

That something is a belief in the fundamental reasonableness and order of the world, in the rationality of all things. If we give up the assumption that all things exist and work according to reasonable laws, we give up our vast system of inferences and reasoning from what we now know to future, possible, and distant events, and progress would no longer be possible.

3. In the area of ^{religion} belief the problem we face on Easter day, today, primarily is the question of whether or not life really does continue beyond the death of the present physical body. Some people would argue that you cannot make a good case for life eternal. We would answer that if immortality is NOT true, then we are confronted with a strangely unreasonable thing. As we look at ~~the~~ human beings, we think we see that after an ages-long development ~~under the guidance of God~~^{of} ever-more-complex organisms, there has at last come into being a creature whose worth is beyond question because he can weigh values; he can judge all things by ideals given him from beyond himself. He is able to unlock many of the secrets of nature itself. Yet, this same creature, the human, cannot

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always live here on this earth. If when he dies and thereby leaves this earth, ~~this life, if~~ that is the end of him, then all his long development over centuries and over thousands of lifetimes will have come to nothing. That human development of the individual is cut off by physical death, that the understanding and values achieved ^{BY A PERSON} ~~just simply~~ vanish, does not seem very reasonable.

4. Many people are convinced that the world is reasonable in its mechanical constancy -- you can count on the calendar, on the seasons, and so on. Isn't it reasonable also to suppose that there is a purpose in all ~~the~~ ^{of this} worldly dependability, ~~around people?~~ Many scientists say that there would be no mechanical order to the universe if there were no purpose or reason.

5. Our faith, our religion, states that God is the reason behind everything, the planner of it all. If there is a God, the only God, controlling it all, then there is a rational, reasonable, logical basis, indeed-almost a demand- that we believe in life eternal, in immortality, for the individual.

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6. The traditional Easter Scripture that we read, Matthew 28:1-9, and the ^{WORDS OF JESUS} Scripture, in John 12:20-26 ~~which presents a teaching of Jesus himself~~ about life eternal, ~~both are~~ Scriptural evidence and teaching to back up our beliefs which we want to ~~state~~ ^{statements} here, as to why it is reasonable to believe in life eternal.

I. It is reasonable, firstly, to believe in life eternal, because if God IS good, then He wills to conserve all value.

1. A motorist had to make a detour on a really-unimproved country road, and became bogged down in a deep mud-hole. He paid a passing farmer \$10 to pull him out with his tractor. After he was on the good road again, he remarked, "I'd think that at that price you'd be pulling people out of this mud day and night."

"Nope," answered the farmer, "at night's when I tote the water for the holes."

That farmer knew a good thing for himself, at least, and was going to do what he could to keep it going!

6. The traditional Eastern Scripture that we read, Matthew 28:1-9, and the Scripture in John 12:20-26, about the resurrection of Jesus, about life eternal, both are Scriptural evidence and teaching to back up our message and teaching. It is here, as to why it is reasonable to believe in life eternal.

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...the motorist had to make a detour on a really unimproved country road, and became bogged down in a deep rut. He had a passing farmer who told him out with his tractor. After he was on the good road again, he remarked, "I'd think that at that price you'd be getting people out of this mud lay and die."

"None," answered the farmer, "at night when I lose the water for the boiler." That farmer knew a good thing for himself, at least, and was going to do what he could to keep it going!

2. We believe that it is reasonable to think that God keeps life going for ~~most~~ people because ~~at its best~~ life is a good thing. Surely a good God ^{likewise} would keep the good ⁱⁿ people from being destroyed forever; just as he does not let matter or energy ever disappear from the universe or world, but ~~perhaps~~ ^{does} let it change form. The human personality may change form, but it is always in existence in one way or another, we believe, reasonably.

3. The goodness and power which God has displayed in so many areas of the world would seem to argue that he does not let goodness and values of any kind disappear, be destroyed.

II. Another reason for believing in life eternal is that a Good God will not allow the many unjust conditions of this world for so many people to be the end of existence and experience for them.

1. The problem of injustice in the distribution of pains and pleasures in this life is a difficult problem to explain, any way you look at it, and especially for a believer in God.

2. We believe that it is not enough to think that God keeps His promises forever because He is faithful. Life is a good thing, surely a good God would keep the good in people from being destroyed forever; just as we do not let matter or energy ever disappear from the universe or world, but let it change form. The human personality may change form, but it is always in existence in one way or another, we believe, reasonably.

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11. Another reason for believing in life eternal is that a God who will not allow the many unjust conditions of this world for so many people to be the end of existence and experience for them.

1. The problem of injustice in the distribution of pain and pleasure in this life is a difficult problem to explain, any way you look at it, and especially for a believer in God.

2. Without a belief in immortality it would be a completely unsolvable problem. But with belief in life eternal there comes the assurance that all will be equalized eventually, the good rewarded and the evil punished. This is in keeping with the belief that God is good. Our Scripture saying, words of Jesus, speak to this point: "He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life ~~loses it~~ in this world will keep it for eternal life." It doesn't mean that you hate your life in the sense of despising it. It does mean that you recognize long-range values enough to be willing to sacrifice and give up some pleasures and benefits now in order to help others, ^{PEOPLE,} to serve God, to achieve life eternal by becoming ~~through practice~~ a fit person to live in God's presence.

3. ^{short biography} An ~~illustration~~ from one of my early parishes, or churches, illustrates the impelling reason to believe in life eternal as a compensating, righting factor, I think. It is the ^{RECORD} ~~story~~ of a person who by the time I knew her was an elderly person. She ^{AND OTHERS} told me, over a period of time, her life story, some of which I want to share here.

