

# LIFE AFTER DEATH?

At eighty-nine I probably give a lot more thought to this than you do. But I'm sure we share the desire not to die, at least while feeling well and having more to do.

As to an afterlife, we probably also share the desire to meet again with those we have loved and lost, and would like to think all of the terrible injustices and cruelties which have afflicted millions in this life were somehow going to be made up to them.

Speaking for myself I would like to know I will not be separated forever from my wife of fifty-eight years. Although in fact, we have parted every night of those fifty-eight years—proof that a parting into unconsciousness does not hurt.

But it is especially because *I would like* all that, that I should be skeptical about believing it. It is a universal trait in human beings to look for reasons to believe what we want to be true while discounting the reasons not to believe. But you know the world does not work that way.

## Dying

I most surely fear the countless miserable and painful ways there are of dying. I would like it to be just an instantaneous loss of consciousness. But again, what *"I would like"* has nothing to do with what it will be.

## Being Dead

I do not fear being dead. I think and hope that being dead will be exactly as it was before I was born. What I remember of that was *nothing*. How bad is that? Just how bad would that be for you?

Try a thought experiment. Suppose you somehow knew for a fact that non-existence was going to be your destiny. Would you cease to love those you love? Would you cease to enjoy what you now enjoy? Would flowers and sunsets be less beautiful? Would you no longer want to live? If so, try to tell yourself exactly why? *What* would you miss exactly—or even approximately?

Whatever or whoever you name, it can't be so. Non-existence means there would be no *you* to know.

## Living Forever

Christianity teaches you *will* definitely live forever. But there is very considerable question as to whether it will be in Heaven or in Hell.

Jesus said the way to salvation was "narrow" and "few" would make it, while "broad is the path that leads to destruction" and "many" will take it. If just two groups equal 100%, the percent of the "many" must be at *least* over 50%—even 70% would not stretch the meaning of "many".

The Holy Bible says those that go to Hell "will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night..." (Revelation 14:9-11)

All that is quite enough to *prefer* Heaven over Hell, but it surely suggests it is very unwise to *assume* you will meet Jesus' standards. "...Jesus said to his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24)

**Are you so sure you have "denied yourself" enough to meet Jesus' very high standards?**

What about all of those you love and have loved, will all of them make it too? You can't imagine you could be happy in Heaven if you knew that one of them was writhing in Hell. But the theologians tell you that is because you don't understand how you will be transformed in Heaven. You will no longer be *you* as you know yourself.

**In Heaven it will not bother you for a minute to know your Father, Mother, siblings, spouse, son, daughter or others that you loved are in Hell forever.**

Instead you will have *new insight* that Hell is exactly what they deserve! Who says so? The priests/preachers—who don't know a thing more about what follows death than you do.

It is not for nothing that the Church filled in the horrible details of the torments of Hell in art and warnings while leaving it to you to write your own ticket about Heaven. They painted vivid pictures designed to terrorize you about Hell but were wise enough to let you fill in the details about Heaven.

How would you describe, in a lot more detail than the priests/preachers do, any condition *you would want* to last for an eternity? Since "eternity" is beyond all comprehension, how about a thousand years, or a million years, or do you think you would *really want* it to last for billions of years?

"Saint" Paul says you will get the same body back – he didn't tell us about its age and condition. Which age would you *want*? Most will want a younger body than they had at death, but what about memories—they are all you have left of your experiences? They are recorded *physically* in the brain in your body.

**If you name any age earlier than at your death you will be wiping away all the rest of your life. And that would mean that the "you" who had those experiences, would not live again; that "you" would be dead forever!**

Try to imagine daily life in Heaven. What could be of interest day after day *forever*? Will there be any striving, any accomplishment, any humor, any music any excitement?

**No human being on earth can answer that question. But we do know what we remember before we were born.**

How does spending all eternity praising God in the glow of his radiance strike you? A friend of mine remembers an old hymn from his Lutheran church which—no doubt inadvertently, but quite starkly—points to the awful boredom problem:

**"Father of Jesus Love Divine,  
what rapture will it be, prostrate before Thy throne  
to lie and gaze on Thee."**

"To lie and gaze on thee!" Can you imagine how *transformed* you will have to be to want to do that—or anything—forever?

In previous messages, I have spent nearly 15,000 words giving all the proofs I know why the Christian religion, invented by men, is immoral—even evil. The first 102 said it all and said it best:

## GREATER EVIL IS BEYOND THE IMAGINATION OF MAN

than that God, perfect in every way, all-powerful, needing nothing, knowing everything past, future and even *possible*; a loving, just, merciful and forgiving Father; would summarily create, from innocent nothingness, creatures capable of suffering, *knowing in advance*, which of those he will consign to *suffer eternally*—as promised by Jesus!

No act of his creature-victims could justify this verdict of unsurpassable hate, injustice and endless mercilessness. All in all, the very definition of unforgiving.

*Nothing* more is needed, though volumes provide it, to prove that such a God is not and never was, except as the sick creation of man.

But nothing I've said can compare to what Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899) said:

## IS IT NECESSARY THAT HEAVEN SHOULD BORROW ITS LIGHT FROM THE GLARE OF HELL?

Infinite punishment is infinite cruelty, endless injustice, immortal meanness. To worship an eternal jailer hardens, debases, and pollutes even the vilest soul. While there is one sad and breaking heart in the universe, no good being can be perfectly happy.

Against the heartlessness of the Christian religion every grand and tender soul should enter solemn protest. The God of Hell should be held in loathing, contempt and scorn. A God who threatens eternal pain should be hated, not loved—cursed, not worshiped. A heaven presided over by such a God must be below the lowest hell.

I want no part in any heaven in which the saved, the ransomed and redeemed will drown with shouts of joy the cries and sobs of hell—in which happiness will forget misery, where the tears of the lost only increase laughter and double bliss.

The idea of hell was born of ignorance, brutality, fear cowardice, and revenge. This idea testifies that our remote ancestors were the lowest beasts. Only from dens, lairs, and caves, only from mouths filled with cruel fangs, only from hearts of fear and hatred, only from the conscience of hunger and lust, only from the lowest and most debased could come this cruel, heartless and bestial of all dogmas.

I would not for my life destroy one star of human hope, but I want it so that when a poor woman rocks the cradle and sings a lullaby to the dimpled darling, she will not be compelled to believe that ninety-nine chances in a hundred she is raising kindling wood for hell.

I would not for anything blot out the faintest star that shines in the horizon of human despair, nor in the sky of human hope; but I will do what I can to get that infinite shadow out of the heart of man.

## ETERNAL SLEEP IS BETTER THAN ETERNAL PAIN.

Eternal punishment is eternal revenge, and can be inflicted only by an eternal monster.

It seems to me that the heart of the Christian ought to burst into an efflorescence of joy when he becomes satisfied that the Bible is only the work of man; that there is no such place as perdition—that there are no eternal flames—that men's souls are not to suffer everlasting pain – that it is all insanity and ignorance and fear and horror.

I should think that every good and tender soul would be delighted to know that there is no Christ who can say to any human being—to any father, mother, or child—"Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."