

**AN INTRODUCTION
TO THE EVIDENCES
OF CHRISTIANITY**

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An Introduction to the Evidences of Christianity by James O. Halliwell

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BY
JAMES O. HALLIWELL, Esq., F.R.S.

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they were more generally known. They are mostly weak ; none are insurmountable ; and a foreknowledge of their nature may be occasionally useful either in defence of one's own belief, or in removing the prejudices of others.

It is only necessary to add, the impression of this little work is at present strictly limited to private circulation, with the view of eliciting opinions, from those capable of forming a correct judgment, how far an extended publication may be likely to answer the purpose for which it was written.

BROMPTON ;

Feb. 28/A, 1859.

EVIDENCES
OF
CHRISTIANITY.

1. We, the inhabitants of one amidst the many worlds that constitute the universe, are surrounded by mysteries,—by visible and invisible agencies, the discovery of the real natures of which is sought in vain by those gifted with the highest powers of human intelligence. There is not an animal, a bird, a fish, an insect, or, of inanimate substances, a particle of rock, a leaf, or even a drop of water, or a grain of sand, which does not involve, in the history of its creation or composition, enquiries that baffle the researches of the wisest philosophers. In vain do these reduce all theories of life into ultimate facts, and all matter into what they term elementary substances, calling them elements the rather that they are unable to effect an analysis, than from an absolute knowledge they may not be susceptible of continued divisi-

bility; for when we arrive at the question of what these elements really are, how they came here, when they were created,—set on one side belief in revelation, and the ablest chemists, or the most subtle geological reasoners, are no better able to give a satisfactory reply than those who are unskilled in all scientific acquirements and learning.

2. Not only are such enquiries as those last mentioned beyond our means of solution, but there seems every reason to believe the true and minute explanations,—if communicated by a higher intelligence, and there appears to be no other possibility of our obtaining them—would be unintelligible to our minds. The power of our intellects is exceedingly limited. Thus, for example, we are incapable of understanding what must be considered in one sense the simplest problem bearing relation to any enquiry into the history of the universe, or into what is generally termed natural theology. We cannot in the least degree comprehend the nature of either time or space. We speak of certain arbitrary intervals in our existence by which its progress is measured, but by what possibility there should ever have been a commencement of time, a period before which time did not exist,—or how there should ever be an end of time, a period after which time shall not exist,

—is to our minds utterly incomprehensible. We are equally unable to conceive the idea of the infinity of time,—a period so constructed that the lapse of a million years, or a million of million years, would be without any effect on either its relative duration or progress. So also with regard to space, we cannot understand in what manner there can be a point in space at which there is nothing beyond, and we are equally at a loss, if we believe space to be infinite, which means, to use a familiar example, that if a ray of light travelled one hundred and ninety-two thousand miles a second for a million years, at the end of that period, it would neither be further from one end of space, nor nearer to the other. The attributes of infinity are, indeed, entirely incomprehensible to the finite human intellect, and, whether we accept revelation, or rely wholly upon science, they must ever be shrouded in mystery to all of us, at least in this life.

3. But although we cannot comprehend the nature of either time or space, whether one or the other be considered as finite or infinite in extent, it seems nearly capable of proof that both must be infinite; for we have the capacity to understand an interval of time, and a distance in space, and it is at once seen it is impossible the former can

exist without time also both preceding and following that interval. So likewise with respect to any distance in space, it is impossible a limited distance should exist without there being space before its commencement, and space after its termination. Assuming the truth of this position, the questions arise, whether any material substance can be coexistent with time and space,—in other words, can have existed from all eternity, whether there can be an element other than spirituality, matter being, in the case of the negation of that proposition being maintained, really capable of infinite subdivision? As far as science can teach us, it is ascertained that not a particle of matter in the world has been absolutely destroyed since the creation; but it is obvious, amidst the constant change to which all matter is subjected, there may possibly be a tendency to destruction incredibly minute in its operation, beyond the power of the analysis of the chemist, for if the world lost only a millionth part of a grain of sand in a million of million years, it would ultimately be destroyed, and that before the morning of infinity had commenced. If there be really no tendency at all to deterioration of matter in an illimitable course of ages, the conclusion is that the ability of destroying is limited to the same power that created. The

idea of matter existing from eternity seems at variance with our instinctive conjectures on the subject; but whatever doubt may rest upon this point, there can be none that matter is not in itself possessed of a creative tendency. This train of reasoning leads to the conclusion there must have existed through infinite time a sentient incorporeal power, endued with the ability of creating and destroying, for nothing could ever come of nothing, and without a sentient power, creation was obviously impossible. This is what the Scriptures tell us concerning God.—“No man hath seen God at any time.”—“God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”—“Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”—Even a single power, such as electricity, or any of the impalpable agencies discovered by the aid of modern science, could not have been self-creating, or have existed by themselves from eternity, as there is no reason to imagine they are endowed with creative power, but rather are ethereal agents depending for their being on certain combinations of inanimate matter, which we know could never have been an emanation from nothing. Even were the existence of