



CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. HOW WE REMEMBER OUR PAST LIVES . . .	1
II. THE VISION OF THE SPIRIT . . .	42
III. THE LAW OF RENUNCIATION . . .	70
IV. THE HIDDEN WORK OF NATURE . . .	81

NOTE

THESE four essays on Reincarnation have all been delivered as lectures during the course of my Theosophical work in America, England, and India. All have appeared in *The Theosophist*, except "The Law of Renunciation," which was published in *Bibby's Annual*, whence it is reprinted here with Mr. Joseph Bibby's permission.

C. J.

TO
THE CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION
IN FULFILMENT OF A PROMISE,
FULL MOON OF CHAITRA, 1912

HOW WE REMEMBER OUR PAST LIVES

AMONG the many ideas that have lightened the burden of men, one of the most serviceable has been that of Reincarnation. It not only explains why one man is born in the lap of luxury and another in poverty, why one is a genius and another an idiot, but it also holds out the hope that, as men now reap as they have sown in the past, so in future lives the poor and the wretched of to-day shall have what they lack, if so they work for it, and that the idiot may life after life build up a mentality which in far-off days may flower as the genius.

When the idea of reincarnation is heard of for the first time, the student naturally supposes that it is a Hindu doctrine, for it is known to be a fundamental part of both Hinduism and Buddhism. But the strange fact is that reincarnation is found everywhere as a belief, and its origin cannot be traced to Indian sources.

We hear of it in far-off Australia,¹ and there is a story on record of an Australian aborigine who went cheerfully to the gallows, and replied on being questioned as to his levity, "Tumble down black-fellow, jump up white-fellow, and have lots of sixpence to spend"! It was taught by the Druids of ancient Gaul, and Julius Cæsar tells us how young Gauls were taught reincarnation, and that as a consequence they had no fear of death. Greek philosophers knew of it; we have Pythagoras telling his pupils that in his past lives he had been a warrior at the siege of Troy, and later was the philosopher Hermotimus of Clazomenæ. It is not utterly unknown to Christian teaching, if we take the simple statement of Christ, when questioned whether John the Baptist was Elijah or Elias reborn, "If ye will receive it, this is Elias which was for to come," and He follows up the statement with the significant words, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." In later Jewish tradition the idea is known and the Talmud mentions several cases of reincarnation.

¹ See *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, by Baldwin Spencer & F. G. Gillen, 1904, p. 145, etc.

There are many to whom reincarnation appeals most forcibly, and Schopenhauer does but little exaggerate when he says, "I have also remarked that it is at once obvious to every one who hears of it for the first time." Some believe in the idea immediately; it comes to them like a flash of light in thick darkness and the problem of life is clearly seen with reincarnation as the solution. Others there are who grow into belief, as each doubt is solved and each question answered.

Now there is one, and only one, objection that can logically be brought against reincarnation, if correctly understood as Theosophy teaches it, and it lies in the question: "If, as you say, I have lived on earth in other bodies, why don't I remember the past?"

Now if reincarnation is a fact in nature, there surely will be enough other facts that will point to its existence. No fact in nature is isolated and it is possible in diverse ways to discover that fact. Similarly it is with reincarnation; there are indeed enough facts of a psychological kind to prove to a thinker that reincarnation must be a fact after all and not a theory.

In answering the question why we do not remember our past lives, surely the first necessary point is to ask of ourselves what we mean by memory. If we have some clear ideas as to the mechanism of memory, perhaps we may be able to understand why we do not (or do) "remember" our past days or lives. Now, briefly speaking, what we usually mean by memory is a summing up. If I remember to-day the incidents of my cutting my finger yesterday, there will be two elements in my memory, first the series of events that went to produce the pain—the misadventure in handling the knife, the cut, the bleeding, the sensorial reaction in the brain, the gesture, and so on; and second the sense of pain. As days pass, the cause of the pain recedes into the periphery of consciousness, while the effect as pain still holds the centre. Presently we shall find that even the memory of the pain itself recedes into the background, leaving behind with us not a direct memory as an event, but an indirect memory as a tendency—a tendency to be careful in the handling of all cutting implements. Continually this process is taking place; the cause is forgotten, though recoverable

under hypnosis from the subconscious mind, while the effect, transmuted into tendency, remains.

It is here that we are specially aided by the brain. We are apt to think of the brain as a recorder of memory, without realising that one of its most useful functions is to wipe out memories. The brain plays the dual function of remembering and forgetting and, but for our ability to forget, life would be impossible. If each time we tried to move a limb, we were to remember all our infantile efforts at movement and the hesitation and doubt and perhaps actual pain involved, our consciousness would be so overwhelmed by memories that the necessary movement of the limb would certainly be delayed, or not made at all. Similarly it is with every function now performed automatically which was once consciously acquired; it is because we do forget the process of acquiring, that we can utilise the faculty.

This is what is continuously taking place in consciousness with each one of us. There is a process of exchange, similar to copper coins of one denomination being changed to silver

coins of smaller bulk representing them, then into gold coins of smaller weight still, and later to notes representing a value, and last of all to a cheque-book whose intrinsic worth, except in those countries that have stamp duties, is nil. Yet we have but to write our signature on a cheque to put into operation the whole medium of exchange. It is a similar process that takes place with all memories of sensations, feelings and thoughts. These are severally grouped into categories and transmuted into likes and dislikes, and into talents and faculties.

Now we know that as we manifest a like or dislike or exhibit any capacity, we are remembering our past, though we cannot remember in detail one by one the memories that contribute to the emotion or faculty. If I write these words in English on this page, I am remembering the first time I saw each word in a reading book and looked up its meaning in a dictionary as I prepared my home lessons; but it is a kind of transmuted memory. Nevertheless I do remember, and but for those memories being somewhere in my consciousness (whether in touch with

some brain cells or not is not now the point) I should not be able to think of the right word to express my thought nor shape it on this paper so that the printer will recognise the letters to set them up in print. Furthermore we know as a fact that we forget these causative memories one by one; it would be foolish if as I write a particular word I were to try to call up the memory of the first time I saw it. The brain is a recording instrument of such a kind that, though it records, it does not obey the consciousness when it desires to unroll the record, except in certain abnormal cases. To want to remember is not necessarily followed by remembrance, and we have to take this fact as it is.

Here it is that Bergson has very luminously pointed out that "we think with only a small part of the past, but it is with our entire past, including the original bent of our soul, that we desire, will, and act". Clearly then it would be useless to try to remember our past lives by the mere exercise of the mind; though thought can recall something of the past, it is only a fraction of the whole. But on the other hand, let us but *feel* or *act*, and then at once

our feeling and action is the resultant of all the forces of the past that have converged on our individuality. If therefore we are to trace memories of our past lives in our present normal consciousness, we must note how we feel and act, expecting to recover little of such memories in a mere mental effort to remember.

Every feeling and act, then, can be slowly traced to its component parts of impressions from without and reactions from within. So much is this the case with each one of us, that we can construct for ourselves what has been another's past as we watch that other feel and act, provided he does both in an *average* fashion. But if he manifests a mode that is not the average mode of thought or feeling, then he becomes incomprehensible and needs explanation. Since then average feelings and actions can be readily explained as the result of average experiences, unusual feelings and actions must be explained as having an unusual causation. If the present writer were to deliver a lecture in English in India, where so many can speak English, each of his listeners would take for granted that he had been to school and college, without

perhaps inquiring further when and where. But were he instead of speaking in English to speak in Italian, at once then each would be curious to know how and when that faculty of speaking in Italian had been grown. Furthermore, if an Italian were present in the audience, he would know that the speaker must have been in Italy or must have spent considerable time among Italians. Wherever there is any manifestation of feeling or action—as indeed of some expressions of thought, too—which has something of the quality of the *expert*, then we must construct for that faculty a slow growth through experiences that result from experiments along that particular line.

Now each one of us has qualities of an average kind, as also a few of an expert kind. The former we can account for by average experiences. Let us examine some of the latter, and see if we can account for them on any other hypothesis than that of reincarnation.

Now one of the principal things that characterise men is their likes and dislikes. Sometimes these might be called rational; that is, they are such likes and dislikes as an

average typical individual of his particular species might be said normally to possess at his stage in evolution. We can account for these normal likes and dislikes, because they are such as we ourselves manifest under similar conditions. But suppose we take the case of an extraordinary liking, such as is termed "love at first sight". Two people meet in the seeming fortuitous adjustment of human events, sometimes, it may be, coming from the ends of the earth. They know nothing of each other, and yet ensues the curious phenomenon that they know a great deal of each other. Life would be a happy thing if we could go out with deep affection to all we meet; but we know we cannot, it is not in our nature. Why then should it be in our nature to "fall in love" with a particular individual? Why should we be ready to sacrifice all for this person whom, in this life at least, we have met but a few times? How is it that we seem to know the inner working of his heart and brain from the little he reveals at our conventional intercourse at the beginning? "Falling in love" is indeed a mysterious psychological phenomenon, but the process is far better described as being

dragged into love, since the individual is forced to obey and may not refrain. Now there are two logical explanations possible; one is the ribald one of the scoffer that it is some form of hysteria or insanity, due it may be to a microbe; the other is that in this profound going forth of one individual, as an expert in feeling, towards another, we have not a first meeting but the last of many many meetings that took place in past lives. Where or when is of little consequence to the lovers; indeed Rudyard Kipling has suggested in his "Finest Story in the World" that it is only in order that we might not miss the delicious sensation of falling in love with our beloved, that the kindly gods have made us drink of the river of forgetfulness before we returned to life on earth. The principal thing to note in this emotional mood of being in love is that the friendship is not as one that begins, but as one that is continued; and in that psychological attitude of the two lovers we have the remembrance of past lives when they met and loved and sacrificed to each other.

