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ARTICLE IV.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL.[1]

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"If a man die, shall he live again?" This is the old, old question, about which the thoughts of men have turned, with doubts, fears, or believing hopes, from the beginning. Old, it is ever new. Never fully solved, except for the conscience and the heart, always leaving the critical reason of man short of absolute conviction, it presents itself anew for practical solution to each new generation. Since, as a question of sensible fact, neither the affirmative nor the negative can be absolutely demonstrated in this life, it leaves immense room for the play of the dialectics of doubt, on the one hand, and of the powerful instincts of the heart's needs and faiths, on the other. As a practical question, rightly affecting, according to the answer given to it, the conduct of life, its importance is transcendently great. To trifle with it, or to neglect to consider it, is unnatural in the extreme.

The belief in immortality is one of the ideal possessions of mankind. It involves the belief in an entity designated by the pronoun "I," — a soul — a subject of consciousness and personality, — which, invisible for the physical organ of sight, belongs to the realities which, though "not seen," are yet "eternal." It stands in the same category with the belief in a God of love, and in a heaven where we shall see him as he is. It implies a faith that things are not altogether what they seem, even when viewed under the most powerful and tell-tale microscope; that behind and above attraction and cohesion is life, and above what are contradictorily termed blind necessity and brute or mechanical force exists intelligence, with the attributes of wisdom, truth,

[1] A University Address.

and love. It goes along with the faith that goodness, beauty, and truth are more powerful realities than gravitation or steam. The belief in human immortality is a part of the heritage of the noblest part of man, — the reason, — and shares and bears witness to the dignity of the latter.

Corresponding with this its dignity is the universality of the belief in question. The lowest in culture and the highest hold it together. A member of one of the most degraded of savage tribes, seizing the hand of a civilized visitor, and squeezing it, said: "This will die; but the life that is within you will never die."[1] Testimony to the effect that all savage tribes believe in a future life is gathered and summed up by one of remarkable judicial impartiality, — Mr. E. B. Tylor, in his recent magnificent work on Primitive Culture. On the other hand, the genius and the piety of the highest culture live in the same belief. Its crowning intellectual exponent, Shakespeare, dies (in the words of his last will and testament), "hoping and assuredly believing ..... to be made partaker of life everlasting"; and to the faith of every Christian the death-bed is the scene whence he shall "languish into life." From this comparative universality of the belief in immortality among men springs the argument in its favor from the "consent of mankind," — *consensus gentium*, — urged already in ancient times by Cicero, among others. It is true there have been, and are still, many who confidently expect death to be the "be-all and the end-all" — persons to whom, as to the recently deceased atheist, Strauss, the thought of eternal persistence, under circumstances even no less happy than those of the present life, would be fraught only with dismay. As the faith in eternal life is supported by no direct testimony of the senses, it is no marvel that, even in cultured nations those persons whose lives most revolve in the sphere of mere sensuality should disclose little capacity to grasp or believe in the idea of a life to come; and as the faith, in its purest form, is indissolubly bound up with the belief in God, and the desire to advance in the

[1] E. B. Tylor, Primitive Culture, i. 389 (1st English ed.).

knowledge and love of him, it is easy to comprehend that it should be more or less wanting to those who are not at once "pure at heart and sound in head." But, apart from those who from deficient mental culture or spirituality reject the hope of a future life, it is undeniable that at all times there have been many of strong intelligence and earnest, honest spirit, who have found the stone before the door of the sepulchre immovable. Nay, how many are there among us to-day who have not felt, from time to time, our misgivings? How many who, under the influence of engrossing occupations which bind the thoughts to earth, or of a science termed "positive," which concerns itself only with things seen, have not been sensible of a chilling shadow of doubt coming between them and the things which are not seen? In truth, an intelligent belief in the soul's immortality, as in all ideal things, requires for its maintenance the constant activity of the spirit. The inward eye must ever be kept opened; the reason must be always on the alert to wrestle with and overthrow the lions of scepticism which come speciously labelled with the names of "science," "positive fact," or (more meekly), "ignorance." It cannot be amiss, then, that I invite you, in the brief time which remains for this discussion, to accompany me in an attempt to refresh our sense of the grounds on which our hope of a life beyond the grave may rest, and perhaps to indicate in a measure its independence of all present or possible results of scientific research.

