



Just Round The Corner: Glimpses of the Afterlife

Colin Morris

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Henry Scott Holland's lines beginning 'Death is nothing at all' are often quoted at funerals. But what evidence is there for the existence of an afterlife at all, let alone one that is 'just round the corner'? Most of the great religions have promises about immortality at the heart of their faith, but religious believers have no monopoly of convictions about any future beyond this earthly life. People who are generations removed from churches, temples, mosques and synagogues and yet hope that death is not the end find comfort and reassurance in some unusual places because our so-called post-religious age is obsessed with the Supernatural. In literature, films and television, society is bombarded with paranormal happenings and stories about 'the truth out there', to quote the motto of that vastly popular TV series, The X Files. Science too is opening up exciting new possibilities - astrophysicists pondering the origins and future of the universe, neurologists searching the brain for evidence of the soul, geneticists examining mechanisms that might postpone death and chemists on the trail of drugs capable of reversing the ageing process. In this witty and perceptive book Colin Morris looks at some of the responses the people of our time are making to the question first put by the prophet Jeremiah: 'What will you do as death approaches?' The answers might range from 'Do nothing,' through 'Toss a Coin', 'Follow the Book', 'Go into Deep Freeze' to 'Explore another Universe' or 'Claim the Right to be Forgotten.' Amongst other subjects, he looks at the turtle that lives for ever, the Tutankhamun of Torquay, the celebrity that Sun readers voted an angel and questions such as: 'Any signs of life in Lenin's tomb?' and 'Would you like to know When?' Given the importance of what is at stake, Colin Morris believes that the deeply held convictions of anybody about immortality, however strange, are worth a moment's thought provided they are not logically absurd or morally degenerate. After all, such beliefs are not just debating points, sooner or later they will be put to the test. As he points out, the unlikeliest things have turned out to be true. Carl Jung said, 'Using subjective assumptions, a false hypothesis and a route abandoned by modern navigation, Christopher Columbus nevertheless discovered America.' Colin Morris is a preacher, broadcaster and writer.

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