Not dissimilar to this unusual liking that is falling in love is the unusual disliking that

is not so very rare in human experience. Certain normal dislikes we can readily account for; but take the case of two individuals meeting for the *first* time, it may be knowing nothing even by hearsay of each other, and then we have sometimes the striking phenomenon of one of the two *drawing back* from the other, not outwardly by gesture, but inwardly by a feeling or an intuition. In all such cases of drawing back the curious thing is that there is no personal feeling; it is not a violent feeling of "I do not like you," but far more an impersonal state of mind where almost no feeling manifests, but may be paraphrased into, "It is wise to have little to do with you." Sometimes we follow this intuition, but usually we brush it aside as unjust, and then turn to understanding our acquaintance with the mind. Not infrequently it then follows that we begin to like him, perhaps even to love him. We forget our "first impression," or put it aside as mere irrational impulse. Now there are many such revulsions that are purely irrational impulses, but there is a residue of cases where after-events show that the dislike was not an impulse but an intuition. For it may

happen, after years have passed of intercourse with our friend, that suddenly without any warning he as it were stabs us in the back and deals us a mortal blow; and then in our grief and humiliation we remember that first impression of ours and wish that we had followed it.

Whence came this first impression? Reincarnation offers a solution, which is that the injured had suffered in past lives at the hands of his injurer and it is the memory of that suffering that flashes to the mind as the intuition.

More striking still are those cases where there exist at the same time like and dislike, love and resentment. The writer well remembers a lady describing her attitude to a friend to whom she was profoundly attached in the following words, "I love him, but I despise him!" I wonder how many wives say this daily of their husbands, or husbands of their wives. Why should there be this incomprehensible jumble of contradictory feelings?

The clue is strikingly given by W. E. Henley in his well-known poem,

Or ever the knightly years were gone
 With the old world to the grave,
 I was a king in Babylon,
 And you were a Christian slave.

The poet goes on to tell us how the king "saw and took," and toyed with the maid and, as is a man's way, finally cast her aside. But she loved him well, but heart-broken at his treatment committed suicide. Now it is obvious that the girl dies full of both love and resentment, and since what we sow we reap, each in the rebirth reaps in emotional attitude the result of past causes. For this time the man loves, and desires to possess her; she loves him in return and yet does not permit him to have his heart's desire.

The pride I trampled is now my scathe,
 For it tramples me again;
 The old resentment lasts like death,
 For you love, and yet you refrain;
 I break my heart on your hard unfaith,
 And I break my heart in vain.

Henley sees with his poetic vision that the present situation as between the two cannot be the end in eternity; there must be a true loving and understanding of each other at the long last; and so the poem ends with the man's pride in his past, and resignation in the present,

Yet not for an hour do I wish undone
 The deed beyond the grave,
 When I was a king in Babylon
 And you were a virgin slave.

There can only be one ending, that of the fairy tale, since it needs must be in a universe where there is One who loves, that,

Journeys end in lovers' meeting
 Every wise man's son doth know.

We have so far been considering the manifestations of an individual's emotional nature, and it is obvious that because of his own experiences he will be able to understand the emotions of others, so long as such emotions are in the main of like nature. But what of those individuals who thoroughly understand such experiences as have not come to them? Shakespeare understands the working of a woman's heart and mind, and, too, all the intricate mental and emotional processes of the traitor; Dickens knows how the murderer feels after committing the crime.

Furthermore, some gifted men and women, experiencing emotions, generalise from them to what is experienced by all, while one not so gifted, though once "bitten," is not twice "shy," nor is made appreciably wiser by the

same experience coming to him over and over again. The gifted few, on the other hand, will fathom the universal quality in a single experience, and from it will anticipate many of like nature; for themselves, and sometimes for others too, they will state their experiences reduced to algebraic formulæ, as it were, each formula including in one general statement all particular cases. Their thoughts and feelings are like aphorisms, with the transformation of many experiences into one Experience.

Now to generalise from our particular emotions is as rare a gift as to originate a philosophy from the particular thoughts we gain about things. Yet it is this generalisation from particular emotions that is characteristic of a poet, and the more universal are his generalisations the greater is he as poet. Why then should an individual here and there have this wonderful ability of seeing particular men as representatives of types, and particular emotions as expressions of universal emotions? We say that such a man is a genius, but the word genius merely describes and does not explain. There are geniuses in every department of life—religion, poetry, art, music,

statesmanship, the drama, generalship in war and in commerce, and in many other phases of life. These geniuses are characterised by many abnormal qualities; they are always men of the future and not of their day, and each genius is a lawgiver to future generations in his own department of activity; and above all, they live emotionally and mentally in wide generalisations. Whence comes this wonderful ability?

One explanation offered is Heredity. But how far does heredity really explain genius? According to the hitherto accepted theory of heredity, each generation adds a little to a quality brought from the generation before, and then transmits it to the next; this in turn adds a little, and passes on the total of what it has received plus its own contribution; and so on generation after generation, till we arrive at a particular generation, and one individual of it, in whom the special quality in some mysterious way gets concentrated, and that individual is thereby a genius. According to this popular theory, some remote ancestor of Shakespeare had a fraction of Shakespeare's genius, which he transmitted through heredity to his offspring; this offspring then, keeping

intact what was given him by his parent, added to the stock from his own experiences, and then passed on both to his child; and so on in successive generations, each generation treasuring what is given to it from all previous generations, and adding something of its own before transmitting it to the next. Shakespeare then is as the torrent from a reservoir that has slowly been dammed up, but bursts its sides when the pressure has passed beyond a certain point.

Such a conception of heredity is based upon the assumption that what an individual acquires of faculty as the result of adaptability to his environment is passed on to his offspring. Such is indeed the conclusion that the Darwinian school of biologists came to from their analysis of what happens in nature. But biological research during the last twenty-five years has been largely directed to testing the validity of the theory of the transmission of acquired characteristics, and not only has not one indisputable instance yet been found, all experiments in breeding and crossing on the other hand accumulate proofs to the contrary.

The new school of biologists known as the Mendelians have therefore come to theories about heredity that are not only novel but startling. According to them, structural characteristics, upon which must depend the mental and moral capacities of an individual, existed in *every* ancestor in their fullness; and further they must all have been in the first speck of living matter. Nothing has been *added* by evolution to this original stock of capacities in protoplasm, and every genius the world has known or will know existed potentially in it, though he had to wait millions of years before there arose the appropriate arrangement of the "genetic factors" to enable him to appear as a genius on the evolutionary stage. Nature has not evolved the complex brain structure of Shakespeare out of the rudimentary brains of the mammals; that complexity existed in a pin-head of protoplasm. Nature has not evolved the genius; she has merely *released* him from the fetters that bound him in ~~the~~ primordial protoplasm, by eliminating, generation after generation, such genetic factors as inhibited his manifestation. Bateson

sums up these modern theories when he says:

I have confidence that the artistic gifts of mankind will prove to be due not to something added to the make-up of an ordinary man, but to the absence of factors which in the normal person inhibit the development of these gifts. They are almost beyond doubt to be looked upon as *releases* of powers normally suppressed. The instrument is there, but it is "stopped down".¹

Time alone will show how far the Mendelian conception will need to be modified by later discoveries; but it is fairly certain already that the older Darwinian conception of heredity is untenable, and that if a man is a genius he owes very little to the intellectual and emotional achievements of his ancestors. If, however, we admit with the Mendelians that a genius is "released" merely by the removal of inhibiting factors, and is not the result of slow accumulations, we have still the original mystery unsolved, and that is to explain the synthetic ability of the genius. We are therefore no nearer really explaining the nature of genius along Mendelian theories than along the Darwinian; the theories of science merely tell

us under what conditions genius will or will not manifest, but nothing more.

The only rational theory of genius, that accepts scientific facts as to heredity and also explains what genius is, comes from the conception of reincarnation. If we hold that an individual is a soul, that is, an imperishable and evolving ego, and manifests through a body appropriate to his stage of growth and to a work he is to do in that body, then we see that his emotional and mental attributes are the results of experiences he has gained in past lives; but since he can express them only through a suitable body and brain, these then must be of such a kind as nature has by heredity selected for such use. The manifestation of any capacity then depends on two indispensable factors, first an ego or consciousness who has developed that capacity by repeated experiments in past lives, and second, a suitable instrument, a physical body, of such a nature structurally as makes possible the expression of that capacity. When therefore we consider genius, if on the one hand a particular genius has not a body fashioned out of genetic factors that do not inhibit his genius,

¹ Presidential Address, British Association, 1914.

he is "stopped down," to use Bateson's simile, and his genius is unreleased; but if on the other hand nature were to produce a thousand bodies that were not "stopped down," we should not *ipso facto* have a thousand geniuses. Two lines of evolution must therefore converge before there can manifest any quality that is not purely functional, the first being that of the evolution of an indestructible consciousness that continually experiments with life and slowly becomes expert thereby, and the second the evolution of a physical structure, that by heredity is selected to respond to a given stimulus from within.

If, with this clue as to what is happening in nature, we examine the various geniuses the world has produced, we shall see that they are remembering their past lives as they exhibit their genius. Take for instance such a genius as the young violinist, Mischa Elman, who a few years ago began his musical career; he was then but a lad, and yet even at that age he manifested marvellous technical ability. Now we may perhaps legitimately account for this technical ability along Mendelian lines, as being due to a rare confluence of genetic

factors; but by no theory of physical heredity can we explain what surprised the most exacting of musical critics—Mischa Elman's *interpretation* of music. For it is just in this interpretation that a music lover can see the soul of the performer, whether that soul is a big one or a little, whether the performer has known of life superficially or has touched life's core. Now Elman's interpretation, absolutely spontaneous as it was, and unimitated from a teacher, was that of a man and not that of a boy. Little wonder that many a critic was puzzled, or that the musical critic of the London *Telegraph* should write as follows.

Rain beat noisily upon the roof and thunder roared and rattled, but Mischa Elman went calmly on with his prescribed Paganini and Bach and Wieniawski. Calmly is the word, be it noted, not stolidly. We have had stolid wonder-children on our musical platforms; Mischa is not of them. Upon his face, as he plies the bow, rests a great peace, and only now and then, with a more decided expression, does he lower his cheek upon the instrument, as though he would receive from it the impulse of its vibrations and to it communicate his own soul beats. The marvel of this boy does not lie in his execution of difficult passages. If it did, perhaps we should award it but perfunctory notice, seeing that among the children of our generation there are so many who play with difficult passages much as their

predecessors did with marbles. We have gone beyond mere dexterity in bowing and fingering, and can say, in the spirit of one of old time, that from the babe and suckling comes now the perfection of such praise as lies within the compass of a violin.

