

*THE VALUE OF THE PATRISTIC WRITINGS FOR
THE CRITICISM AND EXEGESIS OF THE BIBLE.*

II.—THE LOWER CRITICISM (*continued*).

THE reader who has not much previous acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers, and has merely a general idea that they are "uncritical," will be surprised to find how much there is in them of direct and conscious criticism—so far at least as this lower department, the criticism of the *text* of the Scriptures, is concerned.

No doubt it is not difficult to find instances of an uncritical procedure. Instances in which a writer has been misled by a false reading in his text are of course frequent. There is hardly one of the more prominent interpolations that does not find some kind of early patristic support—generally Latin. Irenæus certainly had before him the last twelve verses of St. Mark and the eunuch's confession in Acts viii. 37; Tertullian had the passage about the troubling of the waters of Bethesda; Ambrose and Augustine had the paragraph of the woman taken in adultery; and even the famous interpolation of the Three Heavenly Witnesses, if it is not to be traced in Cyprian (which is doubtful), was certainly read by Vigilius of Thapsus at the end of the fifth century, and Fulgentius of Ruspæ at the beginning of the sixth.¹ But instances of this

¹ I am of course aware that some critics still maintain the genuineness of several of these passages, but I feel at liberty to follow the conclusion that seems to me to carry with it at once the balance of argument and the preponderance of critical authority.

kind, where the author has simply followed his MS., seldom rise to a high degree of wilfulness, or shew a marked incapacity for textual criticism. If we look about for evidence of such incapacity we are hardly surprised to find a near approach to it in the writings of Tertullian. The unfortunate heretic Marcion falls under his lash for the freedom with which he had mutilated or tampered with the text of a number of books of the New Testament. Not content, however, with castigating him for real offences, Tertullian is equally severe upon him for others that are imaginary. Thus, on Luke xii. 51 ("Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division"), he takes Marcion to task for substituting "division" for "a sword." "Marcion must needs alter, as if *a sword* could do anything but *divide*."¹ The real alteration is, of course, not Marcion's, but Tertullian's own. He is quoting from memory, and has in his mind the parallel passage in St. Matthew.

In like manner, on Galatians ii. 5 ("To whom we gave place by subjection; no, not for an hour"), Tertullian calls this a "vitiating text," because of the introduction of the negative.² It is clear that his own copy had not the negative. In this it agreed with a number of Latin authorities—both the Greek and Latin columns of Cod. D. (Claromontanus), and the Latin of its fellow MS. Cod. E. (Sangermanensis), the translator of Irenæus, Victorinus, the Ambrosian Hilary, Pelagius, and others. But though it had in some way slipped out of the Western copies, the negative was undoubtedly part of the true text, and the charge of interpolation which Tertullian brings against Marcion recoils upon himself.

¹ *Adv. Marc.* iv. 29.

² *Ibid.* v. 3.

Tertullian had argued, in the manner of an advocate, for the omission of the negative on internal grounds. He was able to make *some* sense out of the reading, though really an inferior one. But it is impossible to make any sense out of a reading which he accepts in Hebrews vi. 5, 6. Here a defect in his MS. led him to write, instead of "powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away," "if they shall fall away with this declining age."¹

But the most extraordinary case is one in which complete nonsense is combined with unfairness to an adversary. The Valentinians read in John i. 13, as we read, "Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Tertullian calls them "adulterators," and himself contends for the reading, "who was born," in the singular, which he makes refer to Christ.² A glance at the context might have shewn that this was impossible; and a little inquiry might, perhaps, have established the good faith of the Valentinians; but it was Tertullian's habit to wield the scourge first and then to inquire whether the use of it was justified afterwards; or rather, not to inquire whether it was justified at all.

A fitting pendant for this is supplied by a similar instance in the writings of Ambrose. A certain gloss had found its way into the Western text of John iii. 6. To the words, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," was added, "because the Spirit is God, and is born of God." On this Ambrose, who is arguing against the Arians, comments thus: "So clearly do you Arians bear witness that this passage applies to the

¹ *De Pudicit.* c. 20; compare Rönisch, *Das N. T. Tertullian's*, p. 725.

² *De Carne Christi*, c. 19; compare Rönisch, p. 654.

