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978-1-108-00094-9 - A View of the Evidences of Christianity, Volume 1

William Paley

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A View of the Evidences of Christianity

This book by the philosopher and theologian William Paley, published in 1794, was considered so important that it was required reading for students seeking entrance to Cambridge until the twentieth century. This classic work of apologetics is divided into three parts in which Paley discusses the historical evidence for Christianity and the miracles of Jesus Christ. He begins volume 1 with the proposition that the original witnesses to Christ's miracles should be believed, because they spent their entire lives in constant danger for what they witnessed. Paley expertly takes on philosopher David Hume's argument that no miracle can be proved regardless of the amount of evidence with the observation that if one believes in God, then miracles should be expected. Paley's intellectual defence of Christianity was one of the most popular of the day, and his work is considered a direct forerunner of the contemporary theory of intelligent design.

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A View of the Evidences of Christianity

VOLUME 1

WILLIAM PALEY



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A VIEW
OF THE
EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

IN THREE PARTS.



PART I.

OF THE DIRECT HISTORICAL EVIDENCE OF CHRISTIANITY,
AND WHEREIN IT IS DISTINGUISHED FROM THE
EVIDENCE ALLEGED FOR OTHER MIRACLES.

PART II.

OF THE AUXILIARY EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

PART III.

A BRIEF CONSIDERATION OF SOME POPULAR OBJECTIONS.



By WILLIAM PALEY, M. A.

ARCHDEACON OF CARLISLE.

THE SIXTEENTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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TO THE

HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

JAMES YORK, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF ELY.

MY LORD,

WHEN, five years ago, an important station in the University of Cambridge awaited your Lordship's disposal, you were pleased to offer it to me. The circumstances under which this offer was made, demand a public acknowledgement. I had never seen your Lordship; I possessed no connexion which

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could possibly recommend me to your favour; I was known to you, only by my endeavours, in common with many others, to discharge my duty as a tutor in the University; and by some very imperfect, but certainly well-intended, and, as you thought, useful publications since. In an age by no means wanting in examples of honourable patronage, although this deserve not to be mentioned in respect of the object of your Lordship's choice, it is inferior to none in the purity and disinterestedness of the motives which suggested it.

How the following work may be received, I pretend not to foretell. My first prayer concerning it is, that it may do good to any: my second hope, that it may assist, what it hath always been my earnest wish to promote, the religious part of an academical education. If in this latter view it might seem, in any

degree, to excuse your Lordship's judgement of its author, I shall be gratified by the reflection, that, to a kindness flowing from public principles, I have made the best public return in my power.

In the mean time, and in every event, I rejoice in the opportunity here afforded me, of testifying the sense I entertain of your Lordship's conduct, and of a notice which I regard as the most flattering distinction of my life.

I am,

MY LORD,

With sentiments of gratitude

and respect,

Your Lordship's faithful

And most obliged servant,

W. PALEY.