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ARTICLE IV.

IS THE REVISED VERSION OF THE OLD
TESTAMENT BETTER THAN THE
AUTHORIZED?

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR HOWARD OSGOOD, D. D., ROCHESTER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

- Rev. C. J. Ball, Academy, London, May 30, June 27, July 4, 1885.*
Athenaeum, London, May 16 and 23, 1885.
The Nation, New York, June 11, 18, 23, 1885.
T. H. L. Leary, LL. D., Oxford. Gentleman's Magazine, June, 1885, pp. 604-608.
Rev. E. J. Young, Unitarian Review, Boston, July, 1885, pp. 55-64.
Rev. Professor C. H. Toy, Christian Register, Boston, July 23, August 6, 13, 27, 1885.
Saturday Review, London, June 6, July 11, 1885.
Rev. Professor G. R. Bliss, National Baptist, July 23, 1885.
Rev. Professor J. A. Broadus, Religious Herald.
Church Quarterly Review, London, July, pp. 438-461, October, 1885, pp. 181-213.
Westminster Review, London, July, 1885, pp. 253, 254.
Rev. Professor W. G. Elmslie, British Quarterly Review, July, 1885, pp. 122-136.
Rev. Professor C. A. Briggs, Presbyterian Review, New York, July, 1885, pp. 486-533; April, 1886, pp. 369-378.
Rev. A. C. Jennings and Rev. W. H. Lowe, Expositor, London, July, August, October, December, 1885.
Rev. Professor J. F. McCurdy, Evangelist, New York, August 20, September 24, 1885.
Rev. Professor Francis Brown, Evangelist, September 3; Independent, New York, September 3, 10, 1885.
Methodist Review, New York, September, 1885, pp. 758-764.
Universalist Quarterly, Boston, October, 1885, pp. 487-499.
Rev. Professor Frederic Gardiner, Church Review, New York, October, 1885, pp. 448-465.
Edinburg Review, October, 1885, pp. 448-494.
Quarterly Review, London, October, 1885, pp. 281-329.
Rev. Professor A. F. Kirkpatrick and Rev. C. H. H. Wright, D. D., Official Report, English Church Congress, 1885.
Rev. Professor H. P. Smith, Presbyterian Review, October, 1885, pp. 623-652.

Rev. Principal W. Caven, Presbyterian Review, January, 1886, pp. 45-88.

Rev. W. H. Cobb, Bibliotheca Sacra, April, 1886, pp. 303-317.

Rev. Professor F. A. Gast, Reformed Quarterly Review, Philadelphia, April, 1886, pp. 149-180.

Rev. W. Houghton, Academy, April 24, 1886.

Rev. Professor S. I. Curtiss, Bibliotheca Sacra, July, 1886, pp. 547-564.

Rev. Professor C. R. Brown, Bibliotheca Sacra, July, pp. 507-527, October, 1885, pp. 662-690.

It is now more than eighteen months since the revised English version of the Old Testament was issued and submitted to the judgment of Bible readers. Though it is somewhat early to ask what is the general decision, yet the list, given at the head of this article, of decisions coming from scholars of the upper ranks may aid us in gaining some idea of the present state of opinion among scholars. Fourteen of these critics are English, and seventeen are American. The list is as full as we have been able to make it. If there are other writers in the principal periodicals who have expressed their opinion of the Revision we regret our unintentional omission of them. The intentional omission in this list is of all writers who were revisers; the fact that they were engaged on the Revision would in some measure stand in the way of their being regarded as disinterested witnesses of outside opinion.

We have never supposed that the Revision, even if regarded with great favor, would be accepted in place of the Authorized Version under thirty or forty years, and hence its reception or rejection now is not for us a "burning question." As to the character of the work, we have some idea as to its imperfections, but we also feel sure that it is the best the English and American companies could accomplish, for it is all they could be brought to agree upon. Two or three men of the same nation and of similar habits of thought may far more easily reach agreement in difficult points of scholarship than thirty to fifty scholars of different nations and of all varieties of views. It is easy for each of us to settle ourselves in

positive views, and then conclude that all intelligent men ought to agree with us, but no version for all English speaking peoples will ever be made after that fashion.