Asked to account for this—to explain why Mischa Elman, laying cheek to wood, reveals the insight and feeling of a man who has risen to the heights and plumbed the depths of human life—we simply acknowledge that the matter is beyond us. We can do no more than speculate, and, perhaps, hope for a day in which the all-embracing science of an age more advanced than our own shall discover the particular brain formation, or adjustment, to which infants owe the powers that men and women vainly seek. Those powers may be the Wordsworthian "clouds of glory," brought from another world. If so, what a brilliant birth must that of Mischa Elman have been! The boy was heard in a work by Paganini and another by Wieniawski, both good things of their meretricious kind, and both irradiated, as we could not but fancy, by the unconscious genius which shines alike on the evil and the good, making the best of both. Upon the mere execution of these works we do not dwell, preferring the charm of the moments in which the music lent itself to the mysterious emotion of the youthful player, and showed, not the painted visage of a mountebank, but the face of an angel!

If along lines of reincarnation we suppose that Mischa Elman is a soul who in his past lives has in truth "risen to the heights and plumbed the depths of human life," then we have a reasonable explanation for his genius; in each interpretation there is reflected the

summing up of his past experiences, and he can through his music tell us of a man's sorrow or a man's joy because as a man in past lives he has experienced both, and retains their memory in emotional and intellectual generalizations. This explanation further joins hands with science, because the reincarnation theory of genius implies the need by the musical soul of a body with a musical heredity, that has been "selected" by evolution and has been built up by appropriate genetic factors.

Reincarnation alone explains another genius who must remain a puzzle according to all other theories. Keats is known in English poetry as the most "Greek" of all England's poets; he possessed naturally that unique feeling for life that was the treasure of the Greek temperament. If he had been a Greek scholar and steeped in the traditions of Greek culture, we might account for this "*anima naturaliter Graeca* of the Greekless Keats". But when we consider that Keats had "little Latin and less Greek," and began life as a surgeon's apprentice and a medical student, we may well wonder why he sings not as a Christian poet should do, but as some Greek shepherd born

on the slopes of Mount Etna. The wonder however at once ceases if we presume that Keats is the reincarnation of a Greek poet, and is remembering his past lives as he reverts to Greek ways of thought and feeling.

With reincarnation as a clue it is interesting to see how a little analysis enables us to say where in the past an individual must have lived. In the culture of the West, there are three main types of "reversion," to Rome, to Greece, and to India. Any one who has studied Roman institutions and the Roman conception of life finds little difficulty in noting how the English temperament is largely that of ancient Rome in a modern garb; the values, for instance in history, of such historians as Gibbon, Macaulay, Hume, are practically the same as those of Roman historians, Sallust, Tacitus, Livy, and the rest; whereas if we were to take French historians we shall find them scarcely at all Roman in temperament, and far more akin to the Greek. The equation Tennyson=Vergil is certainly not far-fetched to those that know the quality of both poets.

The reversion to Greece we find very clear in such writers as Goethe, Schiller, Lessing.

Why should these writers have proclaimed to Germany with unbounded enthusiasm the message of "back to Greece," but that they knew from their own experience in past lives what Greek culture had still for men? For what is enthusiasm but the spring forward of the soul to experience a freshness and delight in life that it has known elsewhere and whose call it recognises again? These men of enthusiasm, the pioneers of the future, are as sports or freaks in nature otherwise; let us but think of them as reincarnated souls remembering in their enthusiasm their past lives, and they become not sports but the firstfruits of a glorious humanity that is to be.

Who that has studied Platonism has not been reminded of Platonic conceptions when reading Emerson? Though Emerson has not the originality nor the daring of Plato, yet is he truly "Greek"; it does not require such a great flight of the imagination to see him as some Alexandrian follower of Plato. How natural then too that Emerson should enter the ministry to give his message, but should find himself unable to do it as a *Christian*

minister, and should strike out a path for himself as an essayist to speak of the World-Soul! And who that has studied Indian philosophies does not recognise old Vedantin philosophers in Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and a Buddhist philosopher in Schopenhauer, all reverting to their philosophic interests of past lives, and uttering their ancient convictions more brilliantly than ever before? Wherever the deeper layers of a man's being are offered to the world in some creation through philosophy, literature, art, or science, there may we note tendencies started in past lives; for the pageant of a man's life is not planned and achieved in the few brief years that begin with his birth, and he that knows of reincarnation may note readily enough where the parts of that pageant were composed.

Reincarnation as it affects large groups of individuals is a fascinating study to one with a historical bent of mind. I have mentioned that the English race as a whole is largely a reincarnation of the ancient Roman; but here and there we find a sprinkling of returned Greeks in men like Byron, Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, and in those English men and women

who have the Greek joy of life and are as strangers in a strange land. Let a returned Greek, wherever he be born this life, but go to South Italy or Greece, and he will begin to remember his past life in the instinctive familiarity he will feel with the hidden spirit of tree and lake and hill; as none but a Greek can, he will find a joy in the sunshine, in the lemon groves and vineyards and waterfalls that in a Greek land give the message of nature as in no other land.

Others there are who, born last life in the middle ages somewhere in Europe, perhaps in Italy or Spain or Germany, when they revisit the land of their former birth, will have a strange familiarity with the things that pass before them. In striking ways they read into the life of the people, and understand the why of things. To some this mysterious sense of recollection may be strongest in Egypt, or India, or Japan; but wherever we have the intuitive understanding of a foreign people, we have one mode of remembering our past lives.

It is in the characteristic intellectual attitude of the French that we see the reincarnation of much that was developed in later Greece.

The French intellectual clarity and dispassionate keenness to see things "as they are" (whether they bring material benefits or not) is typically Greek. And perhaps, could we know more fully of the life of the Phœnicians, we should see them reborn in the Germans of to-day; and then the commercial rivalry between England and Germany for the capture of the markets of the East would be but the rebirth of the ancient rivalry between Rome and Carthage for the markets of the Mediterranean.

An eruption of Greek egos is fairly evident in the United States of America. On the Pacific coast specially there are many men and women of the simple Greek temperament of the pre-Periclean age, and yet their ancestors were not infrequently New England Puritans. It is in America, too, we have the Sophists of Greece in full strength in the "New Thought" writers that spring up in that land month after month. In them we have the same characteristics as had the Sophists of Greece—much sound sense and many a useful wrinkle, an independence of landmarks and traditions, an unbounded confid-

ence in their own panacea, and a giving of their message of the Spirit "for a consideration". The lack of distinction in their minds in Greece between Sophism and Wisdom returns in the twentieth century as a confusion between the New Thought ideas of the Divine Life and the real life of the Spirit. Let us hope that as the Sophists helped to bring in the Golden Age of Greece, so the "New Thought-ers" are the forerunners of that True Thought that is to dawn, which is neither old nor new.

Here and there in India we find one who is distinctly not Hindu. For the most part the modern Hindus seem scarce to have been in other lands in their late incarnations; but now and then a man or woman is met with for whom the sacrosanct institutions of orthodoxy have no meaning, and who takes up western ideas of progress with avidity. Some of these are "England-returned," in this present incarnation, and we can thus account for their mentality; but when we find a man who has never left India, was reared in strict orthodoxy, and yet fights with enthusiasm for foreign ways of thought, surely we have here a

"Europe-returned" ego, from Greece or Rome or from some other of the many lands of the West.

We must not forget to draw attention to the egos from Greece that returned to Europe to usher in the age of art. To one familiar with Greek sculpture and architecture it is not difficult to see the Greek artists reborn in the Italian masters of painting and architecture. The cult is no longer that of Pallas Athene and the gods; there is now the Virgin Mary and the saints to give them their heavenly crowns. Whence did the Italian masters gain their surety of touch if not from a past birth in Greece? It is striking, too, how the Romans who excelled in portraiture should be reborn in the English School of portrait painters, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Lawrence, and the rest.

Nor must we forget the band of Greeks that like an inundation swept over the Elizabethan stage. Marlowe, Beaumont, Fletcher, Peele, Johnson, and the rest—are they not pagans thinly veiled in English garb? They felt life in un-English modes; they first felt and then thought out the feeling. The Greek is ever

the Greek, whatsoever the language that is given him to speak, and his touch in literature and art is not easily veiled.

Strong impressions made on the consciousness in a past life appear in the present often in some curious mood or mind. Sometimes fears of creeping things, fire, cutting implements, etc., are thus to be accounted for, though sometimes these "phobias" may only be subconscious remainders of this life. In the cases where we have no subconsciousness of the present body appearing, there is sure to have been some shock, resulting it may be in a violent death, in a past life; and the after effects appear now in an uncontrollable fear or in discomfort in the presence of the object that caused the shock. More strange is the attitude of one individual to another brought over from a past life; sometimes one sees the strange sight of a girl of ten or twelve taking care of her mother in a maternal way, as though the positions were reversed, and almost as if she had the onerous duty of bringing up her mother in the way she should go. Of a deeper psychological nature is it when, as sometimes happens, a

wife mated to a husband that causes her suffering finds charity towards him possible only when she looks on him not as her husband but as her child; here we have a reminiscence of a life when he was indeed her child, and his better nature came out towards her in the relation that he bore to her then.

A rather humorous instance of past recollection is found when there has been between the last life and this, a change of sex of the body. In the West specially, where there is a more marked differentiation temperamentally between the sexes than in the East, not infrequently the girl who dislikes playing with dolls, delights in boy's games, and is a pronounced tomboy, is really an ego who has just taken up a body of the sex opposite to that with which he has been familiar for many lives. Many a girl has resented her skirts, and it takes such a girl several years before she finally resigns herself to them. Some women there are on whose face and mode of carriage the last male incarnation seems still fairly visibly portrayed, as indeed a similar thing is to be seen in some men who bring into this life traces of their habits of

thought and feeling when last they had women's bodies.

A consideration of the many psychological puzzles I have enumerated will show us that as a matter of fact people do remember something of their past lives. Truly the memory is indirect, as a habit or a mood, but it is memory of the past nevertheless. Now people willing to accept reincarnation as a fact in life naturally ask the question, "But why don't we remember *fully*?" To this there are two answers, the first of which is: "It is best for us not to remember directly and fully, till we are ready for the memories."

