

The Rev. W. N. Molesworth, M.A., read a paper "On the influence of the conditions of existence in modifying the characters of species and varieties." It consisted chiefly of a review of Dr. Darwin's work on the "Origin of Species," the theory contained in which, he said, was regarded by some persons in the light of a wanton attack on hopes and feelings which every man, whatever his opinions, ought to respect; but that imputation he believed to be unjust. A theory on the origin of species had long been a scientific desideratum, and one had been supplied by Dr. Darwin, which at once opened up a vast field of inquiry in geology, paleontology, and physiology, and would very probably give a new character and direction to all those sciences. The rev. gentleman, however, said that he neither advocated nor opposed Dr. Darwin's work, but desired chiefly to point out a line of investigation to which he had not attached sufficient importance, viz., the changes which were continually taking place in the condition of animal existence, and the necessity of the variations which arose out of those changes, so that the being might be able to keep in harmony with the conditions of its existence. Having condemned the intrusion of Scriptural matters into scientific investigations, as theologically erroneous and scientifically mischievous, he said they all might pass on to the investigation of the Creator's works without the slightest dread that scientific truth would ever come into collision with moral and religious truth.