

If A Man Die Shall He Live Again?

(Continued.)

Mayer—"The soul is located in the medulla oblongata."

McCulloch says in his able work on the "Credibility of the Scriptures." "There is no word in the Hebrew language that signifies either soul or spirit in the technical sense in which we use the term, as implying something distinct from the body." In Gen. 2: 7 we read, "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." We would infer from this, that the soul is located in the nose. If man became a living soul after the breath went into his nostrils, he must have been a dead soul previous to the breathing.

The religions of nearly all civilized or uncivilized people may be said more or less to recognize the immortality of the soul. It is undoubtedly owing to christianity that the doctrine of immortality has become so commonly accepted. Every form of religion has its heaven, and pictures it with the beauties and riches which they enjoy in this world. Take the christians for instance—they are a very dissatisfied class, although they say they are the only ones who experience true happiness. Yet I have heard them call themselves worms and sing—"O land of rest for thee I sigh." The christian advocates the doctrine that the climax of joy is to be an angel, have feathers, and sit on a great white (washed) throne. They picture their heaven with the riches and good things of this world. We are told that heaven has gates of pearl, walls of jasper, streets of gold, with crowns of precious gems, great white robes, and harps with a thousand strings each etc.

One of the most piercing shrieks of christianity against unbelief is that when the unbeliever lies upon his death-bed, he is always afraid of death and calls upon the christian's Savior to come to his rescue. In the face of facts which are innumerable this cry has been kept up for scores and scores of years. It has been told of nearly all prominent unbelievers and believed by nearly all church people.

Only within the past few years has it been admitted by any pietist that any unbelievers die as serenely as the believer and that christianity is of no effect in smoothing the dying pillow. Physicians are beginning to let the truth be known, and the religious papers and their followers do not like their testimony. The latest professional man to bear testimony in this matter is Dr. Shrady, editor of the Medical Record, and the physician who attended Gen. Grant in his illness.

Dr. Shrady says, "My own experi-

ence, strange as it may seem, has taught me that christian people are as a rule the most afraid to die. I have found that the best christians are the most willing to stop out of heaven."

Man has observed that all animated nature, while exhibiting the active functions of life, is at the same time undergoing the transition of decay and death. Their children as well as animals will sicken and die, but is that the end? In their dreams they have seen their loved ones again. Hope has sprung up that the dead would live again.

It may be a consoling thought to some to think they will clasp hands with their loved ones beyond the river. But unfortunately there are sad defects in this cheerful view; no scientist in his laboratory or chemist with his crucible, has ever caged a soul separate and apart from the body. Outside of the brain there is no mentality, no volition, no love. There are many strange mental phenomena exhibited under the names of mesmerism, spiritualism and kindred themes, but as for a satisfactory knowledge of a future life, there is none.

I have been told that it is a consoling thought to one to stand by the open grave, while the clouds are falling over the coffin containing a deceased friend or relative, to have the blessed assurance that they will meet beyond the river. It might be to some, but who has that blessed assurance? I heard a person not long ago quoting St. Paul to establish the doctrine of immortality. If immortality is a scientific fact, why can't it be logically demonstrated by scientific methods? With all the aids of so-called Revelation, and all the vagaries of their expounders, the mystery of life and death have never been solved.

Is immortal life worth living? After due consideration, I have come to the conclusion that all those clamoring for eternal life do not realize all the dread possibilities it implies, and that if a fact, it might indeed even in the absence of a literal hell, become an appalling tragedy, and an actual condition of "eternal torment." Immortality—note well—implies not voluntary eternal existence which can be ended, at option, in a few thousand years, by sickness, age, poison, shot, shell, or dynamite; but on the contrary it implies, absolute compulsory eternal existence, regardless of our desires. It implies that the sentence is decreed over us, "Thou art doomed to live, live, live, eternally."

Though existence after thousands of millions of years may become monotonous and a burden, not even the blessed consolation of eventual relief by death will be ours—we must still live, live, live for countless millions of years, and then the

first round of the ladder of eternity will not yet have been climbed.

