

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

with all the "exigencies of emotion, or of moral education, etc.," when we enter upon an honest and impartial pursuit of truth; for we shall only attain it by the work of pure reason, starting from empirical data and capable of logical analysis. We have to say the same of athanatism as of theism; both are creations of poetic mysticism and of transcendental "faith," not of rational science.

When we come to analyze all the different proofs that have been urged for the immortality of the soul, we find that not a single one of them is of a scientific character; not a single one is consistent with the truths we have learned in the last few decades from physiological psychology and the theory of descent. The *theological* proof—that a personal creator has breathed an immortal soul (generally regarded as a portion of the divine soul) into man—is a pure myth. The *cosmological* proof—that the "moral order of the world" demands the eternal duration of the human soul—is a baseless dogma. The *teleological* proof—that the "higher destiny" of man involves the perfecting of his defective, earthly soul beyond the grave—rests on a false anthropism. The *moral* proof—that the defects and the unsatisfied desires of earthly existence must be fulfilled by "compensative justice" on the other side of eternity—is nothing more than a pious wish. The *ethnological* proof—that the belief in immortality, like the belief in God, is an innate truth, common to all humanity—is an error in fact. The *ontological* proof—that the soul, being a "simple, immaterial, and indivisible entity," cannot be involved in the corruption of death—is based on an entirely erroneous view of the psychic phenomena; it is a spiritualistic fallacy. All these and similar "proofs of athanatism" are in a parlous condition;