ESSENTIAL PHILOSOPHY OF HINDUISM, BUDDHISM AND JAINISM

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the mystic philosophy of India, we pass to the everyday philosophy of the three great sects of the East, the Hindus, the Buddhists and the Jainas.

When I was a small boy, about eight years old, I used to go with my father to hear the sermons of a Jaina monk who happened to visit our town in those days. He delivered his sermons in a lecture hall specially built by my community. On one day, we went to the lecture hall half an hour earlier than the appointed time. After taking our seats we began to look with curiosity at some paintings on the walls of the lecture hall. One of them struck me most. It was the picture of a man holding steadfast the branch of a huge banian tree in the midst of a large well and an elephant standing at the brink of the well and trying with its mighty trunk to catch the man. At the bottom of the well there was a huge boa with its mouth open, ready to swallow the man. On each side of the well at the bottom there were four snakes with their hoods expanded, furiously hissing and ready to sting the man. Two rats, one white and one black, were eating away the trunk of the banian tree. On the top of a branch there was a honey-comb with a swarm of bees. The elephant while trying to catch the man moved that branch to and fro and caused some drops of honey to fall on the lips of the man. A monk, the minister of re-

ligion, stood on the opposite side of the elephant in his white garments, offering help to rescue the man from the well and from the attack of the elephant. And all this was in the midst of a forest. I could not understand the meaning of the painting. I gazed at it for five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes and still could not understand the meaning. Then I asked my father, "Papa, this picture seems to be very strange. What does it mean ?" He at once said, "Will you be able to understand it, even if I tell you what it is ? I think you will. Once upon a time this man whom you see in the picture hanging in the well was travelling from place to place with a party and they happened to pass through a thick forest full of wild beasts and robbers. While they were in the midst of the forest, some robbers attacked them. They all fled for their lives in different directions ; this man too did the same but he lost his track and while he looked back to see where he was. he saw that this elephant was furiously running after him. He saw that if he could not find some shelter, he would be instantly killed by the elephant. He looked in all directions and saw this well. He thought: this elephant is sure to kill me, I may perhaps save myself by jumping into the well. Off he jumps into the well and gets hold of one of the branches of the banian tree which you see in the well. At the bottom he saw that huge boa ready to swallow him ; on the four sides of the well at the bottom he saw four snakes hissing at him. The two rats are eating away the trunk of the tree and from the honey-comb at the top of the branch some drops

of honey are falling on his lips. Just at this time, a minister of religion (like our respected brother Jones) happens to come there and offers him help to rescue him from the well, but the fellow seems quite satisfied with his lot while having the sweet taste of honey drops. He does not realize the fact that the whole trunk of the tree will be eaten away by the rats and then he would have no support at all; he would have to fall down to be swallowed by the cobra. This whole drama is represented in this picture." I said to my father, "Well, but what is the meaning of all this drama ?" He said, "It is all symbolical. This man in the well in this forest is the ordinary worldly man. The elephant that ran after him is death ; the well is this earthly life; the boa is the symbol of the lowest state of existence. The four snakes are the symbols of Anger, Vanity, Deceit and Greediness. The trunk of the banian tree is the short duration of our earthly life. The two rats, white and black, represent time, the light half and dark half of the month which exhaust our earthly duration. The bees in the honey-comb are the organs of senses and the honey-drops represent the sensuous pleasures. And the minister represents the Truth religion. So the whole thing comes to this. The common man of the world, thinking that his life will be cut off at any time by death satisfies himself by enjoying the sensuous pleasures derived from the senses and does not care to receive the truths offered by true philosophy, he being influenced by sentiments of anger, vanity, deceit and greediness represented by the four snakes."

