

proceeds to examine "in the light of our modern studies of evolution." The beginnings of that belief were "lowly." The savage's first notion of ghosts probably originated in his dreams. But this pedigree of the doctrine of immortality does not militate against its worthiness. When man had once risen to a realization of the problem of death, he was ready to meet it also with a solution. Thus the belief in immortality has come to be not only coeval but coextensive with the race.

The views of divers theological systems were fused by the Christian religion into a "glorious and inspiring" development. This purely spiritual fact is one with which science does not deal, and cannot deal; but as for the testimony in its behalf of what is called "Spiritualism:"

If its value as evidence were to be conceded, it would seem to point to the conclusion that the grade of intelligence which survives the grave is about on a par with that which in the present life we are accustomed to shut up in asylums for idiots. [P. 60.]

That is a hard "rap" at the "mediums," and a deserved one.

This is the conclusion of the matter in the mind of this master scholar and thinker, whose knowledge and reason are evident on every page of this both extensive and intensive essay:

In the course of evolution there is no more philosophical difficulty in man's acquiring immortal life than in his acquiring the erect posture and articulate speech. [P. 85.]

Altogether this book is a fourth and final stride in that powerful advance which John Fiske has taken in support of Christian Theism.

### LIFE EVERLASTING.\*

THE late John Fiske's last book (but one) is a small one in inches and ounces, and measured by ordinary standards is hardly worth the dollar that is asked for it. But in thought it is weighty and in feeling precious, and on the whole we consider it worth its weight in gold. It will hardly convince the sceptic, but it will comfort the Christian. Yet it is solidly scientific, profoundly philosophical, brilliantly intellectual, fervidly optimistic, immensely learned, limpidly clear, and full of the many-sided personality of its author.

In a word, and truly so, it is a treatment of "the question of man's immortality in the disinterested spirit of the naturalist."

John Fiske was, and probably is now more than ever, an evolutionist through and through. He has no use (in this argument) for the Bible, or any Sacred Scriptures, or any kind of revelation, but only for facts, perceptions, consciousness, and history. Yet he constructs an argument for the future life—a blessed one under conditions—which was satisfactory to his own spiritual nature, and one we doubt not that is now demonstrated by his experience. A great many thoughtful, perplexed, but hopeful people will find great comfort in the eighty-seven pages of this Harvard "Ingersoll Lecture." And oh the irony of it! An *Ingersoll* lecture!

"Who can tell," he says, "but that this which we call life is really death, from which what we call death is an awakening?" That surely is a Pauline note, a New Testament position, a cardinal precept of the Master. This "supreme poetic achievement of man—his belief in his own immortality"—he then

\*Life Everlasting. By John Fiske. Houghton, Mifflin & Co. \$1.00.