

PALEY, WILLIAM, 1743-1805.
William Paley letter, 1777 April 19

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1531 Dickey Drive, Suite 560
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Paley, William, 1743-1805.
Title: William Paley letter, 1777 April 19
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 243
Extent: 0.01 cubic ft. (1 folder)
Abstract: Contains a one-page letter composed by William Paley on April 19, 1777 to an unknown friend in Appleby.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

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Citation

[after identification of item(s)], William Paley Letter, Archives and Manuscript Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by Anne Graham, 2002.

Collection Description

Biographical Note

William Paley was born in July 1743 in Peterborough, Northamptonshire, to William Paley (d. 1799) and Elizabeth Clapham (d. 1796). The elder Paley was the vicar of Helpston, as well as headmaster of Giggleswick grammar school. The younger Paley was the eldest of four children and the only son. He attended Christ's College at Cambridge University, graduating in 1763. Paley was ordained as an Anglican priest on December 21, 1767 and was appointed to the

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vicarages of Dalston and Appleby in Leicestershire in 1776. He resigned the vicarage of Appleby in 1782 to become the Archdeacon at Carlisle. In 1793 he left Dalston to accept the vicarage of Stanwix near Carlisle. He received the prebend of St. Pancras in the Cathedral at St. Paul's in 1794 and the subdeanery of Lincoln the following year. Paley retained the archdeaconry at Carlisle until his death on May 25, 1805.

William Paley is best known as a Utilitarian philosopher. He authored several influential works on Christianity, ethics, and science, which include "The Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy" (1785); "A View of the Evidence of Christianity" (1794), which was required reading for entrance to Cambridge University until the twentieth century; and "Natural Theology" (1802). He was responsible for the best known teleological argument in English Theology for the existence of God.

William Paley married Jane Hewitt (d. 1791) of Carlisle on June 6, 1776. She died in May 1791, leaving four sons and four daughters. He remarried Miss Dobinson of Carlisle on December 14, 1795. Paley was buried in Carlisle Cathedral next to his first wife, Jane.

Scope and Content Note

This one-page letter was composed by William Paley on April 19, 1777 to an unknown friend in Appleby. Paley wrote from Peterborough and made reference to an earlier letter as well as an offer regarding his house in Appleby.