If each one of the most positive critics of the Revision will take the trouble to read all the articles cited in our list, and will calmly compare his statements with those of the other critics, he will go through the training each reviser received through all the years of revision work, and while our critic might not change his views on special points, he would be less disposed to impute folly to all who had the temerity to differ with him. These criticisms that differ so widely, and clash so often, teach again the old lesson, hard to learn, that accuracy, candor, and due respect for the opinions of others are the chief jewels of scholars.

There are three parts of the revision on which we obtain from these writers decisions, in which a majority coincides: I. The translation; II. The margin; and III. The Hebrew text represented in the translation.

I. The revised translation is that part of the work in which the public is most deeply interested, and it is that part on which the main work of the companies was expended. Amid all the contrarities of criticism found in these thirty-one articles, it is refreshing to note that more than two thirds of these writers unite on one point: that the revised version, as a whole, is a large improvement over the authorized version. Some who assert this superiority do not believe the Revision ought to displace the authorized version by reason of what seem to them special grievous imperfections. But whatever other criticisms they feel called upon to make, they speak as follows on the main point.

The eminent Hebraist and veteran critic of the *Athenæum*: "The revision of the Old Testament is a literary success, but it has no pretensions to scholarly completeness. This is the general impression which the new version makes. The revisers have produced what was

really wanted—an amended version of the Bible as it has affected the religious and literary life of England for the past three hundred years. This is as it should be. . . . It would have been a literary sin of the highest order, if the revisers had destroyed this effect in any pedantic straining after an original text, consistency of rendering, or any other of the Dryasdust's excuses. The revisers have rather erred on the right side in their timidity in alteration, and even Mr. Matthew Arnold, we should fancy, will be satisfied with their work. . . . The revisers at any rate have not been scholarly over-much, and for this they will be heartily thanked by all who value the Oriental hyperbole, antique wisdom, vivid narration, passionate oratory, tender devotion, and profound searchings of the heart, which have made the Bible the book of humanity."

Dr. T. H. L. Leary, *Gentleman's Magazine*: "These blemishes are few and far between, and detract little from the vast sum total of the excellencies and improvements in the revised version of the Old Testament, which we trust and believe will bring the word of God nearer alike to the intellect and the heart and the soul of its readers."

Rev. E. J. Young, *Unitarian Review*: "There have been comparatively few unnecessary alterations, however, made in the Old Testament; and, although there will still be need of commentaries to elucidate many passages which cannot be explained in any literal translation,—as 1 Sam. xxvii. 13,—the revised version is to be welcomed as a valuable aid for study and reference, and as indispensable for all those who would understand the grand utterances of the poets and prophets of Israel."

Professor Toy, *Christian Register*: "When one considers the difficulty of securing unanimity in so large a body of scholars, one may well be surprised that the extent of the alterations is so great. . . . Having such varied tastes to consult, the revisers seem to have performed their task with fairly good judgment and discretion. . . . The revision is not perfect, but it is a great improvement."

Professor G. R. Bliss, National Baptist: "It stands before us learned, conservative, progressive; far from perfect, yet sufficient, with due heed to its preface, its marginal notes, and its appendix, to guide the reader to most that is certainly known, and to much that is probably conjectured of the meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures. It does for us everything which was reasonably to be anticipated, under the conditions which governed the work."

Professor J. A. Broadus, Religious Herald: "The revision of the Old Testament is exceedingly conservative. The severest criticism we have heard upon it was made by a friend who said: 'There is so little alteration that people will hardly care to make the change.' We think people will be standing greatly in their own light if they do not make the change, though we think there was occasion for much more considerable alteration."

Church Quarterly Review: "The gain in fidelity and lucidity is solid and substantial." "There can be no doubt that a most valuable work is offered to readers of the Bible in the revised Old Testament. We have ventured to criticise and to express the opinion that all has not been done that might have been done, and that in regard of both text and translation the revisers have been somewhat timid, because we think it is right that English readers should recognize what the revised version is not, as well as what it is. But this very caution will probably commend it to the public, and they may rest assured that the changes introduced are, with rare exceptions, well substantiated."

Westminster Review: [The revisers] "were called upon to re-translate the text effectively, and make it more intelligible to the average reader. This, so far as we can see, they have done very well."

