

A SHORT VIEW OF GREAT QUESTIONS

BY

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Dull indeed must be the spirit which will not receive an impulse toward better things from this book.—*Springfield (Mass.) News.*

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I.

OF THREE ROADS, CHOOSE ONE.

IN these times a number of the great minds in the world of science and philosophy have lent their approval to the theory that the study of what may be called the Eternal Problems is profitless, being only an exploration into the land of the Unknowable. The position "I do not know" is a very modest one. Every man must take it in relation to many things, for "our knowledge is as the rivulet, our ignorance as the sea." But the extension of the formula "I do not know" to "I cannot know; no one knows; no one can know," does not bear the tone of humility or of open-mindedness. It has the sound rather of a last word to which there can be no answer, a subtle form of denial which should end discussion.

There are but three theories of man's origin and destiny, and they may be expressed in a few words :

1. The theory of Materialism—that man's life begins with the birth and ends with the death of his body.

2. The theory of Theology—that man is created at his birth with an immortal soul which survives the death of his body.

3. The theory of Reincarnation, sometimes called Metempsychosis, or the Transmigration of Souls—that man has an immortal soul which existed before his birth and survives the death of his body.

These three theories are very old, and it is not of record that the mind of man has conceived any other, differing from them in its basic form. Of the three, one must be true, and two false. We are at the point where there are three forks to the road, and only one is the right way. It is not the policy of wisdom to halt, or to proclaim that there is no way out. It is even better to advance on the wrong road than to stand still ; for the wrong road when explored must yield some evidence that it is the way of error.

It is not likely that each of the three theories is sustained by exactly the same amount of evidence, or that an inquiry would prove each to be precisely as reasonable as the others. The true one must have more evidence to support it than the false ones, the truth being stronger than that which is untrue.

It should not be considered presumptuous under the circumstances to compare the merits of the three theories, with a view to ascertaining which does the least violence to our natural feelings ; which is most in harmony with justice, the noble doctrine of moral responsibility, and the truths of science ; which explains best the law of Heredity, the necessity for evil, and other problems that have troubled the minds of men ; which furnishes the highest incentive for right living, and for the pursuit

of knowledge ; which theory in fact is best for man, in the belief that what is best for man must be true and contain within itself other evidences of its verity.

II.

MATERIALISM, THE THEORY THAT DEATH ENDS ALL.

MAN, from the standpoint of the Materialist, is born without his own consent—the product of the law of Heredity and of other forces and impulses of which he has no knowledge—and is equipped with physical, mental and moral qualities for which he is not responsible. All that man knows is that he is here ; that he is what he is. Why he is here, why he is what he is, he does not and cannot know.

But man, being endowed with intelligence, must ask questions. He must, for example, inquire concerning the terrible law of Heredity, which apparently demonstrates that the physical, mental and moral qualities of the parents are transmitted to their children—even more, that the traits of remote ancestors reappear in the new-born child. That which is bad as well as that which is good in the child can be traced to its forebears. The good and evil in us are apparently but inheritances from our progenitors. It has been claimed that the fool, sot, thief, liar, inherits the sins and suffers for the vices of his forefathers ; and that the wise, the noble and the good are heirs to the better qualities of their ancestors.

But how can these facts be reconciled with moral responsibility or with justice? Why should we be condemned for the sins of our fathers? Our man-made laws,

weak and fallible as they are, do not commit such an injustice as this. There is on earth no race of beings so savage or degraded as to tolerate a code that would punish one man for the wrong done by another. Can it be that the Creative Force has a weaker sense of justice than have its lowest creatures in human form?

The Materialist would doubtless answer: "Even if the law of Heredity does not exist, or could be overthrown, still the questions based upon it would remain unanswered; for, since man does not create himself, he can neither be blamed nor credited for the qualities born in him. Nature, for reasons which we cannot comprehend, or perhaps for lack of reason, produces creatures which are unequal, some being men, some animals, some reptiles. Of the men, some are wise and some are foolish, some good and some bad."

Then man must needs ask more questions. If Nature has created one man brave and another cowardly, one wise and another foolish, one good and another vicious, then why should the wise look down upon the foolish, or the good upon the bad, or the hero scorn the coward? Is creation but a great lottery, in which some creatures draw prizes and others blanks?

We may assume that the Materialist would answer in these words: "But why do you question *me*? I am not the Creative Force. I but face the facts, and decline to cherish any illusions. If I have stated the facts incorrectly, please correct me. If I have stated them correctly, then you, not I, must answer them. If you cannot answer them, then accept them and make the best of them. If they overthrow some of our most sacred idols and theories, so much the worse for our idols and theories.

The sheep does not complain because it is a sheep, nor the snake because it is a snake. Perhaps it would be wise for us to congratulate ourselves that we are no worse than we are, and make the best of what we are, rather than complain because some creatures have been treated unfairly in the distribution of Nature's favors."

III.

MATERIALISTIC FATALISM—MAN IS THE BENEFICIARY OF NATURE'S BOUNTY, OR THE VICTIM OF HER MALICE.

THE theory of Materialism, we may now say, is the doctrine of Fatalism, and this doctrine may be interpreted as follows :

We are men ; we know not why. That we are men is due to no merit of our own. The good are only the beneficiaries of Nature's bounty, and the evil are the victims of her malice. That we are not monkeys, or rats, or snakes, is due to our good luck alone. We had no part in our creation ; we will not be consulted about our extinction. A few years ago we were not ; a few years hence we will not be. If we are discontented, we can depart of our own will and without fear ; for there can be no consequences of self-destruction. He who finds life not worth living is foolish to endure wretchedness here, when he can go hence to eternal sleep. •

Courage, truthfulness, honor and wisdom, if the theory of Materialism be sound, are but the gifts of Nature, for which he who possesses them deserves no more credit than the apple for its flavor, or the rose for its fragrance. The noblest thought of Plato was not his thought ; it was

but the result of the forces which Nature planted in the skull of Plato. Nature propagates intellectual and moral qualities as she grows potatoes, and vicious impulses as she produces thistles. The good or evil in us belongs to Nature, who planted it. We are only the garden pots with which she indulges her fancy for the cultivation of man. In one she plants a seed which produces a philanthropist, in another a poet, in another a philosopher, in another a hero ; and other seeds planted in other pots produce fools, traitors, liars and thieves. Our noblest, brightest and best are only as the prize roses in the flower show ; our meanest are as the weeds by the wayside, or as the noxious growths in the swamps of the tropics. What merit we have is due to Nature's forethought ; our demerit to her neglect.

If the theory of Materialism be true, then we must indeed part with the idols and ideals which we have most cherished. We must cease building monuments to the good and noble. We must pluck from our hearts all reverence for the great teachers, thinkers, discoverers and heroes of the earth, for we owe them no respect ; they were only the fortunate ones in the lottery of Fate. Cowards, fools and criminals we can neither scorn nor condemn ; for they are but the wretched victims of Nature's malevolence, and as such are entitled to our sympathy—if Nature has endowed us with such a quality as sympathy. We must accustom ourselves to the thought that moral responsibility is a fiction, and that equity has no place in Nature's general plan. The theories of eternal justice which we have built up, which we have even thought the best heritage we receive from our fathers, the ripest fruits of human experience, are but dreams and

illusions. Nature negatives them all. Man reaps what he has not sown, and sows what he cannot reap.

This is a dismal and hopeless philosophy, which sends a chill to our heart-strings, turns the sweet things of life to bitterness, and destroys the charts and extinguishes the lights by which we have been guided.

And yet the Materialist is right in at least one position—his propositions should be answered, rather than merely questioned or denied.

IV.

THE THEOLOGICAL THEORY, THAT MAN IS CREATED BY JEHOVAH.

THE theory of Theology concerning the origin of man differs from the theory of Materialism in two particulars : first, in the assertion that man is created by God rather than by Nature ; and, second, that man is endowed with an immortal soul which survives the death of his body.

The substitution of God for Nature as the Creative Force overcomes none of the objections to the Materialistic theory of the origin of man. It is still the doctrine of Fatalism. Man remains a creature that has been *made* ; and the credit or responsibility for what he is rests with the Maker, and not with the thing made. Man is still but a pot in which the Great Gardener has planted a seed of good or of evil.

Indeed, the law of Heredity is distinctly asserted in the Second Commandment (Exodus xx, 5) : “ For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.”

A few of the many other texts touching the creation and final disposal of man, and Jehovah's attitude to man, are here reproduced :

Genesis ii, 7: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Ephesians i, 11: "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

Proverbs xvi, 4: "The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."

Acts xv, 18: "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

Proverbs xv, 3: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

Isaiah xlv, 5, 7: "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

Romans ix, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18: "(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

Romans viii, 30: "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Timothy i, 9: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Ephesians ii, 8, 9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God—not of works, lest any man should boast."

Romans ix, 21, 22: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?"

Daniel iv, 34, 35: "I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he

doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth : and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"

Psalms cxxxv, 6 : "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."

Matthew x, 29-31 : "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Psalms xciv, 8-11 : "Understand, ye brutish among the people : and ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? He that formed the eye, shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?"

Romans xi, 7 : "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded (according as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day."

V.

THEOLOGICAL FATALISM—ALL MEN ARE UNDER THE FAVOR OR CURSE OF JEHOVAH.

ALL theologians agree in asserting the all-presence, all-wisdom and all-power of Jehovah. He sees all things, knows all things, wills all things. The creature cannot prevail against the Creator. Man is nothing ; Jehovah is everything.

Upon this line of reasoning has been built the doctrine of Predestination, which is the most absolute form of Fatalism that the wit of man can conceive. Predestination was until recent centuries accepted by all of the churches, though against the protest of an earnest minority. It yet remains in the creeds of the sects which accept the Westminster Confession of Faith, in which it is expressed in these words :

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some

men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death.

' These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

* * * * *

"The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice."

Whatever may be said of the justice of the doctrine of Predestination, there can be no denial of the fact that it is the logical and unerring deduction from the theory of a Creative God.

But the sense of justice in the hearts of nearly all men revolts against every phase of Fatalism. The larger bodies of the church long ago abandoned the doctrine of Predestination. It may be said that all of the theological controversies of the past have been but efforts to reconcile with justice the Fatalistic theory of the creation of man, and to shift the responsibility for evil from Jehovah to man, or to the Evil One. The contentions over Predestination, free will, Adam's sin and its atonement, salvation through faith, means of grace, all hinge upon this issue.

