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INTRODUCTION

IN 1928, Sir Arthur Keith, a distinguished British anatomist and anthropologist, gave a public address in which he denied the survival of the soul after death, which erupted in a media firestorm, with mountains of Letters to the Editors of different newspapers pouring in, pamphlets on both sides of the issue being suddenly rushed into production, and certainly no small amount of argument around family dinner tables and in the drawing room parties of London society.

The *Daily News* of London decided to host an impromptu symposium on the subject, inviting various contributors—among them, G.K. Chesterton.

In this packet, we encounter many of these contributions, including Chesterton's own, of course, along with one by Hilaire Belloc, and even a piece by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Another correspondent was Robert Blatchford, whose religious differences with G.K.C. are well known. His piece, however, has not been included among the selections below.

Adding to the fun, during this newspaper series, George Bernard Shaw "butted in" with a letter to the editor which provoked an exchange back-and-forth with Chesterton. These letters are produced below where they would chronologically have fallen.

I have also interjected some of the newspaper advertisements from the time, to help give a feeling for the thing and to remind us, astounding as it is, that this exchange, on *this topic*, was taking place in a leading daily paper!

While it was infeasible to reproduce the entire debate, a PDF document of all the pieces has been assembled, which shows the entire Daily News page for each day of the exchange. This document, if it is of interest, can be found at our website at phillygkc.org/where-are-the-dead.

In the present packet, a final piece is included last, an afterthought by Chesterton from the following month in *The Illustrated London News*.

Joe Grabowski

Philadelphia Chesterton Society

October 23, 2025 | Drexel Hill, PA

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette Editorial Staff (Thursday, May 31, 1928)

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

THE ETERNAL QUESTION FROM A NEW STANDPOINT.

Answered By Brilliant Band of Thinkers.

TOMORROW, and for some weeks thereafter, the leader page of the "Daily News" (the page opposite this one) will be the platform for the most frank and impressive discussion ever conducted in a daily newspaper on the eternal question of Life after Death.

Sir Arthur Keith, the distinguished scientist, recently said: "Death is the End of All." This blunt declaration lit the beacons of controversy over the length and breadth of the land, and it brought to the "Daily News," among innumerable other letters, one of a very remarkable nature from an ordinary layman. He asked for light on a thing that puzzled him: If the dead live again Where Are They?

It was not without some misgiving that we submitted his letter to leaders of thought in religion, science, literature and philosophy, and asked if they would reply to it. The novel directness of the question might well have been thought capable of giving pain here or offence there. But the response showed that those best qualified to judge that a discussion of immortality from this new angle was in no way out of place.

Among the brilliant band of thinkers who have agreed to take part in this absorbing inquiry... are:

Bishop Knox

Sir Arthur Keith

Mr. Arnold Bennett

Mr. Robert Blatchford

Rev. R.J. Campbell

Sir Oliver Lodge

Prof. Julian Huxley

Lady Southwark

Rev. T. R. Williams

Mr. J. A. Spender

Mr. Hilaire Belloc

Dr. Henry Townsend

Mr. G. K. Chesterton

Mr. Hugh Walpole

Mr. Robert Lynd

Lord Gorell

Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard

George Birmingham

Mr. T. R. Glover

Prof. H. J. Spenser

THE QUESTION?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY NEWS."

Sir,—Will you permit me as an ordinary man in the street to say my say in your columns on the subject of survival after death, and to make an appeal for honest guidance? I can assure you, sir, that Sir Arthur Keith's blunt statement that the death of the body is the death of the individual spirit has spread dismay among those who are comfortable believers in personal immortality and provoked painful controversies in town and village to a degree not in the least adequately reflected in the columns of the daily Press.

As I was coming up to town yesterday by the morning express from Taunton I listened to a conversation between two well-nourished men of business, one of whom had been reading a short newspaper letter in which a woman protested with pitiful impotence against what she evidently regarded as Sir Arthur Keith's blasphemous utterance. These two men took a different line. They thought it was stupid and unnecessary that any scientist should seek to destroy the simple faith of religious-minded persons by dogmatic statements that could not be proved. Then one of them, in a sudden access of candour, said to the other: "For my part I have always had an instinct that in one form or another I shall survive the grave; but what I have never been able to understand is where we all go after death, if indeed we go anywhere."

It was more or less a casual reflection, which yet seemed to me to possess a much deeper practical significance than the Christian philosophy admits. Where are the mighty hosts of the dead? Is it a foolish question? To me, as a humble but life-long member of a Christian community, it appears to be one of supreme importance, if also of supreme difficulty. The population of the earth to-day is round about 1,800,000,000. According to a rough calculation the average annual death rate is about 17 per 1,000 per annum: probably that is an underestimate. But it means that at least 30,000,000 persons die every year. Man has walked the earth, if the biologists and anthropologists are to be believed, for at least half a million years.

Accept literally the purely Biblical descent of man, and allow for the rapid increase of population in recent historical periods, and then picture if you can the army of countless billions that even now, with the vital pulse of the world in which mortals dwell as strong as ever, have passed over to the other side. Every time a human being dies he drops into that abyss of numbers—almost too deep for thought. What happens to the poor, bewildered soul? Where is the place of the little child in that universe of the dead? Where and in what manner is the eternal army assembled and disposed?

Can we indeed dismiss such questions as a trivial irrelevance or be content to mumble vague words about the unknown dimension? The modern spiritualist, greatly daring, claims at a word to call from the abyss the one voice that he longs to hear—friendly, matter-of-fact, soothing and unafraid. And the chemist and biologist laugh in their sleeves at his "magic." The Christian minister discourses with reverence but obscurely on the never-ending joys of the

celestial host, of the glorious mansions it inhabits. But he never explains. He never goes into details. He never advances an intelligent or constructive theory. He may give the comfort of hope, of blind faith, but never the consolation of conviction and understanding faith to a bereaved lover, a sorrowing parent. He shirks the issue.

I am not impressed at all by Sir Arthur Keith's limited physical view of the spirit of man. But like many others I am sharply impressed by the fact that Christian ministers habitually shirk the issue of the scope and nature of life after death. Is there no means, sir, by which the leaders of religious thought in this country, many of whom I respect and admire, can be induced to meet the issue boldly, to face up to the problems that consciously or unconsciously tease and sadden the hearts of millions of Christians, and to explain in rational terms the faith that is in them?

If they continue to evade their responsibility—if Bishop Barnes, for instance, discovers more profit in his chemical analyses of the consecrated elements, or Rev. R. J. Campbell prefers still to contemplate his own nebulous doctrine of the "immanence" of God in all things—are there not leaders of philosophic thought outside the churches, men of intellect and of profound spiritual experience, men of science quite as distinguished and impressive as Sir Arthur Keith, who would be willing to take up the challenge? Perhaps, after all, an appeal from the priest to Einstein would not be to imagine entirely a vain thing.

Every man seeks within himself to create his own image of God, his own conception of the life of the world to come. Is it strange that so many ordinary decent people should come to a negative or a desperate conclusion when the religious professors leave them to pursue, virtually unaided, their crude and imperfect visions of a possible hereafter?

I am just one of those, sir, who have been left well, or ill, alone.

Yours etc.,

A. J. C.

* * *

THE UNSPEAKABLE GLORY OF ETERNITY

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette, Right Rev. E. A. Knox, D.D. (Friday, June 1, 1928)

WHO'S WHO TODAY? BISHOP KNOX.

It is more than seven years since our distinguished contributor retired from the Bishopric of Manchester owing to failing health, but, although an octogenarian, he has lost none of those talents which made him one of the most powerful forces on the Episcopal Bench.

The son of a clergyman, he was educated at St. Paul's and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, became a Fellow of Merton, and was Rector of St. Philip's, Birmingham, being virtually Bishop of that city before going

to Manchester in 1903. His striking sincerity as a preacher, the success of his mission work and his industry in raising for the building of new churches, made him the hero of that diocese during the 17 years he spent there.

One of the most prominent of Evangelicals, he played an important part in the campaign against the revision of the Prayer Book, organising a gigantic petition and an appeal to Parliamentary electors. His courage has brought him admiration, but the affection with which he is everywhere regarded springs largely from a genial humour which never fails.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

THE UNSPEAKABLE GLORY OF ETERNITY.

The First Article of The Great Series on The After Life.

This question, seriously asked, demands a serious answer. In view of the absolutely innumerable multitudes who have passed away from earth, and are hourly passing away, the bewildered soul inquires, "Is there any region in the Universe where all these ever increasing multitudes can be received?"

Now there are preliminary reflections which have some bearing on the inquiry, though they do not dispose of it. So far as we can go back in history we constantly meet with a reverent, or even exaggeratedly honourable disposal of the dead. While multitudes of bodies have been disposed of by funeral pyres, by cannibalism, by the waters of the deep and by its denizens, still number of dead bodies entombed in sepulchres defies all calculation. It would be incredible, if we did not know of it as fact.

Many of these sepulchres have been undisturbed for millenniums. it is suggested as a preliminary reflection that if man has been able in the tiny space of this earth to find room for so great a multitude of bodies, when we pass from earth to the infinite regions of space, and remember that spirits have no dimensions, so far as we know, there is no difficulty about their reception arising from the mere fact of their numbers.

Still this answer to the proposed inquiry would be a very superficial answer. We want to go far deeper into the question than any measurement of space will carry us. We want to get down to realities.

To do so we must first dispose of the unrealities forced upon us by the constitution of our minds. Our minds compel us to accept what our senses report as realities. Again our minds are so constituted that we receive these reports under conditions of time and space. But these conditions have no reality in themselves, nor is the visible world more than an appearance presented by our senses. We are aware that behind the eyes through which we see, the touch through which we handle, there is the "I," to whom the reports are made, the "I" who uses the machinery of the body, the "I" who knows itself distinct from the body and all the reports of the senses. That strange invisible hut overruling "I" is the one Reality before which all that belongs to time and space passes. For the reception, for the housing of that "I" no space is needed. We

cannot think of it in terms of time and space. We believe it to be independent of them all and superior to them all.

The existence of this "I" leads us to believe in the other great Reality, the "I" of the Universe, that is God. He is to the Universe what "I" am to the world and to my body. So persuaded we look upon death as a release from the unreal into the world of reality, the confronting of myself with God, undisturbed by the conditions of time, and space, and sense, which intervene between us.

All that is best in me, Truth, Love, Purity, will be face to face with Absolute Truth, Love, Purity. Only it will not be a meeting of abstract qualities with abstract qualities, but of Personalities with Personalities. Moreover, my faith as a Christian teaches me that whereas this meeting of the finite with the Infinite would be of necessity intolerable and unfruitful, there in that awful Presence I shall find Finite and Infinite united in the Godhead in the Person of Jesus Christ. I shall be there not confronting the Eternal in my own merits, or on the strength of my own capacity, but as I am in Christ Jesus.

In this anticipation there is no vagueness, no shirking of difficulties by use of conventional phrases. Experience is behind this anticipation. I know even here, in spite of all the hindrance of unrealities there has been communion between God and myself. His Spirit in me has revealed to me the Fatherhood of God in Christ Jesus.

The Love that passes knowledge, the rest that comes from childlike trust, the peace and calm that reigns in my soul beneath the ruffled billows of earth's fortunes and misfortunes—these things are not hallucinations, but the loftiest heights in my experience, myself at my very best.

