HUMAN IMMORTALITIES.
THE OLD AND THE NEW.

BY THADDEUS BURR WAKEMAN.

"WHENCE, Why, and Whither?" are the great religious questions which it has taken our race and its science all of the past ages to answer, but to which the answer, now given by the sciences, from astronomy to sociology with its new interpretation of religion, morals and immortality, seems to be conclusive. Of course there is, and will ever be, no end of matters and things to be cleared up, learned and applied; but no one has shown how the natural and scientific solution of man's origin, duty and destiny, can be other than affirmed, extended and applied in the human future.

In this view the answer given by science to the question "whither?" is perhaps the more important. For man's immortality, or his belief about it, determines his "why" or duty; but both rest upon his "whence" or origin.

Accordingly in the history of most peoples we find, that, after the necessities of existence are tolerably provided, their beliefs on this subject control their conduct, religions, ideals, and even the conditions and progress of their physical and practical life. For instance, in China railroads must not be allowed, for they would disturb the "spirits" of the ancestors; and some such superstition generally lies across the paths of progress.

The first beliefs about existence after death were formed in the childhood of the peoples. They were naturally those of children, and therefore inevitably mistaken, illusory, and generally the reverse of the truth. Herbert Spencer, in his descriptive and other works on sociology, has well condensed the facts in regard to these beliefs, and shown how they arose from plain misapprehensions in regard to the breath (spirit or ghost), the air, winds, echoes, reflections, shadows, mists, clouds, motions, thoughts, feelings, will-actions, dreams, sleep, faintings, trances, and above all the sense
of will and selfhood. Hence have grown up all of the religions of
the world: animistic, with their ancestral fetishism; astralatry; poly-
theism, and monotheism—culminating in Christianity, Islamism,
Spiritualism and Mormonism—all one vast mass of illusions and
erors, transfused by empirical social and moral truths and customs
of value.

The chief of those illusions, out of which all of these “spook-
religions” grew, and upon which they still rest, were: (1) The
geocentric astronomy, which was the natural and common belief of
the race until reversed by the Copernican or heliocentric astronomy
in or about 1600 A. D.; (2) The belief that there was a “spirit”
or spirits, (with materiality of feeling, mind, will, and self) forming
Deity in the outer world of space and time; to which spirits all
motions, things and “creations” were referred for their cause, origin,
actions and ends—including man and the universe itself: and (3)
a spirit-world, “supernatural”; which is to be the abode of souls after
death—as a heaven or hell.

All of this old cosmogony is entirely reversed and shown to
be impossible by and in the modern scientific world-view. When
we meet the inevitable we must find its compensations. Since then
we cannot have what was thought to be, or wanted, let us be con-
tented and happy in making the best of what we have.

All of this old world is simply impossible on the basis of known
facts: Our sun is moving northward towards Lyra with the incon-
ceivable speed of three hundred million of miles each year. At
the same time our earth yearly circles the sun in an orbit of five hundred
and fifty millions of miles, besides rotating on its axis twenty-four
thousand miles each day. If we had “souls” which could pierce
space with the speed of light to find one “heaven”—as we all die at
different times, and in immensely different places, (from which “asc-
censions” would be in opposite directions)—how long will it take
our souls to meet there? or any where?

Take next that law of equivalent correlation and its true ver-
sion of the soul, viz., “the totality of our brain functions in active
process of conscious cooperation.” From that law it is impossible
to escape with even a trace of the old immortality. All there is of
any human being is a correlation of the past of the universe con-
tinuing ever onward into the future. All of our existence, conscious
and other, is a jet of fire-light constantly and correlatively “created”
by the infinite world behind us, and ever illuminating our way into
that infinite future which can be no other than a correlation of the
present. As Col. Ingersoll said in his last lecture, “We now know
that the supernatural never did, and never can exist."

We know that all of our subjective ideas, thoughts, feelings and aspirations—even that of immortality itself, are the sequent or concomitant correlations of the infinite objective processes upon which they depend as a part, and without which they have no existence. Our sensations of substance (matter) and its changes; of rest and motion; of space and time; of facts and events; of relation and law; of feeling and consciousness; of I and thou; of fancy and imagination; are realities: for they are direct, continuous and inevitable correlates of the infinite objective, never beginning and never ending, creation. Other "creation" never was, but as an Oriental myth, and as such only, real. Thus the world that was, and is, vanishes every instant and leaves not a "wraith" nor "ghost" behind, but a clean, clear, perfect new creation as a foundation of the world that is to be. "By and under infinite, changeless, eternal laws must we the little circle of our being complete"—was one of the earliest conclusions to which science and Goethe brought us.

