

Alfred Russel Wallace, LL.D.

This distinguished English scientist arrived in Boston last week and took up quarters at the Quincy House. His engagements in this country are to deliver a series of lectures, eight in number, on "Darwinism and Some of its Applications." He began the course before the Lowell Institute in this city, on Monday of the present week. The lectures comprising the course are named "The Darwinian Theory"; "The Permanence of Oceans, and the Relations of Islands and Continents"; "Oceanic Islands"; "Continental Islands, Recent and Ancient"; "Relations of New Zealand and Australia"; "The Origin and Uses of the Colors of Animals"; "Mimicry and Other Exceptional Developments of Color"; and "The Origin and Uses of Colors of Flowers and Fruits." After delivering the course in Boston he will give them before the Johns Hopkins University of Baltimore. It is also probable that he will lecture in other cities of the United States.

Among European men of science Mr. Wallace stands deservedly high, in his chosen field and specialty none being before him. He conceived the idea that Darwin did in reference to the origin of species even before the latter had developed it, and was at the time wholly unaware that it excited the thought of any other mind. It was while he was engaged in explorations on the islands of the Malay Archipelago, and at other points in the East Indies. He was studying the fauna and flora of that part of the world, an occupation that kept him in the far East for eight years, from 1854, when he made an attempt to solve the problem of the origin of species. The striking contrasts of life with which he was made familiar, naturally forced such a study upon him. On the 1st of July, 1858, a paper from his hand was read before the Linnean Society of Great Britain "On the Tendency of Varieties to Depart Independently from the Original Type"; and on the same date was read Darwin's paper "On the Tendency of Species to form Varieties, and on the Perpetuation of Species and Varieties by means of Natural Selections."

Up to that time Mr. Wallace was entirely ignorant of Mr. Darwin's studies in the same direction. Both of them reached substantially the same general conclusions, though Mr. Wallace denies that natural selection alone, without the intervening agency of some higher cause, is competent to effect the transition from the anthropoid ape to man. Yet he holds with Darwin that the most of the changes attributed to natural selection are actually effected by it.

While he was yet a young man he joined a scientific expedition to South America, and passed nearly four years—from 1848 to 1852—in making a study of the primeval forests in the Amazon and Rio Negro regions. Two books were the result of this study, published in 1853, viz., "Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro," and "Palm Trees of the Amazon and their Uses." In 1854 he went to India, as already noticed, and there spent the ensuing eight years. He recorded his observations in that part of the world in "The Malay Archipelago; the Land of the Orang-utan and the Bird of Paradise" (1869). He also produced "Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection" (1870), and "On the Geographical Distribution of Animals" (1876), in two volumes, which were translated into French and German.

What most especially engages the profound interest of Spiritualists in Mr. Wallace is the fact that, among the first scientists of Europe and the age, he made a thorough and unprejudiced investigation of the spiritual phenomena, and, having arrived at the conclusion that they are as firmly grounded in truth as any other facts coming within human cognizance, had the courage to declare his convictions, and has shown equal courage in maintaining them in the face of all opposition. The testimony of a Wallace among the world's scientists is something which the incredulous of his class cannot set aside. If he is authority on one great subject which requires only evidence for its support, he assuredly must be no less good authority on another.

His book on "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism" appeared in 1875, being the series of essays contributed by him to the *Fortnightly Review* in the previous year. And he has uttered numerous voluntary statements in defense and support of the phenomena since that time, which have been repeatedly produced in the columns of the BANNER OF LIGHT, with accompanying comment. Doubtless the creed-parties and their parasite papers will take particular pains to abstain from all mention of his fixed belief in Spiritualism while he is here lecturing on purely scientific topics, though we cannot but observe that one Boston paper, the *Transcript*, comes to the matter only to remark that "his writings on this subject [Spiritualism] have been held, by members of the sect, to prove his belief in the influence of the spirits of the departed on mundane things." This is impertinent to Mr. Wallace, as well as to Spiritualists. If the *Transcript* does not know what his writings on Spiritualism really mean, that is no excuse for its insinuating that he does not know what he intended to say himself.

