

Heaven, Hell and Oblivion

A Reflective Meditation on the Afterlife

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We often think and speak of Heaven and Hell. Today's reflection brings in oblivion as a possible third state after death. I am aware that this is an abstract and somewhat esoteric line of thought, but I feel it worth a deeper exposition.

This morning, I happened to listen to a thought-provoking message by the Reverend Doctor Valsan Thampu, who explored the complex, and often unsettling, topic of life after death. His insights left a considerable impression on me, and have prompted this reflection, in which I share some of the key thoughts that developed in my own mind as a result of his talk.

Doctor Thampu began by addressing a concern common to us all: the fear and uncertainty surrounding our final destination once we leave this world. Most people wrestle with the thought of where they will end up, and this is typically framed in terms of Heaven or Hell. Our physical bodies, formed from the earth, remain lifeless until the moment God breathes His spirit into them. This is a vital insight, reminding us that our physical existence and our emotions, important as they are, are not what ultimately determines our fate in the life to come. It is, instead, the soul — the divine essence breathed into us by God — that holds the true significance in the grand scheme of things.

Doctor Thampu went on to say that if we are genuinely concerned for the destiny of our souls, we must allow our souls to take precedence in our lives and in our characters. He made the important point that salvation is rooted not in our own deeds, but in the grace of God — a gift inherently tied to the full flowering of our souls. If we neglect to nurture our souls, and fail to let them take precedence over the physical being, we deny them the very opportunity of existence after death.

The implications of this line of thought are profound. If we fail to let our souls lead us on our earthly journey, we may, without quite intending it, seal our own fate — resulting in an eternal closing-off of existence, our souls remaining in a state of eternal oblivion. This is a sobering way of looking at life after death, suggesting that there are, indeed, three possible outcomes: the bliss of Heaven, the torment of Hell, and the bleakness of eternal nothingness.

How we are to live by the soul is set out in great detail in the teaching of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

Any takers?

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