

The Idea of Re-birth by Francesca Arundale

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by Francesca Arundale

Including

A Translation of an essay on

The Idea of Re-birth

by Karl Heckel

With a Preface by A. P. Sinnett

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PREFACE

[Page v] No subject claims more earnest attention from religious thinkers in the present day than the doctrine which this volume is designed to defend and interpret. The recognition of the all-important truth that the evolution of the human soul is carried on by means of successive experiences of life, will, when completely established, bring the essential principles of religion into line with our scientific appreciation of other natural laws. It will also rescue the spiritual aspirations of cultivated minds from the deadly burden of incredible dogmas, with which they have been encumbered during the growth of modern religious systems — dogmas that have gradually degraded, almost out of resemblance to its original aspect, the true Oriental teaching of the Founder of Christianity.

The genesis of the German essay that has given rise to the treatise before us is interesting, to begin with, for the light it throws on the progress of intelligence in Germany in reference to the great law which governs the spiritual evolution of humanity. Especially acknowledging the force of passages explaining the principle of Reincarnation in Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's "Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts" (Education of the Human Race), Herr Privatmann August [Page vi] Jenny of Dresden recently established a trust fund to be employed in the promotion and dissemination of these ideas. He endowed it with a sum of £ 500, and the trustees proceeded to offer to public competition a prize for the best essay having for its object the maintenance of the idea of Re-birth. The essay which Miss Arundale has translated stands first among five — out of thirty-seven received — which the judges considered to be highly meritorious. Prize-essays in this country are rather out of date, but the scholarship of German professors may be gently submissive to the system none the less. At all events, Herr Heckel's composition exhibits a deep and extensive familiarity with the Oriental literature of the subject, and a useful service has been rendered by Miss Arundale to English students of spiritual science by the translation of his erudite pages.

For if European readers can be induced to look into the matter sufficiently to realise, in the first instance, the position which Herr Heckel so effectually establishes — that the law of Reincarnation is unequivocally accepted by the ancient writers of India, and, secondly, that these ancient writers have claims on our intellectual respect second to none that can be advanced in favour of more recent philosophers with whom Western scholarship has kept in touch, — then a good deal will have been done towards dissipating the ignorance which constantly leads otherwise instructed persons of our own time to suppose that Reincarnation is the recent whim of an eccentric modern sect. Religious teaching which leaves Reincarnation out of account is in reality, as compared with that of a more deeply spiritual age, the blundering of a later epoch.[Page vii]

The conceit of the nineteenth century, springing from circumstances that buried ancient wisdom for a time in oblivion, has led recent generations to believe with honest *naïveté*, that before their arrival on the scene intellectual chaos prevailed. Man may have been on the earth, it is perhaps conceded, since he left his flints in the drift some hundreds of thousands of years ago, but till the Christian era got into its teens he is assumed to have been a savage and a fool. Historical records only carry us back a couple or three thousand years at most. As for previous time, as we know nothing about it, there could have been nothing to know! Egyptian remains may be puzzling, Mexican antiquities curious, but modern culture has always been gifted with a sublime aplomb in cutting the acquaintance of inconvenient facts.

Now by degrees as Sanskrit literature has been introduced to European society a good deal of Indian

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philosophy that has thus come over for our inspection is calculated to startle intelligent readers out of many long unchallenged assumptions. Perhaps some rubbish from the storehouses of the past has been tumbled out before us together with really valuable writing, but enough Indian philosophy has now been translated into European tongues to establish a few important conclusions beyond the reach of rational dispute. These writings arose among a people whose leading thinkers, at least, must have been men of profound metaphysical subtilty. We need not here go into disputed questions as to the period at which the Vedas, the Mahabharata, and the Upanishads were first composed, but assuredly their origin dates back far behind the beginnings of European civilisation. In [Page viii] the opinion of modern native scholars in India, their antiquity is immeasurably greater than that assigned to them by Western professors; but either way we find Hindoo philosophy concerned with the discussion of intricate spiritual problems before European civilisation was born. We need not go further in order to discredit the theory that the human mind only began to work in a reasonable manner when its guidance was undertaken by regularly endowed universities at Oxford and other seats of learning.

The truth rather is that the intelligence of modern generations having been concentrated with great intensity on the study and development of material life, the faculties of the nineteenth century have been blunted in regard to metaphysical problems as compared with the qualifications in this respect of some earlier races. The best forces of modern culture have been directed to the investigation of physical Nature. Theologians all through the Middle Ages dissuaded original thinkers from applying their powers to the examination of spiritual science, by burning them alive whenever they attempted to do so. Later on, when civilisation, more powerful than the Church, put out its fires, the most brilliantly gifted representatives of the age had already become indifferent to the exercise of the spiritual liberty won for them with so much difficulty. They had become enamoured of the physical aspect of Nature, and ceased to take any interest in problems concerning a life that by the hypothesis would be cut off from the objects of sense. Our modern religious philosophy has thus remained stranded on the intellectual shoals of mediaeval interpretation, and men of first-rate intelligence for the most part declare [Page ix] themselves too busy in other ways to engage in the infinitely troublesome task of floating it off again.

One cannot easily believe, however, that a very acute and cultivated generation will go on much longer neglecting the substance for the shadow,—neglecting the realities of Nature, which have to do with human consciousness, and are permanent, for the transitory phenomena of physical existence, which for each person in turn can only be one single phase of existence, and according to one favorite Oriental figure is only a reflection — a very imperfect and partial reflection — of consciousness in the mirror of materiality. Certainly knowledge concerning the magnificent congeries of laws governing that reflection, *i.e.*, physical science, is intensely interesting and instructive (for those who can appreciate its analogies), but if each separate human being has destinies that outrun his association with matter in any one physical life, and if any definite knowledge concerning those destinies can be procured, surely it is frivolous and unpractical conduct to confine our attention exclusively to the laws of physical Nature. No patience and effort are grudged by the leaders of modern thinking when the result to be secured is the advancement of physical knowledge ever so little along any of its appointed paths. But when the question is no longer how material molecules are controlled, but how the human soul evolves, that subject is left by modern culture, with a smile of good-humoured indifference, to the formal exposition of the professional clergy, guided by creeds about on a level, for the purposes of real enlightenment, with Ptolemaic astronomy as compared with the conceptions of Greenwich. And though the professional clergy may in the [Page x] present age set their contemporaries the example of good lives, they are fettered in too many ways to be in a position to take fresh departures in the interpretation of spiritual science.

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Nature, as people who think at all in the present day of super-physical problems will surely feel, must be a unity with coherent purposes running through both its physical and superphysical manifestations. But the spiritual science which has been confined for centuries within the limits of a Church catechism is not likely to furnish explanations in harmony with the geology or the astronomy of the Royal Society. The mere fact that it is of relatively ancient origin would be no condemnation of it, but the fact that it is stereotyped while presented as comprehensive is enough to discredit its claims. Some great truths derived from spiritual science may have been conveyed to the world at periods of fabulous antiquity, but revelations that have been properly understood have never been represented as complete. The pretence of having summed up in its own formularies all that it is necessary for man to know, and all that it lies within the scheme of Providence that he should be allowed to know while living on earth, is the sure sign of a spurious revelation or of a dishonest Church. The spiritual science that is worthy of respect is bound to advance as the human race advances and improves. Not that the truth of things need be supposed to change. The laws of physical Nature unveiled by modern science were in force before they were understood; and the laws of spiritual evolution have been operating, even while the growth of European civilisation has engaged intellectual activity [Page xi] with other subjects. But if there is any advance going on in the capacities or conquests of the human mind, there must be a corresponding expansion, reconstruction, and development of its creeds, — of the statements which sum up its knowledge of spiritual things for the time being. And thus the rigidity of creeds, and the servitude of the clergy in charge of them, to ideas which must be out of date if the spiritual enlightenment of the race is improving, is from the outset a fatal condemnation of their contents.

As already suggested, however, a time must come when the leading minds of the age will concern themselves again — as in former ages of the world — with the development of knowledge concerning the states of human consciousness which link this life to others. It is only while a condition of non-belief in the whole structure of religious affirmation prevails with the highly educated laity that the task of defining what is held to be known in reference to superphysical existence, will be left, as heretofore, contemptuously to the care-takers of the Churches. When, somehow or other, people who have hitherto been content to pay an idle lip-homage to a conventional body of assertion may become alive to the possibility that real knowledge may be obtainable in reference to the origin and existence of man, the whole subject can hardly fail to spring into enormously greater popularity. To do them justice, the cultivated students of physical science neglect the other branches of natural research, rather because they profoundly disbelieve in the possibility of getting any knowledge that way, than because they are consciously devoted to the theory that the whole is less — and of less consequence — than [Page xii] its parts. Let them once realise that something is to be learned, and they will not — not all of them, at any rate — remain indifferent to the prospect.

What is likely then to be the course of research in the domain of spiritual science when it is fairly opened up? Educated opinion must first of all realise what is at present fully realised only by students of psychic phenomena, that observation can really get into contact with other states of consciousness besides that of which the physical body is the vehicle. We cannot be far from the period at which this all-important state of the facts will be generally recognised, because the materialistic theory that intelligence is a function of highly-organised matter has broken down in so many directions of late years. The enormous mass of testimony, for one thing, that has been furnished by the Psychic Research Society has contributed to change popular conviction in regard to many phenomena of consciousness "out of the body", even while the shallow intelligence of *farceurs* is ignobly employed on the attempt to convert its information to the service of conventional buffoonery. Mesmerism again, rising from the slough of misrepresentation and ignorance under which it has lain buried for the greater part of the present century,

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has at last reasserted its claims, and is now acknowledged for a fact, in some of its lowest aspects, so widely that all long-experienced students of its mysteries must foresee as inevitable in a near future a general recognition of the facilities it affords us in investigating the spiritual faculties latent in man. As evidencing the new sentiment which prevails now, as compared with that prevalent fifty or only twenty-five years ago, we [Page xiii] have only to look round at the literature of imagination in the present day. It is bubbling all over with incidents drawn from the region of what has foolishly been called the supernatural. And now, instead of finding such incidents associated with materialistic explanations intended to cast discredit on the theory of supernaturalism, we find them all referred, more or less clumsily, to current theories of psychic science. For a long time to come we must still expect to hear a good deal of jeering at this change. To people who have encouraged themselves to believe that flesh is the seat and the skin the boundary of human consciousness, a more spiritualized view of the subject is very offensive. Such persons are more intuitive than they imagine in resenting it, for the laws of spiritual evolution are such as to involve in much ulterior discomfort the permanent soul-consciousness of those who cling too passionately to their own manifestation in flesh. Persons who, in sheer hatred of spiritual views of life, fight with the weapons either of ridicule or petty persecution against the progress of psychic science, are even more to be pitied than despised. But anyhow they are no longer able to withstand that progress. Its momentum has now been acquired, and the break-down of all barriers in its way is merely a question of time.

I repeat the question, then. What is likely to be the course of the inquiry, when it becomes apparent to the great majority of leading thinkers that psychic phenomena constitute a field of practical research? One characteristic of that inquiry seems tolerably certain. From the coincidence between modern psychic discovery and ancient mystic teaching, intelligent inquirers [Page xiv] will at once rise to the perception of the fact that our modern discoveries in this field are re-discoveries of knowledge that has undeniably been in the possession of mankind at very early periods of human history. One of the necessary preliminaries of the great research in which future students of psychic science will engage, will thus be sought for in a *résumé* of the ancient teaching, which has been altogether neglected during the growth of European civilisation. That teaching is for the most part obscured in an all but impenetrable disguise; but the tangled symbology of old Oriental literature is gradually yielding to the influence of some recently discovered Rosetta stones. And at all events, foremost among the root ideas that will be detected as running through the spiritual philosophy of the past will be found that wide-reaching and luminous doctrine of Reincarnation that is the subject of the present exposition.

Certainly it will not be because attention will necessarily be turned, in the way I have indicated, to ancient Oriental philosophers, that their doctrines will be accepted *en bloc* by modern psychic inquirers. I have not the least intention of implying anything of the kind. But they must come forward for consideration, and it will be impossible for people who get any genuine touch with Oriental theosophy to avoid taking them into consideration with a grave consciousness of their claims to respect.

These claims will be the more readily conceded in proportion as inquirers take the trouble to understand the theories of Oriental theosophy with precision. These are often talked about on the basis of a very imperfect apprehension, and it sometimes happens that [Page xv] no sufficiently careful distinction is made between popular presentations of Oriental doctrine, and the doctrine in its purity as imbedded in philosophical writings of authority. In this way people are sometimes found repudiating a caricature of some esoteric tenet, under the impression that they are dealing with the tenet itself. Without going for the moment into the many possibilities of such misapprehension that the subject affords, I will attempt at all

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events to guard readers of the present volume from making that particular mistake about the subject it especially treats.

The real Eastern doctrine of Reincarnation, as understood by the cultivated students of esoteric wisdom, is *not*, to begin with, the doctrine of metempsychosis or the return of a consciousness once established on the human level of evolution, into animal forms. That idea is one of the caricatures of the real doctrine served up for popular use in consequence of the severe restrictions which were put in ancient times on the exposition of spiritual science. Never mind for the moment whether those restrictions were wise or unwise. That is a great question apart from the matter we have in hand. I think it can be shown that the restrictions were in the main wise, but to argue out the point would require too long a digression. The real theory of Reincarnation, now at all events made clear, is as follows: —

The generation of human consciousness, with all its possibilities of exaltation above the level that we are for the moment familiar with, is the grand purpose of Nature in connection with the evolution of material worlds, — of that process described very comprehensively as the descent of spirit into matter. It is a purpose worked out by the development of the lower kingdoms [Page xvi] of Nature in the first instance; and the existence of vegetable or animal life is a condition precedent to the development of human life. It is *not* meant that a definite vegetable is ever the nucleus of a soul, nor that a specific beast, bird, or reptile can be regarded as a potential man. But in the animal kingdom, in the very highest levels of the animal kingdom, consciousness at last becomes localised and individualised, and a new soul is launched on the vast ocean of cosmic progress. Stupendous intervals of time come into play between the individualisation of animal consciousness and the entrance of the new soul on its career of human development, and these even have a tendency, when dimly comprehended, to obscure the course of events. But we need not go into that point now. Once human, the new soul does not recede in the scale of Nature; that is the idea to keep hold of at this stage. Its advance may be very slow and gradual, and at first its career will carry it through primitive and savage races; but with these, as with races much further advanced on the path of progress, the method on which Nature works is the same. The focus of consciousness once developed as such, is spiritual in its permanent nature, though wholly unqualified at first by experience to exist out of the body in the full enjoyment of spiritual conditions. On the spiritual plane in the first instance it has a very dim consciousness, with a strong affinity for the material aspects of existence. To these it is drawn back over and over again through an enormously prolonged series of lives. Each in turn may have invested the spiritual Ego with *some* new capacities, and on each return to spiritual planes of existence, the growing Ego goes through a reverberation [Page xvii] of all consciousness of a spiritual character passed through in the life just spent.

To realise the process the more easily let us come down to our own period of evolution. Most lives in this race have some spiritual emotions blended with many others of a highly material character, for we may bear in mind that a "spiritual" emotion does not necessarily mean a gravitation towards the ecclesiastical piety of the period, whatever that may be, but is realised in every impulse of genuine affection, not to speak of the love of knowledge or abstract principles. Each permanent spiritual entity, therefore, when it has gone through an earth life, with all its complicated experiences and emotions, good and bad deeds, high and low aspirations, is plentifully stocked with interior seeds of consciousness capable of growth and expansion in spiritual conditions of existence. A very long time is spent by the Ego — practically identical, at this stage, with the man just deceased — on the spiritual planes of Nature, which include of course that state of felicity known as, and more or less caricatured by popular religions as Heaven. But finite causes have finite consequences. An earth life of sixty or seventy years is a finite cause, and

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however far beyond such a span of time its consequences on the spiritual plane may expand, they will ultimately be exhausted. That is to say, the *specific* memories of the last life will fade out, leaving the spiritual soul clear and colourless, once more — a mysterious centre of spiritual forces and affinities, ripe, as the familiar phrase goes, for Reincarnation.

Then it reincarnates in accordance with the bent of its affinities, which are the growth, be it remembered, [Page xviii] of the former life. But let it not be supposed that "affinities" mean "choice". The reincarnating soul is drawn, quite without volition on its part, to the newly forming body, the life circumstances of which will fairly, rightly, justly, — perhaps retributively, — bring its own tendencies and characteristics into objectivity.

In the vast complexity and volume of human life on earth, the laws of heredity are constantly giving rise to the production of forms with all the varieties of characteristics and capacities required to meet the necessities of, perhaps to provide the required penalties or discipline for, the human spiritual entities, or, in rough common phrase, the souls, coming into incarnation.

Let me conclude this rapid summary by noting a few corollaries deducible from the doctrine.

1. It is impossible that any human being *in incarnation* can remember the specific events of his last incarnation. He has not left the spiritual plane till he has forgotten that. The objection sometimes foolishly raised against the present teaching, that it cannot be true because we do not remember our last lives, is seen to be a mere confession that the central idea of the doctrine is not understood. On the other hand, as human faculties improve with the development of the race, powers are coming into play which enable *some* exalted persons to pick up the imperishable natural records of former lives. While the normal rule must be that people in the flesh again cannot remember former existences, exceptions will be found available, as time goes on, for the service of psychic students in no remote future.
2. The terrible inequalities of human life can be regarded in a light which promises to reconcile them [Page xix] with justice. This is an immense thought dangerously liable to be misunderstood. There can be very few lives the conditions of which are unjust. There may be some; but they would come under abnormal side influences, and in the long run Nature is absolutely certain to compensate man for her own accidents. But on the other hand, no incarnate man, in presence of suffering, can ever take refuge — as a device for excusing inaction on his own part — in the theory that it is deserved. If he does, his own callousness is merely so much evil affinity — bad Karma — that he is engendering in himself. But still it is something to get a clue to what has often been regarded as ghastly, reckless cruelty in Nature. The law of Reincarnation, under the guidance of those self-engendered affinities summed up in the Oriental word "Karma", shows us the world as a school of suffering, it is true, but not as one of useless, meaningless, causeless suffering, as it is made out to be by conventional theology.
3. There is nothing in the Oriental doctrine of Reincarnation incompatible with Christian teaching, if we read this in a spirit raised at all above the gross materialistic literalness in which it is too often regarded. The doctrine of Christianity very concisely stated would be that the sins of the world are atoned for by the sacrifice of the incarnate Son of God on the cross, and Heaven thus secured for all who believe. The obvious meaning of this is, that each man who "believes", *i.e.* puts himself into harmony by his conduct

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with the design of Nature or God, must make a sacrifice of his own lower nature, conquer bad passions, and subdue the imperious desires of incarnate existence, in order to redeem the soul within him, and render it [Page xx] qualified to exist under divine conditions in the spiritual realms of Nature. There is a further subtle and beautiful correspondence between the Christian idea, rightly apprehended in its spiritual sense, and esoteric truth. "The Christ" is an expression implying the spiritual Ego. It emanates from the universal spirit, the highest principle of the universe — from God. Only by its influence on the incarnate consciousness can the complete man — the spiritual Ego personified — be rescued from the temptations of the lower life. It is "the Christ" which redeems the man; but it does so by coming into incarnation, by associating itself closely with the struggle taking place on the plane of physical existence. Though of a divine nature, it participates in human suffering in the course of this undertaking. The beautiful allegorical significance of the gospel story — so profoundly misunderstood by a grovelling theology — is full of correspondence with the eternal and ever-present drama of human spiritual evolution. But this is a drama *in many acts* — each act a life; and the merciful, or rather the just and righteous provisions of the Reincarnation law, render it possible for the redemption to operate with all human beings in the progress of time.

Even the materialistic theologian, for whom the sublimities of the redemption idea are a closed book, might grasp eagerly at the doctrine of Reincarnation as a refuge from one of the familiar dilemmas in which he is sometimes landed by critics of his own stamp. How can the justice of God be reconciled, it is sometimes asked, with the damnation of all human beings who preceded "Christ" upon the earth? The answer might be, in their later incarnations they would [Page xxi] overtake the message of salvation. And spiritualized properly, that answer would be the truth. Primitive man is not educated sufficiently by experience of life to undertake the redemption — the divine evolution of his own soul. He exists before the message has come to the race — before that race is sufficiently evolved in mentality to apprehend the idea of, and be qualified for spiritual evolution.

4. The process of human interior growth, of that which I have elsewhere spoken of as the Evolution of the Higher Self, is a process of infusing the permanent consciousness — which *is* the Higher Self (in one of its aspects), — the individuality of the man, the continuous individuality — with *capacities*, not with specific recollections of events. Within one life our mental growth seems very much a question of memory holding on to things learned. This is apt to blind people to the important truth that the really imperishable and significant element in mental growth is the interior capacity acquired.

Say a man devotes himself to the study of music with enthusiasm. He learns to play on the instruments that are in use at the time, and when he dies, short-sighted observers may say, What waste! The wonderful power that his hands acquired is a thing of the past. Nothing of the kind. Later on there is born a child who astonishes his relations and friends by learning to play the piano at six years old, finding no trouble in the task. You have your old musician reincarnated, that is all. There is nothing lost in Nature — no more on the plane of consciousness than on that of heat, electricity, and chemical action. True esoteric wisdom introduces us to the great truth that [Page xxii] the law of the conservation of energy prevails on the moral as well as on the material planes of Nature's operations.

5. Since it is impossible, except in altogether abnormal cases, for a human Ego to reincarnate until the specific memories of all emotion and aspiration in the last life have vibrated to final exhaustion on the spiritual planes of existence, it follows that long intervals of time elapse between incarnations. Foolish objections, therefore, concerning entanglements likely to arise in relationships by reason of a return to

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earth life of recently deceased persons, merely represent the ignorance or stupidity of objectors. No such entanglements can be operative after the lapse of a thousand years.

These general remarks, and this elucidation, it seems to me, will adequately prepare the reader to appreciate the thoughtful essay which follows, and the scholarly examination of the Reincarnation doctrine as cropping up in Oriental literature, to which that in turn is an introduction. [Page 23]

THE IDEA OF RE-BIRTH

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THE theory of Reincarnation is steadily making its way amongst European thinkers; and, finding it thoroughly established in Brâhmanical philosophy, Western students of Indian literature are constrained to treat it seriously. The philosophy with which it is bound up commands the respect of all intellectual men. It would thus be childish to deal with the theory of Reincarnation as though it were a primitive superstition. It is a grave answer to problems which religious dogma has been found wholly insufficient to deal with, and which material science is equally unready to face. That which has hitherto been the European view of human existence offers no solution of the mystery of sin and sorrow. It affords no ground for consolation when the heart sinks oppressed before the spectacle of the unmerited sorrow of the wise and good; it can give no reason for the misery of ignorance, no compensation for the triumph of evil. Science and religion equally fail in their answer to the question, What am I, and why different in disposition and character from my brother? We ask, whence comes the human Ego that sways and rules the powers of the body, and whither does it go when the shroud of death closes the [Page 24] portals of its habitation? Science penetrates the past, religion attempts to draw the veil from the future, but the doctrine of Reincarnation deals with both the past and the future of man. It leads the evolutionist in his investigations, unfolding the causes that have preceded the present appearance, physical, intellectual, and moral, of the humanity on this earth; it points to a future that shall be in harmony with the past, and a fitting sequence to it — the just outcome of the present, yet containing the fulfilment of every aspiration of religion.

The author of the following essay, Mr. Karl Heckel, has considered the subject of Re-birth from the historical and literary aspect. He has shown that the doctrine of Reincarnation formed an essential feature of all the older religions of the world; he has traced it in the teachings of the ancient philosophers, and shows the conception of the same idea in Christianity in its doctrine of original sin. It is the purpose of the present paper to consider Reincarnation in its relation to the social and individual life of man, and to examine the grounds upon which it may be considered a reasonable belief, and capable of giving a satisfactory answer to the perplexing problems of Nature — those problems which science has left untouched, and which religious teaching has but involved in deeper mystery, by presenting them as the causeless will of an All-wise, All-powerful, and All-loving God.

