

**ON THE REVISION OF THE
AUTHORISED VERSION
OF THE SCRIPTURES**

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On the revision of the authorised version of the Scriptures by Henry Charles Fox

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HENRY CHARLES FOX

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OF THE
AUTHORISED VERSION OF
THE SCRIPTURES.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE REVISION NOW IN PROGRESS.

BY
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PREFACE.

THE contents of the following pages were originally delivered as a lecture before the members of a Young Men's Christian Association at Plymouth. The subject of which they treat, although of great and universal interest, is one concerning which few persons possess any definite information, and there is no work in existence at the present time which treats of it as a whole. It is with a view to supply the deficiency, by presenting the leading facts and arguments connected with the subject of Revision in a form adapted for those readers who have not means to acquire or time to study the larger works on the subject, that these pages are now offered to the public.

I have only to add that in preparing the lecture free use was made of the principal works on Revision, more especially those of Ellicott, Lightfoot, and Trench.

PLYMOUTH, *December*, 1874.



The Revision of the Authorized Version of the Scriptures.

Of the many glorious legacies which have come down to us from the Reformers of the 16th century, there is none so unspeakably precious as our English Bible. Men of all ranks and conditions, and of all creeds, have united in bearing testimony to its surpassing beauty and worth. Men of profound and accurate scholarship have testified to its faithfulness as a translation; men of taste have extolled the dignity and simplicity of its style and language; men of letters have noted its ennobling influence upon our literature; English Christians of every denomination have marked their sense of its truthfulness by accepting it as a common bond of union; and the great multitude of believers have rejoiced to hear in it the voice of God speaking to them in a language which the simplest can understand.

Even Roman Catholic writers have been constrained to bear a reluctant testimony to its extraordinary power and beauty, while lamenting its influence in thwarting the efforts made by Rome to recover her sway over our countrymen. "Who will not say," says Father Faber, "that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible is one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives in the ear like a music that can never be forgotten; like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness. Nay, it is worshipped with a positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose gross fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads availingly with the man of letters and the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments; and all that has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him for ever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing, which doubt has never dimmed and controversy has

never soiled. It has been to him all along as the silent, but oh! how intelligible, voice of his guardian angel; and in the length and breadth of the land, there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible. And all this is an unhallowed power!"*

It is, therefore, no matter of wonder that a treasure so priceless should be guarded with the most scrupulous and jealous care, or that a proposal to revise it, however urgently such revision may be demanded in the interests of truth, should at the outset meet with opposition. "Why," it may naturally be asked, "attempt to improve that which is universally admitted to be so excellent? Why meddle with a version which presents the word of God in all its substantial integrity,—which has gone home to the hearts of the people, and is by them regarded as containing the very words of inspiration?" And we need not be surprised to find some going even further, and charging would-be revisers with profanely touching the ark of God, and tampering with the very fountain of revealed truth.

* From Faber's essay on "The Interest and Characteristics of the Lives of the Saints," p. 10, prefixed to a life of St. Francis of Assisi, which forms vol. xiv. of the Oratory series of the Lives of Modern Saints.