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Reincarnation in the New Testament

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REINCARNATION

IN THE

NEW TESTAMENT

BY

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TO THE READER.

DEDICATION AND PROLOGUE.

No belief held sacred by any sincere student of the teachings of the *New Testament* is opposed or referred to unsympathetically in this little treatise.

The immortality of the soul and the divinity of the Christ are fully recognized in it.

The books of the *New Testament* are taken as they stand, and no question is raised herein regarding the authenticity of any portion of them.

A careful examination is here made of certain teachings of Jesus and his immediate followers, with sole intent to arrive at a clearer understanding of those teachings and all they import.

This is said in order to remove in advance any possible misapprehension that might arise as to the nature and purpose of this work, since its title indicates that it does not follow the beaten track of theological exegesis. In the opinion of the writer, that theological track is not the same

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as, and indeed not even convergent with, the "path" pointed out by Jesus. Certain beliefs, therefore, for which the faintest shadow of support can not be found in the Bible, and which have not approved themselves to the enlightened conscience of humanity, are not treated as sacred in this work, but are considered to be elements that must be eliminated from Christian creeds before the Christian religion and the religion of Christ can become one and the same. It is due to the moral courage of many of the modern followers of Jesus that the Christianity of to-day is being cleansed from the undesirable accretions of the middle ages, and becoming again the pure and noble faith taught by the divinely human Jesus and the humanly divine Paul. To all those Christians who have thus had the courage to prove all doctrines, and hold fast *only* those which are good, wholesome, Christlike, and born of loving heart and clarified reason, this little work is respectfully dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

I.

ELIJAH'S RETURN TO EARTH.

THERE are a number of highly important passages in the *New Testament* bearing directly upon the relation of the life in heaven to the life on earth, the full significance of which seems hardly to have been grasped. The striking statements contained in them might well rivet the attention of even the casual reader; yet, though they deal with, and throw light upon, one of the most vital problems of human life, they have been but little commented upon, and the only legitimate conclusions that can possibly be drawn from them have almost universally been ignored. Among others the following may be instanced:

Matthew xi. 11–14.	*Revised Version.*
"Amên, I say to you, Among [men] born of women there has not awakened [from the dead] a greater [Seer][1]	Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Bap-

[1] *Luke* vii. 28 reads, "a greater Seer (*prophétés*)."

than John the Lustrator; but the lesser [Initiate] in the Realm of the Skies is a greater [Seer] than he. . . . And, if you are willing to receive [him], he himself is Elijah, the one destined to come."

Matthew xvi. 13–16; xvii. 10–13.

Jesus . . . asked his pupils, saying:

"Who do men say that the Son of the Man is?"

And they said:

"Some [say] John the Lustrator; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the Seers."

He says to them:

"But who do *you* say that I am?"

And Simon Peter, answering, said:

"*Thou* art the Anointed, the Son of the Living God!"

. . . . .

And his pupils put a question to him, saying:

"Why, then, do the Retist: yet he that is [1]but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. . . . And if ye are willing to receive [2]*it*, this is Elijah, which is to come.

Marginal readings: [1] Gr. *lesser*. [2] Or, him.

Revised Version.

Jesus . . . asked his disciples, saying, Who do men say [1]that the Son of man is? And they said, Some *say* John the Baptist; some, Elijah: and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

. . . . .

And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And he answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah

corders say, 'Elijah must come first'?"

Now, Jesus answered and said to them:

"Elijah indeed comes first, and will restore all [things]. Now, I say to you, Elijah has come already, and they did not recognize him, but have done him as many [injuries] as they could. Thus also the Son of the Man is destined to suffer by them."

Then his pupils understood that he said [this] to them about John the Lustrator.

is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed. Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them. Then understood the disciples that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

Marginal reading: [1] Many ancient authorities read *that I the Son of man am.* See *Mark* viii. 27; *Luke* ix. 18.

The parallel passage in the third *Evangel* is as follows:

Luke ix. 18–20.

His pupils were with him; and he put a question to them, saying:

"Who do the crowds say that I am?"

And they answered and said:

"[Some say] John the Lustrator; and others, Elijah; and others, that a Seer of the

Revised Version.

The disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am? And they answering said, John the Baptist; but others *say,* Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again. And he said unto them, But

people of old has risen [from the dead]."

And he said to them:

"But who do *you* say that I am?"

And Peter, answering, said:

"The Anointed of The God."

who say ye that I am? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

(See also *Mark* viii. 27-29; ix. 11-13.)

In the above citations the following facts are brought out, either by direct statement or by necessary implication:

Jesus emphatically declared that John the Lustrator was Elijah. As John, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth, had been born in the usual way, the emphatic, unqualified statement of Jesus can have no other meaning than that the soul or inner Self of Elijah was incarnated in John, as the Angel Gabriel had announced to Zacharias before the birth of his son.[1] Elijah, who had been translated to heaven many centuries before, had therefore returned to earth by assuming a new body; in other words, he had reincarnated.

The people who knew of the works performed by Jesus took it for granted that he was a reincarnation of one of the Seers, Prophets or Won-

[1] *Luke* i. 13-17.

der-workers of olden times: they were indulging in speculations as to which of these ancient worthies he might be. Those who held that he was John must have believed either that the latter had been restored to life after his beheading, or that it was possible for the soul of a dead man to replace that of a man still in the flesh.

There is no suggestion whatever that reincarnation was regarded as unusual or extraordinary; it was taken for granted, the sole point at issue being the identity of the individual who was reincarnated. The interest centred wholly in his being a Seer and a Magician, from which it was inferred that these powers were brought over from a past incarnation.

The pupils of Jesus tacitly concurred in all this; so far from disputing the point, they also, it is clearly implied in the narrative, had been indulging in similar speculations.

Jesus understood that such surmises would be made, as shown by his abrupt question, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" He made no comment on the popular belief in reincarnation, and by his silence sealed it with his approval. The essential fact that he was one of the ancient Seers reincarnated he did not deny; on the con-

trary, he encouraged his pupils in their speculations by asking, "But who do *you* say that I am?" And a little later he partially gratified their curiosity by volunteering the information that John was Elijah.

To be consistent with the context, the question asked by Jesus has to be understood as, "Of whom do *you* say that I am the reincarnation?" What, then, could be the meaning of Peter's seemingly irrelevant reply? If it were only an assertion of Jesus' Messianic office, it was an evasive answer; and the subject opened up by Jesus, and discussed by him and his pupils, was brought to an unsatisfactory conclusion, save in the question concerning John the forerunner, which was only a side issue.

From the foregoing considerations the following inquiries naturally arise:

Are any other cases of reincarnation instanced in the *New Testament* besides that of Elijah as John? Was Jesus in fact a reincarnation of one of the ancient Seers, and if so, does Peter's answer or any statement made in the *New Testament* indicate which of them had been remanifested in his personality?

To what extent is the once universally accepted

belief in reincarnation admitted or endorsed by the *New Testament?* Does it recognize the principle as applied to all men, as was anciently held, and in that case what bearing does this fact have upon the teachings concerning right-conduct in the present life, the fate of the soul in the after-life, the mission of Jesus as a Saviour, and the nature and conditions of the salvation offered?

These questions call for a critical examination of all passages in the *New Testament* that relate directly or indirectly to reincarnation. This, however, can be done more advantageously after first reviewing the principal conceptions of reincarnation as taught by the ancient mystics and philosophers.

II.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REINCARNATION.

THE views of the ancients with regard to reincarnation are inseparable from the fundamental propositions of the old philosophy, which asserts the identity of the spiritual principle in man and the spiritual principle pervading the whole universe, and predicates that man is a lesser world, manifesting in himself all the elements, forces and processes of the universe in its entirety, material and divine. This philosophy affirms the spiritual unity of all beings, and does not regard Nature as separate from Deity. It holds that God is in and through all things, present in every atom of even the material universe.

The highest realm of Nature is a divine Unity, or true Being, undifferentiated, limitless, timeless, itself unmanifested, yet the source of all manifestation. Existence, or manifested life, is the going outward from this realm of true Being into the spheres of change and time, and

Nature is Deity in manifestation. True Being is changeless, Nature is ever changing; Deity for ever *is*, the universe is for ever *becoming*. Yet the universe is as eternal as Deity: there is an endless succession of worlds outbreathed into space and again indrawn, and these worlds are of every degree of spirituality and of materiality, for the essence of Being is one, and matter is but spirit outermost from its source. Below the realm of true Being is that of pure spirit, containing the types of all things that are to come into existence, the ideas or souls of all beings and things as formed by the divine Thought, and constituting the model of the universe. Below this is the psychic realm, in which these ideas or souls become clothed in the ethereal elements, and from this realm emanates the material universe, that of the gross elements.

The soul of man, the real Self of him, is therefore identical in essence with Deity, or the one universal Self; and in each realm of existence the soul has a form or body appropriate to that realm. Thus man has a physical body for the material world, a psychic body for the psychic world, and a spiritual body for the spiritual world. Even though he knows it not, man is in reality

an inhabitant of the three worlds. That he is unaware of this, in his outer consciousness, is because these bodies are not duly correlated, his inner faculties remaining latent and undeveloped.

Existence being thus the outbreathing and inbreathing of the divine Life, it follows that all forms of existence are subject to cyclic action, the cycles taking place in time, space and substance. This law applies to the universe in its entirety, and to every part of it. While the real Self of man is eternal,—which means not only that it shall never *cease* to be, but also that it never *began* to be, but is self-existent,—his outer life is a series of cyclic progressions. At death the soul is indrawn toward its real centre of life, and the physical body is resolved into its elements, but the soul still dwells in the psychic world, functioning through the psychic form. That in turn being abandoned, the soul is again indrawn, continuing its activity in the spiritual world, where it is consciously immortal, being purified from all the grosser forms of substance, and free.

The soul reposes after its day of toil in the field of earthly existence, but that rest being ended it must return to its unfinished task; it

emerges again upon the psychic plane, and is reborn in the physical world. The real life of the soul is continuous, its individuality imperishable, and in the whole series of its incarnations there is an unbroken sequence of causes and effects. Every action, however small, produces its proportionate results, whether in the same or in a subsequent incarnation, these effects reacting upon the individual by whom they are originated, good for good, and evil for evil. Thus each man is the maker of his own destiny, inasmuch as his character, good or bad, and his environment, favorable or unfavorable, are the direct outcome of his own thoughts and desires, deeds and misdeeds, in his past lives as well as in his present life; and, similarly, his future will be of his own making.

This "wheel of birth" pertains only to the physical and psychic elements of man's complex nature. His inner or spiritual Self is ever free, though the outer self which it has projected into the "spheres of becoming" is in bondage. It has been formed "of the dust of the ground" through long cycles of evolution, passing through all the lower elemental kingdoms ere it became the likeness of its spiritual prototype, the eternal

Self that breathed into it the Breath of Life. Ultimately it must become one with that Self, but not until it reaches the perfecting-period at the end of its long cycle of earth-lives.

Material existence is therefore a process of discipline. The soul retains the memory of all its incarnations, but this memory can be transmitted to the external consciousness only when the outer life is sufficiently purified; for it is by such purification alone that the inner and the outer natures become correlated, enabling the soul to manifest fully in the lower world. Remembrance of past lives is claimed to have been possessed by many, and will eventually be gained by all. Each human being has lived in all the great races of the past, and will live in those of the future also. History in repeating itself has the same actors, constantly rehearsing the great drama. But vast though it is, the cycle of incarnations is not endless: as a period of rest succeeds each incarnation, so at the completion of the entire cycle humanity collectively will regain the purely spiritual state, that of supreme beatitude.

Such being the beliefs of the reincarnationists, it remains to inquire how far they are sustained and justified by the *New Testament.*

III.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES.

