

Henry M. Tichenor's

***The Theory  
of  
Reincarnation  
Explained***

*We have lived many lives. Both our bodies and minds bear witness to this. The evidence found in our bodies is recognized by modern science—the evidence found in our minds is being perceived, dimly, perhaps, as yet, by modern psychologists.*

**Edited by Greg Gore**

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## INTRODUCTION

*It is not more surprising to be born twice than once;  
everything in nature is resurrection.*

—Voltaire

Long out of print, this new edition of Henry M. Tichenor's *The Theory of Reincarnation Explained* provides timeless wisdom on the subject of reincarnation. It offers the ideas, insights and thinking of the great Western and Eastern philosophers and writers on the concept of reincarnation.

Although mainstream Christianity, Judaism, and Islam reject the belief in reincarnation, studies show widespread public belief in reincarnation. For example, a 2001 Gallup poll revealed that approximately twenty-five percent of the population of the United States believes in reincarnation.

The popularity of recent books such as *Many Lives, Many Masters* by Brian L. Weiss and *Journey of Souls: Case Studies of Life Between Lives* by Michael Duff Newton bear witness to the increasing interest in the subject of reincarnation. These books, like some earlier works such as Gina Cerminara's *Many Mansions: The Edgar Cayce Story on Reincarnation*, use hypnosis case studies to make the argument for reincarnation.

This book uses scientific evidence, psychological evidence, analogy, and logic along with the recollection of past lives to advance the argument for reincarnation. In addition, *The Theory of Reincarnation Explained* offers a clear, straight-forward discussion and analysis of the Yogi philosophy of the seven principles of man's composition: the physical body, the astral body, Prana (the vital force), the instinctive mind, the intellect, the spiritual mind, and the Spirit.

The editor has added material to the original work, deleted some material, and made some organizational changes to make *The Theory of Reincarnation Explained* more accessible to Twenty-first Century readers.

G.G.

*... an old book, Its contents turned  
out and stripped of its lettering  
and gilding Lies here ....  
But the work shall not be wholly lost,*

*For it will...appear once more, In a  
new more perfect edition  
Corrected and  
amended...*

—From the Epitaph of  
Benjamin Franklin

## THE THEORY OF REINCARNATION IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE

*The soul, if immortal, existed before our birth. What is incorruptible must be ungenerable. Metempsychosis is the only system of immortality that Philosophy can hearken to.*

—David Hume

The belief in Reincarnation—the Transmigration of the Soul—forms the basis of the earliest beliefs, as well as the ancient schools of philosophy. The Greek philosopher Pherecydes taught it, and Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Virgil, and Ovid embraced it in their philosophies.

Plato, for example, wrote: “By making the right use of those things remembered from the former life, by constantly perfecting himself in the mysteries, a man becomes truly perfect.”

The belief in reincarnation is found in Jewish literature, in the Talmud, in the writings of Philo, and it is definitely proclaimed in the Kabbalah, the system of Jewish theosophy that even permeated the Christian faith in the middle ages. It was accepted by Giordano Bruno, and treated with respect, if not with full acceptance, by Goethe, Kent, Lessing, Hume, Schopenhauer and many others of the western school of science and philosophy. It reaches from the Wisdom of the Chaldeans to the Yogis of India, from the Magi of Persia to the Philosophers of the East.

“The soul is not born; it does not die; it was not produced from anyone; nor, was any produced from it,” declared Emerson.

“There is not, in my opinion,” wrote Addison, “a more pleasing consideration than that of the perpetual progress which the soul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength, to consider that it is to shine forever with new accessions

of glory and brighten to all eternity; that it will be still adding virtue to virtue and knowledge to knowledge, carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man.”

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

D'Israeli said: “There is no system so simple, and so little repugnant to our understanding, as that of metempsychosis. The pains and pleasures of this life are by this system considered as the recompense or the punishment of our actions in another state.”

Among the many arguments advanced to sustain the claims of reincarnation the following may be cited: The theory of immortality demands it; analogy makes it most probable; science, in many ways, confirms it, especially in the law of evolution; it explains many otherwise mysterious experiences in life; and, it alone solves the problem of apparent injustice and misery in the world.

In his poem on the philosopher Pythagoras, translated by Dryden, Ovid wrote:

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

Most of us, if not all of us, have had many strange experiences that only the theory of reincarnation can answer. Dreams of forgotten scenes, flashes of buried memories come at times like voices from a dim and curtained past. It was such experiences that led Sir Walter Scott to a sense of metempsychosis. From his diary, February 17, 1828, his biographer, Lockhart, in his *Life of Scott*, records:

“I cannot, I am sure, tell if it is worth marking down, that yesterday, at dinner time, I was strangely haunted by what I would call the sense of pre-existence, viz., a confused idea that nothing that passed was said for the first time; that the same topics had been discussed and the persons had stated the same opinions on them. . . . The sensation was so strong as to resemble what is called a mirage in the desert and a calenture on board ship.”

In his romance of *Guy Mannering*, Scott had, years previous, dwelt upon the same subject, in the words spoken by Henry Bertram:

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

These mysterious experiences, known, to a greater or lesser degree by many, are described by Bulwer-Lytton as “that strange kind of inner and spiritual memory which often recalls to us places and persons we have never seen before, and which Platonists would resolve to be the unquenched and struggling consciousness of a former life.” And again he says: “How strange is it that at times a feeling comes over us as we gaze upon certain places, which associates the scene either with soon dim remembered and

dreamlike images of the past, or with a prophetic omen of the future....(*Godolphin*).