But the denial that the final disposition of the souls of men has been predetermined by the Creator, even if it could be reconciled with his omnipotence, leaves equally serious questions unexplained ; for it is evident, if the Creative theory be true, that Jehovah *has already either blessed or damned all of his creatures in the very act of creating them.* Man is of necessity, from the first breath he draws—for no merit or demerit of his own—under the favor or the wrath of Jehovah.

Some men are created strong, brave, wise, honest, and righteous ; some receive the gift of genius, of beauty, of fair-mindedness, of innocence, of honor. These are under the favor and blessing of Jehovah.

Others are created ignorant, cruel, corrupt, selfish, cowardly and base ; some receive the gift of dullness, of selfishness, of meanness, of indolence, of ugliness, of savagery, of depravity. These are under the curse of Jehovah.

VI.

FATALISM IS AT WAR WITH JUSTICE AND MORALITY.

JUSTICE requires that man shall earn what he gets, and shall not get what he does not earn ; that he shall reap as he sows, and not reap what another has sown ; that he shall suffer for his own sin, and not for the sin of another. In one creature the Creator has planted good. But this good the creature has not earned. It was but the gift of Jehovah. In another creature the Creator has planted evil. This evil the creature has not earned. It was but the curse of Jehovah.

The doctrine that all men sinned in Adam is at war with justice. If we can assume that a creature can sin against the will of his Creator and Ruler, then Adam's sin was his own, and he only could justly pay its penalty. But if man did sin in Adam, then man should pay the penalty. Hence the atonement, by which man's responsibility was shifted, is also at war with justice.

The doctrine that salvation cannot be earned through a moral life alone, which has perplexed so many minds,

now becomes plain. Man cannot, under the Creative hypothesis, be saved by his own merits, for he has none. His merits belong to his Maker, who gave them to him. His demerits also belong to his Maker ; and it may be said that the justice of this claim is crudely recognized in the granting of easy terms of salvation. Repentance and faith are the essential theological factors in salvation. Repentance is easy, and especially so to one in trouble. Faith is easy also to one who is taught that reason need not—indeed should not—enter into faith.

The churches—even those that still retain the tenet of Predestination in their creeds—have long really abandoned the attempt to reconcile the doctrine of Fatalism, or of the creation of man, with justice and morality. Such a reconciliation is for manifest reasons impossible. No system of morality can be built upon the theory that we are, from our birth, and for no merit or demerit of our own, either the beneficiaries of God's bounty or the victims of his wrath.

The church is now drifting rapidly, and for some centuries has been drifting, away from its theological foundations. All of the real power in the church, in modern times at least, is due to its record as a teacher of morality and justice. To this record is alone due its hold upon the minds of men. For man loves justice ; it is to his moral sense as the breath of life to his nostrils ; and he will not knowingly countenance that which runs counter to it.

VII.

NATURE'S WAYS ARE LARGE WAYS—THE UNIVERSE HAS BEEN AND WILL BE FOREVER.

THE whole theory of Creation—the creation of the Universe, of the race of men, of the soul of man—is at variance with the trend, deductions and demonstrations of modern science.

Science has demonstrated that matter cannot be destroyed. Fire, decay, and other forces can change, but cannot annihilate, matter. Neither can matter be created ; it is eternal.

Force, also, as demonstrated by science, and all things in the Universe, by rational inference, are uncreatable, indestructible, eternal.

There is on record no evidence of any change in the laws of Nature. It is reasonable to assume that there never has been, and never can be, any change in these laws. As they are, they have been and will be forever.

Nature's ways are large ways. Her great forces could not have been set to work in some dim, far-off time, as an engine starts the wheels of a factory.

Huxley, in "Essays upon Some Controverted Questions," says : " But science knows nothing of any stage in which the Universe could be said, in other than a metaphorical and popular sense, to be formless or empty, or in any respect less the seat of law and order than it is now."

Herbert Spencer closes an epitome of the cardinal principles of his philosophy with these words : " That which persists unchanging in quantity, but ever changing

in form, under these sensible appearances which the Universe presents to us, transcends human knowledge and conception—is an unknown and unknowable power, which we are obliged to recognize as without limit in space and without beginning or end in time.”

The Universe has been and will be forever. There never could have been a time when there was Nothing, not even darkness—for darkness is something. The word Nothing expresses only a negation. It can have no place or habitation. Nowhere in the Universe can Nothing exist.

The Universe had no beginning ; and all speculations based on its Beginning or Creation fall. They are based on Nothing, and lead to Nowhere.

It has been said that the thought of something without a beginning or an end is inconceivable. The circle is a line without a beginning or an end. Who can locate the beginning or the end of the equatorial line ?

VIII.

THERE IS IN THE UNIVERSE NO CREATION AND NO ANNIHILATION.

IN this Universe there is nothing new ; nothing has been created, nothing destroyed—and yet the law of the Universe is transformation, unceasing change. No thing stands still for any second of time ; not even the granite rock. A globe is formed from the debris of space. It hardens and ripens until it can produce low forms of life, and these develop into higher forms. The globe, with the life upon it, reaches by slow processes its prime ; and then descends gradually to barrenness and final disintegration, its dust going back to space.

Nature does not have one law for large things, and a different law for small things. The law for the globe is of necessity the law for the lowest organism upon it, though one may last for a million years and the other for only a second of time. There is nothing new in the constitution of either—nothing that did not exist before the incipience, and that would not survive the dissolution, of each.

A Creation, in the basic sense of the word, would be the making of something out of nothing. A man cannot create a house. He can only transform other things into a house. What we loosely call Creation and Annihilation are really Transformations.

There is then in the Universe, no Creation and no Annihilation. That which to our eyes is born anew is but old matter, old force, old thought, old spirit, old love, old hate, old honor, old degradation, in new forms.

Nature has no contradictions. Her laws are harmonious. The Universe being immortal and eternal, all things in it, even the soul of man, must also be immortal and eternal. The flesh in which we see man must be but as a garment worn for a time. *There must be a law of evolution for the mind, character and soul, as well as for the physical body, of man.*

The soul of man has developed through evolution, and its antecedents are eternal. These may have dipped as low as the meanest germ of life, or they may have risen as high as the archangels; but through all experiences, base or noble, the soul's continuity has been unbroken.

Man is the flower of this earth. It is unbelievable that Nature would give immortality to a senseless speck of dust, and deny it to the soul of man.

IX.

THE FOUNDATION STONES OF THE THEORY OF REINCARNATION.

FROM the foregoing propositions we may draw the following deductions, which are the foundation stones of the theory of Reincarnation in its logical form :

1. The Universe has in space no boundary ; in time no beginning and no end.
 2. Its laws have been unchanged, and are unchangeable.
 3. All things in it, great or small, have been and will be forever.
 4. The soul of man is pre-existent and after-existent, immortal and eternal.
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X.

MAN BUILDS HIS OWN CHARACTER ; HE REAPS AS HE HAS SOWN.

THE theory of Reincarnation is only the completion and the rounding out of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. If man's soul came into existence with the birth of his body, it must die with the death of his body. If the soul be immortal after death, it must have been immortal before birth. The theory that immortality exists after death only, is evidently but a half-truth. That which is immortal is forever immortal.

Building upon the theory that the soul of man is pre-existent, immortal and eternal, Reincarnation teaches that the laws under which we live are just to the last degree. Man builds his own character. We are sick

because we have neglected the laws of health ; ignorant because we have failed to improve our opportunities ; fretful, despondent, lazy or cowardly because we have cultivated mean-spiritedness ; boasters, drunkards, ingrates, thieves, liars or murderers because we have dishonored ourselves.

We reap as we have sown. Each man is—mentally and morally exactly, and to a large degree physically—what he has made himself. He is forever working out his own damnation, or his own salvation. He may rise to the altitude of the angels ; he may fall to the level of the reptile or the insect.

Within certain temporary material limitations, man is free. He cannot speak if he be dumb, nor see if he be blind ; but, mentally and morally, he is always free. He can think his own thoughts, act wisely or foolishly, do right or wrong.

The form of each being shows what its life has been. Its strength and goodness are medals of honor for its victories ; its weakness and vileness are the badges of defeat.

Man's life is an endless battle in which the good and brave are victorious, and the mean and cowardly are defeated.

XI.

WITHOUT ADVERSITY, MAN'S SOUL WOULD
SHRIVEL FOR LACK OF EXERCISE.

EVIL is the penalty of wandering from right ways. Evil is also the background of good, or the incentive to good, or the trial of good, without which indeed good could not be. In a world without evil,

all men would have perfect health, perfect intelligence and perfect morals. No one would ever care to speak to another soul, his own cup of information being full. There would be no need of industry, toil being an evil ; nor of courage, danger being an evil. No scientific, philosophical or religious problems could attract attention, as all these would have been solved, ignorance being an evil. The temperature would stand forever at seventy degrees, both heat and cold being evil. There could be no progress, since progress is but the overcoming of evil. A world without evil would be as toil without exertion, as light without darkness, as a battle without an enemy. It would be a world without purpose.

The law of averages indicates that what is called chance, or luck, is only manifest in a superficial or temporary sense, and that in the deeper and more permanent sense there is no such thing as hazard in the natural world. So true is this, that the important business of insurance is built upon the sound assumption that fires, accidents, marine disasters, and even death itself, will always bear a definite ratio to time and numbers.

Through the working of this law of averages, it may be assumed that man, in his eternal life—of which his present life on this earth is but an inconceivable fraction—has passed, or will pass, through all forms of experience possible to human beings ; and that he has benefited and suffered, or will benefit and suffer, impartially with his fellows, from all forms of both good and evil fortune.

A man may lose his sight by a stroke of lightning. It cannot be assumed that he is responsible for the thunderbolt, or that he could have avoided it by prudence

or foresight. What consolation has he, then, for this affliction which he could not have avoided? The consolation that his loss will be temporary, that his sight will be restored. He should accept with philosophy the evil as well as the good which comes to him, knowing that in the sum of all his lives the good greatly exceeds the evil. The loss of his sight by lightning would not, under the law of averages, happen to him more than once perhaps in a hundred thousand lives. If the life of the stricken man were actually to end with the death of his present body, the loss of his sight would be a great injustice ; but he should look upon his misfortune as an incident merely of his eternal life, in which adversity as well as prosperity has its uses, and even its advantages.

What is commonly called good fortune is not always really good ; nor is what is called evil fortune always really evil. Back of good fortune there lurks sometimes an evil influence, and back of evil fortune there lies often a good influence. Adverse fortune may strengthen a man's unselfishness, fortitude and courage ; while good fortune may weaken him in some of his nobler qualities, as the ownership of great riches may develop idleness or vanity, and as the possession of inherited privileges may foster self-love, arrogance and contempt for one's own kind. The heir to a throne, seen by the lights which illuminate the eternal life, may really be more unfortunate than he who is born to poverty and toil.