We need to remind ourselves at the outset that, whatever conclusion we may arrive at, it must not, and cannot if it be true, conflict with anything which science strictly demonstrates. It is a part of the beautiful harmony and unity of all truth that its parts all belong to one symmetrical, ideal structure. Of this structure the realism of material science furnishes the basis, while the idealism of faith, hope, reason, completes the superstructure. The capping-stones of a building are not to be laid side by side with the stones of the foundation. Thus placed, they will evidently not all fit into each other, will seem incongruous, and perhaps mutu-

ally contradictory. But each in its place, viewed in its relation to the whole building, will be seen equally to be justified in its existence, and to contribute to the due proportion and completeness of the whole. Thus it is with the idealistic truths of God's and the immortal soul's existence, on the one hand, and the material facts of physical constitution, on the other — all regarded as building-stones in the inviolable temple of all truth.

Again, — and this is in harmony with the spirit of the illustration just used, — in reasoning about the things which are ideal and unseen, we rightly proceed from the without to the within, from the given circle of material fact, as that which is first known to us, to the invisible centre, which is discovered only by the subsequent research of the disciplined inward eye. The circumference must have a centre. It cannot be conceived except as in relation to one. In like manner, the cycles of palpable fact necessarily imply central truths by which our conception of them is completed, by which they are accounted for. Hence from the circle of the round world we reason to the central power which created and sustains it; from the circle of facts concerning the human body and human consciousness learned in experience, to the soul which respectively animates and underlies both; and from these facts, viewed in themselves and in their relation to the order of the universe, to the immortal destiny of the soul. In so far as these conclusions are not cogently demonstrated, they are, like the theories of purely physical science (as gravitation, the undulatory theory of light, and the like), hypotheses to be accepted as having all the force of truth until supplanted by better ones.

In making these statements, I leave out of consideration all forms, real or fancied, of direct knowledge by which it may be claimed that we have an immediate experience of the great truths in question. And yet how many may there not be of the pure in heart who see God now, who know him by the life of God in the soul? And who shall term illegitimate the ecstatic fervor of conviction of those who, having such an

experience, affirm that they feel their immortality as an actual fact already begun, the future contained in the present, — their eternity, following the thought of the great German theologian,[1] included in every instant, since they have become consciously one with the infinite? True it is that many, and perhaps all whose spiritual perceptions are not too much beclouded by materialistic prepossessions, profess to detect in themselves this instinctive sense — a spiritual, yet experimental, intuition of their eternal destiny. And into the same category of experimental evidence might be introduced that general instinct of immortality which may seem to be implied in the comparative universality of the belief in it among mankind.

Lastly, there is a large class of people, and that not in other respects the least intelligent, to whom an order of phenomena termed "spiritualistic" directly confirms what perhaps the most eminent living representative of spiritualism, Alfred Russell Wallace, the naturalist, terms "the absolute reality of ..... future existence." Whether the phenomena here alluded to and the spiritualists' interpretation of them are to be regarded as a survival of savage animism, and, if so, whether this fact is to be viewed as discrediting the former or accrediting the latter, I will not attempt to decide. The value of this and of all other alleged direct testimony to man's immortality I leave for each one who doubts to settle for himself, and pass to a class of considerations coming under the head of inferential reasoning.

The considerations from which we may seek to infer the immortality of the soul are: the intrinsic nature of the soul and of the phenomena of its conscious life; the place and relations of man in the scale of existence, as far as this latter is known to us; and the capacity of man and his moral nature, with all which these imply.

The argument from the first of these considerations will of course be baseless, unless the soul itself exists. And to ascertain the fact of the soul's existence, and appreciate fully its nature, we need not simply to investigate the physiological

[1] Schleiermacher.