Spirit, that you erase it from your copies. And would indeed that you expunged it from your own copies and not from those of the Church! For at the time when Auxentius held down the Church of Milan with the armed hosts of an impious heresy, or else when the Church at Sirmium was being harassed by Valens and Ursatius, its own priests wavering in their loyalty, this falsification and your sacrilegious deed was detected in the copies belonging to the Church. And perhaps you have done the same thing in the East." Similarly Fulbert: "The Arian hearers, forasmuch as they denied that the Holy Ghost is God, struck out that saying of the Saviour's from the Gospel, *The Spirit is God.*"¹

Yet even Tertullian was aware of the possibility of various readings. In one place he appeals from the Latin to the "Greek original" (Græco authentico); though to what particular reading he appeals is not quite clear; in any case it is probably a wrong reading.² In another place he gives Marcion credit for possibly having a different reading from his own. In 1 Corinthians xv. 55, he writes as an alternative, "Where, O Death, is thy victory, or thy contention," combining his own reading, "contention" (*νεῖκος*) with Marcion's reading, "victory" (*νῆκος*).³ And elsewhere he has treated erroneous readings of Marcion's in such a way as to leave it doubtful whether they were not also his own.

When we leave Tertullian and some of his Western allies, there are not wanting signs of greater critical activity and circumspection. In more ways than one it is remarkable to what an extent the critical methods

¹ Both quotations are given by Tischendorf *ad loc.*

² *De Monogam.* c. 11.

³ *Adv. Marc.* iv. 40; comp. Rönisch, p. 685.

of antiquity resemble our own. It would be not quite true to say that even the best of the ancient critics were on the same level with the best of our own day, but they were not very far from being on a level with the second best, or with all but one or two of a previous generation, in which the principles of textual criticism were less well understood.

It makes a strange impression upon us to find a writer at the end of the second century already appealing to the authority of MSS. ; and not only so, but laying stress upon the age and character of the MSS. to which he appeals, and going yet a step further than this in suggesting the origin of a corruption which he has before him. Irenæus wrote only little more than a century after the probable date, and less than a century after the traditional date, of the composition of the Apocalypse ; yet even in his time the text of that book had been corrupted. In treating of the coming of Antichrist, Irenæus alluded to the number of the beast as prefigured in the six hundred years of the life of Noah and the dimensions of the image set up by Nebuchadnezzar. These together gave the number 666. "Such being the state of the case, and this being the number that he found *in all the good and ancient copies*, those who have seen John face to face also bearing witness to it, history (itself) telling us that the number of the name of the beast, according to the Greek method of counting, will make by the letters contained in it six hundred and sixty-six ; that is, the tens equal in number to the hundreds and the hundreds to the units. . . . This being so, I know not how some have gone wrong, following a way of their own, and have displaced the middle figure of

the name, subtracting 50 from it, and for six tens wanting to have only one. I suspect this is an error of the scribes, as often happens, from the fact that numbers are expressed by letters; and so the Greek letter which denotes sixty easily became broadened (expansam¹) into the iota of the Greeks [$\iota\varsigma'$ for $\xi\varsigma'$, or 16 for 66]; then others received this reading without further investigation, and some simply and unseasonably made use of it, while others, from want of scholarship (*ἀπειροκαλία*) went so far as to seek for a name corresponding to this erroneous and falsified number."²

Here we have four distinct elements of modern criticism—(1) a distinction between MSS. as “good and old,” or the reverse; (2) the acceptance of one reading and rejection of another on the evidence of these “old and good” MSS.; (3) the confirmation of the same reading by internal probability; (4) an attempt to account for the origin of the corrupted reading. It is true that the clause containing this last point is rejected as spurious by Mr. Harvey, the editor of Irenæus, but there are no documentary grounds for the rejection; and though the passage may no doubt be a gloss, it seems to be sufficiently paralleled by another that will be adduced presently.

This passage from Irenæus is doubly interesting, from its early date and because of the number of points to which it gives illustration. It is not, however, at all unique. I proceed to give other examples of each particular. And first, of the distinction in MSS.

¹ It is not easy to see how $\xi\varsigma'$ could be “broadened” into I. Mr. Harvey (*ad loc.*) thinks that the change was from $\xi\varsigma'$ to EI.