But is not our will free? The answer is, Yes, and No! If the vine had consciousness as we have, every motion and turn of its tendrils and growing ends towards sunlight, food and moisture would be felt as its own act of choice and will; yet every such act we now see is determined by the endless correlations of the endless universe. Our subjective "free"-will is the illusionsy "sun-rise" and "sun-set" as noted in our almanacs; our determined will, and no sun-rise, are the real facts, as we learn when we study psychology and astronomy. We have simply made the mistake of the astronomer in Dr. Johnson's Rasselas, who had lived so long, and so intimately with the heavenly bodies that he verily believed that their motions were a part of himself, and the result of his own will, without which they would cease to move. The difference between his case and ours is, that our will instead of being the cause is the result of our bodily correlations and ceases with them.

Yet these appearances of sun-rise and of free-will are facts as such, and when so understood we practically and most usefully make them the bases of our daily and practical life. They are our subjective devices, well used to measure objective processes, and their concomitants, which are the real causes, though apparently the result of those devices. We most usefully measure the motions of the clock's pendulum or spring by figures on the dial and a time table, but they do not make the clock go. Yet they, too, are the results of natural brain-processes far more wonderful than the objective clock motions. Indeed the clock soon wears out, but these
figures and their time are "immortal," because continuously felt, repeated and used by the whole renewing human race, as a necessity of their life, welfare and improvement. Thus all human telesis and teleology is but the highest process of nature, "willfully" using the lower to its advantage: just as the flower "chooses" to turn to the sun,—

"As the sunflower turns on her god when he sets
The same look which she turned when he rose."

From that fact of nature it is but a step to the wonderful Xenion of Goethe and Schiller, called "The Highest," viz.:

"Seekest thou the Highest, the Greatest?
The plant can tell it thee:
What she without willing is
Be thou willing—that is it."

And from this it is but another step to the still more wonderful conclusion of Shakespeare over Perdita's flowers in "The Winter's Tale," which conclusion it has taken science and philosophy three hundred years to reach, and which is the death-knell of the supernatural in every shape and form, viz.:

"Yet nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean: so o'er that art
Which you say adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes."

That art is the highest telesis of nature—the conscious, designing, feeling, knowing, "willing" reaction of nature upon itself. The human "free"-will is thus the exquisite correlate flower of the universe!

Thus culminates in man that new world which science has opened up to us as our enduring home, instead of the old.

But if it is supposed that the souls which are fabled to escape from the death of the body still remain on this planet, and do not go beyond the earth's atmosphere, then Shakespeare gives their sad and unendurable fate in "Measure for Measure," in the familiar lines:

"Claudio, Ay, but to die, and go we know not where;
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
   . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
The weariest, and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury and imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

Isabella, Alas, Alas!"
We have only to read the whole of this passage to feel the horror of the old immortality. Shakespeare’s real sympathy was with the new world which he did so much to introduce. He uses the word “immortality” but twice, and always in its new and human sense: in Lucrece, l. 725; and in Pericles, Act 3, Sc. 2—all of which Scene is written in the new instead of the old psychology! I have found the word “immortal” twelve times in Shakespeare, but so used that the new meaning is applicable. Shakespeare’s ghosts only appear to those whose conscience creates them.

THE NEW GOD AND WORLD AS REALIZED BY THE GREAT HOME MAKER GOETHE.

Now let us turn from 1600 to 1800 and its first and greatest of real modern men—Shakespeare’s great successor, Goethe. Some other person might have sensed and realized the new state of existence and its consequences, introduced by the new astronomy, but as he was the only one who did, there is no help for it but to let him be our guide in exploring the new, as Virgil was to Dante in realizing the old, world. He was fortunate in natural gifts; in not being dwarfed by the old learning; and in striking the real lines of human growth and evolution in Bruno and Spinoza. These he followed by a most wonderful “fore-feeling” poesy and prophecy up to the very heart of our present century. His literature, and that which he inspired, and the astonishing progress of science which has confirmed and realized it, has made most other literature of our day really “of the past”—a back number! He first led the heart, intellect and soul of man into the new world, to settle there; and then planted its barren wastes with the seeds of the flowers and fruits which are making it the cheerful, enduring home—the “earthly paradise,” of the children of men.