conditions and natural history of mental life, but also to reach an abiding conviction as to the original nature of true being universally. There is a philosophy, which is new only in its phraseology, and in the form, not in the substance of its conceptions, which, ascribing true being to nothing but imperceptible physical atoms, affirms that "the rotation of the atom of ether about its own axis is the prototype of all phenomena."[1] On this view of the fundamental and universal nature of reality, we should be shut off beforehand from inquiring whether any facts immediately observable for us gave evidence of the being of a distinct principle to be termed soul. We should be obliged — whether we would or not, and however great the difficulty of the operation might be — to resolve thought, feeling, desire, will, i.e. all our conscious life, into a rotation of atoms, — of brain-atoms, — and, with the living author from whom I have quoted, to define the word "soul" as a collective term for all the functions of the brain. It is almost needless to say that the difficulty of such resolution is insurmountable, and to cite in support of this assertion the testimony of such "advanced" scientists as Spencer,[2] Tyndall, and Du Bois-Reymond,[3] whose caution approaches, or even amounts to, scepticism, but who admit that the gulf between physical function and human consciousness is, in the nature of things, and must hence forever remain, impassable. But if there are phenomena which are utterly irreducible into the rotation or any other motion of physical atoms, then our conception of the nature and range of true being must be extended beyond the limits which materialism allows. A Dacian chief, "it is said, saved himself from destruction by the stratagem of cutting down a forest to the height of the human figure, and clothing the stumps of the trees in armor, which deterred the Romans from advancing to complete their victory."[4]

[1] Eduard Reich, Der Mensch und die Seele, p. 15. Berlin. 1873.

[2] See Herbert Spencer's Psychology.

[3] Emil Du Bois-Reymond, Die Grenzen der Natur-Erkenntniss. Leipsig. 1872.

[4] Merivale, History of the Romans, vii. 89 (Am. ed.).

The atoms of physical philosophy are the stumps, not the roots nor the branches, of the diversified forest of natural existence. Inaccessible to any sense, they are by this very fact clad in a part (the negative part) of the armor of the unseen, but not unfelt, realities which a Christian idealism affirms. But they are not formidable, nor do they become more so, when they are described as "self-moved" and "self-posited," and when there is arbitrarily ascribed to them "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life."[1] Least of all are they so, when, more consistently, their original constitution is affirmed to provide them with nothing but a rotatory motion. Any mask which materialism may throw about its atoms will not permanently impede the march of higher truth, whatever temporary fright it may produce among the faint-hearted, or among those who are only half-convinced.

The material, then, with which philosophical materialism would construct the universe, namely, revolving atoms, is obviously and confessedly insufficient for the purpose. Its method, which rests everywhere on the assumption of a blind, mechanical motion of atoms, following laws for which no lawgiver is allowed, is unconfirmed by anything but superficial observation, and is logically impossible. We must, therefore, have recourse to another principle to account for the universe as it presents itself to us. And there is no logical stopping-place for us, when we have once abandoned pure materialism, short of the admission of a broad idealism — an idealism which is not exclusive, but inclusive, of realism. We must, in other words, — in view, first and immediately, of the phenomena of conscious life, and then of the rational order, the providential government, the beauty of the world, — admit that the world is the expression of ideas, that thought controls the action of matter (or of the forces which may constitute what we call matter); and that, as being must be ascribed to that which causes and directs as much as, and even more than, to that which is only acted upon, the primal reality belongs to thinking, ideal being, rather

[1] Tyndall, Belfast Inaugural Address. 1874.

than to the atoms of a mechanical physics. But such being cannot retain its character, and be impersonal. We come, therefore, as the only alternative, after our rejection of philosophical materialism, to the recognition of an original, supreme, and personal Spirit, i.e. to God, as the One to whom, originally and in the highest sense, true being belongs.

Why have I gone apparently so far out of my way to reach a result, the connection of which with the main topic of this discussion may not be directly obvious? It is because, I repeat, before reasoning about the soul's immortality, we must reach a conviction that the soul can be and is. The physicist who attempts to give you an exhaustive account of the body refers you at last to assumed physical atoms, solid and imperceptible and in motion, and there stops. The psychologist is naturally and rightly expected in like manner to furnish, if possible, a similarly ultimate account of the substantial constitution of the soul. But the average carnal eye, and not only this, but positive science itself, is prone to see in the physicist's atoms the radical and only ultimate form of existence. We must make ourselves realize that such a conclusion is false. We must see that there is another category of existence in which the soul can be classed, before we can admit with intelligence that there is a soul. Hence we must be made to see that in the beginning there not only were atoms, but there was thought, i.e. thinking being, i.e. God. And as the atoms were the fathers of our bodies, so we must see God, or thinking, ideal being, as the Father of our spirits or souls.

