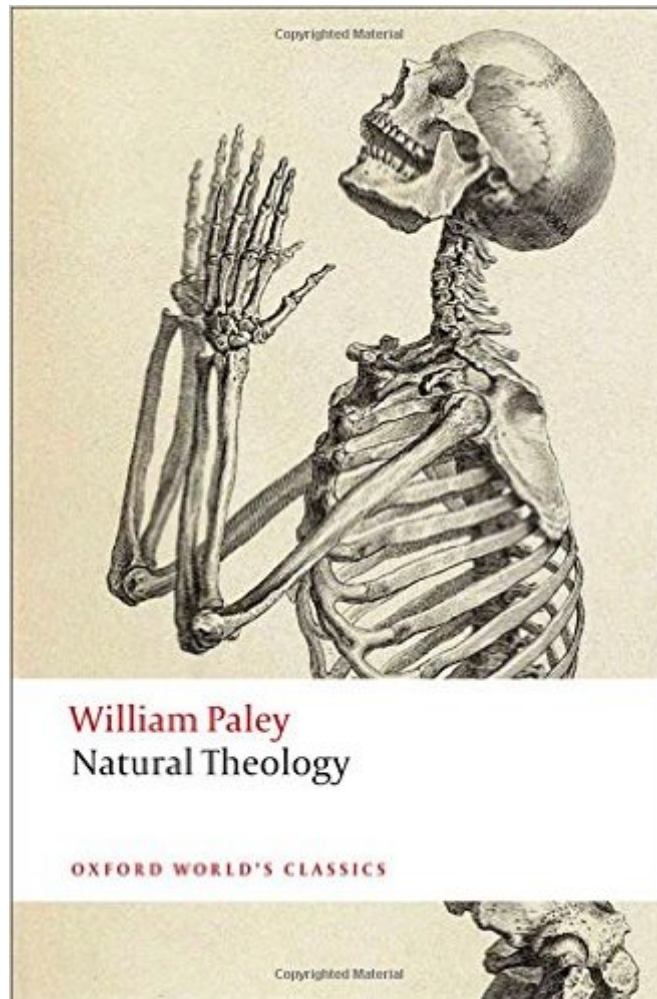


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Natural Theology (Oxford World's Classics)



Synopsis

In *Natural Theology*, William Paley set out to prove the existence of God from the evidence of the beauty and order of the natural world. Famously beginning by comparing the world to a watch, whose design is self-evident, he goes on to provide examples from biology, anatomy, and astronomy in order to demonstrate the intricacy and ingenuity of design that could only come from a wise and benevolent deity. This new edition, which coincides with the bicentennial of Paley's death, reprints the original text of 1802, which was very influential in its day, and still controversial in ours as we see a resurgence in the debate between "intelligent design" and "creationism." The introduction explains how the book built on the early modern natural theology tradition and why it was so influential. The book also contains two appendixes on Paley's courses, an extended bibliography, and full notes offering further background on the key figures of the day.

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Customer Reviews

William Paley (1743-1805) was an English Christian apologist, philosopher, and utilitarian. He also

wrote The evidences of Christianity. This was his last book, first published in 1802. He begins with his famous "watchmaker" argument, in which he supposes that if he "pitched my foot against a stone, and were asked how the stone came to be there, I might possibly answer, that for any thing I knew... it had lain there for ever... But suppose I had found a watch upon the ground... I should hardly think of the answer which I had before given... Yet why should not this answer serve for the watch as well as for the stone...? For this reason... that when we come to inspect the watch, we perceive... that its several parts are framed and put together for a purpose... This mechanism being observed... the inference we think is inevitable, that the watch must have had a maker---that there must have existed... an artificer or artificers who formed it for the purpose which we find it actually to answer, who comprehended its construction and designed its use." (Pg. 9-10) He then points out that "Nor is any thing gained by running the difficulty farther back... by supposing the watch before us to have been produced from another watch... and so on indefinitely... Contrivance is still unaccounted for. We still want a contriver." (Pg. 16) He poses the objection, "Why resort to contrivance when power is omnipotent?" He says, "one answer is this: It is only by the display of contrivance that the existence, the agency, the wisdom of the Deity COULD be testified to his rational creatures." (Pg.

A review of the wrongly entitled text Natural Theology NOT entirely authored by William Paley, but edited by a buffoon known as Frederick FerrÃ©. I read the text in its entirety [abridged though it was]. READ CAREFULLY: DO NOT BUY THIS VERSION OF THIS BOOK! THIS IS NOT WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR!!!! My intention was to purchase the famous and original 200 plus-year-old text penned by the scholar William Paley whose work literally set the stage for the creation vs. evolution debate. (Now, if we could just get one of the evolutionistâ™s to show up for the debate!) The book I received is a hacked up version pieced together by a ding-dong answering to the name Frederick FerrÃ© from Dickinson College. As no title was assigned to Frederick, Foolish Freddie herein, perhaps he was the janitor or grounds-keeper at the college. [No offense is intended toward janitors or groundskeepers of any college or institution of higher learning, but it is difficult â€œ in the extreme â€œ to imagine Freddie as the holder of any degree higher than, perhaps, grade-school.] The reader of this text will be treated to a mere ten chapters of Paleyâ™s excellent work, all of which I thoroughly enjoyed. Foolish Freddie, however, has seen fit to remove seventeen odd chapters from Paleyâ™s famous text; this is done, of course, under the guise of â€œabridgingâ€• (â€œelyingâ€• is more accurate). Freddie then goes on to critique a work, quote a work, and misquote a work to which the reader has no access. Freddie repeatedly embarrasses

himself in his twenty-two page "Editor's Introduction". NOTE: While I usually "in an effort to be fair" limit my negative comments to the living, Foolish Freddie does not.

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