the whole life history being retributive for what went before. For this is the universal law of being, whether of matter or mind; everything changes, nothing dies in the sense of being annihilated. What we call death is only the resolution of a complex body into its constituent parts, nothing that is truly one and indivisible being lost or destroyed in the process. In combustion or any other rapid chemical change, according to the admission of the materialists themselves, not an atom of matter is ever generated or ever ceases to be; it only escapes from one combination to enter upon another. Then the human soul, which, as we know from consciousness, is absolutely one and indivisible, only passes on after the dissolution of what was once its home to animate another body. In this sense we can easily accept the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. Our future life is not, at any rate not while the present administration of this world’s affairs continues, to be some inconceivable form of merely spiritual being. It will be clothed again with a body, which may or may not be in part the same with the one which it has just left. Leibnitz held that the soul is never entirely divorced from matter, but carries on some portion of what was its earthly covering into a subsequent stage of existence. . . . We can easily imagine and believe that every person now living is a *re*-presentation of some one who lived perhaps centuries ago under another

name, in another country; it may be not with the same line of ancestry, and yet one and the same with him in his inmost being and essential character. His surroundings are changed; the old house of flesh has been torn down and rebuilt; but the tenant is still the same. He has come down from some former generation, bringing with him what may be either a help or a hindrance; namely, the character and tendencies which he there formed and nurtured. And herein is retribution; he has entered upon a new stage of probation, and in it he has now to learn what the character which he there formed naturally leads to when tried upon a new and perhaps broader theatre. If this be not so, tell me why men are born with characters so unlike and with tendencies so depraved. In a sense far more literal than was intended by the poet, it may be true of every country churchyard, that

‘Some mute, inglorious Milton there may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country’s blood.’

They bring with them no recollection of the incidents of their former life, as such memory would unfit them for the new part which they have to play. But they are still the same in the principles and modes of conduct, in the inmost springs of action, which the forgotten incidents of their former life have developed and strengthened. They are the same in all the essential points which made them formerly a blessing or a curse to all with whom they came immediately in contact, and through which they will again become sources of weal or woe to their environment. Of course, these inborn tendencies may be either exaggerated or chastised by the lessons of a new experience, by the exercise of reflection, and by habitually heeding or neglecting the monitions of conscience. But they still exist as original tendencies, and as such they must make either the upward or the downward path more easy,

more natural, and more likely to reach a goal so remote that it would otherwise be unattainable.

"All start from the same point, and journey through the same vicissitudes of existence, exhausting sooner or later all varieties of condition. Prince and peasant, bond and free, barbarian and cultured, all share alike whatever weal or woe there is in the world, because all must at some future time change places with each other."

In conclusion, this author says that in the light of this truth "the world becomes a mirror which reflects, without blot or shadow, the infinite goodness of its Creator and Governor. Death remains; but that is no evil, for what we call death is only the introduction to another life on earth, and if this be not a higher and better life than the one just ended, it is our own fault. Our life is really continuous, and the fact that the subsequent stages of it lie beyond our present range of immediate vision is of no more importance, and no more an evil, than the corresponding fact that we do not now remember our previous existence in antecedent ages. Death alone, or in itself considered—apart from the antecedent dread of it, which is irrational, and also apart from the injury to the feelings of the survivors, which is a necessary consequence of that attachment to each other from which so much of our happiness springs—is not even an apparent evil; it is mere change and development, like the passage from the embryonic to the adult condition, from the blossom to the fruit."

Among other western writers who indorse reincarnation, Mr. Walker tabulates forty-two poets, of whom twelve are American, seventeen British, six Continental, and seven Platonic poets. It is well known that oriental poetry abounds with its teachings. We do not consider it necessary to quote these authors.

XIV.

MR. WALKER'S CONCLUSION.

We are lotus-eaters, so engrossed with the ignoble attractions around us as to have forgotten the places through which we have long strayed away from home, and to heed not the necessity of many more perilous journeys before we can reach our glorious destination. It is only by rousing ourselves to the important fact of the past pilgrimage by which we have traveled hither, and to the still more vital reality of the incalculable sequences of our present route, that we can attain the best progress. Our repugnance to the idea of a cycle of lives, with myriad meanderings through varied forms, is the cry of Tennyson's Lotus-Eaters:

While all things else have rest from weariness,
All things have rest, why should we toil alone?