Having arrived at the conclusion that what may be termed the wooden or mechanical conception of the universe is incomplete, — that ideal being not only exists as truly as physical being, but that to it belongs the primacy in existence, and that the universe contains, if I may so express it, the material for souls or psychical material, as well as bodily material, — we are in so far prepared to acknowledge the truth of the conclusion to which self-observation has universally pointed, namely, that the human body is the tenement

and instrument of an ideal principle or soul, that the latter expresses itself in the former, and that the history of the body is to a large extent the history of the earthly fortunes of the soul. And from among the great number of definitions of the soul which have been given I choose the following: "The soul is a self-realizing purpose." [1] To which I add, that it realizes itself under providential guidance and tuition. To explain: We have concluded that ideal or thinking being exists. I have termed it "ideal agency, activity" (for such it must be; ideal inactivity is, from the nature of the case, not ideal being at all). But from the idea of such activity the idea of purpose cannot be separated. Aimless ideal activity is not true to itself, to its own definition. God, as the fountain of all ideal or spiritual being is, or has, the thought of the universe, and that thought is the purpose which he is realizing in the infinite realms of space and in the hearts and minds of the children he has created. So the ideal or spiritual nature of man cannot but follow an ideal end or purpose, which is the idea of man, particularized in the case of each individual by the circumstances in which each is placed. The soul of man is therefore ideal (hence in its measure free and independent), active being, the activity of which tends towards the realization of a purpose, or, in language more commonly employed in this connection, an ideal. It is in this sense that the soul of man is, under providential guidance and tuition, a self-realizing purpose.

The greater includes the less; the admission of a two-fold order of being — namely, physical and ideal — provides the way for the recognition of the two-fold — the bodily and the spiritual — nature of man, and, as I trust will appear, of the eternal destiny of the latter; and I need no longer detain those who are following this discussion from reflections upon the question of their souls' immortality, except to remind them that physiology has till now discovered in the material organ of the soul nothing but a complicated apparatus or

[1] The language is that of the late Professor Trendelenburg, of Berlin. The thought is essentially Aristotelian.

instrument, not an agent. The nerve transmits motion, but nowhere is it discovered in the act of perceiving or willing. And the latest psychology finds that the simplest act of conscious perception must be accompanied by the combining, ordering activity of the thinking principle.[1]

What, now, from the stand-point here reached, is the outlook for the immortality of the soul? I think we must conclude that the soul is as indestructible as are the eternal ideas of God. And in this conclusion must be included not only the persistence of the soul as an ideal substance, but also the continuance of personal consciousness, without which death would be an eternal sleep, and our immortality in vain.

As a substance, i.e. as belonging to the category of true being, the soul, according to all the principles of phenomenal science, must be imperishable. The indestructibility of matter, or of force (which amounts to the same thing), by natural agencies is an axiom of science, confirmed by all experience. The modern discovery of the convertibility and correlation of forces (or of modes of energy or motion) is but a new confirmation and illustration of the same axiom. But what is true, in this respect, of matter or force or phenomena, the existence of which is in a pre-eminent sense derived, must *a fortiori* be true of the soul,—the being of which, according to our principles, is directly derived from, and is akin to, the being of God. The unending existence of the soul, when its existence as a substance is once admitted, follows, then, from the scientific law of persistence. With less obvious stringency, and yet with infinite probability, does its conscious existence also follow. For a human soul is a self, a person, differing in this from all other beings or things known to us on this planet. It has self-knowledge; it distinguishes consciously between me and thee, mine and thine, itself and the whole universe besides it. In the brute

[1] Compare, for example, I. H. Fichte, Zeitschrift für Philosophie, Halle, October, 1874; J. Fiske, Cosmic Philosophy; also views of Schopenhauer, in Schopenhauer als Mensch und als Denker, by J. B. Meyer, p. 24, and Ueberweg's Logic.

which approaches nearest to man, this distinction is, at best, only dimly made; with the reason not at all; at most, and then only incompletely, with the feeling. Its selfhood, or personality, is what constitutes the infinite worth and meaning of the soul. It is involved in the very heart of the conception of the soul as a spiritual or ideal, i.e. a thinking, purposing, willing being. An impersonal human soul were a contradiction in terms, and hence an impossibility in fact. Still, our experience in sleep and in swoons teaches us that our consciousness may be temporarily interrupted; hence the apparently inferior demonstrativeness of the inference from the law of persistence to the conscious immortality of the soul. The whole force of this objection cannot, perhaps, by direct argument, be destroyed. But I will offer one or two observations which may tend to weaken it.