Objections to Reincarnation are many and various. In most instances they proceed from the prejudice of individualism that refuses to accept the possibility of a wider and more extensive field of existence for the human Ego than that which is bounded by the idea of one earth life or one personality with its narrow interests [Page 25] and limitations. A careful consideration of those objections most frequently put forward will serve to show the harmony that results when the facts of existence are contemplated from the standpoint of Reincarnation.

Karma or retributive justice, the law of cause and effect, is inseparably connected with Reincarnation, and it is useless to attempt the investigation of the theory of Re-birth unless the causes that operate in the embodiment of the Ego are also taken into account. The subject of Reincarnation necessarily includes the consideration of Karma.

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It is not needful that the theory of evolution should be conclusively proved to render it a fitting basis for the argument of progression through Reincarnation. This theory, that has received so much support from scientific research, has successfully traced the chain of life in its physical and mental developments through animal existence, and shows a gradually increasing complexity of organism in the continual advance from lower to higher forms. The question arises in the mind, as we look back through the long ages at this development of the life of the human race on this earth, Is man the limit of this progress, and what is the end and aim of this world-existence ? Do the records that have been handed down to us in the history of the nations and peoples of the earth give any support to the conception also of a constant advance towards higher conditions in the moral and intellectual aspect of the world ? The essential feature of evolution is the assertion of progress, but the law of material development seems to necessitate the suppression of the weaker race for the advance of its stronger brother. All that can be observed in the evolution of the so-called [Page 26] progress of Nature is the dying out of the lower forms as the species emerge from the struggle for existence victorious in their survival as the fittest.

What is to be the end of this stupendous work, the outcome of this fight of forces ? From the standpoint of the materialist, it can be but the annihilation of the human race from a world that has exhausted its power to sustain the life-existence it has evolved. Can any effect be more hopelessly disproportioned to its cause ? Where then will be found the fulfilment of the great aspirations, and the realisation of the high ideals of perfection that have led humanity step by step in earnest endeavour to expand its own inherent potentiality for progress ? Void and soulless, the world will be but the dead carcass of the past, waiting till the cataclysm of stellar change shall dissipate its particles and forces for fresh formations of future worlds, again to repeat the story. But is this the end of humanity ? Can we believe that Nature, so perfect in adaptation, in detail, of means to the end, should work for no aim in the great unfoldment of human progress ? Is the aspiration of the spiritual nature of man to be the only force that expends itself without effect and conservation, and is the great progressive life of humanity to be annihilated without end or gain when it has attained the apex of its power ? If the noble thoughts and earnest deeds that have found expression in the Buddhas and Christs of the world are to be lost in the void of space, in the silence of nothingness, we may well fold our hands, in despair, and exclaim, *Cui bono!* If this is to be the end, the poor and miserable offspring of vice, the sorrowful and the suffering, may well end the struggle of their lives in self-destruction.[Page 27]

It is useless to speak of the progress and evolution of the higher from the lower unless there be a bond of union between the various stages, for otherwise these stages are but disconnected points possessing no ground of relation, and therefore not comparable one with the other. In seeking to place this ground of union in the material basis of evolution only, we are brought face to face with the appalling conclusion that humanity, which has evolved through such long and painful processes, only presses forward to its own annihilation with all that it has gained; and as a more developed form and brain gives a greater capacity for suffering, the boasted progress is also the greater pain.

It must be evident that the so-called progress of humanity is but the recorded progress of individual units. The development of the individual must also necessitate the relation of that individual with every link of the great chain of cause and effect that has marked its previous course and brought it to its present stage. As every atom is correlated with every other atom in the great harmony of the universe, as each moment of time exists connected with every other moment of time, so the individual is related to every step of its past development. This relation is to be found in soul — "it is for this that Nature works".

It is not within the scope of this paper to examine the grounds of belief in the super-physical nature of

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man: it may be that it is possible to demonstrate scientifically a conscious intelligent survival after death; and if survival can be proved to that which seems to be the end of the living man, the further continuity of the conscious intelligent Ego may be reasonably deduced. That our consciousness is not limited by [Page 28] the faculties of the body is evident from experience in cases of hypnotism and clairvoyance, and the very fact that consciousness can connect the state before sleep and the state after sleep, shows that it must underlie the sleeping condition, although during that time unmanifest in its normal character. It is needless to consider the mass of evidence that has been put forward to support the statement that the life of man is not closed by the death of the body: it will suffice to accept the immortality of the soul as alone offering a basis for a reasonable explanation of both the objective and subjective nature of man. Before passing to the consideration of Reincarnation, or the continuity of soul through more than one manifestation, it may, however, be well to define what is meant by soul.

The nature of man is complex, and may be considered under various aspects, or, as they are sometimes called, principles. For the purpose of the present explanation man will be considered only as a quaternary, without entering on those further divisions which for greater precision or for certain other objects subdivide the nature of man into five, seven, or even twenty-four categories. As a quaternary, therefore, man consists, first, of the body with the organs of action and perception, physical and psychic, the particles of which are dissipated at death, or soon after. Secondly, of mind or intelligence, consciousness, and will. Thirdly, of soul, the individualised aspect of spirit. Fourthly, of absolute spirit. The definitions here given but roughly represent the content of the various divisions, but it is unnecessary to proceed to closer analysis. Soul may be said to be the individualised aspect of spirit manifesting itself through mind, consciousness, and will as the conscious [Page 29] individuality that passes from birth to birth. It has been stated that the basis of the human evolutionary progress is the relation of the conscious individuality with every stage of its progression. It must not, however, be inferred from this statement that the individual conscious entity as such has worked through all the forms of pre-human existence, and has been once a stone, then a plant, and then an animal. The evolution of the Ego or individualized consciousness must not be considered as identical with the evolution of the physical form or mental faculties as put forward in the orthodox theory of the evolution of man. The evolutionist may be able to trace the gradual unfoldment of physical powers and mental capacity from animal to man: the developed animal and the undeveloped man may be comparable in size of brain and intellectual qualities. The higher forms of animal life may include the potentiality of the human faculties, but soul is the breath of spirit, and not the product of physical evolution. *Being* evolves in the countless ages of planetary life to that point of evolution in which consciousness, mind, and will manifest the individualized aspect of spirit as an entity with the capacity of progression. Where or when, in the vast cycles of being, soul first manifests in this individualized consciousness, is a question we need not here attempt to investigate. We can no more speak of the evolution of soul than we can speak of the evolution of spirit; but the conditions through which soul manifests are subject to development, and they form the conscious individuality, the reincarnating Ego. It is this Ego that is the field of the evolutionary progress in Reincarnation. It is not, however, the product of the physical development [Page 30] of the organs and faculties of the body, for these united in mind form but the vehicle of the Ego, which, as a condition of consciousness and will, manifests individualized soul. From the initial point of animal life the progress of the physical organization may be traced step by step through evolution from the simplest forms to the complex organism of man, and we can perceive in the instincts of the lower animals the potentiality of the consummation attained by Man in the development of reason and mental capacity. But are we, therefore, to consider that evolution is limited to this unfoldment of the physical organism and the faculties and powers of the mind, and deny further progress to the conscious individuality? Is the possibility of such progress to be limited to the short span of life allotted to the human animal — a life in many cases handicapped by mental disease, rendering the attainment of an average experience impossible, and in many cases of so short duration

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that the Ego has to leave the field of experience before it can attain to the development of self-consciousness?

It is through the doctrine of Reincarnation or continuity of soul in manifestation that the scientific theory of evolution becomes something more than a mere statement of material facts. The aim of the physical development is shown to be the growth of soul. "Creation is for the sake of soul" (Yoga Aph. 11, ii.). The evolution of the physical nature with its senses and organs is the basis for the manifestation of individualised soul as a self-conscious Ego, and the full development of the conscious individuality in its power of manifesting soul is the purpose of incarnation. The initial stages of conscious individuality are hidden in the distant past of the [Page 31] races of the earth, but it is sufficient for the elucidation of the theory of Reincarnation to observe the great differences exhibited by the various races of mankind, and the individuals constituting those races at the present time. We see Australian, African, and other tribes possessed of a very small amount of development in comparison with other nations. Among civilised nations we find every variety of progress on the moral and intellectual plane, ranging from the lowest capacity of a savage to the intelligence that follows Nature in her most secret paths and discovers the hidden knowledge of the forces of life. We see the low moral nature scarcely raised beyond the savage instincts of the animal, and at the same time in the same civilisation we behold the philanthropist and the saviours of the race. Reincarnation can give an explanation of these great differences in mental and moral being. It shows as the basis of evolution the individualised aspect of spirit continually advancing to a higher condition of consciousness, mind, and will. It reveals the link that connects the idiot and the Newton, the slayer and the saviour, and reconciles evolution with ethics. It may, perhaps, be argued that the work of evolution for the purpose of soul is as fully complete if the pre-existence of soul is denied, and each entity is considered as a fresh creation at birth. But if it is contended that the individualization of soul is established by its contact with matter through birth in physical incarnation, and that the experience of life is the opportunity for further development, the necessity of this development for the Ego is apparently obviated from the fact that many pass away from earth immediately after birth without obtaining [Page 32] any further experience. It would therefore seem, from this point of view, that the mere fact of physical birth is all that is required for the Ego. But if the if earth-life experience is not a necessity, why should any Ego have to submit to the sin and sorrow invariably accompanying a prolonged earth-existence? If, on the other hand, the experience is for the advantage of the Ego, why should infants, and those who pass away before arriving at maturity, be deprived of this advantage ?

Some half-and-half supporters of the doctrine of Reincarnation consider that further development will take place on other planets, where the conditions of life will be different, perhaps better than those which are to be found here. But this supposition still leaves the most important point untouched. For if each entity enters life from the same starting-point, it is evident that the inherited tendencies of the material organism through which it manifests must in some instances be the greatest aid, in others an almost insurmountable barrier, to progress. Therefore the degree of the after condition of the Ego in other planets being dependent upon the development it attains on this earth, those Egos who had the misfortune to receive their individualisation in evil surroundings would be unfitted through their earth experience for the worlds of higher advancement, to which those might attain who were born under more favourable circumstances. The fact also that the full development that earth-life can give had not been attained, would tend to show that the purpose of *this* planetary existence had not been fulfilled for those individual Egos. The doctrine of heredity is supposed to give an explanation of the great differences observed in the moral and mental characteristics [Page 33] of very young children, but heredity can offer no explanation of the connection of any particular entity with any particular organism — why adverse conditions of development as the heritage of one Ego retard its progress, while good organisation and

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inherited moral qualities promote the advance of another. Heredity does not explain why the children of the same parents should in many cases show marked dissimilarity to their parents and to each other. The assertion of the law of Atavism is made to explain why a child often shows strongly marked characteristics, not of its own parents, but of remote ancestors. This assertion, however, is but a statement of fact, and offers no explanation of the return to an earlier type. The similarity of twins is urged as conclusive proof that the characteristics of the children depend upon the conditions offered by conception ; but closer observation on this point shows many instances of marked dissimilarity in twins unaccountable on the supposition that the twin entities enter life under the same pre-natal conditions. To suppose that education and nurture are the all-important factors in the development of special characteristics is to ignore the patent fact that the most careful training is often powerless to eradicate inherited tendency to evil, while on the other hand children brought up and nurtured in vice have frequently developed a moral character totally at variance with their surroundings. These and many others are the problems involved in the question of the development of the human character when considered only from the standpoint of heredity or Atavism — problems that the theory of inherited tendency on the one hand, and education and nurture on the other, are incapable of solving. The [Page 34] explanations given to account for the differing conditions of individuals are incomplete from the fact that they are put forward entirely from the material standpoint, and deal with effects, not with the causes producing those effects. What is the cause that determines the fate of each Ego previous to birth, so that the embryo of any human child, with its inherited qualities, vices, or virtues, shall be the lot of one rather than another ? Has the Ego power of choice ? Is it through want of knowledge or by blind chance that it takes the evil rather than the good, or shall we believe that the ruler of the universe imposes its destiny upon each individual human soul at creation, giving some to honor, some to dishonor, some to evil and ignorance, others to virtue and knowledge ?

There is also another important consideration that must present itself to every one dealing with this subject. If each entity at birth is a new soul, its creation is contingent upon the lust and passion of man. It is impossible to pursue this idea to its logical outcome, which would make the supreme creating power the slave of the sensual instinct in man. Such an idea is repugnant alike to all moral sentiment and religion. Pre-existence of soul is the necessary alternative, and that pre-existence involves a condition of pre-natal differentiation, otherwise the incarnation of the soul would be an effect without a cause, for the conjunction of any special soul with the particular organism transmitted by heredity would have no determining cause. Pre-existent soul must therefore be considered as existing under conditions of pre-natal differentiation. Soul was defined as the individual aspect of spirit manifesting as mind, consciousness, and [Page 35] will. Spirit, *per se*, is one without parts or divisions, and it is only in its individualised aspect that it can be described as differentiated. It is therefore in the Ego, that is to say, in consciousness, mind, and will, that we must seek for the pre-natal cause that determines birth under varying conditions.

In order to form a correct conception of the way in which Reincarnation influences a soul entity, attention must be directed to the law of cause and effect operating in the events and actions of human life. It is evident that an individual can experience but a small proportion of the effects of his actions in one earth-life ; but few, if any, can be said to reap the fruit of all their actions in the earlier years of life; and with still greater force does this apply when it is remembered that words and thoughts are also causes sowing the seeds of good and evil fruit. Western systems of religious teaching lead men to believe that eternal bliss or eternal misery is the result of one life upon earth — that deeds of hatred and cruelty may be blotted out by repentance and faith at the last moment before death, and that a life of evil may bring the same result to the individual as a life spent in the exercise of unselfish devotion to others, the evil acts of a

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whole life being shorn of their consequences by the belief of an hour.

Such a supposition is entirely opposed to both science and true religion. Science shows that cause and effect invariably accompany each other, and are indeed but the same act at different points of time: — that the law of causation is the law of the universe, and rules the courses of the planets and the lives of men. The true teacher of religion inculcates the same, truth, [Page 35] "As ye sow so shall ye reap", "With what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again". The doctrine of Reincarnation is in complete harmony with the law of cause and effect, for it also teaches that every act in life, whether for good or evil, holds within itself its consequence in the form of retribution or reward, which must appear sooner or later, and this not from the arbitrary will of an offended or gratified Deity, but from the undeviating operation of natural law. Reincarnation shows that it is impossible for an individual to escape the responsibility of the outcome of his own acts, for the effect lies antecedent in the cause, and the consequences of evil thoughts, words, and deeds cannot be avoided by the atonement of another. As the act or cause was initiated by the individual, so must the effect be borne by the same individual. Karma, as retributive justice, returns to an individual the joy or sorrow that his past actions have given to others; he must himself bear the penalty of his sins, for there is no vicarious suffering under the law of eternal justice.

The question may here be asked, How can this be possible when every day we see the innocent suffering for the guilty, and the sins of the father visited upon the children? The comprehension of the causes governing the incarnation of the Ego can alone give a satisfactory answer to this problem of unmerited suffering. The relation of individuals, with each other is as much governed by the great law of cause and effect as the attraction of iron in the neighbourhood of the magnet. It is written in the ancient Scriptures, 'What living creature slays or is slain? What living creature destroys or is preserved? Each is his own [Page 36] destroyer or preserver as he follows evil or good'. No act of one individual can touch another unless there has been participation in the causes of which that act is the effect. "He who meditates not of wrong to others, but considers them as himself, is free from the effects of sin, inasmuch as the cause does not exist. But he who inflicts pain upon others in act, thought, or speech sows the seed of future birth, and the fruit that awaits him after birth is pain".

Each incarnating Ego brought by the Karma of the former life will be drawn by irresistible attraction to those conditions of environment which offer surroundings in harmony with its development and suitable for further continuity of manifestation. Nature leaves no gaps, makes no sudden leaps in her line of progress, and Karma is something more than the mere punishment or reward of past vice and virtue. It is to the moral what the law of gravitation is to the physical world. As the falling body obeys the law which brings it to the earth, so the Ego, enwrapped in Karma, obeys the law that necessitates its incarnation according to its stage of development. Progress consists in the modification that the individuality experiences in successive births, the progress of nations being gained through the progress of the individuals. Nations and races have their Karma even as individuals, for the collective forces of individual Karma become the aggregate Karma of the nation, and each entity as it is born must necessarily inherit the Karma of its race and nation. The law that enables individuals sometimes to transcend the Karmic limitations of birth will be considered further on; but the broad fact remains that family and class, sex and race, have each a heritage of Karma, good and evil, and that each individual has the power to become either a saviour or destroyer of his kind, as he lightens or increases the Karmic burdens of his race. Nations progress through the gradual incarnation of Egos of higher development manifesting through the law of heredity, and carrying on the moral and mental evolution of the race. Nations and races also decay

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and die out when the especial line of progress has reached the limit of its development, and there are no longer Egos requiring that particular incarnation. The rise and fall of the ancient civilisations and races of the world are examples of the working of the law of cyclic development in the progress of humanity, and the gradual extinction of the American Indians and other primitive tribes shows the result of the changes in physical environment reacting on the plane of the incarnating Egos. The requisite conditions for that stage of manifestation being absent, Egos of the necessary development are not drawn into incarnation, and the race becomes extinct. Karma is not any extra-cosmic influence forcing the individual to receive retribution or reward from a source external to itself. It is the essential character of individualised consciousness, mind and will reflecting itself in manifestation as the image is reflected in the glass.

The superstition of belief led man to look upon death and sorrow, sickness and misery, as the direct judgments of God, and the vestiges of this belief still linger in the minds of men; but the human intellect refuses to continue enchained, reason asserts itself, and demands that the external life of man shall harmonise with the teachings of religion. This great problem of existence, which [Page 39] priest and scholar have striven to solve, is the problem of the injustice of life as manifested in the affairs of men; it has puzzled the learned; it has saddened the hearts of the good and just. Happiness and misery, success and failure, are evidently not the nicely adjusted correspondences of the good and evil acts, virtues and vices of men, but for the most part seem to come to them independently of their actions. Those who have tried to stem the current of human misery, or to straighten the tangled threads that weave the warp and woof of joy and sorrow, know how slight may be the influence of the individual acts of a man in determining his prosperity and misfortune, his weal and woe. Through the mere fact of birth he is at once placed physically, socially, and morally within narrow limits that forbid any marked change of condition. Nature visits him with sickness and accidents cause him loss and injury. Injustice seems to be the law of life. Sorrow and misfortune accompany one from the cradle to the grave, while another receives unmerited reward. In vain does the preacher proclaim the loving-kindness of an omnipotent God in face of the manifest injustice with which He apparently visits His creatures. Shall we on the other hand assert with the materialist that no law governs the individual life of humanity, and that the destiny of men and women is but a great lottery where some draw prizes, others blanks ? Such an hypothesis will never satisfy the nature of man, for the demand for justice is an attribute in our nature, and must be satisfied in any theory seeking to provide a logical explanation of the facts of existence. The doctrine of Karma and Reincarnation gives such an explanation; it shows the existing facts to be in harmony with the law of [Page 40] justice; it amply supplies the highest ideal to which man can aspire, and opens the possibility of progress for each individual Ego.

Karma offers a logical explanation of the unequal distribution of wealth and happiness that exists upon the earth, showing why good birth and fortune may be the heritage of the undeserving, why the virtuous suffer and the wicked rejoice. The idiot, the cripple, the poor and needy are not the victims of blind fate or the puppets of indiscriminate caprice. Every event in the life of an individual, whether for joy or sorrow, is the effect of his past action. From birth to death the past causes give shape to the present effects, and in each life man reaps the harvest of the past, and sows the seed of the future. Inherited tendency to crime and vice is not unmerited condemnation to evil, but represents on the plane of external life the reciprocal of the birth-seeking Ego. Against this assertion it may be urged as an objection that in the most evil surroundings of depravity there are often beings who, from their superior moral qualities, seem to be out of harmony with their position, and often rise above it; and it may be asked how this is possible if the conditions of birth are only the external aspect of the inner being. It must be remembered that the nature of the Ego is dual, and that there is constant struggle between the lower and higher nature. The lower instincts have their resulting evil Karma, but the aspiration towards the soul nature likewise affects the

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Karma of the Ego. The tendencies from a past career of crime which cause an entity to incarnate in heredity of a similar character may exhaust that evil Karmic tendency, and may allow aspirations towards [Page 41] higher conditions to take effect by raising the individual beyond his moral and physical surroundings; but the Karma of the past still overshadows the present, for the difficulties that a man experiences who is fighting against inherited evil tendencies or an environment of temptation are the trials that his past acts have brought him — it is the life that he has himself created. This same explanation may be given to many of those curious and sudden freaks of fortune which so thoroughly change the life-history of certain individuals. The child of noble and wealthy parents is withdrawn from its home to receive its nurture among the poorest surroundings, and the child of the poor man is sometimes raised from its class above its brothers and sisters and adopted into a wealthy family. This sudden change of position and opportunities, which often occurs to children before they are capable of exercising effort on their own part, shows that the birth-Karma which brought them to their environment is exhausted, and that other Karmic tendencies are working. The totally different position of the children of the same parents is thus explained by the doctrine of Karma. The birth-seeking Ego, by its incarnation, exhausts the force of the tendency that brought it to the surroundings in which it finds itself at birth, and henceforward there is the struggle with inherited tendency, which struggle is again the cause of future Karma. Karma is not a blind resistless fate, but the adjustment of the present to the past without one error or injustice. It must not however be supposed that Karma only returns to the individual the evil of past action. It is as sure in its recompense of every unselfish act, of every kindly thought. [Page 42]

"The hidden good it pays with peace and bliss,
The hidden ill with pains".

The single redeeming feature for good in the otherwise depraved character of an individual, whether it be love for child or friend, or the faint aspiration towards a better life, will as surely bring its effect as the evil thoughts of an otherwise blameless life will bear their Karma in the future.

It is important to consider the influence of Karma on Reincarnation, for without this influence the theory of Reincarnation would be as arbitrary and capricious as the ordinary idea of the creation of each soul at birth. It is through the Karma of the past that the individual entity is attracted to the human couple whose heredity and surroundings offer the required conditions to carry on the development from lower to higher, as the entity at each fresh birth takes its position at the exact point of progress acquired in its previous life. The similarity of children to their parents in moral characteristics and intellectual qualities is the result of similarity on the plane of the Ego, and similarity of Karma will cause the incarnation of twin Egos under almost identical conditions. The characteristics of family, nation, and race, the occasional return to an earlier type of progeniture, can all be traced to the workings of Karma in human existence. The tendencies of the parents, the conditions under which conception takes place, a change of character in either or both parents, even social standing and worldly position, are all lines of attraction which draw the Karma-laden Ego to its position in the world of manifestation, and the differences in the characters and dispositions of those closely related manifest individual Karma in the various entities. It would be impossible [Page 43] to exhaust the catalogue of Karmic influences. The result of the Karma of any life can only be laid down on the broad principle that the selfish thought and the unkind act will bring the Ego under the law of retribution. "All things that man conceives in his heart when he says 'I', 'this is mine' are so many actions fulfilled which place him under the law of Re-birth". The desire for personal gain is the root of Karma. Far and wide the great tree of selfishness spreads its giant branches, and the fruit it bears is pain in repeated births.

The argument in favour of Reincarnation may be briefly summed up. Progress involves continuity of

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experience. A material basis for progress would be evidence of failure in the end as inadequate to the means, inasmuch as the destruction of humanity would be the crowning apex of all evolution. Progress therefore must inhere in a basis that survives death. This basis is to be found in soul, which is the individualised aspect of spirit manifesting in mind, consciousness, and will as the permanent or reincarnating Ego. The experience in manifestation, and the acts and thoughts of a man's life, modify the character of the incarnating Ego; and this modification of the medium of soul constitutes the progress of the Ego in the repeated earth-lives. In each incarnation the Ego returns to a physical organisation in harmony with its condition, and in that organism receives the consequences of the good and evil acts of previous lives.

It must not be supposed that each life is the Karma resulting from the preceding life only. It may often happen that some Karma may not be brought into effect for several lives. [Page 44]

“Times are as naught, to-morrow it will judge,
Or after many days”.

It must be remembered that Karma cannot become manifest unless suitable conditions are present. The consideration of the causes that develop or retard the action of Karma requires the investigation of the various planes of action, and opens out a very wide subject. It will only be necessary to suggest a few of the more important points in order to throw some light on the causes that determine the fruition of Karma at any particular moment.