* * * * *

Nor ever fold our wings
And cease our wanderings.

Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

This is virtually the longing for Nirvana, and the cause of the irrational belief in an eternal Heaven immediately following this life. But it is neither wise nor religious to ignore the necessity of continuing our ascent at the present pace, until we have journeyed all the way to that distant goal. The restlessness of our nature comes from the established habit of straying about in temporal realms, and has developed a love of adventure in which the occidental world finds profounder delight than in the oriental yearning for inactivity, and which shall have abundant exercise before it disappears. The only path to that perfect satisfaction which is found in complete oneness with the

Supreme winds through the ascending planes of material embodiment. Lucy Larcom writes:

Still must I climb if I would rest:
The bird soars upward to his nest;
The young leaf on the tree-top high
Cradles itself within the sky.

I cannot in the valley stay;
The great horizons stretch away!
The very cliffs that wall me round
Are ladders into higher ground.

And heaven draws near as I ascend;
The breeze invites, the stars befriend.
All things are beckoning to the Best;
I climb to Thee, my God, for rest!

In which one of its various guises we shall receive reincarnation depends upon the individual. Whether it shall be in the crude form of transmigration through animals as received by most of the world; or in the Persian and Sufi faith as the unjust banishment from our proper home by the powers of evil; or, following Egypt, Pythagoras, Plato, Origen, and the Druids, as a purgatorial punishment for pre-natal sins; or, in the form of some Christian teaching, as a probationary stage testing our right to higher existence and ushering us into a permanent spiritual condition; or, as maintained alike by the acutest Eastern philosophy and the soundest Western thought, as a wholesome development of germinal soul-forces—through all these phrasing the same central truth abides, furnishing what Henry More called “the golden key” for the problem of life, and explaining the plot of this “drama whose prologue and catastrophe are both alike wanting.” But the broadest intelligence leads us directly into the evolutionary aspect of reincarnation, and finds the others inadequate to the full measure of human nature. In this view the present life is one grade

of a stupendous school, in which we are being educated for a destiny so far beyond our comprehension that some call it a kind of deity. The experiences through which we have come were needful for our strengthening. Even though we have descended below former altitudes, the only path to the absolute lies through the sensuous earthly vale. Sin itself, after we have escaped it, will lead to a mightier result than would be possible without it, or it would not be permitted. The richest trees of all the forest world spring from the unclean miasmatic fens. The severest present disciplines, coming from our earlier errors, are training us for a loftier growth than we ever knew. Our physical schooling, through all the grades necessary to our best unfoldment, will build a character as much sublimer than our primitive condition as virtue overtowers innocence, and when the race finally emerges from the jangling turmoil of self-will into complete harmony with the Perfect One, as it must at last, the multitudes of our lives will not seem too enormous a course of experience for the establishment of that consummation. The victorious march of Evolution through all the provinces of thought will at length be followed by the triumphal procession of Reincarnation. As beautifully expressed by A. E. Lancaster:

There is a spirit in all things that live
Which hints of patient change from kind to kind;
And yet no words its mystic sense can give,
Strange as a dream of radiance to the blind.
And as in time unspeakably remote
Vague frenzies in inferior brains set free
Presaged a power no language could denote,
So dreams the mortal of the God to be.

The Father's purpose with us seems to be to educate us as his children so that we shall be in complete sympathy with the divine mind. The only method of

accomplishing this glorious result is for us to enter with him into all the phases of his being. Our long series of physical lives will finally give us a thorough knowledge of the grosser nature with which he cloaks himself. We penetrate the animal existence in human form more successfully than would be possible if we transmigrated into all the species of zoölogy; for here we carry sufficient intelligence, along with the material condition, to comprehend these creatures around us which cannot understand themselves. We cannot expect to permanently leave this department of God's house until we have essentially grasped the secret of all earthly life. The highest individuals of mankind, the saviors of the race, the true prophets and poets, attain this intimate communion with Nature, this mastery over the lower creation, which demonstrates their fitness for introduction to a higher stage.