“Eternity may be but an endless series of those migrations which men call deaths, abandonments of home after home, ever to fairer scenes and loftier heights. Age after age the spirit may shift its tent, fated not to rest in the dull Elysium of the heathen, but carrying with it evermore its two elements, activity and desire.”

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

In Lord Lindsay's *Letters*, in which a description of the Valley of Kadisha is given, we read: “We saw the river Kadisha descending from Lebanon. The whole scene bore that strange and shadowy resemblance of the wondrous landscape in *Kubla Khan* that one so often feels in actual life, when the whole scene around you appears to be reacting after a long interval. Your friends seated in the same juxtaposition, the subjects of conversation the same, and shifting with the same dreamlike ease, that you remember at some remote and indefinite period of pre-existence.”

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

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

“Why do we not remember our past births?” is answered by those in all ages—“There are many who do.”

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

Shelley expresses his conviction in the following lines: “If there be no reasons to suppose that we have existed before that period at which our existence apparently commences, then there are no grounds for supposing that we shall continue to exist after our existence has apparently ceased.”

The origin of the Jewish Kabbalah is not known. While doubtless parts have been later added to it, Jewish scholars place its origin in remote antiquity. In the *Zohar*, or *Book of Light*, contained in the Kabbalah, are found these words: “All the souls are subject to the trials of transmigration; and men do not know which are the ways of the Most High in their regard. They do not know how many transformations and mysterious trials they must undergo.”

That the doctrine of reincarnation, as taught in the Kabbalah, found acceptance among some of the Bible writers, is evidenced by numerous texts. In the *Book of Proverbs*—the actual authorship of which is unknown—we find these classic lines:

*The Lord possessed me  
in the beginning of his way,  
before the works of old.  
I was set up from everlasting,  
or ever the earth was.  
When there were no depths,  
I was brought forth;  
when there were no foundations  
abounding with water.  
Before the mountains were settled,  
before the hills was I brought forth;  
while as yet he had not made the earth,  
nor the fields, nor the highest part  
of the dust of the world.  
When he prepared the heavens  
I was there;  
When he set a compass  
upon the face of the depth;  
when he established the clouds above;  
when he strengthened  
the foundations of the deep;  
when he gave to the sea his decree,  
that the waters should not pass his Commandment;  
when he appointed the foundation of the earth—  
then I was by him as one brought up with him;  
and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing always before him;  
and my delights were with the sons of man.”*

—Proverbs 8: 22-31

Jeremiah hears the voice of the Eternal—“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee.” —Jeremiah 1: 5

These passages, as well as other similar ones in the Bible, disclose the belief of the writers in the doctrine of reincarnation. A

reading of Matthew 17:12-13 has been interpreted as a declaration by Jesus that John the Baptist is the reincarnation of Elias (Elijah):

*But I say unto you  
that Elias is come already,  
and they knew him not,  
but have done unto him  
whatsoever they listed.  
Likewise shall also  
the Son of man suffer of them.  
Then the disciples understood  
that he spake to them  
of John the Baptist.*

In his chapter on Death in *The World as Will and Idea*, Schopenhauer writes:

“We find the doctrine of metempsychosis, springing from the earliest and noblest known ages of the human race, always spread abroad in the earth as the belief of the great majority of mankind; nay, really as the teaching of all religions, with the exception of that of the orthodox Jews and the two which proceeded from it (Christianity and Islam). In the most subtle form however, and coming nearest to the truth, is Buddhism.

“Accordingly, while Christians console themselves with the thought of meeting again in another world, in which one regains one’s complete personality and knows one’s self at once, in those other religions the meeting again is going on now, only incognito. In the succession of births, and by virtue of metempsychosis or palingenesis, the persons who now stand in close connection or contact with us will also be born again with us at the next birth, and will have the same or analogous relations and sentiments towards us as now, whether these are of a friendly or hostile description.

“Recognition is certainly here limited to an obscure intimation—a reminiscence, which cannot be brought to distinct consciousness,

and refers to an infinitely distant time; with the exception, however, of the Buddha himself, who has the prerogative of distinctly knowing his own earlier births and those of others—as this is described in the Jataka. But, in fact, if at a favorable moment one contemplates, in a purely objective manner, the action of men in reality, the intuitive conviction is forced upon one that it not only is and remains constantly the same, according to the Platonic Idea, but also that the present generation, in its true inner nature, is precisely and substantially identical with every generation that has been before it.

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

Thus does Schopenhauer proclaim that the doctrine of reincarnation is the natural belief of man, until it has been displaced by “positive religious doctrines,” coming, not from nature, but “from a different source.”

He continues:

“I have also remarked that it is at once obvious to everyone who hears of it for the first time. Let anyone only observe how earnestly Lessing defends it in the last seven paragraphs of his *Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts*. Lichtenberg also says in his *Selbstcharacteristik*, ‘I cannot get rid of the thought that I died before I was born.’ Even the excessively empirical Hume says in his skeptical essay on immortality, ‘The metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that philosophy can hearken to.’