In the *New Testament* writings there is no systematic presentation of doctrines, no formulated creed, no extended treatise on any of the fundamental tenets of religion and philosophy. There are only fragmentary narratives with little attempt at chronological order, brief discourses, letters written to Societies in various cities and to individuals, and that wholly mystical dramatic composition, the Apocalypse—a veiled book entitled the "Unveiling." From many passages in these writings it is clearly evident that the teachings of Jesus, imparted by him orally and in secret[1] to his pupils, were handed down only to the "chosen ones,"[2] or those initiated into a secret order,[3] containing degrees, of which Paul

[1] *Matt.* xiii. 11; *Mark* iv. 11, 33, 34; *Luke* viii. 10.

[2] "For many are the called ones, but few are the chosen ones" (*Matt.* xxii. 14).

[3] I. *Cor.* ii. 6–8, 13; iv. 1, 2; *Eph.* v. 32; I. *Tim.* iii. 9.

mentions four.[1] The letters by Paul and others were, from their very nature, never intended to be read by persons not belonging to this secret order: they refer largely to personal matters, sometimes of so delicate a sort that they certainly could not have been meant for the general public;[2] and the only teachings they contain are in the exhortations, and the incidental elucidation of subjects that had come under controversy. It is only by a painstaking study of such scattered material that the teachings on any particular subject can be synthesized; and however well the work of piecing together the disconnected statements may be done, gaps will remain that can only be filled in by inference and analogy.

[1] "Unless I shall speak to you [the members of the Society at Corinth] either in an Unveiling, or in a Secret Lore (*gnôsis*), or in a Vision-seeing (*prophêteia*), or in a Teaching" (I. *Cor.* xiv. 6). Throughout the *New Testament* the exotericists (*hoi exó*) are also spoken of as the "carnal ones" (*hoi sarkikoi*); while the esotericists (*hoi esó*) are distinguished as neophytes, or the "called ones" (*hoi klêtoi*), and the "chosen ones" (*hoi eklektoi*), and the latter are classified as the "psychics" (*hoi psuchikoi*), the "trustworthy" (*hoi pistoi*), the "spiritual" (*hoi pneumatikoi*), and the "perfect" (*hoi teleioi*) — the Initiates. It will be noted that these correspond accurately to the four Lustrations, or purificatory rites, referred to in the *New Testament:* the Lustrations of Water, Breath or Air (*pneuma*), Fire, and Blood.

[2] I. *Cor.* v. 1; *Gal.* ii. 11–14; iii. 1–3.

In considering the treatment of the subject of reincarnation by the authors of these writings, it is important to note that, while belief in reincarnation was almost universal in the time of Jesus, and was an essential doctrine in all the so-called pagan religions, it is nowhere denied, disputed or questioned in the *New Testament.* Wherever the subject comes under discussion, as it frequently does, the fact of reincarnation is either tacitly accepted or unequivocally asserted, as in the case of Elijah. Yet if it were a false doctrine it would undoubtedly have come in for the same denunciations that were hurled against idolatry and sorcery,[1] nature-worship,[2] sarcolatry,[3] literalism,[4] and materialism;[5] for it is obvious that a very different meaning attaches to many of the teachings of Jesus if reincarnation be accepted as a truth. It is not merely a truth

[1] I. *Cor.* x. 14; *Gal.* v. 20; *Rev.* xxi. 8.

[2] "How is it you are turning back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits (*stoicheia*)? . . . You are observing days, and moons, and seasons, and years" (*Gal.* iv. 9, 10). That *stoicheia* here means, not the "rudiments" of ceremonial religion, but the *spirits of the elements*, believed by the ancients to preside over all natural phenomena, is evident from the context. See *Rev.* vii. 1; xiv. 18; xvi. 5.

[3] *Rom.* viii. 5–8; *Gal.* iii. 3.

[4] II. *Cor.* iii. 6.

[5] *Matt.* xxii. 23; I. *Cor.* xv. 16–19.

that adds to the sum-total of the others, but a new factor that changes the whole equation.

The allusions to reincarnation in the narrative portions of the *New Testament* are so closely woven into the text, and so essential to the narrative itself, that it is necessary to examine extended passages. Taking these in their chronological sequence, as nearly as may be, the first statement is that of John concerning himself:

John i. 19–23.

And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him from Jerusalem priests and Levites to ask him:

"Who are *you?*"

And he admitted, and did not deny, and admitted:

"*I* am not the Anointed."[1]

And they asked him:

"What, then, [are you]? Are you Elijah?"

And he said:

"I am not."

"Are you the Seer?"[2]

[1] Gr. *christos*, washed, anointed with oil (after bathing); the *Messias* or one Anointed by the Breath (*pneuma*) or World-soul. The Christos is the Avatar or periodical manifestation (*epiphaneia*) of Deity on earth. Thus, II. *Tim.* i. 8–10: "God . . . has been manifested now through the Epiphany of our Saviour, Anointed Jesus, who has done away with Death, and has illumined Life and Immortality."

[2] Gr. *prophêtês*, one who speaks for (another), especially for a God; a divine interpreter, a Seer — not necessarily one who foretells future events.

And he answered:

"No."

Therefore they said to him:

"Who are you?—that we may give a reply to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

Said he:

"I [am] 'the Voice of one shouting in the desert, "Make straight the path of the Master,"' as said Isaiah the Seer."[1]

Here there is a denial, apparently, that John is Elijah. But, in fact, it is only an instance of the many curious word-plays contained in the fourth *Evangel*. Elijah in Greek is Hêlias, and John evades the question put to him by taking it to be, "Are you the Sun?" For the Greek word *hêlios*, the sun, is hardly distinguishable from Hêlias. Now, metaphorically, the Christos is the Sun; and it would be natural for John to make this denial as a mere reiteration of the preceding one, "*I* am not the Anointed." But that he was purposely giving an evasive answer is indicated by the enigmatical words, "And he admitted, and did not deny, and admitted," which are followed by apparent denials of every question asked him. How perfectly natural it would be for John to misunderstand the query, whether purposely or otherwise, is apparent from the

[1] *Isa.* xl. 3.

passage in *Malachi* containing the prediction of Elijah's coming, and which both John and his interlocutors must have had in mind. The Saviour is there foretold in solar imagery: "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings" (iv. 2); and directly following this is the prophecy that Elijah would come first. The question might readily be taken to mean, "Are you the Sun of righteousness?"

By the other question, "Are you the Seer?" it is probable that Jeremiah is intended, though possibly Isaiah is to be understood.

However sure of his own mission John may have been,[1] he was, nevertheless, unable to identify the Messias whom he had come to announce. Even after he had been thrown into prison he is represented by Matthew and Luke as sending two of his pupils to Jesus to ask him if he were the Anointed. The following passage in the fourth *Evangel* apparently conflicts with this:

John i. 29–37.

On the morrow he sees Jesus coming toward him, and says: "See; [here is] the Lamb of The God, who takes away the

[1] "*You* yourselves bear me witness that I said, '*I* am not the Anointed, but that I have been sent in advance of him'" (*John* iii. 28).

sin of the world. This [Anointed] is he of whom *I* said, 'Behind me comes a man who has come to be in front of me, for he was my First.'[1] And *I* did not know him, but that he might shine forth to Israel, for this [reason] *I* came, lustrating in Water."

And John bore witness, saying:

"I have seen the Breath[2] coming down like a dove out of the Sky,[3] and it abode upon him. And *I* did not know him; but he who sent me to lustrate in Water, *he* said to me, 'Upon whom you may have seen the Breath coming down, and abiding upon him, this [Anointed] is he who lustrates in the pure[4] Breath.' And *I* HAVE seen, and have borne witness that this [Anointed] is the Son of The God."

On the morrow again stood John, and two of his pupils; and having gazed at Jesus walking, he says:

"See; [here is] the Lamb of The God."

And the two pupils heard him speaking, and they went along after Jesus.

It will be seen that the above is not inconsistent with the narrative of the other Evangelists,

[1] Or, "prototype."

[2] Gr. *pneuma*, air, breath; spirit, "the breath of life."

[3] Gr. *ouranos*, visible Space, the vault of the sky; the world of the Gods beyond the sky-vault. The word "heaven," as now understood, does not express the intimate relation between the external world and the sidereal world, between earth-consciousness and cosmic or spatial consciousness. For a similar reason, "spirit" is an inadequate rendering of *pneuma;* for by the latter the subtile element *air* is intended, as shown by its association with the other elements: John lustrates in Water, and Jesus lustrates in Air and Fire (*Matt.* iii. 11).

[4] Gr. *hagios*, awe-inspiring; devoted to the Gods; unsullied; chaste; holy.

who show John to be in doubt as to whether or not Jesus is the Anointed. The whole passage quoted above from the *Evangel* of John is thoroughly mystical and somewhat vague. John, as the Water-Lustrator, asserted that he had seen Jesus, the Spirit-Lustrator; but his only means of identifying him was the magnetic atmosphere, or *aura*, enveloping him. This *aura*, here referred to under the imagery of a dove, is the "Radiance" (*doxa*) so frequently mentioned in the *New Testament*, and as it is not visible to the physical eyesight, it is clear that John was speaking of a vision he had seen. Notwithstanding his confident declarations concerning Jesus, he made no attempt to approach him. His two pupils, placing implicit faith in his words, went to Jesus trustingly and remained with him. But John did not purposely point him out to them; they overheard him talking to himself, and from the narrative it would seem that he was in a dream-waking state, or trance, and not fully conscious of his surroundings. Hence his failure to recognize Jesus in his waking consciousness. Here, therefore, as in the synoptic *Evangels*, he is depicted as a natural psychic, an untrained Seer, and hence unable to correlate the two worlds,

the material and the spiritual. The inner, subconscious self of John was, indeed, "the Spirit and Power of Elijah," but the outer self of him was darkened and obscured. His inability to identify Jesus as the Messias is depicted almost sarcastically:

Matthew xi. 2–15.

Now, John having heard in his prison the works of the Anointed, sent two of his pupils, and said to him [by these messengers]:

"Art *thou* the one who is coming, or are we to expect some one else?"

And Jesus, answering, said to them:

"Go your way and report to John [the things] which you hear and see: the blind recover their sight, and the lame are walking about; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are awakened,[1] and the beggars are evangelized—and immortal[2] is he, be he who he may, that shall not be tripped up on account of me!"[3]

[1] Gr. *egerthênai*, to be waked up, roused. In the A. V. but little distinction is made between this verb and *anastênai*, to stand up, be raised; yet the difference in meaning is carefully observed in the *New Testament* writings, as in *Luke* viii. 54, 55: "And grasping her hand, he called [her], saying, 'Maiden, awake!' And her Spirit returned, and she stood up immediately."

[2] Gr. *makarios*, free from fate or death, for ever blest, emancipated (from earth-life).

[3] Literally, "be scandalized by me," the words being evidently ironical. The verb used signifies to be tripped up by a snare or noose, and is derived from *skandalon*, a trap-spring, trigger ("tricker") of a trap.

And as these [messengers] were departing, Jesus began to say to the crowds[1] concerning John:

"What did you go out into the desert to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? See, those wearing fine [clothes] are in noblemen's houses. But what did you go out to see? A Seer? Yes, I say to you, and much more than a Seer! This [forerunner] it is concerning whom it is written:

'Behold, *I* send my Messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy path in front of thee.'[2]

Amên, I say to you, Among [men] born of women there has not awakened [from the dead] a greater [Seer] than John the Lustrator; but the lesser [Initiate] in the Realm of the Skies is a greater [Seer] than he. And from the days of John the Lustrator up to now the Realm of the Skies is taken by force, and the forceful seize upon it.[3] For *all* the Seers and the Law had Seership up to [the days of] John. And, if you are willing to receive [him], he himself is Elijah, the one destined to come.[4] He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Mark omits this incident, but Luke gives it in words almost identical with those of Matthew,

[1] The *circuli*, or knots of talkers.

