

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

a direct continuation of his individual life on earth, only in a "much improved and enlarged edition."

We must lay special stress on the thoroughly materialistic character of *Christian* athanatism, which is closely connected with the absurd dogma of the "resurrection of the body." As thousands of paintings of famous masters inform us, the bodies that have risen again, with the souls that have been born again, walk about in heaven just as they did in this vale of tears; they see God with their eyes, they hear His voice with their ears, they sing hymns to His praise with their larynx, and so forth. In fine, the modern inhabitants of the Christian Paradise have the same dual character of body and soul, the same organs of an earthly body, as our ancient ancestors had in Odin's Hall in Walhalla, as the "immortal" Turks and Arabs have in Mohammed's lovely gardens, as the old Greek demigods and heroes had in the enjoyment of nectar and ambrosia at the table of Zeus.

But, however gloriously we may depict this eternal life in Paradise, it remains *endless* in duration. Do we realize what "eternity" means?—the uninterrupted continuance of our individual life forever! The profound legend of the "wandering Jew," the fruitless search for rest of the unhappy Ahasuerus, should teach us to appreciate such an "eternal life" at its true value. The best we can desire after a courageous life, spent in doing good according to our light, is the eternal peace of the grave. "Lord, give them an eternal rest."

Any impartial scholar who is acquainted with geological calculations of time, and has reflected on the long series of millions of years the organic history of the earth has occupied, must admit that the crude notion of an eternal life is not a *comfort*, but a fearful