

## **Rays From The Rose Cross Magazine**

### **Three Theories of Life**

Only three noteworthy theories have been offered as solutions to the riddle of existence and in order that we may be able to make the important choice between them, we will state briefly what they are and give some of the arguments which lead us to advocate the Doctrine of Rebirth as the method which favors soul-growth and the ultimate attainment of perfection, thus offering the best solution to the problem of life.

1) *The Materialistic Theory* teaches that life is but a short journey from the cradle to the grave; that there is no higher intelligence in the universe than man; that his mind is produced by certain correlations of matter and that therefore death and dissolution of the body terminate existence.

2) *The Theory of Theology* claims that just prior to each birth a soul is created by God and enters into the world where it lives for a time varying from a few minutes to a few score years; that at the end of this short span of life it returns through the portal of death to the invisible beyond, where it remains forever in a condition of happiness or misery according to the deeds done in the body during the few years it lived here.

Plato insisted upon the necessity of a clear definition of terms as a basis of argument and we contend that that is as necessary in discussing the problem of life from the biblical point of view as in arguments from the platonic standpoint. According to the Bible man is a composite being consisting of body, soul, and Spirit. The two latter are usually taken to be synonymous but we insist that they are not interchangeable and present the following to support our dictum.

All things are in a state of vibration. Vibrations from objects in our surroundings are constantly impinging upon us and carry to our senses a cognition of the external world. The vibrations in the ether act upon our eyes so that we see, and vibrations in the air transmit sounds to the ear. We also breathe the air and ether which is thus charged with pictures of our surroundings and the sounds in our environment, so that by means of the breath we receive at each moment of our life, *internally*, an accurate picture of our external surroundings.

That is a scientific proposition. Science does not explain what becomes of these vibrations, however, they are transmitted to the blood, and then etched upon a little atom in the heart as automatically as a moving picture is imprinted upon the sensitized film, and a record of sounds is engraved upon the phonographic disc. This breath-record starts with the first breath of the newborn babe and ends only with the last gasp of the dying man, and "soul" is a product of the breath. Genesis also shows the connection between breath and soul in the words: "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" (The same word: "nephesh," is translated breath and soul in the above quotation.) In the post-mortem existence the breath-record is disposed of. The good acts of life produce feelings of pleasure and

the intensity of attraction incorporates them into the Spirit as soul-power. *Thus the breath-records of our good acts are the soul which is saved*, for by the union with the Spirit they become immortal. As they accumulate life after life, we become more soulful and they are thus also the basis of soul-growth. The record of our evil acts is also derived from our breath in the moments when they were committed. The pain and suffering they bring cause the Spirit to expel the breath-record from it being in Purgatory. As that cannot exist independently of the life-giving Spirit, the breath-record of our sins disintegrates upon expurgation, and thus we see that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." The memory of the suffering incidental to expurgation, however, remains with the Spirit as *conscience*, to deter from repetition of the same evil in later lives.

Thus both our good and evil acts are recorded through the agency of the breath, which is therefore the basis of the soul, but while the breath-record of good acts amalgamates with the Spirit and lives on forever as an immortal soul, the breath-record of evil deeds is disintegrated; it is the soul that sinneth and dies.

While the Bible teaches that immortality of the soul is conditional upon well-doing, it makes no distinction in respect of the Spirit. The statement is clear and emphatic when..."The silver cord be loosed...then shall the dust return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return to God who gave it."

Thus the Bible teaches that the body is made of dust and returns thereto, that a part of the soul generated in the breath is perishable, but that the Spirit survives bodily death and persists forever. Therefore a "lost soul" in the common acceptance of that term is not a Bible teaching, for the Spirit is uncreate and eternal as God Himself, and therefore the orthodox theory cannot be true.

3) *The Theory of Rebirth*: which teaches that each Spirit is an integral part of God, that it enfolds all divine possibilities as the acorn enfolds the oak; that by means of many existences in an earthly body of gradually improving texture its latent powers are being slowly unfolded and become available as dynamic energy; that none can be lost but that all will ultimately attain to perfection and reunion with God, each bringing with it the accumulated experiences which are the fruitage of its pilgrimage through matter.

Or, as we may poetically express it:

### **We Are Eternal**

On whistling stormcloud; on Zephyrus wing,  
The Spirit-choir loud the world-anthems sing;  
Hark! List to their voice: "We have passed through death's  
door,  
There's no Death; rejoice! life lives evermore."  
We are, have always been, will ever be.  
We are a portion of Eternity,  
Older than Creation, a part of One Great Whole,  
Is each Individual and immortal Soul.

On Time's whirring loom our garments we've wrought,  
Eternally weave we on network of Thought,  
Our kin and our country, by Mind brought to birth,  
Were patterned in heaven ere molded on earth.

We have shone in the jewel and danced on the wave,  
We have sparkled in fire, defying the grave;  
Through shapes everchanging, in size, kind and name  
Our individual essence still is the same.

And when we have reached to the highest of all,  
The gradations of growth our minds shall recall,  
So that link by link we may join them together  
And trace step by step the way we reached thither.