I was perfectly astonished at this explanation of the picture and of the view of life taken by the Hindus. This was when I was eight years old. Twenty years after that, only the other day I happened to read one of Professor Max Müller's works, and I was much more astonished to see that he also expressed it in pretty nearly the same terms. Here are his views :—Our idea of life on earth has always been that of a struggle for existence, a struggle for power and dominion, for wealth and enjoyment. These are the ideas which dominate the history of all nations whose history is known to us. Our own sympathies also are almost entirely on that side. But was man placed on this earth for that one purpose only ? Can we not imagine a different purpose, particularly under conditions such as existed for many centuries in India and nowhere else ? In India the necessaries of life were few, and those which existed were supplied without much exertion on the part of man by a bountiful nature. Clothing, scanty as it was, was easily provided. Life in the open air or in the shades of the forest was more delightful than life in cottages or palaces. The danger of inroads from foreign countries was never dreamt of before the time of Darius and Alexander, and then on one side only, on the North, while more than a silver streak protected all around the far stretching shores of the country. Why should the ancient inhabitants of India not have accepted their lot ? Was it so very unnatural for them, endowed as they were, with a transcendent intellect, to look upon this life not as an arena for gladiatorial strife

and combat, or as a market for cheating and huckstering, but as a resting place, a mere waiting room at a station on a journey leading them from the known to the unknown, but exciting for that very reason their utmost curiosity as to whence they came and whither they were going. So in those palmy days of India a large class of people, not only the priestly class but the nobility also, not only men but women also, never looked upon their life on earth as something real. What was real to them was the invisible, the life to come. What formed the *theme* of their conversations, what formed the subject of their meditations was the real that alone lent some kind of reality to this unreal phenomenal world. Whoever was supposed to have caught a new ray of truth was visited by young and old, was honoured by princes and kings, nay, was looked upon as holding a position far above that of kings and princes.

I told you last Sunday that out of these rays of truth based on the Vedic literature of the Hindus six systems of philosophy arose. The first was the Nyāya system. The followers of that philosophy hoped by cultivating the instruments of knowledge —Perception, Inference, Analogy, Testimony—to reach final beatitude by right inquiry. They generalized from the phenomena of life to an extra cosmic deity of superhuman powers commanding our homage and worship. The inanimate universe, including the soul and mind of man, they left to itself and believed it to be the result of an act of divine creation. The Vaiśeṣikas accepted the

generalizations of Nyāya but went a step further in analysing the nature of material existence. They acknowledged the existence of an extra cosmic deity but like Gassendi nearly dropped the idea and busied themselves with the atoms and their nature. With them the universe began with atoms, infinite and eternal, moved by the will of the divine power. Thus as Gautama the author of Nyāya built up the metaphysics, Kaṇāda the author of Vaiśeṣika supplied the physics of a philosophy which generally goes under the name of Dialectic philosophy. A philosophy built upon mere abstractions and generalizations from phenomena, which can in reality never be individually generalized from, must result in pure atheism or anthropomorphic deism. Principal Caird says in his *Philosophy of Religion*, "Generalization so far from apprehending reality is a process which takes us away from it, and the further it advances, the more abstract our thought becomes, the further do we recede from the real objective truth of things." If the Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika thus represent the positive side of the method of abstract generalization, the Cārvākas, the materialists, represent the negative aspect. They were not far from the modern materialists when they maintained life, thought or energy to be the result of material organization, but their philosophy made few disciples and converted none. All experience is in favour of declaring that *dead* matter is never capable of producing life and even the best representatives of modern physical science stand confessed of their ignorance of the real

nature of matter and energy *per se,* at the altar of eternal truth. Even Mr. Huxley says, "In perfect strictness it is true that chemical investigation can tell us little or nothing directly of the composition of living matter and it is also in strictness true that we know nothing about the composition of any body whatever as it is." Observation has proved that every atom of matter is full of energy in one form or another. So that instead of postponing the appearance of mind to the last stage of material organization as the modern evolutionists have done, it is more consistent with reason to regard it as coexistent. The Nyāya philosophy regarded it as the very beginning but the intermeddling of a God isolated from his creation did not satisfy subsequent reasoners, such philosophy being subversive of that real knowledge which must by the very conditions of knowledge or thought look upon thought and intelligent being as inseparable. It is in some such train of reasoning that we find an explanation of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* of Kapila's Sāṅkhya. The Sāṅkhyas had advanced further, if advance it may be called, than the Vaiśeṣikas in their analysis of matter and had demonstrated a theory of evolution, anything more entirely novel than which even the Vedânta has not to teach. They postulated *Prakṛti* or undifferentiated cosmic matter as the eternal basis of cosmic evolution ; and they definitely enumerated the various evolving stages of this matter with its properties, being hereupon called the Sāṅkhyas. They however thought it would be impossible to postulate matter without mind and