“What resists this belief is Judaism, together with the two religions which have sprung from it, because they teach the creation

of man out of nothing, and they have the hard task of linking on to this belief an endless existence *a parte post*. They certainly have succeeded, with fire and sword, in driving out of Europe and part of Asia that consoling primitive belief of mankind; it is still doubtful for how long. Yet how difficult this was is shown by the oldest church histories. Most of the heretics were attached to this belief.”

Johann Gottfried von Herder, known as one of the profound and influential German scholars of the latter part of the 18th century, in his *Dialogues on Metempsychosis*, puts the following words in the mouth of one of two friends carrying on a discussion:

“Do you not know great and rare men who cannot have become what they are at once, in a single human existence... Do not these great characters appear, for the most part, all at once? Like a cloud of celestial souls, descended from on high; like men risen from the dead, born again, who brought back the old time?

“Have you never had remembrances of a former state, which you could find no place for in this life? In that beautiful period when the soul is yet a half-closed bud, have you not seen persons, been in places, of which you were ready to swear that you had seen these persons, or had been in these places before? And yet it could not have been in this life?

“The most sublime moments, the highest thoughts, are from that source. In our more ordinary seasons, we look back, with astonishment on ourselves, we do not comprehend ourselves. And such are we; we who, from a hundred causes, have sunk so deep and are so wedded to matter, that but few reminiscences of fine a character remain to us.

“The nobler class of men, who, separated from wine and meat, lived in perfect simplicity according to the order of Nature, carried it farther, no doubt, than others, as we learn from the example of Pythagoras, of Iarchas, of Apollonius, and others, who remembered distinctly what and how many times they had been in

the world before. If we are blind, or can see but two steps beyond our noses, ought we therefore to deny that others may see a hundred or a thousand degrees farther, even to the bottom of time, into the deep, cool well of the fore-world, and there discern everything plain, bright and clear?”

To this the other friend responds: “I will freely confess to you that those dreams of memory are known to me also, among the experiences of my childhood and youth. I have been in places and circumstances of which I could have sworn that I had been in them before; with whom I was, as it were, on the footing of an old acquaintance.”

The latter then tries to explain these experiences as the result of recalled dreams, to which the former replies:

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

“You know the law of economy which rules throughout Nature. Is it not probable the Creator is guided by it in the progress of human souls? He who has not become mature in one form of humanity is put into the experience again, and, sometime or other shall be perfected.”

One more similar quotation (The writer desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to the elaborate writing of the English psychologist, F. D. Walker, for a number of the foregoing quotations) is from Professor Francis Bowen of Harvard University, in an article that appeared in the Princeton Review of May, 1881, entitled *Christian Metempsychosis*, in which Professor Bowen urges Christians to accept reincarnation:

“Our life upon earth is rightly held to be a discipline and a preparation for a higher and eternal life hereafter. But if limited to the duration of a single mortal body, it is so brief, as to seem hardly sufficient for so grand a purpose.

“Three score years and ten must surely be an inadequate preparation for eternity. But what assurances have we that the probation of the soul is confined within so narrow limits? Why may it not be continued, or repeated, through a long series of successive generations, the same personality animating one after another an indefinite number of tenements of flesh, and carry forward into each the training it has received, the character it has formed, the temper and dispositions it has indulged, in the stage of existence immediately preceding?

“It need not remember its past history, even while bearing the fruits and the consequences of that history deeply ingrained into its present nature. How many long passages of any one life are now completely lost to memory, though they may have contributed largely to build up the heart and the intellect which distinguish one man from another! Our responsibility surely is not lessened by such forgetfulness. We are still accountable for the misuse of time, though we have forgotten how or on what we wasted it. We are even now reaping the bitter fruits, through enfeebled health and vitiated desires and capacities, of many forgotten acts of self-indulgence, willfulness and sin—forgotten just because they were so numerous....

“If every soul were an act of absolute creation, the introduction to life of an entirely new creature, we might reasonably ask why different souls are so variously constituted at the outset....If metempsychosis is included in the scheme of the divine government of the world, this difficulty disappears altogether. Considered from this point of view, every one is borne into the state which he has fairly earned by his own previous history....

“The doctrine of inherited sin and its consequences is a hard lesson to be learned....But no one can complain of the dispositions

and endowments which he has inherited, so to speak, from himself; that is, from his former self in a previous stage of existence....All start from the same point, and journey through the same vicissitudes of existence, exhausting sooner or later all varieties of condition.”

Thus to every soul experience becomes the great teacher.

In concluding his article on metempsychosis, from which but a few excerpts can here be presented, Professor Bowen says: “Death remains; but that is no evil, for what we call death is only the introduction of another life on earth, and if this be not a higher and better life than the one just ended; it is our own fault. Death...is mere change and development, like the passage from the embryonic to the adult condition; from the blossom to the fruit.”

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE EAST

*You cannot say of the soul, it shall be, or is about to be, or is to be hereafter. It is without birth.*”—Bhagavad-Gita

The Yogi Philosophy of India, which for ages has ridden above the conflicts of priest-made creeds, and has ever retained, and further evolved the ancient belief in metempsychosis, may be called a philosophy of human endeavor—a philosophy of development—a philosophy of attainment. To this end it follows different paths, all leading to the same goal, viz., the unfoldment of the highest principle in man, the soul. These paths comprise Hatha Yoga, or the way of physical well-being; Raja Yoga, or the way of mental development; Karma Yoga, or the way of work—the path of action; Gnani Yoga, or the way of wisdom. To these may be added Bhakti Yoga, or the way of understanding the Absolute—the Creative Power of the universe.