² *Cont. Hær.* v. 30. 1.

between "old and late," "good and inferior," and the like. In several important readings this distinction is appealed to. Thus on Matthew v. 22, "Whoever is angry with his brother *without a cause*," several of the Fathers note the omission of the last words. The Pseudo-Athanasius writes, "So it is contained in the accurate copies; the word [s] *without a cause* are an addition." Again, Jerome, in the treatise against Pelagius, says, "In most of the ancient copies *without a cause* is not added;" and in his Commentary on St. Matthew, "In some copies there is added *without a cause*, but in the true copies the statement is absolute, and anger is forbidden altogether." And Augustine considered this point worthy to be inserted among his *Retractations*: "We have now better understood the Verse, *Whoever is angry with his brother*: for the Greek copies have not the words *without a cause*, although the sense is the same."¹ The same writer says, in regard to another spurious addition of a like kind, Matthew vi. 4, "Thy Father . . . shall reward thee *openly*," "Many Latin copies have *openly*; but because we do not find it in the Greek copies, which are earlier, we will not argue from it."² Here we have a clear conception of the importance of priority in date in the evidence for any given reading; and here, as in the last case, the statement made is abundantly confirmed, both by the MSS. evidence that has come down to us and by the general verdict of modern criticism.

Rather more disputed and rather less precise, though probably not very far wrong, is the repeated assertion of Eusebius, that the last twelve verses of St. Mark's

¹ The passages are quoted by McClellan and Tischendorf *ad loc.*

² See McClellan *ad loc.*

Gospel are not found in "all the copies," "in the accurate copies," in "nearly all the Greek copies." A like assertion is made by Hesychius (or Gregory Nyssen) and by Jerome, but perhaps only quoting Eusebius. On the other hand, Victor of Antioch, writing a little later (about A.D. 425), first remarks that some have thought the conclusion of this Gospel spurious, but then adds that he himself has "put it together with the rest, as the truth is, from accurate copies, having found it in very many, according to the Palestinian Gospel of St. Mark."¹ There is a like division among the MSS. still extant, *κ* and *B* omitting the verses, and *L* presenting them in another form, while the great mass of MSS. contain them. Critical opinion is also divided, but with a decided preponderance in favour of the view that the verses were not part of the original Gospel. The strongest advocates of the genuineness of the passage (Dr. Scrivener, the Dean of Chichester, and Mr. McClellan) do not seem to have thoroughly understood or rightly appreciated the principles of the critical school to which they are opposed.

Another controverted passage is the account of the Agony in the Garden in Luke xxii. 43, 44. Here it is expressly stated by Hilary of Poitiers that "in very many copies, both Greek and Latin," nothing is found written about the Visit of the Angel or the "Bloody Sweat," and Jerome only says that it was found "in some copies."²

On another question, similarly controverted, the omission or retention of the words, "at Ephesus," in the address of the Epistle, which takes its name from that city, Basil alleges the support "of the ancient

¹ See the critical editions.

² Quoted by Tischendorf *ad loc.*

copies" for his omission of the words, although Jerome only a little later seems to be unaware of any variation from the text now received.

For two other very interesting varieties of reading, "give my body *that I may glory*," for "give my body *that I may be burned*" (*καυχῆσωμαι* for *κλυθήσωμαι* or *καυθήσωμαι*) in 1 Corinthians xiii. 3, and "*thou shalt touch Christ*" for "*Christ shall give thee light*" (*ἐπιφάσεις* for *ἐπιφάσει*) in Ephesians v. 14, the Fathers themselves speak of the evidence as more or less balanced.¹

The above are some instances of the division of MSS. into "old" and "recent," "trustworthy and untrustworthy," and of the preference given to the former class; and, so far as we have an opportunity of judging, the verdict of antiquity would seem to be in the main ratified. Not only does it seem that copies described as old were really old (for that, of course, may be taken for granted), but copies described as "good" were really "good," and more to be trusted than their rivals. It can, perhaps, hardly be said that this will hold good throughout; but at least it will hold good in the great majority of cases. To say thus much is at once to place a high value on patristic text-criticism.

