
SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

Man's Place in the Universe: A Study of the Results of Scientific Research in Relation to the Unity and Plurality of Worlds. By Alfred R. Wallace, D.C.L., F.R.S. New York: McClure, Phillips, and Company. Toronto: William Briggs. 8vo; pp. viii, 326. Price, \$2.50 net.

In the early part of the book season of 1904 this most striking work appeared in the book market of England, the United States, and Canada at about the same time. It is no exaggeration to say that a more arresting publication in the line of its special investigation has not been given to the world for many years. Alfred Russell Wallace, by general consent, is one of the greatest scientists of the world of to-day. He is now in the eighty-second year of his age, and the only survivor of that band of English scientists, including Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and Herbert Spencer, who were responsible for the discovery and exposition of the theory of natural selection.

Dr. Wallace's scientific studies and treatises are many. Besides his scientific publications he has written works on social, political, and spiritualistic problems, and is now engaged in writing his autobiography, which will in all probability be published during the present year. Few men have accomplished more, and fewer still have left a deeper mark on their generation, than this man who possesses such a power of graphic and luminous exposition on the subjects to which for some fifty years his attention has been directed. In some departments of research Dr. Wallace has acted the part of pioneer, and in all that he writes there is manifested the spirit of a noble and manly independence which indicates the sincerity which has animated him in all his investigations in the various realms into which his thought and effort have gone from time to time. It must also be borne in mind that in one great essential Dr. Wallace differs from the scientists whose names are mentioned above in that he is a reverent theist, a firm believer in man's spiritual nature, and recognizes the fact that agnosticism, materialism, and naturalism involve too many demands upon human credence and utterly fail to furnish any rational, satisfactory interpretation of the universe of things in which we live and of which we form a part. He is solidly against such explanations, and is confident that the final victory lies with the intellectual and spiritual, and not with simple matter or force. He appears to be in substantial agreement with Sir Oliver Lodge, Lord Kelvin, and a long line of distinguished authorities in science and philosophy who hold "that it were a strange kind of All that included mountains and trees, the forces of nature and the visible universe only, and excluded the intelligence, the will, the emotions, the personality of which we ourselves are immediately conscious. Shall we possess these things and God not possess them?"

The special reason for the writing of the book we are now considering was the great interest excited by an article under the same title which appeared simultaneously in the *Fortnightly Review* and the *New York Independent* in 1903. Friends who read the article were of opinion that a volume in which the evidence could be given much more fully was desirable, and so the larger task contained in the present publication was undertaken by the aged and distinguished author. We could easily occupy the space allotted to this review with the comments which the book has called forth,

but the following will suffice to show what impression it has made in various influential quarters. A writer in the *British Weekly* said some time ago that "the century is young, but it will be old before a book appears that so strikingly appeals to the imagination and reason as that which has just been published by the veteran naturalist, Alfred Russell Wallace." "Epoch-making books are rare nowadays, but we have one in this," says *Current Literature*. "An important contribution to the philosophy of man's relation to the world he lives in. It aims to prove that the earth is the only inhabitable planet, not only in the solar system, but in the whole stellar universe, and that man's place in the visible creation is supreme; that all things were prepared for his coming, and that in ten thousand ways this finely balanced and adjusted universe contemplates man's life, work, and destiny. Mr. Wallace's contribution to the world of philosophic speculation has been varied and forceful, and he needs no introduction to thinking people as the co-discoverer with Darwin of the law of natural selection."

In sixteen chapters Dr. Wallace discusses at some length, and with all the recent discoveries that the new astronomy and science in general places at his command, such subjects as "The Early Ideas as to the Universe and its Relation to Man"; "Modern Ideas as to Man's Relation to the Universe"; "The New Astronomy"; "The Distribution of the Stars"; "The Unity and Evolution of the Star System"; "Are the Stars Infinite in Number?"; "Our Relation to the Milky Way"; "The Uniformity of Matter and its Laws Throughout the Stellar Universe"; "The Essential Characteristics of the Living Organism"; "The Physical Conditions Essential to Organic Life"; "The Earth in its Relation to the Development and Maintenance of Life"; "Importance of Our Central Position"; "Summary and Conclusion."

Considering, as the author does in great detail, the concurrent causes and the delicate balancing required in such a complicated universe as this to maintain such uniformity as prevails in the earth upon which we dwell, he is firmly convinced that the evidence is exceedingly strong against the probability or possibility of any other planet being inhabited. Dr. Wallace, apparently on the best of grounds, concludes that our earth is almost certainly the only peopled planet in our solar system, and that there is no inconceivability—no improbability even—in the conception that in order to produce

a world that should be adapted for the orderly development of organic life, culminating in man, such a vast and complex universe as that which we know exists around us, may have been absolutely required. In other words, we gather from this stimulating book that the latest word of science would seem to be that the whole known universe has come into existence for the sake of maintaining man and fitting him for the high mission and destiny for which he is intended.

Dr. Wallace's conclusions confirm in a very forceful way those thinkers who hold that the universe is a manifestation of mind, and that the orderly development of *living souls* supplies an adequate reason why such a universe should have been called into existence, and believe that we ourselves are its sole and sufficient result and nowhere else than near the central position in the universe which we occupy could that result have been attained. The bearing on the whole field of theological thought of the positions and conclusions of this most interesting and timely book is quite obvious. It comes as the latest deliverance from the rigid scientific standpoint, and is offered as a confirmation of the biblical view of man's place in the system of created things in which we live, move, and have our being.

The volume makes reading of a very attractive and illuminating order, and we predict that the religious world will not fail to become familiar with the principal conclusions reached in this instructive and inspiring book.

WILLIAM HARRISON.