The Yogi Philosophy teaches that man is composed of seven principles, which are set forth as follows: The Physical Body; the Astral Body; Prana, or the Vital Force; the Instinctive Mind; the Intellect; the Spiritual Mind; and, the Spirit.

The physical body is the lowest and crudest manifestation of life. Yet it is the abiding place of the highest—the spirit, which is the first to be, but the last to be made manifest. As the abiding place of the spirit, the physical body should receive the most intelligent attention and care. It should be kept in good health. Hatha Yoga teaches you how to be well, instead of sick. Its teachings are invaluable to those seeking physical well being.

The Yogi Philosophy not only teaches that the physical body is built up of cells, as recognized by modern biologists, but also that these cells are minute intelligences, intelligently performing their work. This is illustrated in the manner in which

nourishment is extracted from the blood, in the processes of digestion and assimilation of food, in the healing of wounds, the repair work constantly going on in the body, and many other examples known to biologists.

The astral body is the counterpart of the physical body, but of a finer grade of matter. It is the body in which the soul leaves the physical body at death. Both the physical body and the astral body return to the elements.

Prana is a Sanscrit word, the nearest English translation of which could be “absolute energy.” It is what the western school terms “vital force.” It is found in all life, from the lowest plant life to man. Prana is the life-force that we extract from the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. It is the life force of the body.

The instinctive mind is the first and lowest manifestation of mind. It is recognized by the western psychologists as the “subjective” or “subconscious” mind. It appears in all life, in the animal, plant, and even mineral kingdoms. The bodily organs are under control of the instinctive or subconscious mind. This principle of mind carries on the processes of digestion, assimilation, elimination, circulation of the blood, repair work of the body, and many other activities all without the aid or consciousness of the intellect, or conscious mind.

The intellect, or conscious mind, is described as the self-consciousness, in which man forms a conception of the “I.” It is the mind that analyzes, classifies, and draws conclusions. Among the lower animals there is very little intellect displayed. The lower forms of life—including plant-life—live in the instinctive mind. The lower animals are only concerned with the physical life and the satisfying of primitive wants. It was thousands of years before evolution developed the first sign of conscious mind, or intellect. And yet the principle of intellect was there, just as the soul principle was there, awaiting the process of development.

The spiritual mind, which has been called the “superconscious mind,” is that principle of mind that exhibits kindness, love of humanity, love of justice, and longing for a humane society. It is the source of inspiration to poets, painters, sculptors, and musicians.

The spirit itself—the immortal soul—the seventh principle of mind, is, according to the Yogi philosophy, “a ray from the Central Sun, the Real Self.” It is “a drop from the Spirit Ocean, a particle of the Sacred Flame.” It is, “that something within us which is the cause of our evolution through all the weary ages.” It was “the first to be, and yet it will be the last to appear in full, consciousness.”

The philosophy of the east is venerable with age; it can be traced to the Wisdom of the Chaldeans—its researches are found in the philosophies of ancient Greece; its findings in the school of western science.

Man, the highest development of life on this planet, is a being of many experiences. He has passed through many lives. He is destined to pass through many more. In both body and mind he carries the evidence of these experiences, these past lives; and the evidence of now experiences and future lives is made manifest in his continually increasing aspirations and visions. The law of his life is the changeless and ceaseless law of change.

In his bones, in his body, in his blood, Man manifests the life of the mineral kingdom. The mineral substances form part of his structure. His physical life manifests the life of the plant kingdom. His body carries the story of the lower animal life. Man has experienced all of these. He has passed through their lives.

In the body of Man, as well as in the bodies of other living creatures, is found the record of these many experiences, these many past lives; and in the instinctive mind the memory, the characteristics of those past lives, exists.

In human embryos of three to five weeks' development appear the gill-slits of the fish. There is also found the notochord, the dorsal stiffening axis of the lower vertebrates, which disappears as the backbone develops.

In Man, as well as in other mammals, three distinct pairs of kidneys appear in the early embryonic stage. The first kidneys develop at the stage when the fish-gills are formed, and these are identified with the kidneys of the lower species of fishes.

The second kidneys appear at the amphibian-reptilian stage of embryonic life, and with the amphibia such as frogs, crocodiles, beavers and like creatures that exist in both air and water, persist throughout life.

The three kidneys succeed these in the development of Man, as well as in other mammals, and remain, while the other two, and useless ones so far as the life of Man is concerned, perish. Thus has Nature preserved the story of Man's experiences, his past lives. He has lived them all. He will live many more. Evolution does not cease in its processes with the present development of the highest order of Man.

Abundance of other similar evidences of Man's experiences, his past lives, can be found in any standard work on biology. Le Conte writes: "By the law of heredity each generation repeats the form, and structure of the previous; and in the order in which they successively appeared. But there is a tendency for each successive appearing character to appear a little earlier in each successive generation; and by this means time is left over for the introduction of still higher new characters. Thus, characters which were once adult are pushed back to the young, and then still back to the embryo, and thus place and time are made for each generation to push on still higher."

In the western world, Psychology, from an analytical basis, is a comparatively new study. With the philosophers of the east it is very old. There and there alone can be found a solution; or at

least anything that offers a solution, to life. There, writes Max Muller, “the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of them which well deserve the attention of those who have studied Plato and Kant.”

