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Views and Opinions.

Disease and Religion.

Everyone has heard of the theory of immunity in relation to disease. It is simple in outline, although complex in its ramifications. It is based on the observed fact that, with all diseases, some people are more resistant than others. In any epidemic, some people escape, while others are attacked. There are all degrees between the two extremes, but the fact of immunity is undeniable. Thus, a disease develops, those who are susceptible to it are attacked, and die; those who by some peculiarity of constitution are immune escape, and in this way the disease gradually loses its destructive power. Of course, a bountiful and observant Providence soon gets to work, and develops a new microbe against which the organism is not protected, but that is another story. It may also be observed that the process of selection is not confined to the man. It extends to the microbe. A too virulent microbe, by destroying all it attacked, would end by destroying its own food supply. So, while the human is modified in relation to the microbe, the microbe is modified in relation to the man. By this means a kind of working harmony is produced. The human suffers to the limit of endurance, the microbe modifies its assaults to a point consonant with its continuing to exist.

* * *

The Religious Microbe.

Now this theory of immunity fits in very curiously with what we know of the nature and progress of religion. It may not be possible to decide whether religion is due to the presence of a specific microbe, but it is indisputable that the way in which some people contract religion, while others manifest an immunity to its attacks, as well as the way in which the religious microbe is modified to meet changed conditions, presents curious analogies. First, it may be noted that religion is essentially a complaint of childhood. If it is not contracted during the years of immaturity, it is seldom acquired at all. One consequence of this is that as we have a class in the community which lives by attending to this particular complaint, we have the demand made that all children shall, wherever possible, be inoculated with this particular germ. But it is of importance to the rest of the community that children shall be given as clean a bill of health as is possible, and not be made

spiritually sick, so that a certain class of self-styled specialists may live by retailing their specifics. Hence arises the quarrel in the schools between those who claim the right to inoculate children and those who resist such a claim. And so we have the curious position of society maintaining a body of men whose business it is to foster disease under the delusion of perfect health.

* * *

Selection and Religion.

In the case of religion, as in that of disease in general, we are presented, broadly, with two types of organism. We have that which shows a constitutional pre-disposition towards contracting religion, and that which shows an equal pre-disposition against it. Under normal conditions, the principle of immunity would have operated by preserving the non-susceptible type; and, broadly, this is what has actually transpired. The number of the immune *has* increased, although the rate of increase has neither been rapid nor uniform. The reason for this is that its operation has been checked by an artificially induced and sustained principle of selection in a quite opposite direction. The discovery that certain people were immune to the germ of religion was made very early in the history of mankind, and prompt steps were taken to weed out the unwelcome type. Among savages, under semi-civilized and civilized conditions, the aim of an interested and powerful class has been to weed out all those who showed a lack of susceptibility to religion. The type has been, and is still, systematically discouraged. Thus, whereas in the normal way it is the type that is immune to a complaint or a disorder that is preserved, in the case of religion an artificial selection has worked to kill off the immune, while preserving the susceptible. The persistence of this particular complaint, the existence of the "religious instinct," so-called (there is really no more a religious instinct than there is an instinct for diphtheria or typhoid fever), is really the expression of the fact that a form of selection has always been working for the suppression of an opposite type.

* * *

Survival and Accommodation.

But he who fights against natural tendencies finds the dice constantly loaded against him. A particular type of organism can only be perpetuated by a perpetuation of its appropriate environment. In this case, as has been said, the environment had to be sustained by artificial agencies; and in the nature of the case, a breakdown sooner or later was inevitable. In proportion, as social evolution took the power from the hands of ecclesiastical organizations and distributed it over a wider area, and in proportion as that evolution opened up new avenues of interest and employment, the type of mind susceptible to the influence of religion declined, while the opposite type began to flourish. The normal law of variation and survival began to operate more freely, and the type of mind best suited to the natural surroundings showed itself in greater numbers. But at this point another aspect of the theory of immunity begins to appear. We have already pointed out that the process of selection

is twofold. There is the protective evolution of the organism against the microbe; there is also the modification of the microbe to meet the changed organism. To follow up the analogy, the microbe of religion that affected people in the fifteenth or sixteenth century would be quite harmless to the people living in this. There has been a protective evolution against it. To thrive, the microbe must be of a different variety, if not of a different species. In this manner it has come about that the religious influence to which the human organism is exposed has departed as much from the primitive variety as man himself has been differentiated from his simian ancestors. Of this change, what is called "advanced religion," "New Theology," and other names, are fundamentally the expression. It is the attempt of the microbe to perpetuate itself under changed conditions. Yet withal, it retains its fundamental characteristics. It is still, for instance, parasitic in character. Its demands on the human organism are large and persistent. Its contribution to its welfare is practically *nil*. Such beneficial qualities as are claimed for it are clearly independent of it, and flourish as well in its absence as when it is present. * * *

Germ Culture and Germicide.

It would be indeed astonishing in this age of micro-biological investigation if some attempt had not been made to discover the microbe of this particular complaint and indicate the conditions of its development. The first part of this search has not been, as yet, completely successful; the second has been conspicuously so. We know the conditions under which the microbe of religion flourishes, and that gives us a knowledge of the conditions that make the culture of this particular germ difficult—if not impossible. Just as the microbe of malaria is destroyed by an effective system of drainage, or as that of consumption is killed by light and air, so is the germ of religion killed by the growth of more accurate knowledge, by more effective co-operation, and by a proper appreciation of the nature of the forces bearing upon human nature. The conditions of complete health here are substantially the conditions of complete health that prevail in other directions. We must have light and air—the light of knowledge and the air of freedom. It is only when these conditions prevail that perfect mental health is possible.

* * *

A Distinction—and a Policy.

There is, however, one thing that marks off the complaint of religion from other ailments. With physical disease, no one is more aware of its presence than the unhappy sufferer. In the case of religion, the difficulty is to persuade the sufferer that he is really ill. He persists in the delusion that he is in a much better state of health than those around him. It is only when he has completely recovered that he recognizes how pathologic his condition has been. This, of course, lifts the complaint into the region of mental disorders, and future knowledge may enable specialists to indicate, as in other complaints, the peculiar condition of the nervous system, of which the disease is the outward manifestation. Moreover, this conviction of perfect health is fostered by the conduct of those who are interested in keeping the delusion active. These persist in calling health what is really its opposite, and so induce a state of mind analogous to that induced by Christian Science. Probably, if we adopted the Chinese method with their doctors, a cure would be found for this. In China—so it is said—people pay their doctors while they are well, and stop payment when they are ill. If, accordingly, the clergy were paid when people were free from this complaint, and their salaries stopped the moment people

showed symptoms of religion, we might hear much less of the evils of unbelief, and listen to fewer lamentations as to the decline of religion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The God-Eating Sacrament.

VI.

ITS UNIVERSALITY.

