

A Dissertation
concerning the
Antiquity
of the
Hebrew Language,
LETTERS,
VOWEL POINTS,
and
ACCENTS.

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Imo vero censeo, nullius mortalis, licet in Hebraeis literis docte versati, tantum esse acumen, peritiam, perspicaciam, ut prophetae nostro (Jesaiae) longe pluribus locis reddere potuerit genuinum suum sensum; nisi *lectio antiqua synagogica* per traditionem in scholis Hebraeorum suisset conservata, ut eam nunc *Masoretharum punctulis* expressam habemus: quorum proinde studium et laborem nemo pro merito depraedicet. Quod enim in hoc viridario deliciari possimus, ipsis debemus, viris perinde doctis et acri judicio praeditis. - Vitringa, Praesat. ad Comment. in Jesaiam, Vol. 1. p. 5.

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The Preface.

The following Dissertation has been long held by me. It was written at first with no intent to publish it to the world, but was written in my leisure hours for my own amusement, and by way of essay to see how far back the antiquity of the things treated in it could be carried. And what has prevailed upon me now to let it go into the world, is the confidence which some recent writers on the opposite side have expressed. They have contempt for others that differ from them, and the air of triumph they have assumed, as if victory was proclaimed on their side, and the controversy at an end. This is far from being the case. What seeming advantages are obtained, are chiefly owing to the indolence and sloth of men, who read only one side of the question. They write one after another, and take things upon trust, without examining them for themselves, either through lack of ability, or through unwillingness to be concerned about it.

I have been offended to observe the *Jews* called by such contemptuous names, as villains, and wilful corrupters of the *Hebrew* text. It must be owned indeed, that they are very ignorant of divine things, and therefore the more to be pitied. Many of them are, no doubt, very immoral persons; but have we not such of both sorts among ourselves? However, as bad as the *Jews* are, the worst among them, I believe, would sooner die, than wilfully corrupt any part of the *Hebrew* Bible. We should not bear false witness against our neighbours, let them be as bad as they may be in other things. I have never, as yet, seen nor read anything, that has convinced me that they have wilfully corrupted any one passage in the sacred text; ^{1} not even that celebrated one in **Ps 22:16**. Their copiers indeed may have made mistakes in transcribing, which are common to all writings. The *Jews* meeting with variant readings have preferred one to another, which reflected most on their own sentiments. This is not to be wondered about, nor are they to be blamed for it. It is incumbent upon us to rectify the mistake, and confirm the true reading.

It does not appear, that there ever was any period of time, in which the *Jews* would or could have corrupted the *Hebrew* text. They could not have corrupted the text before the coming of Christ, for they would have no desire to do this then. To attempt it would have been to have risked the credit of the prophecies in it. They would have no advantage in corrupting it after the coming of Christ, since it was not in their power to do so without detection. From the beginning of his ministry, the twelve apostles of Christ, the seventy disciples preaching his gospel, besides many thousands of *Jews* in *Jerusalem*, all believed in him over a short time. Can it be supposed that all these were without a *Hebrew* Bible? Particularly, the apostle Paul, who was brought up at the feet of the learned *Rabbi Gamaliel*, who, out of those sacred writings, convinced so many that Jesus was the Christ. He speaks of the *Jews* as having the privilege of the oracles of God committed to them. ^{Ro 3:1,2} Paul does not charge them in the least with the corruption of the text. Neither did Christ or any of the apostles ever charge them with anything of this kind. In addition, there were multitudes of the *Jews* in all parts of the world at that time, with whom the apostles met and converted many to Christ. These *Jews*, like their fathers, had lived in a state of dispersion for many years. Can it be thought, that they would have been without copies of the *Hebrew* Bible? Whatever use they were supposed to have made of the Greek version, it seems incredible, that the *Jews* should have it in their power or inclination to corrupt the text without detection. And here I must quote a passage from *Jerome*, ^{2} who observed, in answer to those who say the *Hebrew* books were corrupted by the *Jews*, what *Origin* said:

“Christ and his apostles, who reproved the *Jews* for other crimes, are quite silent about this, the greatest of all”

Jerome added:

“if they should say, that they were corrupted after the coming of the Lord, the Saviour, and the preaching of the apostles; I cannot forbear laughing, that the Saviour, the evangelists and apostles should so produce testimonies that the *Jews* afterwards should corrupt the text.”

The *Jews* are a people always tenacious of their own writings, and of preserving them pure and incorrupt. For example, they had their *Targums* or paraphrases for hundreds of years before they were known by Christians. It lay in their power to make alterations in them as they pleased. If they had been addicted to such practices, it is marvellous they did not do this. There were many things in them, that Christians were capable of using against them should they come into their hands. In fact, this the Christians have done and yet the *Jews* never dared to make any alterations in them. Had they done any thing of this kind, it seems reasonable that they would have altered the passages relating to the Messiah. Yet those many passages stand fully against them. Indeed, according to *Origen*, {3} some think the *Targums* were known very early, and were used against the *Jews* to prove that Jesus was the true Messiah. This agrees with the sense of the prophets who mention a dispute between Jason, a *Hebrew* Christian, supposed to be the same one as in **Ac 17:5** and *Papiscus, a Jew*. In it Origen states that the Christian showed from the *Jewish* writings that the prophecies concerning Christ agreed with Jesus. Also, Dr. *Allix* {4} asked what could he mean by the *Jewish* writings, but the *Targums*? Although it is possible the writings of the Old Testament may be meant, the apostle *Paul* also proved that Jesus was the Christ. However, if the *Targums* are meant, they do not afterwards appear to have been known by Christian writers for some hundreds of years.

Perhaps the *Jews* are self-condemned. It may be proved out of their own mouths and writings, that they have in some places wilfully corrupted the *Hebrew* text. There are *thirteen* places in which they admit to have changed it. The account of *Ptolemy*, king of *Egypt*, and what they call *Tikkun Sopherim*, the ordination of the scribes, and *Ittur Sopherim*, the removal of the scribes. The first of these, it is true, that they say, {5} when *Ptolemy* king of *Egypt* desired to have their law and seventy men sent to translate it, that they made alterations in the copy they sent. However, it should be noted, that they do not say they made any alteration in their own copies, only in that one they sent to him. It appears also to be a mere fable of the *Talmudists*, and that in fact no such alterations were made. In fact the story was invented, partly to bring into disgrace the *Greek* version of the *Seventy* translators, as though they had made it from a corrupt copy, and partly to settle the minds of their own people. Because the people disapproved of that work, they kept a fast for that occasion. {6} My reason for this is, because the *Greek* version does not correspond with the pretended alterations. There are only two places out of the thirteen, which agree with them. One place is in **Ge 2:2** which the *Seventy* translate, *and on the sixth day God ended his work*. The other place is in **Nu 16:15** which they render, *I have not taken the desire of any one of them*, instead of *one ass from them*. Neither of these passages seem to arise from a bad copy before them, but from some other cause. The first of them is not peculiar to the *Septuagint*; it is the same in the *Samaritan Pentateuch*. The latter plainly arises from the similarity of the letters *Daleth* and *Resh*. There is a third, **Ex 12:40** in which there is some agreement, but not exactly. In writing of this affair of *Ptolemy*, neither *Philo the Jew*, or *Josephus*, made mention of these alterations, in the copy sent to *Ptolemy*, or in the translation of it. They observe, there were no changes made in the sacred writings, from the time in which they were written to the age in which they lived. *Philo* stated: {7}

“For more than two thousand years, the *Jews* never changed one word of what was written by Moses, but would rather die a thousand times, than receive anything contrary to his laws and customs.”

Josephus {8} noted:

“It is clear what credit we give to our writings, for such a long time having passed, yet no one ever dared, to add, or remove or change any thing.”

And *Walton* {9} himself reckons this story about the alterations for the sake of king *Ptolemy*, to be a *Rabbinical* fable. *Jerome* {10} also had gotten a hint of it from one of his *Rabbins*.

The *Tikkun Sopherim*, or ordination of the scribes, is supposed to be the order of *Ezra*, as it is said in the *Masorah* on **Ex 34:11** and on **Nu 12:12** and of his colleagues. Some think {11} it is the order or instruction of the inspired writers themselves. It respects eighteen passages in the Bible. Some smatterers in knowledge might gather from the context that something else is intended than what is written. Hence, they suspect a corruption in the text and take it upon themselves to alter it. Now this ordination of the scribes, as it is called, is so far from encouraging an attempt to make an alteration in the text, that it is just the reverse. It is an ordination that the text should be read exactly as it is written. The words so read, which are the words of the inspired writer, contain an *Euphemism* in them which is decent and becoming to the majesty of God. If they were read as the context might be thought to require them to be read, they would express what is derogatory to the glory of the Divine Being. Thus, in **Ge 18:22**, this ordination occurs as follows. *Abraham stood yet before the Lord*. It might seem to some from the context that the Lord descended to stand before *Abraham*, but since this might be thought derogatory to the glory of God, the inspired writer chose to express it as he has done. The design of what is called the ordination of the scribes, is to establish it, and to admonish that none should dare to alter it. {12} It was to prevent an alteration, not to make one. They made no change at all and far be it from them as *Elias Levita* stated. {13} As for the *Ittur Sopherim*, or removal of the scribes, that is only the removal of a superfluous *Vau* in five places. {14} It was not in the text, and removed from it by them, but it was what the common people pronounced in reading, as if it was there. This reading the scribes forbade in order to secure and preserve the integrity of the text. This prohibition of it to the common people is called "taking it away" although in reality it never was in the text but only pronounced by the common people.

There is a passage in the *Talmud*, {15} produced by some, {16} as a proof that the *Jews* studiously corrupted the scriptures. However, in the end, the answer was this:

“It is better that one letter be rooted out of the law, than that the name of God should be profaned openly;”

Their intent was not that any letter should be taken out of any word in the law to alter the sense of it, but that a lesser command should give way to a greater. An example of this is the law concerning not putting children to death for the sins of their parents. Another example is not suffering bodies hanged on a tree to remain so in the night. This is to give way to a greater command concerning sanctifying the name of God publicly. In the case of *Saul's* sons being given to the *Gibeonites* to be put to death, their bodies continued hanging a considerable time, which is the case under consideration in the *Talmudic* passage referred to. The sense is that it was better that the law in **De 24:16** should be violated, than to allow the name of God to be profaned. This would have been the case if the sons of *Saul* had not been given up to the *Gibeonites* to be put to death for their father's sins, because of the oath of *Joshua* and the princes of *Israel* to them. The falsifications charged against *Jews* by *Justin* and *Origen* do not refer to the *Hebrew* text but to the *Septuagint* version. In spite of that, *Trypho the Jew*, rejected the charge brought by *Justin* as incredible. He stated: {17}

“Whether they have detracted from the scripture, God knows; it seems incredible.”

It has been very confidently affirmed, that there is no mention made of the *Hebrew* vowel points and accents in the *Mishnah* or in the *Talmud*. This is stated by some learned men, who, one would think, were capable of looking into those writings themselves, but did not. They take things upon trust by copying other authors for which they are very culpable, and their mistakes are quite inexcusable. Some men prate about the *Talmud*, a book which they never saw, or about the *Masorah* and *Masoretic* notes, though they be short works they could never have read them. This is intolerable. These men are like the ones the

apostle spoke of on another account. *They understand, neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* What is this *Masorah*? {18} Who are these *Masorites*? What have they done that such an outrageous clamour is raised against them? To me, they seem to be an innocent sort of men who, if they have done no good, they have done no harm. Did they invent the vowel points, and add them to the text, against which there is so much wrath and fury vented? To assert that this is so is the height of folly! {19} If they were the authors and inventors of the art of pointing, and expertly reduced it to certain natural rules of the language, why did they not point the entire Bible at once? Why did they leave so many anomalies or irregular punctuation? If, after viewing their work, and seeing the mistakes they made why did they not correct their work, by removing the incorrect points and put regular ones in the text itself, instead of pointing them in the margin with the true rendering? Is it common for authors to censure their own work in such a manner? If mistakes are made, is it not usual in following editions, to continue such mistakes in the body of the work, and put the corrections of them in the margin? The *Masorites*, had they been the inventors of the vowel points, would never have improperly placed them to a word in the text. They would have put proper ones to the word in the text or would have removed them, and put the word in the margin in a place in which they agree. In **Ge 8:17 14:3** we see that their critical art and notes are not only frequently exercised and made upon the points, but even upon the points without consonants, and upon consonants without points. This would not have become them, had they been the inventors of the points. Note an example of each in **Jer 31:38 51:3**. The truth is that the *Masorites* were not the authors of the vowel points in the Bible, but they considered it of divine origin, and therefore dared not to make any alteration in it. They noted the unusual punctuation, and left it as they found it so that those who came after them would not attempt to alter it either. The punctuation was made before their time, as their work itself shows. *Walton*, {20} an opposer of the antiquity of the points, had this observation:

“The *Masoretic* notes about words irregularly pointed, and the numbers of them, necessarily suppose that the pointing was made long before.”

If these *Masorites* had been in the midst of spending time and study in:

- a) counting the verses and letters of the Bible,
- b) determining how many verses and letters there are in such a book,
- c) if a word lacked a letter, or had them all or had too many or too few letters,

then suppose this is all of trifling consequence, who would be injured by it? The wasting of their time in such trifles is a loss to no one but themselves.

A learned man {21} once said:

“However trifling this scrupulous exactness of the *Masorites* (with respect to the letters in the *Hebrew* text) may appear, yet it suggests to us one observation. The *Jews* were religiously careful to preserve the true literal text of Scripture. Consequently, notwithstanding their enmity and obstinate aversion to Christianity, they are not to be charged with the additional crime of having corrupted the Bible.”

Have not the Christians had their *Masorites* also, {22} who, with equal diligence and faithfulness, have numbered all the Old and New Testament *Greek* version’s verses? Have they been blamed for it? *Jerome* {23} numbered the verses of the book of *Proverbs* and said there were 915, exactly as the *Masora*. Some words over time were thought to have become obscene and offensive to chaste ears. {24} Hence, the *Masorites* placed other words in the margin, which may have been the boldest thing they ever did. The *Karaite Jews* complained, but they never attempted to remove the other words from the text, and put in theirs in their stead. They only placed them where they did so that when the passages were read in public, or in families, the reader might be supplied with words that were thought to be less offensive. The passages are **De 28:27,30 1Sa 5:6,9 Isa 13:16 36:12 Zec 14:2 2Ki 6:25 10:27 18:27**. It would not be

improper, if, in the margin of our Bibles over against the last, and others that have the same word, another *English* word or words were put to be read which were less offensive. And, by the way, from the change of words proposed in those passages, may be drawn an argument in favour of the antiquity of the *Masorites*. This part of their work had to be done in the *Hebrew* language, because the differences of offensive and inoffensive words made it necessary. Certainly these notes were made before the *Talmud* because these notes are mentioned in the *Talmud*. {25} These variations are followed by the ancient *Targums*, by *Onkelos*, and the *Jerusalem Talmud* in **De 28:27,30**. The *Pseudo Jonathan* follows them in **1Sa 5:6,9 2Ki 6:25 10:27 18:27**. The true *Jonathan* follows them in **Isa 13:16 36:12 Zec 14:2**. The true *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* are supposed to have lived in the first century. The word *Sebirim* was sometimes used by the *Masorites* in their notes. This word was conjectured by some to be otherwise read or pointed. The *Masorites* object to this and say that such persons should not presume to make any alteration based on conjecture because they are mistaken. Are they to be blamed for this? What have they done except transmit from age to age the marginal, variant readings. By collating copies which came out of their own observations or comparing different copies which they had. From delivering them down to posterity, they obtained the name of *Masorites*. Can this be thought to be culpable in them? They left the text as they found it. They did not offer to insert a variant reading which was different from the commonly received copy, but placed such readings in the margin so that others might make what use of them they pleased. They may have taken this method to prevent the insertion of them into the text, suggesting, that it was proper to continue them as they found them. Is a Bible with such readings the worse for them? Is a *Greek* Testament to be despised for having the various readings in them, placed by the translators themselves, with references to other scriptures, the less valuable on that account? I think not. Are they not the more valued for them? It may be noted that these *Qeres* or marginal readings of the *Hebrew* text, are followed in many places, by some of the best ancient and modern translators of the Bible. The best ancient *Greek* interpreters, *Aquila* and *Symminchus*, almost always follow them. {26} *Jerome* had knowledge of them, and testified to *Aquila's* following them, in a particular instance. His words are: {27}

“*Asseremoth* in **Jer 31:40** for which, in a *Hebrew* copy it is written *Sedemoth*, which *Aquila* interpreted *Suburbana*.”

This reading is preferred by *Jerome*, {28} as is the marginal reading of **Jer 31:38**. He was the author of the *Vulgate Latin* version which agrees with the marginal readings of the *Masorites* in several places. **Jos 3:16 15:47 2Sa 8:3 2Ki 19:31** All these show the antiquity of these readings. Our own translators and modern interpreters, *Junius*, *Tremellius*, and the *Dutch*, {29} often follow them, as do various other interpreters, both *Papists* and *Protestants*. Indeed, some of these readings and notes are confirmed by the inspired writers of the New Testament. Thus, for instance, in **Ps 16:10** the word rendered *Holy One*, is written with a *yod*, as if it was plural. However, the *Masoretic* note on it is, that the *yod* is redundant, and so the word is to be considered to be in the singular. This is confirmed by two inspired writers, the apostles *Peter* and *Paul*. **Ac 2:27 13:35** Again, in **Pr 3:34** the *Cetib* or textual writing is, *Myyge* *the poor*; but the *Qeri* or marginal reading *Mywne* *the humble* or *lowly*, which is followed by our translators of the text, and is confirmed by two apostles, *James* and *Peter*, **Jas 4:6 1Pe 5:5**. What the *Masorites* have done in this respect is what the learned Dr. *Kennicott* is now doing in several libraries in *Europe*. He is collating the several copies, and collecting from them the variant readings. If I understand his design correctly, he is not forming by his own judgment a new copy of the *Hebrew* text, but is doing with the present copy, what others have done with the New Testament. He is letting it stand as it is, with the various readings placed in the margin as they may be collected, and leaving each person's judgment with some critical rules to form it, to make use of them as they please. When this learned gentleman has finished his large *Masoretic* work, he will be the greatest *Masorite* that any age ever produced. Since not only eight hundred and forty eight variant readings, as *Elias* {30} has reckoned those of the *Masorites* to be, but as many thousands, and more will now appear. I do not say this to depreciate his laborious undertaking. He has my good wishes for the finishing of it, and what little assistance otherwise I can give him in it. I am not so great an enthusiast for the integrity of the present printed *Hebrew* copy, as to imagine that it is entirely clear of the mistakes of

transcribers in every place. To imagine this is to suppose a constant, universal, and miraculous interposition of Divine Providence attending the copiers of it. If only one copier was under such an influence, it would be very extraordinary indeed, if his copy should be used in the first printing of the *Hebrew* Bible. Besides this, the first *Hebrew* Bible that was printed was not printed from one copy, but from various copies collated. There is no reason to believe that the more ancient Old Testament *Hebrew* text should be preserved from the escapades of librarians, than the notoriously many *Greek* copies of the New Testament. Suffering such escapades is no contradiction to the promise and providence of God. With respect to the preservation of the Sacred Writings, all of intrinsic value is preserved in the various copies. What is omitted, or stands wrong in one copy, may be supplied and set right by another. This is a sufficient vindication of Divine providence. This may serve to excite the diligence and industry of learned men, in collating the various copies for such a purpose. The providence of God is remarkably evident in that the textual discrepancies suffered do not affect any doctrine of *faith*, or any moral *practice*, as many have observed. {31} If a more correct and perfect copy of *Hebrew* text should be published from the present collation of manuscripts, we shall be beholden to the *Jews* for it, even though the clamour rises so high against them. Who wrote the manuscripts presently being collated? Was it not the *Jews*? I appeal to the learned collator himself to respond truthfully. He has always, represented the various *Hebrew* copies in his printed Dissertations, whether more or less perfect, as the work of *Jewish* transcribers. Indeed, it seems obvious that from the times of *Jerome* to the age of printing, there were scarcely anyone among Christians capable of transcribing a *Hebrew* copy. That interval was a time of barbarous ignorance. Ignorance prevailed with respect to arts and sciences as well as in languages, especially the *Hebrew*, so much so that it could proclaim him a heretic at once. The study of *Hebrew* lay much neglected, until it was revived by *Reuchlin* and others just before the time of the Reformation. In the above space of time, there might rise up now and then one who had some knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, like *Raymund* in the thirteenth century, the author of *Pugio Fidei*. Friar *Bacon* may have been the first Christian to write *Hebrew* grammar in the latter end of the same century, though since that time, we have had a multitude of them. Almost every dabbler in the *Hebrew* language thinks himself qualified to write a grammar of it. However, there is no reason to believe, as I can understand, that any of our *Hebrew* manuscripts were written by Christians. They were all written by *Jews*, before the age of printing and what have been written since, can be of no account.

I have noticed there is much talk about the *Masoretic* Bible, and about *Masoretic* authority. As for the *Masoretic* Bible, I could never learn there ever was such a one, either in manuscript, or in print, that could with any propriety be so called. Is a Bible with points to be called *Masoretic*? It must be impropriety so called, since the *Masorites*, as has been noted, were not the authors of pointing. Are any so called because they have variant readings, and other notes in the margin? A *Greek* Testament, with variant readings and notes in the margin may also own such a name. Let it be shown, if it can, that there ever was a manuscript or a printed copy of the *Hebrew* text which conformed to the *Masoretic* notes and readings in the margin, or in which these are inserted in the body of the text, call them corrections, amendments, variant readings, or whatever you please. If these cannot be shown, then whatever Bible which does not conform in the text to the *Masora* in the margin, with more authenticity may be called *Anti-Masoretic* than *Masoretic*. As for authority, the *Masorites* never claimed to have had any. Their *Qeri* is not a command to read a certain way, nor even a direction of how to read, much less a correction of the text, as if it were faulty. It is only a suggestion, that it is read in such and such a way in some copies. The word for which q stands in the margin of some Bibles, is not the imperative yrq *Qere* read, but is yrq . It is either the same with ywrq something read, or with hyrq a reading, that is, a variant reading. If the *Masorites* ever pretended to be any authority, as they have not, it is not regarded. Notwithstanding their antiquity, their readings, and what is in agreement with their notes and observations, are not admitted into the text, but are obliged to keep their place in the margin. Where then is their authority? Therefore, as an example, in defiance of what is called *Masoretic* authority, notwithstanding the *Masoretic* not being in the margin, the second *yod* is continued in dyryox **Ps 16:10**. In defiance of the punctuation of the word, which is different from all other places, where the word is obviously plural, as in **Ps 52:9 79:2 132:9 145:10 2Ch 6:41** in all such

places *Segol* is put under *Daleth*. However, the Hebrew letter *Sheva*, as it is in other words, in which the *yod* is redundant also. The word to be read singular, as *Debareca*, **1Ki 8:26 18:36** Demeca, **2Sa 1:16** Yadeca, **1Ki 22:34 Pr 3:27** Abdeca, **1Ki 1:27** Ragleca, **Ec 5:1** with others. This is in defiance of the *Talmud* also. There are only two places {32} I have seen in the *Babylonian Talmud*, where the text is quoted. In both of them the word is without the *yod*. Especially if the first of these two had any authority, the *yod* would not continue in that word.

The different schemes men have formed for reading *Hebrew* without the ancient points, show the necessity of them, and the puzzle they would be without them. Why then need men rack their brains to find out a scheme of reading that language, when there is one so suitable and readily available to them, consisting of vowel points in which the form and position cannot be equalled by any. These points are so contrived, that they take up scarcely any more room than the words do without them. They neither increase the number of letters in a word, nor make it linger, nor give it any unsightly appearance. For instance, *Mascles's* scheme, besides the augmentation of letters, makes the word look very awkward. If it was thought the present vowel points were too numerous, or too great an incumbrance to words, one would think, men might consider reducing their number, and not throw them all away. The great offence taken at them is, that they tie down to a certain determinate sense of the word. They cannot tolerate this, but choose to be at liberty to apply whatever sense upon it they wish.

Much complaining is made of the ignorance of the *Masorites* in their pointing of the text. An example is given of it, in their pointing the word *Lyrus*, as to be read *Coresh* or *Choresch*, though indeed they had no hand in it. Admitting they had, or whoever had a hand in it, there does not appear to be any just blame for it. It is true, and may be thought so that the *Greek* pronunciation of the word must be the rule of punctuation. However the original name is not *Greek*, but *Persic*. In that language, *Persic* signifies the sun. *Ctesias* {33} and *Plutarch* {34} say:

“whether *Cyrus* had his name from the sun being seen at his feet, while sleeping, which he three times endeavoured to catch with his hands, but it slipped from him.”

It is not certain, but according to the *Magi*, this portended a reign of thirty years. {35} The word for the sun, in the *Persian* language, is *Chor* or *Cor*, the same with *Or*, **Job 31:26** and is now called *Corshad*. {36} Hence, the god of the Persians is called *Oromazes*, and sometimes *Oromasdes*, {37} *Hormusd*, and *Ormusd*. This shows the propriety of the first point put to the word, a *Cholem* and not a *Shurek*. It may be observed, there is a familiar word used for the sun in other eastern languages, and it is pronounced *Cheres*, **Job 9:6**. The oriental versions both *Syriac* and *Arabic*, read the word for *Cyrus* in all places in the Bible, with *o*, *e*, and *Shin*, according to the Bible pronunciation. It was usual with the *Persians*, to give men names taken from the sun, as *Carshena*, **Es 1:14** and *Orsines* in *Curtius*. {38} As for the *Greek* pronunciation of the word, it is not unusual with the *Greeks* to pronounce a *Cholem* by an *Upsilon*, as *Izor*, *Lod*, *Beerot*, by *Tyrus*, *Lydda*, *Berytus*. In like manner may the punctuation of *Darius* be vindicated, which is *Darjavesch*, **Da 5:31** in much agreement with which, this name is *Dareiaios* with *Ctesias*. {39} It is a word consisting of four parts, and signifies a great, vast vehement fire. {40} *Esch*, fire, is well known to be the deity of the *Persians*, which was taken in the names of their kings and great personages, as was usual in the eastern nations. So *Vasthi*, the wife of *Ahasuerus*, or *Va-exhti*, means a great fire, **Es 1:9** *Zeresh*, or *Zehar-esh*, the wife of *Haman*, **Es 5:10** means the brightness of fire. It appears in *Astyages*, a king of the *Medes*, *Strabo* says, {41} some people called *Darius*, *Darieces*. *Casaubon* {42} thinks, that *Strabo* wrote $\Delta\rho\alpha\rho\iota\alpha\upsilon\eta\varsigma$, *Dariaoues*, which is near the *Hebrew* punctuation.

In sending the following Dissertation into the world I do not wish to revive the controversy about the subjects in it, nor do I have any expectation of putting an end to it. No doubt some may show an interest in it. Though I may be very unfit to engage further in this controversy, through weight of years upon me, and through the duties of my flock and other work upon my hands, some third person may perhaps arise and

defend what may be thought defensible in it. Should any truly learned gentleman do me the honour, to critic what I have written, I am sure of being treated with candour and decency. However, if I should be attacked by sciolists, I expect nothing but petulance, supercilious airs, silly sneers and opprobrious language. These will be righteously treated with neglect and contempt.

In conclusion, if what I have written should:

- a) merit the attention of men of learning
- b) cause them to think again, even a little
- c) be a means of directing those who are enquiring after these things
- d) engage those who may write on this subject to:
 - d1) think more carefully
 - d2) write with more care, caution and candour
 - d3) with less virulence, haughtiness and arrogance than have appeared in some writings of late

then my end will be in a great measure answered.

- {1} See a good *Defence of the Jews* by F. Simon against Leo Castrius, Morinus and Vossius in his *Disquisit. Critic.* c. ix. and x.
- {2} Comment. in *Esaiam*, c. 6. fol. 14. G.
- {3} *Contra Celsum*, l. 4. p. 199.
- {4} *Judgement of the ancient Jewish Church, &c.* p. 376.
- {5} T. Hieros. *Megillah*, fol. 71. 4. T. Bab. *Megillah*, fol. 9. 1. *Massechet Sopherim*, c. 1. s. 8. fol. 8. 1.
- {6} *Schulchan Aruch*, par. 1. c. 580. s. 3.
- {7} Apud Euseb. *Praepar. Evangel.* l. 8. c. 6. p. 357.
- {8} *Contra Apion*, l. 1. c. 8.
- {9} *Prolegom. Polyglott.* 9. s. 16.
- {10} *Praefat. ad Quaest. Heb.* Tom. 3. fol. 65. c.
- {11} Buxtorf. *Epist. Glassio in Philolog. Sacr.* p. 40.
- {12} Halichot Olam, p. 47, 48. *Praesat. Ben Chayim ad Bibl. Heb.* Buxtorf. fol. 2. Buxtorf. *Talmud. Lexic.* Col. 2631.
- {13} In *Tisbi*, p. 270.
- {14} *Baal Aruch*, in voce *rwje* *Praesat. Ben Chayim ut supra.* Buxtorf. ut supra. col. 1597, 1598.
- {15} T. Bab. *Yevamot*, fol. 79. 1.
- {16} Vid. Morin. de *Sincer. Heb.* l. 1. *Exercitat.* 1. c. 2.
- {17} Justin, *Dialog. cum Tryphone*, p. 297, 299.
- {18} *Plane divina res est Hebraeorum Critica, quam ipsi Massoram vocant.* Is. Casaubon. *Epist. ep.* 390. *Porthaesio*, p. 467.
- {19} *Punctuationem Hebraicam non esse Massor, neque dici, norunt qui nondum aere lavantur.* Owen. *Theologoumen.* par. 4. *Digress.* 1. p. 293.
- {20} *Prolegom.* 8. s. 12.
- {21} Chappelow's *Commentary on Job ix.* 34. See also on ch. xi. 14.
- {22} Vid. *Croi Observ. in Nov. Test.* c. 1. & c. 10.
- {23} *Quaest. seu Trad. Heb. lib. Reg.* 3. fol. 80. 1. Tom. 3.
- {24} Maimon. *Moreh Nevochim*, par. 3. c. 8.
- {25} T. Bab. *Megillah*, fol. 25. 2.
- {26} Montsaucon. *Hexapla Origen.* vol. 2. p. 549.
- {27} *De loc. Heb.* fol. 89. B.
- {28} Comment. in *Hieremiam*, c. 31. 40. fol. 161. F.
- {29} Leusden. *Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Dissert.* 10. s. 9. p. 84.
- {30} *Praesat.* 3. ad Masoret.

- {31} Amamae Antibarb. Bibl. l. 1. p. 20. 22. Bochart. Phaleg, l. 2. c. 13. col. 91, 92. Walton. Prolegom. 6. s. 1. 3. and 7. s. 12. 15 and Considerator considered, p. 127. 162. Capellus de Critica. Epist ad Usser. p. 116. Dr. Kennicott, Disser. 1. p. 11. 301.
- {32} T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 19. 1. et Yoma, fol. 87. 1.
- {33} In Persicis ad Calcem Herodot. Ed. Gronov. p. 687.
- {34} In Artaxerxe, p. 1012.
- {35} Cicero, de divinatione, l. 1. Vid. Hiller. Onomastic. sacr. p. 615. 617.
- {36} Vid. Bochart. Phaleg. l. 1. c. 15. col. 61.
- {37} Plutarch. ut supra, p. 1026. et in Vita Alexandri, p. 682.
- {38} Hist. l. 10. c. 1.
- {39} In Persicis, ut supra, p. 641. 643.
- {40} Hiller. ut supra, p. 635.
- {41} Geograph. l. 16. p. 540.
- {42} Comment. in ib. p. 217.

Chapter 1-Of the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language.

According to the *Targum of Onkelos*, on **Ge 2:7** when God breathed into man the breath of life, that became in man allmm hwr a *speaking spirit*, or soul. *Jonathan* paraphrases it, the soul in the body of man became a *speaking spirit*. Man was endued with a natural faculty of speech, so that he may be defined as well *ab oratione*, a speaking animal, or as a *ratione*, a reasonable one. Speech is proper and peculiar to men. When it is said, man is endued, as all men are, with a natural faculty of speaking, it is not to be understood, as if he was endued with a faculty of speaking some particular language. However, he is understood to have a power and capacity of speaking any language he hears, or is taught. I say hears, because unless a man has the sense of hearing, he cannot express any articulate sounds, or words. Hence such persons who are totally deaf from their birth, they are always dumb, and can never speak any language. *Adam* first heard the Lord God speaking, before he uttered a word himself, as it seemed from the sacred history. The language *Adam* spoke, was probably never received instantaneously, but gradually. He and his posterity improved in language as circumstances and the necessity of things required. This is very probably that which remained to the confusion of tongues at *Babel*, and the dispersion of the people from there. But more of this later.

Some have fancied, that if children were born and brought up in a solitary place where they could not hear any language spoken, that at the usual time children begin to speak, they would speak the first primitive language that was ever spoken in the world. *Psammitichus*, king of *Egypt*, made trial of this by putting two children, newly born, under the care of a shepherd. He charged this shepherd not to speak a word in their presence and that they should be brought up in a cottage by themselves. Goats were to be provided to them at proper times to suckle them. He was commanded to observe the first word spoken by them, when they stopped their inarticulate sounds. Accordingly, at the end of two years the shepherd opened the door of the cottage and both the children with their hands stretched out cried, "*bec, bec.*" He took no notice of this at first, but since it was frequently repeated, he told his lord about it. His lord ordered the children to be brought to him. When *Psammitichus* heard them pronounce the word he enquired what people used it. Upon enquiring, he found that the *Phrygians* called bread by that name. After this it was granted that the *Phrygians* were a more ancient people than the *Egyptians*, between whom there had been a long contest about antiquity. This is the account given by *Herodotus*. {1} However, the *Scholiast* of *Aristophanes* {2} said that it was at the end of three years that the king ordered a man to go in silently to them, when he heard them pronounce the above word. *Suidas* {3} also related, that after the same length of time, the king ordered one of his friends to go in silently, who heard and reported the same. All of them observe, that the story is differently related by others. The children were delivered to a nurse or nurses. These nurses had their own tongues cut out so that they could not speak before them according to *Tertullian*. {4} Yet they all agree in the word spoken by the children. *Suidas* observed, if the former account is true, and it seems most probable, that they were nourished by goats, and not women. Is it any wonder that as they often heard the bleating of the goats, *be-ec, be-ec*, that they would imitate the sound, and say after them *bec*, which in the *Phrygian* language signified *bread*? Food is expressed in *Hebrew* by a word with a similar sound *ḡb beg*. {*Eze 25:7 Da 1:8 11:26*} It might as well be urged in favour of the antiquity of that language. However, this proves nothing!

It may seem pointless to ask what the first language spoken really was. Indeed it must be, if what some say is true, that it no longer exists, but was blended with other languages, and lost in the confusion at *Babel*. In addition, if the *Oriental* languages such as the *Hebrew*, *Samaritan*, *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic*, are all one language, which is more probable, as *Ravius* {5} thought, then they may go under the general name of the *Eastern* language. It must be acknowledged there is a very great familiarity between them, as not only appears from *Ravius*, but from the *Pentaglot* Lexicon of *Schindler* and especially from the *Harmonie Grammars* and *Lexicons* of *Hottinger* and *Castell*. I cannot help being of the opinion that the *Hebrew* language stands distinguished by its simplicity and dignity. The celebrated *Albert Schultens* {6} reckons the *Hebrew*, *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* languages, are sister dialects of the primeval language. I

agree with him, adding that the *Hebrew* is the pure dialect, which the others are a deviation from, and not so pure. I would rather choose to call them daughters, than sisters of the *Hebrew* tongue since, as *Jerome* says, {7} the *Hebrew* tongue is the mother of all of at least the oriental languages. These "daughter" languages are very helpful in assisting the declining state of the *Hebrew* language. The purity of the *Hebrew* appears to have narrowed to the limits of sacred scriptures. Though I cannot agree that *Hebrew* should be stripped of the honoured and dignified position of "mother language," since "she" has the best claim to be the primitive language—as will be seen later. Although *Dr. Hunt*, {8} is of the same mind with *Shultens*, that the above languages are sisters, having the same parent, the *Eastern* language, yet seems to allow the *Hebrew* to be the elder sister. *Shultens* {9} himself asserts, that the primeval language, which was spoken by our first parents at creation, the antediluvian patriarchs after the flood to the dispersion, is the same which was afterwards called *Hebrew*, from *Heber*. It passed from *Heber* through to *Peleg* and *Abraham* to the nation of the *Hebrews* and so the mother language. How it could be both mother and sister, is not easy to say!

Ge 11:1 explains how only one language was spoken by men from *Adam* to the flood of *Noah's* time and continued right up to the dispersion at *Babel*. *The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech*. This is confirmed by the testimonies of several heathen writers, like *Sibylla* in *Josephus*, {10} *Abydenus*, {11} and others. These testimonies continued in that interval without any, or little variation. The longevity of the patriarchs much contributed to this, for *Adam* himself lived to the 10th century, and the flood was in the 17th. *Methuselah*, who died just before the flood, lived upwards of two hundred years in the days of *Adam* and 600 years contemporary with *Noah*. They doubtless spoke the same language that *Adam* did. Even *Lamech*, the father of *Noah*, was born 50 years or more before the death of *Adam* to the days of *Noah*. This is easily accounted for as the same language. If there were any variation, it must have been in the offspring of those of the patriarchs who moved away from them to settle in different parts of the world. Of this however, there is no proof. The separation of *Cain* and his posterity on account of religion, does not appear to have produced any alteration in language. The same language was spoken by one as another. This is evident by the names of the persons in the line of *Cain*, and of places inhabited by them to the time of the flood. No doubt, the same language was spoken by *Noah*, from whom his sons received it, and was continued to the dispersion, which before that was one language. It is the opinion of the *Persian* priests or *Magi* that the time will come when the men of earth will be speaking one language again. {12} If this is so, it is probable it will be the primitive one. What language that was, is the thing to be enquired into. The *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Orikelos* on this passage, add, by way of explanation,

“and they spoke in the holy tongue, in which the world was created at the beginning”

meaning the *Hebrew* language, usually called the holy tongue, and this is the sense of *Jarchi*, *Aben Ezra*, and the Jewish writers in general, as well as many Christians. Most nations have put in a claim for the superior antiquity of their nation and language, the *Europeans* included. *Goropius Becanus* pleaded for the *Teutonic* language, which was spoken in lower *Germany* and *Brahant*, to be the original one, and attempted to derive the *Hebrew* from it. It has been thought he was not serious in it, and only did it to show his *acumen*, and the luxuriance of his imagination. The eastern nations have a much better pretext to antiquity, and most, if not all of them, have put in their claim for it. There was a long contest between the *Egyptians* and *Phrygians* about this matter, as I explained before regarding the Egyptian experiment with two children. The *Armenians* have urged in their favour, that the ark rested on one of the mountains in their country. *Noah* and his posterity continued there for some time, and left their language there. The *Arabs* pretend, that their language was spoken by *Adam* before his fall. Then they claim it changed into *Syriac*, and was restored upon his repentance. It again was said to have degenerated, and was in danger of being lost, but was preserved by the elder *Jorham*, who escaped with *Noah* in the ark. Then it was propagated among his posterity. The *Chinese* make great pretensions to the primitive language. Many things are urged in their favour, as the antiquity of their nation, their early acquaintance with arts and

sciences, and singularity, simplicity, and modesty of their tongue. {13} A countryman of ours, in the last century, published a treatise, called:

“A historical essay, endeavouring a probability that the language of *China* is the primitive language, by *J. Webb*, esq; *London*, 1669, 8vo.”

But as when many candidates contend for a place, they are generally reduced to a few, and, if possible to two. The same method must be taken here. The contest in fact lies between the *Syriac*, *Chaldee*, and *Hebrew*.

The *Chaldee* or *Syriac* language has its patrons for the antiquity of it. *Theodoret* was a *Syrian* by birth, and *Amyra* the *Maronite* (who is not to be wondered at) along with others, made it their favourite study. Even the more judicious *Arabic* writers not only give it the preference to their own language in point of antiquity, but even make it as early as *Adam*. *Elmacinus* says {14} there are *Arabic* historians who affirm, that *Adam* and his posterity spoke the *Syriac* language until the confusion of tongues. *Abulpharagius* said: {15}

“of our doctors, *Basilus* and *Ephraim* assert, that to *Eber* the language of men was one, and that that was *Syriac*, and in which God spoke to *Adam*.”

It must be granted, that there are many things plausibly said in favour of this language being primitive. It must be owned that the *Chaldean* nation was a very ancient one, {*Ge* 15:7} and that the *Syriac* language was spoken very early, as by *Laban*. However, no earlier than the *Hebrew*, which was spoken at the same time by *Jacob*. The one called the heap of stones which was a witness between them *Jegar Sahadutha* in the *Syro-Chaldean* language, and the other *Galeed* in *Hebrew*, which both signify the same thing. What is commonly urged is as follows:

1. The names of a man and woman are as much alike, if not more so, in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* language, as in the *Hebrew*. A man is called *Gabra* and a woman *Gabretha*, which is equally as near as *Ish* and *Ishah* produced to prove the antiquity of the *Hebrew*, **Ge 2:23**. But neither in the *Chaldee* of *Onkelos*, nor in the *Syriac* version of that passage, is it *Gabretha*, but *Ittetha* in the one, and *Antetha* in the other. *Theodoret* {16} indicated the names *Adam*, *Cain*, *Abel*, *Noah*, were proper to the *Syriac* language, but the derivation of them are more evidently from the *Hebrew* tongue.
2. It is closer to the truth, that the primeval common language before the confusion, should remain in the country where the tower was built and the confusion made. This must have been the *Chaldee* language. {17} However, the contrary seemed more naturally the case. That the language, confounded and corrupted, should continue in the place where the confusion was made, and that those who possessed the pure and primitive language should depart from there as in fact they afterwards did.
3. It is observed, {18} that both *Eber* and *Abraham* were originally *Chaldeans*. They were brought up in *Chaldea*, and so must have spoken the language of that country, which therefore must have been prior to the *Hebrew*. However, it should be considered, that not only *Eber* but *Abraham* lived before the confusion and dispersion. For if the confusion was in the latter end of *Peleg's* days, {19} *Abraham*, according to the *Jewish* chronology, must be 48 years of age. {20} He consequently would have possessed the pure and primitive language. It does not appear that either he or any of his posterity, such as *Isaac* and *Jacob*, used the *Chaldee* language, but the *Hebrew* only. It then seems to follow, that it was not the *Chaldee*, but the *Hebrew*, which must have been the language spoken by him, and so the primitive one.