First, the consciousness which we nightly lose in sleep is for the most part phenomenal, transient, and no part of the true ideal selves which we should be, and which our souls are, by the very hypothesis that we have adopted concerning their nature, striving to become. Our daily varying consciousness is mostly the consciousness of changing states, depending on our physical condition and the state of our senses. It is not, and cannot be, mainly occupied with what is eternal in reason and in love, and which is yet the true and only intrinsically worthy object of our conscious attention. The Faust of Goethe is made to say:

> "Two souls, alas! reside within my breast,
> And each withdraws from and repels its brother.
> One with tenacious organ holds in love
> And clinging lust the world in its embraces;
> The other strongly sweeps, this dust above,
> Into the high ancestral spaces."[1]

Who shall say that this distinction made by the poet is not psychologically true, and that when once our variable diurnal consciousness ceases, the inner Psyche does not fly away on the rapid wings of thought to bathe in the bright presence of its divine ancestry — to refresh itself and gain strength

[1] Taylor's Translation, p. 61.

in the realm of eternal truth, goodness, and beauty for the life-long contest with the refractory matter which it has to shape into the symmetrical proportions of the divine form of man, and with this lower consciousness, which it must discipline and refine until it be capable of participating in the higher and true life of the soul? Whence but from such an inner and better personality come the inspirations of genius, the anticipations of presentiment, the warnings of conscience, and the ability, at times, in dream-life to solve problems which the more sluggish activity of our waking mental life found insoluble? Why is intuition often quicker and surer than ratiocination? And how was it that the mathematical and astronomical truths announced by Kepler were, as he was accustomed to say, whispered to him by his protecting genius before he had demonstrated them?

Many of the elements, the data, of our ordinary mental life are results of high complexity, which are furnished, ready and complete, as starting-points for our conscious mental activities. As a consequence of the perception of this fact, the psychology of the last twenty-five years has gone on attributing more and more of that which our phenomenal consciousness contains to the sphere of the so-called "unconscious," until now, in the newest notable system of German philosophy, the "unconscious" plays the supreme role which spirit, or the thing-in-itself, or the absolute idea did in earlier systems. But who shall say that this unconscious element in the psychical life of man is really unconscious, simply because it does not form a part of the extremely limited subjective consciousness of our daily terrestrial life? What relation may it not have to a higher personality within us, clouded, developing, but ready in due time to burst forth in all the brightness of ideal glory, and be recognized by us as our true self?[1]

[1] The reader may recall the sentiment of the ancient philosopher, Heraclitus: "Our life is the death [or burial] of gods in us," and our death brings their release. What is the "active reason," νοῦς ποιητικός of Aristotle but the higher Psyche of the text? Read also Wordsworth's Ode on Immortality, Canto v.

Does this sound like mere fancy? It certainly is not the statement of mechanically demonstrable fact; it is not the discovery of a new mode of motion, yet it may lay claim, I think, to a pre-eminent measure of verisimilitude, and is not in known contradiction to fact. I feel warranted in claiming that, on the whole, the psychology of to-day is tending toward the establishment of such a conclusion. It is offered here to show the direction in which we may at least look for considerations to break the force of that argument against immortality which is derived from the interruption of our ordinary conscious life by sleep and comatose conditions. It is but an extension of the same objection to urge that spirit is so dependent on material organism for its manifestation and for its conscious existence that it cannot continue to exist after death shall have destroyed the body. But this is what we do not know, and cannot prove. As long as our experience takes place necessarily through organs adapted only to the perception of sensible existence, it cannot be expected that we should *see* how any existence apart from a sensible basis should be possible. But we are not to make the limits of our present knowing powers, in this respect, the limits of objective fact. This lesson empiricism is always foremost in recommending to our attention.

First, we must remember that we have come to the conviction that ideal or spiritual being really is, and that it is the king in the realm of existence. Can we fittingly or justly deny that the ruler may continue to exist when his subject has perished? But, again, we may also remind ourselves of the great changes in its material environment which the soul has not only survived, but grown upon. The transition from the womb to the light of day, the growth of the body, and the more than yearly renewal of the elements of the body have taken place without prejudice to the life of the spirit. It, on the contrary, remaining personally identical, has continued to live and to advance; while the body, changing in its states and in its elements, has served simply as a kind of stepping-stone by which the spirit could mount

higher, often burning with a clearer light as the body has grown more diseased or infirm.