The work of Goethe, “the Reconciler,” began with the clear conception of the world as a unity of motion and matter. “No matter without motion; no motion without matter.”—And “spirit” was a mode of motion impossible without matter. The universe was an infinite process of changes correlated, so that “No thing that is can to nothing fall.” The true conception of his poems, “God and World,” is this reconciliatory unity, in which matter, motion and spirit are “one and inseparable.” The “spirit” being the life-manifestation and process of the bio- or proto-plasm which Goethe and Oken discovered as Urschleim in 1800. “No matter without motion, no real consciousness or spirit without protoplasm.” Such is the way in which Ernst Haeckel, the great biological successor of
Goethe, states the conclusion now. But this is but stating the substance of the twelve poems in which Goethe realizes, sings, feels and enjoys his “God and World” as “One and All,” and thus he ends his “Ultimatum” at the close of “Allerdings” in 1827—translated in the Chicago Beacon of August, 1905.

This view of the immortal inspires all of “The Masonic Poems,” especially the three verses inserted as “Interlude” (Zwischengesang). As this Interlude has not been translated into English to my knowledge, and as it is very relevant and important, the text is here given with a translation that tries to reach the meaning of this “despair of translators” as Emerson called him.

**INTERLUDE: THE IMMORTAL.**

“Lasst fahren hin das allzu Flüchtige!  
Ihr sucht bei ihm vergebens Rath;  
In dem Vergangnen lebt das Tüchtige,  
Verewigt sich in schöner That.

“Und so gewinnt sich das Lebendige  
Durch Folg’ aus Folge neue Kraft;  
Denn die Gesinnung, die beständig,  
Sie macht den Menschen dauerhaft.

“So löst sich jene grosse Frage  
Nach unserm zweiten Vaterland;  
Denn das Beständig der ird’schen Tage  
Verbürgt uns ewigen Bestand.”

“Let pass the fleeting Transient as it may,  
Wisdom from that you’ll ever seek in vain;  
From out the Past The Able ever springs,  
In fairer deed eternal to remain.

“Thus ever to itself the living wins  
From change to change, new power over all;  
For Reason’s World, enduring for ever,—  
That makes alone mankind continual.

“And thus resolves itself that great query  
About our long sought second Fatherland;  
For what dies not in our earthly days,  
Insures that death itself we shall withstand.”

In that new world we must learn to live its new life of hopeful usefulness to ourselves and others; for so only can we lay the foundation of the new immortality. That new life was Goethe’s great legacy to mankind—the greatest he could have given—and that one he did give with loving, reconciling truthfulness and devotion. He trusted to freedom and truth.
"Dass von diesem wilden Sehnen,  "That from this wild longing,  
Dieser reichen Saat von Thränen,  This rich sowing of tears,  
Götterlust zu hoffen sei,  Godlike pleasures c'er reap'd may be—  
Mache deine Seele frei!"  Thy soul of that notion make free!"

And this freedom brings to truth—truth rich in remedies for all the ills of change from the old to the new:


"Ist's denn so grosses Geheimniss, was Gott und die Welt und der
Mensch sei?

Nein! Doch niemand hört's gerne: da bleibt es geheim."

"'Hurtful truth,' that prefer I to gainful error.
For truth heals the pain, which she perhaps inflicts!

"Is it, then, so great a secret what God and the world and man may be?
No! But no one is willing to hear it; so a secret it remains."

Such is Goethe's graceful way of impressing us against those prejudicial limitations of human nature, which more than anything else, close for us the entrance into the new world and its "new life" which he tells us must be led in

"The whole, the true, the good and the beautiful."

A few words must intimate what that new life is, or must be, before we can perceive and enjoy its new and inevitable immortality.

The whole universe underlies, correlates, creates, and so produces every instant of our lives and consciousness, and that of our race, with its past, present and future, ever lying between us and the world. Our real existence, therefore, depends upon our relation to humanity, and we have next to consider Goethe's idea of immortality which is most tersely and perhaps best expressed in the following lines:

"Niecht vom Vergänglichen,
Wie's auch geschah!
 Uns zu verwügen,
Sind wir ja da."