[2] *Mal.* iii. 1; *Mark* i. 2; *Luke* i. 76.

[3] The words are ambiguous and might be translated: "The Realm of the Skies has been carried by storm, and robbers are plundering it." This, however, does not accord with the context or with the parallel passage in *Luke* (xvi. 16), which reads: "The Law and the Seers [were] up to [the days of] John; from that time on the Realm of The God is proclaimed as good news, and every one forces his way into it." Possibly the meaning is that the writers of the ancient Scriptures were only natural Seers, not Initiates.

[4] *Mal.* iv. 5.

but breaking off abruptly and leaving out the latter part of Jesus' statement:

Luke vii. 18–28.

And John's pupils reported to him concerning all these [things]. And John, having summoned certain two of his pupils, sent them to Jesus, saying:

"Art *thou* the one who is coming, or are we to expect another?"

Now, having come near to him, the men said:

"John the Lustrator has sent us to thee, saying, 'Art *thou* the one who is coming, or are we to expect another?'"

In that very hour he cured many [persons] of diseases and scourges and depraved [obsessing] spirits, and granted sight to many blind [persons]. And Jesus, answering, said to them:

"Go your way, and report to John [the things] which you have seen and heard: the blind recover their sight, the lame are walking about, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are awakened, the beggars are evangelized—and immortal is he, be he who he may, that shall not be tripped up on account of me!"

And John's messengers having gone away, he began to say to the crowds concerning John:

"What did you go out into the desert to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? See, those [arrayed] in splendid clothing, and living in luxury, are in palaces. But what did you go out to see? A Seer? Yes, I say to you, and much more than a Seer! This [forerunner] it is concerning whom it is written:

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'Behold, I send my Messenger before thy face,
Who shall prepare thy path in front of thee.'

I say to you, No one, among [men] born of women, is a greater Seer than John the Lustrator; but the lesser [Initiate] in the Realm of The God is a greater [Seer] than he."

That Elijah was to be the forerunner of the Messias was predicted in *Malachi* iv. 5:

Behold, I send you Elijah, the divinely frenzied one, before the great and manifested day of the Master comes.

The character and personal peculiarities of John are precisely those of Elijah. Not only does he have the same traits of character, but also the same physical appearance. Thus Elijah is described as "a hairy man, and girdled about the loins with a girdle of skin";[1] and it is said of the forerunner, "John wore a garment of camel's hair, and a girdle of skin about his loins."[2] The man is the same in both incarnations: he is big, boisterous, defiant; outwardly a savage, yet divinely illumined interiorly; loudly proclaiming his message, yet reticent and mysterious. As Elijah he made wrong use of his Seership and magical power, and scorning the king's command, he called down fire from the sky and killed the

[1] II. *Kings* i. 8. [2] *Matt.* iii. 4.

two bands of soldiers who came to take him;[1] as John he suffered for this evil deed, for his Seership was obscured, and Nemesis pursued him in the person of the wanton Herodias, who had him beheaded.

This partial obscuration and loss of power is shown by John's inability to discern of himself whether or not Jesus was the Messias. Imprisoned—unjustly so far as that incarnation went, but with perfect justice in view of the misdeeds of the prior incarnation—he sends his pupils to Jesus to make inquiry. But Jesus, instead of giving a positive answer, merely intimates that John ought to know him from his thaumaturgical feats, even if the spiritual sight of the forerunner had become darkened. And, as if to emphasize this point, he tells the bystanders, and not John's messengers, that John, *as his forerunner*, is "more than a Seer," yet explaining that John is only a natural Seer, or psychic, and therefore inferior to an initiated Seer. For John, the Elijah of old, now humbled and rendered powerless[2] because of his cruel abuse of power, had not the force to seize "the Realm of the Skies." The latter phrase, *basileia tôn ou-*

[1] II. *Kings* i. 9–14. [2] *John* x. 41.

ranôn, which is peculiar to Matthew, denotes divine Seership; for *basileia* here means, not "kingdom," but the "power to rule," and the "Skies" are the seven regions of Space, or seven "Heavens" (sidereal worlds), as indicated by the seven hierarchies of Angels in the *Apocalypse*, and by Paul's use of the word *ouranos* in the passage in II. *Cor.* xii. 2–4: "I know a man, . . . (whether in a body, I do not know; or whether outside of [his] body, I do not know—The God knows), such an one rapt to the Third Heaven." For the "open eye"[1] of the Seer becomes "a window into Space"; he enters at will into any of the spiritual worlds. John is here depicted as the last of the great Seers of old, but undergoing punishment for his sins, and powerless to enter the circle of Initiates. There is deep pathos in the declaration of Jesus concerning this unrecognized, despised and persecuted fallen one: "If you are willing to receive him, he himself is Elijah."

But Herod, having beheaded John, becomes the prey of an accusing conscience. He takes Jesus to be John resurrected. This incident in the narrative is given in each of the three sy-

[1] *Matt.* vi. 22; *Luke* xi. 34; xxiv. 31.

noptics, though the accounts are somewhat at variance with each other.

Matthew xiv. 1, 2.

At that season Herod the tetrarch[1] heard the rumor of Jesus; and he said to his servants:

"This [magician] is John the Lustrator.[2] He himself has awakened from the dead, and for this [reason] the Forces[3] energize in him."

Mark vi. 14–16.

And King Herod heard [of Jesus], for his name had come to be well known; and he said:

"John the Lustrator has awakened from the dead, and for this [reason] the Forces energize in him."

Others said:

"He is Elijah."

[1] Gr. *tetrarchês*, governor of the fourth part of any region; a petty prince.

[2] The one who administers the ceremonial rite of purification. Four lustrations are spoken of in the *New Testament:* of Water, Air, Fire, and Blood (ether), thus corresponding to the five elements, Earth being also frequently mentioned, as in *Luke* xii. 49: "I came to cast Fire into the Earth."

[3] Gr. *dunamis*, strength; ability; potency; a faculty; a psychic or spiritual power; a spirit. The Breath (*pneuma*) is the energizing agent in awakening these Forces and their corresponding faculties, as shown by the passage, "He who supplies to you the Breath and energizes Forces in you" (*Gal.* iii. 5). Paul also speaks of "the free-gift of the charism [occult power, here apparently Seership] of The God, given to me according to the energizing of his Force" (*Eph.* iii. 7).

And others said:

"He is a Seer, for instance one of the Seers [of old]."

But Herod, when he heard [of him], said:

"John, whom I beheaded, this [Seer] has awakened from the dead."

Luke ix. 7–9.

Now, Herod the tetrarch heard of all the [events] taking place; and he was thoroughly perplexed, because it was being said by some:

"John has awakened from the dead!"

And by some:

"Elijah has appeared!"

And by others:

"A Seer, one of the Ancient Seers, has risen [from the dead]!"

But Herod said:

"John *I* beheaded; but who is this [magician], concerning whom I hear such [reports]?"

And he sought to see him.

Luke represents Herod as being in doubt and uncertainty, whereas Matthew and Mark show him to have been positive in his statement that Jesus was John risen from the dead, and Mark even makes him reiterate the statement with emphasis. The latter account is the more natural under the circumstances, and brings out vividly Herod's superstitious dread of the man whom he had unjustly put to death.

As John had been beheaded, Herod could hardly have believed that he had risen from the dead *in the same body*. Nor could the people who were asserting that Jesus was John the Lustrator have supposed that Jesus was a reincarnation of John, for the two were contemporaries, and the personality of Jesus could not have been mistaken for that of John. The unavoidable conclusion is that Herod and others must have believed it possible for the soul of a dead man to replace that of a man who was still living; in other words, that souls and bodies are interchangeable. Cases are frequently related in the *New Testament* where the ghosts, or *larvæ*, of the dead obsess, or infest, the living. The *daimôn*, mistranslated "devil" in the received version, is nothing more nor less than the evil, earth-bound soul (*psuche*) of a dead person, the ghost, or "spook"; and not only one, but many of these unclean "spirits," may take possession of a living person's body, and thus prolong their earthly existence vicariously.[1] It was also held that the spirits of the dead may overshadow, guard and minister to the living;[2] the Angels, whether

[1] *Matt.* viii. 28–34; xii. 22; *Acts* xix. 11–16.
[2] *Matt.* xviii. 10; *Acts* xii. 15; *Heb.* i. 14.

"guardian Angels," "messengers of God," rulers of the Four Elements, or ministering spirits, are in every case the inner Selves of men.[1] But in the present instance neither of these hypotheses is applicable. Herod and the others could not have had in mind a case of obsession or of overshadowing, but evidently held that the soul of a living man might leave the body, and the latter be taken possession of by the soul of a disembodied man. In Herod's opinion this accounted for his magical powers; as one newly risen from the dead, he was in touch with the ethereal world, and so the psychic Forces energized in him.

After John's death the subject is again recurred to, and considerable space is devoted to it in each of the synoptics, without any serious discrepancies, but with interesting variations in the details, the three accounts supplementing each other.

Matthew xvi. 13–24; xvii. 1–13.

Jesus . . . asked his pupils, saying:
"Who do men say that the Son of the Man is?"

[1] Originally *daimôn* meant a God, and the word was applied to the Souls of men; later it came to mean any disembodied spirit, and the *New Testament* writers invariably use it in its bad sense, applying it to earth-bound and obsessing spirits or ghosts. The word *angelos*, in the *New Testament*, has precisely the meaning that *daimôn* had before the latter word became degraded.

And they said:

"Some [say] John the Lustrator; some, Elijah;[1] and others, Jeremiah,[2] or one of the Seers."

He says to them:

"But who do *you* say that I am?"

And Simon Peter, answering, said:

"*Thou* art the Anointed, the Son of the Living God!"

And Jesus, answering, said to him:

"Immortal you are, Simon, Son of Jonah![3] for flesh and blood did not unveil [this secret] to you, but my Father who is in the Skies. And *I* say to you, too, *You* are a Rock (*Petros*), and on this rock (*petra*) I will build my Society, and the Gates of the Underworld shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the Keys of the Realm of the Skies; and whatsoever you shall bind on the Earth shall be bound in the Skies, and whatsoever you shall loose on the Earth shall be loosed in the Skies."

Then he warned his pupils that they should say to no one, "He himself is the Anointed."

From that time on, Jesus began to show his pupils that he must go away to Jerusalem, and suffer many [indignities][4] from the Seniors and Archpriests and Recorders, and be killed, and awaken [from the dead] the third day. And Peter, taking him [by the hand], began to scold him, saying:

"Gracious! Master—you shall *not* have this [fate]!"

But he turned and said to Peter:

"Come on behind me, opposer.[5] You are an impediment

[1] *Mal.* iv. 5.

[2] II. *Esdr.* ii. 18.

[3] Syr. *Bar*, son of. *Bar-Jonah*, Son of Jonah.

[4] *Matt.* xx. 18; *Mark* x. 34.

[5] *Satanas*, adversary, one who opposes.

to me; for you do not take side with The God, but side with men."

Then Jesus said to his pupils:

"If any one is willing to come after me, let him deny himself utterly, and lift up and carry his cross, and go along with me. . . ."

And after six days Jesus takes Peter, and James and his brother John, and brings them up into a high hill, apart. And he was transformed in their presence, and his face shone forth as the sun, and his garments became white as the light. And, behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him. And Peter answered and said to Jesus:

"Master, it is a good [thing] that we are here—if you wish, we will make here three tents,[1] one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

While he was yet speaking, behold, a cloud of light overshadowed them; and, behold, [there was heard] a voice from the cloud, saying:

"This [Master] is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am content; hear ye him!"

And when the pupils heard [the voice], they fell on their faces, and were very much frightened. But Jesus went [to them] and touched them, and said:

"Arise, and do not be frightened."

