

poor men, learned and unlearned,—all are on a level in this matter. There is not a jot of real consolation for any dying man, unless he gets it from the Bible. Chapters, passages, texts, promises, and doctrines of Scripture,—heard, received, believed, and rested on,—these are the only comforters I dare promise to any one when he leaves the world. Taking the sacrament will do a man no good so long as the Word is not received and believed. It was a true confession of the learned Selden, “There is no book upon which we can rest in a dying moment but the Bible.”

I might easily confirm all I have just said by examples and illustrations. I might show you the death-beds of men who have affected to despise the Bible. I might tell you how Voltaire and Paine, the famous infidels, died in misery, bitterness, rage, fear, and despair. I might show you the happy death-beds of those who have loved the Bible and believed it, and the blessed effect the sight of their death-beds had on others. Cecil,—a minister whose praise ought to be in all churches, says, “I shall never forget standing by the bed-side of my dying mother. ‘Are you afraid to die?’ I asked. ‘No!’ she replied ‘But why does the uncertainty of another state give you no concern?’ ‘Because God has said, “Fear not; when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.” I might easily multiply illustrations of this kind. But I think it better to conclude by giving the result of my own observation.

I have seen not a few dying persons in my time. I have seen great varieties of manner and deportment among them. I have seen some die sullen, silent, and comfortless. I have seen others die ignorant, unconcerned, and apparently without much fear. I have seen some die so wearied with long illness, that they were quite willing to depart, and yet they did not seem to me at all in a fit state to go before God. I have seen others die with professions of hope and trust in God, without leaving satisfactory evidences that they were on the rock. I have seen others die, who I believe were in Christ, and safe, and yet they never seemed to enjoy much sensible comfort. I have seen some few dying in

the full assurance of hope, and like Bunyan’s “Standfast,” giving glorious testimony to Christ’s faithfulness, even in the river.

But one thing I have never seen. I never saw any one enjoy what I should call real, solid, calm, reasonable peace on his death-bed, who did not draw his peace from the Bible. And this I am bold to say, that the man who thinks to go to his death-bed without having the Bible for his comforter, his companion, and his friend, is one of the greatest madmen in the world. There are no comforts for the soul but Bible comforts, and he who has not got hold of these, has got hold of nothing at all, unless it be a broken reed.

Reader, the only comforter for a death-bed is the book about which I address you this day. Surely it is no light matter whether you read that book or not. Surely a dying man, in a dying world, should seriously consider whether he has got anything to comfort him, when his turn comes to die. I charge you, I entreat you, to give an honest answer to my question. What art thou doing with the Bible?—Dost thou read it? *How readest thou?*—*J. C. Ryle.*

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#### DR. DUFF’S EPITAPH.

In his farewell address before leaving India, Dr. Duff said he should work for India as long as the breath was in his body, and then he adds:—

“And when at last this mortal body is consigned to the silent tomb,—while I myself think that the only befitting epitaph for my tombstone would be, ‘Here lies Alexander Duff, by nature and practice a sinful, guilty creature, but saved by grace, through faith in the blood and righteousness of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ’—were it by others thought desirable that any addition should be made to this sentence, I would reckon it my highest earthly honor, should I be deemed worthy of appropriating the grandly generous words, already suggested by the exuberant kindness of one of my oldest native friends, in some such form as follows:—

‘By profession, a missionary; by his life and labors, the true and constant friend of India.’ Pardon my weakness; nature is overcome; the gush of feeling is beyond control: amid tears of sadness I must now bid you all a solemn farewell.”