

methods are the equivalents of unknown vital methods.'

Professor Schaefer claims that chemical and physical methods will account for everything in life: Sir Oliver Lodge very definitely and flatly contradicts this statement. Professor Schaefer tells us that the barrier between living and not-living matter is wearing very thin: Professor Wynne urges on our attention the 'profound differences' between laboratory and natural processes.

Whilst we must draw our own conclusions from this remarkable divergence of authority, we may at least feel quite sure that in speaking as he did the president of last year did not voice the unanimous opinion of science, indeed, the remarkable utterances quoted in these columns coming, as they do, at the next possible opportunity, can hardly be otherwise interpreted than as a correction on the part of masters in their subject of the highly doubtful—one may go farther and say much disputed—doctrines laid before us last year.

Finally, on this point I may refer to the president's use of an argument which I have urged myself in my writings on the subject; in my opinion, if properly considered.

The Most Cogent Argument of All.

Why go to the laboratory to study the question whether there is nothing in life but chemistry and physics? Why not study ourselves the things which we know most about if that 'most' be in reality but little? On this point I may be permitted a somewhat lengthy quotation which shall terminate what has to be said under this heading, though indeed every line which the president has written on this point is worthy of the most serious attention.

'So also if any philosopher tells you that you do not exist, or that the external world does not exist, or that you are an automaton without free will, that all your actions are determined by outside causes, and that you are not responsible—or that a body cannot move out of its place, or that Achilles cannot catch the tortoise—then, in all those cases, appeal must be made to twelve average men, unsophisticated by special studies. There is always a danger of error in interpreting experience, or in drawing inferences from it; but in a matter of bare fact, based on our own first-hand experience, we are able to give a verdict. We may be mistaken as to the nature of what we see. Stars may look to us like bright specks in a dome, but the fact that we see them admits of no doubt. So also consciousness and will are realities of which we are directly aware, just as directly as we are of motion and force, just as clearly as we apprehend the philosophising utterances of an Agnostic. The process of seeing, the plain man does not understand: he does not recognise that it is a method of ethereal telegraphy; he knows nothing of the ether and its ripples, nor of the retina and its rods and cones, nor of nerve and brain processes; but he sees and he hears and he touches, and he wills and he thinks and is conscious. This is not an appeal to

the mob as against the philosopher; it is an appeal to the experience of untold ages as against the studies of a generation.

How consciousness became associated with matter, how life exerts guidance over chemical and physical forces, how mechanical motions are translated into sensations—all these things are puzzling and demand a long study. But the fact that these things are so admits of no doubt, and the difficulty of explanation is no argument against them. The blind man restored to sight had no opinion as to how he was healed, nor could he vouch for the moral character of the Healer, but he plainly knew that whereas he was blind now he saw. About that fact he was the best possible judge. So it is also with 'this main miracle that thou art thou, with power on thine own act and on the world.'" (p. 32.)

Some Further Conclusions.

It would leave the subject incomplete if no mention were to be made of the concluding portion of the address wherein the president sounds a note which we may feel perfectly certain will be most unwelcome—as, indeed, he himself admits—to some of his scientific brethren. For, in the first place, he definitely asserts, as one speaking from the platform of a representative body of scientific men and as their head for the year, that his studies in connection with physical research have convinced him 'that memory and affection are not limited to that association with matter by which alone they can manifest themselves here and now, and that personality persists beyond bodily death' (p. 38).

And in his peroration, which will fitly bring this short commentary to a conclusion, he points to the belief in God as the final explanation of what must otherwise be inexplicable.

'Men and brethren, we are trustees of the truth of the physical universe as scientifically explored; let us be faithful to our trust. Genuine religion has its roots deep down in the heart of humanity and in the reality of things. It is not surprising that by our methods we fail to grasp it; the actions of the Deity make no appeal to any special sense, only a universal appeal; and our methods are, as we know, incompetent to detect complete uniformity. There is a principle of relativity here, and unless we encounter flaw or jar or change, nothing in us responds: we are deaf and blind, therefore, to the immanent grandeur around us, unless we have insight enough to appreciate the Whole, and to recognise in the woven fabric of existence, flowing steadily from the loom in an infinite progress towards perfection, the ever-growing garment of a transcendent God.'

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