

notable: *Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect* and *Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects*, 2 volumes (both Westport CT: Praeger, 1997).

These books are among the most important works ever published on the subject of reincarnation, and their author, Ian Stevenson (1918-2007), was the world's leading authority on the subject. Carlton Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, he was the author of more than a dozen scholarly books and 250 articles. His special area of research was purported cases of memories by children of prior incarnations. His earlier works on the subject included *The Evidence for Survival from Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations* (1961), *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation* (1974), *Cases of the Reincarnation Type*, 4 volumes (1975–83), and *Children Who Remember Previous Lives: A Question of Reincarnation* (1987).

Stevenson meticulously investigated at first hand the accounts of children who apparently remember an earlier incarnation. His investigations included not only the child who reported the memories, but also the actual family, locale, circumstances, and events of the remembered life. The cumulative evidence of Stevenson's cases is so impressively massive and detailed that alternative explanations of chance or fraud (deliberate or unconscious) are improbable in the extreme. As Stevenson pointed out, unless one begins with the assumption that reincarnation is impossible, the simplest and most convincing explanation for a large number of cases is the factuality of reincarnation.

What makes the evidence reported in Stevenson's later books so impressive is that they add something new to his earlier studies, which dealt with reported memories and his investigative confirmation of the accuracy of those memories. This something new is physical bodily evidence in the form of birthmarks or birth defects on the body of the person who remembers a previous life. Those marks or defects match attested wounds or other physical anomalies on the body of the prior personality. For example, a child might remember having lived another life including enough details about it (names, places, events) to permit investigators to identify the earlier personality. That personality died from a gunshot wound, and medical or coroner's records establish the location of the entering and exiting wound marks made by the fatal bullet. The child who remembers the earlier life has birthmarks on places