

THE STATE OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

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The State of the English Bible by William Harness

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WILLIAM HARNESS

**THE STATE OF THE
ENGLISH BIBLE**

THE
STATE
OF THE
ENGLISH BIBLE.

BY THE
REV. WILLIAM HARNES, A.M.
PERPETUAL CURATE OF ALL SAINTS,
KNIGHTSBRIDGE.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Pamphlet is a reprint of the article on "Paragraph Bibles," which appeared in the "Edinburgh Review" of October last. In it the author endeavoured, as clearly and concisely as he could, to show the reasons, why he thought the authorised version of the Sacred Scriptures should be subjected to a careful and immediate revision. The favourable manner in which his opinions were received, has convinced him that the necessity of such a revision is very widely felt. And he has been induced to reprint the article, in the hope that, by giving it a further and cheaper circulation, public attention may be more generally attracted to the importance of the subject, and the object which he has so deeply at heart, more speedily attained.

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the first of these is the fact that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The second is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The third is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The fourth is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The fifth is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The sixth is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The seventh is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The eighth is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The ninth is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox. The tenth is that the only person who can be a member of the club is a person who is not a member of the club. This is a self-referential paradox, similar to the liar paradox.

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The Annotated Paragraph Bible ; containing the Old and New Testaments according to the Authorized Version, arranged in Paragraphs, with Explanatory Notes, &c. Published by the Religious Tract Society, London : 1853.

It is, we believe, universally agreed among Protestants of all denominations, that the Bible is their one, great, paramount religious authority ; that they repudiate all traditionary lore or human teaching ; and that every man, depending on his own judgment, and availing himself of his right to use it, looks to the Sacred Scriptures, and the Sacred Scriptures alone, for the spiritual light which should inform his faith and direct his conduct. Such is the

theory; but it is little more than a theory. If Christians acted upon it honestly and more freely than they do, they would in all probability find their differences diminish and their charity increase. But the fact is, that the right of private judgment in religion is a principle more vaunted than exercised. And the experience of society would lead us to infer that, while we and the rest of our fellow Protestants profess to follow the instructions of the Bible, we are far more generally led by the opinions of our respective ministers; and that our doctrinal views are never so much really derived from the letter of the Sacred Text as from the notes of some favourite expositor in the margin. This, perhaps, is no more than might be naturally expected. It is the consequence either of an intellectual indolence, which would evade the task of elaborating the truth for itself; or of a praiseworthy humility, which feels its powers incompetent to the task; or of a certain timidity of conscience, which, shrinking from the peril of incurring error in so momentous a subject, would fain

rest the responsibility of decision on another's judgment. But whatever influences may interfere to warp its operation, all Protestants, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, are agreed in the principle, that our only authoritative religious teacher is the Bible; and that "as
" there is no truth nor doctrine necessary to
" our justification and everlasting salvation,
" but which is, or may be, drawn out of that
" fountain and well of truth; therefore, as
" many as be desirous to enter into the right
" and perfect way unto God, must apply their
" minds to know Holy Scripture, without the
" which they can neither sufficiently know God
" and His will, neither their office and duty."*

Since the Bible, then, is of such inestimable value—the depository of all religious and moral truth—the sacred ark in which the history and the subject-matter of the Creator's communications to His creatures are preserved; we might very reasonably have presumed that it would be regarded with a reverence corre-

* Homily on Reading the Holy Scriptures. Part I.