We are not ready for remembrance so long as we are influenced by the memories of the past. Where, for instance, the memory is of a painful event, up to a certain point the past not only influences our present but also our future, and in a harmful way; and so long as we have not gone beyond the sphere of influence of the past, our characters are weakened and not strengthened by remembrance. Let us take an extreme case, but one typical nevertheless. Suppose that in the last life a man has committed suicide as the easiest

way out of his difficulties. As he dies, there will be in his mind much mental suffering and a lack of confidence in his ability to weather the storm. The suicide does not put an end to his suffering, and after death it will continue for some time till it slowly exhausts itself; but there will be a purification through his suffering, and when it ends there will be a keener vision and a fuller response to the promptings of his higher nature. When he is reborn, he will be born with a stronger conscience; but he will still retain the lack of confidence in his ability, because nothing has happened after his death to alter that. Confidence can be gained only by mastering circumstance, and it is for that very purpose he has returned. Now, sooner or later, he will be confronted with a situation similar to that before which he failed in a past life. As difficulties crowd round him in the new life, once more there will be the old struggle; the fact of having committed suicide will now come in as a tendency to suicide, as a resignation to it as the easiest way; but on the other hand the memory of the suffering after suicide will also return in a stronger sense of conscience that

this time it must not be. In this condition of strain, when the man is being pulled to one side by the past and to the other by his future, if he were to know, with vivid memory, how he had committed suicide in the past in a like situation, the probabilities are that he would be influenced by his past action and his lack of confidence would be intensified, with as a result suicide once again. We little realise how we are being domineered over by our past, and it is a blessing for most of us that the kindly gods draw a veil over a record which at our present stage of evolution cannot be anything but deplorable in many ways.

So long as we identify ourselves with the past, that past is hidden from us, except in the indirect modes as tendencies. But the direct memory will come when we can dissociate our present selves from our past selves. We are ever the Future, not the past; and when we can look at our past, of this life first, and after of past lives, without heat, impersonally, in perspective, as it were, like a judge who has no sense of identity with the facts before him for judgment, then we begin

to remember, directly, the past in detail ; but till then ,

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadow'd by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

The second reason for our not directly remembering our past lives is this : the I who asks the question, "Why don't I remember?" has *not* lived in the past. It is the Soul that has lived, not this I with all its limitations. But is not this I that Soul? With most people not at all, and this will be evident if we think over the matter.

The average man or woman is scarcely so much a Soul as a bundle of attributes of sex, creed, and locality. But the Soul is immortal, that is, has no sense of diminution or death ; it has no idea of time, that it is young, wastes away, and grows old ; it is neither man nor woman, because it is developing in itself the best qualities of both sexes ; it is neither Hindu, nor Buddhist, nor Christian, because it lives in One Divine Life and assimilates that Life according to its temperament ; it is not Indian, nor English, nor American, and

belongs to no country, even though its outermost sheath, the physical body, belongs to a particular race ; it has no caste, for it knows that all partake of One Life, and that before God there is neither Brahman nor Shudra, Jew nor Gentile, aristocrat nor plebeian. It is this Soul that puts out a part of itself, a personality, for a life, "as a mere subject for grave experiment and experience" ; through a *persona*, a mask, of a babe, child, youth or maid, man or woman, bachelor, spinster or householder, old man or old woman, it looks out into life, and, as it observes, eliminates the distorting bias its outer sheath gives ; its personalities have been Lemurian or Atlantean, Hindu or Roman or Greek, and it selects the best out of them all and discards the rest ; all literatures, sciences, arts, religions, and civilisations are its school and playground, workshop and study ; its patriotism is for an indivisible Humanity, and its creed is to co-operate with God's plan, which is Evolution.

It is this Soul that has had past lives. How much of this Soul are we, the men and women who ask the question, "Why don't we remember our past lives" ? The questioner

is but the personality, and the body of that personality has a brain on whose cells the memories of a past life have not been impressed; those memories are in the Divine Man who is of no time, of no creed, and of no land. To remember past lives, the brain of the personality must be made a mirror on to which can be reflected the memories of the Soul; and before those memories can come into the brain, one by one the various biases must be removed—of mortality, of time, of sex, of creed, of colour, of caste. So long as we are wrapt up in our petty thoughts of nationalism and in our narrow beliefs of creeds, so long do we retain the barriers that exist between our higher selves and our lower; an intellectual breadth and a larger sympathy, "without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour," must first be achieved before there breaks, as through clouds, flashes of our true consciousness as Souls. There is no swifter way to discover what we are as Immortals out of time than by discovering what is our Work in time.

Let but a man or woman find that Work for whose sake sacrifice and immolation is serenest contentment, then slowly the

larger consciousness of the Soul descends into the brain of the personality, and with that descent the direct memory of past lives. As more and more the personality presses forward, desiring no light but what is sufficient for the next step on his path to his goal of work, slowly one bias after another is burnt away in a fire of purification; like as the sun dissipates more clouds the higher it rises, so is it for the life of the personality; it knows then, with such conviction as the sun has about its own nature when it shines, that "the soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit."

Then come back the memories of past lives, and how they come those who live the life know. There are many kinds of knowledge useful for a man, but none greater than the knowledge "that evolution is a fact, and that the method of evolution is the constant dipping down into matter under the law of adjustment." This knowledge is for all who seek, if they will but seek rightly, and the right way is to be a brother to all men "without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour".

THE VISION OF THE SPIRIT

THE history of humanity is the history of ideas, and the stages through which men have risen from savage to civilised are distinguishable one from the other by the influence of certain great doctrines. Among these teachings that have moulded civilisations, the idea of Evolution stands out as heralding a new era in the world of thought. Considered at first as of mere academic interest, soon it was recognised as of practical value, and to-day it is known as necessary in the understanding of every problem in every department of being.

Nevertheless it is a fact that the doctrine of evolution is a theory after all. No one has lived long enough to see sufficient links in the evolutionary chain to attest that the changes postulated as having taken place did actually so occur, and that the chain is not a fancy but a fact. Yet evolution is accepted by all as a

THE VISION OF THE SPIRIT 43

dynamic idea, for like a magic wand it performs wonders in the world of thought. It marshals the heterogeneous organisms of nature into orderly groups, and from inanimate element to protoplasm, from unicellular organism to multicellular, from invertebrate to vertebrate, from ape to man, one ascending scale of life is seen,

And striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.

Yet none can say that evolution is an agreeable fact to contemplate, for there is a ruthlessness to nature's methods that is appalling. Utterly cruel and wasteful she seems, creating and perfecting her creatures only to prey on each other, generating more than can live in the fierce struggle for existence; "red in tooth and claw with ravin," she builds and unbuilds and builds again, one-pointed only that a type shall survive and reckless of the pleasure or pain to a single life. Men themselves, proud though they be in a fancied freedom of thought and action, are nothing but pawns in a game she plays. The more fully evolution is understood from such facts as scientists have so far gathered, the

more justifiably can men say with Omar of their birth, life, and death :

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing,
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing,
And out of it, like Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

Of course this attitude does not represent that of the majority of men. Millions of men believe in a Creator and that "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world!" But it is no exaggeration to say that their optimism continually receives rude shocks. No man or woman of sensibility can look about him and not agree with Tennyson's comparison of life to a play :

Act first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with
woe,
You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show
In some fifth Act what this wild Drama
means.

Both the idea of Evolution and the idea of a Divine Guidance, as at present conceived, fail to satisfy fully the needs of men for an inspiring view of life. The former indeed shows a splendid pageant of nature, but it has no message to individual man except to make the most of his brief day of life, and stoically resign

himself to extinction when nature shall have no further use for him. The latter speaks to men's hearts in alluring accents of a power that maketh for righteousness, but it sees God as existing only in the gaps of that pitiless cosmic order that science reveals. It is obvious, therefore, that any philosophy which postulates an inseparable relation between God and evolution, between nature and man, is worthy of examination, and this is the view of life that Theosophy propounds in the light of one great idea.

This idea is that of the Evolution of Life. Just as modern science tells us of a ceaseless change of forms from protoplasm to man, so Theosophy asserts that there is, *pari passu*, a changing, growing life. This life does not depend on the forms, though we see it associated with them; and of it Theosophy says that first it is indestructible, and second that it evolves.

It is indestructible, in the sense that when an organism is destroyed, nevertheless all is not destroyed, for there remains a life that is still conscious. If a rose fades and its petals crumble and fall into dust, the *life* of that rose has not

therefore ceased to be; that life persists in nature, retaining in itself all the memories of all the experiences it gained garbed as a rose. Then in due course of events, following laws that are comprehensible, that life animates another rose of another spring, bringing to its second embodiment the memories of its first. Whenever therefore there seems the death of a living thing, crystal or plant, animal or man, there persists an indestructible life and consciousness, even though to all appearance the object is lifeless and processes of decay have begun.

Further, this life is evolving in exactly the same way that the scientist says that an organism evolves. The life is at first amorphous, responding but little to the stimuli from without, retaining only feeble memories of the experiences it gains through its successive embodiments. But it passes from stage to stage through more and more complex organisms, till slowly it becomes more definite, more diverse in its functions; as the outer form evolves from protoplasm to man, so evolves too the life ensouling it. All nature, visible and invisible, is the field of an evolution of life

through successive series of evolving forms, and the broad stages of this evolving life are from mineral to vegetable, from vegetable to animal, and from animal to man.

The doctrine of a life that evolves through evolving forms answers some of those questions that puzzle the biologist to-day. Many a fact hitherto considered as outside the domain of science is seen as illustrative of new laws, and existing gaps are bridged over to make the doctrine of evolution more logical than ever. It further shows nature as not wasteful and only seemingly cruel, for nothing is lost, and every experience in every form that was destroyed in the process of natural selection is treasured by the life to-day. The past lives in the present to attest that nature's purpose is not death crushing life, but life ever triumphant over death to make out of stocks and stones immortal men.

In each human being is seen this same principle of an imperishable evolving life. For man is an individual life and consciousness, an immortal soul capable of living apart from the body we usually call "the man". In each soul the process of evolution is at work, for at

his entrance on existence as a soul, he is feeble and chaotic in his consciousness, vague and indefinite in his understanding of the meaning of life, and capable only of a narrow range of thought and feeling. But he too evolves, from indefinite to definite, from simple to complex, from chaos to order.