Man has been described as possessing more than one plane of being, and all action is also manifold both as cause and effect on the plane of the universe. Before an act can be carried out on to the material plane of physical manifestation, it must take its rise as a dynamic force on the plane of consciousness, mind, and will. These forces cause disturbance on the various planes of being, and the events of Karma are the effects of the readjustment of harmony. A man, by the thought of committing an injury to another, sets forces in motion which work on the thought-plane of the universe. If the thought culminates in action on the physical plane, the Karmic effect of that action is at once established on that plane. It may, however, happen through circumstances independent of the man that the evil thought is not followed by act. As the impulse to evil has received no check, it must work out its full effect in its particular plane, and is a Karmic force for evil to the individual; but if the man repented before the deed was committed, and became animated by benevolent feelings to his enemy, although the previous impulse will fulfil its course, yet another set of forces [Page 45] have been engendered which partly or wholly neutralize the former.

Every entity at birth comes into the physical life, with its heritage from the past in the form of Karmic energy on the various planes. These planes may be roughly described, 1st. The physical, being the automatic action of the body with its senses and organs. The Karmic force on this plane takes shape in congenital disease, physical defects and tendencies, accidents, and everything that directly affects the body without the participation of the will. 2nd. The emotional, the plane of preference and desire. 3rd. The plane of the intellect or mind. This is the plane of moral obligation, it deals with the objects of the physical senses, and harmonizes and rules the first and second planes. 4th. The ethical plane, the highest plane of Karma, or the law underlying and governing manifestation. It is not suffering the effect of law, but being one with law. All the Karmic energy for good or evil awaiting the incarnating Ego must manifest on these planes, but will be dependent for the form and time of manifestation upon the condition of the Ego, the thoughts, desires, and will of the Ego acting as a determining cause in unison with the awaiting Karma

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to draw forth the answering tone.

The importance of this aspect of Karma in its moral bearing on the subject will be evident when it is remembered that Karma can henceforth no longer be considered as a blind resistless fate forced upon the individual without the possibility of let or hindrance on his part; but that the very fruition of the past Karma is modified to a great extent by the plane of thought and desire of the individual in his present life. The [Page 46] indulgence of the thoughts and desires in greed, lust, avarice, anger, or selfishness will draw the evil Karma resulting from such acts in the past, and bring the Ego to the manifestation of the present act, the force of Karmic energy still further impelling him to evil. On the other hand, every aspiration towards a higher life, every attempt to suppress selfish desire, every effort to benefit others, will turn the Karma of the previous life on to those planes for its manifestation. The good man who constantly works for others may be wearied and discouraged that his efforts are so seldom crowned with success. His evil Karma works itself out in the trials and failures that he experiences, but it does work out. He is exhausting that evil energy, and the next life may bring the fruition of the present effort for good in increased opportunity and power of action. The application of this law of Karma to the events of the earth-life will help to explain much that otherwise seems so inexplicable in the fact that often the best intentions will lead to the most deplorable results. We may ask ourselves, Are we to blame if that which we think to do for the best turns out just the opposite? And from the one-life point of view it may be we are blameless, but in a series of lives each act will be dependent on causes that lie hidden in the Karma of the past; and each act has not only the immediate cause of the present good intention which evokes it, but it has a dual Karmic energy in the present tendency of the individual and his awaiting Karma that may cause the misdirection of the act, and the character of Karmic tendency may be such that the individual judgment is warped and vitiated, so that even a good intention produces an evil act. This question of free-will and [Page 47] necessity, and the consequent responsibility or otherwise of the Ego, has been more fully treated in a paper by Mr. A. P. Sinnett in one of the "Transactions" of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, in which he shows how free-will and necessity are reconcilable under the aspect of Karma and Reincarnation, — how there may be "necessity in act and free-will in spirit", — necessity which brings the Karmic forces to act upon and through the individual, and at the same time the free-will of spirit, which enables the individual to deal with the Karmic force, to exhaust it for good, or intensify it still further for evil. Karma may be broadly divided into two fields of action — the Karma which directly causes the incarnation of the Ego in the conditions which its affinities necessitate; and the Karma which awaits manifestation during the life of the individual, and which, modified by the mind-condition of the Ego, becomes the seed for future Karma. Under the first may be grouped the physical frame and its inherited tendencies, the social condition and the environment that an entity acquires by the mere fact of birth. Under the second are all those acts and events which spring from the past Karma, but which are brought to fruition or modified by the desires of the individual acted upon by free-will. It may also happen that through the force of some special attraction an entity is drawn into incarnation in such surroundings that the manifestation of some evil characteristic is repressed and controlled by social position and the restraints of education, etc. Unless the evil desire is itself weakened and overcome, it must of necessity draw the Ego at the next birth into conditions suitable for its manifestation. The energy on the causal, [Page 48] plane of desire being forcibly repressed in its manifestation in the physical life, acquires an accumulative strength which in the next life takes shape in Karmic result. For this reason asceticism is of no avail, unless it be the asceticism of want of desire. "The danger (of Re-birth) still exists even for him who retires to the forest, - unless he is master of himself, for he carries thither his six adversaries; but what hurt shall the condition of the householder cause to the enlightened man who has overcome his senses and who finds his joy in himself?" The stage of development of an individual must not be measured by the physical acts of life, for the apparently blameless life of one restrained from the committal of crime by the influences of social position, etc., may be far more potent in its evil Karmic

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result than that of the unfortunate criminal who, having no such restraints of position, carries out his desire in action. As the external act is but the effect of desire, which is antecedent as its cause, so asceticism or detachment can only be obtained through the weakening of desire; and so long as an individual entertains the thought of evil in his mind, that thought will bring its fruit in manifestation on the physical plane as action, if not in the present life, it does but wait to meet the Ego as it steps into re-manifestation in the future.

It may be asked, What is the basis of morality established by the doctrine of Karma ? How does it affect the great question of the "I ought" in human life ? The old standard of the Church, the fear of punishment and the hope of reward at the hands of a powerful Being whose will created His creatures, whose pleasure framed the laws for their obedience, has had [Page 49] to give place to the standard of science, to that basis of morality which civilisation unfolds in its doctrine of utilitarianism as that which tends to the increase of the happiness of the race. But the doctrine of utilitarianism, although it points out the true basis of morality, has failed to graft the individual good on the altruistic stem, and the happiness of the race is bought by the sacrifice of the individual. This error proceeds from the materialism that limits existence by birth and death, and denies to the individual *unity of being* with every other individual in time past, present, or future. The doctrine of Karma, through its recognition of this unity of being underlying all manifestation, gives the true basis for morality in altruism, without the necessity of sacrificing the individual to the general good. Altruism is the effort to realise unity in practice, and Karma shows how the progress of the individual is united with the progress of the race. As each ray of sunlight is a portion of the vivifying and creating power of the central globe, so each individual bears his part of the energy of the universal mind which is working towards the development of higher forms of existence. The recognition that every act, every form of experience, every word and thought, leaves its impress on the Ego, and is the cause of future birth in accordance with the accumulated Karma, explains the purpose of suffering for the sake of others consistently with the idea of the development of the individual good. The practical application of this standard of morality to the great questions of conduct in the relation of man to man is the realisation by the individual that there is no such thing as separateness. Every desire that tends to emphasise the notion of egotistic, as opposed to universal [Page 50] interest, is contrary to this standard of morality, a sin against the unity of being, producing disharmony, and the cause of pain and suffering. He that would fulfil the law of harmony and work with, and not contrary to, the true principle of morality, must overcome self, must feel that he cannot put far from him the sin and sorrow of others. The rule of action that decides the "I ought", springing from the knowledge of the unity of being, will lead to the constant endeavour to convert this theoretical knowledge into practice; it should cause the effort to lighten the Karma of each and all, to help forward the progress of others by leaving no wrong unrighted that can be helped; and as all are linked together, none can offend the law of harmony without bringing the effect of his offence not only upon himself but upon others. The Karmic standard of morality may certainly be compared to the highest that any scheme of religion has put forward, and is capable of supplying a rule of conduct to all, from the sage that, Buddha-like, sheds his influence on the world as teacher and saviour, to the child of sin and sorrow, who, faint and stumbling on the road, lifts weary feet to take the first step on the path of self-sacrifice.

Of the various objections brought forward against Reincarnation, it will only be necessary to notice those that proceed from a serious and earnest consideration of the subject. It is urged that there is no proof of Reincarnation, and that it is a mere hypothesis; that we have no memory of a past life; that Reincarnation gives no solution to the problem of the origin of evil ; that it is an injustice if we are punished in this life, in this personality, for the sins which we do not remember, committed in a former life in another personality; [Page 51] that Reincarnation confuses relationships, and that we lose our identity in this constant change of

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personality, and will therefore be unable to recognise our friends and loved ones hereafter; that progress may be equally possible in other conditions of existence, without the necessity of return to earth-life. At first sight this may appear a formidable array of objections, but careful consideration of the points brought forward will show that they are the outcome of a certain materialism of thought which makes the objector take the present personality as the measure of *being*.

We are asked to give proof of the theory of Reincarnation, but in order to give proof of a statement, we must be agreed as to what constitutes a canon of proof. Proof may be classified under three heads— perception, inference, and authority. It is urged by some objectors that the doctrine of Reincarnation is not susceptible of proof under any of these three categories, that it is neither self-evident nor to be derived from inquiry and investigation. A self-evident truth can only be self-evident to that plane of being that can deal with it. The existence of the body and of material corresponding matter is self-evident to the senses, but the existence of soul can never be self-evident to the senses, as it is on another plane of being. That which is "self-evident" is simply to be understood as possessing the compelling force which necessitates recognition from its own plane of being. To material and intellectual man, therefore, the existence of soul and its continuity through Reincarnation cannot be a self-evident truth, any more than the existence of spirit and its immortality. Inference is the next mode by which a truth can be demonstrated. Inference implies arguments from [Page 52] analogy and comparison, and those truths which are not objects of the mind or senses can only be proved to mind and sense through inference. The existence and immortality of the soul and the psychic nature of man is not an object of the mind, and can only become truth to the intellect through inference, and therefore the proof of Reincarnation or continuity of soul in manifestation can only be obtained by the intellect through the patient comparison of cause and effect. If the theory of Reincarnation responds to the demand made upon it by giving the most reasonable explanation of the phenomena of material existence, it may fairly be said to have fulfilled the conditions of this canon of proof. Authority is readily accepted by man as proof in the pursuit of material knowledge, and the testimony of those who know rules in every department of inquiry; therefore, the application of this method of proof to the question of the existence of the permanent Ego and the conditions of its being is not inadmissible. The testimony given by the Scriptures of all races, by the teachers of the Old World religions, by Christianity itself, by philosophers and sages in all time, is not to be lightly set aside. The very postulate of the unity of being necessitates conceptions of states of consciousness extending from the lowest form of consciousness to the highest, thus rendering the revelation of spiritual truths possible. If there is no proof of Reincarnation, neither is there proof of soul or immortality, for the nature of soul can only be perceived directly by soul, and the intellect can only apprehend it by means of inference and analogy. The failure of the memory of past lives is often considered an insuperable objection to the theory of Reincarnation [Page 53] It may well be said in answer to this objection that the memory of the incidents of this present life is also defective, and it would be strange if the memory of a past personality could be impressed on the physical brain of the present entity. How should it be possible that the brain, which is incapable of registering the events of the first two years of the present life, with which it is physically connected, should be able to recall to the present consciousness an existence, in which as a physical faculty it had no part? It can be proved that that which has passed from the memory is not entirely lost, by the many instances which occur in which people have possessed extraordinary vividness of memory when at the point of death by drowning, and in certain cases of recovery from illness; and there are cases on record in which individuals have entirely lost the remembrance of certain periods of their lives for months, and even years, and have afterwards, through an alteration of consciousness, resumed the interrupted current of their lives at the exact point at which non-remembrance had occurred. If such loss and revival of memory is possible through a change of consciousness to the physical brain registering the events of one life, it is evident that the change of consciousness through the death of one personality and the birth of another must be still more potent to

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cause a failure of memory in the new personality respecting the occurrences of a past life. A clear explanation of the relation of memory to consciousness is to be found in Dr. Carl du Prel's "Philosophy of Mysticism".

With reference to this subject, the complex nature of man must also be taken into account. Memory belongs to the lowest or physical division of the [Page 54] human being; it is a faculty of the brain reproducing past impressions, and is in lesser degree also a characteristic of the lower animals. The reincarnating Ego, as it passes from birth to birth, gathers from each life the result which, can be carried forward on to the plane of *being*, illuminated by soul. It is this result that forms the character of the incarnating will but the conscious memory of each physical manifestation can only recall the details of the experience with which it is connected. It must not, however, be supposed that even the details of past experiences are entirely lost; they are only lost as far as the new physical memory is concerned. When the mind, consciousness, and will, or the reincarnating individuality becomes the full manifestation of soul, then the record of the past will lie in unbroken continuity before it, for the soul has its birthright of omniscience, and the Ego in its union with soul receives the knowledge of *being*, and Karma, or the law of cause and effect, as the existence of the past becomes fully revealed. Although the memory of the past life cannot inhere in the physical faculty, yet the remembrance of past lives is not entirely excluded from all entities in earth-life, and it may be asked how such instances of super-human consciousness can be explained in accordance with the previous statement. In most cases of genuine seership the condition of the physical consciousness has been changed either by hypnotism or trance. When such happens, the permanent individuality can overshadow the one-life personality, and is able to impress the physical faculties with the facts of its wider consciousness. In certain rare instances this manifestation of the true individuality takes place without any [Page 55] apparent change in the physical man, but in all cases the knowledge of the past life does not belong to the consciousness of the personal man, but to the consciousness of the reincarnating Ego, which through certain physical abnormal conditions is able to make itself manifest. This knowledge of past existences must not be confused with the ordinary phenomena of clairvoyance, nor the exercise of the psychic faculties as shown by sensitives and what are usually called mediums. In enumerating the various categories into which the nature of man is divided, the faculties of perception, both physical and psychic, were placed in the lowest, because they belong to the physical man. The physical senses deal with those objects which respond to their plane of cognition, and the psychic senses with that plane of being which is subjective, and which may be called the "double" or counterpart of the physical. As every atom of matter has this counterpart psychic plane, it follows that, to the sensitive capable of exercising the psychic faculties, the ordinary barriers to sense-perception offer no obstruction. It is not the object of the present paper to enter at length on the subject of clairvoyance and the various forms of psychic power. It must, however, be borne in mind that the psychic nature is not the soul of man, and that the possession of abnormal psychic power is in no way a manifestation of the attributes of the permanent Ego. Animals often possess the psychic sense of sight, and the lowest conditions of moral nature may accompany psychic powers. It is only when the psychic nature becomes the instrument of the consciousness on the plane of soul through the overshadowing of the true Ego, that spiritual seership [Page 56] can occur. This is the knowledge of the Initiate, the power of the sage. Psychism may bear the impress of the soul's omniscience, as is shown by seer and prophet, but, unprotected by soul, it may draw upon the helpless personality forces from the subjective universe that will bring it to the verge of ruin mentally and physically.

What explanation can Reincarnation give of the origin of evil ? It has been objected that Reincarnation does but move the question farther back, and does not solve the problem; but the question with which Reincarnation is concerned is not the origin of evil, but the causes that give rise to the inequality in

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manifestation, that give to one individual an organisation and environment leading him to crime and condemning him to misery and vice from birth, and to another a heritage of temperament, tendencies, and instincts leading the new-born entity to shun evil, and surrounding him with the safeguards of position, education, and training. This is the question that the theory of Reincarnation will answer; it shows that evil touches or has touched all alike; that none are favourites of fortune; that the good has been gained by worthy effort; that evil is the retributive consequence of past action, the law and schoolmaster that leads to knowledge. The origin of the law of evil can only be understood when we understand the origin of the law of good. However far back we turn our gaze, we see the forces of evil and good, moulding, changing, and forming humanity; we see man rising in this struggle, coming to the knowledge of the potentialities of his being. The problem of the origin of evil is the same, whether we accept gradual evolution for the human [Page 57] Ego in the unfoldment of attributes and activities, or a specific act of creation for each entity at birth; the law that works is the apparent struggle between opposing forces in the development of each human being, but in Reincarnation the manifestation of the law is consistent with justice, and is not the effect of caprice. The law of Karma is itself the origin of evil, for it is the eternal power of unfoldment or becoming good and evil, the dual nature of being in manifestation. We cannot ask how or when this power was created, for it is the nature of being, and the question is illegitimate. From unmanifest before time it becomes manifest in time. It may perhaps here be objected, that if evil and good are both the eternal nature of being, what reason can be urged for the preference of one over the other; therefore, why should we pursue good rather than evil ?

The answer to this question is to be found in the consideration of the nature of the power and its dual aspect. Evil may be described as that aspect of power which tends to the separation or outgoing of the one from the All; good as the compensatory power merging the one in the All — separateness and non-separateness. What then is evil ? Every thought, act, or word that tends to the intensification of the idea of *self* and self-interest as opposed to unity of being. Sin is the transgression or outgoing from the knowledge of unity; it is the illusion of believing that to be multitudinous which is really one. Every sin that can be thought of is but this illusion; theft, falsehood, passion, envy, lust, and hatred are but its varied forms. The Ego that is under the dominion of this aspect of power will never realise the unity of being; but as the Ego in [Page 58] all time has its divine nature, it can exercise the other aspect of power which is good, and the path of good or selflessness leads to the realisation of unity. Purification, therefore, or unselfish action is necessary, that is to say, good is to be preferred to evil, because there can be no extending the notion of the personal self into the universal unless action is performed without self-interest or the idea of personal gain.

It is often stated as an objection to the theory of Reincarnation that there can be no justice in punishment if we do not remember the sin for which we are punished. This objection is not based on reasonable grounds. Punishment infers external authority, but that which is experienced in life as Karma is the effect of past action, its consequence and nature. For human punishment to be just, it is necessary to show the relation of the deed and the punishment to guard against the exercise of individual and arbitrary will. But the law of cause and effect needs no such precaution to ensure justice in its operation, which is not affected by our knowledge or ignorance. Neither must the effect of Karma in the events of life be considered apart from the individual consciousness. They are as much the individual as the tendencies and characteristics of the personal mind; and as the personal mind is able to review the relation between cause and effect in the earth-life with which it is connected, so the consciousness of the permanent Ego has also the power of retrospection, and is able to relate the effect in the present with the past cause. This flash of higher consciousness takes place, we are told, just before death, and also in the pre-natal condition just before birth. It is then that the Ego is able to trace [Page 59] the causes that have brought it

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to its environment, and to recognise the justice of the Karma it has to undergo, and thus strengthen its determination towards progress.

Each personality is but the temporary messenger into the world of experience, the creation of the garnered past. It is just that it should be punished for the past, for it is that past made manifest; but it has its consciousness, and the power at each instant of time to turn towards that consciousness which is illumined by the soul, and so become immortal.

The question of the loss of identity and the fear of non-recognition of friends and loved ones proceeds from a mistaken idea of the basis of individuality. The conception that limits the ground of union between the entities on earth merely to the manifesting personality, and conceives that that personality is to endure unchanged throughout eternity, presents but a feeble idea of the powers and attributes of *Being*. Love that would resist time must be independent of time, and must transcend all separateness in the recognition of the true unity which binds one individual to another. The ties of family love, friendship, and kindred are not loosened by the doctrine of Karma; on the contrary, they are drawn closer in a bond that has existed many times in the distant past. Will love for child or friend be less strong if we realise that the first blossom of that love may have opened its tender petals in other scenes of life ? Shall we have less joy on the morrow because today our love is born ? Passion must die, for it is of the physical; the conventional, external form of friendship will melt away with the destruction of the interest that called it forth; there is no cord to draw [Page 60] such emotions as these into the sphere of the soul's radiance; only that love which can enter into the eternal nature of the true Ego can become immortal. The connection existing between the various members of a family is often not the fruit of love, but the action of Karma, and shows that there has been a relation in time past which has had the effect of drawing such Egos again together. The experience of life is evidence that bonds of kinship often hold no cords of love, the very strength of hatred being the tie that binds together the opposing entities in manifestation. It is not till these forces have been harmonised and the dual Karma exhausted that the Egos can separate. Indulgence in hatred does but draw the chain tighter and closer in Karmic manifestation, until the debt is paid in the suffering and pain and misery that is caused by the bitter strife of families, father against son, and brother against brother.

In the question of the loss of identity we have first to consider what constitutes identity. It is true that in each earth-life there may be no means of establishing the identity of the incarnating Ego with any previous manifestation, for the physical memory is unable to register the details of the past; but identity cannot be said to be dependent upon the memory. The identity of the babe with the child, the youth, and the old man is not affected through the failure of memory to bridge the count of days passed in unconscious life. Changes in physical condition do not affect the Ego, which outlives its temporary manifestation as peasant, slave, or prince, and again and again draws to itself by a love transcending memory the cherished friends and the beloved companions.[Page 61]

Many spiritualists believe Reincarnation on earth to be unnecessary, and hold that the further progress of the Ego is attained in supermundane spheres of existence. There are important reasons which tend to negative such a supposition. There is no answer, according to this theory, to the problem presented in the inequality of life; the law of necessity fixing the conditions of birth becoming a mere arbitrary manifestation of divine will or chaotic chance unless pre-existence on this earth is granted to the incarnating Ego. It may well be, as urged by one writer, that the consequences of deeds which have been done in one state of immortal life may be operative in their consequences in another, but the experience

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of the earth-existence must have its own particular effect upon the Ego that has acquired its individualization of consciousness through its contact with matter in physical birth. Either this experience is a necessary development for the Ego, or it is not; in the one case, the infant that passes to other spheres is deprived of a means of progress; but if such progress can be acquired with equal or greater facility in a non-physical condition, those dying in infancy have decidedly the advantage in their escape from the evils attendant on physical existence. The acts done in the body do most certainly affect other planes of existence than the merely physical, for the inception of the act is not limited to the physical plane, but acts widely differing in character produce different results in the physical surroundings, and it is to these consequences of action that the Ego is bound by the law of cause and effect, and which necessitate its further incarnation in physical conditions. Surely the individualization of consciousness [Page 62] taking place through incarnation in the physical frame, as an idiot, as a murderer, as a Plato, or as a Newton, must have such differing results upon the Ego, that if there is but one earth-life, it is the grossest injustice and a mere mockery to talk of progress for the individual. It is often said that compensation in other spheres readjusts the balance so rudely shaken by the inequality of joy and sorrow in this world; but no compensation can supply the training and development required to place the consciousness of an idiot on a level with that of a Plato; or if indeed such compensation can be given, then the earth-life is a mistake for the greater part of the human race, and the sooner, wholesale slaughter sweeps away the infants from the slums and alleys of our cities the better for the unfortunate Egos. But is it possible to conceive that no antecedent existence has been required to bring the inner consciousness and the outer organism to such harmonious development that the light of soul can shine forth clear and bright as it does with so many of the great and wise among men? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that these highly-gifted beings, who by their truth and purity influence others, have travelled farther along the road to knowledge? Not through the favouritism of a Supreme God have they acquired their present position, but through laborious and often painful endeavour, as step by step they have trod the path of progress, each life giving them further fruit of experience.

This knowledge that there are differing grades and degrees of development upon earth, and the conviction that the greater progress that some have attained is only the fruit of longer endeavor and greater experience, will [Page 63] make it easier to understand that there may be beings beyond the sphere of our consciousness possessed of a higher degree of development. A continuous chain may almost be traced from the first dawns of intelligence in the lowest savage to the manifestation that reveals the divine attributes of the soul in the love and wisdom of those who work as the saviors of their race. It is unreasonable to suppose that this chain of progress must stop at the development we see around us. Link by link it passes on, step by step other heights are reached, and yet again to loftier summits still, ever passing onward, without boundary-line or limit, till the cloud is pierced that shrouds the eternal light. There must be, at every point of time, beings possessed of greater knowledge, greater wisdom, than ourselves, those who have attained to consciousness on other planes of existence; there can be no gap in the line of manifestation from the lowest form on the physical plane to the highest expression, beyond which consciousness can only be described as the divine unconscious or absolute consciousness. And to each and all the same path is open, by all the same results may be gained.