But as we have seen in the case of the passage from Irenæus, the ancients were not guided solely by external evidence. There are many places where it is clear that they took account of internal considerations as well. Sometimes these considerations were derived from the context. As, for instance, when Chrysostom,

¹ As to the first, Jerome writes, "Apud Græcos ipsos ipsa exemplaria esse diversa;" as to the second, Chrysostom says, *οἱ μὲν "ἐπιφάσεις" φασί, "τοῦ χριστοῦ," οἱ δὲ "ἐπιφάσει σοι ὁ χριστός,"* and Theodoret finds the latter reading only in "some copies," though both he and Chrysostom prefer it. Jerome rejects the reading "touch" decidedly, on account of the context.

in arguing for the received as opposed to the older punctuation of John i. 3, urges that with the reading, "That which hath been made in him was life," the sense becomes "incomprehensible" (*ἀπεριωρήτων*) and "inappropriate" (*ἄτοπον*), or again, when Origen says that in the next verse "some MSS. read *in Him* is *life*, not without plausibility" (*οὐκ ἀπιθάνως*), or when, on Galatians ii. 5, Jerome maintains that the insertion of the negative gives a better sense, or when the same writer sums up his opinion on the passage just discussed (Eph. v. 14) thus emphatically, "Of one thing I am sure that with the interpretation and context of the passage the sense attributed to it (*i.e.*, by the false reading) does not agree."¹ Sometimes the considerations of probability are drawn from other sources. Origen has two interesting discussions on the various readings in Matthew viii. 28, John i. 28, where the argument turns on questions of topography. In the Commentary on St. John, when he comes to the verse, "These things were done in Bethabara" (or rather, perhaps, Bethara) "beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing," he remarks as follows: "We are not unaware that in almost all the copies it stands, *These things were done in Bethany*, and it seems that this was also the case formerly, and in Heracleon, indeed, we read *Bethany*. But we were convinced that we ought not to read *Bethany*, but *Bethabara*, when we visited those parts in order to trace out the footprints of Jesus and of his disciples, and of the prophets. For Bethany, as the same Evangelist says, the home of Lazarus and Martha and Mary, is fifteen furlongs distant from Jerusalem, while the river Jordan is removed

¹ For the passages in full, see the critical editions.

from it by about 180 furlongs, speaking roughly. Neither is there any place with the same name as Bethany near the Jordan; but they say that Bethabara is pointed out by the bank of the Jordan, and there they relate that John had baptized." Origen goes on to urge that there is an appropriateness in the names. Bethabara, "house of preparation," was naturally applicable to the mission of the Baptist; and Bethany, "house of obedience," was just as suitable for the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. The other passage (Matt. viii. 28) ¹ is then introduced as an instance of the liability of the MSS. to mistakes in names; and this becomes the subject of a very similar argument. "The incident of the swine being driven down a precipice by the demons and choked in the sea is recorded ~~to have~~ taken place in the country of the Gerasenes. Now Gerasa is a city of Arabia, with neither sea or lake near it. And the Evangelists, with their accurate knowledge of all that concerns Judæa, would never have said anything so evidently false and easily refuted. In a few copies we found, *into the country of the Gadarenes*; but to that, too, there is something to be said. Gadara is a city of Judæa, near which are the celebrated hot springs, but there is no lake bordered with cliffs or sea near it. But Gergesa, whence are the Gergesenes, is an ancient city near the lake which is called Tiberias, near which is a cliff bordering the lake, where it is pointed out that the swine were cast by the demons into the sea. Now Gergesa is interpreted to mean, *abode of expellers*, perhaps prophetically so called from the treatment of the Saviour by the inhabitants in beseeching Him to depart out of

¹ Compare the parallel passages, Mark v. 1, Luke viii. 26, 37.

their borders." Other examples of error in names are then adduced from the Old Testament.¹

The influence of Origen was such as to secure a wide diffusion for both the readings which he preferred. In the one case he appears to have had *some* MSS. authority (the reading Bethabara is still found in the Curetonian Syriac), in the other it is not clear that he had any. The reading "Gergesenes," though found in later MSS., may be a conjectural emendation of his own. As a conjecture it does credit to his knowledge of geography and to his desire to obtain minute accuracy in all things pertaining to the text of Scripture, though a modern critic would look with some suspicion upon the reasoning employed.² The *a priori* argument from the significance of the names is one of Origen's weaknesses; nor does his etymology of Gergesene appear to be correct.³