Professor W. G. Elmslie, British Quarterly Review: "Allowing for all drawbacks, necessary and needless, the result of their toil is a magnificent harvest of golden gain"

for the Bible and its friends. Countless passages have been invested with unwonted meaning, many of these with novel grace as well, and there are sections of the more difficult writings which are only now for the first time intelligible."

Professor C. A. Briggs, *Presbyterian Review*: "The revision is far better than the old version."

Universalist Quarterly: "We may well be grateful that the English and American work has been done in our day, under such liberal influences and in such a catholic spirit."

Professor Frederic Gardiner, *Church Review*: "It is greatly to be regretted that the outcome of so much labor and learning should not have been wholly good. To the careful student of the Old Testament, especially to those who can test it by reference to the original, it must prove most helpful; and even to the merely English reader, in the great majority of cases, it will give a better understanding of the divine word."

Edinburg Review: "In the great majority of instances the alterations are really corrections; in many they remove obscurities, while in not a few they for the first time make the meaning of the original intelligible to the English reader, or else bring out its beauty."

Professor A. F. Kirkpatrick, *Church Congress*: "In fidelity and lucidity the revised version is vastly superior to the authorized version."

Dr. C. H. H. Wright, *Church Congress*: "It may be said to be generally conceded that the new translation as a whole is much superior to the authorized version; and I fully endorse this opinion."

Professor H. P. Smith, *Presbyterian Review*: "It is impossible to mention here the many changes which are real improvements. The improvements, indeed, are so obvious that there is all the greater reason for regret that the treatment of the text falls so far short of what might justly have been expected."

Principal Caven, (Toronto) Presbyterian Review: "The work is not perfect, but the revised version will certainly be placed at the head of all translations of the Scripture which have yet been made."

Rev. W. H. Cobb, *Bibliotheca Sacra*: "I believe a further revision of the new version to be entirely impracticable. I regard the present revision as a great improvement upon King James'."

Professor F. A. Gast, *Reformed Quarterly Review*: "We have reason to be thankful that the work, while full of shortcomings, is as good as it is, and that the English Bible, as revised, is so much improved."

Professor S. I. Curtiss, *Bibliotheca Sacra*: "In closing, I may express my conviction that the revised version of the Old Testament should be adopted, and will be adopted by all English-speaking Christendom. It must stand or fall on its merits. But as the version of Jerome overcame every prejudice and supplanted the old Latin version, because of its superiority, so I believe that this work will finally be adopted by the churches."

Professor C. R. Brown, *Bibliotheca Sacra*: "The revised version is a very great advance upon the authorized version, except in regard to the Hebrew text employed."

Rev. W. Houghton, *Academy*: "With the aids now available for correct renderings of Bible animal and plant names, the revisers of 1885 ought to have produced better results than were possible for the translators of 1611. This they have done. The result as a whole evinces great care, diligence, and judicious discrimination. If identification still remains doubtful, it is because, in such cases, modern researches have failed to throw light. There are, however, exceptions to every rule; and here and there, I think, the revisers have not been quite successful."

If these opinions are representative of the educated classes in England and America, then all the work ex-

pending on the revision is amply rewarded, and we may with full composure of soul leave to the coming generations the question, which is not ours but theirs, of accepting or rejecting this version in place of the other version.

II. From this large accord of view, we turn to the next point which receives large agreement among the critics, (seventeen out of thirty-one,)—the margin. If we are not mistaken, a bare majority of the critics would unite in saying: "The critical scholarship of the revisers is shown in the references to the versions in the margin." It is well known that this praise is due solely to the English revisers, for they only are responsible for the references to the versions in the margin, the American company having declined any responsibility for that part of the margin. Having, on their repeated revisions of the text, ascertained what the English had determined to put in the margin from the versions, the American company decided that it was better to have no reference to the versions in the margin than what now appears there. Some writers have found in this action by the American company an evidence of their "antiquated scholarship," "fear," and ground for various other charges of failure and unfaithfulness. We may as well say here that the American company were perfectly well aware that they would meet just these charges from some critics, but, neither in 1884 nor since, have they been conscious of any fear of such ascriptions.