4. It is said, {21} the *Hebrews* sprung from the *Chaldeans*, /**APC Jud 5:6,7** and so the *Hebrew* language must be later than the *Chaldeans*'. This is founded on *Abraham's* having come from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*. However, it does not follow, that because he was born and lived in that country before the confusion of *Babel*, that therefore he spoke the language used in that country afterwards, since he was soon called out of it. It appears that he did not speak the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* language, but the *Hebrew*, as was noted before.
5. It is urged, {22} as highly probable, that the language the second *Adam* spoke, the first *Adam* also spoke. At the time of Christ, he, his Apostles and the Jewish people spoke in the *Syriac* language, as appears from **Mt 27:46 Mr 4:41 7:34**. However, according to some learned men such as *Masius*, {23} and *Fabricius Boderianus*, {24} this was not the ancient language of the *Syrians* and *Chaldeans*. This was a new language, which had its first rise in the *Babylonian* captivity, and was a mixture of *Chaldee* and *Hebrew*. In actual fact the mixture began in the times of the *Seleucidae* in which the *Syrian* kings invaded and distressed *Judea*. Therefore no argument can be taken from it in favour of the *Syriac* being the primitive language.

I proceed now to put forth the arguments that are, or may be used in favour of the *Hebrew* language being the primitive one.

The *First*, may be taken from the alphabet of the tongue itself, which appears to be the first alphabet of all the eastern languages. The *Chaldee* or *Syriac*, *Phoenician* or *Samaritan*, have their alphabets manifestly from it. The names, the number, and order of their letters, and even the form and ducts of them seem to be taken from there, and to be corrupt deviations from it. The *Arabic* language, though the order of its alphabet is somewhat disturbed, yet the names of most of the letters are plainly from the *Hebrew*. They are also taken from the majority of the names of letters in the *Greek* alphabet, from where the *Romans* have taken theirs, and other *European* nations. *Hermannus Hugo* {25} has noted that it is agreed among all, that from the names of the *Hebrew* characters, the letters of all nations have their names. That language whose alphabet appears to be the first to give rise to the alphabets of other tongues, is the most likely to be the first and primitive language. Let it be noted that the *Hebrew* alphabet as it is now, has been traced and proven to be exactly the same as it was in the days of *David* and *Solomon*. It has been seen in **Ps 119**, and in others and in the last chapter of the book of *Lamentations*, which was written before or at the beginning of the *Babylonian* captivity.

The *Second* argument for the antiquity of the *Hebrew* language may be formed from the perfection and purity of it. *Abraham de Balmis* {26} stated the following:

“It is perfect in its letters and in its points. Our language, is the most perfect language, and in its writing the most perfect of all writings of all languages. There is nothing wanting, and there is nothing redundant in it, according to the laws and rules of things perfect and complete.”

It consists of words which most fully and effectually express the nature of the things signified by them. Its roots for the most part are of three letters only and it has no exotic or strange words used in it. Whoever compares it with the *Syriac* or *Chaldee*, will easily perceive the difference as to the purity of them, and that the *Chaldee*, is derived from the *Hebrew*, and is later than that. As *Scaliger* long ago observed {27} κλm *Melech* must be before ακλm *Malca*, the latter being derived from the former. The same may be observed in a multitude of other instances. That which is perfect, pure, and not derived, must be before that which is imperfect, corrupt, and derived. As the philosopher {28} expressed it, that which is vicious and corrupt must be later than that which is incorrupt.

Thirdly, the *Paronomasia* which *Adam* used when he called his wife *woman*, may be thought to be a good proof of the antiquity of the *Hebrew* language. Since it will agree with that language only, *she shall be*

called *Ishah*, woman, because she was taken, *meish*, out of man, **Ge 2:23**. This *paronomasia* does not appear in the *Syriac* version, nor in the *Chaldee* paraphrases of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*. The *Syriac* uses *Gabra* for a man, but never *Gabretha* for a woman, not even in places where men and women are spoken of together. This is shown in the *Syriac* version and *Chaldee* paraphrase of **Ex 35:22 De 2:34** and many other places. The reason for it is plain, the word is expressive of power and might, and so not so proper to be used for the weaker sex. The *Syriac* or *Chaldee* language will not admit such an allusion as is in the text. Just as *Gabra* is used for a man, and not *Gabretha* for a woman, so *Itta*, and *Ittetha*, and *Intetha* or *Antetha*, are used for a woman, but never *Itt* for a man. As we prove that the additions to the book of *Daniel* were written in *Greek* from the *paronomasia* in **APC Sus 1:55,59**, this seems to prove that the language *Adam* spoke to his wife must have been the *Hebrew* language, and consequently, is the primitive one. {29}

Fourthly, the names of persons and places before the confusion at *Babel*, are in the *Hebrew* language, and are plainly derived from words in it. For example: *Adam* comes from *hmda Adamah*, earth, out of which he was formed, as is generally thought. Also, *Eve*, comes from *hyx Chayah*, meaning to live, because she was the mother of all living. *Cain* was from *hncq* meaning to get, obtain, or possess, being gotten from the Lord. *Abel*, came from *lbh Hebel*, or vanity, as his life was, and *Seth*, came from *tv Sheth*, meaning put, or appointed. This was because he was put, set, or appointed to be another seed in *Abel's* stead. {30} The /@Hebrew/@ was used for all the names of the *Antediluvian* patriarchs down to *Noah* and his sons. Their names also, were *Hebrew* with all those before the confusion and dispersion at *Babel* as were the names of places such as the garden of *Eden*, coming from *Nre* meaning delight and pleasure because it was a very pleasant place. Also the land of *Nod* came from *dwn* meaning to wander about because *Cain* was an exile and wanderer in it. These were the names of persons and places before the confusion of tongues which clearly shows what language was spoken before that time, namely, the *Hebrew*, which therefore seems to be the primitive one.

Fifthly, it is noteworthy that the law and the prophets, or the books of the Old Testament, were written in the *Hebrew* tongue. The law was written in it on two tables of stone by the finger of God himself, and the sacred books were written in the same language, under divine inspiration. It then would be reasonable to conclude, that the same language God wrote and inspired the prophets to write in, he himself spoke in to *Adam*. He inspired him with it, or gave him a faculty of speaking it. Therefore it may be concluded that *Hebrew* was the first and primitive tongue.

It now remains only to be enquired into, why this language is called *Hebrew*. It is supposed by some to have its name from *Eber*, the father of *Peleg*, in whose days the earth was divided, and from whom the *Hebrews* sprung and have their name. {31} This opinion has been most generally received. Others think it has its name from *rbē Abar*, to pass over, from *Abraham's* passing over the river *Euphrates* into the land of *Canaan*. This notion *Aben Ezra* makes mention of in **Ex 21:2** and has been espoused by *Theodoret* {32} among the ancients. Indeed, according to *Origen* {33} the word *Hebrew* signifies *passer over*, and *Jerome* agrees along with *Scaliger* {34} and *Arias Montanus* {35} among the modern writers, in which they have been followed by many. The matter is not of very great consequence, but I must confess I am most inclined to agree with the former. As *Augustine* {36} observed before the confusion there was only one language which was common to all. It needed no name to distinguish it because it was enough to call it the speech of man, or the human language. However, when there was a confusion of tongues, and so more than one, it became necessary to distinguish them by names. What name would be more proper for the first language than that of *Hebrew*, from *Eber*, the last man in whose days it was the only one common to all? For it was in his son's days that the earth was divided into different nations who spoke different languages. Moreover, *Shem* is said to be *the Father of all the children of Eber*, **Ge 10:21** or as *Jonathan* paraphrases it, of all the children of the *Hebrews*, or of the *Hebrew* children. As the learned *Rivet* {37} observed, respect is given to the blessing of *Shem*, in opposition to the curse of *Ham*, **Ge 9:25,26**. As *Canaan* sprung from *Ham*, and was the father of the *Canaanites* so *Eber* sprung from *Shem* and was the

father of the *Hebrews*. Later, they were called the children of *Israel* and *Israelites* from *Israel*, and the children of *Judah* and *Jews* from *Judah*. Just as the children of *Eber* or *Hebrews* were from him, with equal propriety the language they spoke may be called *Hebrew* from him, their country likewise, as in **Ge 40:15**. For it does not seem probable that the land of *Canaan* should be called the land of the *Hebrews*, since it was there in *Canaan*, that so early as in the youth of *Joseph*, from a single family being not very respectful, honourable or distinguished sojourners, were travellers, and strangers in it. Rather, it was from *Eber* and his immediate offspring, who would inhabit it. {38} It was that part assigned and divided to them at the division of the earth, {De 32:8} out of which they might be driven by the *Canaanites*. {Ge 13:7 47:1,4} Therefore, it was an act of justice to dispossess them and place the children of *Eber* in it. This may also account for the names of places given in pure *Hebrew* in old *Canaan*, when *Joshua* made a conquest of it, as well as in the time of *Abraham*, since it was the land of *Eber* before it was the land of *Canaan*. If *Melchizedek* was *Shem*, as the *Jews* in general believe, he was king of a city in it. *Elim* his first born had a right to it, claimed by *Chedorlaomer*, his descendant, who attempted the rescue of it from the *Canaanites*, who had usurped power over a certain part of it. Obviously the prophecy of *Balaam*, **Nu 24:24** show that the *Assyrians* are called *Ashur*, from their original progenitor, so the *Hebrews* have the name of *Eber* from him. Therefore the word *Eber* there is rendered *Hebrews* by the *Septuagint* and other translators. So just as they themselves are, so their language, may be called from him. The objections {39} that *Eber* and *Abraham* were *Chaldeans*, and spoke the *Chaldee* language, I have already explained earlier. It is observed, that from the time of *Eber* to *Abraham*, no one is ever called a *Hebrew* from him. This is not surprising since *Eber* lived to the time of *Abraham*, and even to the time of *Jacob*, according to both the chronology of the *Jews* and of *Scripture*. {40}

The basis of the other opinion, that the *Hebrews* and their language have their name from *Abraham*'s passing over the *Euphrates* to the land of *Canaan*, is the *Septuagint* version of **Ge 14:13**. It reads, instead of *Abraham* the *Hebrew*, τῷ περατῇ the transitor or passer over. Perhaps no more is meant by that version than that he was, as *Juvenal* {41} expressed it, *natus ad Euphratem*, born near the river *Perat*, because that is its name in *Hebrew*. Whatever may be said for *Abraham*'s being called a *Hebrew* from such a circumstance, it can scarcely be thought that a whole nation should be denominated from such an action of a remote ancestor, when they themselves did not pass over the same river. Additionally, there were multitudes who passed over the *Euphrates* besides *Abraham*, who were never called *Hebrews*. For example, *Canaan* and his posterity had to pass over it when they moved from *Shinar* to the land which was afterwards called by their name. Indeed, *Erpenius* {42} is of the opinion that the *Canaanites* were first called *Hebrews*, or passers over, by the *Chaldeans* because they passed over the river *Jordan* and settled between the *Jordan* and the *Mediterranean* sea. This was afterwards called the land of *Canaan*. So *Abraham* was not named from his passage into it, but from his dwelling there, and learning their language. Hence, his posterity were called *Hebrews*, and the *Hebrew* language the language of *Canaan*. {Isa 19:18} The same writer thinks, that if the *Hebrews* were only those of the family of *Jacob*, they would not have been so well known to the *Egyptians* as they were in the time of *Joseph*. To all this it may be replied that there is no place in either the sacred or profane writings where the *Canaanites* were ever called *Hebrews*. It is not probable that the pure and primitive language of *Hebrew*, as has been shown, should be left with and continued in the family of the *Canaanites*. It is even more improbable, that *Abraham*, would learn *Hebrew* from the *Canaanites* when he already possessed the first primitive language before the confusion of tongues. Besides, he seems to be called *Abraham*, the *Hebrew*, {Ge 14:13} to distinguish him from *Mamre*, *Eshcol*, and *Aner*, who were *Canaanite*, confederates with him. The *Hebrew* language is not called the language of *Canaan*, because it was first spoken by the *Canaanites*, but because the people of *Israel* spoke it, who for a long time had inhabited the land {43} which bore that name. It need not seem strange, that the name of *Hebrew* should be so well known in *Potiphar*'s family, and to the *Egyptians* in *Joseph*'s time. No doubt *Joseph* told them that he was a *Hebrew*, as he told the chief butler, **Ge 39:17 41:12**. Especially if what has been previously observed concerning the land of the *Hebrews* can it be established, **Ge 40:15** that it was inhabited by *Eber* and his sons, before the *Canaanites* possessed it.

There are other etymologies of the name of the *Hebrews* and their language, which scarcely deserve any notice. An example being that they have their name from *Abraham*. *Artapanus* {44} a heathen writer, says the *Jews* are called *Hebrews* from *Abraham*, but very few have embraced this notion. Others say, they are so called from *Eberhanaar*, meaning "beyond or the *other side* of the river" that is, of the *Euphrates*, where *Abraham* and his father *Terah* dwelt. This is where *Abraham* is said to have been lived. However, there were many besides them, even whole nations who dwelt beyond that river, who were never called *Hebrews*. There are no good reasons given, why these and their posterity and their language should be called *Hebrew* from that place, though many *Jews* and *Christians* have imbibed this notion. {45} *Eusebius*, {46} thought the *Hebrews* had their name from *Eber*, yet the word signifies a passer over, not from one country to the other, but from the vanity of the things of this present world. They were to study divine things, and in this they continually passed on in search of deeper knowledge. Perhaps, after all, the true origin of the name may be taken from the place of *Abraham's* birth, who is first called $\gamma\rho\beta\epsilon\eta$ the *Hebrew*, or rather the *Ibrite*. {Ge 14:13} The place of his birth was *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, as *Aben Ezra* {47} rightly stated, since it is expressly said to be the land of his brother *Haran's* nativity, and therefore most probably his also. *Ur* of the *Chaldees* is called $\alpha\rho\gamma\epsilon\omega$ adbe *Ibra Zeira*. {48} Therefore *Abraham* might have this epithet from the place of his nativity, the *Ibrite*, to distinguish him from the *Amorites*, among whom he then dwelt. This was also where his posterity frequently afterwards had the name of $\omicron\gamma\rho\beta\epsilon$ or *Ibrites*. {Ge 39:14,17 40:15 43:32}

One more thing I wish to note is this. Whether the *Hebrews* and their language were so called:

(a) from *Eber* the father of *Peleg* (b) from *Abar*, to pass over (c) from *Eber*, beyond or the other side of the river or (d) from *Ibra* the native place of *Abraham*,

though custom has prevailed to write the word with an aspiration, *Hebrew* and *Hebrews*, it should be written without one, *Ebrew* and *Ebrews*. Words beginning with *e* usually are. i.e. *Amminadib*, *Immanuel*, &c.

{1} Euterpe sive, l. 2. c. 2. 3.

{2} In Nubes, p. 150.

{3} Voce Βερχισεληνε

{4} Ad Nationes, l. 1. c. 8.

{5} A Discourse of Oriental Tongues p. 38,39.

{6} Praefat. ad Comment. in Job. & in Prov. & Orat. de Ling. Arab. Franeker. 1729 & altera Lugd. Batav. 1732.

{7} Comment. in Soph. c. 3. fol. 100. A.

{8} Orat. de Antiqu. &c. Ling. Arabic. p. 3,49,53. Oxon. 1738. & Orat. de usu Dialect. Orient. p. 2. Oxon. 1748

{9} Vid. Orationes supradictas, p. 6,41.

{10} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. s. 3.

{11} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 14. p. 416.

{12} Plutarch. de Iside & Osir. p. 370.

{13} See the Universal History, Vol. 1. p. 346,347.

{14} Apud Hottinger. Smegma l. 1. c. 8. p. 228.

{15} Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 1. p. 16.

{16} In Gen. Quaest. 59.

{17} Myricaei Praefat. ad Gram. Syro-Chald.

{18} Ibid.

{19} So R. Jose in Seder Olam Rabba c. 1. p. 1. Abarbinel in Pentateuch. fol. 51. 3. Juchasin, fol. 8. 1. Stalshaler Hakabala, fol. 1. 2.

{20} Seder Olam, ib.

- {21} Myricaeus, ut supra.
- {22} Ibid.
- {23} Praefat. ad Gram. Syr.
- {24} Praefat. ad Diction. Syro-Chald.
- {25} De prima scribendi orig. c. 7. p. 65.
- {26} Mikneh Abraham, p. 39. lin. 13,14,15.
- {27} Epist. ad Thompson. Ep. 242.
- {28} Aristot. de Republica, l. 3. c. 1.
- {29} Vid. Bereshit Rabba s. 18. fol. 15. 2.
- {30} Vid. Sepher Costri, par. 1. c. 68.
- {31} Suidas in voce Εβραιοι
- {32} Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 60.
- {33} Comment. in Matth. p. 239. Ed Huet. et in Num. Homil. fol. 19. 129. E. Reuchlin. de verbo mirisic. l. 3. c. 13.
- {34} Epist. ad Thompson. et ad Ubertum.
- {35} Canaan c. 9. 10.
- {36} De Civ. Dei, l. 16. c. 11.
- {37} In Gen. Exercitat. 66. p. 319.
- {38} See Dr. Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 327.
- {39} Erpen. Orat. de Ling Heb.
- {40} Seder Olam Rabba, c. 2. p. 4.
- {41} Satyr. l. v. 104.
- {42} Ut supra.
- {43} Vid. Gloss in T. Bab Menachot, fol. 109. 2. & Abarbinel. in Is. xix. 18.
- {44} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 9. c. 18.
- {45} Vid. Buxtorf. de Ling Heb. Conservat s. 32,33.
- {46} Evangel. praepar. l. 9. c. 6. p. 520.
- {47} Comment. in Gen. xi 28.
- {48} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. l. & Gloss. in Ib.

Chapter 2-Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Letters.

For the last two centuries, it has been a controversy among learned men whether the modern letters used by the *Jews*, and in which their sacred books are now extant, are the same in which the law and the prophets were originally written. This is denied by some. It has been affirmed, that the original letters of the *Hebrews* were written in what is referred to as *Samaritan*, and that the Old Testament books before the times of *Ezra*, after the return of the *Jews* from captivity in *Babylon* were written this way. The letters were then supposed to have changed to the *Merubbah* or square ones since that time. They wrote them in all the sacred books they had and gave the ancient letters to the *Samaritans*. This notion has been embraced upon the testimonies of *Eusebius* and *Jerome*. The foundation of which appears to be a tradition of the *Jews*, and that far from being generally received by them. The former of these in his Chronicle at AM 4740, wrote, that

“It is affirmed, that *Ezra*, by the strength of his memory, compiled or put together the divine scriptures, and that they (the *Jews*) might not be mixed with the *Samaritans* changed the *Jewish* letters.”

This passage of *Eusebius*, as *Marchius* {1} observed, is not to be found in *Scaliger's* editions of his chronicle, neither in the original *Greek*, nor in the *Latin* version. The illustrious *Spanheim* {2} has fully proven that it is spurious, and has been added to the text by some modern hand. Admitting it to be genuine gives it the rank smell of a *Jewish* fable, particularly that *Ezra* compiled the scriptures *from memory*. It is not a difficult thing to account where *Eusebius* got it from, if he had it at all. Ever since he was bishop of *Caesarea*, where both *Jews* and *Samaritans* lived, he could have received this notion from one or the other of them. The *Samaritans* as *Buxtorff* {3} conjectures, were continually boasting of their language and letters, in which, they say, the law was given, a copy of which they pretend to have, written by *Phinehas* the son of *Eleazar*. Some of the *Jewish Rabbins* whom *Eusebius* had for his preceptors and instructors resided there with *Jerome* (who lived a little after *Eusebius*) and who might have taken what he wrote from *Eusebius*. *Jerome* more confidently stated, {4}

“*certumque est, &c.* it is certain that *Ezra* the scribe, and teacher of the law, after *Jerusalem* was taken and the temple rebuilt under *Zerubbabel*, found other letters, which we now use, when to that time the characters of the *Samaritans* and *Hebrews* were the same.”

How could *Jerome* be certain of this, who lived nearly a thousand years after the supposed fact? Do *Ezra* or *Nehemiah* give the least hint of such a change of letters? They related things of much less consequence than this! Do any of the other prophets suggest any thing of this kind? They do not mention the least syllable! Do *Josephus* or *Philo* the *Jew* say anything about it? They do not say one word! They say the very opposite as will be seen hereafter. From where and from whom then could *Jerome* be assured of it except from none other than his *Jews* and their traditions? It is certain he received many things from his *Jews* such as his treatise called *Quaestiones seu Traditiones Hebraicae*, on various parts of the scripture. All or most of them can be found in the *Talmud*, and other writings of the *Jews*, particularly this one. The *Jerusalem Talmud* was finished about the year 230 AD, long enough before *Jerome* for him to have knowledge of it or at least from his instructors. The *Babylonian Talmud* was compiled in his time, though it was not finished before the year 500 AD. The traditions it consists of were well known before, being handed down from one to another, and with which *Jerome's Jews* could and did tell him. The thing which puts this matter out of the question, is a fragment of *Origen* which was published by *Montfaucon*, {5} who also spoke of the letters used by *Ezra* after the captivity. These letters were different from the more ancient ones. They plainly declare from whom he obtained it, and open to us the true source of this notion:

“in some accurate copies, he says, it (the word *Jehovah*) is written in ancient *Hebrew* letters, but not in those now in use, Φαοι γαρ for they say, (that is, the *Jews*) that *Ezra* used others after the captivity.”

So, it clearly appears to be a *Jewish* tradition. Therefore, it is not improbable, that *Jerome* had what he calls *certainty* from this passage of *Origen* as well as from *Eusebius*. He supposed the passage in *Origen* to be genuine and it was confirmed by his *Rabbins*. Hence, all that has been said about this matter comes from the same fountain, a *Jewish* tradition. The tradition respecting it in the *Jerusalem Talmud* {6} is as follows:

“It is a tradition; *R. Jose* says, *Ezra* was fit to have the law given by his hand, but that the age of *Moses* prevented it. Although it was not given by his hand, the writing and the language were. The writing was written in the *Syriac* tongue, {*Ezr* 4:7} and they could not read the writing. {*Da* 5:8} From hence it is learned, that it was given on the same day. *R. Nathan* says, the law was given in breaking, (in rude, rough, and broken letters, supposed to be meant of the *Samaritan*). This agrees with *R. Jose*. However, *Rabbi* (i.e. *Judah Hakkodesh*) says the law was given in the *Assyrian* character (the square letter) and when they sinned, it was turned into breaking, (into a rough, and broken character). When they were worthy, in the days of *Ezra*, it was given to them again in the *Assyrian* character, according to **Zec 9:12**. It is a tradition *R. Simeon ben Eleazer* says, on the account of *R. Eleazer Ben Parta*, who also says, on the account of *Eleazer Hammodai*, the law was written in the *Assyrian* character.”

As it stands in the *Babylonian Talmud*, {7} it is thus expressed:

“*Mar Zutra*, or as others *Mar Ukba*, says, at first the law was given to *Israel* in writing beyond the river, (or the *Samaritan*) and the holy tongue. Again it was given to them, in the days of *Ezra*, in the *Assyrian* writing, and *Syriac* tongue. They chose for the *Israelites* the *Assyrian* writing and the holy tongue, and left to the idiots the writing beyond the river, and the *Syriac* tongue. Who are the idiots? *R. Chasda* says, the *Cuthites* (i.e. the *Samaritans*): what is the writing beyond the river? *R. Chasda* says, the *Libonaeon* writing.”

The *Gloss* explains of large letters, such as are written in amulets and on door posts. Although this account is far from being clear and plain in explaining what these *Rabbins* mean, yet it is the opinion of *R. Jose*, and of *Mar Zutra* or *Ukba*, that the law was written in *Samaritan* characters. If you add *R. Nathan*, as agreeing with them, there are only three on that side of the question. There are four who affirm it to be written in the *Assyrian*, or square characters, namely, *R. Judah* the saint, *R. Simeon*, and the two *Eleazers*. As for *R. Judah*, he was of so much account with the *Jews*, as to outweigh all others. The decision of any matter in debate was, for the most part, according to him. It is to the latter sentiment that the *Jews* now universally agree. There is only one other, *R. Joseph Albo*, on the other side of the question, unless *Nachmanides* can be thought to be a second, which is still doubtful. {8} This seems to be the sole foundation of the above notion, which has prevailed so long among Christian writers. I must remark about the foible of some learned men, that if any thing against a received opinion is produced from the *Talmud*, and other *Jewish* writings, it is at once condemned as a *Jewish* dotage, dream and fable. However, if it accords with a favourite hypothesis, how greedily and tenaciously is it held on to! It is amazing that so many learned men would give into the change of the *Jewish* letters by *Ezra*. It is not likely that the law should be given to the *Israelites*, and the sacred books be written in *Samaritan* letters, that is, in the old *Phoenician* characters, which belonged to the people of *Canaan*. If they were, it seems absurd that the people of the *Jews* could be prevailed upon to part with them, in which their holy books were written! If these holy books were written in the *Samaritan* language then the *Pentateuch*, the books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Samuel*, the *Psalms* of *David* and books of *Solomon*, and the *Prophets* before the captivity, must be written in the same characters. If this be so, is it not strange that no copy of either of these were ever heard of, seen, or known? It is not probable that the books of the Old Testament would be written in two different characters; those before the captivity in *Samaritan* letters, and those after it in the square letters, as they must be according to this hypothesis. It is unbelievable that *Ezra* would attempt such a change of himself without an order from God. This order appears no where. If such a charge against innovations stands in **De 5:2** it seems impossible that he should be able to do it effectively. It could never be in his

power to call in all the copies of the sacred books, which the *Israelites* had carried into the various parts of the world, through their captivities. It is improbable that the *Samaritans*, if possessed of the square character, which is grand and majestic, should ever be prevailed upon to part with it, for a character so ugly, so ill shaped and deformed as the *Samaritan* is. It was not in the power of *Ezra* to oblige them to it neither can it be thought that those ugly and ill shaped letters were formed by the finger of God. Neither was the law written by him in the Samaritan script. However, the contrary is now universally affirmed by the *Jews*. However, this has been asserted with such confidence that those who are of a different sentiment are treated with abusive language which is unbecoming men of learning. If *Scaliger*, *Drusius*, and *Vossius*, were half the men of learning, half divines, even fools or sceptics, but lately I have observed their confidence has abated, and these learned men have begun to think it is far from being a determined point, what were the original characters of the *Hebrews*! The learned authors of the *Universal History* {9} have taken the side of those who are against the *Samaritan's* characters, and are for the square letters being the original *Hebrew*, and have given their reasons for it. I hope to make it appear, at least probable, that the *Jews* always had and retained their letters and characters, and also the *Samaritans* retained theirs. There has been no commutation of letters between them. To begin with, the *Jews* though we cannot come to any certainty of their ancient letters and characters, yet there is a probability that they were the same in which their sacred writings are now extant. This is all I shall attempt to show.

It has been observed that the *Hebrew* alphabet is the first of the oriental languages. It is from it that the rest have received their alphabets but in name only, not in significance. For the significance of the names of the letters in the alphabet only correspond with the figures of the square letter. Indeed, though the Hebrew alphabet is observed in order no less than twenty times in the Old Testament, in the Psalms, chapters 25,37,91,92,99 eight times, Proverbs 31 & Lamentations six times, yet not one name of a letter is given. However, in the *Septuagint* version of the *Lamentations*, made three hundred years before Christ, the names of all of them are given just as they now are. The *Greeks* had the names of their letters very early, even before the writing of the New Testament, in which mention is made of some of them, such as *Iota*, *Alpha*, and *Omega*. In *Josephus* {10} we see the letters, *Theta*, and *Tau*. However, *Herodotus*, {11} who wrote his history between four and five hundred years before the birth of Christ, observed that the *Persian* names ended in a letter which in the *Doric* dialect is called *San*, and in the *Ionic* dialect is *Sigma*. In equally early writings like *Plato*, {12} mention is made of the names of several of the letters of the *Greek* alphabet. *Homer* came some hundreds of years before them. He had the names of the whole *Greek* alphabet in his works, both his *Iliad* and his *Odyssey*. There were several books of them which had their titles from the Greek and were called by their names unless it may be thought, as it is by some, that the titles were added by some ancient *Grammarians*. These names are chiefly taken from an *Eastern* alphabet. Since the Greeks are generally supposed to have at least most of their letters from the *Phoenicians*, they doubtless had the names of them along with them. *Diodorus Siculus* {13} expressly states, that as *Cadmus* brought the letters from *Phoenicia* into *Greece*, so he gave to every one their names, and formed their characters as well. As the *Phoenician*, or old *Samaritan* alphabet consisted of letters of the same name though of a different character from the *Hebrew*, it may reasonably be supposed that the names are derived from there. The language is only a dialect of the *Hebrew* with a little variation and deflection from it, so that the *Hebrews* had these names originally. It cannot be thought otherwise but that when their letters were first invented, and marks made for them, that names were given to them. *Capellus* {14} himself is quite clear and expressed himself in this matter.

“Before the age of *Cadmus* the *Phoenician*, he says i.e. 1450 years before the birth of Christ, the *Hebrew* letters had their own names, and indeed the same with those by which they are now called, as is plain by comparing the *Greek* alphabet with the *Hebrew*.”

Later on he said, the same names of *Hebrew* letters are as they were three thousand years ago. Although they are adopted by others, the names of the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet correspond only in their signification with the figure of the square letters now in use. Hence, according to various writers {15} a

Aleph the first letter, signifies an ox. Its figure resembles the head and horns of one and in so doing, gives the lead to the rest. *b Beth*, represents a house. Its foundation, wall, and roof, with the *Hebrews* was flat. *g Gimel* appears to look like a camel. It has the figure of its long neck and hump on its back. *d Daleth* is like a door, and it describes the lintel and post of one. *h He*, what it signifies and represents is not easy to say. *w Vau*, resembles a hook. *z Zajin*, signifies armour, and has the figure of a dart, spear, or club. *x Cheth* looks like a beast, and its position is like that of a quadruped. *j Teth*, is folding or involving, as is the form of it. *y Jod*, appears as a hand, the small part of it the finger it represents. *k Caph*, appears as the hollow of the hand, or a curvature, as its figure is. *l Lamed* appears to be like a goad. *m Mem*, a spot, as is impressed on the hollow of the hand. *n Nun*, a son, child, or infant, and it is thought to resemble one sitting. *o Samech*, is not unlike a support, the pedestal of a column. *e Ain* appears as an open eye. *p Pe*, looks like an open mouth. *u Tzadde* has the figure of a fork. *q Koph*, appears as a revolution, a semicircle, with a descending line, or a monkey, having the tail of one. *r Resh*, the head, which resembles the back of a head. *v Schin*, means a tooth, and is the figure of three teeth. *t Thau*, a mark, sign, or border, which is the boundary of the alphabet. The figures of the letters of the alphabet, neither in the *Samaritan* characters, nor in any other but the square, will answer to the signification of these names.

As has been shown, the *Hebrew* language was the first and primitive language, and was spoken by *Adam*. It is probable the letters were first invented by him, as some have thought; {16} since as man is not only a speaking, but a social animal, it can hardly be imagined that *Adam* should live so many years, and not consider the advantage of letters to his posterity, and attempt to form such for their use. As arts and sciences were no doubt found out in *Adam*'s time, they could not be well cultivated without the use of letters.

It is certain some of the arts and sciences were in use before the flood. {*Ge* 4:21} Also astronomy very probably existed if there is any truth in the history of the pillars erected by the posterity of *Seth*. This must have made writing necessary as *Huygens* {17} observed. It is also reasonable to suppose that *Adam* himself would be knowledgeable of the sciences, since the very first sight of the stars would lead him into a contemplation of them, and to make future observations of them. By observing their motions, appearance, disappearance, their revolutions, and the distinctions they made of days, months, years, and seasons, he would have to obtain by degrees a considerable knowledge of this science. Some have thought {18} that the knowledge of all natural, celestial, and terrestrial things were infused into him by God and implanted into his nature. In whatever way he understood it, we may reasonably conclude that he would have communicated it to his posterity. This would seem to require the use of letters. *Scaliger* {19} made no doubt of it that the art of printing was known by *Adam*. Though this was not very probable, yet he may have had the knowledge of letters and of the use of them. Indeed the *Indian Brachmans* {20} and the ancient *Druids* {21} and *Pythagoras* {22} taught their doctrines without the use of letters. However, it was not through lack of them, nor through mere neglect of them, but because they had some peculiar ends to answer thereby. If letters were invented by *Adam*, it seems most reasonable that as his language, so his letters were continued to the times of *Noah*. In turn these letters were communicated in the times of *Shem* through the families of *Eber* and *Abraham* to the people of *Israel*. Though the precise character cannot be determined, it is most probable, it was the square character, as being the most expressive, perfect, and elegant. The Jewish writers are quite clear in this matter, that not only the letters but even the points and accents as they now are, were known to *Adam*, being taught to him by God as stated by the author of the book of *Cosri*, {23} and his commentator *R. Judah Muscatius*. {24}

If the pillars of *Seth* could be depended on as genuine, there would be proof not only of the arts and sciences, particularly astronomy, being known and taught, but of letters, and their use in their days. The invention of letters has been ascribed {25} to *Seth* himself. *Josephus* says, {26} the two pillars erected by his posterity continued to his time. One was made of brick and the other of stone, but it is not likely that they survived the flood. The account he gave in **Jud 3:26** of the place where they stood is very obscure and intricate. He called it the land of *Syriad*. It is only speculation {27} and at best, not clear if he meant *Syria*,

the land of *Egypt*, or *Seirath* near *Gilgal*. He does not give us the least hint of what kind of characters were written on them. Indeed if the pillars truly existed, it can scarcely be thought that the characters could be made of what they were. In *Syria* and *Mesopotamia* there are said to be some ancient books of the *Zabians*, which they make a claim to be the patriarch *Seth's*. {28} The *Arabic* writers say {29} that *Seth* was the inventor of writing letters, and showed them in the *Hebrew* tongue. If it is a credible account that is given of *Cainan*, the grandson of *Seth*, it would not only prove that letters were in use in those early times, but that the letters used were *Hebrew* letters. The account was said to be sent by *Alexander* the Great, while he was in *India*, to his master *Aristotle*, and is as follows:

“When I came to such a place in *India*, the natives told me that they had with them the sepulchre of an ancient king that ruled over all the world, whose name was *Cainan*, the son of *Enos*, who foreseeing that God would bring a flood upon the earth, wrote his prophecy of it on tables of stone, and they are here; the writing is *Hebrew* writing.” {30}

Enoch, the seventh from *Adam*, spoke the prophecy referred to by the apostle in **Jude 1:14,15** but whether it was written is not certain although it may have been. The Jews make mention of a writing of his in their ancient book of *Zohar*, {31} and in the *Targum* of *Jonathan* on **Ge 5:24**. He is called the great scribe. Several of the Christian fathers, including *Tertullian*, {32} speak of a book of his as authentic. The *Arabic* writers {33} tell us of pyramids and pillars erected by him, on which he engraved the arts and the instruments of them. Some writers {34} ascribe the invention of letters and writing of books to him, but what characters he wrote and engraved in are not explained. Others {35} have pretended to give the alphabets of *Adam*, *Seth*, *Enoch*, and *Noah*, however, the characters they give neither agree with the *Hebrew* nor with the *Samaritan*. They are mere figments, and are no more to be depended on than in what the prophecy of *Ham* the son of *Noah* was written, out of which *Pherecydes* the *Syrian*, is said to take his allegories. {36} If *Abraham* the ancestor of the Jewish nation was the inventor of letters, as some say, the *Hebrew* characters might bid fair to be the first. Even *Suidas* says {37} they were the sacred letters he invented. It is *Abraham* who is sometimes ascribed as having been the writer of the *Cabalistic* book of the *Jews* called *Jetzirah*. {38} Some of the Jewish *Rabbins* have said, that the grains of manna which fell from heaven around the tents of the *Israelites* in the wilderness were figured very clearly with the character of the *Hebrew* letter *w Vau*. They claim that that is the principal reason why the wondering *Israelites* said one to another *awh wm Man hu*, which being interpreted means, "what means this *vau*?" The reason this figure is used they supposed to be, because the manna was only to be gathered on the *six* days of the week, which the letter numerically signifies. This is to be treated as a mere fable, nor have I seen it in any writings except that of *Gassarellus*. {39} The only advantage I make of it is this: that those *Rabbins* who relate this believed that the square letters were in use before the giving of the law, for so early was the original descent of the manna. Indeed if the *Israelites* did not understand letters before the giving of the law, of what use could the writing of it be to them and to what purpose was it written and brought to them?

It is not only the opinion of some Christian writers {40} that the *Hebrews* received their letters first from *Moses* through the giving of the law to them. However, even *Eupolemus*, a heathen writer, is quoted both by *Clement* of *Alexandria*, {41} and *Eusebius* {42} in affirmation that *Moses* first delivered letters to the *Jews*. This is accepted by many. {43} No matter what the case was, it is certain that the law was written in letters engraved by God himself, and given to *Moses* for the *Israelites*. It is most probable, as has been already observed, that those letters were not the ill shaped letters of the *Samaritans*, *Phoenicians* or *Canaanites*, but were the noble and majestic square letters, in which the books of the law of the prophets are now extant.

Philo the Jew {44} stated that the law was anciently written in the *Chaldee* language, that is, in the *Hebrew* language, properly so called. For, as *Jerome* {45} observed, *Philo* thought the *Hebrew* and *Chaldee* were the same language. It is commonly understood and admitted among the *Jews* {46} that the writing in which

the law was given, is the *Assyrian* language and writing, by which they mean the modern *Hebrew* letters, in distinction from the *Samaritan*. This is apparent by what has been quoted out of the *Talmud* in which they expressly say {47} is what they now write in. This they call the *Assyrian* tongue and writing, from the word *Asher*, which signifies happy and blessed, being happy and blessed above all languages. Another reason is that they received it from their ancestor *Abraham*, who came out of *Assyria*. It is generally agreed among them that they carried it into *Assyria* when they were led captive there, and it came out of *Assyria* {48} with them when the tables of the law were written in it. *R. Jacob* stated, {49} the whole world acknowledges that the tables and book of the law, which were in the ark, were written in the *Assyrian* character, by which they mean the square character. By this he meant the whole *Jewish* nation, a few, only excepted, not more than two or three. {50} If the mediums of proof used by the *Jews* could be admitted as valid, as they cannot, it would undoubtedly make the square letters to have existed as early as the law. They observed that the hooks of the pillars in **Ex 27:10** are called *Vaus*. Neither the pillars or the *Vaus* were changed. From this they concluded that the *Vaus* were made like hooks. In the days of *Moses* the *Vaus* were like those now in use {51} and what is true of one letter is true of the rest. Therefore, they also concluded from **Es 8:9** that their letters were never changed. They have likewise a notion that the letters of the law were perforated, so that the figures of the letters could be seen on both sides. Therefore they observe מ *Mem clausum* and ׀ *Semech* which were in the tables, stood miraculously. {52} These letters were very similar to a circle or an O. They had nothing to adhere to, or subsist by, but must fall, unless supported by a miracle. Although these notions cannot be given any credence, they serve to show the sense of the *Jews*, that the square letters were then in being, since these observations will not agree with the said letters in the *Samaritan* alphabet. Indeed, they say that the forms of letters, vowels and accents were written by God on the tables, as we now have them. {53}

It was usual in ancient time to inscribe things on rocks and mountains, in order to perpetuate them to posterity. **Job 19:24** alludes to this. *Semiramis* engraved her image and a hundred shield bearers by her at the bottom of a rock, and wrote upon the rock in *Syriac* letters, as *Diodorus Siculus* related. {54} Also the *Arabians*, *Phoenicians*, and *Egyptians*, and others, before the use of paper, engraved their sentiments on rocks and stones. {55} *Themistocles* cut letters into stones which the *Ionians* read the next day at *Artemisium*, as *Herodotus* reported. {56} It was a usual practice with the *Danes* to write the acts and deeds of their ancestors in verse, and engrave them in their own language on rocks and stones. {57} There was a journal which was translated by *Dr. Clayton* who was the late bishop of *Clogher*, about forty years ago of a journey from grand *Cairo* to mount *Sinai*. In this journal it is related, {58} that those who made it came to some hills near mount *Sinai*, called the written mountains. They passed an hour together with others on these mountains where there was engraved ancient unknown characters, cut into the hard marble rock, twelve or fourteen feet distant from the ground. Though they had several in company acquainted with the *Arabic*, *Greek*, *Hebrew*, *Syriac*, &c. none of them had any knowledge of those characters. The bishop thought it probable that these were the ancient *Hebrew* characters, which the *Israelites* learned to write after the giving of the law on mount *Sinai*. They quite probably diverted themselves with practising it during their forty years in the wilderness. He was also of the opinion that the ancient *Hebrew* characters might be recovered by them. Therefore he proposed to the Society of *Antiquarians* in *London*, to send a proper person there for that end. He also offered to bear a proportion in the expense of it. If those characters could be recovered, and an alphabet formed out of them, it would doubtless determine what was the ancient figure of the *Hebrew* letters. About a hundred years before the above journal was begun, *Petrus a Valle* and *Thomas a Novaria* transcribed several of them. *Petrus a Valle* had these in his possession, and showed them to some *Jews*, to whom some of the letters seemed to be like to those of the *Hebrew* now in use, others like the *Samaritan*, and others agreed with neither. The actual meaning of them no one could understand. {59} These letters no doubt came from one and the same alphabet in their form and figure originally. If many of them were of the square form, or like those *Hebrew* letters now in use, which seems to be most of them because they were mentioned first, I should think they were all originally written in the same form. Those letters which are now broken and disjointed, are those said to be like the *Samaritan* letters, which are rough and deformed. Hence, the *Jews* called the ׀ *Uewr*, a fracture, broken,

and uneven. Those who agreed with neither were those that were greatly effaced by time. I am the more strengthened in this supposition by the relation of *Cosmas Aegyptius* who travelled into those parts in the sixth century, more than twelve hundred years ago. He testified that he himself saw many stones in the wilderness engraved by the *Hebrews* in *Hebrew* letters, in memory of their journey in it. {60} His account, as *Montsaucon* {61} related it is, that in the wilderness of *Sinai*, and in all the houses of the *Hebrews*, you may see stones fallen from the mountains, all engraved with *Hebrew* letters, as *Cosmas Aegyptius* testified having travelled that way. Now I imagine that this man in that age could have no other notion of *Hebrew* letters than of those then in use with the *Jews*. He added that some *Jews* who read those inscriptions told us, they signified so and so—such a journey—out of such a tribe—in such a year—in such a month—i.e. such and such things were done. The letters which these *Jews* were conversant with, and capable of reading and interpreting, seem more likely to be the *Hebrew* letters, which they then used. They could not have used the *Samaritan* letters because it is unreasonable to suppose they would give themselves the trouble of learning their letters having nothing to do with the *Samaritans*. They were in fact at enmity with them.