Origen has another elaborate discussion of the reading in Luke xxiii. 45, which also turns upon internal grounds. In commenting on the statement that "There was darkness over all the earth from the sixth hour to the ninth hour," he notices the objection that there is no mention of this darkness in any of the histories, and he also refers to the assertion, made, as it would seem, by the enemies of the Gospel, that the darkness was merely that of an ordinary eclipse. An eclipse, Origen says, it could not be, because an eclipse is caused by the obstruction of the sun's rays by the moon. This never takes place when the moon is full. But Christ suffered at the time of the paschal full moon. In defence it is urged that as the other accom-

¹ *Comm. in Ev. Joann.* tom. vi. c. 24 (ed. Lommatzsch).

² It is, however, accepted by Mr. McClellan (*Commentary ad loc.*) and also by Canon Farrar (*Life of Christ*, vol. i. p. 333 n.)

³ See McClellan *ad loc.*

paniments of the crucifixion were out of the common order of nature, so the eclipse too was not natural but miraculous. Here again the "children of this world" shew themselves "wiser than the children of light." They fall back upon the fact that no writer, Greek or Roman, and not even the chroniclers whose business it is to notice such phenomena, make mention of anything of the kind. Phlegon, indeed, in his chronicles, speaks of an eclipse under Tiberius, but he does not say that it took place when the moon was at the full. This is a real and weighty objection, which, however, Origen feels bound to meet, in order that the believer may have a reason for his faith. "We assert, then, that Matthew and Mark did not say that an eclipse took place at that time, nor yet did Luke, according to many copies, which read thus: 'And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened.' But in some copies the reading is not *there was darkness, and the sun was darkened*, but this, *there was darkness over all the earth, the sun being eclipsed*. Perhaps some one, wishing to speak more plainly, ventured to substitute for *the sun was darkened, the sun being eclipsed*, under the idea that darkness could only be caused by an eclipse of the sun. I prefer to think, however, that the treacherous foes of the Church of Christ substituted the expression that darkness was caused, *the sun being eclipsed*, in order that the Gospel might be plausibly refuted in accordance with the inventions foisted in by those who seek to refute them. I think, therefore, that just as the other signs which took place at the Passion were confined to Jerusalem, so also the darkness spread only over all

the *land of Judæa* until the ninth hour." Thus it was, Origen explains, that the darkness came not to be mentioned by the historians; and he adds further that the cause of it is probably to be sought not in anything to do with the sun, but in a dense pall of cloud.¹

Origen's discussion of this point has been given at somewhat greater length than would have been necessitated by the question of reading alone, because of the help which it affords in defining the conception which previous quotations have led us to form of the character and genius of the man, his quick intelligence, his openness to receive ideas, his intellectual fertility, his comprehensive knowledge, and his thoroughness in dealing with difficulties. No doubt there is again a weak place in the hypothesis, which he not only suggests but prefers, that the text had been intentionally corrupted. We have seen in other instances how unfounded these suspicions of corruption for the most part were. But perfect fairness was hardly to be expected. We must take the portrait that Origen has drawn of himself without extenuating its defects. It is still the portrait of a great and far-reaching mind.

It will have been observed that Origen puts forward a much better hypothesis than that of intentional falsification—a hypothesis of a kind that plays a large part in modern textual criticism—that, namely, of what would now be called an explanatory gloss. He thinks that some Christian, who would probably be a scribe, arguing that darkness is usually caused by an eclipse, substituted the words, the "sun being eclipsed," for "and the sun was darkened." In this particular passage the hypothesis does not seem to be needed; for the

¹ *Comm. in Matt.* tom. x. c. 134.

reading, "the sun being eclipsed," is found just in that group of MSS. (κ, B, C*, L), which best sustains the test of a wide comparative examination of instances; and it seems, on the whole, not at all improbable that the reading so supported is the true one. Still, it is interesting to note that such a hypothesis is put forward, and that eminent text critics like Origen were quite aware of the possibility of corruption from this cause.

I proceed to give a few examples of a different kind of hypothesis, but one that we are also apt to suppose peculiar to modern times.

