

REVIEWS.

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN GREEK, according to the Septuagint. Edited for the Syndics of the University Press, by Henry Barclay Swete, D. D. Vol. I. Genesis, — IV. Kings. Cambridge: at the University Press. Pp. xxviii, 827. Price, seven shillings and six pence :

For the adjustment of the text of the Greek Testament, the textual critic is furnished with a great wealth of material. By a careful examination of the testimonies of manuscripts, versions, and quotations, texts like that of Westcott and Hort have been constructed which may be regarded as fair representatives of the *ipsissima verba* of the original writers. But for the settlement of the text of the Hebrew Scriptures the apparatus is comparatively scant. No manuscript dates farther back than the Ninth Century ; and extant manuscripts present only one type of text, the Massoretic. Some scholars regard this text as very faithful, others maintain that it was much corrupted in pre-Massoretic times. Nearly all agree that among the available critical materials for the purification of this text the version known as the Septuagint, made about 200 years before Christ, stands at the very front. As yet no complete Hebrew text has been constructed bearing a strong Septuagint impress. But recently experiments have been made in this line. Wellhausen's Samuel, Cornill's Ezekiel, Ryssel's Micah, and Workman's Jeremiah, show to what extent some critics would give a voice to the Septuagint. But just here two important questions arise. What proof is there that the Hebrew text was very much corrupted in pre-Massoretic times? That to some extent it suffered deterioration must be admitted, but does not the fact that extant fragments of Greek versions made in the early centuries of Christianity prove in their general agreement with the Massoretic text that at that time great corruptions could not have been introduced? And during the centuries that preceded Christianity the probability is that the text was guarded with scrupulous care. The other question is : Assuming that the Septuagint must be permitted a strong determining voice in the settlement of the Hebrew text, should not its own text be first adjusted? A yard stick must be known to contain exactly thirty-six inches, neither more nor less, before it can be accepted as an authoritative standard of measurement. We must have a pure Septuagint text to rectify an impure Hebrew text. Now, on the testimony of Jerome, it would appear that, at an early period, three distinct recensions of the Septuagint were in circulation,—that of Hesychius in Egypt, that of Lucian in Antioch, and that of Pambilus and Eusebius at Cæsarea. Accepting this statement as a fact, and recognizing the necessity of securing exactness in the standard,