

Transcription (from hardcopy), July 2014:

*The Two Worlds (Manchester)* 26(1357) (1913): 570 (anon.). [submitted by Christine Garwood]

[p. 570]

‘Alfred Russel Wallace, 1823-1913.’

The earthly record of a noble man’s life is closed, its eternal prospects have just opened. The scientist, the naturalist, the reformer, the biologist, the ethnologist, the vegetarian, and last, but not least, the Spiritualist, has laid down the burden of the flesh, and now rejoices in that larger liberty that the White Angel confers upon all who answer his summons. As time is reckoned, Alfred Russel Wallace would have achieved the ripe age of 91 years had he remained in the body until January 8<sup>th</sup> next year.

The secular press has done honour to his labours in relation to material matters; recorded the heroic struggles of his youth and early manhood; his natural history researches, how he worked out his thesis regarding Natural Selection, and the splendid honourableness he manifested in regard to Charles Darwin, for they were really co-discoverers, but Wallace gave way, and Darwin retains the credit. The press has also paid its meed of praise to the anti-vaccinationist, the land nationaliser, and the rest of his interests. They have told it well, and recognise that the last of the pioneers of evolution has now passed on; and, as one said, “the last link has been broken with an era which produced Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Romanes, and Lyell.”

The foregoing points may be left to the secular papers, but, ere they are left, once again let it be noted that the man who was so firm and stalwart a Spiritualist received but grudging praise (if praise it can be called) for advocating our Cause. The various London papers touch lightly upon the point, while the provincial papers follow suit. One journal, *The Daily Mirror*, to its credit, remarked that in Dr. Wallace was represented the unusual combination of scientist and Spiritualist, and this saying of his bears on his belief in the existence of consciousness apart from material organism, for, adds the same paper, “his researches and theories will go down to posterity as the most serious and important of all attempts to raise the veil that enshrouds the vast abstract thing which men call the ‘Universe.’”

His investigations into Spiritualism commenced some forty-six years ago. They were conducted in the private circles of personal friends, and were remarkably successful in results. He became a convinced Spiritualist, asserting the survival of death and the communication between this world and the next as demonstrated and continuously demonstrable. His splendid book, “Miracles and Modern Spiritualism,” is the finest presentation of the phenomenal facts and the philosophy based thereon that our Movement has ever received from any writer. In this book he declared that “Spiritualism is an experimental science, and affords the only sure foundation for a true philosophy, a pure religion.” It also contains the celebrated “Answer to Hume and Lecky,” and deserves the foremost place in the literature of our subject.

In 1905 he published “My Life,” wherein is a full account of his inquiries into Spiritualism, and most interesting it all is. Undoubtedly the conclusions profoundly affected his life and thought, for in one place he has said, “I am not able to believe that the mental and moral nature of man has been developed out of the lower animals wholly and solely by the same natural processes that developed his physical structure. That arises from the fact that I am a Spiritualist, believing that there is something in man differing in nature as well as in degree from the lower animals. At a certain epoch when the body was sufficiently

developed to receive it there was a spiritual influx.” While in another page he bears this splendid testimony to the influence of the teachings of Spiritualism upon his character in these remarkable words. He says: “I feel myself that my character has continuously improved, and that this is owing chiefly to the teaching of Spiritualism; that we are in every act and thought of our lives here building up a character which will largely determine our happiness or misery hereafter; and also that we obtain the greatest happiness ourselves by doing all we can to make those around us happy.”

The omission of the letters marking the distinctions conferred upon him is no slight, for nothing can add to the lustre of his name. One does not say Mr. Homer, Mr. Shakespeare, nor Dr. Esculapius, and while Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, O.M., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., may seem conventionally right and proper, Alfred Russel Wallace will be the name by which posterity will know and honour this great but simple-hearted and kindly dispositioned man. His last earthly days were spent at his home, The Orchard, Wimborne, Dorset, and the transition occurred at 9-25 on the morning of Friday, the 7<sup>th</sup> inst. In accordance with his wishes, the interment took place at the Broadstone Cemetery (within close proximity of his late residence) on Monday afternoon, the 10<sup>th</sup> inst. Needless to say, there was a large company present, while, by his special request, the service was of the simplest character.

So the great men who were not ashamed to avow their faith in our beautiful gospel in the days when it tried men’s souls to make such confession are one by one mounting the golden stairway. The pioneers are a rapidly-diminishing host. But they rendered us inestimable services. Our Movement will possibly never fully realise its indebtedness to the brave souls who dared public obloquy and social ostracism for our truths. But Alfred Russel Wallace has not finished his work for his fellows. He will remain amongst us, he will still inspire us, he has still other and greater messages for the world. Our Cause honours him, testifies its gratefulness to him, and will ever hold his name in loving honour for his bravery and honesty towards us. He still lives, so we cannot say good-bye, rather we join the unseen hosts in the welcome accorded him at the end of his long and well-spent earthly career.

[\[Return\]](#)

*The Alfred Russel Wallace Page*, Charles H. Smith, 2014.