And above all who have through the centuries developed the choicest gifts of the human mind, who have most deeply pondered on problems of life, are the Yogi philosophers of India. This tribute is due them whether or not one accepts their solutions in their entirety; and these solutions at least, in the words of Max Muller, deserve the attention of all students of life. These solutions present a reason to life; while to the materialist school life becomes a riddle.

To the question that remains unanswered with the western materialists, “How did life originate?” the philosophers of the east reply, “Life has no origin; in some form, somewhere, it has always existed, and always will; it has neither beginning nor end, but undergoes constant change.” The eastern philosophers offer a solution to the problem of life, where the western materialists offer none.

The accepted view of the materialists of the western school is *omne vivum e vivo*—*All life from life*, under known existing conditions; and then they maintain that life, somehow, proceeded from the lifeless in its first manifestation on this earth, or elsewhere. The materialists who ridicule the miraculous fall back upon a most astounding miracle to sustain their materialism; for nothing short of a miracle could create life from the lifeless.

When the race, in sufficient numbers, reaches spiritual consciousness, exploitation and war will be no more. Human brotherhood will begin to appear. Man, coming into his own, into a realization of his soul, will create a society benefiting his awakened perceptions. The longing for the higher, the nobler life, does not come from the instinctive mind. Neither does it

come from the intellect. It comes from the messages sent by the soul to the awakened spiritual mind.

Such is the teaching of the eastern philosophers of the principles of Man that are apparent today among the most developed of the race—the Instinctive Mind, the Intellect, and the Spiritual Mind.

Then comes the last known or conceivable principle of Man, hardly made manifest in the present development of the race—the Soul—the Spirit itself; without which the long ages of evolutionary processes would end in utter defeat—would end in falling short of the only conceivable rational purpose of life.

Filled with awe and admiration as he contemplated the Law of Evolution, Charles Darwin declared: “When I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Cambrian system was deposited, they seem to me to become ennobled. Judging from the past, we may safely infer that not one living species will transmit its unaltered likeness to a distant future.”

Together with the Law of Evolution, traveling with it, virtually a part of it, the philosophers of the east recognize the law of re-incarnation. It must be admitted that this would solve many otherwise perplexing problems. It would account for the memories carried by the instinctive mind. Thus do the evolutionary processes go on, until an order of Man shall appear vastly higher than can now be conceived.

A strange doctrine to many; and yet it is as old as the race; recognized in a crude way by primitive Man. Reincarnation, working with the evolutionary processes—a part of these processes from the lower life to the higher—would solve many things we all see in life. In Man can be seen the forms of many lives.

“What compassion,” says Emerson, “do these imprisoning forms awaken! You may sometimes catch the glance of a dog

which lays a kind of a claim to sympathy and brotherhood. What! Somewhat of me down there? Does he know it? Can he, too, as I, go out of himself, perceive relations... It was in this glance that Ovid got the hint of his metamorphosis; Calidasa of his transmigration of souls.... In a mixed assembly we have chanced to see not only a glance at Abdiel so grand and keen, but also in other faces the features of the mink, of the bull, of the rat, and of the barn-door fowl.”

What, then, constitutes the Spirit, the Soul, the seventh principle of Man? It is the Real Self. It is the “I,” the consciousness of which comes at times, even if the “I” itself is hardly understood. We understand the two lower minds—the Instinctive Mind and the Intellect—and we can also realize a Spiritual Mind. But these are not the Real Self—the “I”. These are the “not I’s,” that can be analyzed, can be set in a class by themselves, and mentally viewed. The Real Self; the “I” is far more than these—is far above them. Then what is the “I”—the Real Self—the immortal Soul of Man?

According to Yogi Philosophy, the “I”—the Real Self—is hidden in the lower forms of life—even in the lower forms of human life—by many sheaths that shut out its light. When the Real Self begins to arouse itself from its sleep, its dreams vanish from it, and it begins to see the world as it is, and to recognize itself in reality and not as the distorted thing of its dreams.

Many people are scarcely conscious of the “I.” They are but a little above the animal in point of consciousness, and their “I” is almost entirely a matter of the consciousness of the wants of the body; the satisfaction of the appetites; the gratification of the passions; the securing of personal comfort; the expression of lust, savage power, etc. In these people the lower part of the instinctive mind is the seat of the “I.” If they could analyze their thoughts they would say that the “I” was the physical body, the said body having certain “feelings,” “wants,” and “desires.”

Many people in all societies are in this stage. They use their thinking powers for the gratification of their bodily desires and cravings, and really live on the plane of the instinctive mind. Such a person may speak of “my mind,” or “my soul,” not from a high position of looking upon the things from the standpoint of a Master who realizes Real Self, but from below, from the point of view of one who lives on the plane of the Instinctive Mind.

And yet the Soul is there, awaiting its development. It is there, just as the intellect is sleeping and awaiting development in the instinctive mind of the lower forms of life. As the physical body would be meaningless without the instinctive mind, so the instinctive mind becomes meaningless without the intellect; and so also the intellect becomes meaningless without the soul.

Indeed, without the soul the Universe itself becomes meaningless, becomes unexplainable, becomes the riddle that the materialist, Haeckel, pronounced it to be in his *Riddle of the Universe*. Without the Soul of Man the Law of Evolution—a law more wonderful than the intellect can conceive—has wasted its prodigious processes, has failed to reach the only consummation that its tireless and resistless energy points to as its manifest purpose.