Many evils, such as the pestilence and famine, which were formerly considered as manifestations of the wrath of God, are now known to be but the results of man's ignorance. Science has overcome, or can overcome, the pestilence ; and has provided, or can provide, the antidote

for germs of disease. Human thought, in the practical form of railroads and steamships, in connection with prudence and foresight, can relieve the horrors of famine.

Poverty and other forms of man's debasement are due mainly either to his own indolence, folly or vice, or to economic and social superstitions which intelligence can overcome.

Accidents, difficulties, burdens and sorrows are but the tests of our manhood, the trials of our worthiness, without which the soul would shrivel for lack of exercise. All forces work to make strong men, high men, real men. The post of hardship and danger is a post of honor.

"For as gold is tried by fire,
So a heart must be tried by pain."

XII.

THE PROBLEM OF HEREDITY—THE SURVIVAL OF THE FIT.

WE may now comprehend the great problem of Heredity, which is but one example of the law that like seeks like. To a vicious parent is born a vicious child. *The child is not created ; its soul is as old as the souls of its parents.* Its sins are all its own. Its character has been formed in its own previous existence. It would be as correct to say that the sins of the child are visited upon the parents, as to assert that the sins of the parents are visited upon the child. It comes from space, to be for a little time a citizen of this earth. It is attracted by its own kind. Vicious itself, it naturally becomes the offspring of vice. So also, as a rule, the ignorant soul is born to dull lineage, the wise

soul to wise ancestry, the good soul to good antecedents.

Nature has not created a vicious man. The vicious man is self-developed. He can place the responsibility nowhere but upon himself.

The strong have made themselves strong ; the weak are responsible for their own weakness. The dreams of absolute equality here or hereafter are baseless. Some men will always be taller, stronger or better than their fellows. No two men have been, or can be, exactly equal in all things. The fit advance ; the unfit decline. If the law were reversed, the Universe would be a hell in which health and wisdom would be exterminated by disease and folly.

The future, so far at least as man is concerned, cannot be predetermined in any large or general way ; for it is of necessity undetermined. Man makes his own future. He alone can build or can tell his fortune. That the future has been determined is one of the most debasing superstitions that are still entertained by the minds of men. If it were true, then we would be but as actors, speaking the lines and simulating the emotions in an unending drama which Fate has written for us—loving or hating, fighting or yielding, speaking wisdom or folly, acting nobly or ignobly, as the iron law of Necessity has given us our predetermined parts.

Salvation is not free ; nor can it be secured on easy terms ; nor can it be secured on any terms in the sense of being held securely against all danger of being lost. Salvation can be maintained only, and through eternal vigilance.

XIII.

ETERNAL JUSTICE IS AS EXACT AS ARITHMETIC,
AS THE MOVEMENTS OF THE STARS.

THE Natural Law confirms the doctrine of moral responsibility with greater force than any prophet, seer or lawgiver. Man will forever be what he makes himself. His follies and vices are his own ; his strength and goodness are his own. From the awful responsibility for himself he cannot escape. Suicide cannot kill him ; death cannot destroy him. No ritual, ceremony, fasting, confession or repentance ; no imploration, prostration or sacrifice to the gods ; no mediation, no form of faith, can save him. He has no friend at court ; no attorney can appear for him. The Law works silently, constantly ; it is a stranger to pity, mercy, love or hate ; it knows only Justice—Justice to the finest degree, as exact as arithmetic, as the movements of the stars, as the order of the Universe.

Man's systems of justice are feeble compared with Nature's, as is shown in our temperance laws, which are as a rule impotent ; while Nature's statutes against drunkenness are always enforced to the letter. Degradation, poverty, insanity and premature death are the penalties for the violation of Nature's prohibitory laws.

Our own system of government is but a reflection of eternal justice. The state gives to each man freedom, equal rights and equal opportunities ; but it cannot force any one to use his freedom, his rights or his opportunities. The use or misuse of his civil rights rests with man. So it is with his eternal rights. If the Eternal Law were to force man to use or to neglect his eternal

rights, it would destroy man's freedom, and consequently his morality, which is dependent upon his freedom to choose between good and evil.

The Law is accurate, grim, steadfast, fair and just. If anything so absolute as the Eternal Law can be said to have a purpose, it is to make men happy. Unhappiness is usually but the penalty of wandering from right living. Man-made laws are based on the Eternal Equities. The good have nothing to fear from either.

XIV.

MAN IS HIS OWN SAVIOR AND CREATOR, AND
MAKES HIS OWN HEAVEN AND HELL.

THE human form, however humble or even degraded, still confers a certain stamp of nobility. We are at least men ; not "dumb, driven cattle." We are joint heirs of the thought and experience of the ages. Opportunity is ours ; knowledge is ours, if we would grasp it ; and happiness is ours, if in ignorance we do not refuse it.

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

Man need not grovel or abase himself. He is older than the city of Rome, older than the Pyramids, older

than the Koran or the Bible, older than any book ever written or printed ; and he will survive them all. He is the eternal master of himself ; a king of a royal line older than any throne or dynasty. The noble man has a noble kingdom ; it extends as far and wide as his thought and love can reach. The base man has a mean kingdom ; but still it is his own. If he so wills, he can broaden it, better it. He can lose it only through his own abdication ; for in all the Universe he has no real enemy but himself.

Man is his own savior and creator, and makes his own heaven and hell. Heaven and hell are real. They are here, always with us, and follow us through all experiences. Now, and every day of our lives, we must choose between them. We can accept either, scorn either.

Hell is in the neglecting of opportunities, and descending among the vile and slothful ; in descending so low that opportunity may almost cease, and hope die, and intelligence be lost. The deeper hell can be seen about us, in the lower animals ; in beings dull, slimy, creeping, insignificant, loathsome. These may be lost souls.

Heaven is in the improving of opportunities, and in ascending to the level of the wise and good. Heaven is visible to us in bodies sound, strong and clean ; in muscles that can stand a strain ; in organs that can resist disease ; in eyes that can drink beauty ; in ears attuned to music ; in minds that can reason and understand, appreciative of noble thoughts and deeds, eager for wisdom, hospitable to the truth, scornful of lies ; in moral natures set to the Golden Rule, kindly, cheerful, generous, loving and just, in courage true, in honor bright.

XV.

METAMORPHOSIS—THE FACT THAT ONE LIFE CAN PASS FROM ONE PHYSICAL BODY TO ANOTHER.

THE persistence of one life through two or more physical bodies, as illustrated in the metamorphoses of animals, is important in connection with our present investigation. That transformations occur on a large scale, among the lower forms of life—quite as startling relatively as if a dog were to be changed into a man, or a girl into a mermaid—is one of the most interesting facts in Nature.

These transformations are very numerous. Myriads of plant forms, all of the two hundred thousand species of insects, and most other animals to the extent of three hundred thousand more, go through some form of metamorphosis. These transformations are usually progressive, though retrogressive metamorphoses are common in plant life, and are also known among animals. Metamorphosis is no longer looked upon as something peculiar or exceptional, but is now regarded rather as the law of animal life.

While these transformations vary greatly in details, the familiar case of the caterpillar and the butterfly supplies perhaps as good an illustration as any other. The caterpillar, upon reaching the end of its existence as a caterpillar, forms a cocoon out of its own body. A spark of life, which is called the pupa, or chrysalis, survives in the cocoon. Sir John Lubbock says: "The quiescent and death-like condition of the pupa is one of the most remarkable phenomena of insect metamorphosis." In

time the chrysalis emerges as an incipient butterfly from the cocoon and is promptly transformed into the perfect butterfly.

In the Heteromorpha—the larger division of insects, including bees, wasps, ants, beetles, flies, gnats, fleas, moths and butterflies—the insect in its last metamorphosis bears no resemblance to its form in its first stage of existence. The butterfly resembles the caterpillar as little as an eagle resembles a hog.

As a rule in recent times, the earlier stages in the metamorphosis of an animal have been accepted as embryonic forms of its final stage, and this theory would seem to be in the main correct, though it is untenable in the case of some insects which, as discovered by Prof. Wagner, reach maturity and give birth to their own kind in their first stage of existence. Of the embryonic theory, the Century Dictionary says :

“By a late and loose, though now common, extension of the term [embryo] it is applied to various larval stages of some invertebrates, which in the course of their transformation are frequently so different from the parent as to be described as distinct species or genera : as the *embryo* (first larval stage) of a cestoid worm.”

On the same subject, Sir John Lubbock says :

“The larva of an insect is by no means a mere stage in the development of the perfect animal. On the contrary, it is subject to the influence of natural selection and undergoes changes which have reference entirely to its own requirements and condition.”

Whether the embryonic theory can be maintained or not, is an issue of no importance in its bearing upon our main question. It would be in harmony with the philosophy of Reincarnation to say that every form of life is the embryo of a succeeding form, or one stage in a continuous life which must exist in many different physical forms. The main point, for our present purposes, is

this : that one life does pass, by whatever process, from one physical body to another. No theory touching the metamorphosis of animals disputes the fact that one, and only one, life inhabits the two distinct and dissimilar bodies of the caterpillar and the butterfly.

It would seem that the vital persistence of the caterpillar is a complete answer to the contention of the Materialist—that life cannot survive the dissolution of the physical body. The physical body of the caterpillar has ceased to be ; it has passed beyond all possibilities of restoration or resurrection. Yet the real life of the caterpillar is not ended ; its deathless principle survives in the cocoon ; and it will live to inhabit the body of the butterfly.

The physical form of the caterpillar lives but a few weeks, and the life of the butterfly is also brief. Neither can survive freezing, while the thread of life in the cocoon survives a winter, and has lived, under the experiments of Reaumur, for three years in an ice house. What is this deathless principle which can live so long in a death-like form, and which survives a temperature which would be fatal to the physical bodies of its predecessor, the worm, and of its successor, the butterfly ? What is this vital spark which survives the annihilation of one body and passes on, after three years in ice, to another and a dissimilar body ? The word *soul*, an old word in all languages, is the only word which fitly describes that spark or form of life which survives physical death.

With the caterpillar, death does not end all. For it there is no annihilation. Having shuffled off this mortal coil, it yet lives. The cocoon is the grave into

which the mortal part of the caterpillar descends, and from which its immortal part ascends into the form of the butterfly.