THE chief feature of Christianity has always been its absolute exclusiveness. It claims to be the only true and perfect religion in the world. The tradition is that this postulate was laid down by the Apostle Peter when, speaking of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, he declared: "And in none other is there salvation, for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). This principle of exclusiveness, once duly enunciated and believed, was bound to give rise to persecution. Hence Paul was the most intolerant of men, and, under the cloak of humility, the most conceited. Asserting that the Gospel came to him by revelation from above, he could brook no opposition to nor the least deviation from it. Those who differed from him were guilty of perverting the Gospel of Christ. Writing to the Galatians, he said: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any Gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." In Acts xiii. 6-12, be the passage historical or legendary, we have an illustration of the cruel, brutal intolerance of the Christian spirit, and of how it delights in inflicting suffering and loss upon opponents. Elymas was not even a non-Christian, but, according to Van Manen, "one of the older and very conservative disciples of Jesus"; and yet Paul is represented, in the final redaction of the Acts, as fastening his eyes on him and saying, "O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Then the record informs us that as a punishment for his blasphemous audacity the poor fellow was smitten with blindness, and that, on witnessing the savage miracle, the pro-consul, Sergius Paulus, became a Christian!

Paul displayed the same intolerant spirit in dealing with the Lord's Supper at Corinth. Corinth was now a Roman city, and once more prosperous, though lacking much of her ancient splendour; but to Paul her main interest lay in the fact that she was a Pagan city, and Paganism was to him the embodiment of all that was wicked and corrupt and hateful, as his famous caricature in the first chapter of Romans abundantly shows. In First Corinthians he makes no direct attack upon it; but inferentially even here he leaves no room to doubt the utter contempt in which he held it. He says:—

Look at the people of Israel. Do not those who eat the sacrifices share with the altar? What do I mean? you ask. That an offering made to an idol, or the idol itself, is anything? No; what I say is that the sacrifices offered by the Gentiles are offered to demons and to a Being who is no God, and I do not want you to share with demons. You cannot drink both the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons (1 Cor. x. 18-21).

That was Paul's exact attitude to the Paganism of his day. A Pagan God was, as to reality, only an idol, an image, a phantom of the mind, and as to character, a demon, an evil spirit, a devil. Now, what right had Paul, whoever he may have been, whether an individual or the name in which a theological party spoke and wrote—what right had Paul to sneer at the Pagan worship in such offensive and entirely unjustifiable terms?

In classical Greek *daimon* was one of the names by which the Deity was spoken of; but in Schrevelius' *Greek Lexicon* we are informed that "among sacred writers (it signifies) an unclean spirit, a devil." In this estimate of Pagan religion, Judaism and Christianity were in perfect agreement; but, for all that, it was an estimate rooted and grounded in ignorance and prejudice. There was no valid justification whatever for characterizing the Corinthian Pagan Sacrament as a devilish orgy. There are many exceedingly wise passages in First Corinthians, such as the purely ethical maxims in x. 23-29, and particularly the eloquent hymn to love in xiii.; but every now and then the hard, inhuman, Christian exclusiveness and intolerance step in and vitiate the whole. From the extreme vehemence of the language used, one naturally infers that Paul's own converts, complaints against whose behaviour had evidently reached him, were not above attending and joining in the Pagan sacramental services, possibly to the neglect of, if not in preference to, their own. It seems to me that it was with some such information in his mind he was moved to exclaim, "It cannot be done; there is no more heinous sin on the calendar; the contrast being that at the one Table you offer sacrifice to God in Christ, and at the other, to the Devil and all his angels."

It was a fundamentally wrong attitude of mind, and contributed in no small measure to the growth and development of the feeling of disgust and hatred which the Pagans cherished towards the Christians as a class. Tacitus, who wrote somewhere between the years 115 and 117, describing the horrible punishment which Nero inflicted upon the Christians for their suspected share in the burning of Rome, speaks of them as—

Men, who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death, by the sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked, but it again burst forth, and not only spread itself over Judea, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized, discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city, as for their hatred of human kind (*Annals*, xv., 44).

The burning of Rome occurred in the year 64, possibly while the traditional Paul was still living; and what we learn from that passage in the *Annals* is that the attitude of the Christians towards the Pagans was identical with the attitude of the latter towards the former, and that the Christians were held in the same detestation in 117 as in 64. This proves that their habitual participation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper did not result in the elevation and ennoblement of their character. In other words, there was no indication whatever in their social behaviour from day to day that their Eucharist possessed any virtue that did not belong to the correspondent Pagan rite. Hence we legitimately contend that Paul had no warrant for calling the Gentile Gods mere idols, or for asserting that the sacrifices of the Gentiles were offered to devils. The simple truth is that they drank the Cup and partook of the Table, not of devils, but of the God or Gods in whom they verily believed, just exactly as the Christians did. They were practically all Deists, Atheists, among them at any time being very few and far between. Besides, if any merit attached to religious rites, and if we were to strike a balance, it would be found to be more in favour of the Pagan than of the Christian. Church people talk glibly of supernatural grace being bestowed upon worthy participants; but supernatural grace is itself a myth, and

the belief in its reality, though it may and often does induce a state of emotional inebriation of a most enjoyable kind, has no appreciably good effect on character. Indeed, so far as the influence it exerts upon those who adopt it is concerned, Christianity is essentially a non-moral religion. It is a well-known fact that those who profess to eat the body and drink the blood of the God-man are not, on an average, one whit superior to those who never communicate at all. It is a certainty that long before the close of the first century the Lord's Supper was in general use, that during the first ten centuries it became more and more a solemnity in the Church; but it is even more incontrovertible still that for the whole of that period Christendom kept sinking lower and lower morally, and ultimately reached a depth of degradation which the world had never previously touched.

At present, however, the point of chief interest is the practical universality of the rites. Every supernatural religion, ancient and modern, has its magic food, its ritual meal, its Divine sacrifice. In Japan there is a small and disappearing tribe known as the Ainos. They chiefly inhabit the island of Yesso, and are quite different in race and character from the Japanese. They were probably the original occupants of the country; and it has always been their custom to make a cereal offering and call it an eaten God. In Buru, an island of the East Indian Archipelago, there is an ancient and Pagan tribe of Indians who partake of a sacramental repast which they describe as "eating the soul of the rice." The Arabs used to sacrifice boys to the morning star, but when boys could not be obtained they seized a white camel, mortally wounded it, and then sucked its blood and ate its raw and still living flesh, the camel being the stuff out of which Gods were made. Curiously enough, it was by no means uncommon to administer a purgative prior to partaking of this ritual meal to prevent the sacred food from being contaminated through contact with profane nourishment. That is the true explanation of the Catholic injunction to take the communion on an empty stomach. Whatever form the sacred meal may take, at bottom it always signifies the eating of a God. Professor Preserved Smith says: "The god must either be eaten, or united with the worshippers in sexual intercourse. Both ideas have coloured the language and thought of all religions, including Christianity."

The only question which remains to be discussed is, How did the God-eating Sacrament originate, and what is its real significance?

J. T. LLOYD.

The Pietists and the Pantheon.

Let the sound of those they wrought for,
And the feet of those they fought for,
Echo round their bones for evermore.—Tennyson.

Aux grand hommes la Patrie reconnoissant.
—Inscription on the Paris Pantheon.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY has been termed the Temple of Silence and Reconciliation. This venerable building is to the British Empire what the Pantheon is to France, what the Valhalla is to Germany, what Sante Croce is to Italy. Apart altogether from its religious aspect, it is rich with historical associations. It is the last resting-place of many famous men and women, of every rank and creed, and of no creed, and every form of mind and genius. It contains the bones of Charles Darwin, the solitary student who shook the world. One name alone surpasses his, but only a statue represents William Shakespeare, whilst his dust makes Stratford-on-Avon one of the central spots of men's veneration.