The *Jews* {62} dispute about the plate of gold on the forehead of the high priest, on which was engraven *holiness to the Lord*. They argue about the number of lines which were used to write this, but it was never a question with them in what character it was written. *Jerome* said {63} indeed, that the word *Jehovah* was in his time found written in ancient letters, in some *Greek* volumes. It should be acknowledged that *Jerome* was not speaking of *Jewish* or *Hebrew* copies, but of *Greek* volumes. This means that the ancient *Hebrew* letters in the *Greek* versions of *Aquila* and *Theodotion* in *Origen's Hexapla* the word *Jehovah* was written in *Hebrew* characters as hwhy. The *Greeks* did not understand this rendering of the word and being deceived with the familiarity of the characters to some of theirs they read it from the left to the right as *Pipi*. The word was to be read in no other way than *Jehovah*. It was written neither in *Greek* nor in *Samaritan* characters, but in *Hebrew* letters as was sometimes figured. They were sometimes formed by some *Greek* writers who were not expert in the *Hebrew* letters, as may be seen in a specimen of such letters, given by *Montsaucon*. {64} These seem to have been written by some *Grecian* who had little knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue and its characters. The *Hebrew* letter *He*, though *Schindler* would have it to be the *Samaritan He*, resembles the *Greek* letter *Pi*, and the letters *Vau* and *Jod* are very similar in *Hebrew*, and both have some likeness to the *Greek* letter *Iota*. *Drusius* out of *Procopius* on **Isa 59:13** observed, that in his margin were written A. The ev hwhy, that is *Aquila* and *Theodotion* read it that way. He further observed that they formerly wrote the letters of the name tetragrammaton or *Jehovah*, which they read as *Pipi*, because of the similarity of the letters. {65} *Jerome* {66} himself expressed it as best he could in this way. The name of four letters is written with a *Jod* y, *He* h, *Vau* w, and *He* h. However, some did not understand because of the likeness of the characters, when they found it in *Greek* copies because they used to read it *Pipi*. Elsewhere {67} he stated, the name of God, on the plate of gold, was written in *Hebrew* letters, as those previously mentioned. Hence, because as *R. Asariah* {68} understood him to mean, he affirmed that these were engraved in the *Assyrian* character. He conjectured that *Jerome* had seen the plate of gold at *Rome*, which *R. Eliezer ben Jose*, saw there, and that *Jerome* was of the opinion that the present *Hebrew* letters, were then used by the *Jews*. Indeed it is improbable that this plate would be engraved in the *Samaritan*, that is in the letters of the old *Phoenicians* or *Canaanites*, the descendants of *Canaan*. It was the *Canaanite* people the *Jews* were to drive out of their land when this order about the plate was given to *Moses*. It must be owned that *Origen* has the following words in a fragment {69} of his:

“With the *Jews* the name of the four letters (*Jehovah*) is ineffable, which was engraved on the golden plate of the high priest, and with the *Greeks* is pronounced Lord ($\chi\rho\rho\iota\sigma$); but in correct *Hebrew* copies it is written (that is, with its four letters *Jehovah*, which may be believed; but when he adds, it was written) in ancient letters, but not in those now in use.”

If he meant the *Samaritan* letters, as it is supposed he did, this depends on a *Jewish* fable which he explained and which has been already considered.

It seems clear by comparing **Ge 10:3,4** **1Ch 1:6** that the *Pentateuch* was written in square characters now in use with the *Jews*. The persons referred to were called *Riphath* and *Dodanim* by *Moses*, and the author of the book of *Chronicles* called them *Diphath* and *Rodanim* in some copies. *Hemdan* in **Ge 36:26** is called *Hemram* in **1Ch 1:41** and *Hadar* in **Ge 36:39** is called *Hadad* in **1Ch 1:50**. The author of the book of *Chronicles*, through the similarity of the letters \daleth and \resh *Resh* and *Daleth*, puts one for another, and still signify the same persons. In addition, *Riblah* in **Nu 34:11** and as it is read in **2Ki 23:33 25:6, 20, 21 Jer 39:5,6 52:9,10,26,27**, is in **Eze 6:14** called *Diblah*. *Jerome* remarked on this by saying that through the near likeness of the *Hebrew* letters \daleth and \resh *Daleth* and *Resh*, which are distinguished by a small *apex*, it may be called *Deblatha*, or *Reblatha*. *Theodotion* rendered it as *Deblatha* in **Jer 39:5** and this will account for the same man being called *Deuel* and *Reuel*, in **Nu 1:14 2:14**. This can not be owing to the mistakes of late transcribers, since the same differences are observed in most places in the *Septuagint* version. This was so from the beginning, from the writers themselves. Those letters are much more similar in the *Hebrew* than in the *Samaritan* alphabet. The *Samaritan Daleth* has a hook at the back of it. Thus \daleth which strikes the eye at once, and easily distinguishes it from \resh *Resh*, shows that *Moses*, in all probability, wrote in the former and not in the latter. Likewise differences of names in the same books plainly arise from the similarity of the letters \yod *Jod* and \vau *Vau* in the *Hebrew* square characters. When there is no such similarity in the *Samaritan* character (\mem) and ($\3$) (we have approximated these letters to their nearest shape) as to occasion such differences. Hence, *Alvan* in **Ge 36:23** is *Alian* in **1Ch 1:40**. *Vaakan* **Ge 36:11** is *Zephi* **1Ch 1:42**. *Zepho* **Ge 36:11** is *Zephi* **1Ch 1:36**. *Shepho* in **Ge 36:23** is *Shephi* in **1Ch 1:40**. *Alvah* in **Ge 36:40** is *Aliah* **1Ch 1:51**. *Pau* **Ge 36:39** is *Pai* **1Ch 1:50**. *Hemam* **Ge 36:22** is *Homam* **1Ch 1:39**. *Kimchi* on **1Ch 1:6,7** had taken notice of the difference of these several words, as read in *Genesis* and *Chronicles*, and attributed it to the similarity of letters. He observed that let them be read as they may, they are the same names. So *Ben Melech* did the same thing after him.

Aben Ezra has given us another proof of the *Pentateuch* being written in the square character. He stated:

“that the word \hyx in **Ex 1:16** is irregular according to the grammar, and should be \htyx for *He* radical is changed into *Tau*, according to usual construction, as in **Ge 1:30**. So it is, because these letters are nearly alike in writing, there being only the duct of a point between them, which is in the letter *He*, but in pronunciation and name they differ. For at first it is called *He*, and when the point is protracted it is called *Tau*. This is a sign or proof that the writing we now use is *Hebrew*.”

As the *Pentateuch* was originally written in this character, so it continued until the *Samaritan Pentateuch* was written. This plainly appears to be copied from it, by its having the interpolations of *Ezra's* copy in it, which it would not have had, if it had been more ancient than that. If it was first brought to the *Samaritans* as it probably was, by *Manasseh*, when he fled to them, it was in the square character first introduced among them. *Dr. Prideaux* agrees with this, {70} who otherwise is an advocate for the *Samaritan* letter being the ancient *Hebrew* characters. That this was the case, appears from the difference between the *Hebrew* and *Samaritan Pentateuch*, occasioned by the similarity of the letters in the square character, the same with that now in use with the *Jews*, as has been observed by many learned men. {71} This is shown particularly in *Resh* and *Daleth*. {*Ge 19:14 49:10*} (First reference impossible to read accurately in original. Editor.) This shows that the *Pentateuch* was originally in the modern *Hebrew* characters, and which is superior in point of antiquity to the *Samaritan*, which is copied from it. To the same cause, in many instances, is owing the difference between the *Hebrew* text and the *Septuagint* version, namely the similarity of the *Hebrew* letters, as *Jerome* frequently observes. That was made from the *Chaldee* tongue, as *Philo the Jew* {72} affirms. That is the *Hebrew* according to him. *Justin Martyr* {73} also asserts, that *Moses*, under a divine inspiration, wrote his history in *Hebrew* letters, (he does not say in *Samaritan*, though he himself was a *Samaritan*.) Also out of their ancient books written in *Hebrew* letters, the *Septuagint* or 70 elders made their translation. These books in *Hebrew* letters were then preserved by the *Jews* in their synagogues. *Ptolemy* king of *Egypt*, had only at first the *Hebrew* Bible in *Hebrew* letters,

transcribed and sent to him. However, not being able to read and understand it, he sent for men out of *Judea* to translate it into *Greek*. {74} *Tertullian* {75} affirms, that in the *Serapeum*, or library of *Ptolemy*, the translation was to be seen in his time, with the *Hebrew* letters themselves, from which the translation was made. It is certain that as the authors of the *Universal History* {76} have observed, that the *Septuagint* version is of higher antiquity than any of those shekels which are said to have the *Samaritan* characters on them. The oldest of these did not precede the settlement of the high priesthood in the *Asmonean* family, that is not much more than 150 years before *Christ*. Yet this is the main argument advanced in defence of the *Samaritan* letters being the ancient *Hebrew* characters. The validity and genuineness of this statement and about the *Samaritan* shekels will be discussed later.

The argument in favour of the *Pentateuch* being written in the square character, is taken from the similarity of *Daleth* and *Resh* caused the differences in the way these words were read. These words may be used in reference to the second book of *Samuel* which was written in the same character. The penmen of this book seem to be *Gad* and *Nathan*. {1Ch 29:29} The king of *Zobah* is called *Hadadezer* in **2Sa 8:3**. However, *Ezra*, who is supposed to be the writer of *Chronicles*, put *Resh* instead of *Daleth* due to the similarity of the letters. This rendered the spelling of *Zobah's* king as *Hadarezer* in **1Ch 18:3**. Therefore one of *David's* worthies is called *Shammah* the *Harodite* in **2Sa 23:25** but in **1Ch 11:27** he is called *Shammoth* the *Harorite*. Again another difference may be observed, arising from the same cause, the likeness of the letters *h* and *τ*. The same man is being called *Shammah* in one place, and *Shammoth* in the other. It cannot be owing to the mistakes of late transcribers, since the same difference is to be observed in the *Septuagint* version of both places. Besides this, there is another difference in the name. *Harodite* in *Samuel* is written with a *× Cheth*, and the *Harorite* in *Chronicles* with a *h He*. These two letters are also very similar in the square character. However, neither the *He* and *Tau*, nor the *Cheth* and *He* are at all alike in the *Samaritan* character. The same that is called *Haddai* **2Sa 23:30** is *Hurai* or *Churai*, **1Ch 11:32** and another is called the *Gadite* **2Sa 23:36** and *Haggeri*, or the *Haggerite*, **1Ch 11:38**. Through the likeness of *Yod* and *Vau* in the square character, which have none in the *Samaritan*, as before observed, the king of *Tyre* is called *Hiram*, **1Ki 5:1,2** and *Huram* **2Ch 2:3,11**.

Aben Chabib or *R. Moses Schem Tob*, a Jew, who lived about the year 1480, was shown in the kingdom of *Valentia* in *Spain*, a sepulchral monument of a general of *Amaziah* king of *Judah*, on the top of a mountain. Though this monument was much effaced, he was just able to read a verse or two in rhyme and metre, at the end of which was *hyuma.l.* {77} From this he concluded that this kind of verse was in use with his ancestors, when in their own land. He might have concluded also the antiquity of the *Hebrew* letters, as *Buxtorff* {78} observes, could this inscription be thought genuine although it is hard to conceive how a general of *Amaziah*, king of *Judah*, should be buried in *Spain*. If it is so, similar credit must be accounted to the grave of *Adoniram*, the tax gatherer for *Solomon* and *Rehoboam*, in the same country, and found at the same time. If the account could be credited which *Benjamin* of *Tudela* gives of the cave of *Machpelah*, where he says there are six graves, of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *Sarah*, *Rebecca*, and *Leah* opposite to one another. On these graves are written:

“this is the grave of *Abraham*,”

On the grave of *Isaac*, and on the rest, it would prove the very early antiquity of such letters. However, these are not to be depended on.

The *Hebrews* have five letters, which they call double letters, or final ones, because the figure of them is different at the end of a word, from what it is at the beginning of one, or in the middle of one. These letters are *Mem* {79} *Nun*, *Tzade*, {80} *Pe*, and *Kaph*, commonly called *קפוכו Manatzpach*. These must be of very ancient use, they are mentioned in *Bereshith Rabba*, {81} and in both the *Talmuds*. In the one {82} they are said to be used by the seers or prophets, and in the other {83} to be a *Halacab* or tradition of *Moses* from *Sinai*. By an ancient writer {84} they are said to be known by *Abraham*, and indeed they seem to be as early

as the other letters in the alphabet. Hence *Abraham de Balmis* {85} made the *Hebrew* alphabet consist of twenty-seven letters. *Jerome* {86} speaks of these five final letters as early, and in equal use with the twenty-two letters, and so does *Epiphanius*. {87} *Irenaeus* {88} before them, is thought by *Dr. Grabe* to refer to a final *Hebrew* letter when he says:

“God, in *Hebrew*, is called *Baruch* (blessed) which consists of two letters and a half.”

Dr. Grabe's note upon it is, that r is taken for half of the letter x . However, in that he is mistaken, for the word has not that letter, nor has that letter a final, but k , and the final of that does not shorten, but lengthen the letter. If these final letters were from *Moses* and the prophets, then the law and the prophets must be written in the *Hebrew* characters now in use, and not in the *Samaritan* characters because the *Samaritans* have no final letters. In particular the book of the prophet *Isaiah* written 200 years or more before the supposed change of letters by *Ezra*, must be written not in the *Samaritan* character, according to that notion, but in the modern *Hebrew*. Since the *Mem* final, contrary to common usage, appears in the middle of the word hbrMl **Isa 9:6**, it has occasioned much speculation and enquiry among the Jews and Christians, it could not have appeared to be written in the *Samaritan* character in which there are no final letters. It is clear that it was read that way in the ancient *Hebrew* copies of the *Talmuds* {89} where it is written and reasoned upon, and the *Jerusalem Talmud* was finished AD 230. *Jerome* {90} owned the reading of it, and offered a reason for it. He observed that the *Mem clausum*, in the middle of the word hbrMl is so written for the sake of a mystery, to show the exclusion of the Jews from the kingdom of Christ. Even that same *Jerome* made this remark, "it is certain that *Ezra* changed the Jewish letters". If *Isaiah* wrote in the *Samaritan* character, as that change supposes, it would spoil the remark he had made. In this he contradicts himself. This is an observation of *Wasmuth*'s; but I suspect that *Wasmuth* had mistaken *Hieronymus de sanctaside*, a later writer, who wrote a book against the Jews, for *Hieronymus* the ancient father, since I can find no such treatise as is referred to by him in *Jerome*'s works, either genuine or ascribed to him.

The book of *Daniel*, which was written by Daniel, must have been written before the pretended change of letters by *Ezra*. The Jews in the *Talmud* {91} indeed say it was written by the men of the great synagogue, that is the synagogue of *Ezra*. However, the reason given for it is frivolous as in the *Gloss* upon the place, that prophecy was not suffered to be written outside the land (of *Israel*). Could not *Moses* write the *Pentateuch* outside the land and was not *Ezekiel* ordered by God to write among the captives at the river *Chebar*? {*Eze* 1:3 24:2} *Josephus* {92} expressed that *Daniel* wrote his own prophecies, and left them to be read. This is clear from the book itself, **Eze 11:4** and from the words of Christ in **Mt 24:15**. Since this book was written partly in *Hebrew*, and partly in *Chaldee*, I ask, in what letter is it most probably to have been written, in two different characters, (which seems not at all probable) or in one character? It was either written in *Samaritan* or the square letter. It was most probably written in the square letter according to the hypothesis of those who are for the change of letters by *Ezra* and who suppose that was the character used in *Chaldee* and *Babylon*, where *Daniel* lived. It seems most probable for another reason: that it was better known to the *Jews* for whose use that book was written specifically. It should also be considered that the characters of the handwriting *Belshazzar* saw on the wall was written this way as well. The *Chaldeans* could not read it, only *Daniel* the Jew. It is certain the words in **Da 5:25** are *Chaldee*, and had they been written in their own characters, which were the same since called *Samaritan*. This will be shown in the following chapter. The *Chaldeans*, no doubt, could have read them, though they might not have understood the meaning of them. Though we can not be certain of the character, it is probable it was the square character then and now in use with the *Jews*. These were what *Daniel* was accustomed to before he came to *Babylon*, and therefore could easily read the handwriting. Without doubt it was by divine inspiration however, that he gave the interpretation of the handwriting. *Josephus ben Gorion* {93} was quite clear in this:

“The letters were the holy tongue, that is, *Hebrew*, but the writing or words were the *Syriac* tongue, or the *Chaldee*”

Indeed, if these words had been in a different character from that which *Daniel* wrote, it is much he had not given them in it.

Bianconi, {94} the last that wrote on the antiquity of the *Hebrew* letters, is of the opinion that the *Chaldeans* used the same characters as the *Hebrews*. He supposed their language was the same, which he argued from the relation of *Abraham* and *Nahor* being brethren, and from the *Hebrews* descending from the one, and from the other of the *Chaldeans*. Therefore, *Josephus* {95} calls the *Chaldeans* their kindred though perhaps the latter rather sprung from *Arphacsad*. He argues that they understood one another very well in the conversation which passed between *Abraham's* servant and *Nahor's* family, when he was sent there to take a wife for *Isaac*. Also, in what passed between the men of *Haran*, *Nahor's* city, and *Jacob* and between him and *Rachel* and *Laban*, there appeared to be no difficulty of understanding one another. All of this is true, and yet the language might not be exactly the same. The *Chaldee* was a dialect of the *Hebrew* which may have been understood by the *Hebrews*, especially in those earlier and purer times, when the deviation from the *Hebrew* might not have been so great as it became afterwards. However, it is certain that *Jacob* and *Laban* used a different language, at the time of their covenanting together, and gave different names to the heap which was the witness between them, though it had the same sense. This learned writer indeed thinks that the *Chaldean* name of it was given prophetically, and that it was called so by *Laban's* sons afterwards. This was known to *Moses* because he inserted the name in the scriptural account. Be that as it may, it proves the difference of that language in the times of *Moses* at least, and which, at the time of *Hezekiah*, appears to be still more different from the *Hebrew* since the common people among the *Jews* did not understand it. {2Ki 18:26} In the time of the captivity, some of the *Hebrews* who were carried captive, were taught the *Chaldean* tongue. {Da 1:4} The difference between that and the *Hebrew* may be seen in the books of *Daniel* and *Ezra*. Indeed, it is called a language not known nor understood by the *Jews*. {Jer 5:15} From the similarity of the languages, as this writer supposes, he proceeds to argue the similarity of the characters. However probable this similarity may be thought to be, it is not conclusive. The *Syriac* and *Chaldee* are nearer to each other, than either of them are to the *Hebrew*, and yet their characters are very different, at least as we now have them. But what this learned writer seems chiefly to depend on is the instance of *Cyrus* being able to read the prophecies in *Isaiah* concerning himself, according to *Josephus*. {96} *Bianconi* imagines *Cyrus* could not have done this if the *Chaldee* and *Hebrew* characters were not the same. He supposes *Cyrus* understood the *Chaldee* language, and could read that, having been some time in the court of *Darius*. However that is not quite certain, since at his taking of *Babylon* it does not appear that the *Chaldee* tongue was much known in his army. At that time he had given orders, according to *Xenophon* {97} to those who understood the *Syrian* or *Chaldee* language, proclaiming that the inhabitants that were found in the streets, should be slain, but those that stayed indoors should be safe. It was immediately after this, even in the first year of his reign with *Darius*, that he gave liberty to the *Jews* to return to their own land, when he had knowledge of the prophecy of *Isaiah* concerning himself. In addition, why may he not be thought to know the *Hebrew* character as well as the *Chaldee*, supposing them different? He was a very enterprising prince and had conquered many nations. Could he not be master of many languages, as *Mithridates* king of *Pontus* was? Particularly he could have been master of the *Hebrew* language, if what is said by an *Arabic* writer {98} is true. He wrote that *Darius* married the sister of *Zerubbabel*, and his mother also is said {99} to have been a *Jewess*. The entire argument depends on the testimony of *Josephus*, that he did read the prophecy of *Isaiah*, but *Josephus* produced no authority for it. If *Darius* had read this prophecy, it may have been through an interpreter, or it could have been translated for him, supposing him ignorant of the *Hebrew* language and its character. It can hardly be thought that when the same *Josephus* said {100} that *Alexander* was shown the prophecy in *Daniel* concerning himself, that he understood *Hebrew*, or the language in which it was written, but that it was read and interpreted to him. There is a passage I have noted in *Josephus* {101} which makes the *Hebrew* and *Syriac* character very similar. According to him, *Demetrius* the librarian of *Ptolemy*

Philadelphus told the king that, when he acquainted him with the Jewish writings, that their character was very much like the *Syriac* letters. They were pronounced similarly, but according to *Aristaeus*, {102} whose words are also preserved in *Eusebius*, {103} *Demetrius* said very much the contrary. He stated that the *Jews* and the *Egyptians*, had a peculiar character, and a peculiar pronunciation. Some think they used the *Syriac*, but it is not so, because he said it was in another form and manner.

Thus have I traced the *Hebrew* letters and characters from the beginning of them to the times of *Ezra*, when the supposed change took place. What I undertook to show was no more than that it is probable that the ancient letters of the *Jews*, and which they have always retained, are the square letters, as they are commonly called, or those in which the sacred scriptures are now extant. I think I have made it appear to be probable. I lay no stress on the pillars of *Seth*, nor the tables of *Cainan*, and the writing of *Enoch*, nor the letters of the law, and the fancies of the *Jews* about them and the manna, nor upon any inscription of sepulchral monuments. I think it is probable, that it was the first language men spoke. After the confusion of tongues, it was called the *Hebrew* language to distinguish it from others. If there were letters before that confusion, as it seems reasonable to suppose there were, they were such as were proper and peculiar to it, and it is probable that they afterwards continued in it. The alphabet of the *Hebrew* language appears to be the first of the *oriental* languages, from where the rest have the names, order, and number of their letters. It is highly probable that the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet were those of the square kind, since to them only the names of the letters in their signification correspond. It is probable that the law of the ten commandments was written and given in *Hebrew* characters, and not in the *Samaritan*. It is more probable the letters on the written mountains, supposed to be written by the *Israelites* in the wilderness when encamped and on their travels, were of the same kind, rather than of the *Samaritan*, or any other. It is probable, that the letters on the plate of gold the high priest wore on his forehead were the same as are now in use. *Moses* wrote his *Pentateuch* in the same character. *Isaiah* also wrote his prophecies in the same, and that the book of *Daniel*, and particularly the handwriting that terrified *Belshazzar*, were written in the same character. There is no just reason to believe that the *Jews* ever had any other sort of letters, nor that *Ezra* changed their ancient ones for those. As it has already been observed, he never would have done it without a divine command, which it does not appear he had. If he would have changed their ancient characters, it is most incredible that the *Jews* in *Babylon* so forgot their language, and their letters, as to make such a change necessary, which is suggested. {104} Can it be thought that the men who remembered the first temple in its glory, and wept at laying the foundation of the second, **Ezr 3:12** should forget their language and the *alphabet* of it, when the greater part were only fifty two years there? The seventy years are to be reckoned from the fourth of *Jehoiakim*, eighteen years before the destruction of the city and temple by *Nebuchadnezzar*, and their being carried captive by him into *Babylon*. They lived together in groups and did not mix with the *Chaldeans*, nor did they intermarry with them. They conversed together in their own language. They had their sacred books in it to read and they held correspondence with *Jeremiah* by letters at the first of the captivity. They had the ministry and sermons of *Ezekiel* to attend in their own *Hebrew* tongue. {*Eze* 1:1 3:15 33:30 *Jer* 29:1,25,31} It is not true that their language was corrupted in *Babylon*. The captives that returned spoke the language of the *Jews* purely. Only the children of some few, whose fathers had married wives, not in *Babylon*, but women of *Ashdod*, *Ammon* and *Moab*, after the return from the captivity spoke half in the language of those people. For this *Nehemiah* reprov'd them. This shows it was not a general thing. It is certain that the prophets *Haggai*, *Zechariah* and *Malachi* wrote in pure *Hebrew*, as it was in the days of *Moses*. The same roots, prefixes, suffixes, idioms, constructions, and terminations, are to be observed in them as in the *Pentateuch* of *Moses*. Upon the whole, the *Jews* certainly spoke the *Hebrew* language after their return from the captivity, and some when they came back to *Persia* again, in *Nehemiah's* time. Neither had he forgotten it nor neglected it, for walking before *Susa*, the chief city of *Persia*, as *Josephus* {105} relates, he overheard some strangers recently coming from *Jerusalem* discoursing together in the *Hebrew* tongue. Since he understood them, he asked the questions as in **Ne 1:2**. *Nehemiah* himself wrote in *Hebrew*, as did *Ezra*, not only his own books, but the books of *Chronicles*, as is supposed. Indeed, some of the *Psalms* were written after the return from the captivity, as **Ps 126:1-6, 137:1-9** and even as late as the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*. These all were written in pure

Hebrew. *Daniel* in the captivity wrote in *Hebrew* except in what concerned the *Chaldeans* and so did *Ezekiel*. The book of *Esther*, supposed to be written by *Mordecai*, was written in pure *Hebrew*. If *Ahasuerus* was *Darius*, it must have been written many years after the captivity. In his time, it is thought by some that **Ps 138** was written. It is the nature and glory of the *Hebrew* language to have been always constant and invariable, and so it is probable its letters were. The Jews glory in their sacred writings, that no innovation was ever made in them. *Josephus* {106} stated:

“It is manifest in fact in what veneration and credit we have our letters or books. For though so many ages are past, (as almost 3000 years, as he says) yet no man has dared to add any thing to them, nor to take any thing from them, nor to change them.”

It is plain from this, that this historian knew nothing of the change of the letters of the sacred writings made by *Ezra*, which must be an innovation in them.

Philo the Jew {107} stated,

“Our law only is firm, unmoveable, unshaken, sealed as it were with the seals of nature. It remains firmly from the time it was written, until now and it is to be hoped it will remain immortal throughout all ages, as long as do the sun and moon, the whole heaven, and the world.”

The eighth article of the *Jewish* creed states: {108}

“I believe sincerely, that the whole law which is now in our hands, is that which was given to *Moses* our master, on whom be peace, without any change and alteration.”

We have a greater testimony than these, of the unalterableness of the law, and even of the letters in which it was written; the words of *Christ* in **Mt 5:18** *for verily I say unto you, 'till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*. Though it is not to be understood of the bare letter *Yod*, which is sometimes redundant and in some places wanting, as in **1Sa 21:2 2Sa 16:23 21:8 Ne 12:46**. Though it is a proverbial expression, signifying the unchangeableness and unalterableness of the law, with respect to the least precept in it, yet it is founded upon, and is an allusion to the writing of the law, and the letters of it. This does not pertain to any copy of it in any other language, but to the original writing of it, and its letters, in which it had continued to his time, and in which the *Iota* or *Yod* is the least of the letters. Therefore it could have no respect to the *Samaritan* copy of the law, in which language

it is not the least letter, but a very large one. Besides the stroke above, it has three large prongs descending from it, each of which is as large again as the *Hebrew Yod*. This *Hebrew Yod* is so small, that *Irenaeus* {109} called it half a letter. It is to this letter our Lord manifestly referred. This makes it at least highly probable, that the law was originally written not in the *Samaritan*, but in the square *Hebrew* letters, which had unalterably remained to the times of *Christ*. All of this makes it greatly probable, that the Jews only had one sort of letters, which always remained with them, and are what are extant to this day.

Bianconi, {110} the learned writer previously mentioned, is quite clear, that the *Hebrew* letters were never changed by *Ezra*, nor by any public authority. He judges a change to be improbable, since neither he nor *Josephus* makes mention of any such change. He backs up this claim by citing no such change occurring:

- 1) From the great numbers of Jews left in the land at the captivity and the return of multitudes from it.
- 2) From *Ezra's* coming to them with a large number also, and that sixty or eighty years after the return of the first.
- 3) From the prophecies of *Haggai* and *Zechariah*.

- 4) From the shekels in the times of the *Maccabees*, which (supposing such a change would have been not in the *Samaritan*, but in the square character.)
- 5) From the unlikelihood of a conquered people taking the characters of an enemy's language, and abandoning their own, and that after they had been many years delivered from them.

He supposes, that the *Hebrews*, *Chaldeans*, *Phoenicians*, and *Samaritans*, had all the same characters originally, and that there was a change made among the Jews long after the times of *Ezra*, from the ancient character to the square one. It began in the shekels in the time of the *Maccabees*, in which he observed a mixture of the ancient and modern characters. He supposes, that by gradual processes the change was made, from frequent transcribing of the Bible, and daily writing. He thought that the modern letters were gradually formed from use by the swift manner of writing, and for the convenience of it. It does not seem probable that a character should be mended through swiftness of writing, and that such a grand, majestic, regular, and well formed character, as the square letter is, should be produced in that way. It seems rather that the ill shaped, ragged, rough, and deformed *Samaritan* character should spring from there. This seems to be the fact, but not so late as the times of the *Maccabees*, but as early as the division and dispersion of the nations, in the times of *Peleg*. *Gassarellus* {111} observed, that the *Samaritan* characters were corrupted from the *Hebrew*. He added that this is so certain a truth that one would be infinitely perverse to doubt it. According to *Dr. Bernard's* table of alphabets, called *Orbis eruditi Literatura a caractere Samaritico deducta*, it has been thought, that the letters of all nations must have sprung from the *Samaritan* character. However, this seems to depend on much fancy and imagination. I am inclined to think, that all languages are deducible from the *Hebrew* square character, the *Assyrian* first, then the *Phoenician*, from that the *Greek*, and so on. According to *Hermannus Hugo*, {112} the *Hebrew* letters (the present ones) were the first. Next sprung from them the *Chaldean* letters, which he says are scarcely extant. Then the *Assyrian*, or *Babylonian*, the *Syriac*, and the *Samaritan* developed.

The principal argument by which the opposed hypothesis is supported, is taken from some coins or shekels, said to be dug up in *Judea*. They are minted with these words, *Jerusalem the holy*, and *the shekel of Israel*. It is asserted that the form of the letters agree with the *Samaritan*. Since the *Samaritans* had an aversion to the *Jews*, and the ten tribes after their separation from the other two, they had nothing to do with *Jerusalem*, nor had they any esteem for it. Therefore, neither of them can be thought to have minted these pieces. It is inferred from this that they must have belonged to the *Jews* before the captivity, and to the *Israelites* before the separation of the ten tribes. Consequently the *Samaritan* letters, supposed to be the same with those on the coins, were the ancient *Hebrew* characters, and in which the books of the Old Testament were written. This argument is thought to be unanswerable. However, it should be observed, that the letters on the most unexceptionable of these coins differ considerably from those in the *Samaritan Pentateuch*, and seem to resemble, in some instances, the *Hebrew* almost as much as the *Samaritan*. Besides this, the oldest of them do not precede the settlement of the high priesthood in the *Asmonean* family, and were not much more than one hundred and fifty years before the era of Christ, and some of them are dated later. {113} In addition, there are coins, both silver and brass, with inscriptions in the square character, which according to them are much more ancient than the other, and so prove the superior antiquity of the square character to that of the *Samaritan*. *Rab. Azariah* stated, {114} that he saw among some ancient coins at *Mantua* a silver coin which had on one side of it the form of a man's head, and round about it, *King Solomon*, in the holy tongue, and square writing, and on the other side the form of the temple, and round about it written *the temple of Solomon*. *Hottinger* {115} also affirmed, he saw one of the same sort in the collection of the Elector *Palatine*. The *Jews* in their *Talmud*, {116} speak of a *Jerusalem, the holy city*, on the other side, and of a coin of *Abraham's*, having on one side the *Hebrew* words for *an old man* and *an old woman*, and on the other side, those, for a *young man* and a *young woman*. The learned *Christopher Wagenseil* {117} assures us, he had both these coins in his own possession, of which he gives the figures with the words on them, in the square letters. Besides *Abraham*, the *Jews* {118} speak of three more, that coined money: *Joshua*, *David*, and *Mordecai*. The coin of *Joshua* had on one side a bullock, and on the other, a unicorn. {*De* 33:17} The coin of *David* had a staff and scrip on one side, and a

tower on the other. Elsewhere, {119} *Mordecai's* coin had sackcloth and ashes on one side, and *Esther* on the other. There was also a coin of *Moses*. I myself have seen a coin of his, {120} having on one side, his face, with his ears horned, like rams horns, and underneath is the word *hvm*, in square characters, and on the other side, the first commandment, in the same character, *Nl tyhy al and thou shalt have no other God before me*. This exactly agrees with one which *Mr. Selden* {121} had in his possession, found among some rubbish at *Shene* in *Surry*. It will be said that these coins are spurious. The same may be said of those that have the *Samaritan* characters on them. There is no reason to believe that any of those shekels or coins which have *Jerusalem the holy* on them, and *the shekel of Israel*, are indisputably genuine. *Ottius* and *Reland*, who have applied themselves closely to the study of those coins, have as good as confessed that they are not genuine. Also, *Spanheim*, by what he has said, appears to be in very great doubt about it. {122} The celebrated *Charles Patin* is famous for his skill in coins and medals. He had free access to the cabinets of all the princes in *Europe*. He declared many years ago to the learned *Christopher Wagenseil* {123} with great assurance, that he never found in those collections, a *Hebrew* coin which was not manifestly spurious. Therefore these coins are not to be depended on, nor can any sufficient argument be drawn from them in favour of any hypothesis. Moreover, it has been said that the ancient *Hebrew* or *Samaritan* characters, were given to the *Cuthites* or *Samaritans*, and left with them out of hatred to them. The square letters in the times of *Ezra* were chosen, taken, and retained by the *Jews* for their use. How then did it come to be that the *Samaritan* characters were reassumed and inscribed on the coins three hundred years after that? Namely, they were inscribed on those of *Simon* the high priest, of *Jonathan* his brother, and of *John Hyrcanus*, his son, as the coins published by *Mr. Swinton* show. {124} It was by *John Hyrcanus*, the last of these, that *Samaria* was destroyed, and the temple in *Gerizim* demolished, after it had stood two hundred years, and the *Samaritans* were made tributary to the *Jews*. It is observable, that upon the coin of *Hyrcanus*, on one side are *Samaritan* letters, and on the other *Greek* letters. This was usual with the *Carthaginians*, *Syrians*, and *Sidonians*. There is also an instance of it in a coin of *Demetrius*. {125} This by the way, furnishes us with an answer to a question of *Bianconi* {126} who asks, "Why did the *Maccabees* not put *Greek* letters on their money?" This was a well known custom in that age and common to all the east, for it seems he never saw any. He adds, that *Jewish* coins with two sorts of letters were never seen. From the different letters on the coin of *Hyrcanus*: from the one, it can no more be inferred, that *Samaritan* letters were in use among the *Jews*, than it can be inferred from the other, that *Greek* letters were used. Although I profess no skill in coins, I should think that the reason for those different characters designed by *Hyrcanus* was to insult both people, to triumph over them, and to perpetuate his conquests over the *Samaritans* and the *Greeks*, or *Syro-Macedonians*. However, it appears, that from these coins no argument can be taken to support the hypothesis, that the ancient *Hebrew* characters were the *Samaritan*. It is indeed inconsistent that those letters were left to the *Samaritans*, and others taken by the *Jews*. There is no need to give into the notion that a twofold character was in use by the *Jews*: that the square character was for sacred use in their holy books, and the *Samaritan* character used for coins and civil affairs. Some *Jews* {127} and *Christians* {128} seem to have been led to believe this by the above coins. Although the *Egyptians* {129} had their sacred characters and their common ones, as did the *Greeks*, {130} the *Jews* did not. The *Jewish* priests had no juggling tricks to play, as the priests of *Egypt* and *Greece* had. Though some later *Jews* have given into the notion of a double character, as in use formerly, yet it is not mentioned in their ancient writings. The only place I have met with this notion is in the *Targum* of *Jonathan*, on **Ge 32:2**:

“...and called the name of the place in the language of the holy house, *Mahanaim*.”

This is not to be rendered the language of the house of the sanctuary, or the temple, as by some, since that is usually called, *vdqm tyb* or *avdqwm*, as in **Ge 28:17,22** and not *avdwq tyb* as here, but the language of the holy house, or family, the people of God, that is, the *Hebrew* tongue. In addition, an ancient writer among the *Christians*, *Irenaeus* {131} stated:

“The ancient and first letters of the *Hebrews*, and called *Sacerdotal*, are ten in number.”

It does not appear that he means to distinguish them from any other letters or characters, used by the *Hebrews*. Besides, he speaks only of ten, and what he means is not easy to say. However, by them he cannot mean the *Samaritan* letters, because among these letters he reckons the *Yod*, which he calls half a letter, which cannot agree with the *Samaritan Yod*, but it does agree with that of the square character.

- {1} Exercitat. in Matt. v. 18. s. 6. p. 67.
- {2} Apud Carpzov. Critic. par. I. p. 240.
- {3} De Literis Heb. s. 61.
- {4} Praefat. in lib. Reg. Tom. 3. fol. 5. L.
- {5} Praeliminar. in Hexapla Origen. p. 86.
- {6} T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 71. 2, 3.
- {7} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2. and 22. 1. and Zebachim, fol. 62. 1. and Gloss. in ib.
- {8} Vid. Buxtorf. de literis Heb. s. 20. 52, 53, 54.
- {9} Vol. 17. p. 302, 304.
- {10} Antiqu. l. i. c. 6.
- {11} Clio, sive l. i. c. 139.
- {12} in Cratylo, p. 271, 284, 286, 289, 292, 297, Ed. Ficia.
- {13} Bibliothec. lib. 3. p. 200.
- {14} Arcanum punctat. Revelat. l. 1. c. 12.
- {15} Vid. Schindler. Lexicon Pentaglott. Herman. Hugonem de prima Scribend. Orig. c. 7. p. 69. &c. Wasmuth Vindiciae Heb. par. I. c. 1. p. 58, 86. Marckii Exercitat. ad Matt. v. 18. Bedford's Chronology, p. 497, and Dr. Gregory Sharpe's Origin of Languages, p. 60, &c.
- {16} Suidas in voce Αδαμ. Hermannus Hugo, ut supra c. 3. p. ?? . Bibliander & alii in ib. The Jews ascribe several writings to *Adam* Wolsii Biblioth. Heb. p. 110, 111. In the *Talmud* they speak of the book of the first *Adam*, T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 85, 2. and of a book the angel *Raziel* gave him, which bears the name of that angel, Zohar in Gen. fol. 43, 3. Some writers make mention of a book composed by *Abel* the son of *Adam*. See Bangi Coelum Orient. p. 103, 123.
- {17} Cosmotheoros. fol. 10. p. 56.
- {18} Vid. Lydiat. defens. tract. de ann. form. c. 8. p. 26.
- {19} Apud Lydiat. ib. p. 125.
- {20} Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. dier. l. 2. c. 30.
- {21} Caesar. Comment. l. 6. c. 13.
- {22} Alex ab Alex. ut supra.
- {23} Cosri par. 4. s. 25.
- {24} Comment. in ib. fol. 229. 1.
- {25} Vid. Suidam in voce Σηθ
- {26} Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2.
- {27} Vid. Marsham Canon. Secul. l. 1. p. 3. Prideaux. Praefat. ad Marmor. Arundel. & Vossium de aetate mundi, c. 10. p. 37.
- {28} Praefat. Hyde ad Hist. Relig. Pers.
- {29} Elmacinus apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 228.
- {30} Juchasin, fol. 3. 2. so Ben Gorion, l. 2. c. 18. p. 131.
- {31} In Gen. fol. 53. 2. and 74. 1.
- {32} De Cultu faemin. l. 1. c. 3. vid. Bangi Coelum Orient. Exercitat. l. 24. Qu. 5.
- {33} Abulpharag. Hist. dynast. dyn. l. 1. p. 9.
- {34} Vid. Hugo. de orig. scribendi, c. 3. p. 41. Shalshalet Hakabala fol. 94. 2.
- {35} Vid. Bangi ut supra, Exercitat 2. Qu. 1. p. 100, 101. 104, 105.
- {36} Vid. Clem. Ale. Stromat. l. 6. p. 642.
- {37} In voce Αβρααμ, vid. Herman. Hugo. ut supra, p. 41.
- {38} Cosri par 4. c. 27. Juchasin fol. 52. 2.