There is one important point which immediately presents itself in the consideration of this subject of Reincarnation. If the Ego has to return to earth-life again and again, what is its condition between death in one incarnation and Re-birth in another? To answer this question requires an investigation of the correspondence existing between the microcosm, man, and the macrocosm, universe. Many writers have written on this subject, and the after-death condition of the Ego has been a prolific source of discussion to [Page 64] both spiritualists and theosophists. Spiritualists conceive that the personal Ego is capable of

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manifesting after the death of the body as a conscious intelligence, with independent will and knowledge; that it can communicate with those on earth, and is in many instances capable of exercising a protective power towards them. Most spiritualists, except those of the Allan Kardec school, believe that the after progress of the Ego will be carried on in other spheres, and that further earth experience can only be obtained in the return to earth through mediums. Theosophical teaching, on the other hand, denies conscious post-mortem communication with earth to the individual entity except in peculiar cases, and limits immortality to the individuality or permanent Ego. The difference between these two views is considerable at first sight, and it may be worth while to examine what is the real ground of difference.

Theosophy and Spiritualism both agree that the life of man is not limited to the life of the body, and that therefore the individual continues after the death of the body. Further, they will agree that communication is possible between the earth-life and that state of existence that follows death. Here full agreement ends, although those who dispassionately investigate, find that the differences between the two are not so considerable as at first appears. The nature of man was described in the foregoing pages as a quaternary, consisting of body, mind, soul, and spirit. But this division is not alone applicable to the planes of consciousness of the individual man; the universe also may be considered under four aspects or states of consciousness (see note p. 86). At the death of the body the physical matter of which it is composed is [Page 65] disintegrated, and becomes once again the atoms and cosmic forces of the material universe, and the double or astral counterpart of the physical is also dissipated after a longer or shorter period according to the character of the personal Ego, and is resolved into the counterpart or astral plane of the universe. The psychic nature [The term "psychic" is not used here to signify soul, but is taken to express the superphysical, or the forces immediately acting on the physical plane] of the physical man, *i.e.*, the desires, passions, and emotions operating only on the physical plane which formed the personal Ego, also awaits extinction as a personality, and gradually merges into the super-physical or psychic plane of the universe.

These three, the body, the astral, and the psychic nature of man, belong to that division of universal consciousness known as "Jâgratha" or the waking condition, being the state of the knowledge of objects through the senses, and is the lowest of the four states. It is only the spiritual aspirations of the self-conscious personality that become immortal when united to the true Ego, which, although separated by death from the body, is still connected with the desires and emotions generated by the past personality, and has to remain so for a longer or shorter period, according to the strength of these desires and passions, before it can free itself from the dying psychic entity and pass into its state of rest. The permanent Ego, as consciousness, mind, and will, receives the earth-life experience through the personal Ego and bears away the impress of the past life. Having assimilated all that the personality develops during the earth-life of earnest desire for truth, and the spiritual aroma of its good deeds, and love to man, the Ego [Page 66] remains in a state of consciousness, in which it is overshadowed and surrounded by the reflection of the past life, in the plane of Svapna or dream condition, that state in which objects are perceived through impressions produced during the waking state. The Ego immediately after death is in a dazed, half-unconscious condition as it gradually emerges from the earth-connection with the personal Ego, the knowledge and consciousness of the earth-life becoming fainter as it separates itself from the personal desires and emotions, till the last cord is severed that binds it to the personality. The individual Ego having passed through the progressive trial on earth, enters the inter-incarnation period, there to await till the Karmic forces engendered in the last life shall draw it once more into action, to reap the fruit of the past and to again fight the battle of progress. As in this state of the Ego perception only results from past impressions, it is evident that there can be no conscious communication between the Ego and those on earth. Herein lies the great difference between the spiritualistic and the

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theosophical teaching. The spiritualist, while believing in postmortem progress, yet considers that the manifesting personality is identical with the individual Ego or spirit, and that it consciously manifests in its earthly character during unlimited time, while theosophy sets the limit to conscious communication in general at the period shortly succeeding death, before the Ego has freed itself from its astral and psychic condition. It must not be imagined, however, that Spiritualism entirely overlooks the possibility that the spirit may pass to a sphere in which it can have no further communication with earth, but this sphere is said to be of such a spiritual character that [Page 67] those spirits that attain thereto have passed beyond any progress to be derived from earthly experience. Nor does Theosophy, on the other hand, deny that an influence streams forth to the earth from those Egos that have entered their temporary rest. They have carried from the personality all that was true and eternal. Love, as the strongest power leading the Ego to the unity of soul, is the ground-work on which are grouped the impressions in which it rests. Love for child and friend, love for country, home, and kindred, love for the poor and suffering, love for truth, that for truth's own sake will seek the knowledge of Nature's laws, every aspiration towards good, every noble act has left its impress on the Ego. It draws together the scattered threads of the unselfish hopes and desires left unsatisfied in physical life, and weaves therewith a "curtain of repose"; this curtain bears the tracery of the past life, but only of that which was good and pure and sweet and true, which when drawn into the consciousness of the Ego will be capable of reflecting soul. There may be no communications from the Egos at rest to those still left in the battle of life, but the love that survives death is not restrained by the barriers of sense; it passes as a protective power for good to those on earth, and the struggling Ego still working in its Karmic shell will feel the helping influence. The condition of the Ego between its incarnations is, therefore, one of rest, in which no new impressions are received, but the aspirations of the earth-life expand to the full extent of their force, unhindered by physical surroundings, unchecked by physical Karma. The duration of this period will vary according to the intensity and the strength of these aspirations. When the [Page 68] Ego has exhausted the force engendered during the earth-life, it will once more be drawn into the circle of physical necessity, and the dormant physical desires, the Karma of the past life, will lead it anew into an incarnation in harmony with its development. It is often objected that such a condition of the Ego has in it no element of reality, and is nothing but an illusion, the Ego creating the similitude of friends and scenes of interest very much in the same way that the mind creates the actors and events of dreams. But this objection can have no weight if the true nature of consciousness is taken into consideration. Consciousness may be represented as a continuous line or unity, the four states (see note) being merely aspects of the one. This unity, therefore, includes every manifestation of consciousness in the four states, and every state of consciousness has the potentiality of the other three conditions. From this it follows that the manifestations of consciousness in Jâgratha or the waking condition have also their counterpartal Svapna or dream condition, and it is this which is cognised by the individual Ego when in the Svapna condition. It is as real as the waking life of sense, for that also is but the-illusion of aspect, for consciousness, *i.e.*, absolute consciousness, is neither Jâgratha nor Svapna, nor Sushupti nor Turya, which are but aspects of the reality that is one without a second and without division. "The fourfold essence of the Supreme Spirit is composed of true wisdom, pervades all things, is only to be appreciated by itself, and admits of no similitude". (*Vishnu Purana*).

The question will perhaps arise why the Ego in this; condition should only-perceive the past action of the [Page 69] former life, and not cognize the present, so as to be aware of what transpires on earth. The answer to this lies in the fact that the Ego is over-shadowed for the time being by the life it has just passed through; it is experiencing the effects on a certain plane of being of the causes set in action in its earth-life, and is limited to those effects as the further development of its personal existence. For this reason the Ego, so long as it is under the influence of these effects, will remain unconscious of aught beyond, and it is only when the force has spent itself and the Ego has again to enter the circle of physical Re-birth that it can realize the life past and present and the causes that bring it to its present birth.

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From birth to death, from death to birth. What power constrains to force the Ego again and again into bondage ? It is Karma, the power of unfoldment in manifestation, the outgoing of the one in the illusion of the many. What is its cause and origin ? what is its end and aim ? Can we measure infinity and ask its object ? Can we hold eternity of past and future in our feeble grasp? Can we bind the spirit to show cause why it should be ? Karma is action from the impulse that leads the unmanifest into manifestation; behind it lies the supreme mystery of being, which veils itself as name and form (Nâma and Rûpa), from which proceed all cosmic forces and all the forms of life in the countless worlds of space. What is the cause of Karma ? The answer is given in the words of Chrishna.

"By reason of my being the onlooker, Nature gives birth to the animate and inanimate universe; for this cause, O son of Kunti, the universe revolves". This Nature is the eternal power of the One Reality, the manifestation in space and time of the One Life that [Page 70] in cosmic energy passes through every form of being in the differentiations of physical evolution. What is its end and aim ? It is the path of manifestation, the power of the supreme unfolding. So long as this power of Karma rests upon the Ego, it must wander on from birth to birth; good deeds will bring it to good incarnations and long periods of rest, evil deeds to sorrow and pain. "Of what avail is the ascent to the summit of heaven, if it is necessary to return from thence to earth?". (*Vishnu Purana*).

Whence then shall liberation be attained ? Through the cessation, of Karma, which can only be obtained in the return to unity. Between spirit and soul on the one hand, and desire and physical manifestation on the other, the Ego stands with the power of choice at every instant of time. Subject to the influence of desire, it passes outward into the cycle of birth and death. Turning to the light of soul, the Ego casts off the illusion of separateness, and recognises the unity of being; it is therefore through knowledge alone that liberation can be achieved. It must be remembered that all sin is due to the illusion of believing that to be multitudinous which is really one, and the first step on the road to knowledge is discrimination. "Action brings re-birth, yet action can destroy itself when devoted towards the Supreme Being" (*Bhagavat Purana*). Discrimination is the effort of will towards that purification of mind which enables the individual to cease the performance of action for personal benefit, and which leads him to the recognition that escape from suffering can only be obtained by victory over the desires. Not from the fear of punishment, not for the hope of heaven is the act of kindness and mercy to be [Page 71] rendered, but from the renunciation of the idea of a self apart from other selves. He who recognizes this unity of being holds the meanest creature upon earth as the manifestation of the Supreme Power, which is nevertheless not more multiple through manifestation than the sun from the thousand eyes that contemplate it. This knowledge of the true essence of being is the only path to emancipation; it destroys action or Karma in relation to the individual by withdrawing the personal motive from the act, so that the Ego, no longer subject to the influence of works, becomes freed from all attraction to migratory existence.

The teaching of the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation is capable of being applied to every condition of life, to every stage of progress. It is as helpful to those who are setting their feet for the first time on the return path to soul as for those who have passed far beyond the ordinary life of sense and who are treading the mystic's path in the exercise of the higher powers of being. To the lowly disciple who finds the way of renunciation of desire too hard to climb, it gives the knowledge that Karma repays to the uttermost the act of duty fulfilled, the kindly thought for another's joy. It gives the sufferer by the march of progress in life the comforting assurance that the pain patiently borne will not only forward the great sum-total of happiness for the race, but that the individual pain and loss will be followed by individual gain and rest. And for him who aspires to follow the path trodden by sage and adept, it shows the effort begun in

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one life influencing and determining the conditions of birth in another, so that in the end the path will open and the way be made clear. [Page 72]

The Karmic law of retribution must be fulfilled, but the steps thus taken enable the Ego, struggling in the weary round of birth and death, to catch glimpses of the light of soul that illumines the pathway to Nirvâna. Not in one life, nor yet perchance in many, will the Karmic bonds be severed that bind the Ego to its veil of darkness; but each rent in the cloak of ignorance, each fond illusion scattered, will bring the Ego nearer to the goal.

The one made manifest in the illusion of the many is seen in the countless forms of life, in the cosmic powers and forces, in the chain of existence that is subject to the Karmic law. He who would follow the path of liberation must realise that desire but leads to action, and action brings the fruit of works in renewed birth and death. He who would follow the path must turn from the outward to the inward, from the life of action in Karma to the life of the inner being. Self-existent, the eternal unity is the one unchangeable; self-revealed, this *being* assumes the forms of its similitudes; self-enjoying, it is perfect bliss and knowledge. The innermost spirit of each man is this *being* and the same consciousness that holds the illusion of existence as its power. To know this self as identical with Brahm is self-existence, self-manifestation, self-enjoyment; this is liberation; this is NIRVÂNA, "where the silence lives".

"Foregoing self, the Universe grows 'I' :
If any teach NIRVÂNA is to cease,
Say unto such they lie.
If any teach NIRVÂNA is to live,
Say unto such they err ; not knowing this,
Nor what light shines beyond their broken lamps,
Nor lifeless, timeless bliss".

THE IDEA OF RE-BIRTH

by Karl Heckel

[Page 74] " Why should not each individual man have existed more than once on this earth? Is this hypothesis then so ridiculous because it is the most ancient? because it occurred to the mind of man before it was weakened and destroyed by scholastic sophistry?" [Page 75]

"Look forward, look backward, the same fate rules here as there.
The human race is like the grain that ripens, it falls and is again born".

— *Kâthaka Upanishad.*

IN estimating the worth and importance of a religion, one ought to consider how far it regards poverty and misfortune as just punishment, or as the arbitrary infliction of an offended God. It cannot be conceded by the judgment that proceeds from experience that the destinies of human life are in harmony with a righteous government of the world. This position enforces the necessity for a metaphysical basis. Every religion is the defence, the immediate perception, and the *a priori* recognition of eternal justice, our faith in which is shaken by almost all that we experience. In the childhood of the nations, the heat which dried up the streams and withered the fruits of the field was considered as punishment for neglected prayers, or for disobedience to the will of the gods, who were praised as just; but the mature intellect cannot conceal from itself that the pious suffer as well as the froward, and that enjoyment comes alike to the evil and the good. Faith, therefore, in the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice after death, that is, the assertion of the immortality of the soul, can alone preserve confidence in eternal justice. But this belief, although it justifies the possibility of [Page 76] exemption from punishment or the failure of reward in this life, does not explain the inequality existing among men, and their different destinies, which they inherit even at birth. The Indian people ages ago fully explained what later-arising Christianity merely hinted at in its doctrine of original sin; so that even at the present day, when realizing the insufficiency of every other basis of explanation, we are able to see the primitive truth contained in this teaching, and one draught from this source enables us to perceive the *a priori* acknowledged rule of eternal justice. The Eastern race, which about 2000 B.C. [It is at all times difficult to fix the dates of particular events which lie far back in the past of nations, and this applies with great force in respect to the early history of India. The investigations of Orientalists have failed to throw light on the dim past when a branch of the Aryan stock first emerged from their primitive borne in Central Asia. Rejecting all Eastern tradition, and in many instances hampered by the prejudices derived from Christian chronology, it is not surprising that only 2000 years B.C. has been fixed by the historian for the origin of the great Aryan nation. Those who are able, on the one hand, to free their minds from the superstition that limits the creation of the world to 4000 B.C., and on the other to allow that it is possible for Indian records to be trustworthy guides, will be able to consider the claim made by Brâhman chronology of a past to their nation beyond the period of Western historic time. In the consideration of the Aryan race even at such a remote period as the rise of Buddhism, which has been placed by Orientalists not later than the sixth century B.C., it will be seen that the Aryans had developed at that time a literature and a philosophy of a most complex and recondite character, and that mathematics, astronomy, and medicine were highly developed sciences. They possessed a language with an elaborate grammar, a sacerdotal caste of learned metaphysicians; and yet we are asked to believe that this great civilisation, the very traces of which still strike the scholar with amazement, needed little more than fifteen hundred years for its development — TRANSLATOR.]

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wandered from the north-west over into the land of the Indus, possessed only the simple religious ideas peculiar to [Page 77] all primitive peoples. About 500 years later they passed forward to the territory of the Ganges, subduing the black aborigines. It is supposed that up to this time the sacrifice before and after battle was offered by the kings who were the leaders in war. The Hindus even in the earliest times had their poets and bards, but any special distinction of class was first made when they exercised as Brâhmans independent control over the sacrificial rites in the time of peace, having previously only given assistance to the kings. After wandering in the country of the Ganges, where the religious idea unfolded itself in a marvellous manner into the belief in immortality, the office of the Brâhmans became administered almost all over the country by men possessing the true productive power. The origin of "caste" occurred at this time. This is hardly to be explained by the proportion of the conquering invading whites to the black aborigines, although the Indian designation "Varnani" [Varnani is properly applied to the four castes *rt: vri*= covering, appearance, color, class of men, etc. TRANSLATOR] (color) might so mislead. The well-defined difference of caste existing among the old Hindus is much better explained in the claim early made by the priests of being a superior and distinct class, a position which they had to preserve in order not to endanger the authority which they needed for the proper maintenance of the religious rites. The sacrifice offered by the priest originally consisted of food, which was considered by Hindus, as well as by other nations, as the nourishment of the gods, the means by which their powers were increased and preserved. Through this gift the donor also became entitled to the fulfilment [Page 78] of the prayers, which were always connected with every sacrifice. The position of the Brâhmans was established through this idea of the necessity of sacrifice, and very soon the king himself, and the warriors of royal descent, had to yield to the supremacy of the Brâhman. The warrior class likewise held themselves aloof from the remainder of the people, who were either agriculturists or serfs, and, following the example of the Brâhmans, they separated themselves as a special caste. Both these castes had no reason to limit further divisions on the part of the people which they therefore tolerated; but all agreed in exacting the absolute humiliation of the subjugated aborigines or outcasts. With that stiff-neckedness which errors owing their existence to superficial investigation are apt to possess, the assertion is made repeatedly in works on the Indian religion that the custom of caste in India owes its origin to the belief in metempsychosis. The following incomplete statement of the doctrine will suffice to show the weakness of this supposition. Faith in everlasting life, in the Paradise of the blessed, in happy realms and holy pastures, and also in eternal bondage in the kingdom of darkness, existed long before the doctrine of metempsychosis. This is evident from the Rig-Veda, the most ancient of the three collections of songs and hymns, consisting of sacrificial formulas, proverbs, rules, and doctrines, which are known as the Veda or Knowledge. In the hymns of the Rig-Veda, composed about the year 1500 before our chronology, [These are the dates usually given by European Orientalists; but it must be remembered that a far greater antiquity is ascribed to these books by Hindu writers TRANSLATOR] no trace can be discovered of a belief [Page 79] in the migration of the soul, although they describe the torments of the nether world and the delights of Paradise. The first appearance of the doctrine of metempsychosis is to be found in the Upanishads, which originated about the year 900 B.C.; at any rate, no earlier date can be given for the genesis of the idea of Re-birth than the year 1000 B.C. We must not take Lessing's words literally, "that the idea occurred at once to the mind of man", although he repeatedly proves that the doctrine belonged to one of the oldest systems, if not the oldest. The early Brâhmanical teachings speak without exception only of repeated death, not of Re-birth. This fact is of great importance in the explanation of the genesis of the doctrine. "To be freed from the hand of death" is an expression still used by the Brâhmans, and "to find liberation from death" is the blessed promise of the Buddhists of today. Within the limits of this essay, I can only cursorily refer to the various early myths related of Yama, the god of death, and to the sacrifice of the Agnihotra, of which it is written, "He frees himself from repeated death who finds freedom from death in Agnihotra"; and again, "He who enters any world without having freed himself from the power of death, as in this world death has no respect for him, but slays him at his will, so also in every world he will become again and again the prey of death". The cause of man's

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most bitter sorrow was not the suffering which is inseparable from life, but the fading and decay of all that lives, the impossibility of escape from the power of death. The idea of immortality became, therefore, a hope full of consolation, and the [Page 80] thought that the powerful hand of death might even reach beyond the grave, a peace-destroying fear, an encouraging promise and an intimidating threat in the hands of the priests. Fervent prayers were offered to the gods for a long life. An old marriage proverb says, "They bestow length of days on those rich in sons and daughters", and the formula with which the father was accustomed to greet his new-born son contained these words, "Thou art myself called my son; mayest thou live a hundred years". The doctrine of Re-birth must not, therefore, be considered as arising from a perception of the sorrows of life, or through disdain for the joys of the world, but as proceeding from the deep and overwhelming feeling of pain which the manifest transitoriness of earthly life produces in the human breast. The necessity which is experienced of seeking satisfaction for the desire for justice gave birth to a doctrine which lightened the trouble of the soul and gave sweet consolation to the trembling heart. The first hundred years after the immigration into the territory of the Ganges must be considered in every respect as the time of the development and the unfolding of the Brâhmanical religion. Before, however, we can approach the Indian belief of Re-birth on earth, we must take into consideration the growing philosophy of the *All-One*, or the doctrine of Brahm, because the idea of Re-birth was not evolved independently of this philosophy, but both arising at the same time, the one reacted on the other. By Brahm or Brahma was originally understood the holy act of giving a drink-offering to the gods. Later it came to express the mysterious power [Page 81] with which, through this offering, the gods were inspired. [Brahm or Brahma, from the root *brih* or *vrih*, signifying to grow, to increase=the divine essence without quality, part, or action. It is easy to see how the word may have been applied to the act of devotion of the worshiper and also to the power of the god. Brahm, as the Supreme Spirit, was not the object of worship nor the act of worship, but the pervading essence expanding in the soul as the religious impulse and the same essence as the power in the god worshiped - TRANSLATOR] In accordance with the belief of all primitive peoples, they considered the preservation of the power of the gods as depending upon the food offered them in sacrifice. It therefore followed that Brahm represented not only the immortal drink, but also the sign of the life principle of the gods and the *Source of all Being*. No other appellation for that which was before all time as Prajâpati, [Prajâpati, literally "Lord of all Creatures". In the Veda the term is applied to Indra and other deities, but in Manu it signifies the creator of the universe or Brahmâ. It was only in the Brâhmanas or later writing that Prajâpati was described as the self-existent being or Brahma - TRANSLATOR] etc., contains so deep a metaphysical meaning as the doctrine of Brahm. It is expressed in the briefest manner in the following sentence: "This whole world is Brahm, has its source in Brahm, exists in Brahm, and sinks again into Brahm". This sentence will serve as text for the following treatise. Many poetical images and similitudes were employed to show the transcendental nature of Brahm. Naturally all statements are fundamentally negative, when considered apart from the general proposition. It is said, "That infinite Being is independent of all direction: it has neither morning, nor mid-day, nor evening, no midnight, no under, no over, and is withdrawn [Page 82] from all finite proof". As a significant indication of the manner in which Brahm is to be considered, a conversation on repentance may be cited, contained in the Atharva-Veda. "One understands Brahm as air, another understands it as fire, a third as the sun, a fourth as the lightning, until the sage instructs them with the words, That of which it cannot be said it is this or it is that, that is Brahm". The following sentence of the Vedas must be taken in a similar sense: "He who believes that he cannot comprehend Brahm does know him, and he who believes that he can comprehend him does not know him, for the knowledge is beyond his comprehension. He who thinks he knows not, knows, and he who thinks he knows, knows not. To him who knows all expression fails; he who expresses knows not. Knowledge is not knowing, and not knowing is knowledge. He who has come to this understanding acquires eternal and unchangeable beatitude, he attains perfect power and greatness". The Brâhmanical theory of creation stands in intimate relation to this subject: "Before all things was Absolute Being, without name or form, alone, without similitude, without deficiency or imperfection". That solitary, formless being

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willed to become manifold in form, various in kind. "As from a blazing fire thousands of sparks of the same nature proceed, so from that imperishable being all souls come forth, and as *âtma* return into it again". In harmony with the expression, "the whole world exists in Brahm", the old Vedic texts describe this causal being as impersonal. They speak of Brahm as Being, Power, and Knowledge, and as that which alone is real. A sharp distinction is made in the Vedas between the real and the unreal, the thing in itself and [Page 83] in its appearance. The world as will and the world as idea were considered distinct long before the origin of Buddhism, and the inability of the mind to pass beyond the outward manifestation was clearly understood, "That which lives knows only of its appearance; its true being it has quite forgotten, and cannot know it till it returns, losing its individuality, into Brahm, the source of all being". This return of the individual to the universal is considered by Brâhmanism as the purpose of all suffering, the aim of all motion, and this belief is carried to the uttermost when it is said, "The sinless sage becomes the universal being". In the Brâhmanical myth sin is conceived as the action of Brahmâ, who calls forth the manifested universe from his own substance. The sorrows of the world are considered as expiation, freedom from the world as salvation, which serious aspect of life agrees with the pessimism of true Christianity. "The world sinks again into Brahm"; by this is meant that the many again become the one; the individuality, asserting itself in life, re-embodies itself after death in other and higher manifestations, and so passes to the highest stage attainable by man. Then the possibility arises to cease the wandering from form to form, from manifestation to manifestation, and through the resignation of every individual effort to enter the universal Brahm. We find in the Vedas the mention of other worlds as halting-places for the dead, but the soul obtains liberation only upon earth; there must be return to earth from every sphere without exception. This is repeated until the particular individual will to live is extinguished and the soul again becomes one with Brahm, as a wave which becomes one with the smooth surface of the water and [Page 84] is indistinguishable from it when storm and wind are allayed. This passing into other spheres is considered a great step on the way to liberation. "All men, according to their acts and thoughts, pass to a sphere corresponding to those acts and thoughts, but the greater number remain in the bonds and fetters of this world". In exoteric Brâhmanism this doctrine is still further amplified, as it states, "At death the soul that rises by the artery leading to the brain, thus departing, attains the goal of the imperishable; the soul departing by other arteries attains to worlds which correspond". That this description was exclusively intended for the crude understanding is proved by its frequent repetition, with the addition that the soul departs through an aperture in the brain. Esoteric Brâhmanism omits all such attempts at explanation, and also leaves the question as to whether remembrance of former lives be possible, although in the amplifications of the doctrine for the laity the question is answered as follows. In the ninth month, when development is at an end, remembrance comes to the foetus of all the stages and wanderings he has passed through in the elements, upon the earth and in plants; he recognises the good and evil of his past acts, and exclaims, "I have been in many dwellings in many regions; I have sunk in the sea of adversity and violence; when I shall leave the body of the mother, I will reflect on true being, I will follow the knowledge of truth; this knowledge liberates both from good and evil deeds; [By good deeds, in Indian philosophy, are to be understood religious rites or action performed for the sake of specific reward. In order to become free from birth and death, it is necessary to become free from action. This freedom from action is evidently not to be obtained through action, therefore no act can give liberation. All good works have their reward, long life, temporal prosperity, friends and enjoyments; these are the fruits of good works, which also serve to purify the mind for the reception of spiritual truth. But the seeker for liberation must free himself both from good and evil deeds, and this is to be obtained only through knowledge of truth. It does not follow that the aspirant for spiritual knowledge is on that account to refrain from action; such a supposition is untenable, for the very effort to refrain from action is in itself action. What is here to be understood by action is identification of self-interest, whether spiritual or physical, with the act. - TRANSLATOR] this path will [Page 85] lead me to that Being in whom the whole world is contained". These determinations, however, he again forgets on account of the torments he suffers in being born. "When the sickle of death cuts a man down, what is the root by means of which he is again raised?" To this question

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the Brâhman answers, "It is Brahm, that which is being, power, and knowledge. The soul of each man becomes at death one with Brahm". [*i.e.* at the end of manifestation - TRANSLATOR] It becomes free from the law of time, space, and matter; the question of when, where, and how, is no longer admissible, for these only concern manifestation, and not its substance — *being*. That this doctrine of a transitory union with Brahm, which we also find put forward by Sandilya, [An Indian sage who was connected with Chhândogya Upanishad - TRANSLATOR] was not brought into Brahmanism in an arbitrary way later, but was peculiar to it from the beginning, is evident from numerous passages in the Vedas on the subject of sleep. It is called "Svapna", and signifies to come to oneself; and the choice of the name explains that men in sleep become one with the world-soul, *âtma* or Brahm, for "Brahm [Page 86] is *âtma*".

