
On the Excellency of the Holy Scriptures

by William Huntington

I have sometimes thought, that a nation must be truly blessed, if it were governed by no other laws than those of that blessed book [the Bible]. 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 and done.

It affords a *copy* for a king, Deut. 17:18, 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 a 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 the authority of the master, commands the subject to honour, and the servant to obey; and promises the blessing and protection of its Author to all who walk by its rules.

It gives directions for weddings, and for burials; regulates *feasts* and *fasts*, mournings and rejoicings; and orders labour for the day, and rest for the night. 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. 49:11; 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, entails the right of the first-born, and shews how the younger branches shall be left: it defends the rights of all; and reveals vengeance to every defrauder, over-reacher, or 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 and profoundest mysteries that ever were penned. It brings the best of tidings, and affords the best of comfort, to the inquiring and disconsolate. It exhibits life and immortality from everlasting, and shews the way to eternal glory. It is a brief recital of all that is passed, 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: it sets aside all other gods, and describes the vanity of them, and of all that trust in them.

In short, it is a book of law, to shew 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, that gives life, and shews the way from everlasting death.

It is the most compendious book in all the world; the most ancient, authentic, and the most entertaining history, that ever was published. It contains the most ancient antiquities, strange events, wonderful occurrences, heroic deeds, and unparalleled wars. It describes the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal worlds; and the origin of the angelic myriads, human tribes, and devilish 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 skilful arithmetician, Rev. 13:18; puzzle the wisest anatomist, and exercise the nicest critic. It corrects the vain philosopher, and confutes 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 schoolboy's *spelling-book*, and the learned man's *masterpiece*. It contains a choice *grammar* for a novice, and a profound *mystery* for a sage. It is

the ignorant man's dictionary, and the wise man's directory. It affords knowledge of witty inventions for the *humorous*, and dark sayings for the *grave*; and is its own interpreter. It encourages the wise, the warrior, the swift, and the overcomer; and promises an eternal reward to the excellent, the conqueror, the winner, and the prevalent.

And that which crowns all is, that the Author is without partiality, and without hypocrisy; in whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

I have, at times, perused it till I have thought myself in company with all the inhabitants of Paradise. It is Little Faith's choice breast, and the strong man's substantial dish. It is the lady's best *looking-glass*, 2 Cor. 3:18, in which she may see both her heart and her face, and the face and heart of every body else. It is an exact *balance*, in which a man may weigh both his spirit and his actions; and tell the exact weight of himself, and of all mankind, Psalm 62:9. It is the astronomer's best telescope, 1 Cor. 13:12; in which he may see the *sun*, Mal. 4:2; *moon*, Cant. 6:10; and *seven stars*, Rev. 2:1; and an awful eclipse to the damned; and it reveals a world of which no geographer could ever give a map; and a way to it which no lion hath ever trod, and which the vulture's eye hath never seen.

And the best of all is, that it promises *freedom indeed* to all who embrace the truths of it; freedom from the reign of Sin, of Satan, and of Death: and, except a man receive the *truth*, the real *truth*, and that *in the love of it*, he never shall be able to govern himself, or to bridle his temper, his passions, his tongue, or his sin!

William Huntington (1745-1813) was a London minister and author, much maligned in his day and ever since by men far inferior to him in the knowledge of the Scriptures, a man who was greatly used of God. This article was excerpted from *The History of Little Faith*, by William Huntington, in *The Select Works of William Huntington*, Volume 1, pgs. 536-539. Originally published by W.H. Collingridge, London, 1856, and reprinted by Gospel Standard Trust Publications, Harpenden, Herts, England, 1989.

An Interesting Sequel

A Huntington biographer, George Ella, records an interesting sequel to the above piece by Huntington. Many years after his death, during the Papal Aggression of 1851, when various churches were seeking to reveal the errors of Roman Catholicism, an Anglican rector in England came across this piece, but the author's name was not attached to it. This man was very impressed with it, and had it circulated, in addition to recommending it from the pulpit, saying he "could not inform them who was the writer, but had no doubt it was by some Eminent Divine". Then the editor of the *Stamford Mercury* wrote in his newspaper "that the Author was a London Dissenting Minister named Huntington, once a Coalheaver". When he learned this, the Anglican rector was so shocked that this was in fact not written "by some Eminent Divine" but by an ex-coalheaver, he stopped circulating it and forbade his people from doing so! (*Huntington: Pastor of Providence*, pgs. 148-151, by George M. Ella. Evangelical Press, Darlington, England, 1994.)

Clearly, worldly learning and worldly honours meant more to him than biblical truth. Yet all who love the Word of God will say "Amen" to Huntington's lovely defence of the Bible in this passage.

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