And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus only. And while they were going down from the hill, Jesus commanded them, saying:

"Tell the vision to no one, till the Son of the Man be risen from the dead."

[1] Booths or huts, made of green boughs or skins, like the Indian wigwams or tepees.

And his pupils put a question to him, saying:

"Why, then, do the Recorders say, 'Elijah must come first'?"

Now, Jesus answered and said to them:

"Elijah indeed comes first, and will restore all [things]. Now, I say to you, Elijah has come already, and they did not recognize him, but have done him as many [injuries] as they could. Thus also the Son of the Man is destined to suffer by them."

Then his pupils understood that he said [this] to them about John the Lustrator.

Mark viii. 27–34; ix. 2–13.

He put a question to his pupils, saying to them:

"Who do men say that I am?"

And they told him, saying:

"[Some say] John the Lustrator; and others, Elijah; but others, one of the Seers."

And he himself says to them:

"But who do *you* say that I am?"

And Peter, answering, says to him:

"*Thou* art the Anointed!"

And he cautioned them, that they should say [this] to no one about him. And he began to teach them:

"The Son of the Man must suffer many [indignities], and be rejected by the Seniors and Archpriests and Recorders, and be killed, and rise [from the dead] after three days."

And he uttered the statement freely. And Peter, taking him [by the hand], began to scold him. But he, turning about and looking at his pupils, scolded Peter, saying:

"Come on behind me, opposer; for you do not take side with The God, but side with men."

And having called the crowd to [him] with his pupils, he said to them:

"Whosoever is willing to come after me, let him deny himself utterly, and lift up and carry his cross, and go along with me. . . ."

And after six days Jesus takes Peter, James and John, and brings them up into a high hill, apart by themselves. And he was transformed in their presence, and his garments became glittering, exceedingly white—such as no fuller on earth can whiten.[1] And there appeared to them Elijah, with Moses; and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter, answering, says to Jesus:

"*Rabbi*, it is a good [thing] that we are here; and let us make three tents, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

For he did not know what to say—for they were scared. And there came to be a cloud, overshadowing them; and there came a voice from the cloud:

"This [Master] is my well-beloved Son; hear ye him!"

And on a sudden, when they had looked around, they no longer saw any one, but Jesus only with themselves.

Now, while they were going down from the hill, he warned them that they should relate to no one the [things] which they saw, except when the Son of the Man should have risen from the dead. And they laid hold of the saying, discussing with each other, "What *is* 'rising from the dead'?" And they asked him, saying:

[1] Compare Penelope's invocation of Minerva: "Covering her body with a veil of dazzling whiteness, she invoked Minerva" (*Odyssey* xvii. 48).

"[Why] do the Recorders say, 'Elijah must come first'?"

And he answered and said to them:

"Elijah indeed comes first, and restores all [things]. And how is it written of the Son of the Man that he should suffer many [indignities], and be treated as of no account? But I say to you, Elijah also has come, and they have done him as many [injuries] as they could, even as it is written about him."

Luke ix. 18–23; 28–36.

As he was alone praying, his pupils were with him; and he put a question to them, saying:

"Who do the crowds say that I am?"

And they answered and said:

"[Some say] John the Lustrator; and others, Elijah; and others, that a Seer of the people of old has risen [from the dead]."

And he said to them:

"But who do *you* say that I am?"

And Peter, answering, said:

"The Anointed of The God."

And he cautioned them, and charged [them] to tell no one this [secret], saying:

"The Son of the Man must suffer many [indignities], and be rejected by the Seniors and Archpriests and Recorders, and be killed, and awaken [from the dead] the third day."

And he said to [them] all:

"If any one is willing to come after me, let him deny himself, and lift up and carry his cross daily, and go along with me. . . ."

And it came to be that about eight days after [he uttered]

these sayings he took Peter and John and James, and went up into the hill to pray. And as he prayed, the appearance of his face became different, and his apparel [became] white —flashing as with lightning. And, behold, talking with him were two men, Moses and Elijah—who, appearing in a Radiance, spoke of his departure [from this life], which he was about to fulfil at Jerusalem.

Now, Peter and those with him were overcome with sleep, but keeping wide awake they saw his Radiance and the two men who were standing with him. And it came about that as they were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus:

"Chief,[1] it is a good [thing] that we are here; and let us make three tents, one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he says.

And while he was saying these [words], there came to be a cloud, and it overshadowed them; and they were frightened as they entered into the cloud. And there came to be a voice from the cloud, saying:

"This [Master] is my chosen Son; hear ye him!"

And when the voice came to be, Jesus was found alone. And they themselves kept silence, and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen.

The answer made by Peter, "*Thou* art the Anointed, the Son of the Living God," has a double meaning. Superficially it is only an assertion that Jesus was the expected Messias, which was not a secret, but a fact well known to

[1] Gr. *epistatés*, overseer, manager; commander; here used like the colloquial English word "boss."

the pupils and to people generally. Peter had known it for nearly three years. The *Evangel* of John is explicit on this point, when relating how the pupils were chosen by Jesus.

John i. 40–45, 49.

Andrew, the brother of Simon Petros, was one of those two who heard from John, and went along after him, [Jesus]. This [pupil] first finds his own brother Simon, and says to him:

"We have found the *Messias*" (which is, being interpreted, Anointed).

He led him to Jesus. Jesus, having gazed at him, said:

"*You* are Simon, the son of Jonah; you shall be named *Kêphas*" (which is interpreted Petros).

On the morrow he wished to go out into Galilee; and he finds Philip, and says to him:

"Come with me."

Now, Philip was from Bethsaida, out of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip finds Nathanael, and says to him:

"[The one] whom Moses described in the Law, and [whom] the Seers [foretold], we have found—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." . . .

Nathanael answered and says to him, [Jesus]:

"*Rabbi, thou* art the Son of The God; *thou* art the King of Israel."

The question put by Jesus was equivalent to, "Of whom do *you* say that I am the reincarnation?" If Peter's reply referred only to the

Messiahship it would be evasive and undeserving of the commendation he received for mental acumen. Nor would the words of Jesus be true; for "flesh and blood" in the person of Andrew *had* unveiled to Peter, years before, that Jesus was the Anointed, and the fact was no longer a secret, but a matter of common report.[1] Yet the real significance of Peter's answer is quite plain: it is an assertion that JESUS WAS KING DAVID. This view is abundantly sustained by other passages in the *New Testament*. As John, before his birth, was foretold to be Elijah, so Jesus was preannounced as David. The Angel Gabriel's promise to Zacharias was as follows:

Luke i. 13–17.

"Your wife Elisabeth shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you shall have joy and exultation, and many shall rejoice at his birth. . . . And many of the sons of Israel will he turn to their Master-God; and he will come into his presence in [the] Spirit and Force of Elijah."

That John, in the presence of God, was "in the Spirit and Force of Elijah," can have no other meaning than that the inner Self of Elijah

[1] *Matt.* xiv. 33; *Mark* iii. 11; v. 7; *Luke* iv. 14; *John* iv. 39–42; vii. 41; ix. 35–38.

was incarnated in John. The annunciation of Jesus, by the Angel Gabriel to Mary, is this:

Luke i. 31–33.

"Behold, you will conceive and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. This [son] shall be great, and shall be called a son of [the] Highest [God]; and the Master-God will give him the Throne of David, his father; and he shall reign over the House of Jacob throughout the Æons."

As Gabriel was an Angel, he may be excused for speaking as a mystagogue; but in the language of mortals his meaning is sufficiently clear. In mystical works it is a common figure of speech to refer to a man as the "son" of one of his preceding incarnations, which is his "father" in the sense that the past produces the present. It is curious to note, in this connection, that while Matthew gives the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham down to "Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born,"[1] he also makes it perfectly clear that Joseph was *not* the father of Jesus;[2] and Luke, who gives a somewhat different genealogy running clear back to Adam, speaks of Jesus as the "reputed" (*enomizeto*) son of Joseph, and shows that he was not in fact

[1] *Matt.* i. 1–16. [2] *Matt.* i. 18–20, 25.

his son.[1] Hence the genealogy of Joseph proves nothing so far as Jesus is concerned; and unless the two Evangelists are to be regarded as grossly stupid in not noticing such a fatal defect in the evidence, it must be granted that they were not attempting to prove that Jesus was lineally descended from Abraham by mere physical heredity; in other words, that they were dealing with the genealogy of souls, not of bodies. The latter are *all* supposed to be descended from Adam.

Taken together, the two annunciations are easy to be understood. As John was to come into God's presence "in the Spirit and Force of Elijah," so Jesus is to be given the "Throne of David," that is, to occupy the place of David in the spiritual world, since the Spirit or true Self of David was to be incarnated in him. Paul uses the word "Throne" in precisely this signification, speaking of "the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, the things seen and the things unseen, whether Thrones or Masterships or First-principles or Authorities,"[2] where he is unquestionably referring to Hierarchies of spiritual beings.

Further, Jesus himself distinctly gave it to be

[1] *Luke* i. 34. [2] *Col.* i. 16.

understood that he was not the son of David in a material sense, as shown in the following:

Matthew xxii. 41–45.

Now, while the Pharisees were assembled, Jesus put them a question, saying:

"What is *your* notion concerning the Anointed? Whose son is he?"

They say to him:

"David's."

He says to them:

"How, then, does David, [speaking] in Spirit, call him 'Master,' saying:

'The Master said to my Master,
"Sit thou by my right hand,
Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet"'?[1]

"If, then, David calls him 'Master,' how is he his 'son'?"

Mark xii. 35–37.

And Jesus answered and said, while he was teaching in the temple-courts:

"How is it the Recorders say, 'The Anointed is David's son'? For David himself, [speaking] in pure Spirit, said:

'The Master says to my Master,
"Sit thou by my right hand,
Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet."'

David himself, therefore, calls him 'Master'; and from what source is he his 'son'?"

[1] *Ps.* cx. 1.

Luke xx. 41–44.

Now, he said to them:
"How is it they say that the Anointed is David's son? For David himself says in *The Book of Psalms:*

'The Master said to my Master,
"Sit thou by my right hand,
Till I put thine enemies underneath thy feet."'

David, therefore, calls him 'Master,' and how is he his 'son'?"

As if to emphasize the spiritual ignorance of the Pharisees to whom Jesus propounded this problem, Matthew adds, "And no one was able to answer him a word"; yet, though Jesus made them no explanation, the solution is an easy one. David called his own spiritual Self his Master, and that same Self having incarnated in Jesus, he was alike the "son" of that Master and the "son of David." If the real Self of David was distinct from that of Jesus, the latter could not be David's son in the mystic sense of the word; nor was he descended from him physically unless through Mary, and it is nowhere stated, or even intimated, in the *Evangels* that Mary was a descendant of David.

The testimony of the *Apocalypse* to this identity of David and Jesus is emphatic:

Revelation iii. 7, 8, 12.

These [things] says he who is pure, who is true, who has David's key, who opens [or, unlocks] and no one shall shut [or, lock], who shuts and no one opens:

". . . I have given in front of you an opened door, which no one is able to shut. . . . The conqueror, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall not at all go outward any more."

Here "David's key" is the power to correlate the two worlds, to open or close the door between them at will; and the "opened door" leads to final emancipation from reincarnation, when the freed soul need not "go outward any more" into the material world. By the toil and suffering of many earth-lives, man reaches human perfection; then, through the opened door, he emerges from the human kingdom into the kingdom of the Immortals. Again and again in the magnificent *Apocalypse*, the Book of the Unveiling, is this note of triumph sounded:

Revelation i. 17, 18.

"*I* am the First and the Last, and the Living one; and I became a dead man, and behold, I am a living one throughout the Æons of the Æons, and I have the keys of Death and of the Underworld!"

Revelation xxii. 16.