“Consider,” writes Maurice Maeterlinck, “the earth in its origin; at first, a shapeless nebula becoming gradually more and more condensed; next a globe of fire, of rocks in fusion, whirling for millions of years through space, with no other object than that of forming into a mass and cooling—an inconceivable incandescence which none of our sources of heat can suggest to us—an essential, scientific, absolute barrenness which may well have proclaimed itself irremediable and everlasting.

“Who would have thought that from these torrents of matter in eruption, which seemed to have destroyed forever all life or the least germ of life, there would emerge each and every form of life itself, from the greatest, the strongest, the most enduring, the most

impetuous, the most abundant, down to the least visible, the most precarious, the most ephemeral, the most exiguous?

“Who could have dared foresee that they would give birth to what seems so utterly alien to the liquefied or viscous rocks and metals that alone formed the surface, the nucleus, and the very entity of our globe? I mean our human intelligence and consciousness. Is it possible to imagine a more unexpected evolution and ending? What could astonish us after so great an astonishment, and what are we not entitled to hope of a world, which after being what it was, has produced what we see and what we are?

“Considering that it started from a sort of negation of life; from integral barrenness, and from worse than nothing in order to end in us, where will it not end after starting from ourselves? If its birth and formation have elaborated such prodigies, what prodigies may not its existence, its indefinite prolongation, and its dissolution hold in store?

“There are an immeasurable distance and inconceivable transformations between the one frightful material of the early days and the human thought of this moment; and there will doubtless be a like distance and like transformations, as difficult to conceive, between the thought of this moment and that which will succeed it in the infinity of time.

“It is well, sometimes, to tell ourselves, especially in these days of distress and discouragement, that we are living in a world which has not yet exhausted its future and which is much nearer to its beginning than to its end. It was born but yesterday, and has only just disentangled its original chaos. It is at the starting point of its hopes and of its experience.

“We believe that it is making for death, whereas, all its past, on the contrary, shows that it is much more probably making for life. In any case, as its years pass by, the quantity, and still more the quality, of the life which it engenders and maintains tend to

increase and to improve. It has given us only the first fruits of its miracles; and in all likelihood there is no more connection between what it was and what it is than there will be between what it is and what it will be.

“No doubt, when its greatest marvels burst into being, we shall no longer possess the lives which we possess today, but we shall still be there under another form; we shall still be existing somewhere, on its surface or in its depths, and it is not utterly improbable that one of its last prodigies will reach us in our dust, awaken us, and recall us to life, in order to impart to us the share of happiness which we had not enjoyed and to teach us that we were wrong not to interest ourselves, on the further side of our graves, in the destiny of this earth of ours, whereof we had never ceased to be the immortal offspring.”

No evidence of the immortality of the soul could be more conclusive than the evidences of the evolutionary processes in the Law of Life. To this conclusion came the great Naturalist, Alfred Russel Wallace, who, together with Darwin, gave to the western world the Darwin-Wallace theory of Evolution and Natural Selection. There are other evidences of immortality offered, but in Nature herself, our common Mother, can, if we will but study her wondrous ways, be found the evidence of the soul, the last principle to manifest itself in the mind of Man. Without this principle—without this supreme and necessary complement to complete the mind of Man, the Law of Life becomes an exhibition of magic manipulated by mysterious jugglers.

The Soul—the immortal life principle—alone answers the question that materialists cannot answer, What is Life? The soul becomes the “I”—the Real Self that Ingersoll in a tribute to the memory of John G. Mills so beautifully expressed:

“He was not a Christian. In the Eden of his hope there did not crawl and coil the serpent of eternal pain. In many languages he sought the thoughts of men, and for himself he solved the

problems of the world....With him immortality was the eternal consequences of his own acts. He believed that every pure thought, every disinterested deed, hastens the harvest of universal good....

“All hope to meet again the loved and lost. In every heart there grows this sacred flower. Immortality is a word that Hope through all the ages has been whispering to Love. The miracle of thought we cannot understand....But let us believe that over the cradle Nature bends and smiles, and lovingly above the dead in benediction holds her outstretched hands.”

## THE SCHOOL OF EXPERIENCE

*There are today, as there have always been, many who remember. One need only ask to find men and women who have a clear and definite vision of things that befell them in other lives.*

—Charles Johnston

In offering reincarnation as the school of experience—a philosophy that solves the problem of life—E. D. Walker, in *Reincarnation: A Study of Forgotten Truth*, (London, 1888) writes:

“The broadest intelligence leads us directly into the evolutionary aspect of reincarnation....In this view, the present life is one grade of a stupendous school, in which we are being educated for a destiny so far beyond our comprehension that some call it a kind of deity. Even though we have descended below former altitudes, the only path to the absolute lies through the sensuous earthly vale. Sin itself, after we have escaped it will lead to a mightier result than would be possible without it, or it would not be permitted.

“The richest trees of all the forest spring from the unclean miasmatic fens....We penetrate the animal existence in human form more successfully than would be possible if we transmigrated into all the species of zoology; for here we carry sufficient intelligence, along with the material condition, to comprehend these creatures around us which cannot understand themselves. . . .The highest individuals of mankind, the true prophets and poets, attain this intimate communion with Nature, this mastery over the lower creation, which demonstrates their fitness for introduction to a higher (creation).”

