

# Biblical Proof of Rebirth

By W. VERNAL SEARLES



DEACON of a Methodist Church recently said to me that if I could show him where reincarnation was taught in the Bible he would believe in it. I submitted the following quotations and comments.

Malachi, chapter 4, verse 5, reads: "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Elijah died several centuries before that statement was made, so if God were to send Elijah back to earth again he would have to be reborn, or reincarnated. The Bible does not say, as some try to interpret it, that God would send someone in the spirit and likeness of Elijah. God said *I will send Elijah*. When Jesus Christ came into the world, He told His disciples that Elijah had come in the person of John the Baptist; therefore we think that reincarnation is as true as any other statement found in the Bible.

In Matthew 11:14—we read the words of Jesus where he speaks of John the Baptist: "And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah which was for to come." Can anything be plainer?

In referring to the same incident in Matthew 17:10-12 we read: "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already. . . . Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist."

Again in Matthew 16:13, Jesus asked his disciples saying, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets." A knowledge of reincarnation must have been common or the disciples could not have

given such an answer as that, and if there had been no such thing, would not so great a teacher as Jesus have said so?

Again in John 1:6, it says, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." And in the eighth verse it says, "He was not that Light [Christ], but was sent to bear witness of that Light." We do not send ambassadors to foreign countries to represent us if they are not prepared by experience and training. Would God do differently? No, John got his training back in history when he was known as Elijah.

In John 9:2-3, it says, "And his disciples asked him saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." If neither he nor his parents had sinned and sin was manifested in his blindness, then, who did sin? If, as we sow we shall also reap, is true, we can't escape the conclusion that this ego must have sinned back in his last incarnation and he is now suffering the consequences of that sin. Surely God would not cause one to be blind for nothing, nor would he compel one to suffer for the guilt of another. Neither would He cause an innocent person to suffer years of blindness in order that Christ should heal him at this time.

In John 3:5, it says, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." When a boy is born into this world he is equipped with all the senses and powers necessary for him to make his way and master the world. Still, it takes him from 20 to 30 years to reach a reasonable degree of efficiency using those senses all the time, every day. But many people seem to think that they can be born into the spir-

itual consciousness and prepare for eternity by spending one to two hours per week. It doesn't make sense, nor is it what Jesus teaches. He says that we must have a birth of the spirit. The ordinary conversion does not meet the conditions. Many people who stoutly affirm that they are "born again" continue to violate the common virtues of honesty, respect for others, and humility. That isn't what Jesus meant by rebirth.

Jesus tells us that we must have a spiritual birth before we can enter the Kingdom of God. If we do not reach that exalted state in this life we must return to earth until we do reach it. If we pass out of life without reaching it, the accident of death will not bring it to us. It is a state of spiritual development.

First Corinthians 2:14, says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." At his transfiguration Jesus opened the eyes of the three disciples who were sufficiently developed to bear it so they could see for themselves that reincarnation was a law of life, for only Moses and Elias appeared. Since John the Baptist, according to Jesus, was Elijah, we do not have to stretch the imagination to infer that Elijah was Moses reborn. Both were spiritual leaders of different times.

Job 19:26, says, 'And though after my skin worms destroy my body [the one I now wear] yet in my flesh [when I am born in Christ's time] shall I see God [in the person of Jesus Christ].

In Ezekiel 37, verses 1 to 17, there is a story of Ezekiel prophesying to a valley of very dry bones, and they took to themselves flesh and came alive. This, in my opinion, is to teach wholesale reincarnation. The 12th verse reads: "I will open your grave and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel." Is there any record of the whole of Israel literally coming out of their graves?

I have often been asked how a man

can be born after he has died, and my answer is—Exactly the same way he was born the first time. Is it not as easy for God to send a spirit to earth a thousand times as to send a thousand newly created spirits?

You may ask what the advantage of reincarnation is. Well, it explains the inequalities of life. Can we charge a good God with all the differences in health, wealth, mental, and spiritual ability, inventive ability, literary ability, and even rascality? Reincarnation teaches that the whole human race was sent out into manifestation about the same time and all the differences we see on every hand are the results of what each of us has done or left undone. A careful reading of the Old Testament reveals that immortality is not taught there.

When Jesus was about to leave his disciples he said, "I go to prepare a place for you—that where I am, ye may be also." If Jesus had to "prepare" a place there could not have been a place before. Speaking of John the Baptist in Matthew 11:11, he says, "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." This gives us some idea of what the requirements for the entrance to the kingdom of heaven are.

If we were all taught that we could not escape, by any means whatever, from the task of perfecting ourselves, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," would we not act differently?

The older generation is now waiting to pass out to its eternal (?) joys in heaven, and the younger generation is too busy with material things and having a good time to do much about building the Kingdom of God. So the Kingdom waits, and waits, until men learn that His Kingdom is with us and that upon the earth is where it is to be set up.