It is difficult to account for the great geniuses except by the consideration that they are the result of many noble lives. Emerson arrives at this conclusion in his essay on Swedenborg:

"In common parlance, what one man is said to learn by experience, a man of extraordinary sagacity is said, without experience, to divine. The Arabians say that Abul Khain, the mystic, and Abu Ali Scena, the philosopher, conferred together; and on parting the philosopher said, 'All that he sees, I know;' and the mystic said, 'All that he knows, I see.' If one should ask the reason of this intuition, the solution would lead us into that property which Plato denoted as reminiscence, and which is implied by the Brahmans in the tenet of transmigration. The soul having been often born, or, as the Hindoos say, 'traveling the path of existence through thousands of births,' having beheld the things which are here, those which are in heaven, and those which are beneath, there is nothing of which

she has not gained the knowledge—no wonder that she is able to recollect, in regard to one thing, what formerly she knew. For all things in Nature being linked and related, and the soul having heretofore known all, nothing hinders but that any man who has recalled to mind, or, according to the common phrase, has learned one thing only, should of himself recover all his ancient knowledge, and find out again all the rest, if he have but courage, and faint not in the midst of his researches. For inquiry and learning is reminiscence all. How much more, if he that inquires be a holy, godlike soul! For by being assimilated to the original soul, by whom, and after whom, all things subsist, the soul of man does then easily flow into all things, and all things flow into it—they mix; and he is present and sympathetic with their structure and law.”

A recent instance of the glaring facts inexplicable by any other theory than reincarnation appears in the little musical prodigy Josef Hofmann, whose phenomenal genius holds complete mastery of the piano, and charms vast audiences with his exquisite rendering of most difficult concertos, and particularly with his marvelous improvisations upon themes suggested at a moment's notice. He presents the uncanny phenomenon of a child of ten who has little more to learn in the most difficult of arts. The natural explanation occurring to any candid mind is thus suggested by the *Boston Herald* in a report of a Hofmann concert:

“It almost seems as if the spirit of some great composer had been put into this boy by Nature, waiting to be developed in accordance with our modern art, to shine forth again in all its glory in his work.”

What if he actually were the reappearance of Mozart hastening to fill out the life that was cut sadly short? There may be means of verifying such a presumption by the character of his later compositions, when he

gets the full expression of his natural bent. An art so independent of time and place, as music, might fairly be traced through two historic individuals, when literature and painting would not permit it.

It is significant that the young prodigies in any particular kind of skill do not come until that skill has been well established on the earth. Guido followed generations of great painters, Pascal was preceded by a long course of mathematicians. Pope "lisped in numbers" after a vast procession of poets. And Mozart waited until the new era of musical harmony had been well inaugurated. The colossal characters who stand out from the race, with no predecessors equal to them, like Homer, Plato, Jesus, Raphael, Shakespeare, Beethoven, all reach their maturity later than other prodigies, after infancy and youth have fastened the Lethean gates upon the prehistoric scenes from which they seem to hail. But the unfathomable vagaries of the soul, as it works out successively its dominant impulses, easily disguise the individual in different personalities, so long as the physical realm is most attractive to it. Yet it is noticeable that the great minds of history come together in galaxies, when the fullness of time for their capacities draws them together. Witness the Sanskrit sages, the Greek poets and philosophers, the Augustan writers and generals, the Italian artists of the Renaissance, the German masters of music, the Elizabethan authors, the nineteenth century scientists. The traits of the commonest child, however, as much as the miracles of a genius, have no satisfactory explanation outside of the philosophy of re-births.

Evolution of the physical nature and of material strength attaches our future to body and matter. But the attachment hastens toward a release by at length proving these to be low steps in the ascent of life. As

in the geological programme of animal development each era carried its type to gigantic dimensions and then was surmounted by a higher order of creatures, which in turn grew monstrous as tyrants of their age and then succumbed to a still higher rank; so the soul's progress from the earthly domain lies through the mastery of physical things to mental, thence to psychic, and at last to spiritual. And the passion for material achievement animating our side of the planet should not be underestimated, since it governs an important epoch in the world's growth. But the danger lies in esteeming it a finality. It is chiefly valuable as the foundation upon which we may build skyward, in an evolution of character. When the structure is made high enough, the buoyancy of the upper stories will conquer the weight of the base and float away our abode to ethereal climes. Only the education of the spiritual in us, of sacrifice, nobility and divinity, can divorce us from these uneasy earthly affinities to the permanent rest of union with God. While we must not abandon the glories of physical beauty, power and pleasure, we must not forget that the true business of life is to wean our affections from the visible to the invisible, to transfer the preponderance of our magnetisms from shadows to substances. For we bridge the two kingdoms of matter and spirit, and we have the choice between them more freely than we know.

