

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

menace, to the best of men. Only want of clear judgment and consecutive thought can dispute it.

The best and most plausible ground for athanatism is found in the hope that immortality will reunite us to the beloved friends who have been prematurely taken from us by some grim mischance. But even this supposed good fortune proves to be an illusion on closer inquiry; and in any case it would be greatly marred by the prospect of meeting the less agreeable acquaintances and the enemies who have troubled our existence here below. Even the closest family ties would involve many a difficulty. There are plenty of men who would gladly sacrifice all the glories of Paradise if it meant the eternal companionship of their "better half" and their mother-in-law. It is more than questionable whether Henry VIII. would like the prospect of living eternally with his six wives; or Augustus the Strong of Poland, who had a hundred mistresses and three hundred and fifty-two children. As he was on good terms with the Vicar of Christ, he must be assumed to be in Paradise, in spite of his sins, and in spite of the fact that his mad military ventures cost the lives of more than a hundred thousand Saxons.

Another insoluble difficulty faces the athanapist when he asks *in what stage of their individual development* the disembodied souls will spend their eternal life. Will the new-born infant develop its psychic powers in heaven under the same hard conditions of the "struggle for life" which educate man here on earth? Will the talented youth who has fallen in the wholesale murder of war unfold his rich, unused mental powers in Walhalla? Will the feeble, childish old man, who has filled the world with the fame of his deeds in the ripeness of his age, live forever in mental