they therefore laid down an eternal union between *Puruṣa* or the eternal mind and *Prakṛti* in all its stages of evolution. They attributed no functions to *Puruṣa* and regarded the evolutions of *Prakṛti* for this *Puruṣa* who was ever in it but never of it, trying in this manner to satisfy the necessity of philosophic thought. The Sāṅkhyas will thus be nearer the truth, nearer because they were, by postulating two entities in the form of *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa*, both interdependent so to speak, indirectly precluding the possibility of *Mokṣa*, salvation, and initiating a principle which would lead to false results in practical ethics. Sattvaguṇa or purity, the first of the three properties of matter, is after all a kind of material purity in as much as that property is inseparable from *Prakṛti* and to set this up as a standard to which men should ever try to reach is only to point a way to re-incarnation or fresh evolution (of the individual self) and misery contemplation of *Prakṛti* can raise the contemplation no higher than *Prakṛti*, the source of all mundane existence and misery. Patañjali not satisfied with the practical side of Sāṅkhya set up a kind of training, generally known as *Yoga*, for attaining the state of eternal bliss and postulated a kind of God, for purposes of contemplation. His *Yoga* led to marvellous physical results but nothing more. It again landed the student in *Prakṛti* only on a higher stage of it. The Vedānta philosophy while trying to meet this difficulty, went off at a tangent in a region to be conscious of which is an utter impossibility. Of Buddhism and Jainism we shall judge later on.

The details of these philosophies will interest none but a student of metaphysics. My purpose therefore lies in giving you the essential principles which make up what are known as Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. In the first place, therefore, let us see what Hinduism says as to the existence and nature of soul, for the theory of soul must be the foundation of every religion which deserves a name. In all ages it has been supposed that there is something divine in man ; that there is in him the non-phenomenal agent on whom the phenomenal attributes of feeling, thinking and willing depend. To the Hindu philosophers this agent was self-evident (*svayaṁprakāśa*). Of course, this agent, which they called Self was not discovered in a day. We see in the Upaniṣads many attempts to discover and grasp it. I shall give you a kind of allegory representing the search after this Self from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad. It is a dialogue supposed to have taken place between Prajāpati, the lord of creation, and Indra, representing the Devas, the bright gods, and Virocana representing the Asuras, the opponents of the Devas. Prajāpati is said to have uttered the following sentence: "The Self (Ātman) free from sin, free from age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing but what it ought to desire and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine, that is what we search out, that is what we must try to understand. He who has searched out that Self and understands it obtains all worlds and desires—that is final beatitude."

The gods and the demons both heard these words and said, "Well, let us search for that Self by which if one has searched it, all worlds and all desires are obtained." Thus saying Indra went from the Devas, Virocana from the Asuras and both without having communicated with each other, holding fuel in their hands as is the custom with pupils approaching their master. They dwelt there as pupils for thirty-two years and served Prajāpati. At the end of thirty-two years Prajāpati turns his face to them and asks, "For what purpose have you been both dwelling here?" They replied that they had heard the saying of Prajāpati and that they had both dwelt near him because they wished to know the Self. Prajāpati like many of the ancient sages dses not show himself inclined to part with his knowledge at once. He gives them several answers which though not exactly wrong are equivocal and open to a wrong interpretation. He says first, "The person that is seen in the eye, that is the Self. This is what I have said: this is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman." If the pupils had understood this as meant for the person that sees through the eye, or out of the eye, they would have received a right though indirect idea of the Self. But when they thought that the reflection of man in the eye of another person was meant, they were wrong. And they evidently took it in the latter sense, for they asked, "Sir, he who is perceived in the water and he who is perceived in a mirror, who is he?" Prajāpati replied, "He, the Self himself, indeed, is seen in all these. Look at yourself in a pan of

water, and whatever you do not understand of yourself, come and tell me." They looked in the water pan. Then Prajāpati said, "What do you see ?" They said, "We both see the Self thus altogether, a picture even to the very hairs and nails." Prajāpati then said, "After you have adorned yourselves, have put on your best clothes and cleansed yourselves, look again into the water pan." They did so and looked into the water pan. Prajāpati says, "What do you see ?" They said, "Just as we are, well-adorned, with our best clothes and clean, thus we are both there, Sir, well-adorned with our best clothes and clean." Prajāpati said, "That is the Self, that is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman." They both went away satisfied in their hearts.