- {39} Unheard of Curiosities, par. 4. c. 12. p. 352.
- {40} Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 18. c. 39. Isidor. Origin. l. 1. c. 3. and chronic p. 263.
- {41} Stromat. l. 1. p. 343.
- {42} Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 26.
- {43} So Clemens Roman. Cornelius Agrippa, Crinitus, Textor, Cyraldus apud Herman. Hugo. ut supra, MS. in Vatican. Biblioth. apud Waser. de Numis Heb l. 2. c. 3. vid. Owen. Theologoumena l. 4. Digress. 1. p. 301.
- {44} De vita Mosis. l. 1. p. 657, 658.
- {45} Comment. in Dan. 1:4.
- {46} Balmesii inikneh Abraham, p. 2. lin. 26.
- {47} Gloss. in T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 8. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 74. 2.
- {48} T. Bab. Sanhedra. fol. 21. 1. and Balmes. ut supra, lin. 24, 25. and p. 6. lin. 13. 14.
- {49} In En Israel Megillah, c. 1. fol. 415. 1.
- {50} Vid. Buxtorf. de lit. Heb. s. 20. 23.
- {51} T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 71. 3. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 22. 1. and Gloss. in ib.
- {52} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104.
- {53} Tipheret Isreal in Broughton's works, p. 506. 670. 684. 703.
- {54} Biblioth. l. 2. p. 100, 101.
- {55} Plin. l. 6. c. 28. vid. Huet. Demonstrat Evangel. c. 2. s. 15.
- {56} Urania, sive, l. 8. c. 22. vid. Melpomene, sive l. 4. c. 87.
- {57} Salmuth. in Pancirol. par. 2. p. 256.
- {58} Journal &c. p. 45, 46. Ed. 2.
- {59} Antiq. Eccl. oriental. p. 147.
- {60} Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Graec. Tom. 2. p. 615.
- {61} in Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 2. p. 147. 148.
- {62} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 2. & Succah, fol. 5. 1.
- {63} Praesat. in lib. Reg. fol. 5. L.
- {64} Praeliminar. ad Hexapla Origen. c. 2. p. 22.
- {65} Vid. etiam Drusium de voce Elohim & Tetragram. c. 20. & Grotium in Matt. 22:44. Montsaucon. praeliminar. ad Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 90. 184. Lexicon col. 430.
- {66} Epist ad Marcellam Tom. 3. fol. 31. B.
- {67} Ad Fabiolam fol. 20. B.
- {68} Meor Enayim, c. 58. fol. 178. 2.
- {69} Apud Montsaucon. ut supra, p. 86.
- {70} Connection, part 1. p. 416, 417.
- {71} Hottinger. Antimorin. p. 50. Carpzov. Critic. sacr. p. 229. 604. 610. Universal History, vol 17. p. 305.
- {72} De vita Josephi, l. 1. p. 658.
- {73} Ad Graecos, p. 13.
- {74} Epiphan. de ponder.
- {75} Apologet. c. 18.
- {76} Ut supra, p. 301, 304, 305.
- {77} R. Azariah, Imre Binah, c. 60. fol. 182.
- {78} De liter. Heb. s. 27. & de prosod. metric. ad calc. Heb. Gram.
- {79} Vid Hottinger. praefat. ad Cipp. Heb. p. 4.
- {80} Itinerar. p. 48, 49.
- {81} Parash l. fol. 1, 4.
- {82} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 1.
- {83} T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 71. 4.
- {84} Pirke Eliezer c. 48.
- {85} Mikneh Abraham, pag. 2. lin. 12, 13.
- {86} Praefat. ad lib. Reg. fol. 5. M.

- {87} De memsur. & Ponder.
- {88} Adv. Haeres. l. 2. c. 41.
- {89} T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 4. T. Bab. ib. fol. 94. 1.
- {90} Apud Wasmuth. Vindic. Heb. par. 1. p. 44.
- {91} T. Pab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1.
- {92} Antiqu. l. 10. c. 11. s. 7.
- {93} Hist. Heb. l. 1. c. 5. p. 25.
- {94} De Antiq. liter. Heb. p. 6. Bononiae 1748.
- {95} Contr. Apion. l. 1. s. 13.
- {96} Antiq. l. 11. c. 1. s. s.
- {97} Cyropaedia, l. 7. c. 23.
- {98} Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. dyn. 5. p. 82.
- {99} Hottinger. apud Pseiffer. Theolog. Jud. Exercitat. 7. c. 1. th. 1.
- {100} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. s. 5.
- {101} Antiqu. l. 12. c. 2. s. 1.
- {102} Hist. 72. Interpr. p. 4. 5.
- {103} Praepar. Evangel. b. 8. c. 2. p. 350.
- {104} Eliae Praefat. Methurgeman.
- {105} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 5. s. 6.
- {106} Cont. Apion. l. 1. s. 8.
- {107} De vita Mosis l. 2. 656.
- {108} Seder Tephillah, fol. 86. 2. Abarbinel. praefat. in Jer.
- {109} Adv. Haeref. l. 2. c. 41.
- {110} De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p. 18-22, 25, 26.
- {111} Unheard of Curiosities, c. 13. s. 6. p. 40.
- {112} De prima Scribendi orig. p. 54.
- {113} See the Universal History, vol. 17. p. 302, 303, 304.
- {114} Meor Enayim, c. 58. fol. 174, 2. See fol. 54.
- {115} Praefat. ad Cippi Heb. p. 41.
- {116} T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 97, 2. vid. Waser. de Num. antiqu. l. 2. c. 5.
- {117} Sota, p. 574, 575.
- {118} Bereshit Rabba, Parash. 39. fol. 34, 4.
- {119} Midrash Esther, fol. 95, 4.
- {120} Penes Mr. Richard Hall in Southwark.
- {121} De Jure Nature, l. 2. c. 6. p. 187.
- {122} Universal History, ut supra, p. 303.
- {123} Ut supra, p. 576.
- {124} Dissert. de Num. Samar. p. 46, 49, 61.
- {125} Montsaucon. Diar. Italic. p. 355.
- {126} De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p. 23, 24.
- {127} Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yadaim, c. 4. s. 5.
- {128} Vid. Buxtorf. de Lit. Heb. s. 45.
- {129} Herodot. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 36. Diodor. Sicul. l. 1. p. 72 & l. 3. p. 144. Clement. Alex. Stromat. l. 5. p. 555.
- {130} Theodoret. in Gen. Quaest. 60.
- {131} Adv. Haeres. l. 2. c. 41.

Chapter 3-Concerning the Origin of the Samaritans their Language and Letters

In the preceding chapter, I have shown that it is probable that the *Hebrews* always had the same letters, without any material change or alteration, and which have been retained by them, and are in use to this day. I shall endeavour, in this chapter, to make it appear as probable, that the *Samaritans* always had distinct letters from the *Jews*, and retained them, so that there never was any commutation of letters between them. In order to set this in as clear a light as possible, it may be proper to enquire into the original of letters, and particularly of the *Samaritans*.

It is highly probable that there were letters before the flood, as already has been indicated. Therefore, before the confusion of tongues, which, as the first language they belonged to were pure and uncorrupted, and the original of others, which first letters were the *Hebrew*. It was *Hebrew* which was the first language as *Hermannus Hugo* {1} observed. He added that the figures of letters never differed before the diversity of languages at *Babel*. My enquiry is, concerning the first letters after the division of tongues and these are claimed by various nations. Some say they were the invention of the *Egyptians*, others of the *Phoenicians*, and others of the *Chaldeans*. {2} Many ascribe the invention of letters to the *Egyptians*, to the *Thoth*, *Tautus*, the *Mercury* of the *Egyptians*, as *Sanchoniatho*, {3} *Gellius*, {4} and others, as some say in *Plato*. {5} However, *Pliny* says {6} the *Phoenicians* have the honour for it. If the *Phoenicians* are to be credited, as *Lucan* {7} expressed it, they were the first that dared to mark words by figures. *Suidas* {8} ascribed the invention of letters to them, and so does *Mela*. {9} *Vossius*, in his observations on him, is of the opinion, that by letters he means numbers, and that *Arithmetic* and *Astronomy* were the invention of the *Phoenicians*, which need the assistance of numbers. Perhaps the true reason why letters have been thought to be found out by them is, because they first brought them into *Greece*. However, *Dr. Cumberland* {10} remarked, the *Chaldeans* and *Assyrians* will not grant them this honour, but contend for an earlier invention of them, and that the inventors lived among them, and not in *Phoenicia*, nor in *Egypt*. *Pliny* {11} is of the opinion, that the *Assyrians* always had letters. This he confirms by the testimonies of *Epigenes*, *Berosus* and *Critodemus*. They say, they had observations of the stars inscribed on bricks, for a long series of years past. They may well have from the beginning of their nation, or nearly, for it was very early in their country that the confusion of tongues was made. Their language comes near to the *Hebrew*, the first and pure language, from which the *Assyrian* is a deviation. So their letters might be taken from the *Hebrew*, though greatly corrupted. *Elias* {12} observed that the *Syrian* language is nearest to the holy, or *Hebrew* language of all languages. He quotes *Aben Ezra's* opinion that the *Syrian* language is none other than the holy tongue corrupted. *Elias* thinks this corruption took place after *Abraham* departed from *Chaldea*, though perhaps it could be sooner. *Ephrem Syrus*, who well understood that language, said, {13} that the *Syrian* language has an affinity with the *Hebrew*, and in some respects nearer reaches the sense of the scriptures. *R. David Ganz* {14} observed, that those who were nearest to the place where the confusion was made, were purer and nearer to the holy tongue, such as the *Syrians* and *Arabians*. The *Assyrian*, *Chaldee*, and *Syrian* language and letters were the same. They are of great affinity, if not the same, with the old *Phoenician*, now called the *Samaritan*, as will be shown later. The ducts of their letters may well be thought to be taken from the *Hebrew*. Since the *Assyrians* are the first the heathen writers had knowledge of, they impute the origin of letters to them, as many do. {15} *Diodorus Siculus* {16} related, that some say the *Syrians* (that is, the *Assyrians*) were the inventors of letters. *Eusebius* also observed {17} the same, that some say, the *Syrians* first devised letters. He seems willing to agree, provided that by *Syrians* are meant *Hebrews*. There is no doubt those writers intended the *Syrians* or *Assyrians*, commonly so called. Some, in *Clement of Alexandria* {18} join the *Assyrians* and *Phoenicians* together, as the inventors of letters. However, the real fact seems to be as follows.

The *Phoenicians* received their letters from the *Assyrians* or *Syrians*, and not from the *Hebrews*, as some have thought. Not from *Abraham* to the ancestor of them, who, according to *Suidas*, {19} invented the holy letters and language. The knowledge of this he says, the *Hebrews* had, as being his disciples and posterity. That *Abraham* invented the letters and language, may be doubted. It is certain that he spoke pure *Hebrew*

since he was forty-eight years of age when the confusion of tongues took place. *Elias Levita* {20} said, it was clear to him that language was confounded immediately after he went from *Chaldea*, and that he and his ancestors spoke the holy tongue as received from *Adam*, to *Noah*. This may be admitted but it is not true that when he came among the *Canaanites*, that he either learned the primitive or *Hebrew* language from them, as some have fancied. Since they neither had knowledge of the *Hebrew*, nor did *Abraham* need the *Hebrew*, since he already spoke it before. Neither did he teach the *Hebrew* to them. *Eupolemus* and *Artapanus*, said, {21} that *Abraham* taught the *Phoenicians Astronomy*, yet they do not pretend that he taught them letters. There is no foundation for either one of these claims, since he chose not to have such a free conversation and society with them as these authors require. *Abraham* would not so much as bury his dead with them, nor suffer his son to intermarry with them. A similar precaution was taken by *Isaac* his son, with respect to *Jacob*, who for some years was out of the land, and when he returned, was a sojourner in it, as his fathers had been. After a while *Jacob* went down with his posterity into *Egypt*, where they abode at least two hundred years. They came from there, and after forty year's travel in the wilderness, and entered the land of *Canaan*, the inhabitants were either destroyed by them or they fled before them even at the report of their coming. {22} Hence, they had no time to learn a language from them, or receive letters from them. *Cadmus*, the *Phoenician*, whom *Isocrates* {23} called the *Sidonian*, is generally supposed to have gone from *Phoenicia* to *Greece*, in the times of *Joshua*, where he carried letters, and therefore must have possessed knowledge of them before *Joshua* entered *Canaan*. He is said to have come to *Rhodes* in *Greece*, and at *Lindus* to offer to *Lindia Minerva* a brass pot with *Phoenician* letters on it. The huge serpents, which upon his coming there, are said {24} to have wasted that country. They seem to have been none other than the *Hivites*, the same with the *Cadmonites*, {*Ge* 15:19} which the word *Hivites* signifies, whom *Cadmus* brought with him there. Others of the *Phoenicians* or *Canaanites* fled into *Africa*, {25} particularly the *Girgasites*, as is asserted in the *Jerusalem Talmud*. {26} This is confirmed by *Procopius* {27} who said they came into *Numidia*, where they had a garrison in the place which, in his time, was the city of *Tingis* (now called *Tangier*). They erected two pillars of white stone there, in the year, AD 540, which he himself saw and read. On these pillars in *Phoenician* letters were written:

“We are they that fled from the face of *Jesus* (or *Joshua*) the robber, the son of *Nave* (or *Nun*).”

Suidas {28} said, it was written, we are the *Canaanites*. This is a full proof they had letters before the times of *Joshua*, and did not learn them from the *Israelites* when they came into *Canaan*. In addition, it is clear from the scriptures also, that they had letters before that time. This appears to be so from the names of some cities among them, particularly *Debir*, which in the *Persian* language, as *Kimchi* {29} from the *Rabbins* says, signifies a book. This place was also called *Kirjath Sannah*, and *Kirjath Sepher*, which signify, that it was a city where either there was an academy for the instruction of persons, or a library of books. Or it could have been where the archives of the country were kept, a city of Archives, as the *Targum*, supposes were letters. The *Septuagint* renders it a city of letters, {*Jos* 15:49} from all which it seems plain, that the *Phoenicians* or *Canaanites* did not receive letters from the *Hebrews*, but rather from the *Assyrians* or *Syrians*.

The *Assyrians* or *Syrians*, were distinguished from one another by one having their name from *Ashur*, a son of *Shem*, and the other from *Aram*, a younger son of his. {*Ge* 10:22} Hence, they are called in *Strabo* {30} *Aramaeans* or *Arimei*. In the times of *Ahaz* king of *Judah* there was a king of *Assyria*, and king of *Syria*, yet these two names are often confused, and intermittently used by the ancients as if they were the same people. *Syria* was commonly thought to be a contraction of *Assyria*. {31} Therefore, *Lucian* of *Somosata* in *Syria*, called himself an *Assyrian*, {32} and conversely, *Tatian* the *Assyrian*, is called by *Clement* of *Alexandria*, {33} a *Syrian*. These countries having been part of each other, may very well have been called by each other's names. The *Syrians*, {34} have their name from the *Assyrians*. Hence, *Isidore* {35} stated, whom the ancients called *Assyrians* we call *Syrians*. *Justin* {36} also remarked that the *Assyrians* who were afterwards called *Syrians*, held the empire three hundred years. The same people who, according to *Herodotus*, {37} were by the *Greeks* called *Syrians*, are by the *Barbarians* called *Assyrians*, among whom

were the *Chaldeans*. *Strabo* observed, {38} that *Semiramis* and *Ninus* were called *Syrians*. By the one *Babylon* the royal city was built, and by the other *Nineveh*, the metropolis of *Assyria* was also built. The same language was used both without and within the *Euphrates*, that is, by the *Syrians* strictly so called, and by the *Babylonians* or *Chaldeans*. It need not seem strange that the *Phoenicians* should receive their letters from these people, since they were their neighbours, and lived so near them. *Herodotus* {39} spoke of them as springing out of *Syria*, and dwelling in *Syria*, and of the *Phoenicians* and *Syrians* being together in *Palestine*. {40} *Phoenicia* is often described as being included in *Syria* and as a part of it. *Diodorus Siculus*, {41} spoke of *Coleosyria*, in which *Phoenicia* is comprehended. *Strabo* {42} states that some divide all *Syria* into *Coleosyrians* and *Phoenicians*. *Clement of Alexandria* {43} calls *Phoenicia* "*Phoenicia of the Syrians*". *Isidore* {44} observed, that *Syria* had in it, the provinces *Comagene*, *Phoenicia*, and *Palestine*, so *Pliny* {45} *Philo* {46} the *Jew* asserted, that *Phoenicia*, *Coleosyria*, and *Palestine*, went by the common name of *Canaan* in the times of *Moses*. The *Phoenicians* and *Assyrians* are reckoned as one by *Macrobius*. {47} These all agree with some passages of scripture. The woman of *Canaan*, in **Mt 15:22** is called a *Syro-Phoenician* in **Mr 7:26**. Also, the disciples are said to have sailed into *Syria*, and landed at *Tyre* the chief city in *Phoenicia* {Ac 21:3} and as their country was much the same, so were their manners. Hence the proverb: {48}

“the *Syrians* against the *Phoenicians*,”

which signified their being alike in temper and behaviour. They also shared their religion and deities. The rites of *Adonis* were common to them both. *Adad*, the god of the *Assyrians*, {49} is the same as the *Adodus* of the *Phoenicians* {50} so that, all things considered, it may well be thought they had the same language and letters, or nearly the same. *Annius of Viterbo* affirmed, {51} that the ancient *Assyrian* and *Phoenician* letters were the same. He was certainly a man of learning for the times he lived in, and very inquisitive. However, culpable he might be in publishing some fragments as genuine which are thought to be spurious. On this account perhaps he has been a little too severely treated by critics, as *Dr. Clayton* late bishop of *Clogher* has observed. {52} He is of the opinion, that his fragment of *Berosus*, so much complained of, ought not to be entirely rejected as spurious. That same writer stated, {53} that the first *Phoenix*, from whom the *Phoenicians* had their name, and the first *Cadmus* from whom the *Greeks* had their letters, sprung from *Syria*. This *Phoenix*, who is said by him to reign in *Sidon*, according to *Sanchoniatho*, {54} was none other than *Canaan* the son of *Ham*. For he states that:

“One of these (the *Phoenicians*) *Isiris* was the inventor of their letters, the brother of *Chan* (or *Canaan*) who was first called *Phoenix*.”

The old *Canaanite* or *Phoenician* language, and also the *Punic*, were the same. Hence *Augustine* {55} says, that the country people living near him, who were a colony of the *Phoenicians*, when asked who they were, used to answer, in the *Punic* language, *Chanani*, *Canaanites*. This language was like the *Hebrew* language, so that the *Hebrews* and *Canaanites* could converse together and be understood. This seems to be true from *Abraham's* conversation with them. {Ge 14:18-24 23:3-16} From the conversation of the *Hebrew* spies with *Rahab* the *Canaanite*, {Jos 2:9-21} and from the names the *Canaanites* imposed on their cities before they came into the hands of the *Hebrews*, their communication was evidently understood from the books of *Joshua* and *Judges*. However, those names could have been given to them by *Eber* and his sons, who dwelt there before the *Canaanites* as *Dr. Lightfoot* {56} suggests. Yet the language was not altogether the same, it differed much, and especially in later times, and particularly in their colonies, where it had the name of the *Punic*. *Augustine* {57} having remarked, that the *Hebrews* called *Christ Messiah* observes, that:

“the word agrees with the *Punic* language, as very many *Hebrew* words, and almost all do.”

This may be true of proper names in particular, but not of words in general. *St. Jerome*, who understood the *Hebrew* language better than *Augustine*, affirms, that the *Canaanite* or *Punic* language was very

similar to the *Hebrew*. {58} {59} Fuller {60} noted that *St. Jerome* did not say in the greatest part, nor almost in every part, and still less in every part, but in a great part. Therefore, *Origen* {61} asserts, that the *Hebrew* language differs both from the *Syrian* and the *Phoenician*. *Jerome* in one place {62} says, that the *Canaanite* or *Punic* language is a middle language between the *Egyptian* and the *Hebrew*. *Salmasius* {63} suggests as if some thought that the *Punic* and *Egyptian* languages were the same, that this can by no means be admitted.

It seems most probable what *Jerome* elsewhere {64} observes, that the *Canaanite* or *Phoenician* language is the *Syrian*, or nearly that. *Augustine* {65} affirms, that the *Hebrew*, *Punic*, and *Syrian* languages are very near akin. Most of the words which he makes mention of as *Punic*, are plainly *Chaldee* or *Syriac*. Therefore, *mammon*, he says, {66} is the word for *gain*, in the *Punic* language, and is the *Syriac* word used for riches in the time of Christ. {*Lu* 16:9} Hence, with the *Phoenicians* is the name of a man *Abdamamon*, {67} which signifies a servant of *mammon*, riches wealth, or gain. {*Mt* 6:24} He says {68} blood, in the *Punic* language is called *Edom*. However, in the *Hebrew* tongue it is *Dam*; but in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* tongue, it is, *Mda*, or *Mdya*, which are frequently used in the *Chaldee* paraphrases. He also observes {69} that *Baal* in the *Punic* tongue, signifies Lord, and *Samen* heaven. Both together means, Lord of heaven which with *Sanchoniatho*, {70} a *Phoenician* writer, is a deity of the *Phoenicians*. Therefore, *Balsamen* in the *Poenulus* of *Plautus*, {71} is manifestly of a *Chaldee* or *Syriac* termination. The above *Phoenician* writer also spoke {72} of types of intelligible animals, whom he calls *Zophasemin*. *Philo Bybius*, who translated his work out of the *Phoenician* language into *Greek*, interprets these animals as seers, or contemplators of the heavens, which word also, is plainly in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* dialect. *Kircher* {73} also affirms, that he had in his possession a fragment of *Sanchoniatho*, written in the *Aramoean* or *Syriac* language. The *Maltese*, or the inhabitants of the island called *Melita*, {*Ac* 28:1} a colony of the *Phoenicians* as *Diodorus Siculus* {74} affirms, have in their language a great deal of the old *Phoenician* or *Punic* language to this day. It is observable, that their numerals from two to eleven, end in *a*, and from twenty to a hundred, in *in*. {75} These are exactly the terminations of the same numbers in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* dialect. The *Carthaginians* were another colony of the *Phoenicians*, and the old name of the city of *Carthage* was *Cartheda*. This name in the *Phoenician* language, *Solinus* {76} said, signified the *new city*, being composed of *atrq* *Kartha* a city, and *atrh* new, which are both *Chaldee* words. There was a city in *Canaan*, or old *Phoenicia*, called *Hadattah*, or *Hagar Hadattah*, {*Jos* 15:25} and another city there is called *Kerioth*. Another name of *Carthage* we find in *Plautus* {77} which appears to be of *Phoenician* origin, *Chadoreanac*, the chambers, lodging, or seat of *Arnak*, that is, the *Anakim*, such as were in old *Canaan*. However, according to *Dr. Hyde's* conjecture, {78} the word signifies the *new city* also. Also *Bochart* {79} has observed many words in the *Punic* of *Plautus*, which are in the *Syrian* dialect. There are several words in different authors said to be *Punic* or *Phoenician*, which are manifestly *Chaldee* or *Syriac*. *Plutarch* says, {80} the *Phoenicians* call an ox *Thor*, which is the word used in *Chaldee* for it. *Jonah's* gourd, according to *Jerome*, {81} was called *Elkeroa* in the *Syriac* and *Punic* language, as if they were the same. *Sanctius* {82} observes, that in *Spain* a garden is called by a *Punic* name *Carmen*, which signifies a vineyard, though planted with other trees. This *Punic* word, he makes no doubt (as he need not) comes from the *Hebrew* word *Cerem*, a vineyard, and which in the *Chaldee* language in the plural number is *Cermin*. *Charmis* {83} is the name of a city given by the *Phoenicians*, because of the multitude of vines around it. *Isidore* {84} says the *Phoenicians* call a new village *Magar*. The word is used by *Plautus*, {85} where it signifies a place in *Carthage*, some public building there, and it is the same with the *Syriac* word *Magar*, which signifies a habitation. Hence, *Anna* in *Virgil*, {86} the sister of *Dido* or *Elisa*, who were both *Phoenicians*, and daughters of *Pygmalion* king of *Tyre*, is the *Syriac* name for *Hannah*. {*Lu* 2:36} *Gades* or *Cadiz*, corruptly called *Cales*, which belongs to *Spain*, the *Phoenicians* called *Gadir* or *Gadira*, which in the *Punic* language signifies a hedge, as is observed by many {87} as it does in *Chaldee*. The reason for this name is because that place was hedged about on all sides by the sea. The *Syriac* word *Korban* used by the *Jews* in Christ's time for an oath, {*Mr* 7:11} is said by *Theophrastus* {88} to signify the same in the *Punic* language. *Lachman* is used by *Athenoeus* {89} for bread, which the *Syrians* and *Syria*, he means *Phoenicians* and *Phoenicia*, where it seems it was so called, and is manifestly a *Chaldee* word. The word

Nabla, the name of a musical instrument, is also said by him {90} to be an invention of the *Phoenicians*. Just as the *Sambuca* is used by the *Syrians*, to call the *Phoenician* lyre, the same in the *Chaldee Sabbeca*, {Da 3:5} is there rendered *sackbut*. *Pausanias* {91} used this as a proof that *Cadmus* was not an *Egyptian*, but a *Phoenician*. This is because *Minerva* is not called by the *Egyptian* word *Sais*, but by the *Phoenician* word *Siga*, which comes from the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* word אגו to increase or be increased. From all of this it appears, that the *Chaldee* or *Syrian* language and the *Phoenician* are nearly the same, and therefore the letters may also be considered to be the same as well.

Let it be further observed, that the *Greeks* had their letters from the *Phoenicians* at least sixteen or seventeen of them, {92} which *Cadmus*, and some say *Linus*, {93} brought out of *Phoenicia* into *Greece*. *Herodotus* {94} asserted they were called *Cadmeian* and *Phoenician* letters without mentioning their number. He saw some of them at *Thebes* in *Boeotia*, engraved on some *Tripods* there, and they were very much like the *Ionic* letters. *Diodorus Siculus* said the same thing about the origin and names of those letters, and related, {95} that the brass pot *Cadmus* offered to *Minerva Lindia*, had an inscription of *Phoenician* letters on it. The *Greeks* acknowledged that they had gotten their letters from the *Phoenicians*, as the above writers affirm, and so did *Euphorus*, {96} *Zenodotus*, {97} and others. Hence *Josephus* {98} observed, that the *Greeks* glory in the fact that they received their letters from the *Phoenicians* so none need dispute it. *Bianconi* {99} is of the opinion that the ancient *Greeks* used the very letters of the *Phoenicians*. Indeed, this seems to be the meaning of *Herodotus*, in the previous reference. *Dictys Cretensis* is said {100} to have written his history of the *Trojan* wars, in the *Greek* language, but in *Phoenician* letters. *Diodorus* says that *Linus* and *Orpheus* wrote in the letters of the *Pelasgi* and also in the same way as the *Phoenician*. {101} Also, the *Greeks* formerly wrote as the *Phoenicians* did, from the right to the left, for in this form the name of *Agamemnon* was written on his statue at *Olympia*. {102} Thus wrote the *Etrusci*, who had gotten their letters from the *Greeks*, {103} whose ancient language was the *Aramaean* or *Syrian*. {104} This way of writing by the *Greeks* gradually fell into disuse. It was issued in a form like that of the ploughing of oxen, called βουσροφηδον. In the same manner the laws of *Solon* were written. This is apparent from *Suidas* {105} and *Harpocratian*, {106} that is alternately, from the right to the left. Since the *Greeks* received their letters from the *Phoenicians*, and there is a similarity of the letters of the one to those of the other, it is reasonable to suppose that they should be the same. *Herodotus* affirms this, having seen it for himself. There is also a great likeness between the *Greek* and the present *Samaritan* letters. Since the *Samaritans* wrote from the right hand towards the left, if the position of the *Samaritan* letters be inverted for that purpose, as *Mr. Bedford* remarks, {107} the letters will appear to be the same, or at least very much alike. The purpose for this will soon be easily perceived because, as *Bochart* {108} reasoned, if this be so, it follows that the *Samaritan* characters are the very same which were used in *Phoenicia* in the times of *Cadmus*. It is acknowledged by many learned men, that the letters or characters of the ancient *Canaanites*, or the *Phoenicians*, were either the same with, or very like to *Samaritan* characters, {109} or that the old *Phoenician* letters, and the *Samaritan* are very similar, and nearly the same. {110} Just as the *Phoenicians* received their letters from the *Assyrians*, or *Chaldeans*, it follows that the *Samaritan* letters which are much like the *Phoenician*, must be the same, or nearly the same as the old *Assyrian* and *Chaldean* characters. It seems highly probable that from the origin of them, that the people who are properly called *Samaritans* had gotten both their language and their letters from the *Chaldeans* or *Syrians*.

It is amazing to me, that some learned men would make the ten tribes of *Israel* that revolted under *Jeroboam* the origin of the *Samaritan* people. *Samaria* indeed was built in the times of *Omri*, a successor of his, and not before or even during *Jeroboam's* reign. Between *Omri* and *Jeroboam* the following kings, reigned: *Nadab*, *Baasha*, *Elah* and *Zimri*. *Samaria* also became the metropolis of the ten tribes, and was inhabited only by *Israelites*, hence its inhabitants were never from that time called *Samaritans*, but *Israel* or *Ephraim*. They had no more connection with the *Samaritan* people than they had with the *Scythians* or *Tartars*. For it was not until after the *Israelites* were carried captive into *Assyria*, that those who were called *Samaritans*, were sent as a colony from there to repeople *Samaria*. This city was entirely stripped of

its inhabitants by the king of *Assyria*. Apparently none of the people who were left in the land of *Israel* had any society with this new colony. They never mixed with them, either in civil or religious things, but many of them returned to the pure worship of God. They joined with the tribe of *Judah* and put themselves under the government of the kings of it, and went with that tribe captive into *Babylon*. It is unclear if any of the ten tribes, or those of the two tribes, had any thing to do with these *Samaritans*, for three hundred years after their first settlement in *Samaria*. Even after being joined by some renegade *Jews* in the times of *Manasseh* the priest, for whom a temple was built in *Gerizim* by *Sanballat*, they still had nothing to do with the *Samaritans*. The only instance is of the priest sent from *Assyria* to teach them the worship of God of the land. They very coolly and hypocritically received this teaching yet still continued in the idolatry they brought with them until the times of *Ezra*. {2Ki 17:27-29,33,34} On this account the *Israelites* who were left in the land were obliged to keep at a distance from them even when they first came among them. For if they had joined them, it may be reasonably assumed that there would have been a priest who could have instructed them even though it would be of *Jeroboam's* religion. A priest sent from among the captives in *Assyria* also must have been of the same sort. Either there were no priests left in the land, or, if there were, they did not join the *Samaritans*. Although they had officiated in *Jeroboam's* idolatry, they did not choose to join the *Samaritans* in theirs. It is certain that in the times of *Ezra* and **Ne 2:20**, though under the influence of *Sanballat* their governor, they received the renegade *Jews* with his son-in-law *Manasseh* as the leader. It does not appear that they cordially embraced the *Samaritans* since in any time of trouble the *Jews* did not care to own that they had any connection with them. In the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, by whom the *Jews* were greatly distressed, the *Samaritans* wrote asking not to be considered as having the same religion with the *Jews* or to be involved with them in their distress. Although their ancestors had been forced into compliance with some parts of their worship, they assured him they were different from the *Jews* in their manners, customs and origin. In addition, they had built an altar on mount *Gerizim*, not dedicated to any deity and desired it might for the future be called the temple of the *Grecian Jupiter*. {111} However, at other times, when the circumstances of the *Jews* were more favourable, they claimed kindred with them, and derived their descent from *Joseph*, and his sons *Manasseh*, and *Ephraim*, {112} as they did from *Jacob* in the times of *Christ*. Even then the *Jews* had no dealings with them, {Joh 4:9,12} and they are manifestly distinguished by our Lord himself from the *Jews*, and from the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*. {Mt 10:5,6 Joh 4:22} What is said in favour of the *Samaritans* by Jewish writers like *Maimonides*, {113} and by *Obadiah Bartenora*, {114} must be understood as expressing the opinion their ancestors had of them, after they embraced the *Jewish* religion. These writers thought they were hearty and sincere, and so gave credit to them, until the wise men of *Israel* made a strict inquiry about them, and found that they worshipped the image of a dove. After this they reckoned them as other idolatrous heathens. They would have nothing to do with them, as is asserted by them in those very passages where the character is given of them, as strict observers of the written law. {115}

A late writer {116} suggested, that *Jeroboam* coined a new religion by the help of his priests and a new language and letters, to keep the people close to him. This language he supposes was the *Samaritan* language. However there is no proof for this. There is equally no proof for *Genebrard's* {117} claim from a *Jewish* writer, who asserts that:

“The *Jews* in *Rehoboam's* time, that they might not join with the schismatic *Israelites*, in any use of sacred things, contrived the form of letters which are now used, i.e. the square letters, changing their former figures, and left those which have been since called the *Samaritan* letters.”

This may better suit the hypothesis of a change of letters than where it is commonly placed.

The *Samaritans* had gotten their original language and letters elsewhere. Where they had gotten them may be concluded from the account given of them in **2Ki 17:24,30,31** where the places they came from are expressly named. The idolatry they brought with them and continued in is fully described there. It appears they were originally *Chaldeans* or *Phoenicians*, and had the same religion, language, and letters they had.

Some of them were brought from Babylon, the metropolis of the *Chaldean* empire. Perhaps the most of them were from Babylon since they are first to be mentioned. They no doubt brought with them the *Chaldean* language and letters, as they did their idolatry, because they made *succoth benoth*, or *the tabernacles of the daughters*, or *booths of Venus*, as *Selden* {118} thinks it may be rendered. This may have respect to the apartments in the temple of *Mylitta*, or *Venus* in *Babylon*. These apartments were like those the people made in *Samaria*, in which women once in their lives, prostituted themselves to whomsoever asked them, in honour of *Venus*. This filthy practice is mentioned by *Herodotus*. {119} From the *Babylonians* the *Phoenicians* had the same custom in which their women prostituted themselves before their idols. They dedicated their gain to them, being strongly persuaded that their gods would be propitious to them, and they should enjoy prosperity, as *Athanasius* {120} affirms. *Valerius Maximus* {121} relates, that they had a temple called the temple of *Sicca Venus*, which sounds like *Succoth Benoth*, where their matrons prostituted their bodies for gain before they were married. Also, there was a *Phoenician* colony, three days journey from *Carthage*, called *Sicca Veneria*. {122} In addition, it was a custom with the *Cyprians*, another colony of the *Phoenicians*, for virgins before marriage to prostitute themselves, and give their gain to *Venus*. {123} By all this it is plain from whom these *Samaritans* received their impiety and impurity. Others of these people were brought from *Cuthah*, or *Cutha*, a city in *Ereo*, a province of *Babylon* {124} where it is said *Abraham* lived. The *Samaritans* are commonly called *Cuthim*, or *Cuthites* in Jewish writings. {125} Therefore, these were of the same country with the *Samaritans*, and probably had the same language and letters. The idol they made for themselves was *Nergal*, which is part of the name of two of the princes of *Babylon*. It was customary for great personages in the east to take the names of their idols as part of their own names. {*Jer* 39:3} According to *Hillerus*, this name signifies the fountain of light, and denotes the sun the *Babylonians* worshipped. The next that were brought to *Samaria* by the king of *Assyria* were brought from *Ava* or *Iva*. {*Isa* 37:13} They may be the same as the *Avim*, {*De* 2:23} a people that formerly dwelt along the borders of *Phoenicia* from where there may have been a colony of them in the country of *Assyria* or *Babylon*. In the *Septuagint* version of **De 7:1** they are called *Hivites*, which were one of the seven nations of *Canaan*, or of old *Phoenicia*, the remains of which had settled in those parts. These people had idols called *Nibhaz* and *Tartak*. According to *Hillerus* {126} these idols signified the one the *remote one seeth*, that is, the sun which beholds all things, and the other a *chain*, denoting either the fixed stars chained to their places, or the *Satellites* of the planets fixed to their orbs. These idols were worshipped by the *Chaldeans* and *Assyrians*. The next group of people came from *Hamath*, a city in *Syria*, on the northern borders of the land of *Canaan*. {*Nu* 34:8} Their idol is called *Ashima*, which, as *Hillerus* {127} states, was with the *Arabs*, the name of a lion, the symbol of the sun. This idol may have been worshipped by these men, under this name, as the sun was the chief object of the worship of the *Assyrians* and *Phoenicians*, as *Macrobius* {128} observes. The last of this colony of the *Samaritans*, were men that came from *Sepharvaim*. This colony was either the *Sipharah* of *Ptolemy*, {129} in *Mesopotamia*, or that which was near *Babylon*. *Abydenus* {130} mentioned and *Vitringa* thinks {131} this was a city in *Syro-Phoenicia*, or a province in which *Abydenus* {132} places *Heliopolis*, namely *Coelosyria*. It is certain the idolatry these men were guilty of, is the same as that of the old *Canaanites* or *Phoenicians*, who burnt their children in the fire to *Molech*. {*Le* 18:21} They did this with *Anammelech* and *Adrammelech* which means the same as *Molech* as the ending of these words show means king as *Molech* does. The fact that the *Phoenicians* sacrificed their children to *Saturn* or *Molech*, is observed by *Pliny*, {133} *Eusebius*, {134} and *Athanasius*. {135} Hence those words of *Ennius*:

“Poeni sunt soliti, suos sacrificare puellos.”

as did the *Carthaginians*, a colony of the *Phoenicians*, which is affirmed by *Porphyry* {136} *Justin*, {137} *Curtius*, {138} *Pesaenius Festus*, {139} *Diodorus Siculus*, {140} and others. All of this clearly proves that the *Samaritans* sprung from the *Assyrians* or *Chaldeans*, and the *Phoenicians*. Sometimes they would call themselves *Sidonians*, {141} from *Sidon*, a chief city in *Phoenicia*. Therefore, they may well be thought to have brought with them to *Samaria*, the language and letters of the *Assyrians* and *Phoenicians*. It is also a certainty that the *Samaritans* used the *Syrian* tongue and letters, {*Ezr* 4:7} as did the *Chaldee*, {*Da* 1:4 2:4} more

than two hundred years after they came to *Samaria* because their epistle to the king of *Persia* was written in that language and letters. According to *Josephus*, {142} the *Syrians*, *Phoenicians*, *Ammonites*, and *Moabites*, joined the *Samaritans* in the writing of this letter. With great propriety they used them in writing to a king of *Persia*, since the *Persians* and *Syrians*, for the most part, used the same letters and characters, as *Epiphanius* {143} asserts. *Jerome* {144} clearly states that the old *Canaanite* or old *Phoenician* language is the same as the *Syrian*. *Bochart* {145} also affirms that the *Samaritan* language more clearly resembles the *Chaldee* or *Syriac*, than the *Hebrew*. Whoever has skimmed the *Samaritan* version of the *Pentateuch*, will easily perceive it is in the *Chaldee* dialect, and only here and there is a *Hebrew* word. It is no wonder that the *Chaldeans* should get into the *Jew's* language, when some of the *Jews* had mixed themselves with them. *Walton* {146} also admits that the dialect of the *Samaritan* version is the same kind as the *Chaldee* language, though it has a few words proper and peculiar to itself. Therefore, *F. Simon* {147} states that the *Samaritan* version in the *Syro-Chaldee* language is pure, which shows the antiquity of it. There are three dialects of the *Syriac* language, as *Abulpharagius*, {148} an *Arabic* writer relates. The *Aramaean* is the most elegant of all, which the inhabitants of *Roha*, *Harran*, and outer *Syria* used. The language of *Palestine* was spoken by the inhabitants of *Damascus*, mount *Libanus*, and the interior of *Syria*. The *Chaldee Nabathean* dialect was the most unpolished of all. It was used by those who dwelt on the mountains of the *Assyrians* and in the villages of *Erac* or *Babylonia*. This last dialect was probably spoken by the *Samaritans*. Those which were truly ancient *Syrian* or *Assyrian* letters can only be ascertained from the old *Phoenicians* who received their letters from the *Syrians*, or *Assyrians*. They must have been nearly the same. The usual *Syriac* characters, in which are written the versions of the Old and New Testament, are comparatively of a late date and use. They were introduced by the Christians of *Antioch*. They imitated *Daniel* and *Ezra* who used the *Hebrew* character, but they changed it for those now in use, because they wished to have nothing in common with the *Nazarenes* or *Ebionites*. {149} The more unusual, and more ancient character is the *Estrangelo*, used only now for capitals, and frontispieces and titles of books, which is rough and unpolished, and bears a resemblance to the old *Phoenician* or *Samaritan*. *Mr. Castell* {150} has expressed that the *Estrangelo* is the *Chaldee* character because the *Assyrians* and *Chaldeans* always used the square character of the *Hebrews*. This cannot be proven, since we have no writings of theirs extant. For what *Chaldee* books we do have, were written by *Jews*, either in, or after the *Babylonian* captivity. *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, who wrote *Chaldee* in the square character are two examples of this. It was what their sacred books were written in, and they and the people were used to this form whom they wrote them for. Later on the *Chaldee* paraphrases were written by *Jews*, as well as both *Talmuds*, though less pure. It seems this character was used by the *Syrian* Christians, in imitation of the *Jews*, before their change of characters already mentioned. After the *Chaldee* monarchy ceased, no books were written by any of that people in their own language. *Berosus* the *Chaldean* and others, wrote in *Greek*. *Pheophilus* of *Antioch* {151} stated that *Berosus* showed the *Greeks* *Chaldee* letters. Whether he means their learning laws, and history, or the characters of their letters, it is not certain. If he had meant the letters, it does not appear what they were. Hence *Hottinger* {152} concluded that the ancient character of the *Assyrians* and *Chaldeans* is unseen, and unknown, and that nothing certain is understood concerning it. He thinks that some think it is the *Samaritan*, which is right, others, the *Ethiopic*. Since he could not tell, he hoped that in time something would be published by *Golius*, some *Chaldee* writings, in the ancient tongue and character. If any were ever published, I never heard of it. The *Jews* say, {153} that after the hand writing of the angel upon the wall, and the publication of the *Hebrew* characters by *Ezra*, the *Chaldeans* left their own characters, and used them. This however seems to be said without any good foundation.