In his essay on the Swedish scientist, philosopher and mystic, Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), Emerson writes:

“In common parlance, what one man is said to learn by experience, a man of extraordinary sagacity is said, without experience, to divine. The Arabians say that Abdul Khain, the mystic, and Abu Ali Scena, the philosopher, conferred together; and on parting the philosopher said, ‘All that he sees, I know’; and the mystic said, ‘All that he knows, I see.’

“If one should ask the reason of this intuition, the solution would lead us into that property which Plato denoted as reminiscence, and which is implied by the Brahmans in the tenet of transmigration... For all things in Nature being linked and related, and the soul having heretofore known all, nothing hinders but that any man who has recalled to mind, or, according to the common phrase, has learned one thing only, should of himself recover all his ancient knowledge, and find out again all the rest, if he have but courage, and faint not in the midst of his researches.”

There is no doubt that Swedenborg anticipated many scientific facts and positions that are usually regarded as of a much more modern date. It was only toward the end of the 19th century that his voluminous writings began to be properly collected and examined, with the result of proving that there was hardly one department of scientific activity in which he was not far ahead of his time.

His work on palaeontology shows him the predecessor of all the Scandinavian geologists, and his contributions in this field alone would have been sufficient to perpetuate his fame. He was also a great physicist and had arrived at the nebular hypothesis theory of the formation of the planets and the sun long before Kant and Laplace.

Swedenborg’s theory of light and theory of the cosmic atoms were equally astonishing. He wrote a lucid account of the phenomena of phosphorescence, and adduced a molecular magnetic theory, which anticipated some of the chief features of the hypothesis of today.

The great French chemist, Dumas, gives Swedenborg the credit for the first attempt to establish a system of crystallography. He was the first to employ mercury for the air pump, and devised a method of determining longitude at sea by observations of the moon among the stars. He suggested the use of experimental tanks for testing the powers of ship models, invented an ear-trumpet for the deaf, improved the common-house stove of his native land, cured smoky chimneys, took a lively interest in machine-guns and even sketched a flying machine.

In no field were Swedenborg's researches more noteworthy than in those of physiological science. It is clear that Swedenborg showed, 150 years before any other scientist, that the motion of the brain was synchronous with the respiration and not with the action of the heart and the circulation of the blood, a discovery the full bearings of which are still far from being realized.

He had arrived at the modern conception of the activity of the brain as the combined activity of its individual cells. The cerebral cortex, and, more definitely the cortical elements (nerve cells), formed the seat of the activity of the soul, and were ordered into departments according to various functions. His views as to the physiological functions of the spinal cord are also in agreement with recent research, and he anticipated many of the pre-eminent roles of the ductless glands, which students of the present time are only beginning to discover.

Up to middle age Swedenborg's position was that of a scholar, a scientist. But a profound change was coming over him, which led him to leave the domain of physical research for that of psychical and spiritual inquiry. Neither by geometrical, nor physical, nor metaphysical principles had he succeeded in reaching and grasping the infinite and the spiritual, or in elucidating their relation to man and man's organism, though he had caught glimpses of facts and methods which he thought only required confirmation and development.

Late in life he wrote to Oetinger that “he was introduced by the Lord first into the natural sciences, and thus prepared, and, indeed, from the year 1710 to 1745, when heaven was opened to him.” The latter event is described by him as “his introduction into the spiritual world.” Before his illumination he had been instructed by dreams, and enjoyed extraordinary visions, and heard mysterious conversations.

“The life of religion,” Swedenborg said, “is to do good....The kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom of uses.” The attention of modern psychologists is now being drawn to his doctrine of the relation of the elements of the universe to the membranes of the body.

Into this world at times come colossal characters like Swedenborg who stand like mile-posts in the long journey of human life. From where did they come? Heredity does not account for them because their ancestry does not disclose it. Their posterity, even greater than themselves, demonstrates it. What other solution may there be, except that these people have lived other lives, have gained their greatness through former experiences? Buddha and Jesus, incarnations of brotherhood and peace, without which society is not yet truly human; Homer, whom the Greeks named a god; Shakespeare, son of a cobbler; Raphael and Angelo, Wagner and Beethoven; heredity, to these, answers not. The answer is offered in the words of Francis Bowen:

“For this is the universal law of being, whether of matter or mind; everything changes, nothing dies in the sense of being annihilated. What we call death is only the resolution of a complex body into its constituent parts, nothing that is truly one and indivisible being lost or destroyed in the process.

“In combustion or any other rapid chemical change, according to the admission of the materialists themselves, not an atom of matter is ever generated or ever ceases to be; it only escapes from one combination to enter upon another. Then the human soul,

which, as we know from consciousness, is absolutely one and indivisible, only passes on after the dissolution of what was once its home to animate another body....

“Our future life is not, at any rate not while the present administration of this world's affairs continues, to be some inconceivable form of merely spiritual being. It will be clothed again with a body, which may or may not be in part the same with the one which it has just left. Leibnitz held that the soul is never entirely divorced from matter, but carries on some portion of what was its earthly covering into a subsequent stage of existence.

