

THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION

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The Evolution of Religion by William A. Hinckle

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WILLIAM A. HINCKLE

**THE EVOLUTION
OF RELIGION**

THE EVOLUTION OF RELIGION

BY *W*
WILLIAM A. HINCKLE, M. D.

"As for truth it endureth and
is always strong, it liveth
and conquereth forever more"



BOSTON
SHERMAN, FRENCH & COMPANY
1910

35538 *Hand.*

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WILLIAM A. HENCKLE

TO
MY WIFE

Foreword.

In these days, when the so-called supernatural is everywhere becoming natural, when law and progress are more and more being recognized as universal, it is not surprising that there should be a growing tendency to discredit the supernatural in religion and to make religion a natural product of human evolution. The superhuman origin and authority of the Bible, the foundation upon which rests the claim that Christianity is a supernatural or revealed religion, is being discredited. The reality and desirability of such authority is being disputed. Even the superhuman origin and nature of Jesus, the cornerstone of orthodox Christianity, is being denied.

While much has been written along these lines, little of it has been so concise, readable, and reverent as to appeal to the average man. Recognizing this dearth of available popular literature on these important subjects, the author has endeavored to show in a brief and interesting manner the evidence, or rather the lack of evidence, as to the superhuman origin and character of our Bible, our religion, and of the great teacher, Jesus. As a corollary, some evidence as to their natural origin and character has been adduced.

While it was his purpose to discredit the supernatural origin of religions in general and of Christianity in particular, the author feels that in doing so he has done no injury to the cause of true religion, but has rendered it service.

W. A. H.

Preface to the Second Edition

The demand for a second edition of this little book within a year is most gratifying, for it would seem to indicate that, in a measure at least, it has fulfilled the purpose for which it was written, namely, to show briefly and in such a way as to appeal to the man of the street that religion is a natural and necessary product of human evolution and not a supernatural revelation; to show that true religion is ethics, not theology. If these pages help to attain this end the effort was well worth while, for to do this is to have a part in the evolution of the Religion of the Future, which will mould the people of the future even as religions of the past have moulded the people of the past.

While nothing has here been presented that is new to scholars, for the convenience of those who may wish to verify the truths herein set forth or who may wish for further information on these great subjects, the following literature is especially recommended.

For general reference see articles Bible, Canon, Gospels, Jesus, Nativity, Christology, Creeds, Trinity, Reformation, Inquisition, and so on, in standard works of reference, particularly the following: *The Encyclopedia Biblica*, 4 vol. (The Macmillan Co., New York); *A Dictionary of the Bible*, 5 vol. (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York); *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, 12 vol., *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, 12 vol. (Funk & Wagnalls, New York); *Ten*