The caterpillar has an after-existence in the butterfly, and the butterfly has had a pre-existence in the caterpillar. This transformation demonstrates, on the physical side at least, the fact of pre-existence and after-existence. It certainly proves the transmigration of life, if not the transmigration of souls ; and the persistence of life, if not the persistence of the soul. Such distinctions would probably not occur to us but for the fact that the theory that the insect may have a soul is unfamiliar to us.

The Theological theory that animals are soulless is plainly untenable. If man be immortal, all other forms of life must also be immortal.

On the other hand, if there be a deathless principle in the worm, there must also be a deathless principle in man. Not all of Nature's ways and transformations are in the open. The eye cannot follow them completely. But her laws are harmonious. It is highly improbable that the life of the caterpillar could inhabit two bodies, and the life of man only one ; and that the soul, or vital spark, in the worm is subject to the law of evolution, while the inner life of man is not.

The metamorphoses of animals emphasize the folly of the assumption that the physical part of man is the product of evolution, while his mind, character, moral nature, or soul, has been created.

This much at least must be conceded in fairness—that the transformation of the bodies of animals, even if it does not prove the existence of the soul, does establish a strong presumption in favor of that fact, and is in

exact harmony with that theory of the evolution of the soul which is called Reincarnation.

XVI.

WHY HAVE WE NO MEMORY OF OUR PAST LIVES ?

WHY have we no memory of our past lives ? If of our past lives there be no recollection, has not our identity been lost ?

Doubtless the butterfly has no recollection of its previous life as a worm ; but this defect in its memory does not change the facts nor affect its identity.

We find it desirable often in one short life to turn over a new leaf, open a new set of books, break off from the past, abandon an old life. This life doubtless is as a miniature to that longer life to which our present existence is not even as a second to threescore years and ten.

As we grow old here, we become garrulous and tiresome with our recollections and reminiscences. Much more wearisome we would be if we had the experiences of all our lives, all of our humiliations and successes, to draw from. He who lives in the present is wholly alive ; he who lives in the past is weakening, dying.

Each man as he stands is the epitome of his own past. His thought, courage and moral substance show what his eternal life has been. In his form and character one can read his story. The volume is open for him and for all men. In it are concentrated the sum and the results of all his lives, as upon one plate the camera throws the details of a landscape. His own memory could not change, but would doubtless be at variance with, the result ; for

our memory retains but a jumble of matters trivial as well as important ; it is usually inaccurate and always fallible. Memory is a treacherous vagrant who plays tricks with us, and eludes us often when we need him most.

Of the present life we remember little. The years of our infancy, the hours passed in sleep, are all forgotten. Who remembers accurately all the details of yesterday, of this day last week, of this date last year? He who has reached fifty years has breathed for 1,576,800,000 seconds. How many of these seconds can he remember? Certainly not one in one thousand. We retain, then, the memory of less than one one-thousandth part of the life we are now living.

It is true, however, that many persons, and more particularly the thoughtful and intelligent, do have glimpses, sometimes vague and often clear, of a previous existence. Sir Walter Scott, in his diary, dated February 17, 1828, says :

"I cannot, I am sure, tell if it is worth marking down, that yesterday, at dinner time, I was strangely haunted by what I would call the sense of pre-existence—viz., a confused idea that nothing that passed was said for the first time ; that the same topics had been discussed and the same persons had stated the same opinions on them."

Edgar A. Poe, in "Eureka," says :

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

Moreover, it is claimed by those who may know, that in the land of the Hereafter, which is the same land as

the Heretofore, it is given to us to see somewhat of our former lives, to have our past revealed to us. They claim also that in that Other-world we may meet, recognize and abide with the friends of this life, and also the friends of our past lives, unrecognizable now, even by "the lonely lamp of memory."

XVII.

THEORIES CONCERNING THE FORM OF THE REINCARNATION OF SOULS.

WHAT form does the Reincarnation of souls take? Many theories come down to us—from the sources of Egyptian religion, from the old Greek philosophers, from the mystical philosophy of India—re-enforced by modern speculation and investigation, in the sum too voluminous and intricate to be summarized here. It would be unwise to accept any of these theories as the last word to be uttered upon the question.

The very old theory of transmigration through the souls of animals has had less standing, perhaps, in recent times, than it is entitled to. It would seem reasonable that the very lowest forms of men, or the lowest men among decaying races, or the degenerates, the worthless and the wholly vile of our own race, may reappear in the form of animals.

Doubtless the reverse is also true—that high and noble animals may reappear in the form of man. Some brutes travel manward; some men, bruteward. But these movements must be slow, taking long periods for completion.

It may be that the lower beings are passing through a stage of existence where they require and receive exter-

nal help, as do the infants of our own race. As the tadpole passes, apparently without will or effort of its own, to a higher life in the frog, and the caterpillar to a broader existence as a butterfly, so it may be the process of Nature to conduct all helpless beings through a long and varied series of reincarnations, in which they may acquire experience and intelligence. Reaching finally man's estate, as our infants do, having acquired man's intelligence and man's strength, the souls which have ascended from lower forms of life may be then thrown upon their own responsibility, to form henceforth their own characters.

Those who fail as men, may return to the lower life, to try over again the tedious round of transmigration through animal forms. It may be that the harmless lower creatures have been human souls which failed in human form through lack of purpose ; and that the vicious and hideous are the souls which failed in human shape through depravity.

The foregoing theory, touching the upward movements of the lower souls, is advanced as a conjecture only, and is based mainly upon the marvelous consideration which Nature gives to the helpless and to the unintelligent, as shown in the instinct of the lower beings, otherwise lacking apparently in moral sentiments, to care for, protect and defend their young. All of the valorous deeds of men, in conflict with each other, pale before the reckless courage of weak, and even insignificant and otherwise timid, females in defense of their own young. Leonidas, at Thermopylæ, did not take more desperate chances than almost any mongrel hen will accept in protection of her chickens.

It is apparently the way of Nature to adjust all burdens to the strength of the backs that bear them, to give continuous chances for improvement and advancement to all forms of life, and to increase the responsibility of each being in exact proportion to its progress in power and intelligence. Apparently nothing is so insignificant that it does not have, consciously or unconsciously, repeated opportunities to improve its conditions in life.

XVIII.

THE SOUL OF MAN MIGRATES FROM FLESH TO SPIRIT, AND FROM SPIRIT TO FLESH.

EMERSON, in "Compensation," expresses the theory of dualism : "An inevitable dualism bisects nature, so that each thing is a half, and suggests another thing to make it whole—as, spirit, matter ; man, woman ; odd, even ; subjective, objective ; in, out ; upper, under ; motion, rest ; yea, nay. The same dualism underlies the nature and condition of man."

It may be said that Reincarnationists agree substantially that man's life is dual, and that his soul migrates from flesh to spirit, and from spirit to flesh. The life in the flesh is spent on this earth, or on some other planet, and the life in the spirit is spent in the land of spirits, which may be called the Other-world—a place in which souls are little changed save in being freed from earthliness. It is a land of Truth, in which there are no lies, and in which each soul stands revealed for what it is. Hell is there the exposure of evil souls, and heaven the revealing of the good. This is called the Unmasking of Souls.

The Other-world is to this world as summer to winter, as day-time to night-time, as rest to toil, as recreation to hardship, as order to confusion, as peace to war.

The Other-world is a place of peace and order, while the earth, in the economy of Nature, is as a state of war, a hard school, a place in which conditions are adverse, harsh and rigorous; in which oppression may thrive, and greed fatten, and hypocrisy pass as holiness, and lies as truth; in which the noble may be obscured and the vulgar exalted—all for a little time.

After the death of the physical body, each soul returns to its real part in the land of Truth. In the Other-world, the more spiritual and noble are at peace and rest. They have returned home, as it were, after a weary pilgrimage in alien lands. In this home they may rest for a very long period, and the higher souls perhaps eternally.

On the other hand, the lower souls—the gross, dull and vicious ones—do not find the Other-world a land to their liking. Stripped of the mask of the flesh, they can deceive no one, not even themselves. Deprived of all means of sensual gratification, they long to return to the more pleasant and congenial life in the flesh. In this they are as a rule gratified, their stay in the world of spirits being short. The animals, having little or no spirituality, scarcely depart at all from the earth, being reincarnated promptly in the bodies of other animals.

XIX.

OUR ACTS ARE CAUSES WHICH PRODUCE THEIR OWN UNVARYING RESULTS.

THE theory that adverse fortune is the penalty for sin in this life, or in a previous life, may be questioned. The sun shines, and the rain falls, alike upon the just and upon the unjust. The man morally good is as fair a target for the lightning, and is as susceptible to the malaria, as the man morally bad. There is no evidence that, in a railroad accident, or in a battle, the evil receive more injuries proportionately than the good. Intelligence is a better protection than is morality against disease, poverty, accidents and many other forms of ill fortune. Difficulties, trials, hardships, bereavements and sorrows are quite as likely to come to the good as to the bad.

It is not probable that the Eternal Force dispenses any special judgments to fit special cases, or that it is a searcher of hearts, or that it exercises a guardianship or supervision over all matters great and small in the Universe, or that it keeps a set of books which show the moral and eternal reckoning of all souls.

It would be more in harmony with what we know of Nature to say that our acts are causes which produce their own unvarying results ; as food refreshes, sleep rests, toil wearies, fire burns, poison kills. A good act, in the nature of things, has a good result, which is a reward ; and an evil act has a bad result, which is a penalty. Man is free to choose between food and poison, between good and evil. He goes his own way in freedom, sails his own barque, and makes the port he aims for ; or, if

he have no force of character, drifts indolently with the wind and tide.

The chief result of man's sin must be in the degradation of his own soul, or character. It is a question if the character be not, in some sense, the soul of man. The character alone reveals the actual man. The character is made and modified slowly. A few good actions cannot make it ; nor a few errors destroy it. It is the result of eternal labor, or of eternal neglect.

The man of high and noble character, though he be poor and of humble station, is really rich and great ; and he who is possessed of a frivolous, selfish or vicious character, though he have great earthly possessions, though even he sit upon a throne, is actually a pauper. He whose character is being strengthened and improved, is an ascending soul ; and he whose character is weakening, is a descending soul, who is traveling the road of degeneracy and degradation which leads down to the meanest and vilest forms of life.

XX.

MAN CAN MAKE NO PROGRESS SAVE AGAINST ADVERSE CONDITIONS.

THERE is among some Reincarnationists a disposition, inspired doubtless by that form of Oriental philosophy in which existence even is held to be an evil, to place too low an estimate upon the life in the flesh. Our duty lies here. In one sense, and a very important sense, the Present is all there really is of life. The Past is gone. All the powers in the world cannot change one fact in the Past ; it is a book that is closed.