The mechanical transmigration which was fancifully told in Grecian mythology, gathered and beautifully rendered by Ovid, which was taught in the Egyptian and Pythagorean dogmas and still floats broadcast throughout the vast realms of Brahmanism, Buddhism, and barbarism, which fascinates the thought of our poets, and which is daily enacted by a myriad object lessons in Nature, is merely the objective expression of a subjective truth, discerned by all the mystics, seers,

and philosophers, and most elaborately stated by Swedenborg. It means that the infinite progress of the soul conveys it through countless epochs, moving in perfect succession by the dynamic laws of its own being. During this development, the universe arranges itself peculiarly to each individual according to his thought and character. We shape the outer world by our inner nature, and we say just how long our stay shall be among dust and mortality.

The true and wholesome aspect of the earthly life, under the religious philosophy of reincarnation, transforms the spectacle from a trivial show, or a gloomy arena of despair, to a majestic stage in the ascending series of human sojournings on the way to the Absolute. In the words of the old martyr-philosopher, Giordano Bruno—the father of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz—the cherisher of that thought, “being present in the body, is yet, as by an indissoluble oath, bound and united to divine things, so that he is not sensible either of love or hatred for mortal things, knowing he is greater than these, and that he must not be the slave of his body, which is to be regarded as no other than the prison of his liberty, a snare for his wings, a chain upon his limbs, and a veil impeding his sight.” His life flows beautifully in aspiration for the invisible kingdom of permanence, as this same Bruno, the Nolan, phrased it in verse:

While that the Sun upon his round doth burn
And to their source the roving planets flee,
Things of the earth do to the earth return
And parted waters hasten to the sea:
So shall my spirit to the high gods turn
And heaven-born thought to Heaven shall carry me.

Instead of being a cold pagan philosophy, as it is frequently considered, reincarnation throbs with the most vital spirit of Christianity. It is no more Bud-

dhism than kindness is Christianity. It is the hidden core of the gospel of Jesus as of all other great religions and philosophies. This is what has preserved them in spite of their degrading excrescences. It is "the religion of all sensible men" who refuse the weak sentiment and bigoted dogmas that obscure the light of Christianity in the churches, for it clearly unfolds what they unconsciously believe, in the laws of cause and effect. It spurns the despairing doctrine of total depravity, but shows the cause of partial depravity. It teaches salvation as Jesus did, not by heaping our sins upon him, but by recognizing the Fatherhood of the Supreme, entering the new birth into spiritual life and watchfully growing Godward. It revolts against the thought of everlasting punishment for brief errors but provides infinite opportunities for restoration and advancement, while emphasizing most vigorously the unescapable results of all action. It is therefore a corrective of modern Christianity holding fast to the strength and beauty of what the Nazarene taught and lived, but including those very principles which breed religious skepticism in the extreme advocates of science and evolution. It enlarges Christianity to a grander capacity than it has hitherto known, and so furnishes at once an inspiring religion for the loftiest spiritual aspiration, a most satisfactory philosophy for the intellect, and the strongest basis for practical nobility of conduct.

There is no reason why reincarnation and Christianity should not grasp hands and magnificently advance together, each keeping the other steadfastly true. Only in this union can Christianity escape its present downward sag. Since western religion fails to spiritually sustain us and has largely gone over to the enemy—materialism—it is time for another oriental tide to sweep over the West. Having already a partial pos-

session here, reincarnation promises to flow in freely to revitalize Christianity and to spiritualize science.