This British Valhalla ought to be a true and just record of the great nation that we are, and should afford sepulture to the illustrious dead regardless of the trivialities of theology. Yet, owing to clerical control and prejudice, it is but an imperfect and irregular commentator of greatness. A building from which clerical hostility excluded Byron, Burton, Gibbon, Keats, Meredith, and Swinburne, to mention but a few omissions, whilst many of small and no fame sleep within its precincts, hardly deserves to be regarded as the Mecca of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Westminster Abbey holds the dust of St. Evremond, a dissolute man-about-town. It immortalizes such actresses as Anne Oldfield, Susannah Cibber, Hannah Pritchard, and Anne Bracegirdle. It throws a halo round the memory of John Broughton, the prizefighter, and sanctifies the ashes of Mrs. Aphra Behn and Tom Brown, two of the sauciest scribblers in the language. The Abbey should be the Pantheon of our greatest dead. If we except about a hundred of real eminence, it is crowded with the tombs of what Shelley calls "the illustrious obscure." For every eminent name inscribed on its monuments, there are a score of nonentities either interred or commemorated within its walls.

"Westminster Abbey or victory" was Nelson's word in action. Yet neither for the little admiral, who made the world resound with the splendid tumult of his deeds, nor for Wellington, the victor of a hundred battles, was room to be found, for the Abbey must find spaces for the bones of its own dead clergy, and sometimes of their wives.

One marvels at the monuments. The cenotaph justly raised to the great Chatham, which declares proudly that he "was worthy to rest near the dust of kings," is jostled by the colossal monument to three of Rodney's captains, doubtless worthy individuals, but having no claim to such extreme honour. A huge tomb commemorates the peaceful death of Admiral Tyrrell. Hard by rests Sir Cloudesley Shovel, "wearing the eternal buckle of a long periwig." Tyrrell and Shovel were brave sailors, but what is to be said for Generals Fleming and Hargrave, who never heard a shot whistle in anger? Hargrave was simply one of the richest men of his day. The clergy, who imagined that Isaac Watts, Mason, and Shadwell were poets, had no scruple in honouring this military nobody. Hargrave's burial roused much indignation. The monument was by Roubilliac, and when Oliver Goldsmith saw it, he said: "I find in the Abbey memorials erected to several great men. The names of these great men I forget, but I remember that little Roubilliac carved the tombs."

Some inscriptions are in bad taste. The caustic remarks of the great Duchess of Marlborough, as she gazed on the epitaph erected to Congreve by the second duchess, with whom the great dramatist had been intimate, might have been uttered by Thackeray. The epitaph alluded to the happiness and honour the second duchess had enjoyed in her intercourse with Congreve. "Happiness, perhaps," scornfully said the Dowager, "but the less we say about honour the better."

To place the Abbey on a level with the ever-extending wants of a great Empire, it should no longer be the property of the priests of a sectarian body. The Abbey should become the possession of the Nation. A narrow and sectarian body is no fit judge as to who is worthy to rest under the Abbey's time-honoured roof. The clergy admitted Dickens and Longfellow, both of whom were Unitarians, and excluded scores of men who were Freethinkers. How different was the conduct of the French when they opened their splendid Pantheon! The first occupant was the great Freethinker, Mirabeau, the orator of the Revolution. There also

rest the ashes of Voltaire and Rousseau. Shoulder to shoulder these two great soldiers of the Army of Human Liberation rest under their magnificent tombs, and from the tomb of Rousseau may be seen the emblematic hand thrust forth, bearing a torch.

"There is no darkness but ignorance." It will be better when the people know their famous men better, and honour them with their due. It will be well for children when they hear of Herbert Spencer, who took all knowledge for his province, and of Sir James Simpson, whose great discovery concerning chloroform has soothed the pain of countless millions, no less than the stories of the kings of Israel and Judah. Few people know in what battle Sir Philip Sidney died, but all children should know that he gave a cup of water, brought for himself, to a poor, nameless soldier, who was dying beside him.

When space is precious, it is well to remember that the sculptor is not the only artist whom we can call in to commemorate a great man. There are monuments which are more enduring than brass. A few inches upon a wall, room for the carving of a few words, and your great man may have his memory handed down in an undying sentence. Who is better remembered at St. Paul's Cathedral, the sea-captain, with his tons of marble, or the great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, with his few words of Latin?

At Westminster should be written the whole history of a mighty Empire. Here should be garnered the mighty and the noble dead. Under the present authorities, the Abbey's sculptured glories throw their shade over the tombs of unknown clergymen, and even clergymen's wives, whilst scores of memorials are excluded by reason of religious prejudice. There is nothing for it but to do as the French Nation did, and to supplant the clergy. Narrow exclusiveness is out of place in a National Valhalla.

MIMNERMUS.

Life as an Illusion.

IF we consider life as an illusion, the next step is how to make the best of it. With our rich inheritance from the world's literature this should not be an impossible task, nor should it bring us to the hopeless despair found in the book of Ecclesiastes. Our hypothesis: is it a creed of pessimism or is it an incentive to good deeds? To the latter, with Nietzschean fortitude, we answer—Yea! There are illusions pleasant and painful, but it will be readily agreed that mankind prefers the former as naturally as a wild bird hates a cage.

An end comes to this life—the life we know. This assertion, we admit, is a platitude; but, if we consider some devices of man, their very nature impels us to think that life is static, and not dynamic as history plainly proves. Institutions, laws, religions, customs, all appear as permanent ancient lights in life. Time, like the dropping of water on stone, slowly effaces them. Time, the grand Serpent, casts his skin, and, where Hope was anything but favourable to a Greek, it becomes a Christian virtue. If life is an illusion, then Christianity is another illusion added to it, and the issue becomes more clouded than ever.

Illusion on illusion, Pelion on Ossa, look at their number. In battalions they rise to the mind's eye; that the injunction to "Love one another" has failed to prevent the European War; that a bishop can talk more sense than a layman, that specially selected soldiers of Christ were at the Front in the proportion to their number, that Christian nations

could agree. My readers, you can add to the list indefinitely. This grafting of bastard illusion is disastrous. It shows a wonderful lack of imagination on the part of the proprietors of Christianity, even as a theory of expedient ethics for man with the feeble toddle of his rationed seventy years.

We are bold enough to assert that many Freethinkers regard life as an illusion. If they regarded it as a painful fact, they would make the obvious escape from it through the emergency exit of Christianity. Consider *mes amis*, the meanderings of St. Augustine in *The Confessions*. The devout attitude is an easy way of disposing of the mystery of life. One is positively disgusted with his blabberings on the birth of his five senses. His mother is figured as a conduit pipe between himself and his God, and the sweetest dreams of his childhood are strangled in this biography of the Athanasian Creed, or paraphrase of the Old Testament. Is filial disrespect a Christian virtue?