Man's evolution is by successive manifestations in bodies of flesh, passing at the death of one body to begin life once more in another new one; and in this passage he carries with him the memory of all experiences he has gained in the past behind him. This aspect of the evolution of life as it affects men is called reincarnation.

As all processes of nature are intelligible on the hypothesis of an evolution of organisms, so all that happens to men becomes comprehensible in the light of reincarnation; as the former links all forms by species and genus, family and order, class and group, sub-kingdom and kingdom into one unbreakable chain, so the latter binds all human experiences into one consistent philosophy of life. How reincarnation explains the mysteries around us and inspires us we shall now see.

Imagine with me that existence is a mountain, and that millions are climbing to its summit. Let many many days be needed before a traveller comes to his goal. Then as he climbs day after day, the proportion of things below him and above him will change; new sights will greet his eyes, new airs will breathe around him; his eyes will adjust themselves to new horizons, and step by step objects will change shape and proportion. At last on reaching the summit a vast panorama will extend before him, and he will see clearly every part of the road he climbed, and why it dipped into this valley and circled that crag. Let this mountain typify existence, and let the climbers up its sides be men and women who are immortal souls.

Let us now think for a moment of travellers at the mountain's base, who are to climb to its summit. We know how limited must be their horizon and how little they can see of the long path before them. Let such travellers typify the most backward of our humanity, the most savage and least intelligent men and women we can find to-day. According to reincarnation these are child-souls, just entering into existence

to undergo evolution and to be made into perfect souls. To understand the process of evolution let us watch one of them stage by stage as he climbs the mountain.

The first thing that we shall note is that this child-soul manifests a duality. For he is soul and body; as a soul he is from God but as a body he is from the brute.

The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul
of a man,
And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"
And the Lord—"Not yet: but make it as clean
as you can,
And then I will let you a better."

The body he occupies has in it a strong instinct of self-preservation, stamped upon it by the fierce struggle for existence of its animal progenitors; he himself as a soul coming from God has intuitions as to right and wrong, but as yet hardly any will. The body demands for its preservation that he be self-assertive and selfish; lacking the will to direct his evolution, he acts as the body impels.

THE VISION OF THE SEPARATED SELF

Hence at this earliest stage of the soul his vision of life as he climbs is that of the separated

self. "Mine not yours" is his principle of action; greed rules him and a thirst for sensation drives him on, and he little heeds that he is unjust and cruel to others as he lives through his nights and days of selfishness and self-assertion. He seems strong-willed, for he crushes the weaker before him; but in reality he has no will at all, for he is but the plaything of an animal heredity he cannot control. He has no more freedom of will than the water-wheel that turns at the bidding of the descending stream; he is but the tool of a "will to live" that accomplishes a purpose not his own.

Millions of men and women around us are at this first stage. Their craftiness, hardly deserving the name of intellect, is that of a Falstaff for whom "the world is mine oyster which I with sword will open". In their least animal phases comfort is their aim in life: "They dressed, digested, talked, articulated words; other vitality showed they almost none." The universe around them is meaningless, and they are scarce capable of wonder: "Let but a Rising of the Sun, let but a creation of the world happen *twice*, and it ceases to be marvellous, to be noteworthy or

noticeable." The centre of the circle of the cosmos is in themselves and they neither know nor care if another and truer centre be possible.

Yet when we recognise that each of these souls is immortal and that his future is "the future of a thing whose growth and splendour have no limit," we begin to understand why at this early stage selfishness plays such a prominent part in his life. For in the stages to come he must be capable of standing alone, firm on the basis of a coherent individuality; now it is, therefore, he must develop initiative and strength. He is quick to retaliate, but the germs of swift decision are grown thereby; he is domineering and cruel, but the seeds of intelligent enterprise result from the animal cunning he displays. Every evil he does must some time be paid back in laborious service to his victims; yet on the whole the evil he does at this stage is less in quantity and force, for all its seeming, than that done in later stages where intelligence is keener and emotion more powerful. At a certain period in human evolution selfishness has its place in the economy of things, for selfishness too is a force used to build the battlements of heaven.

These souls, whose youth alone is the cause of their selfishness, are in their essence divine, and there is in them no evil of a positive kind; the vices are but the result of the absence of virtues, and the evil "is null, is naught, is silence implying sound". Each is a "good man" who, deep down within him, has a knowledge of "the one true way," though in his attempts to tread it he seems to retrograde rather than to evolve. Like plants in a garden they are all tended by Him from whom they come; He knows the perfect souls that He will make out of them by change and growth as the ages pass by.

Though still confused his service unto Me,
I soon shall lead him to a clearer morning.
Sees not the gardener, even while he buds his tree,
Both flower and fruit the future years adorning?

Life after life these souls come to birth, now as men and now as women; they live a life of selfishness, and they die, and hardly any change will be noticeable in the character; but slowly there steals into their lives a dissatisfaction. The mind is too dull to grasp the relation of the individual to the whole, and the imagination is too feeble to realise that

"man doth not live by bread alone". Hence it is that "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to" are duly marshalled and employed to ruffle their self-centred contentment; old age and death cast over them shadows that have no power to sadden a philosophic mind; disease and accident lie in wait for them to weigh down their spirits and make them rebel against a fate they do not understand. Till their hearts shall enshrine a divine purpose, a Hound of Heaven pursues them, and "naught shelters thee, who wilt not shelter Me".

Thus are they made ready to pass on to the next stage; the foundations of abilities have been laid, and the individual is firm on a basis built through selfishness. Now has come the time to begin the laborious work of casting out the self, and so there opens before the soul's gaze the vision of the next stage. According to the type of soul, this vision is either the Vision of the Mind or the Vision of the Emotions.

There are in life two main types of souls, the one in whom intelligence controls emotion and the other in whom emotion sways the

mind. One type is not more evolved than the other; they are both stages to pass through to grow a higher faculty, that of Intuition. The vision of the third stage is the Vision of the Intuition, but to it souls come from the first stage either through intellect or through emotion. Let us first consider those souls whose evolution is by way of the intellect.

THE VISION OF THE MIND

We shall see in the past of these souls that much intelligence has been developed in the first stage; their selfishness has made them quick and cunning to adapt opportunities to minister to their comfort. This intelligence is now taken up by the unseen Guides of evolution, and the soul is placed in environments that will change mere animal cunning into true intellect. The past good and evil sown by him will be adjusted in its reaping, so as to give him occupations and interests that will force him to think of men and things around him apart from their relation to himself. Instead of weighing experiences in terms of personal comfort he begins now to group them in types and categories; little by

little he begins to see a material and moral order in the cosmos that is more powerful than his will. Each law of nature when first seen is feared by him, for it seems to be there to thwart him; but later, with more experience of its working, he begins to trust it and to depend upon it to achieve his aim. A love of learning appears in him and nature is no longer a blank page; he has ceased to be "a pair of spectacles behind which there is no eye".

At this stage we shall see that the selfishness still in him will warp the judgments of his mind. He will be a doctrinaire, a pedant, combative and full of prejudice; for all his intellect his character will show marked weaknesses, and he will often see and propound principles of conduct which he will not be able to apply to himself. Again and again he will fail to see how little he understands the world, since the world is the embodiment of a life that is more than mind, and whoso understands it with mind alone will misunderstand. Excess of intellect will become in him defect of intelligence, and he will see all things as through a glass darkly.

Many a life will pass while he slowly gains experiences through the mind and assimilates them into a truer conception of life. By now he will have begun to take part in the intellectual life of the world, and when he is on the threshold of the next stage we shall find him as a worker in science, philosophy or literature. But his intellect has too great a personal bias still, and it must be made impersonal and pure before the next vision, that of the intuition, can be his. Once again we shall see that there enters into his life a dissatisfaction. The structures which he builds so laboriously as the results of years of work will crumble one by one, because nature reveals new facts to show the world that his generalisations were only partly true; the world for which he toiled will forget him and younger workers will receive the honours that are his due. He will be misunderstood by his dearest friends, and "he is now, if not ceasing, yet intermitting to eat his own heart, and clutches round him outwardly on the Not-Me for wholesomer food".

But this suffering, though the reaping of sad sowings of injustice to others through

prejudice, brings in its train a high purification sooner or later; the soul learns the great lesson of working for work's sake and not for the fruit of action. Now he knows the joy of altruistic dedication of himself to the search for truth. A student of philosophies but the slave of none, he now watches nature "as it is," and in a perfect impersonality of mind solves her mysteries one by one; of him now can it be said with the Pythagoreans that "a great intellect is the chorus of divinity". Thus dawns for him the Vision of the Intuition.

THE VISION OF THE EMOTIONS

I mentioned when describing the transition from the first stage to the second that there were in the world two main types of souls—those who pass from the Vision of the Separated Self to the Vision of the Intuition by way of the mind, and those others who develop along a parallel path and pass from the emotions to the intuition. We have just seen how souls are trained through intellect to cast out the self; we shall now see how the same result is achieved for those in whom emotions sway the mind.

As the intellectual type showed in the first stage a marked development of intelligence of a low kind, so similarly shall we find that the souls we are going to consider show during the same stage a great deal of feeling. Not that this feeling will be refined or unselfish; indeed it will mostly be lust and jealousy, with perhaps a little crude religious emotion thrown in. But the character will be obviously easily swayed by emotions, and this trait in the soul is now taken up and worked upon to enable him to pass to the next stage.

Following his emotional bent, and selfish and oblivious of the feelings of those around him, the soul will compel others weaker than himself to be the slaves of his desires; but the passion and the sense of possession he has of these that minister to his lusts will link him to them life after life, till slowly he begins to feel that they are necessary to his emotional life and not dispensable at will. Gradually his impure passions will be transformed into purer affections, and then he will be brought again and again into contact with them so that his emotions shall go out impulsively towards them. But the evil he wrought them

in the past will now cast a veil over their eyes and make them indifferent to him. He will be forced to love on, to atone for past evil by service, but despair will be the only reward; when in resentment he tries to break the bond that ties him to them he will find he cannot. He will curse love, only to return again and again to love's altar with his offerings.

