

**EVOLUTION AND  
NATURAL  
THEOLOGY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649579044

Evolution and Natural Theology by W. F. Kirby

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**W. F. KIRBY**

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AND  
NATURAL THEOLOGY.

BY  
W. F. KIRBY,

OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

LONDON:  
W. SWAN SONNENSCHN & CO.,  
PATERNOSTER ROW.  
1883.



KELLY AND CO., PRINTERS, GATE STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS ;  
AND KINGSTON-ON-THAMES.

## PREFACE.

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A GREAT part of the present work was written some time ago, and an abstract of the philosophical portion was published as a series of papers in a London periodical. Want of leisure has hitherto prevented the author from preparing the completed manuscript for press. It now appears to him that his conclusions are still sound, and not altogether unworthy to be laid before the public, as the main argument remains essentially unaffected by publications more recent than those upon which the work was originally based.

The quotations from Darwin's "Origin of Species," are taken from the third edition, when not otherwise specified.

W. F. KIRBY.

*London, 1883.*





## INTRODUCTION.

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"I cannot but feel surprised that a theory which thus teaches us humility for the past, faith in the present, and hope for the future, should have been regarded as opposed to the principles of Christianity, or the interests of true religion."—Lubbock's "*Prehistoric Times*," 2nd edition, p. 581.

THE Theory of the Evolution of Living Beings, more familiarly known as the Theory of the Origin of Species, has continued to attract an increasing amount of public attention, ever since 1859, when Darwin published his great work on the subject. Although the principle of Evolution was not new, yet the crude and unscientific speculations of the earlier Evolutionists had failed to produce any deep or permanent impression on either the scientific or the popular mind; and it was left for Darwin and Wallace to promulgate a theory which could be seen to be both scientifically probable, and easily intelligible, and capable of accounting for a great number of familiar facts which had previously been regarded as lying almost beyond the domain of science, and therefore as incapable of explanation. It is universally acknowledged

that no one can read one of Darwin's elaborate works on this subject, without admiring the great amount of learning and industry displayed in the marvellous array of facts collected from every conceivable source, which are brought forward to illustrate even the most trifling point under discussion.

The literature of the subject has now become very extensive, and Darwin's views are accepted, with more or less reservation, by nearly all scientific men, as a key to the mysteries of Nature. Among the supporters of Evolution may be found men of every shade of opinion, from Herbert Spencer, who asserts that Atheism, Pantheism and Theism are all equally untenable, to St. George Mivart, who attempts to show that the teachings of the Fathers of the Church are in accordance with Evolution.

But although the main principle of Evolution is now conceded by most naturalists, there is a great difference of opinion on matters of detail, and the subject is evidently still in its infancy. It must not be supposed that Darwin's views, comprehensive and valuable as they are, are by any means final; and every general work on Evolution attempts to develop the subject more extensively, or to throw light on certain questions which still remain obscure. It is often as