

Kingdom of God is within you." "This is life everlasting, that they may know thee, the only true God." This is no mere endless prolongation of petty individual existence. It is something far nobler and higher than this. Hear Farrar's burning words :

"The use of the word *aionios* and of its Hebrew equivalent *olam*, throughout the whole of Scripture, ought to have been sufficient to prove to every thoughtful and unbiassed student that it altogether transcends the thoroughly vulgar and unmeaning conception of 'endless.' Nothing, perhaps, tends to prove more clearly the difficulty of eradicating an error that has once taken deep and age-long root in the minds of 'theologians,' than the fact that it should still be necessary to prove that the word 'eternal,' far from being a mere equivalent for 'everlasting,' *never* means 'everlasting' at all, except by reflexion from the substantives to which it is joined ; that it is only joined to those substantives because it connotes ideas which transcend all time ; that to make it mean nothing but time endlessly prolonged is to degrade it by filling it with a merely relative conception which it is meant to supersede, and by emptying it of all the highest conceptions which it properly includes."

As to a continued individual existence after death, it is nowhere definitely taught by the Master, and is only even implied on any broad and reasonable principle of interpretation in three of his sayings. This may seem an extreme statement, but I challenge proof to the contrary from the Gospels. The three passages alluded to are the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the decision upon the case of the woman who had seven husbands, and the promise to the thief on the cross.

All other references of this sort which have even the appearance of being personal are to a mysterious "second coming" "in the clouds of heaven," which it is distinctly stated shall take place within the lifetime of that generation (Matt. 16 : 28 ; Mark 12 : 25 ; Luke 20 : 35 and 24 : 34), but as to whose occurrence history is silent. Even that matchless epitome of the wants and aspirations of the human heart, the Lord's Prayer (in Luke, Rev. Ver.), contains not a word of allusion to such a region. The grandly majestic "Last Judgment" is the Verdict of History, and nothing could be more "unorthodox" than its superb criterion, which is neither creed, nor faith, nor even intentional service of God ("Lord, when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee?"), but the broad and noble principle of common humanity, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." In short, the *Zoe aionios* of Christ is literally the "Life of the Ages" of Darwin.

To what conclusion, now, are we led by this review of the type-religions of the world, as to the effect of a belief in a future life upon the fear of death? Only one seems possible, that it vastly increases it. The happy hunting-ground is reserved only for chiefs and warriors of highest renown, and many are the risks which even these have to run upon their passage thither. Only a few of the most favored of mortals can hope to scale Olympus. The halls of Odin open to none save heroes of renown or faultless courage. The paradise of Mahomet is reserved for the faithful

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