

**THE HEBREW TEXT OF THE  
OLD TESTAMENT, REVISED  
FROM CRITICAL SOURCES**

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The Hebrew text of the Old Testament, revised from critical sources by Samuel Davidson

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THE  
H E B R E W T E X T

OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, REVISED FROM  
CRITICAL SOURCES ;

BEING

AN ATTEMPT TO PRESENT A PURER AND  
MORE CORRECT TEXT

THAN THE RECEIVED ONE OF VAN DER HOOHT ;

BY THE AID OF THE BEST EXISTING MATERIALS :

WITH THE PRINCIPAL VARIOUS READINGS FOUND IN MSS., ANCIENT VERSIONS,  
JEWISH BOOKS AND WRITERS, PARALLELS,  
QUOTATIONS, &c., &c.

BY

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OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HALLOU, AND LL.D.



Πολλά μὲν θεῶτες ἔλαττες, μὴ δ' ἄλαστοι μὲν.

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WAREHOUSE FOR BIBLES, NEW TESTAMENTS, PRAYER BOOKS, CHURCH SERVICES, LEXICONS,  
GRAMMARS, CONCORDANCES, AND PSALTERS, IN ANCIENT AND MODERN LANGUAGES ;

15, PATERNOSTER ROW.

## INTRODUCTION.

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It is not the writer's purpose in the present place to give a history of the Hebrew text unprinted, printed, or both. He has done so already in another work;\* and it would be needless to repeat the same things. The collations of Hebrew MSS., and other critical sources by Kennicott and De Rossi, are well known to scholars. But though a considerable time has elapsed since their publications, we have not yet derived any adequate advantages from them. It was intended that they should lead to a standard Hebrew text, differing in not a few places from that commonly received; yet we are still destitute of that to which Kennicott doubtless looked forward as the legitimate result of his great labour.

The criticism of the Old Testament is confessedly far behind that of the New. And it is likely to be so, because the means for advancing it to the same state scarcely exist. All Hebrew MSS. are comparatively modern. Almost all belong to one recension. We have, it is true, more and less ancient ones, as in relation to the Greek Testament; but the greatest antiquity is behind that of Greek MSS. by several centuries. The text of the Old Testament is Masoretic; and all the codices which we are likely to have at our service are mainly Masoretic. All belong essentially

\* A Treatise on Biblical Criticism, exhibiting a systematic view of that science. One volume, octavo, new edition. Black, Edinburgh.

to the same type or class. Besides these, ancient versions exist, carrying up our knowledge of the state of the original far beyond the period to which Hebrew MSS. reach; but such versions require to be used with great caution, being by no means so reliable or authoritative as Cappellus and his followers supposed. Other sources of correction have also their use; but are much less profitable than many scholars have imagined. Peculiar difficulties, therefore, lie in the path of him who would undertake the emendation of the Old Testament text. He may easily believe that the text is more corrupt than it is in reality; attaching undue importance to whatever is prior to, or independent of, the Masoretic period.

But though we fully believe that the Old Testament text can never be brought by the genuine instruments of criticism to the same state of perfection as the New, we are far from thinking that it needs no thorough revision. There are places, not a few, in which it is corrupt. It ought to be corrected; and it is capable of being so through an instrumentality which every sound critic will allow. Inadequate as the supply of materials for this purpose is, no reason exists for not employing them to the extent they are available, and summoning to our aid any resource that may be thought expedient. Among the difficulties of the task belonging to the Old Testament critic, the chief seem to lie in the application of critical conjecture. The higher and lower criticism must be combined; and it is a delicate question how far the former should modify and control the latter. All admit that the former must be employed much more than in the case of the New Testament, because necessity requires it. But in relation to the scope it should have, a problem of no small importance arises. Thus in the case of contradictions between one place of the Old Testament and another, or discrepancies between the New Testament quotations and their Hebrew originals, it is not easy to settle the method or principle of adjustment. It is well known that



with regard to a variety of discrepancies which appear irreconcilable, conjecture must be resorted to, in the absence of all various readings; or else such discrepancies must be left as original. Numerous particulars occur throughout the Old Testament books which clash more or less with one another—statements objectionable or positively wrong appear—and the question is, how they should be dealt with when there is no objective authority for altering or reconciling them. Should we proceed without hesitation to bring them into harmony by the aid of critical conjecture, believing them inconsistent with the true theory of inspiration; or should they be suffered to remain undisturbed, as not militating against a correct theory of the authority belonging to the Biblical books? We allude to this as one particular in the department of Old Testament criticism peculiarly perplexing, separating it from New Testament criticism where the same difficulty is hardly felt amid the abundance of existing materials. In the one, subjectivity comes into active play; in the other, it is properly kept in abeyance.