As Christianity has degenerated in the West, so has reincarnation in the East, and the hope of the race lies in an exalted marriage of them. They need each other, as husband and wife, allied in purest devotion, supplementing the defects and strengths of each other and regenerating their lower unassociated tendencies. The religion of Jesus tends to sink into an irrational sentimentality which is commonly relegated to women and effeminate men. The spiritual philosophy of India declines into passionless fatalism or an ungenerous self-absorption. Superstition darkens both alike. But reincarnation keeps Christianity thoroughly rational, and Christianity will sustain reincarnation in vigorous unselfishness. This alliance of the best truths of both hemispheres will teach a reverential submission to the divine will without its sequel of stagnation, a heroic self-reliance without its danger of atheism, a regenerative communion with the Highest without the sacrilegious folly of selfish prayer.

Reincarnation unites all the family of man into a universal brotherhood more effectively than the prevailing humanity. It promotes the solidarity of mankind by destroying the barriers that conceit and circumstances have raised between individuals, groups, nations and races. All are alike favored with perfect poetic justice. The children of God are not ordained some to honor and others to abasement. There are no special gifts. Physical blessings, mental talents and moral successes are the laborious result of long merit. Sorrows, defects and failures proceed from negligence. The upward road to the glories of spiritual perfection is always at our feet, with perpetual invitations and aids to travel higher. The downward way into sensual wreckage is but the other direction of the same way.

We cannot despise those who are tending down, for who knows but we have journeyed that way ourselves? It is impossible for us to scramble up alone, for our destiny is included in that of humanity, and only by helping others along can we ascend ourselves. The despondent sadness of the world which dims the lustre of every joy, chanting the minor key of Nature, haunting us in unaccountable ways, cropping out in all literature and art, making the grandest of poetry tragic and the sublimest music sombre, is the unconscious voice of mankind, humming its keynote of life. While we continue to dwell in the murky realm of sense, that must prevail. But the bright rifts illuminating the advance guard herald the approach of day, and assure us that the trend of restless human gyrations is away from that condition.

Contrary to the common opinion of eastern thought, reincarnation is optimistic. The law of causation is not a blind meting of eye for eye and tooth for tooth. It opens out into a scheme of beneficent progress. Science recognizes this in the *vis medicatrix remedia nature*, the healing power of Nature. What was once denied in the creed of the alchemists concerning the ascending impulse of all things is now preached by science, which declares in Tyndall's words that "matter contains within it the promise and potency of all life." All minerals have the rudimentary possibility of plants and animals. Crystals strive after a higher life by assuming arborescent and mossy shapes. Plants display the embryonic qualities of low animals. No naturalist can mark infallibly the boundaries of the three kingdoms, so closely are they interlinked. A zoölogist does not doubt the possibility of minerals becoming plants and these mounting into animals. The movement of vital energy is manward, and the cry of mankind is "excelsior," towards God.

Poetry, as voiced by Tennyson, cherishes the same conviction

that somehow good
 Shall be the final goal of ill,
 For pangs of nature, sins of will,
 Defects of doubt and taints of blood;
 That nothing walks with aimless feet;
 That not one life shall be destroyed
 Or cast as useless to the void
 When God shall make this pile complete.
 Behold! we know not anything.
 We can but trust that good shall fall
 At last, far off, at last, to all,
 And every winter turn to spring.

And Tennyson's uncertain faith is an undoubted verity in the Orient, thus phrased by Edwin Arnold:

Ye are not bound! the soul of things is sweet,
 The heart of being is celestial rest;
 Stronger than woe is will: That which was good
 Doth pass to better—best.

Acknowledging that the forces of evil are terrific and multiply themselves prodigiously, there can be no question that the predominant powers are infinitely good. And the supremacy of good in the universe diminishes the full force of evil, makes the higher attractions outvie the lower, and hastens the final disappearance of darkness. This insures the amelioration of all life by the benign process of re-birth; for

The Heart of all is a boundless Love
 Pulsing through every part
 In streams that thrill the hosts above
 And make the atoms dart.