[Consciousness, according to Indian philosophy, is considered under four aspects or conditions, viz., Jâgratha, waking state; Svapna, dream state; Sushupti, state of ecstasy; and Turya, where consciousness disappears, — Nirvâna. It must not be supposed that these states are separated by any exact line of demarcation; they are only the external aspect of the one unconscious or absolute consciousness. In the same way that the colours of the rainbow merge one into the other, so do the various states of consciousness glide one into the other in an unbroken line of continuity. The derivation of the word *Svapna*, as given in the text, is somewhat doubtful, although the word *sva* certainly means own; but the word *svap* is the root form of the verb, and simply signifies sleep. At any rate, it is erroneous to suppose that in sleep the individual consciousness becomes one with Brahm.

In a Sanscrit work entitled the "Atmânâtma Vivekah", by the great Indian philosopher and sage, Sankârachârya, the states of consciousness are defined as follows (the translation is taken from "Five Years of Theosophy", p. 394): —

"Jâgratha = that state in which objects are known through the avenue of [physical] senses.

Svapna = that state in which objects are perceived by reason of desires resulting from impressions produced during wake-fulness.

Sushupti = the state in which there is an utter absence of the perception of objects".

In this classification it is evident that the Svapna consciousness is not the Brâhmic consciousness, and indeed if it were, there would be no reason for the re-entrance into Jâgratha or the waking condition, for Nirvâna would be attained; but the condition of Svapna is not Nirvâna. Jâgratha and Svapna are conditions of consciousness in connection with material objects, and the only difference is that in the one case (Jâgratha) the object of consciousness is cognised through the senses, and in the other (Svapna) the objects are cognised directly through the mind. I am aware that this explanation will be objected to by Materialists, who will urge that objects cognised in the dream condition are not external to the individual, but are mere impressions left on the brain from sense perception. Any one who has studied the facts of clairvoyance, hypnotism, and the phenomena of dreams must however allow that there is perception independent of the physical senses. It must also be remembered that according to Hindu philosophy the universe itself consists of various states of consciousness which respond to the consciousness of the individual. For a clear statement on this subject I will refer the reader to the synopsis of Baron Du Prel's "Philosophie der mystic" by Mr B Keightley in the "Transactions" of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society.

Sushupti consciousness may be considered as the bare plane of consciousness, undifferentiated by objects psychic or sensuous. The indwelling notion of the I, the eternal consciousness of the universe,

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the plane on which there is no longer the *I and thou*, but consciousness as such. Turya can only be described as unconsciousness or absolute consciousness, the one reality, Brahm - TRANSLATOR] In the Upanishad of the Sama-Veda, which treats of the explanation of the celebrated words "tat tvam asi", it is explicitly stated, "As the bee gathers the delicious nectar from many flowers and makes one honey, and the sweet juices of the flowers of which it [Page 87] is made cannot be distinguished one from the other in that honey, so all creatures although in the time of sleep, in the time of death, in the time of resurrection, or rather of again being raised, they have become one with true being, yet know not that they have been one with that being. For this reason, the lion, the tiger, the wolf, the boar, the worm, the butterfly, and the fly, no matter what form a creature may have taken, it imagines it is that form and nothing else; until it has reached its source it forgets what in truth it is; and that source is pure, and all this is one âtma, tat tvam asi, *i.e.*, that âtma art thou". The knowledge that all plurality is illusion becomes an unspeakable consolation. What cause can a man have for fear? One can only fear that which is other than one's self. He who has entered into Brahm has no knowledge beyond the consciousness of being and the not-being of every manifestation. [This is rather the state of knowledge previous to entering Brahm - TRANSLATOR] Brâhmanism explains this also, [Page 88] for it says he enters Brahm who attributes no reality to illusion, and who knows that all reality is Brahm. Of such a sage it is said, "The body that he dwells in, after having attained knowledge, will be his last; when he becomes freed from that body he enters no more the chain of visible being; he will not take another body". Therefore it is said, "Whoever takes *it* and *I* as separate, into whatever world he may go, he will not be freed from the hand of death". The great importance given by the Hindus to wisdom is very evident; yet it is not difficult to perceive that in the value attributed to learning by the Brâhmans — often very selfishly — by wisdom, in the esoteric portion of the doctrine only metaphysical knowledge is to be understood, that "which the sage sees with closed eyes". But no unconditional liberating power is ascribed to the metaphysical knowledge as such, even when it shows itself a sufficient motive for the promotion of good deeds, and for the repression of egotistic desires. The circle of birth and death, and again Re-birth, must have led to the perfect extinction of the individual will, to the *annihilation*, not the restraint, of every worldly inclination; then Re-birth will no longer take place, but the ascent unto universal being. Only this transformation, this negation of the will to live, can lead to liberation; no worship, no wisdom, no act in itself is able to effect emancipation. I know nothing more beautiful wherewith to close these remarks than the following passage from the Rig-Veda, as it shows at the same time that esoteric Brâhmanism did not believe that its own system alone possessed the key of salvation. "No one who performs an action can attain to me by that action; not [Page 89] through the acquirement of knowledge, not through abstinence from food and drink, not through abundant good deeds can he reach to me, but *all* by all ways attain to me". The metaphysical importance of Brâhmanical philosophy cannot be too highly estimated. It is the result of the belief of the people; and the Indian people, in virtue of their contemplative nature (this designation can be confidently applied), dimly foreshadowed what their poets and priests, as members of this people, afterwards represented. What to them were mere feelings developed as thought and philosophical doctrine. But what the people had immediately perceived they could not find again in the paths of intellectual knowledge. For this reason the Brâhmanical philosophy remained the property of the poets and priests, and of those few who, by reason of their education, were able to grasp it. Art, the song, and the proverb passed on the beautiful thoughts unfalsified to the people, but what worship offered them as religion was already withered and arid from the breath of incapable priests, or was corrupted as it passed from hand to hand. The branches torn from the stem of the vigorous life-giving doctrine were planted before the huts of the people, not as trees, but as sticks, rank superstition and formality choking the last impulse for growth.

II

The preceding digression was necessary in order to be able to define the limits of the position properly belonging to Buddhistic culture. The Greeks designated the Brâhman caste as the status of the philosopher [Page 90] And rightly so. The founders of Brâhmanism concerned themselves with metaphysics, Buddha with ethics. He drew the boundary very clearly, and warned transgressors with the words, "It is only for a Buddha to know the highest truth". Passages of similar import to the following recur continually. "So also, O disciples, that which I know and do not teach you is much more than that which I have taught you. And why have I not taught it you, O disciples ? Because, O disciples, it will bring you no gain; because it does not lead to the putting off of the earthly, to the annihilation of desire, to the cessation of the transitory, to peace, to knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nirvâna, therefore have I not taught it you". We must consider the ethical character of Buddhism as well as the metaphysical profundity of the idea of Re-birth in order to find a practical application of the higher knowledge. Before Buddha, and also contemporaneous with him, other teachers came forward, who, independently of Vedic tradition, endeavoured to show the way to emancipation. Some entirely rejected the doctrine of metempsychosis, others, like Makkhale and Pûrana Kassapa, denied that eternal justice manifested itself in Re-birth, and taught that every being goes through an appointed round of Re-births, at the end of which the fool as well as the sage experiences an end of sorrow. The mischief that was done through unreasonable dependence upon the Vedas was increased by a still more senseless opposition, until Buddha stepped forward and gave the people a religion, and rescued the kernel of the Vedas from those who fought around the husk.

It has been stated that we have to seek the genesis [Page 91] of the doctrine of metempsychosis in the Brâhmanical recognition of earthly transitoriness. This transitoriness was also the corner-stone of the work accomplished by Buddha. Buddha said —

"Many a House of Life
Hath held me, seeking ever him who wrought
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught;
Sore was my ceaseless strife.
But now,
Thou Builder of this tabernacle — Thou !

I know Thee ! Never shalt Thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay
Fresh rafters on the clay.
Broken Thy house is, and the ridge-pole split!
Delusion fashioned it.
Safe pass I thence — deliverance to obtain".

— Light of Asia.

"Check the stream with force; banish all desire from thee, O Brâhman; when thou shalt know the end of the transitory, then art thou the knower of the uncreated, O Brâhman".

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The last words of the wise Hindu, "Now, O disciples, I speak to you; everything that is is transitory; wrestle without ceasing", bring his teachings harmoniously to an end, while they correspond to a return to the keynote. Starting from a knowledge of the transitory character of this world, Buddha, like the old Indian philosophers, spoke of repeated death. In his first discourse he said, "Give ear, ye monks; freedom from death is found". Then he spoke, in agreement with the Brâhmins, against a life of pleasure, and, in opposition to them, against a life of self-mortification. He taught that a healthy body is necessary in the [Page 92] struggle for knowledge and the conquest of sorrow's cause. Pointing out the fruitlessness and hurtfulness of self-mortification brought him into conflict with most of the sects of his time. In the positive part of his teaching, he placed himself before all those who had lost faith in eternal justice. Tradition relates that during the first night in which the Bodhisattva watched, free from temptation, in contemplative peace beneath the Bodhi-tree, he perceived the justice of the requital that the good and bad experience after death; during the second night-watch he saw the former lives of himself and others, and recognised the joys and sorrows of the present life as the consequences of former deeds, their effect in the present manifesting character. In the third and last watch he knew the constant desire of ignorance to be the cause of all sorrow.

The sequence is significant as showing the ethical character of Buddhism. The knowledge that the present is the result of the past precedes any speculation as to the requital in the future.

"Brahm", as the source of all being, or, to express it better, as the transcendental basis of all appearance, was not mentioned by Buddha. He was satisfied with teaching, "The wandering of *being*, O disciples, had its beginning in eternity. No origin can be known from which *being* strays and wanders, confused in ignorance, fettered by the thirst for existence" (*Samyuttaka. Nikâya*). He thus re-states in this and other places the oft-repeated theme, and, faithful to the object of his teaching, continues: "What think you, disciples, which is the greater, the water that is in the four great seas, or the tears shed by you and forgotten as you wander and stray on this wide path sorrowing and weeping [Page 93] because what you hate is apportioned to you, what you love is not given you?". When Buddha expressed himself definitely on questions touching the sphere of immanence of the universe, his explanations were less complete. "There is, O disciples, an unborn, non-becoming, uncreated, unformed; were there not, O disciples, this unborn, non-becoming, uncreated, unformed, there would be no way out of the world of the born, the becoming, the created, the formed".

Buddhist teaching distinguished six different paths or ways (*gati*) of being. God, man, animal, demon (*asura*), ghost (*treta*), dweller in hell (*Nâraka*). The three last, or, according to the tradition of the Southern school, the four last, were called unholy paths (*apâya*); emancipation from death could only be reached as man. "Devenir Dieu", as Burnouf very justly says, "c'ŕtait renâitre, pour mourir un jour". Buddha adopted no fixed path of evolution from form to form, and Buddhist writings often mention descent without any intermediate transition from a high path of incarnation to the lowest, even to that of the animal, as well as Re-birth as a god in consequence of acquired merit. According to the Chinese tradition, the horse upon which Buddha escaped was removed after death to the thirty-third heaven, in order later to be born as the son of a Brâhman, and to be blessed as a follower of Buddha. It is characteristic that the age of monks was not reckoned from birth, but from the time of conception, which manner of reckoning was also the one prescribed by the spiritual law of the Brâhmins. To count from the day of birth would have been very inconsistent, because, according to Indian teaching, copulation only offered an opportunity for the entity [Page 94] desiring Re-birth, and in the development of the embryo, the participation of the mother was not considered to be greater than in the nutrition of the infant.

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The question arises, could Buddha have overlooked the striking reappearance of the qualities of the parents in the children ? Could he fail to observe that in the generation of the germ through the two parents, not only the peculiarities of the species were transmitted, but also the peculiarities of the individual? It is difficult for us, at the present day, to suppose that the law of transmission should have been so entirely unconsidered by Buddha; but only on the supposition of the failure of this empirical knowledge can we understand the one-sided explanation given by Buddha of the origin of man and the qualities of his character, as the creation of the reincarnating individual only, without accepting dependent or independent co-operation of the qualities of the parent. In the consideration of the possibility of this absence of knowledge, it must be allowed that the Hindu as an individual manifests very few peculiar characteristic features. In all legends the similarity of the *dramatis personae* must have forcibly struck every European reader. It rests upon an actual absence of special character, not only upon the inability of the authors to reproduce individual features.

Burnouf in his "Introduction à l'histoire du Bouddhisme Indien" (pp. 437-458) gives the explanation of the incarnation of an entity according to Indian ideas. He succeeds just as little in giving a satisfactory result as Colebrooke, Hodgson, Goldstücker, and others did before him, or as any of those who have made a similar attempt after him. The most painstaking endeavors are frustrated by the extraordinary difficulty of arriving [Page 95] at adequate translations of Indian words, which in themselves contain transcendental knowledge, and this is caused not only by difference of language, but from the fact that to "answer questions of immanent knowledge in words necessitates contradictions".

For example, Oldenburg writes thus: "Out of ignorance proceeds form, from form proceeds consciousness".

What we are to understand by ignorance is taught in the words of Buddha. "Not to know sorrow, not to know sorrow's cause, not to know the end of sorrow nor the way to sorrow's end" — that is *ignorance*. On the other hand, the word "form" without any commentary gives no idea what Buddha meant, and to translate "vijñâna" as consciousness is certainly unsatisfactory. [Leftmann points out that *samjna* (p. *sañña*) is better translated by consciousness, and *vidjñâna*, (p. *viññâna*) as knowledge, idea, mind. Schmidt has "the knowing, knowledge"; Csoma de Coros, "cognition". Colebrooke calls it, with Burnouf, "le sentiment ou le commencement de la conscience"; Burnouf himself has often "l'intelligence", but also "le connaître", "la connaissance", and in the passage under consideration he points out that the true sense is to be arrived at through the association of the ideas "sentiment et connaissance"; while Schroter involves too much in the expressions "âme", "vie", "âme raisonnable". According to Goldstücker, *vijñâna* or *vidjñâna* means the knowledge of that which *is* (for our senses); *vi* means manifold, various, without unity; thus, according to the Indian philosophy, the unreal phenomenal world ; *djñâna*, (or *jñâna*) expresses transcendental knowledge, the thing in itself, the knowledge of Brahm, of unity; *vidjñâna* is therefore the knowledge of plurality resting on illusion. As such, it can be designated as the cause of manifestation. In a conversation between Melinda and Nagasena (Spence Hardy's Manual of Buddhism, p. 454) there is a passage which may be taken as an argument for the correctness of this conception. *Vidjñâna* is compared to a man who, looking at a certain gold coin, only knows its name, while the goldsmith, or true wisdom, knows whether the coin is true or false.] Now even supposing it were of greater importance to [Page 96] find an adequate translation for that word, the word "production" would also have to be avoided. It is caused through the circumlocution in the following series of the sayings of Buddha, which are called "The Theory of the Production of the Successive Causes of Existence". I will try

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to render them in a translation which shall adhere as closely as possible to the original sense.

What is the cause of Djâramarana, transitoriness?: [Literally decrepitude and death]

Djâti, Birth.

And the cause of Birth?

Bhava, Separate being. [Oldenburg has “becoming” (werden); Spence Hardy, “reproduction of existence“; Köppen, “existence (Dasein). Existencia potenciales”; but Bhava contains at the same time the thought of separateness from unity]

And the cause of Separate being ?

Upâdana, Clinging to the phenomenal world.

And the cause of Upâdana ?

Trishnâ, Desire,

And the cause of Trishnâ ?

Vedana, Sensation; rather discrimination between pleasure and pain.

And the cause of Vedana ?

Sparca, Contact with the world; rather attraction to the world.

And the cause of Sparca ?

Chadâyatana, The virtual senses (virtualiter).

And the cause of Chadâyatana ?

Nâma rûpa, Desire to continue as a personality. [Literally name and form, by which, however, in my opinion, only detail, particularity, “individual will,” is here meant with reference to the splitting up of the transcendental unity into the multiplicity of appearance] [Page 97]

And the cause of Nâma rûpa ?

Vidjñâna, "The confused knowledge in the *principiô individuationis*, as opposed to the knowledge which transcends it.

And the cause of Vidjñâna?

Samskâra, Illusion called forth by the will. [Veil of Maya]

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And the cause of Samskâra ?

Avidyâ, Ignorance.

In this rendering of the communicated doctrine, I differ somewhat materially from the various translations of the same. This divergence has been produced because I do not consider any of the enumerated "successive causes" as *causa efficiens* of the foregoing cause in the text, but look upon them altogether as referring to the basis of appearance, not to themselves. I am aware that this conception, which I consider as originally taught by Buddha, is not rigidly adhered to by Buddha's disciples. Sometimes vidjñâna, sometimes Karma (which we have yet to speak of), sometimes upâdâna, sometimes trishnâ, is given as the single conception of the efficient cause. Spence Hardy also points out this contradiction: "It would sometimes appear that upâdâna is the efficient cause of reproduction, and at other times that it is Karma". This confusion sanctions the supposition that this wonderful theory of the great Hindu has been disfigured in its interpretation by ordinary intellect incapable of transcendental knowledge. This is the most important part of the "Abhidharma", the metaphysics of Buddhism, "of the law manifesting the law". The deep wisdom of the Abhidharma is evident from the saying, "The [Page 98] Sutras are for all men, the Vinaya for the priests, the Abhidharma for the gods".

I have mentioned "Karma" which in the Southern tradition is the eleventh member of the chain of causation, instead of Samskâra, and which is frequently translated as "moral nature". Buddha taught that Karma includes kusala (merit) and akusala (demerit). Upon this Mainländer justly remarks: "At the birth of an individual his Karma may be compared to a double balance (as the merchants would call it). The balance from the sum of all good actions in previous existences, after the deduction of those already rewarded in the past, results in merit; the balance from the sum of all bad actions in former lives, after the deduction of those already expiated, results in demerit. At the death of an individual his Karma becomes the Karma of birth reinforced by the good and bad deeds of the closed life, and reduced by the evil atoned for and the good rewarded in that life. The theory of Karma serves to establish faith in eternal justice. It has no other object than to give a clear and precise commentary on the thought briefly stated in the 'Brahmana of the Hundred Paths' in the words: 'As he acts, as he lives, so will it be; he who does well will have a good life; he who does evil will have an evil life.' The following explanation is received as the words of Buddha. 'All sentient beings have their own individual Karma, or the inner kernel of all beings is their Karma. Karma is an inheritance, or that which is inherited (not from the parents, but from a former life) is Karma. Karma is the source of all good, of all evil, or good and evil enter through Karma into manifestation. According to the good or evil quality of Karma, the fate of [Page 99] man shapes itself, so that some are lowly, some are exalted, some are happy, some are miserable". At first Karma may have been understood as only the moral qualities of the individual will, but it was also soon used as including the will itself, as in the following comparison: "Let us imagine a fruit-tree before the blossom. We cannot say that the fruit is in this or that particular part of the tree, and yet it is in the tree. So is Karma in the human body".

These extracts demonstrate that the basis of manifestation or the continuity of the being of man was no more considered as sensuously conceivable by esoteric Buddhism than by esoteric Brâhminism, but that which constitutes the identity of the different embodiments of the same being through death and Re-birth was recognised as transcendental, against which conception exoteric Buddhism erred more rarely than exoteric Brâhmanism.

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I have said that Buddha explained that there was no natural transmission in conception, but that it presented only an opportunity of embodiment to the incoming entity; yet it would be ridiculous to ascribe to Buddha himself those fancies the appearance of which are rendered possible by such one-sidedness; as when the commentators on his doctrine assert that besides conception there are yet eight other opportunities given for the incarnation of an individual will; as, for instance, when a voluptuous woman listens to the sweet voice of a man. These eight opportunities are given in Spence Hardy's "Manual of Buddhism", and in German in Mainländer's "Philosophie der Erlösung". I think the originators of these statements attached no other importance to them than that of [Page 100] being efficacious means of exhortation to withdraw at once every apparently dangerous occasion of excitement from the mind. The inestimably high moral power of Buddhism is forcibly presented in the instructive collection of the Jâtaka birth-stories (histories of former births). The doubters of eternal justice obtained peaceable satisfaction through Buddha. He gently instructed those who complained: "Once thou didst the same wrong that today thine enemy inflicts upon thee; bearing it patiently, thou atonest for thine own sin". He intended not only to give consolation to those torn by pain, but in the generally poetically imagined narratives he offers at the same time peace to those possessed by anger. He not only dries the tears of the one, but he also loosens the closely clenched fists of the other, teaching him to look for the cause of his injury, not in his adversary, but in his own heart, in the qualities of his own individual will.