Mr. G. K. Chesterton, whose views are as varied as the colours in the coat of Joseph, strikes a true note in the course of ringing all bells. He says: "The *Iliad* is true because life is a battle; the *Odyssey* is true because life is a journey; and the *Book of Job* is true because life is a drama." As a statement of fact, in our opinion, this is sublime; but, we ask: a battle, a journey, a drama, for what? From beyond the veil no one returns to tell us anything. On this side of it, all are as wise or as ignorant about the Beyond. We throw overboard the idea that life is a fact, a reality, and what have we left? Our hypothesis; that life is an illusion; and our deduction that it is an incentive to good deeds. Sowing, we care not who reaps, and our nobility shall be, that we desire no reward. Our illusion is not an investment. Our lives are not so much capital to bear interest in a land where monotony must be monotonous.

For your *Odyssey* reader, listen to the golden voices that speak to you in literature, no man knowing *why* literature exists.

Every night and every morn
Some to misery are born.
Every morn and every night
Some are born to sweet delight;
Some are born to sweet delight,
Some are born to endless night.
Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine;
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for joy and woe;
And, when this we rightly know,
Safely through the world we go.

The same genius who wrote these lines makes the following affirmation: "The world of imagination is the world of eternity. It is the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the vegetated body. The world of imagination is infinite and eternal, whereas the world of generation or vegetation is finite and temporal." William Blake would have it that reality only exists in the world of imagination, but his contribution to life as an illusion will stand with dignity and grandeur among those who would add the burdens of Christianity to the burden of life.

Whether it be in a sweet or bitter mood that we view existence, we do not stand still. About a century ago a man was hanged for stealing a sheep. About thirty years ago the prison gate closed on men who were free with their tongue in discussing religious subjects. Today, a man is released from prison after murdering Jaures, and our divines joke about their stock-in-trade with a freedom akin to levity. As a matter of fact, the music-hall audiences enjoy jokes about the Ark and

sundry other Biblical matters—and Thomas Paine, with his *Age of Reason*, was regarded as a fit subject for the gallows.

Our affirmation: Life may be an illusion, or a fact, but, whatever the truth, we implicitly reject the illusion of Christianity. Christian love lies buried in the devastated Somme district; our disillusion has been written in letters of blood, and it were an insult to us to fling this hotch-potch system of ethics in our face. Man's destiny may be divine; we may be "such stuff as dreams are made of"; but Christianity only succeeds in converting the simple to the complex.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Acid Drops.

Bigotry is not peculiar to one country. It flourishes wherever religion rules. In Melbourne, we see that our lively contemporary, *Ross's Monthly*, has just been experiencing a "blasphemy" prosecution. Mr. R. S. Ross has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for sending through the post certain copies of his magazine containing articles of a "blasphemous" nature. In this case the judge held that it was not necessary to prove it was the Christian religion that was ridiculed: any religion was enough. This is a new reading of the law, and looks as though, like the Judge North of infamous memory, the judge was determined to convict whatever happened. The execution of the sentence has been suspended pending an appeal. The case offers one more proof that the only thing to do with these Blasphemy Laws is to abolish them. It is time "God" was left to depend upon other defences than that of the police force.

At the unveiling of a Barnsbury War memorial, the Rev. H. Must stated that a local soldier, who was killed, had a Bible in his pocket, and the fatal bullet had gone right through the text, "Greater love hath no man," etc. The reverend gentleman did not point the moral. It seems that one Bible is not enough to save life from rifle-fire, and that the faithful ought to carry two.

"Any boy will take an apple or a pear," said the high-minded magistrate of Old Street Police Court. This judicial utterance removes our doubt as to the action of that old boy, Adam, in the Garden of Eden.

On the body of an unknown man, found drowned at Grimsby, a printed Roman Catholic prayer was found. A statement, accompanying the prayer, says that "those who say or read this prayer never die a sudden death, either by drowning or by poison." The best comment on the value of this prayer is the verdict of the Coroner's jury, "found drowned."

At Southend-on-Sea the Town Memorial Fund has been languishing for want of support, and it is stated that already the Churches have absorbed several thousands of pounds for their "War Memorials." According to the *Daily Chronicle*, £2,000 has been raised at St. John's Church, St. Saviour's Church is raising £5,000; St. Mary's is asking for thousands; and St. Clement's and St. Alban's want £2,000 each. The "War Memorials" of the Churches include a new church, a rood screen, payments of debts, and similar purely ecclesiastical objects. When the clergy of Southend are asked what they did in the Great War, they will be able to say, "We did very well."

In order to attract congregations some of the dear clergy are becoming quite frisky. At Bedford Park an all-night Peace Dance was held, under the care of the Rev. J. C. Robinson. At St. Mary-at-Hill Church, Prebendary Carlisle blows the trombone, and cinema shows are a regular feature of the service.

The Rev. J. F. Powsring, of Cornwood, Devon, died at a Sunday service, and the Rev. W. O. Jenkins, Rector of

Bagendon, near Cirencester, was found shot dead in his garden. Apparently, the clergy are not exempted from the merciful attentions of Divine Providence.

The President of the Wesleyan Conference, in his address from the chair at Newcastle the other day, made the amazing admission that the War had not succeeded in killing sin, forgetting that the one purpose of the War was to kill men, not sin, and that this purpose had been crowned with terrific fulfilment. Dr. Barber forgot another startlingly significant fact, namely, that some two thousand years ago Christianity came into existence with the only mission of killing sin, and yet that to-day sin is as much alive as ever. Inferentially, the President accounted for this colossal failure by the statement that although the Christian religion possesses the requisite spiritual power, it lies merely latent in it.

A newspaper reports that the Rev. J. T. Powning, Vicar of Cornwood, Devon, "died suddenly after taking evening service." After that, we think the churchwardens should put up the notice that the evening service is not to be taken. We really think that everyone would be healthier.

Through sheer necessity, temperance drinks are far more in use than they were. That is one of the inevitable results of a minority of fanatical teetotalers being allowed to impose their will upon the majority of their countrymen. Of celestial origin, the tea-plant may become yet more heavenly. Should alcohol be prohibited, Freethinkers may live to see the time when the "blood of the Lamb" will be perpetuated in the Communion service by cups of tea. Even tea would be more dignified than ginger-pop or lemon-squash.

The following bright scintillation appeared in the *Star*: "Rider Haggard would 'let this Royal intimate of Heaven fall into the hands of Heaven, not into those of man.' But even the All Highest can't fall upwards."

The dear clergy sometimes get a little butter on their bread. Canon Brennan, of St. John's Wood, has been presented with a cheque for £500 by his congregation. When the Rev. H. G. de Castro, a Shropshire clergyman, went to heaven, he left behind him on earth the sum of £13,386.

Destitution and starvation are still the lot of the clergy. Two bad cases are those of the Rev. G. W. Minns, Vicar of Weston, Southampton, who left £42,170, and the Ven. Archdeacon Stanhope, whose will was proved for £22,429. An even worse case is that of Canon James Pickop, of Manchester, who left £97,872. The Rev. A. F. Burgoyne, of Finchingfield, Essex, brings up the rear with a modest £27,015. In one week, four parsons leave £189,486; yet the Bishop of London stoutly maintains the clergy are starving.

In his presidential address at the Wesleyan Conference, the Rev. W. T. A. Barber declared that the Church "must put dynamite into its work." We wonder if this is to take the place of hell, or is merely an addition. If the latter, Wesleyan congregations have a warmer time before them than the folk they regard as rank outsiders.