In the Present we make our Future. We do not live in the Future. When we reach the Future it will be the Present. We live only Now. Man builds his character only in the Now.

It is doubtless true also that the most important modifications of man's character are made in the flesh, and that the opportunities for progress are infinitely greater under the harsh conditions prevailing on earth, than under the favorable conditions existing in the Other-world. Men here recur often with pleasure to their days of hardship, toil and trial in this life, recognizing them as the times in which they built up and strengthened their own characters, and fortified themselves against later reverses.

Man can make no progress save against adverse conditions, and all progress of consequence must be against hard and stern resistance. An easy victory is a poor victory. It is in the shock of stern conflict that souls are made or marred.

The earth is the field of conflict in which evil is most strongly intrenched ; while the Other-world is the land of peace. The earth, then, is the scene of the greatest battles between good and evil, and we could hardly imagine that great souls would be left out of the issue. The sound of a trumpet in a good cause is as inspiring as are the hymns of peace.

Another and more serious error, borrowed also from the "vast abstractions of Buddhism," is the assumption that the movement of the soul is continually progressive ; that it is ascending constantly through definite stages to higher planes, and will ultimately reach perfection. If the individual soul could be carried forward

by a vast progressive movement of all souls, then the incentive to individual exertion would be lost. It must of necessity be true that some souls are advancing, and others receding ; some growing stronger, and others weaker.

XXI.

ANNIHILATION FITS THE MOODS OF DYING RACES AND DESCENDING SOULS.

IN these days of light and doubt, men's minds are turning somewhat to the philosophy of the Orient.

This is well, for it is good to know and measure and understand. Yet it is not well to discard one authority, and set up in its place another ; for the last may be no better than the first. The world grows weary of authority. If a thing be reasonable, authority is useless ; if it be unreasonable, authority cannot save it.

The sacred mysteries of the East probably have no merits over the sacred superstitions of the West. He who veils or hides his truth in obscure and uncertain words, or images, thereby confesses that it is too feeble to stand the light. There is nothing in the Universe more sacred than Truth, and the Truth can always bear exposure to the light. Truth is treated most respectfully and reverently when it is clothed in plain and simple words so combined as to express a clear and definite meaning.

In the vast, complicated and mystical philosophy of the East, a little of which is simple and more beyond comprehension, there is doubtless much of truth, and much also of error. Else why is the neck of the Hindoo under the heel of the Briton ? Is it because the Hindoo

dwells too much upon the eternal and too little on the temporal, or is it because he is of a dying race? His doctrine of Nirvana would sustain the latter theory. Nirvana, a form of sublimated annihilation, is the goal of supreme happiness to which Hindoo philosophy would lead us.

The thought of annihilation is pleasant only to weary, discouraged and worn-out souls. In the hour of man's defeat, when life has nothing but bitterness, and hope departs from him; when the love of friends and kindred is as nothing, and faith in himself dies, then the thought of lying down in a dreamless sleep which shall have no awakening is pleasant and alluring to him. This thought may fit into the moods of dying races or of descending souls; but it can never satisfy the aspirations of the brave, the strong, the hopeful or the true-hearted.

XXII.

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY IS THE NATURAL
FAITH OF MANKIND.

HERBERT SPENCER, in discussing the origin and probability of moral and religious beliefs, asserts that what great numbers have believed for long periods must have some basis in truth, and adds:

"More especially may we safely assume this in the case of beliefs that have long existed and are widely diffused; and most of all so, in the case of beliefs that are perennial and nearly or quite universal. The presumption that any current opinion is not wholly false, gains in strength according to the number of its adherents. Admitting, as we must, that life is impossible unless through a certain agreement between internal convictions and external circumstances; admitting therefore that the probabilities are always in favor of the truth, or at least the partial truth, of a conviction; we

must admit that the convictions entertained by many minds in common are the most likely to have some foundation."

Abraham Lincoln, in more homely phrase, said: "You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time; but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."

Nearly all men in nearly all times have believed in the immortality of the soul in some form; some believing in the half-truth of after-existence only, and others in both pre-existence and after-existence. Herbert Spencer says also that the conception of immortal existence,

"along with the multiplying and complicating ideas arising from it, we find everywhere—alike in the arctic regions and the tropics; in the forests of North America and in the deserts of Arabia; in the valleys of the Himalayas and in African jungles; on the flanks of the Andes and in the Polynesian islands. It is exhibited with equal clearness by races so remote in type from one another that competent judges think they must have diverged before the existing distribution of land and sea was established—among straight haired, curly haired, woolly haired races; among white, tawny, copper colored, black. And we find it among peoples who have made no advances in civilization as well as among the semicivilized and the civilized."

The belief in the immortality of the soul can be traced to no single book, seer or prophet; it has been the natural faith of men in all times and places. The broader, stronger, older, more universal the moral belief of man, the more rational it is. The faith of individual men, or even of great masses of men, may be built on airy fabrics; but the moral belief of mankind is built on more solid foundations. What the race of men hope for, aspire to, believe, can be little short of the actual truth.

It has been said that the almost universal belief in immortality can be explained in man's fear or vanity. If man, through fear of annihilation, had adopted the the-

ory of another life, he would have invented heaven only, or at least a condition not more wretched than his present life ; and not hell, which is worse. Men, through fear, do not jump deliberately from bad to worse. Nor if moved by vanity could man have invented hell ; vanity could have inspired heaven only.

Man adopted the theory of another life because of the apparent injustice in this one. He perceived that there were wrongs here which were not righted here, and good which was not rewarded here ; and with a sublime sense of justice, and with faith in the justice of the Universe, he demanded another world to right the wrongs of this one.

The natural belief in immortality has been inspired by man's sense of justice, and those who would attribute this belief to man's fear or vanity, belittle and insult mankind.

XXIII.

JUSTICE CANNOT BE BUILT UPON A FOUNDATION OF INJUSTICE, NOR MORALITY UPON A FOUNDATION OF IMMORALITY.

THE Fatalists—all who accept either Materialism or Theology—assert that man is a thing that has been made. A thing compounded, manufactured, can be neither moral nor immoral. The lotion that changes agony into peace, the prescription that saves a life, are not moral ; nor is a poisonous compound immoral. The responsibility for the good and evil in the thing manufactured rests entirely with its maker. If man is a thing that has been made, then he can think

only such thoughts as his Maker has given him the power to think, and do only the things which his Maker has given him the power to do. His thoughts and acts are therefore not his own ; they are the thoughts and acts of his Maker.

It will be said in answer that all men have been given freedom by their Maker to choose between good and evil. Does the Maker grant to the man created deaf, freedom to hear? Or to the one created blind, freedom to see? Or can the one created morally deaf be free to hear, or the one created morally blind be free to see? Can the dumb talk, the deaf hear, the blind see?

Some men, it is true, have the inclination, will or power to improve their moral condition. But if man is a thing that is made, this inclination, will or power is the endowment given to man by his Maker. Other men have an inclination toward evil, and are mentally or morally weak. This tendency and weakness must also have been the gifts of man's Maker.

If man has been created, his will, his ambitions, his aspirations, his courage, his fair-mindedness, are all the gifts of his Maker ; and his weakness of will, his lack of aspiration or ambition, his cowardice, his mean-spiritedness, are also conferred upon him by his Maker. He can be nothing more or less than what he is made to be.

He who honors any man for his wisdom or goodness, or scorns another for being dull or vile, repudiates both Materialism and Theology. For, if either the theory of Materialism or of Theology be true, no man deserves the least credit or discredit for what he is. The good man is but as a good engine or machine, reflecting much credit upon his Maker ; and the bad man is as an imperfect

machine, a dangerous engine, or a poisonous compound, reflecting discredit upon his Maker.

Justice cannot be built upon a foundation of injustice, nor morality upon a foundation of immorality. If God or Nature has created one man good and another bad, then God or Nature has been unjust. If God or Nature has created a vicious, base or depraved creature, then God or Nature has been immoral.

If a Creative Force has made all things as they are, then the truth that man utters is the Creator's truth, and the lie that man utters is the Creator's lie ; the honor in man is the Creator's honor, and the crime of man is the Creator's crime. Man, at his worst or best, if he is a thing that has been made, is but the impotent and soulless expression of the Creator's varying moods, *and all moral distinctions vanish from the world.*

We may now affirm that no system of justice or morality can be built upon any theory other than that of the complete immortality of the soul. He who denies the pre-existence and the after-existence of the soul, must deny justice and morality ; he alone who affirms the immortal and eternal nature of the soul can affirm justice and morality.

XXIV.

TWO CONCLUSIONS WHICH ARE OF VAST IMPORTANCE.

THERE is a broad distinction between material truths and basic moral truths. Men have held erroneous universal beliefs touching material things—the common belief that the earth was flat being an illustration. The truth concerning material things is

vast and complex, ever opening, expanding and increasing under investigation. Basic moral truths, on the other hand, are few and simple. They are not discovered as easily as are new mechanical devices or new stars. They are as plain perhaps to the ignorant as to the learned. It may be doubted that a new basic moral truth has ever been discovered by a civilized man. Such truths were all known before man emerged from barbarism.

The basic and universal moral belief of mankind is that which has been tested by all minds, and measured by all experience ; and hence it cannot be unsound. That the truth is better than a lie, and that justice is better than injustice, are examples of the moral beliefs of the human race.

With these undisputed basic moral truths should be classed the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, without which morality and justice cannot exist.

We have now reached two important conclusions :

1. That nearly all men in nearly all times have believed in the immortality of the soul, and that this belief is the natural and moral faith of man.

2. That justice and morality can be established upon one theory only—that the soul of man is pre-existent and after-existent, immortal and eternal.

The belief in the immortality of the soul has sometimes been compared with the belief in fetichism, witchcraft and Mohammedanism. Not one of these beliefs has been held by nearly all men in nearly all times, nor has any of them a claim to be considered as the natural and moral faith of man. Fetichism is a low superstition, held only by the ignorant and degraded. Witchcraft

was a temporary delusion, which has had no permanent hold upon mankind. Mohammedanism has its origin only in the revelations of Mohammed. It had no existence before Mohammed spoke, and it has spread only through the zeal of his partisans. Mohammedanism, if it can be called a revelation, was a revelation to one man ; while immortality is a revelation to all, or nearly all, men. Nor is fetichism, witchcraft or Mohammedanism necessary to prove that the laws of the Universe are just and moral. To the contrary, the proof of the truth of fetichism, of witchcraft, and to some extent of Mohammedanism, would be also a demonstration that the laws of the Universe are unjust and immoral.

