

**THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN
PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY,
VOL. XIII: A CANDID
EXAMINATION OF THEISM**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649034673

The English and Foreign Philosophical Library, Vol. XIII: A Candid Examination of Theism by
George John Romanes (Physicus)

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

GEORGE JOHN ROMANES (PHYSICUS)

**THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN
PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY,
VOL. XIII: A CANDID
EXAMINATION OF THEISM**

THE
ENGLISH AND FOREIGN
PHILOSOPHICAL LIBRARY.



VOLUME XIII.

A
CANDID EXAMINATION
OF
THEISM.

BY
PHYSICUS. *George Henry Adams*

BOSTON:
HOUGHTON, OSGOOD, & COMPANY.

1878.

[All rights reserved.]

12
13
14
15

CANST THOU BY SEARCHING FIND OUT GOD?

P R E F A C E.



THE following essay was written several years ago; but I have hitherto refrained from publishing it, lest, after having done so, I should find that more mature thought had modified the conclusions which the essay sets forth. Judging, however, that it is now more than ever improbable that I shall myself be able to detect any errors in my reasoning, I feel that it is time to present the latter to the contemplation of other minds; and in doing so, I make this explanation only because I feel it desirable to state at the outset that the present treatise was written before the publication of Mr. Mill's treatise on the same subject. It is desirable to make this statement, first, because in several instances the trains of reasoning in the two essays are parallel, and next, because in other instances I have quoted passages from Mr. Mill's essay in connections which would be scarcely intelligible were it not understood that these passages are insertions made after the present essay had been completed. I have also added several supplementary essays which have been written since the main essay was finished.

It is desirable further to observe, that the only reason why I publish this edition anonymously is because I feel very strongly that, in matters of the kind with which the present essay deals, opinions and arguments should be

allowed to produce the exact degree of influence to which as opinions and arguments they are entitled: they should be permitted to stand upon their own intrinsic merits alone, and quite beyond the shadow of that unfair pre-judication which cannot but arise so soon as their author's authority, or absence of authority, becomes known. Notwithstanding this avowal, however, I fear that many who glance over the following pages will read in the "Physicus" of the first one a very different motive. There is at the present time a wonderfully wide-spread sentiment pervading all classes of society—a sentiment which it would not be easy to define, but the practical outcome of which is, that to discuss the question of which this essay treats is, in some way or other, morally wrong. Many, therefore, who share this sentiment will doubtless attribute my reticence to a puerile fear on my part to meet it. I can only say that such is not the case. Although I allude to this sentiment with all respect—believing as I do that it is an offshoot from the stock which contains all that is best and greatest in human nature—nevertheless it seems to me impossible to deny that the sentiment in question is as unreasonable as the frame of mind which harbours it must be un-reasoning. If there is no God, where can be the harm in our examining the spurious evidence of his existence? If there is a God, surely our first duty towards him must be to exert to our utmost, in our attempts to find him, the most noble faculty with which he has endowed us—as carefully to investigate the evidence which he has seen fit to furnish of his own existence as we investigate the evidence of inferior things in his dependent creation. To say that there is one rule or method for ascertaining truth in the latter case, which it is not legitimate to apply