Since both the *Samaritan* language and letters differ from the *Hebrew*, being the old *Phoenician* and *Assyrian*, it was necessary that, when the *Pentateuch* of *Moses* was brought among them, it should be copied, and put into *Samaritan* letters so that they could read it. As it was written in the square character to begin with, as the variations show which we noted earlier. It was also necessary that there should be a version which was written for them in their own language, so they would be better able to understand it. I think it plainly appears, that they always retained their own language and letters, which were the *Assyrian* and old *Phoenician*. They retained these letters from the time of *Manasseh* their high priest, until ages

after, just as the *Hebrews* retained their language and letters which were the square ones. Therefore, there seems to be no foundation for any such change of letters being made by *Ezra*, as has been contended for.

- {1} De prima Scribendi Orig. c. 3. p. 42, 43.
- {2} Theophilus ad Autolyc. l. 3. prope sinem.
- {3} Apud Euseb. Evangel. Praepar. l. 1. p. 31.
- {4} Apud Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.
- {5} In Philebo, p. 374. & in Phaedro, p. 1240.
- {6} Plin. l. 5. c. 12.
- {7} Phaenices primi, &c. Phar. sal. l. 3. v. 220. So Critias, apud Athenaeum, l. 1. c. 22. p. 28.
- {8} In voce Γραμματα, and in Καδμοσ.
- {9} De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12.
- {10} Sanchoniatho, p. 191.
- {11} Ut supra, l. 7. c. 56.
- {12} Praesat. ad Methurgeman.
- {13} Apud Basil. in Hexaemeron, Homil. 2.
- {14} Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 4. 1.
- {15} Vide Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30.
- {16} Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 340.
- {17} Praepar. Evangel. ut supra.
- {18} Stromat. l. 1. p. 307.
- {19} In voce Αβρααμ
- {20} Praesat. ad Methurgeman.
- {21} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17, 18.
- {22} Targum. in Cant. 3. 5.
- {23} Helenae Laudat. in sine.
- {24} Diodor. Sic. l. 5. p. 329.
- {25} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 91. 1.
- {26} T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3.
- {27} Vandalis. l. 2. p. 135. apud Prideaux. Not. ad Marmor. Arundel. Tingit. p. 139. 140. Evagrii Eccles Hist. l. 4. c. 18.
- {28} In voce Χανααν so Athanasius, contr. Gentes, p. 16.
- {29} Commen. in Jud. l. 1. T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 24. 2.
- {30} Geograph. l. 16. p. 540.
- {31} Universal History, vol. 2. p. 255.
- {32} De Dea Syriae, p. 1.
- {33} Stromat. l. 3. p. 460.
- {34} In voce Ασσυριοι
- {35} Orig. l. 9. c. 2.
- {36} A Trogo l. 1. c. 2.
- {37} Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 63.
- {38} Geograph. l. 2. p. 58.
- {39} Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 105. & Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 116.
- {40} Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 104. & l. 4. c. 89.
- {41} Bibliothec. l. 18. p. 591.
- {42} Geograph. l. 16. p. 515.
- {43} Admon. ad Graec. p. 25.
- {44} Orig. l. 14. c. 3.
- {45} Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 12.
- {46} De vita Mosis l. 1. p. 627.
- {47} Saturnal. l. 1. c. 21.

- {48} Vid. Suidam in voce συροι, & Reines. de Ling. Punic. p. 11.
- {49} Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 24.
- {50} Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 38.
- {51} Comment. in Xenophon. de Aequivocis, p. 118.
- {52} Introduct. Chronolog. Heb. Bible, p. 19-22.
- {53} Annii Comment. in Manethon. Sup. p. 97.
- {54} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel, l. 2. c. 10. p. 39.
- {55} Expos. Rom. Tom. 7. p. 363.
- {56} Works, vol. 2. p. 327.
- {57} Contr. Petil. l. 2. p. 123. Tom. 7. vid. Reines. de Ling. Punic. c. 4. s. 4. p. 20.
- {58} Trad. Heb. in Gen. fol. 71, M.
- {59} Comment. in Isaiam, c. 19. fol. 42. C. & in Hierem. c. 25. fol. 51. B. Tom. 5.
- {60} Miscellan. Sacr. l. 4. c. 4.
- {61} Contr. Celsum, l. 3. p. 115.
- {62} In Isaiam, ut supra.
- {63} Not. in pallium Tertull. p. 205.
- {64} In Isaiam, ut supra.
- {65} In Ioannem, Tr. 15. p. 58. Tom. 9.
- {66} De Sermon. Dom. l. 2. p. 352. Tom. 4.
- {67} Vid. Swinton. Inscript. Cit. p. 21.
- {68} Enarrat. in Ps. 136. p. 646. B.
- {69} Quaest. super Jud. l. 7. p. 130. B. Tom. 4.
- {70} Apud Euseb. Praepar. l. 2. p. 34.
- {71} Act. 5. sc. 2. v. 67.
- {72} Apud Euseb. l. 2. p. 33.
- {73} Obelisc Pamphil. p. 111. apud Fabritii Biblioth. Gr. Tom 1. p. 164.
- {74} Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 294.
- {75} See Universal History, vol. 17. p. 209.
- {76} Polyhist. c. 40. So Isidor. Orig. l. 14. c. 14.
- {77} Poenulus, Act. 5. sc. 2. v. 35.
- {78} Not. in Peritzol. Itinerar. Mundi, p. 44.
- {79} Canaan. l. 2. c. 6.
- {80} Opera, vol. 1. Vit. Syllae, p. 463.
- {81} Comment. in Jonam, c. 4. fol. 59. B.
- {82} Comment. in Cantic. l. 6. p. 58.
- {83} Stephan. de urb.
- {84} Orig. l. 15. c. 12. so. Servius in Virgil. Aeneid. lib. 1. v. 309.
- {85} Prolog. v. 86. vid. Philip. Pareum in Ib. & Lexic. Plautin.
- {86} Aeneid. l. 4. v. 9. & passim.
- {87} Festus Avienus in Ora Maritim. l. 1. Solinus, c. 36. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 4. c. 22. Isidor. Orig. l. 14. c. 6.
- {88} Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. s. 22.
- {89} Deipnosophist. l. 3. c. 29. p. 113.
- {90} Ib. l. 4. c. 23. p. 175.
- {91} Baeotica, sive, l. 9. p. 560.
- {92} Plin. l. 7. c. 7. c. 56. Irenaeus adv. Hares. l. 1. c. 12. Isidor. Orig. l. 1. c. 3.
- {93} Suidas in voce Ατβοç
- {94} Terpsichore, sive, l. 5. c. 58. 59.
- {95} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 328, 329, 340.
- {96} Apud Clem. Alex. Stromat. l. 1. p. 306.
- {97} In Laert. vit. Philosoph. l. 7. p. 455.
- {98} Contr. Apion. l. 1. s. 2.

- {99} De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p. 59.
- {100} Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. l. 1. c. 5. s. 10. p. 33.
- {101} Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 200, 201.
- {102} Pausan. Eliac. 1. sive l. 5. p. 338.
- {103} Vid. Dickinson. Delphi Phaenic. c. 10 & Reinesium de lingua, Punica, c. 12. s. 30.
- {104} Reines. Ib. c. 2. s. 16.
- {105} In voce νομος
- {106} in Οχλωθεν
- {107} Chronology, p. 479.
- {108} Ep. Vossio col. 859.
- {109} Universal History, vol. 2. p. 347.
- {110} Bochart. Canaan l. 1. c. 20. col. 451. Dr. Kennicott. Dissert. 2. p. 151. 156.
- {111} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. s. 5.
- {112} Ibid. l. 11. c. 8. s. 6.
- {113} Comment. in Misn. Beracot, c. 8. 8.
- {114} Comment. in Ib. c. 7. 1.
- {115} Vide Guisium in Ib.
- {116} Kals. Dissert. Philolog. de Ling. Heb. Natal. p. 72.
- {117} Chronolog. ad A. M. 3203. c. Mose Gerundense.
- {118} De Dis. Syr. Syntagm. 2. c. 7. p. 713.
- {119} Clio, sive l. 1. c. 199.
- {120} Contr. Gentes, p. 21.
- {121} Dict. & Fact. Memorab. l. 2. c. 6. s. 15.
- {122} Ptolem. Geograph. l. 4. c. 3. vid. Reines. de Ling. Punic. c. 8. s. 28. & Rivin. de Majumis, c. 7. s. 26.
- {123} Justin. e. Trogo l. 18. c. 5.
- {124} Hyde Hist Relig. Vet Pers. c. 2. p. 39. 40.
- {125} T. Bab. Bava. Bathra, fol. 91. 1. Vid. Pirke Elieaes, c. 26. fol. 26. 2. and c. 38. fol. 44. 2.
- {126} Onomastic. sacr. p. 605.
- {127} Ib. p. 609.
- {128} Saturnal. l. 4. c. 21, 42.
- {129} Geograph. l. 5. c. 18.
- {130} Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.
- {131} Comment. in Isaiam, c. 36, 19.
- {132} Apud Euseb. ut supra c. 12.
- {133} Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 5.
- {134} De Laud. Constantin. p. 646.
- {135} Contr. Gent. p. 21.
- {136} De Abstinencia, l. 2. c. 27.
- {137} Justin e. Trogo. l. 18. c. 6, and l. 19, c. 1.
- {138} Hist. l. 4. c. 3.
- {139} Apud Lactant. Institut. l. 1. c. 21.
- {140} Bibliothec. l. 20. p. 756. 789.
- {141} Joseph. Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. s. 6, & l. 12. c. 5. s. 5.
- {142} Antiqu. l. 11. c. 2. s. 1.
- {143} Contr. Haeres. l. 2. haeres. 66.
- {144} Comment. in Is. xix. fol. 29. l.
- {145} Epist. Vessio, col. 860.
- {146} Praesat. ad Introduct. Ling. Oriental. s. 25.
- {147} Disqu. Critic. c. 11. p. 88.
- {148} Hist. Dynast. p. 16, 17.
- {149} Boderian. Praesat. ad Lex Syro-Chald. Walton Praesat. ut supra, s. 35.

- {150} Lexic. Heptoglott. col. 178. vid. Psseri Critica sacra. s. 2. problem. Quest. 1.
{151} Ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 139.
{152} Smegma oriental. par. 1. p. 35. Gram. Chald. Syr. p. 4.
{153} Buxtorf. de Lit. Heb. Addit.

Chapter 4-Of the Antiquity of the Vowel Points, and Accents

I put the vowel points and accents together, because, according to the way they are understood, they have a dependence on each other. The points are often changed according to the position of the accents, and therefore the one must work in conjunction with the other. As *Elias Levita* {1} observed:

“There is no word without an accent.”

About the antiquity of these there has been a controversy for the last two centuries which is not yet decided. I do not expect it will be resolved by this essay of mine. My only purpose is to outline how far back in antiquity these things can be traced and carried.

There have been various opinions concerning them. Some think they are of a divine origin and others think they are of human invention. Some suppose that they were first invented by *Ben Asher* and *Ben Naphtali*, about the year 1037. {2} Others however, think they were devised by the Jews of *Tiberias*, about 500 years after Christ, or were invented at least after the *Talmud* was finished. {3} Others ascribe them to *Ezra* and the men of the great synagogue. {4} These men were supposed to have at least revived and restored them having fixed them to the consonants, which before were only delivered and used in a traditional way. Others are of the opinion that they were given to *Moses* on mount *Sinai*. They were meant to better enable proper pronunciation in reading, though not to be used in writing. They were propagated by tradition to the times of *Ezra*. Still others believe they were *ab origine*, {5} and were invented by *Adam* together with the letters. At least they were present with the letters, and in use as soon as they were written. This account seems the most probable, and may appear by tracing them step by step, from one period of time to another as we begin with the most recent times.

{1} Sepher Tob Taam, sive, de accent. c. 4.

{2} So Morinus de Sinceritate Heb. & Gr. Text. 1. 2. Exercitat. 14. c. 1. Genebrard. Chronolog. p. 181. Calmet. &c.

{3} Elias Levita, Praefat. 3.

{4} Ben Chayim praefat. Bibl. in principio & multi script. Jud.

{5} Cosri par. 4. s. 25. Miscatus in ib. fol. 229. 1. Meor Enayim. c. 59.

A. D. 1037.

In this year, according to *R. Gedaliah* {6} and *David Ganz*, {7} lived two famous Jews, *Ben Asher*, and *Ben Naphtali*, to whom some have ascribed the invention of the vowel points. Therefore it is believed that they existed as early as 700 years ago or more. However, it is not probable that these men were the inventors of the vowel points. This is due to such eminent Jewish doctors as *Jarchi*, *Kimchi*, and *Aben Ezra* who lived in the following century. They often made mention of the vowel points, but never as a novel invention. If these had been the authors of the vowel points, would it not be reasonable to expect these Jewish doctors to mention them as such, and commend them for it in their writings? *Kimchi* {8} observed that compared to those that read *Adonai* lord, and *immecha* with thee, in **Ps 110:1,2** instead of *Adoni* my lord, and *ammeca* thy people,

“that from the rising of the sun to the setting of it, (i.e. throughout the world) you will find, in all copies. *Nun* with *chirek*, and *Ain* with *pathach*.”

Hence, in his time pointed Bibles were in common and general use. In addition, he charges *Jerome* with an error on account of the points, and therefore must believe they were in his time. The author of the book of *Cosri*, {9} even if *R. Judah Halleni* was the author of it, lived about 1140, or as others, 1089. He spoke of punctuation as a divine thing and as the effect of divine wisdom. He does not appear to have the least notion of its being of human invention, much less the invention of the present age or preceding century. *R. Judah Chijug* has been said {10} to be the first principal grammarian. He found the Bible pointed and accented. *Elias Levita* {11} stated that he was a contemporary of *Ben Asher*, and wrote a book of the double letters, and another of pointing, {12} as if it were an art which was of long standing and generally received. He makes not the least mention of *Ben Asher* being concerned in it. Also, *R. Jonah*, another grammarian, who came a short while after him, was silent concerning this matter. {13} *Aben Ezra* spoke {14} of *Ben Labrat*, who came before them both, as having found *twbrh* with *pathach* in **Ps 9:6** in an ancient pointed copy. Hence, there was an *ancient pointed* Bible before these men came into being. These men could not have been the inventors of the points because of an observation made by *Elias Levita*. {15} He noted that their dissensions and disputes were about the words which were pointed formerly but not then pointed. Therefore, it is unreasonable to conclude that they would disagree and dispute about what they themselves had invented. The evidence is clear that the points must have been in use before their time.

{6} Shalshalat Hakabala fol. 28. 2.

{7} Tzemach David. par. 1. fol. 37, 1.

{8} Apud Pocok. Prta Mosis miscell. not. p. 58.

{9} Par. 3. c. 32.

{10} Balmesii Mikneh Abraham p. 24. lin. 10. Eliae praefat. Methurgeman, fol. 2. 1.

{11} Ib.

{12} Wolsii Bibliothec. Heb. p. 338. 424.

{13} Vid. Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiq. par. 2. p. 329.

{14} Comment. in Ps. 9:6

{15} Praefat. 3.

A. D. 927.

About this time lived *Saadia Gaon*, who wrote a book concerning pointing, which *Jarchi*, on **Ps 45:9** makes mention of stating that he saw it. The points therefore must have been before his time for it is ridiculous to think that he would write a book concerning the rules of an art which did not exist! The accents also must have been in use at that time because *Gaon* was using them to divide *Jehovah* from *righteousness* in **Jer 23:6**. This made *righteousness* to be the name of the Messiah, and *Jehovah* the name of God. *Aben Ezra* {16} replied to him, that he mistook or perverted the author of the accents, and made him guilty of an error, who put *Tarcha* (or *Tiphca*) on *warqy*. In addition, where the word *Jehovah* is

repeated in **Ex 34:6** *Gaon* observed that the first name is to be connected with אָרָאָו, *proclaimed*. *Aben Ezra* {17} replied, "If it should be so, why did not the author of the accents connect it?" *Gaon* responded, "But, it is right to repeat the name, as *Abraham Abraham, Jacob Jacob, Moses Moses*." Now it would have been most absurd if *Aben Ezra* had charged *Gaon* with a mistake or perversion of the accents, if they were not in being in the time of *Gaon*. He lived many years before *Ben Asher* and *Ben Naphtali*. This proves that they were not the inventors of them. *Aben Ezra* lived in the next century after them, and he spoke of the accents not as a novel invention, but referred to them as having been in use by the men of *Ezra's* great synagogue. He expressed such a high opinion of them, that he advised not to acquiesce in any exposition that is not according to them, or hearken to it.

{16} Comment. in Exod. 18:3

{17} Ib. in Exod 34:6

A. D. 900.

In the church of *St. Dominic* in *Bononia*, a copy of the *Hebrew* scriptures is kept with great care. It is pretended to be the original copy written by *Ezra* himself, and is valued at great cost. Sometimes the *Bononians* have borrowed large sums of money against it and repaid them for the redemption of it. It is written in a very fair character, on dressed calfskin. The letters have retained their blackness, and it is made up in a roll, according to the ancient manner. The Jews presented this copy to *Aymericus*, who was the master of the order of *St. Dominic* at that time. He exercised that office about the year 1308, as *Montsaucon* {18} related who witnessed this. *Montsaucon* further observed that besides a *Latin* inscription sewn in the middle of the volume, which he gave, there was also one in *Hebrew*:

“This is the book of the law of *Moses*, which *Ezra* the scribe wrote, and read before the congregation, both men and women when he stood in a wooden pulpit.”

Montsaucon did not say whether it was pointed or not, but dean *Brideaux* {19} stated that it has the vowel points. *Franciscus Tissardus Ambaceus* asserts {20} the same, who says he often saw it. Also, *Arias Montanus* {21} affirmed that it had the *Masorah*, the same as in the *Venetian* and *Bombergian* editions. Though there is no reason to believe it to be the autograph of *Ezra* or even as early as that, yet, according to the account of it, it must be ancient. For it is nearly 460 years ago since it was presented by the Jews to the monastery. Since they presented it as a very ancient copy, even as the autograph of *Ezra*, it must have had marks of antiquity on it even in that day, and must have been written some ages before. *Dr. Kennicott* {22} also observes that it seems sensible to imagine that it was written as long before it was presented, as it has been since, and agrees with the early date in which I have placed it.

{18} *Diar. Italic.* p. 399. 400. vid ejusdem *Praeliminar.* in *Hexapla Origen.* p. 22.

{19} *Connection,* par. 1. p. 362.

{20} *Gram. Heb.* apud *Hottinger.* *Thesaur. Philolog.* p. 512, 513.

{21} *Praefat. de ver. Lect.* in *Heb. Lib.*

{22} *Dissertation,* vol. 1. p. 310.

A. D. 740.

It was approximately the year 740 when a dialogue took place between *Isaac Sangari*, a Jew, and a Persian king named *Chosroes*. An account of this dialogue took place in the book of *Cosri* which work we have already discussed earlier. It is thought by some to have been compiled from loose sheets and put together by *R. Judah Hallevi*. At the beginning of the book *R. Judah*, who flourished about the year 1140, says this conversation took place 400 years before his time. Within this work the points and accents are much spoken of, in which the author commends the excellence and elegance of the *Hebrew* tongue on account of them. It gives many of the names of both points and accents, and declares the usefulness of them, and asserts that they were received by tradition from *Moses*. It states they are the production of

admirable wisdom, and would never have been received had they not come from a prophet, or one divinely assisted. {23} *R. Judah Hallevi* died not giving the least hint of their being of human origin or of modern invention. He expressly ascribed the seven kings or vowel points, as *Aben Ezra* also called them, to *Ezra* and the men of his synagogue, and inferred that they received them by tradition from *Moses*.

{23} Cosri, par. 2. s. 80. & par. 3. s. 31, 32.

A. D. 600.

Those who ascribe the invention of the points to the Jews of *Tiberias* suppose that this was after the year 500, when the *Babylonian Talmud* was finished. Their reason for it is, because, as they affirm, no mention is made of them in that work, and therefore the invention of them must be later than that. We will discuss more of this later. However, according to this hypothesis, one would think they must have been invented and in use by the above mentioned time. Indeed, those who espouse this hypothesis, are at a very great uncertainty about the exact time of this invention! The first person that broached this notion was *Elias Levita*, a *German Jew*, who lived in the 16th century, contrary to the sentiments and belief of his whole nation. His countrymen supposed the points were from *Ezra*, and the men of the great synagogue, or from *Moses* at mount *Sinai*, or from *Adam* who had them from God himself. *Elias* asserted, {24} that after the finishing of the *Talmud*, which he placed in the year 436, after the desolation of the second temple, the men of *Tiberias* arose. These men were wise and great, expert in the scripture, and in purity and in eloquence of language and excelled all the *Jews* in those times. No others rose up after the like of these men and these were the authors of the points. This is stated without offering the least proof of it, and by one that lived nearly a thousand years after that time! It is strange that only he should be knowledgeable of this secret, and that no history, Jewish nor Christian, ever made mention of it for such a course of years. It is quite improbable that there were such a set of men at *Tiberias* about the time suggested, since a great destruction of the *Jews* was made there in the year 352, by *Gallus*, at the command of *Constantius*. Also *Jewish* chronologers {25} observed that promotion to doctorship ceased in the land of *Israel* with *Hillel* the prince, who flourished about the year 340. Since the flourishing university of the *Jews* was at *Babylon* at the time of this pretended invention, it is very unlikely that it should be done without their knowledge, advice, and assistance. There is no record of either their approbation of it, or opposition to it by any of them. That it should be universally received by the *Jews* at once every where, and not one *Momus* to find fault, is very extraordinary indeed. Also, that it should be received by the *Karaite Jews* themselves who are enemies to tradition and innovation. This will be seen later on. It is strange that, according to this scheme, that many persons must be employed in this work and that there should be only one sort of pointing. How is it that they all took the same method, throughout the whole Bible, without any variation, except some anomalies which are to be observed in letters as well as in points? Why would this always be continued with the *Jews*, and never any other scheme proposed and attempted? That it is not known who began it and when seems a mystery. Indeed we are left at a very great uncertainty about the place where this wonderful affair was transacted! *Elias*, the author of this story, if he were pressed hard, seems to have found a subterfuge to retreat to, and therefore he tells us that *Tiberias* is *Moesia*. {26} However, where that is he does not say, but leaves us to seek for it where we can, and take a wild goat's chase into *Asia Minor*, to *Pontus*, or to where *Mysia* is said to be. No mention is made of famous *Jewish* doctors, for they have not been heard of in it. The *Tiberias* of the scripture, and of *Josephus*, and of the *Jewish* writers in general, was a city in *Palestine*, situated on the Lake of *Genesaret*. This city was famous in their writings for the last sitting of the *Sanhedrim* in it. There was a very considerable university there, for the residence of *R. Judah*, the saint, in it, where it is probable he compiled the *Misnah* and of many others of their celebrated doctors in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It is certain the *Jerusalem Talmud* was finished, in the 3rd century, after which the university in it began to decline. We only hear now and then of a doctor in that place, the universities in *Babylon* bearing away all the glory. Therefore it is not probable, that this business of pointing the Bible was done by the men of *Tiberias* in later times. If it was, it is strange that none of them declared themselves the authors of the points, or that they had a hand in the invention or assistance in that work, since it would have gained them immortal honour. It certainly would be agreed that it was an

ingenious and useful work, especially since *Jews* are proud boasters and lovers of fame and reputation. Strange, very strange it is, that not one of the men concerned in this work can be named! Not even can any time be fixed when it was done by them, whether 100 years after the finishing of the *Talmud*, or 200, or 300 or 400. No espouser of this notion chose to state a particular man or a particular time, lest they should be entangled! The only man I have met with, that has ventured to fix the date of the invention of the points, is *Possevinus* the Jesuit. {27} He, in his great wisdom, has pitched on the year 478, when the points began to be in use some years before the finishing of the *Talmud*, according to the most early account of it. By this he has destroyed the hypothesis on which this notion is built! It is incredible that men under a judicial blindness, and the curse of God, ignorant of divine things, should form a scheme which so well ascertains the sense of the scriptures! It is amazing that they should hit on such an invention, and publish that which is so subversive of their own religion, and so serviceable to Christianity and its doctrines which in no one instance opposes it. They must have seen in the age they were supposed to have invented them, what use the Christians had made of various passages of scripture against *Judaism*, and in favour of Christianity. Why should they point and accentuate those very passages against themselves, and for the Christians? Take one instance in the place of many as to accents in **Ge 49:10**. How gladly now would they have the *Athnach* removed from *wylnr* to *de* and then read the words, as they have attempted to do, {28} *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law giver from between his feet for ever; for Shiloh shall come*. However, the accents are against them, and forbid this reading! The use they are in **Jer 23:6** has been already observed. It is most incredible, that the accents should be invented by the *Jews* about the time supposed since one use of them was to lead and direct in music. Yet the use of accents in prose and verse is different than in metrical and prose writings of the Bible at the very time metre fell in disuse, and the metre of the *Hebrews* lost and unknown! He that can believe such a romantic story as all this is, need not be squeamish to believe the most arrant lie and notorious fable, to be met with in the whole *Talmud*! A greater lie I do not know and a louder lie I believe was never told by a *Jew* or anyone else with any credibility in the world! It is amazing that anyone believes it. Some *Protestants* at first received it because they were too trusting. Through their high esteem for the previously mentioned *Elias*, by whom they were taught the *Hebrew* language, they understood the usefulness of the points and accents. Many of the *Papists* greedily grasped it, and commended the *Protestants* for receiving it. They hoped in this issue to avail themselves of it, since it would appear that the sense of scripture the *Protestants* had given into, depended on the invention of men, even of some *Jews*, long since the time of Christianity. They hoped that on this account, they would reject the points, and then as words would be subject to various senses without them and some contrary to each other, they would at last be convinced of the necessity of one infallible interpreter of scripture. *Morinus*, a papist, and a very principal opposer of the points, in a book, {29} highly commended by some *Protestant* writers, spoke out plainly. He said:

“The reason why God would have the scriptures written in the ambiguous manner they are, (i.e. without points) is, because it was his will that every man should be subject to the *judgment of the church*, and not interpret the scriptures in his own way. For seeing the reading of the scriptures is so difficult, and so liable to various ambiguities, (i.e. a mere nose of wax, to be turned any way); from the very nature of the thing, he observed it is plain, that it was not the will of God, that every one should rashly and irreverently take upon him to explain it, nor to suffer the common people to expound it at their pleasure, but, that in those, as in other things respecting religion, his will is, that the people should depend upon *the priests*.”

{24} Praefat 3. ad Masoret.

{25} Shalshalet Hakabala fol. 25. 2. Gan. 2. Tzmach David, fol. 33. 1.

{26} Praefat. 3. ad Masoret. he seems to have taken this name of Tiberias from Ben Chayim in Masor. Mag. Lit. x fol. 31. 2. or from David Kimchi, in Miclol. fol. 108. 2.

{27} Apud Herman. Hugonim. de prima scribendi orig. c. 27. p. 168.

{28} Vid. Menasseh. ben Israel. Conciliat. in Gen. Quaest. 65. s. 3.

{29} De Heb. & Graec. Text. Sinceritate, l. 1. Exercitat. 6. c. 2. s. 8. p. 198, 199.

A. D. 500.

According to *Scaliger*, {30} it was about this time the *Babylonian Talmud* was finished in 508. In this work, it is said to mention the points and accents. However, upon enquiry, it will be found to be otherwise. Though the *Talmudists* do not mention the names, nor express the figures of the vowel points, they obviously allude to them. This shows they were in being in their times in that: when they say, *read not so, but so*, it is plain they have no reference to the consonants, which are the same one way as another. They must have respect for the difference of the vowel points, the understanding of which is the foundation of their remarks, and therefore the vowel points must have been known by them. Hence, the *Karaites* charged the *Rabbins* with perverting the commands of God by their *Al-tikra's*, *read not so, but so*, not changing the consonants but the vowels and accents, since they said that the copies of theirs and the *Rabbins*, with respect to punctuation were the same. They acknowledge that otherwise in the places where they change the vowels and accents, and say, *do not read so, but so*, they are not changing the consonants but the vowels and accents. When they have said that the punctuation in their copies is the same as the *Rabbins'* and have specifically directed the reader to *not read so, but so* in changing the vowels and accents, they would have otherwise pointed according to their pleasure. It is suggested that they dare not do this. Therefore the *Karaites* add, this proves that before the finishing of the *Talmud*, from the days of old, the law was pointed and accented. {31} For example: when they say, {32} with respect to **Ps 50: 23** do not read מִוֶּר but מִוֶּר, they mean do not read *Shin* with a point on the right hand, but with a point on the left. In quoting **Pr 19:23** they direct, {33} do not read eבֵּו but eבֵּו that is, do not read the word with the point on the left hand of *Shin*, when it would signify *satisfied*, as the common punctuation reads, but with the point on the right hand because it signifies *Seven*. They think this proves what it is quoted for: that such a man who lies seven nights without a dream, is an evil man. Therefore it is read, *he shall not be visited, he is an evil man*. Also, in **Isa 2:22** *Ula* says, {34} don't read חִמֵּק but חִמֵּק, that is, to serve his own purpose, don't read as if it was *Bameh*, (i.e. pointed with a *Patach* and *Segol*) which would signify *wherein*, but *Bamah*, (i.e. with a *Kametzes*) and so signifies a high place. Another example is in **Isa 54:13**. It is said, {35} don't read כִּנְיָנִים (i.e. with a *Kemetz*) thy children, but כִּנְיָנִים, (i.e. with a *vau*, and *cholem*) thy builders. When quoting **Eze 48:25** it is observed, {36} don't read חִמְּוֵי, *Shammah* there (i.e. with two *Kametzes*) but חִמְּוֵי, *Shemah*, his name, (as if with *Shevah*, and *Kametz*) and this form does not suppose any corruption of the text, nor even a variant reading. It seems to be a kind of allegorical sport of these *Rabbins* among themselves as *F. Simon* {37} calls it. To show their *acumen*, they observe what different senses they can put on a word by its being differently pointed. This then supposes the points were in being or they could not divert themselves in this manner. It should be noted that this phrase is used chiefly in giving allegorical expositions, not by way of authority and command, as imposing such a reading. I concede that if it was read in that way, it would yield a commodious sense, especially if it were allegorical. {38} I cannot see how this phrase could be used in writing by giving instances like the ones given above, without expressing the very marks and figures of the points as put to the words in debate, otherwise these men are fools. Neither can I see how the ridiculous story about *Joab's* slaying of his master for teaching him to read wrong could be related in the *Talmud* {39} without the vowel points added to the words. The story is told in this way. After *Joab* had cut off every male in *Edom*, **1Ki 11:15,16** when he came before *David* he said to him, "What is the reason that thou hast done this?" (i.e. that thou hast not destroyed the females, as the gloss is). He replied, "because it is written **De 25:19** thou shalt blot out רְבוֹא of *Amaleck*". *David* said to him, "But behold we read רְבוֹא". *Joab* answered, "I was taught to read it רְבוֹא". He went and asked his master, saying, "How didst thou teach me to read?" He told him "רְבוֹא". He drew his sword to kill him. Now where is the difference? They all say the same thing, *David*, *Joab*, and his master, as the bare letters of the word without the vowel points are given. What sense can be made of this story, thus told? No doubt but in the *Talmud*, as originally written, the several vowel points were put to this word in the way it is said to be read by *Joab*. It was *zacar*, male, with two *Kametzes*. By *David* and *Joab's* master, it was *zecer*, remembrance, with two *Segols*. In other cases of a similar kind, the points were put through the carelessness or sloth of transcribers. There are two instances of this where the very figures of the vowel points are used. In quoting **Nu 13:31** it is directed {40} don't read רַבִּימִי than *him* (with

a *Cholem*). The second place, {41} with respect to the passage in **De 23:18** they say, do not read ξβθζ (with a *Kametz*) but ηβθζ (with a *Segol*). The first word, pointed as directed, signifies a *whore*, being feminine, the other, differently pointed, is masculine, and signifies a *fornicator*. {42} My *Talmud* is of the *Amsterdam* and *Frankford* edition, and I have no opportunity of consulting another. Should it be said, these points are annexed to the words by the *editors* of this work? I ask, why are they not added to the words in the other instances? No doubt the reason is, because they were originally so in the *Talmud*, and this is as I found them. There is no question of their being put in all other instances, though they are omitted by copiers. To these observations I would add, the prick or point on the *Vau* in the word for *arose*, in **Ge 19:33** is taken notice of in the *Talmud*, {43} as well as the 15 pricks on several words in the bible. The following is one example: {44} the word for *unless*, in **Ps 27:13** {45} and on **De 29:29**. {46} Therefore, if these pricks and points were so early, which are of so little use, then the vowel points are even more so. As for the accents, they are specifically mentioned. Thus those words in **Ne 8:8** are interpreted, *so they read in the law of God*, this is the Scripture *distinctly*, this is the *Targum* and *gave the sense*. These are the verses pointed, as *R. Nissim* in that place in the *Talmud* interprets it, *and caused them to understand the reading*, these are οymej γqoyρ *the distinctions of the accents*. {47} There are other places mentioned where the distinctions of the accents are made. {48} The accents of the law, {49} which might be shown and pointed at by the hand must also be visible marks or figures. These also are to be understood both of vowel points, and of accents. Therefore the over all intent in that passage interprets it as the pointing and the elevation of the voice in singing according to the accents. The marks and figures of them, they say in the *Talmud* were what *Solomon* {50} instructed the people in. Those words were paraphrased in the *Talmud*: *he taught the people knowledge*, for he instructed them οyme jyγmyob *in the signs*, marks, figures, or characters of the accents: Also on the phrase, *his locks are bushy*, it is clear that he (*Solomon*) sought out and explained every title, prick, or point (*in the law*). *There are* heaps upon heaps of the constitutions or decisions of it {51} which are pointed. In one of the above places {52} referred to, they disputed about giving a reward to such who taught the accents. Surely this could never be thought of, if the accents were not yet invented! In addition, in the *Talmud* {53} it is mentioned that some words in the bible are,

“written but not read,”

and others are,

“read but not written.”

Those that are written but not read are alone without the vowel points, as in **Jer 51:3** &c. Those that are read but not written, are those vowel points which stand alone in the text, and the consonants in the margin. There are ten of these. **Jud 20:13 Ru 3:5,17, 2Sa 8:3, 16:23, 18:20 2Ki 19:31,37 Jer 31:38 50:29** This shows that the state of the *Hebrew* text, with respect to these *Keries* and *Cetibs*, was the same at the composition of the *Talmud* as they are now. The *Talmudists* must have been acquainted with pointed Bibles, and consequently points must have been in use before the *Talmud* was finished, and hence, before the pretended men of *Tiberias*. The ablation of the scribes is spoken of in the same *tract*. This forbids reading the superfluous *Vau* in five places. Also the reading of the scribes, which shows how they read and pronounced some words, as *Arets*, *Shamaim*, *mitzraim*; as *Aretz*, sometimes *Aratz*, and sometimes *Erets*, according to the diversity of the accents, as *Buxtorff* explains. {54} *Shamaim* sometimes appears with *Kametz* and *Patach*, and sometimes with a double *Kametz*, because of the pause as well as *Mitzraim*. The note of *R. Nissim* in that place is, because of the *Athnack*, *Arets* is read with a *Kametz*, and *Shamaim* and *Mitzraim*. Though they have no *Aleph* in them, they are read as if they had.

{30} De Emend. Temp. l. 7. p. 323.

{31} Dod Mordecai, c. 11. p. 137. c. 12. p. 152. 153.

{32} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 5. 2. Moed Katon, fol. 5. 1.

{33} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 14. 1.

- {34} T. Bab. Sotah fol. 4. 2.
 {35} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 64. 1.
 {36} T. Bab. Bathra, fol. 75. 2.
 {37} Disquis. Crit. c. 3. p. 17.
 {38} Vid Maimon. Moreh Nevochim. par. 3. c. 43. Hottinger. Thesaur. Philolog. l. 1. c. 2. p. 214. Buxtorf. de Punctuat. par. 1. p. 97, 98. Surenhus. Biblos Kattalages, p. 4. 59. 60.
 {39} T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 21. 1. 2.
 {40} T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 1. su in Menachot. fol. 53. 2.
 {41} T. Bab. Temurak. fol. 29. 2.
 {42} Vid. Schindler. Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 495.
 {43} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 10. 2, & Nazir, fol. 21. 1.
 {44} Aboth. R. Nathan, c. 34. fol. 18. Sopherim. c. 1. s. 3.
 {45} T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 1.
 {46} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 2.
 {47} T. Bab Megillah, fol. 3. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 37. 2.
 {48} T. Bab Chagigah, fol. 6. 2.
 {49} T. Bab Beracot, fol. 62. 1. & Gloss in ib. Pesachim, fol. 119. 1.
 {50} T. B. Eruvim, fol. 21. 2.
 {51} Ibid.
 {52} Nedarim, fol. 37. 1.
 {53} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. Massechet. Sopherim. c. 6. s. 7, 8.
 {54} Tiberias, c. 8. p. 11.

A. D. 400.

The *Masorah*, or *Masoreth*, as it is sometimes called, which signifies *tradition*, is a work consisting of remarks on several things in the Bible, handed down to posterity from one to another. It does not appear to be the work of one man or even a group of men living in one age or place, who were jointly concerned with it. It was a work involving various people in several ages. It may have been started by the men of the great synagogue of *Ezra*, to whom the *Jewish* writers generally ascribe it, to be carried on by scribes and copiers in later ages. It was at last finished by the men of *Tiberias*. Not the *Utopian* men of *Tiberias*, after the year 500, who lived in the 6th and 7th centuries, as was thought. It was the men who lived in the 2nd and 3rd centuries and in the beginning of the 4th. These were men of fame and note among the *Jews* whose names are given in an account of them in the *Jerusalem Talmud*. More will be discussed about them presently. In later times, some things had crept into this work and additions were made to it. The names of *Jarchi* and *Ben Gersom* are mentioned in it as well as some notes of *Ben Chayim*. He was the first editor of it in printed Bibles. *Ben Chayim* took many pains to bring it into some form and order, and arranged it in the manner in which we see it in some printed copies. However, it is certain the work existed before the *Babylonian Talmud*. In *Ben Chayim's* preface (which stands before *Bomberg's* Bible, and which *Buxtorff* also has placed before his) *Ben Chayim* asserts that in many places the *Talmud* contradicts the *Masorah*. Besides, the *Babylonian Talmud* is expressly mentioned in the *Masorah*. Such phrases are sometimes {55} to be met with in it as arqml Ma and trwoml Ma . This means that such an exposition of a word or passage, has its foundation in the Scripture and is according to the literal and common rendering of it. Also, such an exposition or interpretation of a word or passage, has its foundation in the *Masorah*, or is according to that. {56} It is the traditional sense of it, as it may be read and pronounced by other vowels. Indeed, those men who are said to have numbered all the letters in the law, and the verses in it, and to have pointed out the letter which is exactly the middle of the pentateuch, and in other books, are called Mynvad the *ancients*. These men lived long ago, and with whom the compilers of the *Talmud* were not to be named {57} and are thought by the learned bishop *Ussher* {58} to be the men of the great synagogue of *Ezra*. The compilers of the *Talmud* are not to be associated with them. Therefore when *F. Simon* quoted {59} *Elias Levita* who says that the *Masorah* came later than the *Talmud*, his statement was wrong. Indeed, even Christ himself spoke of the men of old time who were called by him,

the ἀρχαῖοι, the *ancients*. These men delivered down peculiar senses of the law from age to age. They may be truly said to be a sort of *Masorettes*. {55} They are elsewhere called *elders* to whom traditions are ascribed, {Mt 15:2 Mr 7:3,5} though perhaps they are more apt to be rendered *misnic* doctors. Certainly various parts of the work of the *Masorettes* ascribed to them, are made mention of in the *Talmud*. Not only is the numbering of the letters and verses in the law ascribed to them as we asserted before, but the distinction of verses is spoken of in it too. It is ascribed to *Moses*, although *Elias Levita* {60} made them the work of the *Masorettes*. In the *Talmud* {61} it is said:

“Whatever verse *Moses* did not distinguish, we do not distinguish.”