The two facts that the belief in the immortality of the soul is the natural faith of man, and that its truth must be assumed in order to prove that the natural laws are just and moral, are of vast importance. From the moral standpoint—and there can be no higher view of any issue than the moral view—they demonstrate the truth of the immortality of the soul of man.

XXV.

THEOLOGY IS ARTIFICIAL, A REVELATION TO A SMALL NUMBER OF MEN.

IN these times Theology is discredited, and is weakening under the lights which science and reason have turned upon it. Many minds are quick to assume that, Theology being untrue, all Religion must be false. The conclusion is unwarranted. There is a broad distinction between Theology and Religion.

Theology is the work of men who have assumed,

falsely or ignorantly, to be the spokesmen, ambassadors or vicegerents of God.

The revelation which has been accepted by our own people, is a collection of the dreams, legends, poetry, proverbial philosophy and sacred and historic fables which were current in the twilight of the Hebrew race. It is the mythology of the Jews.

All of the revelations upon which the different forms of Theology are based are the work of a small number of men ; all are in conflict with one another and inconsistent in themselves. Thousands of learned men have devoted their lives to the study of the Bible, reverently, worshipfully, seeking for the truth, and have arrived at diverse conclusions. Devout men have spent days, weeks and months on their knees supplicating in vain for its true interpretation. It contains texts which have been used to justify both democracy and autocracy, freedom and slavery, monogamy and polygamy, predestination and free will, Reincarnation and Creation, justice and injustice, and almost all other forms of both truth and error.

Over three hundred varying or conflicting creeds have been built upon the Hebrew Scriptures ; and the history of Europe is to a large extent the story of the many fierce and bloody wars which have been fought over doctrinal issues between the different sects which have built their faith upon the one book. It is a revelation which reveals nothing clearly save perplexities and contradictions.

NATURAL RELIGION IS IN HARMONY WITH
SCIENCE AND ALL OTHER TRUTH.

RELIGION, on the other hand, is not a revelation to one man, nor to a few men ; it is the revelation in the hearts of all men in all times and places, which has come alike to Jews, Gentiles, Christians, Mohammedans and Buddhists. It consists of those moral and eternal truths which savages have recognized, perhaps intuitively, and which all experience, learning and enlightenment have confirmed. These truths may be defined scientifically by ascertaining what beliefs have been held in common by all forms of Religion. The truth will be found in their points of agreement, and not in their differences. For the moral beliefs which nearly all men have held in nearly all times must be true, or mainly true.

These are the points, briefly expressed, in which all Religions, and nearly all men, are in practical accord :

1. That the soul of man is immortal.
2. That man is morally and eternally responsible for his acts.
3. That the Eternal Laws are just.
4. That the Eternal Power is righteous and good, meriting man's reverence, adoration and devotion.

These are the moral and eternal truths which ignorance has been unable to pervert, or imposture to defile. They are the essence, the soul, the basic principles, of natural and rational Religion—the solid and permanent foundations upon which the moral code of mankind has been built.

Religion is in harmony with morality and justice, and Theology is the doctrine of Fatalism, which is at war with morality and justice. Religion is natural, and Theology is artificial. Religion is the faith of freedom ; while the creeds, which set a limit to what man can believe, or even think, all belong to Theology, which is the doctrine of man's moral and mental enslavement. Religion is based upon works, and Theology upon faith. Religion has been and forever will be in harmony with science and all other truth ; while Theology has been and forever will be at war with truth.

Mankind have never departed absolutely from the moral truth, and have been incapable of holding a false belief that did not in some sense symbolize a truth. All forms of gods, however crude, have been but the personalization of goodness and justice, and all devils have been the personalization of evil ; heaven has been the reward for good, and hell the penalty for evil. Back of the most monstrous forms of faith there has always been a spark of truth.

Theology is dying ; but Religion is not dying, and will not die. Theology is the mortal and corrupt body of the church, while Religion is the immortal and incorruptible soul of human faith.

XXVII.

THE ETERNAL FACTS AND LAWS ARE JUST AND MORAL.

THE belief in God is founded on that profound respect and love for the Good which is one of the noblest qualities in human nature. Nearly all men—black, white and red, savage and civilized—have per-

ceived that the Eternal Force must be good and just ; and in this view the most ignorant and debased of mankind have been wiser than the greatest philosophers who have denied it.

It is folly to assume that man's sense of justice, or any of his nobler emotions or aspirations, can be in the slightest degree out of harmony with Nature's facts or laws. It is a blasphemy, a sin against light and reason, to say that man can be just and the Eternal Laws unjust. Doubtless the mind of the most just soul that has ever lived on this earth could have grasped but a faint outline of the depth, breadth and majesty of the system of eternal justice which must be the very heart of Nature's being.

The Eternal Force is a stupendous moral force. Whether we call it God, Allah or Nature, is but the question of a name. It is, ever has been and ever will be, the perfection of wisdom, goodness and justice. It reveals itself no more to the Jew than to the Gentile. Its word is accessible on equal terms to all men in this world and in all worlds.

Its revelation is but the simple Truth. Wherever Truth is discovered or established, there has been discovered or established a part of the true revelation, which is always in harmony with all other truth, and can require no explanation, revision or apology. The Eternal Force can give no new dispensation, provide no new way of salvation, since its laws have been and will be just and right forever. All truth-seekers are its prophets, and all who love justice are its priests. All science and learning, all progress in morality and in intelligence, must be forever in harmony with the Eternal Facts and Eternal Laws.

XXVIII.

IT IS NOT WELL TO SCORN THE MORAL RESULTS
OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE.

THE Religious questions are the problems of man's eternal life. The Materialist is forced to believe that there has been nothing natural or rational in the perennial interest of mankind in these problems ; for, from the standpoint of Materialism, there is for man no eternal life.

To assume that mankind, from the earliest days of the human race to the present time, have been perpetually and seriously absorbed in the contemplation of a phase of life which does not exist, and of moral relations and eternal obligations which have no foundation in truth, is to assume that practically all men in all times have been subject to one form of hallucination which would stamp them as a race of madmen. It should be borne in mind that this universal belief of mankind has been, in its simplest terms, but a faith that the Eternal Laws and Facts are moral and just. If this faith be a delusion, it is a noble delusion.

On the other hand, the belief of the Materialist is based upon the presumption that the Eternal Laws and Facts are immoral and unjust—that the noblest being merits no credit for what it is, and the vilest creature no discredit ; that for suicide there can be no penalty ; that for the tyrants, for the oppressors, robbers and scourgers of the weak, for the brutes who trample on women and children, for ingrates and murderers, there can be no eternal reckoning ; and that man sows what he cannot reap, and reaps what he does not sow.

The faith of Religion is a moral faith ; while it must be said in fairness that the philosophy of Materialism, which attributes injustice and immorality to the Eternal Laws, must consequently be classed as the philosophy of injustice and immorality, or as an unjust and an immoral belief.

The believers in morality and justice have been the many, and the believers in immorality and injustice have been the few. It would be unreasonable, under the circumstances, to say that the moral belief of the mass of mankind is irrational, and that the immoral belief of a comparatively small number of men is rational. It would be fairer to say that the moral belief of men, whether held by the few or by the many, is always true ; and that their immoral belief is always false.

It is not well to scorn the moral results of human experience. They represent all the thought, cares, labor, sorrows, trials, persecution, martyrdom, travail and agony of mankind. They are the sacred legacies which all the dead have left to the living. If they be worthless, then indeed is life barren and bitter, its joys illusions, its hopes as the mirage of the desert which beckons one forward to black disappointment and death.

Pure Religion, separated from Theology and all other forms of error and superstition, offers to mankind the hope and faith, based on all human experience, and in harmony with all truth, that there is no wrong which will not be righted ; and, for those who live justly, no trouble which will not end, no night of sorrow or anguish which will not be succeeded by the dawn of peace and joy.

On the other hand, Materialism offers to the human

race but one thing which, from the standpoint of Fatalism, may be said to be akin to justice ; and that is suicide. He who is dissatisfied here can go hence, if the theory of Materialism be true, to the somber unconsciousness from which he but recently emerged.

Let mankind choose between the consolations which these two philosophies offer to the race of men !

XXIX.

NO MAN IN HIS HEART BELIEVES IN THE DOCTRINE OF FATALISM.

THE man who has been created base—if we assume that man is created—has been wronged beyond all our knowledge of wrong in its darkest aspect.

Our conception of the worst forms of wrong may be found in the brute flaying the bare backs of women and children, or in the savage bigot delivering a martyr to the consuming flames. But these outrages and atrocities pale in comparison with the deeper and blacker wrong done by a Creative Power which could place the stain of crime, the stamp of debauchery, the indelible brand of dishonor, upon a helpless human soul, which, if it could have had a choice, would have been innocent, noble and good.

It is a significant fact, on the other hand, that mankind have coined the correct meaning of the word “creature,” in the sense of one who has received fortune, position or honors at the hands of another, and is subject to the will, or is the instrument or tool, of this patron or creator. The word “creature,” used with this meaning, as when Macaulay speaks of Charles I. “and his *creature*,

Laud," is a term of scorn and contempt. Nor can this word have in justice any other meaning, when applied to men who owe all that they have or are to power, patronage or favor. And it must be so applied to our noblest, wisest and best, if they have been created noble, wise and good, without merit, or even choice, of their own.

We may now say that no man does or can accept the Creative theory completely and fully, in his heart as well as in his mind. In other words, no man in his actual experience can look upon himself, or upon his fellow man, as a thing that has been made. No man in his natural sentiments, or in his life, can sympathize with the false, hard, cruel, treacherous and malicious of his own kind, as he should sympathize with them if they were created vicious without their own knowledge or consent—being only the innocent victims of the malice of Nature, or of the wrath of God.

Nor can any one look upon a noble or an honest man as being entitled to no more credit within himself than a criminal or a scoundrel. He only who, in his natural feelings, can look constantly upon the mean and depraved with the tenderest and keenest sympathy, and upon the good and noble without respect, can accept fully the doctrine of both Materialism and Theology—that man is a thing that has been made.

It will doubtless be said that a good man is entitled to respect and honor because he is good, and regardless of whether he has been created or is self-developed ; and, to the contrary, that a vicious man should be scorned simply because he is vile. Let us consider the Brooklyn bridge as an example of one of the greatest and most useful of all objects that have been made. We can admire the

Brooklyn bridge ; but we cannot honor, respect, revere or love it. These finer sentiments cannot go out to a thing that is made.