“We can easily imagine and believe that every person now living is a representation of someone who lived perhaps centuries ago under another name, in another country; it may be not with the same line of ancestry, and yet one and the same with him in his inmost being and essential character. His surroundings are changed; the old house of flesh has been torn down and rebuilt; but the tenant is still the same. He has come down from some former generation, bringing with him what may be either a help or a hindrance; namely, the character and tendencies which he there formed and nurtured.

“And herein is retribution; he has entered upon a new stage of probation and in it he has now to learn what the character which he there formed naturally leads to when tried upon a new and perhaps broader theater. If this be not so, tell me why men are born with characters so unlike and with tendencies so depraved.

“In a sense far more literal than was intended by the poet, it may be true of every country churchyard, that, ‘Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest, Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.’ They bring with them no recollections of the incidents of their former life, as such memory would unfit them for the new part which they have to play. But they are still the same in the principles and modes of conduct, in the inmost spirits of action, which the forgotten incidents of their former life have developed and strengthened....

“These inborn tendencies may be either exaggerated or subdued by the lessons of a new experience, by the exercises of reflection, and by habitually heeding or neglecting the monitions of conscience. But they still exist as original tendencies, and as such they must make either the upward or downward path more easy, more natural, and more likely to reach the goal so remote, that it would otherwise be unattainable.”

A number of years ago, when Josef Hoffmann, then a ten-year old child, was astonishing music lovers with his exquisite rendering of the most difficult concertos, the Boston Herald said:

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

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

“There is in each Incarnation but one birth, one life, one death,” says a philosopher of India. “It is folly to duplicate these by persistent regrets for the past, by present cowardice, or fear of the future. There is no Time. It is Eternity’s Now that man mistakes the past, present, and future. Liberate thyself from evil actions by good action.”

In a work entitled *The Memory of Past Births*, written in the last century by Charles Johnston, the following details are given of persons having a memory of a former existence:

“There are today, as there have always been, many who remember. One need only ask to find men and women who have a clear and definite vision of things that befell them in other lives. I have known many who could tell, and were ready to tell the right inquirer. Let me give details of some of these.

“One remembered clearly a temple ceremony in a shrine hollowed out between the paws of some great beast, telling even the form of the landscape and color of the sky as he had seen them, when looking back through the door. He described, without knowing it, a scene in ancient Egypt, for the shrine is cut out between the paws of the Egyptian Sphinx—a shrine of which he knew nothing, remembering only the clear picture, but having no sense of where it was. He also had a quite clear vision of a hillside in India, a memory belonging to yet another life; and his description here was equally vivid and true.

“Yet another spoke of many lives remembered, one including a scene in a temple in inner China, where a ceremony of the Mysteries was being performed. He had a clear sense of his own place in the temple, of the words spoken, of the ritual carried out. And he also had a definite memory of two other births with details of names and places, vivid as if they had happened yesterday.

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

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

Based upon the memory of two distinct lives, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote his story of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. These phenomena, of what is termed “alternating consciousness,” have formed themes for various writers. Baron Du Prel's *Philosophie der Mystic* gives a number of cases, claimed to be of actual occurrence, of which the following is an illustration:

“Miss R enjoyed naturally perfect health, and reached womanhood without any serious illness. She was talented, and gifted with a remarkably good memory, and learned with great ease. Without any previous warning she fell one day into a deep sleep which lasted many hours, and on awakening she had forgotten every bit of her former knowledge, and her memory had become a complete *tabula rasa*. She again learned to spell, read, write and reckon, and made rapid progress.

“Some months afterward she again fell into a similarly prolonged slumber, from which she awoke to her former consciousness, i.e., in the same state as before her first long sleep, but without the faintest recollection of the existence or events of the intervening period. This double existence now continued, so that in a single subject there occurred a regular alternation of two perfectly distinct personalities, each being unconscious of the other, and possessing only the memories and knowledge acquired in previous corresponding states.”

Similar instances of complete loss of memory, of the person concerned completely forgetting his former identity and assuming

an entirely different one, are not of such rare occurrence but that doubtless the reader has known or heard of them. Men and women have disappeared from their homes and have finally been located living in some other locality as an entirely different personality, and this without any reason whatever for hiding their former identity. These instances generally follow a sickness, in which the “ego” has wandered away from present scenes. Is it any wonder, then, that the memory of former existences becomes lost, except in rare cases?

And how many lives may there be, slumbering for a while, within our being? And what do these instances indicate, where one life is laid aside, and another taken up?

“Our body,” said Plotinus, “is the true river of Lethe; for souls plunged into it forget all.” It is written of Frederick von Oetingen that “in his old age he became an innocent child. Leaving his study, where he had written many books, and his library, whose volumes were now sealed to him, he would go to the streets and join the children in their plays, and spend all his time sharing their delights. The profound scholar was stripped of his intellect and became a venerable boy, lovable and kind as in all his busy life. He had bathed in the river of Lethe before his time.”

## CONCLUSION

*Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!*  
—Wordsworth

We have lived many lives. Both our bodies and minds bear witness to this. The evidence found in our bodies is recognized by modern science—the evidence found in our minds is being perceived, dimly, perhaps, as yet, by modern psychologists. By the experiences of the past we are molding the future—by our past errors we learn the better way to go.

We are travelers from eternity to eternity, learning the way of wisdom as we come and go; learning at last that all life is the expression of Universal Life, evolving from lower forms to higher; that birth and death are but phases of the ceaseless law of change.