

**THE BASIS OF RELIGION  
BEING AN EXAMINATION  
OF "NATURAL RELIGION"**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649426713

The Basis of Religion Being an Examination of "Natural Religion" by Alfred Williams Momerie

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](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**ALFRED WILLIAMS MOMERIE**

**THE BASIS OF RELIGION  
BEING AN EXAMINATION  
OF "NATURAL RELIGION"**



"WE LIVE BY ADMIRATION."

—Motto of 'Natural Religion.'

# THE BASIS OF RELIGION

BEING AN



EXAMINATION OF "NATURAL RELIGION"

BY

ALFRED WILLIAMS MOMERIE, 1848-19

M.A., D.SC., LL.D.

LATE FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;  
PROFESSOR OF LOGIC AND METAPHYSICS  
IN KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

THIRD EDITION

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
M DCCCXC

All Rights reserved

11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62  
63  
64  
65  
66  
67  
68  
69  
70  
71  
72  
73  
74  
75  
76  
77  
78  
79  
80  
81  
82  
83  
84  
85  
86  
87  
88  
89  
90  
91  
92  
93  
94  
95  
96  
97  
98  
99  
100

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

---

2-28-18. ENW.

THE substance of the following Essay, I delivered, when Select Preacher, before the University of Cambridge. As the sermon-form, however, was not necessary to the argument, and as many persons on principle avoid reading sermons, it appeared advisable to publish it in its present shape.

I should like to take this opportunity of saying that for the author of 'Ecce Homo' I shall always feel the deepest reverence and gratitude. I am not, of course, blind to the literary charm and other excellencies of 'Natural Religion.' But in spite of its fascination, it appears to me exceedingly faulty in argument, and to some extent even pernicious in tendency. Pernicious for this reason: let us once be persuaded that the negative theories of modern science are com-

378824



patible with religion, and we lose the strongest motive for that re-examination of the grounds on which the theories rest, which is the crying want of the present day. Whereas, on the contrary, if it be seen that these negative views divest the universe of all beauty, and make worship in this life and hope for the next utterly impossible, there will be less danger of their being accepted with undue haste and on insufficient evidence.

I should also like to take this opportunity of saying I cannot but feel very strongly that much time and scholarship and ability are being at present *wasted* by theologians. Work which is useful enough in one age becomes often perfectly futile in the next. Modern science conceives that it has disproved the existence of the soul and of the Deity. Now it is not likely that a Being, whom there is no reason to suppose existent (*viz.*, God), has done anything to reveal Himself to another being, whom there is every reason to suppose non-existent (*viz.*, the human soul). Of what use, then, to those who are imbued with the new ideas—and the number of such persons is increasing with tremendous rapidity—are treatises on the authorship of the

Fourth Gospel, or on the credibility of miracles, or on minute points of Biblical exegesis? Those who wish to do anything for the continuance of religion upon earth, should devote the best of their energies to the task of proving that our common experience, if we look deeply enough into it, contains supersensible, and therefore supernatural, elements — elements which may form a rational basis for a rational theology.

A. W. M.

KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON.