Prajāpati thought, "They both go away without having perceived and without having known the Self and whoever of these two whether gods or demons will follow this doctrine will perish." Now Virocana satisfied in his heart went to the demons and preached that doctrine to them, that the Self alone is to be worshipped, that the Self alone is to be served and that he who worships the Self and serves the Self gains both worlds, this and the next.

Therefore they call even now a man who does not give alms here, who has no faith and offers no sacrifices, an Asura, a demon ; for this is the doctrine of demons. They deck out the body of the dead with perfumes, flowers and fine raiment by way of ornament and think they will thus conquer the world. But Indra before he had returned to the gods saw this difficulty. As this Self (the shadow in the

water, is well adorned when the body is well adorned, well-dressed when the body is well dressed, well cleaned when the body is well cleaned, that Self will also be blind if the body is blind, lame if the body is lame, crippled if the body is crippled, and perish in fact as soon as the body perishes; therefore I see no good in this doctrine. Taking fuel in his hand he went again as a pupil to Prajāpati. Prajāpati said to him, "Well, Indra, you went away with Virocana, quite satisfied in your heart; what has brought you back?" Indra said, "Sir, as this Self is well adorned when the body is well adorned, well dressed when the body is well dressed, etc., that Self will also be blind when the body is blind? Therefore I see no good in this doctrine." "So it is, indeed," Prajāpati said, "but I shall explain the true Self further to you. Live with me another thirty-two years." And then Prajāpati said, "He who moves about happy in dreams, he is the Self, this is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman." Then Indra went away satisfied in his heart. But before he had returned to the gods, he saw this difficulty. "Although it is true that that Self is not blind even if the body is blind, nor lame if the body is lame, though it is true that that Self is not rendered faulty by the faults of the body, nor struck when the body is struck, nor lamed when the body is lamed, yet it is as if they struck him the Self in dreams, as if they chased him. He becomes even conscious, as it were, of pain and sheds tears in dreams. Therefore I see no good in this."

Taking fuel in his hands he went again as a

pupil to Prajāpati. Prajāpati said, "Well, Indra, you went away satisfied in your heart, what has brought you back?" Indra told him his difficulty. Then Prajāpati said, "So it is indeed, Indra. But I shall explain the true Self further to you. Live with me another thirty-two years." He lived with him another thirty-two years. Then Prajāpati said, "When a man being asleep, reposing and at perfect rest, sees no dreams, that is the Self, this is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman." Indra went away, quite pleased; but before he had returned to the gods he thought, "Truly, in this dreamless repose he does not know his Self that he is I, nor does he know anything that exists. He is gone to utter annihilation. So I see no good in this." Taking fuel in his hands he once more went to Prajāpati as his pupil. Prajāpati again asked: "Well, Indra, what again has brought you back?" He again told him his difficulty. Prajāpati said: "So it is indeed, Indra; I shall explain the true Self further to you and nothing more than this. Live here other five years." He lived there for other five years. This made in all 101 years. Prajāpati then said, "Indra, this body is mortal and always held by death. It is the abode of that Self which is immortal and without body. When in the body by thinking this body is I and I am this body, the Self is held by pleasure and pain. So long as he is in the body he cannot get free from pleasure and pain. But when he is free of the body, when he knows himself different from the body, then neither pleasure nor pain touches him. The wind is without body, the cloud, lightning

