



THE HOLY BIBLE

(It's All-Importance)

A NATION must be truly blessed, if it were governed by no other laws than those of this blessed book; it is so complete a system, that nothing can be added to it, or taken from it; it contains every thing needful to be known or done; it affords a copy for a king (Deut. xvii. 18), and a rule for a subject; it gives instruction and counsel to a senate; authority and direction for a magistrate: it cautions a witness; requires an impartial verdict of a jury, and furnishes the judge with his sentence; it sets the husband as lord of the household, and the wife as mistress of the table: tells him how to rule, and her how to manage.

It entails honour to parents, and enjoins obedience to children; it prescribes and limits the sway of the sovereign, the rule of the ruler, and authority of the master; commands the subject to honour, and the servants to obey; and promises the blessing and protection of its Author to all who walk by its rules.

It gives direction for weddings and for burials; it promises food and raiment, and limits the use of both; it points out a faithful and an eternal Guardian to the departing husband and father; tells him with whom to leave his fatherless children, and in whom his widow is to trust (Jer. xlix. 11); and promises a father to the former, and a husband to the latter.

It teaches a man how to set his house in order, and how to make his will; it appoints a dowry for the wife, and entails the right of the first-born; and shows how the younger branches shall be left.

It defends the rights of all; and reveals vengeance to every defrauder, over-reacher, and oppressor.

It is the first book, the best book, and the oldest book in all the world.

It contains the choicest matter, gives the best instruction, and affords the greatest pleasure and satisfaction that ever was revealed.

It contains the best laws, the profoundest mysteries that ever were penned.

It brings the best of tidings, and exhibits life and immortality, and shows the way to everlasting glory.

It is a brief recital of all that is past, and a certain prediction of all that is to come.

It settles all matters in debate, resolves all doubts, and eases the mind and conscience of all their scruples.

It reveals the only living and true God, and shews the way to Him; and sets aside all other gods, and describes them the vanity of them, and of all that trust in them.

In short, it is a book of laws to show right and wrong; a book of wisdom, that condemns all folly, and makes the foolish wise; a book of truth, that detects all lies, and confutes all errors; and a book of life, and shows the way from everlasting death.

It is the most compendious book in all the world; the most authentic, and the most entertaining history that ever was published: it contains the most early antiquities, strange events, wonderful occurrences, heroic deeds, unparalleled wars.

It describes the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal worlds; and the origin of the myriads, human tribes, and infernal legions.

It will instruct the most accomplished mechanic, and the profoundest artist; it will teach the best rhetorician, and exercise every power of the most skillful arithmetician (Rev. xiii.18); puzzle the wisest anatomist, and exercise the nicest critic.

It corrects the vain philosopher, and guides the wise astronomer: it exposes the subtle sophist, and makes diviners mad.

It is a complete code of laws, a perfect body of divinity, an unequalled narrative; a book of lives, a book of travels, and a book of voyages.

It is the best covenant that ever was agreed on, the best deed that ever was sealed, the best evidence that ever was produced; the best will that ever was made, and the best testament that ever was signed.

To understand it is [to] be wise indeed; to be ignorant of it, is to be destitute of wisdom.

It is the king's best copy, the magistrate's best rule, the housewife's best guide, the servant's best directory, and the young man's best companion.

It is the school-boy's spelling-book, and the learned man's masterpiece: it contains a choice grammar for a novice, and a profound treatise for a sage: it is the ignorant man's dictionary, and the wise man's directory.

It affords knowledge of witty inventions for the ingenious, and dark sayings for the grave; and is its own interpreter.

It encourages the wise, the warrior, the racer, and the overcomer; and promises and eternal reward to the conqueror.

And that which crowns all is, that the Author is without partiality, and without hypocrisy,--- 'in whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.'

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*Holy Bible, book divine!
Precious treasure! thou art mine;
Mine, to tell whence I came;
Mine, to teach me what I am:
Mine to chide, when I rove;
Mine, to shew a Saviour's love:
Mine, art thou, to guide my feet;
Mine, to judge, condemn, acquit:*

*Mine, to comfort in distress,
If the Holy Spirit bless:
Mine, to shew by living faith,
How to triumph over death!
Mine, to tell of joys to come,
And the rebel sinner's doom:
O thou precious book divine!
Precious treasure! thou art mine.*

*THIS is a precious book indeed!
Happy are those who love to read;
'Tis God's own word, which he has given,
To shew our souls the way to heaven.
It tells us how the world was made;
And how good men the Lord obeyed:
Here his commands are written too,
To teach us what we ought to do.*

*It bids us all from sin to fly,
Because our souls can never die:
It points to heaven where angels dwell;
And warns us to escape from hell.
But what is more than all beside,
The Bible tells us Jesus died:
This is its best, its chief intent,
To lead poor sinners to repent.*

Endnote:

The piece that you have just read was transcribed from the torn frontispiece pages of a very old and very well read large print family Bible. The Bible's original publishing date was previous to 1824 (Hall-End, Halifax). The paragraph and poem were first published in the *Christian Journal and Literary Register* (New York, 1819). Almost 200 years ago, this small introductory statement and poem were originally published with no separate paragraphs. I have transcribed them with small spaces between for better flow of thought and readability.

- Chris Lawson