

that since nothing in nature is incapable of change, therefore every human being is capable of it, and hence *may* improve, and that consequently we are compelled to think even the most demoralized *may* possess a residuum of a capacity for improvement sufficient to lead us to *hope* in their immortality, is to adopt an attitude that is both useless and precarious (Chap. ix). For what is there so sacred in the desire to preserve such beings? In some cases, all that can be observed is a capacity for change in a downward direction, and to say that it *may* after all be otherwise, and that this would be grasped from a deeper or higher point of view, from which some thoughtful people are strangely excluded, is simply to take refuge in one of the many forms of the asylum of ignorance. At least, it has no interest for any attempt to place ethics on a scientific and philosophical basis. If it be said that mankind cannot get on without a belief in immortality, which we dispute, this, as a well-known Oxford thinker has said, *may* be a mere detail in the Universe; and such a race of beings may have to give place to another more in touch with the ascertainable conditions of moral life and the facts of existence.

Mr. Martin is quite scientific in saying that we do not and cannot *know* that we are immortal; but, like Kant and Mr. A. J. Balfour, he holds to "the faith which begins where knowledge ends," and regards this faith as rational.

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