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... a ~~distinction~~ from one of my early parishes, or churches, illustrates the compelling reason to believe in life eternal as a compensating, righting factor. I think it is the story of a person who by the time I know her was an elderly person. She told me, over a period of time, her life story, some of which I want to share here.

As a young girl, adults viewed her as particularly intelligent, and as she developed she seemed to absorb knowledge very quickly. A bright future was forecast for her, regardless of the fact that she came from a poor and hard-working, honest, religious family. At the time when she should have been enabled to go to high school, and perhaps later to college, her mother, who was the means of support for the family since the death of the father when the girl was very young, became a permanent invalid. This girl was the oldest in the family, and she had to do anything she could ~~then~~ to earn money to help support the family. As she grew into maturity this responsibility continued. In ~~early middle age~~ ^{WHEN} all the younger brothers and sisters finally grew up, and her only responsibility was to herself and her mother, she found a little time ~~then~~ for her own interests, particularly her religious and church activities. Through the church she met a man of some financial means, and they eventually were married. It looked as if she would now have a few years of well-earned happiness and security. However, ~~with~~ ^{VERY SOON} in just a few years he was killed in an accident, and not much later her

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mother died. Quickly thereafter the great crash of the late 20's and early 30's wiped out her property and bank accounts. Only a small place with a house and a little bit of land was left. She supported herself on that, raising a bit of fruit, keeping a cow, pig and chickens. She got a dog, and after she got to love it an accident took its life. Another dog replaced it, but this one ate some poisoned meat. With each death a part of her seemed to go. She once asked why her life had to be so unfortunate; but ^{KEPT HER FAITH} ~~then decided that she still~~ trusted the heavenly Father ^{WOULD} ~~to~~ make things right ^{IN THE LONG RUN.}

4. This true account ~~does~~ points out that some people ~~do~~ enter on this life with great promise, only to have environmental obstacles, or disease, or accident ~~seem to~~ strike them down at every turn, until death finally intervenes. Will a Good God let such careers stop there? It is more reasonable to assume that He will provide new ways of work and growth and satisfaction in a life to come.

III. A good God provides immortality as a means of giving each life a way

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4. This true account is bound out but some people enter on the life with great promise, only to have environmental obstacles, or disease, or accident, or death finally in-tervened. Will a Good God let such careers stop there? It is more reason-able to assume that He will provide a way of work and growth and satis-faction in a life to come.

III. A Good God provides opportunity as a result of faith in each life's way.

to achieve its possibilities not achieved here on earth through no personal fault.

1. Some people still live who remember Woodrow Wilson as president of The United States, and others of us have read about him in the history books. He believed fervently in the peace-conserving possibilities of an organization of world scope, the League of Nations. In his own country he found little support for the League of Nations, and saw this nation refuse to join it. Perhaps he was on the wrong track in seeing the League as the best vehicle for peace. ~~He was doomed to failure in getting his country into it. Nevertheless,~~ His sincerity was apparent, and over the years becomes even more respected. Is the yearning of this man, long-dead, and others before him and since his time, to be forever denied, that peace ^{MAY} become a reality? Who knows? Maybe the memory of Woodrow Wilson will accomplish more since his death than his influence did in life. Maybe in life eternal he can find approval from the source that ultimately counts, and know that he was not a failure, as he must have felt he was when he died.

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2. The holiest of saints, the most learned of scientists, and the most gifted artists are keenly aware of the distance that their finest efforts fall short of the goals set in their hearts. Most of us have goals which never are fulfilled here on earth. Life is not long enough. Our understanding and skills do not develop fast enough.

3. It seems that God has given to each person an infinite and endless task. Does He give only a little bit of time in a short life here and now, and then sweep that person away into utter annihilation and death? To call such a God good would be a contradiction.

4. Belief in God logically demands that we believe in immortality, so that in life eternal a person may be given a chance to make up for his inabilities and failures here on earth. That "making up" might be a chance to keep on working at his chores; or it might only be to know that he is

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A. Belief in God logically demands that we believe in immortality, so that in life eternal a person may be given a chance to make up for his failures and failures here on earth. That "rain up" might be a chance to keep on working at his career; or it might only be to know that he is

understood fully and forgiven completely by God; that at last he is really at home permanently and in happiness forever.

Conclusion:

1. Here today we have been pointing to some reasons for belief in life eternal. We have said that because the world we live in and know obviously is operating in an orderly way, it is logical to believe in an intelligent and reasonable operator of the world and its universe. We call that operator by the name of God.

2. We have said that for a human, which we have claimed as the highest living organism on earth, it is logical to expect a reasonable and just outcome of life, as opposed to a meaningless existence.

3. We have said that because God conserves the energy and matter of the universe, letting them change from form to form but never letting them disappear, it is reasonable to assume that he treats the human spirit in a similar manner. We believe that the experience of death is but a change of form for the housing of the eternal personality.

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4. We have pointed out that a faith in life eternal gives us a preview of a time and condition where the injustices of life will be made right.

5. There are many other reasons for believing in life eternal. The greatest of all, of course, is the record of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This has been the central fact and article of Christian faith since its beginning. Because Jesus lives, we shall live also. Eternal life has been demonstrated to us and promised to us by Jesus. We need but to have faith in him, to follow him, to love him.

6. Our Scripture, words of Jesus, illustrates and says well the essence of Jesus' outlook on this life and the next: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

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