And neither do we scorn, loathe or hate the dynamite bomb which destroys the lives of the innocent. These sentiments are reserved for the assassin who made or threw the bomb. He could have put the dynamite to good uses, or applied it to moral rather than to murderous purposes. It is evident that the credit or discredit, the honor or dishonor, for the thing that is made must go in justice to its maker.

If any man could accept in his heart the philosophy of Fatalism, it would follow that morality and justice would cease to exist in his mind as principles ; they would become matters of expediency only. Fortunately for mankind, the philosophy of Materialism has been held, as a rule, by scientific minds too sturdy and honest to be corrupted by it ; and the evil influence of Theology has been kept in constraint by its close association with the moral truths of Religion. But the fact should not be ignored that both of these philosophies are immoral and unjust, and that their influence must be evil and unwholesome.

The universal and common natural feelings of mankind are right, and all of the philosophies which run counter to them are wrong. Men's minds can be misled, in conformity to beliefs which have become conventional, or philosophies which seem to be sound, but their hearts cannot go far wrong. Man accepts nothing which runs counter to right and justice, save through an error in his reasoning.

There are in the world no men who really accept fully,

completely and logically the doctrines of either Materialism or Theology. He who thinks that he believes in either, has failed to grasp the full meanings and bearings, the immorality and injustice, the coldness and hopelessness, of these twin doctrines of Fatalism and despair.

XXX.

THE CREATIVE THEORY EXPLAINS NOTHING; THE
THEORY OF REINCARNATION EXPLAINS ALL
THINGS.

THE Creative theory has been the blunder of the ages. It has set man wrong in all of his eternal reckonings. It is as though the whole of our arithmetical calculations were based on the presumption that one and one make three. All mathematical reckonings would consequently be wrong in all details, in all stages, and in all results.

Perhaps the most serious results of the acceptance of the Creative theory have been the consequent perversion and degradation of the reasoning powers of mankind. Until a recent time, almost all learning, and theological and philosophical speculations, in Europe and America, have been bent, twisted and distorted to sustain the theory of the Creation of man, and to prove that to be just which is plainly unjust, and that to be moral which is plainly immoral.

The vast literature of Theology is an almost interminable record of sophistry in which learned men have attempted to reconcile the irreconcilable, and to bring truth into harmony with fiction. These theological discussions have now practically ceased ; not because they have ar-

rived at a conclusion, which is impossible, but because mankind have grown weary of the fruitless and barren controversy ; and because, science and reason having undermined the foundations of Theology, that monstrous delusion now sways and topples to its fall.

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

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

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

XXXI.

THE MAJESTY AND THE VASTNESS OF THE
UNIVERSE—HEIGHTS WHICH ARE UN-
DREAMED OF HERE.

SIR ROBERT S. BALL, President of the Royal Astronomical Society of England, has recently made the statement that the existence of thirty million suns has now been demonstrated by scientific processes. If there be an average of ten planets to each sun, then there are known to be about three hundred million worlds in existence. An unimpeded telegraphic message, which could girdle this earth eight times in one second, and reach our sun from the earth in eight minutes, would require eighteen hundred years to reach the more remote of the other known suns.

This electric impulse might travel straight forward into space for a thousand, or for a million, years ; or the number of years might be increased to a sum which could be expressed only in figures in fine type filling a scroll of the dimensions of the surface of this earth—and yet in this inconceivable number of years, the impulse could not reach, or even make any real progress toward, the outer limits of the Universe. The boundary of the Universe cannot be reached ; for it does not exist.

The three hundred million worlds, of which we on this earth are dimly conscious through the eye of science, are in reality no appreciable part of the Universe. The great space which has been opened to our vision cannot be considered even as the vestibule of the greater domain of the Eternal Power. Our own world, in comparison with the Universe, is not even as one drop of water to all of the water in all of the oceans of this globe.

Of the other globes in the Universe, some must contain forms of life much lower, and others forms of life much higher, than the life on this earth. There are doubtless worlds possessing civilization, arts and learning, compared with which our civilization would be crude, our arts and powers feeble, and our learning as the knowledge of little children. There must be in other worlds heights which are undreamed of here, and intelligences beside which our most consummate creatures are but as the worms of the earth to the men of the earth.

Evolution is no more the law of Nature, or a fact in the Universe, than devolution. Progress exists no more than retrogression ; growth no more than decay ; action no more than reaction.

In the past million years new worlds have been formed and others have ceased to be ; great civilizations have been evolved and have perished ; great races have been developed from barbarians, have reached their prime, have descended, and have become extinct. The unceasing motion throughout the Universe is both progressive and retrogressive. All souls in it are moving constantly up or down, heavenward or hellward. The soul of man can neither die nor stand still. It must advance or recede.

The question arises, if retrogression be as much the law of Nature as progress, may there not be a culminating point in the career of man from which he *must* descend ? That acme would of necessity be the place of perfection, which would seem to be unattainable. As the North Pole is that point on the earth's surface from which one can only move southward, so perfection would be that lonely pinnacle from which there could be no movement

save backward—that inconceivable point where progress ceases.

The man attaining perfection would of necessity reach a state in which he would be inferior to no other soul, human or divine, in the Universe. Even if the imagination could conceive of such a summit, it must be so remote from our present plane of life that it may be safely omitted from all human calculations.

As there is doubtless on this earth no living thing so low that it may not, through Nature's unceasing changes and opportunities, reach the form of man, so there can be no higher forms of life in other worlds to which man may not ascend. Perhaps the thought is not too fanciful that there is literally no limit in the eternal life of man to the progress of the determined ascending soul, as on this earth there seems to be no boundary to the possibilities of degradation for the descending soul.

Man can move forward if he so wills ; he will certainly drift backward if he does not work and fight against the adverse currents. All heights are accessible, and all depths are open, to him. He may advance in freedom, hampered only by the trials and obstacles which make and strengthen character.

The Universe exists for man. It is man's heritage, man's arena, man's throne. It has no secrets which he cannot grasp, no barriers which he cannot surmount, no forces hostile to him which he cannot conquer.

XXXII.

JUSTICE IS THE FINAL MEASURE OF ALL TRUTH.

IT is plain that this great Universe, of which our own world forms such an insignificant part, could not maintain its unceasing activities without order and harmony, transcending any human conceptions of order and harmony ; or without justice, which is a vital part of order and harmony ; or without morality, of which justice is the basic principle.

The most important known fact in the Universe is this—that the same cause, acting under the same conditions, produces exactly the same result. This one fact alone proves clearly, and beyond cavil or controversy, that Nature's laws and ways are just. And it proves also the certainty, the steadfastness and the integrity of the Eternal Power. We are dependent absolutely every moment of our lives upon the fidelity of Nature.

A law of equivalents, compensation, reparation or reciprocity, which is the Law of Justice, runs through the whole physical as well as the moral world. The engine can give back only the power that has been put into it ; the soil yields in proportion to its food and care. The law of averages, to which reference has already been made, is a line of equilibrium, or equity, running through those events which are supposed to be subject to accident, hazard or chance. In drawing impartially a long series of numbers, the odd and even figures cannot drift in the aggregate far apart, and will be repeatedly equalized. The males and females born are practically equal.

All of the perturbations of Nature—the tides, the lightning, the cyclone—are but her struggles to restore an equi-

librium between forces. As Nature abhors a vacuum, so she loathes all other forms of inequality, unevenness, unfairness and injustice.

If the great Law of Justice were to cease to operate in human affairs, society and civilization would be wrecked in a day ; and if the Law of Equilibrium, or Equity, in the material world were to fail, the Universe would be turned into a vortex of fire and flame in a second.

Justice is the noblest word in our language, and the most important principle in the world. The logician who fails to measure his premises by equity is as the navigator who ignores his compass ; for Justice is the final measure of all truth.

XXXIII.

A FAITH BASED ON REASON AND UNDERSTANDING.

HE who grasps the truth that man's soul is eternal—that the life here is only one short act in an existence which has had no beginning, and will have no end—knows that no misfortune can seriously harm him. Sorrows, poverty, blindness, paralysis, and all other afflictions and maladies, will come to an end. Sight will follow blindness ; joy will come after grief and pain. Our dead have only gone home before us, to the Land of Truth and Peace, where we shall presently join them.

The frowns of fortune, the injustice of others, the insults of the strong, the stings of malice, are but petty things in the eternal life of man. There is little reason for hating, or for the consideration of revenge. The evil will go their own way downward. Nature's revenge is

surer, and more exact in its justice, than our own. Man should attend carefully to his own soul ; for nothing but his own self-degradation can really harm him.

He who, in his life here, has done most to improve himself—his real self, his nature and his character—has been the most successful man who has ever lived on this earth. The conqueror of himself is greater than the conqueror of an empire ; for the empire is of time, while man is of eternity. He who has developed within himself a generous nature, an open mind, the philosophy of patience and courage, faith in himself, in his fellows, and in the Rightness of the Eternal Laws, is a greater victor than Bonaparte or Cæsar. For this true and lofty man, the victor over himself, Death has no terrors ; for him the grave is but the open door from toil to rest, from war to peace.

Those who pursue or secure wealth and power, and hold them to be the main objects of life, should know that they can strut and swagger but for a little hour on this temporary stage ; that they are only as other men, even as those in the meanest stations, or in the humblest life. The noblest soul in a great city may not be its most honored citizen ; but may indeed be a washerwoman, a drayman, or a newsboy.

" The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that."

The greatest hero is he who sacrifices, or has it in his nature to sacrifice, most for others. He who has acquired an heroic character is as much a real hero as any one whose name has become a household word, or who has been glorified in marble or in bronze. It even may be

that he whose statue crowns the Trafalgar shaft in London, and that other noble and lofty soul in whose honor the tallest column on earth has been reared in Washington, were not really the greatest heroes of our race. For the battlefield is not the only stage on which true heroism can be displayed.

The courageous ones in ordinary life, the men who carry cheerfully the burdens and sorrows of others ; the women who fight patiently through long years for shelter, warmth and food for their fatherless children ; the lonely and forlorn souls who walk in the straight road of duty and honor—all the honest, brave, helpful and true-hearted—are also real heroes, and the more heroic because there is little rest in their long prosaic battle ; because they seek no plaudits, and hope for no day when they will receive the homage of mankind.

But the day will come—must come—when they who have acted nobly, seeking no approbation or glory, must be glorified ; and when they who have played a coward's part must be scorned. In the eternal life, every earnest and strong soul must have recognition, and every hypocrite and impostor must be found out.