"Naught of the Transitory
Howe'er it appear!
Ourselves to eternalize
For that are we here."

Such is the lesson of the ages: In sun and nature worship, objectively; in sex, ancestor, and child worship, subjectively; are the two main and tap roots of human societies and religions to be found—and all real immortality. Upon them rested the monarchies of old, the republics and empires of Greece and Rome. They underlie the communities that for ages built up the culture of the Orient; and especially of Japan, which at a bound, solely under and by their inspiration, has placed that little island people by the side of the
British and American in the forefront of our race. It was that secular reality and sentiment that founded our republic through Paine and Washington, vindicated it by Webster, and secured its permanence through Lincoln. Back of his Gettysburg inspiration we hear the uplifting wave of Webster’s eloquence defending the Republican Union against Hayne and Calhoun; and welcoming the “advance of the coming generations” by that sublime chant of hope and glory which closes his Plymouth oration. In the view of the facts and realities of human evolution—past, present, and future, every variety of the old immortality, even Webster’s “immortal hope of Christianity,” becomes shallow, unsocial, immoral, and finally repulsive.

THE NEW CHRIST AND MAN AS REALIZED IN SOCIOLOGY.

The immortality described in the above poems of Goethe rests firmly now upon the physical sciences (astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology including psychology), but it is becoming recognized and appreciated only as the comparatively new science of sociology, literally brings “life and immortality to the light.” As soon as the old myth of man’s creation is replaced by the truths of biology and of human evolution, the individual and his conscious immortality in the old sense of the words, are found to be impossible metaphysical fancies.

There is no individual who is not a socius, born in and of his race, living, investing and expending his life therein from day to day until his last breath. His life is social in all of its origin, duties and functions; and so in all of its possibilities, and destinies. There is no possible exception to the universal law of continuous, equivalent or concomitant correlation. Under that law the totality of the whole living, conscious, immortal person or individual is fully accounted for naturally, that is correlatively, and there is nothing left to go to any supernatural or “other” world—even if such world could exist; which it cannot: for the universe or world as now known is one infinite and eternal correlating unity. There is no room for anything but the All, and its co-relating components.

It is as a part of this All or new “God” that we have our being, life and immortality. We are its continual correlation. Our consciousness and “free will” are no exception, nor is our sense of self with its personality and continuous ego. But between this self and the universe, sociology reveals our race as the all-important medium, matrix, mother, mediator and moderator of all the children of men. To use the old religious phrases, this race—humanity.
appears now as the ever-living holy Virgin Mother, of whom each generation, in its continuity and solidarity, is the ever newly born Christ—the ever-living, working, loving, sacrificing, and finally the Saviour, ever crucified, so as to make the life and salvation of each succeeding generation possible. It is in the continuity of the All, the race, and the generations with their families and communities social and governmental, that the only possible human immortality is now to be found. Goethe seems to have been among the first, if not the first, to have really and clearly recognized this all-important fact in and of the new world, which science has given us. He saw and felt at once the immense import "of the saying of the sage" Pascal, that "the human race is to be considered as one immortal man growing through the centuries." To this he seems to have added the static conception of Swedenborg’s picture of the foundation of heaven, as the "Grand Man." We find these ideas welded together in his "Sprüche" or Sayings, and finally in his remarkable "Dornburg Letter," written to the young duke upon his accession to the duchy in 1828, where it stands in these words:

"The rational world is to be considered as one great, immortal individual, who unceasingly works the necessary, and thereby ever raises himself to be lord (or master) over the accidental"—that is, the unknown or unforeseen, which may be controlled by human will and effort.

Following this line of thought we find many expressions in his prose and poetry:

Thus:

"Nur allein der Mensch
Vermag das Unmögliche;
Er unterscheidet,
Wählet und richtet;
Er kann dem Augenblick
Dauer verleihen.

"Man, and he alone,
May dare the impossible:
He distinguishes,
Chooses and judges;
He can the moment
Continuance lend."

"Im höchsten Sinn die Zukunft zu begründen,
Humanität sei unser ewig Ziel."

"In the highest sense the future to found
Let humanity be our constant (eternal) aim."

"Durch Menschlichkeit geheilt die schwersten Plagen!"

"Through humanity become healed the (our) heaviest afflictions."

