

## Our Contributors.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Notes by Nemo.

### A Timely Quotation.

I extract the following quotation from an article by Sir Oliver Lodge, D. Sc. F. R. S., on "The Reconciliation between Science and Faith," and I do so because it shows very clearly that a change has come over the spirit of representative "men of science" in their handling of this great subject. They are ready to admit that their own work, important as it is, is not all; and they cheerfully recognise that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in their philosophy. After speaking of the slow painful processes through which the human race have been led, he says, "Let us be thankful we have got thus far, and struggle on a little further. It is our destiny, and whether here or elsewhere it will be accomplished. We are God's agents, visible and tangible agents, and we can help; we ourselves can answer some kinds of prayer, so it be articulate; we ourselves can interfere with the course of inanimate nature, can make waste places habitable and habitable places waste. Not by breaking laws do we ever influence nature—we cannot break a law of nature, it is not brittle we can break ourselves if we try—but by obeying them. In accordance with law we have to act, but act we can and do and through us acts the Deity.

And perhaps not alone through us. We are the highest bodily organism on this material planet, and the material control of it belongs to us. It is subject to the laws of physics and to the laws of our minds operating through our bodies. If there are other beings near us they do not trespass. It is our sphere, so far as Physics are concerned. If there are exceptions to this statement, stringent proof must be forthcoming.

Assertions are made that under certain strange conditions "physical" interference does occur; but there is always a person present in an unusual state when these things happen, and until we know more of the power of the unconscious human personality, it is simplest to assume that these physical acts are due, whether consciously or unconsciously, to that person.

But what about our mental acts? We can operate on other ways, but we can do more; it appears that we can operate at a distance, by no apparent physical organ or medium; if by mechanism at all, then by mechanism at any rate unknown to us.

If we are open to influence from each other by non corporeal methods, may we not be open to influence from being in another region or in another order? And if so, may we not be aided, inspired, guided, by a cloud of witnessess,—not witnesses only, but helpers, agents like ourselves of the immanent God?

How do we know that in the mental sphere these cannot answer prayer, as we in the physical? It is not a speculation only, it is a question for experience to

decide. Are we conscious of guidance? do we feel that prayers are answered? that power to do, and to will, and to think is given us? Many there are who with devout thankfulness will say yes.

They attribute it to the Deity; so can we attribute everything to the Deity, from thunder and lightning down to daily bread? but is it direct action? Does He work without agents? That is what our feelings tell us, but it is difficult to discriminate; and fortunately it is not necessary; the chain is linked together.

"Bound by gold chains about the feet of God," and through it all His energising Spirit runs. On any hypothesis it must be to the Lord that we pray—to the highest we know or can conceive; but the answer shall come in ways we do not know, and there must always be a far Higher than ever we can conceive.

Religious people seem to be losing some of their faith in prayer; they think it scientific not to pray in the sense of simple petition. They may be right; it may be the highest attitude never to ask for anything specific, only for acquiescence. If saints feel it so, they are doubtless right, but, so far as ordinary science has anything to say to the contrary, a more child like attitude may turn out truer, more in accordance with the total scheme. Prayer for a fancied good that might really be an injury, would be foolish; prayer for breach of law would not be foolish only but profane; but who are we to dogmatise too positively concerning law? A martyr may have prayed that he should not feel the fire. Can it be doubted that, whether through what we call hypnotic suggestion or by some other name, the granting of it was at least possible? Prayer, we have been told, is a mighty engine of achievement, but we have ceased to believe it. Why should we be so incredulous? Even in medicine, for instance, it is not really absurd to suggest that drugs and no prayer may be almost as foolish as prayer and no drugs. Mental and physical are interlocked. The crudities of "faith-healing" have a germ of truth, perhaps as much as can be claimed by those who condemn them. How do we know that each is not ignoring one side, that each is but half educated, each only adopting half measures? The whole truth may be completer and saner than the sectaries dream; and more things may be

"Wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of!

We are not bodies alone, nor spirits alone, but both; our bodies isolate us, our spirits unite us; if I may venture on two lines, we are like

Floating lonely icebergs, our crests above the ocean,  
With deeply submerged portions united by the sea.

The conscious part is knowing, the subconscious part is ignorant; yet the subconscious can achieve results the conscious can by no means either understand or perform. Witness the physical operations of "suggestion" and the occasional lucidity of trance.

Each one of us has a great region of the subconscious, to which we do not and need not attend; only let us not deny it, let us not cut ourselves off from its sustaining power; if we have instinct for worship, for prayer, for communion with saints or with Deity, let us trust that instinct, for there lies the true realm of religion. We may try to raise the subconscious region into the light of day, and study with our intellect also; but let us not assume that our present conscious intelligence is already so well informed that its knowledge exhausts or determines or bounds the region of the true and the possible.

As to what is scientifically possible or impossible, anything not self contradictory or inconsistent with other truth is possible. Speaking from our present scientific ignorance, and in spite of the extract from Professor Tyndall quoted in Part I of this article, this statement must be accepted as literally true, for all we know to the contrary. There may be reasons why certain things do not occur; our experience tells us that they do not, and we may judge that there is some reason why they do not; there may be an adaption, an arrangement among the forces of nature—the forces of nature in their widest sense—which enchains them and screens us from their desructive action, after the same sort of fashion as the atmosphere screens the earth from the furious meteoric buffeting it would otherwise encounter on its portentous journey through ever new untried depths of space.

We may indeed be well protected; we must, else we should not be here; but as to what is possible—think of any lower creature, low enough in the scale to ignore us, and to treat us too, as among the forces of nature, and then let us bethink ourselves of how we may appear, not to God or to any infinite being, but to some personified influence high above us in the scale of existence. Consider a colony of ants, and conceive them conscious at their level; what know they of fate and of future? Much what we know. They may think themselves governed by uniform law—uniform, that is, even to their understanding—the march of the seasons, the struggle for existence, the weight of the soil, the properties of matter as they encounter it no more. For centuries they may have continued thus; when one day, quite unexpectedly, a shipwrecked sailor strolling round kicks their ant-hill over. To and fro they run, overwhelmed with the catastrophe. What shall hinder his crushing them under his heel? *Laborare est orare* in their case. Let him watch them and see, or fancy he sees in their movements the sign of industry, of system, of struggle against the untoward circumstance; let him note the moving of eggs, the trying to save and repair—the act of destruction may by that means be averted.

Just as our earth is midway among the lumps of matter, neither small like a meteoric stone, nor gigantic like a sun, so may the place we, the human race, occupy in the scale of existence. All our ordinary views are based on the notion that we are highest in the scale; upset that notion and anything is possible. Possible, but we have to ascertain the