The American company, as we suppose, believed they were commissioned to revise the English of the authorized Old Testament by all the light they possessed or could gain; and they were not commissioned to issue a critical edition, with proofs, of that Old Testament. For this last, not a margin only, but a page of diamond type would be requisite for every page of the English in large pica type. And "critical" remarks, which are not accurate, in treating the Bible or any writing, are, in the interest of accurate science, to be wholly eschewed.

While we recognize to the full, and heartily, the scholarship and honesty of the English company, we must state our reasons, and give proof for our reasons why we agree with the American company in declining any responsibility for the references to the versions in the margin. We have not observed, in any of the writers who find the critical scholarship of the revision in the margin, a critical analysis of the margin, and in very few of these writers any appreciation of what is meant by correcting the Hebrew text by means of the versions. When, for example, the Samaritan version is quoted, in blissful agnosticism whether the quotation is from the nearly worthless Samaritan Pentateuch, or utterly worthless Samaritan Targum; when a writer assures us: "that we have MSS. of the Samaritan Codex much more ancient" than "the tenth century;" when the Septuagint is quoted in an utterly rejected text, or where it does not apply, or quoted without specification of what Septuagint text is referred to; when Hebrew MSS. are brought forward as containing a reading just discovered, which reading was known, and has been rejected by all textual critics for centuries; when the St. Petersburg Codex is suggested to the revision company as a fruitful source of good readings of which they have been ignorant;¹ or the Ambrosian Syriac Codex is praised as giving us the original text;—when these are the evidences of work on the text, the best answer

¹Professor Briggs, editor of the *Presbyterian Review*, in the *Evangelist*, June 25, 1885, wrote: "We have examined a number of the passages of the St. Petersburg Codex (the oldest Hebrew manuscript now accessible to scholars), and have been surprised to find no evidence of its use by the revisers. Some of its readings are clearly better than the common text, but they have not been regarded." He was immediately asked by a reviser to point out the better readings. After four months, January, 1886, Dr. Briggs gives "two of the readings of the St. Petersburg Codex that seem to me to be better supported than those of the commonly received Massoretic text, the one Isaiah liv.9," "and the other Hosea ii.22." In Isaiah liv.9, Dr. Briggs says that "*days*," not "*waters*," is the correct text. This is an old question; the Codex has added nothing to the knowledge of this passage possessed by scholars for 1700 years, and, consequently, on this point, as usual, it is Dr. Briggs against every critic from Gesenius to

is to be silent, lest we should speak harshly. But we may be permitted to commend the study of Cornill's Prolegomena to his edition of Ezekiel, as an evidence of what is the indispensable pre-requisite of one who would lay his hand to the correction of the Hebrew text in this day and generation, lest he fall out by the way.

Our reasons for agreeing with the American company in declining all responsibility for the references to the versions in the margin, so far as the critical question is concerned, are, that the citations are not accurate, the translations are often inaccurate, citations are made for a divergent reading when that reading is condemned by all experts in textual criticism, and it is impossible to tell what text of the versions is referred to.

For example, in the first book of Samuel, where the Hebrew text is, to a greater extent than in some other books, impaired, there are thirty-eight references to the versions in the margin. Of these thirty-eight nearly one third, the following twelve references to the Septuagint, are utterly wrong, and others are very doubtful. We use in these references Tischendorf's Septuagint, 1880, Cheyne. On Hosea ii.22, it is Briggs against not only Cheyne, Nowack, and Tottermann, good scholars of the most advanced school, who have written since the issue of the St. Petersburg Codex, but against the Codex itself, for the Codex does not give the reading יְנִי בְּי . The only possible solution of its erasures is that a forgetful scribe wrote יְנִי בְּי or יְנִי בְּי and erased it. We know that Strack, in the appendix, says the reading is יְנִי בְּי , but we refer critics to the Codex.