"So im Handeln, so im Sprechen;
Liebevoll verkünd es weit:
Alle menschlichen Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit."
"So in deeds, so in words,  
Proclaim it wide and far:—  
For all human failings  
Pure humanity atones!"

"I have never been able to conceive of the ideal other than under the form of woman."

"Under the image of woman we reverence the beautiful in all things."

"The eternal-womanly draweth us ever onward."

"Die Liebe herrscht nicht, aber sie bildet; und das ist mehr!"

"Love rules (and reigns) not, but it forms (builds and 'trains'); and that is more!" (Das Märchen.)

Space-limit stops quotations. But the above suffices to show that in Goethe's synthesis of science: The infinite and eternal universe is the All-God: the ever-begetting human race, the more than divine "Mother"; the ever-begotten Son and Christ; the humanity, the converging and co-operating good and saving which atones for, redeems and expiates for, all human ills and failings. The true and only "Holy Spirit" is the life, love and well-wishing, designing and endeavoring thought of man, which now seeks to rule and reign, but which is beginning to learn that it is by love "more" to build, form, train and lead!

The above scientific form and version of the "Godhead" is consciously or unconsciously taking the place of the old mythic form in every brain that thinks and heart that loves. Perhaps the greatest advance over the old is the deification of woman who here first appears as "Goddess" between the "Father" and the "Son": thus in the closing scene of "Faust":

"Jungfrau, Mutter, Königin,  
Göttin: bleibe gnädig."

"Virgin, Mother, Queen,  
Goddess,—gracious remain."

This method of Hermetic interpretation may be extended evolutionally, and so usefully, to all of the old religious characters, names, words and concepts. This is the true lesson of evolution—to grow gently and healthfully from the past, instead of breaking from it, in a rude or revolutionary way. Thus the Eden, Paradise and Heaven of "the past" or "the above" passes into an "earthly paradise" of the future and the beyond (drüben not droben, as Goethe says in his wonderful Lodge-Symbol). Such is the heaven
into which the undying soul of Faust passes—out, over and into
"the free people in a free land," both of which his life had called
into existence. Faust does not die; he knows of no sky or firmament
heaven—none but the future of his race on its Mother Earth.
From the lofty, Pisgah-like mountain he gazes out prophetically
and "forefeelingly" into the newer and better world he has helped to
make and into which his life has been invested,—and he is satisfied!

"Es kann die Spur von meinen Erdentagen
Nicht in Aeonen untergehen!—
Im Vorgefühl von solchem hohen Glück
Geniess ich jetzt den höchsten Augenblick."

"The traces of my earthly days
Cannot in the ages pass away!—
In the forefeeling of such lofty fate
Enjoy I now the highest moment (bliss)."

Such were his final words—words by which what we call death
was the passing into the new world he realized.

It is to be well noted that Goethe uses the scenery, angels,
saints and penitents, as well as the devils of the old religions, in
order to work out and to help us realize this wonderful transition
into the only real "other world"—the ETERNITY which is both past
and present in the Now and Here.

That the foregoing is the correct interpretation of Faust, and of
its most wonderful and instructive Fifth Act, is shown plainly by
the whole of Goethe's poems, works and life. Take for instance
the two summaries of his world-views: "One and All," and the
"Vermächtniss" (Inheritance)—from the latter of which here are
two relevant verses, in literal line translation:

"Enjoy in measure plenty and blessing:
   Let reason be everywhere present
   Where life rejoices in the joy of life,
   There firmly standing is the past,
   The future beforehand lives,
   The present moment is eternity."

"What fruitful is, that alone is true—
   By that judge thou man's common life.
   In its own way it goes as it will;
   Join thyself to the smaller band.

