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[p. 228a]

‘Another Scientific Spiritualist.’

The struggle between materialistic or Positive science and spiritualistic science, which has been going on for years, and which has lately centered in London, engaging the attention of England’s greatest thinkers, grows sharper and hotter with the lapse of time. The spiritualistic party received a great accession of strength when William Crookes, F. R. S., publicly announced his belief in the facts of spiritual manifestations, based on a series of most careful experiments by himself, in which he employed all the scientific tests he could bring to bear. His character and reputation as a scientific man gave immense weight to his testimony. And now Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace publishes in the *Fortnightly Review* “A Defense of Modern Spiritualism,” in which he declares his belief in the phenomena of spiritual manifestations and the importance of the religion which the most enlightened spiritualism teaches. Mr. Wallace has been long known as a great traveler and author, and as an eminent scientific authority. He went through a series of original investigations in the same field which has made Darwin famous, and arrived at much the same general conclusions in regard to “natural selection,” etc. This Darwin himself concedes. Some of the definitions of the theory of Human Nature, given by Mr. Wallace as deductions from the facts and teachings of spiritualism, are so clear and good that we quote from them:

- “1. Man is a duality, consisting of an organized spiritual form, evolved coincidentally with and permeating the physical body, and having corresponding organs and development.
- “2. Death is the separation of this duality, and effects no change in the spirit, morally or intellectually.
- “3. Progressive evolution of the intellectual and moral nature is the destiny of individuals; the knowledge, attainments and experience of earth-life forming the basis of spirit-life.
- “4. Spirits can communicate through properly-endowed mediums. They are attracted to those they love or sympathize with, and strive to warn, protect and influence them for good by mental impression when they can not effect any more direct communication; but as follows from clause 2, their communications will be fallible, and must be judged and tested just as we do those of our fellow-men.”

*** “For the essential teaching of spiritualism is, that we are, in every act and thought, helping to build up a ‘mental fabric’ which will be and constitute ourselves more completely after the death of the body than it does now. Just as this fabric is well or ill built, so will our progress and happiness be aided or retarded. Just in proportion as we have developed our higher intellectual and moral nature, or starved it by disuse and by giving undue prominence to those faculties which secure mere physical or selfish enjoyment, shall we be well or ill-fitted for the new life we enter on.”

We might remark on this last that it is not peculiar to spiritualism, being also the “essential teaching” of the Bible, the “mental fabric” which constitutes ourselves after death, being understood as nothing less than our *souls*.

The good-natured way in which Mr. Wallace shows the littleness of the position taken by Huxley and other such scientific men, in refusing to even investigate the claims of spiritualism, on the ground that

many of the communications received from spirits are mere twaddle, is refreshing. He says of them, "It will thus be seen that those who can form no higher conception of the uses of spiritualism 'even if true,' than to detect crime or to name in advance the winner of the Derby, not only prove their own ignorance of the whole subject, but exhibit in a marked degree that partial mental paralysis, the result of a century of materialistic thought, which renders so many men unable seriously to conceive the possibility of a natural continuation of human life after the death of the body."

In an article written by Mr. Noyes, and published in the *New York World* in 1869, entitled *American Positivism* he predicted the time as near at hand when Americans will do their own thinking and refuse to acknowledge the skeptical philosophers of the Old World as their "incomparable masters." That prophecy is hastening to fulfill itself. The balance of power seems to have shifted already. The theories of Comte and Spencer make no headway in this country, while modern spiritualism, which is an American product, proves its vigor by going to Europe and routing skeptical science in London.

F. W. S.

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The Alfred Russel Wallace Page, Charles H. Smith, 2015.