The poetical legends of Buddha's life, as well as the occurrences he experienced in numerous births as god, man, and animal, in order at last to obtain the knowledge of the highest truth, evidently offer representations of the idea of Re-birth. I will only give a few references from the legends, knowledge of which I must take for granted. When the father of the future Buddha asked the Brâhmans how his son should be prevented from becoming an ascetic (a conqueror or overcomer of the world was the alternative of the prophecy at his birth), he was told that the boy must never look upon an aged man, nor a sick person, nor a corpse, nor a hermit. But the sight and knowledge of the perishability of all things came to him in spite of the forethought of his royal father. Sorrow and [Page 101] compassion drew his heart, and when, in the encounter with the worthy hermit, the sight of religious peace was revealed to him, he became irresistibly constrained to depart into exile.

Not only in the definite narrative of Buddha's life, but also in other traditions the traces may be seen of the invincible power of will, which instigated those who desired to free themselves from all that was dear to them in this world; it caused them to tear asunder all family ties in order to obtain in lonely contemplation the negation of the will to live, and, in so doing, to withdraw themselves from the law of Re-birth. The return to a worldly life was, however, not denied to any one separating himself from the activity of the world and professing Buddha, the law, and the congregation; he could again seek wife and child, pleasure and suffering, again come and again go. This freedom from constraint is surprising to the Western mind, because the time given for development is limited to the period from childhood to death; but he who has drawn his knowledge from the source of Indian wisdom knows that night but separates day from day, death life from life; he knows that denial of enjoyment comes hard to one filled with the unsatiated love of life, and to him whom living and suffering leads nearer to the goal, so long as the privation endures it means a step farther upon the way. He knows that each one must tread his own path, and that the change experienced by the individual will during one period of life, the portion of the way traversed within that limit of the appointed course, is as immeasurably small as the apparent movement of many heavenly bodies, which the life of man is insufficient to perceive. [Page 102] Buddha expressly taught: "None of my disciples should say, Today or tomorrow my spirit will be free from all impurity, but he must wait till his time comes, till emancipation shall be his". But then, when he has acquired the knowledge that his senses only owe their existence to the fire of desire, when through this knowledge he

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becomes satiated with the world of sense, then "he will become free from desire; free from desire, he becomes liberated. In liberation is the knowledge, I am liberated; Re-birth is destroyed, salvation is accomplished, and duty is performed; no return takes place to this world; thus he knows" (*Mahavagga*). In later times different grades of advancement were distinguished and the classes separated : the Sakadâgâmi, *i.e.*, those who return once more to this world, and then reach the end of sorrow; and the Anâgâmi, those who do not return, whose destiny it is (contrary to the original teaching) to purify the last remnants of sinful being in celestial existence, and who receive emancipation not as men, but as Devas.

The dwellings of the blessed or of the gods are divided into Deva-lokas and Brahma-lokas (but here also there are many traditions). The first, which are described with exuberant fancy, although not without poetical power, offer the highest known happiness, that of almost uninterrupted contemplative meditation on pure knowledge. Their inhabitants only need bodily nourishment at great intervals and breathe but once in forty hours. The Brahma-lokas, however, give to their inhabitants a deep unconscious sleep, which lasts for long periods, but not for ever, and then there is. again return to earth [Page 103]

Agreeing with the teaching of Brâhmanism — "All by all paths come unto me" — tradition after the death of Buddha also proclaimed —

"All the beings of the world shall lay down the body,
Even as now Buddha the Conqueror, the highest Lord of all,
The Mighty, the Perfect One, Nirvâna has entered in".

Nirvâna! It means the blowing out, the extinguishing; and when we keep close to the original meaning, we can substitute no other word. Many writings on Nirvâna are entangled in the senseless question, is Nirvâna a something, or is it — nothing? The only answer to this question is, that to the one confused by the illusion of the *principii individuationis* it signifies the annihilation of that which he considers as real; to the sage, on the contrary, it signifies the disappearance of the world of illusion. To the former, Nirvâna is annihilation; to the latter, the only reality, "the ocean in which the flowing streams attain their rest". Samsâra is the world of continual Re-birth; Nirvâna the liberation from it. "Sorrow only arises where something has existence; sorrow disappears when that something disappears".

In the strict sense, Nirvâna signifies the extinguishing of the fire of desire, of which the natural consequence is the impossibility of Re-birth; for "as the wind carries the flame, so desire, clinging to existence, bears the Individual Will from manifestation to manifestation". "The disciple who has renounced pleasure and desire, rich in wisdom, has attained here below freedom from death, the rest of Nirvâna, the eternal condition". The wise among Buddha's pupils took good care not to formulate in words that about which [Page 104] their master was silent. To the question of the babbler, "Is Buddha the Perfect One beyond death?" they answered with the question, "Canst thou count the sand of the Ganges or measure the water of the ocean?" and to the earnest inquirer they answered, "The Perfect One is freed therefrom, that his being may be numbered with the number of the worldly bodies; like the great ocean, he is deep, immeasurable, and fathomless". After having considered the high metaphysical signification of the idea of Re-birth as it is represented in the Vedas of the Brâhmins and the Abhidharma of the Buddhists, we can confidently face any attack. What can be said of writers and savants who, like Köppen, speak of the "disgusting doctrine of Rebirth?" or, like Gough, of the degrading consequences springing from "the growing belief in metempsychosis?" Still more astonishing is it, if possible, that, to the hopeful believers in "continual progress", Indian wisdom should appear unpleasant, and that even

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praiseworthy investigators of Indian literature find it necessary, after every three lines of valuable information, to interpolate their-own opinions, in order unaccused to protest against it, and assure their readers that all this "phantastic miraculous wisdom" is useless for "historical advancement", and appears to them throughout objectionable. They think it dead as they excavate it, and know not that it will yet rise up again with living power. At any rate, *that* "continual historical progress" that can be known and certified — as, for example, that, unlike the Greeks, we no longer possess slaves — is not striven after in Buddhism; for it the world-*conqueror* is no victor (Jina), but the world-overcomer!

It must be allowed that what we know of the *origin* [Page 105] of the doctrine of metempsychosis can but be incompletely represented with these extracts. No proof can be found that the doctrine was peculiar to the Egyptians; the latest works of Maspero, A. Erman, and others to whom Egyptology is greatly indebted, appear rather to sanction the supposition that the doctrine was not indigenious to them.

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III

We may award to Brâhmanism the supremacy in metaphysics, and to Buddhism the carrying out of the ethical tendency, but the Egyptian religion appears throughout rotten and overgrown with magic.

The idea of the wandering of the soul was connected by the Egyptians with the worship of animals; but the venerated sacred animals were not considered as an incarnation of the god, but only as his manifestation. The divinity was as little identified with the particular animal as with the idol. The sun-god and the moon-god tower majestically over all the lower gods, and in their worship a mythology has arisen a thousandfold restricted, dense, and involved. What we are in a position to understand and to follow is the distinction between the morning, mid-day, and evening sun as different gods, and even if it be admissible to accept for these one original identity, yet the threads remain phantom-like which knit these mythological representations with our doctrine. The myth of Osiris, the evening sun, through the rites and magic formulas with which his descent was solemnised, led to mysteries in which at first certainly very little metaphysical signification was hidden, and in which the ethical element was wholly [Page 106] wanting. This statement may also be applied to those mysteries which arose from the worship of other gods.

The Egyptian representation of the *ka* as immaterial being, having its seat in man and like him in form, appears as understood originally, to be tolerably expressed by our idea of soul, although Edward Meyer of Breslau may be right when he asserts that in the received texts it should mostly be translated by "ghost" (*Gespenst*). Next to *ka*, *ba* is given, which Meyer translates as soul, without misunderstanding the material representation connected with it, and which has led to the supposition that at the death of a man *ba* fluttered forth in the form of a bird.

The great care with which the Egyptians, in contrast to the Hindus, endeavoured to preserve the body, the eagerness with which they bestowed food and raiment on the dead, shows conclusively that they mistook the appearance for the reality, and inquired not of its substance; or where a timid attempt in reference to the transcendental being of man showed itself, as in the doctrine of the *ka*, it quickly disappeared and was again hidden in the darkness of ignorant superstition.

What Herodotus communicates on the religion of Egypt has to be taken with the greatest precaution. Egyptology has nothing to produce to sanction his statements on metempsychosis. According to Herodotus (ii. 123), the Egyptians were the first to arrive at the knowledge of the immortality of the soul, and to proclaim the opinion, "That when the body decays the soul always enters into another creature coming into life; and having performed during 3000 years a kind of pilgrimage through all the forms of being, of earth and air and sea, enters at last the body of a new-born [Page 107] man". I consider the information just as untrustworthy which is offered in a fragment of old hermetical writing by Stobias. According to this, the priests taught that the individual souls proceeded from one soul, that of the All. In any case, such a belief is only to be found in isolated instances, and can only have occurred through Indian influence, while the idea that after death the soul is for ever united with the goddess "Nut", the unlimited divine primitive matter, has been traced in the oldest inscriptions in the time of the pyramid kings, yet without the slightest explanation that such union should be preceded by individual continuity of life in Elysian fields or a Re-birth upon earth. The conclusions are quite arbitrary which have been drawn in favour of metempsychosis from the mythos that relates how Osiris in the kingdom of death, Amentes

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or Amenti, holds judgment over those sent thither, weighing their deeds. The ceremony also of judging the dead immediately after death, and, on proved accusation of an evil course of life, the denial of burial even to the king, had nothing to do with this doctrine. I entertain the conviction that the deeper investigation penetrates into the Egyptian religion, the more evident it becomes that the doctrine of metempsychosis was foreign to the religion of the Egyptian people, and that what some of the mysteries possess of it could not have been peculiar to the Osiris doctrine, but proceeded from Indian sources. There is, however, but little to be learned on this point. The writings relative to the secret doctrine of the Egyptians, of Hekataös of Abdera, of Manethos, of the stoic Chaeremon, of Apollonius, Horapides, and others have all been lost. That which Herodotus, Diodorus, Plutarch, [Page 108] Clemens of Alexandria, and Eusebius offer is not of importance. Perhaps they help to show how the doctrine of the metempsychosis came from India to Egypt, in further evidence of which the passages in the life of Apollonius of Thyana mentioned by Schopenhauer should be considered. There is no doubt that the doctrine came to the Hebrews exclusively through the Egyptians, while it still remains to be settled whether Pythagoras obtained the treasure of his metaphysical knowledge solely in Egypt or also in India.

Already in the writings of the Old Testament before the banishment, the Hebrews distinguished one of the various life principles of the body, which they sometimes designated as Nephesch, sometimes as Ruach, sometimes as Neschama; but all these names correspond much more to the idea of breath than to spirit or soul. [According to some interpreters of the Kabala, these terms refer to that part of man which survives the death of the body, and are aspects of being or spirit. Neschama is the spiritual soul, the highest in man and the direct vehicle of spirit; it is that which passes from birth to birth, and which finally becomes one with Divine Being. In its lowest aspect it is the same as the *ba* of the Egyptians. Ruach is the animal soul, or soul of desire, volition, and feeling. Nephesch is the lowest, the counterpart of the body, the shade or "Gespenst", the *ka* of the Egyptians. TRANSLATOR] Thus in the writings of the Palestine Jews after the exile, there is never any question of an actual, individual, and immortal soul, but only of a breath of life proceeding from God, which at the decay of the body into dust again resolves into the divine Ruach. We find quite another representation of the soul in the Syncretic philosophy of the Alexandrian Jews, who recognised the soul as individual. To the influence of this conception, which is of Egyptian origin, must be principally ascribed the belief among the Pharisees [Page 109] at the time of Jesus, not only in a personally constituted soul, but also in the wandering of the soul in various bodies, which is proved by the idea that the prophet Elias again appeared as Christ.

The Jew Manasse Ben Israel defended the doctrine in his "De Immortalitate Animae". By the Rabbins we find the supposition that God only created a certain number of Jew souls, who therefore always return so long as there are Jews. This hypothesis was not at variance with the idea of gradual advancement, which view is also supported by the circumstance that the descent into the bodies of animals was considered as expiation.

In any case, it was from Alexandrian conceptions that the words of Solomon must have proceeded (Book of Wisdom, viii. 19): "I was a child of good nature, and a good soul came to me, or rather because I was good I came into an undefiled body". It is but of little use to heap up similar examples, as they can only supply the proof of foreign influence, which fact, however, hardly needs further proof. Yet it must not be ignored that these and similar passages certainly show that the doctrine was eagerly accepted, though the metaphysical meaning was so densely hidden that ignorance and unbridled phantasy clothed it in the wildest forms; as, for example, with the Kabalists and the Rabbins. In the Talmud there is no direct reference to the doctrine of the metempsychosis; the Sohar first speaks of it, and it only remains further

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to refer to Matt. xi. 14, xiv. i, xvi. 14, xvii. 12; Luke ix. 7, 19; John i. 21.

There can be no doubt that the doctrine was never peculiar to the Jews.[Page 110]

That the same statement can be maintained concerning the Greeks does not appear so indisputable, for it is doubtful whether the doctrine arrived in Greece first through Pherecydes or through Pythagoras, penetrating into the Orphic mysteries only through the latter. As far as our knowledge goes, there is no proof that it evolved in an independent way from the Greek religion, but it rather appears to have been brought by Pythagoras from Egypt or India. In an excellent treatise on Pythagoras, Edward Baltzer writes: "When the old Hellenes whom we honor as 'classic' devoted themselves to study, they turned to *their* ancients, to the sages of India and Egypt. For it was from these cradle-lands of human culture that the stream of higher civilisation truly came to the Mediterranean peoples".

Pythagoras was induced to go to Egypt by Thales, whose intuition, even as with Pherecydes and Anaximander, caused him to recognise Egyptian influence. But Pythagoras was the first Greek who succeeded in penetrating into the Egyptian mysteries. After long efforts he obtained consecration as priest in the temple of Ammon Knuphos. Later he cultivated intercourse with Zoroaster in Babylon, and only returned to Greece after thirty-eight years. According to Apuleius, he may also have gone to India, and have been instructed by the Brâhmans. The seminary established by him in Sybaris was formed after Egyptian models, and politics were rigidly excluded. There, and later in Tarent, he taught, "There is a power, a spirit, the powerful primeval cause of the whole world, but this hidden god (Amoun, Ammon) is revealed as the eternal square" (Tetraktis). By this is meant space, time, [Page 111] and matter (the latter divided as mind and stuff). Here again but in an Egyptian garment, we recognise the Indian doctrine of the All-One, the myth of Brahm presenting himself to the cognising intellect in plurality. For Pythagoras (taking the words of Baltzar), "The All was an harmonious whole, an ever-living life, a continuing Palingenesis. All has soul; All is soul wandering in the organic world, and obeying eternal will or law, the recognition and accomplishment of which is the salvation and blessedness of man". The ethical character of the teaching of Pythagoras is very evident, but it is also unjust to deny its metaphysical signification. If it is impossible to clearly recognise the aims and results of the esoteric doctrine, what we do know may win from us the conviction that the efforts of Pythagoras extend not only in educational results, but that through a life consecrated to the highest he penetrated to the deepest knowledge in his discriminating examination of the basis of all things. The doctrine of Palingenesis, drawn from his investigations into organic nature, forms a strong supporting pillar to his doctrine, not an arbitrarily introduced Eastern ornament; for his intuition of the body as the prison of the soul descending from the supernal spheres, the teaching that an impure unholy life leads to the wandering of the soul in the bodies of animals, as also the admonition to abstain from animal food, proceeded directly from his conception of nature "as a sanctuary in which all investigation is equal to inquiry of God".

Not by Pythagoras, but by others far removed from his doctrine it might be said that the wise Greeks have been Thallus before the Trojan war, during it Euphorbius, then Hermetimus, Samius, Pyrrho, Delius, and [Page 112] at last Pythagoras. Much that is unauthenticated has been written about Empedocles, who likewise owed his knowledge to long sojourn with the Egyptian Magi. Whether his practices as doctor or his profession of the doctrine of metempsychosis gave occasion for his being called a sorcerer who could raise the dead, has not been determined; but the circumstance that he was also considered to possess the gift of prophecy shows that his philosophical doctrines, although unintentionally, worked for the establishment of such a report. It suffices to say that, as far as concerns Empedocles and his attitude

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towards the doctrine of metempsychosis, he further accepted the idea of the wandering of the soul in the bodies of plants. It would be unjust to be led away by any negative statements to conclude that Empedocles had but an arbitrary and external touch with this blossom of Indian wisdom, for he accepted seriously the doctrine of metempsychosis and Palingenesis. He it was, before Plato, that put forward the comparison of the world to a dark cave in which we are confined, and consequently called the human body the prison of the soul. He spoke of an anterior happy condition of the soul which had been lost through sin, and taught that through desire and sinful conduct the soul is kept in the round of metempsychosis, but can free itself by renunciation, and thereby obtain return to its former condition. He described the recognised changes in the phenomenal world as the combination and separation of the four elements, and supplemented this doctrine by the acceptance of two causal principles. Truly, if by these is to be understood nothing more than attraction and repulsion we may be content to designate Empedocles as the forerunner of the Atomists. [Page 113]

But those causal principles, taken as hate and love, bring us to the consideration of the sphere of immanence, and remind us of the splitting up of the transcendental unity into the plurality of the world, giving the impression that this plurality owes its existence to the hate and war of disunion, as well as that the desire for emancipation or the return to unity may be understood as love or the suppression of opposition. What Empedocles relates of the "Sphairos", and the way in which he represents the origin of the world, agrees throughout with this conception. He possessed a marvellous knowledge of natural science, and the wise insight that physics can only deal with appearances, and needs metaphysics to supplement it. In this sense must be understood the following often-cited quotation: —

"Fools think that that can become which never yet had an existing,
Or that that which is can fade away and wholly disappear;
But now to you yet further the truth will I declare. By nature
Is no birth, of that which dies, no complete destruction,
Nothing but mingling of parts, and again separation of mingled,
And this is the birth and the death, so called, of the ignorant mortals".

It appears to me much more likely that Empedocles first became acquainted with the doctrine of metempsychosis through Pythagoras, and not in Egypt, while Plato can hardly have been introduced to it directly through him, but rather through the Orphic mysteries. If I should undertake to examine how the Greeks, especially Plato, were induced to accept the Indian doctrine of the metempsychosis, I would adopt the following words [Page 114] of Heinrich von Stein as a motto. What he causes Solon to say in the dialogue of "Heroes and the World" appears to me masterly, as showing the standpoint of the sages among the Greeks, which they took in opposition to the insufficiency of the childish ideas and opinions on the subject of the eternal justice governing the world. He says: "We must decidedly consider the gods as fools if we believe that they reward virtue with enjoyments in another existence, so that today it is fit and proper for us to renounce what in the future we are to enjoy, and that in the end they requite us for our docility with those very benefits which we here learn to despise and reject".

What Plato writes in the "Timaeus" on reminiscence and the pre-existence of the immortal soul, and also in many passages in the "Republic", in the "Phaedrus", and especially in the "Phaedo", is in close relation to the metempsychosis as taught by Pythagoras. At the end of the "Republic" Plato describes how every soul fixes, or rather chooses, his own personality and fate in Re-birth. In the "Phaedo" he appeals to the doctrine in order to prove the immortality of the soul. He says: "Let us consider whether the souls of men

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who have died are in the nether world or not. An old saying truly, which I remember, says that when they go from here they are there, and return again here, and are again born from among the dead. And if this be so, that the living arise again from the dead, then certainly must our souls be there. For they could not return from there if they were not there".

On this somewhat doubtfully expressed passage Plato follows in an argument for the doctrine of metempsychosis which has very little signification. [Page 115] At the conclusion he says: "It thus appears to us that the living proceed from the dead no less than the dead from the living". Altogether, the doctrine, as expressed by Empedocles, decidedly deserves the preference to that given by Plato, for Plato was not, like him, in agreement with the esoteric Buddhism, but with the exoteric. With Plato *mind* (Geist) ought to be substituted for soul, and with Empedocles it should be *will*, Plato shows all learning as reminiscence, and concludes that we must therefore have learnt in some former time that which we now remember, and that this would be impossible if the soul had not already existed before it came into this present human form. He supports the admonition to restrain every sensuous desire by the explanation that if the soul has already in life set itself free from the service of the body, then in death it carries nothing with it from the body, and is able to attain to the formless similar to itself, to the gods, to the immortals, to the "rational", in order for "remaining time" to live freed from all evils, happy with God. To these, "the good", are contrasted "the bad", those who do not understand that that is to be preferred to the pleasures of the body which, though dark and formless to the eye, is comprehensible to the reason, and obtainable through the love of wisdom. Plato supposes that the souls of the bad are steeped in matter, which makes them heavy and draws them back to the visible world. Such souls may be seen in the vicinity of graves and tombs. They wander round until, through their desire for the corporeal, they become again united to a body, "and naturally become bound to a body of similar moral qualities as those which they had acquired during life". [Page 116]

It is stated as an example that those who lived as drunkards might be re-born as asses, the unjust, the domineering, and rapacious, as wolves, hawks, and vultures, while those who were really without any philosophical knowledge, but who by practice and custom lived as virtuous citizens, would be re-born as domestic animals or as honourable men; only philosophers reached bodiless to the gods, having abstained from all desires proceeding from the body. In the part of the "Phaedo" called the death-sayings or Nekyia, like the eleventh book of the "Odyssey", Plato relates that each one has his daemon, who has already followed him in life, and who leads him to the nether world, where judgment takes place. Most souls go to the sea of Acheron, "After remaining there a certain appointed time, some shorter, some longer, they are again sent forth for the production of living beings. Inexpiable sin throws many into Tartarus. Such as, through the love of wisdom, have already purified themselves, live for all future time without bodies. Those who are condemned for venial sin must obtain the pardon of those they have injured before they can return to the world". This fate, suggested by the belief in eternal justice, agrees with similar examples in exoteric Buddhism. Dr. A. Pfizmaier cites in the original text, and also in the German translation, "Eine Seelen-wanderung in Japan", a history of two families who quarrelled about a certain deed, and whose descendants would only become reconciled on the giving back of the deed, from the motive that, "If this were given back, there would not remain the slightest grudge in the soul of the dead father".

In explanation of the theory of "reminiscence", it [Page 117] must be stated that Plato adopted it in close connection with the doctrine of "Innate Ideas". God created all souls at the same time, and showed them the All in His Being. The reattainment of this transcendental knowledge is the learning which, therefore,

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as reminiscence, becomes the highest work of the soul. When this aim is achieved, the soul ends its wandering, for it has then again become what it was before, pure intelligence, which perceives and knows, not by the organ of the mind, but directly.

A definition of that which the Greeks understood by God offers some difficulty. The divine is meant, and as such is comparable to Brahm, not the god Brahmâ. In every case it is always considered as impersonal, with which conception agreed the Alexandrian Jew Philo, the well-known forerunner of Neo-Platonic philosophy, and the eloquent commentator of the five Mosaic books. God was to him what Brahm is to the Hindus, the All-One, namely, the transcendental source of All-Being. He taught, therefore, that souls go forth from God like rays of light from the sun, and are yet only in Him, even as light in the sun. Every living body is a prison for a soul, into which it must enter because it has not kept itself in original purity. To regain this purity is its work; only then will it no longer be attracted by matter, and able to return to God. Philo also taught that many souls allowed themselves to fall into matter through the mere desire for knowledge, and only became bound with it in consequence. There could hardly be a deeper meaning than in this last-mentioned hypothesis. Every attempt at explanation, however, is wanting with Philo as to how the conjunction of the soul with matter took place. [Page 118]

It is partly proved and partly not improbable that Malabaren, Chalaidium, Plutarch, Mercurius Trismegistus, *Apollonius of Tyana*, [It may as well be mentioned here that also the old Italians, the Celtic Druids, the Scythians, the Hyperboreans, and still more distant peoples without religious systems in America, and the African Negroes, etc, show traces of a belief in the wandering of the soul] believed in the doctrine of metempsychosis. With respect to Apollonius of Tyana, and especially the new Pythagoreans, it appears probable that many of their excellent writings on this subject have been lost.

Of the Neo-Platonists, to whose doctrine of Emanation I can only slightly refer, we must first mention Plotinus. It is essential to notice that the soul no longer appears, as with Plato, predominating as intellect, but as the perfect union of spirit and will. It is on this account that Plotinus places ecstasy above logical thought. Further, it is to be considered as a simplification of the theory of Plato that Plotinus does not state that the soul at the end of her wanderings attains perfect remembrance and looks back with consciousness upon the route passed over, but teaches the oblivion of all that refers to the earth, seeking for happiness in unconscious mergence in God. That Plotinus should allow that the soul has also sojourn in plants agrees with his conception of Nature. In order to appreciate the depth of the ideas of Plotinus further explanation would be necessary, which, however, cannot be given here.