Christian Scientists are to build in New York the highest church in the world. The building will have thirty stories. It seems appropriate, for Christian Science is probably the tallest religious proposition in the world.

The value of religion as an ethical guide is not so marked as the clergy assert. How otherwise can the frequent backsliding of holy men be explained? Recent police court cases include the cases of the ex-Rev. T. H. S. P. Bohun, who was convicted as an incorrigible rogue; and of the Rev. W. B. Bell, of Epsom, who was fined for driving a motor-cycle without a licence.

Christian Evidence lecturers and other believers in the Design Argument, will be pleased to note a case of profiteering among birds. Two owls have been shot in the grounds of the Putney Hospital for robbing chickens.

A single day's sale of pictures at "Christie's" recently realized £146,422. This is the country which worships a carpenter-god.

A proposal to make places of worship less like mortuaries was before the Upper House of Convocation, and a proposal to use churches for conferences and lectures was adopted, the Archbishop of Canterbury supporting the resolution. If the Churches are short of lecturers, doubtless the National Secular Society will oblige.

At Acton members of the Government religion, Baptists, and Salvationists, selected the same field for their Sunday-school treats. As they did not attempt to murder each other, the reporters made paragraphs of the remarkable growth of religious unity.

Mere preaching and hymn-singing no longer fill the Churches. Only men with special gifts draw crowded congregations now-a-days, and such men are few and far between. Consequently, strange devices are resorted to in the hope of attracting the people. In America "the jazz banjo concert" is being utilized for the purpose. Of course, everything, no matter what its nature, once drafted into the service of religion, becomes sacred and holy.

The sanctifier of the "jazz banjo concert" is the Rev. Charles Nelson, of Long Island City; and it was Mr. Reef, the banjo king of jazz players, who introduced it. Mr. Nelson says that the experiment proved a complete success, and that he has something more startling still along the same line for coming Sunday evenings. "If the people want life," he sagaciously observes, "I am going to mix it with Gospel, and then I am sure they will come to church every Sunday evening." Ere long, the Gospel will be a vanishing quantity, the people demanding "life," and nothing else.

Sir Heath Harrison has given £26,000 to Oxford University for the endowment of modern language instruction. It is high time. Oxford has a weakness for "dead" languages and "dead" ideas. Maybe that is why the University authorities expelled the poet Shelley, and conferred an honorary degree on William Booth, of the Salvation Army.

The "Spiritual Lords" are very anxious to appear democratic. The Bishop of London declares that he is bound for the workhouse; and the Bishop of St. Albans follows suit by saying that he has never been a rich man. "London" gets £10,000 a year, and "St. Albans" £2,500. Neither of them can claim with justice the blessings of poverty.

As a result of religious mania, Elizabeth Beatty, of Dalston, refused to take food, and died of exhaustion. Christian Evidence lecturers kindly note.

The dear clergy are asking for a "living wage." For a modest beginning, the Bishop of Hereford suggests £400 a year and a house, and rich people are to be approached for support. Apparently, the clergy do not think very highly of relying solely upon prayer.

The honour of God, said the Bishop of London in Hyde Park on Sunday last, is pledged to people meeting again those belonging to them who were killed in the War. But suppose they don't meet? How will anyone know whether the "honour of God" has been vindicated or not? After all, this is only the language of the confidence trick. Believe in me, says the Bishop, and you shall see your trust vindicated—after you are dead. But after death no one tells. We repeat, it is the language of the confidence man exploiting a nation's grief in the interests of his craft.

The L. C. C. and Freedom of Propaganda.

THE London County Council is at it again. It will be remembered that in 1916 the Parks Committee passed a resolution forbidding the sale of literature in the Parks. This was, we had reason to believe, preliminary to stopping meetings altogether. Had the first move succeeded, the second would certainly have followed. But the proposal was resisted, and after it had been carried to the Courts, the L. C. C. was defeated, and ordered to return to its old procedure.

It was hoped that the matter was settled, but reactionaries never learn. That, perhaps, is a good thing; it leads to their destruction. Anyway, the Committee set to work to achieve its ends in other ways.

On behalf of the N. S. S., Miss Vance made application to sell certain books and pamphlets, and also the *Freethinker*. Some were permitted, but the Committee could not tolerate our *Christianity and Slavery, Woman and Christianity*, or our new edition of *Voltaire's Dictionary*. The selection will show the intelligence with which the Committee conducts its censorship. Probably the office boy selects with a long pin.

What we are concerned with now, however, is the ban that has been placed on weekly publications. When Miss Vance applied for a permit to sell the *Freethinker*, she was told that ten days' notice was required. In the case of a seven days' publication this was clearly absurd. After some correspondence, a meeting was arranged between certain officials of the Council and Mr. Verinder, myself, and Mr. Hubbard, the solicitor to the Protest Committee. The ten days' notice was so palpably ridiculous that no real attempt at defence was made, and an agreement was finally reached. Two copies of the *Freethinker* were to be sent each week to the Council immediately on publication. The Council was to give a permit to sell the paper, subject to its right to stop the sale of a particular issue to which exception was taken.

It was soon seen that the Committee could not keep its word, either in the letter or in the spirit. After more correspondence, the Council informed Miss Vance that no permit could be given for the sale of the *Freethinker* in the Parks.

Thus the matter stands at the moment. But it will not stop there. Mr. Harry Snell, now, we are pleased to say, a member of the L. C. C., on July 22 put a question to the Parks Committee, and extracted the information that some Socialist publications had also been banned. The matter will probably be further discussed on the Council next week, and we shall then see where we stand.

Meanwhile, the Protest Committee is still in being, and will take whatever steps are possible. Mr. Frederick Verinder is Chairman of the Committee, and in any fight for justice he can always be counted on to do more than his share. Miss Vance is Secretary, and I represent the N. S. S. So everyone may rest assured that all that can be done will be done.

It is too early in this new phase of the fight to say what will happen, but I think there are ways of once again bringing this little Star-Chamber into a more reasonable frame of mind. And in that *Freethinker* readers may be able to lend a hand. I have written to the Clerk of the Council asking, as Editor of this paper, what are the articles or paragraphs to which the Committee take exception. We shall see what reply comes to that. But it is impossible to let this attack on the right of public meeting pass without protest. And it is the right of public meeting that is really aimed at.

Prussianism has been defeated in the field. We must see to it that it does not survive in the Council Chamber.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

E. C. D. (Portland, Oregon).—Sorry we have no pamphlet of the kind you inquire about. We think there is a public for a pamphlet of that description, if clearly written.—Leuba's *Psychological Study of Religion* (Macmillan) gives a good view of the present position.

A. ATHERTON (Glasgow).—Coming change of address noted. We are pleased to have your appreciation of the paper. Shall be pleased to see you when you come to London.

GORDON.—The impertinence of some Christians almost passes belief. We should say you were well rid of such people. It is time Portsmouth wakened up and went in for some more propaganda. You may rely upon our increasing the size of the paper so soon as it can be done. Let us have another thousand a week, and we will do it at once.

F. KÜETGENS.—Nansen's *Eskimo Life* contains a very good account of a people such as you inquire about. Native people are very seldom the better for European interference. Generally, they absorb our vices and ignore our virtues, and we show about an equal capacity in each direction.