Just because this communion with God is unconditioned by time and space, I have no fear of its being cut off by separation from the body, or removal from this world. I have also the promise resting on the Resurrection that this "I" will not be a vague impersonal or unreal being, but that whatever of personality attaches to the distinction of body from body will be mine in respect of a spiritual body.

Into the mysteries so suggested I dare not intrude. They suggest a communion not only of myself with God, but of myself with all who are sharers of this same life in God. I seem to see Eternity not as a selfish beatitude, but as the communion of countless hosts, a world to which all the vast multitude of stellar bodies will be insignificant in number, an ocean in which every separate wave is lit up by the eternal Sun, and reflects its unspeakable glory.

* * *

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette (Saturday, June 2, 1928)

WHO'S WHO TODAY? ARNOLD BENNET.

To-day's contribution to the "Where are the Dead" series is of peculiar interest because, of all modern writers, the author is the one to whom life has the strongest savour. The things that interest him are without number, and, for this reason, there can be no one to whom the problem of the end of life has greater significance.

It was because of his gift of seeing "a patch of life, dull enough to the unobservant, as a thrilling spectacle" that he entered the first rank of novelists with "The Old Tale" and "Clayhanger." For his success he owes something to the fact that he was born in Hanley, the son of a solicitor, but he came south as a journalist when a young man; and "Riceyman Steps" showed that he could do for an obscure corner of London what he did for the Five Towns.

In spite of his serious novels and plays, he has remained, as he himself has said, a journalist. Liberal not only in politics but in every branch of thought, he has the sanity, clarity and lack of sentimentality which always win the ears of those who prize common sense.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

This is a subject upon which people feel so deeply that those who try to deal with it should use the greatest care in order as far as possible not to wound susceptibilities. And they should also remember that no answer to the question can be final. Every answer is merely the vague surmise of a particular individual at a particular moment of his mental growth.

We should begin with the limitations of the human mind. There are things we cannot conceive. First: We cannot conceive the act of creation, the making of something out of nothing. We cannot take an empty space and then imagine how anything can come there that previously did not exist in any form anywhere.

Second: Similarly we cannot conceive the act of annihilation.

Third: We cannot conceive "spirit" without "matter." In other words we cannot conceive "soul" without a material form. We can conceive spirit as something extremely thin, subtle, gaseous—a poet has likened souls to flames going up to heaven—but a material form of some kind the soul must have for us before we can conceive it at all.

Assume the apparition of a ghost, and we assume the ghost has materiality. If it had not we could not see it, for the reason that vision is the result of **physical** reactions on the organs of sight.

Now let us suppose that a soul at death permanently leaves the body—of course, in some material form: that, at any rate, is conceivable. And let us face the difficulties of the supposition. The arithmetical difficulty has been well stated by an able correspondent, "A. J. C." Every year over the earth a number of souls equal to the population of France would be

liberated and would depart. The number of disembodied souls must therefore be enormous; it must amount to billions, and it is continuously increasing. Correspondingly, the amount of vital force available for the creation of new souls must be continuously decreasing—like the beat of the sun.

The question arises: Where is the vast and ever-increasing assemblage of departed souls? If it is on or near the surface of the earth it must cover the same in a packed layer of some thickness. So far as our power of conception goes it must have some physical qualities and it must be somewhere. Where is it? No answer.

Theorists have talked about the "fourth dimension," ingenious persons who argue that besides the three dimensions of length, breadth and depth (as exemplified by a box), there may be a fourth, and therefore that bodies which exist in four-dimensional space may exist around us, through us, in us, without us being aware of the same.

Of course, there may be four dimensions—there may be forty—and mathematicians have done sums about four dimensions and novelists written romances about them; but nobody has ever yet explained what the fourth dimension may be, because nobody has ever yet physically conceived it. Hence we may leave aside the fourth-dimensional explanation of the habitat of disembodied souls as being completely incomprehensible to the human intelligence.

There remains the theory of reincarnation. If dead souls are accommodated with newly created bodies, then by this time the great majority of bodies are occupied by old souls, and again the majority of those old souls must have occupied numerous different bodies in turn. The evidence that this is so does not go beyond an occasional imperfect bodily or spiritual resemblance between a living man and a dead man. Such evidence is acutely inadequate, and may, I think, be ignored. Moreover, the theory would cut across principles of heredity the truth of which is almost universally admitted. Still, it cannot be ruled out as utterly inconceivable.

But the question of the habitat of the dead seems to me to be far less interesting than the question: What are the dead doing? Is each dead soul existing solitary—somewhere? Improbable. If not, then there must be some sort of social organisation of the dead, and it would be contrary to all our ideas to suppose that this organisation is standing still, is not developing in some process of evolution. If there is no progress among dead souls, what is the Creator's purpose in keeping them at a standstill? No answer.



We are forced therefore to the conclusion that the colossal community of the dead, endowed with physical attributes (without physical attributes we cannot even conceive these citizen-souls), is morally and socially progressing somewhere. Again, and more insistently, where? In the ether, on no physical footing? Almost inconceivable. On our own globe? Impossible. On some other globe? Equally impossible, for we cannot imagine how souls with physical attributes could cross the wastes of the ether. They may be able to do so, but as we cannot imagine how they do so, the theory ceases to interest speculative thinkers, and must be excluded from the region of practical thought.

To my mind (which is, of course, only one mind at a particular stage of its development) all the above theorising seems fanciful, and is merely the fruit of a strong desire to believe that those whom we have loved and who are departed have not ceased to exist. I much prefer the theory so clearly and so succinctly stated by Sir Arthur Keith, in his address at Manchester University on May 9 last, that matter and spirit are indivisible and that when the body loses its organised vitality what we call the soul loses its organised vitality too, and all is in time resolved into its original atoms.

But atoms are indestructibly alive; they are the most alive things we know; they probably comprise the potentialities of all intelligence and all progress, according to the manner in which they combine re-combine. Nothing can be destroyed—no quality of mind, no beauty, no kindliness. The elements of that which we have loved will in some new and probably finer form re-appear to us or to our descendants. Everything is from everlasting to everlasting.

And in the ordinary sense of the word there are no dead.

I well realise that the theory of the inseparableness of body and soul is only a theory, and that it can be attacked by arguments many of which are now unanswerable and some of which will be for ever unanswerable. But every other theory concerning death is and always will be in the same case. I am as convinced as I am of anything that we will never know what death signifies and involves. (And we shall never cease to try to know.) It is best for us that we should never know. If we knew, the importance of what we call life might diminish to nothing, and the scheme of evolution would be most gravely disorganized. Human ignorance of the future is more than bliss: it is an ordinance of the divine wisdom.

* * *

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette (Monday, June 4, 1928)

[No "Who's Who?" introduction accompanied this piece.]

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

ON THE ROUT OF REASON

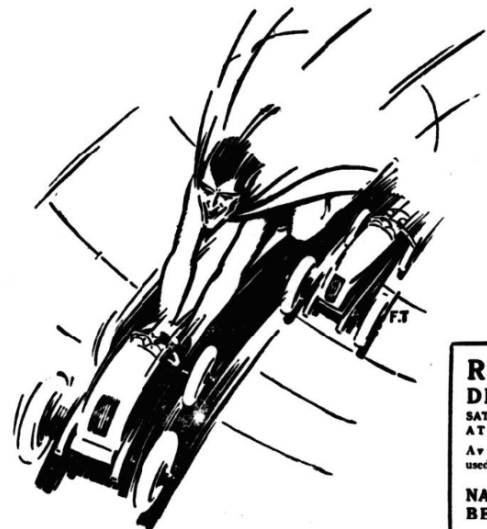
G. K. Chesterton

Many people seem to be wondering what will become of the human soul in another world. I am wondering what has become of the human mind in this world. I am especially wondering what has become of the human power of reason in this age. Hume or Huxley, or any of the rationalists who were really rational, could never have kept a straight face in the presence of the preposterous confusions of thought that are now called arguments by Sir Arthur Keith or the Bishop of Birmingham. It is as if the brain itself had broken down. An inquirer writes to the "Daily News" gravely asking how there can be room in eternity for the souls enjoying immortality. Apparently he has read the great text about "many mansions"; and supposes they are all limited and numbered like Artillery Mansions or Overstrand Mansions. I do not know how many commodious flats, with kitchen and bathroom, he will permit Omnipotence to erect, before it becomes necessary to announce in the headlines that there is a Housing Problem in Heaven. That is the sort of philosophical doubt which we are apparently called upon to "meet" nowadays. The example is extraordinary enough; but I really think it is every bit as intelligent as Bishop Barnes on the Sacrament or Sir Arthur Keith on the Soul.

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unduly modern or offensively up-to-date. He defends the Darwinian tradition because it is tradition; and a great national tradition. But when Mr. Belloc quoted Vialleton against it, Sir Arthur Keith calmly told him that there was no such remark in Vialleton at all. Whereupon it was discovered, to the wonder of the world, that Sir Arthur had (apparently) never even heard of Vialleton's recent and famous book, and had read nothing later than an old text-book. I do not blame him for that; I never take the trouble to read the latest literature myself: but I do not go out of my way to give somebody else the lie about it. The same romantic taste for lingering in the shades of old libraries, which I share with Sir Arthur, has doubtless kept him loyal to the parable of the soul as a little flame. So he is still measuring eternity, as Alfred the Great measured time, by candles. But even a leading scientist might by this time have heard of electricity. If we must have material parables, in an age that has lost the power of abstract thought, the more modern parable would obviously be much the closer of the two. Of course, such analogies are inadequate anyhow, as any thinker could have seen in the time of Anselm, if not of Alfred.

Asking for them is like asking, as did the Mad Hatter or the March Hare, for a drawing of a muchness. But there are metaphors and metaphors; and the candle is a very bad metaphor. The flame is not the principle of life in a candle; it is only some of its elements mixed with air and presenting another form to the senses. But suppose there were something in a candle that made it jump out of the candlestick, dance on the table, run round the room and hit a muddle-headed materialist over the head. We might then begin to ask what was the principle of activity in the candle. If the candle then tumbled down and remained inert as before, we might well ask where principle of activity had gone to.

We should not have the remotest reason, if we were rational, for saying that its principle of activity could not be active anywhere else. On the electric parallel, for instance, the same battery might be making a three-legged stool dance in the next room. But of course the parallel is only a parable. We cannot describe mind in terms of matter; if only for the reason that we cannot even perceive matter except by mind. That was why Huxley, in the days when agnostics could think, said that if he had to choose between denying mind or matter, he would deny matter. Huxley would have said, of course, that he did not know whether the soul survived. If you had told him that "a medical man" could certify that it did not survive (as Sir Arthur suggests) he would have enjoyed a very hearty laugh.

What troubles me is not that a very able anthropologist doubts immortality, or even that he denies immortality; thousands of men, wise and foolish, have denied or doubted it from the beginning of time. Generally, though not invariably, it was the wise who doubted and the fools who denied. What troubles me is that the denial is no longer rational; that any rationalist could see that it is not rational. Nobody needs a medical man to tell him that a dead man is materially as dead as mutton. Nobody need believe a medical man, any more than a muffin-man, or any other kind of man, upon the totally different metaphysical point of whether the abstract

principle of energy has ceased or been withdrawn. The whole of that question of religious belief begins where all this leaves off; but it begins on a clear ground of agnosticism. Sir Arthur's ground is not clear and it is not agnostic. There was exactly the same muddle about the position of the Bishop of Birmingham when he uttered his celebrated howler on the subject of the sacramental philosophy. I am not here dealing with it considered as an attack on my religion. I am dealing with it as an attack on everybody's reason; or rather, as an example of the weakening of the reason, so that it cannot even attack. When Bishop Barnes suggested that chemical investigation might test Transubstantiation, it was no occasion for the skies to fall, as at a sublime blasphemy. It was simply that the solid earth of reason and common sense, on which we all walk, gave way under us with a faint crash. It was the human mind that had collapsed.