Dr. Briggs, with the courtesy and modesty characteristic of his pen, returns, in the Presbyterian Review, April, 1886, page 372, to this suggestion of ignorance of the Codex on the part of the revisers. The writer of this has possessed the Codex from the date of its issue, having subscribed for it before its issue; and he has known during all these years that no new reading can be safely founded upon this Codex. The very texts, Isaiah liv. 9, Hosea ii.22, which Dr. B. selects to prove its superiority, are among the crowning evidences of its carelessness. In Isaiah liv.9 two *ashers* are written one after the other, and neither erased. In Hosea ii.22 the carelessness is colossal. And yet Dr. Briggs writes on textual criticism.

with Nestle's Collation, with that text, of the Vatican and Sinaitic Codices, 1880, and Lagarde's Septuagint, 1883; and the Latin translation, Vulgate, in Vallarsi's and Tischendorf's editions.

i Sam. i.15. "The Sept. reads, *a single portion*," etc. So Tischendorf's Sept., but Lagarde's reads, "one portion," *κατα πρόσωπον*.

vi.19. "The Sept. has *and fifty thousand men*." So Tisch., but Lag. adds, "of the people."

x.21. "The Sept. adds, *and the family of the Matrites were brought near man by man*." Tisch., "and they bring the tribe of Mattari man by man." Lag., "and he brought the clan of Amattari man by man."

x.27. "The Sept. has, *and a month*" etc. So Tisch., but Lag., "a month of days."

xii.3. "The Sept. has, *even a pair of shoes?*" Tisch. and Lag. have, "a sandal." It is Thenius who made this ridiculous mistake of "a pair of shoes."

xiii.1. "The Hebrew text has, *Saul was a year old*." The whole verse is omitted in the unrevised Sept., but in a later recension the number *thirty* is inserted." Tisch. omits, but Lag. is exactly in accord with the Hebrew, "Saul was a year old (son of a year) in his reigning, and two years he reigned in (Heb. *over*) Israel."

xx.19. "As read by the Sept., *this mound*." Tisch., "by that Ergab." Lag., "by that stone." There is no "*mound*" in the Greek.

xx.41. "As read by the Sept., *from beside the mound*." Tisch., "from the Argob." Lag., "from the Argab." There is no "*mound*" in the Greek.

xxv.22. "The Sept. has, *unto David*." So Tisch., but Lag. "unto the enemies of David," i. e., just as the Hebrew. Wellhausen (Text d. BB. Samuelis, p. 134) knows just how the false reading (but which proves to be the true) arose: the Jews stuck it in!

xxvi.20. "The Sept. has, *my life*." So Tisch., but Lag. "a flea," with the Hebrew.

xxvii.8. "Some copies of the Sept. have *from Telam.*" No critical edition or critical notes of any good edition of the Sept. have this reading. All the *varia* of Holmes and Parsons are, "*Telampsour, Telapsur, Gelampsour, Lamou-sour, Lampsour, Lampsoun, Gelapsour.*" Tischendorf, "from Gelampsur." Lagarde, "from Gessur." This is only another of the many errors of Thenius who ascribes "from Telam" to the Sept., and Wellhausen (Text der BB. Samuelis, p. 140) leans on Thenius and, as usual, goes a step further, giving as reference for this reading, "codd xi. 44, 242 and nine other minuscular codices of Holmes;" but there is not the first sign in Holmes of that reading. Thenius and Wellhausen are broken reeds for support in quotation of the Sept. in spite of (because of?) their absolute dogmatism.

xxxiii.30. "According to many MSS. and versions, *Borashan.*" Many Hebrew MSS. have this reading according to De Rossi, but the Sept. in Tisch. and Lag. have *Bersabee*; the Vulgate (Tisch., 1873,) "*in lacu Asan*;" the Syriac (Lee, 1823,) "*Birashan.*"

If these are the plain mistakes in the margin when only one version, and that the one most favored, is in question, we shall find the mistakes intensified when several versions or authorities are referred to.

Let us now take the best preserved of the Hebrew and of the Septuagint texts, the Pentateuch, and let us prove the twenty-two citations of "ancient authorities," "ancient versions."

Gen. iv.8. "Many ancient authorities have, *said unto Abel, his brother, Let us go into the field.*" This is the reading of the Sept., Sam., and Syriac. The Vulgate (against Jerome's statement of its "corruption") "Let us go out." The Targum Onkelos, the Greek versions of Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus read as the Hebrew.

Gen. xxii.13. "Many ancient authorities." The only ones are the Sept., Sam., Syriac. Against them are Onkelos and Vulgate.