Thus in time we shall know, if only we do  
What lifts, ennobles, is right and true.  
With kindness to all, with malice to none,  
That in and through us God's will may be done.

We venture to make the assertion that there is but one sin: *ignorance*, and but one salvation: *applied knowledge*. Even the wisest among us know but little of what may be learned, however, and no one has attained to perfection, or an attain in one single short life, but we note that everywhere in nature slow persistent unfoldment makes for higher and higher development of everything, and we call this process evolution.

One of the chief characteristics of evolution lies in the fact that it manifests in alternating periods of activity and rest. The busy summer, when all things upon earth are exerting themselves to bring forth, is followed by the flood-tide. Thus, as all other things move in cycles, the life that expresses itself here upon Earth for a few years is not to be thought of as ended when death has been reached, but as surely as the Sun rises in the morning after having set at night, will the life that was ended by the death of one body be taken up again in a new vehicle and in a different environment.

This earth may, in fact, be likened to a school to which we return life after life to learn new lessons, as our children go to school day after day to increase their knowledge. The child sleeps through the night which intervenes between death and a new birth. There are also different classes in this world school which

correspond to the various grades from kindergarten to college. In the lower classes we find Spirits who have gone to the school of life but a few times, they are savages now, but in time they will become wiser and better than we are, and we ourselves shall progress in future lives to spiritual heights of which we cannot even conceive at the present. If we apply ourselves to learn the lessons of life, we shall of course advance much faster in the school of life than if we dilly-dally and idle our time away. This, on the same principle which governs in one of our own institutions of learning.

We are not here then by the caprice of God. He has not placed one in clover and another in a desert, nor has He given one a healthy body so that he may live at ease from pain and sickness, while He placed another in poor circumstances with never a rest from pain. But what we are, we are on account of our own diligence or negligence, and what we shall be in the future depends upon what we will to be and not upon divine caprice or upon inexorable fate. No matter what the circumstances, it lies with us to master them, or to be mastered as we will. Sir Edwin Arnold puts the teaching most beautifully in his "Light of Asia:"

The Books say well, my Brothers! each man's life  
The outcome of his former living is;  
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,  
The bygone right breeds bliss.

Each has such lordship as the loftiest ones,  
Nay, for with powers around, above, below,  
As with all flesh and whatsoever lives *act* maketh joy or woe.

Who toiled, a slave, may come anew a prince  
For gentle worthiness and merit won,

Who ruled, a king, may wander earth in rags  
For things done or undone.

Or, as Ella Wheeler Wilcox says:

One ship sails East and another sails West  
With the self same winds that blow.  
'Tis the set of the sail, and not the gale,  
Which determines the way they go.

As the winds of the sea are the ways of fate  
As we voyage along through life.  
'Tis the act of the soul, which determines the goal  
And not the calm or the strife.

When we wish to engage someone to undertake a certain mission we choose some one whom we think particularly fitted to fulfill the requirements, and we must suppose that a Divine Being would use at least as much common sense and not choose anyone to do his errand who was not fitted therefor. So when we read in the Bible that Samson was fore-ordained to be the slayer of the Philistines and that Jeremiah was predestined to be a prophet, it is but logical to suppose that they must have been particularly suited to such occupations. John the Baptist, also, was born to be a herald of the coming Saviour and to preach the Kingdom of God which is to take the place of the kingdom of men.

Had these people had no previous training, how could they have developed such a fitness to fulfill their various missions, and if they had been fitted, how else could they have received their training if not in earlier lives? The Jews believed in the Doctrine of Rebirth or they would not have asked John the Baptist if he were Elijah, as recorded in the first chapter of John. The Apostles of Christ also held the belief as we may see from the incident

recorded in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew where the Christ asked them the question: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" The Apostles replied: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others Jeremias or one of the Prophets." Upon this occasion the Christ tacitly assented to the teaching of Rebirth because He did not correct the disciples as would have been His plain duty in His capacity as teacher, when the pupils entertained a mistaken idea. But to Nicodemus He said unequivocally: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," and in the eleventh chapter of Matthew, the fourteenth verse, He said, speaking of John the Baptist: "*This is Elijah.*" In the seventeenth chapter of Matthew, the twelfth verse, He said: "Elijah is come already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed." "Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist."

Thus we maintain that the Doctrine of Rebirth offers the only solution to the problem of life which is in harmony with the laws of nature, which answers the ethical requirements of the case and permits us to love God without blinding our reason to the inequalities of life and the varying circumstances which give to a few the ease and comfort, the health and wealth, which are denied to the any.

The theory of heredity advanced by materialists applies only to the *form*, for as a carpenter uses material from a certain pile of lumber to build a house in which he afterward lives, so does the Spirit take the substance wherewith to build its house from the parents. The carpenter cannot build a house of hard wood from spruce lumber, and the Spirit also must build a body which is like those from which the material was taken. But the theory of heredity does not apply upon the moral plane, for it is a known fact that in the roguish galleries of America and Europe there is no

case where both father and son are represented. Thus the sons of criminals, though they have the tendencies to crime, keep out of the clutches of the law. Neither will heredity hold good upon the plane of the intellect, for many cases may be cited where a genius and an idiot spring from the same stock. The great Cuvier, whose brain was of about the same weight, as Daniel Webster's, and whose intellect was as great, had five children who all died of paresis; the brother of Alexander the Great was an idiot; and thus we hold that another solution must be found to account for the facts of life.

