

feelings of joy, love, and peace. Despite his attitude, though, he somehow reunites with his physical body and lives.

Later he tries to tell others, but he has trouble doing so. In the first place, he can find no human words adequate to describe these unearthly episodes. He also finds that others scoff, so he stops telling other people. Still, the experience affects his life profoundly, especially his views about death and its relationship to life.

It is important to bear in mind that the above narrative is not meant to be a representation of any one person's experience. Rather, it is a 'model', a composite of the common elements found in the very many stories. I introduce it here only to give a preliminary, general idea of what a person who is dying may experience." (pp. 21-23)

"Even those who previously had some traditional conviction about the nature of the afterlife world seem to have moved away from it to some degree following their own brushes with death. In fact, in all the reports I have gathered, not one person has painted the mythological picture of what lies hereafter. No one has described the cartoonist's heaven of pearly gates, golden streets, and winged, harp-playing angels, nor a hell of flames and demons with pitchforks.

So, in most cases, the reward-punishment model of the afterlife is abandoned and disavowed, even by many who had been accustomed to thinking in those terms. They found, much to their amazement, that even when their most apparently awful and sinful deeds were made manifest before the being of light, the being responded not with anger and rage, but rather only with understanding, and even with humor In place of this old model, many seemed to have returned with a new model and a new understanding of the world beyond -- a vision which features not unilateral judgment, but rather cooperative development towards the ultimate end of self-realization." (pp. 97-98)

"Through all of my research, however, I have not heard a single reference to a heaven or hell anything like the customary picture to which we are exposed in this society." (p. 140)

"Rarely, someone in one of my audiences has proposed demonic explanations of near-death experiences, suggesting that the experiences were doubtless directed by inimical forces. As a response to such explanations, I can only say this: It seem to me that the best way of distinguishing between God-directed and Satan-directed experiences would be to see what the person involved does and says after his experience. God, I suppose, would try to get those to whom he appears to be loving and forgiving. Satan would presumably tell his servants to follow a course of hate and destruction. Manifestly, my subjects have come beck with a renewed commitment to follow the former course and disavow the latter. In the light of all the machinations which a hypothetical demon would have to have carried out in order to delude his hapless victim (and to what purpose?), he certainly has failed miserably -- as far as I can tell -- to make persuasive emissaries for his program!"(p. 156)

(PROFESSOR'S NOTE: Could Satan's purpose be to convince these persons that the Bible is not true when it speaks of judgment, heaven, hell, and the need of salvation from sin and hell through Christ? Would this not be a