Gen. xxxii.28. "The Sept. and Vulgate have, *thou hast had power with God, and thou shalt prevail against men.*" Tisch. ὅτι ἐνίσχυσας μετὰ θεοῦ καὶ μετὰ ἀνθρώπων δυνατὸς ἔση. Lagarde omits ἔση and has τοῦ before θεοῦ. Tisch., Vulgate, "Quoniam si contra Deum fortis fuisti quanto magis contra homines praevalebis;" and so the Vallarsi Jerome. The translation is wrong even of Sept.; there is no representation of the Vulgate at all.

Gen. xlvii.21. "According to Sam., Sept., Vulg." Correct as to Sam. and Sept., but Vulg. is doubtful, and Onkelos and Syriac against.

Ex. xiv.25. "Some ancient versions." Three for and three against.

Ex. xix.18. "Some ancient authorities." Only one. Five against.

Ex. xxxi.10. "Some ancient versions." All doubtful.

Numb. xxi.30. "Some ancient authorities." Two. Four against.

Deut. xxviii.22. "Some ancient versions." Only one. Four against.

Here are nine out of twenty-two citations of the versions which are not critically correct. From all our investigation of the references to the versions in the margin, we believe we have given a fair sample of the proportion of mistakes which may be easily verified; and this proportion, we believe, holds good throughout all the rest of the books. We shall be glad to have any or all of the critics, who have found the evidence of critical scholarship in the margin, show that the proportion of mistakes is less than we have stated it. But if we are right, the American company were fully justified in declining responsibility for the marginal references to the versions.

The greatest scholars may turn off some careless work, even Homer may nod; and we are compelled to believe that the work on the versions shown in the margin of the revision does not represent the scholarship so largely

possessed by the English company, but seems rather to be the waste-basket of their labor.

III. As to the text. While a few critics of the revision express the extreme view that the revisers should have followed the example of the New Testament company and made a new text of the Old Testament, fourteen are clear in their opposition to such a course. But nineteen express themselves just as clearly either in favor of larger alterations of the text or of larger additions to the text from the versions, or think that in many places the present text and margin should change places. We suppose that every reviser from his own point of view could make similar statements. We are very sure we could. But if we take these thirty-one critics, eminent representatives of scholarship and of large Christian bodies, and make them a revision company for the revision of the Hebrew text, how many of them could be brought to agree on any given text to be corrected, and on the correction to be made? Take Gen. iv.8, for instance, a striking example, and, standing so near the beginning of the Bible, always singled out by beginners in textual criticism for immediate repair by the apparently very handy versions. Three young critics and one, who is not young but ranges himself very properly with the "younger Hebrew scholars," decide with positiveness as to the correction for this verse: the others of the thirty-one either make no mention of this verse, or if they do, they assert that the versions do not mend it. Unless the other twenty-seven members of this company for the revision of the Hebrew text should be willing to conclude that all the critical authorities of preceding centuries and of this century and themselves in the bargain are wrong, our four positives would find that they could not have in the text of the new revision, what they think ought to be there. They would also find that it would not be an evidence of their wisdom to decide that the twenty-seven others did not stand on the heights of wisdom, or of Hebrew grammar,

or of advancing scholarship, or in the ranks of the faithful. Indeed, after a year or two in that company for the revision of the Hebrew text, it might "come in" to these four that a critic's course towards that verse, that seems so easy to mend, is a very good test of his appreciation of the primary axioms of textual criticism.

There are some things in the revision which we earnestly strove to keep out: there are other things not there which we just as earnestly strove to have put in, but we were, as to these points, in a minority, sometimes in a minority of one. We believe in these points just as strongly as ever. Learned and honest men heard our arguments with kindness and respect, but did not agree with them: we felt sorry for those who disagreed with us, but we never doubted their scholarship and fairness. Every reviser could tell the same tale.