We read of the distinction of verses in the *Misnah* {62} which was compiled some hundreds of years before the *Talmud*. The variant readings which the *Masorettes* are said to be the authors of, even many sorts of them are mentioned in the *Talmud*. {63} Their concern with the points and accents will be presently observed. Not only were these parts of the work assigned them, but the forms of letters, greater, lesser, or suspended, marked by the *Mosorettes* in the Bible, are observed in the *Talmud*. Even {64} the *Masorah* itself is mentioned in it. In the interpretation of **Ne 8:8** noted in the preceding section, and caused them to understand the reading, some interpret it as the distinction of accents. Others say, these are the *Masorah* {65} or *Masoretic* notes, or as *R. Nissim*, in that passage explains, what is delivered in the *Masorah*. Not only in the *Jerusalem Talmud* {66} is mention made of it, but in the *Misnah* {67} itself, which was finished in the year 150. There was a saying of *R. Akiba*, who died in the beginning of the second century:

“The *Masorah* is a hedge to the law.”

The note of *Bartenora* on it is, the *Masoreth*, which the wise men have delivered to us, concerning words defective and redundant in the law. I must be safe therefore in placing this work 100 years before the *Babylonian Talmud*, it certainly must have been that early or much earlier. *Walton*, an opposer of the points, acknowledged {68} that some part of the *Masoretic* notes were collected before the *Talmud* was finished. He thought it was probable, that though not immediately after *Ezra*, but about the time of the *Maccabees*, when the sect of the *Pharisees* arose, some might begin to make those observations. *Dr. Prideaux* {69} supposed that they began shortly after the time of *Ezra*. The observations of the *Masorettes* were not only about entire words, nor about letters or consonants, but about the points and accents. Take a few instances, instead of many which might be produced. On **Ge 1:5** the note of the *Masorah* is, *rwal* which is written several times with a *Kametz*. In **Ge 14:5** *Chedorlaomer*, is one word with two *Shevahs*. In **Ex 32:6** it is observed the word *qxul* is no more found with *Segol* and *silluk*. In **Job 19:7** *hnea* is no more written with *Segol* and *Kametz*. Also, in **Ps 84:11** it is remarked, that *yhla* is twice with a *Patach* and *Athnach*. See also on **Ge 16:13 19:2 Ex 26:5 Le 10:4,19 Nu 9:2 De 18:17 Jos 6:14 1Sa 10:21 Ps 27:4 Jer 17:17 Da 1:3 3:21 Eze 8:16** and other places. Therefore, the points and accents must have come before the *Masorettes*, and could not have been invented by them.

{55} T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 86. 2. Succah, fol. 6. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 18. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 4. 1.

{56} Vid. Halicot Olam, par. 4. c. 3. p. 187.

{57} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 30. 1. & Sabbath, fol. 112. 2.

{58} Epist. ad Capell. in calce de sept. interpr. p. 211.

{59} Disquis. Critic. c. 4. p. 23.

{60} Sepher Tob Taam, c. 2.

{61} T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 22. 1.

{62} Misn. Megillah, c. 4. s. 4.

{63} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2.

{64} Massech. Sopherim, c. 9. s. 5. 7. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 109. 2. & Gloss in ib. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 30. 1. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 2.

{65} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. Megillah, fol. 3. 1.

{66} Megillah, fol. 754. ?? 4.

{67} Pirke Abot, c. 3. s. 13.

{68} Prologom. 8. s. 12.

{69} Connect. par. 1. B. 5. p. 353.

A. D. 385.

Jerome died in 420, being almost 90 years old and therefore must have lived in the above year. He was the best versed in *Jewish* literature of any of the ancient writers, having had no fewer than four *Jews*, at different times as his instructors. He had knowledge of the points and accents, which therefore must have been in his time. This is most clear from his writings. I do not insist upon the marks and figures of the vowel points, which go along with the *Hebrew* words used by him, which I suppose are added by the editors of his works. I am not convinced that such a sensible and learned a man as *Jerome* was, would ever say what he has unless he had seen the *Hebrew* words he used with the vowel points. He must have put them there himself when he wrote them though over time they may have been left out in the copies transcribed from him. Otherwise, how could he have said of certain words, it is not written so, but so, in the *Hebrew* text, and yet gives the word either way with the same consonants exactly? He gives the word hmb , in **Isa 2:21** as an example with others, as we will presently show. What is there then to distinguish them? How could he expect to be believed, or to convince anyone by such a method? Would it not make him appear very ridiculous? Suppose the vowels were put to the words by him? They would distinguish one word from another, and him to be the true critic he is. Since this is indeed true of him, it is easy to account why the vowel points and accents are not mentioned by him since there is no need to. They were presented to the eye of the reader, and supposed to be understood by him. However, the same *Hebrew* words expressed in *Roman* characters, I have taken for granted were done by Jerome as well. This opinion is also endorsed by *Walton*. {70} I have no other edition of his works, than that of *Erasmus*, and have had no opportunity to consult any others. The words which are read, very rarely disagree with modern punctuation, but when they do, it could be due to inadvertency, over confidence in his memory, or to sloppy copiers. Nevertheless, he often speaks of the *Hebrew* points and accents and their variety which can change words and meaning in many ways. {71} In taking note of {72} the prick or point in the word *Kumah* in **Ge 19:34** which he calls pointing, he makes many observations on divers words, which clearly shows his knowledge of the *Hebrew* points. If he did not have this knowledge, he could never have made them. Thus, he notes, {73} that in **Ps 90:8** in the *Hebrew* it is written wnmle alumenu , which he translates *our neglects*. He marvels at the *Septuagint* interpreters, that they should translate it *our age* as if it was *olamenu*. Therefore, how could he say it was written in the *Hebrew*, *alumenu* and not *olamenu*, since the word without points may be read either way, if he had not seen it himself or been told that it was so pointed? He would not have been able to say {74} that in **Ex 13:18** he found it written in the *Hebrew* volume, carefully examining its characters, *Hamusim*, and not *Hamisim*, if the *Hebrew* volume he examined had no points. He did not know this by tradition, nor from use and custom of reading, but found it written this way. He also noted {75} that the word Myrev written with the same letters, has a different signification, because it may be differently read. For example: if *Searim* (i.e. has a *Kametz*) then it signifies *estimations*, but if *Seorim* (i.e. has a *Cholem*) then it signifies *barley*. Another example he has made is {76} her , written with the same letters. If it is read *Re*, (i.e. with a *Shevah*) then it is a *friend*, if *Ro*, (i.e. with a *Cholem*) then it is a *Shepherd*. He made a similar example with {77} the word hmb , in **Isa 2:22**. If it is rendered *wherein*, then it must be *hmb*, *bameh*, but if a *high place* or *high*, then it must be read hmb bamah . Since the three letters rkz signify *memorial*, or *remembrance*, then he says {78} the word is read *zecer*, (i.e. with two *Segols*) but if a *male*, then it is read *zacar*, (i.e. with two *Kametz*s). Again, {79} these three letters rbd are understood according to where they are placed. If read *dabar* (i.e. with two *Kametz*s) it signifies a *word*, but if *debar* (i.e. with two *Segols*) then it signifies the *plague*. Also the word dqv , he observes, {80} that if the accent or point is varied, it signifies either a *nut* or *watching*. That is, if it is pointed for a verb, then it signifies to *watch*, but if as a noun, then it signifies a *nut*, an almond nut. In the *Septuagint* version of **Jon 3:4** it is three days instead of forty. *Jerome* has wondered {81} how they could have so translated, when there is no likeness in the *Hebrew* words, for *three* and for *forty*, neither in

the letters nor in the syllable, nor in the *accents*, or vowels. Further, he has noted {82} the ambiguity of the *Hebrew* word $\gamma\nu\nu$ which is written with three letters, γ and ν and ν . If it is read *Shene* (i.e. with a *Shevah* and a *Tzere*) it signifies *two*, but if *Shane*, (i.e. with a *Kametz* and a *Tzere*) then it signifies *years*, and so in many other places. *Jerome* must have had knowledge of the point placed sometimes on the right hand of the letter ν , and then called *Yamin*, and sometimes on the left hand of it, and then called *Smal*, which gave it a different pronunciation, and the words a different sense. He also showed {83} that from *Ish*, a woman is rightly called *Isha*, but *Theodotion*, he says, suggests another etymology, saying, she shall be called *assumption*, because taken from man. He adds that *Issa* may be interpreted *assumption*, according to the variety of the *accents*, that is, the points. He means that if the word is derived from $\alpha\nu\nu$, with the point on the left hand, then it may signify *assumption*, since the word, so pointed, signifies to assume. *Bersabee*, {84} as differently *accentuated*, that is pointed, may be translated the *well of satiety* or of the *seventh*. The reason for this is that $\epsilon\nu\nu$ with a point on the right of ν , signifies *seven*, and to *swear*. However, with the same point on the left of the letter, it signifies *fulness* and *satiety*. The same thing is observed by him in another place, {85} that it has different senses according to the variety of the accents. Could *Jerome* have possibly made such observations as these without the knowledge of the points? Though from some of these passages it may be gathered, that unpointed books had been used, thereby deceiving some through the ambiguity of words without points. Why was *Jerome* not deceived? How could he be sure of the true *Hebrew* reading, if he had not seen pointed Bibles, or had not been taught that they were so pointed in the various places? To suppose any other explanation is ridiculous. It appears that the punctuation of his time is the same as the modern punctuation, which he follows to the letter. For instance, his reading the title of the 45th *Psalms*,

“Lamanazeah al Sosannim, libne Corah, Maschil sir jedidoth”. {86}

There is one point missing, and that is the *Shevah* in the first word. This is sometimes not pronounced, and it had no certain pronunciation with the ancients. Sometimes an *a* was used, sometimes an *i*, and sometimes an *e*, as it usually is now. According to the *Hebrew* grammarians, it has the nature of all the rest of the vowels, is equal to them, and pronounced like them, at certain times under certain conditions. {87} Three whole verses in **Ge 17:18-20** (Chapter reference obscure in original. Editor.) are exactly pronounced according to the modern punctuation. {88} His version of the *Psalms* agrees with the *Hebrew* text, as it now is, and as it is with the points. In addition, what can he mean by saying {89} his version of the *Psalms* agrees with the *Hebrew* text by candle light, since the letters were so small, that they were enough to blind a man’s eyes at noonday? The *Hebrew* letters, could not be much smaller than the common *Roman* character. He must have meant the small pricks or points which belonged to the *Hebrew* letters. How did he happen to put *Adonai* instead of *Jehovah*, in **Ex 6:3** if he is the author of the *vulgate Latin* version, unless he knew that the *Jews* put the points of *Adonai* to *Jehovah*? There is a passage in *Jerome* {90} which is produced by some to disprove the knowledge and use of vowel points in his time. When speaking of *Enon* near *Salim*,

“It does not matter, he says, whether it is called *Salem* or *Salim*, since the *Hebrews* very seldom make use of vowel letters in the middle. According to the pleasure of readers and the variety of countries, the same words are pronounced with different sounds and accents”

Jerome means the *Matres Lectionis* $\gamma\nu\nu$. It is true that these are seldom used in the sacred books of the *Hebrews*. This makes the use of vowel points the more necessary. If the *Matres Lectionis* were expunged upon the introduction of the points, as is suggested by some, then the points must have been before *Jerome*’s time, and consequently not the invention of the men of *Tiberias*. It seems the above letters were rarely used in his time as placed between consonants, as *Dabar*, and other words observed by him show, or else he is to be understood that vowel points go along with letters. These he may truly say, were very rarely used, because pointed Bibles in his time were very rare. However, he believes such Bibles were in use, though only seldom. This *Dr. Owen* {91} took to be his meaning:

“Either, I cannot understand him, or he positively affirms, that the *Hebrew*, had the use of vowels, in his epistle to *Evagrius*;”

He stated further:

“If they used points, *perraro*, then they had pointed Bibles, though, in these days to keep up their credit in teaching, they did not use them much. This cannot be spoken as the sound of vowels, for surely, they did not *seldom* use the sounds of vowels, if they spoke often.”

With this meaning, the words of *Jerome* are quoted by R. *Azariah*. {92} From this he concluded, that the points were really in being before his time, and so they are understood to be by others. {93} We need say no more. Not only are the vowel points and accents said to be the invention of the men of *Tiberias*, after the finishing of the *Talmud*, but the distinction of verses are said to be invented also. Certainly, *Jerome*, lived a century or two before these pretended *Tiberians* are said to have lived. He frequently {94} spoke of verses in the *Hebrew* books, and they were distinguished by him into colons and commas which the accents make. Mention is made before him in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, and even in the *Mishna*, as we will show hereafter, and even in the New Testament, **Lu 4:17 Ac 8:32**.

{70} Bibl. Polyglott. prolegom. 3. s. 47.

{71} Epist. ad Evagr. fol. 13. F. Tom. 3. Comment. in Ezek. c. 28. fol. 220. C. Tom. 5. & in Hagg. 1. fol. 101. & fol. 102. B. 1. 6. & in Ephes. fol. 95. F. Tom. 9.

{72} Quaest. Heb. in Gen. fol. 68. 1.

{73} Epist. ad Cyprian. fol. 33. B. Tom. 3.

{74} Ep. Damaso. 2. qu. fol. 12. A. B.

{75} Quaest. Heb. in Gen. fol. 70. 4.

{76} Ib. fol. 72. C.

{77} Comment. in Is. c. 2. fol. 7. D. T. 5.

{78} Ib. in c. 26. fol. 50. H.

{79} Ib. in c. 9. fol. 19. H. & in Habac. c. 3. fol. 87. H. Tom. 6.

{80} Comment. in Eccles. fol. 43. G. Tom. 7. & in Jerem. fol. 133. C.

{81} Comment. in Jon. c. 3. fol. 57. M.

{82} Comment. in Ezek. 15. fol. 194. C.

{83} Quaest. Heb. ad Gen. fol. 65. 1.

{84} Comment. in Amos, c. 8. fol. 99. B.

{85} Comment. in Is. c. 65. fol. 115. C.

{86} Ad Principiam, fol. 34. F. Tom. 3.

{87} Vid. Balmes. Heb. Gram. sive Mikneh Abraham, p. 28. Sepher Cosri, par. 2. s. 80. & Muscatum, in ib. fol. 128. 1. & R. Judah Chijug, & Aben Ezra, in Muscat.

{88} Ad Evagrium, fol. 13. 6. Ib.

{89} Proem. in Sept. Comment. in Ezek. c. 20. fol. 208. G.

{90} Epist. Evagrii, tom. 3. fol. 13. F.

{91} Of the Divine Original of the scriptures, p. 285.

{92} Imre Binah, c. 59. fol. 181. 1.

{93} Simeon de Mus, Joseph. de Voysin. apud Owen. Theologoumen. p. 412.

{94} Praefat. in Josuam, Paralipomen. Esaiam & Ezekiel.

A. D. 370.

About this time lived *Epiphanius*, bishop of *Cyprus*. He lived in the times of *Valens*, *Gratian* and *Theodosius*, and wrote a book against various heresies. Among them, he noted those of the *Nicolaitans*, and their followers the *Gnostics*, &c. who had all sorts of deities they paid honour to, and which they

called by barbarous names. One of these was called *Caulaucauch*, a word which he noted had been taken from **Isa 28:13** and upon which he gave {95} the text in *Hebrew*.

“*Saulasau Saulasau, Caulaucauch, Caulaucaush, Ziersam, Ziersam*”

This exactly agrees with the present punctuation, only the *Sheva* in the last word is pronounced as an *i*. This may be owing to the copier, and is sometimes not pronounced at all, as shown before, and when it is pronounced it is different. Very near to the same manner of pointing is his quotation of **Ps 60:3** according to the *Hebrew* text:

“*Merem messaar Lactal jeleddecheth*” {96}

The same {97} is true of **Isa 26:2,3**. I suppose *Epiphanius* took these *Hebrew* passages from *Origen's Hexapla*, which work existed in his time. If this is so, this carries the punctuation still further back. More shall be said about this later. Moreover, the first word we noted, was pronounced by some heretics, if not in the first, certainly in the second century.

{95} Ephiaphan. contr. Haeres. l. 1. haeres. 25.

{96} Ib. l. 2. haer. 65.

{97} Ib. l. 3. haer. 76. vid Mont. faoucon. Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 130.

A. D. 360.

About this time *R. Ase*, the head of a school or academy at *Sura* lived in *Babylon*. {98} He is said to have written a large book concerning pointing with *cabalistic* secrets in it. *R. Nachman*, {99} who lived about the year 1200, said this book was then in their academy. Now if this *Rabbi* wrote a book about the points so early in time, they must have been in use before that time. Pointing must have been reduced to an art, and brought under certain rules, and used at large.

{98} Vid. Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 33. 1. 2.

{99} Apud Buxtorff. de Punct. Antiq. par. 1. p. 55.

A. D. 340.

About this time lived *R. Hillell*, the prince. He was the last of those who were promoted to doctorship in the land of *Israel*, as we noted before. *R. Zacuth* {100} spoke of a copy of the book of 24, called the Bible, written by *R. Hillell*. By this book all other books were corrected in the year 956 or 984, (according to the *Jewish* account). He saw a part of it sold in *Africa*, and it had been written in *Hillell's* time, 900 years earlier. He observed that *Kimchi* said in his *grammar*, that the *Pentateuch* was at *Toletolo*, or *Toledo*. Some, like *Schickard* {101} and *Cunaeus* {102} are of the opinion, that this *Hillell*, was the famous *Hillell* that lived before the time of *Christ*. He lived 100 years before the destruction of the second temple. If this is so, since his copy was pointed, as will presently be seen, it would prove the points to be as early as that. However, he is more generally thought to be *Hillell* the prince, previously mentioned. If he were a *Spanish Jew*, who lived about 600 years ago, as *Morinus* {103} suggests, is not possible. He was not an obscure person, but a noteworthy one from whom the copy had its name. Especially since all copies were corrected by his Bible. Besides, the above *Jewish* chronologer, who gave the account of it stated that the copy he saw had been written 900 years before his time, and he lived about the year 1500. This copy had the points, based on what *Kimchi* said, who lived in the 12th century. He observed, {104} that the word *wvrd*, in **Ps 109:10** is written with a broad *Kamets*. In the copy of *Hillell*, at *Toletolo*, or *Toledo*, that the *Masorah* states concerning it that no where else is the *Chateph*, i.e. with *Kamets Chateph* used. In another work {105} of his, he says that in the word *hmwvt* in **2Sa 13**, *Mem* is with *Segol*, which is not usual, and is used instead of *Pathack*. In the book of *Hillell*, which is at *Toletolo* or *Toledo* a *Pathach* is used. The learned *Mercer* {106} observed, that the word *her*, in **Pr 24:14** is, in a M S. Written with a *Tzere*, but in

the margin it is remarked, that in *Hillell* it is written with a *Segol*. Therefore the points must be annexed to the Bible as early as the time of *Hillell* and before. At the library in *Berlin* there is a *Hebrew* MS. written by *Elias* the pointer, containing the *Pentateuch*, the *5 Megillot*, with the book of *Job*, and some chapters out of the Prophets, with *Masoretical* observations in the margin. If what is said of it could be established it would be fully as ancient as *Hillell's* copy. At the end of this work, the writer has put his name, and declares that he wrote it, and pointed it, and finished it in the year from the creation of the world 4094. *Andrew Mullerus*, who was provost at *Berlin* for some time, wrote in the preface, that this copy was written by *Elias* on the island of *Rhodes*, AD 334. However, *La Croze* {107} the late librarian, stated, that at the end of the book there were apparent traces of letters blotted out, and others put in, that the colour of the ink, and form of the parchment clearly showed that it could not then have been written more than 400 years ago.

There are several ancient copies of the Bible pointed, but the precise age of them cannot be ascertained. The *Jews* in *China*, have a very ancient *Hebrew* Bible in *Peking* which is said to be the very same as ours. {108} By this it would seem that it is pointed, otherwise it would be different. A copy called *Sinai*, includes a correct copy of the *Pentateuch*, with the accents, as *Elias Levita* acknowledges. {109} He observed that the first word in **Ex 18:1** is with a *Gerashim*, but in the *Sinai* copy it has a *Rebiah*. He also gives another instance of a different accentuation, but adds that he did not know who was the author of it. *R. Nachman*, {110} who lived about the year 1200, claimed that he searched most diligently in all the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem* copies, as well as *Hillell's*, and could not find a *Dagesh* anywhere in those three guttural letters, *h*, *x*, and *e* but found it in *a*, in three places **Le 23:17 Ge 43:26 Eze 8:18**. By this it appears, that not only *Hillel's* copy, but the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem* copies were pointed. *Ben Melech*, on **Eze 24:10** observes, that *R. Jonah* wrote, that he found the word *Harkach* with a *Kamets* under *He* in the *Jerusalem* copy, but in the *Babylonian* copy, he found it with a *Pathach*. There was a *Jerusalem* copy made mention of by several, that was a pointed one. *Malcatius* {111} stated, that the word $\alpha\chi\alpha$, in **De 6:4** is pointed with *Segol* and *Kamets* as it is found in the correct *Jerusalem* copy. Hence, *Kimchi* affirms, {112} that in the correct *Jerusalem* copy, the word לwx , in **Job 29:18** was with a *Shurek* for those of *Nahardea*, and with a *Cholem* for the western *Jews*. This seems to be the copy *R. Jonah* the grammarian, and *Maimonides*, who both lived in the 12th century, trusted in and depended on. *Maimonides* {113} called it the famous *Egyptian* copy, which was many years at *Jerusalem*, and which *Ben Asher* spent much time in correcting, who lived there a long time. *Elias* agrees {114} that it was by this copy that all other copies were corrected. *Azariah* {115} consulted it and stated that it was in *Jerusalem* from the times of the *Misnic* doctors. It had the *Tikkun Sopherim* in it, the ordination of the scribes, and the Bible sections open and shut.

{100} Juchasin, fol. 132. 1.

{101} Bechinat haperushim, p. 51. & Jus Reg. Heb. c. 2. theor. 5. s. 4.

{102} De Republic. Heb. 1. 1. c. 18.

{103} Exercitat. Bibl. l. 1. c. 2. p. 29.

{104} Comment. in Psal. 109. 10.

{105} Sepher Shorash. rad Mwv

{106} Comment. in Prov. 24:14

{107} Apud Wolf. Biblioth. Heb. p. 166. 167.

{108} Semedo's History of China, 1. 1.

{109} Sepher Shibre Luchot.

{110} Apud Buxtorfs. ut Supra.

{111} Comment. in Cosri, par. 4. fol. 230. 4.

{112} Sepher Shorash. rad. lwh

{113} Hilchot Torah, c. 8. s. 4.

{114} Shibre Luchot & Praefat. 3. ad Masoret.

{115} Meor Enayim. c. 9. fol. 52. 2.

A. D. 300.

The *Rabbot* are commentaries on the five books, of *Moses*, written by *Rabbi Bar Nachmoni*, who lived, according to *Buxtorf*, {116} about this year. There are fifteen words which have unusual pricks or points upon them, observed by the *Masorah* and in the *Talmud*. Ten of them are pointed on the law, four of them in the prophets, and one in the *Hagiographa*. Most of those in the law, if not all are noted in these commentaries. {117} One commentary {118} says this about them:

“Said *Ezra* if *Elijah* (another copy said *Moses*) should come and say, why hast thou written them? I will say to him, now I have pointed them. If he should say, thou hast written well, I will immediately remove the points from them.”

In another commentary it says: {119}

“Express mention is made of the accents. **Ne 8:8** is thus paraphrased, *they read in the book of the law of God, this is the scripture. distinctly this is the Targum, and gave the sense, these are the accents; and caused them to understand the reading, these are the heads of verses.*”

{116} Biblioth. Heb. p. 326

{117} Bereshit Rabba, s. 48. fol. 43. 1. & s. 51. fol. 46. 1. & s. 78. fol. 68. 3. & s. 84. fol. 73. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, s. 3. fol. 182. 2.

{118} Bemidbar Rabba s. 3. fol. 182. 2. Abot R. Nathan, c. 34. vid. Aruch in voce דִּקְרָן & Maaric Philip. Aquin. fol 343. 2. who from hence concludes that *Ezra* put the points and accents.

{119} Hereshit Kolle, l. 36. M. 32. 1.

A. D. 230.

It is generally understood that the *Jerusalem Talmud* was finished in the above year. *Scaliger* {120} however, places it in 370, and *Wiston* {121} in 369. In it the accents are mentioned. {122} The passage in *Nehemiah* is explained in the *Jerusalem Talmud* much in the same manner, as it is in the *Babylon Talmud*, and in the *Rabbot* just now quoted. The distinction of the verses is observed in it, {123} which is made by the accent *Silluk*. In this *Talmud* {124} the double reading of a word in **Hag 1:8** is observed, which in the text is written *dbbaw*, but in the margin it is read *hdbkaw*. One is according to the letters without the *h* paragogic, the other according to the points with it. This, *Schindler* states, {125} is the true reading. Because the point *Kametz* is under the last letter, the quiescent letter *h* is to be assumed, and so the word is to be read with *h* paragogic. However, if the word had no points at the time this *Talmud* was compiled, nor written with *h* in any copies, why should it be read, or directed to be so read? I have placed this *Talmud* here because it is generally received, though some think it was not written so early, since mention is made in it of *Dioclesian* the king. If the *Roman* emperor by that name is meant, it must be written in or after his time. It appears, however, from the *Talmud* {126} itself, that the *Doclet* or *Dioclesian* spoken of was some petty king that lived in the times of *R. Judah Hakkodesh*. He was the compiler of the *Misnah*, by whose children he had been beaten, as pretended, and when he became a king he complained about it. This does not agree well with the emperor *Dioclesian*. However, what is quoted from it, is a proof of the accents being mentioned in it, which some have denied, and for the sake of which we are calling attention to it.

It was during this time that the prolific writer *Origen*, lived. He had knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, and was almost the only one of the ancients that had, except for *Jerome*. This writer, in one of his commentaries, {127} quoted the *Hebrew* reading of **Ps 118:25,26** which agrees with the present punctuation. In it, he appears to be instructed by a *Jew* since he puts *Adonai* instead of *Jehovah*, and by which it is evident that the *Jews* pointed as they do now. The same writer composed a work called *Hexapla* which, had it been preserved, would have been of great use in this controversy about the antiquity of the *Hebrew* points. For in this work he placed in the first two columns, first the *Hebrew* text with its proper letters, and then the same in *Greek* characters. *Fabricius* {128} has given an example of it in the

whole first chapter of *Genesis* collected out of the fragments of the ancient *Greek* interpreters, and so has *Montfaucon* {129} after him. I have compared these with our pointed Bibles and found it agrees exactly with our modern punctuation with scarcely any variation at all. As proof, take the first two or three verses.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Myhla arb tysark | Βρεσιθ Βαρα Ελωιμ |
| Urah taw Mymsh ta | Εθ ασαμαιμ ουεθ ααρες |
| 2. whbw wht htyh Urahw | ουααρες αιθα θωου ουβωου |
| Mwht ynp-le Ksxw | ουχωσεξ αλ φνε θεωμ |
| le tpxrm Myhla xwrw | ουρουαχ Ελωιμ μραχεφεθ αλ |
| Myph ynp | Φνε αμαιω |
| 3. rwa-yhyw rwa yhy Myhla rmayw | ουωμερ Ελωιμ ιει ωρ ουιει ωρ |

(Hebrew text pointed in original document. Editor.) The rest of the examples throughout the whole chapter agree with this. Both *Fabricius* and *Montfaucon* have given another example of the *Hexapla*, in **Ho 11:1**. *Walton* {130} has transcribed it from a copy by cardinal *Barberini* from whom they seem to have taken it. It does not exactly agree with the modern pointing as the other does. *Montfaucon* {131} has given two more examples. One comes out of the *Octapla* of **Ps 2:6** and another out of the *Enneapla* of **Hab 2:4** which perfectly agree with the present punctuation. It is surprising that they do agree, considering, that particularly the example of the whole first chapter of *Genesis* is collected from fragments preserved in various writers. These writers are not skilled in the *Hebrew* language, and sometimes wrote differently from each other. Since these have passed through the hands of various copiers, entirely unacquainted with that language, yet *Fabricius* does not complain of any difficulty in collecting it. *Montfaucon* however, does complain, {132} and so he should, since he wrote after *Fabricius*. This shows that he did not consult him, and that he did not get his example from him. Therefore it is the more surprising that they should agree so closely. The difference between them is not mainly in the vowel points, but in the powers of a few of the consonant letters. With what precision and exactness, agreeable to the modern punctuation, may it be reasonable to suppose were the *Hexapla Origen* first published as it would have looked if it had been preserved? He must have had a pointed Bible in front of him when he composed it. The most exquisite care, circumspection and diligence must have been used by him, to observe every letter and every point, so as to write each word in *Greek* characters, and give them a proper and regular pronunciation. I must admit, that *Origen* was not highly skilled in the *Hebrew* language, as *Huetius* {133} and father *Simon* {134} observed. I imagine he had by some means obtained a copy of the *Hebrew* Bible, written in *Greek* characters, from a *Jewish* acquaintance well versed in the *Hebrew* language in both letters and points. For, it was allowed by the *Jews* {135} to write the *Hebrew* text in the characters of any language, though they could not be read as written in their synagogues. They especially allowed it to be written in *Greek* characters only. This may have been for the use of the *Hellenistic Jews*. This is stated in the *Mishnah*: {136}

“There is no difference between the (sacred) books, the Phylacteries, and *Mezuzah* (the parchments on the doorposts) only that the books may be written in every tongue, but the Phylacteries and *Mezuzah* may not be written by in the *Assyrian* (i.e. in *Hebrew* characters). *Rabbi Simeon Ben Gamaliel* says, they do not allow the books to be written but in *Greek*.”

Maimonides {137} observed that the decision was, according to *Simeon*:

“They may not write the Phylacteries and *Mezuzah* but in *Assyrian* characters, but they allow the (sacred) books to be written also in *Greek* and in that only.”

I suspect that *Origen* found one of those copies because, in his *Hexapla*, *Adonai* is written instead of *Jehovah*, as the *Rabbins* read it. {138}

When he compiled his *Hexapla*, he placed the many copies he found in order and in distinct columns as follows:

The first column was the *Hebrew* text in *Hebrew* letters as was then in use with the *Jews*. *Eusebius* concurs {139} who doubtless saw the work itself. The second copy was in *Greek* characters. He followed them with *Greek* versions of *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, the *Septuagint*, and *Theodotion*. It does not matter if the composition of the *Hebrew* copy in *Greek* characters, was *Origen's*, or someone else's, it seems clear that a pointed Bible must have been in existence and in use. Also, there was a regular punctuation, and by the example the present punctuation agrees with it. This observation sufficiently confutes and destroys those notions and common mistakes so generally accepted:

- a) that the points were invented by the men of *Tiberias*
- b) they were invented after the writing of the *Talmud*
- c) they were unknown in *Jerome's* time.

All of these opinions must now be abandoned.

{120} De Emend. Temp. l. 7. P. 323.

{121} Chronological Tables, cent. 19.

{122} T. Hieros. Maglliah, fol. 74. 2. 4.

{123} Ib. fol. 75. 1. 2.

{124} Hieros. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. & Taaniot, fol. 65. 1.

{125} Lexic. Pentalott. col 830.

{126} T. Hieros. Trumot, 46. 2, 3.

{127} Comment. in Matth. p. 438, 439. Ed. Huet.

{128} Bibliothec. Graec. tom. 2. p. 346.

{129} Hexapla Origen. Tom. 1. p. 2. &c.

{130} Biblia Polyglott. Tom. 6. 72. Interpr. Ed. Roman. p. 133.

{131} Praeliminar. ad Hexapla. c. 1. p. 16.

{132} Hexapla Gen. p. 14.

{133} Origenian. l. 2. c. 1. s. 2. p. 26.

{134} Disquisit. Critic. c. 9. p. 61.

{135} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1. & Megillah, fol. 9. 1. & Debarim Rabba, s. 1. fol. 233. 1.

{136} Megillah, c. 1. s. 8. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 15. 3.

{137} Tephillian, c. 1. 8. 19.

{138} Vid. Epiphan. contr. Haeres. 3. haer. 76.

{139} Ecclesiast. Hist. l. 6. c. 16.

{140} Quaest. seu Trad. Heb. in Gen. T. 3. fol. 73. l. K.

A. D. 200.

During this and the preceding century lived the Rabbins of *Tiberias*, so frequently mentioned in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, finished in the year 230, as noted before. At this time there were many synagogues of the *Jews* at *Tiberias*. There was one particularly famous academy. It was at this time the true men of *Tiberias* now lived, who were spoken of in *Jewish* writings. It was in the following century that the universities and promotions ceased in the land of *Israel*. These men were famous in *Jewish* writings for their knowledge of the *Hebrew* language, its purity and elegance, and the right manner of reading and pronouncing it. They lived before the time of *Jerome*, not after the finishing of the *Talmud*, as *Elias* said. *Jerome* clearly referred to them, and the sentiments the *Jews* expressed about them. He noted their knowledge of the law and the beauty and elegance of their language. {140} Although these men studied the *Hebrew* language, and were very expert in it, and in the affair of pointing, they were not the inventors of the points. This is concluded from what *Aben Ezra* says {141} about them:

“I have seen the books which the wise men of *Tiberias* examined, and fifteen of their elders gave it upon oath, that three times they diligently considered every word and every *point* every full and deficient word, and behold, *Yod* was written in the word *hveyt*”

For example, in **Ex 25:31** it appears that the Bible was not pointed by them, but pointed Bibles which they had, were examined by them. Therefore, pointed Bibles were in existence before their time. These Bibles were already pointed when they searched them, and studied them. Hence, they became very expert and accurate in their knowledge of the points. Based on this fact the same writer, in another work ^{142} of his stated that from them the men of *Tiberias* were the *Masorettes* and from them we have the whole pointing. This did not mean they were the authors and inventors of the points, but that by them they were handed down to these men with great accuracy and exactness. He pointedly declares in another work of his ^{143} that:

“The men of the great synagogue taught the people the sense of the scriptures by the *accents*, and by the *kings* and *ministers*. Hence, he calls the vowel points, *Cholem*, *Shurek*, &c. and were instead of eyes to the blind. Therefore in their footsteps we go forth, them we follow, and on them we lean in all expositions of the scripture.”

But whatever skill the men of *Tiberias* may have attained in the study of the points, they appear to be very unfit for and unequal to such a work as the invention of them. Here is what *Dr. Lightfoot* ^{144} observed about them, who was thoroughly acquainted with their characters, according to the above *Talmud*:

“There are some who believe the holy Bible has been pointed by the men of *Tiberias*. I do not wonder at the impudence of the *Jews* who invented this story. I wonder at the credulity of Christians who applaud it. Recollect, I beseech you, the names of the *Rabbins* of *Tiberias*, from the first situation of the university to the time that it expired. Upon reflection, what do you find, but a kind of men who are mad with *Pharisaism*. They are bewitching others with traditions and they themselves are bewitched, blind, guileful and doting—even magical and monstrous. These men are unfit, unable and foolish for the undertaking of so divine a work!”

Then he gave the names of many of them, and observed ^{145} their childishness, sophistry, froth, and poison. Then he added:

“If you can believe the Bible was pointed in such a school, then also believe all of what the *Talmudists* have written. The pointing of the Bible favours the work of the Holy Spirit, not the work of lost, blinded, and besotted men.”

Elsewhere he stated:

“It is beyond the skill of a mere man to point the Bible. Not even scarcely a verse can be pointed by a man as has been. The ten commandments may puzzle all the world for that skill.”

It was about this time the universities of *Tiberias* and *Babylon* were flourishing. It can be reasonably supposed that they each had copies of the Bible which they carefully examined and preserved for the use of the *Jews* in *Palestine* and *Babylon*. Some variant readings were called *western* for the *Jews* in their own land, and some were *eastern* for the *Jews* in *Babylon* as is noted at the end of some printed Bibles. There are about 216 differences. None of them are found in the law. They are mostly very trivial, and chiefly about letters and words but not entirely. For in two places, **Jer 6:6** **Am 3:6** they make mention of the point *Mappick*, in which the one copy differs from the other. Therefore, *Elias* ^{146} is wrong, in saying that the differences are about words and letters only, but not about points and accents. Therefore he supposes they

were made before the invention of the vowel points and accents but he is mistaken. These already were in existence. In **La 5:21** the *western Jews* have the Tetragrammaton, *Jehovah*, but the *eastern* have *Adonai*. *Jehovah* is pointed for the word *Adonai* in the *western* copy. Hence, this proves that the points already existed at that time.

{141} Comment. in Exod. 25. 31.

{142} Tzachut fol. 138. 2. apud Buxtorf. de punct. Antiqu. p. 11.

{143} Mozne Leshon Hakodesh apud Buxtorf. ib. p. 13, 14.

{144} Works vol. 2. Chorograph. Cent. c. 81. p. 73. 74.

{145} Erubhim, or Miscellanies, c. 31. vol, i. p. 1014.

{146} Praefat. 3. ad Masoret.

A. D. 190.

Clement of *Alexandria* lived and wrote during this era. He is thought to have made mention of the *Hebrew* points and accents. In it he states: {147}

“There are some, who read the Scriptures and by the tone of their voice they pervert the Scriptures to their own pleasure. By a transposition τινῶν προσῳδίων κακῶν σγμῶν (which *Sylburgius*’ interpreter renders) *of certain accents and points*, what are wisely and profitably commanded, they force to their own liking.”

He referred to a text in **Mal 3:15** which he defended against some heretics of his time. This vindication did not occur in the *Greek* version of it and its accents because those in the opposition have said there were no accents in the *Greek* tongue for many years after this. {148} However it was in the *Hebrew* text, and the points and accents in it that *Clement* vindicated against the heretics. This is supposed since it appears in several places in his writings that he had some knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue.

Just before *Clement*, *Irenaeus* wrote. Although he had only a small degree of knowledge of the *Hebrew* language, the little he endeavoured to get was in order to answer the heretics of his time. These heretics were fond of introducing foreign words and their significance into their schemes. He said {149} there were only ten of the first ancient *Hebrew* letters. *Feuardentius*, his annotator, explained that the ten included the letters from *Aleph* to *Yod*. These were the first and foremost from where all the rest were formed. Indeed the *cabalistic Jews* {150} say the *Yod* is the beginning of all letters. *Hermannus Hugo* {151} observed, that all the *Hebrew* characters were composed from the single letter *Yod* which were variously joined together. *Irenaeus* added:

“Every one of the letters are written by fifteen, the last letter coupled to the first”

Now what he means by fifteen, *Dr. Grabe* said he could not imagine. I suspect he meant the fifteen vowel points, as some *grammarians* {152} have reckoned. They called them five long, five short, and five most short, which *Irenaeus* might have some knowledge of from those who taught him the little *Hebrew* he had. It is clear he consulted the *Rabbins* of his time from what he said before about the *Hebrews* and their language:

“Sicut periti eorum dicunt. (They say as experts of them.)”

It is evident that in his time *Hebrew* words were read and pronounced according to the modern pointing. For instance, wq̄l wq̄ is read, not *Culacu* nor *Coloco* as seems natural, without points. *Gauldcau*, {153} as it is in our pointed Bibles in **Isa 28:13** was read that way before his time by the heretics he opposed. There are other words in *Irenaeus* {154} which agree with our modern punctuation such as *Sabaoth*, *Eloa* and *Adonai*. Here, *Philo Byblius* {155} who lived at least half a century before *Irenaeus*, translated

Sanchoniatho's history from the *Phoenician* language. It reads, *Myhla* but in the *Greek* *Ελωειμ*. This was his author's word no doubt. *Jerome*, {156} *Basil*, {157} and *Epiphanius* {158} in the fourth century read it as *Eloim*. Long before their time *Origen* rendered it the same as the example of his *Hexapla* given above shows. This very ancient way of reading and pronouncing *Elohim*, agrees with the modern punctuation. It may also be compared with the *Hutchinsonions* who sometimes write and pronounce it *Elahim* and sometimes *Aleim*, as *Mascles* also does.

{147} *Stromat.* l. 3. p. 442.

{148} Some say they began in the 7th century, vid. *Velasti Dissert. de lit. Graec. Pronunciat.* par 4. c. 2. p. 95. *Romae*, 1751. It is said the older the MSS. are, the fewer are the accents, and that those which exceed a thousand years have none at all, *Martisb. Sarpedon* (alias *Frideric Reissenberg*). *Dissert. de Vera Attic. Pronuciat.* par. 3. c. 1. p. 48. *Romae*, 1750; but *Gregorius Placentimius* makes them much more ancient. See his *Epitome Graec. Paleograph.* c. 11. p. 88. *Romae*, 1735. The controversy about the Greek accents has been of late year revived at Rome.

{149} *Adv. haeres.* l. 9. c. 41.

{150} *R. Abraham Dior.* in *Jetzirah* p. 58. Ed. *Rittangel*.

{151} *De prima Scribendi Orig.* c. p. 64.

{152} *Vid. Balmesii Mikneh Abraham* p. 25. lin. 3. & 26. lin. 6.

{153} *Adv. haeres.* l. 1. c. 23.

{154} *Ib.* l. 2. c. 66.

{155} *Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel.* l. 1. p. 37.

{156} *Epist. Marcellae* fol. 31. A. Tom. 3. *Quaest. Heb. in Gen* fol. 66. E.

