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 philosophical position involved in their assumption that a time product can somehow be hocus-pocussed into eternity. So long as 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 irremovable 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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