But deeper than personal preferences as to alterations is the question as to the real state of the Hebrew text. In a few of these writers we read much and often of the "corrupt" Hebrew text. To a textual critic one error in a text of hundreds of pages makes that text "corrupt;" that is, "corrupt" means any text that is not perfect. Then, strictly speaking, all texts are "corrupt," for there is no perfect text of any work. All of the revised English texts of the Old and New Testament, printed with great care, at Oxford and Cambridge, are "corrupt," for every one has some error. The best text of the Greek New Testament ever yet published, that of Westcott and Hort, the fruit of twenty-eight years' work, is, in technical, critical language, "corrupt," for there are sixty-two places which they mark "A⁺," as containing error behind and in all the manuscripts, and, in addition, they give in their margin about 1197 various readings. Yet they tell us (vol. ii., pp. 282, 284): "We see no reason to doubt that, as regards the extant form or edition of the first Gospels, their text as it stood in the autograph has been exactly preserved." "The books of the New Testament, as pre-

served in extant documents, assuredly speak to us in every important respect in language *identical* with that in which they spoke to those for whom they were originally written." So then this, in critics' term, "corrupt" text gives us for all practical purposes the text of the autographs! If that is the truth, and we believe it is, we can let the critics have "corrupt" as their technical term, with a meaning far more restricted than, and very different from its popular use.

A few of those writers tell us that the Hebrew text is so corrupt that that no reliance can be placed on it until it is critically revised with all the light our present materials can throw upon it. But can we, by the work and statement of the most careful textual critics of the present day, gain a fair general estimate of the condition of the Hebrew text? We think we can gain a general estimate. Let us take as one measure the critical revision of the text by Professors Cheyne and Driver in their *Variorum Bible*, 1880. In their preface they say, their notes under "Variations of Reading" concern those points "where the text which the authorized version translates has been supposed to be either incorrect or doubtful." It may be well to add that these critics have published their adherence to the general view of the composition of the Old Testament advocated by Wellhausen and Kuenen, so that they cannot be fairly accused of any dogmatic bias to shield the Hebrew text in the interest of more orthodox views. Over the whole Old Testament they mark forty-six places by "text corrupt," "perhaps corrupt," "partly corrupt," "exceedingly corrupt," (once Nah. i.10), "very corrupt," (once, Hab. iii.9), "doubtful," "very doubtful," (once, 1 Sam. x.2), etc. Cheyne and Driver, in addition to these forty-six "corrupt" places, give about 996 various readings from the versions and manuscripts. By comparing this critical revision of the Old Testament text with Westcott and Hort's critical revision of the New, we find:—

O. T. text, forty-six "corrupt," 996 various readings.

N. T. text, sixty-two "corrupt," 1197 various readings.

But as the O. T. contains at least three times as much text as the New, if the O. T. were as "corrupt," according to all external and internal evidence, as the best text of the New, we ought to find:—

O. T. (62 x 3) 186 places "corrupt," and (1197 x 3) 3591 various readings.

But, instead of that, we are given:—

O. T. forty-six "corrupt," and 996 various readings; that is, judging by these eminent Hebrew and Greek critics of our own day, the Hebrew text is four-fold (46-186) more correct than the best Greek text of the New; and the various readings from versions, MSS. etc., deserving of special notice in the O. T. are not one third in number (996-3591) of those in the New.

On the questions of a corrupt text it is far easier for two critics of the same school to agree, than to find a larger number of critics of all schools who can be brought to agree. Just as the number of critics is increased, so the probability of agreement that any given place is corrupt, is rapidly decreased. For instance, Cheyne and Driver give us as the first of their "Text corrupt," Gen. iv.7 ("If thou doest well," etc.); with them are Olshausen and, partly, Dillmann; against them are *all the versions* and Knobel, Lange, Kalisch, Philippsohn, Tuch, Delitzsch, Reuss. If the versions and these critics formed a company for the revision of the text, Gen. iv.7 would not be marked "corrupt."

Let us inquire of a larger company of living critics, than whom there are none more learned and fair, the English revisers, among whom were found Cheyne and Driver, Westcott and Hort. The revised New Test., we believe, marks only five (5) places where the text "is somewhat uncertain" (Acts iv.25, Heb. xi.4, Jude 22, Rev. ii.13, xiii.10), and 395 places where various readings are deserving of special notice. The English O. T. re-

visers marked six places (2 Sam. xxiii.8, 2 Chron. xxxiv.6, Prov. vii.22, Isa. lxiv.5, Amos iv.3, Zech. xiv.18,) as "probably corrupt"; one place (Neh. iv.23) as "probably faulty;" and two places (Prov. xxv.27, xxvi.10), "Hebrew text is obscure;" nine places in all: and they have in 277 places offered various readings as deserving of special notice. Remembering that the N. T. has only one third the extent of text of the Old, the proportion should have been:—

N. T., five corrupt, 395 various readings.

O. T., fifteen corrupt, 1185 various readings.

But instead of that we find:—

O. T., nine corrupt, 277 various readings.

So that this comparison of the work of the British revisers would lead us, as Cheyne and Driver, and Westcott and Hort led us, to the conclusion that they do not regard the Hebrew text of the O. T. as "corrupt" as the best Greek text (their own; Palmer's ed.?) of the New.