Though life now becomes full of disappointment and despair, in his serener moments he will acknowledge that in spite of the suffering it entailed, his emotional life has slowly opened a new sense in him. He catches now and then glimpses of an undying youth in all things, and the world that seems dreary and aging will re-appear under certain emotional stress as he knew it before life became a tragedy. These glimpses are transitory at first, lasting indeed only so long as the love emotion colours his being; but there is for him a time,

When all the world is young, lad,
And all the trees are green,
And every goose a swan, lad,
And every lass a queen.

Life after life, fostered by his transitory loves, this sense will grow in him till it

blossoms into a sense of wonder. Then nature reveals in all things in life new values whose significance he can henceforth never wholly forget. While love sways his being each blade of grass and leaf and flower has to him a new meaning; he sees beauty now where he saw none before. Everything beautiful around him—a face, a flower, a sunset, a melody—will link him in mysterious ways to those he loves; the world ceases to be a blank page.

Love wakes men once a lifetime each,
They lift their heavy lids and look;
And lo! what one sweet page can teach,
They read with joy, then close the book.
And some give thanks, and some blaspheme,
And most forget. But either way,
That and the child's unheeded dream
Is all the light of all their day.

It will happen that this sense of wonder is intermittent, and that there come periods when the world is veiled; but the veil is of his own making, and must be torn asunder if he is to possess the Vision of the Intuition. Once more there enters into his life a dissatisfaction—a discontent that love itself is transitory after all. Those he loves and who love him in return will be taken from him just when life seems in flower; friends he idealises

will shatter the ideals so lovingly made of them. Cruel as it all seems, it is but the reaping of sad sowings in past lives, but the reaping has a meaning now as always. He has so far been loving not Love but its shadow, not the Ideal from which nothing can be taken away but its counterfeit which suffers diminution; he must now see clearer and feel truer. The character must be steadied so that it shall not rebound from enthusiasm to depression, nor be satisfied with a vague mysticism that prefers to revel in its own feelings rather than evaluate what causes them.

Hence the inevitable purification through suffering; the dross of self is burned away till there remains the gold of a divine desire. He then discovers that the truest feelings are only those that have in them the spirit of offering. Now for him thus purified in desire, and for that other type of soul made impersonal in intellect, there dawns the Vision of the Intuition.

THE VISION OF THE INTUITION

"Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear, it must have lost its sensitiveness." All souls

that have come to this stage have learned by now the bitter lesson that "it is only with Renunciation that Life, properly speaking, can be said to begin"; they have proved in their own experience that what once seemed death was but a "repentance unto life". They have now discovered the meaning of life—that man is a child of God come forth to life to be a co-worker with his Father. It matters not that a soul does not state to himself his relation to the whole in these terms; it only matters that he should have discovered that his part in existence is to be a worker in a work, and that nothing happening to himself matters, so long as that work proceeds to its inevitable end. He knows that the end of thought and feeling is action for his fellow-men, and that this action must be either dispassionate and without thought of reward, or full of a spirit of grateful offering.

He possesses now the faculty of the intuition, which transcending both reason and emotion yet can justify its judgments to either. He grows past "common sense," the criterion for common things, into an uncommon sense; for life is full now of uncommon things of whose existence others are not aware. In men and

women he discerns those invisible factors which are inevitable in human relations, and hence his judgment of them is "not of this world". In all things he sees and feels one Life. Whatever unites attracts him; if intellectual he will love to synthesise in science or philosophy, if emotional he will dedicate himself to art or philanthropy.

Now slowly for him the Many become the One. The Unity will be known only in the vision of the next stage, but preparing him for it, science and art, religion and philosophy, will deduce for him eternal fundamental types from the kaleidoscope of life. Types of forms, types of thought, types of emotions, types of temperament—these he sees everywhere round him, and life in all its phases becomes transformed because it reflects as in a mirror Archetypes of a realm beyond time and space and mutability.

Everything of mortal birth
Is but a type;
What was of feeble worth
Here becomes ripe.
What was a mystery
Here meets the eye;
The Ever-womanly
Draws us on high.

"The Ever-womanly" now shows him everywhere one Wisdom; science tells him of the oneness of nature, and philosophy that man is a consciousness creating his world; art reveals in all things youth and beauty, and religion whispers to his heart that Love broods over all. His sympathies go to all as his will is ever at their service.

Not far now is the time when for him shall dawn the Vision of the Spirit. But to bring him to its portal a dissatisfaction once more enters his soul. No longer can that dissatisfaction be personal; the sad reaping of sorrow for evil done is over, and "only the sorrow of others casts its shadow over me". Nor is it caused by any sense of the mutability of things, for, absolutely, without question, he knows his immortality, and that though all things change there is behind them That which changes never. Yet while he climbs to his appointed goal dissatisfaction must always be.

It comes to him now as a creator. For with intuition to guide him he creates in that field of endeavour in which he has trained himself in past lives; as poet, artist, statesman, saint, or scientist, he is one of the world's geniuses.

But though his creations are a miracle to all, yet to him they are only partly true and only partly beautiful, for he sees the ideal which he would fain bring down to men, and knows his failure as none others can know. Life is teaching him "to attain by shadowing forth th' unattainable".

As thus he grows life after life, scientist and poet, artist and saint, now merge into a new type of being who sees with "larger, other eyes than ours". He has regained his integrity of heart and his innocence of hands and is become "a little child"; "by pity enlightened" he is now Parsifal, the "Pure Fool," who enters upon his heritage.

THE VISION OF THE SPIRIT

Then it is that at its threshold there meets him One who has watched him climbing for many a life and all unseen has encouraged him. This is the Master, one of that "goodliest fellowship of famous knights whereof the world holds record". In Him the soul sees in realisation all those ideals that have drawn him onward and upward; and hand in hand with this "Father in God" he now treads "the

Way" while the Vision of the Spirit is shown him by his Master. Who shall describe that vision but those that have it, and how may one less than a Master here speak with authority? And yet since Masters of the Wisdom have moved among men, since Buddha, Krishna and Christ have shown us in Their lives something of what that vision is, surely from Their lives we can deduce what the vision must be.

In that Vision of the Spirit the Many is the One. "Alone within this universe He comes and goes; 'tis He who is the fire, the water He pervadeth; Him and Him only knowing, one crosseth over death; no other path at all is there to go."

Now for the soul who has come to the end of his climbing each man is only "the spirit he worked in, not what he did but what he became". There is no high nor low in life, for in all he sees a ray from the Divine Flame; as through the highest so through the lowest too, to him "God stooping shows sufficient of His light for us i' th' dark to rise by". Life is henceforth become a Sacrament and he is its Celebrant; with loving thoughts and deeds he celebrates and at-ones man with God and God

with man. He discerns, purifies in himself, and offers to God "infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn"; from God on high he brings to men what alone can satisfy that yearning.

He has renounced "the will to live" and thereby has made its purpose his own: "Foregoing self the universe grows I." Yet he knows with rapture that that "I" is but a tiny lens in a great Light. Henceforth he lives only that a Greater than he may live through him, love through him, act through him; and evermore shall his heart whisper, in heaven or in hell, whithersoever his work may take him: "Him know I, the Mighty Man, resplendent like the Sun, beyond the Darkness; Him and Him only knowing one crosseth over death; no other path at all is there to go."

* * * *

Thus do we, the happy few, the precursors of a new age, see life in the light of reincarnation. As the evolutionist sees all nature linked in one ladder of life, and sky and sea testify to him of evolution, so do we see all men linked in one common purpose, and their hopes and fears, their self-sacrifice and their selfishness,

testify to us of reincarnation. Life and its experiences have ceased to be for us,

an arch wherethro'
fades

Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin

For ever and for ever when I move.

No longer can the world be for us as the poet sang:

Act first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe,
You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show
In some fifth Act what this wild Drama means.

The Fifth Act is here before our eyes. It is that Vision of the Spirit that is the heritage of every soul, and thither all men are slowly treading for "no other path at all is there to go".

its deepest feelings. But then why should not the attainment of happiness be easier than it is?

MAN AN EVOLVING SOUL

There is a philosophy of life which holds that man is an immortal soul, living not one life on earth but many, growing by the experiences he gains in them manifold capacities and virtues. This philosophy further postulates that all men are the children of One Father, who has created a universe, in order that *working* therein His children may know something of Him, and come to Him in joy. According to this theory, the purpose of life is not to achieve a stable condition of happiness for any individual, but rather to train him to work in a Plan of an Ideal Future, and find in that work an ever-changing and ever-growing contentment.

From the standpoint of the Theosophist all men are indeed working for a foreordained ideal future; but they work at different stages according to their differing capacities. A recognition of these stages and the laws of life appropriate to each makes life less the riddle that it is. There are three broad stages on

THE LAW OF RENUNCIATION

THE joy of life! Is it not everywhere? In plant and animal and man do we not see an instinct for happiness which impels all creation to rise from good to better, from better to best? Since God said, "Let there be light!" are not all men seeking to step out of darkness into light—blindly, dimly feeling that happiness must be their goal? Yet how few find happiness in life! It is easy to sing,

God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world!

But to sing so long one must be blind to facts. Life is a tragedy to many, and far truer is it described by Tennyson:

Act first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe
You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show
In some fifth Act what this wild Drama means.

Nevertheless all feel that happiness must be the goal of life, and humanity never errs in

the Path of Bliss that leads to the Highest Good, and they are happiness, renunciation, and transfiguration.

THE STAGE OF HAPPINESS

God calls upon His children at this stage to co-operate with Him by offering them happiness as the aim of life. He has implanted in them a craving for happiness, and provides work for them that shall make them happy. Love of wife and child and friend, fame and the gratitude of men, success and ease—these are His rewards for those that serve Him. Many are the pleasant paths in life for the young souls at this stage, reaping happiness as they prove those pleasures

That hills and valleys, dale and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield.

Useful as men are in the Great Work at this stage, yet so long as a man deliberately seeks happiness, his capabilities as a *worker* are soon exhausted. For soon he "settles down in life"; the precious gift of wonder slowly fades away, his happiness ceases to be dynamic. Self-centred he calls on the universe to give. But

the Path to Bliss is by work, and if he is to go over on he must fit himself for a larger work than has so far fallen to his share. He must enter on the next stage, but for that he must change utterly. Hitherto he has measured men and things by the standard of his little self; henceforth the Great Self must be his measure. He must break the sway of himself and realise that evermore what is important in life is not he, not his happiness, but a Work. Before this realisation can begin there must be a conversion.

