

**A SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL
EVIDENCES FOR THE TRUTH & DIVINE
ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.
TO WHICH IS ADDED THE CELEBRATED
POEM ON DEATH. DESIGNED CHIEFLY
FOR THE USE OF YOUNG PERSONS**

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A Summary of the Principal Evidences for the Truth & Divine Origin of the Christian Revelation. To Which Is Added the Celebrated Poem on Death. Designed Chiefly for the Use of Young Persons by Beilby Porteus

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BISHOP OF LONDON.

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PREFACE.

FOR readers of a mature age and judgment, there are so many excellent treatises on the EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION already published, that it is perfectly needless to add to their number ; but it appeared to me, that there was still wanting something in a shorter, a cheaper, a more methodical and familiar form. This is a time, when it is peculiarly proper to communicate to young people the chief grounds of their faith, and to lay the foundations of a firm belief in the Christian Revelation ; leaving it to themselves to add to these primary evidences which reason furnishes in favor of Christianity, those further proofs of its truth, which I trust they will hereafter derive from still higher and better sources ; from an intimate acquaintance with the sacred writings ; from the illuminating and sanctifying influences of the HOLY SPIRIT upon their understandings, and their hearts ; and

from the experimental conviction, which I hope they will hereafter have, of the divine efficacy of the gospel in purifying their affections, in remedying the disorders of their corrupt nature, and in communicating to them those two invaluable blessings, peace of conscience, and holiness of life.

In a concern of such infinite importance, no species of evidence ought to be discouraged, depreciated, or withheld. And at this time more particularly, when new compendiums of infidelity, and new libels on Christianity are dispersed continually, with indefatigable industry, through every part of the kingdom, and every class of the community, it seems highly expedient to meet these hostile attempts with publications of an opposite tendency, and to fortify the minds of those who are just entering into the world, by plain and concise statements of the principal arguments in favor of Christianity, against the efforts that will be made to mislead their judgments, corrupt their principles, and shake their belief in the gospel of CHRIST.

With a view therefore of fulfilling this duty towards the youth, more immediately under my care, I have drawn up the following little tract. My chief object has been to collect together into one view, and to compress together in a narrow

compass, all the most forcible arguments for the truth of our religion, which are to be found in our best writers, with the addition of such observations of my own as occurred to me in the prosecution of the work. All these I have classed under a few short, clear, distinct propositions; an arrangement which I have always found most convenient for the instruction of youth, and best calculated to assist their memories, to make strong and durable impressions on their understandings, and to render the important truths of religion most easy to be comprehended and retained in their minds. After this, I would recommend it to my young readers, as they advance in life, to have recourse to one or more of the well known treatises of GROTIUS, ADDISON, CLARKE, LESLIE, LARDNER, BEATTIE and PALEY; on the Evidences of Christianity; to some of whom I am myself much indebted, and to whose masterly writings on that subject, this little work was meant only as a kind of elementary introduction.

I must however warn my young disciples, that when they have, by the course of reading here suggested, arrived at a full conviction of the divine origin of the Christian Religion, they must not imagine that their task is finished, and that nothing more is required at their hands. The

most important part of their business still remains to be accomplished. After being satisfied that the Christian Religion comes from GOD, their next step is to inquire carefully what that religion is, what the doctrines are which it requires to be believed, and what the duties which it requires to be performed. For this purpose it may be useful for them to begin with CASTRELL'S Christian Institutes, and Archbishop SECKER'S Lectures on the Church Catechism. In the first they will find the doctrines and duties of the Christian Religion ranged under their proper heads in the very words of scripture, and in the other they will see most of them clearly and concisely explained by a most able, pious and judicious divine. After this they may proceed to study the scriptures themselves, and more particularly the New Testament, with the assistance of Dr. DONDRIDGE'S Family Expositor, to which they should add some of the sermons of our best divines, Bishop TAYLOR, BARROW, SHERLOCKE and SECKER.

When they have thus learnt what Christianity is, and what it demands from them, they will feel it to be their indispensable duty (as it is unquestionably their truest interest) to believe implicitly all the doctrines, and obey with cheerfulness all

the commands, of their Maker and Redeemer ; to sacrifice to them, and to their own future eternal welfare, all their corrupt passions and irregular desires ; to preserve themselves unspotted from the world, and to implore the assistance of divine grace, cooperating with their own most earnest endeavors, to render their belief in the gospel effectual to the sanctification of their hearts, the regulation of their lives, and the salvation of their souls.

I have only to add, that although this little treatise is designed principally for the instruction of Youth, yet considered as a kind of recapitulation of the Evidences of Christianity, it may be found of some use to persons of a more mature age, by refreshing their memories, and bringing back to their recollection those proofs of their religion, which they have formerly read in larger and more elaborate works, and which they will here see brought together into one point of view.

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