{157} *Adv. Eunom.* l. 1.

{158} *Contr. Haeres.* l. 1. *Haeres.* 40.

A. D. 150.

It was about this time that the *Misnah* or book of Traditions was finished. *R. Judah Hakkodesh* collected these writings together so that they would not be lost. It must have been written this early because the *Jewish* writers unanimously consented that this *Rabbi* should compile it, who lived in the time of *Antonius Pius*, with whom he was very familiar. Some Christian writers place it at the beginning of the sixth century, or at the end of the fifth, and others at the end of the fourth. However, there is no good reason given which explains why the *Jews* should antedate this book since it was written for the Jew's use only. There is not one *Rabbi* mentioned in it who lived before *R. Judah*, the supposed compiler of it. There is also not even one chronological character in it that places it earlier than the time of *Adrian* who is the predecessor of *Antonius*. His name is only mentioned once in it. {159} Hence, *Maimonides* {160} thinks the *Misnah* was composed about his time. The *Jews* were very much harassed in the times of *Trajan* and *Adrian*, but obtained some favour and ease in the time of *Antonius*. Since they had more ease and leisure, it was the most fitting opportunity for setting about this work of collecting their traditions from several parts. Then *Rabbi Judah Hakkadesh* collected and collated them so they would not be lost. According to the author of *Cosri*, {161} this year 150 is the 150th year from the destruction of the second temple, which brings it to the year of *Christ* 220. However, *R. Abraham Ben David* {162} and *R. Menachem* {163} place the *Misnah* 120 years from the destruction, which is AD 190. *Morinus* {164} himself owns that *Rabbenu Hakados* compiled the *Misnaiot* or traditions almost two hundred years before the council of *Nice*. That council was little more than three hundred years after the birth of *Christ*. Since the *Jews* in *Palestine* and in *Babylon* generally acknowledged the *Misnah*, the *Gemarists* were puzzled over understanding parts of it, and many of the traditions in it were the same as were referred to in the New Testament, these are all proofs of its antiquity. Although it is denied, *Jerome* clearly had knowledge of it as a written book. He stated: {165}

“The traditions of the *Pharisees* are to this day what are called "secondary laws or the *Misnah*". They are such old wives fables, that I cannot bear *evolvere* to turn them over. Neither will the large size of the book admit to it, but most of the things in it are so filthy that I am ashamed to speak of them.”

In this quote he not only gives the work its proper name, a secondary law or *Mishah*, but speaks of it as a *book*, and of a considerable size, it being larger than our New Testament. There are things in it which *Dr. Wotton* {166} thought were well worthy of *Jerome's* censure, though I must confess in this I am of a different mind. I choose rather to subscribe to what the learned *Wagenseil* states, {167} that in the *Mishnah* as abstracted from the *Gemara*:

“There is no fable nor epilogue in it, nor any thing very foolish, nor very remote from reason; it contains mere laws and traditions.”

Jerome has therefore based his opinion upon hearsay, and it is plain from his own words he had not read it. It is also possible that he was referring to the *Jerusalem Talmud*, which consists of both the *Misnah* and the *Gemara*. It is not only the content of the book, but the large size of the book which *Jerome* has described because the *Jerusalem Talmud* is a large folio. Since this work had been finished in the year 230, there was plenty of time for *Jerome* to have knowledge of it. However, undoubtedly there was a written collection of the *Jewish* traditions called *Misnah* or *Misnaiot*, which existed in his time either by itself or with the *Gemara*, which *Jerome* knew of. The learned *Dr. Bernard* is of the opinion that *Jerome* saw the *Misnah*. Evidence of this is in a letter he wrote to the bishop of *Fern* which was prefixed to the *Misnah* of *Surenhusius*. {168} In this epistle *Jerome* mentioned the *Misnic* doctors by name. They were *Rab, Akiba, Simeon,* and *Hillell*, who delivered to the *Jews* the tradition of walking 2000 feet on a sabbath day. As a postscript he stated:

“On certain days when they (the *Jewish* doctors) explain their traditions they usually say to their disciples, the wise men teach the traditions.”

The *Misnah* gives the best translation of the phrase *wnbr wnx*, "Our Rabbins teach," and *ybr ynt*, *Rabbins teach* in the *Misnic* way. There are many phrases in innumerable places in the *Talmudic* writings {169} which show that *Jerome* knew about them and that they were in being before his time. This is why that in the *Misnah* itself the most famous wise men are frequently called *Tanaim*, *Misnic* doctors, and the *Misnah* is called *Mathnitha*, tradition, instruction, and doctrine. These wise men were so well known by *Jerome*, that he gives their names and time periods in chronological order below:

“The *Nazarites* {170} originated from the two houses {*Isa 8*} of the two families of *Sammai* and *Hillel*, from whom sprung the Scribes and Pharisees, in whose school *Akiba* succeeded. He was thought to be the master of *Aquila* the proselyte, and after him *Meir*, who was succeeded by *Johanan* the son of *Zaccai*. After him came *Eliezer* and then *Delphon* (*Tarphon* I suppose is meant) and again *Joseph* the *Galilean*, and *Joshua* up to the captivity of *Jerusalem*. *Sammai* and *Hillell* therefore did not arise in *Judea* much before the Lord was born. The first of whom was called a *dissipator*, and the other called *profane*. Because of their traditions and secondary laws (or *Misnic* doctrines) they dissipated and despised the precepts of the law. These are the two houses which did not receive the Saviour.”

It seems clear from this passage, that *Jerome* called the schools of *Hillell* and *Shammai*, which make so considerable a figure in the *Misnah*, houses and families. This is the same name they go by in the *Misnah* hundreds of times, as *tyb Hillell* and *tyb Shammai*. *Jerome* elsewhere {171} called the *Jewish* fables and traditions, *δευτερωσεις* secondary laws. This, as noted before, answers to *Mishnaiot*, the same name by which their book of traditions is called. *Eusebius*, {172} who lived before *Jerome*, also mentioned the *Deuterotae* of *Misnic* doctors among the *Jews*. This is the name by which *Jerome* {173} often called the Pharisees. They were traditionary men, retailers of traditions, and the authors of the *Misnah*. He also

called one of the *Rabbins* who instructed him in the *Hebrew* tongue {174} by the same name. It was from this *Rabbi* along with others with whom he became acquainted regarding many things now read about in the *Misnah* and *Talmud*. This accounts for *Jerome's* knowledge of the *Misnah*, which might not be known by those who were his contemporaries. This makes sense, since the book was written purely for the use of the *Jews*, and was not designed to be made public to others. It was only through *Jerome's* acquaintance with some *Jewish Rabbins* who were his teachers, that he came to have any knowledge of it. Since *Augustine* did not know it was committed to writing, {175} having no correspondence with the *Jews* as *Jerome* had, it cannot be used as a viable argument against its existence. Some *Misnic* doctors lived before *Christ's* birth, some before *Jerusalem's* destruction, and some lived after that. However, all of them lived before *R. Judah Hakkodesh*, who was the last of them. He compiled the *Misnah* around the date given. Since some of these men lived before this date some considerable time, in course, their debates and decisions about any matter must be considered as having occurred early. In fact, the discourse between two *Rabbins* who lived about, or a little after the destruction of *Jerusalem*, carries the affair of punctuation earlier than the date fixed, {176} even into the first century. (The debate in question will be seen shortly.)

The *Misnah*, according to the *Jews*, was pointed. *Ephodeus* {177} stated that you will find all the ancient copies of the *Misnah* written with points and accents. *R. Azariah* {178} also affirms, that he saw two copies of the *Misnah* more than 500 years old, with points and distinguishing accents. In the *Misnah* verses appear, how many to read at a time {179} is outlined, and the points are clearly referred to. Two doctors are introduced {180} who are disputing about the reading of the text in **So 1:2**.

R. Joshua asked, "Brother *Ishmael*, how dost thou read the words *Kydwd* or *Kydwd*?" (That is, whether he read the word with a masculine or feminine affixed.) The meaning being, whether it was the congregation or church that spoke to God, or whether it was God that spoke to the church. This could not be determined by the letters or consonants which are the same, but by the vowel points, which distinguish the affixes. According to *R. Ishmael* it was to be read feminine *Kydwd* as if spoken by God to the church. However, *R. Joshua* denied it saying, "Not so, but masculine" and so it was spoken by the church to God. Although these two *Rabbins* may have had unpointed bibles before them, the foundation of their reasoning lay in the points. Their dispute was not merely how the word was *pronounced*, but how it was *read*. It is clear that the modern punctuation of this word is by this instance established. The *Masoreth* is clearly mentioned in the *Misnah* {181} as the hedge of the law, one branch of which is concerned with the points and accents and to the authors of the *Masoreth*, those that oppose the points ascribe them. It was *R. Akiba*, who said this. He lived about eighty years after *Christ*, and died in the year 120, in the war of *Adrian* against the *Jews*. The glory of the law is said to have ceased with this *Rabbi* because it was prophesied {182} that he would give his mind to search out the meaning of every *apex*, tittle and point in it. One extraordinary point in the letter *h* in *hqwxxr* **Nu 9:10** is observed in the *Misnah*. {183}

{159} *Avodah Zarah*, c. 3. s. 3.

{160} Comment. in *ib*.

{161} Par 3. c. 67. so *R. Serira* in *Juchasin* fol. 115. and *R. Azariah Meor Enayim* c. 24. fol. 95. 1.

{162} *Sepher Cabala*.

{163} *Apud Ganz Tzemach David*, par 1. fol. 30, 2.

{164} *De sinceritate Heb. text.* l. 1. Exercit. 1. c. 2. p. 17.

{165} *Epist. Algasiae Qu.* 10. fol. 55. l. Tom. 3.

{166} *Miscellaneous Discourses*, &c. p. 94.

{167} *Praefat ad Tela Ignea*, p. 57, 58.

{168} *Videret equidem aliquando opus illud Misnicum Rector Bethleemiticus*, &c. Vid. *Triglandium de facta Karaeorum* c. 9. p. 123, who is of the same opinion.

{169} See the meaning of these phrases in *Halicot Olam*, p. 35. 39. Ed. L'Empereur.

{170} Comment. in *Esaiam*, c. 8. fol. 17. l. Tom. 5.

- {171} Comment. in Esaïam, c. 59. fol. 103. in Ezek. c. 36. fol. 235. H. & in Matt. 22. fol. 30. M. Epist. ad Damasum, T. 3. fol. 40. A.
- {172} Praepar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 5.
- {173} In Esaïam, c. 3. fol. 9. C. & c. 10. fol. 20. D. & c. 29. fol. 57. C. Tom
- {174} In Habacuc. c. 2. fol. 85. D. Tom. 6.
- {175} Opera T. 6. contr. Adversar. Leg. & Proph. l. 2. c. 1. p. 256.
- {176} Vid. Halicot Olam, c. 2. p. 19,26,228. & Pocock. Port. Mosis, p. 120.
- {177} Apud Buxtorf. de punct. Antiqu. p. 78.
- {178} Meor Enayim, c. 59. fol. 180, 2.
- {179} Megillah, c. 4. s. 4.
- {180} Avedah zarah, c. 2. s. 5.
- {181} Pirke Abot, c. 3. s. 13. vid. Leusden in ib.
- {182} Misn. Sotah, c. 9. s. 15. Bartenora in ib. T. Bab. Menachot fol. 29, 2.
- {183} Pesachim, c. 9. s. 2.

A. D. 120.

About this time, according to the *Jewish* chronology, {184} there lived a disciple of *R. Akiba* named *Simeon Ben Jochai*. He was the author of the book of *Zohar*. The authority and antiquity of this book is not called into question by any of the *Jews*, not even by *Elias Levita*, who first asserted the points to be the invention of the men of *Tiberias*. He declared, {185} if any one could convince him that his opinion was contrary to the book of *Zohar*, he would be content to have it rejected. What seems to favour this book's antiquity is not only that the persons in it whose sayings are recorded, lived earlier than they were placed, but also the written language is so precise that it far exceeds any thing written at a later time. There is no mention of the *Talmud* in it, though it does mention {186} the *Targums* of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*. The objections to its antiquity may be only interpolations. *R. Azariah* said, {187} it was written before the *Misnah* was compiled. According to *Masius* {188} it was written a little after the destruction of *Jerusalem*. In this book it is said:

“The letters are the body, and the points are the spirit or soul.”

The text in **Da 12:3** is thus paraphrased, *they that be wise shall shine*, meaning: the letters and points, *as the brightness*, meaning: the modulation of the accents and *they that turn many to righteousness* are interpreted as the pauses of the accents. {189} In addition, **Ne 8:8** is interpreted as the pauses of the accents, as in the *Masoreth*. {190} In another place {191} "*Jehovah*" is called "*Elohim*," because he is the river of mercies. It is written mercy, and pointed "by *Elohim*". Even the names of the points and accents are mentioned in it in various places, {192} as *Cholem, Schurek, Chirek, Pathach, Segol, Sheva, Kametz, Tzere, Zarka, Segolta, Shalsholet, &c.* Elsewhere are mentioned the seven vowels which grammarians call *Kametz, Tzere, Chirek, Cholem, Shurek, Pathach, and Segol*. Some of the extraordinary points or pricks, on certain words are shown in it such as the word for *he kissed him* **Ge 33:4** and the word for *afar off*, in **Nu 9:10**. {193} In this book {194} are mentioned the double letters in the *Hebrew* tongue. Their pronunciation depends on the points.

- {184} Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 30. 1.
- {185} Praefat. 3. ad Masoret.
- {186} Zohar in Gen. fol. 61. 1.
- {187} Imre Binah, c. 59. fol. 179. 2.
- {188} Comment. in Josh. 1, 3,
- {189} Zohar in Gen. fol. 1, 3.
- {190} In Exod. fol 82, 4.
- {191} Ib. in Lev. fol. 4, 3. Ed. Sultzbach.
- {192} Ib. in Gen. fol. 1, 2. & 26, 3. & 38. 1. 2. & 71. 2. Tikkune zohar praefat. fol. 6, 2. & 7. 1.
- {193} Ib. in Gen. fol. 98, 4.

A. D. 100.

In the time of the first century, before this date, the *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* were written. One is about the prophets, and the other about the Pentateuch. *Buxtorf* {195} said these *Targums* were the most ancient books of all the *Hebrews*. *Jonathan* lived just before Christ, and *Onkelos* lived a little after. Although some have written that they knew one another, they each lived in this particular century. It is certain also there was a *Targum* on *Job*, as ancient {196} as *R. Gamaliel*, the master of the Apostle *Paul*. *Onkelos* must have been contemporary with him, if what is said {197} is true, that he burnt at *Gamaliel's* funeral as much as was worth seventy *Tyrian* pounds. The *Targums* are now pointed in our printed Bibles, however, whether they were so when first written cannot be said. *Elias Levita* {198} very positively stated that the *Targumists* wrote their paraphrases without points. He also affirms, that they were not pointed by the *Masoretes*, but by men of note long after their time. However, this is all said to serve a hypothesis of his own: that there was no pointing before the men of *Tiberias* and that the points of them were then in a corrupt state, and very irregular. Indeed this is how *Buxtorf* {199} found them. He took great pains to restore them. This fact not only supposes their being in existence, but it may be that such a state was owing to their great antiquity and the long neglect of them. Along with some *Jewish* commentators, *Jonathan* is observed in some places to have translated and paraphrased according to the points. *Kimchi*, in commenting on **2Sa 19:14** observed that instead of *he bowed*, *Jonathan* renders it passively, *was bowed*. By this it seems, he was saying that he read ךָיָו with a *Tzere* under *Yod*. However, the *Masorah* renders it with a *Patach* under the *Yod*. In **Ho 5:15** he remarked, that in the word וַמְוַי the *Aleph* and *Shin* are with a *Sheva*. This agrees with the *Targum* of *Jonathan*. *Jarchi* observed in **Eze 27:16** that as to the point *Dagesh*, *Jonathan* explained the word that has it sometimes literally, and sometimes allegorically. For in that way he sometimes paraphrased otherwise than in the copy before him. The *Jerusalem Targumist* on **Ge 14:5** do what *Onkelos* and *Pseudo Jonathan* take for the proper name of a place, he instead of *Zuzim* in *Ham*, renders it, the *illustrious ones among them*. It is also quoted in *Bereshit Rabba*, {200} on which the commentator {201} observed, that *Zuzim* is allegorically explained, as if it had the signification of splendour and lustre, and *Beham*, which is with a *Kametz*, as if it was written with a *Segol*. If the points were not then known, there could be no foundation for such an allegorical interpretation. *Cappellus* {202} also knew that *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* made use of a *Hebrew* copy different from what the *Septuagint* used, and we now have almost the same from the *Masoretes*. In fact, *Onkelos* scarcely ever departed from the modern punctuation, and it will be difficult to produce a single instance proving that he used an unpointed Bible.

{194} In Gen. fol. 38, 1.

{195} Biblioth. Rabbin. p. 293.

{196} T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 15, 3.

{197} T. Bab. Avodah zarah fol. 11, 1.

{198} Praefat. ad Methurgeman, fol. 2, 1.

{199} Praefat. ad Bibl. Heb.

{200} Parash. 42. fol. 37, 2.

{201} In Mattanot Cehunnah in ib.

{202} Critica, p. 324.

A. D. 70.

This is the time in which *Josephus*, the famous *Jewish* historian, lived. Scarcely anything can be expected from him concerning the *Hebrew* Points, who wrote in *Greek*, and conformed *Hebrew* words to the genius of that language. He read and pronounced consonants, as well as vowels, in a different manner than the *Hebrew* words. There is a passage of his which is thought to disagree with the antiquity and necessity of the vowel points. In it he states {203} that the sacred letters engraved on the mitre of the high priest, which meant the word *Jehovah*, were *four vowels*. These were supposed to be a sufficient number of vowels for the *Hebrew* language, at least, if another vowel or two were added to them. However to reveal the lack of force in this objection, observe the following argument.

Firstly, *Josephus* was charged by some learned men to be unskilled in the *Hebrew* tongue. The *Syro-Chaldean* language was commonly spoken by the *Jews* in his time. This fact may serve also to account for his different pronunciation of *Hebrew* words in some places.

Secondly, what he refers to as vowels, and which some think may be used instead of vowels, are also allowed by the same individuals to have the power of consonants. Certainly, the *Vau* was used as a consonant before, and in the time of *Josephus*. Therefore, *David* is read Δαβιδ, in **Mt 1:1,6** and *passim*, and in the very name *Jehovah* he spoke of it. Because the *Samaritans* {204} pronounced it *Jabe*, w and b are sometimes exchanged for each other in the *Hebrew* language, as in *Bathshua* for *Bathseba* in **1Ch 3:5**. In addition, *Josephus* must have known that the *Yod* is used in the Bible as a consonant, in a multitude of proper names of men and places, in other words, and even in his own name.

Thirdly, if the sacred name *Jehovah* consisted of vowels only, it could not be pronounced. Just as consonants cannot be pronounced without vowels, neither can vowels be pronounced without consonants. Though the word is said by the *Jews* to be ineffable, the reason was not because it could not be pronounced, because indeed, it was pronounced by the blasphemer in the times of *Moses*, by *Hiram*, by the former wise men to their children once a week {205}, and by the high priest in the sanctuary, as they also know {206}. Because as they thought it was not lawful to pronounce it, at least in common usage, as both *Philo* {207} and *Josephus* {208} have stated. The *Misnah*, {209} also reveals that he is said to have no part in the world to come who pronounces the name *Jehovah* with its own letters. When the ancient *Greek* writers have said that it is unutterable, as the author of *Delphi Phoenicizantes* observed {210}, it is only as written by the *Greeks*, who scarcely admit that a υ is a consonant. They cannot express aspirates in the middle and end of a word, as this word requires. *Delphi Phoenicizantes* also added, that it was not because it cannot be pronounced, for it may be pronounced according to the *Hebrew* letters, with which it is written.

Fourthly, the three letters in the name *Jehovah*, in which there are no more in it of a different kind, can at most be only considered as *Matres lectionis*, which they are called. Therefore they are used instead of vowels. However, these are often lacking in the *Hebrew* text in places where they might be expected, and where their presence would be necessary if this were how they were to be used. There were no other vowels or vowel points, hence, they are insufficient to supply as the replacement of them.

Fifthly, after all, γραμματα and φωνηεντα are the same in *Josephus* as in the *Greek* epigram in *Eusebius* {211}, and they the same with φωνη the human and articulate voice, which, as *Capellus* {212} has observed, consists of both vowels and consonants. The same is observed in the Tetragrammaton, or the name of four letters, *Jehovah* is thought to be meant, or of seven letters, four consonants and three vowel points. Because of this *Scaliger* {213} stated:

“There is no necessity by φωνηεντα to understand vowels, in the above *Greek* epigram, since *Josephus* expressly calls the four letters of the tetragrammaton φωνηεντα, where it appears that any letters may be so called.”

Josephus's observation was not to tell us what sort of letters were upon the mitre of the high priest, whether vowels or consonants, but that it was the tetragrammaton or name of four letters, that was written upon it, using the language of his own nation. This language is in use to this day. Therefore, both *Selden* {214} and *Braunius* {215} render the passage in *Josephus* in the following way:

“About it (the mitre) was another golden crown bearing sacred letters, that is, the name tetragrammaton.”

Philo called them the four engravings of the name, and the engravings of the four letters which he said the divines called the tetragrammaton {216}. Moreover, though *Josephus* does not make specific mention of the *Masorah* in his writings, *Arias Montanus* {217} thought he never could have so confidently stated this without the help of the *Masorah*. When he stated {218}, from times past since *Moses*:

“No man dared to add, nor to take away, nor to change *any thing* in the scriptures, choosing rather to die”

Philo the Jew, {219} who lived in the same age, agreed with this and even in earlier times, the *Jews* in over 2000 years:

“Never moved out of its place *one word* of what was written by *Moses*, rather willing to die a thousand times than go contrary to the laws and customs.”

The fact that there was a *Masorah* before their time is acknowledged by some who have been opposers of the points, as we noted before. The silence of *Philo* and *Josephus* about the points, is proof that they were not a matter of controversy. However it is not a proof that they were not in use.

{203} De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. s. 2.

{204} Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 15. vid. Epiphan. contra Haeres. l. 1. haer. 40.

{205} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71. 1.

{206} Misn. Sotah, c. 7. s. 6. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39. 2.

{207} De vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 670.

{208} Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12. s. 4.

{209} Sanhedrin, c. 11. s. 1.

{210} Dickinson, c. 6. p. 57.

{211} Praepar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 6.

{212} Orat. de Num. Tetragram. p. 172.

{213} In Fragm. ad Calcem lib. de Emendat. Temp. p. 34.

{214} De Succes. in Pontif Ebr. l. 2. c. 7.

{215} De Vestitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2. c. 22. s. 18. p. 811.

{216} De vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 670, 673.

{217} De Varia Heb. Lib. Script. & Lect.

{218} Contr. Apion l. 1. c. 8.

{219} Apud. Euseb. Evangel. praepar. l. 8. c. 6. p. 357.

A. D. 31.

It may be concluded that the points were in use in the time of Christ from **Mt 5:18**. *Till heaven and earth pass away one jot* (or one *Yod*, as the *Syriac* version renders it) *or one tittle* (or one *Chirek*, as *Elias Hutter* in his *Hebrew* version stated) *shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled*. Just as the least letter in the *Hebrew* alphabet *Yod* is referred to, the least of the points in use, *Chirek*, is also used. Between these and the *Greek* word *κεραία*, which the Evangelist used, the sound is extremely similar, and seems to be none other than that point made *Greek*. As *Dr. Lightfoot* {220} observed, our Saviour in his words of one *Iota*, and one *Keraia*, not perishing from the law, seemed to allude to the least of the letters, *Yod*, and to the least vowel and accent. The argument from this cannot be put more strongly than it was by *Dr. John Prideaux*, {221} who was an opposer of the points. He stated:

“If the points did not exist at this time, why does the Saviour make mention of them? If they were the same with the consonants or only conical eminencies of them, why are they reckoned here as distinct things?”

His answer is feeble and his argument weak. The pricks on certain letters called *Myqṭ*, could be designed, though very ancient, being mentioned in the *Talmud*, {222} and the same letters on which they are put, are placed on them only but not on all of them.

As *Broughton* {223} observed:

“These, and likewise accents, are no part of the word, therefore vowel pricks (or points) must be meant.”

It also may be concluded with *Piscator* in the same place, that Christ:

“so calls, i.e. tittles, what now go by the name of points, which in *Hebrew* writing are variously put to letters, both to signify the proper sound of some of them, and the vowel sounds, and also the accents and parts of a sentence. Hence it appears that the holy Bible in the time of Christ was pointed, and that its punctuation was approved of by him.”

Pastor in his *Lexicon* states:

“by tittle here is meant a point; wherefore the vowel points were in the time of *Christ*, and not, as some pretend, a new invention.”

The words of Christ expressed on the cross, *Eli, Eli, &c.* and the names of persons in the genealogies of the Evangelists, and in **Heb 11** and in other places of the New Testament, seem to confirm the modern punctuation. The *Dagesh forte* appears and is preserved in many words in those times. Examples are found in *Immanuel*, **Mt 1:23** *Matthew*, *Lebbaeus*, *Thaddaeus*, **Mt 10:3** *Hosanna*, **Mt 21:9** *Ephphatha*, **Mr 7:34** *Anna*, **Lu 2:36** *Matthat*, *Matthathias*, **Lu 3:24,25** *Matthias*, **Ac 1:23** *Abaddon* **Re 9:11** *Armageddon*, **Re 16:16** *Sabbaton*, **Mt 12:5** *Lamma*, **Mr 15:34** with many others. They are also found in the *Dagesh lene* in *Capernaum*, *Sarepta*, and others. Even the use of the *Pathach Genubah* appears in the pronunciation of *Messias* and *Siloam* as well as the other points, **Joh 1:41 9:7,11**

{220} Works, vol. 1. p. 1014.

{221} Viginti duae Lectiones, Lect. 12. p. 182.

{222} T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 29, 2.

{223} Works, p. 204.

{224} T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 88, 2.

B. C. 30.

About this time there lived two famous doctors among the *Jews*, *Hillell* and *Shammai*. They were the heads of two schools and of two sects which were so different, that it is said {224} the law was as two laws. A fast was appointed on account of the division between them. {225} *Hillell's* sect was followed by the *Rabbanite Jews*, and *Shammai's* was followed by the *Karaites*. In fact, *Josephus* {226} referred to *Pollio* as being the same with *Hillell*, a Pharisee, but not *Sammeas* or *Shammai*, whom he mentioned with him. It was through *Shammai* that the *Karaites* derive the genealogy and succession of their doctors, and from whom they say they received the doctrine and copy of the law. {227} *Shammai* received it from *Shemaiah*, who received it from *Judah ben Tabbai*. It was in his days the separation was made 120 years before *Christ*, as will be discussed later. The *Karaites* all agree that the copy of the law {228} which they used, had always had the points and accents as did the *Hillelian* copy. I have also noted that under A. D. 340. some learned men take that copy to be this *Hillell's*. I too am inclined to be of the same opinion. As *Shammai* and his party had a copy, so *Hillell* had, no doubt, a copy for himself and his party. The *Karaites* boast of the antiquity of their copy as do the *Rabbanites* concerning *Hillell's* copy. This must be the copy of some eminent person of that name, by which all copies were corrected. Who was as eminent as this

Hillell? It is indeed most generally ascribed to a *Hillell*, who lived in the fourth century, not so famous as this. The copy which was written 900 years before *R. Zacuth* saw it, was from 1500 (the time in which he lived), and carried up to the year 600. This time period falls short of that *Hillell*. Furthermore, we would surmise that was a copy taken from the original copy of the elder *Hillell*, and being the only one remaining, was valued, and made use of for correcting all other copies. If this is true, there were two pointed Bibles as early as the date given. *Hillell* began his government as the head of an academy, 100 years before the destruction of the temple, about the beginning of the reign of *Herod*. {229} *Josephus* {230} agrees with this and called him *Pollio*, as before observed.

{225} Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580.

{226} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 1. s. 1.

{227} Dod Mordecai, sive Comment. de Karaeis, c. 9. p. 97. Edit. a Wolsio.

{228} Ibid, c. 12. p. 150.

{229} T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 15, 1. Juchasin, fol. 19, 2. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24, 2.

{230} Antiqu. l. 15. c. 1. s. 1. & c. 10. s. 4. & Josipp. Heb. l. 5. c. 13.

B. C. 40.

The *Jewish* chronologers {231} generally place *R. Nechuniah Ben Kanah* at about this time. I believe him to be the same whom *Grotius* {232} called *R. Nehumias*. He lived fifty years before Christ, according to *Grotius*, and openly declared that the time of the *Messiah* signified by *Daniel*, would not be prolonged beyond those fifty years. To this *Rabbi* the book of *Bahir* is generally ascribed by the *Jews*. If the authenticity and antiquity of it could be established, it would furnish out a very early proof of the points, for *R. Bechai*, {233} a celebrated writer with the *Jews*, has a quotation out of it for this purpose:

“Letters are like to the body, and points to the soul, for the points move the letters as the soul moves the body, as our *R. R.* expound in the book of *Bahir*.”

Since the antiquity ascribed to this book is doubtful, I lay no stress upon it; though *Buxtorf* {234} stated it to be the most ancient of all the *Rabbinical* books. It must be as ancient as it is said to be since *Jonathan Ben Uzziel*, who wrote on the prophets, was contemporary with the supposed author of it.

{231} Juchasin, fol. 20, 1. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24, 2.

{232} De Ver. Relig. Christ. l. 5. s. 14.

{233} Apud Buxtorf. Tiberiad. c. 9.

{234} Bibliothc. Rab. p. 319. so. Groddeck de Script. rabbin. s. 74. p. 26.

B. C. 120.

In the time of *John Hyrcanus*, and *Alexander Jannaeus* his son, a sect of the *Karaites* {235} sprang up in opposition to the Pharisees. This sect introduced traditions and set up the oral law, which these men rejected. In these times lived *Simeon Ben Shetach*, and *Judah Ben Tabbai* about 140 BC. These two separated because *Judah Ben Tabbai* could not embrace *Simeon Ben Shetach*'s inventions which he formed out of his own brain. It was from *Judah* the *Karaites* came to be, who were first called the society or congregation of *Judah Ben Tabbai* {236} which was afterwards changed into the name of *Karaites*. *Morinus* {237} and others have said the *Karaites* began from *Anan* and *Saul*, who lived in the eighth century after Christ, which was after the *Talmud* was finished, but this is not true. Proof of this falsehood lies in the fact that mention is made of them in the *Misnah* {238} compiled in the second century. These men were only the restorers—not the authors of *Karaism*, which must be nearly as early as *Pharisaism*. According to *Josephus* {239} that was as early as the time of *Jonathan the Maccabee*. These *Karaite* men adhered to the scriptures only. This is where their name came from which signifies *Scripturarians*. Some think this group is the same as the *Scribes* known as *letter men*, and are linked with the lawyers in the New Testament who kept to the letter of the scriptures. {Mt 23:13 Lu 2:46,52 Mt 22:35 Mr 12:28} However, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*

are not only put together in agreeing with each other, but in some things they agreed against the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection. {Ac 23:9} They also differed in other things. However, the most evidence we have against the Scribes being the same with the *Karaites*, is their joining with the Pharisees in the point of traditions. {Mt 15:1,2 Mr 7:1-5} On the other hand, what seems most to favour the notion that the Scribes and Lawyers differed from the other sects, is the text in **Lu 11:45**. It is certain that Christ spoke more favourably of the Scribes than of others {Mt 13:52 17:10,11 Mr 12:28,34} and he is sometimes compared with them, though with some difference. {Mt 7:29} A Jew named *Orobio* of the last century, said {240} our *Jesus* was a *Karaite*. Another Jew of the *Rabbinical order*, out of ill will to the *Karaites*, feigned a letter {241} from the *Karaites* to the other *Jews* asserting that *Jesus* of *Nazareth* agreed with them, and exhorted his followers to receive their rites, and not those of the *Rabbanites*. He added that their ancestors had no hand in his death, and that it was the *Rabbanites* that slew him, and they only were answerable for it. However, it is evident that the Scribes were concerned in the death of Christ. {Mt 16:21 20:18 26:3 27:41,42} It may be reasonably thought that some of the *Karaites* were among the Scribes, and there were some of these scribes included in every sect. {242} For, since there were Scribes on the side of the Pharisees, {Ac 23:9} there is also mention made in *Jewish* writings of the Scribes of the *Sadducees*, {243} and of the *Samaritans*. The sentiments of these men, the *Karaites*, were from the beginning consistent. They made the scripture their only rule. They would not allow any innovation in it, nor addition to it, nor allow the inventions and traditions of men to be made equal to it, much less set up above it. The testimony therefore of such men for the points, must be very considerable. *Buxtorf* {244} the younger, stated that the *Karaites*, rejected punctuation as a species of the oral law, and of tradition. He greatly mistook the author of the book of *Cosri*, who, from the *Karaites* admitted the points urging their admission of tradition. Since he, and other *Jews* thought punctuation from the time of *Moses* to *Ezra*, was delivered by tradition, therefore, he said, {245} if this is so, both we and the *Karaites*, are bound to admit tradition. King *Chosroes* was made to answer, "When the *Karaites*, have found they have a perfect law (a copy with points and accents), they will deny that they have any further use of tradition for the explanation of it." (This was said with respect to the necessity of the tradition of the points and accents to read the book of the law). This writer may go too far in ascribing traditions to the *Karaites* though the *Karaites* allowed for tradition in some sense. It seems clear that *Chosroes* took it for granted that the *Karaites* made use of pointed copies of the law. *Morinus* {246} himself understood it and owned that it is even more clearly manifest from their own writings. In a reputable book {247} of theirs, it is observed that the patrons of tradition explain *boughs of thick trees*, used in the feast of tabernacles {Le 23:40} of a tree whose leaves are treble, according to **Ex 28:14**. However, the *Karaite* writer stated, that this is contrary to the nature of the language, for this e (in תּבֵּעַ) is with a *Kametz*, but that is with a *Sheva*. In another work {248} they say, the *Rabbanites* affirm, that what is written in the law needs explanation by tradition, but we don't believe so. What is written, bears the explanation *along with it*, meaning in the vowel points, and a little after some pointed words are used. The *Karaites* admit that their copies of the Bible agree with those of the *Rabbins*, because the disposition and order of the books of scripture were made by *Ezra*, who lived before the schism. As for the various readings of *Ben Asher* and *Ben Naphtali*, many of which are about the points and accents, they rather agree with the latter. It greatly displeases them that in some places the points are changed and others put in their place for modesty's sake, {249} as in **1Sa 5:6,9,12 6:4 2Ki 6:25**. By this it appears they are very tenacious about the points, and do not wish to alter them on any account. They would never be sticklers about this if they could be thought by them to be the invention of the *Rabbins*, and additions to the scriptures made by them. *Mordecai*, the famous *Karaite* in 1699, and his associates, are unanimous in their agreement of the antiquity of the points with the letters. His words in answer to some questions sent him by *Triglandius* are these: {250}

“All our wise men with one mouth affirm and profess, that the whole law was pointed and accented, as it came out of the hands of *Moses* the man of God.”

Morinus's {251} following statement is simply not true:

“All the *Jews*, the *Karaites* also, though the enemies of the traditions, and the *Kabala*, believe, as a most certain tradition, that the book of the law which *Moses* delivered to the *Israelites*, was without points and accents.”

F. *Simon* {252} totally disagrees with him, and affirmed instead that the *Karaites* readily receive the Bible with the vowel points, accents, and *Masorah*. The above *Karaite* continued by saying:

“Far be it that the invention of points and accents was made after the finishing of the *Talmud*, for this is largely to be confuted. The division of the *Rabbans* and *Karaites* was long before the finishing of the *Talmud*, as has been proven. If there were no points or accents in the time of the division, but were found out only after the finishing of the *Talmud*, then there would be different copies of the law and of the prophets in our hands. That is, copies in the hands of the *Karaites*, pointed differently from the pointing of the copies in the hands of the *Rabbans*. For in the places where the *Rabbans* have contradicted the vowels, and the accents, and say, don't read so, and so, they would not have said, don't read, but absolutely they would have pointed according to their will and sense.”

He gave instances of this in which they might have so done and observed that many of the *Rabbans* assert, that the points and accents were equally as ancient as the letters. *R. Azariah* in *Meor Enayim* and *R. Samuel Arkevolti* in *Arugat Habboshem* are examples. He continued:

“The copy of the scriptures which we have is the same that the *Rabbans* have. In this there is no division or difference between us, for the disposition or order of the scriptures was from the men of the great synagogue, those good men on whom be peace, at which time there was no dissension between them. Therefore with us there is nothing full and deficient, neither first and last, no *Keri* and *Chetib*, but what are in the order of the scriptures which is now in the hands of the *Rabbans*. The most correct books are the most in esteem with us, and we follow, or depend upon the reading of *Ben Naphtali*.”

Certainly their Bibles had the same *Masoretic* notes and observations in common with the *Rabbanites*. Hence, it is observed by them, {253} that the letter τ in twenty places is written at the end of a word, but not read, which agrees with the present *Masorah*. *R. Aaron*, a *Karaite*, published a *Hebrew* grammar in 1581, in which he never deserts the modern punctuation of the Bible, and consults the *Masorah* in words written defectively, or in any other irregular way, and is full of *Masoretic* observations, such as the *Rabbanites* produce. {254} A *Karaite* {255} of the same name, who wrote a commentary on the law in 1294, frequently referred to the points, and made mention of the names of them, as *Tzere*, *Pathach*, *Sheva*, *Hataph camets*, *Cholem*, *Shurek*, *Dagesh*. This sect, the *Karaites*, would never have allowed the present punctuation, if they had not believed it was obtained in the Bible of old, and came from God himself. As others {256} strongly affirm, the vowel points of the *Hebrew* Bible are from *Moses* and the prophets. The sense of the *Karaites* about the points is with me invincible proof of the great antiquity, and against the novelty of them. From the time that this sect rose up, it was not possible for the *Pharisees*, *Rabbanites*, *Masoretic* or traditionary *Jews* to have introduced such an invention as the vowel points. No matter what era of time, these men would have objected to them as such, and would never have received them. This demonstrates to me that the vowel points existed before the schism was, which was about the time before given, and were universally regarded by the *Jews* so early, that they were of divine origin.

{235} *Cosri*, par. 3. s. 65. *Maimon*. in *Pirke Abot*, c. 1. s. 3. *Juchasin*, fol. 51. 1.

{236} *Dod Mordecai*, c. 2. p. 12, 13, 14.

{237} *De Sincer*. *Heb. Text*. l. 2. *Exercit*. 7. c. 1. s. 6.

{238} *Megillah* c. 2. fol. 24, 2. *Amstelod*. Ed. vid. *Houting*. in *Misn. Roshhashanah*, c. 2. s. 1. & *Trigland*. de *Sect. Karaeorum*, p. 20, 21.

{239} *Antiq*. l. 13. c. 5. s. 9.

{240} *Apud Tribland*. ut supra, c. 6. p. 66.

- {241} Apud Huidric. Not. ad Toldos Jeschu, p. 82, 83.
 {242} Vid. Drusium de Sect. Jud. l. 2. c. 13. Alting. Shilo, l. 4. c. 8. Trigland. ut supra, c. 6.
 {243} G. Ursin. Antiqu. Heb. Academ. c. 9. p. 227.
 {244} De Punct. Antiqu. par. 1. p. 300.
 {245} Cosri, par. 3. s. 33, 34.
 {246} Epist. Buxtorf. ep. 70. in Antiqu. Eccles. Orient. p. 362.
 {247} Addareth Eliahu apud Trigland. de Sect. Kar. p. 32.
 {248} R. Caleb, Asarah Maamarot, MS. apud Trigland. ib. p. 117.
 {249} Chillouk MS. apud Trigland. ib. p. 189, 190.
 {250} Dod Mordecai, c. 12. p. 150-157.
 {251} Epist. Buxtorf. in Antiqu. Eccles. Orient. Ep. 70. p. 394.
 {252} Disquisit. Critic. c. 4. p. 25. & c. 12. p. 93, 95.
 {253} Menachem in Dod Mordecai, c. 10. p. 130. that Menachem was a Karaite, vid. Trigland. de sect. Karaeorum, c. 11. p. 187.
 {254} Vid. Wolsii Access. ad Notitiam Karaeorum, p. 37. & Biblioth. Heb. p. 119.
 {255} Vid. Simon. Disqu. Critic. c. 12. p. 95. 96. vid. Massechet Sopherim, c. 6. s. 4.
 {256} Legeri Epist. Hottinger. in Thesaur. Philolog. p. 54.
 {257} Praefat. 3. ad Masoret.

B. C. 164.

Elias stated there are 848 variant readings with *Keries* and *Cetibs* with different marginal readings which differ from the written text. Certainly they are very old since they are mentioned in the *Babylonian* {258} and the *Jerusalem Talmud*, {259} particularly the variant reading of **Hag 1:8** and in the book of *Zohar*. {260} It is not clear when these marginal readings were first made. The *Jews* say, {261} they are a tradition of *Moses* from mount *Sinai*. This however, is not possible since his books were not then written, much less the books of the prophets. Some Christians are of the opinion, as *Broughton*, *Ainsworh*, and *Wasmuth*, that both the text and marginal reading are of divine inspiration. It must be noted, that in many places they may be both taken into the sense of the passage, and enrich it greatly. Both are taken in by our translators in **Pr 19:7** and in the margin of **2Sa 23:13** in other versions. Others suppose they were put there by *Ezra* and the men of the Synagogue, on the return from the captivity, who, upon revising several copies of the books of scripture, observed various readings. *Kimchi*, on **1Ki 17:14** stated, the copies were corrupted in the captivity. {262} They found one copy varied with another, some they did not understand, and some of which they did not choose to put into the text. They did not throw any away, but instead put one within in the text, and the other without in the margin, to be used at the discretion of the reader. In his preface to the former prophets he observed much the same:

“In the first captivity the copies were lost or removed out of their place, (were out of order) and the wise men that knew the law were dead. The men of the great synagogue, who restored the law to its former state, found variations in the copies, and they were not after the greater number (of copies) according to their judgment. In a place which they could not clearly understand, they wrote the word and did not point it, or they wrote it without (in the margin) and did not write it within (in the text) and so they wrote in one way within, and in another way without.”