So far as that goes, it is merely a coincidence that the Bishop's argument was urged against a point of faith, which I myself believe to be a fact. The Bishop's argument would be quite as silly, if it were used against something that really is a fable. It would be so, for instance, if it were an ordinary fairy-tale. Somebody says: "The prince is enchanted under the form of a parrot in a golden cage." The proper answer of the sceptic, according to his degree of prudence, is either "Bosh!" or "There is no proof of that," or "You may believe in magic, but I do not," or "I have no reason to think that a princess can turn into a parrot." All these answers are reasonable in their relative degrees. But suppose somebody says. "I will test it; I will count all the feathers and find out if they look like feathers; I will show you that it flies like a parrot, screams like a parrot, claws and clutches like a parrot..." Even in a fairy-tale the other man would have the sense to say: "Of course it does, idiot! I said she had turned into a parrot; and you are only repeating what I said. I think it is you that have turned into a parrot."

This is no place in which to explain why some of us hold that even fairy-tales are only false or fantastic shadows thrown by mysterious realities; and that such a mysterious reality can be present, under the appearances of the Sacred Elements. I need only say that anybody who really believes it fully understands how some people do not believe it. But whether or no anybody believes it, it is absurd talk of anybody disproving it. All that any analysis could possibly prove is that the appearances continue to appear. But it was we who said, from the very beginning, that the appearances do continue to appear. Our doctrine concerns the metaphysical reality inside all appearances; and rational people either ignore such metaphysical things altogether, or reason about them as their own metaphysical plane. It is as if a man were to talk about digging up a cube root with a spade. As I say, the old lucid agnostics would have said it was impossible ultimately to define the mind. But they did not find it impossible to use the mind; and that is rapidly becoming the more pressing peril.

In short, we seem to have fallen to an altogether lower level of scepticism. Men are endlessly repeating (and that repetition is itself a mark of the degeneration) that this or that has shaken the foundations of faith. What I complain of is that it has shaken the foundations of

doubt. It has altered, and very much lowered, the grounds even of unbelief. The criticisms sound like the cries of children or savages, compared with the wary and well-poised consistency of some of the old masters of negation. A Hottentot might offer to cut open a wafer and see whether it a god. A Choctaw might say of a medicine man what is quoted above about a medical man. There must be something very queer and deleterious at work in the world, when this unreason saps, as it does sap, the minds of very acute and brilliant men, as well as those merely receptive. I am not at all disturbed about the future of the Faith; but I am disturbed about the future of the doubters, and the prospect of such very unphilosophic doubt; in which the very blasphemies have grown feeble and even stark nothing cannot remain unclouded or unconfused.

* * *

MY IDEA OF SURVIVAL

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette (Tuesday, June 5, 1928)

WHO'S WHO TODAY? PROF. JULIAN HUXLEY.

Professor Julian Hurley's reply to the question "Where are the dead?" is particularly interesting, not only because literary ability and scientific authority are joined in him, but also because he is a grandson of Thomas Huxley, who has been called "Darwin's Bulldog."

Professor of Zoology at London University since 1925, he was Assistant-Professor at the Rice Institute, Houston, Texas, when war broke out, and in 1919 became a Fellow of New College and Senior Demonstrator in Zoology in Oxford University. He can make scientific research interesting to an audience or to readers as can no one else, and, in fact, has shown how science can be made "popular" without becoming shallow or superficial in the process.

The son of Dr. Leonard Huxley and brother of Mr. Aldous Huxley, he has inherited also the literary talents of his family and won the Newdigate Prize while up at Balliol.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

MY IDEA OF SURVIVAL.

The only correct answer to the question, "Where are the Dead?" consists, like the question, of four words, "We do not know." But man is so made that he is always most interested in those things about which he has no certain knowledge. and it is reasonable in every age to discuss such problems in the light of current thought.

But before entering upon my main task, I would like to correct one common misapprehension that came to light in the letter which started this discussion. "A. J. C.," in the "Daily News" of May 31, writes of two businessmen he heard talking in the train, that "they thought it was stupid and unnecessary that any scientist should seek to destroy the simple faith of religious-minded persons by dogmatic statements that could not be proved."

I wonder how many people have reflected that every day thousands of "dogmatic statements that cannot be proved" are made by "religious-minded persons," which wound and injure the faith of the scientist and damage the great cause for which he is fighting?

For the scientist, if he is worth his salt, believes in Truth, and not merely truth of logic or so-called truth of intention or artistic feeling (which is rather rightness than truth), but truth laboriously built upon fact, tested by observation in Experiment, and capable of verification by whoever will go to the trouble.

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To assert as true doctrines like the Last Judgment, or the existence of Hell, or the sudden creation of the world by a personal God (let alone such now generally-abandoned and obviously false details as Noah's Ark, or the Garden of Eden, or the Star in the East), is to insult the scientists' idea of Truth, whose worship is an essential of whatever religion he may have, and should be an essential of any high religion; and the same holds good of any similar dogmatic assertion about personal immortality.

To proclaim the existence of this on insufficient evidence is just as offensive to Truth and the lovers of Truth as to deny its existence on insufficient evidence.

Our possible answers to the question, "Where are the dead?" of course depend upon the kind of answer we give to the greater question of whether we survive death, and, if so, in what form. Let us remember that several different kinds of answer have been given to this greater question. Most primitive peoples, in days before the ideas "body" and "mind" were properly analysed, and when mind or spirit was ascribed to every phenomenon of Nature, thought that men survive in a pale, shadowy, not at all desirable, form of existence.

Life after death, both to the ancient Hebrews and the ancient Greeks, was a very poor sort of life. Some primitive peoples imagine that only certain elect men survive, while quite a number seek to improve the condition of the dead man in the next world by burying food and implements and ornaments with him—even by sacrificing beasts of burden and slaves to attend him hereafter.

With this type of belief, although it for thousands of years dominated the minds of the great majority of mankind, and still is common among all backward peoples, we need no longer deal to-day. There are three other main types of belief. One is that of full personal survival; the second that of total extinction at death; and the third that of the personal spirit being merged in some spiritual essence much greater and more comprehensive than itself.

That of personal survival has, of course, by far the largest number of adherents at present. Votes, however, do not count in the search for truth. It is held in some form or other by all the great organised religions of the world, and also by many new sects and religions, such as Spiritualism. A variant of it is to suppose that only a certain number of men and women, who have truly discipline their souls, survive, while the rest fade out, either at once or after a shorter or longer time.

What is the evidence on the matter? Of positive evidence (and when I speak of evidence I am talking of evidence that would satisfy a man of science) there is none. Evidence from so-called revelation is no evidence in the modern sense. Ghosts, if not always the product of imagination, are much more likely to be due to some as yet unexplained mental phenomenon akin to telepathy or clairvoyance than to survival.

Finally, there is the "evidence" of Spiritualism, I have read a good deal of this, and must confess that it leaves me as unmoved as the "evidence" periodically adduced by those who believe in the imminent end of the world. Some ninety per cent. is either fraudulent, or childish, or both. The remainder testifies to curious faculties in the medium, but definite evidence of survival, as opposed to interesting manifestations of the subconscious or possibly telepathy or clairvoyance—that appears to me to be wholly lacking. The most that can be said is that if survival could be proved by other means, a small proportion of the spiritualist evidence would be consonant with it.

On the other hand, the difficulties in accepting personal survival are admittedly great. On the one side there are physiological difficulties; on the other, those arising from a study of evolution. The physiological difficulties arise from the impossibility of separating mind and matter, soul and body. It used to be said that all the activities of mind were dependent upon matter. That is quite true—witness the derangement of character that overtakes the patient who recovers from sleepy sickness or who is infected with the spirochaete which causes general paralysis. Witness the effects of alcohol and other drugs; the idiocy due to lack of sufficient secretion from the thyroid gland; the definite effects on men's faculties and memories of localised injuries to various regions of the brain.

And yet, though it is the truth, it is a one-sided truth. The full truth is that, the further we penetrate towards an understanding of the workings of the human organism, the more intimate does the mutual dependence of body and mind become. On the one hand, the mind (I am using mind in its broadest possible sense, to cover the emotional and spiritual as well as the

intellectual side of our natures)—the mind is seen to be dependent not only on the brain, but on the whole chemical array of the ductless glands, and on the construction and working of the entire body.

On the other, it, becomes clearer that living matter organised in the form of the human brain and kept in healthy life cannot help thinking and feeling—mental and spiritual activity is not something separate, from the outside, but a necessary activity of that kind of living matter.

In other words, the **body**, which is the material frame of a human being, and the **mind** with which he thinks and feels, are only two aspects of the single reality, the living human individual himself.

If there is this intimate dependence of body on mind and mind on body, it is difficult to imagine a mind without a body, and especially difficult to imagine a mind surviving in all its personality and individual distinctness without the material basis with which that distinctness was bound up.

The argument from evolution is of another type. It asks where the line is to be drawn. If human spirits survive, why not the souls of the apes from which men descended? And so back, through monkeys and lower mammals, reptiles, amphibia, fish, and eventually to the lowest organisms known. There is no sharp line in the animal kingdom—why should there be one as regards survival? And it must be acknowledged that, even if we might be disposed to grant immortality to an orang-utan or a dog, it becomes a little ludicrous to do so to a newt or a worm or a jellyfish. As a matter of fact, precisely this same difficulty meets us in our own species as regards embryos. Even if we are prepared to grant that a new born baby, to spite of its limited faculties, has an immortal soul, what about a five-months foetus—or the hideous, tailed, inhuman creature that preceded it—or its fishlike predecessor—or the mere mass of cells first formed by the egg—or the structureless microscopic egg itself? And yet each stage gradually arises imperceptibly from the one before.

Because of such difficulties, many moderns believe that total extinction of mind or soul occurs at physical death; and if extinction is a hard saying for the many, that is no reason it should not be true; at least we can truthfully say that the evidence for it is just as strong, or as weak, as that for personal survival.

None the less, it does not seem to be the only or the necessary conclusion from the evidence.

Let us turn to the analogy (a mere analogy, merely showing us possibilities, but proving nothing) of electricity. An electric battery is a source of electric current. The current is as dependent on the construction and proper working of the battery as the mind on that of the brain and body; and yet the inference that electricity could not exist apart from batteries would be quite erroneous. It can be generated in various other ways, of which a dynamo and the electric

organs of the torpedo and other fish are familiar examples; and, apart from such powerful manifestations, we know that every change that occurs in matter is accompanied by—indeed, in part is—an electrical change.

There is nothing against the view that intense thought and feeling could spring into existence as the result of other groupings of the world-stuff than those afforded by our brains; there is nothing against the view (and something, on grounds of evolutionary continuity, for it) that all changes in reality, in the world-stuff, are necessarily accompanied by changes in the mental order of things as well as by changes in the material order.

