

the universe still remains, and is likely to give exercise to our posterity, as it has to our forefathers. Let us hope that they may be not less wise than the Hebrew "Preacher," who, when he had come to the end of his studies without reaching the solutions of his questions, founded "the conclusion of the whole matter" in "fearing God and keeping his commandments."

That theory of the universe which, at the present day, in the English-speaking countries, is most in vogue, is known as Evolutionism.

It is only as a theory of the universe that I propose to regard it this evening. As a doctrine of natural history, of more or less extended application, it has wide approval on the part of many scientific men, who either have no interest in it, anyway, as an explanation of the system of the universe, or very decidedly repudiate it. But it is only in this latter relation—as a theory of the universe—that the doctrine of evolution greatly concerns me as a theologian. The question of the origin of the vegetable and animal species by development and survival is one of fascinating interest, but has, as I conceive, none but incidental bearing on any important religious question. The theory of evolution as an explanation of the universe is another matter. It is, in terms, a denial of the creation of the world, in any sense, a negation of God, or, as its propounders would prefer to say, an ignoring of God. But I beg you all to observe that, distinctly hostile as this system is to the teaching of the Scriptures, and even to the very essence of all religion, it is no part of our present argument to controvert it directly, but only to state it, mainly following the most conspicuous of its English apostles, Mr. Spencer; and then to point out an inevitable corollary from it, which seems to me to have been curiously overlooked, both by its advocates and by its antagonists. Evolutionism, then, is that theory of the universe which finds all the facts of the universe—past, present and future—to be fully accounted for by the existence of matter, uncreatable, indestructible, capable of indefinite variation and form, but incapable of varying in amount; and the existence of motion,