

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

Religion

For centuries, scripture and theology were the focus of prodigious amounts of scholarship and publishing, dominated in the English-speaking world by the work of Protestant Christians. Enlightenment philosophy and science, anthropology, ethnology and the colonial experience all brought new perspectives, lively debates and heated controversies to the study of religion and its role in the world, many of which continue to this day. This series explores the editing and interpretation of religious texts, the history of religious ideas and institutions, and not least the encounter between religion and science.

Natural Theology

William Paley (1743-1805), a British Christian apologist, argues for the existence of God as the intelligent creator of the world in this, his last book, published in 1802. He builds on early modern natural theology including the works of John Ray, William Derham, and Bernard Nieuwentyt, and chooses to ignore Hume, who had argued against design. Paley uses analogy and metaphors, including a particularly well-written version of the 'watchmaker analogy', to prove that the world is designed and sustained by God. Most of his examples are taken from medicine and natural history. This sixth edition also contains a detailed bibliography, appendices on Paley's courses, and background notes on key figures. It was an influential best-seller throughout the nineteenth century, read by theologians and scientists alike, and reprinted in cheap editions. It inaugurated a tradition of natural theological works, amongst them the Bridgewater Treatises (which also appear in this series), and is a landmark of Western thought.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection will bring back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and
Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Natural Theology

*Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes
of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of
Nature*

WILLIAM PALEY



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and
Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature
William Paley
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge New York Melbourne Madrid Cape Town Singapore São Paulo Delhi

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108003551

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2009

This edition first published 1803

This digitally printed version 2009

ISBN 978-1-108-00355-1

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

Cambridge University Press wishes to make clear that the reissue of out-of-copyright books not originally published by Cambridge does not imply any knowledge or advocacy of the reissue project on the part of the original publisher.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and
Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NATURAL THEOLOGY:

OR,

EVIDENCES

OF THE

EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES

OF

THE DEITY.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and
Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NATURAL THEOLOGY:

EVIDENCES

OF THE

EXISTENCE AND ATTRIBUTES

OF

THE DEITY,

COLLECTED FROM THE APPEARANCES OF NATURE.

BY WILLIAM PALEY, D.D.

ARCHDEACON OF CARLISLE.

SIXTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR R. FAULDER, NEW BOND-STREET,

BY WILKS AND TAYLOR, CHANCERY-LANE.

1803.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

TO

THE HONORABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND

SHUTE BARRINGTON, LL.D.

LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM.

MY LORD,

THE following Work was undertaken at your Lordship's recommendation; and, amongst other motives, for the purpose of making the most acceptable return I could make for a great and important benefit conferred upon me.

It may be unnecessary, yet not, perhaps, quite impertinent, to state to your Lordship and to the reader, the several inducements that have led me once more to the press. The favor of my first and ever honored patron had put me in possession of so liberal a provision in the church, as abundantly to satisfy my wants,

A

and

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi

DEDICATION.

and much to exceed my pretensions. Your Lordship's munificence, in conjunction with that of some other excellent Prelates, who regarded my services with the partiality with which your Lordship was pleased to consider them; hath since placed me in ecclesiastical situations, more than adequate to every object of reasonable ambition. In the mean time, a weak, and, of late, a painful state of health, deprived me of the power of discharging the duties of my station; in a manner at all suitable, either to my sense of those duties, or to my most anxious wishes concerning them. My inability for the public functions of my profession, amongst other consequences, left me much at leisure. That leisure was not to be lost. It was only in my study that I could repair my deficiencies in the church. It was only through the press that I could speak. These circumstances, in particular, entitled your Lordship to call upon me for the only species of exertion of which

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION.

vii

which I was capable, and disposed me without hesitation to obey the call in the best manner that I could. In the choice of a subject I had no place left for doubt: in saying which, I do not so much refer, either to the supreme importance of the subject, or to any scepticism concerning it with which the present times are charged, as I do, to its connection with the subjects treated of in my former publications. The following discussion alone was wanted to make up my works into a system: in which works, such as they are, the public have now before them, the evidences of natural religion, the evidences of revealed religion, and an account of the duties that result from both. It is of small importance, that they have been written in an order, the very reverse of that in which they ought to be read. I commend therefore the present volume to your Lordship's protection, not only as, in all probability, my last

A 2

labor,

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

viii

DEDICATION.

labor, but as the completion of a consistent and comprehensive design.

Hitherto, My Lord, I have been speaking of myself, and not of my Patron. Your Lordship wants not the testimony of a dedication; nor any testimony from me: I consult therefore the impulse of my own mind alone when I declare, that in no respect has my intercourse with your Lordship been more gratifying to me, than in the opportunities, which it has afforded me, of observing your earnest, active, and unwearied sollicitude, for the advancement of substantial Christianity; a sollicitude, nevertheless, accompanied with that candor of mind, which suffers no subordinate differences of opinion, when there is a coincidence in the main intention and object, to produce any alienation of esteem, or diminution of favor. It is fortunate for a country, and honorable to its government, when qualities and dispositions like

9

these

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and
Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DEDICATION.

ix

these are placed in high and influencing
stations. Such is the sincere judgment
which I have formed of your Lordship's
character, and of its public value: my
personal obligations I can never forget:
Under a due sense of both these considera-
tions, I beg leave to subscribe myself, with
great respect and gratitude,

MY LORD,

Your Lordship's faithful

And most devoted servant,

Bishop Wearmouth,
July 1802.

WILLIAM PALEY.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. STATE OF THE ARGUMENT . . .	1
II. STATE OF THE ARGUMENT CONTINUED	9
III. APPLICATION OF THE ARGUMENT . . .	19
IV. OF THE SUCCESSION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS	53
V. APPLICATION OF THE ARGUMENT CON- TINUED	60
VI. THE ARGUMENT CUMULATIVE . . .	81
VII. OF THE <i>MECHANICAL</i> AND <i>IMMECHA- NICAL</i> FUNCTIONS OF ANIMALS AND VEGETABLES	84
VIII. OF <i>MECHANICAL</i> ARRANGEMENT IN THE HUMAN FRAME—OF THE BONES	99
IX. OF THE MUSCLES	132
X. OF THE VESSELS OF ANIMAL BODIES	159
XI. OF THE ANIMAL STRUCTURE RE- GARDED AS A MASS	199
XII. COMPARATIVE ANATOMY	227
XIII. PECULIAR ORGANIZATIONS	259
XIV. PROSPECTIVE CONTRIVANCES	272
XV. RE-	

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-00355-1 - Natural Theology: Or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature

William Paley

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
XV. RELATIONS	282
XVI. COMPENSATIONS	298
XVII. THE RELATION OF ANIMATED BODIES TO INANIMATE NATURE	315
XVIII. INSTINCTS	324
XIX. OF INSECTS	346
XX. OF PLANTS	374
XXI. OF THE ELEMENTS	398
XXII. ASTRONOMY	409
XXIII. PERSONALITY OF THE DEITY	437
XXIV. OF THE NATURAL ATTRIBUTES OF THE DEITY	474
XXV. OF THE UNITY OF THE DEITY	482
XXVI. THE GOODNESS OF THE DEITY	488
XXVII. CONCLUSION	572

NATURAL