The Law of Rebirth coupled with its companion law, the Law of Causation, does that. When we die after one life, we return to earth later, under circumstances determined by the manner in which we lived before. The gambler is drawn to pool parlors and race tracks to associate with others of like taste, the musician is attracted to the concert halls and music studios where there are congenial Spirits, and the returning Ego also carries with it likes and dislikes which cause it to seek parents among the class to which it belongs.

But then someone will point to cases where we find people of entirely opposite tastes living lives of torture, because grouped in the same family, and forced by circumstances to stay there contrary to their wills. But that does not vitiate the law in the slightest. In each life we contact certain obligations which cannot then be fulfilled. Perhaps we have run away from a duty such as the care of an invalid relative and have met death without coming to a realization of our mistake. That relative upon the other hand may have suffered severely from our neglect, and have stored up a bitterness against us before death terminates the suffering. Death and the subsequent removal to another environment does not pay our debts in this life, any more than the removal from the

city where we now live to another place will pay the debts we have contracted prior to our removal. It is therefore quite possible that the two who have injured each other as described, may find themselves members of the same family. Then, whether they remember the past grudge or not, the old enmity will assert itself and cause them to hate anew until the consequent discomfort force them to tolerate each other, and perhaps later they may learn to love where they hated.

The question also arises in the mind of inquirers: If we have been here before why do we not remember? And the answer is that while most people are not aware of how their previous existences were spent, there are others who have a very distinct recollection of previous lives. A friend of the writer (Max Heindel), for instance, when living in France, one day started to read to her son about a certain city where they were then going upon a bicycle tour, and the boy exclaimed: "You do not need to tell me about that, Mother. I know that city. I lived there and was killed!" He then commenced to describe the city and also a certain bridge. Later he took his mother to that bridge and showed her the spot where he had met death centuries before. Another friend traveling in Ireland saw a scene which she recognized, and she also described to the party the scene around the bend of the road which she had never seen in this life, so it must have been a memory from a previous life. Numerous other instances could be given where such minor flashes of memory reveal to us glimpses from a past life. The verified case in which a little three year old girl in Santa Barbara described her life and death has been given in *"The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception."* It is perhaps the most conclusive evidence as it hinges on the veracity of a child too young to have learned deception.

This theory of life does not rest upon speculation, however. It is one of the first facts of life demonstrated to the pupil of a Mystery School. He is taught to watch a child in the act of dying, also, to watch it in the invisible world from day to day, until it comes to a new birth a year or two later. Then he knows with absolute certainty that we return to Earth to reap in a future life what we now sow.

The reason for taking a child to watch in preference to an adult is that the child is reborn very quickly, for its short life on Earth has borne but few fruits and these are soon assimilated, while the adult who has lived a long life and had much experience remains in the invisible worlds for centuries, so that the pupil could not watch him from death to rebirth. The cause of infant mortality will be explained later; here we merely desire to emphasize the fact that it is within the range of possibilities of every one without exception to become able to know at first hand that which is here taught.

The average interval between two Earth-lives is about a thousand years. It is determined by the movement of the Sun known to astronomers as "precession of the equinox," by which the Sun moves through one of the signs of the Zodiac in about 2,100 years. During that time the conditions upon Earth have changed so much that the Spirit will find entirely new experiences here, and therefore it returns.

The Great Leaders of evolution always obtain the maximum benefit from each condition designed by them, and as the experiences in the same social conditions are very different in the case of a man from what they are for a woman, the human Spirit takes birth twice during the 2,100 years measured by the precession of the equinox, as already explained: it is born once as

a man and another time as a woman. Such is the rule, but it is subject to whatever modifications may be necessary to facilitate reaping what the Spirit has sown, as required under the Law of Causation which works hand in hand with the Law of Rebirth. Thus, at times a Spirit may be brought to birth long ere the thousand years have expired, in order to fulfill a certain mission, or it may be detained in the invisible worlds after the time when it should have come to birth according to the strict requirements of a blind law. The laws of nature are not that, however. They are Great Intelligences who always subordinate minor considerations to higher ends, and under their beneficent guidance we are constantly progressing from life to life under conditions exactly suited to each individual, until in time we shall attain to a higher evolution and become Supermen.

Oliver Wendell Holmes has so beautifully voiced that aspiration and its consummation in the lines:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vaulted past;  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

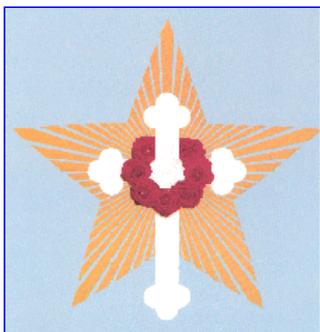
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- 
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-

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Go



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