The upholders of personal survival will doubtless say that if that is so, there is nothing against a permanently-surviving spirit-individuality being in some way given off at death, as a definite wireless message is given off by a sending apparatus working in a particular way. But (apart from the grave difficulty as to what happens when the person at death is ill or feeble or in his second childhood) it must be remembered that the wireless message only becomes a message again when it comes in contact with a new, material structure—the receiver.

So with our possible spirit-emanation. It seems impossible to imagine it being more than a potentiality until it again gets in contact with a material receiver; it would wander through space as a possibility of thought and feeling, but would never think or feel unless again "embodied" in some way.

The last alternative is to suppose that, just as every scrap of material energy, whether liberated by an engine or the fall of a stone, a volcanic explosion or a steam-hammer, is never lost, but returns to the ever-constant store of energy which is the source of all physical activity in the universe—so spiritual or mental activity is not lost, but all of it returns, in some way not yet understood, to a store or pool of spiritual reality which is the non-material counterpart of energy.

This is, on the whole, the hypothesis towards which I would lean—not, I repeat, because of any positive evidence in its favour, but because it seems to present fewer difficulties than the others.



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The idea of personal, individual survival, especially in any definite place, does seem to me to be ruled out. Our personalities are so based on body that it is really impossible to think of survival in any true sense **personal** without a body of sorts.

And then there is the future. Man has existed for perhaps a million years; there is every likelihood of his surviving, and surviving in numbers greater than to-day, for a thousand million years more. This world is getting crowded enough; but the thought of a next world with a population of immortal spirits running into tens of billions is not to be seriously faced. Personal Immortality was a good deal easier to believe in before geology and astronomy had enlarged our time scale.

I can think of **something** being given off which would bear the same relation to men and women as a wireless message to the transmitting apparatus; but in that case "the dead" would, so far as one can see, be nothing but disturbances of different patterns wandering through the universe until either they were destroyed or came back to actuality of consciousness by making contact with some thing which could work as a receiving apparatus for mind.

And I can think of our personalities being lost, blended, taken up into some general reservoir of mind and spirit. In that case, presumably, the dead would not be anywhere in particular, but would become part and parcel of something universal and all pervading. Perhaps that universal reservoir of spirit transcends Space and Time—is it not true that we in our minds can hold in a single mental grasp the near and the distant, the present and the past? And if so, the question, "Where are the dead?" will need no answer.

* * *

SHAW BUTTS IN.

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette (Wednesday, June 6, 1928)

EDITORIAL NOTE.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw was among the hundreds of "Daily News" readers who addressed letters to us yesterday on the eternal question, "Where Are the Dead?" His letter is printed below.

MR. BERNARD SHAW'S LETTER

To the Editor of the "Daily News"

Sir.—I am butting into this controversy, not with any intention of settling it, but merely to suggest a variation of its method. I have noticed that the point under discussion is stated as whether "we" are immortal, whether "the dead" survive, or whether "the soul" perishes with the body.

The style is the leading article style, the royal style, or the style of Italian and Highland politeness, in which the individual is not you but she, the she denoting an abstraction of honour and excellency, as to which anything is credible and arguable.

This gives immense scope to the discussion and elasticity to its terms; but it takes our feet off the earth so completely as to enable the controversialist to prove that there may be such a thing as immortality without producing the faintest conviction that any particular Tom, Dick or Harry, Susan, Sophronia or Jane ever was or will be immortal.

What I propose is that your next few contributors shall discuss not whether "we" are immortal, or whether the soul is immortal, or whether the dead are still seeking lodgings in infinite space, but whether I, Bernard Shaw, am going to persist to all eternity in a universe utterly unable to get rid of me, no matter how desperately tired it may become of the Shavianismus, or how intolerably bored I may be by myself. Can there never be enough of me? Never too much of me?

Also, am I myself to have any say in the matter? Am I or am I not to be allowed to hand myself back to my creator, and say "Will you be so kind as to pulp this worn out article, and remanufacture it, if possible, without any of the glaring defects which have made it so troublesome to myself and others?"

For the guidance of those who will undertake this discussion, I had better say that as far as I know no person has ever doubted that I did not exist before October 1855.

Now the arguments that prove that I cannot have an end seem to me to prove equally that I cannot have had a beginning. Many persons think that it would have been better if I could not have had a beginning. But I most certainly had a beginning. The event can be precisely dated.

I may be a brick made from the eternal clay: in fact, people to whom I have injudiciously lent money have sometimes called me a brick ; but the brick, though made of the clay, is not the clay.

Nobody but a lunatic would maintain that a brick existed before it was baked, or will still be a brick when it has crumbled into dust. Consequently, all the arguments that prove that my non-existence is impossible must be ruled out.

As a matter of fact, I have non-existed; and the discussion must address itself to proving or disproving that the non-existence that was possible before 1855 can never be possible again.

With this hint I leave your contributors to their stupendous theme: an eternity of G. B. S. Imagine it, if you can! Millions upon millions of Shaw plays! Billions upon billions of letters to the Press, intensely irritating to many worthy citizens! To be "a fellow of infinite jest," not, like poor Yorick, figuratively, but literally!

Chesterton, too. He also will be bombinating for ever and ever, world without end. And Wells and Belloc in sempiternal controversy! How if we became really convinced of it—not on paper, where anybody can be convinced of anything, but genuinely in the centre of our life—and immediately went off our chumps, as I for one most certainly should?

Frederick the Great was very far from being in all respects a trustworthy spiritual guide; but when he said to the soldier who was running away, "Confound you, do you want to live for ever?" he said a mouthful.

One word more. Let no controversialist try to evade the point by assuring me that I shall survive, not as myself, but as the just man made perfect. He might as well tell me that the chariot of Pharaoh survives in the Rolls Royce. When I use the word "I" (as I frequently do) I mean myself, with all my imperfections (if any) on my head, and my eyebrows turning up, and not down like those of my friend Mr. George Robey. I mean the celebrated G.B.S., almost unbearably individualized, with his consciousness and his memories, his tricks and his manners, complete and exact in his GBessence.

Otherwise the controversy is about nothing, and had better be dropped for some of the issues at the next General Election.

Yours truly,

G. BERNARD SHAW.

* * *

THE UNSPEAKABLE GLORY OF ETERNITY

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette. (Thursday, June 7, 1928)

BY SIR ARTHUR KEITH, M.D., F.R.S.,

the eminent anthropologist and anatomist, whose now famous lecture, in which he denied personal survival, was starting point of the great national debate on "Where are the Dead?"

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

For me life is a web and is immortal. Your correspondents and I are infinitesimal specks in that colossal web, as are also the 1,800,000,000 other human beings who keep us company on this earth. The web of humanity, now on the loom of time, is but the end of the immeasurable sheet which recedes into the abysm of the Past and the beginning of another to which we can see no end. It is true that men who have studied the Sun assure us that a time will come when our planet will be unfit for life, but as that calamity lies millions of centuries ahead we may reasonably call the period assured as an immortal lease.

It is in this material sense that the biologist regards man as an immortal being; we survive, if we survive at all, only in the lives of our descendants. Every man and woman are

born with the seeds of immortality within their bodies. I am but a non-commissioned officer in that large and progressing army which the world has enlisted for the study and conquest of disease. We cannot hope to succeed in our campaign except by the study of life—the processes of life which we find at work within the body and brain of man. While we must give due attention to the evidence of men who have inquired into the constitution of matter we must give especial consideration to those who have studied the organisation of living matter. No court which inquires into the nature of man can be regarded as properly constituted which rejects the evidence of those best fitted to give it—medical men.

Before we discuss what life is and the possibilities of its survival, let us see what medical men know concerning death. When a physician finds that his patient's heart has ceased to beat and his breath to ebb and flow he concludes that death has taken place. For all practical purposes the patient is dead, but not really so. Could the physician instantly set up an apparatus by which he could circulate fresh blood, containing oxygen, through the vessels of the dead man's head, consciousness would return; memory and thought would revive; mind would be restored, words uttered, so long as the artificial circulation was continued.

But let the circulation and the supply of oxygen cease ten minutes and the living units of the brain, in their serried millions, pass into a state of irretrievable death. The heart itself survives much longer. After a certificate of death has been properly signed the heart may be cut from a "dead" body and by artificial means revived so that it will again beat and continue beating for some time if proper precautions are taken. Forty hours after a man is legally dead the coats of his arteries may still manifest signs of life. The human body is made up of an infinite number of microscopic living units; medical men have removed some of these from a dead child and kept them alive and growing in their laboratories when the rest of the body was crumbling to dust.

Death is not an affair of an instant. The human body dies by a process of attenuation as does the starved population of a beleaguered city: the delicate die first; the most enduring last. If death is due, as is supposed by Sir Oliver Lodge, to the escape of an immaterial spirit, we should expect the exodus to be instantaneous, whereas we find it to be a process of piecemeal. And if the living essence of man's body is an immaterial spirit, how comes it that it requires such material things as air, food and water for its maintenance? If a ghost enters my house by night and I find in the morning it has eaten my food, drunk my wine, and stolen my money, I conclude that it was material and not immaterial.

This is exactly what we biologists conclude concerning the living spirit of the human body; for its existence it must consume and transform energy. Consciousness, feeling, memory, will—all that we count mind—disappear from the living brain the moment we withhold its supply of oxygen and of energy. Life as we know it has always a material basis; a physiologist

cannot imagine how life could be possible apart from matter. If our minds are to survive, our bodies must bear them company.

The dead body is an extinguished candle; what do we know of the burning candle—the body glowing with health and life? We know how the candle of a human life is lit; only the flame from another candle will start it into being. How quickly our knowledge has progressed! Only a century has elapsed since the eye of man saw for the first time the speck of protoplasm—the ovum in which every human life takes its beginning. And now we know every stage in that wonderful miracle which transforms a particle of living matter—smaller than the head of the finest pin—into grown men and women. We have followed in the womb every change which carries the human body up the scale of life from the simplest beginnings to the most elaborate endings. We begin as microscopic unit of protoplasm and we end as a multi-millioned colony of living cells. We see great battalions of these cells marshalled to carry on the work of the nervous system; we see cousin battalions arranged to form muscular engines, others are specialised to serve the lowly purpose of living bone levers. We see the elaboration of these delicate living instruments—the eye and the ear. Even in the life of the body there is death; certain units are ever in process of birth, others in process of death. Every day the human body lives and dies; every hour it is giving off the spirit or energy of life in the form of good actions and bad ones. If philosophers are right, nothing is lost.

How are we to explain the elaborate and miraculous changes, which transform a simple unit of living matter into an adult human body? Is it true, as men like Sir Oliver Lodge believe, that an ethereal entity, a human spirit, has entered into this speck of protoplasm, seized its atoms and calmed them to pass through the elaborate turmoils of development simply to secure an uncertain and at the best temporary terrestrial lodging? No sooner has a spirit fashioned its home than decay sets in and sooner or later loses all its labour. Nay it is easier, and more satisfying to our reason, to explain the known facts of life as material processes than to attribute them to the workings of a mysterious and immaterial entity such as is postulated by Sir Oliver Lodge and many of your correspondents.