Immortality implies that after we have "hovered around the throne," or around our spirited friends for countless generations, "played harp" daily for ten thousand million years and progressed intellectually until all the mysteries of the universe are as plain as A B C, and conscious that nothing more of interest is in store for us during all eternity—and vainly longing for re-incarnation and another earth life, with its changes, charms, hopes and possibilities, all however vanished forever. Immortality implies that when this inevitable and terrible state of immortality overtakes us—when we have nothing more to live and hope for—when nothing but uneasiness, and privations stare us in the face, that then the only consolation in store for us, decreed by cruel fate is, "live, live, live! Thou art doomed to live forever and no appeal." And though yearning for relief and death this precious boon is eternally denied us.

Shakespeare says on death,

"Here lurks no treason;
Here no envy dwells;
Here grow no grudges;
Here are no storms;
No noise but silence
And eternal sleep."

When rest can become a condition of grief, peace a condition of horror, and sleep an appalling tragedy, then, but not till then, may mortal fear that which is in fact the greatest boon vouchsafed to man—Death. Tragedy, horror, pain, can only overtake the living never the dead. Death is simply nonexistence, negation, naught, and cannot possibly be a condition of grief or joy, sorrow or gladness, tragedy or comedy. If nonexistence after death is an appalling tragedy, nonexistence before death must be the same. In my opinion the eternity succeeding mans life is precisely the same as the eternity preceding his birth. As conditions of horror cannot exist for those who do not exist, the folly of postulating tragedy for the dead must be apparent.

"The present condition of the unborn and the dead are identical. We may as well lament over an appalling tragedy before existence as to lament over nonexistence after death."—(Wettstien). If a man has a soul, and it is of vital importance to him, it ought to be so logically demonstrated that "a man though he be a fool should not err there in."

Let some soul-wise individual answer the following questions:

Where does the soul come from? Is the soul an entity or a nonentity? What is the chemical analysis of the soul? When does the soul enter the body before or after birth? Where is the soul located? If the soul is located in all parts of the body, what becomes of that part of

the soul contained in an amputated part of a living body? Is the soul an organization independent of the body? Does the soul develop as the body develops? Is the soul of an infant the same size as that of an adult? Is the soul of a Caucasian the same color as that of a Negro? Is the soul of an idiot the same as that of an intelligent person? When does the soul leave the body at death, or at the resurrection day? If the soul leaves the body at death where does it sojourn while waiting for the resurrection morn? If a living person was placed in an air tight jar and the jar sealed hermetically, at death how would the soul make its exit? After leaving the body, what direction does the soul pursue to reach its final destination? If an old man died at noon, and an old woman at midnight would the souls go in opposite directions? If so how long will it take for the old woman to catch up with the old man? Where and what distance from the earth is the soul land located? Is the soul sensible or insensible to pain? Of what shape is the soul? Does the soul retain its sex?

We have five infallible witnesses to prove the existence of matter, namely—hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling and feeling. By these five witnesses can we prove the existence and the component parts of matter. But by the aid of these five witnesses of a soul?

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George W. Foote, as reported in the Truth Seeker, just before leaving for home, gave the following admirable advice to American Freethinker:-

"Keep your Free Thought organization, free from all other questions. To add, in this respect, is to take away. The more planks you have in your platform, the fewer people can stand on it, for what a man objects to is as important (to him) as what he agrees with. Politicians know this well. They go in for a simple issue. Let us imitate them where they are wise. This does not interfere with individual freedom. Those who have special views of their own, in politics or sociology, should advocate them on their own responsibility, or through organizations formed to promote such objects. One thing at a time is the policy of wisdom and success."

If that advice had been practiced by Liberals in this country for the last ten years there would have been a powerful Secular National Society in this country that would have commanded the respect of every intelligent person.

The dragging of every irrelevant question has been the barrier to our success. Let us learn by experience.—Free Thought Magazine.