and thunder are without body (without hands, feet, etc.). Now as these arising from the heavenly ether appear in their own form, as soon as they have approached the highest light, thus does that serene being, arising from this body, appear in its own form, as soon as it has approached the highest light—the knowledge of the Self. He in that state is the highest person. He moves about there laughing, playing and rejoicing, be it with women, carriages or relations, never minding the body into which he was born. Like a horse attached to a cart, the spirit is attached to the body. Now where the sight has entered into the void, there is the person of the eye, the eye itself is but the instrument of seeing. He who knows let me smell this, he is the Self, the nose is but the instrument of smelling. He who knows let me say this, he is the Self, the tongue is but the instrument of saying. He who knows let me hear this, he is the Self, the ear is but the instrument of hearing. He who knows let me think this, he is the Self, the mind is but the divine eye. He the Self, seeing these pleasures (which to others are hidden like a buried treasure of gold) through his divine eye, i.e., through the mind, rejoices. He who knows that Self and understands it, obtains all worlds and all desires." Indra was satisfied by this explanation, went to the gods and taught them this doctrine.

This dialogue is so plain that I need not explain its esoteric meaning. It is on this dialogue that the various sub-divisions of the Vedāntic philosophy have offered different interpretations. We will take

the interpretation of the most prominent Vedāntin Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara says that it is quite true as Prajāpati said that the true Self has nothing to do with the body. For the body is mortal but the Self is not mortal. The Self dwells in the body and as long as he thinks that the body is I and I am the body, the Self is enthralled by pleasure and pain, it is not perfect, it is not the immortal Self. But as soon as the Self knows that he is independent of the body and becomes free from it, not by death but by knowledge, then he suffers no longer, neither pain nor pleasure can touch him. When he has approached this highest light of knowledge, then there is perfect serenity. He knows himself to be the highest Self and therefore is the highest Self, and though while life lasts, he moves about among the pleasant sights of the world, he does not mind them, they concern his body only, or his bodily Self, his ego, not his absolute Self. He goes a step further and lays down that it is not the individual soul that is the highest Self, the highest Self is not different from Brahma; the interposition of ignorance, nescience or illusion leads the individual Self to believe that he is separate from Brahma; as soon as ignorance is removed, he is Brahma. He does not become Brahma; for really he was nothing less than Brahma. A post in darkness may seem to be a thief to a person but when darkness is removed he realises the fact that it is a post and not a thief. On the disappearance of darkness, the object which was seen does not become a post but the fact is realised that it is and has ever been a post. In the

same manner, the individual Self does not become the highest Self; only the truth comes out that it is the highest Self.

This is the doctrine of the highly philosophical Hindu. Let us now turn to Buddha and see what he says as to the existence and nature of soul. Buddha's merit consists not in promulgating a special theory of his own as to the nature or existence of soul but in avoiding the metaphysical and subtle disputation of the Brāhmaṇas. His sarcasm against this sort of discussion appears to be very bold as we read it in the Tevija Sutta. He says to a Brāhmaṇa named Vasettha—"Then you say, Vasettha, that not one of the Brāhmaṇas, or of their teachers, or of their pupils has ever seen Brahman face to face. And that even Ṛṣis of old, the utterers of the ancient verse, which the Brāhmaṇas of today so carefully intone and recite precisely as they have been handed down—even they did not pretend to know or to have seen where or whence or whither Brahman is. So that the Brāhmaṇas versed in the three Vedas have forsooth said thus, "To a state of union with that which we know not and have not seen we can show the way and can say, 'this is the straight path, this is the direct way which leads him who acts according to him, into a state of union with Brahman'."

"Now what do you think, Vasettha? Does it not follow, this being so, that the talk of the Brāhmaṇas, versed though they be in the three Vedas, is foolish talk? Verily, Vasettha, that Brāhmaṇas versed in the three Vedas should be able to show

the way to a state of union with that which they do not know, neither have seen—such a condition of thing has no existence. As when a string of blind men are clinging one to the other, neither can the foremost see nor can the middle one see, nor can the hindmost see, just so is the talk of the Brāhmaṇas versed in the three Vedas."

