

**AN ARGUMENT FOR THE  
TRUTH OF  
CHRISTIANITY: IN A  
SERIES OF DISCOURSES**

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An Argument for the Truth of Christianity: In a Series of Discourses by I. D. Williamson

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ARGUMENT  
FOR THE  
TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY,

In a Series of Discourses.

BY  
*Isaac Dowd*  
REV. I. D. WILLIAMSON, D.D.

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## PREFACE.

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THE author of these discourses has long seen with regret, a spirit of scepticism at work in community, and strong exertions making to destroy faith in the gospel of Christ. Being "set for the defence of the gospel," he has deemed it a privilege and a duty, to labour both in public and in private, to deepen men's convictions of the inestimable value and substantial truth of Christianity. He has not been an inattentive observer of the efforts of infidels and their mode of warfare. In former times it was an object with them to array *science* against the gospel, and hence they assumed at least a show of learning. This attempt has been thwarted, and by many able works it has been made to appear that every discovery of genuine science is in harmony with Christianity. Within a few years past their mode of warfare has changed. The *schools* are not now the objects of their attacks. They have left the schools and gone to the "common people," and the leading object *now* appears to be, to array *reason* against religion. Under these circumstances the author has thought that it would be useful to make an effort to meet them here, and show

that sound *reason* approves and sanctions the gospel of our salvation. With these views, early in his labours in the ministry, he prepared and delivered the original draft of these discourses, without however the least intention of giving them to the public through the press. Since that time, he has been repeatedly urged by those in whose judgment he confides, to revise and prepare them for the press. This work he has finally accomplished, and with their numerous imperfections they are now submitted to the public. The author is aware that they may possess little interest for the learned student in theology. He claims not the ability to *instruct such*. He has written for the unlearned Christian, and if his work shall in any good degree "strengthen the weak," confirm the feeble, or reclaim the doubting, he will be satisfied that he has not laboured in vain. Though his work in its execution may be more humble than others, he flatters himself that it will not be the less useful on that account. His ardent prayer is that by this effort he may do some good in the name of Christ Jesus our Lord.

## DISCOURSE I.

### INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

ROMANS I. 20.

I DESIGN this discourse as the first of a proposed series in defence of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, as presented in the volume of divine revelation. At a period of excitement and dissension among the professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ — when the angry spirit of sectarian warfare, and the ill-advised efforts of bigotry and fanaticism, are doing much to advance the cause of scepticism, and little to promote the gospel, I deem it not only a sacred duty but a desirable privilege, to call back the attention of the people to a consideration of the first principles of our most holy faith, and to an examination of the grounds on which that faith is founded. Sincerely believing as I do that Christianity has come down to us burdened and corrupted with the devices and inventions of men, a considerable share of my ordinary labours, in the pulpit, is designed to strip away the veil which has for ages obscured the face of the Lord's anointed, and to present the "glorious gospel of the blessed God" in its original simplicity and purity. In this laudable work, I am sensible there is danger to be avoided. In our zeal to purge out the dross we should be careful that we do not waste the metal itself, no



lose sight of the inestimable value of the pure gold of the kingdom. The voice of prudence warns us to beware, lest in gathering up the tares we root up the wheat also. It is not only important that we distinguish between Christianity and its corruptions, but it is equally important that we prepare ourselves to "give a reason for the hope that is in us," and to defend the gospel itself against the assaults of its enemies.

I am fully aware that much, very much indeed, has been said and written in defence of Christianity.\* The treasures of literature and science have been brought forth and made to bear on this momentous subject, and so triumphant has been the result, that to this day, the arguments of the advocates of the gospel remain unrefuted and in many cases even unattempted. A long line of defenders of the faith have risen up and put forth their powers in the cause of the Redeemer. Many of them have been men of giant minds, possessing powers and resources surpassed by none. While I admire their talents, I must be permitted to observe, that it may be doubted if the mass of their labours have not been too learned, and in a measure removed from the grasp of common minds. Their works, indeed, have not been designed for ordinary readers, but for men of education and leisure. To such they are invaluable, and through them, they have been eminently useful to the world. Some volumes there are, it is true, which are strictly popular, and which have exerted a wide and happy influence on the interests of Christianity. But as infidelity exerts its most powerful influence over the popular mind, and as these works are not generally known, I have thought that some good might be done by another effort to check the

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\* See note A.

influence of a withering scepticism, where it is most injuriously felt. At all events, I enter upon the work before me with the pleasing hope of guarding this "little flock" from deception, and of laying before you an easy and I trust a satisfactory method of meeting and solving the most popular objections against the gospel of Christ.

In prosecuting my design in these discourses, I shall take a somewhat different course from that generally pursued, and endeavour to simplify the subject, as much as possible, that I may bring it to the understandings and capacities of all. The ground I take, and which I shall attempt to defend, is simply this: *The important doctrines of Christianity are true*; not merely because they are found in a book claiming a divine origin, but because they correspond with and are sanctioned by the voice of reason, experience and "nature, speaking through all her works."

I have long been of the opinion, that if Christianity cannot be defended upon its own merits, with the weapons of reason and common sense, it is not worth preserving. If there is nothing in it that harmonizes with the voice of nature, reason, and experience—nothing that carries along with it, to the unprejudiced judgment of man, the resistless conviction of its truth and value, certainly it can be of little use to the world; and for ever vain will it be to contend that it originated in the counsels of infinite wisdom and unerring truth.

Nature and experience never lie. The truths written out upon the pages of the great volume of creation, were written there by the finger of its Divine Author and will stand for ever. The truths that may be gathered from experience are equally sure and certain. Hence it follows that all truth must harmonize with

these principles, and no system can be true which does not accord with them.

It should be observed here, that the lessons learned from experience and nature, are general. They are as it were the first principles, the fundamental rules of the great science of truth and religion. Christianity professes to present the detail, and the practical operations of the science. Hence again, we may see that all its parts must harmonize with these first principles. I will take, as an illustration of these remarks, the science of mathematics. When the tyro enters upon this study, his first business is to make himself familiar with its fundamental principles. He learns to add, subtract, multiply, and divide; and in his whole course however far pursued, he never finds a problem that may not be solved by the application of these principles, or a demonstration that does not depend upon them for its correctness and truth. Destroy these and you destroy the whole science, root and branch; establish them, and you establish every conclusion resulting from their legitimate application.

I look upon the subject before us in a similar light. From nature, reason, and experience, man learns the rudiments of religion. Its great principles are written upon the face of nature and providence, and reason may read them there; and in all the ramifications of this greatest of all sciences, there is no one *truth*, that does not recognise these first principles, and harmonize with them, yea, even result from their legitimate application.

Now Christianity is but a further discovery, a more full exposition, and a clearer illustration of those eternal truths, whose rudiments are faintly delineated in the book of nature and providence. Hence follows the necessary conclusion, that the same God who wrote