The importance and necessity of accomplishing for the Old Testament something like what Griesbach did for the New, have been often felt. We mention Griesbach rather than his distinguished successors in the same department, Lachmann and Tischendorf, because the first thorough attempt to revise the text must be more on a par with *his* labours than subsequent ones. The work cannot be done at once, or by one individual. All that can be reasonably expected of him who undertakes it is, that he should accomplish for the Old Testament as much proportionately, and in the same spirit, as Griesbach did for the New; leaving future scholars to follow up his work, or to do better, as Lachmann and Tischendorf have done after the critic of Jena. The editor of a Hebrew Bible on the same plan as Griesbach's New Testament, would possess advantages which *he* did not possess; and could avoid errors into which he fell.

The *textus receptus* of the Old Testament is that in Van Der Hooght's edition, published at Amsterdam in 1705, in two volumes, octavo. Apart from errors of the press which it contains, we do not regard this as the best text which has been published. That of J. H. Michaelis, in two volumes octavo and quarto, Halle, 1720, is superior in every respect, except legibility and beauty of type. The editor used for it five MSS. in the library at Erfurt, and nineteen printed editions. But as the text of Kennicott's edition was printed from that of Van Der Hooght, it was firmly established as *the received* one. Hence the same was reprinted at London, under the superintendence of D'Allemand; at Leipzig, under the supervision of Hahn, Rosenmüller, Landschreiber, and Theile, the last edition of Theile being the most accurate; and at New York, under the supervision of Isaac Leeser and Joseph Jaquett.

The edition of Jahn, which is a very valuable one, exhibits in like manner Van Der Hooght's text corrected in a few places. It appeared in four volumes, octavo, at Vienna, 1806.

In the year 1810, Boothroyd began to issue an edition of the Hebrew Bible in parts, which was completed in 1816. Here an attempt was made to turn the collations of Kennicott and De Rossi to account, by indicating in the notes a revised text, based upon authorities, as well as by occasional marks in the Hebrew text itself. Still the text itself is without points, after Kennicott's; and the editor's judgment cannot be commended. In 1821 appeared Hamilton's *Codex Criticus* of the Hebrew Bible, which is the first attempt, properly so called, to form a standard text of the Old Testament. The text of Van Der Hooght has been adopted as the basis. Every deviation from it, except the correction of typographical errors, is marked by hollow letters, and the word or words as they stand in Van Der Hooght, are exhibited in the outer margin; so that the entire of his text is printed. The inferior margin contains such various readings as were deemed

worthy of notice, though not entitled to a place in the text, being divided into *probably* true (†), and *possibly* true (‡). In the text, each variation is preceded by a numerical figure—1, 2, 3, etc., and followed by two inverted commas ("), to mark how far it extends. The plan is obviously in accordance with that of Griesbach's revision of the Greek text of the New Testament. The contribution towards a standard text furnished in this little work is creditable to the learning and industry of the author. Had he printed the entire Hebrew text, and retained the vowel points, it would have been more valuable.

In the following work, it will be seen that the author has not only gone beyond the plan of Hamilton, but has also departed from it very considerably. The whole of Hamilton's various readings, widely printed as they are, occupy no more than thirty-six pages octavo. It is also evident that he followed Kennicott and others too implicitly, in attaching greater weight to ancient versions for emending the Hebrew text than belongs to them, as well as in depreciating the Masorah. And it may be safely asserted, that all his emendations are unimportant, except in the readings noticed at length in his Appendix, where he is for the most part in error. It is obvious too, that he was neither aware of the extent to which discrepancies appear in the Old Testament text, nor disposed to apply a remedy to remove them, in the majority of cases. In some instances he has made an approach to the use of critical conjecture, by the application of what is termed *the exigence of the place* (*exigentia loci*), that is, what either the grammatical construction or the general meaning of the context requires. The work now before the reader may be regarded as a more ambitious attempt to exhibit a standard text agreeably to the best authorities, and to the most probable view entertained by the writer. It was his original intention to have the Hebrew text printed entire, with such emendations in it as seemed to him desirable, thus presenting a standard text throughout to the eye of