

## Alfred Russell Wallace and Spiritualism.

*To the Editor of T.P.'s WEEKLY.*

Sir,—You are unwittingly unjust when you say: "I have shown how a scientist like Dr. A. R. Wallace is fain to turn in his old age from the harshness of materialism to the consolations of spiritual hope." Fortunately for the cause, it was in the prime of his life, that after having carefully investigated the subject, he boldly faced the sneers of the ignorant, and came forward as one of the champions of the blessed truths of Spiritualism.

In the first edition of his "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," published in 1874, but written in 1866, he says:—

Up to the time when I first became acquainted with the facts of Spiritualism, I was a confirmed philosophical sceptic. . . . The facts beat me.

In the preface to the third edition:—

It was about the year 1843 that I first became interested in psychic phenomena. . . . I thus learnt my first great lesson in the inquiry into these obscure fields of knowledge, never to accept the disbelief of great men or their accusations of imposture or imbecility, as of any weight, when opposed to the repeated observation of facts by other men admittedly sane and honest. . . . What are termed spirit photographs—the appearance on a photographic plate of other figures besides those of the sitters, often those of deceased friends of the sitters—have now been known for more than twenty years. Many competent observers have tried experiments successfully, but the facts seemed too extraordinary to carry conviction to anyone but the experimenters themselves, and any allusion to the matter has usually been met with a smile of incredulity or a confident assertion of imposture. . . . The most incredible suppositions were put forth by those who had only ignorance and incredulity to qualify them as judges. . . . Those who believe as I do, that spiritual beings can, and do, subject to general laws and for certain purposes, communicate with us, and even produce material effects in the world around us, must see in the steady advance of inquiry and of interest in these questions the assurance that so far as their beliefs are logical deductions from the phenomena they have witnessed, those beliefs will at no distant date be accepted by all truth-seeking inquirers.

The daily increasing interest in psychic laws, shows the worthy professor to have been a true prophet, for the time has come when no intelligent man can afford to be ignorant of that new and beautiful world, which Spiritualism opens to our view.

H. BLACKWELL.

*To the Editor of T.P.'s WEEKLY.*

Sir,—The secession of A. R. Wallace from Darwinism (issue 10), is an instance of the law of change, and I think the following extract from Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe" is apropos: "In the first edition ('Wundt's Observatus') psychology is treated as a physical science. . . . thirty years afterwards he finds psychology to be a spiritual science. . . . This entire change of philosophical principles which we find in Wundt, as we found it in Kant, Virchow, Du Bois-Reymond, Carl Ernst Baer, and others is very interesting. In their youth these able and talented scientists embrace the whole field of biological research in a broad survey, and make strenuous efforts to find a unifying, natural basis for their know-

ledge; in their later years they have found that this is not completely attainable, and so they entirely abandon the idea. In extenuation of these psychological metamorphoses they can, naturally, plead that in their youth they overlooked the difficulties of the great task, and misconceived the true goal; with the maturer judgment of age and the accumulation of experience they were convinced of their errors, and discovered the true path to the source of truth. On the other hand, it is possible to think that great scientists approach their task with less prejudice and more energy in their earlier years, that their vision is clearer and their judgment purer; the experiences of later years sometimes have the effect, not of enriching, but of disturbing the mind, and with old age there comes a gradual decay of the brain, just as happens in all other organs. In any case, this change of views is in itself an instructive psychological fact; because, like many other forms of change of opinion, it shows that the highest psychic functions are subject to profound individual changes in the course of life, like all other vital processes."—Yours truly,

HAROLD LISTER.

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