It has been seen that Irenæus, in accounting for the variety of reading in the "number of beast," suggests that one letter had been mistaken for another. In like manner Tertullian explains a diversity of reading in 1 Corinthians vii. 39 by the excision, "either crafty or accidental," of two syllables.¹ Augustine in several instances points to the resemblance in the Greek words represented by varieties of reading in the Latin. Thus in Numbers xvi. 30, some of the Latin texts had "in visione" (= φάσματι), others "in hiatu" (= χάσματι). In Leviticus xxv. 23, some Latin copies read "[the land shall not be sold] for profanation" (βεβήλωσις), others, "for confirmation" (βεβαίωσις). In Joshua ix. 4 ("They shall take old sacks upon their asses") "some MSS., both Greek and Latin," Augustine says, "have upon their shoulders, but others, which seem to be more trustworthy, have not upon their shoulders, but upon their asses. For the resemblance of the word in the Greek made corruption easy, hence it is that the Latin copies came to differ; for ὤμων and ὄνων

¹ *De Monogam.* c. ii.

are not very different in sound, the first of which means *shoulders*, and the second *asses*." ¹

An instance of greater interest and importance has been preserved from Eusebius in the "Catena" of Corderius. From this it appears that in the so-called *Questiones ad Marinum* Eusebius, besides discussing other difficulties in the account of the Passion, paid attention in particular to the seeming discrepancy between "the third hour" of Mark xv. 23, and "the sixth hour" of John xix. 14. This discrepancy, which is now most commonly removed by the supposition (probable on other grounds) that St. John used a different mode of reckoning time, Eusebius explained as a clerical error (*γραφικὸν σφάλμα*) arising from oversight on the part of the copyists—the letter *I*, standing for 3, being confused with the digamma *F*, standing for 6, through the curving of the upper line in the former (*κυρτωθείσης τῆς ἀποτεταμένης εἰς μῆκος εὐθείας*). The suggestion is ingenious, and but that it is made for a purely harmonistic purpose, might have had a considerable degree of plausibility.

The above examples may perhaps suffice to illustrate the manner in which the ancients dealt with text-critical problems. But the present paper would not be complete unless it contained some further notice of the three or four greater and more sustained critical labours, the fame of which has come down to us. These greater works are the Hexapla of Origen, the Recensions of Lucian and Hesychius, and Jerome's Vulgate.

Origen's Hexapla must have been a marvellous product of that indefatigable industry and careful scholar-

¹ See the passages quoted in Ziegler, *Die lat. Bibelübersetz. vor Hieron.* p. 67.

ship for which its author was renowned. It was no less an undertaking than the presentation in parallel columns of the Hebrew text of the whole of the Old Testament along with the principal Greek Versions. First came the Hebrew in Hebrew characters; then the same in Greek characters; then the Greek version of the Jew Aquila; then that of the Ebionite Symmachus; then the Septuagint; then the version of Theodotion, also, like Symmachus, an Ebionite Christian, and a little his predecessor in point of time, Theodotion's work having been published shortly before Origen's birth, and that of Symmachus during his boyhood. Besides these versions two others, which were anonymous, were introduced in certain books; and on the Psalms a seventh version even was given. The relation of the Septuagint to the Hebrew and to these versions was carefully noted. Words, phrases, and sentences which were wanting in the Hebrew and in the other versions, were marked with an obelus (*i.e.*, a broad stroke, with or without a dot or dots above or below). Words, phrases, or sentences which were wanting in the Septuagint, as compared with the Hebrew, were supplied from the other versions, and the portion thus supplied was marked with an asterisk.¹ In this way care was taken not hastily to shock the readers of the Septuagint—which was held in high honour, and believed itself to have been divinely inspired—by the rude excision of the added and interpolated matter; and at the same time every facility was afforded to the reader for exercising such criticism

¹ Jerome (*Ep. ad Sunniam et Fretel.*) says that the *obelus* might be called "a spit with which to transfix and run through" all not found in the original. See Redepenning, *Origenes*, ii. p. 169 n., and for the different forms of the *obelus*, Field, *Hexapla*, pp. lv. lvi.

as he wished, while the mere juxtaposition of the best versions was an admirable commentary upon the sacred text.

