



Theology Explained and Defended, in a Series of Sermons, Vol. 1 of 4 (Classic Reprint)

Timothy Dwight

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Excerpt from Theology Explained and Defended, in a Series of Sermons, Vol. 1 of 4

Men of letters pass their lives in a course so tranquil and uniform, it is generally supposed, as to furnish but few incidents for the labours of the biographer or the entertainment of his readers. Mankind are attracted rather by what is brilliant in character and daring in action, than by the less splendid achievements of learning and piety. The exploits of the hero are recounted with applause while he is living, and after his death are enrolled with admiration on the records of nations; but the Minister of Christ must usually wait to receive his honours in eternity, and expect the due estimate of his labours only as they are written on the tablet of the skies.

There are, however, exceptions to this remark. Sometimes the good man, by the uncommon powers of his mind, by peculiar incidents in his life, by having exerted a commanding influence on the interests of the public, or by having acquired an unusual share in their affections; presents the most attractive subject of biography. Contemporaries indulge a strong desire to view more minutely the life and character of the man, whose living excellence they have often felt and acknowledged; and posterity receive with admiration the history of one who so widely blessed a preceding generation.

The author of the following Discourses claims a high rank among men of this class. The testimonies, far and wide, given by the public to his excellence, the heart-felt sorrow so extensively occasioned by his death, and the honours so profusely poured upon his memory; persuade us that we shall be listened to with lively interest, while we attempt, in the following Memoir, to sketch the most important incidents of his life, and to delineate the most striking traits of his character.

Timothy Dwight was born at Northampton, in the county of Hampshire, state of Massachusetts, on the 14th day of May, A. D. 1752. His parents were Timothy and Mary Dwight. The first ancestor of his father's family in this country, John Dwight, came from Dedham in England, and settled at Dedham in Massachusetts, in 1637.

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