

**THE STATESMAN'S MANUAL; OR,
THE BIBLE THE BEST GUIDE TO
POLITICAL SKILL AND FORESIGHT:
A LAY SERMON, ADDRESSED TO
THE HIGHER CLASSES OF SOCIETY**

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The statesman's manual; or, The Bible the best guide to political skill and foresight: a lay sermon, addressed to the higher classes of society by S. T. Coleridge

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S. T. COLERIDGE

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LAY SERMONS:
BY S. T. COLERIDGE, ESQ.

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ADDRESSED TO

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By S. T. COLERIDGE, Esq.

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L A Y S E R M O N .

PSALM LXXVIII. v. 5, 6, 7.

5. For he established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel; which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. 6. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: 7. That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God.

IF our knowledge and information concerning the Bible had been confined to the one fact of its immediate derivation from God, we should still presume that it contained rules and assistances for all conditions of men under all circumstances; and therefore for communities no less than for individuals. The contents of every work must correspond to the character and designs of the work-master; and the inference in the present case is too obvious to be overlooked, too plain to be resisted. It requires, indeed, all the might of superstition to conceal from a man of common understand-

ing the further truth, that the interment of such a treasure in a dead language must needs be contrary to the intentions of the gracious Donor. Apostacy itself dared not question the *premise* : and that the practical *consequence* did not follow, is conceivable only under a complete *system* of delusion, which from the cradle to the death-bed ceases not to overawe the will by obscure fears, while it pre-occupies the senses by vivid imagery and ritual pantomime. But to such a scheme all forms of sophistry are native. The very excellence of the Giver has been made a reason for withholding the gift; nay the transcendent value of the gift itself assigned as the motive of its detention. We may be shocked at the presumption, but need not be surprized at the fact, that a jealous priesthood should have ventured to represent the applicability of the Bible to all the wants and occasions of men as a wax-like pliability to all their fancies and prepossessions. Faithful guardians of Holy Writ! they are constrained to make it useless in order to guard it from profanation; and those, whom they have most defrauded, are the readiest to justify the fraud. For imposture, organized into a comprehensive and

self-consistent whole, forms a world of its own, in which inversion becomes the order of nature.

Let it not be forgotten, however, (and I recommend the fact to the especial attention of those among ourselves, who are disposed to rest contented with an implicit faith and passive acquiescence) that the Church of Superstition never ceased to avow the profoundest reverence for the Scriptures themselves, and what it forbids its vassals to ascertain, it not only permits, but commands them to *take for granted*.

Whether, and to what extent, this suspension of the rational functions, this spiritual slumber, will be imputed as a sin to the souls who are still under chains of papal darkness, we are neither enabled or authorized to determine. It is enough for us to know that the land, in which we abide, has like another Goshen *been severed from the plague*, and that we have light in *our dwellings*. The road of salvation for *us* is a high road, and the wayfarers, though 'simple, need not err therein.' The Gospel lies open in the market-place, and on every window seat, so that (*virtually* at least) the deaf may hear the words of the Book! It is preached at every turning, so that the