Why should human beings begin as products of the womb? If my opponents are right in supposing that the living human body is merely the husk of an immaterial spirit then no explanation is possible. But, if we accept evolution as a truth, which we have the best grounds for doing, then we can explain why man begins as a simple cell and why his developing body ascends the scale of living things. For evolution traces man's history back to the dawn of life on earth; his embryological record points clearly to such a remote and lowly beginning. Biologists therefore regard humanity as part of the web of life whose unknown beginnings lie in the recesses of time. Man is but part of that variegated web; what we postulate of him must also apply to the whole web.

I agree with Julian Huxley in this, that if we postulate an immaterial essence to account for the life of man, we cannot withhold the same interpretation from the living amoeba. If we grant immortality to the spirit of man's body how can we deny it to that of every living thing? We must not shirk the implications of either Immortality or of Evolution. Every one of us must face these problems with the utmost honesty and courage of which we are capable.

I have spoken of "life as a web on the loom of time." Who, then, is in charge of the loom? Who is the weaver? As far as biologists can perceive the loom works automatically; the threads spin themselves. The human threads in that web differ from all the other strands within it in one important respect; man alone can alter the spinning and the pattern: according as he spins and designs is the web of the future. The web spun by plants and animals is quick with life, but is not the whole universe really alive? Astronomers tell us that some stars represent worlds coming into being, others passing towards extinction; the process of growth and decay within the universe of matter are regulated automatically. So are the movements of all the heavenly bodies. Their regulation is both elaborate automatic; Newton made his name immortal by giving his fellow men a reasonable explanation of why masses of matter are compelled to behave in a certain way when swung in space.

Now, we who are peering into the behaviour of living matter find just the same automatic laws at work as physicists find to reign in the universe of dead matter; the laws which prevail in living bodies are infinitely complex but are not beyond the human powers of discovery.

Biologists do not know as yet when or how life began; they have no explanation to offer of its inner significance and ultimate meaning. Their primary business is to observe happenings and give a truthful record of them. Therein lies the weakness of their case, for the human mind craves a solution of the great mystery and is restless until it is satisfied as to its place in the great scheme of the universe. And the honest biologist cannot accept, as an explanation of what he sees and knows, a dual theory of the living body—be it that of man or of any other animal. For him spirit and body are one and indissoluble.

Neither my opponents nor I will ever persuade an untutored savage that the voice which issues from the box of a gramophone is not that of a spirit. Nor can we blame the savage for interpreting things after his own manner; for him everything that happens is caused by a spirit. The savage believes, just as spiritualists do, that the air around us is swarming with spirits.

The heart of man is naturally lazy and hates the scientific toil entailed by a search into the cause of things; if a man believes in spirits then he may sit at ease and spin dream-like and, to him, quite satisfying explanations. When modern medicine began its beneficent work it found spirits of many kinds were supposed to be at work in and around the human body. Pasteur discovered that the malignant spirits of disease were, for the greater part, material organisms; malignant devils which seized man became known as "Jacksonian epilepsies"; the "vital spirits" of the blood were found to be oxygen. Science has driven, and is driving, spirits from the body

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more and more. Sooner or later it will expel all of them, for as knowledge improves we find that what were spirits in the eyes of our forefathers are actual substances to our vision.

If the spirit of truth is the kernel of religion, then men of science are truly religious beings. They not only believe in the immortality of man, but they are convinced that this immortality is material. And believing so they work for the betterment of the world and of humanity; this is the most essential part of their daily religion.

But the one thing the man of science insists upon above all others is that his currency be struck is the mint of truth and that each coin must carry on its face the stamp of verifiable truth. Once let the human fancy free to wander at will untrammelled by fact and the markets of the scientific world will be flooded with debased coin. When a scientific man calls upon spirits, mysterious essences, and uncertain shadows to explain phenomena of the living and of the dead world, he is drawing cheques upon imaginary banks.

The true man of science is ever mindful of the dog in the fable which mistook appearance for reality. At it crossed a stream with the bone of reality in its mouth it happened to see in the water another dog also with a bone in its mouth and jumped to seize the shadow hone.

That I suggest, in all humility, it the kind of mistake which many your correspondents are making.

* * *

IMMORTALITY AND MR. SHAW,

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette. (Monday, June 11, 1928)

FROM MR. G.K. CHESTERTON

To the Editor of the "Daily News":

Sir,—As Mr. Bernard Shaw mentioned my name, not to speak of my immortal destiny, and u his letter was admitted to a place outside the framework of your series of articles, may I rather more briefly intervene to correct an astounding error?

It seems quaint that this protest against existence unduly prolonged should be made by the only human being who has ever proposed, as a practical reform, that men should live for three hundred years; and who has expounded it in a drama of a length suitable to such a lifetime. It takes all tastes to make a world. Some might think even a paltry three hundred years too long a time to listen to a lecture by Mr. Shaw. Some even thought three evenings too long to listen to a play by Mr. Shaw. Nobody in his senses would listen for half the time to a play by me. But I am truly appalled to learn that Mr. Shaw imagines the Immortality of the Soul to consist of listening to lectures or plays, or debates between myself and Mr. Wells, or any part of the rather vulgar pantomime we have to call Public Life.

The fate of the soul will be a highly practical continuation of the private life; and (please God) of the most private of all relationships. I can only suppose that Mr. Shaw has been reading some of the queer psychical journalists who hasten to send us the first news about Lord Northcliffe (of all absurd people) and indicate that he is still very important on the Other Side; presumably because he is still a millionaire. I cannot think of any other reason for his being important.

Now Mr. Shaw may pretend or persuade himself that George Bernard Shaw consists entirely of Shavianism. But I beg to assert with great firmness that Gilbert Keith Chesterton does not consist of Chestertonism; or of "paradoxes" or characteristic remarks, or any such blather and balderdash. The individual who in this case hopes he may save his soul alive was living a long time before he was flattered in newspaper caricatures; and he still exists quite independently of any such external confirmations of his existence. He is still identical with a little boy looking at a Punch and Judy before the First Home Rule Bill; and he still does not know why he has never been quite so happy since, though his life has been a happy one.

He is the same as the schoolboy who was nearly always at the bottom of the class; and the adolescent who nearly went man with morbidities that seemed as dark as diabolical possession. The people most important to him have been people hardly anybody has heard of; and certainly not people with whom he has conducted public controversies.

He does not consist of argument, or even opinions, but of sins and resistances to sin, affections and fundamental longings, that shall find no record among living men.

This is the obscure person, and not some sort of gloriously stuffed guy called G. K. C., whom I do most certainly hope under the mercy of God and the enlightenment of the Catholic Faith, may see eternal life.

On two lesser points, he asks whether he is to have no say on whether he is immortal. The answer is "None whatever," any more than he would if he were mortal. Second, I note all this because it illustrates what I remarked in my article; the inferiority of our finest free-thought to that of the past. Huxley said he hated the of extinction and would far rather be in hell. But he added that it might be true even though it was hateful. That was virile; but our moderns must be "optimistic," otherwise sentimental; and pretend that annihilation is really quite nice.

G. K. Chesterton

Top Meadow, Beaconsfield

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WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette (Tuesday, June 12, 1928)

MR. HILAIRE BELLOC ON "IMMORTALITY"

People to-day are perpetually rediscovering very old things. That is natural, I suppose, to an epoch of discovery, though I confess I should be better contented if they would only be humble enough to surmise at least that certain ideas were very old and not suddenly sprung from their own creative brains. Thus the discussion on evolution which is as old as the human race, or at any rate as old as all recorded history of human reasoning, is beginning at last to be treated as something worth handling, and not merely a thing to be making violent affirmations about. Again the infinitely old discussion upon the modes of human government is becoming popular. People no longer simply take it for granted throughout Europe that democracy must be the best; and even those who do think it the best are beginning, at long last, to ask what democracy is.

Now among the old things thus recently discovered, and therefore seemingly novel—novel at least to the more backward brains of Europe—is the discussion upon human immortality. It is fair to smile at those who, coming abruptly upon such hoary debates, believe themselves to be pioneers. It is fair enough to laugh at such a mixture of vanity and ignorance. But the laughter leads nowhere. It is our business rather to convince error than to scorn it.

I should think it probable that this discussion on human immortality was the very oldest present among men, since men through whatever accident either lost full knowledge, or began

to discuss what they did not fully know. For though we have plenty of evidence which makes it look as though man had always envisaged a life of some kind after death (evidence drawn from prehistoric remains and the more doubtful analogies of primitive people) yet in the nature of things, there can be no prehistoric evidence upon the **denial** of survival. You can dig up ornaments buried with the dead; you cannot dig up the sneers of those who said that such rites were futile. And as for evidence drawn from primitive races, it is not wholly satisfactory for two reasons: first, that among not a few there is little, and among some, apparently, no idea of survival. Secondly, that, after all, they have been as long on the earth as we have, and have had plenty of time to develop illusions.

But we have very old records of the debate in the shape of words written down, long after the inception of such ideas, but clearly stretching back to the beginning of inquiry; and the moment we can fully observe men going thoroughly into the affair, we find the two Schools—those who accept and those who deny survival—whether among the Asiatic philosophers or the Western. "It shall be with us as though we were not."

Well, then, there is nothing new about the arguments pro and con, but that does not detract from their importance, and I propose here to set out as briefly as I can what those arguments seem to me to be.

In the first place I am bound, writing as a Catholic, to define the Catholic position, but of course with this proviso, that I do not expect that position to have influence upon those who are not of my communion. The Catholic believes in the immortality of the human soul (and, for that matter, in the very existence of the human soul) on Authority. He believes it because he is told it is true by the voice of the Church, which, when it defines any one of the comparatively few, but tremendous things which it has defined, is for him the voice of God. He is more certain of this than of any thing except his own existence. He relies upon that Authority as the saintly old Bible Christian who brought me up relied upon the literal Authority of James I's English Bible.

Having concluded by the use of observation and reason that the Church has this supreme power and right to teach, I accept what She teaches and trust her more than I do the evidence of my senses. Whether I can **imagine** the thing believed or not, is to me of no intellectual consequence at all.

But, I repeat, no one who is not a Catholic can be expected even to consider that position. If I am arguing whether an outline seen from far off at sea is a cloud or an island, I must not argue from the map if the man with whom I am arguing begins by telling me that he thinks the map has been made up out of somebody's head and that, therefore, he will not accept its evidence. I might add, before leaving this point, that we Catholics believe our authority to be Divine from observation and reason, because it fits in with every other thing that we know, while others reject what does not fit in with some preconceived theory on cause and effect. It is the old opposition between what we call Faith based upon Reason and what our opponents—

especially the scientific sceptics—must admit (if they closely analyse their own position) to be Reason based upon Faith. But to press this most interesting point would be to enter into the whole dialogue between the Catholic and non-Catholic position, and I am here dealing with a much more particular matter.

What are the general arguments for and against the survival of bodily death by human personality?

We must begin by observing that the arguments against such survival are very strong. I say nothing about the supposed argument from our new knowledge of the human frame. Any man who cares to reason can see for himself that no amount of this can tell us more than men have always known: to wit, that "if the brains are out the man is dead." St. Thomas Aquinas, as was his wont in dealing with these awful matters, has summed up in the tersest and most pregnant form the three main groups of arguments which all men naturally entertain, and upon which the deniers of immortality continually rely (you will find them in the Sixth Article of the Seventy-fifth Question of the *Summa*). I will give them here, not in his order, but in the order in which they appeal most to my contemporaries.