Or let us take the Hebrew text of Ezekiel which is said by some to be "one of the most corrupt in the O. T." In Ez. Cheyne and Driver mark Ez. xl.14, "text corrupt," and xli.20 "doubtful," and they give 106 various readings. As to the two corrupt places, Cornill, 1886, and Smend, 1880, in their revisions of Ezekiel, agree with Cheyne and Driver, but as to the 106 various readings these four agree only in thirty, and are wide apart on seventy-six. The English revisers, in Ezekiel, do not mark any places as corrupt, but they offer nineteen various readings from the versions, and nineteen alternate translations of the Hebrew. Of these nineteen various readings Cheyne and Driver do not notice eight: of the alternate translations they do not notice fourteen: i. e., they do not notice twenty-two out of thirty-eight places which the English revisers think deserving of special notice. Of the remaining sixteen places (38-22), in ten readings from the versions Cheyne and Driver and Cornill agree, in one they do not agree: in five places of alternate translations

Cheyne and Driver and Cornill agree in two, disagree in three. That is, in "one of the most corrupt texts of the O. T.,"—

"Text corrupt," Brit. Rev.	0	
Cheyne and Driver	2	
		—
"Var. Readings," Brit. Rev.	19	
"Alt. Transl." " "	19	
		—
		38
Cheyne and Driver agree in		16
		—
" " " disagree with Rev.		22
"Various Readings," Cheyne and D.	106	
Smend and Cornill agree in	30	
		—
" " " disagree with C. and D.		76

From all this it appears that while a great deal is said by critics of the corruption of the Hebrew text, that text is not proportionately as "corrupt" as the best Greek text of the N. T., and that it is very difficult to get these critics to agree on the corrupt places, and still more difficult to get them to agree on the corrections to be made.

Smend and Cornill are both fine scholars, of the Wellhausen school, and have given us their revision of the text of Ezekiel. For them both the Septuagint is the well-nigh unique external help for their revision of the text. For as Merx says (*Jahrb. f. Prot. Theol.*, 1883, pp. 71, 72), "In truth the Sept. is the single and only critical help to the understanding of Ezekiel, for the version next in age shows that the corrupt Massoretic text was its text, and from MSS., as is well known, there is no hope."

Smend regards the endeavor to reconstruct the Hebrew text which was behind the Sept. as a "relatively somewhat objectless undertaking" because of the corrupt state of the Sept. text: Cornill estimates the Sept. more highly; but the main reliance of both is in their conjectural emendation of the text. For both these works the world of Hebrew scholars is greatly indebted to these

critics, their conjectural emendations will be weighed at their full value, with all respect for the large learning that has prompted them. But we have seen no criticism of either work which asserts that their revisions have brought us much nearer Ezekiel's autograph, though Cornill has given us a smoother text than the Massoretic. Conjectural criticism of the text is not to be tabooed altogether, but the necessary conditions of its acceptance are so severe that few examples of it have ever passed into the text. "As regards intrinsic evidence, it must be so exactly and perfectly suitable to the place that it cannot but be right; or, to attain reasonable probability, it must be quite suitable to the place positively, and free from all incongruity negatively. As regards transcriptional evidence, it must be capable of explaining how the transmitted text could naturally arise out of it in accordance with the ordinary probabilities of transcription" (W. and H. Grk. Test. Introd. p. 71). Westcott and Hort have worked twenty-eight years in textual criticism, Cornill has worked five years: this may help explain their different positions as to conjectural criticism. Of the vast mass of conjectural criticism, Merx says: "One's subjective conviction is of no value, for every one else holds his different view as equally important, and thus subjectivity meets subjectivity and there is no progress."

If this general estimate is worth anything, it shows us that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is "corrupt" only in the critics' technical meaning, and is not corrupt in the popular understanding of that word.