As far as concerns the doctrine of metempsychosis, Porphyry, the pupil of Plotinus, follows closely in his theories. The following passage appears to me well worthy of consideration: "Each one becomes what he [Page 119] really already is, and has to become consciously identified, not with that which is strange, but only with himself". He taught, namely, that the soul in itself remains free from all sensuousness, but becomes entangled with the sensuous in consequence of the imperfect union of our being with the eternal reason, through the power which draws us to our present position. The pure being of the soul is not destroyed through birth, but becomes bound up with the mortal, and drawn down to the antithesis of itself. Good seed in bad ground. *Porphyry does not so much accept the purification of our inmost being as its liberation from the power of the body.* Yet he himself opposes the idea of the blameless condition of the inner being, with the reminder that in life one must not only renounce the thing itself, but also the inclination and desire for it, and at the same time speaks emphatically of the passions of the soul. "The slavery of the soul proceeds from two sources, drinking from which, she sucks in death and the

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forgetfulness of her own being" (by death is here meant death in the phenomenal world), "two sources, that is to say, pleasure and pain". To fly from temptation, urged by Plato with insistence, was also repeatedly recommended by Porphyry. He rigorously rejected the eating of slaughtered animals, "as enjoyment for a being with a soul" (beseelter Wesen). His remarks on renunciation are worthy of the greatest consideration. They take the highest form in that passage in which he says that the return to divinity can only be obtained when each, in all points and relations, shall sanctify himself according to his real nature. "And truly this must begin with the physical, and complete itself with the inner life". Porphyry's [Page 120] further theories on the metempsychosis are to be found in the Eclogae of Stobaeus, 1. i. c. 52, 54. For what Jamblichus has written on the same theme, we must refer the reader to "De Mysteriis", sect. iv. c. 4 et 5 ; and further to sect. v. c. 6. In the dissertation of Jamblichus on an Egyptian symbol, whose Indian source is not to be mistaken, as also in Porphyry's remark that the cow is holy and should not be slaughtered, Schopenhauer sees the Hindu origin of the Egyptian religion. Truly this can hardly be placed in doubt, nor further that all references to metempsychosis in the theories of the philosophers, from Pythagoras to Porphyry and Jamblichus, are to be traced back more or less directly to the Indian wisdom.

IV

Instead of the metempsychosis, Christianity teaches the doctrine of original sin, which shows both similarity and contrast to it. Christianity also looks upon life and sorrow as expiation of guilt, although the guilt of another individual, with whom, nevertheless, we have to consider ourselves as identical in being. There is as much reason for the direct discernment of this identity in exoteric Buddhism through its acceptance of metempsychosis, as for Christianity, while protesting against it, to found its dogma on empirical knowledge, which is entirely absent in the doctrine of metempsychosis. Truth lies between; for we see in children something more than the repetition of the parents, and yet we cannot deny the law of heredity. The aim of this essay will be to show these two truths as combined in their result. [Page 121]

An exhaustive treatment of the emanation system of the Neo-Platonists, the theory of special creation, or the "traduction" system of generation, is beyond the sphere of our investigations.

The word Re-birth is to be met with in important places in the New Testament, as in John iii. 3-8; but we have to understand by it only the transformation of man into his essence, therefore the negation of the will to live, without reference to the doctrine of the metempsychosis. When it is said, "except a man be *born again*, he cannot enter the kingdom of God", this sentence, which expressly speaks not of being born according to "the flesh", but of being born according to "the spirit", does not refer to what Buddha designates as the circle of Re-birth, but to what he terms freedom from death and Re-birth: it is not Samsâra, but Nirvâna. Jürgen Bona Meyer directs attention to the zealous polemic which the fathers of the Church, especially Tertullian, Augustine, Hermias, and Eneas Gaza, carried on against the belief in the migration of the soul. In his remarks on "Die Idee der Seelenwanderung" he mentions Gregory of Nyssa, and quotes his opinion, that metempsychosis can only be understood on that hypothesis which raises the true individuality of each being, and causes all to merge in one universal substance. It must be added that Tertullian objected to this doctrine, that if it were true, we should have kept the remembrance of our former condition. He might have been answered (considered from the secondary nature of the intellect), that we are also unable to remember our embryonic existence. He came to the supposition that all souls were derived from the soul which God breathed into Adam, and [Page 122] that the soul passes, at conception, from the parent to the child. He considered Adam's soul expressly as the source or "matrix" of all souls. We have yet to add to the names mentioned by Meyer those of Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianz, Hieronymus, and Cyril of Alexandria. Origen, who was especially repudiated by the above-named fathers of the Church as an upholder of the doctrine of metempsychosis and the pre-existence of the soul, nevertheless found his defenders both in the Western and Eastern Churches, especially in the latter; among others, Nemesius, Bishop of Emisa, in Syria (about 380), Synesius, Bishop of Ptolemaeus (about 410), and the sacred poet Prudentius (about 405). It remains uncertain whether Origen asserted, as affirmed by Photius, that the soul of the Saviour had been the soul of Adam, but it appears certain that he accepted metempsychosis. Either he came across it through Plato, or his other theories became premises for this conclusion. He did not loudly and unreservedly confess to it, and he found himself obliged to reject the reproach; but that he spoke of the possibility of the human soul sinking into an animal body must be allowed by those who, like Delitzsch, Slochl, and W. Möller, put in question his adherence to the doctrine of metempsychosis.

It seems to me that he early accepted it in order to allay the doubts of eternal justice, evoked by the daily experience of the serious inequality in the destiny of mankind from birth. He expresses his conviction of

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the original equality and perfect purity of all, and yet continues, "The greater portion of these spiritual beings have nevertheless sinned". The souls that fell the lowest became "daemons", others men, in which form [Page 123] upon earth they experience the purification of their being. After various Re-births as men they become angels, and at last attain to the sphere of ethereal bodies, where they receive enlightenment, from beings who have kept their primitive purity or reattained it, in the truth yet hidden from them, so that at last they obtain perfect blessedness in heaven.

Pressed by the opposition against the doctrine of Re-birth on earth, he accepted various grades among the angels. The doctrine of purgatory may be said to have had its origin with him, putting him in a position to make concessions to his adversaries and to remain silent later on the doctrine of metempsychosis, given out at first according to Plato. Yet the seed scattered by him sprouted forth plentifully, so that Justinian in the year 538 called together a Synod in Constantinople only for the object of rooting up this heresy. The Council ordered that: "Whoever shall support the mythical presentation of the pre-existence of the soul, and the consequently wonderful opinion of its return, let him be Anathema".

From the time of this Council, the belief in pre-existence is not to be found within the Christian Church, and that of metempsychosis very rarely among the external sects. This can be explained by the fact that the doctrine is irreconcilable with the conception of original sin, as it became paramount in the Romish Church after the victory of Augustinianism over Pelagianism. That view of the doctrine of metempsychosis as laid down by the (Ecumenical Council was also kept to by the Inquisition when it burnt Giordano Bruno in 1592, principally for this heresy, in spite of his only trying to blend the doctrine of metempsychosis [Page 124] with the Christian opinions. J. B. Meyer writes thus concerning him: "G. Bruno joined the idea of spatial soul-wandering on the other side with that of the wandering of being on this side. He explained the wandering of the soul not as an accidental change of habitation, but as self-prepared and measured by the present life, and as retributively higher or lower in consequence. When, even now, the faces of some people remind us of horses, dogs, or swine, it is an echo from their past, or a signal of their future condition; others wander again in human bodies, others ascend to higher stars". But Bruno had a much deeper comprehension of the doctrine than Meyer shows. I will only mention the following verses of the second dialogue, "The Cause, the Principle, and the One".

"O thou being, quaking before the icy dawn of death,
Does the Styx affright thee, the darkness, of void name,
The welcome theme of poets ; the perils of imagined worlds ?
Know when the flaming heat, when of age the lingering weakness
Has given the body to dust, it knows neither sorrows nor pains.
Never shall die the soul, but rather the earlier dwelling
Exchange for newer habitation, and live and work therein.
All must change, but nought is destroyed".

In Germany, Von Helmont the younger, a follower of the doctrine of metempsychosis, was also attacked on its account by the Inquisition.

Father Grueber compares the doctrine of metempsychosis to purgatory. The two truly serve the same object, as they place a transition between the threat of eternal damnation and the promise of heavenly blessedness. This transition was obtained through [Page 125] the doctrine of purgatory (which Pope Gregory I. incorporated into the Church), and through the esoteric doctrine of the Hindus, in defiance of

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science, but in unanswerable agreement with the judgments of empirical knowledge. If we ask ourselves why this doctrine should have been so entirely suppressed, and at last only regarded as ridiculous, we must not forget that those who defended it did not obtain their instruction at the source, but that the doctrine came to them very much disfigured. The conception of the soul as intellect, an opinion particularly put forward in the writings of Plato, in distinction to the esoteric doctrine of the Hindus, had also the same tendency. Therefore the dogma of original sin was more important, not only to the people, but also to philosophy, than the involved meaning of a doctrine full of the deepest significance, it is true, but arbitrarily seized and torn up from its natural abode.

Western philosophy had other tasks to perform before Oriental wisdom could inspire it, instead of intoxicating. It accomplished these tasks when it attained independently, through Kant, to the separation of the ideal and the real, to the discrimination of the appearance and the thing in itself, which knowledge must have preceded the doctrine of the metempsychosis also in India. Thus only could the soil become fruitful for the Indian wisdom.

Kant in his essay "Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht", proceeding from the recognition of teleology in Nature, writes as follows: "All the natural talents of a creature are intended to unfold themselves completely and suitably". He does not conceal from himself that in the observation of the [Page 126] course of human life, the fulfilment of this axiom cannot be literally accepted, and defends this contradiction with the explanation, "That with man such talents as have for object the use of his reason can only become perfectly unfolded in the species, not in the individual". If I am asked why Kant did not arrive at the doctrine of Palingenesis in a logical manner — a thoroughly reasonable question — I know of no other answer than this: through the misuse that he makes of the abstract idea of species. Knowledge such as the following passages testify would otherwise have led Kant to the idea of Re-birth. He says: "It would need an immeasurably long life for a man to learn how to make a perfect use of all his natural qualities ; or if, as is truly the case, Nature appoints him but a short term of life, it would require an unending series of generations for the one to hand over its enlightenment to the other, in order that the germ in our species may at last arrive at that degree of development which shall be perfectly adapted to the fulfilment of its design". Kant found and himself expressed the insufficiency of his explanation, inasmuch as he still finds it strange that the earlier generations only appear, for the sake of the latter, to push forward the arduous process. His incomparable insight led him straight to the truth, his hand touched the veil, but he omitted to raise it, and satisfied himself with an abstract idea. I cannot read his following remarks without impatience, and am unable to resist a feeling of disappointment. "How it may be with the dwellers on other planets and their nature, we know not. . . . Perhaps in these every individual may fully attain his appointed design in life. *With us it is* [Page 127] *otherwise*; (and therefore) only the species can hope for it".

Whoever wishes to establish that the perfection of man is not manifested in the continual progress recognised in history, but that the teleology of Nature and the moral tendency of the world are to be found in the gradual refinement of the Individual Will, as it presses forward from re-birth to re-birth, let him take Kant's work, the "Idee zu einer Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht". Kant's own objections to his supposition afford the best answer to the proposition in question. If I should indulge in aimless speculation on the system of coincidences, which wanders as chance in the events of life, one such coincidence is worth notice — the publication of Kant's principal work simultaneously with the publication of the first results of the investigation of Indian learning. As regularly as food is provided for the nourishment of the body so is the necessary sustenance provided for the growth of philosophy.

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As far, however, as the doctrine of Palingenesis is concerned, it was at first quite isolated, and only considered from the standpoint of ethics, the characteristic which also predominates with Lessing. I have selected from this writer a fragment for consideration from his essay on the "Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts", where he says "that more than five senses may be possible for the human race". In speaking of Palingenesis he further remarks, "This system is certainly the oldest of all philosophical systems, for it is properly nothing but the system of the pre-existence of the soul and metempsychosis, which not only Pythagoras and Plato, but already, [Page 128] before them, the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Persians, in brief, that which all the wise of the Orient had accepted. And this should at once plead in its favour. The first and oldest opinion is always the most probable in speculative things, because it occurred in the beginning to the healthy understanding of mankind. This ancient, and, as I believe, only probable system is negated on two points only. First -----" Here the fragment ends. I must also mention his "Philosophische Gespräche über die unmittelbare Bekanntmachung der Religion und über einige unzulängliche Beweisarten derselben" (Philosophical Words on the Direct Revelation of Religion and some Insufficient Proofs of the same). At the conclusion of this writing, the question why Providence has not destined all men to the same perfection gives occasion to the following remark: "What if, from the unanswerableness of the question, I conclude that the object of the question is vain? What if I say that man, or each soul while appearing as man, fully attains to the same cultivation of his faculties? Is it then settled that my soul only appears once as a man? Is it absolutely entirely unthinkable, that, on my way to perfection, I may pass more than once through the veil of humanity? Perhaps this wandering of the soul through various human bodies was at the beginning a right system? Perhaps this new system was none other than quite the oldest". From a letter of Lessing's to Campe, December 1779, it is evident that Lessing was prevented by illness from carrying out this sketch to its completion.

As far as concerns the doctrine being the oldest system, I have already expressed my views. What two things in Lessing's opinion mitigate against it, [Page 129] will not presumptuously try to discover. To show that the doctrine gave him consolation and support in life, I will give but one example. On the 10th of January 1778 he wrote to Eschenberg as follows: "My wife is dead; I have now also received this experience: I rejoice that there cannot remain many such experiences for me to make, and I am at rest". Lessing's essay, "The Education of the Human Race", which he published a year before his death, has been called his "religious will". This document is clear and striking. Let us enter into the inheritance! We cannot more highly honor the testator than when we learn to understand what he has written in the last paragraphs of his testament. Here is what is said: —

"But why should not each individual man have existed more than once on this earth?"

Is this hypothesis then so ridiculous, because it is the most ancient, because it occurred to the mind of man before it was weakened and destroyed by scholastic sophistry?

"Why should I not have already once passed through here those stages towards perfection which only bring temporal reward and punishment?" And why not another time through all those stages the accomplishment of which helps us so powerfully in the prospect of eternal reward?" Why should I not return as often as I am sent to obtain new knowledge, new faculties? Do I the first time take so much away that nothing remains to repay the trouble of return? "Why not? Or is it that I forget that I have already lived? Well for me that I do forget. The remembrance of my former condition would only cause [Page 130] me to make a bad use of the present. And what I now forget, have I then forgotten it for ever?"

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" Or is it because in that way too much time would be lost for me? Lost! and what have I then to lose ? Is not the whole of eternity mine ? "

I will pause here to draw attention directly to these passages, for it is the object of this treatise to defend the substance of these last paragraphs of Lessing's essay. It is sufficient to mention Herder's treatise on "Palingenesis" (of the return), and his essay on the "Migration of the Soul". Like Lessing, he treats of the "Hypothesis of the Atonement" but rejects the whole doctrine as an "illusion of the mind" (*sic*). As these essays only confirm the stricture of Schiller of being the "tone of a Catholic prelate", and do not display Herder's otherwise highly valuable conceptions, it is useless to seek in them for any useful thoughts; they must be placed unread with Herder's writings against Kant. Dr. Alb. Wittstock, in his essay on "Lessing's Education of the Human Race as a Scholastic System", says that Mendelssohn, in his treatise on "The Evidences of Metaphysical Science", had already prior to Lessing mentioned which were the qualities that might be possessed by the soul before its entrance into this life.

It is, however, necessary to guard against bringing forward such statements as direct support for the doctrine of Palingenesis. Mendelssohn was throughout opposed to it. Compare his arbitrary work of the "Phaedo" with the original, the arguments of which, as he says, " he has arranged according to the taste of his time". Just those places which treat of the doctrine of Palingenesis have been either smoothed over or totally changed, while the idea of Re-birth is inferred [Page 131] as the continuity of matter. It is far more justifiable to refer to Charles Bonnet's important work on this subject, "Idées sur l'état future des êtres vivants, ou Palingenésie Philosophique", because he really considered the doctrine before Lessing.

It is but of late years that the Germans have interested themselves in the investigations of Indian philosophy; general interest was only evoked after 1789, especially through George Forster, who had been in India, then through Görres, Kreuzer, Schlegel, Herder, and others. Sanscrit was studied, and the Romantists raved about India. A still further advance was soon made. Frank Bopp published the first useful reading-book in the Sanscrit language. Jacob Grimm, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and other Germans considerably advanced the knowledge of Sanscrit, and must claim equal acknowledgment with the English and French, for whom Renaud exclusively claims all merit.

The remarks of Lichtenberg are interesting in the characteristic which he gives of himself. He says: "I cannot escape from the thought that I died before I was born, and return through death again into the prenatal condition. In many respects it is a happiness that this idea cannot be distinctly realised. If man could find out every secret of Nature, it would yet be very much against the interest of Nature could he prove it. To die, and again to live with the remembrance of a former existence, is only to swoon; to wake again with other faculties which must again be cultivated, that is to be re-born". Elsewhere also, in relation to the letters of Eulers, he refers to the doctrine. "This agrees with my idea of the migration of the soul. I think, or [Page 132] more properly I perceive, herewith much that I am not in a position to express, because it is not *ordinarily* human, and therefore our speech is not made for it. God grant that it may not cause me madness. I perceive so much, that, if I should write on it, the world would take me for a fool; therefore am I silent".

Induced by Lessing's writings, J. G. Schlosser, in 1783, published conversations on the Migration of the Soul. He answered the question as to "Where the journey ends at last?" with the words, "In the bosom of God". He again repeated this thought in the dedication to Bodmer in these stanzas :—

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"Sage wohm, wo
Wirst du hin wandeln
Seele des Weisen !
Seele des Dichters !
Wenn du einst wandelst ?

Wirst du schon ruh'n im
Schosze der Gottheit,
Oder noch wandeln
Einen der Söhne
Künftiger Zeiten,
Wieder zum Weisen
Wieder zum Dichter
Neu zu beleben ?

Ach, wenn du wandelst,
Seele des Weisen!
Seele des Dichters !
Werde du künftig,
Werde mein Vater !

[Say whither and where
Shalt thou wander away
Soul of the wise!
Soul of the poet!
If thou dost wander?

Wilt thou repose
In the bosom of God,
Or yet again wander
As one of the sons
Of the future of time,
Again as the wise,
Again as the poet,
Anew to arise?

Ah if thus thou shalt wander,
Soul of the wise,
Soul of the poet,
Become in the future,
Become thou my father.]

[Page 133] I refrain from citing some pertinent statements of the philosophers after Kant on the subject of metempsychosis, as they are not peculiar to their theories. I will only quote the following passage from Fichte's "Anthropologie" : — "The constant incoming of fresh individual spirits (Genien) in the human sphere is like the process of a spiritual *generatio oequivoca*. The parents are not the generators, in the complete sense. They offer the organic material, and not only this, but at the same time the inner sensitive nature, which shows itself in temperament, in peculiar disposition, in determined specifications of inclination, and the like". We must be careful not to suppose that the doctrine of the pre-existence of

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the soul stands in direct connection with the knowledge of Re-birth. The polemic treatises against the doctrine of pre-existence often encroach on metempsychosis, as, for example, Bertram in his essay, "A Slight Examination of the Opinion of Pre-existence, or the Former State of the Human Soul in Organic Bodies"; while the writings which bring forward proofs for pre-existence, partly through timidity, partly through contempt, avoid the [Page 134] question, and only a few follow on from the doctrine of pre-existence to that of the migration of the soul. This occurs with Kant, Schelling, Benecke, Julius Müller, Ruckert, Ernesti, Fichte, and others, without their being able to offer us anything important on the idea of Re-birth.

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V

It is otherwise with Schopenhauer. In agreement with Buddhism, Schopenhauer considered physical evil as the consequence of moral failure, and stated that Nature is the materialising of the Will to live, and is fashioned according to its moral quality. Like Buddhism, he also teaches that Nature has to await her liberation from humanity. When I pointed out the inadmissibility of translating *vidjnâna* as consciousness, I might have appealed to Schopenhauer's teaching, agreeing with esoteric Buddhism, of the merely physical quality and corresponding mortality of the *intellect*, as opposed to the metaphysical continuance of the *Will*. Consciousness depends upon the intellect; the intellect depends upon the organism. Only if we can deny for the latter destruction following upon death, would the possibility be given for the continuance of consciousness. But in death the organism perishes; only that continues which brought it forth, the Will. This only, and of itself, constitutes the identity of all the appearances of the same being separated by death. The comparison between sleep and death, which since the time of Homer has been frequently repeated, appears most significant in the form which [Page 135] Schopenhauer has given it: "What to the individual is sleep, that to the Will as thing in itself is death".

It is advisable here to mark the difference between metempsychosis and Palingenesis. The Indian religion taught metempsychosis, *i.e.*, it presupposed continuity of the Will and the mind after death, and maintained the possibility of remembrance. Esoteric Buddhism, on the contrary, accepted Palingenesis; for Buddha recognised that only the Will endures after death; that the intellect, as the function of the brain, perishes with it. [The persistence of consciousness is independent of that intellect which as a "function of the brain perishes with it". Upâdâna is explained as the cause of birth, and is the seizing of the Skandhas, the re-union of which with the five senses and five gross elements forms the body. These Skandhas, which are declared to be five, are attributes sensible and intellectual: they are Rûpa, form; Vedanâ, sensation; Samdjne, idea; Samskâra, concepts; and Vidjnâna, consciousness. According to the authority of the Buddhist Church of Ceylon, these Skandhas carry on the individual identity from birth to birth. "The new personality of each succeeding reincarnation is the sum-total of the Skandhas or groups of attributes of the last". See "Buddha's Teaching." A.P. Sinnett. Transaction xii, of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society - TRANSLATOR] But the ethical tendency of his doctrine determined him to take advantage of the illusion of the people, that the intellect endured, and that the remembrance of former embodiments was possible for the sage. On that account he taught metempsychosis (the continuance of mind and Will), instead of Palingenesis (the destruction and re-formation of the individuality according to the quality of its indestructible Will). Before Schopenhauer, only metempsychosis was taught, except by Empedocles, so that where elsewhere the designation Palingenesis appears, according to the above definition, [Page 136] it is not correct. Buddhism denied the knowledge of the transiency of the intellect, in harmony with the sentiment expressed by Wieland —

"An illusion that makes me happy
Is worth a truth that bears me to the ground".

Knowing the power of such a temptation, I understand Schopenhauer's energetic protest against every pretension to force a moral tendency in his works. Only in this manner could he present us the unshakable foundation for pure morality, and render it possible to recover the doctrine of Palingenesis.

"Death shows itself unconcealed as the end of the individual, but in this individual lies the *germ for a new*

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being. . . . The dying man perishes, but a germ remains out of which a new being goes forth, which steps into existence without knowing whence it comes, or wherefore it is just such as it is" (*Parerga*, ii. 292).

"The fresh existence of each new-born being is paid for through the age and death of the past life which has perished, but the undying germ has endured, out of which the new existence has arisen: they are *one being*" (*W. a W.*, ii. 575).

From this it is evident that in the present all living beings possess the true germ of all future living beings; therefore *in a manner* these are already present" (*Parerga*, ii. 292).

We must leave the guarded manner of expression to which Schopenhauer confines himself in these quoted passages; we must step firmer now he has placed us on the airy pathway and cleared the dark track. Each one must recognise, This Will, to which [Page 137] in its affirmation individuality inheres, embodies itself anew when death has destroyed this my present manifesting personality. This knowledge, however, enables him to say: The *being* of the future manifestation is not only *in a manner*, but implicitly the same as the *being* which constitutes my present appearance, for it is my Individual Will. That this *being* after the destruction of its present appearance will not re-embodiment as an animal, is assured by the teleology of Nature. Life is a process of refinement. By virtue of a greater sensibility to pain, this process is fulfilled quicker at the stage reached by humanity than in the lower stages, and retrogression is also contrary to expediency in the fitness of Nature. Yet we have no reason to suppose that we are destined only to attain the goal on higher planes than those reached by man. For after the Will to live in its efforts for more perfect manifestation has reached this point, then there is at this stage the possibility, which is denied to animals, to negate the Will to live. When we also remember that the man in whom the Will to live still asserts itself with great force can only come to this determination after repeated Re-births, it will be evident that it is as man that he attains the negation of the Will to live, and endures the last death in order to be for ever freed from the laws to which are subject the manifesting appearances of the assertive Will.