First, there is the undoubted truth that the soul exists in thinking. Now we think wholly under physical conditions. We cannot think about¹ physical images in our minds; we receive all the food for thought through our senses. When, therefore, we are no longer in a position to do this, when physical conditions have ceased, thinking ceases and, supposing a permanent cessation, the soul is not.

Next, whatever came out of nothingness may return to nothingness. Modern men do not put it that way but they continually use the argument in another form. Our consciousness came out of unconsciousness. It "developed" (as we say in modern language) out of an unconscious condition. Therefore, it should reasonably return to that condition, or at least there would seem to be no reason why it should not.

But the third argument (which is the first in St. Thomas's order) is that which appeals most strongly to my contemporaries, I think, and this is, that things of a like origin and a like mode of action have presumably a like end. Our generation, our maintenance of life, are on the same model as those of the vegetable or the beast, or any other growing thing. They grow old and decay, and so do we. They disintegrate to exist no longer; so shall we. And he quotes those powerful Scriptural words: "Man has nothing more than the beast... the death of man and beast is one, and the condition of both is equal."

To these arguments the great philosopher adds elsewhere another which I for myself find to be of most powerful effect, though it is not in time with the language of to-day. He points out that a thing is what it is on account of its form. Thus a vase is what it is, not because of its

¹ See item top of page 34.

material, clay, but because of its form which makes it a vase. Destroy the form, and the essential has disappeared. Crush it to powder, and it is a vase no more. But the soul is the form of the body. A man is what he is by his character, his thought, his inward disposition, and all that gives life to his mere flesh. Become a corpse, the form has disappeared; of that material, flesh, the essential exists no more.

It is the argument on which Mr. Shaw relied in his example of the Brick in the "Daily News" the other day.

Now what are the counter arguments? In the first place, emphasise this—that without faith not one of them is conclusive. They are converging. They create an increasing probability. They do not establish certainty.

Before dealing with them, it is well to brush aside the commoner kinds of support. Thus

the idea that a belief in immortality is a consolation, though perhaps an indication of truth, is worthless for intellectual conviction. To trust in "consolations" alone is as base intellectually as taking drugs and as worthless. It would be a consolation to an embarrassed man to foster the illusion that he was about to inherit a fortune, but he does well to avoid such self-deception. Moreover, the popular conception that survival necessarily involves happiness, is intellectually negligible. Regarded in itself, apart from other considerations it may be happy, unhappy or neither.



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No, the strong arguments are of another kind, and for my part, though I will hardly affirm it (for no one can judge himself out of his own experience), I should imagine that they would suffice to

establish my judgment, apart from that altogether superior thing, accepted doctrine.

The first is the nature of man, which we all feel ourselves, which we all observe in others and from which we cannot get away. He is not on the scale of this earth. He is paradoxically at once lower and higher than what is around him. He is also, or can be also, worse and better, and that in a different mode from what is around him. All philosophies (it is the universal burden of Pascal, among a host of profound thinkers) are founded upon either the misery of man or his greatness—or, indeed, in the case at one philosophy (but only of one, the Christian), upon the reconciliation of that greatness and that misery. Start out with a conviction of man's greatness, not necessarily subject to misery on this earth, and sooner or later you will find that you are deceiving yourself. Facts are against you. Start out with his miserable subjection, denying super-mundane greatness, and you will find the same. He is not a beast yet he suffers here not only more, but more radically than the beasts. He is not here beatified, yet he desires complete felicity. On that I think we are all agreed.

Now if this nature of man, with the moral sense for its most active expression, is of such a sort, how can you fit it in with man as nothing but an animal on this earth? By whichever facet you look at it, either by the commonest facet of remedy for injustice, or by that which used to be a common aspect a generation ago, of reward and punishment for good and evil deeds, or by considering the magnitude of your subject—and there are hundreds of other angles—you come back to the truth that man is not here in his element.

The second strong argument, which converges upon this first, is the argument from personality; conscious intelligent personality. That quality in man by which he is not only conscious, but can stand outside his own consciousness, compare ideas, and deal with conceptions not subject to space and time.

Now we know that such personality is more than non-personality. The greater does not come from the lesser save by addition. You cannot get a quart out of a pint bottle. Only Personality will produce personality, something more personal, perhaps, but not less. Admitting personality is man, personality is behind the universe. The process of the universe has a meaning, the end of man becomes rational. But if his end is upon this earth, that end is not rational in the ultimate sense of the word "rational." It does not complete his being. It leaves not only loose ends, but loose ends infinitely larger than the woven strands which build up his earthly life.

That is how I see the affair. I admit I am handicapped in putting it abstractly, because I accept it, not as an abstraction but as part of a Divine philosophy wherein all is at accord. I feel, not with sentiment, nor only with emotion, but by the process of all my being and especially with the lucid cogitative part of myself two great quotations, centuries old, often recited triumphantly in song; with these I will end.

The first runs: *Coheredes ac sodales... in terra viventium.*

The second: *Qui vitam sine termino / Nobis donet in patria.*

So they stand in what was once the universal language of our civilisation. In our modern local language they mean:

The first: "Co-heirs and barrack-room companions in the land of living men."

The second: "Who shall give us life without end in Our Own Country."

* * *

IMMORTALITY AND MR. CHESTERTON.

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette. (Wednesday, June 13, 1928)

FROM MR. GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

To the Editor of the "Daily News":

Sir,—Mr. Chesterton, as usual, agrees with me, and, also as usual, assured us that his assent is the correction of an astounding error on my part. Mr. Chesterton, as a Roman Catholic (of sorts), believed in the immortality of the soul; but the moment he confronts himself with the conception of an immortal Lord Northcliffe he has a sense of overwhelming absurdity, whilst his own hope (or dread) of eternal life makes him see himself as a gloriously stuffed guy without even the consolation of being combustible.

Mr. Chesterton recalls the dead selves which he has made stepping-stones to higher things. First a small Chesterton at the bottom of the First Latin Junior, instinctively protecting himself against the process of stultification which we call education. Then an unexpectedly morbid adolescent Chesterton, suggesting a young George Moore with discretion enough not to write his confessions.

Then the Chesterton we all remember, the Young Man Mountain, a volcano of precocious literary genius, a living paradox in respect of being an Anacreontic Liberal Hammer of the Puritans, and an intensely religious Freethinker. Then the Hammer of the Capitalists, the Distributist, the professed Roman Catholic. Now which of these corruptibles shalt put on incorruption? which of these mortals immortality?

He replies, in effect, None of them; they are only accidents of the flesh in which the Word, the Germ Plasm, the Vital Spark, the Elan Vital, the Life Force, the Soul, or what in our ignorance we please to call it, had to become incarnate before it could pursue its ends effectively on earth. In that restless pursuit it has already discarded half a dozen Chestertons: and shall it not discard the last Chesterton as it has long since discarded the first, both being



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alike accidents in the flesh? True, the first Chesterton lives in the memory of the present one (inaccurately); but so does Temple Bar.

Mr. Chesterton sees in our public life a vulgar pantomime, and leaves us to imagine in what category of squalid drama he sees our private life. That this vulgar harlequinade will pass away he evidently believes; but it is not the stage that makes the harlequinade, but the clown and pantaloone, the harlequin and columbine, the policeman, the swell, and the old woman. Unless these pass away, how can the vulgar pantomime pass away? Life is eternal; but may it not cast off its worn-out clothes?

This casting off of worn-out instruments is not the Extinction that Huxley's soul abhorred, nor the Annihilation that Mr. Chesterton's optimistic friends (I never met them) consider really quite nice. The Life Force has taken care that I shall have sufficient dread of it to ensure my running away as fast as my legs will carry me if I see a bull charging in my direction before my work is done; but when Mr. Chesterton, in the course of his dazzling avatars, has passed from Roman Catholicism to Catholicism Absolute, he will be able to

understand how a used-up guy can say his Nunc Dimittis and lie down on the scrap heap without asking for more.

I would not give twopence for a religion that did not make our souls strong enough for that.

Yours truly,

G. BERNARD SHAW.

Welwyn

* * *

A CORRECTION

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette. (Wednesday, June 13, 1928)

FROM MR. HILAIRE BELLOC

To the Editor of the "Daily News":

Sir,—In my article of today's date the phrase "We cannot think without physical images" has come out "We cannot think *about* physical images." The error was due to bad proof-reading on my part, and I trust your readers read the right meaning in this line.

Reform Club, June 12. H. BELLOC.

* * *

IMMORTALITY—OR NATURE IS MAD

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette. (Friday, June 15, 1928)

BY REV. J.P. ARENDZEN, D.D., D.PH., M.A.

In the following article written for the "Daily News" with the approval of the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, this eminent scholar states the Roman Catholic position regarding the after-life. Reason alone, he declares, apart from Divine Revelation, teaches the survival of the human soul after death. Divine Revelation teaches that unending torment awaits the unrepentant sinner. Heaven is the vision and love of God.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

The answer to this question must be sought both from reason and from revelation. Human reason by itself, unaided by divine revelation, teaches us the survival of the human soul after death and the sanction for good and evil beyond the grave. The evidence for these truths is, in fact, so overwhelming that assent to them is universal in time and place. Those who deny survival and sanction beyond this life are abnormalities, few in number, and found almost exclusively in times of mental decadence consequent upon the strain of over-civilisation. In healthy circumstances the human mind assumes its native vigour, and without a tremor of hesitation embraces the evidence of the life beyond. This evidence is found in the very nature of the human soul. Death is dissolution, or a falling asunder into parts. The soul is the highest unity we know on earth: it is an indivisible principle; it has no parts; hence it cannot die.

Moreover, nature does nothing in vain. It pursues an intelligible purpose in all it does. Now nature itself has laid the desire for immortality and the expectation of a sanction for good and evil in the human heart. This desire and expectation postulate the real existence of the object desired and expected since they form the striving not of the individual merely, but of human nature as such and the conation of nature cannot ultimately tend towards the nonexistent. If the aim striven for did not exist, nature would be mad and this world a madhouse. But sane

men postulate the sanity of the Universe, or rather of Him who made it. Denial or doubt of the sanity of creation and therefore of its Creator can only arise in a mind itself not sound.

Again, man by experience knows that nothing whatever in this material Universe can set at rest his inner life and thus bring his manhood to completion. Give a man food and drink in abundance, give him safe shelter and soft clothing, give him pleasant sights and dulcet sounds, give him whatever can gratify his animal nature, give him robust health and surround him with healthy offspring, man is ever restless in this world. Promise him a never-ending existence on this globe in company with his fellow men and he shudders at the thought, for he instinctively knows that it would be unbearable boredom, to which suicide would be a relief. In consequence, man infers the existence of another world, different from this, where his nature will be at rest and come to its maturity. We are evidently beings in progress, but progress without a fixed terminus is a self-contradictory notion; an evolution without a state of completeness into which to evolve is a self-evident absurdity. As this terminus and state of completeness is not obtainable on earth, it must be obtainable hereafter.

Lastly, men—not criminal lunatics—know the categorical imperative within themselves: thou shalt do right and avoid wrong. Reason with irresistible necessity concludes that in the end it will be well with those who do well and ill with those who do ill. Now, one month's experience of life on earth is sufficient to convince any adult that no such sanction for good and evil exists here. Many evildoers enjoy all the good things this world can offer till the very moment of death. Men therefore rightly conclude that there exists a state of life after this where the ethical law will be vindicated. On these and similar lines human reason has always come to a conviction of a life after death and hath declared those who doubt or deny it irrational.