"And, as of old till now, all silently
   His work of love, after his own will,
   The philosopher, the poet form'd;
   So may'st thou win life's fairest grace.
   For noble souls to feel beforehand
   Is the call of life most worthy of wish."
In the closing pages of Faust we see how the old religions lead up to and are entering the gates to the new thought. This comes from extension of the real meaning in them, and by using them as symbols, under Hermetic interpretation, as above instanced. It requires no great genius to share in this most delightful exercise of mind and heart,—and what can be more useful? Thus, when the old Bibles of the race are placed in the light of evolution they naturally and inevitably expand so as to include all of the true, good and beautiful literature of mankind in every age and clime: the "world-literature" as Goethe called it: "The heavens and hells," the natural selection, of the good and useful from the bad and destructive, compels us to carry in our own "conscience" and heart; and so to extend them as the basis of morals, and the outcome of social religion in all social and human relations. The "world's end" with all of the fearful eschatology of the "judgment" vanishes, and in its place comes the individual and social judgment, under the conscience, opinion, and law of invariable penalty. From that no repentance, penance or vicarious atonement can relieve; and that is the only solid foundation of personal and social morality, and of a healthy and saving conduct of life. As Goethe advanced in years, the old notions which he had inherited prior to the great revolution, were outgrown. He told his friends, that all were not equally immortal, that only those who invested in the imperishable could survive with it. In Heinemann's Life of Goethe, one of the latest and best, (Vol. II, 345-354) his views are given with this conclusion: "In general he advised against all occupation (of mind or feelings) over these questions. 'A capable man,' he would say, 'leaves the future world to rest upon itself, and is active and useful in this world.' 'Activity, unceasing activity is the magic word.' 'Well-wishing and reverent work and hope was the only basis of a real life here and of continuance in the future.' Further inquiries were met by his half comic verselets:

"'Und wo die Freunde faulen,
Das is ganz einerlei,
Ob unter Marmor-Saulen
Oder im Rasen frei.

"'Der Lebende bedenke,
Wenn auch der Tag ihm mault,
Dass er den Freunden schenke
Was nie und nimmer fault.'"

"'And where the friends decay—
That all the same 'twill be,
Whether under marble columns
Or in their turf-bed free.

"The living let him bethink,
Though turns the day awry,
That he to the friends be giving
What now and never can die."

In Bielschowsky's Life, now said to be the Life of Goethe, the same conclusion is reached. It is shown to be the result of the poet's philosophy—advancing through Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Kant and ending in nature and science. The quotations are mostly those we have given:

"Existence is eternal: nothing that is can to nothing fall."

"If I work without rest to my end; nature is bound to provide me another form of existence, when my soul (Geist) can hold out no longer." etc., etc.

What that "other form of existence" is, which is to succeed the present, is stated by Goethe in those "Interlude" verses translated above and which were sung most appropriately as a part of his own funeral ceremony. See Bielschowsky's Life of Goethe, Vol. II, pp. 91, 92 and 678-681, where the work ends with this splendid passage—concluding with the last lines of Goethe's sublime tribute to the ever continuing "soul" of his friend Schiller, thus:

"So lives Goethe among us ever on—deathless, as all greatness is deathless, living, working, life creating, always himself; yet always more and more ours, the more we wish and learn to make him our own.

"'So soon through countless hosts is spreading,
The Rare, that belonged to him alone:
As a comet, before us vanishing,
Unending light with his light combining!'

"'Schon längst verbreitet sich's in ganzen Scharen,
Das Eigenste, was ihm allein gehört.
Er glänzt uns vor, wie ein Komet entschwindend,
Unendlich Licht mit seinem Licht verbindend!'

It is now a hundred years since this new world and its new immortality was lived and set before the world by the author of Faust. Since then Auguste Comte has worked both into his grand positive philosophy, polity and religion; all of which was wrecked by their Roman Catholic motive and ethics. Ernst Haeckel and hundreds of other scientists have given it their versions and added to its clearness and strength. Among the most important of these versions is that under the light of the "Philosophy of Form" by the Editor of The Open Court in its last June number where this discussion was begun by my article on Dr. Funk's Widow's Mite.
SCIENCE AND SENTIMENT.

That article on *The Widow's Mite* explained and applied the laws of science to the belief in the old immortality, viz.:

1. The law of induction from the facts.
2. The law of equivalent, continuous correlation.
3. The law of economy, or non-repetition in nature.

It was shown that under these laws the old immortality was an absolute impossibility, unless their application could be avoided; and the prayer was that this (if possible) should be done at once, or that intelligent people should drop the old and turn to the new belief.

This challenge has been before the public for years without even an attempt at an answer; and the default of the old belief had been taken thereupon, as far as such a thing could be. But

"Truth can never be confirmed enough,
Though doubts did ever sleep."

It was very pleasing, therefore, to find in the last November number of *The Open Court* an article on "Immortality" by Mr. Hereward Carrington of the Society for Psychical Research, in which he refers to my article as one of "dogmatic assertions," but tells us that in the *Metaphysical Magazine* for June last he had "elaborated a theory of consciousness and of its relation to brain function which accepts the fact of dependence, but endeavors to account for it in such a manner as would leave personality quite possible, and immortality an open question: one that could then be determined by direct experiment." He says that he does "not argue that the soul does exist—but merely that it is possible for it to exist."