"*I*, Jesus, sent my Angel to declare by you these [things] against the Churches.[1] *I* am the Root and the Offspring of David, his radiant Morning Star."[2]

The imagery could hardly be clearer. The "Root" of David is the ever-living Self, which before the descent into the cycles, or Æons, of generation was the "First," the archetypal man; while the "Offspring" is the "Last," the perfected man, who has emerged triumphantly from the "spheres of becoming," returning with added knowledge and power to the realm of true Being. Paul explains this evolution of the perfect man very lucidly, as in the following passages:

Hebrews ii. 10.

It was fitting for him—for whom [are] all [things] and through whom [are] all [things]—in leading many Sons into

[1] See the scathing arraignment of the "seven Churches" in the second and third chapters of *Revelation*.

[2] Such is the obvious rendering of the Greek idiom; the R. V. construes it, "the bright, the morning star," only partially correcting the mistranslation of the former version, which reads, "*and* the bright and morning star." So, also, ii. 28 should read, "I will give him his Morning Star." Allegorically, this "Star" is the soul, the bringer of light to the material world. Thus II. *Peter* i. 19: "Till the day dawn, and the Light-bringer (*phôsphoros*) arise in your hearts."

Radiance, to make the First-leader of our Salvation perfect through sufferings.[1]

Romans viii. 28–30.

Now, we know that to those who love The God all [things] work together for good—to the ones called according to a plan. For whom he knew beforehand[2] he also marked out beforehand as *replicas* of his Son's image, for him to be a first-born among many Brothers.[3] And whom he marked out beforehand, these [later-born] he also called; and whom he called, these [called ones] he also made just; and whom he made just, these [just ones] he also made Radiant.

Here Jesus is depicted as differing from the many Sons and Brothers only in being older than, and a pattern for, the others. Like the rest, he is "made perfect through sufferings," and all alike pass into the divine Radiance when they have attained to right-conduct. That Paul had in mind, not the predestined salvation of an unjustly favored few, but the orderly evolution of hierarchies of souls, according to a divine plan, is clear from his argument against any notion of

[1] "A Son who has been made perfect throughout the Æon" (*Heb.* vii. 28).

[2] That is, in preceding Æons, or periods of evolution.

[3] Similarly, among the Gods "Zeus was born first, and knew more" (*Iliad* xiii. 355).

God's injustice in the matter,[1] as also from his explanation of this plan or purpose of the Æons, Paul boldly proclaiming himself to be an hierophant, and thus announcing his mission:

Ephesians iii. 9–11.

To bring to light all [things]—which is the supervision of the Mystery kept hidden from the Æons in The God, by him wherefrom all [things] were formed, so that *now* may be made known to the First-principles and Authorities among the Gods,[2] through the Societies, the much-diversified Wisdom of The God, according to a plan of the Æons, which he brought about in Anointed Jesus, our Master.

Such language would be meaningless if it did not apply to many incarnations throughout the Æons, or evolutionary periods, the hierarchies of souls having their leaders and authorities, and all working together according to a plan and making for a destined goal.

Jesus is also called "the seed of David"[3] and "the seed of Abraham." In commenting on

[1] *Rom.* ix. 14–24.

[2] Gr. *epouranioi*, heavenly beings, Gods; equivalent to *theoi*. Here the souls of men are evidently meant, as in *John* x. 34 (quoted from *Ps.* lxxxii. 6): "I said, 'You are Gods.'"

[3] II. *Tim.* ii. 8.

God's promises to Abraham,[1] Paul has this to say:

Galatians iii. 16.

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his *seed*. He does not say, "And to the seeds," as concerning many; but as concerning one, "And to thy seed"—who is the Anointed.

If by "seed" the vital reproductive energy of the soul[2] is intended, it would follow that Abraham, David and Jesus were different incarnations of one and the same individual.

It is therefore a fair conclusion that by the words "*Thou* art the Anointed, the Son of the Living God," Peter applied to Jesus, with peculiar significance, the title of David, the Warrior-King, who was "the Anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel," with

[1] *Gen.* xiii. 15; xvii. 8.

[2] A favorite simile with mystics. Thus Porphyry: "As seed, when it is contained in matter, dominates it according to each of the productive principles which the seeds contain, and all the seed, its power being collected into one, possesses the whole of its power in each of the parts, so, likewise, in the immaterial soul, that which may be conceived as a part has the power of the whole soul" (*Auxiliaries to the Perception of Intelligible Natures*, xxxix.). So also in *John* xii. 24: "Unless the grain of the wheat falls to the earth and dies, it abides by itself, alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

whom God had "made a covenant throughout the Æons," [1] and that in Jesus his pupil saw fulfilled the promise made by that God in old times:

Acts xv. 16.

"After these [things] I will return,
And I will rebuild David's down-fallen tent; [2]
And I will rebuild its ruins,
And will uprear it anew." [3]

In return Jesus addresses Peter as "Bar-Jonah," or "Son of Jonah," which expression, in the light of the context, may be regarded as a hint that Peter was Jonah reincarnated; Peter, having identified Jesus with David, was appropriately rewarded by this information concerning himself. His being called a "rock" was but a mystical allusion to his Seership, which he had just demonstrated, for this "rock" (*petros*, a stone) is the "philosopher's stone," symbolical of the inner and spiritual sight, and it is identical with the "white pebble" (*psêphos*) which Jesus, in the *Apocalypse*, promises to the "con-

[1] II. *Sam.* xxiii. 1–5.

[2] "Our earthly house of the tent"—the physical body (II. *Cor.* v. 1).

[3] *Amos* ix. 11.

queror."[1] Therefore Peter was promised "the Keys of the Realm of the Skies," and was to be given the power of correlating the lower and higher worlds. The allusion to "the Gates of the Underworld" brings in the fact of reincarnation, for they are the gates by which the souls pass to and from the earth. Porphyry has much to say about these gates, which are the zodiacal signs Cancer and Capricorn, "and theologists say of these that Cancer is the gate through which souls descend, and Capricorn that through which they ascend."[2] Macrobius also tells how the souls, "when they begin to fall into terrene bodies," are in Cancer; and in elucidating the ancient arcana he gives many interesting details about the causes of reincarnation and the means of liberation, whereby the soul, "when it deserves to be purified from the contagion of vice, through its entire refinement from the corporeal nature, will be restored to the light of perennial life, and will return to its pristine integrity and perfection."[3]

The character of Peter, as he is portrayed in

[1] *Rev.* ii. 17.
[2] *On the Cave of the Nymphs in the Odyssey*, xi.
[3] *Commentary on Scipio's Dream*, ch. xii.

the *Evangels*, is certainly that of Jonah; he is simply Jonah *redivivus*. This is the more striking because the character of the man is very marked and altogether out of the ordinary. It is of interest, therefore, to compare the two personalities.

The story of Jonah is one of the masterpieces of ancient literature. In quibbling over the fish incident, critics have generally overlooked the Homeric strength and beauty of the narrative as a whole, its artistic contrasts of rude humor and poetic grandeur, and the dramatic force and pathos of its conclusion. Thus it runs:

The "word of the Lord" ordered Jonah to arise, go to Nineveh, and "cry against" that great city because of its wickedness. But the disobedient prophet "rose up" and tried to flee from the presence of the Lord by going to Tarshish, evidently under the supposition that the latter city was not in the Lord's territory. At Joppa "he found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." But the Lord was not to be so easily eluded by his absconding prophet, and the contest between the resourceful Lord and the wily

Jonah is told with titanic humor. "The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken." The frightened mariners "cried every man unto his God, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them"—while Jonah "was fast asleep" between-decks. Then the shipmaster routed out the sleeping prophet, and berated him for not praying to his God also. But on casting lots to find out who was the cause of the wrath of the Gods, "the lot fell upon Jonah," who promptly owned up that he was in bad favor with his God, and heroically advised them to throw him overboard so that the sea might be calm. Still the tars were unwilling to adopt so drastic a measure as to make moral jetsam of Jonah, and they "rowed hard" to bring the ship to land; "but they could not, for the sea wrought and was tempestuous against them." So they prayed to his God not to lay innocent blood upon them, since it was the Lord's own pleasure—and overboard went Jonah. Then "the sea ceased from her raging," and so profoundly were the mariners impressed by the evident superiority of Jonah's God over their own that they "offered a

sacrifice to the Lord, and made vows. Now, the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." The prayer of the undaunted prophet, thus brought up with a round turn by "the Lord his God," is a marvel of shrewd cajolery and exquisite poetical imagery:

"I cried by reason of my affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, *even to the soul:* the depths closed me round about, *the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains;* the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice to thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay thee that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

The Lord could not resist such sublime blarney; he "spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." Small wonder that when "the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the sec-

ond time" the prophet no longer shirked his duty, but performed his mission with praiseworthy thoroughness. "Now, Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey"; but before Jonah had put in his first day's work traversing it he had terrified the whole city by his confident prediction, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Even the king put on sackcloth, and by royal decree every man and beast had to be covered with sackcloth, and might "not feed nor drink water," but was to "cry mightily unto the Lord," and "turn every one from his evil way." Then "God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." But Jonah, forgetting the like clemency that had been extended to himself, and thinking only of his prediction that had failed, was the angriest prophet in Israel. He had endured philosophically the indignity of being engulfed by the deep sea and swallowed up by the great fish, but he bitterly resented this non-fulfilment of the prophecy, which touched his professional pride. He upbraided the Lord for his soft-heartedness, yet cunningly took advantage of this new turn in affairs to exonerate himself, claiming that he had

fled before to Tarshish because he knew the Lord would be sure to repent, and so leave him discredited as a prophet. He besought the Lord to take his life, saying, "It is better for me to die than to live." In his obduracy he went out "and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city." But the Lord was ready with another object-lesson for his obstinate prophet. He prepared many things for the purpose, even as he had "prepared" the great fish. First he "prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd." Then he "prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered." And when the sun rose he "prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die." But he still remained angry and defiant, and the Lord then expostulated with him, drawing an impressive moral from the object-lesson he had just imparted: "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hadst not labored, neither madest it

grow. . . . And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

Peter is the same obstinate, self-assertive, combative, shrewd, but blundering individual.[1] He is ever speaking out ahead of the other pupils, often clownishly and with no sense of the fitness of things,[2] as in his ludicrous offer to build booths for the spiritual visitants. He has the indomitable courage of Jonah, and his denial of his Master was certainly not from cowardice, but from a desire to extricate himself from a bad predicament by sacrificing truthfulness. Like Jonah, he could juggle with his conscience and invent excuses. Paul indignantly denounced him to his face as a hypocrite: "When Peter [Kêphas] came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he was blameworthy. . . . And the rest of the Judeans played the hypocrite with him likewise, so that even the Junior Prophet [Joseph] was led astray by their hypocrisy."[3]

[1] *Luke* xxii. 31, 32.
[2] *Matt.* xiv. 28–31; *Luke* v. 8; *John* xiii. 8, 9.
[3] *Gal.* ii. 11, 13.

Too great stress should not be laid upon Peter's having "the Keys of the Realm of the Skies"; for as a Seer he was presently surpassed by John, "that pupil whom Jesus loved,"[1] and in whom it is not difficult to see Jonathan, Saul's son, who "delighted much in David,"[2] and of whom it was said: "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. . . . Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul."[3] Peter, indeed, has been taken too seriously. He is in fact the clown among the Twelve, as Jonah played the clown among the prophets of old times.