The strongest objection to reincarnation, our ignorance of past lives, is met by the fact permeating all Nature and experience, that progress depends upon forgetfulness. Every great stage of advancement is

accompanied by the mental loss of earlier epochs. One of Montaigne's best essays shows the blessedness of defective memory. All deep philosophy agrees that after an experience is absorbed into the soul, its purpose is accomplished, and the only chance of improvement consists in "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before." It would be intellectually impossible for the memory to grasp anything new, if it clung to all it had known. One of the grandest discourses of that greatest English preacher of the last generation, Frederick W. Robertson, is upon the theme of "Christian Progress by Oblivion of the Past." The experience of the race affords no sufficient endorsement of the continuation of our mortal memories. It is impossible to escape the liberal scientific teaching that the mind is only an instrument of the soul, and when it decays with the body the soul retains of its earthly possessions only what has sunk down into the character. The logician of the Scriptures expresses this in saying, "Whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away." But the everlastingness of character insures the permanence of our identity and of our dearest ties. And as the scale of being on earth shows a gradual development of memory from the lowest protozoön to man, so in man the unconscious memory shall become more and more conspicuous, until it reveals the course of our complete career.

The glorious unfoldment of our dormant powers in repeated lives presents a spectacle magnificent beyond appreciation, and approaches more grandly than any other conception to the sublimity of human development. Addison wrote:

"There is not, in my opinion, a more pleasing consideration than that of the perpetual progress which the soul makes towards the perfection of its nature,

without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength, to consider that she is to shine forever with new accessions of glory and brighten to all eternity; that she will be still adding virtue to virtue and knowledge to knowledge, carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a prospect pleasing to God himself, to see his creatures forever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to him by greater degrees of resemblance."

Reincarnation shows the programme by which this stupendous scheme is being worked out, step by step, in the gradual method of all God's doings, and glorifies the present cycle as a specimen of eternity which shall ever grow brighter until the full brilliancy of the Highest shall radiate from every life.

The practical application of this truth not only dispels the haunting enigmas of life, but incites us to the strongest habits of virtuous conduct in ourselves, and of generous helpfulness toward others. It inspires us to nurture all the means of developing noble traits, since the promise of all good, and the only highway out of the bogs of physical life into the mountain heights of spirituality, is character. It reminds us most forcibly that

Every thought of purity,
Every deed of right,
Conquers sin's obscurity,
Speeds the reign of light;
Moves with might supernal
Toward rest and home,
Leads to life eternal,
Prays, "Thy kingdom come."

It is not strange, therefore, that Professor William Knight, one of the leading writers of Great Britain,

says of reincarnation: "The ethical leverage of the doctrine is immense. Its motive power is great. It reveals as magnificent a background to the present life, with its contradictions and disasters, as the prospect of immortality opens up an illimitable foreground, lengthening out the horizon of hope. It binds together the past and the present and the future in one ethical series of causes and effects, the inner thread of which is both personal to the individual and impersonal, connecting him with two eternities, one behind and the other before. With peculiar emphasis it proclaims the survival of moral individuality and personal identity along with the final adjustment of external conditions to the internal state of the agent."

Alongside of the Scotch professor's words we place these sentences from an adept of India, that the wisdom of the antipodes may grasp hands in one common brotherhood for the instruction of the world:

"There is in each incarnation but one birth, one life, one death. It is folly to duplicate these by persistent regrets for the past, by present cowardice, or fear of the future. There is no Time. It is Eternity's *Now* that man mistakes for past, present and future.

"The forging of earthly chains is the occupation of the indifferent; the awful duty of unloosing them through the sorrows of the heart is also their occupation.

"Liberate thyself from evil actions by good actions."

Emerson, who unites in one personality the sublimest intuitions of the Orient with the broadest observations of the West, may well represent a noble harmony of these distant kinships when he says:

"We must infer our destiny from the preparation. We are driven by instinct to hive innumerable experiences which are of no visible value, and we may revolve through many lives before we shall assimilate

or exhaust them. Now there is nothing in Nature capricious, or whimsical, or accidental, or unsupported. Nature never moves by jumps, but always in steady and supported advances. . . . If there is the desire to live, and in larger sphere, with more knowledge and power, it is because life and knowledge and power are good for us, and we are the natural depositaries of these gifts. The love of life is out of all proportion to the value set on a single day, and seems to indicate a conviction of immense resources and possibilities proper to us, on which we have never drawn. All the comfort I have found teaches me to confide that I shall not have less in times and places than I do not yet know."

We conclude, therefore, with the conviction that all the best teachers of mankind—religion, philosophy, science and poetry—urge the soul to

Be worthy of death; and so learn to live
That every incarnation of thy soul
In varied realms, and worlds, and firmaments,
Shall be more pure and high.

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