

For this is one of the matters in which the organ of practical certainty is neither the evidence of our senses nor the force of logic, but a faith that seems to be almost beyond analysis, yet more cogent than either sense or logic. The certainty of our immortality is not the only matter that is so. Let us look about a little.

One of the most obvious things to the man in the street is the existence of the external world which everywhere seems to lie around us. He would as soon doubt his own existence as doubt the existence of the external world with all its solidity and infinite variety. It seems like madness to question it for a moment; and yet every philosopher knows that it is the most difficult thing to prove that existence. It seems to be given to us by every one of our senses and its reality to be confirmed by almost every conceivable consideration. But every one of these arguments was attacked with great force by Bishop Berkeley, and, to the thinking of many, his attack is unanswerable. The idealistic philosophy, which makes the external world merely the creation of our own faculties, has certainly as much to say for itself as any other, and has never been successfully overthrown in debate. But though that has all been fully recognized for two centuries, every one of us still believes as firmly as ever in the existence of the external world, the idealist philosopher included no less than any other. If he attempts to act on any other supposition, he is promptly brought up standing by the first stone wall or closed door he runs against. For all practical purposes he is compelled to believe in it, or he will get into all kinds of difficulties. Faith reaches out beyond the evidence and assures him of the reality of the external world with a conviction that scorns all further proof or the absence of it. Faith is thus the organ of practical certainty, and, argue as we will, faith refuses to let go its hold on that external world.

Again, in one form or another, the overwhelming majority of mankind believe in the existence of a conscious and personal Supreme Being, who is immeasurably greater than man, and before whom man must bow in submission, willingly or other-