What explanation then does Ponddha offer as to the nature of man and his relation to the world around him ? In fact, Buddhism does not attempt to solve the problem of the primary origin of all things. When Malunka asked Buddha whether the existence of the world is eternal or non-eternal, he made him no reply ; the reason of this was that it was considered by him as an inquiry which tended to no profit. Buddhism takes as its ultimate fact the existence of the material world and of conscious beings living within it and it holds that everything is subject to the law of cause and effect, and that everything is constantly though imperceptibly changing. The whole cosmos—earth, heavens and hell—is always tending to renovation or destruction ; it is always in a course of change, a series of revolutions, or of cycles, of which the beginning and the end are unknowable and unknown.

As to the nature of man, Buddha's teaching is that it consists of an assemblage of different properties or qualities of aggregates none of which corresponds to the Hindu or modern notion of soul. These are Rūpa, forms or material attributes, Vedanā, sensations, Saṁjñā, notions or abstract ideas, Saṁskāra, tendencies or potentialities, and Vijñāna, i.e., con-

sciousness or mental powers. These aggregates along with hundred and ninety-three sub-divisions exhaust all the elements, all the material, intellectual and moral properties and attributes of the individual. There exists nothing apart from these, either fixed principle or soul, or simple or permanent substance of any kind. They unite and arrange themselves so as to form a several being, undergo incessant modification along with it and dissolve at its death ; the individual being throughout a compound of compounds entirely perishes. The influence of its *karma* alone of its acts survives it and through this the formation of a new group of Skanathas or aggregates is immediately effected ; a new individual rises into existence in some other world and continues in some degree the first. The Buddhist, strictly speaking, does not revive, but another, if I may say so, revives in his stead, and it is to avert from this other, who is to be only the heir of his *karma*, the pains of existence, that he aspires to Nirvāṇa.

Let us now turn to Jainism and see what explanation it offers as to the nature and existence of soul. While Vedāntism says that in reality nothing exists apart from Brahma, that the phenomenal world is an illusory phantom, that the only reality is noumenon—the Brahma, Jainism says that both the noumenon and the phenomenon are real, the one cannot be separated from the other; Reality is not in the one, if considered alone and by itself, nor in the other if considered alone and by itself. The one as well as the other is a part of the reality. So in the Jaina philosophy, the existence of both spirit and

matter is postulated—both of them existing as separate entities ; so far as both of them exist as entities, they may be classed under one category the existence, the substance—one the material, the other the spiritual. Both of them have their qualities and modifications. But while the Vedāntist says that the modification of a substance is a phenomenon and therefore unreal and the substance itself is the only reality, a Jaina says that substance and its modification are inseparable. Though a substance is different from its modification, neither of them can exist without the other. Though gold may be said to be in a sense different from a gold ring, a gold ring does not exist apart from gold, nor do you find gold existing separate from some modification or form. When an old form or modification is destroyed, a new one is produced and in both cases we have the same substance. This leads us to the Jaina theory of the origin of the Universe. Jainism has two ways of looking at things—one called the Dravyārthika Naya and the other the Paryāyārthika Naya. The production of a gold ring is the production of something not previously existing (at least not as a ring) if we think of it from the latter point of view, i.e., as a Paryāya or modification ; while it is not the production of something not previously existing, when we look at it from the former point of view, i.e., as a Dravya or substance. So the Universe looked upon as a totality is eternal ; when looked upon in its several parts and modifications there is in it creation and destruction every moment. The Jaina philosophy classifies the whole cosmos under the two

heads Jīva and Ajīva—sentient or conscious, and insentient or unconscious. The sentient or conscious being sullied by its contact with the insentient or unconscious travels from body to body. When this unnecessary contact is removed, the conscious will shine forth in its bliss and that state is its final emancipation.

