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THE CHANGING VALUES OF SCIENCE

By Dr. R. C. WALLACE

Principal of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario

There is no need to elaborate the assertion that changes of emphasis are taking place in our time in the values of science. This has been a matter of perception and of observation. Men whose responsibility it is to make contributions to the advancement of their own fields of science have felt the change. Others who are not scientists have spoken about it, and have not infrequently misunderstood its meaning. It is a formidable task to endeavor to interpret the changes which are taking place, more particularly because we are in the middle of the current. We have not a position of objective independence. But it is of value to the speaker at least, whose day-by-day thinking is perforce confined to the field of educational values, to clarify in his own mind the shift in emphasis and in meaning which science, as a tool of thought, is experiencing before our eyes. It may not be out of place to take the occasion of the Hector Maiben lecture, which you have honored me with the invitation to deliver, for the presentation of such thought on this subject as I may be able to place in coherent sequence.

It is, after all, somewhat of a paradox that there should be any change of attitude in the scientific way of thinking. So much of the contribution of science in the last three centuries is a permanent readjustment of the thought of mankind and is not subject to change. The rationalism of the scholastics of the Middle Ages gave way under the revolt of the Renaissance, and the growing demand for facing facts. It was this demand which led to the development of modern science, and to its great victories in the exploration of nature and the harnessing of her forces for the use of man. When he finished his treatise on the "Principles of Psychol-