

If A Man Die Shall He Live Again?

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vary. Nor does it ever encumber itself with what is wholly useless, for any known purpose. If heaven and hell exist, it must be from supreme necessity. Mankind has occupied the globe for a period so vast that the science of mathematics halts when it comes to computation by years. To accommodate the great collection of souls accumulated in that vast period, theology has invented two regions wholly outside of anything known; one is to hold the saints, the other the sinners, but as only a beggarly portion goes to heaven, hell gets the balance, and Satan's subjects far outnumber the Lord's. How can any sane person believe that nature, which does nothing not comprehensible by reason, wastes energy by taking charge of such useless realms, for no other purpose but to reward the saints and torment the sinners?

But, it is said that doubt of a future life is a dreadful, cheerless doctrine. People want to believe they are to live always. But is the doctrine really more cheerful, that death is not endless rest, that the sorrows and woes of life are perchance to be repeated on another field, and that we are to be tried for the frivolous acts and faults of this life at some future and uncertain period, so that no one can know his ultimate destiny until the celestial court passes sentence? Is not faith in such a cheerless prospect far more terrible than belief that death is the end of all that can harass or vex us?

All history proves that the more ignorant the nation or person, the more certainty prevails that souls will live after death. Ignorance is not troubled by the doubts that afflict intelligence. The fetish of ignorance corresponds with its credulity. The barbarian is far more certain of what he does not even pretend to know anything about, than the enlightened minds of intelligent investigators after a long research. Ghosts and the like are always in stock for the ignorant. That men can converse with spirits is an article of prime theological faith. It is blasphemy to inquire what proof exists that a soul or spirit survives the cessation of human life. Something has emerged from nothing, and the negation of a thing is evidence of its existence. It is prayed about, preached about, talked about as an assumed fact, and yet not an atom of evidence is offered to bolster up the assumption.

The theology of the Buddhist, a form of belief held by nearly one third of the human race, teaches that the final end of souls is extinction, and that heaven is attainment of this condition. That souls are no immortal, but must

go a few years' purgation in animal forms to expiate errors committed during life. But like all theologies, the Buddhists assume the existence of spirits as much easier than to prove it. Of all religious systems, this is the most philosophical and in accordance with reason. It deals but little with the supernatural, discards all miracles, and turns them over to the juggler, the mountebank and the Christian missionary. While Buddhism embodies many errors fastened on its pure doctrines by priests, it must be pronounced the most scientific system that has appeared on the globe. It is a religion without mysteries, and accepts life and its condition as nature has made them, without the addition of annexes, like heaven or hell, or the personality of devils and angels, to keep guard over these alleged abodes of departed spirits.—H. A. Tenney. In Freethought Magazine.

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