When his article referred to appeared in that magazine the author, or some one, kindly sent it to me. Had it seemed to me to make the old immortality "possible" I should so have announced without delay, but it did nothing of the kind.

That article contains an account of the errors of scientists during the "unknowable," "inconceivable," and "inexplicable" stages of their attempts to apply the correlative "key law" of the universe: Their struggles there shown with "principles," "forces," "energy," "thing-in-itself," "mind-stuff," "spirits," "auras" and "entities" generally, show us what not to get befogged with, and that a new and up-to-date edition of the late Prof. E. L. Youman's book on correlation, (published by Appleton), is most desirable. Finally we reach the author's said "theory" in these words:
“And, whereas it must be admitted that thought is, in one sense or another, a ‘function’ of the brain; a very different statement of the case, from that generally held, may be made as follows: Instead of consciousness or thought being a function of the nervous tissue, the perception of a sensation through nervous tissue is a function of consciousness; that is to say, consciousness is independent of nervous tissue and uses nervous tissue to perceive with. In this sense our two brains—for we have two—would be the instruments of consciousness, but are not conscious themselves; just as our eyes are the instruments of sight, but do not themselves see; in the same way that a microscope is the instrument for magnifying minute atoms of matter, but cannot itself see and appreciate the magnification. Why?—because it has no consciousness of its own.”

This “theory” or hypothesis seems to me to be upset at the start and to be useless child’s play: For, it asserts that “consciousness or thought”—treating them as one, are “independent,” “instead of being functions of the nervous tissue.” Yet at the start we read that “it must be admitted that thought is, in one sense or another, a function of the brain.” But the brain is simply active nervous tissue. This proven and admitted fact contradicts and makes the proposed theory of an independent consciousness impossible.

Next we are told that the consciousness would use “the nervous tissue to perceive with.” But that is immaterial. Consciousness may do that and a thousand other things, and yet be the active process and function of the brain’s nervous tissues. We are told that it would be “just as our eyes are the instruments of sight, but do not themselves see.” But our sight is the seeing, is action, and not a thing, and has no eyes as “instruments.” It is simply the activity of the nervous tissues of the eyes and brain when light vibrations reach them. Our consciousness comes about in a similar way, from those and from countless other vibrations. It is proven to be a correlating process—a go and not a thing. It is rudimentary in some plants, higher in animals, and highest as the action of the human nervous tissues. That it survives each plant, animal, or human being after death as a ghost to be caught by the Society for Psychical Research is, as Professor Haeckel says, “perfectly absurd”—that is, too absurd for anything but silence. It can only catch the ear of those who, like Columbus’ crew, wish to slink back to some imaginary Eden, or heaven, instead of pressing forward to enjoy and people the new and real world.

SENTIMENT.

The hesitation as to the acceptance and use of the new immortality arises not from any scientific doubt or reason, but from senti-
ment unenlightened as to the facts about the old and new worlds, and the immortals connected with each. For that reason we have touched upon the contrast of the two, and upon Goethe’s fruitful example in regard to them. His oft-quoted saying was, that the main proof of immortality was the impossibility of doing without it. But what—which—and whose immortality? were questions it took his life to settle. With noble and unselfish minds similar knowledge must lead to similar conclusions, and bring the healing satisfaction of truth as above quoted.

Such healing occurs wherever the new views of science are made known. Mr. Carrington, in the Open Court article above mentioned, describes the new immortality as “annihilation,” unless our personal consciousness, memory and personality are continued. But are they not?—and in the only way naturally possible? Every day they are passed to and invested, and so continued in a new social life and environment; until the life, which they are, is all expended. Shall we now sit down, like the spoiled child, and cry because we shall not have the cake which we have eaten, or passed to others, to enable them to continue our consciousness, memory and personality? “Annihilation” under correlation is not possible. As Goethe says it:

“No thing that is can to Nothing fall;
The Eternal moves ever on in all.

The present moment is Eternity.”