CONVERSION

In many ways are men converted from the interests of the little self to the work of the Great Self. Some, loving Truth in religious garb, open their hearts to a Personality that dazzles their imagination. Thenceforth they must serve Him and be like Him and gone for ever is the standpoint of the little self. Some study science and philosophy and discover a magnificent plan of evolution, with the inevitable result that they know that the individual is but a unit in a great Whole and not the centre of the cosmos; and if they set

rightly to study they see, too, that there is a Will at work, and that cost what it may they must co-operate with that Will. A few there are to whom comes some mysterious experience from the hidden side of things, and life speaks to them a transforming message. Out of the invisible comes a "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and a persecutor of Christians is changed into an Apostle of Christ. Manifold are the ways of conversion, the same in all lands and in all faiths. One factor is common, the old personality is disintegrated, and a new one is re-integrated in the service of a Work.

When through conversion the new personality is ready for a larger work the tools he uses must be made pure. They are his thoughts and feelings, and slowly a process of purification is begun. Disappointment and pain and grief are his lot—the sad harvest of a sowing of selfishness in the unseen past of many lives, for we reap as we have sown. When the worker is ready, swift is Nature's response to free him from the burden of his past, in order that he may be fit to achieve the great work prepared for him.

THE MEANING OF PAIN

With some, sorrow hardens the character, but with those who are ready to enter on the second stage it ever purifies. Does not the very texture of the flesh of a sufferer who has in patience and resignation borne his pain seem luminous and pure, as though through every cell there gleamed the light of a hidden fire? How much more is it with mental suffering? Are we not irresistibly drawn to reverence one who has suffered much and nobly, and sometimes to love, too?

Sorrow was there made fair,
 Passion wise; tears a delightful thing;
 Silence beyond all speech a wisdom rare.
 She made her sighs to sing,
 And all things with so sweet a sadness move
 As made my heart at once both grieve and love.

THE STAGE OF RENUNCIATION

Life seems full of evil days to those that come to the end of the first stage, but its lesson is clear. That lesson is, "Thou must go without, go without! That is the everlasting song, which every hour, all our life through, hoarsely sings to us." Truly does Carlyle voice the wisdom of the ages when he says, "The

Fraction of Life can be increased in value not so much by increasing your numerators as by lessening your denominator. Nay, unless my algebra deceive me, unity itself divided by zero will give infinity. Make thy claim of wages a zero, then; thou hast the world under thy feet."

THE LAW OF RENUNCIATION

All great workers know that the Law of Renunciation is true and that "it is only with renunciation that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin". There are no great souls that are completely happy, can never be! Once more let the great apostle of work speak to us: "The happy man was never yet created; the virtuous man, tho' clothed in rags and sinking under pain, is the jewel of the Earth, however I may doubt it, or deny it in bitterness of heart. O never let me forget it! Teach me, tell me, when the Fiend of Suffering and the base Spirit of the World are ready to prevail against me, and drive me from this last stronghold."

Take whom you will who has done a great work, and he knows that renunciation is the

law. In bitterness of heart Ruskin cries out: "I've had my heart broken ages ago, when I was a boy, then mended, cracked, beaten in, kicked about old corridors, and finally, I think, flattened fairly out." But he persevered in his work all the same. There is no greater name in the world of art than Michel Angelo, "this masterful and stern, life-wearied and labour-hardened man," whose history "is one of indomitable will and almost superhuman energy, yet of will that had hardly ever had its way, and of energy continually at war with circumstance." It is the same with all who have been great.

THE MEANING OF LIFE

But through renunciation the soul on the threshold of greatness discovers life's meaning. If religious, he will state it, "Thy will be done"; if scientific or artistic he will say, "Not I, but a Work." He is now as Faust who sought happiness in knowledge, and failed; sought it in the love of Marguerite and reaped a tragedy; and only as he planned to reclaim waste lands for men, and lost himself in the dream of that *work*, found that long sought for

happy moment when he could say, "Ah, tarry a while, thou art so fair!"

So, renouncing, live the souls at the second stage, lovers of a Work. Sad at heart they are; but if they are loyal to their work, then comes to them in fleeting moments more than happiness, the joy of creation. Such wonders they now body forth that to themselves their masterpieces are enigmas. In fitful gleams they see a Light, and know that now and then it shines through them to the world. Perfect masters of technique they are now, in religion, in art, in science, in every department of life. But, alas! just as they have discovered what it is to live, what it is to create, they are old, and life comes to a close, before it seems hardly begun. Shall the path of renunciation bring nothing but despair?

Despair was never yet so deep,
In sinking as in seeming;
Despair is hope just dropp'd asleep
For better chance of dreaming.

THE STAGE OF TRANSFIGURATION

"Hope just dropp'd asleep for better chance of dreaming"—that, truly, is death. The

great worker leaves life but to return again, with every dream old and new nearer realisation. He returns with the inborn mastery of technique of the genius to achieve where he only dreamed. The joy of creation is now his sure and priceless possession, that wondrous joy which only those know who can offer all gifts of heart and mind and stand apart from them while a Greater than they creates through them. "Seeking nothing, he gains all; foregoing self, the universe grows I." Now has he found that life which he lost in the stage of Renunciation; henceforth, in all places and at all times, is he become "a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall no more go out".

THE PATH OF BLISS

So life gives of its best to all—happiness to some, renunciation to others, and, to a few, transfiguration. What if now most of us who love Truth must "do without"? Let us but dedicate heart and mind to a Work, and we shall find that renunciation leads to transfiguration. There is but one road to God, for all to tread. It is the Path of Bliss. It has

THE LAW OF RENUNCIATION

its steps—happiness, renunciation, and transfiguration. Whoso will offer up all that he is to a Work, though he “lose his life” thereby, yet shall he find it soon, and “come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”

THE HIDDEN WORK OF NATURE¹

NEVER, in the history of mankind, has there been a time as to-day when it could be so truly said that,

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

It is true that “the man in the street” knows of no such great change; life for him moves as of old in its fixed grooves, and if the world’s progress has multiplied for him life’s conveniences, it has also multiplied for him life’s needs. Change to him is largely a matter of a surplus of comforts over pains, and in this regard the old order has changed but little for him. But the man in the library, the laboratory, the studio, the pulpit, is aware of this great change, and he knows that

¹ A Lecture delivered at the Small Queen’s Hall, London, October 26th, 1913.

it began with the work of Darwin and his school.

The importance of the work of modern scientists lies in the fact that they have marshalled for us the events of nature into an orderly pageant of evolution. What mere religion has not been able to do, science has achieved, which is to show Life as one. Theological trinitities of Creator, Creation, and Creature, or dualities of God and Man, have not unified life for us in the way science has done; Mysticism alone, with its truth of Immanence, has revealed to men something of that unified existence of all that is, that is the logical deduction from modern evolutionary theories.

When we contemplate the pageant of nature, we see her at a work of building and unbuilding. From mineral to bacterium and plant, from microbe to animal and man, nature is busy at a visible work, step by step evolving higher and more complex structures. Though she may seem at first sight to work blindly and mechanically, she has in reality a coherent plan of action; this is to evolve structures stage by stage, so that the amount of time needed by a

given creature for its self-protection and sustenance may be less and less with each successive generation. The higher a structure is in its organisation and adaptability, the more time, and hence more energy, there is free for other purposes of life than sustenance and procreation.

Two elements in life arise from the perfection of the structural mechanism that the higher order of creatures reveal. First, they have time for play, for it is in play that such energy manifests as is not required for gaining food and shelter. The second element manifests itself only when human beings appear in evolution, and men begin to show a desire for adaptability. Adaptability to environment exists in the plant and in the animal, but it is in them purely instinctive or mechanical; with man on the other hand there is an attempt at conscious adaptability.

When this desire for adaptability increases, nature reveals a new principle of evolution. To the principle of the survival of the fittest by a struggle for existence, she adds the new one of evolution by inter-dependence. Hence we find human units aggregating themselves

into groups, and primitive men organising themselves into families and tribes.

Once more this means a saving of labour and time in the material struggle for existence; some of both is now at nature's disposal to train men to discover new ways of life and action. To the play of the individual there is added a communal life that makes civilisation possible. For civilisation means that some individuals in a community are dissatisfied with what contents all the others, and that therefore they are burning with a zeal for reform; and the spirit of reform sooner or later is inevitable in evolution. The survival of the fittest can only come about by that mysterious arrival of the fittest that no scientist can explain; nature now ushers in "the fittest" in the few that are planning for reform. For reform means that slowly organisms will adapt themselves more and more to the possibilities of environment, for to each successive change to greater adaptability nature has something new to give.

Thus individual men and women become nature's tools; she works with their hearts and minds and hands to create social and political

activities. Religion and science and art appear among men; the struggle for existence is no longer nature's sole means for bringing to realisation her aim; inter-dependence of units, and therewith reform, are the means she uses now.

Then it is that nature proclaims to men that message she has kept for them through the ages. It is the joy of social service. Strange and unreal, as yet, to most men is the thought of such a joy; but evolution has but lately entered on this phase of her work, and ages must yet elapse before social service becomes as instinctive in men as are now self-assertion and selfishness. But that day must inevitably be; the handful of reformers to-day are as the "missing links" of a chain that stretches forward from man to superman. As from the isolation and selfishness of the brute, nature has evolved the inter-dependence of men, so too is self-sacrifice the next logical step in her evolutionary self-revelation.

A more inspiring picture there could hardly be than this of nature at work at her building and unbuilding. Yet there are not a few of dark shadows in the picture. So long as the

individual lives only the few brief years of his life, so long as nothing of him remains as an individual after his death, there is a ruthlessness about nature that is appalling. Where is to-day "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome"? Some day there must be an end to nature's work, in this planet at least where we live. There are dead suns in space and some day our sun will die out and every satellite of his will be a frozen world. Careful of the type, nature truly builds form after form, and will build for many an age yet to come. There is indeed a far-off event "to which the whole creation moves," but it is to that state when living organisms shall lack what they need for their life.

