

“ THE WORLD OF LIFE.”

Another new and large book, from the pen of the great scientist, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, is an event full of interest. It is known by our readers in what high terms of commendation the Doctor spoke of the work, *Root Principles*, by the late Rev.

Thomas Child. This of itself would be sufficient to excite a wish to ascertain whether in the new publication there are evidences of further sympathy with the principles of New-Church teaching. The subject of the work is one to which we must all be forcibly attracted. It deals, of course, with the great principle of evolution, which has revolutionised the world of human thought during recent years. The point of view from which to regard humanity has completely changed, and the results, in some respects, it must be confessed, has been disastrous. The mind has been led away from the world of causes, when seeking for a solution of problems of life, into the world of effects and appearances. The editor of the *New-Church Messenger* has recently emphasised this, and again, in the first issue for the new year, returns to the matter. In alluding to a valuable timely article by Professor J. J. Reeve, in the editorial, he tell us :

That the higher criticism and Godless sociology that is taught in the majority of American universities are nothing other than the arrangement of facts in support of evolution, is well known to our readers, for several times we have in as strong language as we could summon asserted the deplorable fact, but there is reason for joy that outside the specific body of the New Church there is sufficient light to see the awful desecration that evolution is working and has wrought on spiritual planes, and that at last even its zealous converts begin to recoil from impending soul destruction and to sound the warning to others who are still eating of the forbidden tree, in whose fruit is the death of atheism.

We are glad that in Professor Reeve they have a writer who can place the subject before his readers with "surpassing intelligence and force." And now also we have here in England Dr. Wallace, a man unequalled in knowledge and experience with regard to the subject of evolution, who at least, by his splendid work, will be able to restore to an equilibrium the minds of those who are interested in the study, so that fallacies may not swamp the reason and the faith of those who are disposed to believe in God and a spiritual world as the world of causes. Dr. Wallace sees that "the whole of the creation has been a preparation for the evolution of man, and that man's life on earth is but a preparation for a future life in which he

will be able to realise all the latent potentialities of his infinitely varied character." He reaffirms in this book the principle that to explain life and the phenomena of life, it is necessary to postulate God. Dr. Wallace asserts :

The absolute necessity for an organising and directive life-principle in order to account for the very possibility of these complex growths. I argue that they necessarily imply, first, a Creative Power ; next, a directive mind ; and lastly, an ultimate purpose. This purpose, which alone throws light on many of the mysteries of its mode of evolution, I hold to be the development of man.

The whole of the latter portion of the book is devoted to an examination of the evidence in favour of this supremely important conclusion. From these few hints it will be judged that the book is of extreme interest and value at the present juncture of affairs, and that a somewhat full acquaintance with its contents will be of the utmost value to New Churchmen in both their studies and work.

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