In this way much was done for the intelligent study of the Old Testament. And yet the primary object of the Hexapla was not what would be called in modern times strictly text-critical. Origen was, indeed, well aware of the corrupt condition into which the Septuagint texts of his own day had fallen, and he speaks as if he had found a remedy for this in his Hexapla; but his remedy consisted in furnishing the means of an easy comparison of the Septuagint with other versions and with the original, and not in a systematic critical revision of the Septuagint itself. This labour Origen did not undertake. What he offered was rather the materials of a revised translation than a revised text of a particular existing translation. The Septuagint column in his Hexapla presents a good text, but not the best text attainable. There are no signs that it was based upon an elaborate comparison of MSS., though as Origen was wont to distinguish between good and bad copies of the LXX., there can be little doubt that the MS. or MSS. which he used were such as he himself believed to be in the main trustworthy. As such the Hexaplar text of the LXX. came to be highly valued. The work as a whole filled not less than fifty large volumes, and, so far as we know, it was never copied. But single columns, the Septuagint column especially, were repeatedly copied. The zealous promoters of the best learning of their day, Pamphilus and Eusebius of Cæsarea, took care that this text was widely diffused; and in the time of Jerome it was the typical text of

which the Churches of Palestine boasted their possession.¹ Besides these copies a Syriac version was made direct from the Hexaplar text by Paul, bishop of Tela in A.D. 618, and a portion at least of this Syriac version was further translated into Arabic. The original Hexapla, which was still to be seen in the library at Cæsarea in the time of Jerome, 150 years after the death of its author, perished not very long afterwards—how is not known.² Considerable fragments of it, however, have been recovered indirectly, and these have recently been re-edited in a masterly and sumptuous manner by Dr. Field. There are few recent works of which English scholarship has more reason to be proud.

Origen's treatment of the text of the New Testament was not dissimilar. He did not undertake a professed revision of it. At the same time the MS. that he used no doubt bore marks of his own correction, and copies of this MS. were highly prized. Jerome himself deferred to their authority.³

Besides Origen's Hexaplar text, which, as we have seen, acquired a certain predominance in Palestine, it may be gathered from a passage in the writings of Jerome that two other types of text obtained a considerable local diffusion. "Alexandria and Egypt,"

¹ *Pref. in libb. Paralipom.*

² The common conjectures on the subject are refuted by Field, *Hexapla*, p. xcix. n.

³ See the passages quoted in Redepenning, *Origenes*, p. 184 n. Wetstein appears to have expressed his conviction that "if only a codex of Origen's had come down to us, or if his writings had been preserved entire, this would have done more for the accurate editing of the New Testament than all the other Fathers and codices that have come down to us" (*ib.* p. 185 n.) This, however, is rather an exaggeration if we take into account not only the other Fathers and MSS. but also the valuable remains of Origen's writings which we possess as it is. It is an immense advantage to be able to compare Origen's text with that derived through other channels.

he says, "claim the authority of Hesychius for their LXX. texts, Constantinople, as far as Antioch, approves the copies of Lucianus."¹ About Hesychius very little is known, except that he seems to have put forth a text of the New Testament as well as of the Old, the readings of which are scouted by Jerome. Lucianus of Antioch suffered martyrdom at Nicomedia in A.D. 312. Of his text not much more was known than of that of Hesychius, which is several times mentioned by Jerome along with it, until the publication of Dr. Field's edition of the Hexapla. One of the most striking points in this work is the skill with which the traces of Lucian's text are followed out until it seems to be definitely localized in certain MSS. of the LXX. These MSS. agree with the quotations in Chrysostom and Theodoret, who appear to have used Lucian's recension. The method by which the text of Lucian was formed does not appear to have differed very widely from that of Origen in constructing his Hexapla. At the same time it is marked by some peculiarities.²

The last great systematic work that we have to notice is Jerome's Vulgate. The different parts of this work possess from a text-critical point of view a different value. That upon which Jerome first began and which he first completed was the Gospels. Here he did not venture upon a new translation direct from the Greek, but contented himself with a revision of the Old Latin text already existing, Jerome's complaints of the state of this text remind us closely of Origen's description of the condition in which he found the text.

¹ *Ep. ad Sunniam et Fretel.* above quoted.