K. JONES.—A list of some of our publications will be found in this issue. In what direction do you wish for the names of Atheists? As expressed, your inquiry is too general to permit of a brief answer. It would require an essay.

M. LESTER.—We had no intention of administering a "snub." We were merely protesting against the policy of separating the intellectual interests of men and women. We believe in identifying them, in the best interests of the race. Mr. Cohen will be writing you shortly.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We are indebted to Mr. Lloyd for seeing this issue of the paper through the press. The Editor is taking a few days' holiday—or as much of a holiday as he can get—and he will be none the worse for a few days' rest before commencing the Autumn's lecturing work. For the next week Mr. Cohen will answer as few letters as possible, and his correspondents will doubtless overlook any delay that occurs.

The *Star* did good work in its issue of July 23 in calling attention to the ridiculous conduct of the L.C.C. in banning certain of our and other people's publications. The more publicity given to this matter the better, and we hope that our friends all over London will let their Members know their opinion on the matter. The notion of a haphazard collection of County Councillors sitting in judgment on Voltaire, and deciding that the people of this city must not read him, is absurd. These glorified Bumbles, dragged out of their native obscurity by a few votes, should be taught

that when they lay hands on one of the world's great writers they are grappling with matters quite beyond their comprehension. And it is within the power of the people to read them the required lesson. —

The following is from the *South African Review*, which advertises itself as the oldest weekly paper in South Africa:—

When you look into the various Church pronouncements, and take a peep below the surface, you find them all alike, no matter what the denomination, and they all give themselves away with a solemn *naivete*. We have here a pastoral letter from the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church. It makes prominent reference to (1) the War (for which the Churches in Germany were chiefly responsible, because they originated and encouraged the "Gott mit uns" doctrine); (2) the epidemic (the origin of which was dirt, and it became more virulent by reason of the social system on which the Churches thrive); (3) the poor white problem (which is not a problem at all, but merely a result of greed, belonging to the system aforesaid); (4) missionary work (as if the clergy of all denominations do not need a mission among them, in order to prevent them from fomenting further trouble, including wars).

From this we gather that the oldest review in South Africa is not over fond of the Churches.

The Decay of Sunday Observance.

To the old question, "Stands Scotland where it did?" the answer, from the Kirk and Sabbatarian point of view, must decidedly be in the negative. Scotland, during the last few years, has indubitably moved. We in the Freethought Movement think she has progressed; the earnest successors of John Knox and of the Covenant hold she has retrograded. So far as the old-fashioned observance of the Sunday (which the kirkgoer persistently and erroneously speaks of as the Sabbath) is concerned, Scotland is regarded by the stalwarts of Presbyterianism as a sad backslider. Certainly, in the matter of old-time Sabbath observance, the attitude of the general public has undergone a marked change; in our view, of course, entirely for the better.

Nowhere in the world (except, perhaps, in the New England States of America) was there ever devised a day of desolation and misery equal to the Scottish Sabbath of last century, as experienced particularly in the industrial centres of population. But latterly there has been an evolution towards sanity of outlook on this question, in some parts at least of Scotland, which, if not much to boast of so far, holds considerable promise for the future. To be candid, the present writer never expected that even the modest advance that has been made would have been achieved in his lifetime.

Within the memory of many yet amongst us, people in Scottish towns sat in their "best room" on the "Sabbath" day, behind drawn window-curtains, excluding the light and freshness of Nature, in an endeavour to pay reverential tribute to the Day of Rest. Not for worlds would they allow the tinkle of a piano to be heard. The Sunday dinner must be cooked the day before. Children dared not play, or whistle, or sing on the Lord's Day. All secular literature was temporarily banished.

It can scarcely be doubted that in a large degree this strictness of Sabbatarianism was conventional, and, indeed, mainly adhered to out of deference to the bogey of public opinion. It may as safely be asserted that much of the surviving regard paid to the Sunday is due to fear of what other people will think and say, rather than to any honest conviction that a special sanctity attaches to the first day of the week. The writer knew an elder of the Kirk, who a good many years ago confessed he saw no harm in Sunday cycling, and would have had no objection to going out for a spin if he could depend on

getting back without being recognized by anyone who knew of his church connection.

The foolish reverence for the Sunday so prevalent a generation or two ago has, however, broken down to no small extent in the last two or three decades, and credit for this is in some measure due to the efforts made by the Secular Society and the Socialist parties to interest the people in the affairs of this world on the so-called Sabbath Day instead of brooding over their sins and worrying about their probable status in a problematical future life. Few people do justice to the generally rationalizing influence of Secularist propaganda. The liberalizing effect on the community of the operations of the Secular Society is not to be measured by the number of formally attached members. Of a verity the little, ardent, secular-minded minority is the leaven which shall ultimately leaven the whole mass. Anyone who comes through a course of Secularist teaching can never be the same as he was before he came under its influence, even if he may not accept all the apparent implications of Secularism. If he is even only approximately loyal to the truth which has been unfolded to him, he will ever after, without necessarily cleaving to the official Secularist Movement, be a human centre from which must inevitably radiate some modicum of rationalistic light.

For many years prior to any general stirring of the dry bones in Glasgow, the Secular Society had been doing pioneer work by holding meetings, organizing lectures, and giving concerts absolutely devoid of anything of a "sacred" nature on the Lord's Day. Much of this was done in an unobtrusive way, but its permeating effect undoubtedly extended far, and assisted to build up the healthier state of public opinion as regards the use of the Sunday that is now making itself apparent.

We have now in Glasgow got so far as to have Corporation reading-rooms open on Sunday, and Sunday band performances in the public parks. We have also had several first-class vocal and instrumental concerts in public halls in Glasgow on Sundays—concerts with never a pretence of anything "sacred" about them, and given to overflowing audiences. All who know Scotland must concede that this indicates a considerable advance, and such as would have been regarded as impossible a very few years ago.

Of course, we see regretful allusions made to the growth in Protestant Britain of the "Continental" Sunday. Pious people who have never been on the Continent, and whose knowledge of continental customs is of the haziest description, are thoroughly imbued with the idea that any tendency towards a rationally recreative use of the Sunday must necessarily be of continental origin, and therefore demoralizing. Lurid pictures of a supposititiously immoral Paris cross their mental vision. Any relaxation of Sunday observance is the first step downward on the slippery path of moral deterioration. These individuals are the lineal descendants of the earlier Sabbatarians, who, as was so grimly expressed long ago, left the Scottish people with no recreative outlet on Sunday but drink and fornication.

We notice that in England also the advent of the "Continental" Sunday is alarming the bigots. That species of semi-clerical trade-union styled the Wesleyan Methodist Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Association views with dismay and sorrow (*vide press*) the modern invasion of their monopoly of the Lord's Day. The wordy title of the above-mentioned body somehow irresistibly recalls memories of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association, made famous by Dickens. But we must not treat the W.M.L.P.M.A.A. disrespectfully or regard it as a negligible quantity. It is not exactly a case of

the three tailors of Tooley Street speaking as the voice of England, for this Association claims to represent no fewer than 26,000 local preachers. The constitution of the aforesaid Association being what it is, it seems fairly obvious that its opposition to any encroachment on the Lord's Day is largely of a professional nature. The instinct of self-preservation inevitably prompts its members to resent any attempt on the part of rival interests to attract their clients. If the people of England want recreation on the Sunday let them go and listen to the 26,000 Methodist local preachers. And if the people will not do this, the law and public opinion should see that they are not allowed to do anything else.