And from here the argument may take either of two courses. Either we may pass again to the conclusion that the ideal spirit is, in its fundamental nature, not only measurably, but absolutely, independent of the body, and capable of subsisting apart from it; or, returning to physical analogies, and calling in the aid of Christian history and doctrine, we may end with the doctrine of a renewed and transfigured body. Let us follow the latter course. The analogies of the physical world, the facts of the metamorphosis of organisms, show that when an organ has served its purpose as the basis for the development of an ideal function, it is cast aside, and a new one is provided in its place. The evolution of species itself, if the theory be true, is but the illustration, on the widest scale, of the same law. Besides, in the universe as actually and at present constituted, the general law is that matter is the basis and condition of the manifestation of spirit. Aye, this is the very substance of our conception of matter, — that it is simply clay in the hands of an ideal potter, that it is in all its varied forms but the expression of ideas, that all its forces issue from and are controlled by intelligent will. I know not, therefore, what interest we can have, or how we can even rationally be justified, in denying the extreme probability that the spirit, surviving the death of its present body, will be clothed upon with a more glorious body, according to the comforting doctrine of him through whose good tidings "life and immortality are brought to life." If positive, material science extends its speculations to this point, it is this conclusion that it must demand. Pure speculation reaches the same result as a probable one. Both meet in harmony with the assuring doctrine of our holy Christian faith.

Other, and perhaps more impressive, considerations in support of the hope of immortality are suggested by the definition of the soul as a purpose, a complex ideal which is to be realized, and by the facts which support and illustrate

the definition. That there is a purpose, a "chief end of man," in the realization of which man alone rises to the full measure of his being, is obvious enough from the observed and necessary nature of all life. In all life there is progression; there is a starting-point, which represents the minimum of being, from which an orderly advance is made until the end be reached. The same truth appears, in a different and higher light, when we regard the moral sense and ideas of man, which serve him as a standard by which to measure his progress and to rectify deviations, whether through frailty or ignorance, from the right line of his intended development. But in physical life there is periodicity, orbital movement, waxing and waning. Progression is followed by retrogression, growth by decay. What evidence is there that the soul of man, an exception to this law, is a purpose reaching into eternity? There is the negative evidence, derivable from the circumstance that the soul, being, with God's aid, a self-realizing purpose or idea, belongs to the realm of things to which the notion of destruction has no application. Death is dissolution; it is the resolution of the composite into its elements; it is the cessation of motion. But the ideas of God are not compounded of atoms; they are not simple or complex modes of motion. We are such ideas, if we are spirits; for then God must be our Father. And, although the creature may not set limits to the power of the Creator to destroy his own offspring, it is evident that the process of such destruction, if it take place, must be entirely different from any which experience discloses, or which the unaided imagination can picture to itself. If, therefore, the purpose of the soul seems to imply the necessity or probability of eternal duration, we are not simply permitted, under the government of a just Father above, but are morally and logically bound, to expect it. And that this is implied may appear to us, if we contemplate man's place in the known order of created existence, his capacity, and his moral nature.

The signs of man's unique position of superiority in nature

are sufficiently obvious and familiar to all. We need only call to mind how relatively immense is the brain of man, his upright position, his natural and acquired modes of locomotion and communication, the enormous superiority of his mental endowments, and the power he exerts through his moral nature. Verily, man is *facile princeps* among his fellows of the material realm, and it is not wonderful if he exclaims, in the words of a living atheist, "Man was not born to be ruled," but, we will add, to rule. Nor is the essential superiority of man's position in nature diminished by anything which investigations into his natural history and genesis have rendered probable. Granted, that it were strictly proven that man's body is the lineal descendant of the lowest animal form, and admitting (for the sake of the argument) that the rudiments of his mental and moral qualities are for the most part present in the lower animals, increasing in degree as we ascend in the scale toward man, yet this is not out of harmony with the history of development in other ideal realms.

