

RUSSELL WALLACE ON SPIRITUAL  
HIERARCHIES

The theosophical teaching with regard to the Hierarchy of Builders, through whose agency natural processes are carried on, has not so far found much corroboration in the pronouncements of western science. In view of this fact it is exceedingly interesting to notice the stand taken by Sir Alfred Russell Wallace, the eminent collaborator of Darwin, in his latest book, *The World of Life*. In this work the great naturalist states that, in his opinion, "the main cause of the antagonism between religion and science is the assumption by both that there are no existences capable of taking part in the work of creation other than blind forces on the one hand, and the infinite, eternal, omnipotent God on the other." He then goes on to explain his own view of the way in which evolution is carried on—a view which very much resembles, in its general outline, the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom.

"If, as I contend," he says, "we are forced to the assumption of an infinite God . . . it seems only logical to assume that the vast chasm between ourselves and the Deity is to some extent occupied by an almost infinite series of grades of beings, each successive grade having higher and higher powers in regard to the organization, the development, the control of the Universe.

"If, as I here suggest, the whole purport of the material Universe (*our* Universe) is the development of spiritual beings who, in the infinite variety of their natures . . . shall to some extent reflect that infinite variety of the inorganic and organic worlds through which they have been developed; and if we further suppose . . . that such a variety of character could have been produced in no other way, then we may reasonably suppose that there may have been a vast system of co-operation in such grades of being, from a very high grade of power and intelligence down to

those unconscious, or almost unconscious 'cell-souls' posited by Haeckel, and which, I quite admit, seem to be essential coadjutors in the process of life-development.

"Now granting all this, and granting further that each grade of being would be, for such a purpose, supreme over all beings of lower grade who would carry out their orders or ideas with the most delighted and intelligent obedience; I can imagine the Supreme, the Infinite Being, foreseeing and determining the broad outlines of a universe which would, in due course and with sufficient guidance, produce the required result. He might, for instance, impress a sufficient number of His highest angels to create by their will power the primal universe of ether, with all those inherent properties and forces necessary for what was to follow. Using this as a vehicle the next subordinate association of angels would so act upon the ether as to develop from it, in suitable masses and at suitable distances, the various elements of matter which under the influence of such laws and forces as gravitation, heat and electricity, would thenceforth begin to form those vast systems of nebulae and suns which constitute our stellar universe.

"Then we may imagine these hosts of angels, to whom a thousand years are as one day, watching the development of this vast system of suns and planets until some one or more of them combined in itself all those conditions of size, of elementary constitution, of atmosphere, of mass of water and requisite distance from its source of heat, as to insure a stability of constitution and uniformity of temperature for a given minimum of millions of years or of ages, as would be required for the full development of a life-world from amoeba to man, with a surplus of a few hundred millions for his adequate development."

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