² See Field, *Hexapla*, pp. lxxxiv-xciii.

of the LXX. "There are," he says, "as many texts as copies." "Some things have been badly translated from the first, others have been perversely corrected by ignorant meddlers; others, again, have been added or altered by careless scribes."¹ This confusion St. Jerome sets himself, at the instigation of Pope Damasus, in some degree to remedy. His conception of the work grew as the work itself proceeded. He began with the Gospels; and here all he did was to revise the Old Latin translation already in use. The revision was not, however, by any means thoroughgoing. The more obvious blunders and interpolations were removed, but many also were left. For the rest of the New Testament the revision was even slighter still. It appears to have affected the rendering rather than the text. When the New Testament was finished the Psalter was revised upon the same principles. This was about A.D. 383. Not long afterwards Jerome obtained access for the first time to Origen's Hexapla. This made him dissatisfied with his own work, and he brought out a second edition of the Psalter carefully corrected from the Hexaplar text. This edition of the Latin Psalter is commonly known as the "Gallican," from the fact that it was used in the Gallic Churches at a time when the Churches of Italy still retained the older form. The Gallican Psalter is that which now stands in the authorized text of the Vulgate. Other books of the Old Testament were revised in like manner from Origen's text. These, however, were not made public; indeed, they were lost to the author himself through the bad faith of some one whom he does not name.² But both these revisions—the one partial,

¹ *Pref. in quat. Evv. ad Damas.*

² *Ep. cxxxix. ad Augustin.*

the other more thorough—of the Old Latin version were soon to be overshadowed by a bolder undertaking—the veritable Vulgate—Jerome's own translation direct from the Hebrew. It is impossible not to admire the energy with which Jerome set to learn Hebrew when well advanced in life, the courage with which the difficulties of the language were wrestled with and overcome, and the vigour and skill with which the work of translation when once begun was carried through. It is true that in those days there were no scientific grammars, no formulated rules to help the learner in his task. He was dependent entirely upon such traditional knowledge as he could pick up from living teachers; and he was at the mercy of those teachers whatever their own attainments might be. Jerome seems in this, for the time, to have been fortunate. He ended by becoming the first Hebraist among the Fathers, superior to his contemporary, Epiphanius, superior to Theodoret, superior even to Origen. None of these could have done what he did, and that he should have been moved to do it is matter for lasting gratitude.

But what we have to consider now is the value of Jerome's great work not as a translation but as a recension of the text. Here we must distinguish. For the Old Testament the Vulgate is chiefly valuable as shewing that the Hebrew text then current was very similar to that which became formally fixed about a century later by the Masoretic editors. The Gallican Psalter is important not directly for the Hebrew or Greek texts, but mediately as a help to recovering the Hexaplar text. In the New Testament there is, of course, a double element. That which the Vulgate

has in common with the older version has the same authority as that version. It carries us back into the second century, but at the same time it bears traces of the corruption which even in that century was already very extensive. The corrections which Jerome introduced were drawn from Greek MSS. which cannot have been many years younger, and may have been older, than the oldest now extant. In many places the changes made were for the better,¹ in some for the worse, in some old errors were allowed to remain. On the whole, there was a decided relative gain as compared with the version superseded, and a high positive standard was reached for all time. "When every allowance has been made for the rudeness of the original Latin and for the haste of Jerome's revision, it can scarcely be denied that the Vulgate is not only the most venerable, but also the most precious monument of Latin Christianity. For ten centuries it preserved in Western Europe a text far purer than that which was current in the Byzantine Church; and at the revival of Greek learning guided the way towards a revision of the late Greek text, in which the best Biblical critics have followed the steps of Bentley, with ever-deepening conviction of the supreme importance of the coincidence of the earliest Greek and Latin authorities."²

W. SANDAY.

¹ Jerome himself (*Ep.* xxvii. *ad Marcellam*) gives the following examples of the superiority of his revised text over the Old Latin:—Rom. xii. 11, "*Domino servientes*," for "*tempori servientes*;" 1 Tim. v. 19, addition of "*nisi sub duobus aut tribus testibus*;" 1 Tim. i. 15, "*fidelis sermo*" for "*humanus sermo*." These are good examples, but they are, of course, only examples; many others might be quoted.

² Dr. Westcott, Art. "Vulgate" in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*.