Those who understand and feel his “One and All” and “The Legacy or Inheritance” have passed the fear or possibility of annihilation. There is nothing now more stupid than to have to die in order to get to heaven, find hell or secure continuance. Those who wait till then are assured by science that they are “too late.” Yet what a relief would even annihilation (if possible) be to the millions of Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, whose terrors over endless existence and its Nirvandas, heavens and hells have been, and still are, the main cause of fearful anxiety, weakness, slavery, and misery? The new certainty relieves from these ills and from “annihilation” too.—As our poet says: “Only the truth heals, saves and lives.” Those who live in and trust to that are insured “eternal continuance.” As the editor of The Open Court said in reply to Mr. Carrington: “I must emphatically declare that man’s life is not finished at his death. That the after-life constituted by the effects of life itself is a salient part of the present life, and has to be constantly considered in all our actions. A consideration of the status
of our being after we are gone should be the supreme motive of all our principles, and I would not hesitate to say that it constitutes the basis of all true morality,"—and he might well have added,—of all real health, help, consolation and courage.

That is the immortality, which, as Goethe said, "we cannot do without." Or as Hugo Münsterberg says in his little thought-inspiring book The Eternal Life (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., publishers): "The man whom we love belongs to a world in which there is no past and future, but an eternal now."... "The life which we live in this world of eternity has no possible other measure than that of its significance, its influence and its value. If in those directions the aim is fulfilled, our life-work is so completed that we should become disloyal to ourselves and should deny the meaning of our particular individuality if we were aiming towards influences which do not belong to us, and towards a significance to which we have no right: in short, if we demand more than this, our particular life." (Pp. 63-69.)

As to the consolation and satisfaction of the new view we cannot forbear a few lines from a recent letter of one lady to another in regard to an "old mortality" funeral of an esteemed friend. Either of these parties, had they lived in the New Testament days, from their religious nature, nurture and education might well have been spoken of by John as "the elect lady." From such a source such sentiments as these indicate the dawn of the new day with its new consolation: "I have just returned from the funeral. It was all sad—very, very sad. Still I am glad I was there—for it has planted a new feeling in my heart. It seemed odd that the belief in "immortality," which is supposed to be such a great help and consolation at such times, does not now seem to help at all. I cannot help but wonder now at our calmness at the time of our own dear mother's death. I could not banish her to some spiritual Botany-bay in another world we know not how nor where. She seemed specially present to-day by her influence, as she is in a way every day I live, and courage comes from a beautiful life well spent—not from a life of which we really cannot conceive.

"I felt to-day how that nothing said or done showed what this struggling, sacrificing blessed mother had done—there was nothing of the bravery and courage that had saved and kept the family about her for years. When I was thinking of this reality and what it had done and left to be continued, the talk of the beauty of a future existence dried my eyes, and made me inwardly angry. I wanted to get right up and tell what this noble mother had done,
and what all her friends had to do that the promise of her life might be realized. I somehow wanted credit given and the life continued instead of sending it to a "future state," where it can do nothing. When my summons comes to join that innumerable caravan I hope that you will do what is possible to save me from moving on with it to any 'pale realm of shade,' but take me with you into the life that is and make what I have done the beginning of its end and aim, or of something better. I suppose that I am a rebel at heart, but as I love you, I hope that you are, or may become one; and that we may do something to prevent death from having added to it the horror of eternal banishment."

The trouble is that the old view with its "end of the world" and horrible eschatology, viz., "death, judgment, heaven and hell," lies directly across the evolution and continuity of our race. The new immortality naturally and at once takes its place, as the great motive and hope of mankind, as soon as those horrors are shown by science to be absolutely impossible in their old meanings. By far the happiest day in the life of any human being is the achievement of this conviction. He then for the first time stands forth "emancipated, regenerated and disenthralled." He is no longer to be a victim of mercy or sacrifice. The old "gods and their altars sink into the dust," or are transformed into something new and strange, because true. He opens his eyes upon a new and enduring home—far newer than if he had been transferred to the planet Mars. He finds the "chief end of man" is to glorify Man and to enjoy him here, now, and for ever: that the real joy, success and bliss of life is in helping our generation to leave a better in its place, and in forefeeling that heaven on earth, which we are here co-operating with natural and human evolution to realize. This is the New Era, the happiest, the most glorious of our race. And even now as we are leaving the old Paradise and gazing out wistfully into the future, the life of the new world dawns clearer, happier—for we know—

"That world is all before us, where to make
Our paradise, our Providence, our guide!"