

**ERSKINE'S REMARKS ON THE
INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE
TRUTH OF REVEALED RELIGION.
AND LESLIE'S SHORT METHOD
WITH THE DEISTS**

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Erskine's Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion. And Leslie's Short Method with the Deists by Thomas Erskine & Charles Leslie

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THOMAS ERSKINE & CHARLES LESLIE

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Thomas ERSKINE'S

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RECOMMENDATIONS.

Dear Sir,

I have read *Erskine's* treatise on "The Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion." It is an admirable performance, filled with judicious observations, and interspersed with happy and interesting illustrations of the various points discussed. It is stamped with the image of a strong, accurate and powerful mind. Having himself by the grace of God, experienced the moral and regenerating influence of Divine truth, the author wishes that others may be brought under the quickening and sanctifying operation of the same transforming power. The work is well calculated to call up the attention of nominal christians, as well as of professed infidels, to the high and commanding claims of the Bible, as a revelation given by Jehovah to form the character of sinful man for eternity.

J. J. JANEWAY.

July 17, 1821.

Mr. Finley,

I have read, with great pleasure, *Erskine's* treatise on "The Internal Evidence for the Truth of Revealed Religion."

It is, in my judgment, a work of rare merit. The style is lucid, chaste and nervous. The illustrations are happily chosen, and skilfully applied. "The internal evidence for the truth of revealed religion," is not a new subject; but this writer's method of treating it, is new and natural; and to my mind, convincing and satisfactory. I wish you success in the publication.

W. NEIL,

Pastor, Sixth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia
July 17, 1821.

Dear Sir,

I have read with much pleasure, and rejoice that you propose to republish, *Mr. Erskine's* valuable treatise

on the internal evidence of Christianity. It deserves, and I hope will receive, a careful perusal, from those persons especially, who whilst they readily assent to the authenticity of the Bible, are too little acquainted with "the internal structure" of that religion which it teaches: It is a specimen of sound and ingenious argumentation, conducted in a perspicuous, and animating style, whose attractions will be very soon felt and confessed, by the attentive reader. It abounds with striking, yet chaste illustrations; presents elevated views of evangelical truth; and cherishes a pure and enlightened piety, offering no offence to true christians of any denomination. It is the author's design to enforce the sentiment, that as the Bible embodies in itself the principal evidence of its truth, he who desires to form a correct judgment of the character of this book, instead of reading many elaborate works on the external proofs of its inspiration, should first of all, give a candid and careful attention to the Bible itself: leading us to this most consolatory inference, that men of learning are not the only persons capable of obtaining an *intelligent assurance* of the truth of the gospel, but that this assurance is alike attainable, by the poorer and less instructed portion of mankind.

Believing that by reprinting this interesting book, you will be instrumental of promoting the best of causes, I have, agreeably to your request, transmitted these remarks to your disposal.

Respectfully, &c.

T. H. SKINNER.

Mr. Anthony Finley.
July 17, 1821.

The Rev. Dr. A. Alexander says, in relation to this work, "This is the production of a superior mind, on which the truths of Revelation seem to have operated effectually."

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

There is a principle in our nature which makes us dissatisfied with unexplained and unconnected facts; which leads us to theorize all the particulars of our knowledge, or to form in our own minds some system of causes sufficient to explain or produce the effects which we see; and which teaches us to believe or disbelieve in the truth of any system which may be presented to us, just as it appears adequate or inadequate to afford that explanation of which we are in pursuit. We have an intuitive perception that the appearances of Nature are connected by the relation of cause and effect; and we have also an instinctive desire to classify and arrange the seemingly confused mass of facts with which we are surrounded, according to this distinguishing relationship. From these principles have proceeded all the theories which were ever formed by man. But these principles alone can never make a true theory: They teach us to theorize; but experience is necessary in order to theorize justly. We must be acquainted with the ordinary

operations of causes, before we can combine them into a theory which will satisfy the mind. But when we are convinced of the real existence of a cause in nature, and when we find that a class of physical facts is explained by the supposition of this cause, and tallies exactly with its ordinary operation, we resist both reason and instinct when we resist the conviction that this class of facts does result from this cause. On this process of reasoning is grounded our conviction that the various phenomena of the heavenly bodies are results from the principle or law of gravitation. That great master of theories, Adam Smith, has given a most appropriate and beautiful illustration of this principle, in his "History of Astronomy." He has there shown, how the speculative system was always accommodated to the phenomena which had been observed; and how, on each new discovery in point of fact, a corresponding change necessarily took place in the form of the system.

There is another process of reasoning, differing somewhat from that which has been described, yet closely allied to it; by which, instead of ascending from effects to a cause, we descend from a cause to effects. When we are once convinced of the existence of a cause, and

are acquainted with its ordinary mode of operation, we are prepared to give a certain degree of credit to a history of other effects attributed to it, provided we can trace the connexion between them. As an illustration of this, I shall suppose, that the steam-engine, and the application of it to the movement of vessels, was known in China in the days of Archimedes; and that a foolish lying traveller had found his way from Sicily to China, and had there seen an exhibition of a steam boat, and had been admitted to examine the mechanical apparatus of it,—and, upon his return home, had, amongst many palpable fables, related the true particulars of this exhibition,—what feeling would this relation have probably excited in his audience? The fact itself was a strange one, and different in appearance from any thing with which they were acquainted: It was also associated with other stories that seemed to have falsehood stamped on the very face of them. What means, then, had the hearers of distinguishing the true from the false? Some of the rabble might probably give a stupid and wondering kind of credit to the whole; whilst the judicious but unscientific hearers would reject the whole. Now, supposing that the relation had come to the ears of Archimedes, and