

The Harmony of Spiritualism and Science.

To the Editor of "LIGHT."

SIR,—It was in no spirit of controversy that I took exceptions to Mr. A. R. Wallace's definition of Spirit, and it is only that the difference involved in our respective positions—and these positions are representative of two distinct schools of thought in Spiritualism—may be clearly understood, that I once more crave a share of your valuable space.

Mr. Wallace thinks I mistook his position regarding the nature of mind or spirit by confusing two distinct meanings, one referring to "mind in the abstract," or as a "fundamental principle," and the other as mind "individualised in the human form." Whenever Mr. Wallace can show that such a thing as "abstract mind" exists—and that would be equivalent to showing what it consists of—then I shall consider his point well taken, but not before. No, there was no confusion, but there was denial. "Abstract mind" exists no more than abstract matter exists. There can be no matter independent of its properties. It is the same with mind. Now what is the essential property or quality of mind? Obviously it is *consciousness—awareness*. To speak of it otherwise is to speak of it in terms of matter. Now, consciousness is only another term for egoism. Therefore, if the "abstract mind" of Mr. Wallace be anything not material, it must possess the attribute of consciousness, *i. e.*, it must be egoistic, and matter lends nothing but the element of experience to the embodied spirit or soul. My position in a word is this: soul or spirit is. It embodies itself in matter for expression or experience. The result is a definite recognition in the consciousness of the spirit of what takes place in matter, and this recognition, this awareness, confined to itself, constitutes man—not the physical, but the spiritual man—the real man—the enduring man. Man does not *become* immortal. He is immortal, and this immortality is not by virtue of anything in matter, but because he is the output of that which is always in eternity, is never out of eternity; and the difference between man here and man there is, that here he views himself under time conditions, which exclude spirit, and there he views himself under eternal conditions, which is the realm of spirit. When man here transcends his experience, as sometimes happens under what we call abnormal conditions, through intuition or the superior state, it simply means that he has broken through that which constitutes himself *as experience*, and is permitted to participate in the larger and fuller and freer life of that which impelled him forth, created him, so to speak. Thus it is not mind or spirit, but *experience* that is *evolved*—to mind or spirit itself nothing is added, and never can be.

Spiritualists of the school of which Mr. Wallace is so distinguished a representative, cannot long avoid facing the unphilosophical position involved in their assumption that a time product can somehow be hocus-pocussed into eternity. So long as a future existence was itself the matter of contention, it was idle to speculate about anything beyond. But for Spiritualists this is now established—it is the main postulate of all their reasoning, and thus the inquiry is pushed into a field until now entirely unexplored. The theory I here set forth, permit me to say, is not evolved from my own inner consciousness. It is plainly and clearly taught by several of the spirit instruments now most prominently before the public; and since its acceptance is not barred on the score that it is not taught by spirits, it is happily in a position to rely for acceptance on its inherent logic and moral and philosophical necessity.

One point more: I controverted Mr. Wallace's position that "progress towards a nobler and happier existence in the spiritual world is *dependent* on our higher moral feelings here," on the ground that it was a denial of justice or equality, because our moral nature as well as environment is largely imposed upon us. "But," says Mr. Wallace, "he does not say whether he accepts the *alternative* position, that all are to be *at once good and happy* in the future state, and that the most selfish, vicious, and sensual are to make equal progress with the benevolent, self-sacrificing, and virtuous." Why *alternative*? Why must all be *at once* both *good and happy* in order to controvert the theory that "progress towards a nobler and happier existence in the spiritual world is

dependent on the cultivation of our moral feelings here"? I forbear to take advantage of what in all charity I must attribute to a laxity in statement, by which it is plainly made to appear that only such moral progress as is begun here can be continued there. Otherwise, how can it be *dependent* upon it? No, I will assume that what Mr. Wallace meant is that the ratio of progress is so dependent. But even this I assail on the score of its fixed and arbitrary injustice, because its assumption involves the unspiritual conclusion that the opportunities for bringing about a change of life for the better are far worse there than here. Yes, I do believe that under spiritual laws the difference is *not* one of *goodness*, so much as it is one of *happiness*. Even under earth conditions the greatest of sinners have been known to become saints in an hour—sudden and complete *conversions* are *facts* incontrovertible. Orthodox Christianity is discredited to-day because it refuses to extend the law of repentance, conversion, and salvation beyond the grave. Is Spiritualism doomed to fall into what is practically the same grave misconception of a higher and divine law? A converted man is a man in whom the spirit is awakened or born to outer consciousness. The spirit always makes for righteousness; and when rid of all false appearances, is it permissible for us to suppose that it will not move even more and more mightily along the line of repentance and conversion? But here let me observe a distinction *not* observed by Mr. Wallace. He employs goodness and happiness, as if they were always necessary correlates. A converted man is a good man now, but he is perhaps far from being a happy one. He is under repentance, but the shadow of his crimes still lingers about him, and as it is here, so I make no doubt, it will be there. Has not the translated individuality every incentive to progress—true spiritual progress—I mean, having its source in repentance, and shall it be denied him by some arbitrary law *dependent* on the limitations of matter or the accident of birth?

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