As evidence of the directness and the straightforward character of his writings as witnesses for the New Dispensation about which hour friend the *Transcript* is in such doubt—we take occasion to refer to the article from his pen on Modern Spiritualism and its relations to Science, which appeared in "different forms but the same spirit," in the columns of the Boston *Sunday Herald*, the *Christian Register* and the BANNER OF LIGHT last spring, when his coming to this country was being mooted. In that article his language had no uncertain sound, but the whole effort proved full of strong suggestion as to the harmonization of the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism with science—explaining what the spiritual theory really teaches mankind and exposing the basis of the true ethical system. He set out with the assertion that it is clearly a mistaken notion that the conclusions of science are antagonistic to the phenomena of Spiritualism. He reminded the teachers and students of science that their mere opinions and prejudices are not science. Nor do denunciations effect anything. It has to be admitted that in this skeptical and materialistic age Spiritualism has firmly established itself, and by mere weight of evidence, and in the face of the most powerful prepossessions, has compelled recognition by a constantly increasing body of men in all classes of society and gained adherents in the highest ranks of science and philosophy. Mr. Wallace asserted, too, in the article in question, that it (Spiritualism) has never lost a convert thus made. He held that Spiritualism supplements and illuminates science; that it rests solely on the observation and comparison of facts in a domain of nature that has been hitherto little ex-

plored; and that it is a contradiction in terms to say that such an investigation is opposed to science.

Evolution Professor Wallace proclaims to be the great fundamental law of the universe of mind as well as of matter. The varied powers of both mind and body he recognizes as being developed, along with the nobler impulses of our nature, by the antagonism of the good and the bad, as well as by the need of labor in order to live and the constant struggle against the forces of Nature. If the material imperfections of the globe—the wintry blasts and summer heats, the volcano, the whirlwind and the flood, the barren desert and the gloomy forest—have each served as stimuli to develop and strengthen the intellectual nature of man, why, he asks, may it not be true that the oppression and wrong, the ignorance and crime, the misery and pain that always and everywhere pervade the world, have been the means of exercising and strengthening the higher sentiments of justice and mercy, charity and love, which we all acknowledge to be our highest characteristics, and which we cannot conceive of having been developed by any other means? He holds that such a view supplies the best solution we can have of the origin of evil, since it is the means of creating and developing man's higher moral attributes which make him fit for a permanent spiritual existence.

Prof. Wallace says that the nature of mind, and its presence in the universe, fail to be realized and accounted for by modern science, except in the form of the current dogma that it is "the product of organization"; but Spiritualism recognizes mind as the cause of organization, and perhaps also of matter itself; and he adds, that we know far more of the nature of man by having a demonstration of the existence of individual minds, not to be distinguished from those of human beings, yet disconnected with human bodies.

Spiritualism, says Prof. Wallace, has acquainted us with forms of matter of which materialistic science knows nothing and cognizes nothing; likewise with an ethereal chemistry whose transformations are far more marvelous than any with which science deals. Thus does it furnish us with the proof that organized existence is possible beyond the boundaries of our material world; and thus, also, does it remove the last obstruction to a belief in a future state of existence.

In the same article we find Prof. Wallace stating the pith of the whole matter of human life and its outcome in the terse sentences:

"On the spiritual theory, man consists essentially of a spiritual nature or mind intimately associated with a spiritual body or soul, both of which are developed in and by means of a material organism. Thus, the whole *raison d'être* of the material universe—with all its marvelous changes and adaptations, the infinite complexity of matter and of the ethereal forces which pervade and vivify it, the vast wealth of nature in the vegetable and animal kingdoms—is to serve the grand purpose of developing human spirits in human bodies."

The teachings of Modern Spiritualism also, in his view, furnish us with the much-needed basis of a true ethical system, by which it is taught that our life on earth is only a preparation for a higher state of progressive spiritual existence, and that all this sin and suffering here is the means of developing in us those highest moral qualities which St. Paul summarized as "love," which it is universally admitted must be cultivated to the utmost if we are to make progress toward a higher social state. Modern philosophy teaches no such reasons for this painful self-sacrifice; but to be taught from youth up that the material universe exists for the purpose of making all things tend to one end, and that an existence in the spiritual world, and to be taught this on the direct knowledge of because gained from the spirit-world, is to become possessed of a power that "will work everywhere for righteousness."