This brings us to the doctrine of re-incarnation and Karma. Although this doctrine is rejected throughout Europe and America by the Christians, it is accepted by the majority of mankind at the present day. It has been held as true by the mightiest Eastern nations. The ancient civilization of Egypt was built upon this doctrine and it was handed over to Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Virgil and Ovid who scattered it through Greece and Italy. It is the keynote of Plato's philosophy when he says that all knowledge is reminiscence. It was wholly adopted by the Neo-Platonists like Plotinus and Proclas. The hundreds of millions of Hindus, Buddhists and Jainas have made that doctrine the foundation of their philosophy, religion, government and social institutions. It was a cardinal point in the religion of the Persian unagi. The doctrine of Metempsychosis was an essential principle of the Druid faith and was impressed upon your forefathers, the Celts, the Gauls and the Britons. Among the Arab philosophers it was a favourite idea. The rites and ceremonies of the Romans, Druids and Hebrews expressed this truth forcibly. The Jainas adopted it after the Babylonian captivity. John the Baptist was to them a second

Elijah. Jesus was thought to be a re-appearance of John the Baptist or one of the old prophets. The Roman Catholic purgatory seems to be a makeshift, contrived to take its place. Philosophers like Kant, Schelling and Schopenhauer have upheld this doctrine. Theologians like Julius Muller, Dorner and Edward Beecher have maintained it. And today it reigns over the Burman, Siamese, Chinese, Japanese, Tartar, Tibetan, East Indian and Ceylonese including at least 750 millions of mankind and nearly two-thirds of the race. Is it not wonderful then that this great and grand philosophical deduction which the Hindus, Buddhists and Jainas gave to the world centuries and centuries before the Christian Era should or could be blotted out of existence from the Western and European world by the soul-blighting and absurd dogmas of the dark ages that supervened. By the persecution of wise men and destruction of innumerable works in the library of Constantinople, the Church hierarchy managed to plunge the whole of Europe into mental darkness which has given the world the black record of the inquisition and the loss of millions of human lives through religious wars and persecutions.

What is reincarnation ? Reincarnation is the doctrine that souls enter this life not as a fresh creation, but after a long course of previous existences and will have to pass through many before reaching their final destination. Our age is the age of opinions. Instead of thinking ourselves, we allow others to think for us. If I can quote passages from Ralph Waldo Emerson or from Lord Tennyson's

poems or from the Bible in favour of a certain theory no argument will be necessary to prove it. But if I quote a passage from my Bible, you will say you won't believe in its truth and will ask me to prove my position logically. I will accept the challenge and prove the truth of my theory, not by a quotation from my Scriptures but logically. We know that the human body is a mechanism, not a mechanism like a watch or a steam-engine, but a knowing mechanism, able to control itself. It is controlled not by an external power but by a power within, which we call mind, soul, spirit or ego. The existence of this central power is disputed by none. Materialism declares this central power to be the property of matter, to be the product of molecular activities going on within the brain. This theory only explains how mechanical motions are produced on the brain cells. But machines only produce motions, not judgments. An amœba in search of food pursues no haphazard methods but makes most careful selections of the kind it wants. It will send out its pseudopodia, catch, swallow and digest a struggling infusorium or other nutritious game ; but a mere touch of a grain of sand satisfies it as to its character, when it thrusts it from it in a way that plainly says, "That is not good." Oxygen consuming bacteria will cluster around grains of chlorophyl, if exposed to direct sunlight but pay no attention to them in the shade or darkness. They know when the oxygen is being given off. Infusoria guide themselves in hunting their food with apparently as much precision as fish. They avoid obsta-

cles and sometimes undertake to move them out of the way. They reject the innutritious and take the nutritious. These facts, evidently, teach that the central energy called the soul power is not the result of a nervous system but *vice versa*. In man this fact becomes most potent what particular motion among the molecules of the brain can be postulated as the physical equivalent and causal antecedent of our conceptions of justice, of truth, of moral obligation. The physical brain is limited to motion only, it cannot choose its own mode of motion even. What possible motion in the brain causes the idea 'I am I' ? This recognition of a real unit does not vary from the cradle to the grave. From childhood to old age, during the whole course of the total change of all brain molecules, 'I am I' is undisturbed. This 'I am I' is the soul. It is this soul which makes memory possible. It has its own consciousness and not the consciousness of any one else, therefore it is a unit existing by itself. The law of the conservation of energy is true in the physical as well as in the spiritual world. Therefore as no atom can be created or destroyed, so also no soul entity can be created or destroyed. What becomes of soul then after what we call death ? No power in the universe can annihilate it. It must exist somewhere. In what state would it exist ? Does it at once pass into spiritual existence ? If so, there is no justice in hurling all the egos, good, bad or indifferent, into spirituality without distinction. Spirituality itself means the existence of spirit pure and simple and there is no sense in asserting that all egos after