It is said in the *Jerusalem Talmud*: {263}

“They found three copies in the court, (not with *Ezra*, as *Morinus* {264} renders it,) in one they found it written hñem, **De 33:27** in two hbwem. They confirmed the two (as the true reading) and rejected the one. In one they found it written, yjwjez **Ex 24:5** in two yren, they confirmed the two, and rejected the other. In one they found it written evt, **Ge 32:22** in two hrve txa, they confirmed the two and rejected the one.”

Some think {265} these three copies were what belonged to the three bodies of the *Jews* in *Judea*, *Babylon*, and *Egypt*. They conjecture that from the collation of these copies arose the *Keri* and *Cetib* though this refers to a time after *Ezra* and the great synagogue. Translators sometimes follow the *Cetib*, and sometimes the *Keri*, as do the *Chaldee* paraphrases, which sometimes take in both, as in **Ps 22:16**. This is a proof of the antiquity of them. There is a variant reading in **Isa 45:5** *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, hence *Aquila*, an ancient *Greek* interpreter, translated according to the margin. *Symmachus* and *Theodotion*, two other ancient ones, translated according to the textual writing, which is observed by *Jerome*. {266} These variant readings were known by him, though it has been denied. They were in existence before the pretended *Masorettes* of *Tiberias*. Indeed, the forms and figures of unusual letters, or of unusual position were marked by the *Masorettes* and observed in the *Talmud* {267} so that these *Masoretic* remarks were before those men lived, who were said to be the authors who finished it. These readings seem to be designed not as corrections and amendments of the text, but only variant readings and euphemisms, to be regarded by readers as may seem good to them, and others as observing anomalous punctuation. However, there was never any intention that alterations should be made in the text, but that the text should stand as it was found. It seemed best with *Carpzovius* {268} to suppose that these marginal readings were made after the time of *Antiochus*, when the temple was purified and worship in it restored. The autograph of *Ezra* perhaps, and many copies of it having been destroyed, though not all, /**APC 1Ma 1:56,57 3:48 12:9** it was thought proper to revise the books of the scripture. Having observed different readings in the copies they found, they placed them in the margin for the said uses. Therefore, I have put the date of the origin of them as above. Though these greatly respect words and letters, in some instances there is a change of consonants in it. Therefore the vowels must be in the text when the *Keri* was put in the margin as the learned *Pocock* {269} had found. For he said that unless the *Masortes*, or whoever put the *Keri* in the margin had found *ydrwym* pointed, with vowels agreeing to the word *ydrym*, why did they need to substitute it since the sense flows better by reading it *ydrwym*? However, if in other copies they had found it *ydrym* without vowel points, why did they not dash out the *Vau*, and read it so that way? If they had found *ydrwym*, with its own vowels, in which they read it, they would never have dared to cast them away without necessity, and put those in their place, proper to an infinitive. This seems to be commonly reasoned that *Vau* is postponed to *Kametz*, **1Sa 27:11 Jos 15:63 Ps 101:5** and to *Pathach*, **Ps 5:9**. It then appears to be the doctrine of the points, and the anomalous ones observed, that is sometimes the cause of the marginal *Keri*. See **Isa 36:12** where the points under the word in the text better agree with that in the margin, and seems to be the reason for the marginal reading. Some of those *Keries* may not be as ancient as the date above, but additions may be made by some in later times. However, they seem mostly to be of great antiquity, as appears by what has been observed of the *Targums* and ancient *Greek* copies. *Buxtorf* {270} has given some rules to discern the one from the other.

{258} T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37, 2. Sopherim, c. 6. s. 5. 8. & c. 7. s. 1, 2, 3, 4. & c. 9. s. 8.

{259} Maccot, fol. 32, 1.

{260} In Deut. fol. 119, 3. & 226, 3.

{261} T. Bab. Nedar. ut supra, Schulchan Aruch. par. c. 141. s. 8.

{262} Vid. Ben Chayim praefat. ad Bibl. Heb. col. 1.

{263} Taanioth, fol. 68, 1.

{264} Exercit. l. 2. exerc. 12. c. 3.

{265} Lightfoot, Hor. Heb. in Matt. 5. 18. p. 140. Othon. Lexic. Rabbin. p. 315.

{266} Vid. Comment. in Isa. c. 49. 5. in Hierem. c. 31, 40. fol. 160. Vide Loc. Heb. fol. 89. B.

{267} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 30, 1. & 66. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 109, 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 103, 2. Massech. Sopherim c. 9. s. 7.

{268} Critic. Sac. p. 342.

{269} Miscellan. Not. in Port. Mosis, p. 64, 65.

{270} Anticritica, par. 2. c. 4. p. 501.

B. C. 277.

In this year, according to bishop *Ussher*, {271} *Ptolemy Philadelphus* king of *Egypt*, wanted to build a library in *Alexandria*. He employed *Demetrius* his librarian to collect books for that purpose, who in a letter to the king preserved by *Eusebius*, {272} told him that he had diligently executed his orders. However, with some other books, there remained the books of the law of the *Jews* to be obtained which he stated were contained in *Hebrew* letters and vowels. For, what else could he have meant by φωνη, as distinguished from letters? He could not have meant the pronunciation and sound, which those volumes could not be said to lie in, but the vowel points, by which the letters were read and pronounced. They are annexed to them for that purpose. Therefore it seems that at this time the books of the *Jews* were written not only in *Hebrew* letters, but with *Hebrew* points, and in their own characters, as *Demetrius* says. {273} These books were different from the *Egyptian* and *Syrian*, as he affirmed. This is pointed out to show what *Hebrew* characters were then in use. Though it is commonly thought that the seventy interpreters used an unpointed copy from which they translated, where did the many mistakes come from which were made in their version? *Hottinger* {274} noted nearly fifty places in which for *Kametz* they read *Tzere* or *Segol*. Also *Leusden* {275} observed that they read words with wrong vowels, like *Tzere* for a *Kametz*, **Ps 40:5**, *Patach* for *Tzere* **Ps 7:12**, *Chirek* for *Patach* **Ps 7:7**, *Patach* for *Segol*, **Ps 94:3**. This might be owing either to a vitiated pointed copy before them, which led them wrong or to an unpointed copy, and trusting to their memory, they put one point for another. *Dr. Lightfoot* {276} suggested:

“They purposely used an unpointed Bible, in which the words written without vowels might be bent various ways, and into various senses, and different from the meaning of the original. Yet, if the translation was questioned they might point or vowel the word so as to agree to their translation. How they have dealt in this kind there is none that ever laid the *Hebrew* Bible and the *Septuagint* together, who have not observed...”

Although he adds:

“...their differences from the original, which were innumerable, were partly due to ignorance, not being able to read the text properly in a copy without vowels. This ignorance was also voluntary in them in that they did not care about mistakes so that they might do it with a sense of security”

Hence, *Mr. Broughton* {277} says:

“The seventy did not have the pointed Bible, both for the rareness, and because they never meant to give the truth.”

If they used an unpointed Bible purposely or a pointed one vitiated, it shows that points were in use in their time, and very necessary. It may be noted, that the *Pentateuch*, which some, like *Josephus* and others, think was the only part of scripture translated by them, is almost every where translated in agreement with the modern punctuation. *Jerome* {278} long ago observed this, that the five books of *Moses* translated by them more agreed with the *Hebrew* than any other. It is an observation of *Capellus* {279} that the seventy interpreters, who lived about 300 years before *Christ*, instead of the *tetragrammaton* or the word *Jehovah*, always read *Adonai*, and always render it by κυριος, a word not expressing essence like *Jehovah* does, but of lordship, as *Adonai* does. They are followed in this by the Apostles of *Christ*, and the rest of the writers of the New Testament, and the ancient fathers of the church. They never depart from the *Greek* interpreters of the Old Testament like *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, and *Theodotion*. Now what could lead them to read *Adonai*, and sometimes *Elohim* instead of *Jehovah* and translate the word accordingly? Not the consonant letters of *Jehovah*, but the points of *Adonai* and *Elohim* put to it as they now are. *Capellus* {280} plainly confessed that this word had the points of *Adonai*, and sometimes of *Elhoim* in their time. He stated, the seventy when hwhy has the points of מַיְהִיָּא more often render it κυριε κυριε, as **Ps 68:21** and *passim*, and sometimes κυριος, and θεος, as in **Am 3:7** &c. from where it is conjectured that for *Adonai Jehovah* they read *Adonai Elohim*.

- {271} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 480.
 {272} Praepar. Evangel. l. 8. c. 3. p. 351.
 {273} Apud Euseb. p. 350. Vid. Aristae Hist. 70. p. 4, 5. Ed. Oxon. 1692.
 {274} Thesaur. Philolog. l. 1. c. 3. p. 354, &c.
 {275} Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Dissert. 4. p. 31.
 {276} Works, vol. 1. p. 490.
 {277} Works, p. 680, 681.
 {278} Quaest. seu. Trad. Heb. in Gen. fol. 65. D. Tom. 3.
 {279} Orat. de Nom. Tetragram. p. 183, 191, 192.
 {280} Ib. p. 146.

B. C. 454.

In this year according to bishop *Ussher*, {281} *Ezra* had returned from *Babylon*, and was at *Jerusalem*. He read and expounded the law to the people of the *Jews* there. It is generally accepted by the *Jews*, that the vowel points were annexed to the letters of the sacred books by *Ezra*. However, they suppose the points were originally from *Moses* and the prophets and that they have equal divine authority as the letters do. Only they imagine these points were delivered down from the prophets by oral tradition to the times of *Ezra*, and *Ezra* then affixed them to the letters. It was *Elias*, who invented the story of the men of *Tiberias*. He was of the same opinion, only with this difference; that the oral tradition of the points was carried down to those men, and they added them to the letters. As much like a fiction as this oral tradition looks, it is little less, if any, what *Capellus* and *Walton* allow, especially the latter. The pointing of the *Masoretes* is not arbitrary, and at their pleasure, but according to the sound, pronunciation, true and accustomed reading, always in use, handed down successively to their times, and which contains the true sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost. *Dr. John Prideaux*, {282} is an opposer of the antiquity of the points, yet thinks it is probable that some of the points and accents for the distinction of the text, and, for the direction of the reading, were devised by *Ezra*. That the succeeding *Masoretes* before the *Talmudists* also had a hand in this, and these works were preserved in separate parchments and sheets, and that they were used and increased to the times of the *Tiberian Masoretes*, who were after the *Talmudists*. This in effect is giving up the invention of them by the men of *Tiberias* and ascribing the original of them to *Ezra*. Many who are clear for the divine authority of the points and accents are content they should be ascribed to *Ezra*, since he was divinely inspired, such as *Buxtorf* and others. It may be safely concluded that the points and accents existed in *Buxtorf's* time, since the *Masorah* which was begun in his time, {283} either by him or by the men of his synagogue, is concerned about the points and accents, as well as other things, as has been observed. In addition, the Scribes who assisted *Ezra* in reading the law, cannot be thought to have read it *distinctly*, and cause the people to understand *the reading* of it, without the points. I now refer to the text of **Ne 8:8** which has been quoted already. The *Talmudists* of *Jerusalem* and *Babylon* do not take any further notice of the sense. *Dr. Humfrey Prideaux* having taken that side of the question which denies that the vowel points were affixed by *Ezra*, and of the same divine authority with the rest of the text allows, that they came into use a little after the time of *Ezra*, being then necessary for the reading and teaching of the *Hebrew* text. {284} This is not only an acknowledgement of the great usefulness of the points, but it highly esteems their antiquity. I do not see why they were not as needful in the time of *Ezra* as they seemed to be for the reading and teaching of the *Hebrew* text a little after the time of *Ezra*! Was the necessity of them owing to the *Hebrew* language, then ceasing to be commonly spoken, as it, according to him, ceased to be in the times of *Ezra*. I contend however, that is a mistake, for it was some hundreds of years later that it ceased to be the commonly spoken language.

There is nothing on this topic that was of any particular notable import between the time of *Ezra* and *Moses* relative to the points. I lay no stress on the different pronunciation of *Shibboleth*, in **Jud 12:6** though *Schindler* {285} is of the opinion that from that passage it appeared that the point on the right and left hand of *v*, was then in use, and so by consequence the other points were similarly affected.

Elias Levita {286} roundly asserts, that the copy of the law which was given by *Moses* to the children of *Israel* was without points and accents. However, this is claimed without proof, because no one has been able to prove it. He quoted *Aben Ezra*, {287} who stated the points were delivered at *Sinai*, but the tables of the law were not pointed, which seems improbable and even a flat contradiction. Another writer had a better {288} argument who mentioned, in answer to the question, "How do we know that the points and accents are of God?" stated:

“It may be replied, what is written in **De 27:8** ‘and thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly,’ but without the points and accents, which explain the words, no man can understand them *clearly* and *plainly*.”

Since the king had written out a copy of the law, and read from it every day of his life {*De 17:18,19*} and the priests read it once a year to all of *Israel*, it is hard to see how this law could be understood without the points. {*De 31:11*} It is an even greater difficulty to understand how the common people would be able to read it to their children and teach them the knowledge of it without the points!

{281} Annal. Vet. Test. p. 197.

{282} Veginti & duae Lectiones, Lect. 12. p. 196, 197.

{283} Casaubon. Epist. ep. 390. Porthaesio, p. 468.

{284} Connection, par. 1. b. 5. p. 352, 353.

{285} Lex. Pentaglott. col. 1792. vid. Balmesii Gram. Heb. p. 14. lin. 9. 14. 16.

{286} Praefat. 3. ad Masoret.

{287} Zach Shephataim in Ib.

{288} R. Levi bar Joseph Semadar, in ib.

Summary

There are two common opinions the *Jews* maintain regarding the points and accents. These points and accents were delivered to *Moses* on mount *Sinai*, by pronunciation for reading, but not with their marks and figures in writing. They hold the opinion that the true manner of reading the scriptures was propagated and preserved by oral tradition up to the time of *Ezra*. The second position is that the points and accents were given to *Moses* at *Sinai*, but were mostly omitted in writing thereafter and hence were forgotten until *Ezra* came and restored them. It makes more sense that they existed as early as the *Hebrew* letters. Since it is not improbable that these writings existed before the flood, and before the confusion of tongues, the points then also must have existed. If the sense of **Ge 11:1** given by a late writer, {289} could be established, it would be without any doubt. The passage reads:

“and the whole earth was of one language, i.e. the *Hebrew* language, as it was afterwards called, and of one speech, or words.”

That is, according to this writer, words distinguished by acute or sharp points. In deriving the word used from *רִדָּן* to *sharpen*, he thinks the tautology in the text is avoided. To this it may be added that the latter clause of the text is plural. I fear the word will not bear this sense, since the singular and plural words used, the one in one clause, and the other in the other, must have a different derivation, which is not usual of a word in the same text.

If the book of *Jetzirah* was compiled by *Abraham*, to whom the *Jews* {290} commonly ascribe it, though sometimes to *Adam*, the points might be traced to his time. In that book frequent mention is made of the double letters *Begaa Cephath*, or *Begad Cephrat*, as there it is so called, {291} because they have a double pronunciation. This pronunciation depends upon the points in their having or not having in them the *Dagesh lene*. But though there is no reason to believe that the book was written either by *Abraham* or

Adam it is certainly an ancient one. In this instance it carries the antiquity of the points farther back in time than is now commonly held because this book is spoken of in the *Talmud*. {292} If it was written by *R. Akiba*, who is the only one mentioned by the *Jews* as the author of it, besides *Adam* and *Abraham*, he died in the beginning of the second century. However, if *Jonathan Ben Uzziel* wrote a supplemental commentary on it, as is stated, {293} it must be before his time, since *Jonathan* was contemporary with *Christ*, or came shortly after him. It may be noted that the double pronunciation of the above letters was in use in the time of *Christ*. This is shown in the following words: *Armageddon*, *Capernaum*, *Euphrates*, *Joppa*, *Pascha*, *Sarepta*, and others.

It is the opinion of some *Jewish* writers, such as the author of *Cosri*, {294} and his commentator *Muscatus*, {295} *R. Azariah*, {296} and others, that the vowel points, as well as letters, were given by God himself to *Adam*. In addition, some Christian writers {297} also, ascribe them to *Adam*. If indeed the *Hebrew* letters were of his invention, as many have thought, including *Walton*, {298} there can be no reasonable doubt but the vowels were also. However, I am inclined to believe that the vowels were coexistent with the letters, and that the penmen of the sacred scriptures added the vowel points to letters in their writings. My reasons are these:

1. The perfection of language requires vowels. No language can be perfect without them. They are the life and soul of language. Letters without vowels are indeed dead letters. The consonants are stubborn and immovable things, they can't be moved or pronounced without vowels, which are, as *Plato* says, {299} the bond of letters, by which they are joined, and without which they cannot be coupled together. Is it possible therefore, that the *Hebrew* language, the first, and most perfect of all languages, should be without them? If this was the case, would *Hebrew* not be the most imperfect of all the *oriental* languages? Notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, the *Samaritan* had its points, though differing from the *Hebrew*, as *Jerome* {300} and a later writer observed. {301} The *Syrians*, *Chaldaeans*, *Arabs*, and *Persians*, had vowel points likewise, as *Hottinger* {302} and dean *Prideaux* {303} observed. The invention of the *Syriac* vowel points is indeed by some {304} ascribed to *Ephrem Syrus*, who lived in the 4th century. As for the *Ethiopic* language, the vowels are incorporated into the consonants, and are a part of them, and so must be *ab origine*, and coexistent with them. Even those who wish to do away with the vowel points seem to be aware of a need to substitute something in their place. For example, the *matres lectionis*, as they call them, *ywa* to which some add *h* but these are not sufficient. They are lacking in a great number of words. Notice the various methods of reading *Hebrew*, contrived by men. Why should they be so careful to find out a method of reading and pronouncing the *Hebrew* language, when there is such a plain one at hand which is already prepared for them, and of which *Walton* himself says, {305} is a most profitable and useful invention?
2. The nature and genius of the *Hebrew* language require points. Without these the difference cannot be discerned between nouns and verbs, in some instances, such as *rbd* with many others. Also the differences are undiscerned between active and passive verbs, and between some conjugations, moods, tenses, and persons, such as *Kal*, *Piel*, and *Pual* which are imperative and infinitive proofs. Neither can the *Vau* convertive of tenses be observed, {306} which yet is used frequently throughout the Bible. Without it, the formation of some of the tenses by letters would be useless. *Morinus* {307} stated:

“Without the points a grammar cannot be written, as *Elias* rightly observed. For example, describe the conjugation *Kal* without points, and immediately you will be at a stand still, and much more in *Piel*”

Walton {308} also points out the use of them in the investigation of the roots. The pronunciation of some letters depends upon the points which we have already seen.

3. The vowel points are necessary and useful to easier learning, reading, and pronouncing of the *Hebrew* language. What skilled men in the language may be able to do is one thing, and what learners and

beginners in it can do is another thing. Well versed men may choose to read without them just as a master of *Brachygraphy* may choose to read what he has written in short hand because he is used to it rather than reading it in long hand. However, this is not proof of the perfection and propriety of *Brachygraphy*! As *Dr. Lightfoot* {309} stated:

“A tongue cannot first be learned without vowels, though at last, skill and practice may make it to be read without them. Grammar and not nature makes men to do this.”

A late learned writer has observed: {310}

“To talk of reading *Hebrew* without points, is a *collusive* way of speaking. We may do it when we have learned the language. We want instructions either by word of mouth or by grammar. Points in *Hebrew* are like scaffolds in building, when the work is finished we may take them down and throw them aside, but it would be unsafe to do it sooner.”

Dr. John Prideaux {311} an opposer of the antiquity of the points, states:

“The tongue has been tossed about by various calamities. The points were added, that it might be the more accurately preserved, and that was done by the *Jews*, to whom it ceased to be vernacular. Also this was done so that by others it might be the more *easily* understood and be more *exactly* pronounced.”

Elsewhere he stated: {312}

“Let them be, whoever adds to the text, they are so far from corrupting it, that they rather protect it from corruption, and lead to a more *easy* reading and understanding of it.”

Also, *Walton* {313} who is another opposer of the points, stated:

“The Christian church received their (the *Masorettes*) punctuation, not upon their authority, but because it expressed the *true sense* received *in the church of God*. And withal, because they saw it conducted a much *more easy* reading of the text, and even to the true reading of it.” {314}

The great master and chief leader of the opposers, *Capellus*, having treated the points and accents as having supposedly been devised and added to the sacred *Hebrew* text by the *Masorettes*, frankly admitted:

“Upon that account we certainly owe much to them, or rather, should *give thanks* to God, who stirred up these men to study it. For in that work they have certainly laboured most successfully. The result has been that by the help of those *little marks* we can *far more easily* and happily converse in reading and understanding the sacred *Hebrew* text, than we could have otherwise without this help.”

Why then should it not be attended to? Indeed, I cannot see how common people, men, women, and children, could be able to read it without points, when it was their mother tongue! It was their duty and interest to read their Bible in *Hebrew*. It was for the *Jew's* sake it was written, and who else had as great an interest and concern in it as the most learned men have? It has been the grand charter of their salvation. The Bible was not written for learned men only, but for these unlearned ones also. Therefore, it was written, as it most properly should have been, in the most plain and easy manner!

4. The vowel points and accents are useful and necessary. They remove ambiguity and confusion in words and sentences so that the true sense of them may be understood by persons who may have no capacity

or ability. It is for their sake the Bible was written as noted before. These facts have been admitted by the opposers of them. *Capellus*, {315} speaking of the accents stated:

“Certainly these little marks when properly placed, are indeed used so that we may not hesitate to understand the mind and sense of the writer.”

Walton {316} in regard to the *Masorettes*, stated:

“They did not point the text according to their own will and pleasure, but according to the true sense of the received reading from the sacred writers in their time. Hence, the reading is made *easier* and the text less susceptible to *ambiguity* and corruption.”

It is often said that by attending to the connection of words, within their context, the sense of a word may be easily understood. It must be noted that not all individuals have the same natural abilities, acumen, understanding, or critical judgment, as the particular persons mentioned above. In addition, if the connecting words in the context are left unpointed, some of them are very difficult to understand. Therefore they must be examined and adjusted so that the sense of the word can be determined. This requires time and the end result may not even be satisfactorily obtained. If able and learned men have been led into mistakes because the points are not used, much more may persons of ordinary capacities. The authors of the various *Greek* versions of the Bible, the Septuagint interpreters, *Aquila*, *Theodotion*, and *Symmachus*, were all *Jews*, except the last one who had a considerable knowledge of the *Hebrew* language. However, the seventy interpreters, who neglected the points, translated without them. They have put gross interpretations upon the text. Some were directly contrary to what was intended, sometimes very absurd, even wicked and blasphemous interpretations were given. An example of each is as follows: *God is angry every day*, **Ps 7:11**. The *Greek* version is, *does not bring on anger, or is not angry every day*. The word *la* is differently pointed, and is used for *God*, and for the negative *not*. There is a passage in **Isa 24:23** *then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign, &c.* *Dr. Lowth* {317} with others represents this passage in grand and magnificent terms. It is so coloured that no translation can express it nor can they altogether obscure it. However, the interpretation is most miserably obscured in the *Greek* version of it, and its sense is given in extremely low, mean, and absurd terms. *The brick shall waste, and the wall shall fall, when the Lord reigns, &c.* *hgb1* differently pointed, signifies the moon, and a brick, and *hmx*, the sun and a wall, the authors of this version have absurdly taken the latter sense. **La 3:33** it is, *he*, i.e. *God*, *doth not willingly afflict*. The *Greek* version is *he doth not answer from his heart*, cordially and sincerely, thereby charging *God* with insincerity and dissimulation. However, the three letters *hne* unpointed signify to *answer* as well as to *afflict*. In *Kal* it signifies the former, in *Piel* the latter. This is the true sense here distinguished by the points. This is how the same interpreters, by changing points and letters, spoiled the famous prophecy of the *Messiah* in **Isa 9:6**. Instead of *everlasting Father, the Prince of peace* they translate: *I will bring upon the princes peace?* though the passage is otherwise produced by *Clement of Alexandria* {318} as more agreeable to the *Hebrew* text, which shows that the *Septuagint* version is not in the same state now it formerly was. The learned *Vitringa* {319} has observed:

“One of the *Seventy Greek* translators of the *Septuagint* of *Alexandria* was no expert in the *Jerusalem* reading. In his poorly translated version, in the more obscure passages, so deformed the prophet (*Isaiah's*) discourse that it cannot be recognized as *Isaiah*.”

Through negligence, disuse or lack of the points, the *Greek* interpreters have made mistakes, in places one would think it was almost impossible they could. Thus *ynb* differently pointed, or without any points, may signify *sons* or *builders*. They have taken the word in the first sense in **1Ki 5:18** and, contrary to the context, rendered the reading: *Solomon's sons and Hiram's sons hewed them*, the stones. The same word, consisting of the same letters but differently pointed, has two or three senses. Sometimes they have half a

dozen different senses or even eight or ten, such as the word *rbd*. How difficult then must it be to arrive at the true sense for the common person! It was for these kinds of people the Bible was originally written as it was for learned men.

5. It will be difficult to assert and maintain the clarity of the scripture if the vowel points and accents are removed. The scriptures must:

- a) exemplify the wisdom of God
- b) proclaim his laws
- c) rule man's conduct towards himself and each other
- d) indoctrinate men to be wise to salvation
- e) to instruct them in matters of the greatest moment for time and eternity.

To deliver these in ambiguous words that have various senses, and at best give a difficult interpretation to men of the deepest learning and of the greatest capacity is foolishness! It is of utmost importance for the wise law giver to express his laws, for a king to publish his edicts, and for a teacher to give forth his doctrines and instructions in the clearest, plainest and most easily understood terms. The Bible should not be interpreted in ambiguous language which delivers many different senses, contradicting what is intended. Can it be thought that God, our lawgiver and king, who, by his word, proposes to teach men to profit and to lead them by the way they should go, would act otherwise?

6. I fear that we shall not be able to support the infallibility of the scripture, if for example in that part of the Old testament where, as a sure rule of faith and practice, the points are removed. It then becomes flexible and may be turned as a nose of wax to any thing to serve a purpose, to countenance any doctrine or practice agreeable to the different tastes and inclinations of men! In doing this the scriptures will have different senses, and as a consequence will be uncertain, and not to be depended upon! I fear it is this spirit of wantonness that has led many to throw away the points and accents so they may be under no restraint, but at full liberty to interpret the scriptures as they are led by their own inclinations. However, if even the opposers of the divine origin of them allow that the points give the true sense and mind of the Holy Spirit in the sacred writings, why should they be laid aside, to make way for any sense the fancy of men may impose upon them? *Walton* affirms {320} that:

“The *Masorettes* express in their punctuation the *true sense* of the Holy Ghost. These in turn were dictated to the holy penmen, written down and preserved by both Jews and Christians.”

And that:

“They pointed the text according to the *true* and *received reading*, which expressed the *true sense* of the Holy Ghost, and not as they pleased. It is not lawful for any one to reject their reading at pleasure, but all are tied to it, unless some error or better reading can be proved. {321}

Cappellus himself also said: {322}

“No one is obliged to admit the punctuation of the *Masorettes*, because it comes from them. However, all may be bound by this punctuation because it can be demonstrated, that it agrees nearly everywhere with the consonants to which it is added. It agrees with the series and structure of the words in the passage, and it produces a sense which is commodious, true, and coherent. No other punctuation can be produced which is more apt or more commodious.” {323}

7. The inspiration of scripture is affected by the points and accents. If *all scripture* or the *whole writing* of the Bible is *by inspiration* of God, then not just the matter, but the words in which it is written, are of

divine inspiration. Indeed what else is meant by *the words of the Holy Ghost teaches?* {1Co 2:13} If the words of scripture are of divine inspiration, and given by God himself, then, how could half words having consonants without vowels be divinely inspired? If whole words, which seem most agreeable to the wisdom and honour of the Divine Being, then both consonants and vowels were given by inspiration. If both consonants and vowels were NOT given by inspiration, then as long as they have been in use, and the sense of scripture depends on them, this sense does NOT depend upon divine authority, but upon human authority! If this then is so, that human authority consists of men who are blinded, besotted and destitute of the Spirit of God, bitter enemies to Christianity, and perhaps a set of men as bad as ever was on earth! Hence, these points ought never to stand in our Bibles, and be used by us, but should be rejected with great indignation. A pointed Bible, if possible, should not be in the world, having in it such an addition to the word of God, which ought not to be made, and which is so directly contrary to his orders. {De 4:2 12:32 Pr 31:6}

7. Finally, if the vowel points were not annexed to the letters by the sacred writers while first being written, but instead would have had a later and a new beginning, this would have been known. Some would have divulged it. This would have been on record somewhere, and we would have been informed by some means. We would have been told who placed them, where they were placed and at what time. However, nothing of this has ever transpired. The story of *Elias* about the men of *Tiberius* merits no regard. Even that the points were annexed by *Ezra*, or by the men of his congregation, is mere conjecture, without any foundation. Therefore upon the whole it may be concluded, that they were originally placed by the sacred writers, *Moses* and the prophets.

It has been often said, in favour of reading the Bible without points, that *Rabbinical* books are written without the points and are easily read. But then it should be observed, that they are read by such who have first read the *Hebrew* Bible with points, and who are well versed in *Biblical Hebrew*. As such the commentaries of *Kimchi*, *Abarbinel* and others, may be easily read, whose style is plain and clear. By degrees other writings are more rough, crabbed and with difficulty they may be read also. However, as *Buxtorf* {324} and others have observed, there is a great difference between the Bible and *Rabbinical* books: in writing, in style, in manner and means of learning and reading them. In *Rabbinical* books, the *matres lectionis* as *ywa* are called, are used to supply the lack of vowels. In the Bible they are most frequently omitted. Even in places where they might be expected, and where they least of all should be omitted! The style of *Rabbinical* books is mostly quite plain, and where it is not, as in the *Talmud* and other writings, it is difficult to read them. The style of the Bible is generally short, concise, full of ellipses and other figures, especially in the prophetic writings. In addition to this, what is contained in *Rabbinical* writings are things usually before known, or easily understood, and to be read without any hindrance. However, the sacred scriptures contain mysteries, things sublime, and more remote from the capacities of men, and require more attention, help and assistance in reading them. Also, if a mistake is made in *Rabbinical* writings, it is not of the same importance, as it is in reading the Bible. Therefore we may venture to read with less pain and with more safety, the *Rabbinical* writings without points than we can when reading the Bible. *Buxtorf*, the son, looked into this and asserted, {325} that it is easier to read *Rabbinical* books unpointed, than any of the books of the Bible pointed! He even ventured to say, that he could more readily and with certainty read any of the *Rabbinical* books which he had never seen before, than to read any book of the Bible even pointed, even though the Bible passages may be well known by him, and often read over and over again! Notwithstanding all the advantages on the side of *Rabbinical* writings, how many mistakes have been made by learned men, like *Scaliger*, *Schickard*, *Kircher*, *Vorstius* and others? What blunders in translation has *Buxtorfs* exposed in *Morinus* and *Capellus*? Even those great masters in *Rabbinical* literature, as the *Buxtorfs* themselves, *Selden*, *Lightfoot*, &c. are not without their errors. No wonder this is true since, in the *Talmuds* especially, there are many places which seem quite unintelligible. In addition they are written in the *Chaldee* dialect, an impure language, and abounding with exotic words.

It is frequently objected against that the Bible should be written and read with points. The argument is, that the copies of the law every where which are kept in the Jewish synagogues are without points, as answering to the *Mosaic* Archetype. The fact that it is an unpointed copy of the law which is usually kept in the *Jewish* synagogues now, will be granted. {326} However, that the Archetype or Autograph of *Moses* was without points may be asserted, but it cannot be easily proven. Neither can it be said, with any precision, how long it has been the custom of the *Jews* to have an unpointed copy of the law in their synagogues. It cannot be established that what they have can be thought to be a reproduction or answer to the copy of *Moses*, nor can that view be kept. Did the Autograph of *Moses* have the *Keri*, or marginal readings? The opposers of the points will not admit that it had! However, the present copies of the law in the synagogues of the *Jews* have the marginal readings and *Keri*, if I am not mistaken. Even the pricks and points which they call *crowns* {327} are in their copies. Are the present copies in the synagogues written in *Samaritan* characters? They are not! However, according to the hypothesis of *Morinus*, *Capellus*, and those that follow them, they ought to be so written, to be a reproduction of, or to answer to that of *Moses*. Since, that reproduction, according to them, was in the *Samaritan* character, this then would be contrary to their own rules; one of which runs thus: {328}

“They do not write (the sacred books) in the language beyond the river (or the *Samaritan*), nor in the *Syriac* nor in the *Median*, nor in *Greek*. In whatever language or writing they are written, they may not be read (i.e. publicly) until they are written in the (Assyrian) or *square character*.”

There are other reasons why unpointed copies are kept and used in the synagogues of the *Jews*. They may help us to ascertain the origin of this custom and the reason for its continuance.

1. One reason was, that the *Cabalists*, and those who interpreted the scriptures allegorically, might have the opportunity of establishing their own various senses of them. An unpointed Bible will do this, but a pointed Bible will not. Hence that saying of *R. Menachem*: {329}

“A book of the law in which there are many faces (or on which many senses may be put) is one not pointed.”

For, he stated:

“When letters are not pointed, they have many faces (or many be differently read). When they are pointed, they have only one sense, according to the punctuation.”

This is what *R. Bechai* {330} plainly suggested was the original cause and reason for using unpointed copies:

“Letters which are not pointed give various senses. They are divided into various meanings. *Because of this we are commanded* not to point the book of the law because the literal sense of every word is according to the punctuation. There is only one literal sense in a pointed word, but an unpointed word a man may understand many ways and find out many wonderful and excellent things.”

It is mainly for the same reason that men do not wish to be tied down to one sense of a word, that points are now so much opposed. Some have argued for the novelty and against the antiquity of the points from the *Cabalists*. They make no use or mention of them in their writings, but they drew their various meanings from the letters only, and the combination of them, and not from the vowels and accents. However, this has been abundantly confuted by *Buxtorf*. {331} The commentator on the book of *Cosri* {332} made mention of *R. Aaron*, a great *Melabbal* or *Cabalist*. He was the head of the university at *Babylon*, as the author of a book of pointing. He is quoted by *Rittangelias* {333} and in the *Cabalist's Lexicon*, {334} under the word *Mydwqn*. Mention is made of nine points, and their names are given, *Kametz*, *Pathach*,

Zere, &c. The use that is made of the points is observed. *Menasseh ben Israel* {335} described the *Cabalists* as employing themselves in searching out the deep mysteries of the law, which are contained in the letters, *points* and musical *accents*. Later on he observed that:

“The law was given without points, like the books the *Jews* now have in their synagogues. Therefore, when any word occurs, whose letters now are not tied to certain vowels, men may put what points they please to them. Hence, the words may be read one way or another.”

2. Another reason for the *Jews* having an unpointed copy of the law in their synagogues is, that it might be a memorial of the oral tradition of points and accents, from the times of *Moses* to *Ezra*. They suppose the points were from *Moses*, but not annexed by him to the *Pentateuch*. The *Jews* think they were delivered and handed down by oral tradition from one to another until *Ezra*, who added them to it. Therefore, to keep in memory this wonderful affair, they always have an unpointed copy in their synagogues.
3. Another reason why only unpointed copies of the law are kept in the synagogues, may be their superstitious accuracy and exactness in the writing of the law. Therefore, if any letters are lacking or incorrectly placed, or similar ones used for each other, the copy is considered profane and rejected. Since it is even more difficult to have the points and accents placed exactly, they choose to have none at all. Hence they say, {336} a pointed copy is profane or to be rejected, even though the punctuation is erased. This is partly because it will not allow for various senses, as before observed, and partly because of the difficulty and almost impossibility of a perfect pointed copy. Or perhaps they are indifferent to one because they prefer an unpointed copy in their synagogues because only their learned priests read from those copies.
4. The chief reason for unpointed copies in the synagogues seems to be that only learned *Hebrew* scholars should be admitted as readers there. For if the copy was pointed then any common man might read it. Therefore any such man could be chosen for the office of a reader though in other things he may be very illiterate. The principal reason why it is unpointed is to prevent any such person from being introduced into it. Although they may have been chosen in the synagogue to hold the office of an experienced reader, are expert in the language, and able to read without points, yet it is their custom, to prepare themselves at home by reading from a pointed copy. *Cocceius* {337} learned this long ago from one of those readers who explained that it was to help them to be prepared to read better, more easily and accurately. It is their usual method to this day, for the well versed, exact, *praecentor* {Latin term for choir director. Editor.} to read the chosen passages from a pointed copy the day before the sabbath. In this way he would master the exact reading without hesitation, stopping, or mispronunciation, in order to conform to the present punctuation. {338} It makes no sense that since the *Jews* have had unpointed Bibles in their synagogues for centuries which only the learned could read, that they did not also have pointed ones for the common people. Certainly they have formerly had unpointed Bibles and still have them now. However, this is not an argument against their antiquity and use of them but an argument in their favour. Since the true reason for having unpointed copies in the synagogue is so that no one would be allowed to read except those who are so perfect in the *Hebrew* language that they could read as exactly from an unpointed copy as if they had been reading from a pointed one.

{289} Kalf. de ling. Heb. Natal. p. 33, 37, 38, 39.

{290} Cosri, par 4. c. 27. Juchasin, fol. 52, 2.

{291} C. 1. s. 2, 9, 10, & c. 2. s. 1. & c. 4. s. 1, 2, 3.

{292} T. Bab. Sauhedrin, fol. 65. 2.

{293} Vid Wolsii Bibliothec. Heb. p. 28.

{294} Par. 4. c. 25.

{295} In Ib. fol. 229, 1.

- {296} Meor enayim, c. 59.
- {297} Alsted. Chronolog. p. 267. vid. Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu. par. 2. p. 309, 310.
- {298} Prolegom. 2. s. 7.
- {299} Sophista p. 177.
- {300} Praefat ad Reg. T. 3. fol 5. L.
- {301} Petrus a Valle in Antiqu. Eccl. Orient. p. 184.
- {302} Thesaur. Philolog. p. 403.
- {303} Connection, par. 1. B. 5. p. 55.
- {304} Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. Tom. 5. p. 320.
- {305} Prolegom. 8. s. 10.
- {306} Vid. Cosri, par. 2. c. 80.
- {307} Epist. Buxtorf. in Antiqu. Eccl. Oriental. p. 392.
- {308} Introduct. Orient. Ling. P. 5.
- {309} Works, vol. 1. p. 1014.
- {310} Chappelow's Preface to his comment on Job, p. 18, 19.
- {311} Viginti & duae Lectiones, Lect. 12. p. 189.
- {312} Fasciculus controvers. de Script. qu. 3. p. 21.
- {313} The Considerator considered, p. 200.
- {314} Prolegom. 8. s. 17. Arcan. Punct. l. 1. c. 17. s. 11.
- {315} Arcan. Punct. l. 2. c. 25. s. 7.
- {316} Prolegom. 8. s. 10.
- {317} De Sacr. Poes. Heb. Praelect. 6. p. 69, 70.
- {318} Paedagog. l. 1. c. 5. See also Euseb. Demonstrat. Evangel. l. 7. c. 1. p. 336, 337.
- {319} Praefat. ad Comment. in Isaiam, Vol. 1. p. 5.
- {320} Prolegom. Polyglott. 3. s. 51.
- {321} The Considerator considered, p. 200.
- {322} Arcan. Punct. l. 2. c. 26. s. 2.
- {323} Qui puncta vel negligunt, vel prorsum rejiciunt, certe carent omni judicio & ratione. Calvin. in Zech. 11. 7.
- {324} De Punct. Antiq. par. 3. p. 370.
- {325} De Punct. Antiq. par. 2. p. 376.
- {326} Lyra in Hos 9. 12. Menasseh ben Israel. Conciliator, in Exod. qu. 50. p. 170.
- {327} Schulchan Arach, par. 1. c. 141. s. 8. and par. 2. c. 275. s. 6. Vid. Hackspan. Cabala, p. 309.
- {328} Massechet Sopherim, c. 1. s. 6.
- {329} Apud Munster. Praefat. ad Vet. Test.
- {330} Apud Buxtorf. ut supra, p. 45, 46.
- {331} Ut supra, par. 1. c. 5. p. 54, &c.
- {332} R. Judah Muscatus in Cosri, fol. 230. 4. Vid. Wolf. Bibliothec. Heb. p. 128.
- {333} De Verit. Relig. Christ. p. 27. 40.
- {334} Kabela. Denudata. par. 1. p. 592.
- {335} Conciliat. in Exod. qu. 50. p. 169. 172. 174. Vid. Leisden. Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Dissert. 13. p. 100. & Philolog. Heb. Dissert. 26.
- {336} Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 274. s. 7.
- {337} Coccei Defens. Cod. Heb. s. 19. p. 22. Tom. 7.
- {338} Carpaev. Critic. sacr. par. 1. p. 267.