That the pupils were not in their normal consciousness when they saw the "vision" of Moses and Elijah may be inferred from the narrative: they apparently fancied themselves wide awake, but were, nevertheless, in the dream-waking state. The appearance of Moses and Elijah, and the transfiguration of Jesus, exemplified the permanent spiritual body, the Augoeidês, or "Light-like" form, that endures throughout the Æons, and of which the physical body is but the impermanent earthly shadow. After this scene

[1] *John* xix. 26. [2] I. *Sam.* xix. 2. [3] I. *Sam.* xviii. 1, 3.

of the transfiguration Jesus again made the declaration that Elijah had come in the person of John. As John had been beheaded, and yet they had just seen Elijah in the spiritual body, it follows that the "coming" of the latter was a reincarnation, and not merely a return in the spirit. The real Self of man is thus considered as everliving, whether incarnated or excarnated. Such is the unmistakable teaching of Jesus, as in the following:

Matthew xxii. 31, 32.

"Now, concerning the rising up of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by The God, saying:

"'*I* am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and The God of Jacob?'[1]

"The God is not a God of dead [men], but of living ones."

Mark xii. 26, 27.

"Now, concerning the dead, that they awaken, have you not read in the *Book of Moses*, at [the passage about] the thorn-bush, how The God spoke to him, saying:

"'*I* am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'?

"He is not the God of dead [men], but of living ones. You wander a great way [from the truth]."

[1] *Ex.* iii. 6.

Luke xx. 37, 38.

"But that the dead awaken, even Moses disclosed, in [the passage about] the thorn-bush, when he calls [the] Master 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' Now, he is not a God of dead men, but of living ones; for in him all live."

This immortal Self is always in the spiritual world, even when incarnated; the material self being, as it were, a reflection of it. Thus Jesus speaks of its ascending and descending:

John iii. 13.

"And no one has gone up into the Sky, unless he who came down out of the Sky—the Son of the Man, he who *is* in the Sky."

John vi. 62.

"[What] then, if you should see the Son of the Man going up where he was before?"

Of his own incarnation he says:

John vi. 38, 39.

"I have come down out of the Sky, not that I may do *my* will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that of everything which he has given me I may not lose any, but should raise it up on the last day.'

His incarnating was therefore voluntary; as one consciously immortal he was free from the "wheel of birth," and remained in the lower world only to save others. Paul speaks of him as "a forerunner on our behalf, having become an Archpriest throughout the Æon, according to the order of Melchizedek,"[1] and says of the latter that he was, "first, King of Right-conduct, and then also King of Salem, that is, King of Peace; *without father, without mother, without ancestry, having neither first of days nor end of life.*"[2] And he beautifully explains the mission of Jesus:

Hebrews vii. 21–25.

"The Master confirmed by an oath, and will not change
his purpose:
'*Thou* art a priest throughout the Æon.'"

. . . And indeed the majority [the "silent majority"—the souls of the dead] have become "priests" [intercessors for the living, or "guardian angels"], because of their stay being cut short by death; but *he*, because of his abiding throughout the Æon, has the priestly office that does not pass over [to a successor], and hence he is able to save throughout the whole [world] those drawing near to The God through him, [as he is] at all times and seasons alive to interpose on their behalf.

[1] *Heb.* vi. 20; *Gen.* xiv. 18–20; *Ps.* cx. 4.

[2] That is, he was one of the deathless Kings of the "Divine Dynasties."

This continuous life, the conscious oneness with the eternal Self, is promised by Jesus to his pupils:

John xiv. 2, 3.

"In the house of my Father there are many abidings;[1] but if not so, I would have told you that I am going to make ready a place for you; and if I do go and make ready a place for you, I am coming back, and I will take you to myself, so that where *I* am, *you* also may be."

Here the "many abidings" are the respites the soul has in the spiritual world between incarnations. In this connection there is a curious incident recorded:

John i. 48–51.

Nathanael says to him:

"From what source do you have knowledge of me?"

Jesus answered and said to him:

"Before Philip called you, while you were [yet] under the fig-tree, I saw you."

Nathanael answered and says to him:

"*Rabbi, thou* art the Son of The God; *thou* art the King of Israel."

[1] Gr. *monê*, a staying or tarrying (at a place). The R. V. translation "mansions" is wholly untenable, as is also the mispunctuation of the passage, which makes it read incoherently.

Jesus answered and said to him:

"Because I *said* to you that I saw you hidden beneath the fig-tree, do you believe [it]? You shall *see* greater [things] than these!" And he says to him: "Amên, Amên, I say to you, From now on you shall see the Sky opened, and the Angels of The God going up and coming down upon the Son of the Man."

The words "beneath the fig-tree" may be taken to mean "before you were born";[1] the symbolism is that of the ripe fruit concealed beneath the leaf. Coupled with this the statement about the Angels (Souls) "going up and coming down" is extremely significant.

The cause of rebirth is said by James to be desire, the longing for sentient life, which he likens to a wanton woman:

James i. 13–15.

Let no one who is being tried say, "I am tried by The God"; for The God is untried in evil [things], and *he* tries no one; but each one is tried by his own Desire, being lured forth and enticed. Then Desire, having conceived, brings forth Sin; and Sín, being fully perfected, gives birth to Death.

By "Death" material existence is intended, in a figurative sense, precisely as Heraclitus

[1] See *Gen.* iii. 7.

says, speaking of unembodied souls, "We live their death and die their life." So also in Plato's *Gorgias* Socrates is represented as saying: "I should not wonder if Euripides spoke the truth when he says, 'Who knows whether to live is not to die, and to die is not to live?' And we perhaps are in reality dead. For I have heard from one of the wise that we are now dead, that the body is our sepulchre, and that the part of the soul in which the desires are contained is of such a nature that it can be persuaded, and hurled upward and downward." Thus in the *New Testament* the physical world is constantly referred to as "Death," and its inhabitants as "the dead," who have to be born "from above,"[1] that is, born spiritually, before they become "living." James makes evil speech one of the worst of the sins that bind man to earth:

James iii. 6.

The tongue [is] a fire: the tongue is ordinarily, among our members, the sum-total[2] of injustice, that which vitiates the whole body, and inflames the Wheel of Birth, and is [itself] inflamed by the Burning Valley.[3]

[1] See *John* iii. 1–21. [2] Literally, "a world."
[3] Heb. *ge hinnom*, Valley of Hinnom — the evil aspect of the psychic world.

Mystically the soul is called the "Son" of God, and the man as manifested on earth is the "slave" of his own sins, which keep him in the bondage of rebirth. Such teachings as the following admit of no other rational interpretation:

John viii. 31–36.

"If *you* abide in this saying of mine, you are truly my pupils; and you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free."

They answered him:

"We are Abraham's seed, and never yet have been slaves to any one. How is it *you* say, 'You shall become freemen'?"

Jesus answered them:

"Amên, Amên, I say to you, *Every one* who commits sin is a slave to sin. Now, the slave does not abide in the house throughout the Æon; the Son does abide throughout the Æon. If, therefore, the Son shall set you free, you shall be 'freemen' indeed."[1]

But though each man is thus the slave of his own misdeeds, there is a divine purpose behind it all:

John ix. 1–3.

And passing on, he saw a man blind from birth. And his pupils asked him, saying:

[1] See also *Gal.* iv. 1–11.

"*Rabbi*, who sinned, this [man] or his parents, that he should be born blind?"

Jesus answered:

"Neither did this [man] 'sin,' nor his parents; but that the works of The God might be made to shine forth in him."

Without answering the question directly, whether the man's blindness was due to heredity or to his own sins in a past life, Jesus gave out the broader teaching that all sin and suffering are disciplinary, and ultimately lead to purification and to the manifestation of the divine nature. He restored the man's sight. But the Pharisees took the narrower view, saying to the man, "In sins *you* were begotten entirely."

Now, taking the *New Testament* as a whole, it becomes apparent that much that has been mistaken as merely the fulfilment of prophecies was in reality the working out of causes and effects, and that Jesus and his followers, as well as his enemies, were the men of old times returned to earth and carrying out "the plan of the Æon." The "church" was a continuous organization, unbroken from the time of the first "contract" with God, and its members were ever the same. Paul's teachings can be understood in no other way, as also such passages as the following:

Jude 4–11.

There have slipped in stealthily into this judgment certain [men], *the proscribed of old times*, sacrilegious, changing The God's favor into wantonness, and disowning the only Overlord and our Master Anointed Jesus. Now, I wish to remind you —[though] you know this once for all—that the Master, having saved a people out of the land of Egypt, next destroyed those who did not put faith in [him]; and the Angels who did not keep their First-principle, but abandoned their own dwelling, he has kept in perpetual fetters, under netherworld gloom, till [the] judgment of a great day. . . . Still, similarly these [men], also, in their dreamings, contaminate the flesh, and disregard Masterships, and revile Radiances. . . . Alas for them! for they travelled the path of Cain,[1] and rushed headlong in the wandering way of Balaam after pay,[2] and were ruined in the rebellion of Korah.[3]

Even such an indefensible translation of *hoi pailai progegrammenoi* as "they who were of old set forth," distorting a technical legal expression—"those written up" (before all eyes), "placarded," "proscribed"—into a prophetic phrase, can not cover up the obvious allusion to reincarnation contained in the above. And while the following passage does refer to the prophecies, it also implies remembrance of past lives, as well as prevision of impending events:

[1] *Gen.* iv. 8. [2] *Num.* xxii.-xxiv. [3] *Num.* xvi. 1-33.

Luke xxiv. 25–27, 44–46.

And he himself said to them:

"O unreasoning, and slow of heart to believe, after all that the Seers have spoken! Are not these the [things] the Anointed must have suffered, and have entered into his Radiance?"

And beginning at Moses, and at all the Seers, he explained in detail to them, in all the Writings, the [things] concerning himself. . . . And he said to them:

". . . All the [things] that are written in the Law of Moses, and Seers, and Psalms, concerning me, must be fulfilled."

Then he opened their consciousness, for the understanding of the Writings; and he said to them:

"Thus it is written, and thus must the Anointed have suffered, and have risen from the dead on the third day."

Many of the sayings of Jesus referring to the distant past and the far future become pregnant with meaning when read in the light of reincarnation, as instance the following:

Luke xi. 46–52.

"Woe unto you Lawyers also! For ye load men with loads hard to carry, and ye yourselves do not touch the loads with one of your fingers. Woe unto you! For ye build the monuments of the Seers, and your fathers killed them. So, then, ye bear witness to, and approve of, the works of your fathers:

for *they*, indeed, killed them, and *ye* build their monuments. For this [reason] also *The Wisdom of The God* said:

"'I will send to them Seers and Envoys; and [some] of them they shall kill and hound, so that the blood of all the Seers, shed from the casting-down[1] of the world, may be required of this generation—from the blood of Abel[2] to the blood of Zachariah,[3] who perished between the altar and the house.'

"Yea, I say to you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you Lawyers! For ye took away the Key of the Gnôsis;[4] ye yourselves have not entered in, and those entering in ye have prevented."[5]

Matthew xxiv. 4–14.

"Beware lest any one lead you in wandering ways: for many [charlatans] shall come in my Name, saying, '*I* am the Anointed,' and shall lead many [neophytes] in wandering ways. And you shall be about to hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that you are not alarmed, for all [things] must come into being; but the Perfecting-period is not yet. For class shall rise up against class, and realm against realm; and there shall be privations of food, and epidemics, and earthquakes, according to places. Now, all these [things are] the

[1] Gr. *katabolé*, a throwing down; laying down (a foundation). Origen (*De Principiis*) explains that in *New Testament* usage the word refers to the descent of the souls from the higher and invisible spheres to the lower and visible ones—in other words, to their "fall into generation."

[2] *Gen.* iv. 8–10.

[3] II. *Chron.* xxiv. 20–22.

[4] The secret teachings in the arcane mysteries.