So long as we contemplate nature's *visible* work only, not the greatest altruist but must now and then feel the shadow of a great despair. That which alone makes life and self-sacrifice real and inspiring to great souls, the thought and the feeling that their work will endure for ever, is lacking when we consider nature's work in the light of modern science alone. Yet many an altruist would be

content to die, and be nothing thereafter, if he could but feel that nature had some pity for his fate. Well the poet voices this feeling arising from this conception of nature, or of a Deity who is as passionless as nature:

Life is pleasant, and friends may be nigh,
Fain would I speak one word and be spared;
Yet I could be silent and cheerfully die,
If I were only sure God cared;
If I had faith and were only certain
That light is behind that terrible curtain.

It is here that Theosophy steps in to continue the work of science and explain the true significance of nature's self-revelations. As modern science points to nature's visible work, so Theosophy points to a Hidden Work of Nature. There is a Hidden Light that reveals to men that nature is but one expression of a Consciousness at work; that this Consciousness is at work with a Plan of evolution; and that this Consciousness carries out its plan through us and through us alone. The moment we realise the significance of this message of the Hidden Light that men are immortal souls and not perishable bodies, we begin to see that while careful of the type, nature is not less careful of the single life too. For then we see

that nature's latest phase, a fullness of life through social service, necessarily involves the recognition of men as souls; for it would be useless for nature to slowly fashion a reformer unless she could utilise his ability and experience for greater reforms in the future. That his specialised abilities shall not be dissipated would surely then be logical in a nature for which we postulate an aim that persists from age to age.

It does not require much profound thought or speculation to deduce from this view of nature's work that men live for ever as souls, and that through reincarnation they become fitter tools in nature's hands to achieve her purpose of evolution. Let but reincarnation be considered a part of nature's plan, and at once the tragedy of nature transforms itself into an inspiring and stately pageant. For then the future is ourselves; it is we that shall make the glorious utopias of dreams; we that painfully toil to-day to fashion bricks for nature's beautiful edifice in far-off days, we, and not others, shall see that edifice in its splendour, and be its very possessors. Though the spirit of action of the best of us is ever on

sic vos sed non vobis, yet in reality, like bread cast upon the waters, our work shall greet us ages hence, and we shall then be glad that we have toiled so well now.

So comes to us the message of the Hidden Light that nature is consciously going from good to better, from better to best, and that she works out her splendid purpose through us, who may become her ministers or must be her slaves.

The spirit of reform then being a part of the evolutionary process, the next point to note is that in all effective reform there are two elements: first, the reform is brought about by individuals working as a group, and second, the group has a leader. It is fairly easy to understand the grouping of individuals co-operating for a common aim as a part of nature's evolutionary plan; their united action but expresses the social instinct. But it is perhaps less easy to see that nature selects the leader and sends him to a particular group to crystallise dreams and plans into organisation and action. Yet this is the message of the Hidden Light—that a leader does not appear by a mere concatenation of chance circumstances, but only because he is selected for

a particular work and is sent to do it. For a leader does not come in evolution as a "sport," a passing variant produced nobody knows how; he is fashioned by a slow laborious process lasting thousands of years. Life after life, in a process of rebirth, the would-be leader must earn his future position by dedication to works of reform; by little actions for reform as a savage, by larger actions as a civilised man, he trains himself for the rôle that nature has written for him.

If we look at reformers in the light of reincarnation, we shall see that their present ability to lead is simply the result of work done in past lives. Since biologists are agreed that acquired characters are not transmissible, we must look for that rare inborn capacity to lead, not in the heredity of the organism, but in a spiritual heredity that is in the life and consciousness of the individual. This is exactly what reincarnation says; the individual acquired his ability to lead to-day by endeavours to lead in many a past life, and by succeeding so to do.

Furthermore the Hidden Light reveals to us that each present movement for reform was

rehearsed in many a primitive setting long ago, with the present leaders and their coadjutors as actors. We need but look at the reform movements for the amelioration of the lot of the working classes in Europe to see how the leaders to-day in the various countries were tribunes of the plebs in Rome or demagogoi in Athens or leaders of the masses in Carthage. Nay, furthermore, it is not difficult to note how some of the politicians and statesmen of Greece and Rome and elsewhere, that worked to abolish abuses and to free the oppressed, have changed sex in their present incarnations, and are with us to-day as leaders of the various suffragist and feminist movements of the world. Where else, but in past lives, did these women learn the tactical strategy and mastery of leadership that they evince in their campaigns for reform? Why should certain men and women, and not all, labour and toil for their fellow-men, renouncing all and coveting martyrdom, unless those same men and women had learnt by past experiences the glory of action for reform? For the born leaders in every reform are geniuses in their way; they go unerringly to an aim with the

conviction of success; where did they develop this faith in themselves? They are in reality the "missing links" from men to-day to the supermen of the future, and it is nature herself with her Hidden Work that has so fashioned them life after life.

So nature plans and achieves, and the stately pageant moves on. But her purpose is not achieved slowly and leisurely, adding change to change; she does not bring about a new order of things by an accumulation of small changes. Nature goes by leaps, *per saltum*; and as in the biological world crises appear and nature makes a leap and ushers in new species, so too is it in the world of human affairs. Though there is a slow steady upward movement for progress through reform, yet now and then there is a crisis in the affairs of men; then things happen, and after the crisis is over there is, as it were, a new species in human activity. Reform takes a new trend and a whole host of new reforms are ushered in to make life fuller and nobler.

One such crisis in human affairs came in Palestine, with the coming of Christ. For though men knew not that it was a crisis,

though Greece and Rome dreamed and planned of philosophy and dominion without end, a dawn had begun of a new era, and an age was ushered in, in the heyday of which Greece and Rome should be a mere name. Christ ministered in Palestine, spoke to peasant and priest, and gave His sermons "on the Mount"; and men knew not then that with His message He gave birth to new species of idealism in action. But after two thousand years have elapsed, we of another generation can see that when Christ lived in Palestine, and the Roman Empire was but just then beginning its day of glory, then indeed was the beginning of the end of a world of thought and action—of that "glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome"—and that Christ gave His message not so much to the men of His day as to those that were to come.

So too was it in India, six centuries before Christ; another "dreamer" appeared, Siddhartha, Prince of the Sakya Clan; men listened to Him and loved Him and followed Him, but they little dreamed that He was in reality building an Empire of Righteousness, which even after twenty-five centuries should

embrace within it five hundred millions of souls. To the critics of His time, He was but another "Teacher," one of hundreds then living in India pointing out "the Way"; it is only after the lapse of centuries that later generations know that He was a Teacher of Teachers, a Flower on our human tree the like of which had never been.

Every so often then, there is a climax in human affairs, and always such a climax is preceded by an age when men "dream dreams". In Palestine prophet after prophet dreamed of "the great and dreadful day of the Lord" before Christ came, and proclaimed its coming and worked for it; in India many a sage and philosopher with his solutions prepared the way for the message of the Buddha. And in every such climax, small or great, the resolution comes through the intermediary of a Personality. For nature weaves the tangled knot of human fate, "nowise moved except unto the working out of doom"; but she plans too the Solver of the knot, and for every crisis which is of her planning, she has prepared the Man who holds the solution in his heart and brain.

In this our twentieth century, men dream dreams as never heretofore. East and west, north and south, the machinery of human life grates on the ear, and there is not a single man or woman of true imagination who can say, "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world!"

De profundis clamavi better describes the wail of every nation. Millions are spent on armies and navies, while the poor are clamouring for bread; and statesmen themselves are wringing their hands that they cannot give a nation's wealth back to the nation in hospitals and schools and fair gardens and clean habitations. For there are "wars and rumours of wars". The spirit of charity grows year by year, but it seems as though charity but added patches to a rotting garment, and the more the patches that are put on the more the rents that appear. Strife between capital and labour, race hatred between white and brown and yellow and black, a deadlock between science and religion, and more than all else the increasing luxury of the few and the increasing misery of the many, these are but a few of the problems facing philanthropists to-day. But

every reformer realises, in whatever department he works, that for lasting reform a complete reconstruction is needed of the whole social structure, if poverty and disease and ignorance and misery shall be as a nightmare that has been but shall never be again. All are eager for reform; thousands are willing to co-operate. But none knows where to begin, in the true reconstruction. Each is indeed terrified lest in trying to pull one brick out of the present social edifice, to replace it by a better, he may not pull the whole structure down, and so cause misery instead of joy.

This is the crisis present before our eyes, confronting not one nation but all. "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord," is true to-day as never before.

Everywhere, in every department where men work for reform, men are looking for a Leader. Where is He that nature has selected, in whose mind is the Plan, in whose heart is the Spirit, and in whose hand is the Power? Let him but appear, let him but say, "This is how you shall work," and thousands will flock to Him in joy. And it is the message of the Hidden Light that He is ready, for from the

hearts of men a cry has gone forth, and from the bosom of God a Son shall come. The world is in the birth-throes once again for the coming of a Son of Man, and the young men that see visions to-day shall in their prime find Him in their midst, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Prince of Peace.

Never an age, when God has need of him,
Shall want its man, predestined by that need,
To pour his life in fiery word and deed,
The great Archangel of the Elohim.

When He that the world waits for, and whom nature has planned to come "unto this hour," shall appear, what will be His work? What but to carry on nature's work one step further? The day is past when men go forward with competition as their cry of progress; nothing lasting can now come for men unless it is brought about by interdependence and co-operation. The best of men to-day see the inevitable coming of this new age when men shall be sons of God in deed and not merely in name; but their cry for altruism and co-operation is as a voice hurled against a tempest. They can but gather round them here an enthusiast and there a disciple;

nature keeps her diadems not for those that reap happiness in her pleasant fields and gardens, but for those that co-operate with her in her Hidden Work, and try "to lift a little of the heavy karma of the world". For this is nature's Hidden Work, to weave a vesture out of the karmas of men that shall reflect the pattern given her from on high; and the weaving halts, unperfected, till through the actions of all men there shall shine one great Action. When the perfect vesture is woven for Him who desires it, and the karmas of all men act in unison, then, and not before, will come "that day" when Nature can say to men, as now to her God, "I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you." Unto that hour she toils at her Hidden Work, and it is the Hidden Light that reveals to men her process of evolution as she shapes from out the dust immortal Sons of God.