Thus, the advent of Christianity was preceded in advancing degrees by types and signs, by premonitory longings and expectations among the various pagan nations, which pointed with increasing impressiveness to the coming Redeemer. Yet it cannot therefore be maintained that Christianity was a simple outgrowth from pagan religions, the greater from the less, and that it contained no new ideal and saving content which the others had not. Or, to take another, only less impressive, illustration; the history of German literature, with its early cultivation through the study of foreign models of a form which bound the content captive, and its "storm and pressure period," in which the content broke its bands, introducing an anarchical rule of self-styled genius, prepared the way for the classical epoch, and for him — the wise, the comprehensive Goethe — in whom all its best characteristics were more than resumed, and in whom all its best tendencies culminated. But is the great poet's genius, then, a mere product of its antecedents, and are not its pro-

ductions marked by a quality as much higher and as different in kind, when compared with what went before, as the original inspirations of genius are different from the ineffectual strivings of tame talent?

So then, whatever his historical or natural antecedents, yet man is, all the same, just what he is and is known to be; and the lower animals remain, none the less, mere brutes, separated from their head by an impassable gulf. The former is still a being capable of thinking the immutable and eternal, of appreciating its unfading splendor, of longing for an unending life in its vivifying presence. Man can find the motive of his action in the ideal, is conscious of the distinction between right and wrong, holiness and vileness, as an absolute one, and has an absolutely imperative sense of duty. Darwin's attempted derivation of man's mental and moral attributes from the lower animal kingdom by gradual evolution, and through natural (meaning "mechanical") means, rests on false assumptions. It ignores the element of spontaneity, which is essential to all true existence — to the inferior soul of the brute, as well as to the spirit of man, who was "created a little lower than the angels." It assumes, in common, it is true, with the tendency of much of the psychology of the day, that spirit is a mechanical function of matter, resolvable ultimately into a mode or modes of motion. The idealist, on the contrary, — the man of spiritual faiths, — claiming to view the subject from a stand-point more true to fact, more broad, more fundamental, sees in the advancing types of psychical, as of physical life, only so many successive steps forward in the self-realization (under divine guidance) of that ideal substance of the universe which is the directest emanation from the Divine Being and the most illustrious manifestation of his power and will. He regards everything, down to the lowliest clod of earth, as possessing significance, and endowed with true being, only in so far as it is the expression of the ideal. So far, then, from admitting "natural selection," pure and simple (though not necessarily denying evolution in some form or degree), as

the agent of the genesis of physical and psychical species, he denies *in toto* that anywhere in nature pure mechanism prevails. The phenomenal mode may be determinable by mechanical formulae; but the power and the real operation are spiritual, and guided by comprehensive wisdom.

Man's distinction in nature is therefore grounded not on the fact that ideality first appears in him; for this is not the fact. It is equally present in the whole universe, though in a relatively more elementary form. But in man, of all existences experimentally known to us, it first rises to the form of rational personality. It is this that characterizes him. It is in virtue of this that he is fitted to bear the rule. It is in view of this that the wisest of German poets could exclaim:

"Only man alone
Can work the impossible!"

By it he enters with his thought into relations with the thought of God; nay, more, finds that the possibility, the consistency, the truth of his own thought are only possible and explicable upon the condition that it rest on that primal foundation of rational intuitions whose immutable nature stamps them as the direct children of the ideal realm, of which God must be the light. Does the fact that man is thus founded, in his intellectual relations, on the eternal, signify nothing?

Again, man, through this distinction of his rational nature, first among known created existences discloses not only the capacity for immortality, but the ability to desire it; and he does, in proportion to the perfection of his intellectual and moral being, desire it. Is it a demonstrated rule of the universal order that truly natural capacities and desires are given in vain?

Still further, and finally, man, by virtue of the personality which distinguishes him, is capable of entering into conscious moral relation with him who is from everlasting to everlasting. The whole examination of his capacities is an examination into his purpose or destiny, since the former are not without the latter; and in none of them do we find more

significant evidence that man's nature is, so to express it, planned for immortal existence, that his purpose is eternal, than in those which are to be designated as moral and religious. In common with the beasts which perish man has temperament, natural dispositions; but he alone can possess character. This, under divine tuition, he must make for himself. The brute is provided with instincts which, being already complete, are not improvable by the voluntary action of the subject which possesses them, but compel their possessor to be relatively perfect in his kind. Man, on the contrary, must learn voluntarily what the beast virtually knows already involuntarily, and by the way in which he does this is forced to lay the first, and what may in some sense be termed the physical, foundation of his personal character. This peculiarity of man is enough of itself to legitimate the suspicion of a radical difference between man and brute beast, not only in nature, but also in destiny. On this foundation the sense of mankind has declared, in an expression which has well-nigh become proverbial, that man must build for eternity. Various circumstances tend to confirm this declaration.