[5] See also *Matt.* xxiii. 29–36.

first of birth-pangs. Then they shall deliver you up to a hemming-in, and make you wretched; and you shall be hated by all classes because of my Name. And then many [neophytes] shall be tripped up, and shall hate one another. And many false seers shall rise up, and shall lead many [neophytes] in wandering ways. And because sorcery shall be prevalent, the love of the masses shall become cold; but he who stands firm until the Perfecting-period, that [man] shall be saved. And this Evangel of the Realm shall be proclaimed in the whole inhabited [world] for a witness to all classes. And then shall come the Perfecting-period."[1]

Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

"Go your way, and make all the nations your pupils, lustrating them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the pure Spirit; teaching them to keep all [things] whatsoever I commanded you. And, behold, *I* am with you all the days till the Assembly of the Perfect of the Æon!"

Now, most of the predictions made by Jesus hinge upon the word "generation," as in the assertion that "this generation shall not at all pass away until these things come about."[2] If the word is to be taken as meaning merely the lifetime of the people then living, it is certain that most of his prophecies were never fulfilled; but if the word applies, as it well may, to the present process of reproduction, a wider scope is

[1] See also *Mark* xiii. 5–13.

[2] *Matt.* xxiv. 34.

given to his predictions, which then include the whole cycle of reincarnations, the full period of human evolution. That the latter is the correct view is clear from his associating his predictions with the "end" or "Perfecting-period" of the Æon. And, this being so, the work laid out for his pupils was to extend through many incarnations; their mission could not have been, and was not, carried out in a single lifetime. As they had been with him in olden times, so they were to be with him in the future.[1] Paul[2] (in whom it is not difficult to recognize King Saul, one of the most striking figures in *Old Testament* history), who incarnated too late to become one of the personal followers of Jesus, seeing him only after he had "risen from the dead," speaks regretfully of the fact, and attributes this to his own misdeeds.[3]

It remains but to consider certain of the

[1] *John* xxi. 21–23.

[2] "Paul" is only an appellative name, the Latin *Paulus*, "a little man," possibly descriptive of his person, but more probably indicative of his being an Initiate, or one "new-born." He is called Saul in *Acts;* but it is uncertain what was his real name or that of the "Elymas, 'the Magian' (for so his name is interpreted)," with whom at one time he had an altercation, a sort of theurgic duel, resulting disastrously to the Magian (*Acts* xiii. 8–11).

[3] I. *Cor.* xv. 8, 9; *Gal.* i. 15.

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teachings of Jesus given in parables; and these, when taken in connection with reincarnation, are so clear that comment is hardly needed.

Luke xv. 11–32.

A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to the Father:

"Father, give me the share of the Substance [1] that falls to me."

And he divided the Living between them. And not many days after, the younger son, when he had gathered all together, took a journey to a far-distant country, and there he scattered abroad his Substance, living unsavingly. Now, when he had spent his all, there came about a mighty famine throughout that country, and he himself began to be in want. And he passed over [2] and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he longed to fill his belly with the carob-pods which the pigs were eating; and no one gave to him. Now, when he came to himself, he said:

"How many wage-workers of my Father have bread more

[1] Gr. *ousia*, being, essence; substance, property. In a philosophical sense, *ousia* is the primal substance, the efficient cause of all manifestation. Here there is a play on the two meanings of the word, as also with *bios*, "life" and "the means of living." This duality of meaning is apparent in a number of curious expressions used in this parable.

[2] Literally, "was ferried across." Crossing the "river of generation" and incarnating in the physical body, the soul becomes subservient to longings and desires — the "pigs."

than enough, but *I* here am perishing with hunger! I shall rise up and cross over to my Father, and shall say to him, 'Father, I have erred against the Sky and in your presence; no longer am I worthy to be called your Son; make me as one of your wage-workers.' "

And he rose up and went to his Father. Now, while he was yet far away, his Father saw him, and his heart was stirred, and he ran and fell on his neck, and tenderly kissed him. But the Son said to him:

"Father, I have erred against the Sky and in your presence, and no longer am I worthy to be called your Son; make me as one of your wage-workers."

But the Father said to his slaves:

"Bring forth quickly the first garment[1] and put [it] on him, and give a seal-ring into his hand, and sandals to his feet; and bring forth the fatted calf and sacrifice [it]; and let us eat and rejoice, because this my Son was one dead and is alive, was one lost and is found."

And they began to rejoice. Now, his older son was in the field, and as he was coming and drew near the house he heard a sound of music and a chorus of singers; and calling to him one of the slave-boys, he demanded what these [things] meant. And he said to him:

"Your brother is come, and your Father has sacrificed the fatted calf, because he has recovered him safe and hale."

And he was wrathful, and was unwilling to go in. Then his Father went out and spoke to him; but he, answering, said to his Father:

"See, so many years have I slaved for you, and I never passed over a command of yours; and you never gave *me* a

[1] The spiritual body, the first garment of the soul.

kid, so that I might rejoice with my friends. But when this your Son came, who has consumed your Living with prostitutes, you have sacrificed for him the fatted calf!"

And he said to him:

"Child, *you* are with me at all times, and all [things] that are mine are yours. Now, you ought to have rejoiced and been glad because this your brother was one dead and is alive, and was one lost and is found."

Matthew xiii. 24–30 36–43.

The Realm of the Skies may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while the men were asleep, his enemy came and sowed darnels all through the midst of the wheat, and went away. Now, when the grain sprouted and put forth the ear, then appeared the darnels also. And the householder's slaves came and said to him:

"Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? From what source, then, does it have darnels?"

And he said to them:

"A man [who is] an enemy has done this."

And the slaves said to him:

"Do you wish, then, that we should go back [to the field] and weed them out?"

But he said:

"No, lest perhaps in weeding out the darnels you root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the reaping, and at the season for reaping I will say to the reapers: 'First weed out the darnels and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my granary.'"

. . . And his pupils came to him, saying:

"Explain to us the parable of the darnels of the field."

And he answered and said to them:

"He who sows the good seed is the Son of the Man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these [souls] are the sons of the Realm; and the darnels are the sons of the useless [function]; and the enemy who sows them is the Accuser; and the reaping is the Perfecting-period of the Æon; and the reapers are the Angels. Therefore, just as the darnels are weeded out and burned with fire, so it will be at the Perfecting-period of this Æon. The Son of the Man will send forth his Angels, and from his Realm they will weed out all offensive things and all those who commit lawless deeds, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; *there* will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the upright [souls] will shine forth as the Sun in the Realm of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Matthew xxi. 33–44.

"There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard, and put a hedge round it, and digged a wine-vat in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went abroad [to live]. Now, when the season of the fruits drew near, he sent his slaves to the husbandmen, to receive its fruits. And the husbandmen seized his slaves, and thrashed one [of them], and killed another, and pelted another with stones. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they did [injuries] to them in like manner. And afterwards he sent his son to them, saying:

"'They will pay respectful attention to my son.'

"But the husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves:

"'This [son] is the heir. Come, then! Let us kill him and get possession of his inheritance.'

"And seizing him, they hurled [him] out, outside the vineyard, and killed [him]. When, therefore, the Master of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those husbandmen?"

They say to him:

"He will utterly destroy them—horribly wicked [men]! And he will let out the vineyard to other husbandmen, who will render him the fruits in their seasons."

Jesus says to them:

"Have you never read in the Writings:

'A stone [1] which the Builders rejected,
This [stone] became [the] head of [the] corner;[2]
It came into being from the Master,
And is a wonderful [thing] in our eyes'?[3]

For this [reason] I say to you, The Realm of The God shall be taken away from you and given to a class [4] producing the fruits of it. And he who falls on this stone shall be crushed together; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will winnow him." [5]

Indisputably these parables set forth the descent of the soul from the realm of true Being

[1] *Isa.* xxviii. 16; *Zech.* iv. 6–10.

[2] Or, "apex of the angle."

[3] *Ps.* cxviii. 22, 23.

[4] Gr. *ethnos*, body of people, tribe, race; particular class of men, caste.

[5] Gr. *likman*, to separate the wheat from the chaff, winnow, sift. The A. V., following the *Vulgate*, gives the mistranslation "grind him to powder," and the R. V. makes the half-hearted correction "scatter him as dust." The parable is also recorded, with considerable variations, in *Mark* xii. 1–11 and *Luke* xx. 9–18.

into the "spheres of transition," and its return to the spiritual state at the end of the Æon. But the language used is such as to imply that the soul toils in the fields of earthly existence throughout the Æon, which could only be through a long series of incarnations.

The "stone" which was rejected by the "Builders"—the divine races who preceded the physical humanity[1]—is the "philosopher's stone," the "open eye"[2] of the Seer. It was the organ of objective vision of the spiritual ancestors of humanity, but became atrophied—*petrified*,[3] rather—when they fell into generation, and now pertains to *spiritual* sight. Being, therefore, the point of contact between man and his inner Self, or God, it is the avenue of his conscience, the arbiter of his destiny, that which through his many incarnations on earth winnows the wheat from the chaff[4] in his nature. Hence the allusion to it fittingly concludes the sublime Parable of the Vineyard.

[1] *Gen.* vi. 1–4.

[2] *Matt.* vi. 22; *Luke* xi. 34.

[3] *John* xii. 40 (quoted from *Isa.* vi. 10). The verb used, *pôroun*, means "to turn into stone," "to petrify" (A. V. "harden").

[4] *Matt.* iii. 12.

IV.

OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES.

THAT reincarnation, not only in the case of particular men, but also as a law of life that applies to all men, is distinctly taught in the *New Testament*, has been shown. To dispute this point is to deny that the authors of that collection of writings meant what they said in unmistakable language. To reject reincarnation is to impugn their teachings.

What changes, then, must necessarily be made in the current interpretation of Biblical doctrines, once reincarnation is admitted to be one of those doctrines? Concisely stated, the Biblical account is this:

The Master-God "formed Adam [the first man] of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the Breath of Life"; and having "planted a garden eastward in Eden," he placed Adam in it, and commanded him, under penalty of death, not to eat "of the tree of the know-

ledge of good and evil." He then created Eve as "a help meet for him." The serpent tempted the woman; she "saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and *a tree to be desired to make one wise.*" She and Adam ate of the fruit of that desirable tree. They were ejected from the garden, not so much for a punitive as for a precautionary measure, for the Master-God said: "The man is become as one of us [Gods], *to know good and evil;* and now, lest he put forth his hand, and *take also of the tree of life, and live for ever,*" therefore the Master-God "sent him forth from the garden of Eden, *to till the ground from which he was taken.*" The results of the disobedience of the primal couple were: enmity between the woman and the serpent; the woman was thereafter to suffer the pangs of childbirth, and to be ruled over by her husband, presumably because of her physical weakness; Adam was to till the ground for a living, which was accursed for his sake, and would bring forth thorns and thistles; and his body was to return to the ground, being resolved into the dust out of which he had been formed.[1] Of the fate of the "Breath of Life" that had been

[1] *Gen.* ii. 7–25; iii. 1–24.

breathed into him nothing is said. Subsequently God entered into four contracts, or agreements, with the descendants of Adam, successively with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and then a fifth contract with Moses.[1] Each of these contracts was no more and no less than to *preserve and multiply physical bodies*, and to bestow material benefits, the means of living, upon the people, if they, on their part, would obey the will of God and follow the moral code he laid down for them. The people are especially enjoined to "be fruitful and replenish the earth." So far the *Old Testament* (*palaia diathêkê*, "contract of olden times"). Next God entered into a further agreement, through Jesus,[2] the *New Testament* (*kainê diathêkê*, "new contract"), by which people are to be *emancipated from the physical body* and restored to the state of purity which was that of the soul before its fall, or descent into material existence. The language of *Genesis*, though poetically euphemistic, distinctly indicates that this fall, resulting in death, was

[1] *Gen.* vi. 18; ix. 7–17; xv. 18; xvii. 2–11; *Lev.* xxvi. 42; *Ex.* xxiv. 7, 8; *Deut.* v. 1–3; xxix. 1.

