

THE THEISTIC COROLLARY OF EVOLUTION.

BY LEONARD WOOLSEY BACON.

"I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith."—Ecclesiastes i. 13.

I needs no great attainment in the intelligent use of the Scriptures to recognize that whatever of divine wisdom is communicated to us through this book of the "Preacher," is conveyed by means of the experiences and speculations of a most studious man. Whether the book be regarded as the actual writing of Solomon, or (as is more likely) of some much later poet speaking in the character of Solomon, it delineates before us a vain endeavor to solve the problem of the universe by wisdom; and the blasé despair with which the writer gives up the inquiry at last, acknowledges that it is too much for him, and that further study does no good, and settles down at last in the conviction (which is the real lesson of the book) that he must leave all to the wisdom and justice of God. This "conclusion of the whole matter" is that which well rewards us for following him through his epicurean experiments and conjectures, and his pessimist despair. But, on his way to this conclusion he lets fall many a nugget of worldly wisdom, many a shrewd, sometimes cynical, observation on men or society; in his old-world aphorisms we see the reflections of many a modern experience. In undertaking to get a theory that shall include all phenomena, he differs not at all from our very latest philosophers, and there is solid and sober truth in him when he looks on the universe, with its unsolved problems, as God's invitation to our inquiries—the task divinely set for the schooling of our reason. It is the justification of philosophy, even in its most futile labors.

These score of centuries of toilsome speculations, in which each school has achieved so little, except to refute the rest, have, at least, not put scorn on the divine invitation to human inquiry. They have done their task at the great problem, even though the "sore travail" of accounting for the facts of