The assertion of anatomists or biologists that nothing in their respective sciences proves the existence or immortality of the soul leaves any thinking man unmoved. No logical thinker ever sought the proof for immortality in anatomy or biology. Physical sciences deal with occurrences observable by the five senses, but no reasonable man ever claimed that the soul was visible, audible, tangible or an object of taste or smell. Hence its continuance after death is beyond the province of physical science. To ask biology or anatomy for its verdict about the existence or survival of the soul is like asking it about the Sonnets of Shakespeare, the virtue of Socrates or the heroism of nurse Cavell. Besides the small world of material realities a greater world stares us in the face, a world in which we live and move and with which we are concerned during the greater part of our conscious life. Our dictionaries would shrink to a diminutive size were we to omit all words that refer to immaterial realities, such as right and wrong, honour and shame, virtue, vice, love and hatred, purity, unselfishness, truth, veracity, fidelity, sin, remorse and repentance. In this immaterial world our soul is at home because it is itself an immaterial agent. Whether this agent survives bodily death is to be decided by mentally considering immaterial facts, not by physical observation. It is idle to ask those whose study is

strictly limited to the observation of the behavior of matter what their researches tell them of the world of mind. One might as well ask a professor of Chinese philology for his verdict on botany

In order to decide the question of the soul's survival, one needs a wider outlook on human life than that which is obtained from the study of cells and bones. We glory in the wholesome institution of trial by jury because we realise that in matters of fact, in the great affairs of man, demanding a full appreciation of the realities of life, it is safer to trust a number of average citizens than a set of specialists. Somehow, a bench of biologist seems unsuitable in a verdict on Kennedy and Browne. In matters of eternal import mankind happily goes its way guided by its wider outlook on life rather than by the utterances of scientists; for, because of their narrow specialisation, they are not exempt from the danger of combining a very limited mentality with an exceedingly small field of experience. The conviction of survival and sanction after death is at once so spontaneous and universal, so deeply rooted in human rationality, it is the fruit of such complete analysis and synthesis of human life, that it can never be doubted to any great extent.

Beyond survival and sanction after death, unaided human reason can, however, hardly go with absolute certainty. Of what kind the life after death may be, how and where it is lived, whether it is everlasting for all, for the evil as well as the good, human reason alone could not decide beyond the possibility of doubt.

Where mere reason fails, revelation comes to man's aid both by strengthening his wavering conclusions and in adding new information. It teaches us that man's final reward consists in the vision and possession of God. No such vision would have been naturally possible, it is a supernatural gift of God. This gift is bestowed instantaneously at the very moment of death on all those who died without a stain of sin remaining on their soul and without any liability of punishment due to divine justice. The vision and love of God will constitute their everlasting unchanging happiness. It will be enhanced by the enjoyment of the presence of the humanity of Christ, the company of angels and saints, the contemplation of the wonders of nature and the re-assumption of the body at the resurrection. Heaven is a place, but where it is no one knows, for it has not been revealed. Those in heaven remain in touch with those on earth, they care for them, pray for them and answer their petitions.

Those who die with some unrepented grave and deliberate sin on their soul instantaneously enter into unending sufferings, for they will suffer the eternal loss of the sight of God. They will also undergo a lesser pain of a positive character, inflicted on them from without by some agency, which is called fire. This fire is, of course, not identical with that in our grates, yet it is some dread reality, distinct from themselves, the tormenting influence which the lost eternally undergo. Where hell is, no one knows. It has not been revealed. Any guess as to which particular persons are in hell is a futile and blameworthy usurpation of the office of the

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Divine Judge. On the other hand, the facile joke: "I believe in an eternal hell, eternally empty," is an evasion of God's revelation that some will be cursed and go into everlasting fire.

There are only two final states of the dead; but the Church teaches that, previous to the Last Judgment at the return of Christ, there exists an intermediate state, commonly called Purgatory, or state of purification. This state is not a second chance of salvation, since the final state of the soul is always irrevocably settled at the moment of death. It is a delay of happiness for those whose eternal salvation is secured. Many people die not in unrepented, grievous sin, but with the stains of lesser sins on their soul, or with their debt unpaid to God's justice for sins, forgiven, indeed, but imperfectly repented of. Such people pass at death into a state which is at once one of great calm resignation and one of intense sorrow. Their calm arises from their certainty of salvation and the surrender of their will to the will of God. Their sorrow arises from their temporal exclusion from the vision of God face to face, from the temporary frustration of their ultimate end, for which they crave with the full intensity of their untrammelled spiritual being. Hence Catholic are wont incessantly to pray for them, that the Eternal Light may shine upon them, that they may rest in the embrace of God.

* * *

G.K.C. AND DR. BARNES.

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette. (Friday, June 15, 1928)

To the Editor of the "Daily News":

Sir,—I would not goad you to madness with letters, though perhaps I may have a word with Mr. Shaw later; this is only a line in reparation to an opponent. A correspondent

has kindly told me that Dr. Barnes has since repudiated the idea of material experiment and explained that he meant only a mental one.

I formed my impression from a phrase which ran, I think, "If it is materially present, it can be materially perceived; if it is spiritually present, it can be spiritually perceived," which I and many other certainly supposed to imply both type of experiment.

But it should certainly be made clear that the Bishop understands it only of the second. As regards my own argument, it does not make the case much better and even in one way makes it worse. There are such things as real chemical experiments; there are precious few real psychological experiments, except the experiment of starting a new trade for quacks. For a Catholic, of course, both are quite irrelevant; because Catholic religion is not mere emotion such as the Bishop invokes. A Catholic would not be in the least surprised to learn that he has high religious emotions before an unconsecrated wafer. A Catholic often has his highest religious emotions on the top of an omnibus. His faith in the Sacrament concerns a fundamental fact; an objective idea of Reality.

But though it does not make it better, it does make it different; and the Bishop obviously has a right to ask us to accept his disclaimer of the particular interpretation, which I did not happen to know he had disclaimed.

Beaconsfield. G.K. CHESTERTON.

* * *

THE ANSWER OF THE SPIRITUALISTS

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette. (Monday, June 18, 1928)

BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

An "immense number of independent messages," says Sir Arthur, testify to the existence and the character of the life beyond the grave. These messages, which he declares must be taken seriously, describe the life and surroundings of the dead, "their happy homes, their great halls, their temples, and their facilities for recreation." There is no pain there, everything is peaceful and harmonious.

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

It has always been a matter of surprise to me that the mass of evidence as to the conditions of life beyond the grave collected by psychic means has not penetrated more generally to the public. This evidence seems to me to be worthy of the most serious attention. It is reasonable in itself—so much so that it presents the most logical religious philosophy which I have ever heard, and it comes in a more direct way than any previous Inspired message.

The reasons for the delay in its circulation and acceptance would seem to be that the more dramatic and contentious physical phenomena have obscured the message to which they are meant to call attention. Also that the scheme presented does not fit in with any preconceived idea taught by any of the churches, although in essentials it is not antagonistic.

I should not exaggerate if I say that there are thousands of messages bearing upon the point, very many of which have been collected in books and many circulated in manuscript. Their validity is attested by the fact that they agree remarkably among themselves, that they are often accompanied by information concerning this life which proves to be correct, and that psychic phenomena which come with them point to their supernormal origin. If the reader cares to consult such books as Lodge's "Raymond," Walbrook's "Case of Lester Coltman," Walker's "The Bridge," or Vale Owen's works, he will find much information as to our future fate.

Far from being annihilated our lives carry on in a far more intense and vivid fashion than before. We undergo a change of vibration (there no simpler way of expressing it), but we change in nothing else. Our form at its best, our character and our knowledge are exactly the same as before. We find ourselves in an exceedingly busy and complex life in which we have full scope for all the mental powers which we possess—which means that the environment must be much the same. It seems to me, apart from these revelations, that it is perfectly clear from logic and common sense that this must be so unless we are annihilated. The whole nature of the artist centres upon his art, of the musician upon his music, of the man of science upon his science. If this were cut out the man, even if he survived, would not be the same man. But if it is not cut out then it postulates a means of expression, and that in turn postulates a critical appreciative audience or public, so that along that line of thought we obtain clear confirmation of what we are told.

The whole appearance and method of life is, we are told, analogous to that which we have here, as a tune a higher is analogous to one upon a lower octave. All changes, however, would seem to be for the better. Physical pain is absent, though mental trouble, as remorse, may continue. There is not such a mixing of jarring natures as on earth, but those who are in sympathy are attracted together. Everything is, therefore, more peaceful and harmonious. Family ties only carry on in so far as they are sympathetic.

The surroundings and their colouring are described as reproducing what is familiar to our eyes and senses, but in more beautiful forms. There is no sudden transition—nor is there anywhere in natural evolution. Mental progress has to be worked for there as here. Spiritual progress is in a way easier, as one is in closer touch with higher entities, but in another sense it is more difficult, as it is the troubles of life which give us the chance to put a finer edge upon our own souls. "We pity the poor folk who have no troubles." Such was the message I once had from a spirit control.

In the descriptions which we have had of that third sphere, which is the spiritual home of the average decent human being, terms are used such as flowers, fields, lakes, streams and mountains which may stand for exactly what they say, or may be the nearest approach they can get in their attempt to get a parallel in earth life. Their happy homes, their great halls, their

temples and their facilities for recreation have all been fully described. The picture of the places where the children grow to maturity is particularly beautiful.

Such a new and homely conception shocks the mind at first, but when one considers that it is only under such conditions that we could attain **human** happiness, and develop to the full the gifts that we possess, it is impossible to suggest any alternative which would be more reasonable. The spirit body may seem to us a tenuous thing, but as it is surrounded by a whole world of the same texture it and its environment seem as solid to them as ours to us.

As to where this land is we have to bear in mind that it is expressed in sounds beyond our register and in colours beyond our spectrum, so that it might well coincide with our own earth surface and yet be unobserved by us. Their own conception is that the spheres are circular and round the world. At the same time there seem to be immense numbers of undeveloped spirits, many of them from among the rich and famous of this earth, who are held down either on the surface or near it for long periods because they have not yet developed sufficient spiritual strength to fit them for a higher environment. Roughly, this condition corresponds with the old idea of Purgatory—a cleansing period before the soul can rise to what is its true place.

There may be darker and grimmer places for those who have been positively wicked, and whose reformation can only be effected by punishment. But it is all to one end, the chastening and ultimate redemption of the soul. It is always temporary, but would seem to be severe while it lasts. We are taught that any narrowness of religious vision, or any limiting of God's mercy to this or that sect is a dangerous mental condition which calls for correction.

On the whole, the prospect is infinitely cheering, and Providence will prove to have been far kinder and less exacting than any orthodox religion has imagined. Death is actually a great improvement in condition, but not a great break in development. Those who pass over frequently say how surprised they are to find how small is the change, but it is seldom indeed that any of them express a desire to return. Therefore, the message which Spiritualism has been able to bring to the human race as to their future fate is not only the most reasonable but also the most cheering which we have ever received. However grey the road there is sunlight on the end of it.