[2] *Jer.* xxxi. 31; *Matt.* xxvi. 28; *Mark* xiv. 24; *Gal.* iv. 23–26; *Heb.* viii. 6–13; ix. 7–16. In the latter passage in *Hebrews* the word *diathêkê* has the meaning "testament," or "will."

the evolution of the generative function;[1] and this "sinful generation"[2] must "pass away" before the "presence" of the Anointed can be manifested on earth.[3] In fact, the *New Testament* teachings concerning "sin" are summed up in the words of Calderon, "The greatest guilt of man is that he was born." The "old contract" related to generation; the "new contract" to *regeneration*,[4] the "birth from above." Therefore the injunction to "be fruitful and replenish the earth" has no place in the teachings of Jesus; on the contrary, he inculcated celibacy, and was himself a celibate—the significance of which fact can not be overlooked, inasmuch as he was the pattern to be followed by all who would attain to eternal life, since he was "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

It may clearly be inferred from the narrative in *Genesis* that before eating of the tree Adam and Eve were without "the knowledge of good and evil," and hence *morally irresponsible*. They gained wisdom by eating of that tree, and if they

[1] *Gen.* iii. 7, 10, 11, 12, 16; iv. 1, 2.

[2] *Mark* viii. 38.

[3] *Matt.* xxiv. 34; *Luke* xxi. 32; *Acts* ii. 40.

[4] "For as in Adam all die, so also in the Anointed all shall be made alive" (I. *Cor.* xv. 22).

had eaten of the other tree the evil results of eating of the former tree would have been annulled. They would have lived for ever instead of becoming the prey of death. But the Master-God guarded against their obtaining this antidote, and nothing is said about the tree of life in the contracts made in olden times. But in the *Apocalypse* it is said to be in the "new Jerusalem," and is described as "bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." And Jesus says of it: " Immortal are they who wash their robes, so that theirs shall be the authority over the tree of life." And again he says: "To the conqueror I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of The God."[1] Manifestly, therefore, the one tree, that with which the "old contract" was concerned, typified *generation*, the multiplication of physical bodies, requisite for the many successive lives on earth, by which knowledge of good and evil is gained through experience; while the other tree, that of the "new contract," stood for *regeneration*, emancipation from the "wheel of birth," and restoration to the purely

[1] *Rev.* xxii. 2, 14; ii. 7.

spiritual and divine state. Having eaten of the first tree, that is, having fallen into generation, man was not to eat of the tree of life, that is, become consciously immortal, until he had passed through the vast cycle of reincarnations, tilling the hard soil of material existence, which, indeed, brings forth the "thorns and thistles" of sorrow and suffering.

Such is the Biblical allegory in its sublime simplicity. But the commonly received theological version of it is about as follows:

Adam and Eve committed the "original sin," for which they and all their descendants were sentenced to eternal punishment in unquenchable fire. This notwithstanding the irresponsibility of Adam and Eve, who, like new-born babes, had no knowledge of good and evil, which extenuating circumstance, together with the fact that it was their first offence, surely entitled them to a recommendation to mercy. And in condemning their descendants the Lord went beyond the rule he subsequently laid down for himself of "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth [generation]."[1] All

[1] *Ex.* xx. 5. Mystically, "third and fourth incarnation" is meant.

the generations from Adam went down to endless torment, until the "new contract" was made through Jesus, who (himself perfectly innocent) was offered as a substitute for the countless millions of human beings who in a ceaseless stream were descending into the bottomless abyss (bottomless, surely, or it soon would have been filled), to expiate in eternal woe a crime that few of them had ever heard of, and which had been committed ages before their souls had been created and before their bodies had been born—the most perfect *alibi* the mind of man could conceive. Yet not one could be saved from eternal torture unless, while still in the physical body, the pitiful prison of clay, he heard of and believed in Jesus, whether with or without any evidence upon which to base his belief. Before ever the Saviour had come, great nations rose and fell, the populous earth for ever pouring its mighty tribute of countless souls into the nether abyss, with no possible salvation for any save, perchance, for a few Seers whose eyes had gazed into the future; and during and after his coming the sacrifice of the God-Man availed not for the many: out of non-being they come into existence for a few short years on earth,

only to be hurled into the bottomless pit to undergo eternal agony. "Be fruitful and replenish the earth," and by so doing supply fuel for the quenchless flames! "Look now toward heaven," said the Lord to Abraham, "and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; so shall thy seed be"[1]—in the Netherworld of Eternal Woe. Not theirs the everlasting bliss reserved for a few "saints" and "believers," who, according to some of the theologians, had been "predestined" or "foreordained" before the hapless Adam and Eve had come into existence, and even before the Spirit of God had moved on the Waters of Space.

If it be contended that this is the old-fashioned theology, and that it has been lightened somewhat of its gloom by later sects, what, then, are the modifications that have been made? The theological scheme has been so constructed that each part of it is dependent upon the others, so that if any part of it is removed the whole structure collapses. If all men prior to the time of Jesus were saved, then by coming he saved no one, but brought condemnation upon all who, after his coming, might not hear of him, or who,

[1] *Gen.* xv. 5.

hearing, might not believe. If all those never hearing of him are saved, and none are lost except those who hear and disbelieve, then usually it would be a misfortune to hear of him. In that case ignorance is not only bliss, but *eternal* bliss. If the dogma of eternal punishment is wholly rejected, then of whom and from what is Jesus the "Saviour"? The *crux* of theology is this: no damnation, no salvation; no hell, no heaven. To introduce varying degrees of happiness into heaven is only to erase the boundary-line between it and hell, for relativity in heaven would mean that evil as well as good obtains there.

Now, the whole tissue of horrifying beliefs which theology has woven, and which all right-minded Christians of to-day are anxious to cast aside, if they can do so without at the same time giving up the realities of religion, has been fabricated upon the erroneous theory that man has but one life upon earth. Not having eyes to see the plain statements of reincarnation contained in their Bible, the professional expounders of that book have denied even the preëxistence of the soul. They have asserted the doctrine of "special creation," claiming that God makes a

new soul for each body that is born, thus regarding the body as of paramount importance. The oddity of this theory is at once apparent, for it would naturally seem that while mortal bodies might become the temporary dwellings of immortal souls, there is a ludicrous incongruity in having an immortal soul created for the benefit of each mortal body that happens to be generated. Again, according to this theory, the souls are not derived from Adam and Eve, but come fresh from God, and are therefore pure and blameless; yet they are placed in bodies that are descended from the pair of original sinners, and when the bodies return to dust the souls are sentenced to eternal punishment for the sin of those primal parents. It would seem that absurdity could go no further than this; but, in fact, the most serious objection to this doctrine of "special creation" is yet to be stated. If the soul thus has a beginning, it must necessarily have an end. Eternity is not an indefinite extension of time, nor can it be expressed in such terms as past, present and future. The soul, if eternal, is beginningless and endless. To say that the soul is "created," that it has a beginning, is to deny that it is immortal. To assert that it comes into

being because of the generation of the physical body is to make the flesh superior to the spirit and degrade every concept of spiritual life. There is no possible authority in the Bible for this doctrine of "special creation"; the Breath of Life that God breathed into Adam is uncreate, eternal. That Spirit being embodied in Adam, he "became a living soul," the soul being therefore a manifestation of the Spirit in the outer worlds. The universe itself is said in the *New Testament* to be "born," to "become," or "come into existence";[1] it is only in the uninspired and not very conscientious authorized translation that it is "made" or "created."

From the one-incarnation dogma comes the curious notion, held by many, that after the death of the physical body the soul remains in a comatose state until the "end of the world," when it is wakened for its final judgment on the "last day." However, it would be an almost endless task to point out the absurdities that have arisen from attempting to interpret the *New Testament* teachings apart from reincarnation, when reincarnation is in fact the basis of those teachings. And all these difficulties vanish when reincarna-

[1] *John* i. 3.

tion is accepted. Then the principal doctrines may be defined thus:

The "original sin" was the descent of the soul into the material world, and the generation of physical bodies, man being thenceforth a God dwelling in the animal form.

The "curse" is the vast cycle of incarnations through which the soul must pass before it can regain the divine state. Yet, as the "prodigal son," it receives more honor on its return than does the soul that has not gained power and knowledge by this journey through the lower worlds.

The "Underworld" (*hadês*) is the world in which the soul makes its stay between incarnations. This world is of a dual nature, Paradise (the "pleasure-grounds") being the abode of the souls of the good, and Gehenna[1] (the "burning valley") that of impure souls.

"Heaven" is the final state of bliss attained by the soul when freed from the "wheel of birth," and is the same as the Nirvâna of Buddhism.

"Perdition" (*apôleia*) is the "eighth[2] sphere,"

[1] Also called Tartarus in II. *Pet.* ii. 4.

[2] *Rev.* xvii. 8, 11; xix. 20; *John* xvii. 12; II. *Thess.* ii. 3; *Heb.* x. 39; II. *Pet.* iii. 7.

or receptacle of the unspiritualized residue of humanity after the seven great racial periods which comprise the Æon have run their course, this residue being the bestial portion of human nature. What Paradise and Gehenna are in the cycle of a single incarnation, Heaven and Perdition are in the vaster cycle of the Æon.

The "Æonian Life"[1] is the consciousness of immortality consequent upon the recovery of the memory of past incarnations, man's life being then one of unbroken continuity throughout the Æon, even though his outer existence continues to be a series of incarnations on earth.

The "Second Death"[2] is the dissolution of the psychic self of the irredeemably evil person, the soul thereby falling out of the evolutionary cycle through such loss of its vehicle for manifesting in the lower worlds. It is also the passing away of the physical and psychic worlds ("Death and Hadês") at the end of the Æon.

"Resurrection" (*anastasis*) is any ascent from a lower to a higher state of existence, whether of individual man or of the entire race.[3] As re-

[1] Erroneously translated "eternal life" in the A. V.
[2] *Rev.* ii. 11; xx. 6, 14; xxi. 8.
[3] *Rev.* xx. 5, 12; *John* v. 29.

lating to the Æon, or world-period, the "first resurrection" is the awakening to spiritual life, during the cycle, of the "just men" who have been "made perfect"; while the "second resurrection" is that of all mankind at the close of the world-period, when they are "judged every man according to their works."

"Salvation" is freedom from the bondage of rebirth. Jesus is represented as a Saviour in that he taught and exemplified the right-conduct that alone can emancipate the soul from the material, animal existence, and awaken it to the realities of the spiritual life.

"Faith" is intuitive knowledge, the dim reminiscence which the soul retains of its pristine state; true faith, instead of being but ignorant opinion, is the beginning of spiritual wisdom, "an assurance of things hoped for, a proof of things not seen."[1]

"Righteousness" is *right-conduct*, the perfect performance of duty in the light of a purified conscience.

"Baptism," or lustration, is a ceremonial rite of purification, symbolizing successive degrees of initiation into the divine Mysteries. The exo-

[1] *Heb.* xi. 1.

tericist, or "earthy man" (*choïkos*), when he first comes to recognize the reality of the spiritual life, becomes a "believer" (*pistos*); by the lustration of Water he becomes a "psychic" (*psuchikos*); by that of Air (*pneuma*), a "spiritual person" (*pneumatikos*); by that of Fire, a "perfect man" (*teleios*); and by that of Blood (ether), a full Initiate or Christos.[1]

The "Atonement" is the union of man's purified human self with his spiritual and divine Self; it is "vicarious" in the sense that the sinless spiritual Self is incarnated for the salvation of the animal-human creature formed "of the dust of the ground"—that is, evolved from the elements.

"Regeneration" is the "birth from above," when the soul, freed for ever from the prison of clay, puts on its "first garment"—the deathless glorified body of the Initiate.

[1] "My little children, of whom I am again in travail until a Christos be formed in you" (*Gal.* iv. 19).

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