First, character is an expression of the eternal. For true character is fundamentally and alone the living out of the true, which, like the laws of God, is

> "Not of to-day, nor yesterday,
> But lives forever."

Hence our ideal of character includes, above all, absolute invariableness in our highest principles of thought and life, and in our highest loves. Hence, too, we observe that character subordinates the temporal to the eternal, conscious that in so doing it is but giving the preference to the abiding and real over the fleeting and unreal. Character counts not its life dear, but willingly faces every danger for the sake of constancy and truth to the ideal, and that with the more exalted assurance of victory the more extreme the outward peril or the literal cost. Shall a life which commences here to be the conscious, living expression of the eternal, itself perish? Shall noblest being cease to be?

Again, true character has eternal worth. Its influence among men is beyond appreciation, and the riches of him who possesses it are felt and admitted by all to be inalienable and absolute. It is the most perfect human expression of the good. The blind law of natural selection, even, provides, according to the admission and allegation of its supporters, for the survival and preservation of the best (and hence is not, after all, so very "blind," or, if so, it is certainly blind to good purpose). Perpetuation of the good — this law of the phenomenal world yields a suggestion by which he will not be slow to profit who not only with Plato, but with all great Christian thinkers, has come to the conviction that the eternal source and substance of being is not only ideal, but good, and that intrinsic goodness is inseparable from intrinsic and imperishable being.

Still further, while the worth of moral character is, as far as the latter extends, absolute in kind, because inspired by ideal and eternal motives, and developed in conscious relation to the absolute; yet in a finite being, in accordance with the universal law of such being, it is a variable and progressing quantity, and to the extent of its progress no limit is imaginable. Examine the case under but one of its numerous aspects. True character involves, among other things, the right distribution of our loves. In particular, it requires the love of self and the vanity of knowledge to be subordinated to the love of goodness. Now, a finite being, continuing indefinitely to exist, cannot conceivably cease to extend the range of his knowledge, when we consider that the range of being, and therefore of possible knowledge, is infinite. Hence it must forever remain a moral problem for the being thus existing to hold knowledge inferior to goodness in his affections. Thus in this one element of perfect character we may see how eternal is that purpose of man which constitutes his true soul, his true being.

Lastly, by his moral and religious qualities man stands in direct relation with the eternal God. By them he is specially constituted a son of God, and in so far co-eternal with him.

And, if this latter consideration does not suffice to furnish him complete assurance of his immortal destiny, yet his conviction that God is literally his Father cannot co-exist in him with the belief that a Parent of infinite goodness, power, and love will ever permit his child to perish out of his hand. If our love to God is so hearty and so supreme that without God we feel that we could not continue to exist, we may be assured — and it is the glory of our Christian faith that it completes this assurance — that God, too, so loves us, and even more.

Such, as I conceive, are some of the more important conderations which may support our hope of immortal life. It can never be amiss to attend to them; for the faith which rests upon them tends to keep us above the dangers and evils of "this naughty world." The water-spider provides for its respiration and life beneath the surface of the water by spinning around itself an envelope large enough to contain the air it needs. So we have need, while walking through the thick and often polluted moral atmosphere of this lower world, where seeming life is too frequently inward death, to maintain around ourselves the purer atmosphere of a higher faith in things invisible, without which we should morally droop and die. We need to remember, also, that the promise of the scriptures is: "To those who [personally] *seek* for honor and immortality, eternal life."

To the Mahometan the future life is, amid sensual delights, "Peace, peace." The Greek proverb declares that "there hands are clasped forever," thereby intimating the eternity of true affection. For the Christian the future is full of promises not only of peace and undying love, but also of eternally active life. May our assurance and our hope of the Christian's immortality be complete! They will be so, when we are conscious that, by our clear rational intuitions, our faith, our trust, our love, we are one in our spiritual body with him who saith: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen."