

Transcription, January 2015:

*T. P.'s Weekly* (London) 1(12) (30 Jan. 1903): 371.

[p. 371]

‘Alfred Russell Wallace and Spiritualism.’

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 knowledge; 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 then 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.

18, Portland Crescent, Leeds.

January 18, 1903.

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*The Alfred Russel Wallace Page*, Charles H. Smith, 2015.