

face of some hideous monster. If a man should tell you that the highest destiny he wishes for himself is that of becoming a lump of senseless clay, you would look upon him with astonishment as a strange and unintelligible exception to our race, or you would regard him with pity as a man bereft of reason.

The Christian doctrine of the soul's immortality is certainly more consonant to that love of life and that longing after future good, "those pleasing hopes and fond desires" which are characteristic of our common humanity. The practical tendency of this doctrine is also most powerful and benign. It is admirably adapted to stimulate man's intellectual energies and to purify his moral affections; to strengthen and refine his domestic endearments and his social sympathies; to promote his constant growth in knowledge and virtue; to inspire him with noble purposes and prompt him to glorious deeds; to clothe his mind with fortitude and fill his heart with consolation amidst the troubles of life; to deliver him from the enslaving fears of death, and enable him to contemplate his removal from earth, not only with the composure of a mind free from fear, but with the gladness of a spirit radiant with hope.

The Apostle Paul was under the purifying and ennobling influence of this great doctrine when he uttered the words of our text. He exulted in the prospect of a blissful immortality. He felt the mighty attraction of heaven drawing his heart above everything earthly. The prospect of being with Christ filled his soul with rapture. He desired to depart, knowing that, "if absent from the body," he should "be present with the Lord." His heart, his treasure, his home, were in heaven; and thither he looked for the complete fulfilment of his highest hopes, for the entire satisfaction of his holiest affections and de-