But, seriously speaking, one can only marvel at the effrontery of any religious organization stigmatizing as "desecration" such methods of observing the Sunday as do not meet with its approval. People of this temperament lack even an elementary conception of the principles of human liberty. They cannot see that while they are perfectly entitled to preach and pray to one another on the Lord's Day to their hearts' content, and observe the Sunday in whatever manner their conscience dictates so long as they do not thereby interfere with the freedom of action of anyone else, their right reaches no farther. Other people have a similar right of option to spend the Sunday in such fashion as suits them, with the same due regard for the freedom of those who differ from them.

The non-churchgoing section of the community—now by far the larger portion—is warranted in demanding that the Sunday shall be completely emancipated from the blighting influence of Sabbatarianism. It is preposterous that a minority of zealots should be allowed to exercise any prohibitory control whatever over the occupations and amusements of the people on the occasion of their weekly holiday. There should be unrestricted access to coast and country for the town-dweller on the first day of the week as well as on the other six days; and all institutions erected for the use of the people, such as museums, libraries, and picture-galleries, should be freely open to the public on the one day on which most use could be made of them. Nor does the writer perceive any valid reason why the theatres should not be available on Sunday. Those who prefer to go to church or chapel could continue doing so.

It is a favourite argument of those who uphold the Puritanic tradition of Sunday observance that any secular invasion of the sanctity of the first day of the week as a consequence entails the loss of the working man's day of rest. Whatever of truth was at one time contained in this plea, it has now entirely lost its force. We have ample evidence at the present day that organized labour is perfectly capable of holding all its hard-won privileges—and of securing a few more. There is not the smallest likelihood of the working class submitting to a seven-day working week, so the Sabbatarians need no longer pretend they are animated by a desire to conserve the labourer's weekly rest day. The worker's weekly rest day is not in jeopardy. But he has plainly very little inclination to spend it in church, and that is what troubles the clerical fraternity.

G. SCOTT.

'Tis with our judgments as our watches; none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.—*Pope.*

There is a common-place book argument,
Which glibly glides from every tongue;
When any dare a new light to present,
"If you are right, then everybody's wrong!"
Suppose the converse of this precedent
So often urged, so loudly and so long;
"If you are wrong, then everybody's right!"—*Byron.*

The Science of the Ultra-Material.

V.

(Concluded from p. 370.)

IN the preceding section we considered the distinction between proto-material and material evolution in terms of equilibrium, the former being regarded as an advance from instability to a comparatively stable equilibrium, and the latter as an advance from this condition through stages showing a progressive breakdown of equilibrium.

Of proto-material evolution very little is yet known, but that little is sufficient to show the contrast which exists between its laws and those of matter. The dissociation of matter is a process by which matter loses its material properties and functions, and assumes those of a different order apparently quite irreconcilable with them. As an instance, we may take the now familiar fact that the mass of the "electric particle" or electron—what we have called kinetic mass—increases with the velocity of the particle. Nothing could, apparently, be more at variance with the conditions governing mass in the physical world, and yet there can be no reasonable doubt that when the nature of the proto-material energies and the intra-atomic energies of matter come to be thoroughly understood, there will be found some underlying law or principle capable of unifying and "explaining" both these contrasted aspects of "mass."

The laws governing the material world may be broadly divided into four classes, viz., Physical or Mechanical, Chemical, Vital, and Mental laws. Of these the physical laws, governing the relationships and functions of matter and force in the mass, were, from the first, more amenable to ordinary methods of observation and calculation, and were, therefore, the first to be studied and reduced to a scientific order. They comprise the laws of motion and gravitation, of static and moving equilibria, of mechanical transformation and distribution of forces, and generally all those laws included under the term mechanics or physics, omitting, of course, the laws of electricity, magnetism, heat, and light, which are usually included in the study of "Physics," but which properly belong to the pro-material sphere. Of these mechanical laws it need only be said that they are the simplest, the most definite, and the most rigid of all the laws of Nature. Being the laws of matter in the mass they are unaffected by the internal constitution of matter, and remain true quite independently of the laws of chemistry, vitality, or mentality. This definiteness and rigidity of mechanical law is concomitant with the fact that it deals with matter in its most stable form of equilibrium. The relationships of the masses and their mechanical equilibria being completely unaffected by their internal molecular equilibria, they can be dealt with as passive vehicles or transmitters of mechanical energy, possessing only material mass or inertia.

Chemical laws take us a step further. These deal with the energies liberated by the breakdown of molecular equilibria, and must, therefore, be profoundly different from physical laws which, as we have just seen, are independent of molecular equilibria. And because of this difference it is probable that chemical laws will never be found capable of complete expression in terms of mechanical laws, but this is by no means the same as to say that the two sets of laws can never be affiliated in any terms. A complete unification would, no doubt, be quite possible if we could express it in terms of those energy functions which underlie both sets of laws. And there is no reason in the nature of things why we should not, at some future time, and in the light of a fuller

knowledge, be able so to express them; for the laws of material mass and the motion of material bodies must be derived from, and dependent on, those of kinetic mass and the primordial movement of substance.

The functions of protoplasm (which the Neo-vitalists now tell us involve a special vital principle) are open to a precisely similar interpretation. Indeed, all recent investigation seems to show that chemical and vital functions are very closely related, and that the connecting link between them is, as already stated, furnished by the peculiar structure and activities of the colloids. The main difference seems to be that the equilibria of the living colloids are of a more delicate and unstable character than those of the inorganic ones, and that hence the breakdown and restoration of these equilibria, involving disruptions of a less sudden and violent kind, can go on in a more rhythmic and orderly manner. It is possible that all the energies liberated by molecular disruption may before long be brought under one great generalization, and when that is the case vital and chemical laws will be completely unified.

Whether or no there be any probability of truth in the idea—put forward as a mere speculation in the preceding section—that psychic activities involve atomic dissociation, it is undoubtedly true that they involve a condition of greater instability than do the activities of non-sentient protoplasm—that in brain and nerve matter we reach the utmost limit of instability known to us in the material world. But this is a difference in degree only, and not in kind; and hence the energy functions of mind, equally with the vital and chemical energy functions, may eventually be affiliated with those of matter and force when all alike become expressible in terms of the ultra-material energies.

Thus the kinetic theory of matter affords, as it were, a common denominator in terms of which all the activities of the material world, with their seemingly irreconcilable differences and fundamental contrasts, may ultimately be expressed. And the recognition of material evolution as a progressive advance towards instability of equilibrium seems, moreover, to afford a clue as to *why* the laws of the material world also progressively advance from the simplicity, rigidity, and definiteness characterizing those of mechanics to the complexity and apparent capriciousness characterizing those of mind. For it is obvious that the laws governing any system in a condition of unstable equilibrium, though equally inflexible and inviolable, must be less simple and rigid, and more susceptible of complicacy and disturbance than those governing a stable system. As a rough instance, we may take the law of gravitation. Two bodies gravitating about their common centre of inertia form a system of relatively great stability not easily disturbed, and such as would, if left uninfluenced by other forces, continue unchanged for an indefinite period. Add a third body to the system, and the movements of each of the three become so complex that the highest resources of mathematical analysis fail to calculate them with complete exactitude, while the equilibrium of the system has at the same time become less stable. With four or more bodies their mutual perturbations become still more incalculable and seemingly capricious, and the equilibrium of the system becomes progressively less stable and more easily deranged. Yet we doubt not that, however complex and unstable the system may become, it is throughout governed by one constant and invariable law.