death live in that state, when we know for a certainty that all of them have lived on this physical plane different kinds of life. Effects of good or bad acts committed on the physical plane must manifest on the physical plane. The force created by the ego on the physical plane in this life must in some way or other manifest itself after death on the physical plane in future life. And if the soul has to pass through other future lives, is it unreasonable to say that it has passed through past lives also ? If the soul was created at a time it must also die at death. Whatever begins in time must end in time. If the soul is immortal, it must be immortal at both its ends. It cannot be immortal at one end without being immortal at he other. The idea of special creation at birth implies the correlative of annihilation at death. It does not stand to reason that from an infinite history the soul enters this world for its first and only physical existence and then shoots off into an endless spiritual existence. As Emerson says : We wake and find ourselves on a stair. There are other stairs below us which we seem to have ascended ; there are stairs above us, many a one which go upward and out of sight.

Reincarnation is the only doctrine which gives a complete solution of the much disputed question of original sin. There cannot be greater injustice in the world than the fact that I am suffering for the transgression of my ancestor. Adonis responsibility for our sin is only a makeshift of the theologicians. No one but the individual himself can be

blamed for his wrong-doing. Are not the courts of law of your United States founded on the ideas of justice ? Will any judge sitting on the throne of justice be justified in accepting the death—the voluntary suicide of Mr. B as the proper retribution for the murder committed by Mr. A ? And if he does that, will not the same judge be arraigned before a superior court having knowingly abetted the suicide of B ? And still we are asked to believe that the guilt of one man can be washed by the suffering of another.

But the doctrine of reincarnation assists us most when we look at inequality and injustice and evil of the world and seek for solution. Why is one man born rich and the other poor ? Why is one man born in Central Africa among the cannibals and the other in the peaceful part of India ? Why is Queen Victoria born to rule over territories on which the sun never sets and why is a labourer of Burma born in Burma to work as a slave in an Englishman's tea-garden ? What is the cause of this apparent injustice ? Even those who believe in the personal creator of the universe must believe in this doctrine of reincarnation in order to exonerate God from the charge of maliciousness. And now let us see if the Bible of Christendom assists in upholding this doctrine. In the Proverbs of Solomon we find this passage : Proverbs VIII.22-31. Here all the verses except the last two prove the pre-existence of soul, and not the creation at a certain time. The first two verses even prove a prior physical life. Let us turn to Jeremiah I. 5 : "Before I formed thee

in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee." This shows that the prophets too had existed before. Even in the New Testament there is sufficient evidence for reincarnation. In John IX. 2 a question is put to Jesus by his disciples—Which did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? This refers to two popular theories of the time—one that of Moses who taught that the sins of fathers would descend on the children to the third and the fourth generation and the other that of reincarnation doctrine. He merely says that neither that man's sin nor his father's sin was the cause of his blindness; he does not deny the pre-existence of that man. For in Galatians VI. 7 we find: Whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap. Paul does not here mean that what a man soweth in this physical existence that he shall reap in spiritual existence. For in the next passage he says: For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Even the words of Jesus confirm the doctrine. In St. Mathew XI he says: Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied unto John, and if ye will receive it this is Elias, which was far to come." Does not Jesus mean that John

was reincarnated Elias.

It is useless to multiply instances taken from the Bible. For every candid Christian student must acknowledge that the truth of the doctrine of Reincarnation does not depend on a scripture's mention.

But some people may say—If this doctrine is true, how is it that we do not remember our past incarnations ? I will ask such people—In what way do we exercise the faculty of memory ? Certainly, so far as we are living in a body, we exercise it through the brain. In passing from one incarnation to the other, the soul does not carry its former brain in the new body. Even during the course of one life, do we always remember our past doings ? Can any one remember that wonderful epoch the infancy?

This doctrine of reincarnation is common to Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism.

Out of these ideas all of them have constructed high codes of morality pretty nearly similar to one another.