All of man's real riches, power and greatness are in his heart and mind, in his own character. His wealth is in his goodness and nobility ; his strength in his patience, courage and thinking powers. The pauper who would give if he could, *is* a philanthropist ; and he who could die for man *is* a martyr and savior. By the Eternal Measurements, man is exactly what he has made himself, and not what accident has temporarily conferred upon him. The rank of souls is more definite and exact than the rank of any line of earthly princes.

**" A prince can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that ;
But an honest man 's aboon his might."**

The philosophy of Reincarnation is good for man. It affords a powerful stimulus to the practice of morality, and to the study of the exact definitions of right and wrong in the affairs of individuals, of society, of the state, and between nations. It would ameliorate poverty, abolish caste and privilege, substitute peace for war, benevolence for conquest, and freedom for oppression. It would make our half-savage world the abode of goodwill, toleration and brotherhood. It unfolds a new heaven and a new earth.

No other philosophy maintains with equal force—or indeed with any force—the responsibility of man, the freedom of man, and the dignity of the soul of man.

It explains all things in harmony with our experience and natural feelings, without attributing inconsistency or injustice to the Eternal Power. It puts the responsibility for happiness or unhappiness upon ourselves. It affords the highest possible incentive for right living, and for the pursuit of knowledge. It strengthens and re-enforces the noble doctrine of moral responsibility. It dignifies and exalts our conception of the Laws of Nature, proving that they work without variation for good. It gives us a philosophy to sustain us in our hardest trials ; a hope to illumine our darkest hours ; a faith based on reason and understanding.

And finally, the philosophy of Reincarnation—and it alone—enthrones Justice as the basic, supreme and unvarying Law of the Universe.

SUPPLEMENTARY.

1.

THE POETS OF PRE-EXISTENCE.

TO the honor of the great poets, whose keen insight into the heart of moral and spiritual truth exceeds even that of the philosophers and men of science, it may be said that many of them have expressed in some form their belief in the pre-existence of the soul. A few extracts from these poets are quoted here :

Rudyard Kipling, in "The Neolithic Age :"

In the neolithic age, savage warfare did I wage
For food and fame and two-toed horses' pelt ;
I was singer to my clan in that dim, red dawn of man,
And I sang of all we fought and feared and felt.

* * * * *

Then the silence closed upon me till they put new clothing
on me—

Of whiter, weaker flesh and bone more frail ;
And I stepped beneath Time's finger, once again a tribal
singer.

Wordsworth, in "Intimations of Immortality :"

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar.

Tennyson, in "De Profundis :"

Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that was,

Whirled for a million eons through the vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous eddying light—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Through all this changing world of changeless law,
And every phase of ever heightening life,
And nine long months of antenatal gloom,
Thou comest.

Goethe, in "Faust :"

The soul of man
Is like the water—
From heaven it cometh,
To heaven it mounteth,
And thence at once
It must back to earth,
Forever changing.

Shelley, in "The Cloud :"

I am the daughter of earth and water
And the nursling of the sky ;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores ;
I change, but I cannot die.

Whittier, in "A Mystery :"

A presence strange at once and known
Walked with me as my guide ;
The skirts of some forgotten life
Trailed noiseless at my side.

Bayard Taylor, in "The Metempsychosis of the Pine :"

All outward vision yields to that within
Whereof nor creed nor canon holds the key ;
We only feel that we have ever been
And evermore shall be.

Longfellow, in "Rain in Summer :"

Thus the seer, with vision clear,
Sees forms appear and disappear
In the perpetual round of strange
Mysterious change
From birth to death, from death to birth,
From earth to heaven, from heaven to earth,
Till glimpses more sublime
Of things unseen before
Unto his wondering eyes reveal
The Universe as an immeasurable wheel
Turning for evermore
In the rapid rushing river of time.

Walt Whitman, in "Leaves of Grass :"

I know I am deathless ;
I know that this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's
compass,
And, whether I come to my own to-day or in ten thousand or ten
million years,
I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can wait.
* * * * *
As to you, Life, I reckon you are the leavings of many deaths.
No doubt I have died myself ten thousand times before.

Victor Hugo, in "To the Invisible One :"

Before I came upon this earth
I know I lived in gladness
For ages as an angel ; birth
Has caused my present sadness.

Dryden, in the translation of Ovid's "Metamorphosis :"

Souls cannot die. They leave a former home,
And in new bodies dwell and from them roam.
Nothing can perish, all things change below,
For spirits through all forms may come and go.

T. B. Aldrich, in "The Metempsychosis :"

I was a spirit on the mountain tops,
A perfume in the valleys, a simoom
On arid deserts, a nomadic wind
Roaming the Universe, a tireless Voice.
I was ere Romulus and Remus were ;
I was ere Nineveh and Babylon ;
I was, and am, and evermore shall be,
Progressing, never reaching to the end.

Robert Browning, in "Evelyn Hope :"

Delayed it may be for more lives yet
Through worlds I must traverse, not a few—
Much is to learn and much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

Coleridge, in "On a Homeward Journey :"

Oft in my brain does that strange fancy roll
Which makes the present (while the flash does last)
Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mixed with such feelings as perplex the soul
Self-questioned in her sleep : and some have said
We lived, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore.

Lowell, in "The Twilight :"

Sometimes a breath floats by me,
An odor from Dreamland sent,
Which makes the ghost seem nigh me
Of a something that came and went,
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not
In what diviner sphere :
Of mem'ries that come not and go not ;
Like music once heard by an ear
That cannot forget or reclaim it ;
A something so shy, it would shame it
To make it a show ;
A something too vague, could I name it,
For others to know :
As though I had lived it and dreamed it,
As though I had acted and schemed it
Long ago.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in "To an Astrologer :"

Before the solar systems were conceived,
When nothing was but the Unnamable,
My spirit lived, an atom of the Cause.
Through countless ages and in many forms
It has existed ere it entered in
This human frame to serve its little day
Upon this earth.

W. W. Story, in "Cleopatra :"

That was a life to live for !
Not this weak human life,
With its frivolous, bloodless passions,
Its poor and petty strife !
Come to my arms, my hero !
The shadows of twilight grow,
And the tiger's ancient fierceness
In my veins begins to flow.
Come not cringing to sue me !
Take me with triumph and power,
As a warrior storms a fortress !
I will not shrink or cower.
Come as you came in the desert,
Ere we were women and men,
When the tiger passions were in us,
And love as you loved me then !

SCHOPENHAUER ON THE SOURCES OF, AND THE WIDE
EXTENT OF THE BELIEF IN, METEMPSYCHOSIS.

SCHOPENHAUER, in "The World as Will and Idea," gives an admirable brief account of the sources of, and of the wide extent of the belief in, the doctrine of Metempsychosis, from which a few paragraphs are quoted here :

"We find the doctrine of Metempsychosis, springing from the earliest and noblest ages of the human race, always spread abroad in the earth as the belief of the great majority of mankind—nay, really as the teaching of all religions, with the exception of that of the Jews and the two which have proceeded from it: in the most subtle form, however, and coming nearest to the truth in Buddhism.

* * * * *

"With reference to the universality of the belief in Metempsychosis, Obry says rightly in his excellent book 'Du Nirvana Indien,' p. 13, 'This old belief has been held all round the world, and was spread in the remote antiquity to such an extent that a learned English churchman has declared it to be fatherless, motherless and without genealogy.' Taught already in the 'Vedas,' as in all the sacred books of India, Metempsychosis is well known to be the kernel of Brahmanism and Buddhism. It accordingly prevails at the present day in the whole of non-Mohammedan Asia, thus among more than half the whole human race, as the firmest conviction, and with an incredibly strong practical influence. It was also the belief of the Egyptians, from whom it was received with enthusiasm by Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato. The Pythagoreans, however, specially retained it. That it was also taught in the mysteries of the Greeks undeniably follows from the ninth book of Plato's Laws. The 'Edda' also, especially in the 'Voluspa,' teaches Metempsychosis. Not less was it the foundation of the religion of the Druids. Even a Mohammedan sect in Hindustan, the Bohrahs, of which Colebrooke gives a full account in the 'Asiatic Researches,' believes in Metempsychosis, and accordingly refrains from all animal food. Also among American Indians and negro tribes—nay, even among the natives of Australia, traces of this belief are found.

* * * * *

"According to all this the belief in Metempsychosis presents itself as the natural conviction of man whenever he reflects at all in an unprejudiced manner. It would really seem to be that which Kant falsely asserts of his three pretended ideas of the reason, a philosopheme natural to human reason, which proceeds from its forms; and when it is not found it must have been displaced by

positive religious doctrines coming from a different source. I have also remarked that it is at once obvious to every one who hears of it for the first time. Let any one only observe how earnestly Lessing defends it in the last seven paragraphs of his 'Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts.' Lichtenberg also says in his 'Selbstcharakteristik,' 'I cannot get rid of the thought that I died before I was born.' Even the excessively empirical Hume says in his skeptical essay on immortality, 'The Metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that philosophy can hearken to.' What resists this belief is Judaism, together with the two religions which have sprung from it, because they teach the creation of man out of nothing, and they have the hard task of linking on to this belief an endless existence *a parte post*. They certainly have succeeded, with fire and sword, in driving out of Europe and a part of Asia that consoling primitive belief of mankind; it is still doubtful for how long. Yet how difficult this was is shown by the oldest church histories. Most of the heretics were attached to this belief. For example, Simonists, Basilidians, Valentinians, Marcionists, Gnostics and Manicheans. The Jews themselves have in part fallen into it, as Tertullian and Justinus inform us. In the Talmud it is related that Abel's soul passed into the body of Seth, and then into that of Moses. Even the passage of the Bible, Matthew xvi, 13-15, only obtains a rational meaning if we understand it as spoken under the assumption of the dogma of Metempsychosis."

3.

THE CLOSING WORDS IN LESSING'S LAST CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE.

LESSING has been called "the Luther of German literature, of the German drama and of German art." The seven paragraphs to which Schopenhauer refers in the foregoing section, are the closing words in Lessing's last contribution to literature; and hence they may be accepted as the ripest product of his thought, while the prominence given them would indicate that he held them to be his most important message to mankind. They are reproduced here:

"The very same way by which the race reaches its perfection must every individual man—one sooner, another later—have traveled over. Have traveled over in one and the same life? Can he have been in one and the selfsame life a sensual Jew and a

spiritual Christian? Can he in the selfsame life have overtaken both?

"Surely not that: but why should not every individual man have existed more than once upon this world?

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

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

"Why should I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh expertness? Do I bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back?

"Is this a reason against it? Or because I forget that I have been here already? Happy is it for me that I do forget. The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad use of the present. And that which even I must forget *now*, is that necessarily forgotten forever?

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



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