

cannot reach beyond a midway position as to its truth or falsity. Xy might be true! If so, then for men to go on talking as if Xy has been proven false is merely to show their unreasonableness!

22. Natural Theology by William Paley (1802)

William Paley (1743-1805) was the son of a headmaster of Giggleswick School in England. He excelled both in his early studies and at Cambridge. After graduation in 1763, he gained a considerable reputation for his brilliant lectures on moral philosophy. In 1776 he married and left Cambridge for an ecclesiastical living as Archdeacon of Carlisle. He wrote a book on ethical theory Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy (1785) which was adopted as a standard text at Cambridge. His master work, Natural Theology, remains the definitive statement of the classical teleological argument.

Paley's argument divides naturally into two parts, the first devoted to proving the existence of a Designer of the experienced world, the second to deriving empirically the theistic attributes of this Designer. On such grounds the Designer is found to be powerful, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, and self-existent. Who is such a Designer if not God?

The influence of Paley's Natural Theology in Britain and America in the half-century after its publication was immense. It was required reading in many colleges, universities and seminaries in the early decades of the 19th century. Gradually, however, with the growing philosophical influence of David Hume and Immanuel Kant, and with the triumph of Darwin's evolutionary theory, Paley's arguments lost favor in the latter half of the 19th century. Recently Paley has experienced something of a revival in discussions of the so-called anthropic principle.

NOTE: From William Paley to Benjamin B. Warfield (c1900), a large number of apologetic works appeared, largely responding to attacks on the supernatural from secularism and evolutionism.

Rather few works on apologetics proper appeared during the period 1907-1947. Then a number of works began to appear on the scene, and these continued to increase to the present. See our bibliography for some of these.