As little can we doubt that, however profoundly the five orders of natural law—including the proto-material—may seem to differ one from another, they are yet capable of unification, and may all be brought under the dominion of one supreme underlying law. This law

is what we understand as Causality, for the essential principle of the five sets of laws is that, however varied they may be in their manifestations, they are all *causal laws*. And as the primordial energy of substance is the common element of all these varied manifestations, this energy must itself be the ultimate principle of Causality.

The promise of future progress in the unification of natural law would therefore seem to lie in the proto-material rather than in the material sphere of research—in that border-land between the material and the immaterial worlds which is now gradually coming within the cognizance of a perplexed and wondering science. The science of the future will be the science of the ultra-material, and it will probably stand to our present scientific conceptions in much the same relation as these do to the ignorant gropings and vague guesses of primitive man.

In conclusion, we may summarize the results here arrived at in the following tentative propositions or hypotheses, which seem to represent the tendency of modern speculation, and which it will be the task of future science either to verify or disprove.

1. The primordial element of existence is an immaterial energy consisting of infinitely diffused substance in a state of infinite mobility; that is to say, a condition of diffusion and mobility transcending the limits of material energy. This immaterial energy is in a state of complete instability.

2. The primordial energy or movement of substance contains the potentiality of all existence, the elemental substance constituting the basis of matter, or "matter-stuff," and the elemental movement constituting the basis of mind, or "mind-stuff."

3. Proto-material evolution is a progressive fall from this primordial state of instability, through varying degrees of increasingly stable equilibrium, to the most stable form of equilibrium attainable. This stable form of equilibrium, combining the maximum condensation of substance with the minimum freedom of movement, is what we understand as matter.

4. Material evolution is a progressive rise from the stable equilibrium of matter, through varying degrees of increasing instability, to the highest degree of instability as manifested in sentient protoplasm. The breakdown of this extremely unstable equilibrium, combining a minimum condensation of substance with a maximum freedom of movement, is what we understand as mind. The movement, or mind-element, in the primordial energy hitherto locked up, as it were, in matter, and becoming liberated by the final breakdown of the equilibria of protoplasm, functions as consciousness.

5. The entire process, both of proto-material and of material evolution, is actuated and controlled by the primordial energy of substance, and the universal and persisting influence of this energy finally manifests itself in consciousness as the Law of Causality.

A. E. MADDOCK.

The End.

It was an afternoon in March. I stepped out of my cottage, and stood for a few minutes looking at the weather and the surroundings. Rain fell heavily. From the thatched roof drops of water fell with a steady "drip, drip," into little pools of wet close to the wall. Through the low-lying pastures a small river slowly flowed, gradually increasing in volume as numerous side-streams welled into its waters. Two lapwings flew heavily across, uttering their melancholy cry of "Pee-weet." The ducks that usually disported in the brook, or walked with clumsy gaiety about the meadow, were being overwhelmed by the excess of their favourite element, and

were waddling reluctantly to the higher ground. The downs were obscured by a curtain of mist and slanting rain, whilst overhead the continuity of the grey sky was varied only by darker masses of ill-defined cloud that rolled sullenly north-eastwards.

Shivering, I drew my oilskin closer round me, and stepped out on to the puddly path. Each side of the gate was guarded by pools, and down the road ran rivulets of mud-coloured water. Rain dripped steadily from the bare trees, the greyish-brown boles were marked with black streaks of moisture, and the hedgerows were soaked till not a dry spot remained in or under them. Cattle and horses stood inert under the non-sheltering trees, their wet coats steaming mistily, and looked with dull, patient eyes at the passers-by. Sheep huddled together, as if to protect their flanks from the downpour, even if their backs were reduced to a state of wet sponge. Runlets of brown and black liquid trickled down the banks, to mingle with the grey chalky mud of the road, and add to its messiness. Birds crouched in the hedgerow bushes with puffed-out feathers, unmoving. The patter of rain, the constant drip of larger spots, the sucking, wheezing noise of water soaking into the earth, these were the main sounds, through which the "Pee-weet" of the plover came eerily. Occasionally the faint tinkle of sheep-bells floated lingeringly in the valley. I splashed on, the smoke from my pipe hanging almost motionless in the damp atmosphere.

At the corner by the gate I stood and looked across country, usually a beautiful scene, bounded by the easy contours of the Downs. To-day the view was limited by a pall of grey, impenetrable, and thickening as the afternoon wore on. The military camp on the hilltop was invisible.

Almost imperceptibly, a mournful sound was borne to my ears through the drenched atmosphere. Listening carefully, I heard it again; music, played slowly and solemnly. From a quarter-mile away it came quivering through the stilly air, the "Dead March in Saul." A soldier was being carried from the camp to be buried in the little graveyard of the grey stone church beside the village. The sense of desolation and loneliness produced by the weather was deepened by the sad music and its associations. I could trace the procession of khaki-clad men as they followed their departed comrade down the winding road.

Now the harmony came full and strong as the higher pitched instruments took up the theme, fading again as the heavier ones repeated their diapason. At measured intervals the muffled drums rolled mournful cadences like personified sorrow muttering condolences with itself. The weather, the music, and the occasion could not have been more completely appropriate each to the other.

At the farmyard gate I waited and listened. Whilst I did so the band stopped playing. Again the silence was not broken but rather intensified by the patter and splash of raindrops and the gurgling of runlets.

As I entered the gateway a guinea-fowl retreated to a remoter shelter, and commenced its unvarying two-note call, not an ill-fitting song, striking the imagination as in keeping with the circumstances of the afternoon. I walked to the stable door and harkened again. It was easy to picture the last sad rites round the grave.....

Within the horses munched steadily. Occasionally one rattled the chain of its headstall, or stamped with heavy foot. Down in the little churchyard an obscure soldier was being lowered into his last resting-place, and the business of the world went on unheeding.

As I listened and watched, the rain lessened and the sky grew lighter. A sudden shattering crash of musketry rent the air. The firing party were signaling their comrade's departure as befitted soldiers. Next moment

the bugle rang out loud and clear, sounding the "Last Post." All was over. Now the soldiers would be reforming ranks to march back to camp. How many would give the erstwhile companion a second thought? The rain had almost ceased. I took off my drenched coat and cap, and the horses started with expectancy at the movement.

A burst of high gay music flung to the whitening sky. "Brighton Camp" broke forth, liveliest of marches, familiarized as "The Girl I Left Behind Me." The spell of death snapped, and I turned and entered the stables.

A. R. WILLIAMS.

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Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

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NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): No Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Blessed are the Poor"; Mr. R. Norman. "The Old Stunt."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Mr. F. Shaller, 3.15. "Is Atheism Sound?" 6, "The Bible and Common Sense."

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