

Under given conditions, some of which we do not at all understand, any more than we understand some of the conditions of the brain, the phonographic cylinders give off these sounds again. For the time being we have perfect speech, or music, practically as perfect as is given off by the tongue when the necessary forces are set in motion by the brain. Yet no one thinks of claiming immortality for the cylinders or the phonograph. Then why claim it for the brain mechanism or the power that drives it? Because we don't know what this power is, shall we call it immortal? As well call electricity immortal because we do not know what it is. If a man has a strong will, he can force his brain to do this thing or that—make this effort, abstain from making one."

"Is the will a part of the brain?" Mr. Marshall inquired.

"I do not know," was the answer. "It may be or it may not be. The will may be a form of electricity, or it may be a form of some other power of which we as yet know nothing. But whatever it is, it is material; on that we may depend. After death the force, or power, we call will undoubtedly endures; but it endures in this world, and not in the next. And so with the thing we call life, or the soul—mere speculative terms for a material thing which, under given conditions, drives this way or that. It, too, endures in this world, not the other."

At the time when this report was current we discussed Mr. Edison's views in *The Open Court* as follows (Vol. XXV, p. 2):

"Mr. Edison says that he expects to live on merely in the ticks and clicks of telegraphs and in telephones and his various other inventions. But no 'merely' is needed! That immortality is big enough for any one of us. In addition he will live also in the brain of other inventors who will carry his work to further accomplishment.

"Wherever any one of Mr. Edison's inventions is used there is part of his thought, of his mind, of his soul, and that is the true Edison. Will he deny it? Scarcely. Mr. Edison's personal friends and the members of his family may love Mr. Edison himself—his person, his character, the twinkle in his eye and the smile on his lip, the human in him—better than his thoughts; or presumably they love his personality and admire his genius. But the recording angel of history, the destiny of mankind that doles out our rewards in immortality, cares naught for the former and weighs the soul only, and this soul of man, according to its merits, will take part in the life after death, in what is commonly called immortality."

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## AN ETERNITY LIMITED IN ONE DIRECTION.

BY EWING SUMMERS.

How can that be? for

1. Whatever has an end of existence must in the nature of things have had a beginning;

2. Whatever has a beginning must have an end.

The above postulates seem to me to be intuitive or axiomatic.

I believe it was the "school-men" who invented the technical terms *eternitas a parte ante* and *eternitas a parte post*; but I think these phrases were dropped a century ago or earlier as unscientific or otherwise too absurd for use.

If the above "postulates" are correct there can be no "immortality" for human consciousness.

Even all worlds are temporary, subject to redissolution by collision, as we see in those stellar phenomena called *novae*,—new or temporary stars.

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### BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

PSALMS OF THE EARLY BUDDHISTS. II. Psalms of the Brethren. By *Mrs. Rhys Davids*. London: Frowde, 1913. Pp. 446. Price 10s. net.

We are glad to see the second volume of Mrs Rhys Davids's sympathetic translation of Buddhist psalms. It is natural that this volume of the Brethren should be twice as large as that of the *Psalms of the Sisters* published in 1909. At a cursory reading these psalms seem to be more uniform in thought and expression, the minds represented to run more nearly in one mould, than is the case with those of the Sisters. The latter have the feminine personal quality which speaks from the point of view of the individual in contrast to their brothers' tendency to more abstract generalizations. But Mrs. Rhys Davids has formulated the aspects under which the supreme goal of salvation is viewed by the brethren, and her tabulation shows a wide variety of points of view. One evidence of uniformity is the tendency to refrain. A frequent one is:

"The Threefold Wisdom have I made my own,  
And all the Buddha bids us do is done."

and sometimes as much as eight lines are duplicated. The keynote of the volume is that of victory, of triumph, "the lion's roar," a frequent figure which introduces the collection thus:

"As to the call of distant lions' roar  
Resounding from the hollow of the hills,  
List to the psalms of them whose selves were trained,  
Telling us messages anent themselves:  
How they were named, and what their kin, and how  
They kept the Faith, and how they found Release."

One Brother, Kassapa the Great, thus gives forth the lion's roar of victory in his own behalf with Pharisaic sincerity:

"In the whole field of Buddha's following,  
Saving alone the mighty Master's self,  
I stand the foremost in ascetic ways;  
No man doth practise them so far as I.  
The Master hath my fealty and love,  
And all the Buddha's ordinance is done.  
Low have I laid the heavy load I bore.  
Cause for rebirth is found in me no more."

The story of Kassapa's life, as of many of the brethren, is of romantic human interest. He promised his parents that he would care for them during their lives and afterwards renounce the world. To appease his mother he had a statue made of an ideally beautiful maiden, telling her that if he found one who resembled it he would marry. The mother sent out messengers with the statue, and once when they left it standing by the river's edge the