

Reincarnation

By Ellen Burns

How would you like to be a cow? a cobra? Or perhaps you have already resided on ancient Atlantis or Lemuria!! Have you really lived before? How can we be sure?

What is the basis for such theories, which to us sound so incredible? Deep in the heart of most human beings, there is a strong conviction that death is not the end—that there is life beyond the tomb. This innate fear of death, and man's longing desire to perpetuate life, has brought about many strange beliefs.

Eternal Life Forfeited Through Sin

Man was originally intended to have eternal life, but it was forfeited through sin. In the Scriptures we read that:

1 Timothy 6

¹⁶ ...[God] only has immortality...

...and that we can obtain eternal life now only through Christ.

We must have a standard by which to determine what is truth. Jesus said:

John 14

⁶ I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.

Acts 4

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

In the light of this counsel from God, let us examine how the doctrine of reincarnation began.

Origin of Immortality of the Soul Doctrine

Spirits must operate through a body. Satan used the ser-

pent as a medium in the Garden of Eden to deceive Eve. Here is where this evil teaching of the immortality of the soul began.

Genesis 3

⁴ You shall not surely die...

This was the first lie ever told in this world. Satan was the only one who promised Adam and Eve perpetual life in disobedience.

This was the first sermon preached on the immortality of the soul and it rests solely on the authority of Satan's lie. To-day, it is preached everywhere in Christendom, and is received by the majority of mankind as readily as it was received by Eve in Eden.

Satan's Contradiction of God's Truth

God said:

Genesis 2

¹⁷ ...for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.

Ezekiel 18

²⁰ The soul that sins, it shall die.

So here we have Satan's flat contradiction of the clear statements of God! Acting as a medium for Satan, the serpent charged God with falsehood, declaring that if Eve would eat, not only would she not die, but she would live on a higher plane, and would eventually become a "god" herself!

This lie has never ceased to go around and around the world, in some form or other.

The enemy of God and of truth had promised our first parents much, but they soon discovered that they were crushed under the weight of their guilt, when they were driven from their garden home. The devil's lie had robbed them of their peace and of their dominion.

Transmigration of the Soul & Reincarnation

The theory of the transmigration of the soul, is associated with the ancient Egyptians, who are said to have practiced embalming to prevent or delay reincarnation. It is also associated with the teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism. It is an ancient, primitive belief.

Encyclopedia Britannica, 1968, p. 265-267:

The primitive idea of the passage of the soul, or vital essence, into some particular form is bound up with the conception of an objective soul and often with ideas as to a plurality of souls in a single individual, one of which is separable and able to go in and out through the mouth or nostrils...This conception of a separable soul is clearly based on the phenomena of dreams taken to be actual experiences undergone during sleep and postulating some sort of embodiment able to roam while the body sleeps...

If the soul can leave a person during sleep and re-enter him, it should be able to enter and be re-born in another person. The range of this conception of reincarnation is indicated by the frequency of tabu on giving children names already borne by living members of the family; identity of name implies identity of personality; and one of the two bearers would die...

Reincarnation is not confined to animal forms. The stories of trees that grow up from the graves of lovers, such as Tristan and Iseult, and twine themselves together are familiar in Europe; and the human soul also reappears in a flower growing on the grave. In the case of flowers springing from drops of blood, as from that of Ajax, the soul is possibly regarded as located actually in the blood itself. In farther Asia and elsewhere the soul goes into the crops, and by preserving the corpse which is smoke-dried, funeral ceremonies are accommodated to the agricultural year, to afford the crop full benefit of the soul matter from those who have recently died...

The source of all these doctrines is quite uncertain...More important for the history of these doctrines is Plato, who was decidedly influenced by Orphic-Pythagorean views and reinterpreted them (their ideas) after his own fashion...The

soul, according to him, is immortal, the number of souls fixed, and reincarnation regularly occurs...

Attempts to find this teaching in early Jewish literature have met with little success...Within the Christian church it was held by isolated Gnostic sects during the first centuries...but was invariably repudiated by orthodox theologians....

Hinduism—The belief in transmigration or rebirth has been fundamental to most of the religions and philosophies of India...This process of rebirth is an endless one for the individual, until he realizes the liberating truth of the identity of the soul of self...Thus his soul becomes one with Brahman, and he is set free from bondage to karma (deeds), escaping forever the dreary and painful cycle of life and death....

In Buddhism...what is commonly called the self is...nothing more than a complex of psycho-physical elements and states, changing from moment to moment. At death...the groups of elements—viz. body, sensations, perceptions, impulses, emotions and consciousness—fall apart and the individual as such ceases to exist. But...it is the beginning of a new individual existence; for the karma of the deceased individual survives and passes in the form of “germ of consciousness” to the womb of a mother, there to grow into a new individual. The nature of the new individual will depend upon the quality of the potencies contained within the germ...

Five possible conditions of rebirth were generally recognized among the Buddhist schools; birth in hell, as an animal, as a ghost, as a man and as a god. None of these conditions is eternal...but is subject to termination, followed by another rebirth...When through moral discipline and meditation a state of complete passionlessness and enlightenment is attained, karma ceases to be generated, the process of rebirth is terminated and Nirvana, a state of eternal bliss is achieved....

The Sleeping Prophet

In more recent years, the doctrine of reincarnation has been revived by the “Sleeping Prophet”, Edgar Cayce. At first, Cayce himself was...

The Edgar Cayce Story by Gina Cerminara, p. 33:

...repelled, in fact, by the very word; confusing reincarnation, as some people do, with the doctrine of transmigration of souls—namely, that man returns to earth, after death, in an animal form. He seemed to recall having read somewhere about Hindus who refuse to kill cows because they may be their reincarnated grandfather; he seemed to have heard somewhere of people who do not kill beetles...because they may contain the spirit of a departed ancestor.

Who was this Edgar Cayce? He was a clairvoyant prophet who gave readings during his sleep.

The Edgar Cayce Story by Gina Cerminara, p. 34:

Edgar discovered at about age 12 some of the remarkable powers he possessed while asleep, but made little use of them until he was a young man of 21...in his self-induced hypnotic trance state, he had the gifts of a psychic, clairvoyance and precognition. His healing powers consisted in diagnosing and suggesting treatment; he did not actually heal or cure by means of laying on hands or any such miraculous methods...He saw the body and mind as a single entity, whose overall balance was to be maintained; co-ordination among all functions was the key. Remedies which he recommended encompassed physical therapy, surgery, medicine, diet, exercise and psychological guidance....

He is described as a medium, a psychic, a clairvoyant. He, himself, did not know what was transpiring in his own mind, as he gave the readings during sleep. A stenographer took notes and he was just as shocked and surprised as anyone else, when he read the “readings” of his cures! It seems he was almost 100 percent correct on diagnosis and physical healings. This baffled the doctors who sometimes did not know how to treat certain illnesses. Cayce almost always came up with the right answers. This accuracy, of course, served to promote confidence in his readings and thereby he was a decoy of Satan to bring in such errors as reincarnation.

Cayce’s own readings soon changed his mind about reincarnation.

The Edgar Cayce Story, by Gina Cerminara, p. 33:

[Quoting the readings] “Reincarnation does not mean the return of human beings in animal form; it is not merely a superstition of ignorant people. It is a thoroughly respectable doctrine, both from the religious and the philosophic point of view. Millions of educated people in India and Buddhist countries believe it intelligently, and guide their lives by its ethical principles. There are, to be sure, many sects in India and the East that teach migration of the human soul to animal forms; but this is only a misinterpretation of the true reincarnation principle. Even Christianity has garbled and mistaken forms; one must not permit narrow acquaintance with the distorted versions to close one’s mind to the possibility of truth in the original.”

Mediums vs. God’s Prophets

What does the Bible say about mediums?

2 Corinthians 11

¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

¹⁵ Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Satan is the author of sickness and death and if he puts sickness upon a person, he knows how to remove it, when it suits his own purpose.

It is evident that Cayce was used as an inert medium, by some power outside of himself; and we must test that power by the Word of God. For every truth, Satan has a counterfeit; so let us look at God’s true prophets in the Bible.

In every case when men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and Hosea, to name a few, received a vision or a dream with a message from God, it was given to them personally, not delivered to another person through their unconscious mouths.

The prophets themselves had the dream or vision; and they in turn gave the message to the people.

This was quite the reverse with Cayce, whose body was only a medium. He, himself, was unconscious and was not aware of the message that was given through him.

Now we are told that the devil is a deceiver, one who is an expert in fooling men. He comes as an angel of light through the many correct readings on physical healings. If he can gain our confidence there, it is easy to follow it up by bringing in such false theories as reincarnation, Atlantis, Lemuria, etc.

Bible Record of Life and Death

Let us now more thoroughly examine the Bible record of the condition of man in birth and death; and the only promise of life that is made to us, through our acceptance of Jesus Christ.

Genesis 2

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

Here we see that it takes the body, plus the breath of life to become a living soul. There is no such thing as a dead soul. Without the breath of life, the body cannot function. It takes the two to become a living soul. This applies also to the animal world as follows:

Ecclesiastes 3

¹⁹ For that which befalls the sons of man befalls beasts;...as the one dies, so dies the other; so that a man has no preeminence above a beast; for all is vanity.

²⁰ ...all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

What about the dead?

Ecclesiastes 9

⁵ For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the

memory of them is forgotten.

Because of sin and disobedience to God, man is now subject to death.

Ezekiel 18

²⁰ The soul that sins it shall die.

The Scriptures declare that Christ came to...

1 John 3

⁸ ...destroy the works of the devil.

By subtleties and various temptations, the devil attempted to overcome Christ. At one time Satan caused “all the kingdoms of the world” to pass before Christ in a panoramic glory. And Satan said,

Luke 4

⁶ All this will I give You, and the glory of them:...

Jesus did not dispute his claim, but simply stated:

⁸ It is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.

At Calvary, the cry “It is finished” was no moan of despair; it was a shout of triumph that the contest for the ownership of the world now belonged to Christ. That shout sounded the death knell of Satan and his hosts. The battle had been won and the enemy unmasked, and the king of hell dethroned. It was the Creator Himself who descended to this battlefield and broke the stranglehold of evil.

It was God offering Himself for lost men. He died that we might have the opportunity of eternal life; and we have the assurance that evil will ultimately be eradicated from the universe.

Occultism in the Days of Moses

It has always been God’s purpose to separate His people from spirit worship and the idolatry of the nations around them. No peoples of ancient times were more engrossed with

occultism than the Egyptians and the Canaanites at the time of the Exodus. God said:

Leviticus 19

³¹ Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them.

Leviticus 20

⁶ The soul that turns after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.

Modern Deceptions

It has ever been Satan's studied plan to destroy confidence in the Bible. Note the warning:

Ephesians 6

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

¹³ Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

There is a war between truth and righteousness, and that war intensifies as we near the close of time. The deceptions will be so overpowering that they will sweep through all nations; and Jesus said:

Matthew 24

²⁴ If it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Only those who know the Word of God, and have built their faith on its unalterable precepts, will be able to withstand the coming universal delusion.

Falsehood about death has cursed every civilization through the ages. If death is really a friend, then why do we go to such lengths to preserve life? The Bible says:

1 Corinthians 15

²⁶ The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death.

Eternity for the true child of God does not begin at death; but it begins when our Lord returns:

1 Corinthians 15

⁵¹ Behold, I show you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

We are not immortal now, but will be when Jesus comes.

1 John 5

¹¹ And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

¹² He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life.

Modern Seances

But what about the spirits that appear in a seance? Who are they? Where do they come from? These are not the dead coming back in spirit form, because, as we have seen, the dead know not anything. They are represented as being asleep.

The apparitions that appear during a seance are evil spirits impersonating the deceased. They are aware of the lifestyles of the people they are imitating. They know their voices and they know the sins which they have deceived people into committing.

Where Did These Evil Spirits Come From?

Revelation 12

⁷ And there was war in heaven...

⁹ And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceives the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out

with him.

These fallen angels, these spirits of demons, these superhuman forces of evil are now seeking our destruction.

The Great Controversy by E. G. White, p. 624:

Fearful sights of a supernatural character will soon be revealed in the heavens, in token of the power of miracle-working demons...They will perform wonderful miracles of healing and will profess to have revelations from heaven contradicting the testimony of the scriptures.

Isaiah 47

¹² Stand now with your enchantments, and with the multitude of your sorceries, wherein you have labored from your youth...

¹³ ...Let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save you from these things that shall come upon you.

¹⁵ ...none shall save you.

Isaiah 8

¹⁹ And when they say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God?...

²⁰ To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

There is no other way by which to test truth than by the law of God.

Our Only Safety

Our only safety is to have Christ as our Saviour. He has conquered Satan and He alone can be our shield and buckler. He is the only connection between earth and heaven, and unless we accept Him as our Redeemer, we cannot be saved.

Acts 4

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Let us make God our Source, our Guide and Plan-Maker in

everything.

Satan has no connection with heaven now. He is only a created being with no life in himself. Therefore, he cannot give life to us. We can have life only through Jesus Christ.

In the end, many will be lost eternally, not only for sincerely believing a falsehood, but also for refusing to believe what the Bible says. It will take real courage to stand when all the world bows in homage to the false Christ, Satan.

Evangelism by E. G. White, p. 365-366:

Fallen angels upon earth form confederations with evil men. In this age antichrist will appear as the true Christ, and then the law of God will be fully made void in the nations of our world. Rebellion against God's holy law will be fully ripe. But the true leader of all this rebellion is Satan, clothed as an angel of light. Men will be deceived and will exalt him to the place of God, and deify him.

Faith Is The Victory

The true people of God will not be misled, because they are guided by the Word of God. Of them it can be said:

Isaiah 25

⁹ And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

To resist the evidences of one's sight when all the world bows before the false christ, to wait for the Lord from heaven, will take real courage and faith. Only the "faith of Jesus" will make us victorious in that great day.

Luke 21

³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

³⁵ For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

If you are not already on God's side in this great contro-

versy, then receive of His grace now. The invitation to you is,

2 Corinthians 6

² Behold, now is the day of salvation.

The great heart of infinite love is drawn toward the sinner with boundless compassion.

Ephesians 1

⁷ We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Steps to Christ, by E. G. White, p. 55:

Believe that God is your helper. He wants to restore His moral image in man. As you draw near to Him with confession and repentance, He will draw near to you with mercy and forgiveness.