

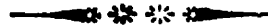
A
PLEA FOR RELIGION

AND THE
SACRED WRITINGS:

ADDRESSED TO THE
DISCIPLES OF THOMAS PAINE,

AND TO
WAVERING CHRISTIANS

OF
EVERY DENOMINATION.



BY THE REV. DAVID SIMPSON, M. A.

He that believeth shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

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While some flattering panegyric is pronounced at my interment, I may perhaps be hearing my just condemnation at a superior tribunal; where an unerring verdict may sentence me to everlasting infamy. But I cast myself on his absolute mercy, through the infinite merits of the Redeemer of lost mankind. Adieu, till we meet in the world of spirits."

Nothing is so well calculated to convince us of the vast importance of living wholly under the power of the gospel, as seeing great and valuable men dying in such a low and unworthy manner, as many of the first characters of our world have been known to do. The cases of Grotius and Salmasius, of Johnson and Haller, are mortifying instances. Great talents, great learning, great celebrity, are all utterly insufficient to constitute a man happy, and to give him peace and confidence in a dying hour. We know the promises of God are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus: but if the promises be sure, and strongly animating, to the proper objects of them, the threatenings of God are not less infallible, and at the same time are extremely alarming to the proper objects of them. Nothing within the compass of nature can enable a man, with the eyes of a mind properly enlightened, to face death without fear and dismay, but a strong conscious sense, founded on scriptural evidence, that our sins are pardoned, that God is reconciled, and that the Judge of the world is become our friend.



**EXAMPLES OF PERSONS LIVING AND DYING, EITHER
WITH CONFIDENCE, OR IN THE FULL
ASSURANCE OF FAITH.**

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Addison was a very able and elegant advocate for the Bible, in life and death. Just before his departure.

having sent for a young nobleman nearly related to him, who requested to know his dying commands—his answer was—“See in what peace a christian can die!”

He spake with difficulty, and soon expired.—
Through grace divine, how great is man! Through
divine mercy, how stingless is death!

“He taught us how to live; and, oh! too high
A price for knowledge, taught us how to die.”

Leland, after spending a long and exemplary life in the service of the gospel, closed it with the following words:—“I give my dying testimony to the truth of christianity. The promises of the gospel are my support and consolation. They, alone, yield me satisfaction in a dying hour. I am not afraid to die. The gospel of Christ has raised me above the fear of death; for I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

Pascal was one of the most humble and devout believers in Jesus that ever lived. Bayle saith of his life, that “an hundred volumes of sermons are not worth so much as this single life, and are far less capable of disarming men of impiety. The extraordinary humility and devotion of Pascal gives a more sensible mortification to the libertines of the age, than if one was to let loose upon them a dozen missionaries. They can now no longer attack us with their favourite and darling objection, that there are none but little and narrow spirits, who profess themselves the votaries of piety and religion: for we can now tell them, and boldly tell them, that both the maxims and practice thereof, have been pushed to the strongest degree, and carried to the greatest height, by one of the profoundest geometricians, by one of the most subtle metaphysicians, and by one of the most solid and penetrating genii, that ever yet existed on this earth.”(9)

(9) “This great man, during some of the latter years of his life, spent his whole time in prayer, and reading the Holy Scriptures; and in this he took incredible delight.”

Olympia Fulvia Morata, was one of the earliest and brightest ornaments of the reformation. She could declaim in Latin, converse in Greek, and was a critic in the most difficult classicks. But after it pleased God by his grace to open the eyes of her mind to discover the truth, she became enamoured of the sacred scriptures, above all other books in the world, and studied them by day and by night. And when dissolution approached, she declared she felt nothing but “an inexpressible tranquillity and peace with God through Christ.”—Her mouth was full of the praises of God, and she emphatically expressed herself by saying—“I am nothing but joy.”

Lord Russel delivered himself, just before his execution, in the strongest terms of faith and confidence. He said:—“Neither my imprisonment nor fear of death have been able to discompose me in any degree. On the contrary I have found the assurances of the love and mercy of God in and through my blessed Redeemer; in whom I only trust. And I do not question but I am going to partake of that fullness of joy, which is in his presence; the hopes of which do so wonderfully delight me, that I think this is the happiest time of my life, though others may look upon it as the saddest.”

Charles the Fifth having alarmed and agitated all Europe nearly fifty years, retired from the world, and enjoyed more complete contentment in this situation than all his grandeur had ever yielded him. “I have tasted,” said he, “more satisfaction in my solitude, in one day, than in all the triumphs of my former reign; and I find that the sincere study, profession, and practice of the christian religion, hath in it such joys and sweetness as courts are strangers to.”(10)

(10) Louis, one of the late dukes of Orleans, expressed the delight he found in piety and devotion in the following terms; “I know by experience, that sublunary grandeur and sublunary pleasure are deceitful and vain, and are always infinitely below the concep-