It will be seen that there is a general resemblance to the old-time teaching, in that there is a Heaven—which is progressive, sphere above sphere—a purgatory and apparently a darker place of chastening. It differs only in giving reasonable detail, in showing that all races and all religions are on an equality so long as the individual develops reasonable spirituality and is not too set in his dogmas. There is much to show that this view of the future was appreciated in early Christian times. Christ's own allusion to the "many mansions" and to the wine which his disciples would partake with him in Paradise seems to point to a sphere where conditions would not break away abruptly from those with which we are familiar.

I repeat that this conception is founded upon an immense number of independent messages, varying occasionally in detail, but all united in their general effect. They should be taken seriously.

* * *

IMMORTALITY AND MR. SHAW.

The Daily News and Westminster Gazette. (Monday, June 23, 1928)

FROM MR. G. K. CHESTERTON,

To the Editor of the "Daily News":

Sir,—I must apologise if the affairs of this lower world him prevented me till now from being true the kindred points of Heaven and Shaw. I must also thank Mr. Shaw for having made exactly the mistake which makes explanation ease easy. For he accuses me of saying precisely the opposite of what I say. He improves, with true Shakespearean gusto, my simplified version of the Seven Ages of Men. He deals with the schoolboy, the lover and so on; he mercifully passes over my present phase., which is (I need hardly say) that of the lean and slippered pantaloon. He substitutes the fact I am a critic of Capitalism, a Distributist "a Catholic of sorts," whatever that may be. And then he asks which of these persons I really am or hope permanently to be: and he says that I really answer: "None of them."

I claim to be all of them because of certain positive things within, which are only very partially or indirectly represented by public actions without.

It Is true, I am sorry to say, that I did not like Latin grammar when I was a little boy. It Is true, I am very glad to say, that I did not like modern monopolistic Capitalism when I was a young man. But all these things that I did not like are only very slight indications at what I did like; or what I do like. I neglected my lessons partly because I had my own daydreams about positive beauty and the value of life. I dig not like Capitalism partly, I hope, because I did like other positive things, such as justice and human companionship and the dignity of the image of God.

Now it is possible, I suppose, for man to come at last to hating Capitalists without loving comrades. Such a man is neglecting his soul; precisely because his soul does depend on those

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positive and permanent appreciations of good finding their mere external expression in attacks on any particular evil. But if a man does love justice and comradeship, then he will have joy in the justice of God and joy in communion of saints.

As to the argument, considered as an argument, I would not suggest that Mr. Shaw has been for the first time guilty of cant; but I cannot but find him guilty of confusion. If the dissolution in question is not the extinction of personality that Huxley hated, I cannot see how it can be the liberation from personality that Shaw desires. He may not to call it annihilation; but Huxley would not hesitate to call it annihilation. It seems perfectly clear that the great Agnostic did definitely mean that he wanted to go on being the individual known to the world as Thomas Henry Huxley. It is the point of Mr. Shaw's argument that he does not want to go on being the individual known to the world as George Bernard Shaw. And it is exactly this shrinking from a mere word like "annihilation," but not from the main thing involved in being annihilated, that I have ventured to call, and will again venture to call, sentimental.

I am not here giving my reasons for believing immortality to be true; I am only answering somebody who denies that it is even desirable. But it is a point of honor to me not to pass without a protest Mr. Shaw's strange notion that my being a Catholic is only one of the last of a series of personalities, almost like impersonations. Whereas it is precisely as a Catholic that I see most clearly the one continuous personality of which I speak. It is by that philosophy that I possess my own childhood and my own youth, more than by any other philosophy; indeed it seems that I should lose all connection with them according to Mr. Shaw's philosophy. Thus, there are many modern men of genius from Sir James Barrie to Mr. A. A. Milne who seek to recover the feelings of childhood as things eternally attractive. But they have no philosophy that can really explain why they should be eternally attractive; and the Catholic philosophy can.

Thus there have been many modern men of genius from William Morris to George Bernard Shaw, who have fought magnificently against unjust laws and sought to achieve social equality. But they have no philosophy that can really explain why men should have a mystical equality before the moral law, amid the general race and scramble of the evolutionary law; and the Catholic philosophy can.

By that philosophy a man does understand, so far as such mysteries can ever be understood, why his first glimpse of existence was full of wonder and why his first experience of the inequalities of this world full of indignation.

When I called modern political life a vulgar pantomime, I wrote as one who enjoys pantomimes and does not very much mind vulgarity—at tiny rate, that sort of vulgarity. But it is a very bad thing if men are not men as well as mimes; or if there is not in each of them a continuous miracle play within, which continues under the externals of Cinderella's cat or the hind legs of the elephant. In this, as in so much else, the Catholic philosophy is a mystical

return to common sense; in this case to the common sense that a human being in himself wants to go on being himself.

But though this philosophy offers the best explanation, there has been any amount of poetry and intuition conveying the same suggestion. All the arts are alive with the conviction that there is behind all a beauty of which the vision would be beatitude. And, in this matter of immortality, it could hardly be better expressed than in that line of pagan poetry, beautifully translated by Professor Gilbert Murray: the line of which Mr. Shaw himself used to be very fond: "And shall not loveliness be loved forever?"

G. K. CHESTERTON.

* * *

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

G.K. Chesterton, *The Illustrated London News*, July 7, 1928.

It is well known that a daily paper recently published a series of answers to the question "Where Are the Dead?" The curious thing is that, while many philosophers answered the question most philosophically, the man who originally asked the question apparently asked it quite literally. I mean that he said "Where are the Dead?" as he might have said "Where are the dead donkeys?" in echo of the proverbial joke that nobody is supposed to have ever found a dead donkey! Under conditions of modern education and enlightenment, it will never be difficult to find a live donkey. But what happens to the souls even of dead donkeys, if they have any, is a question upon quite a different plane. It is simply irrelevant to calculate an idea like immortality by a measurement like geometry or geography. It is just as if a school boy were to say "How can there be room for an infinitely recurring decimal in that little arithmetic book?" or as if he said "If a circle has no end, how can you put it on the blackboard?"

But, among the other contributions to the controversy, there were other errors more subtle and perhaps more misleading. I have had occasion to write elsewhere about what I consider the errors of Sir Arthur Keith and of Mr. Bernard Shaw. The former consists of a confusion between the brain and the mind, which is merely an abject begging of the whole question. The brain is simply an object we perceive when we happen, every now and then, to split open the skull of some social acquaintance with a chopper. It is as much an object in the landscape, so to speak, as a blue lamp-post or a green tree. By inference or analogy we argue that there is something of the sort in our own skulls also. But the brain and the blue lamp-post are still merely two of the ten thousand things we see and experience as objects. The mind is not one of those things. The mind is an absolute; the mind is the thing that sees them. All those objects in the landscape can only exist, as we know them, in a field of consciousness called the mind; and it is tenable even that they do not exist, or do not exist as we know them. But the mind exists; and we have not, in that sense, the same certainty that anything else exists. Now there is not,

and cannot be, any bridge of imagination between the brain and the mind. We cannot form any conceivable notion of how the grey cells we find in Mr. Smith's skull (when we split it open) can possibly *be* a field of consciousness in which there are trees and lamp-posts. As an idea, that identification is much harder to entertain than the mystery of the Trinity or the Dual Nature of Christ. Minute changes of grey matter cannot *be* the Binomial Theorem or the memory of last Wednesday. The best that can be said for it is that it is a mystery; and the only thing to be said for the materialist is that he is a mystic. Therefore, for anyone to say that, because the brain breaks down and ceases to function among objective things, therefore the totally different condition called mind cannot continue on its own totally different plane, is really a confusion of the same kind as saying the circle cannot get on to the blackboard or the recurring decimal into the book.

The question raised by Mr. Bernard Shaw was not so much about whether he would be immortal, as about whether he wanted to be. If we may judge by one of his plays, he would be content with three hundred years, though not with three-score years and ten. On this matter also I disagree; being not after the order of Back to Methuselah, but rather of Back to Melchizedek. For I believe in that philosophy which claimed to come that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly. And I think it is because of our defects and disaffections that we weary of life, and not because life itself would not always be glorious to men truly alive. But it was not in order to renew the discussion either with Sir Arthur Keith or with Mr. Bernard Shaw that I mentioned the journalistic discussion just now. It was in connection with a much finer shade of difference, or what I will venture to call a finer shade of error, in the contribution of another distinguished writer to the same series.

Mr. Alfred Spender makes a suggestion much more plausible, and, up to a point, much more true. Yet I think even this truth contains an untruth; and one rather likely at this moment to lead men astray. He describes a philosophical conversation he has had with a Brahmin; and heaven forbid that I should pretend to know more about Brahminism than he does. It is only too easy for an English journalist to pretend to know more about Brahminism than the Brahmins do. There are some, not without authority, who declare that our Theosophists are pretending to know more about Buddhism than the Buddhists do. When, therefore, Mr. Spender's Brahmin tells him that the ultimate absorption of the soul in the universal life is not really a loss of consciousness, but an enlargement to a sort of cosmic consciousness, I am quite ready to take his word for it that this is Brahminism; though I rather doubt whether it is Buddhism. From what I can gather, I fancy Buddhist philosophy really is more positively pessimistic. It is, if one may use the paradox, more positively negative. But, anyhow, the Brahmin promised at most the change from our own individuality to a universal individuality; individuality at least in the sense that it is not divided into lesser individuals.

I am quite willing to believe that these particular Eastern mystics say this. But I am not willing to admit, as Mr. Spender demands, that all Western mystics say the same. I admit that the

distinction sometimes sounds like a fine one. As he says, a mediaeval mystic like Dante will speak of a great sea of existence, because there obviously is a great sea of existence. But it is not the only thing there is; and there are more fish in that sea than ever came out of it. A mediaeval mystic like Dante will say, as in the famous passage quoted in this case, that in God's will is our peace. For everybody who believes that God is good must believe that our peace is in being reconciled with good. But that does not alter the fact that Dante describes the blessed as seeing and not as being God. It is still something sufficiently separate to be loved. And that idea of the element of separation in creation, and even in affection, seems to me a very vital distinction indeed; and especially a great distinction of the Christian creed. Christian mysticism, as it seems to me, has not said *merely* that we shall all melt into the divine life, but that we shall all ourselves remain sufficiently alive to measure the height and even the distance of its divinity.

I may be permitted to make this gentle protest, because I think there is a faintly patronising tone in the talk about Asiatic mystics and the West. When European travellers really were ignorant of Asia; when the bumptious missionary of some provincial Little Bethel really did see nothing in Eastern religions except horrible goblin gods with three heads and six hands; when a follower of the great Gautama or the greater Confucius really might be regarded merely as a nauseous nigger or a dirty coolie - then it was doubtless desirable to insist that Christians did not know very much about religions like Buddhism and Brahminism. It was quite natural and necessary to repeat that we were not too well acquainted with Eastern religion. But I think the time has come when it is permissible to ask respectfully whether these Eastern mystics are very well acquainted with Western religion. Incidentally, it might be well to ask if Western critics are acquainted with Western religion. We have practically come to a condition in which Christianity is the only religion which Christians do not study. That being the case, we can hardly look to Confucians or Brahmins for much comprehension of it. I will venture to guess that I know at least as much about the Hindu's conception of Nirvana as he does about the Schoolman's far nobler notion of Fruition. And if Western critics studied Western mystics, not merely in order to show how much they resemble Eastern mystics, but also how much they can add to the Eastern mysticism - I think we should break new ground and begin to understand ourselves.