It is incomprehensible how Schopenhauer can reiterate the remark that knowledge alone becomes changed in the course of a life, and with it the manner of action, but not the *character*. If we suppose persistence or the unchangeability of character, all [Page 138] ethical meaning is withdrawn from the doctrine of Palingenesis, and it ceases to be a moral postulate. Schopenhauer recognized the inappropriateness of his supposition. Seeking a means of escape, the strange idea occurred to him, that not during life, but in the hour of death, a change might take place in the character of an individual. "All those secret powers which are nevertheless rooted in ourselves, and which determine the eternal fate of the man, press together in the death-hour and come into action. Out of their conflict the way is formed which the individual now has to tread. His Palingenesis, that is to say, is prepared together with all the weal and woe which are comprised in it, and to which he is irrevocably destined. This is why the death-hour is of such an important, serious, solemn, and fearful character. It is a crisis in the highest meaning of the word; it is a last judgment" (*Parerga*, i. 238).

Experience daily teaches that the possibility of a change in character is usually confined within very narrow limits; yet even here we must see the standard of truth and the moral effect of the idea of Re-birth, as it teaches us to recognise that although man is unable to reach the goal in one course of life, he nevertheless is constantly approaching it, and thus the point arrived at in the death-hour appears as a

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station and Re-birth the farther journey from it.

The problem of conception presents much greater difficulty than the problem of death. As I have before stated, Buddha considered it entirely from one side, as he ascribed to the parents no share in the production of the qualities of their children. Schopenhauer also taught that in relation to the generated, generation only [Page 139] gives rise to the opportunity for the appearance of the Will, at this time and at this place; yet he did not ignore the transmission of the physical and mental qualities from parents to children. We must therefore follow his direction in the solution of this problem of the philosophy and seek information in the beaten track. Every illness of the body may be compared to the appearance of a battle of innumerable chemical ideas against the idea man. The death of man takes place through the victory of these lower chemical forces. If this is granted, we can also say, The origin of man is the victory of the idea man over these lower chemical ideas. The victor through the death of a man becomes a liberated Individual Will, whose incarnation takes place on the occasion of conception. But these chemical ideas at the time of their subjugation, as it were, by this Individual Will are also, through the act of conception, subject to the future parents, and speak their speech, so that the share of the parents in their children is easily recognizable. [There is one point that has been somewhat overlooked by the author on this subject of heredity and Karma, and that is *why* a particular entity should be born in a particular family or nation ; in fact, why, in the subjugation of the chemical ideas at the time of conception on the part of the future parents, the liberated Individual Will enters that incarnation and not any other. The law of heredity, instead of being opposed to the law of Karma, is its most essential support; the one could not work without the other. As the law of cause and effect obtains in the moral as well as the physical world, there must be cause why the entity has a particular parentage; This cause is to be found in the tendencies of the birth-seeking entity, an example of the law of least resistance. The conditions offered at the time of conception by the father and mother are responded to by the tendencies of the incarnating entity, and the heredity handed down in the evolution of the embryo is the means for their development, It may perhaps be urged that in that case we should always see the children like the parents, possessing the same tendencies, but this would be but a one-sided argument. The incoming entity possesses tendencies different to those of father and mother, and these will assert themselves when the original attracting tendency is exhausted. This may take place after a shorter or longer period, and determines the similarity of the child to its parents or parent. If, on the contrary, the attractive affinity has exhausted itself, we shall see strongly marked divergence as other tendencies come forward. - TRANSLATOR]

There can be but as little doubt [Page 140] on this point as that the being of the child constitutes an Individual Will which is separate from that of the father and mother, although identical with that which constituted the being of another embodiment which has been destroyed by death. In this way the similarity as well as the dissimilarity of brothers and sisters, and especially of blood-relations, in physical and moral respects is so easily explained, that it seems to me that herein is to be found the only correct solution of the problem.

VI

I will summarise the result of the foregoing as follows. Transcendental unity has separated itself in multiplicity of manifestation. A single Individual Will underlies each manifestation. After the destruction of one manifestation this Individual Will incorporates itself again anew, sweeping forward its individuality, and the following embodiment may be characterised as higher in comparison with that which has gone before. Each single Individual Will experiences, through the influence of others and the effect of his Will upon them, continual modification, which may be designated as the weakening of that which, with Schopenhauer, we call the "Will to live". [Mainländer's philosophy of liberation presents interesting details in its hypothesis on the conversion of gases into fluids and solid bodies] To attain this seems to me the direct object [Page 141] of the world viewed from the standpoint of physics. From the standpoint of ethics the negation of the Will to live becomes the goal; from the standpoint of metaphysics it is the return, after complete purification, to the transcendental unity.

As the celerity of a falling body increases as it falls, so also the Individual Will hastens quicker to its goal as it approaches it in each more perfect form. Each Individual Will is hindered by others in its efforts to completely unfold itself, and thus is presented the continual spectacle of strife, struggle, and exhaustion, with a constant change of victor. [Figuratively it may be said that the complete change of manifestation taking place through death and birth is only the exchange of old weapons for new] Each weakening of the violence of the self-asserting Individual Will means a purification of this Will, which, after the following destruction of the embodiment, carries the Will to a higher state of manifestation.

The higher the stage reached by the Individual Will, the greater its capacity for suffering. The essential difference between men and animals consists in the capacity of the former for conscious suffering. From the higher standpoint there can be no other classification of mankind than according to the degree of their capacity for this conscious suffering, for it shows how far the man is separated from the animal and how near he is to his goal. While the one only perceives as pain and misfortune that which directly opposes the lowest needs of his Will, and has but little susceptibility to the sorrows of others — as, for example, to that sorrow produced by the knowledge of the surrounding misery of his fellow-creatures, another, who has attained through [Page 142] many lives to excess of sensitiveness over irritability and mere reproductive power, is receptive to influences which affect more strongly and powerfully the grasp of the assertive Will to live. The acuteness of the intellect stands in no relation to the moral character, as little as the sharpness of the sword to the bravery of its possessor. But superior knowledge possesses for condition the most perfect faculty for objective interest, and the susceptibility to conscious suffering raised to its highest It is therefore an absurdity to believe that the developed man can possess a vicious heart.

The blossom which expands from birth to birth as the capacity for conscious suffering is *compassion*. He whose heart from birth no longer suffers, but compassionates, must be considered as raised above the idea man, because for him the process of purification is already completed; he has reached the goal appointed to man. Christ, who from birth showed Himself as compassionate, must be recognised as Divine, and that without any dogmatic basis, but because we can no longer regard Him as an appearance called forth by the Will to live.

As we have shown, mankind, as the last stage of the manifestation of the Will striving towards liberation,

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the above words on Christ require some explanation which shall be given later. [The divine Wisdom or Logos is the spiritual Christos. When the soul of man has become set free from the power of desire, so that it can fully reflect the divine light, an incarnation of Deity takes place and the Christ is born. The manifestation of the Will for liberation is unhindered by the Will to live, the Individual Will is no longer individual, but universal; the incarnation not a person, but a power. The personal entity called Jesus or Buddha appears as the god; in reality it is but a part of the universal illusion. A quotation from the "Secret Doctrine" by H. P. Blavatsky will help still further to elucidate this subject". There never yet was a great world-reformer, whose name has passed into our generation, who was not a direct emanation of the Logos (under whatever name known to us), *i.e.* an essential incarnation of one of 'the seven' of the 'divine spirit who is sevenfold;' and who had not appeared before during the past cycles . . . reborn under various circumstances for the good of mankind, and for its salvation at certain critical periods, until in their last incarnations they had become truly only the 'parts of a part' on earth, though *de facto* the One Supreme in Nature' (ii 358). - TRANSLATOR] [Page 143]

We seek with eagerness and believe with tenacious anxiety in a moral development for the world. History shows us indeed that the nature peoples raise themselves from animal barbarity to higher culture, but it also proves that they again recede and miserably perish. Whoever, therefore, seeks the moral evolution of the world in the fate of nations, seeks in vain. Whoever has been accustomed to obtain consolation and hope from the so-called "continual progress of the civilised races", and therefore believes that the Overcomer of the world will draw down from heaven an Eden upon earth for future human beings, and that prisons and churches are so successfully occupied with ploughing the ground of the future Paradise that all weeds must wither and all good seed assuredly spring forth as of itself, will be grievously disappointed. Such a one may well draw back dismayed before that picture of the world that the great sage of our time has portrayed and reflected in the mirror of his work.

The ignorant lament in the hopelessness of pessimism. But whoever has grasped the deep significance of the doctrine of Re-birth may give up the illusion that civilisation and "progress" will cause the morality of the nations; may give it up consoled by [Page 144] the truth, "it is not the fate of the nation, which is but an appearance, but the fate of the individual which is to be morally decided". Therefore, we do not live and suffer to create a Utopia for future generations, but for our own sakes. The great complexity manifest in the lives and surroundings of the cultured classes of the present day needs some explanation. He who rushes into the open arms of physical science and thinks to dispense with the aid of metaphysics, will only too soon find the lifeless character of his support. Belief in eternal justice and moral development is not dead, but science has taken away the crutches upon which it rested without being able to provide it with sound limbs; it therefore lies prone on the ground, waiting for knowledge to raise it once more. The doctrine of Re-birth may here be appealed to, and that not arbitrarily and presumptuously, but of good right. It addresses itself to all those who find it impossible, from the scientific development of the age, to continue in the faith of the Church, but who are still conscious of the indwelling desire for purification and perfection. With the natural eye we cannot look over the barrier raised by birth behind us and death so near at hand, but the superior knowledge of our *being* as the *Will to live* is like the wings which danger taught Wieland to forge — it carries our intellect over the high wall which Nature has set as a limit to our experience. The statement that it is the destiny of the individual to fully develop morally can only bring us conviction when we no longer seek its sanction in one single course of life; only on the basis of the doctrine of Re-birth can its truth enter our consciousness without danger of contradiction. [Page 145]

This belief was always so natural to men, that, in spite of all opposition, they held it fast for the sake of

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justice. It is not only children who believe that punishment follows in the footsteps of the offence, but also the greater number of our art critics are of the same opinion when they speak of the tragic fate of the heroes of the drama. When, by virtue of the doctrine of Re-birth, a man is convinced of the moral development of the individual, and becomes conscious of the expediency of Nature, which only knows necessity and not caprice, the thought that he experiences, and must experience, all sorrow for the purification of his being, will give him the greatest consolation in misfortune. The conventional belief of the educated classes is insufficient to give rise to that peaceful devotion of the real Christian, who endures every fate as the gift of God in patience and gentleness. External religiousness, with its weekly devotion and sanctimonious sentimentality, is a society lie, and nothing more. For this reason true-hearted men desired knowledge, which should not carry on a hypocritical play with holy things but should be in harmony with all that the heart desires as moral or the mind can imagine as ideal — knowledge to strengthen them in danger and be present with them through life, both in action and inaction, a sun by day, a guiding star by night.

It may be asked, Has the idea of Re-birth only significance in that form which it has taken in India ? can it not also mould itself in harmony with all that we also aspire to and honour as truly Christian, moral, and lofty ? With the idle apathy of the begging monks of India we can have but little sympathy. The healthy feeling of the Greeks had already rebelled, [Page 146] against the stultification of the natural man, as followed in the Indian religion. Full development, fair unfolding, and a worthy realisation of our indwelling powers, are claims which we now place on the basis of moral necessity. The doctrine of Re-birth is in harmony with these claims as fully and entirely as it agrees with true Christianity. We appreciate the moral value of the Indian religion, but the same path is not for every one. The withdrawal of the Hindu from all human society does not appear at the present day the right path for us. The Christ-like love which has given us our salvation is not satisfied with indifference only to the enjoyments of the world; it gives us a surer path in compassion for its pains and energetic endeavour for their alleviation. Buddha also required the knowledge of sorrow, although he only recommended as means its contemplative consideration, while we imprint upon our souls the poet's words which admonish "through compassion to become wise". Yet Buddha also taught "not through enmity can enmity be overcome; only through want of enmity is it set at rest". But how different are the words of our Saviour: "Love your enemies". Buddhism does not apparently recognise this Christian love. [The hope that Buddha brought to mankind was the possibility of escape from transmigration, and no religion that has been put before the world possesses a more perfect morality than Buddhism. The moral law of Buddha is certainly the equal of the law of Christ, inasmuch as it also must be designated as a law of love. "Look with the same eye upon your own work and that of another, and extend your love to all living beings", this is the teaching of Buddhism. True, it does not directly inculcate "Love your enemies", but in the law of love as put forward by the Buddha there could be no enemy. It was the abnegation of self in every form, the selfless fulfilment of duty as householder, the selfless renunciation as disciple, and the selfless compassion as Buddha. — TRANSLATOR] But in what else does it arise [Page 147] than in the presentiment of the union of beings, in the One underlying all manifestation ? What else but the desire of the various entities for the eternal union ? What the "tat twam asi" (that art thou) of the Brâhman says to the intellect of the scholar, that the Saviour speaks to the hearts of men in the words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself".

We possess a presentation of Schopenhauer's philosophy which attempts to eliminate from it the doctrine of Palingenesis: Philipp Mainländer in his "Philosophy of Liberation" teaches: "Death is succeeded by the absolute nothing; it is the perfect annihilation of each individual in appearance and being, supposing that by him no child has been begotten or born; for otherwise the individual would live on in that." Mainländer entered seriously into the philosophy, but fell into the mistake of the Materialists in

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thinking that with a short plank he could bridge over a wide abyss. With rare consistency Mainlander endeavoured to carry out his theories, and when he had completed his philosophical work, he put an end to his life. That the healthy mind of man should rebel against a doctrine leading to the result of self-destruction is as natural and certain as it is also true that previous to Schopenhauer all the reasons brought forward against such an act did not hold good with ingenuous critics.

It is only through the doctrine of Palingenesis or Re-birth that satisfactory arguments can be brought forward combating self-destruction, for it forces us to acknowledge its aimlessness. Suicide is an exceptionally useless attempt at escape from life; for it is followed by a new birth and a new life. There is no other path to freedom than purification through pain [Page 148] and sorrow; these lead to the liberation of the Will. Only from the standpoint of Palingenesis can any value be allowed to the reasons that Schopenhauer brings forward against self-destruction. They show that this is far from being negation of the Will to live, but, on the contrary, a phenomenally strong assertion of that Will. The doctrine of Palingenesis is evidently a powerful reason against suicide, for how can there be escape from life when the possibility of successful flight is excluded. It might here be in order to consider what ground there is for sorrow in the death of our neighbour, from the standpoint of this doctrine. A well-beloved friend dies; it is certainly only the external appearance that suffers death. But we have loved even this appearance. It gave us the opportunity to express the highest aspiration of the heart. We lament, therefore, bitterly at the grave that we have exercised this opportunity too little. [This lament touches the heart in the poem of Freiligrath:—

"O lieb' so lang du lieben kannst,
O lieb' so lang du lieben magst,
Die Stunde kommt, die Stunde kommt,
Wo du an Gräbern stehst und klagst"

Love while thou canst,
Love while thou mayst,
For the hour comes, the hour comes,
When at the grave thou shall stand and mourn.]

The open grave earnestly admonishes us: Love the living, for they also must die.

To the heart overwhelmed by the sorrow of bereavement, this doctrine will give the same comfort and consolation which it gave to Lessing. Know that thou must experience this sorrow also for thy purification, but there awaits thee some time not only a recognition [Page 149] of thy friend, which may be but of little worth, but re-union. Know that, whether distant or near, this re-union is the complete satisfaction of that longing feeling with which thou hast regarded the departed personality, whose being is not destroyed, but, like thine own, will find liberation only in re-union. We have seen that the higher the manifestation of an Individual Will, the greater the capacity for the renunciation of individualism; but we may reverse it and say: The more perfectly the individuality develops, the nearer do we attain to the highest stage. Our first object, therefore, must be the cultivation of our particular faculties for the unfoldment of the individuality, the transformation of the natural to the pure human. From the higher standpoint this exercise of our powers is something different to placing them at the service of modern civilisation. For modern civilisation requires just the denial of all that is true, real, original, and therefore godlike in us, and necessitates the use of that dexterity which modern education evokes when it places before us as court-

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master, neither Nature nor Art, but above all Utilitarianism. Such an education for mere industrial acquisition many will unwillingly find wanting in Lessing's "Education of the Human Race", and therefore will reject it as well as our conclusions, as in their opinion untimely. We desire no suppression of the powers that impel our actions, but their concentration and direction on the path leading to the highest. So struggling, we serve a culture which is hidden under the hypocritical cover of military civilisation, and we may recognise the blossoms which, in spite of this, still press forward to the light as real art and true religion. We are [Page 150] Europeans, not Hindus, our religion is Christianity. If this ground offers no good soil for the idea of Re-birth, the doctrine planted by us will not mature fruit, certainly none that will be able to thrive. The hypothesis of metempsychosis is foreign to Christianity, but the germ has sprouted. The knowledge of the transitoriness of the earthly and the essential reality of the substance of all manifestation is also the kernel of the Christian religion. We must further recognise the conviction from which our doctrine is nourished, and which we give expression to in the words: Each life is a refining process, as also that from which Christianity has unfolded its imperishable doctrine. Therefore the idea of Re-birth can closely attach itself to the Christian religion, and may appeal to the fact that Schopenhauer with reason called his philosophy the most Christian of all.

It is indeed true that the world, in spite of all religion, art, and science, is not more moral today than it was a thousand years ago. But are we then to expect that it should be? If we think of the human race as a society which aims at the purification of its members and actually obtains it, must this society as such appear moral? Do not the purified members step out of such a society now without object for them? Do not other unpurified always step in? Might not slight changes always be supposed, sometimes inclining to evil, sometimes to good? Change that only once ["Only once", perhaps for the Western world, but the advent of Buddha was also "a sudden beat for good". As it is written in the Bhagavad Gita, "Whenever there is decline of righteousness and uprising of unrighteousness, then I project myself into creation". This projection of divine power cannot be limited to one beat; the law of cyclic evolution draws forth the incarnation of the Will for liberation, and Krishna, Buddha, Christ mark the cusps of cycles as the saviors of mankind. - TRANSLATOR] manifested itself as a sudden beat for good, when [Page 151] Christ, an incarnation no longer of the Will to live, but of the Will for liberation, returned as Lord and Master of the society.

In agreement with Schopenhauer, Richard Wagner writes in "Religion und Kunst" (Religion and Art): "As the Saviour Himself is recognised as entirely without sin, as indeed incapable of sinning, the Will must have already been completely broken before His birth, so that He could no longer suffer, but only compassionate; and the root of this was necessarily to be recognised in His birth, which was suggested not by the Will to live, but by the Will for liberation". I will refrain from following the traces of metempsychosis in the works of art, but nevertheless mention must be made of Beethoven's Sonata Op. iii. Bülow, once characterising its two parts, very appropriately described one as Samsâra, the other as Nirvâna. It is further interesting to notice that Richard Wagner in the "Conqueror" has musically and artistically suggested the identity of Prakriti with a Brâhman's daughter, who had lived before and whose fate is related by Buddha. An actual result might truly be expected from this attempt, for music, as the direct materialisation of the Will only, is alone qualified to reproduce this identity clearly and directly. [To this knowledge is to be referred also the play of the Dodanaïschen priests. It explains the idea of the wandering of the soul by a circle of raised cymbals and their tones. As the tone passes through these, so the soul passes through the circle of various spheres.] We find close connection with the doctrine in "Parsifal", as when it is said of Kundry — [Page 152]

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"Here she lives today,
Perhaps raised up anew
To atone for the guilt of a former life".

And when she herself speaks of the sleep of death, and tells Klingsor of her former appearances.

In Ibsen's drama "Kaiser und Gallilaer" allusions to the same idea are to be found, as also in the "Ahasver" of Moser.

Zschokke's "Harmonius", Grosze's "Abul Kazims Seelenwanderung", and many others may also be mentioned. More important than such enumeration, were it even possible to complete the list, is the explanation obtained through this doctrine of the so-called "poetical justice". In the various tragic works of our great poets we see the heroes perish, and, speaking in dramatic parlance, the "villain triumph"; only the true popular poets have attempted to turn the stage into a tribunal of justice, to proclaim the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice. Each course of life is there placed as a process of purification. The more clearly it is delineated, the more convincingly the poet carries it out as such, the more lively our interest, the more ardent our sympathy, manifesting itself as a kind of compassion. The death of Cordelia, when looked at in this light, no longer appears unrighteous, even if we consider her free from all the faults which Gervinus, as a second Lear, imputes, to her. Why such subtleties? Why pluck a flower to pieces and seek after a worm, only to show that it will not always bloom and be fragrant? Let each give way undisturbed to the joy of this and similar innocent maiden forms, as our poets picture them to us. Eternal justice is not put in question through their death, no matter how it result. [Page 153]

We may tell ourselves that a Cordelia draws nearer to the goal of eternal rest through her death, and that Richard III, even though he fall as hero in courageous manly fight, must yet suffer many sorrows before the strength of his will be broken for his salvation. Even the heroic death of the royal murderer, which has been thrown before the poet as injustice, as the glorification of vice, makes us wonder at the prophetic insight of the dramatist. Through this feature of bravery we become, as it were, induced to recognise in our hearts that this monster also is like unto us in his being, and is wandering on the way which life and sorrow lead him to those heights which we are already conscious of being nearer. What the valuable works of Balzac, Zola, and Ibsen appear so often to leave without satisfaction is the need of that knowledge of eternal justice which manifests itself through Re-birth. One life-journey considered alone represents neither justice nor expediency, as Ibsen shows in a masterly manner, while he forces us to see the impossibility of pure idealism of the sentiment, or even the impossibility of its enduring manifestation in the human race. Neither can the law of heredity offer consolation or hope; it shows but the rapid increase of vice. Experience, which can only judge the object as such, sanctions such disgusting phenomena as with rare truth to nature Zola pictures in "Les Rougon-Macquart, Histoire Naturelle et Sociale d'une Famille sous le Second Empire".

It appears as if each of the desired tales for the August Jenny's Prize Convention ought to be a complete counterpart of Zola's romance cycle. With Zola, that which constitutes the unity of person in various situations of life depends upon inherited inclination to [Page 154] vice, the manifestation of which continually increases; so also in this "*histoire sur-naturelle*" in contrast to the mere unity of the identity of person, there would be the representation of the different personalities. In such works it might be shown how the Will to live (the fearful manifestation of which is pictured in so marvellous a manner by Zola) also expresses itself as the Will for liberation. [Not for death, as Mainländers writes]. What for Zola must be

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the end, might here be the beginning. Proceeding from the Will to live in its most hateful expression, it would be possible to show the gradual purification of the same being in new forms, and how love being the manifestation of the Will for liberation, the purer its expression, the higher the stage attained by man in the moral respect; or rather it may be said, man attains to higher conditions of manifestation as he becomes capable of purer love and more ardent compassion. There is no need to fall into the error of prophesying an Eden upon earth, but it would be necessary always to keep in view the liberation of the Individual Will according to the doctrine of Palingenesis. As an example for our encouragement, it can be shown that even the Saviour had to resist temptation, make an effort and pass forward on His way, attaining to the highest. May such works arise! When they work the mosaic out of the idea, they will show the reader that every insignificant conquest of egotistic desire, every small expression and proof of compassion for the pain of living beings, animal or men, in spite of every license with which the world either flatters or constrains itself, means one step forward on the path towards [Page 155] the goal. Such a work will show, like our doctrine, that in the moral respect *each one desires what he is able to perform at the stage he has reached*, and therefore, the great sin of one does not weigh heavier than the little sin of another. "All by all ways attain unto me", says the transcendental unity.